

**Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club – Board of Directors Meeting
Zoom Meeting - Monday February 8, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.
Minutes**

Chair: Jakob Mueller

Present: Ken Young, Ted Farnworth, Ann MacKenzie, Eleanor Zurbrigg, Annie Belair, Bob Cermak, Elizabeth Moore, Dwayne Lepitzki, Henry Steger, Owen Clarkin, Diane Kitching, Catherine Hessian, Janette Niwa, Diane Lepage, Gord Robertson (from 7.30 p.m.)

1. Approval of the Agenda – the agenda was approved as circulated
2. Acceptance of Minutes from January 18, 2021
moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Ken Young, that the minutes of the January 18, 2021 meeting be accepted. **CARRIED**
3. Business arising from the minutes
 - 6g – emails to Members: Henry had introduced some colour into the most recent “upcoming events” email. Jakob had circulated an example of the Macnamara FNC Newsletter and Ted had circulated an example of the FWG newsletter. Jakob will discuss possible further improvements with Ted, Henry and Sandy. **Action: Jakob**
 - 6h - OFNC Wikipedia Page: Gord had created this page immediately after the January meeting. The Board expressed thanks for his prompt action.
4. Communications
 - Catherine had circulated an email itemising the mail received recently and asked to whom she should deliver mail going forward. Jakob will discuss this with Catherine. **Action: Jakob**
5. Treasurer's Report
 - Ann had circulated the following report by email:
“The Charity Return T3010, which is our tax form based on our Sept 30th financial statements, has been submitted to CRA.

The T4As that are sent to individuals who receive honorariums or grants during the past calendar year have been sent to them and the summary has been sent to CRA.

Tax receipts for donations received up until Dec 31st have been mailed. These are done in three or four batches a year.

A proposed policy on approving grants has been drafted and forwarded to the Finance Committee for consideration.

Our insurance policy with Cade Associates, through Ontario Nature, has been renewed. It expires on Feb 28th of each year. Updated ‘Certificates of Insurance’ have been provided to DND, AAFC, and the Univ of Ottawa (grant related). The insurer has added a legal hotline to

help us determine our legal rights under provincial and federal laws. The renewed insurance policy has an exclusion for any liability related to Covid-19. They do point out that there is legal protection for organizations making a 'good faith effort to act in accordance with public health guidance and laws'. This means that we not only have to continue strictly following current guidelines but also that we should be documenting the fact that we are doing so.

On Feb 3rd there was a zoom meeting with our accountants, Welch LLP, to introduce Ken and Ann to the new partner on our file, Bryden McMaster, following the retirement of Mark Patry. During that discussion there was mention of back-up in case of something happening to the treasurer and consideration of who owns our data and if it is stored in Canada. We are looking into both of these issues.

A telephone meeting with our bank, CIBC, is scheduled for Feb 16 to consider a number of account issues including changing the signing authorities.

The Director's Handbook is being updated to include the latest documents from our year-end. A link will be sent to the directors when it is ready."

During the meeting, Ann drew particular attention to the exclusion of any liability related to Covid-19 in the renewed insurance policy and emphasised the importance of reinforcing COVID protocols.

The insurers had suggested considering publication insurance and cyber insurance. The Finance Committee will look into this.

The agreed donation of \$10,000 towards purchase of land in Alfred Bog had been sent to the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

6. Issues for Discussion

a. Approval of committee rosters (attached) including chairs:

moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Owen Clarkin, that the Chairs of Committees and Committee Rosters be approved as circulated. **CARRIED**

b. Revision of ABM minutes / nomination list:

moved by Ken Young, seconded by Eleanor Zurbrigg, that the resignation of Jeff Saarela from the Board of Directors be accepted. **CARRIED**

c. Ottawa Urban Boundary expansion & Tewin development proposal

Jakob drew the attention of the BoD to the decision by the City, after the period of public comment had expired, to include a large parcel of land south-east of the city, the Tewin lands, in the re-designated urban boundary. Taggart Construction and the Algonquins of Ontario have submitted a development proposal to be voted on by Council on February 10. Jakob had previously circulated the following comments by email: "The Tewin proposal is of concern because a substantial portion of that area is currently a natural state. Not just any natural state, but a high-quality mixed forest community that is contiguous with the greenbelt. It contains Red Spruce (provincially rare) and a number of other rare or regionally significant plants. Among many other animals, it also supports Moose. As a community, this forest type is

rare in the province, particularly of this quality. The fact that we know of its existence is largely due to the work Owen and the Conservation Committee have done over the last several years.”

The BoD discussed possible strategies that could be used to influence the course of this development. The proposal is unlikely to be rejected by Council and the vote is imminent but it was felt that OFNC should make an effort to communicate its concerns before the vote. It was felt that a press release would be the most effective strategy. The Club would also hope to open a dialogue with the construction company and the Algonquins of Ontario to draw their attention to the environmental significance of the land in the hope of persuading them to preserve some of the most biologically significant areas. Owen and Jakob will draft a suggested press release and circulate before the Council vote. **Action: Jakob & Owen**

- d. OFNC Bird Feeders Fund – Bob noted that it had been previously agreed that BC would no longer continue with the Seedathon due to the diminishing number of participants. BC does, however, wish to continue to encourage donations towards birdseed for the OFNC feeders. **moved** by Bob Cermak, seconded by Gord Robertson, that reference to Seedathon donations on the website and membership form be replaced by reference to donations towards wild bird seed. **CARRIED**
- e. Computer for FWG – Gord had previously been asked to look into purchase of a laptop for FWG, the previous one having “disappeared”. He currently has a duplicate order for a laptop that he could offer to OFNC. Issues have arisen in the past when speakers have expected a laptop to be available for presentations. The BoD felt that security issues outweighed the desirability of having a laptop. The onus should be on event organisers to ensure that presenters bring their own laptop or, if this is not possible, to provide one.

7. Committee Updates

a. Awards

Eleanor reported that the 2020 Awards have been announced on the website and the short versions of the citations will appear in the next T&L. Any comments should be sent to her.

b. Birds – (Bob)

Birds Committee would like to award a Certificate of Appreciation (CoA) to Patsy Cassidy who is the homeowner who has welcomed birders as they come to see the Boreal Chickadee at her feeders. It was suggested that this should be done at committee level. Owen felt it would be nice to get such a certificate from the Board but others felt this was what Awards were intended for.

c. Conservation

Owen reported that the final report for OFNC-Conservation's six month survey of Voyageur Provincial Park had been sent to Ontario Parks. A positive response had been received from Ontario Parks.

They are planning for conservation-related fieldwork activities in 2021, and keeping an eye on current issues such as the proposed Tewin development discussed in 6c. above.

2021 field activity will expand on previous work and they are considering what to prioritise. The first activity, when permitted, will probably be visiting Lavigne Natural Park to establish a baseline inventory.

Jeff Saarela had asked that specimens be collected by Conservation during their field work whenever possible and sent to the Museum of Nature.

Owen's attention had been drawn to the fact that Richmond Fen is under threat from the spread of invasive Phragmites

d. Education & Publicity

Gord reported that they have put up five new storyboards and created a new wildlife quest. He noted that some trails have spots for flyers and he will print some.

e. Events (Jakob - circulated by email)

"The Events Committee met on Zoom on 2 February and had a productive planning discussion.

Bad News: Elizabeth Robson Gordon has chosen to withdraw from the committee due to having too many personal commitments. She brought a unique perspective to events planning and came up with some interesting ideas. She had taken over coordination of the annual photo night. This past summer, she conceived of and ran a nature "scavenger hunt" through the OFNC Facebook page. In lieu of in-person events due to the pandemic, this gave people a safe way to engage with and experience nature in their area.

Good News: Henry Robertson is joining the committee. He is new to the club, and is a resident of Aylmer. He also recently joined the Conservation Committee; Owen introduced him in January.

We believe we have a way to simplify the registration process for digital events on Zoom, which we will test in March.

There are three online events this month, including the monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 9th."

f. Finance (Ken - circulated by email)

"The Finance Committee will be working on several issues this year.

Currently, we are addressing the following issues:

1. ethical investing—should the Club amend its investment policy to include a statement on ethical investing?
2. how the Club authorizes grant applications.
3. whether we can improve financial reporting to the Board.

We will report back to the Board on these issues when we have proposals to make.

It is possible that the Government of Ontario will implement changes this year to the legal framework that governs the Club. If so, the Finance Committee will determine what the Club

needs to do in response. In particular, this would be the trigger for a revision of our Constitution and By-laws.”

g. Fletcher Wildlife Garden (Ted - circulated by email)

“Volunteer Ottawa

- We have received notice from Volunteer Ottawa that our membership fee is due. This agency has been a good source of new volunteers
- Management Committee has agreed to renew the membership
- the fee is \$175/yr

FWG Big Year

- the Big Year was launched on Jan 1, 2021
- our Facebook Group currently has 60 members
- the month of January had 12 confirmed sightings

The Plant Sale

- it is generally felt that we should be able to hold a plant sale this year - preparation and planning has begun
- discussions are ongoing to consider various formats for a sale – on line sale/scheduled pick-up; limited access outdoor sale etc.
- method of payment is the biggest challenge
- any event will have to abide by applicable COVID restrictions”

h. Macoun Club – Diane reported that there is no current activity. The Club is waiting for COVID rules to lighten

i. Membership (Henry) – nil to report

j. Ontario Nature - OFNC has signed on to Ontario Nature’s ERO submission re: increase in Ministerial zoning orders

k. Publications – (Dwayne and Annie circulated by email)

Publications Committee meeting:

held by Zoom 28 January (couple Thursday’s ago)

- Dan Brunton has stepped down from committee
- Carolyn Callaghan stepped down as Associate Editor (AE) but will stay on committee - seeking another mammal AE – 1 person has already declined Dwayne's request
- more pressing is replacing a fish expert AE – Francois Chapleau retiring from U of Ottawa this June – 1 person has already declined Dwayne's request
- Publ. Comm. is seeking new committee members - don't necessarily have to reside in Ottawa - Dwayne reached out to 1 potential addition but no response so far

CFN:

- paper copy of 134(3), July-Sept 2020, arrived same day as the Publ. Committee meeting , ~ 3.5 weeks since couriered back to Ottawa
- 134(4), Oct-Dec – last issue for 2020 - progressing well
- 72 journal pages, probably have enough for the issue although will try and squeeze in 1 more article and hopefully another tribute to accompany an author's last publication in CFN
- Dwayne wrote short obituary notices for both Ron Bedford and Don Smith for News and Comment – Dwayne had thanked Fenja for sending her tribute for Don that will be published in T&L and thanked Annie for making this possible
- full tribute for Don Smith still planned for CFN
- Paul Catling will be writing full tribute for Ron Bedford
- Research Grant review committee struck
- will need to remove Governor General Julie Payette being the patron of OFNC in first issue for 2021 (135-1) and update the list of Honorary Members”

Trail & Landscape:

Annie is very busy with the next issue (55(2), April-June 2021). All black and white back issues are now free, since most are available online on Biodiversity Heritage Library. People who order hard copies are still required to pay for postage.

It was noted that OFNC should seek patronage from the next Governor General when appointed.

I. Safe Wings Ottawa – (Janette – circulated by email)

- “ - The Good Planet Project is looking to film some Safe Wings activities and bird rescues
 - * At this time of year we are slow.
 - * Given how fast rescues get organized they might not be ready for an outdoor shoot.
 - * With COVID, we will not be granting access to film inside.
 - * Might not happen.
- TVA Hors Quebec has reached out because they've learned Safe Wings operates bilingually
 - * looking to film or report on this / SW.
 - additionally they are looking for individuals or groups who bird in French. So if you know any please let us know.”
- Lastly we are preparing for the spring migration season and we will be doing a virtual orientation to provide reminders to our volunteers on COVID protocols for patrolling and driving (physical distancing, hand sanitizing, etc. - a reminder of the same protocols as last year)”

7. Adjournment

moved by Gord Robertson, seconded by Eleanor Zurbrigg, that the meeting be adjourned.
CARRIED

Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Moore

Upcoming Meeting Dates

Apr. 19, 2021
May 17, 2021
June 21, 2021
September 20, 2021

Jakob Mueller
President
Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

Date

Elizabeth Moore
Recording Secretary
Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

Date