



The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

Diane Lepage - 2008 Member of the Year

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The OFNC's Member of the Year award recognizes the member judged to have contributed the most to the club in the previous year. Diane Lepage is this year's Member of the Year for her dedicated work as a volunteer at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden.

Diane, who has been an OFNC member since 1980, joined the FWG Management Committee in 2004 and almost immediately became an integral part of the FWG group. For some years the FWG committee had debated whether it was worthwhile continuing to maintain the Butterfly Meadow. The task seemed quite overwhelming and so no decision either way was made until Diane arrived. She saw the

potential for rejuvenation of the existing site as well as creating a new addition to the meadow. During preliminary visits to the site, she was impressed by the number of butterflies and other insects she found, and was more than ever resolved to undertake some serious work there. She drafted plans for the site, including lists of plants, and gave them to the committee for input. By 2006 she had rounded up a dedicated team of volunteers who come every Wednesday evening from spring to mid-September. However, it was during 2008 that Diane really redoubled her efforts, and there was a remarkable transformation of the new section of the meadow to a place of flourishing blooms where insects were abundant until late fall. Early in 2008, she arranged for further roto-tilling of the area, after which she and her team removed the invasive Dog-strangling Vine, as they had done in previous years, preparing the site for more planting. Plans for 2009 are ambitious and include more roto-tilling, more Dog-strangling Vine control, and planting for nectar and for larval food. She also plans to continue work on rejuvenating the old Butterfly Meadow, by carrying on with intensive Dog-strangling Vine removal, control of Sumacs (which are invading the meadow), and of course, more planting.

Diane's involvement with the FWG is not confined to the Butterfly Meadow. As noted, she is an important member of the Management Committee. She continues to help with invasive plant removal from the Amphibian Pond; maintains the binder of FWG minutes, making sure we have a complete set of these minutes available; prints the FWG brochures and information sheets; maintains the FWG library, and leads walks.

For all of these reasons, and with a focus on achievements in 2008, we believe that Diane is a fitting recipient of the 2008 member of the Year Award.

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