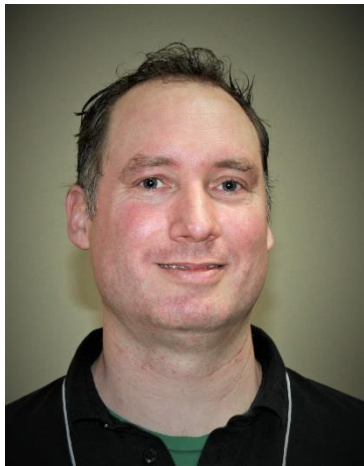




2019 Conservation Award—Member: Owen J. Clarkin



This award recognizes an outstanding contribution by a member in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley, with particular emphasis on activities within the Ottawa District.

Eight years ago, for lack of a chairperson, OFNC's Conservation Committee was relatively inactive. Contact was mainly through intermittent emails. In October 2012, Owen offered to chair regular meetings to rebuild the committee. Owen brought energy and inspiration along with agendas, minutes and ideas to Committee meetings. New members joined. A conservation program of advocacy, public outreach and eco-inventories evolved.

Under Owen's influence and aided by other members, the Conservation Committee identified various issues on which they made submissions on behalf of the OFNC. For example, they sent comments to Ontario's Environmental Registry on the proposed hunting of Snapping Turtles and Double-crested Cormorants, to the federal government on recovery plans for endangered turtles and American Eels, and to the City requesting sloping curbs for turtle hatchlings at Mud Lake and less mowing of meadows to support pollinators.

This advocacy for conservation has been balanced by ambitious public outreach. As Owen wrote in his 2015 Annual Report about the Conservation Committee, "We are keen to share our collective expertise with local nature lovers." Since 2012, he has led about 125 nature walks for over 20 groups, from naturalist organizations to community groups to horticultural societies. With boundless good humor, he tells people how to distinguish woody plant species by their buds, leaf venation, even their profile in the canopy on the horizon, plus information on their unique ecology. Tree Fest Ottawa described him as "Tree Educator, Activist, Treabadour."

From the beginning, one of Owen's personal goals for the Committee has been to learn the current status of uncommon or declining native plants in Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec. The Committee discusses and plans actions regarding species of conservation concern (both threatened indigenous species, and emerging potentially invasive exotics). They have

collaborated with several organizations on bioblitzes and inventories. Most recently, Owen conducted a tree inventory of Petrie Island with the Friends of Petrie Island and the Ottawa Stewardship Council. Under Owen's leadership, the group discovered several populations of extant Red Spruce throughout Eastern Ontario and noted other species growing in Red Spruce stands. Owen has also documented the region's threatened Rock Elms.

Owen leads and keeps the Conservation Committee together. He has developed effective positions on conservation issues for the OFNC Board and collaborated with almost every conservation group in the region. He is distinguished by his generosity in sharing knowledge with others, using education as a tool to promote appreciation and conservation of nature.

It is for revitalizing the Conservation Committee and promoting appreciation and conservation of regional forests and natural areas that the OFNC is pleased to present Owen Clarkin with the 2019 Conservation Award for a Member.

Prepared by Lynn Ovenden