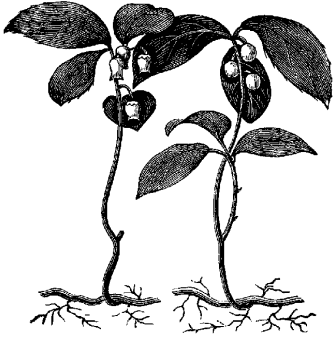


2021 Conservation Award—Member: Janet Mason

“In recognition of an outstanding contribution by a member in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley”

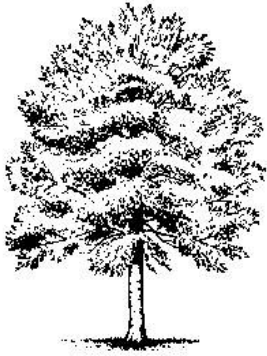


Janet Mason is being recognized for outstanding contributions to the conservation work of several community organizations in the Ottawa area. She currently leads the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (vice-chair), the Friends of the Carp Hills (chair and co-founder), and the Friends of the Carp River (chair). She has led the Ottawa Stewardship Council since founding it 20 years ago. She has served on the boards of the Mississippi-Madawaska Land Trust and the Macnamara Field Naturalists Club. How generous!

After graduating from Queens University as an electrical engineer, Janet worked for 30 years in the defence and technology industries with leadership positions. Since retiring, she has volunteered with several community organizations involved in environmental stewardship. She writes newsletters, blog posts, grant applications and study reports. She gives public talks and engages persuasively with municipal politicians, scientists, and business leaders alike. Colleagues have attributed her success in conservation to incredibly hard work, tremendous communication skills, persistence, and the ability to solve problems with insight and analysis.

Janet and others incorporated the Friends of the Carp Hills in 2013 to preserve areas of the Carp Hills where there is little human activity and to offer other specific areas for public recreation. The Friends envisage a collaborative forum for stewardship of the highland (which is mostly privately owned) to strike a balance between protection, conservation and the desire to experience its natural beauty. They build trails and hold organized walks, lectures and public meetings on conservation issues. They try to protect species at risk in the area, especially Blanding’s Turtle, Whip-poor-will and Common Nighthawk. The City of Ottawa and Ducks Unlimited partner with them on assessments, management plans and conservation measures. The Carp Barrens Trail Study (2019-2020) led by consulting ecologist Holly Bickerton is a good example of this collaboration. Following the impact assessment of trail use, the Friends worked with the City of Ottawa to reduce disturbance in this popular recreational destination.





The Friends of the Carp River is another organization that Janet chairs. Since 1997, the organization raised funds and planted 50,000 trees and shrubs to restore shorelines along the river. In recent years, they worked with the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority on a major wetland restoration project in West Kanata along 2km of the Carp River. This is the Carp River Conservation Area, a floodplain previously channelled and farmed, and now restored with meanders, a pond, wet meadows, and a loop trail with bridges for recreational use. The site is animated by an educational program with curriculum for use by schools, a mobile app called EcoTrek, a downloadable brochure, interpretive signs, an osprey nest tower, a viewing platform, and citizen science projects on iNaturalist. The Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority, Ottawa Stewardship Council and Friends of Carp River all participate in this project.

Like all members of OFNC, Janet Mason loves to explore local natural areas herself. She also has an extraordinary ability to collaborate with others to get things done. She has described herself as “an advocate for neighbourhood involvement in the stewardship of local natural areas for the mutual benefit of their human and wildlife communities.” People throughout western Ottawa have joined in conservation projects that she leads. We are grateful to Janet for her generous work in conservation.

