

Summary Report of the Audubon Council of New York State Meeting

Dear Audubon Chapter Leaders,

Thank you to all who made it to the Spring Council meeting in Saratoga Springs this past weekend. It was a wonderful gathering and we learned more about community science, sharing with one another, and having some important policy discussions. Laura and the Audubon New York staff will surely be reaching out with further follow up on some of these topics, and more. In the meantime, I wanted to share a summary of our weekend and a few important updates. First: Please save the date for our 2019 Fall Council meeting, taking place November 1-3, at the Villa Roma in Callicoon, NY.

The meeting was attended by representatives from 20 chapters (including one from Vermont), Audubon NY Executive Director Ana Paula Tavares and the Audubon New York staff, as well as a number of Audubon New York Board members including the new Chair Karen Thomas, outgoing Board chair Gini Stowe, Ross Whaley, and Alex Zagoreos.

Friday evening, we were treated to a dessert buffet and speaker Kris Covey of Skidmore College, whose presentation about his study to count the number of trees on earth was engaging and inspiring. Saturday's programming included a wealth of expertise and information from National Audubon staff Loren Smith of the Network team, Marlene Pantin of the Plants for Birds team, and Sarah Greenberger, NAS's VP on conservation policy. Registration for the Audubon Convention, July 26-28, 2019 in Milwaukee is now open and can be accessed when you search Audubon Convention. Julie Hart, Breeding Bird Atlas Coordinator for NYS, provided an overview of the 2020 atlas, changes from the last BBA, and how chapters can contribute. As always, the Chapter Roundtable gave us a quick insight into the exceptional work being done by each of the chapters present.

Our Saturday Awards Dinner included honoring our friend and past Council Chair Richard Saravay of Saw Mill River Audubon with the Norm Stotz Award. As Richard was unable to make the event in person, we'll look forward to celebrating him in the fall. Our Audubon Award for Environmental Excellence was presented to Assembly member Carrie Woerner of Saratoga and Washington Counties, whose hard work in partnership with Audubon helped to protect many acres of the Washington County Grasslands Important Bird Area this year.

Sunday's conversations included an overview of AVID – Assessing Vegetative Impacts for Deer – a community science initiative that some chapters are already involved in and others are encouraged to take on. The Special Committee on Resolutions presented changes to the policy resolutions related to bird safe buildings, climate change, and Long Island Sound. The Council passed a “sense of Council” resolution supporting a bill currently before the legislature to

create a Bird Friendly Building Council. Updates to these will be incorporated and shared in advance of the fall meeting. Lastly, Ana Paula provided an update of the Audubon NY/CT strategic plan process and requested input from chapter leaders. The Audubon New York team plan to share more on this soon.

The Council's Nominating Committee presented its slate of officers and new members which will be distributed to the chapters for their vote in April, which must be sent back to Audubon New York's Troy office no later than June 30th.

As always, the Council Board and Audubon NY team welcome any feedback or suggestions on how these Council meetings can be made even more relevant to your chapter, or ideas to encourage others from your chapter to participate. As a reminder, we can provide a small stipend to a chapter that may not have the resources to send a representative, so please let us know if we can help. If you have thoughts and would like to share any feedback, please send these to Laura at lmccarthy@audubon.org, who will share this with the Council Board as we work to organize our future meetings.

Enclosed you'll find a group photo. Thank you to the staff from Audubon New York, to John and Craig for leading field trips, and to the Council planning team. And thank you again to all of you who made it weekend of learning, sharing and good fellowship. We hope to see you at the Audubon Convention, or in the fall in Callicoon, NY.

Warmest regards,

Marcy Boyle

Chair, Audubon Council of New York State