

**Saw Mill River Audubon**  
**October 3, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes (taken by Bill Kellner)**  
**Meeting held at Croton Free Library, Croton-on-Hudson, NY**

Present (in bold type): **Erik Andersen, Cary Andrews, Ginger Bernardin, Louisa Gagliardi, Mitchell Goldfarb, Phil Heidelberger, Rik Kaufman (via Zoom), Suzanne Kavic (via Zoom), Bill Kellner, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Tom McEnerney, Ken Novenster, Steve Rappaport, Tom Ruth, Lynn Salmon, Richard Saravay (via Zoom), Jean Sparacin, Jenni Stern (via Zoom), Larry Trachtenberg, Debbie van Zyl (via Zoom), Kathleen Williamson.**

Executive Director Anne Swaim was also present.

ABSENT: Ken

Meeting started at 7:09 PM.

**President's Report—Valerie Lyle**

Valerie noted that a quorum was present with board members attending the meeting in the library. Five additional board members joined the meeting remotely (via Zoom).

Cary moved that the board accept the minutes of the board of directors meeting held on August 29, 2022. Lynn provided a second for this motion. With all present in person and remotely voting in the affirmative, the motion passed.

The SMRA Annual Dinner held on Sept. 9 at Crabtree's Kittle House was a great success. We had 65 paying guests and a total attendance of 75. Net profit for the event is \$2,300. Feedback from attendees was very positive. The indoor/outdoor venue worked well, the food got good reviews and our youth scholarship winner and special guest presentations were entertaining and informative. Recently retired SMRA Office Manager Ellen Heidelberger was recognized by Valerie and Anne for her many years of loyal service. Ellen addressed the meeting, amusing those present with anecdotes about the trials and tribulations of being the SMRA Office Manager. Everyone wished Ellen well as she embarks on the next phase of her life. We also recognized SMRA Educator Patricia Mutolo who is moving out of the area thanking her for more than 10 years of Audubon teaching at Pinecliff Sanctuary and in local schools.

Anne asked for opinions about whether the Members Best Photography program scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 15 would be better in person or Zoom. Consensus was to go with Zoom for this program for better display of pictures.

Our next board meeting is scheduled for Dec. 5; this will be a Zoom meeting. For 2023, meetings are scheduled for Jan. 9 (Zoom) and Feb. 6 (Zoom), March 6 (Croton Library), May 1 (Croton Library), and June 5 (picnic at Senasqua Park). Our Annual Meeting and potluck dinner is scheduled for April 2.

A celebration of the life of Ed Mertz will take place at the Half Moon Bay Condominium common room on October 8. Additional details are provided in an email sent to all board members by Anne.

There will not be a board of directors meeting in November. However, several SMRA committees will hold meetings to plan their 2023 budgets. Tom McEnerney noted that budget planning worksheets that are distributed to each committee typically have ten months of data from the current year. In 2022, however, with the South Africa trip scheduled to take place in November, the process will begin earlier (worksheets to be distributed around Oct. 10) so only nine months of current year budget data will be provided. Tom also noted that Lynn will be taking over as SMRA Treasurer in 2023.

Val announced that we are in the process of setting up the Nominating Committee. Bill has agreed to be the chair; he will reach out to the two committee members from 2021–22 to see if they are willing to serve on the committee in 2022–23 with the goal of voting on board and officer nominees at the March 2023 board meeting.

**Development Committee Report—Valerie Lyle**

[Reference Membership and Donation Report as of October 3, 2022]

With the current 641 SMRA chapter member households and 518 joint NAS/SMRA member households, total membership stands at 1,159.

Year-to-date we have received a total of \$62,661 in donations. This includes \$47,445 in Annual Fund donations.

### **Finance Committee—Phil Heidelberger**

As of October 1, 2022, the endowment portfolio balance was \$1,210,545, a \$241,663 (16.6%) decrease below the January 1, 2022 balance of \$1,452,208, an \$81,029 (6.3%) decrease for the month of September, and a \$58,457 (4.6%) decrease for the third quarter. There have been \$22,000 in withdrawals from and \$44,701 in additions to the portfolio so far during 2022. As of October 1, 2022, we are \$112,263 (73.7%) above our guideline to maintain two years of budgeted withdrawals in highly liquid assets such as checking and money market funds.

### **Treasurer's Report—Tom McEnerney**

[Reference Report: Operating Revenues and Expenses for the 9 months ended Sept. 30, 2022]

Operating revenues for the first nine months are about \$5,700 over budget, primarily due to higher donations. Expenses are about \$4,300 over budget due primarily to higher Sanctuaries and Program expenses. The net deficit of \$39,300 is about \$1,500 better than budget and was funded by \$22,000 in withdrawals from the endowment and by \$20,000 of unbudgeted revenues.

Unbudgeted revenues for the first nine months consisted primarily of over \$10,000 in donations from the Rewilding School and the Chappaqua Friends Nursery School and \$6,700 in deposits for the South Africa trip. Tom also noted that both the Larry Light and Butterfly Garden funds are down significantly since the beginning of the year due to the poor performance of the stock market.

Tom reported that SMRA would participate in a 100% renewable energy program for the electricity supply at Pruyn House. This is estimated to cost about \$250 more per year than electricity supplied from fossil fuels.

### **Bird Seed Sale—Anne Swaim for Ken Novenstern**

Income from sale of seed is approximately \$10,000, year-to-date. We are hoping for good results from the upcoming third Saturday sale days at the Pruyn Sanctuary. Please contact Anne or Ken if you can volunteer for one or more of the sale days. Seed sale hours are 9:30 am to 12:30 pm.

### **Executive Director's Report—Anne Swaim**

Anne reported on the New York State Ornithological Association (NYSOA) Annual Meeting held Sept. 30–Oct. 2 in Oswego, which she attended. There were a number of excellent presentations, including a talk by Scott Weidensaul on his latest book, *World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds*. Field trips included visits to the Lake Ontario shoreline habitats. One of NYSOA's key functions is historical record keeping. Our upcoming Bird Chat, to be held via Zoom on Oct. 11, will feature Shai Mitra of the New York State Avian Records Committee, who will talk on this topic.

We are looking forward to the upcoming trip to South Africa. The dates are Nov. 5–21.

### **Advocacy Committee Report—Tom Ruth**

The semi-annual Audubon NY/CT council meeting will take place in Rochester October 21–23. The host chapter is Genesee Valley Audubon. There will be many interesting speakers and field trips. SMRA board members interested in attending should let Tom Ruth know by Oct. 10.

As Tom reported in the minutes of the August 29, 2022 SMRA Board meeting, SMRA is following the situation with the 20.3 acre Buttonhook property in the Town of New Castle. This environmentally-sensitive parcel is owned by the Chappaqua Central School District, which is looking to sell the property, possibly for development with single family homes. An organization of local neighbors and others has formed a non-profit organization, Friends of Buttonhook, to try to prevent development of the property. Friends of Buttonhook has submitted a bid to purchase the property from the school district. To date, this offer has not been accepted.

The Advocacy Committee will meet in October and also in November to plan upcoming public programs. Please let Tom know of any program ideas you may have.

The Hudson River Watershed Alliance will hold its annual Watershed Conference on Oct. 24. The topic is "Climate

Change Impacts on Water in the Hudson Valley.” This will be a hybrid meeting, with in-person and virtual presentations. For more details, see the email sent by Anne on the conference that went out to all board members.

### **Sanctuaries Committee Report—Michael Madias, Jr.**

Our regular Second Saturday Walk at Brinton Brook Sanctuary will take place on Oct. 8.

September’s Second Saturday Walk was featured as one of the Hudson Valley Ramble events. We had 11 people participating.

The Sanctuaries Committee will meet on Oct. 24.

The start date for our sanctuaries deer management program is Nov. 1; we are currently in the process of posting signs in the relevant sanctuaries to inform visitors about the program.

As Michael reported in the August 29 meeting of the board of directors, we are holding a series of walks in our sanctuaries to evaluate the trail networks for possible problem areas that may be subject to erosion in case of heavy precipitation events. Extreme rainfall episodes are expected to become more frequent because of climate change. The walks are an effort to prioritize where trail work is needed to stay on top of this issue. So far, three walks have been held. Board members will be notified of future walks as they are scheduled and should let Anne know if they would like to participate. We are grateful for Phil’s trail-building and -maintaining expertise in conducting these evaluations.

### **Fundraising Committee—Louisa Gagliardi**

The SMRA 2023 calendar is almost ready to go to the printer. We have 59 photo submissions, resulting in donations of \$590 from our photographers. Meeting attendees viewed a slide show of some of the photos selected for the calendar. We are looking to order 100 calendars from the printer at a cost of \$1,157. The format is 12” x 12”, saddle stitched.

Our annual fundraising Birdathon will take place Oct. 14–16.

### **Programs and Field Trips—Debbie van Zyl**

Upcoming virtual and in-person programs include:

Oct. 19—Birding the Gaspé. Charlie Roberto, one of three trip leaders for our group of 18 travelers on our recent 10-day birding trip will narrate with beautiful photography by trip participants covering the birds, other wildlife and spectacular boreal and coastal scenery. This program will be held via Zoom.

Nov. 2—Gardening for Birds. Stella Miller will present this comprehensive workshop via Zoom, explaining why it is important to landscape for birds and other wildlife, along with tips for creating backyard habitats that include food, shelter and nesting spots. You’ll also learn the basics of designing and choosing plants for your personal wildlife sanctuary.

Dec. 2—Boria Sax on Cultural Images of Birds. Author Boria Sax will discuss the complex history of the relationship between birds and humans in this program at the Chappaqua Library, which is being cross-promoted by Saw Mill River Audubon. Attendance by Zoom will also be possible.

Nov. 1—Kathleen reported on the upcoming session of the Nature Book Club, which will feature a discussion of *Leave It As It Is* by David Gessner. The meeting will be conducted via Zoom. [Update: The date of this program has been changed to Dec. 6.] A January meeting of the book club is also planned. A work (to be announced later) by Henry David Thoreau will be discussed.

Kathleen reported that Films on Purpose is working with Andy Young and Susan Todd to have a showing of *Wings Over Water* at the Jacob Burns Film Center in February.

### **Newsletter—Jenni Stern**

The deadline for the winter issue is Nov. 1 (not Dec. 1 as erroneously listed in the meeting agenda). We’re looking for submissions, so please let Jenni know if you have anything for the upcoming issue.

**New Business—Valerie Lyle**

Valerie asked the board if there was any new business that required discussion. As there were no responses to her query, Valerie requested that a member of the board move to adjourn the meeting.

**Adjournment—Valerie Lyle**

Cary moved that Valerie adjourn the meeting; Ginger seconded this motion. With all present voting in favor, Valerie adjourned the meeting at 7:57 PM.