



## The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

### Erwin Dreessen, Conservation Award - Member 2007

The OFNC Conservation Award is given in recognition of a club member who has made an outstanding contribution toward protecting our natural environment in the Ottawa Region. Erwin Dreessen has been a prominent and vocal defender of urban greenspaces for many years. He has written articles, prepared reports, given presentations, and argued in a lucid and thought-provoking manner for the preservation and protection of natural areas in the nation's capital. Erwin first became involved in land use issues in 1993, galvanized into action by development proposals for the Confederation Heights area. As a member of the Federation of Citizens' Associations, he served as Chair of their Land Use Committee.

From these beginnings, Erwin went on to help found the Greenspace Alliance (GA) in 1997, a very active and well-regarded citizen's group. He was Chair of the organization for several years as well as a director, and is now one of the moderators of the GA listserv. He continues to play a major role in the organization. One of his main functions has been to advance greenspace issues in the City of Ottawa Official Plan, advocating for retention and protection of wetlands, woodlots and other natural areas in the urban context. This is no small role. He monitors City development proposals, attends hearings and meetings with City staff, attends all OMB hearings in which greenspace issues are a factor, and prepares reports on same for the GA listserv.

As a fellow Greenspace Alliance member noted, Erwin is a stickler for detail and accuracy, and his research is thorough. This ensures that the GA is always exceptionally well prepared when advocating the protection and preservation of Ottawa's greenspace, and such thoroughness has earned them much respect and attention.

A long-standing concern for Erwin, has been the Southern Corridor, which includes McCarthy Woods. He has spent considerable time reviewing consultant's reports, Ottawa's Urban Natural Areas study, and liaising with other groups and individuals, arguing for the protection of the entire Southern Corridor including the extensive meadow habitat. The meadow is significant both for wildlife and as a component of the Poets' Pathway project. The Poet's Pathway, a tribute to the nature-inspired Confederation Poets, envisages a pathway spanning the greenspaces of urban Ottawa.

Erwin was also very involved in helping prevent a golf course at Leamy Lake. As well, he has played a significant role in the Ottawa Land Trust projects. OFNC members may also remember Erwin's recent article in *Trail & Landscape* (July-September 2007) on NCC holdings outside Gatineau Park and the Greenbelt. This quite exhaustive article is a must read for those who wish to understand more clearly the land acquisitions and disposals of the NCC.

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Erwin Dreessen is a tireless champion of our urban natural areas, and his work is of the utmost importance to those who value greenspace preservation. For all his work on these issues, we are proud to present Erwin with the OFNC's Conservation Award - member for 2007.

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This page was created 7 January 2009

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