

**THE OTTAWA FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOD)  
MINUTES OF MEETING**

**November 17, 2014**

Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretation Centre, CEF, Ottawa, 7 p.m.

**Chair:** Fenja Brodo

**Directors Present:** Annie Bélair, Dan Brunton, Barry Cottam, Don Hackett, Diane Kitching, Ann MacKenzie, Lynn Ovenden, Rémy Poulin, Henry Steger, Ken Young

**Directors Absent:** Carolyn Callaghan, Barbara Chouinard, Julia Cipriani, Owen Clarkin, Alex MacDonald, Karen McLachlan Hamilton, Eleanor Zurbrigg

**Guests:** Linda Burr, member of Education and Publicity Committee  
Jakob Mueller, member of the Events Committee  
Heather Badenoch, Communications Consultant from Village PR

**1. Minutes of the October 20, 2014 Meeting**

**Moved by** Annie Bélair/Lynn Ovenden that the October 20<sup>th</sup> minutes  
be accepted as distributed.

**CARRIED**

**2. Business Arising from the Minutes**

- a. Ken wrote the cheque for the OFNC's contribution of \$200,000 towards the purchase of the Gervais property in Renfrew County. He gave it to Dan who will send it to Gary Bell of the Nature Conservancy of Canada.
- b. Dan wrote an article on the Gervais property for the next T&L. He will re-circulate it for the benefit of some Directors who did not receive an earlier circulation of the draft.
- c. Annie double-checked with Volunteer Ottawa to see about the OFNC's membership. We do have a membership. It was originally opened by the FWG Committee, and Barbara Riley is the contact person for the OFNC. Annie asked Barbara to forward her the announcements for workshops, and she will forward them to the BOD.
- d. Nature Canada is celebrating its 75th anniversary with an afternoon tea at the Canadian Museum of Nature on Nov. 18. An invitation was sent to the OFNC, and some directors have confirmed that they will be attending.

**3. Ostrander Point Crown Land wind project**

Fenja forwarded an email she received from Myrna Wood of the Prince Edward County Field Naturalists. Myrna explained that the Prince Edward County Field Naturalists (PECFN) is appealing the Ostrander Point Crown Land wind project at the highest Court in Ontario, and she is asking for donations to cover the legal costs. (See complete letter in [Annex 1.](#))

The OFNC may support the PECFN's actions but we are not allowed to make a club donation as the PECFN is not a charitable organization; however, private donations from members are fine. Fenja pointed out that what is at stake here is the efficacy of the

Environmental Review Tribunal and the success of this appeal will affect environmental law across Ontario. It was agreed that we could share the information with our membership.

#### **4. Discussion on the Communications Plan**

This board meeting was dedicated to the first discussion on the OFNC's communications plan with the communications consultant we hired, Heather Badenoch.

An electronic survey was sent in early November to the directors and committee members (57 in total), to help launch the discussion at the meeting; 44 people responded. To the question "over the next 3 years, what should OFNC be trying to achieve?", 80% of respondents identified "higher participation of members on committees and club projects". To the same question, 35% - 55% of respondents would also try to improve membership numbers and communications. The discussion focused on available information regarding membership numbers and how to express "higher participation" in terms of a measurable goal. The Board has little information about members' expectations and levels of satisfaction with OFNC. The Board agreed that a survey should now be sent to members on these questions.

At the end of the evening, Heather invited all those present to contact her if they had anything to add.

She will let us know what the next step will be.

#### **5. Committee Reports**

There was no time to go through committee reports; however, the Birds Committee's ([Annex 2](#)) and the Macoun Club's ([Annex 3](#)) were circulated by email prior to the meeting.

Recording Secretary: Annie Bélair

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Last Meeting of 2014:

Monday, December 15

To our sister Ontario Nature Naturalists:

The Prince Edward County Field Naturalists (PECFN) is appealing the Ostrander Point Crown Land wind project at the highest Court in Ontario. The hearing will occur at Osgoode Hall Dec 8-9. Ostrander Point Crown Land is situated in an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) - a refuge for migrating birds, bats and butterflies - it contains provincially significant wetlands, globally imperilled Alvar habitat and is the home and breeding ground of several avian, reptilian and amphibian species at risk, such as the Blanding's turtle.

On Dec 8-9 PECFN will be defending the Environmental Review Tribunal ruling that overturned the Ministry of the Environment's approval of the Gilead wind turbine project, which was later overturned at Divisional Court. At present the Divisional Court's ruling on Ostrander Point undercuts the ability of the Environmental Review Tribunal to make decisions based on the evidence before it. PECFN's appeal of the Divisional Court ruling is a precedent setting case that impacts the validity of the Environmental Review Tribunal, the Endangered Species Act and the Environmental Protection Act. As such it will affect environmental law across Ontario.

As Justice Blair, who granted a stay against any construction on the site said, "the issues raised on the proposed appeal are issues of broad public implication in the field of environmental law".

The Evening Grosbeaks appearing at bird feeders this fall are one of Canada's declining species. It has declined 78% in the last 40 years. Other examples of species decline: our iconic Canada Warbler: 80%; Rusty Blackbird: 90%; Olive-sided Flycatcher 79%; Bay-breasted Warbler 70%. And in September the World Wildlife Fund reported that animal populations have fallen on average by 52 percent since 1970. The findings pertain mostly to vertebrate species, including mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles.

The root cause of these decimations is simple - loss of habitat. This loss of habitat and the species they support is a crisis for our planet superseded only by the projections of even worse decimations caused by climate change. Not only do we humans urgently need to stop the use of fossil fuels, we also need to urgently move to conserve the habitats of our remaining wildlife.

In order to stop fossil fuel use we must implement conservation by investing in retrofitting all 19th-20th century technology in our buildings and vehicles and begin to build alternative sources of power. It is imperative that these new developments be sited in places that we humans have already removed from nature in order to preserve the scarce wildlife lands that remain. New developments should not be sited in land that functions as significant habitat for wild species.

Our undeveloped wild places play a vital role in mitigating the effects of climate change. Forests and wetlands sequester carbon keeping it out of the atmosphere, while tall grass prairies actually remove carbon from it. Wetlands prevent flooding and erosion and replenish

our aquifers. Alvars and other seasonal wetland habitats filter contaminants, keeping them out of our streams and lakes. What allows these invaluable habitats to mitigate climate change are the wild species they support. Without these wild species, they will no longer function. Eventually they will cease to exist at all.

Prince Edward County's South Shore is the last undeveloped land along the northern shore of Lake Ontario. If this industrial development is allowed to proceed it will be surrounded by another 29 turbines in the centre of the IBA and pave the way for hundreds of more turbines along Lake Ontario shorelines, including at Amherst Island which is world-renown for the owl populations that overwinter there. They will join TransAlta's turbine project on Wolfe Island which has caused the highest mortality rate of birds and bats in North America with the exception of Altamont pass in California and displaced the indigenous and wintering Red Tail Hawk and Short Eared Owl populations. A concentration of hundreds of industrial turbines along this intersection of two major migration corridors will form an impenetrable barrier, causing mounting declines for our migrating species and substantial degradation to the habitats along the migration routes that they stage in.

The 50 members of PECFN have raised almost \$200,000 to pay the legal costs of these appeals against Gilead Power, the Ministry of Environment and the 291 corporations of the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWea). This small organization needs the support of Field Naturalist clubs and concerned citizens from all parts of Ontario because the work we are doing will affect environmental law for the Province and the County. Donations may be made online at [www.saveostranderpoint.org](http://www.saveostranderpoint.org) or by cheque to Ostrander Point Appeal Fund, 2-59 King St, Picton K0K 2T0.

Myrna Wood  
Prince Edward County Field Naturalists  
myrna@kos.net  
613-476-1506  
<http://www.saveostranderpoint.org/>

[Back to Minutes](#)

**Birds Committee (BC) Report to OFNC Board of Directors (BoD) – November 2014**

1. Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP). Daily patrols have ended for the season and will start up again in late March or early April 2015. Total birds recorded (dead, injured and escaped) in 2014 is around 500. Sarah Kirkpatrick-Wahl (Nature Canada) and Anouk Hoedeman (OFNC) travelled to Toronto last week to attend a FLAP Canada volunteer appreciation event and art fundraiser. They used this opportunity to meet with the board members to further discuss how to structure the relationship between FLAP Canada, the OFNC and Nature Canada. Anouk reports that FLAP Canada is hoping Ottawa can serve as a model to set up additional chapters across the country. She pointed out to them that circumstances in each location will vary, with different requirements for printed materials, language and local organizations that participate. Consequently, she suggested that they think of chapters as franchises that must operate somewhat autonomously while adhering to FLAP's mission, branding and protocols. They are impressed with what the Ottawa wing has accomplished so far and agree that it is neither practical nor advisable to try to oversee day-to-day operations but are planning to eventually assign some funding. Discussions continue. Meanwhile, the Ottawa wing will work on the following goals over the winter:

- a. encourage the National Gallery of Canada to treat their glass walkway to prevent hundreds of estimated fatalities every year;
- b. continue discussions with the University of Ottawa to adopt bird-friendly design for new buildings and to retrofit problem buildings;
- c. put together an information kit and sample window treatments for property managers;
- d. begin discussions with the City of Ottawa on adopting bird-safe design guidelines; and
- e. review all the birds collected in 2014 to ensure they are properly documented and photographed.

2. Weekly Bird Status Reporting. Given the time commitment associated with his new responsibilities with the Ontario Field Ornithologists, Bob Cermak has indicated that he will be stepping away from compiling the weekly report but that Gregory Zbitnew has agreed to take over that function. The changeover will occur in mid-December with Greg's first report due December 18.

Rémy Poulin

[Back to Minutes](#)

## MFC Report, 17 November 2014

On October 18, we held elections for officers, followed by member- photo-show-and-tell. We've done this activity before, and it's quite popular. Some photos were taken far away (Saguenay region), some were taken VERY close to home (butterfly larvae raised in the house) and some were taken on field trips in or around Ottawa and area.

October 25 found us at Pakenham again (a last trip before deer season), and despite some occasional showers, everyone had a good time. A Great Blue Heron watched us eat lunch (of course he was really keeping a beady eye out for edibles in the marsh grass) and Gerry had a few more turkey bits and pieces for us to examine and collect. On November 8, we went to the Study Area and were pleased to see two porcupines, one of which was quite young. We also noticed signs of Red Squirrel caches and dining sites, several Winter Moths, Woolly Bears, and lots of Herb Robert in bloom. The day was cool and damp (we ended the trip before the rain started) and for some it was a lesson about why dressing in layers is really important....

We had two indoor meetings after the one on October 18. Lauren Stoot talked about the natural history of the American Eel and the work she has been doing with the Canadian Wildlife Federation to monitor and study the eels in the Ottawa River. A particular focus has been on the impact of dams on eel mortality, and studying various methods to help eels to get around them and to avoid the turbines. She brought in bits and pieces of equipment that she uses in her work. On November 15, James Paterson talked about turtles in Eastern Ontario, and his research into ways to minimize turtle deaths on or near roads. One part of his study is create suitable nesting sites in places near ponds that are already used by turtles so that turtles don't have to cross roads find places to lay their eggs and hatchlings can find a pond that can be reached without a road crossing.

Diane Kitching

[Back to Minutes](#)