

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

2014-2015 Annual Committee Reports

Awards Committee – Eleanor Zurbrigg, Chair

The Awards Committee manages the process to annually recognize those OFNC members and other qualified persons who, by virtue of their efforts and talents, are deserving of special recognition. In 2015, nominations were received and evaluated (see awards criteria <http://www.ofnc.ca/awards.php>), resulting in nominees for six awards being recommended to the Board of Directors for approval. Biographies were written for each award winner for publication in the Club's journals and posting on the website. The awards were presented at the annual Awards Night in April. The recipients' names, type of award (in brackets) and rationale for recognition follow below. As well during the year, the committee worked with Mark Brenchley of the Education and Publicity Committee to update the template for the awards certificates.

- Ross Layberry (Honorary Member) – In recognition of lifetime contributions to butterfly conservation
- Natalie Sopinka (Member of the Year) – For revitalizing Club communications via social media, including the blog FieldNotes and Twitter
- Elizabeth Morton (George McGee Service Award) – For twelve years' dedicated service as the Copy Editor for *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*
- Anouk Hoedeman (Conservation – Member) – For creating the Ottawa Chapter of the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) and bird rescue
- Paul and Cathy Keddy (Conservation – Non-member) – For land conservation achievements in the Lanark area
- Tom Spears (Mary Stuart Education Award) – For years of popularizing natural history topics for the media in the Ottawa area

Committee members: Irwin Brodo, Julia Cipriani, Christine Hanrahan, Ann MacKenzie, Karen McLachlan Hamilton

Birds Committee – Chris Traynor, Chair

The Birds Committee and the Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais organized another successful Christmas Bird Count in 2014. This event was first held in 1920 and continues to be very popular with club members and the local birding community. This year's Peregrine Falcon Watch continued only at the Heron Road site. Regrettably, most of the buildings adjacent to the downtown nest site no longer allow access to view the nest ledge making any future watch downtown logistically difficult. The Bird Records-sub Committee published a revised checklist of the Birds of Ottawa in 2015 and it is now available. The Ottawa chapter of FLAP (Fatal Light Awareness Program) left the national organization to form Safe Wings Ottawa. Safe Wings Ottawa will carry on the same work and remain affiliated with the OFNC and the Birds Committee. The committee continues to maintain a number of bird feeders in the Ottawa region.

Conservation Committee – Owen Clarkin, Chair

Three items in particular are worth mentioning:

1. Constance Bay Biothon (<http://www.ofnc.ca/conservation/ConstanceBay/index.php>): We wrapped up field observations for this year-long (2014-2015) bioinventory at Torbolton Forest and the surrounding area. Besides engaging the local community in the practice of active Natural History observation, this project has gathered a baseline of data to compare with historical records. Analysis of data and generation of a report is to be completed over the upcoming winter season.
2. Westmeath (Gervais Caves) Bioblitz (<http://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/where-we-work/ontario/featured-projects/gervais-caves-ottawa-1.html>):
On June 13th, a bioblitz inventory of the Gervais Caves property took place, organized by the Conservation Committee in partnership with Nature Conservancy Canada. Though our event only lasted the one day, we observed a number of species which had not been previously documented.
3. Mud Lake Turtle Hatchlings (<https://ofnc.wordpress.com/2015/11/13/victory-for-the-snapping-turtles/>):
In early 2015, our committee wrote a letter to the City of Ottawa, proposing that roadside curbs adjacent to Mud Lake be modified to allow passage of wildlife such as turtle hatchlings. We were immensely pleased that later in same year the curbs had been modified. Victory for the Snapping Turtles!

Looking forward:

We are keen to share our collective expertise with local Nature lovers. As we head into 2016, we have planned activities such as:

- Writing short seasonally-relevant "What you can do for Wildlife" articles for T&L
- Surveys of biota at specific sites of interest (e.g. Petrie Island and Marlborough Forest) and the wider landscape
- Continuing our role as an agent for positive stewardship of the landscape through simple actions (e.g. the suggestion of curb modifications at Mud Lake)

Education and Publicity Committee – Lynn Ovenden, Chair

This committee provides information to the community about natural history and the OFNC itself. This year we brought an OFNC display to several public events: Larose Forest Day in February, the Bird Day Fair at Andrew Hayden Park in May, Bug Day at the Museum of Agriculture and Food in September, and the launch of Ottawa's Urban Forest Management Plan. For youth, we judged projects at the Ottawa Regional Science Fair for OFNC's Special Awards, and presented the awards to Shamus McCoy and Allan Leveille. We selected a local high school student, Sophie Roy, for OFNC to sponsor at Ontario Nature's Youth Summit on Lake Couchiching. Committee members continued to manage the sales table at monthly meetings and OFNC's blog and twitter account. Over 20 social and educational groups in the region requested a nature walk or talk from OFNC; many thanks to those members who respond to such requests and share their knowledge with others.

Late in 2014, OFNC launched an ongoing project to improve its communications both internally with members and with the broader community. For help, we engaged Village PR to conduct a survey of members' preferences and an inventory of OFNC's many communications channels. Village PR

recommended several ways that OFNC communications could better meet the information needs of members and support the club's objectives of enhancing the appreciation and conservation of nature.

Events Committee – Julia Cipriani, Chair

The Events Committee planned, coordinated or supported:

- 61 outings, 7 of which were workshops
- 10 monthly meetings, including the annual business meeting. Unfortunately the December 2014 monthly meeting was cancelled because the meeting room was not available.
- 2015 Awards celebration at St. Basil's Church, held on April 18.

The focus of outings, workshops and monthly meetings included birds (18), plants/trees (16), general natural history (12), amphibians and reptiles (5), travel (4), mineralogy (3) insects (3), photography (3), butterflies and moths (2), conservation (1), fungi (1) and geology (1).

Jon Ruddy led an informal migration watch on Greenland Road and posted results on Facebook over several weeks to track the migration of hawks, eagles, falcons and vultures.

Two outings planned for sparrow spotting on Ottawa airport land were cancelled when access to the area was blocked.

Lynn Ovenden, Chair of Education and Publicity, led the planning of four events over the May long weekend to explore the Gervais property with Ali Giroux, NCC, afternoon birding with Christian Renault, Pembroke Area Field Naturalists, an evening mothing outing with Diane Lepage and a guided tour of Shaw Woods with Grant Dobson.

Sandra Garland and Isabel Nicol led a total of 11 tours – 9 the Fetcher Wildlife Garden, 2 of the backyard garden.

Monthly meetings were held in Salons A & B of the Neatby Building. The January business meeting was held at the Fletcher Interpretation Centre.

Committee members: Holly Bickerton, Julia Cipriani (chair), Owen Clarkin, Chair of Conservation, Hume Douglas, Jakob Mueller

If you have ideas for events or would like to lead an outing or event, please contact Jakob Mueller, incoming chair, (jm890_7 AT hotmail DOT com) or other members of the committee.

Finance Committee – Barbara Chouinard, Chair

The OFNC's financial reporting systems are operating smoothly and efficiently. In addition the interim financial reports that are prepared several times a year by the Treasurer are also useful. These reports provide the OFNC committees with a snapshot of the year-to-date status of OFNC's revenues and expenses.

The preparation of the 2016 OFNC budget was a less onerous task this year as committees have several years of experience now in preparing a budget. Committees are also using the budget process as a planning tool for the coming year. Special projects and new initiatives are brought forward to the OFNC board for discussion and if approved, the item is included in the budget.

The draft 2016 OFNC budget was discussed in detail at the September 2015 board meeting and the revised budget was approved at the October 2015 meeting. The 2016 OFNC budget forecasts a substantial deficit however the OFNC has the funds to cover the shortfall as a result of the significant bequest to the OFNC.

During the 2015 fiscal year, the Finance Committee responded to issues raised by the board which included donations in kind, investment guideline policy, and preliminary succession planning for the Treasurer position. In addition the Finance Committee updated its Terms of Reference and the OFNC Financial System summary.

The Finance Committee continues to promote fiscal responsibility and the OFNC's financial reports reflect this operating mandate.

Fletcher Wildlife Garden – Ted Farnworth, committee representative on board of directors

Volunteers

Much appreciation was shown by all our visitors for our work in the BYG. Comments made about the feeling of serenity that many feel when they visit, as well as their comments on the colourful plants and their placement which adds to its beauty. This is work accomplished by mowing, keeping the paths clear, tending the feeder and birdbath, and the weeding and care of all the plants. This is accomplished by all of our dedicated volunteers who put in a great deal of work to help keep the garden at its spectacular best throughout the spring, summer and fall.

FWG volunteers have come from Volunteer Ottawa; young high school students wishing to fulfill their volunteer hours; and students from Carleton University; Carleton Serves day; the Tamir Youth group; The Ernst & Young community volunteer program.

Over 4000 volunteer hours were used in 2015 to help the Fletcher Wildlife Garden to preserve and protect this unique green space in Ottawa.

Annual Plant Sale

Our annual plant sale raised almost \$5000 this year. The success can be partly attributed to help from a Carleton student intern. We continue to sell and donate plants to schools and community gardens, in cooperation with Nature Canada, Evergreen schools programs, and independently. This is one of the FWG's largest activities, providing both additional revenue and good public visibility.

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Visitors, Tours, Walks, and Workshops

We don't have any means of counting the number of visitors that come to the FWG, but the Garden did have a large number of local, out-of-town, and foreign visitors.

We held a series of nature walks every second Sunday afternoon with mixed success. Several walks attracted up to 20 participants and brought us new volunteers and "friends."

A workshop to build simple mason bee boxes was held in April and 2 boxes were installed in our bee hotel. They were used by Blue Orchard Mason Bees. We also inherited AAFC bee boxes and are working on a cycle of monitoring, cleaning, and storing cocoons safely over winter in consultation with a bee expert from Ottawa U.

Community Outreach

We contributed seeds and plants to the new Canadian Museum of Nature ecozones garden and we helped create a demonstration pollinator planter box next to the Horticulture Building at Lansdowne Park.

New Shed

The tool and equipment inventory for the FWG continues to grow, and storage space had become a problem. A second garden shed (identical to the first one) was purchased to allow more storage space. Items from the Interpretation Centre, the old small tin storage shed and the nursery were moved into the new shed. The company that installed the new shed donated a new bird bath for the BYG.

Interpretation Centre (IC)

In the fall of 2015 the Interpretation Centre was cleaned and painted indoors, resulting in a fresh look. The storage area was de-cluttered and new shelving purchased; this work was supported by a donation to the OFNC. The kitchen area was re-organized and enhanced, but the installation of a sink was not possible. Discussions have started about putting a door on the east wall of the IC for safety reasons.

The IC now has internet hook up.

Old Woodlot Rehabilitation

To address the loss of over 50 ash trees from our Old Woodlot, we formed a Tuesday afternoon volunteer group that planted a variety of trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. Invasive species continue to plague all areas, but control measures are improving as we learn more.

A fall Carleton Serves day resulted in another large area of the Old Woodlot being cleared of DSV and gained us another regular volunteer.

To further our role as a Monarch Waystation, last year's Youth Summit participant and her friends planted hundreds of milkweed seeds in the field north of our Old Woodlot.

Memorials

This year a memorial plaque was put on the new bird feeder to commemorate Charles Clifford (an ex OFNC Board member, long time birder, and FWG volunteer). The Cody Trail including the new fern garden was dedicated, and finally, a tree was planted with a plaque to commemorate Laurie Consaul.

The Pond

The pond rejuvenation project was put on hold in November 2014. Two items prevented us from moving forward. We had to get sediment sample to find out if the sediment in the pond is contaminated, and we also needed to get someone from SARA to evaluate the possible risk of having a negative impact on turtles, even though we had no Blanding Turtle visiting the pond since 2010.

The Paterson Group was hired to take sediment samples and have them characterized. The Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club agreed to cover the expenses. As of December, test results have not been received back.

This summer the pond was covered of vegetation which meant less wildlife was resident. Removal of invasive plants from the pond by four Kemptville Youth Rangers and their leader, together with FWG volunteers, created an opening that attracted ducks that helped reduce the duck weed that was covering the surface of the pond.

Plans to do the "path project" around the pond will continue regardless of the pond rejuvenation work.

Butterfly Meadow (BM)

Work in the Butterfly Meadow (BM) occurred most Wednesday evenings throughout the summer. During the first months we removed the dead vegetation and prepared the garden for the season. Throughout the summer we worked at improving the BM by planting flowers and weeding.

The volunteers cleared a few areas where Dog Strangling Vine (DSV) predominated and replaced them with flowers. We also put old newspapers or pool liners around trees and shrubs and then covered them with wood chips. The intention is to minimize weeding in the future years and stop the DSV from spreading.

We also maintained the previously planted areas, and worked at removing the plants that are spreading aggressively. To further our role as a Monarch Waystation, last year's Youth Summit participant and her friends planted hundreds of milkweed seeds in the field north of our Old Woodlot.

Nodes

A new initiative this year was a call for volunteers who are interested in adopting a small area and working independently – with guidance and help from the Management Committee. So far, 7 people are tackling “nodes,” removing invasives and planting native species. Education nodes, places where we have a “story” to tell our many visitors, have been identified and bilingual signs are being prepared for the 2016 season.

Invasive Species

The buckthorn does not go away, though the remaining trees are much bigger or else they appear from places which are difficult to access. A lot of time was spent on another invasive tree which is proving difficult to control. In the three known sites with *Euonymus europeii* they are now more widespread and harder to get at than when they were first noticed. The trees are smaller but spread through the roots.

The three volunteers of the Wednesday Invasive Species Group put in over 100 hours in the 2015 season. We continued working 8 small plots on the perimeter of the Butterfly Meadow, using several techniques for controlling DSV, including tarping, mowing / reseeding and digging / reseeding. A 100 sq. m. test area was cleared just outside the BM with a view to systematically monitoring the effects on DSV of several treatment manual methods. In the New Woods, a large tarp laid down last year was taken up, DSV and other plants growing below it cleared out so the tarp could be put back down. Work removing Asian bittersweet and other invasives continued in the Birch Grove. Rapidly regenerating non-native birches were pruned back from the surviving native birches planted. A number of other trees in these areas were pruned as needed, to remove dead wood and alleviate crowding by invasives. The AAFC mowed the field south of the pond and resprayed the glyphosate test spray area in the New Woods. Encouraged by the positive results of two years of treatment, we prepared and seeded a 100 sq. m. portion of the test area that we will be monitoring for the next few years.

Burdock and purple comfrey have been identified as invasive species to address. However, no concerted efforts have been directed towards these invasives as yet.

The Back Yard Garden (BYG)

A lot of work was accomplished this year in the BYG. The usual weeding, transplanting, and mulching was accomplished with a number of new volunteers as well as the ones who have been with us for many years now.

We had many visitors again this year. They included people purposely visiting the garden itself; people making the garden a part of their walk on their way to visit other areas; people walking their dogs; cyclists, birders; photographers, etc. And perhaps, most importantly, people visiting because of "word of mouth"; people who heard about us through friends and family. We left the bird feeder up, for the first time throughout this summer; the feeder was a popular attraction both for birds and photographers. Many people would come just to sit and watch the many birds at the feeder, as well as the squirrels, rabbits, and chipmunks interacting with one another beneath the feeder.

The most interesting and exciting aspect of this year's work was incorporating a Fern Trail in the BYG which honours William J. (Bill) Cody; a beautiful area which has become a major attraction for our many visitors.

We are in the process of getting signs created for all the plants in the garden.

There has been more ongoing work with keeping DSV from invading the BYG. Tarpaulins were laid down at the back of the garden where the problem gets worse each year, as well as in the surrounding areas. The plan is to put down these large tarps, cover them with brush piles, etc., and hope that they help hold back the invasion.

Macoun Club Committee – Robert E. Lee, Chair

The Committee, whose members generally all see each other at the weekly events, put together the month-to-month program for the children without the need for committee meetings. The weekly schedule and an illustrated record of what was done were maintained on the Club’s website (macounfieldclub.ca). Saturdays, Committee members supervised or gave presentations at the 2-hour-long indoor meetings (held in the Fletcher Wildlife Garden's interpretation centre) or led the 5- to 6-hour-long field trips. Most field trips took place either on private properties in Lanark County or in the Club's nature-study area of 45 years standing in the National Capital Commission’s greenbelt (Stony Swamp), but there was also a bus trip to the Montreal Ecomuseum (paid for by the Camfield Memorial Fund). Funds donated in memory of former member Bob Bracken were used to buy enough birding field guides to pass around the table when sharing observations at all indoor meetings. The Committee produced issue no. 69 of the Club's annual publication, The Little Bear, and distributed it to members.

Outside the scope of normal activities, the Committee approved and facilitated the participation of Macoun Club members with a graduate student, who was studying children’s understanding of, and attitudes toward, climate change. Committee members also scouted out specific locations for the filming of particular forest invasives in the Macoun Nature-Study Area at the request of the Invasive Species Centre, and conducted the video crew and expert narrators to each spot. At summer’s end, the Macoun Club led a special field trip in their Study Area for OFNC members.

Membership Committee – Henry Steger, Chair

The distribution of Club membership for 2015 on September 30, 2015 is shown in the table below, with the corresponding numbers shown in brackets for September 30, 2014. “Other” represent mostly affiliate organizations that receive complimentary copies of the Club’s publications. The Board implemented a new policy in 2014 that the family of children in the Macoun Club be given a complimentary membership to encourage interest in the Club in the longer term. The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed in 2017. The number of new paying members of 133 was consistent with the 130 in 2014. The increase in total paying membership of 19 (Macoun Club members excluded) maintained the growth note in 2014 and was due to higher current-member renewal. The increase in Student Membership to 27 is a positive sign for the Club.

| | Canadian | | U.S.A | | Other | | Total | |
|--------------------|------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|----------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Individual | 359 | (354) | 9 | (10) | 0 | (0) | 368 | (364) |
| Family | 309 | (296) | 1 | (0) | 1 | (1) | 311 | (299) |
| Student | 27 | (20) | 0 | (0) | 0 | (0) | 27 | (20) |
| T&L | 1 | (1) | 0 | (0) | 0 | (0) | 1 | (1) |
| Honorary | 24 | (23) | 0 | (0) | 0 | (0) | 24 | (21) |
| Life | 44 | (45) | 3 | (3) | 1 | (1) | 48 | (49) |
| Other | 30 | (25) | 0 | (0) | 1 | (1) | 31 | (26) |
| Macoun Club | 17 | | | | | | 17 | |
| TOTAL | 811 | (764) | 13 | (13) | 3 | (3) | 827 | (780) |

Publications Committee – Jeff Saarela, Chair

The Publications Committee manages publication of the Club's scientific journal *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (CFN), the Club's newsletter *Trail & Landscape*, and Special Publications. Publications Committee members in 2015 were Dan Brunton, Carolyn Callaghan (Editor-in-Chief, CFN), Paul Catling, Jay Fitzsimmons, William Halliday, Sandra Garland, Tony Gaston, Amanda Martin (Assistant Editor, CFN, vol. 129(2) onwards), Karen McLachlan Hamilton (Editor, *Trail & Landscape*), Frank Pope, Trina Rytwinski (Assistant Editor, CFN, up to vol. 129(1)), Jeff Saarela (Chair), and David Seburn. Committee meetings were held on 5 February and 5 October 2015, and a variety of issues pertinent to the management of the Club's publications was discussed. The committee began a process of evaluating the current formats (the "look and feel") of both *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* and *Trail & Landscape*, with the intent of eventually re-designing one or both of these publications.

Publication of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* proceeded smoothly and on-time in the last years, and four issues were published in 2015: 128(4) (mailing date 30 January 2015), 129(1) (5 May 2015), 129 (2) (4 August 2015) and 129(3) (23 October 2015). The final issue of volume 129 is expected to be published in early January 2016, and upon completion volume 129 will comprise well over 400 pages reporting the results of important natural history research in Canada and on species that occur in Canada, numerous book reviews, and the official minutes of the 136th Annual Business Meeting of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club. In 2015, Assistant Editor Trina Rytwinski retired after completion of 129(1), having served in production of 17 issues of CFN. Trina's work on behalf of the committee and the Club was extremely important during a time of editorial transition. Following Trina's departure, the committee welcomed new Assistant Editor Amanda Martin, who commenced her work with the journal starting with volume 129(2). In late 2015 Roy John, Book Review Editor for CFN, tendered his resignation. Roy served in this capacity since 2003; he has authored over 250 reviews in CFN, and handled all the reviews by others. The new CFN Book Review Editor is Mark Gawn. Ken Young provided extensive and much-appreciated help bringing order to *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* subscriptions, page charge invoices and budget tracking. Jay Fitzsimmons continued to tweet on Twitter on behalf of the journal under the handle @CanFieldNat throughout 2015, in a fun and engaging way, drawing attention to new and earlier papers published in *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*. By the end of 2015 @CanFieldNat had over 2,600 followers.

Four issues of *Trail & Landscape* were produced by Editor Karen McLachlan Hamilton and her team in the current year. *Trail & Landscape* continues to provide an important newsletter function informing Club members of current and upcoming activities, and it is a significant source of documentation of regional biodiversity and conservation needs.

The committee worked with the Bird Records Subcommittee on publication of an updated Bird Checklist for the Club's study area.

In 2015 the Publications Committee started a new initiative: the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club Research Grants program. Research grants support field-based research activities that reflect and promote the Club's objectives within eastern Ontario or western Quebec, focused particularly upon the Club's study area – inside the 50 km radius from the Peace Tower in Ontario or Quebec. A total of \$15,000 is available each year to fund research proposals. The committee developed guidelines for the research grants, put out the first call for proposals in April 2015, and awarded the first round of research grants in June 2015. The OFNC Research Grants Subcommittee (a subcommittee of the Publications Committee) was established, chaired by Tony Gaston, to receive and evaluate research proposals. The 2016 Call for Proposals went out in November 2015.

In the inaugural year of the program, eleven proposals were received and the following eight were funded:

1. Chelsey Blackman, M.Sc. candidate, Carleton University. Host range of *Lilioceris lillii* and ability of biocontrol agent *Tetrastichus setifer* to find pest on novel hosts. Awarded \$2066.
2. Henri Goulet & P.T. Dang, Biodiversity Conservancy International. Study of the Ghost Tiger Beetle (*Ellepsoptera lepida*) population in the Pinhey Sand Dunes. Awarded \$2066.
3. Jean Faubert, Société québécoise de bryologie. Flore du parc de la Gatineau/Gatineau Park Flora. Awarded \$2066.
4. Stephanie Haas, M.Sc. candidate, University of Ottawa. How do environment and host phylogeny influence mite communities on bumblebee species? Awarded \$2066.
5. William Halliday, Ph.D. candidate, University of Ottawa. What ecological factors are most important to habitat selection by Common Gartersnakes (*Thamnophis sirtalis*) in the National Capital Region? Awarded \$2066.
6. Marry Ann Perron, M.Sc. candidate, University of Ottawa. Biodiversity in urban stormwater management ponds: effects of pond age and water quality. Awarded \$2066.
7. David Seburn, Seburn Ecological Services. Have salamanders declined in eastern Ontario? Awarded \$1100.
8. Richard Webster (postdoctoral fellow, Carleton University) & Jim des Rivières (independent researcher). Evidence-based moth catching: designing small, inexpensive and low energy lights for mothing. Awarded \$1500.

Treasurer's Report – Ken Young, Treasurer

Financial Statements

The financial statements have been prepared by our accounting firm, Welch LLP. They have conducted an engagement review of our financial records.

The Club financial statements are prepared using the fund method of accounting. In the financial statements, the first table (page 2) presents the financial position of all the Club's funds in a consolidated manner. The remaining tables present the statement of operations of the general fund (page 3), the internally restricted funds (page 4) and our one endowment fund (page 5). There is also a cash flow presentation (page 6). The Notes to the financial statements explain the Club's financial policies.

The Notes include a presentation of our long-term investments. Our investments are made according to a policy established by the Board of Directors, and implemented by Ann MacKenzie and our investment advisor, Sue Anderson of BMO Nesbitt Burns.

As in the past, we have received excellent service from our accounting firm, Welch LLP, and our reviewer, Eric Liebmann, to whom I give thanks.

Financial Position

The Club improved its financial position in the 2014-15 fiscal year as the remainder of Violetta Czasak's bequest was recognized in our accounts. As a result, the total assets of the Club are \$1,617,722.

The major sources of revenue for the Club are membership fees, donations and bequests, and subscription charges and authors' charges for the Canadian Field-Naturalist.

Both membership and CFN revenues have increased. Donations and bequests, other than the Czasak bequest, are also up.

Expenses were also stable during the year, after allowing for increased donations that the Club has made. In 2015, the Club used revenues from the Czasak bequest to help preserve natural areas and to assist other charities in the area. It also established a research grant program to encourage research in natural history.

Violetta Cszak Bequest

The Club received a large bequest from Violetta Cszak, who died in 2013. Because of the size and complexity of the estate, it has taken a couple of years to liquidate the assets. However, that has been done and the 2014-15 financial statements reflect the final results, barring anything unexpected.

The net disbursements to the Club total \$1,235,226. The gross value of the estate was \$1,297,662. Expenses of \$62,436 were incurred in liquidating the estate.

Budget for the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year

The Board approves the budget for the Club at the October meeting of the Board of Directors. The budget is attached to the minutes of that meeting and is available on the OFNC website where minutes of Council meetings are kept, at <http://ofnc.ca/council/minutes.php>.

This year, the budget includes revenues of \$122,550 and expenses of \$169,005. Therefore we are budgeting for a deficit of over \$45,000. This pattern will likely be repeated for at least several years, because we do have to spend the Czasak bequest. There is no rush to do this, but the regulations that govern charities discourage them from sitting on their financial resources.

As I mentioned, the Club has made expenditures that are directly related to our charitable objects. More are planned. The research grant program will continue, and we are exploring the possibility of funding increased use of the MacSkimming Outdoor Education Centre. We are also making some overhead expenditures. For example, we have renovated the Fletcher Interpretive Centre. It is heavily used and the renovation makes it more comfortable and efficient. We are also in the process of modernizing our website.

Routine Events

Most of the Treasurer's duties continue from one year to the next. They include:

- filing the Charities Information Report with the Canada Revenue Agency;
- preparing T4A returns for people receiving honoraria or contract fees from the Club;
- updating the Club's information with our bank, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, and our online payments processor, PayPal;
- depositing cheques received and writing cheques to pay expenses;
- making financial reports to Council and Committees, such as for the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*, the Seedathon, the Fletcher Wildlife Garden and the Macoun Field Club; and
- assisting the reviewer in the production of the annual financial statements.

I would again like to express my appreciation for all the assistance that I have received from Frank Pope, the past Treasurer, and Ann MacKenzie, who handles the investment activities of the Club.