

Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club – Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday March 21, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.
Minutes

Chair: Jakob Mueller

Present: Ken Young, Ted Farnworth, Eleanor Zurbrigg, Annie Bélair, Elizabeth Moore, Owen Clarkin, Diane Kitching, Janette Niwa, Diane Lepage, Ann MacKenzie, Gord Robertson, Bob Cermak, Kerri Keith, Lorraine Elworthy (representing Birds Committee), Catherine Hessien, Deb Doherty (SafeWings Committee), Joan Harrison (guest), Ali Hyder Ali (guest), Bob Cermak,

Absent: Gord Robertson

1. Approval of the Agenda – approved as circulated

2. Acceptance of Minutes from February 15, 2022

Moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Diane Lepage, that the minutes of the February 15, 2022 meeting be accepted. **CARRIED**

3. Issues for Discussion

a) NatureHood initiative

Deb Doherty (Safe Wings Committee member) gave a presentation about an initiative undertaken with a grant from Nature Canada to the Britannia Woods Community House to help new immigrants and racialized members of society connect with nature. This project had encountered problems and OFNC was invited to assume a lead role. It would also involve activities related to Migratory Bird Day, Bird Friendly Cities and leading nature walks. OFNC's role would primarily be fiduciary, administrative and reporting although it might wish to start its own NatureHood projects.

In the discussion that followed it was recognized that the goals and objectives were compatible with those of the OFNC and we did a lot of those activities already. It was pointed out that any grant needed a lead sponsoring committee. While Deb Doherty is a member of Safe Wings this project would more naturally fall into the scope of Education and Publicity. Gordon Robertson was not present to comment on the acceptability of his committee taking on this role. Some directors questioned if we were just being used for administrative purposes and we already have a heavy administrative burden with other club activities.

It was agreed that the project proposal would be circulated to key directors and Ann would share the OFNC Grant Policy. The deadline of March 31st for submitting the 2nd phase of the project to Nature Canada was recognized to be unrealistic.

b) Aly Hyder Ali

Aly introduced himself to the Board. He lives in Gatineau and works for Nature Canada (NC). He is a graduate of Fleming College and Trent University but was born in Karachi, Pakistan and exemplifies the lived experience of a person of colour who has been brought into the natural world. His role within NC is working with clubs and other stakeholders to establish coalitions to engage with elected officials to advance the conservation of birds. He is looking

for an opportunity within his local community to volunteer in conservation education efforts. In response to a question from Bob, he advised that he is interested in other opportunities within the Club in addition to representing NC. Aly was advised that he would need to become a member of OFNC in order to join the Board.

c) Sponsorship for OFO Young Birders Events

Bob advised that OFO is offering two youth programmes this year and Rob has advised him that a couple of Macoun Club members are interested. Bob requested that OFNC consider sponsoring them. The Board felt such programmes were valuable opportunities to develop youth interest in nature.

The first programme is a new Canada jay birding weekend. Parents would have to drive the attendees and the cost of accommodation is \$42 per night for two nights. A funding decision is required immediately as the programme is the weekend of April 1. In an accepted departure from policy regarding budget decisions:

Moved by Bob Cermak, seconded by Annie Bélair, that OFNC agree to sponsor up to two Macoun Club members in the sum of \$150 each to attend the OFO Canada jay weekend.

CARRIED

The second programme is the Alan Wormington Memorial Camp, designed to give youth an immersive experience of nature activities in Algonquin Park. This programme runs from July 3 to July 10. The likely cost of approximately \$950 covers the week long programme including van rental. This will be put to the vote at the April BoD meeting.

4. Communications – Ken had circulated by email details of mail received

5. Treasurer's Report

Ann reported that the OFNC's file in the Business Registry of Ontario had now been updated. This is a new process that needs to be done each year. Ontario previously got the information from the federal Charity Return filing.

The six-month financial update as of March 31st, 2022 will be prepared and presented to the Board at the April meeting.

We have signed the contract with Dymon Storage at Lincoln Fields for a 5x10 storage locker starting March 2, 2022. The monthly rental of \$ 168.00 plus tax will be paid automatically from our bank account. Several people have access to the locker through a smart phone app and all activity is tracked. Both Safe Wings and Publications have already placed material in the locker.

6. Business arising from the minutes

a) Compound Microscope Donation – waiting for feedback

b) Approval of 2022 Research Grants

Moved by Owen Clarkin, seconded by Annie Bélair, that the 2022 research grants, as submitted to the board by Jeff Saarela, be accepted.

CARRIED

Jakob emphasised the need to report these studies. Annie advised that she and Jeff are currently working on some past summaries.

- c) Communications improvements – Catherine had circulated an email incorporating some proposals for improving Club communications (proposals attached). Diane L felt they were all good suggestions and particularly liked the idea of event reminders. Various suggestions were made for moving these proposals forward, including:
- asking each committee to look at the recommendations and see how they could contribute;
 - sending the recommendations to a wider group and asking them for input, especially those involved with social media;
 - involving media studies students at e.g. University of Ottawa although it was noted that continuity could be an issue and some concern was expressed about “outsourcing” communications.
- As in previous discussions on this topic, it was noted that it would be desirable to have someone to oversee communications and that responsibility should fall under the Education and Publicity Committee. Annie suggested initiating a recruitment push along the lines of those that had worked successfully for the Membership and Finance Committees. Jakob suggested starting by widening the net and engaging other people who are involved in communications. **Action: Jakob**

7. Committee Updates

- a) Awards – Eleanor: nil to report
- b) Birds – Bob reported that the rare bird data capture from OFNC sources upload to eBird is complete.
- c) Conservation – Owen reported on the continuing collaboration with Canadensis. There will be a guided tour of seed collection techniques this week. They have received an inquiry from Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists about interest in organising a bioblitz at Morris Island. Jakob believes OFNC has the necessary experience and expertise. Owen will respond favourably.
- d) Education & Publicity – no report
- e) Events – Jakob reported that the Committee met March 15. They are continuing to plan virtual meetings to the end of the Club year. If possible, they will revert to in person meetings in the fall but this will depend upon availability of the Neatby Building. They are planning for outdoor events for the spring and summer.
- f) Finance – Ken: nil to report
- g) Fletcher Wildlife Garden – Ted circulated the following report by email
“Work continues on seeds/plants for the June plant sale.
LED lights are replacing traditional fluorescent lights on grow shelves, and new power bars have been purchased and installed to prevent power cord overload. -
The newly purchased dehumidifier has been turned on in the Resource Centre to help prevent mold growth.
Interest in volunteering at the Fletcher has started to increase. To date 23 new people have made enquiries about volunteering. Interviews with potential new volunteers will begin closer to the opening of the Garden for the 2022 volunteer season.
The contract with Cityscape was renewed. The company is contracted to open and close the water system in the backyard garden and any maintenance requirements for the system.”

- h) Macoun Club – Diane K reported that they have held 3 recent field trips with 5 – 10 youth. They are keen to know when meetings can start at the Resource Centre. Eleanor hasn't heard anything from AAFC.
- i) Membership – Kerri: nil to report
- j) Ontario Nature – the semi-annual regional meeting is on April 9. Jakob cannot attend and asked whether anyone else is able to attend.
- k) Publications – Annie reported that the next T&L is at the printers. The new CFN book reviewer is Jessica Sims. She will be a member of the committee
Moved by Annie Bélair, seconded by Ken Young, that Jessica Sims be approved as a member of the Publications Committee. **CARRIED**
- l) Safe Wings Ottawa – Janette had circulated the following report by email:

Volunteer activities

- Spring 2022 testing a new volunteer software (phones, patrols, drivers)
- Naturehood/Britannia Woods Community House:
 - o Deb is recruiting strategic partners
 - o April 2022 to March 2023, to have 5 hires via Nature Canada grant, launch May 8, 2022
- uOttawa: 2 new mural projects (TBC Bioscience and surrounding corridors) & spring patrols start soon
- LRT study doing final report edits for review
- Volunteers – updating orientation, recent session March 13, new volunteer patrol kits prepared
- Patrols – starts end of March

Collision Data

- Started with late season finch eruption & owls
- Working to include photo upload with collision report

Annual Display & Specimens

- Storage – taking to Carleton U specimen bank & possibly send some for Queens Park MPP event
- Venue/Display – need ideas; covered trolley at Ron Kolbus Centre in Britannia or museum?

Events

- City of Victoria and Bird Safe Guelph in March by Willow
- Canadian Security Establishment (CSE) - April 21: GoC Green Initiatives (SW + 2 other parties)

- MPP Chris Glover Press conference/rally late March

Advocacy

- Investigations ongoing by Canadian Wildlife Service with witness statements regarding species at risk (200 Kent and KRP in Kanata)
- Looking for more volunteers (2nd Thursday of the month)

Rehab

- Avian Flu outbreak in NFLD and NS: [Avian influenza in wild birds - Canada.ca](http://Avian%20influenza%20in%20wild%20birds%20-%20Canada.ca)
 - o Spreading from east.
 - o Should not be a risk to people as the songbirds are generally not infected. Biggest concern is possible transmission to domestic birds.
 - o Waterbirds (gulls, duck, geese) most likely to have it.
 - o Symptoms are broad but birds acting strangely, neurological, swollen areas on face, sneezing, discharge are possible signs. Would need to be euthanized at WBCC. Speak to Anouk and Christina before sending anything to them with these kinds of symptoms. Coordinating with WBCC on how this will all play out.
 - o Phone volunteers to be advised of messaging for callers from public.

OFNC board

- Have moved some material into Dymon storage; need to buy shelves (used tables).
- Interested in using Volunteer Ottawa account.

Strategic Planning

- Anouk will be moving to Europe July 2022
- Workshopped ideas March 16 for knowledge transfer and continuity
- Issues: pool resources with WBCC and MOU (includes transport ideas when moved west of Kanata), more rehabbers, additional vet support, business location/downtown drop-off & pickup, volunteer resources (post-orientation training, engagement, burnout support), sustainability plan (funding, knowledge, leadership), media communication specialist (interviews/filming), outreach (presentations, contact tracking, networking)"

Anouk's move is going to have a very significant impact as she has been central to SafeWings activities. The Wild Bird Care Centre (WBCC) moving further out of town is also going to have an effect. SafeWings has a good team which is trying to work out how to step up. They are meeting to determine what areas need to be addressed first. Ann inquired about all the equipment Anouk has. Janette advised that WBCC may be able to accommodate and use some of it. Christina Young will continue with rehab. They are interested in finding another rehabber but it is demanding and requires certification and appropriate motivation. Bob inquired about the nature of the relationship with WBCC. Janette advised that there is no formal relationship but SafeWings might be interested in some sort of memorandum of understanding with WBCC.

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

Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Moore

Upcoming Meeting Dates

April 18, 2022

May 16, 2022

June 20, 2022

Appendix

1. Proposal for a committee to centralize Club communications

Proposal for a committee to centralize Club communications

The benefits would include: a central point for receiving/sending communications to members or the public, make sure things don't get dropped or missed, enable consistent messaging, and ensure we stay current with services/apps/platforms.

The committee could do the following:

- receive and forward emails, with a regular summary report (similar to postal box summary)
- maintain the web site
- maintain social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc)
- accept and create content for the web and social media
- pick up the postal box mail and forward the contents, with a regular summary report (current email summary)
- send out emails to members for events (currently done by Henry)
- send out reminders of the monthly meetings to members
- maintain our Zoom subscription (and any other domain or application subscriptions)
- send out press releases
- report to the Board - communications received and sent, new content, follow ups required, web and social media activity/engagement, etc.

It would consolidate activities that are currently spread out across various functions. It's a PR function. It wasn't a big deal in the old days but now we have many more avenues of communication.

Given our current setup:

- Do we have the ability to craft a public face and maintain consistent messaging?
- Do members or the public know how to contact us and do they know they'll get the right person and not be dropped or missed?
- Do we have stats on engagement with members through events and social media?
- Are we keeping up with technology?
- If we lose key people will there be a hole in our communications?

Catherine Hessian