

New Hampshire Audubon
97th Annual Meeting Minutes
U.S. Forest Service, White Mountain National Forest Headquarters, Campton
October 8, 2011

Trustees present: Kelly Dwyer, Arthur Mudge, Paul Nickerson, JoAnn O'Shaughnessy, David Ries and Antony Sayess.

Honorary Trustees present: Peter Stettenheim, Lawrence Sunderland and Frances Von Mertens

Former Trustees present: Mary Boulanger, Roger LaFontaine, Stephen Mirick and Robert Quinn

Staff present: Michael Bartlett, Philip Brown, Lea Caron, Laura Deming, Carol Foss, Pamela Hunt, Sarah Koval, Mary Malan, Christian Martin, Kathleen Neville, Kathleen Palfy, Rebecca Suomala, Margaret Watkins and Kelly Wing

Members present: John R. Allen, Ralph Andrews, Carol Andrews, Frank & Nancy Benham, Julie Brown, H. Meade Cadot, William and Kathy Carter, Howard and Phyllis Crosby, Reinhild Davis, Katrina Fenton, Margaret Foley, Jack Gleason, David Govatski, Holly Green, David Howe, Margot Johnson, Geoffrey Jones, Sheila Kabat, Carol LaFontaine, Lisa LaPierre, John and Suzanne Lloyd, Joan McKibben, Leonard Medlock, Barbara Richards, Albert Stewart, Pia Sunderland, Mark Suomala, Michael and Sandy Turner

Keynote speaker: Dr. Peter Marra

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Welcome – Michael Bartlett

NH Audubon President Michael Bartlett welcomed members, trustees, honorary trustees, staff and visitors to the 97th Annual Meeting and noted that this year marks the 100th anniversary of the Weeks Act, the law authorizing the creation of national forests in the eastern United States. Mike said it was gratifying to be here -- the White Mountain National Forest -- to celebrate the forest and fields and the rivers and streams that John Wingate Weeks worked to protect so many years ago.

Mike thanked Forest Service staff and host Leighlan Prout. Mike also thanked the Pemigewasset Chapter for coordinating the meeting location, and Normandeau Associates for helping to underwrite the meeting. Mike then recognized NH Audubon trustees, honorary and former trustees, and staff – extraordinary people – all of them!

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Paul Nickerson at 12:35 p.m.

Approval of Minutes – Paul Nickerson

Paul Nickerson called for a motion to approve the minutes of the 2010 Annual Meeting. Howard Crosby moved; David Ries seconded; Peter Stettenheim abstained. There were no changes, errors, or omissions. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Finance Report – David Ries

Finance Committee Chair David Ries reported that the NH Audubon has been operating at a loss for a number of years. The results for the 2011 fiscal year ending March 31st again show a loss of about \$300,000.

Our losses have been covered by “one-time revenues,” such as bequests and sale of conservation easements. For the current fiscal year (FY 12), we project a deficit of \$250,000. That loss will also be covered by one-time revenue sources. David noted that we are striving to have a budget that is in balance without resorting to one-time revenues. Our one-time revenues should be used to pay down debt or rebuild endowment.

What are we doing to get NH Audubon out of a deficit operating status?

- We need to increase substantially our annual fund income and our donor base.
- We reduced “inherited” debt of \$3.1 million by \$ 1.1 million, largely by selling a conservation easement on the Massabesic Audubon Center to Manchester Water Works and the Town of Auburn, and by paying off a \$400,000 line of credit.
- We hired a new Finance Director, Mary Malan who has made extraordinary progress in getting our books in order. We have a new financial system so for the first time in many years we are getting accurate and timely information.
- Since hiring Mary Malan, we have closed out audit years FY 08, FY 09, and FY 10. We are current in the audit process for the first time in at least 10 years. All the audits are “unqualified.”
- Last year, we paid over \$100,000 in audit fees. We changed auditing firms in FY 11 and cut audit costs by 75%. With the help of our auditor, we reallocated administrative expenses to more accurately reflect the true cost of running the organization. Administrative overhead dropped from 38% to 15% which will be reflected in our Guide Star rating.
- We contracted with a professional fundraiser to work with the Board on the FY 11 Annual Fund process and significantly improved our Annual Fund performance.
- We leased a part of the McLane Center to the New Hampshire Center for Nonprofits. We are continuing to seek additional tenants or a buyer for the building who would then lease it back to us.
- We are working on increasing membership. We received a grant from the NH Charitable Foundation for this purpose. We are on track to increase membership by 17%.
- We have created a restructuring committee to examine all revenues and expenses and to find areas where we can improve. This committee will report back to the Board by November 1.

- We continue to maintain our reputation as one of New Hampshire’s premier organizations in environmental education, conservation science and land protection/stewardship.

Board of Trustees: Transitions and Nominations – Paul Nickerson and Arthur Mudge

Recognition of Trustees leaving the Board – Paul Nickerson

- Roger LaFontaine - Roger was a strong board member representing the Newfound Audubon Center. To commemorate his years of service to NH Audubon, Paul presented Roger with a copy of Mary Holland’s book, *Naturally Curious*, and thanked him for his dedicated service.
- Robert Ridgely - Bob is currently out of the country and is retiring from the Board. He was the recipient of the Rushmore Award for Conservation. Paul thanked Bob for his many years of service.

Nomination to the Board of Trustees – Arthur Mudge

- JoAnn O’Shaughnessy and Kelly Dwyer – Their three year terms are expiring. Art moved that JoAnn O’Shaughnessy and Kelly Dwyer be nominated for reelection to the Board of Trustees; Peter Stettenheim seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**
- Antony Sayess – Tony has degrees from University of New Hampshire, George Washington University, and the University of Virginia Law School and New York University School of Law. He is currently a business and tax associate with the law firm of Rath Young & Pignatelli. He enjoys participating in the Friend Program Junior Senior Youth Mentoring Program. He is interested in working with NH Audubon’s Development and Finance Committees. Art moved for the election of Antony Sayess to the Board of Trustees; David Ries seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Art concluded by saying that there are presently several vacancies on the board and the Board is empowered under the By Laws to make interim appointments. The Nominating Committee welcomes any recommendations.

Paul Nickerson thanked Art and noted that “there is no one in my memory who has provided more service to this organization” than Art Mudge.

Paul welcomed and acknowledged Dawn Lemieux who will be completing the term of Roger LaFontaine on the Board as the Newfound Advisory Committee member. Dawn brings with her 17 years of business experience and marketing skills. She is the owner of Venture Print Unlimited, and operates with her husband Sculptured Rock Farm Country Inn, a bed and breakfast. She has implemented green practices in both enterprises.

Paul mentioned that he joined the board five years ago and will serve as Board Chair for one more year.

President's Report – Michael Bartlett

Mike noted that since last year's annual meeting, we sold a 130 acre conservation easement at the Massabesic Audubon Center to the Manchester Water Works and the Town of Auburn. Not only did we realize almost \$750,000 from the transaction which went directly to paying down our \$2.7 million debt, but we protected the land from development in perpetuity.

Mike also noted that we launched a new website in January. Mike singled out Communications Director Kelly Wing for special recognition because the new site would not have happened without her.

Mike observed that “connecting children with nature” is a growth industry at NH Audubon. More than 400 children participated in our summer camps this year -- 100 more than last year -- and another 200 kids participated in our winter and spring camps – an extraordinary workload for Education Directors Kevin Wall and Angie Krysiak. More than 20,000 children were enrolled in our school programs, many of them run by Helen Dalbeck and her staff at the Amoskeag Fishways.

More than 5,000 adults participate in our adult programs this year. In particular, our new summer lecture series at McLane has been well attended.

Our raptor observatories at Pack Monadnock and Carter Hill continue to grow in popularity. Hundreds of visitors crowded the observatories on “release day” and experienced record numbers of raptors passing over. Mike singled out Land Management Director Phil Brown for special recognition.

Our Conservation Department continues to maintain its reputation as a premier group of ecologists. Breeding Bald Eagle, peregrine falcon and osprey populations in New Hampshire continue to increase due in large part to Chris Martin.

Pam Hunt's State of NH Birds report made national news when released last February. The report described the dramatic decline of many breeding bird populations in New Hampshire. Putting the report together was difficult, but finding ways to slow or reverse the declines is the challenging part and that work has just begun.

A team of folks in our Conservation Department is at the front edge of a new initiative that documents climate change impacts on selected NH Audubon sanctuaries. This initiative relies on students and other citizen scientists to collect data – once again connecting people with nature.

Mike commended the hundreds of volunteers who are helping us with our school program, in our sanctuaries, and in our field work. For example, Pam Hunt's dragonfly volunteers contributed over 1,400 hours of their time and burned over 10,000 miles worth of rubber off their tires surveying the state for the presence of dragonfly species.

Mike concluded by thanking all our members, supporters and volunteers.

Video – *NH Audubon: Connecting People with Nature*

Margaret Watkins introduced the video “NH Audubon: Connecting People with Nature” produced by the Concord video production company, Accompany. This video captures the essence of NH Audubon and will be used as promotion and marketing with supporters, members and other interested parties.

Awards

Each year, NHA presents awards to volunteers to recognize their outstanding service.

The **Tudor Richards Award** has been presented each year since 1983 to an individual who best exemplifies Tudor’s love and knowledge of the outdoors and who has worked tirelessly and effectively for conservation in the state. The award this year goes to someone who has put that knowledge to great and effective use: for land consideration, land stewardship, and environmental education of all ages. The award was presented by Barbara Richards to Geoff Jones.

The **Goodhue-Elkins Award** has been presented annually since 1995. The award is named for Charles Goodhue, New Hampshire’s first great birder, and Kimball Elkins, the model of critical observation and insightful record-keeping. The award recognized outstanding contributions to the study of New Hampshire birds and was presented by JoAnn O’Shaughnessy to Steven Mirick.

The **Meade Cadot Award** – The award recognizes NH Audubon’s land conservation partners. This year’s recipient took the lead on land protection projects around Willard Pond by helping to procure the last three parcels that resulted in Willard Pond being completely surrounded in NH Audubon conservation land. The award was presented by Meade Cadot to Francie Von Mertens.

The **Volunteer of the Year Award** has been presented since 1977 and was created to honor those who through their dedication and hard work have made an outstanding contribution to the success of NHA and its work. This year’s award was presented by Phil Brown to Jack Gleason.

The **President’s Award** is presented at the President’s discretion to particularly deserving individuals who have distinguished themselves in their work on behalf of NH Audubon. This year, the award was presented to five individuals who serve as hawk watchers at our Pack Monadnock and Carter Hill Raptor Observatories for their commitment to the raptor observatories. The awards were presented by Michael Bartlett to Tom Baillio (not present) and Katrina Fenton of Pack Monadnock, and to Tom Brewton, Crawford Lyons (both not present), and David Howe of Carter Hill. In recognition of his leadership and commitment to the Carter Hill Raptor Observatory, an award was also present to Robert *Vallières (not present)*.

Other Business

Mike Bartlett reported that NH Audubon had been asked by the National Wildlife Foundation (NFW) about the possibility of becoming their state affiliate in New Hampshire. Mike noted that our missions are extraordinarily compatible (clean air, clean water, endangered species and connecting children with nature). The NFW brings to us the strength of an 8 million member national organization and a 14,000 household membership list for New Hampshire – a list that we can use to recruit new members as part of our membership campaign. We can contribute to the NFW’s mission by helping deliver some of their environmental education programs and we

can give them a “grassroots face.” Mike believes it is a good opportunity for NH Audubon. Despite the fact the NFW has concerns about our financial situation; they recognize that we have come a long way in reducing our debt and building our programs. The issue of affiliation will be voted on at the NFW’s November board meeting.

Robert Quinn requested the opportunity to make a resolution to the assembly as follows:

Whereas, NH Audubon will be approaching its 100th anniversary in two years, and

Whereas, several members have been very active with NH Audubon for almost half of those 100 years,

BE IT RESOLVED that these Audubon stalwarts be recognized today, October 8, 2011, at the NH Audubon Annual Meeting in Campton, New Hampshire, for their efforts over the decades on behalf of NH Audubon, and thereby for the conservation of New Hampshire’s wildlife.

FURTHERMORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that NH Audubon and its assembled members extend our sincere and enthusiastic thanks today and pay special tribute to these outstanding members: Ralph Andrews, Art Borrer, Ed Broad, Howard Crosby, Kay Dymont, Margot Johnson, John Merrill, Art Mudge, Larry Sunderland, Peter Stettenheim, Sandy Turner, and especially Barbara Richards.

AND LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be presented to those members at the earliest possible time.

A resounding ovation sufficed as acceptance of this resolution.

Keynote Speaker – Dr. Peter Marra

Dr. Peter Marra of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center gave the keynote address on the life cycles of migratory birds and the connection between wintering conditions and summer breeding.

Closing Remarks – Paul Nickerson

Paul said that the level of dedication to this organization as reflected through the audience is apparent. Do what you love and love what you do!

Paul called for a motion to adjourn. JoAnn O’Shaughnessy moved; Bob Quinn seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lea A. Caron
Database Manager