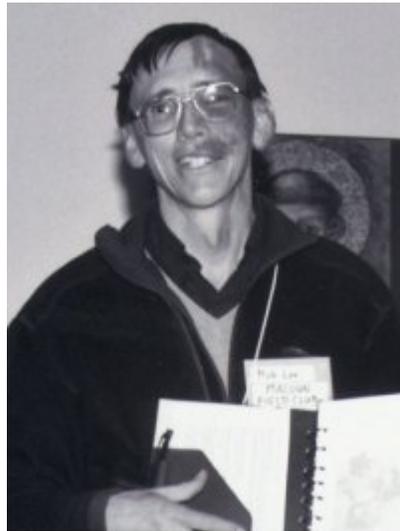




## The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

### Macoun Field Club, Anne Hanes Natural History Award 2005

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**Rob Lee accepted the Anne Hanes Natural History Award and a "nature notebook" on behalf of the Macoun Club**

The Anne Hanes Natural History Award, named in honour and memory of one of the Club's most dedicated amateur naturalists, is made in recognition of a member who, through independent study or investigation, has made a worthwhile contribution to our knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural history of the Ottawa Valley. The award is designed to especially recognize work that is done by amateur naturalists.

The OFNC feels that there can be no more worthy recipient than the Macoun Field Club in recognition of the remarkable studies the members of the Club have made of the Macoun Study Area in Bells Corners over a 35 year period, documenting rare plants and animals, tracking changes to plant and animal populations as well as the environment, producing and up-dating vegetation maps of the area, and much more.

The idea of having a special area of natural land designated as a "study area" for members of the Macoun Field Club came from the senior (high school) members, not from the adult leadership. The first study area in the Bells Corners area was actually where the Wild Bird Centre is now, but because the OMNR was cutting out the dead and dying elms at the time, they suggested an area across the road in a less disturbed site west of Moody Drive. Within two years, the members had drawn a vegetation map of most of the 800 acres making up the site. This valuable base map was based on aerial photographs supplemented by field trips to determine what was there. There have been several versions made to keep pace with changes: 1972, 1986, 1992, and 2000. In this way, the Club members traced the changes that occurred in a significant part of the Ottawa Greenbelt brought on by urbanization, beaver activity, tree diseases and people. The club members, on their bi-weekly field trips over many years, mostly led by Rob Lee, created lists of trees (54 species), wildflowers, birds, mammals (29 species), reptiles and amphibians, and lichens (215 species). In the process, they discovered many rarities and have documented the disappearance of certain species.

Because each member is encouraged to "adopt a tree" and study its growth and health, its inhabitants in the crown, on the trunk and at its base, the Club has amassed an amazing amount of information about seasonal fluctuations in a suburban forest system. It is improbable that any urban greenspace in Canada has such a well-documented history of its flora and fauna.

Observations on the Macoun Study Area have been regularly published by the members in their annual magazine, *The Little Bear*, and, because of the Internet, is now readily available to the general public as well. Most important, the experience that the members have gained in doing careful field research has encouraged many past members to embark on a career in conservation biology, botany, zoology, park management and teaching.

The OFNC feels that the Macoun Field Club members have done a remarkable job, under the leadership of Rob Lee, and well deserves the Anne Hanes Natural History Award.

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Several Macoun Club "graduates" were on hand to share the honours. Gershon Rother of the NCC (at right) thanked the club for the valuable contribution its members have made to our knowledge of

local natural science.

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