

New York State Ornithological Association, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting
November 18, 2017

The Board of Directors of the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc. (NYSOA) met at Olana State Historic Site, 5720 Route 9G, Hudson, NY 12534. The meeting was called to order by President Michael DeSha at 9:31 AM. Present were **Mike DeSha, Brian Dugan**, Mary Jane Dugan, **Richard Guthrie**, John Kent, Andy Mason, **Carena Pooth**, Kathy Schneider, **and Bob Spahn**. Present by teleconference were Pat Aitken, **Tim Baird**, Joan Collins, **Brendan Fogarty, Lucretia Grosshans Greg Lawrence**, and **Shirley Shaw**. Seth Ausubel joined the teleconference later.

Mike DeSha and several others spoke in memory of Berna Lincoln and her many decades of dedicated service to NYSOA/FNYSBC.

Summary of Action Items:

- Approved minutes of the July 22, 2017, Board of Directors meeting
- Approved the appointment of Willie D’Anna and Tom Burke to new 3-year terms on NYSARC
- Approved the appointment of Willie D’Anna as NYSARC Chair
- Approved appointment of Executive Committee – Mike DeSha, Tim Baird, and Bob Spahn
- Approved a motion to commit NYSOA to move forward with the third Breeding Bird Atlas
- Brian Dugan joined the Conservation Committee
- Mary Jane Dugan joined the Finance Committee as Chair

Secretary’s Report – John Kent

The draft minutes of the July 22, 2017 Board of Directors meeting were presented. Bob Spahn made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Carena Pooth seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report – Andy Mason

Andy provided printed reports detailing NYSOA’s balances and account activity as of September 30, 2017. Through the third quarter, spending has been below budget, but that was due to the fact that more issues of *The Kingbird* were budgeted for than have been produced so far this year.

President’s Report – Joan Collins

Joan will be publishing her year-end President’s Report, which was presented at the Annual Meeting, in the upcoming issue of *New York Birders*. She briefly updated the board on planning activities for the Breeding Bird Atlas III (BBA III) project. Joan recently met with Greg Lawrence and Bob Spahn. A planning meeting with representatives of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology/eBird has been scheduled for January 11. Joan added that she is hopeful that Onondaga Audubon will host the 2020 Annual Meeting. The President and Vice President of that organization attended this year’s meeting in Niagara Falls to get an idea of what is involved with hosting it. Joan has the list of registrants for the 2016 and 2017 Annual Meetings. Joan sent a card to Susan Peterson expressing condolences on Mike Peterson’s passing. Joan reports that Carena Pooth took care of the details of making electronic copies of *The Kingbird* available to the Biodiversity Heritage Library. Joan was pleased to report that the Conservation Committee’s meeting with DEC led to the publication of Tom Salo’s article about

alternatives to lead ammunition in *Conservationist* magazine. Joan received a letter from Connie Adams, the DEC Region 9 wildlife biologist who presented an excellent report on DEC's activities to the delegates at the Annual Meeting. Connie expressed surprise and disappointment to have learned at the meeting that DEC would not be providing the personnel support to BBA III that they did with past atlases.

Mike DeSha thanked Joan for her outstanding work throughout her term as President.

Committee Reports:

Annual Meeting -

Bob Spahn and Shirley Shaw are the chairs for the 2018 Annual Meeting, and are also NYSOA directors. As such, they will fill the role of liaison between NYSOA, Rochester Birding Association, and Burroughs Audubon Nature Club.

Archive -

No report.

Auditing Committee -

No report.

Awards -

No report.

Bylaws -

Berna Lincoln was the chair and the primary keeper of the bylaws. Tim Baird agreed to serve on the bylaws committee for the time being. Shirley Shaw brought up an issue regarding a change that was made to the New York State law covering not-for-profit corporations. She reported that this change made it necessary for the Rochester Birding Association and Burroughs Audubon to update their bylaws within the past two years. None of the NYSOA board members were aware of this change. Shirley, Tim Baird, and Bob Spahn all volunteered to investigate the change to the law and whether it necessitates an update to NYSOA's bylaws.

County Listing – Carena Pooth

Carena submitted a report summarizing the county and state lists submitted for 2016. The submission form for 2017 lists is on the website and will be published in the upcoming issue of *New York Birders*.

Finance – Mike DeSha

As Mike is now NYSOA President, a new chair was needed for the Finance Committee. Mary Jane Dugan agreed to join this committee and serve as chair. Mike DeSha and Andy Mason comprise the remainder of the committee.

Marketing and Publicity

The committee needs a new chairperson. Greg Lawrence reported that he continues to maintain the NYSOA Facebook page. Joan suggested that Greg post an item about the winners of awards at the Annual Meeting, as well as a mention of the *Conservationist* article about alternatives to lead

ammunition. Kathy Schneider and Joan Collins will work with Mary Beth Warburton to plan a winter weekend program in the Adirondacks. The program will concentrate on winter finches, which may be abundant this winter due to an unusually abundant mast crop in the Adirondacks. It will probably be scheduled for February.

Membership and Circulation – Tim Baird

It is thought that when Berna Lincoln died, she was in possession of some mailed renewals that had yet to be processed, as well as a supply of printed checklists and decals. The board decided that members should be notified that they need to resubmit their renewals if they were submitted this fall and their checks have not yet cleared. Electronic renewals were not affected. Andy will draft a notice for *New York Birders* and circulate it to the board for comments on the wording. The mailing address for NYSOA renewals has been switched to a post office box which Joan Collins opened in Long Lake, and forwarding of mail from the Somers address has been arranged. New volunteers are needed for this committee going forward. Joan will be working with the membership records to prepare them for conversion to the form needed for Wild Apricot, the membership data management system that NYSOA will be using in the future. Pat Aitken will continue her job for now, but a meeting is needed to plan how membership processing will be handled going forward. Once we move the membership database to Wild Apricot, we may wish to switch to 12-month membership terms that renew at any time of year, rather than basing all renewals on the calendar year. There will be a continued effort to move more of the process from postal mail and checks to email and online payments. Tim Baird will arrange a meeting between himself, Pat Aitken, Carena Pooth, Joan Collins, Pat Lindsay, and Shai Mitra to discuss the future of Membership and Circulation operations.

Richard Guthrie suggested that NYSOA consider trying to involve bird clubs in nearby areas of states bordering on New York. He recently gave a talk at a bird club in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and found that some of the members of that club live in New York. The board agreed that this was worth pursuing. Rich will compile a list of nearby out-of-state clubs, and the discussion will be continued at the next meeting.

Joan Collins reported on the Wild Apricot project. She found recommendations for consultants to help transition our membership processes to Wild Apricot. She is now requesting quotes from several of them and will report back to the board before choosing a consultant.

New York State Young Birders Club – Carena Pooth

Carena reports that the club is in good financial condition and has a growing membership. At present, there are 57 youth members. The club sponsors field trips almost every month, which are well-attended. Since its inception, the club has awarded over \$30,000 in scholarships to help young birders attend birding camps and other bird-related educational programs. Approximately half of that money has been raised by the club's youth members.

New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) – Willie D'Anna

Willie submitted a written status report. NYSARC will be issuing a special report soon covering their decisions on potential first state records for 2015-2017. The committee will be meeting more frequently in order to eliminate the backlog of reports. The committee is also developing a policy on the acceptance of records that were submitted to eBird, but not directly to NYSARC. The details have not

been finalized, but only observations supported by hard evidence (photos, video, and/or sound recordings) will be considered.

Mike DeSha made the following appointments:

- Willie D'Anna and Tom Burke to new 3-year terms on NYSARC (1/1/18 to 12/31/20)
- Willie D'Anna as NYSARC Chair

Rich Guthrie made a motion to approve these appointments. Bob Spahn seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Organizational Handbook – Mike DeSha

Mike will continue as chair. The handbook is mostly complete, and Mike thanked all of the committee chairs for their help with it.

Research – Greg Lawrence

Greg has nothing new to report since the Annual Meeting. He hopes to have a report for the next board meeting about progress on development of the NYSOA research grant program.

Bob Spahn and Joan Collins provided an update on planning for the New York Breeding Bird Atlas III (BBA III). Bob expressed concern about our ability to find enough volunteers, both for management of the atlas effort and for data collection. He reported that the Steering Committee met on October 25, and has another meeting planned for January 11 at Cornell. However, a chairperson is still needed for the committee. A grant of \$875,000 has been secured for the atlas and is being administered through SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF). However, a substantial portion of that amount will go toward overhead. ESF is expected to play a role in BBA III similar to that played by DEC in the previous atlas. Bob brought up several questions that remain unanswered about the roles of NYSOA, DEC, Cornell Labs, and others. DEC does not expect to be able to devote staff time to this project the way they did with the previous atlases. The use of the eBird system for data entry and processing will replace much of the work that DEC did, but there will be a significant cost if Cornell develops the data portal.

Publications – Seth Ausubel

Seth presented a proposed agreement with EBSCO Information Services which would make *The Kingbird* available via EBSCO's subscription-based online academic and scientific library service. There were questions raised by the board about a few of the stipulations in the contract. It was decided to delay approval of this agreement pending more information. Seth will research the issue.

Joan Collins reported that she has received most of the materials needed for the October issue of *New York Birders*, which was delayed so that it would include coverage of the Annual Meeting. She expects to complete the issue soon.

Carena Pooth reported that she will complete production of the 2018 version of the *Checklist of the Birds of New York State* as soon as possible. She will also look into ordering more NYSOA decals.

Website and Information Services – Carena Pooth

Carena reports that she migrated the websites to a less expensive web hosting company. This move involved a substantial amount of work, but it will save NYSOA \$377 over three years. She also created a web page where donations may be made to NYSOA, with the headline “Help Wild Birds with a Gift to NYSOA”.

Conservation Committee – Andy Mason

Andy reported that the committee received a response to its letter to the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC). The PIPC indicated a willingness to listen to NYSOA’s concerns about the scheduling of a foot race that resulted in the Doodletown area of Bear Mountain State Park being inaccessible to birders on a prime weekend in May. The race may also have posed a danger to the threatened timber rattlesnakes that live there, as the organizers were driving vehicles on the normally-closed roads. It is hoped that the race will be moved to an earlier date in future years.

Andy also reported that the committee will probably get involved in opposition to the Ontario Shores wind project, after learning details of the proposal at the Annual Meeting. Specifically, NYSOA opposes wind turbines within 5 miles of the shore of Lake Ontario, since it is an important bird migration route.

Brian Dugan has joined the Conservation Committee.

DEC Report -

No new report was received. An extensive report from DEC was delivered at the Annual Meeting earlier this month.

New Business -

John Kent passed around copies of the draft 2017-2018 NYSOA contact list and the listing of Officers, Directors, and Committees. A few corrections and additions were made. These lists will be posted soon on the Boardplus website.

Mike DeSha appointed an Executive Committee consisting of himself, Tim Baird, and Bob Spahn. Carena Pooth made a motion to accept these appointments. Richard Guthrie seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Dates were scheduled for 2018 Board of Directors meetings: February 10 (conference call), April 21, July 28, and November 3. These dates are tentative, pending confirmation that the venues are available.

The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development has expressed an interest in hosting NYSOA’s 2019 Annual Meeting. Mike DeSha will be in touch with Peg DiBenedetto of the Center to pursue this possibility, and also look into the possibility of involving the John Burroughs Natural History Society.

The discussion returned to BBA III. The board needs to compose a job description for Steering Committee Chair and Regional Coordinators. Provision of a stipend to the chair should be considered. Andy Mason made a motion that the board commit NYSOA to move forward with BBA III, provide project leadership, and participate in recruitment of field workers. Brian Dugan seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Rich Guthrie made a motion to adjourn. Bob Spahn seconded it, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
John Kent
Recording Secretary