

Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club – Board of Directors (BoD) Meeting
Wednesday, September 22, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.
Zoom Meeting – Minutes

Chair: Jakob Mueller

Present: Ken Young, Ted Farnworth, Ann MacKenzie, Eleanor Zurbrigg, Annie Belair, Elizabeth Moore, Owen Clarkin, Diane Kitching, Janette Niwa, Diane Lepage, Catherine Hessian, Henry Steger

Absent: Bob Cermak, Gord Robertson

1. Approval of the Agenda – the agenda was approved as distributed.
2. Acceptance of Minutes from June 21, 2021
moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Diane Lepage, that the minutes of the June 21, 2021 meeting be accepted. **CARRIED**
3. Business arising from the minutes
 - Inclusion, diversity, and equality statement – deferred
 - Emails to members – deferred
 - Storage for Club Materials – deferred
 - Pink Lady's Slippers (Hunt Club Forest) – The car dealership has put its plan to pave over an area of the forest on hold indefinitely.
4. Communications - Catherine had circulated details of mail received over the summer by email. Of note:
 - the newsletter from Rideau Waterway Land Trust. The big news is they have acquired 30 ha (74 ac) of land on Opinicon Lake. It will be called the Warren Nature Reserve.
5. Treasurer's Report – Ann had circulated an email reminding the BoD that the end of the fiscal year is rapidly approaching and that claims must be submitted before September 30, 2021. Nil else to report.
6. Issues for Discussion
 - a) Budget 2021-2022 – Jakob had asked Ken to describe how the Finance Committee decides what to propose as the expense items for each line. Ken had circulated a document (**appended**) by email describing how the Finance Committee decides what to propose as the expense items for each line.

Ken and Jakob had subsequently agreed that it would be best to use total authorised expenses rather than most likely expenses. Ken took the BoD through the draft budget. A few minor amendments were made. The projected deficit is in the region of \$18,000 but Ken explained that this is unlikely to be reached. The budget will be voted on in October and any comments should be received before then.

- b) Ethical Investing Policy – Finance Committee had considered this and advised that no specific policy be adopted for the reasons outlined (report **appended**). This will need to be addressed under “business arising” at the ABM.
- c) 2022 Nominations – Diane Lepage presented the Report of the Nominating Committee (**appended**). She noted that the Board is very stable with only a few changes. The most notable changes are that Henry Steger is stepping down from the position of Membership Chair and Ken Young is stepping down as the Finance Chair. Those members standing down need to be replaced. Possible succession strategies were discussed. Ted suggested using Facebook. An article could be put in T&L but the next issue will not be published until next year.
- d) Committee Members – it was noted that committee members are required to be OFNC members. Chairs should remind their groups.
- e) Notifications of member deaths – Diane L noted that, although the deaths of particularly meritorious members of OFNC are recognised through tributes in CFN, it would be good to know about the deaths of other members. It was suggested that there should be an “In Memoriam” section in T&L. **Action: Annie** will give this matter some thought.
- f) Public Use of FWG (not the Resource Centre) & OFNC Mandate – Jakob: The board discussed the importance of being guided by the OFNC mandate (to promote the appreciation, conservation, and study of nature and natural history) in our interactions with other organizations and the public. When other organizations ask for OFNC assistance or partnership on an effort that is consistent with the OFNC mandate, the OFNC should provide that assistance or support as long as it is reasonable, feasible, and practical. If a matter is of concern, or if there is a need to decline support for some reason, the matter should be referred to the board. Also discussed was the importance of being courteous, open, and welcoming in all interactions with other organizations and the public, and how good communication can solve problems created by assumptions. A case study was used to illustrate these points.

7. Committee Updates

- a) Awards – Eleanor had circulated the following report by email:

“i. 2020 awards - Awards Committee is working with the Events Committee to schedule a November Zoom event to officially present the 2020 awards to recipients. Although the awards were announced on our website and published in T&L, we missed the step of actually presenting the awards certificates to recipients (due to cancellation of Awards Night). So we will proceed with a virtual presentation (similar to the way that Ontario Nature presented their 2020 conservation awards at their AGM) then mail the certificates to the recipients.

ii. 2021 awards - The call for nominations for 2021 awards is in the next T&L, and in October we'll be asking Henry S to send an email to Club membership in the Ottawa area to solicit nominations for Club awards. The closing date for receipt of nominations is November 30th.”

b) Birds – no report. The BoD wished Bob well.

c) Conservation – Owen had circulated the following report by email:

“In July, Jakob put together a summary and gave high profile interviews regarding the threat to the Mer Bleue Bog posed by a major proposed road expansion.

e.g.

<https://ofnc.ca/conservation-2/proposed-new-road-threatens-mer-bleue-wetland>

<https://ontarionature.org/road-proposal-threatens-mer-bleue-blog/>

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/mer-bleue-wetland-threatened-by-road-proposal-field-naturalists-say>

We continued numerous bioinventory and community outreach projects, including those at Voyageur Provincial Park (Salamander Survey led by Jakob), Lavigne Natural Park (Bourget), Lalande Conservation Park (Orleans), Carp Ridge, Dunrobin, Aylmer, and Hunt Club (threatened forest near airport), and we participated in bioblitzes at Gananoque Lake (Ontario Nature) and the annual Kingston Field-Naturalists' event.

We focused considerable effort on a new alien insect (Elm Zigzag Sawfly, discovered in North America near Montreal last summer), and we detected it in the city of Ottawa in August after Henry Robertson found it at Aylmer Quebec in July.

e.g. <https://twitter.com/OttawaFieldNat/status/1431282986666840066>

We have now shown that EZS is present at several sites in the city of Ottawa, and that it is established in wider eastern Ontario from Ottawa to Brockville and all areas east, with over 160 records documented.

Rob Alvo has asked to join the committee, and we will be delighted to have him in the group.”

d) Education & Publicity - no report

e) Events – Jakob had circulated the following report by email:

“We have had a few in-person outdoor events over the summer, and there are several planned for this month. We are going to continue to try to have several events per month, but there is some sense of uncertainty over the direction of the pandemic.

There is a palpable sense of chronic exhaustion among both volunteers and leaders. I am okay with a reduced pace for now if we can make a splash in Spring 2022 with a lot of events - I sense that if we are restriction-free at that point, we will have an increased demand for events, and people will have more energy to put into planning and leading them. We are planning to have a Point Pelee trip in 2022.

There was a drop in attendance for the June and September monthly meetings, which I would attribute to a combination of "Zoom fatigue" and nice weather outside. I expect that attendance will increase in the fall and winter. Virtual meetings will continue to substitute for

indoor events for the foreseeable future. I've mentioned before that online events will likely continue to be part of the events we run after the pandemic.”

f) Finance – Ken: see Budget discussion under 6a above. Nil else to report

g) Fletcher Wildlife Garden – Ted had circulated the following report by email:

“In spite of the late start to our work and the challenges of imposing COVID restrictions on volunteers, 2021 has been a productive summer. The increase in the number of visitors to the Garden has had positive and negative effects. Events/situations of note these past months include:

- Due to the parking problems produced by the increase in visitors, Agriculture Canada in consultation with FWG volunteers increased the signage in the parking areas, agreed that the parking spots in front of the Resource Centre should be reserved for FWG volunteers only, and have created additional parking spots to the north of the Quarantine Building
- Ag Canada security has become more aggressive in enforcing parking rules; warnings and some fines have been issued
- A limited number of monthly parking permits are issued by Ag Canada for use by selected FWG volunteers. Thanks to Eleanor for co-ordinating this.
- The city of Ottawa by-law officers did visit the FWG a couple of times; owners of dogs not on a leash were warned, but no fines were issued that we know of
- Additional signage was put up to advise visitors how to report dogs not on leash. After the first sign was stolen, a second sign was erected in the middle of the amphibian pond
- Minor repairs were made to the automatic watering system that is used in the Back Yard Garden
- A flying ant infestation broke out in the storage area of the Resource Centre. Plugging up the points of entry by the bugs appears to have solved the problem
- The Fletcher property was the site of a graffiti incident. A large number of symbols made with a white powder were discovered throughout the property. A notice of the attack that was posted on our Facebook group page resulted in an individual admitting to being responsible. The white powder was baking flour and the symbols were left as part of a trail for a group of joggers. Apology accepted.
- The Big Year at the Fletcher continues. Over sixty different kinds of birds have been reported to date.
- Mold was found on the walls at the back of the storage area of the Resource Centre. The Management Committee is discussing the usefulness of buying a dehumidifier to prevent future moisture build up that promotes mold growth. Thanks to Eleanor and Gord for working on this.
- A TVO filming session occurred at the Fletcher. The theme of the filming was pollinators.
- Diane reported all chain link pond fence removed. Try to sell it.”

h) Macoun Club - Diane K reported that, although the Club does not usually meet over the summer, they had continued to have field trips most Saturdays to make up for time lost to Covid. Approximately 10 youth have been participating in the field trips. This number reflects the fact that those members who are typically more interested in the indoor meetings have not been attending.

i) Membership – Henry: nil to report

j) Ontario Nature – next meeting October 2. Jakob will send an invite to Diane Holmes and will attend himself.

Jakob and Owen have visited the newly created ON Nature Reserve at Gananoque Lake on several occasions.

ON has engaged in several issues of interest to OFNC, including the Mer Bleu proposal.

Friends of Carp Hills had reported heavy use on the trails during the pandemic.

Owen had received his award (the W.E. Saunders Natural History Award – reported under Item 6a in the June 2021 minutes) and was congratulated by the BoD.

k) Publications

The Manning Fund - Ken had circulated the following report regarding the Manning Fund by email:

“The Manning Fund is an internally-restricted fund in the OFNC accounts. It is used to support CFN authors who do not have institutional funding to pay page charges.

The source of the Manning Fund was a bequest by Tom Manning, received in 1999. The bequest was not directed to any purpose, so the Board decided at first to use it to support articles about the Arctic (Manning's research area). That restriction was dropped later, essentially because there were few such articles requiring support.

The intent was to just use the interest earned by the fund balance for this purpose, and maintain the principal. Around this time, the Club's assets were much smaller - the Manning Fund accounted for almost a third of the Club's assets. Also, interest rates were much higher, and page charges lower. So the stipulation to only use the interest to support authors was practical.

These things have changed and now the Manning Fund is declining. Supported articles are being charged to the Manning Fund at a rate of about \$12,000 per volume, while interest credited to the Manning Fund runs around \$3,000.

The Publications Committee has discussed the situation and intends to continue supporting authors to this degree. That means that the Manning Fund will be fully depleted in about nine years.”

Annie reported that the October/December issue of T&L is out. Of particular note is an article by Irwin Brodo, Colin Freebury and Fenja Brodo reporting the establishment of a maritime species of lichen in Ottawa. The five year index is included in this issue

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The committee met on September 8. Dwayne had emailed the following report:

“135(2), April–June, is nearly ready for online posting. It is 104 pages long with nine manuscripts and the Editors' Report for 134 (2020) along with only three book reviews. There will be two colour 16-page signatures. The issue will include obituary notices for Val Geist and Stuart Houston. Still looking for a Book Reviewer Editor replacement for Barry – 135(2) is his last CFN issue. Interim plans are in place. Cover picture decided: a painting by Aleta Karstad, recently inducted Honorary OFNC member, of a nesting Red-throated Loon, the subject of a large 16 page article on vocalizations of the loon on Haida Gwaii. Nice tie-in between arts and science. Aleta is also scanning a few pages of her natural history journal where she writes

about the background information on her initial sketches which can turn into paintings; we hope to include this as an online supplement to the cover picture.

135(3), July-September, currently sitting at 10 manuscripts: three have returned from formal copyediting (two of which have returned from author review), three are undergoing formal copyediting, two are ready for me to send for formal copyediting, one has returned from author tweaks with lots of changes (which will take some time to wade through), and there has been no response on another sent to an author in mid-July. Copyeditor John was on vacation most of August.

Dr. Katriina Ilves (CMN), new fish expert Associate Editor, joined the team in June 2021, and has completed her review and recommendation on a manuscript.

COSEWIC will NOT be meeting face-to-face in Ottawa in November 2021 but Dwayne may be in Ottawa in February 2022 for a COSEWIC-related meeting, if travel restrictions are lifted.”

Further to Ken’s report on the Manning fund (see Item 7f), Owen, Catherine and Jakob each spoke to the desirability of continuing to assist authors who do not have institutional support.

Jeff has advised that he wants to step down as Chair but will stay on for another year.

l) Safe Wings Ottawa – Janette circulated the following report by email

- “Instead of bird displays in 2020 and 2021, Safe Wings participated in *When Worlds Collide* September 15 with other similar organizations in Canada. Safe Wing's August 23 private filmed display included 4,015 specimens from the 8,020 collisions from 2019 and 2020.
 - Each group filmed a display and provide data and statistics that FLAP (Toronto) combined into one larger piece to be shared on social media
 - [2021 Virtual Bird Display – Safe Wings Ottawa](#) and [When Worlds Collide - A collaboration - YouTube](#)
 - Many of the specimens have been sent to the Museum of Nature and the Royal Alberta Museum. Most of the remainder will go to researchers in Ontario and Alberta for wind turbine research
- Global Brd Rescue Week is Sept 27-Oct 3: all collisions recorded are compiled and sent to FLAP
- A screening of the film *The Messenger* is tentatively planned for October 1 (virtual). Ways of generating some income to pay for the rental of the film were discussed. Will include a Q&A after the film.
- Exploring new phone system; had some technical difficulties from the provider being hacked
- Have been testing some volunteer organizing software this past year for scheduling different activities. VSP software. Goal is a better system especially for driving arrangements and higher density patrol areas.
- Ottawa U project: reports to be posted; still coordinating TD project with recruitment of patrollers for the fall Global Birds Rescue week on campus and possible orientation week display.
- **Need support from volunteers for manning the phones.** Increase in calls over past 2 years has been tremendous, resulting in increase in birds and workload for the 2 rehabbers. **Any volunteer support is appreciated, training provided and phones are manned virtually (from your home). Target is 25 volunteers on the team.**
- Wild Outside Youth instructional walk to take place October 17

- Submitting an abstract to the Real Property Institute of Canada's National Workshop to be held November 2 & 3. The deadline for abstract submission is September 15.
- Advocacy continues:
 - 200 Kent and KRP: Preparation of the application for investigation under the SARA and the Ministry of the Environment (ON) is ongoing. A lawyer from EcoJustice is assisting with the Species at Risk application.
 - We are continuing to look for a system to allow photos to be easily uploaded to the database. Volunteers with experience in digital image storage are needed.
 - LRT: The draft report is being reviewed
- Rehab with fall patrolling is in full swing. YTD is 943 birds to our rehabs, some in care for 10+ days. Safe Wings is keeping all window collisions and others are sent to the WBCC."

It was agreed that the December BoD meeting would be moved up to December 13, 2021.

8. Adjournment - there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Moore

Upcoming Meeting Dates

October 18, 2021
 November 15, 2021
 December 13, 2021
 January 17, 2022
 February TBD

Jakob Mueller
 President
 Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

Date

Elizabeth Moore
 Recording Secretary
 Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

Date

Appendices

1. Basis of Finance Committee decisions re: budget line items
2. Ethical Investing Policy
3. Report of the Nominating Committee

Basis of Finance Committee decisions re: budget line items

There are two sources of information—information provided by committees, and the actual expenditures of previous years. The Covid pandemic has disrupted our activities and for this reason the committee has paid more attention to recent actual expenditures than in the past.

A factor in all this is that the budget serves several purposes, and the numbers appropriate to each purpose can differ. These purposes and how they affect the amount to be shown are:

1. make the committees identify what they want to do in the upcoming fiscal year, especially new activities. Here we are mostly interested in identifying activities; the amounts allocated are of lesser importance.
2. make the Board as a whole cognizant of the activities of the OFNC as a whole. Again, the list of activities is more important than amounts. The goal is that Board members are informed.
3. give the total authorized expenditure for a budget line item. Here the amount does matter, and the appropriate amount is the maximum that might reasonably be spent on the line item.
4. facilitate cash management by the Treasurer. Since we can't do short-term overdrafts, we need to ensure that we can pay our bills with cash on hand. For this purpose, the total authorized amounts are the safest.
5. satisfy the review requirements of our accountants. Here the desired amount is the most likely amount, not the total authorized amount.
6. project the likely net profit/loss of the OFNC as a whole. For this, likely expenses are appropriate.

The issue mainly affects expenses, not revenues. Items 5 and 6 are the exception.

The information supplied to the Finance Committee is shown in the attachment on pages 3–7. It has been used in the budget proposals, so the budgeted expenses on pages 1–2 are on an “authorized expenditures” basis rather than a “likely” basis. The difference between the two is about \$5,000, so it is not insignificant. The upshot is that the deficit is likely to be less than what is shown in the budget.

Statement to the OFNC Board Concerning Ethical Investing

Finance Committee, September 20, 2021

At the January 12, 2021 ABM a member asked if the OFNC had a policy on ethical investing. The answer was no, and at the next Board of Directors meeting the Finance Committee agreed to research the issue.

Catherine Hessian, our Investment Manager has done so, and the committee has discussed the issue.

The Finance Committee recommends that the OFNC not adopt a policy limiting investments to a defined category based on environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria.

There are two reasons for this, the difficulty of defining criteria to be used, and the limited choice of investment instruments.

Defining ESG Criteria

ESG criteria encompass a broad range of considerations. Therefore to judge an issuer of securities, one needs to decide on the particular criteria to use, and find information about the issuer's performance on those criteria.

Traditionally, ethical investments were taken to be those that excluded alcohol and tobacco, and weapons. The ESG framework is much broader. Environmental criteria seem the most relevant for the OFNC, given its mandate and history. But we would need to be more specific. Energy-producing companies and crown agencies are common issuers of bonds that we purchase. Which sources of energy are environmentally ethical—coal, natural gas, hydro, nuclear, wind, solar?

While there are databases that categorize companies according to various ESG attributes, the judgement of the compilers of these databases might differ from ours. And they do not cover governments, which are the issuers of most of our investment holdings.

Consequently, to implement an ethical investment policy, the OFNC would have to define fairly detailed criteria for "ethical" and the investment manager would have to perform a significant amount of research.

The Availability of Securities

Currently, we restrict ourselves to securities of investment-grade Canadian issuers, that are either strip bonds or compound GICs. There are not a lot of these. Combined with the fact that we are not high frequency

investors, if we add additional criteria, without loosening the existing criteria, we could run out of investment options.

Proposal

Considering all this, the Finance Committee thinks that the choice of securities should remain delegated to the Investment Manager. She can handle ethical issues on a case-by-case basis.

The committee suggests that the Investment Manager make an annual report to the Board, discussing the state of our investments generally, and specifically securities that have been purchased during the year. Directors could then indicate if they thought that there were ethical issues with any of the issuers. In the future the Investment Manager could take these judgements into account in choosing issuers.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Diane Lepage, Chair

I advised that the Board is very stable with only a few changes. The most notable change is that Henry Steger is stepping down from the position of Membership Chair and Ken Young is stepping down as the Finance Chair.

Relevant Excerpts from the OFNC Constitution (revised February 2000)

Article 8 – “The Council shall consist of the officers of the Club and up to eighteen additional members, all members of the Club.

Article 12 – “The officers of the Club and other members of the Council shall be elected annually at the Annual Business Meeting. The nomination of sufficient persons for election to the various offices and membership of the Council shall be the responsibility of the Nominating Committee, which shall act in the manner prescribed in the By-Laws.

The Council shall, at the earliest possible date, appoint chairs and members of Standing and ad hoc committees and Editor and Business Managers, as required for club publications. “

Nominated Officers

Official Duty

Jakob Mueller

President

Owen Clarkin
(vacant)

1st Vice President

2nd Vice President

Elizabeth Moore

Recording Secretary

Ann MacKenzie

Treasurer

Diane Lepage

Past President

Nominated Members of the Board of Directors (alphabetical order)

Annie Bélair
Janette Niwa
Gordon Robertson
Henry Steger (no)
Ken Young (no)

Robert Cermak
Edward Farnworth
Catherine Hessian
Diane Kitching
Eleanor Zurbrigg