

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

March 16, 2015

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

Chair: Fenja Brodo

Directors Present: Annie Bélair, Barbara Chouinard, Julia Cipriani, Barry Cottam, Diane Kitching, Louis L'Arrivée, Alex MacDonald, Ann MacKenzie, Karen McLachlan Hamilton, Lynn Ovenden, Rémy Poulin, Henry Steger, Ken Young

Directors Absent: Carolyn Callaghan, Owen Clarkin, Jeff Saarela, Eleanor Zurbrigg

Guests: Linda Burr, member of Education and Publicity Committee
Heather Badenoch, Communications Consultant from Village PR

1. Minutes of the February 16, 2015 Meeting

There were 2 corrections in committee rosters to make: the Bequest Committee is composed of Ann, Barry, Lynn, Fenja, Alex and Rémy and Jon Ruddy's name is misspelled in the Birds Committee roster.

Moved by Annie Bélair/Henry Steger that the February 16th minutes
be accepted with the 2 corrections mentioned above.

CARRIED

2. Action Item from the February Minutes

Fenja reported that as the admission to the 2015 Awards Night on April 18 is now free, the liquor license was \$25 instead of \$75.

3. Communications

Nature Canada wrote a letter to the OFNC to thank the club for its contribution of \$3000 to co-sponsor the 2015 Bird Fair on May 30th.

4. Results of Survey to Members – Heather Badenoch, Communications Consultant

The survey to members was sent at the end of January. The goals were to learn which OFNC events members attend, what information they want to receive, and the best ways to communicate with them.

The survey was sent to 658 members by email and to 115 members by mail. Heather received 356 electronic answers and 39 by mail, which is a 51% response rate. Heather said the club should be extremely pleased with this really high rate, as it makes the results very reliable, on top of showing how dedicated the members are to the club.

Some highlights:

- a) The top three answers for “How did you hear about the OFNC” were “from another member”, “I don’t remember”, and “online browsing and searching”.
- b) Around 25% of respondents said they would like to receive an electronic version of *Trail & Landscape*.
- c) Close to 40% of respondents use Facebook, but close to 40% do not use social media at all.
- d) The top 2 sources of Ottawa news for members are CBC radio and The Ottawa Citizen paper.
- e) There are over 15 communication channels the club is currently using.
- f) 31 of the respondents did not renew their membership for 2015 or were not sure if they would do so, and gave reasons why. The most common reason was “I am not participating in OFNC as much as I’d hoped”.

Heather will distribute the results to the directors who will be free to share them with their committees. She will then meet with directors or members of committees who are more involved in communicating with the membership, and will report back to the Board of Directors later this spring.

5. 2015 Awards Citations

Ann sent the citations for the 2014 OFNC Awards by email to all the directors. They were endorsed by the BoD.

6. Report from the Bequest Committee – Ann MacKenzie

Ann sent a report of the Bequest Committee’s meeting to the BoD – see [Annex 1](#). The report describes the general approach the committee is taking and an approximate division of the bequest among the different categories of projects. All are welcome to send feedback.

The committee asked the BoD to consider 2 items in particular.

- i. The first one involves approving the establishment of the Research Fund Grant Program to be administered by the Research Fund Committee.

The Bequest Committee had asked if the members of the Research Fund Committee should be named in either the minutes of the Board and/or in the proposal guidelines for applicants. In an email, Jeff recommended not to name them in the proposal guidelines as applicants don't need to know who the evaluators are.

MOTION: That the OFNC BoD establishes a research grant program to be administered by the Research Fund Committee. This program will provide small grants towards natural science research, for a total of \$15,000 per year.

Moved by Ann MacKenzie/Henry Steger

CARRIED

- ii. The second item is the purchase of the final section of the Alfred Bog. The Committee recommends contributing a maximum of \$75,000, highlighting that this would reflect and complement the club’s prior extensive involvement in the conservation of the Alfred Bog. Discussion: some directors agreed that the purchase of this final section of land would not give the Alfred Bog extra protection, as this final piece of land is surrounded by already protected land and is therefore not under any threat. Our contribution could be

more useful in other places where land needs to be protected, such as in the Lost Bay case. Contributing less than \$75,000 towards the purchase of the final section of the Alfred Bog is also a possibility.

ACTION: Ann to ask Frank Pope to provide more information on the situation at the Alfred Bog and on this piece of land that is for sale, so the BoD can understand the context before making a decision.

Note: Henry pointed out that the OFNC should write about its conservation achievements (such as the Alfred Bog). The BoD will discuss this after it receives the recommendations for the communications plan from the consultant in a few months.

7. Investment Guideline Policy – Barbara Chouinard

On February 27, Barbara sent a draft of the Investment Guideline Policy presented by the Finance Committee – see [Annex 2](#).

Ken suggested asking the OFNC's lawyer to have a look at it; Ann agreed.

MOTION: That the Investment Guideline Policy be adopted as an OFNC policy.

Moved by Barbara Chouinard/Lynn Ovenden

CARRIED

8. Committee Reports

a) Birds – Rémy Poulin

- i. All the dead birds recovered by FLAP have been identified. Anouk Hoedeman is now working on having a picture of all these birds taken.
- ii. She would also like to make a display on FLAP to take to public events; the Bird Committee will present an expenditure request when ready.

b) Macoun Club – Diane Kitching

See report in [Annex 3](#).

c) Nature Canada – Alex MacDonald

Work on the 2015 Bird Fair on May 30th is coming along; the focus species will be the Purple Martin.

d) Nominations

Ann MacKenzie advised the Board that she would be unable to manage nominations this fall because of her travel schedule. She suggested that nominations might be handled by a 'committee of the whole' starting with the Board meeting in September. This approach would further reinforce the fact that succession planning is a responsibility of everyone.

e) Fletcher Wildlife Garden – Henry Steger

- i. The committee decided to describe the different sections of the FWG as 'nodes' instead of habitats. The work will focus on these smaller areas.
- ii. A new bird feeder was set up in the backyard garden in memory of longtime volunteer Charlie Clifford.

iii. The volunteers are getting ready for the annual native plant sale on June 6.

f) Ontario Nature – Barry Cottam

Barry met with former Ontario Nature rep on the BoD, Don Hackett, to talk about his role as the new Ontario Nature rep on the BoD.

9. Proposed Development of Burnt Lands Alvar

Barbara forwarded an email she received from the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists (MVFN) who have appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) to stop a planned housing development that would destroy a portion of the Burnt Lands Alvar, which straddles the boundary of Mississippi Mills and the City of Ottawa.

Barbara asked if the BoD would like to support the MVFN with a financial donation.

Henry asked which part of the alvar is being eyed for development; all directors would like more information before making a decision.

ACTION: Barbara to provide more information on the Burnt Lands Alvar issue to the BoD.

10. Motion to adjourn

Moved by Diane Kitching/Louis L'Arrivée that the meeting be adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

CARRIED

Recording Secretary: Annie Bélair

Meetings in 2015 at the FWG:

April 20

Tuesday, May 19

June 15

September 21

October 19

November 16

December 14

**Bequest Committee Report to Board of Directors
March 16, 2015**

The Bequest Committee currently is composed of Fenja Brodo, Remy Poulin, Barry Cottam, Lynn Ovenden, Alex MacDonald and Ann MacKenzie (chair). They met on March 11 with Barry Cottam and Lynn Ovenden absent.

The Bequest Committee, composed of some different members, had developed the OFNC Bequest Policy that was approved by the Board April 2014 and which served as the basis for the approval to support the Gervais property acquisition. This current committee met to consider how the remaining funds should be managed.

The bequest from Violetta Czasak of approximately one million dollars is not being treated as a separate fund. Some projects may be part of a committee's budget while others may have their own budget and accounting code. However, we do wish to be able to loosely track how the bequest has been used. This can be done by including a short statement in the financials and/or in T&L which will hopefully encourage others to leave bequests to the OFNC. All projects should have a report, however simple, to assess the activity and its impacts. Administration of any initiatives should be kept to a minimum given the constraint on available volunteer time.

Without being too restrictive it is useful to consider the major kinds of expenditures for the bequest and to allocate lump sums. That ensures that the benefits are spread among a range of projects. A time horizon of ten years was used in the considerations.

Land Acquisitions (not to exceed \$400,000)

1. The Gervais property has already been purchased thanks to a donation of \$200,000 from the Club.
2. Support for the purchase of the final section of the Alfred Bog should be provided up to but not exceeding \$75,000. This would reflect and complement our prior extensive involvement in the Alfred Bog.
3. The club should be cautious about making any additional investments in land acquisitions. While they are valuable they could easily use up most of the bequest funds and have limited impact on raising awareness of the club, natural history education or encouraging more members. Any that are entertained should be in eastern Ontario and should not fund more than 50% of the value of the property.

Club Operations (about \$250,000)

1. Balancing the budget – The club has been regularly running deficits in its operating budget. Funds are needed to bridge the gap and to allow for relaxing some constraints such as not requiring the Awards Night to be self-funding.

2. Education and Publicity are currently surveying members (\$7k) as a basis for a redesign of the website (\$10k) and other communication material.
3. Publications Committee is considering a rethink of T&L design and format and possibly of the CFN as well. As they come forward to the Board with proposals there needs to be funds to support these projects.
4. The Fletcher Wildlife Garden is considering a number of initiatives to help set the FWG on a path forward. Up to \$50k may be needed to support their projects.

Grants to Others (\$250,000 over 10 years)

1. The Publications Committee has suggested providing small grants for natural science research work. At the request of the Board they have drawn up a set of criteria for evaluating submissions. Up to \$ 15k should be made available each year to fund this initiative (\$150k over 10 years). More precise comments on the proposal are at the end of this report.
2. Education Grants – These would be small grants somewhat similar to the research grants but made available to the education community to encourage or facilitate natural history activities. Further examination will be made of the potential role of the Community Foundation of Ottawa in identifying recipients and handling the administrative aspects. The Ottawa Public School Board is also being approached to get proposals related to the Bill Mason Centre and MacSkimming Outdoor Centre. The total on these kinds of projects would be about \$100k over ten years.

Speaker Series (100k over 10 years)

1. An annual major event that would invite a high profile speaker on a natural history topic. The intention would be to use an event planner for hall rental, publicity, ticket sales, etc. Some suggestions include David Sibley, Rosemary and Peter Grant (Galapagos) or the team of Margaret Atwood and Graham Gibson. The objective would be to raise the profile of the club. It is expected that some of the costs would be offset by ticket sales. Payment for the speaker is likely to be not only the cost of the speech but also accommodation and travel. While using an event planner we would still need a club liaison to drive the project so it would be dependent on identifying someone.

Notes on Research Fund Grants

1. The maximum per year should be \$15,000.
2. The application should indicate if the applicant is a member of the OFNC or a subscriber to the CFN. This will not influence the decision but it should be tracked.
3. Grants should be open to honour undergraduates provided they have solid proposals.
4. The Summary of the Proposed Research should identify if the relevant permits have been obtained / applied for and if any land access permission is required.
5. When the submissions have been reviewed by the Research Fund Committee they must be forwarded as recommendations to the Board in summary format.
6. Once the Board has approved the grants then up to 50% of the funds may be paid to the recipient upon receipt of an invoice identifying to whom the cheque should be issued.

7. When the summary of the results are provided, the remaining funds will be dispersed. Supporting invoices are not required but recipients should be advised to keep them for five years for random audits.
8. The promotion of the availability of the funds will be at the discretion of the Research Fund Committee but at a minimum the head of key departments at the local universities should be advised.
9. During the first year of the grants (2015 field season) the deadlines for submissions will be waived and each proposal may be considered on its own merits.

[Back to minutes](#)

OFNC Investment Guideline Policy
Draft February 25, 2015

Context

As a result of several bequests over the years the OFNC has a significant portfolio of investments. This document outlines how the OFNC will manage its investments and gives guidance to the Investment Manager with respect to investment decisions.

Investment Manager

One person will be appointed by the Board of Directors as the Investment Manager. The appointment will remain in effect until a new appointment is made. This person must be a member of the club, a member of the Finance Committee and preferably also a director. The person appointed cannot be someone who has signing authority for any bank accounts of the OFNC.

The Investment Manager is responsible for deciding, in conjunction with the advice of the Investment Advisor, what investment instruments will be purchased. In addition he/she will track all investments, allocate interest to funds as appropriate, review the monthly statements from the Advisor, estimate interest and other investment earnings for budgeting purposes and prepare the fiscal year-end report for incorporation into the financial statements by the bookkeeper and accountant.

Investment Advisor

Upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee and the Investment Manager, the Board of Directors shall approve the appointment of an Investment Advisor (company and individual) to work with the Investment Manager and to handle the OFNC's investment account. This will be reflected in a Client Account Agreement with the institution (which is updated every 3 years).

The Advisor also needs an Authorizing Resolution to indicate who is permitted to give investment instructions with identification verification for those persons. Additional paperwork that the Investment Advisor requires is a Limitation of Benefit Treaty Statement (saying that the OFNC is domiciled in Canada for U.S. tax purposes) and information they obtain from the CRA confirming the club's charitable status.

The OFNC and the Investment Advisor must draft and sign an Investment Policy Statement (IPS). This statement reflects the investment objectives of the club as stated in this Guideline Policy and is binding on all parties.

The Investment Manager will make decisions regarding investments based on the advice received and their own best judgement. They are not liable for the outcome of any investment decisions made in good faith. In order to guide these decisions the following objectives, guidelines and constraints should be kept in mind.

Investment Objectives (in order of priority)

1. safety of principal
2. income generation
3. liquidity
4. minimum exposure to market fluctuations

Investment Guidelines

1. Fixed Income investments should have a credit rating of A or higher from an established credit rating service (S&P, DBRS). If the rating drops after purchase then the instrument will be retained if within five years of maturity unless there are over-riding reasons to dispose of it sooner.
2. Purchases of GICs should not exceed the amount covered by the Canadian Deposit Insurance Corporation (currently \$100,000 per issuer) unless there are extenuating circumstances.
3. Fixed income investments should maintain the “ladder of maturities” structure to provide a proportional amount of principal to mature each year over a ten to 15 year period. This laddering may be modified to accommodate expected needs for funds or to allow for bequest considerations.
4. Equities should not exceed 10% of the overall investments at the time of purchase.
5. Equities should be issued by large, established businesses with a consistent history of uninterrupted dividend payments and earnings growth.
6. Administrative fees should be taken into consideration.

Restrictions and Constraints

1. Investments in corporations whose actions or reputation are contrary to the objectives of the OFNC should be avoided at the discretion of the Investment Manager.
2. The Investment Manager should avoid investments whose structure might cause unnecessary confusion and complexity in year-end reporting.

[Back to Minutes](#)

Macoun Field Club Report, 16 March 2015

Since our last report (Feb. 16) we have had two indoor meetings, both led by Rob. On February 21, Rob used photos and maps to give a presentation on the Champlain Sea and its effects on the geology and landscape of the Ottawa Valley as we know it today. On March 7, Rob used part of the MFC collection of skins, skulls, bones and teeth, guided us through some of the features to look for in trying to identify animal remains.

We had one field trip, on February 28. Because it was still very cold, we again went to Pakenham. As usual, we had fires for cooking and warmth, and the brilliant sunshine and slightly warmer air temperature made for a very pleasant day. We saw lots of animal tracks, and tramped around in our snowshoes to write names in the snow that covered the pond where we ate lunch.

We are now on March Break until March 28th, when our new committee member, Victor Culjak Mathieu, will talk about insect ecology.

Diane Kitching

[Back to Minutes](#)