

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

April 15, 2013

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

Chair: Fenja Brodo

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

Council Members Absent: Ian Davidson, Ann MacKenzie, Rémy Poulin

1. Minutes of the March 18, 2013 meeting

Fenja pointed out that under #5 (Education and Publicity), there are items that belong under the Excursions and Lectures Committee.

ACTION: Annie to split the items between the Education and Publicity Committee and the Excursions and Lectures Committee correctly.

Moved by A. Bélair/L. Ovenden that the
March 18th minutes be accepted with this modification.

Carried

2. Business Arising from Last Minutes

- a. The blurb on owl baiting was reworded by Henry and accepted by Council members. It was uploaded on the OFNC website.
- b. The decision on the change to the method of allocating interest to the externally restricted funds is still pending as the Camfield family has not provided an answer yet.

3. Communications

In order to thank Elizabeth Le Geyt for her many years as the bird columnist for the Ottawa Citizen, Fenja sent her a personal letter, but also wrote a public letter that was published in the Citizen.

4. Awards E. Zurbrigg

The citations for the 2012 OFNC awards have all been approved and are printed for the Soirée on April 20th. Eleanor pointed out that the cost of framing the certificates is higher this year; this extra expense will need to be included in budget planning from now on.

5. eBird Widget on OFNC Website

A few months ago, the eBird widget, which is an online tool to access data from the eBird database, was added to the OFNC website per Jeff's request. He thought that the OFNC should make the eBird data, which is public, easily available to OFNC members. However,

the Birds Committee objected to this as it is the policy of the OFNC to not publicize owl sightings, and Chris Traynor, the chairman, had it removed from the website.

Council acknowledged that a process for posting items on the website should be established. In this case, however, since Council felt that this tool should be available to its members, it decided to vote on a motion to have the widget restored. Jeff pointed out that individuals who add data to eBird can choose to hide entries; this could be done for entries on owls.

MOTION: That Council asks the webmaster to re-establish the eBird widget on the OFNC website.

Moved by J. Skevington/O. Clarkin

CARRIED

ACTIONS: Fenja to contact Chris Traynor to explain the decision Council made. She will afterwards contact Sandy Garland, the webmaster, to have the eBird widget re-established on the website.

6. Conservation Committee O. Clarkin

- a. Owen reported that the Conservation Committee is discussing the issue of the management of the Alfred Bog since Frank Pope has indicated that the current management by Ontario Parks is unsatisfactory.
- b. Owen will write a letter to the National Capital Commission, the City of Ottawa and the Central Experimental Farm to point out that mowing should not be done during the breeding season, as it can destroy nests and eggs on the ground and kill adult birds and their young.
Fenja added that any individual can write to these organizations to express their concerns.
- c. Owen also mentioned that he has been doing some research on the rate of mortality of ash trees due to the emerald ash borer. There seems to be some evidence that a very small percentage of ashes survive, and that might be sufficient to rethink the pre-emptive logging approach.
- d. Carolyn asked to bring the issue of the current situation of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) issue to the attention of the Conservation Committee. She explained that the many parcels of land throughout the Canadian prairies, once managed by the PFRA, are now controlled by provincial governments. She believes that this is a conservation matter that merits attention from the OFNC as these parcels of valuable prairie habitat might now be sold to the private sector.
Owen will therefore present this issue to the Conservation Committee and touch base with Nature Saskatchewan.

7. Fletcher Wildlife Garden B. Cottam

See [Annex 1](#) for the committee report.

The first item of the report, the Pond Rejuvenation Project, was brought to Council's attention. The FWG Committee wishes to apply for a Shell Grant for this project and asked for Council's approval; the plan was sent to Council prior to the meeting (see [Annex 2](#)). The goal is to ultimately improve the public's enjoyment of the pond by first dredging it to make it deeper, which would remove a good part of the invasive plants and the anoxic muck

sediment, improving the path around it, roto-tilling the areas covered by Dog-strangling Vine, and replanting native plants. The Committee will also need to take the plan to AAFC to get their approval.

If the plan is accepted by Shell, it will be posted on their website and visitors can vote.

MOTION: That Council approves the proposal for the Pond Rejuvenation Project presented by the FWG Committee for their application for a Shell Grant.

Moved by B. Cottam/D. Hackett

CARRIED

8. Nature Canada and the International Migratory Bird Day 2013

Don explained that Nature Canada, along with its partners in Ottawa, is organizing a Bird Fair on May 12. There will be a booth with corporate involvement at Andrew Haydon Park, and volunteers at Mud Lake and Bate Island. This will be advertized on the OFNC's website

ACTIONS:

Don to contact the Birds Committee and other volunteers to find birders for the event.

Lynn to find volunteers for booth at Andrew Haydon Park.

9. Publications Committee

a. Carolyn said the next issue of CFN is in the mill.

b. Karen confirmed that T&L should be in the mail shortly.

10. Treasurer's Report K. Young

Ken presented a report showing where the OFNC's finances stand midway into the fiscal year.

Dan and Carolyn will send projected numbers regarding the CFN to Ken.

11. Motion to adjourn:

Moved by D. Hobden/D. Kitching that the meeting be adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

CARRIED

Recording Secretary: A. Bélair

Meetings in 2013:

May 13

June 17

September 16

October 21

November 18

December 16

**Fletcher Wildlife Garden
Report to OFNC Council, April 2013**

Pond Rejuvenation Project: A subcommittee of the MC, chaired by Diane Lepage, prepared over several meetings and numerous emails a pond rejuvenation project intended as the basis for an application for a Shell FuelingChange grant. The proposal has been submitted to council and to the AAFC's Environmental Impact and Species at Risk group for review.

Spring Fling: After a successful end of year pot-luck for our volunteers last fall, the idea arose that we should begin the new year the same way. As well as being a social event, we decided that the managers of our various groups and habitats should give brief presentations of their work plans; treasurer David Hobden provided an overview of our funding and accounts. Over 30 people turned out and the event was a great success.

Meeting with the AAFC: On April 9, FWG committee members Sandy Garland and Barry Cottam met with Cory Reaney and Robert Ranger of the AAFC, the first face-to-face meeting in several years. The meeting proved very productive, with almost a dozen issues being successfully addressed, including removal of Ash trees infested with EAB and the lowering of the new shed.

Plant Sale preparations: Several volunteers have been busy for some time now planting seeds and transplanting seedlings for the June plant sale, effectively turning the IC once again into a mini-green house.

Our work groups are beginning to gear up for the new season. The Butterfly Meadow group starts operations on April 24; the Tuesday Invasive Species Group and the Friday Group will begin in May. We have been getting a fairly steady response through our Volunteer Ottawa membership, but how many new volunteers actually come out remains to be seen.

Barry Cottam,
Chair, FWG Management Committee

The Pond Project: We would like to rejuvenate the pond

The Amphibian Pond is an integral part of the Fletcher Wildlife Garden (FWG) site and its only aquatic habitat. It illustrates the ability to create a “natural oasis” in an urban environment. Since the construction of the pond in October 1991, FWG volunteers have used a balance of hands-on intervention and patient waiting for the natural evolution of the pond and its surroundings to occur. The time has come to carry out a strategic rejuvenation of the pond, to remove and replace two non-native weedy plants that are prominent in the vegetation of the pond and surrounding slopes, and to improve the pathway that circles the pond. Many visitors (and their dogs) like to walk around the pond; however, the rough pathways that have emerged are unattractive, a disturbance and do not provide safe easy views of the many points of interest around the pond. This undertaking will require careful planning, input and advice from a wide range of experts, including those who currently volunteer at the FWG and external experts.

To rejuvenate the pond, the following activities will be undertaken:

1. Shallow dredge the pond to reduce as much as possible the layer of anoxic muck sediment beneath the water as well as retard invasive plant growth. The most invasive one is the flowering rush plants (an invasive non-native perennial). Decomposition of organics has created anoxic conditions on the pond bottom, thereby lowering the quality of the aquatic habitat which in turns reduces the diversity of animal life. When complete we need to put in native Narrow-leaved Cattail and Pussy Willow on the edge. Cattails provide shelter and nesting sites for many animals, birds and also stabilise shorelines, preventing soil erosion.
2. Improve the path around the pond to provide easier footing and a clear boundary below which people and dogs should not walk. The path would be 3 feet wide and covered with gravel. Leave a 24 inches margin on each side of the path and replace with low-growing native plants to make it a more pleasant walk and to allow for the management of invasive plants near the path.
3. Replace or upgrade the fence on the North Slope with another, possibly a split railed fence or upgrade it for safety purposes.
4. Erect a 6-foot observation tower on the southwest corner of the Pond.
5. Plant more bushes on North Slope (also removing Dog-strangling Vine (DSV)): Dogwood shrubs, Serviceberry, Red Elderberry. We must protect the ground where the Adrenid bees nest.
6. Roto-till the ground from 2 feet south of the existing path on south and west side and the pond up to pond's edge to destroy DSV and allow re-planting of native vegetation.

Foresee two roto-tillings, one in the autumn of 2013 and one in the spring of 2014 just before plantings. It would be advantageous to cover the roto-tilled areas not planted with landscape cloth through the following summer and autumn to minimize the resurgence of DSV.

7. Retain all existing trees and shrubs in the roto-tilled area. Willows and Elderberry Shrubs may be planted on the West side.
8. Replant the roto-tilled area with native plants grown by local nurseries. Foresee planting in two stages: one in Spring 2014 and one in Spring 2015. Estimate the need for about 10,000 plants overall.
9. Build one or two "rafts" to serve as turtle roosts.
10. Put sand near the pond for the turtles to lay their eggs. Possible use by shorebirds or other wildlife. Protect the area, possibly by fencing to be sheltered and make it safe from dogs, humans and mammals that could disturb the eggs.
11. Create a grassy area with sod in the roto-tilled area. Size not yet defined.
12. Build a sunny rock pile in hope of attracting reptiles, amphibians and dragonflies.
13. We will develop information sheets to explain the purpose of the pond and the need to rejuvenate the pond, how it will be done, the project schedule and how visitors can get involved.

Plants for edge of pond:

Joe-Pye Weed (*Euratorium maculatum*)
Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)
Turtlehead (*Chelone oblique*)
Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)
Tall meadow-rue (*Thalictrum pubescens*)
Blue Flag (*Iris versicolor*)
Jewelweed or touch me not (*Impatiens capensis*)
Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
Canada Lily (*Lilium canadense*)
Maddog skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*)
Purple-Stemmed Aster (*Symphyotrichum purpureum*)
Purple-Stemmed Aster var. firmum (*Symphyotrichum firmum*)
Marsh-marigold (*Caltha palustris*)

Plants for slope:

Fire Weed (*Epilobium angustifolium*)
Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)
New England aster (*Symphyotrichum noveae-angliae*)

Heath Aster (*Aster ericoides*)
Grass-leaved Goldenrod (*Euthamia graminifolia*)
Panicked Aster (*Symphotrichum lanceolatum*)
Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*)
Little bluestem grass (*Andropogon scoparius*)
Creeping Juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis*)
Witchhazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)
Hawthorne (*Crataegus* sp.)

Also many other plants such as:

Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
Goldenrods: Rough-stemmed (*Solidago rugosa*)
 Grey (*Solidago nemoralis*)
 Canada (*Solidago canadense*)
 Early (*Solidago juncea*)
Hybrid Goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa* x *S canadense*)