



2019 George McGee Service Award: Barry Cottam



This award is given in recognition of a member who has contributed significantly to the smooth running of the Club over several years.

Like many who gravitate to the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, Barry's fascination with the natural world came at an early age. He quickly learned that the outdoors offers an inexpensive, endless source of learning and enjoyment. He was, and still is, never bored. He learned of the Club initially through the Fletcher Wildlife Garden (FWG), a place a friend suggested he

should "check out." That was the beginning of his nine-year adventure.

Barry really loves books. So, when *The Canadian Field-Naturalist (CFN)* needed a new Book Review Editor, the position seemed a natural fit. His primary responsibility is to manage the book review and new titles sections seen at the end of every issue. Approximately 150 books have passed through his hands since assuming the position in 2016. Most are forwarded to reviewers; however, for books that may seem a little obscure or do not seem to fit a particular niche, Barry has risen to the challenge and reviewed them himself. His reviews have included topics such as Passenger Pigeons, enlightened naturalists, human enlightenment through nature and climate change.

Being a Book Review Editor is not for the faint of heart. It requires good communication and editing skills, and the ability to organize and coordinate every item through the review process in a timely fashion. This process can take 20-48 hours a month to accomplish, depending on the complexity of the situation. Barry has also introduced a new twist to each review by adding a thumbnail image of the cover page. It is his natural curiosity, self-motivation, and easy-going personality that make him the editor he is.

It should be said that Barry's activities in the Club have not been restricted to *CFN*. When affiliated with the Fletcher, he served on its committee for four years, and led a small group

attempting to rid the garden of Dog-strangling Vine. He was also FWG's representative to the Central Experimental Farm Advisory Committee and Friends of the Farm for two of those years. He served on the Board of Directors not only as FWG chair, but later as the OFNC representative to Ontario Nature. He left the Board in October 2016 to join the Publications Committee as Book Review Editor for *CFN* and Proofreader for *Trail & Landscape (T&L)*. Other activities include six years as co-organizer of the Members' Photography Night and he occasionally contributes to the blog notes and *T&L*.

As Barry is seriously considering living full time in Prince Edward Island, his active service will be winding down. With this in mind, the Club would like to acknowledge his invaluable contributions in general and to *CFN* specifically. Thank you, Barry, for a job well done.

Prepared by Karen McLachlan Hamilton