

Annual Reports of OFNC Committees, Oct.2015 – Sept.2016

AWARDS COMMITTEE

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 2016, nominations were received and evaluated (see awards criteria at <http://www.ofnc.ca/awards.php>), resulting in nominees for four 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.

Robert E. Lee (Honorary Member) – In recognition of lifetime contributions to natural history teaching and investigation and dedicated leadership of the Macoun Field Club.

Lynn Ovenden (Member of the Year) – For delivering a communications plan for the Club and initiating website modernization.

Roy John (George McGee Service) – For 12 years of service as the Book Review Editor for *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*, leading Pelee trips and bird walks.

Miller Paving Limited (Conservation – Non-member) – For land conservation at the Braeside Quarry.

Prepared by Eleanor Zurbrigg, Awards Committee Chair

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

BIRDS COMMITTEE

The Birds Committee and the Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais held another popular Christmas Bird Count in 2015. The Peregrine Falcon Watch has been put on hold while we wait for a successful nest at the downtown site. The second nest site at Heron Road is being informally watched as it was deemed to be a safe nesting location without the need for constant monitoring. Safe Wings Ottawa (formerly a chapter of Fatal Light Awareness) continues to build its program and raise awareness of the dangers of glass for bird collisions. The committee continues to maintain a number of bird feeders in the Ottawa region and this past winter started to fund the feeder at the Natural Heritage Campus of the Museum of Nature in Gatineau, Quebec.

Chris Traynor, Chair, Birds Committee

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Highlights for 2016 include:

Letter-writing:

1. American Eel:

In February, the committee put out a call for conservation action for the American Eel (*Anguilla rostrata*) (<https://ofnc.wordpress.com/>) and in April submitted a letter to Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

2. Habitat Loss for sensitive species Kanata:

In February, the committee raised awareness regarding anticipated impacts on sensitive species (e.g. Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*)) of Kanata Lakes North Development Inc.'s proposed development (<https://ofnc.wordpress.com/>)

3. Turtle Recovery/Management (May):

Spearheaded by the expertise of Dave Seburn, the committee drafted letters reviewing the draft Recovery Planning program of Environment and Climate Change Canada, for the following three species: 1. *Blanding's Turtle* (recovery plan), 2. *Spotted Turtle* (recovery plan), and 3. *Snapping Turtle* (management plan).

4. Review of the Navigation Protection Act:

In November, the committee submitted a letter to The Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities regarding the Navigation Protection Act. Briefly, the committee encouraged the federal government to restore lost protections and incorporate modern safeguards to the act, pointing to the historical Navigable Waters Protection Act.

"How-to" Articles:

1. "Brush piles: improving backyard habitat" (Fred Schueler), February 2016

<https://ofnc.wordpress.com/>

2. "Build a "home" for mason bees" (Sandy Garland), May 2016

<https://ofnc.wordpress.com/>

3. "The importance of snags and downed logs to wildlife" (Christine Hanrahan), July 2016

<https://ofnc.wordpress.com/>

Upcoming articles are in development regarding topics including: a Wild Parsnip Position Paper regarding recent herbicide programs, How and Why to cultivate indigenous woody plants, and Ponds-how-to: Reintroducing ponds and their associated wildlife to the human environment.

Lecture to OFNC membership:

1. "Twigs: Introduction to the Fingerprint of Woody Plants" (Owen Clarkin), April 2016

<https://www.facebook.com/>

Inspired partially by a mini-lecture given at the 3rd Annual OFNC Members Photo Night in January

<https://ofnc.wordpress.com/>

Other Activities:

1. Mostly as individuals in their respective fields of expertise: several members continue to be active as volunteers tour leaders, lecturers, bioblitzers, and reviewers of conservation related projects/proposals for OFNC and other organizations.
2. The committee continues to collaborate with the OFNC Events committee to help plan conservation-themed events for the club.
3. Erwin Dreessen left OFNC-conservation as Greenspace Alliance representative; position has been filled by Paul Johanis.
4. Social Media as a Conservation Tool (iNaturalist / Facebook Groups), emphasis on plants to date. Continued advocacy and leadership on social media plant identification forums, from the perspective of accurate species identification as being a foundational key to conservation. A community service to help others, but also citizen-science tool to gather statistics of rapidly changing plant populations: e.g. natives/non-natives/ invasives from local and worldwide perspectives.
 - a. Demonstrated iNaturalist as a bioinventory database tool at “Engaging Citizens in Science” event hosted by the city of Ottawa in April.
 - b. The chair, as an individual, actively co-administers and regularly contributes IDs to two prominent international (largest of their kind) and one local group:
"Plant Identification" (83000+ members)
<https://www.facebook.com/>
"Tree Identification" (6900+ members)
<https://www.facebook.com/>
"Tree Ottawa Tree ID and Tree Discussion" (380+ members):
<https://www.facebook.com/>
5. The committee did not request or use club funds in 2016.

Owen Clarkin, Chair

EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

It was a busy year. First Gordon Robertson took the chair after Lynn Ovenden stepped down to become Secretary of the OFNC Board. This year we lost a few members but one new member, Joel Buffam has recently joined the committee. There were approximately a dozen presentations or nature tours given to various seniors' groups, Guides' and Scouts' groups (including Pathfinders, Beavers, and Brownies), and school groups (homeschoolers and two Grade 7 classes at St. F. Xavier H.S.). A new initiative for teacher candidates at the University of Ottawa demonstrated how the study of birds may be used with the various Kindergarten to Grade 6 Ontario curriculums with help from Profs. Chris Tippet, Lorna McLean, and Gordon Robertson.

Mark Brenchley and Sandra Garland again sifted through submissions for attending the Youth Summit of Ontario Nature at the YMCA Geneva Park. The OFNC provided funds to send the two selected candidates, Priya Nagpal and Carlos Barbery, to the summit. Lucy Patterson and Kathy Conlan were judges at the annual Science Fair. They presented three awards (\$100) to the winning students.

This year, new logos were created by Mark Brenchley and circulated to the board and others. A small decal was produced and was sent to every member via Trail and Landscape. The logos are starting to appear in our various publications and will gradually replace the older (owl) logo.

Various members (Fenja, Lynn, Mark, Gillian, Lesley, Gord) held poster/promotional presentations at a number of events, including: natureScene at the Museum of Nature; Migratory Bird Day at Brewer Park, Bug Day at the Neatby Building; Healthy Trees, Healthy City for National Forest Week; Earth Day at Hunt-Club Riverside Park Community Centre; and Love thy Nature film at the Mayfair Theatre.

Lastly, the committee has begun work on producing 6 bilingual “storyboards” that will be placed around the FWG to identify seasonal flora and fauna. The storyboards will be changed three or four times during the year with changes based on what might be expected to be seen.

Gordon Robertson, Chair

EVENTS COMMITTEE

The Events Committee coordinated, planned, or supported 35 outings, 5 workshops, 10 monthly meetings and the annual awards celebration. Topics included: birds (14), botany (7), butterflies and moths (4), geology (3), photography (2), and general natural history (7).

The nine monthly meetings were held in the K.W. Neatby Building of Agriculture Canada on Carling Avenue. The January business meeting was postponed until March to allow for financial returns (delayed due to circumstances beyond the club’s control), and was held at the FWG Interpretation Centre.

Numerous popular trips returned this year, including various spring and fall outings centered on bird migration, led by repeat leaders. Some locations and trips differed from the usual fare as well, including a trip to Luskville Caves, and a trip to the Lost Bay Nature Reserve, hosted by Ontario Nature staff. For the third year in a row, the MacSkimming Outdoor Education Centre hosted a mushroom outing, which continues to be very popular. Two fall geology-themed hikes were also well received.

The Club’s biannual trip to Pelee was a sold-out success and received favourable reviews. Martha Farkas did a fantastic job as trip coordinator, and Roy John, John Cartwright, and Jon Ruddy lent their ornithological skills as leaders.

Some challenges continue, most notably the competing demands for the time of would-be leaders, which seem to be ever growing. This makes commitments for outings difficult to make at all, and most especially with the lead time required by our planning and publication cycle. Unfortunately, these time constraints led to fewer outings being offered in the summer and fall than what was desired. Nature sometimes intervenes to make this worse – a few trips were

cancelled due to poor weather, including the only trip of 2016 specifically oriented towards reptiles and amphibians.

Another challenge is membership participation. Waivers returned from trips reveal that non-member attendance is high, frequently from 25% to 50% of the attendees on a given outing. On one outing, 100% of those in attendance (other than the leader) were non-members. Active, participating members are seen as a valuable base for recruiting and developing new leaders.

Committee members in 2016 were Holly Bickerton, Julia Cipriani, Hume Douglas, Margaret Hart, Sue Milks, and Jakob Mueller (Chair), with excellent support from Owen Clarkin, Chair of Conservation.

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

Jakob Mueller. Chair, Events Committee

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Club is in a solid financial position as a result of the Czasak bequest. The final disbursement from the estate was done and the estate accounts have been closed. A big thank you to Ken Young for the enormous amount of work required to handle the settling of this estate. In total \$ 1.2 million was received. These funds form part of the general finances of the club and are not treated as a separate fund. A review was prepared for the Board in November showing that, as a result of the bequest, about \$600,000 had been spent or planned on various projects to further the objectives of the club.

The investments of the club were \$1.5 million at the end of the fiscal year, September 2016. The current lower interest rates have been partially offset by the increased amount invested. The Finance Committee decided to instruct Welch LLP, the financial reviewer, that it would not be necessary to list all the investments in the financial statements. The growing list has made this a bit unwieldy. The details will be available to any member who wishes to see them.

Because of the improved financial situation of the club, the Finance Committee recommended to the Board that the honoraria should be increased for the CFN Editor, Assistant CFN Editor, and T&L Editor.

The budget for 2016-17 was prepared. The draft was presented to the Board in September and approved in October. It estimated a shortfall of revenues over expenses of \$114,000. This includes the renovation of the pond at the Fletcher Wildlife Project which was expected to take place mostly during FY2016-17. In the event, the work went more quickly than expected, so the bulk of the cost (about \$51,000) will be included in the expenses of FY 2015-16.

The Treasurer, Ken Young, has been working with a new bookkeeper. The intention is to have this bookkeeper assume more duties such as the preparation of cheques and charitable receipts. Ken Young will be stepping down in January 2017. Ann MacKenzie has been shadowing him in preparation for assuming the duties. Rémy Poulin will be taking over investment management from Ann at the same time.

Rémy Poulin, Chair, Finance Committee

FLETCHER WILDLIFE GARDEN

2016 has been a very productive and rewarding year for the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. The positive comments from an ever increasing number of visitors to the Fletcher indicate that our efforts are appreciated and valued. Walkers, birders, nature lovers, sparks and beavers, and tourists to Ottawa have visited the Fletcher Wildlife Garden over the past year.

Volunteers

This year over 70 regular volunteers spent time at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden either alone or in one of our weekly work groups. Together, we amassed over 5300 hours of volunteer time. The time put in by individuals assigned a “work node” should be acknowledged. Work groups from Price Waterhouse Coopers, Carleton University, and, Ernst and Young, and Health Canada helped supplement our regular volunteer effort. At the end of the season, a volunteer questionnaire was sent out to all volunteers. The responses indicate a very high satisfaction level with their “Fletcher experience.” Suggestions were also made on how we can do better. Certificates of appreciation were handed out by the FWG Management Committee to Tony Denton, Henry Steger, Malcolm Leith, Marilyn Ward, Gretchen Denton, Diane Lepage and David Hoben acknowledging the long term service of these volunteers at the FWG.

BYG

The Back Yard Garden was again a popular part of the FWG. New flower name signs were purchased and put in place that listed the common English and French names, and the botanical name of each plant. The colour and size of the signs were popular with photographers, and helped further our goal of public education. This summer it was decided to leave up the bird feeder in the BYG. The large number and variety of birds attracted to the feeder proved that the decision to feed birds year round was a good one. A landscape architect and an arborist visited the BYG in the fall and a list of suggestions – particularly related to large tree removal – was drawn up. Removal of some trees is planned for the winter (2016/17).

Amphibian Pond

The dredging and removal of sediment from the Amphibian Pond was completed in early fall. Replanting of this area will begin in the spring of 2017. A stable crushed stone pathway now encircles the pond. Strategies are being discussed to prevent dogs from entering the pond, particularly near the bridge.

Butterfly Meadow

Again this year, the butterfly meadow was the site of a variety of colours throughout the summer. A small number of different butterflies were observed this year. However, in spite of increased plantings of milkweed, no Monarchs were seen. Work was completed on a small pond at the edge of the meadow.

Old Woods

Again this year work in the Old Woods focused on planting of new trees, bushes and flowers as this part of the Garden transitions from a grove of diseased ash trees. It would appear that diligent weeding, selective planting, and natural new growth are preventing – so far - the Woods from being taken over by dog strangling vine.

Plant Sale

We had many repeat customers again this year at our plant sale. At the end of the day, we deposited close to \$5000 into the Fletcher Wildlife Garden bank account.

Interpretation Centre / Sheds

An attempted break-in of the tool shed and front door of the Interpretation Centre prompted a review of our key policy. A key lock box system at the front door now provides easy access to the IC. A debate continues about how much internet capacity is actually needed in the IC, and how this can best be provided.

MACOUN CLUB COMMITTEE

The Committee continues to organize the activities of the Macoun Field Club by telephone and e-mail. All five Committee members were involved with Club activities and were recognized by children and parents as being leaders of the group. Eighteen meetings were held indoors, with some presentations being made by outside speakers, others by Macoun Club leaders, and a few by Macoun Club members. There were 16 field trips. The usual destinations were the Club's long-time field-trip sites (Pakenham since 1967 and the Stony Swamp study area since 1970). The Club continues to work closely with the National Capital Commission to monitor for, study, and attempt to control invasive plants in Stony Swamp. The Club also visited two leaders' properties in Lanark County. An illustrated record of all events was maintained on the Club's website (macounfieldclub.ca). Issue no. 70 of The Little Bear magazine, written and illustrated by Macoun Club participants, was produced, as always, in time for distribution at the Club's annual end-of-year party in June.

On three occasions, as representatives of the Macoun Club, Committee members also volunteered to provide field programs to both elementary school students and a Carleton University environmental-science class. These activities took place in the Macoun Club's Nature Study Area and at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. Committee members also scouted out specific sites of invasive plants and tree pathogens in the Nature Study Area, and then conducted a film

crew there for the Invasive Species Centre, with credit being given to the Macoun Field Club on the resulting video.

Robert E. Lee. Chair, Macoun Club Committee

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The distribution of Club membership for 2016 on September 30, 2016 is shown in the table below, with the corresponding numbers shown in brackets for September 30, 2015. “Other” represent mostly affiliate organizations that receive complimentary copies of the Club’s publications. The Board implemented 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. Macoun Club participation stayed stable.

Membership decreased by 41 in 2016 mainly due to a decrease of 33 in Family membership within Canada. This is the first decrease since 2013.

	Canadian		U.S.A		Other		Total	
Individual	358	(359)	8	(9)	0	(0)	364	(368)
Family	286	(309)	0	(1)	1	(1)	287	(310)
Student	19	(20)	1	(0)	0	(0)	20	(27)
T and L	2	(1)	0	(0)	0	(0)	2	(1)
Honorary	25	(24)	0	(0)	0	(0)	25	(24)
Life	41	(44)	3	(3)	1	(1)	45	(48)
Other	24	(30)	0	(0)	1	(1)	25	(31)
Macoun Club	16	(17)					16	(17)
TOTAL	771	(811)	12	(13)	3	(3)	786	(827)

Henry Steger, Membership Committee

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Publications Committee manages publication of the Club's scientific journal *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (CFN), the Club's newsletter *Trail & Landscape* (T&L), and Special Publications. Publications Committee meetings were held on 5 October 2015, 24 February 2016, 1 March 2016 and 29 September 2016. Committee members were Annie Bélair (incoming Editor, Trail & Landscape), Dan Brunton, Carolyn Callaghan (outgoing Editor-in-Chief, CFN), Paul Catling, Barry Cottam (Book Review Editor, CFN), William Halliday (Journal Manager, CFN), Tony Gaston, Diane Kitching, Dwayne Lepitzki (incoming Editor-in-Chief, CFN), Amanda Martin (Assistant Editor, CFN), Karen McLachlan Hamilton (outgoing Editor, Trail & Landscape), Frank Pope, Jeff Saarela (Chair) and David Seburn.

There was considerable change in editorial roles for both of our publications this year. Carolyn Callaghan announced she would be stepping down as Editor-in-Chief of CFN, after five years in this role. Terms of reference for the position were established, and a search for a new Editor-in-Chief was initiated. Dwayne Lepitzki, of Banff, Alberta, agreed to take on this important role, and he was welcomed to the team. Carolyn and Dwayne worked together through the year and successfully and smoothly transitioned Editor-in-Chief responsibilities. Karen McLachlan Hamilton announced she would be stepping down as Editor of Trail & Landscape, after serving in this role for 12 years. Annie Bélair expressed interest and was welcomed as incoming Editor of T&L, and Diane Kitching and Barry Cottam agreed to work with Annie to help with copyediting and proofreading. Karen and Annie worked together on the smooth and successful transition of this editorial role. Both Carolyn and Karen were thanked by the committee for their dedication and service to the Club publications over many years. Mark Gawn, who in late 2015 had agreed to replace Roy John, upon his retirement, as Book Review Editor, announced he would not be able to take on the role as planned. Roy graciously postponed his retirement temporarily and a search for a new Book Review Editor was initiated. Barry Cottam expressed interest and was welcomed as new Book Review Editor and as a member of the committee. William Halliday moved to Victoria, British Columbia, in late 2016, and continued serving as Journal Manager from that location. Tony Gaston resigned from the committee and as Associate Editor for CFN in late 2016, but agreed to continue managing the OFNC Research Grants program.

[Canadian Field-Naturalist and Trail & Landscape](#)

Four issues of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* were published in this fiscal year: 129(3) (23 October 2015), 129(4) (30 January 2016), 130(1) (17 June 2016) and 130(2) (30 September 2016). In addition to the editorial transition for CFN and T&L, numerous other issues were discussed and dealt with. Details of licencing and copyright for content published in CFN were clarified. Progress was made on new author guidelines for CFN. A decision was taken in early 2016 to implement a paywall for online access to CFN for current content, after providing several years of free online access to the journal. The paywall was quickly established, and a subscription (personal or institutional) is now required for access to the four most recent issues of the journal. All older content is freely accessible online. Requiring a subscription for current content will help the Club maintain the income needed to publish the journal, whereas making all older content freely available helps the Club fulfill one of its main objectives, "to diffuse information on [all fields of natural history] as widely as possible" while not cannibalizing an important part of the journal's revenue base. CFN began publishing articles online as they were finalized, rather than waiting until an issue was complete.

The Open Journal Systems online submission system was implemented in mid-2016 to manage journal production. The Editor, Assistant Editor and Associate Editors were provided with instructions on how to handle manuscripts in the system, and all recognized there is a learning curve. During the transition to this new way of working, manuscripts were handled in both the traditional way and with the new online system, depending on their stage of the publication pipeline. Once fully implemented, it is expected that the online submission system will increase efficiency of all stages of the journal production process, from initial submission to publication. Ken Young, Club Treasurer, managed CFN subscriptions, page charge invoices and budget tracking. Sandra Garland continued in her role as copyeditor for CFN, and it was recognized that additional copyediting help was needed to maintain timely production of the journal production. Efforts to identify further help in this regard were initiated.

Requests were made to have CFN content included in BioOne, a non-profit publisher that makes scientific research more accessible through full-text aggregation of journal content produced by societies, associations, museums, research institutions and university press, and JSTOR, a digital library of academic journals, books and primary resources, but both were rejected at the present time.

Four issues of *Trail & Landscape* were produced in the current year. *Trail & Landscape* continues to be an important source of information about current and upcoming Club activities, and a significant source of documentation of regional biodiversity and conservation needs. The committee continued to evaluate the current formats (the “look and feel”) of both *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* and *Trail & Landscape*, and made progress on the re-design of both publications. Work on a new design of T&L was initiated with Wendy Cotie, typesetter for CFN and a professional designer. New formats for both are expected in 2017.

The Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) completed digitization of a subset of back issues of *Trail & Landscape* (from the 1980s), for which the Club had earlier provided permission. This content is freely available at <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/115961#/summary>, under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence. The issues currently available online reflect the incomplete physical holdings at the LuEsther T. Mertz Library, New York Botanical Garden, where the digitization work was carried out. The BHL continued to scan and provide access to back issues of CFN under the same or similar licence as *Trail & Landscape*, following our agreement with them to release content older than six years. As of 12 December 2016, content to the end of volume 124 was available through BHL.

Ottawa Field-Naturalists’ Club Research Grants

Several individuals who received funding in the first year of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists’ Club Research Grants program published summaries of their 2015 field work in *Trail & Landscape*. These were well-received by the membership, and numerous positive comments about this new initiative of the OFNC were received. 2016 was the second year of the program. Research grants support field-based research activities that reflect and promote the Club’s objectives within eastern Ontario and/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 call for proposals for 2016 awards was sent around in fall of 2015, with an application deadline of 15 January 2016. The OFNC Research Grants Subcommittee (a subcommittee of the Publications Committee), comprising Owen Clarkin, Tony

Gaston (Chair) and Jeff Saarela, evaluated research proposals. Eleven proposals were received and funding was recommended for nine of them. One applicant subsequently declined the funding, and the following eight projects were funded:

1. Emily Austen, post-doctoral fellow, University of Ottawa. The ecological significance of pollen colour variation in Trout Lily (*Erythronium americanum*).
2. Julia Charlebois, M.Sc. candidate, University of Ottawa. Do invasive plants impose selection on native plants' flowering time?
3. Jean Faubert, Société québécoise de bryologie, & Alexandre Blain, FloraQuébeca. Flore du parc de la Gatineau/Gatineau Park.
4. Robert Forsyth, Paul Catling, independent researchers, and Annegret Nicolai, Université Rennes (France). Surveys of rare and potentially at-risk species of land snails in the Ottawa area.
5. Mary Ann Perron, PhD candidate, University of Ottawa. Tracking successional development of a newly constructed riverine wetland.
6. Frederick W. Schueler & Aleta Karstad, Bishops Mills Natural History Centre. Auditory Monitoring in Eastern Ontario.
7. David Seburn, Seburn Ecological Services. Identifying new locations in eastern Ontario where the Blanding's Turtle occurs.
8. Maria Vu, M.Sc. candidate, University of Ottawa. Hormone-based spawning induction for the captive breeding and conservation of amphibians.

Jeffery M. Saarela, Chair, Publications Committee