

**THE OTTAWA FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB
MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING**

February 18, 2013

Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretation Centre, CEF, Ottawa, 7:00 p.m.

Chair: Fenja Brodo

Council Members Present: Annie Bélair, Dan Brunton, Barbara Chouinard, Owen Clarkin, Don Hackett, David Hobden, Diane Kitching, Diane Lepage, Ann MacKenzie, Karen McLachlan Hamilton, Lynn Ovenden, Jeff Skevington, Henry Steger, Ken Young, Eleanor Zurbrigg

Council Members Absent: Caroline Callaghan, Barry Cottam, Ian Davidson, Rémy Poulin

Guest: Chris Traynor (Chair of Birds Committee)

1. Minutes of the January 21, 2013 meeting

Moved by F. Brodo/K. Young that the
January 21st minutes be accepted as distributed.

Carried

2. Business Arising from Last Minutes

Council members agreed to have the May meeting on May 13 because of the Victoria Day long weekend.

3. List of Committee Members for 2013

Annie read the committee rosters that all committee chairs had provided. Chris pointed out that there might be names to add to the Birds Committee's list; he will confirm. The Conservation Committee's list was also not final.

MOTION: That Council approves the committee rosters for all
committees except for Conservation and Birds.

Moved by A. Bélair/D. Kitching

CARRIED

ACTIONS:

Owen and Chris to confirm the roster for the Conservation and the Birds Committees respectively and send Annie the final list; Annie to update.

Annie to send final rosters to Karen for publication in T&L and to Sandy Garland for publication on the OFNC's website.

4. 2012 OFNC Awards

Eleanor read the nominations for the 2012 OFNC Awards, as well as the 2 nominations for honorary members. Since the minutes of this Council meeting will be published on the OFNC website prior to the Soirée, the names of the nominees are not to be included in the minutes.

MOTION: That Council approves the 2 nominations for honorary members.

Moved by E. Zurbrigg/D. Lepage

Carried

MOTION: That Council approves the nominations for the 2012 OFNC Awards.

Moved by E. Zurbrigg/A. MacKenzie

Carried

5. Birds Committee Report C. Traynor

On behalf of the Birds Committee, Chris had two motions to table:

- a. Change to the Terms of Reference of the Birds Committee.

Chris explained that currently, the ToR state that it is the Birds Committee's responsibility to maintain the rare bird alert. The committee proposed removing this clause as the alert was not being used properly or was not used at all.

MOTION: That OFNC Council agrees to removing the clause about maintaining the rare bird alert in the Terms of Reference of the Birds Committee.

Moved by C. Traynor/A. MacKenzie

There was a heated discussion. Several people thought that the rare bird alert should be a function of the OFNC and should not be discontinued. It was suggested that the idea of a rare bird alert simply be set aside for now in case anyone wishes to take it up again.

Vote:

1 opposed to motion; rest of Council members abstained.

- b. Reporting of owls in the Ottawa Region.

The Birds Committee felt that owls in the Ottawa region were being disturbed and harassed by the crowds of people gathering to see, photograph or bait them after learning their location on the Ontario Field Ornithologists' (OFO) ONTBIRDS listserv. The committee has asked OFO to stop reporting sightings of owls in the Ottawa region on their listserv, but OFO asked for the endorsement of the OFNC Council before doing so.

MOTION: That OFNC Council endorses the Birds Committee request to Ontario Field Ornithologists to suspend the reporting of owls from the Ottawa region until such time as they review their policies.

Moved by C. Traynor/D. Brunton

Discussion:

Jeff disagreed, stating that this is a good opportunity to get people to enjoy bird watching.

Dan agreed with Jeff Skevington and argued that the real question was the control of excessive or abusive baiting and that a science-based OFO review of this could be productive.

Vote:

Motion carried; 1 opposed

ACTION: Fenja to write a letter to the OFO stating that the OFNC Council supports the request of the Birds Committee to omit sightings of Owls in the Ottawa District.

- c. Chris also said that Birds Committee is reviewing the use of the Bird Status Line that costs the OFNC \$40 monthly.

6. Conservation Committee O. Clarkin

1. Issue of Predation by Housecats in the Outdoors: Owen was to present summarized

information for discussion tonight but did not due to higher priority topics which came up in the past month (see below). This will be done for the March monthly meeting.

2. Almonte Dam hydroelectric generation expansion proposal (Enerdu). Following a suggestion by Ian Whyte, Owen put together comments on this proposal on behalf of OFNC-CC (conservation committee) and submitted them to the dam proponent and the firm responsible for the environmental assessment (EA). The EA was found to be poorly researched, which made it fairly easy to submit comments; Owen also included an appendix of years of observations (1996-2012) by Fred Schueler of the Bishops Mills Natural History Center which further illustrated the inadequacy of the EA. Owen was told to expect a response to the comments which has not happened yet, 17 days later. The comments were positively received by the Ontario Rivers Alliance and, as a public document, they asked and were permitted to post the comments online which they did here:

<http://ontarioriversalliance.ca/enerdu-generating-station-expansion-and-redevelopment-project-mississippi-river-ottawa-field-naturalists-club-to-enerdu/>

3. Greenbelt Master Plan Meeting: Owen will attend one of the two meetings regarding the GMP, the 2nd one on Feb 20.

4. Changes to Endangered Species Act (EBR posting # 011-7696): A comment period is open on this issue until Feb 25. Owen intends to submit comments and hopes to have a rough draft ready by later this week before sending a final version out.

5. Greenhouse Gases Round Table Preliminary Meeting: Owen is attending a meeting Feb 25 regarding the setting up of a Greenhouse Gas Round Table advisory committee for the city of Ottawa.

6. Brewer's Park Pond to rejoin Rideau River: Owen is attending a meeting March 9 which will involve discussion of the plan to re-join the pond back to the river as an inlet.

7. Russell Shale Hill Dump Site: The proponent of a dump proposed to be located at North Russell has publicly declared that they prefer an alternate site about 5 km to the northwest: between Highway 417, Boundary Road, and Devine Road. This statement of preference is of course not legally binding. In summer 2011, the OFNC was involved in a bioblitz at the Russell Shale Hill site in an effort to demonstrate the local biodiversity which is at risk. The proponent-preferred alternate site, which is not too far from Mer Bleue, is at a location which had been rejected as a dump in the 1980s, apparently due to geological factors.

7. FWG Signs

In March 2010, OFNC Council held a special meeting to discuss publicity strategies for expanding and engaging membership. Ann explained that one suggestion had been to add the words "Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club" to the signs at the FWG. A member of the Education and Publicity Committee, Mark Brenchley, volunteered to do this. Adding "ofnc.ca" on some signs was also proposed.

Ann therefore asked Council members would consider this suggestion, and if they agreed to have Mark come up with cost estimates for this project; Council agreed.

8. Report from Meeting with Nature Canada on Feb. 4 D. Hackett

a. Round 2 of the nature walks in the Lac Deschênes IBA will take place on May 11, which is International Migratory Bird Day. The OFNC booth will be set up at Mud Lake and in other locations; volunteers will be needed for this event.

ACTION: Don to send information on walks to Karen for publication in T&L and to Jeff for the Excursions and Lectures Committee to help find volunteers.

b. The boundary of the Lac Deschênes IBA must still be defined. Discussions are on going.

c. See [Annex 1](#) for the initial draft proposal to Nature Canada on how to organize the tours during the BirdLife World Congress in June 2013.

9. Committee Reports

See [Annex 2](#) for the Treasurer's report, [Annex 3](#) for the Publications Committee report, and [Annex 4](#) for the Macoun Club report.

10. Motion to adjourn:

Moved by D. Lepage/L. Ovenden that the meeting be adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

CARRIED

Recording Secretary: A. Bélair

Meetings in 2013:

March 18

April 15

May 13

June 17

September 16

October 21

November 18

December 16

A Proposal for Birding Trips in support of BirdLife World Congress 2013

Constraints:

- At least one birding site on each side of the Ottawa River.
- At least one birding site within the Lac Deschênes Important Bird Area.
- Trips must be scheduled for the morning hours prior to the start of the daily scheduled activities for the conference.
- Birding sites must be no further than about a thirty minute drive from the Ottawa Convention Centre.

Assumptions:

- Total number of participants will be limited to approximately 60.
- Participants will pre-register for the trips.
- Total of three birding sites will be selected representing three different habitats.
- Trips will be scheduled to all three locations on three successive mornings (19 to 21 Jun 2013 inclusive).
- Nature Canada will organize transportation consisting of three minibuses (seating for about 25 each) to and from the birding sites.
- OFNC will organize leaders for birding sites on the Ontario side and the COO will do the same for birding sites on the Québec side.
- Each group will have one designated leader supported by at least one assistant.
- The assistant will travel to and from the location with the group.

Proposal:

Given the above assumptions and constraints, the following birding sites are proposed:

- Mud Lake
- Mer Bleue
- Gatineau Park (exact location TBD)

This arrangement will mean that, each day, the OFNC would provide at least two leaders and two assistants while the COO would provide at least one leader and one assistant.

Ideally, the participants would sign up well in advance of the Congress and would do so for all three outings. They would be divided into three groups (A, B and C) and the groups would rotate to the three sites on successive mornings as follows:

Group	19 June 2013	20 June 2013	21 June 2013
A	Mud Lake	Gatineau Park	Mer Bleue
B	Gatineau Park	Mer Bleue	Mud Lake
C	Mer Bleue	Mud Lake	Gatineau Park

All three groups would depart the Convention Centre at 5:30 AM to arrive at their respective sites by 6:00 AM. They would then leave the sites at 8:00 AM to return to the Convention Centre by 8:30 AM. This would allow for about two hours of birding each morning.

Realistically, not all participants will be interested in birding each morning. Additional, but limited space, would be available for sign-up by the Congress attendees by 3:00 PM on each preceding day to fill up the minibuses (max of approx 25 per minibus) for the following morning. If space remains available, consideration will be given for OFNC and COO members to fill the remaining seats.

Regardless, members of both clubs will be invited to make their own way to the birding sites to join the walks and interact with Congress attendees.

Treasurer's Report for January 18, 2013

The annual report to the Charities Branch of the Canada Revenue Agency was submitted. This year a separate report to the Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services was also required.

Our insurance coverage has been renewed. This year, we are obtaining Directors' & Officers coverage as well as Commercial General Liability. The cost this year is \$1,652.40 including PST (CGL is 925.56, D&O is 726.84). Last year CGL was \$907.20.

Ken Young,
Treasurer

Publications Committee Report to Council - February 2013

No committee meeting has been held since the last Council meeting although the customary discussion of various publication matters took place through email and telephone communications.

As forecasted, CFN 126(3) was published shortly after the last Council meeting and CFN 126(4) remains scheduled for release in March, with 127(1) to be released before the end of the first quarter of 2013.

The recent issue contains the usual diversity of articles on natural science subjects including a valuable, exceptionally long-term study of an uncommon plant species in Gatineau Park by OFNC Honorary Members Joyce & Allan Reddoch.

The issue also includes two tributes to recently deceased Honorary Members Stewart MacDonald and Donald Britton. A tribute to lesser known but equally remarkable Honorary Member George Ledingham will appear in 126(4). These tributes are recommended to all Council members as illustrations of the exceptional talents and scientific importance of the work of many of our Honorary Members.

There was considerable discussion about tracking Honorary Members, especially out-of-town Members, so tributes can be prepared in a timely manner upon their passing.

A.J. (Tony) Erskine has retired as an Associated Editor of the CFN after the longest continuous service of any contemporary Associate Editor (since 1975); sincere thanks were offered to him by the Committee and the Editor in Chief.

Dan Brunton
Chairman

Macoun Field Club Report for February 18, 2013

Since my last report on November 19, we have maintained our pattern of alternating field trips (5) with indoor meetings (4) at FWG.

Indoor meetings were on monitoring fish populations in Toronto harbour, and an introduction to bats. We also had two meetings where we compiled a cumulative list of birds seen in our study area from 2005-2012. This was also an exercise in bird identification, as Annie Belair provided pictures of each species. Over eight years, 109 species have been seen and recorded.

We had two field trips to Stony Swamp, and two to Pakenham, including one in early December when conditions were just right for skating on a small pond.

We also had a “two for one” day: a show-and-tell at a morning meeting, when members showed and talked about some of their favourite nature photos, and an afternoon trip with the OFNC for a tour of the Canadian National Collection of Insects.

Diane Kitching