

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

Chair: Jakob Mueller

Present: Catherine Hessian, Gordon Robertson, Ann MacKenzie, Annie Belair, Janette Niwa, Diane Lepage, Owen Clarkin, Kerri Keith, Ken Young, Elizabeth Moore, Bob Cermak, Ted Farnworth

Absent: Eleanor Zurbrigg, Diane Kitching

1. Approval of the Agenda - the Agenda was approved as circulated with the addition of:
6 b) Awards Night
2. Acceptance of Minutes from October 17, 2022
Moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Diane Lepage, that the Minutes of the October 17, 2022 meeting be approved. **CARRIED**
3. Business arising from the minutes - nil
4. Communications (circulated by email)
5. Treasurer's Report – Ann: nil to report
6. Issues for Discussion
 - a) Annual Reports – Elizabeth reminded Committee Chairs that Annual Reports need to be submitted for approval at the December 12 meeting. Ken agreed to collate the documents for the meeting.
 - b) Awards Night – The suggested date for Awards Night 2023 is April 1. Diane L will be looking for volunteers.
 - c) List of investments – Catherine & Ken had circulated lists of investments held in response to the decision previously made that lists will be provided yearly. Jakob inquired whether the provincial investments are bonds. Catherine confirmed that this is the case and noted that the range of investments that the Club is permitted to hold is limited. Ann commented that, where investments are not provincial bonds, they are usually GICs. Individual investments never exceed \$100,000.
 - d) Patronage update – Jakob clarified that the Club does not currently have a Patron. He reminded the Board that the Club's request that the new Governor General, Mary Simon, agree to be Patron was acknowledged last February but there has been no further response despite a follow-up email. Diane noted that it took over a year to get a response from the previous Governor General. Jakob suggested that, if we have heard nothing 6 months from now, it would be reasonable to ask for a status update
 - e) Nominations – Diane L reported that the Macoun Club has put forward a previous youth member for consideration as a Director. The Board questioned whether there is an age requirement for becoming a Director. Ken doesn't think there is anything about age in the Constitution. Jakob/Diane will follow up to assess whether the candidate would be a good fit.

A new Chair of Events needs to be found to allow Jakob to focus on other responsibilities. Something could be put in T&L but this is unlikely to be in time for the ABM. The possibility of separating the Chair from the Representative on the Board, as is the case for several other committees was discussed. The possibility of advertising on Facebook was mentioned but Jakob noted that most people active on Facebook are not members and he feels that it is important that the Chair has relevant experience.

f) Ontario Bill 23 – Jakob had circulated various documents regarding this Provincial Omnibus Bill which would make changes in a number of areas, including environmental protections. Wetland and Greenbelt protection would be reduced under this proposal. Jakob noted that some of the changes proposed in the previous Bill 66 were removed so the Government may respond to pressure. Ontario Nature has circulated two letters: the first opposing the Proposed Updates to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System and the second, drafted by the Greenbelt Alliance, opposing the Proposed Amendments to the Greenbelt Plan and the Proposed Amendments to the Greenbelt Area Boundary Regulation. There is a very limited opportunity for public input. Although the proposed amendments to Greenbelt protection are directed at the Toronto Greenbelt, it was felt that we should nevertheless be concerned and sign the letter opposing the Greenbelt changes as well as the one opposing the Wetland changes. OFNC would hope for support from other organisations in the Province if Ottawa was involved. Owen supported signing the two letters and thanked Jakob for his work on this issue. The Board agreed that the Club should sign the two letters. Jakob will continue to update the Club on progress in this matter. He commented that it was of note that other provincial organisations that are not usually very vocal are weighing in on this issue.

7. Committee Updates

a) **Awards** – Eleanor had circulated the following report by email:
-“the call for nominations for OFNC awards is open until Nov 30.
- so far, only one new nomination (for Service award) has been received
- committee chairs are encouraged to consider nominating worthy volunteers from within their committees
- Awards Committee will meet on Dec 8 to evaluate nominations”

The need for further nominations was emphasized.

b) **Birds** – Bob had circulated the following report by email:

“I will be retiring from Birds Committee at the next BC meeting January 30, 2023.

BC has added three members (see below).

The trees used to suspend OFNC feeders on Pine Grove Trail on Davidson Rd and along the Jack Pine Trail on Moodie Dr were blown down by the derecho storm. The Pine Grove feeder has been relocated at the same location but on the opposite side of the trail. The Jack Pine feeder was destroyed and due to felled trees another cannot be erected at the old location. NCC has provided another feeder, it will be installed along the Stony Swamp Beaver Trail west of the old Wild Bird Care Centre building next week. FYI, NCC has indicated that due to issues with bears at bird feeders on NCC property feeders should only be stocked with seed from December 1st through the end of April.”

Moved by Bob Cermak, Seconded by Diane Lepage, that Sheila Craig, Janet McCullough and Jennifer Bordeleau be approved as members of Birds Committee. **CARRIED**

Bob reported that an issue had arisen with respect to provision of birdseed by WBU. BC has an agreement with WBU whereby a discount is offered on sunflower seed for the OFNC feeders, including one of the two FWG feeders. Seed can only be purchased by designated individuals. Other seeds and sunflower seeds for the second FWG feeder are expected to be purchased by FWG. It had been suggested that a non-designated individual had recently purchased seed for FWG and there was concern that this was being used for both feeders. After some discussion, it was agreed that FWG will take on responsibility for both their feeders. They will explore the possibility of getting the same discount from WBU as BC.

Bob is retiring largely for health reasons. He has asked the Committee to think of a new Chair but has not approached any particular individuals. Bob advised that there is an upcoming BC meeting and he will raise the matter. He expressed concern about how the Committee would function if no one steps forward. The possibility of separating the roles of Chair and Board representative was discussed. Ken pointed out that at least one other committee does not have a permanent chair but has a representative of the Board.

Jakob expressed his sorrow at the loss of Bob from the Board.

c) **Conservation** – Owen reported the following:

One visit to Morris Island CA as part of the year-long bio-inventory project; leading a tour for the MFNC (who had originally invited OFNC to be part of this initiative), found some new species (e.g. Hackberry).

Canadensis Botanical Garden tour with Scouts Canada: showing how and why to plant native flora for children. Also led a small tour for adults, showing some adult enthusiasts how to collect and grow Black Spruce seeds. Part of both tours including showing habitats at Fletcher Wildlife Garden and discussing OFNC and what we do. A rare exotic plant was found naturalized during the Scouts tour: Dwarf Strawberry Bush (*Euonymus nanus*): would be 2nd site in eastern North America on iNat and 3rd known in eastern North America.

High Lonesome Nature Reserve Annual Monitoring

Meeting regarding the Alfred Bog proposal to become a provincial park (Lynn, Jakob, Diane) with Ontario Nature and OFNC. Ontario Nature also interviewed Jakob and myself regarding bog habitats in southern Ontario with a focus on Alfred Bog

Bill 23 (covered by Jakob under Item 6f)

Kingston group meeting; old forest Collins Bay threatened by development: Jakob and I met a concerned local regarding approaches to conserving this habitat.

Manotick Site Visit (Mud Creek Park): Trail proposal biodiversity survey

Kemptville Woodlot Conference invited talk (invited by RVCA) on Red Spruce in Eastern Ontario in February

The North Central Regional Plant Introduction Station (Iowa, USA; part of the USDA) contacted us regarding conserving a tree species which we have provided leadership regarding fieldwork, taxonomy, propagation, etc.: Rock Elm (*Ulmus thomasii*). There will be a virtual meeting with them after the American Thanksgiving.

Odd finding: an apparently wild White Oak was found near Reveler Conservation Area on Sunday at the club event. This is around 50km away from the nearest known next population.

Speaking of range extensions related to OFNC-Conservation activities, I wanted to congratulate Jakob and Annie on publishing a range extension article on American Hazelnut at Constance Bay, now published online and appearing soon in CFN. This resulted directly from a conservation hike (not expecting significant finding) at Torbolton Forest.

Planning for one invasive species detection project south of Ottawa over the winter: Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. This insect, which is a major threat to ecological keystone species Eastern Hemlock, was discovered at Grafton (near Cobourg) in summer 2022. We will do some light sampling with binoculars and zoom photography, focusing at sites near the St Lawrence River and along the north shore of Lake Ontario. This will be done with collaboration of the CFIA, whom we will inform of any positive results.

d) **Education & Publicity** – Gord reported that there is not much activity at the moment. Next week they will go out and put up winter stories and some more tree tags at FWG.

e) **Events** – Jakob circulated the following report by email:
-“Pelee trip planning for 2023 is underway
-Scouting of potential venues is underway (thanks Diane!)”

f) **Finance** – Ken: nil to report

g) **Fletcher Wildlife Garden** – Ted: nil to report

h) **Macoun Club** – Rob Lee circulated the following:
“As Diane Kitching is retiring from her position on the BoD, I am proposing Morgan McAteer as the Macoun Club’s new representative.

Morgan has been a member of the Macoun Field Club, and therefore an OFNC member, since 2011; she is now an OFNC member in her own right. Twice, as Macoun Club president, she has addressed the assembled OFNC membership at Awards Night events.”

(See discussion under Item 6 e) above)

i) **Membership** – Kerri: nil to report. Bob asked Kerri how many members OFNC has. Kerri responded that there are about 800 members who get emails and a few more who don't get them.

j) **Ontario Nature** – Jakob circulated the following report by email:

“The regional East meeting was held in Milford, Prince Edward County on 12 November. Representatives were present from Ontario Nature, Prince Edward County Field Naturalists, Quinte Field Naturalists, Kingston Field Naturalists, Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists, Friends of the Salmon River, Friends of Frontenac Park, the Lennox & Addington Stewardship Council, and OFNC (me).

Nature Canada representatives were present for the first 45 minutes to discuss efforts to designate a large area of Eastern Lake Ontario as a National Marine Conservation Area. Progress is being made and the outlook is positive, so more information is expected in the near future.

Several groups are involved in efforts to document, monitor, and control invasive *Phragmites australis* (Common Reed) in wetlands in their respective areas.

We are not alone in struggling with the return to in-person meetings. Many organizations are having difficulty finding a venue. The MVFN applied for and received a grant for equipment allowing them to run hybrid meetings (in-person and on Zoom). The PECFN attempted a hybrid meeting, which crashed in ~10 minutes due to a weak internet connection at their usual venue.

There is much concern about the potential impacts of Bill 23 (effectively discussed as a separate issue).

After the indoor meeting, the Nature Conservancy of Canada gave a tour of the newly-acquired MapleCross Coastline Reserve (on the Prince Edward County "South Shore") and discussed their efforts in the area.”

k) **Publications**: Annie circulated the following report by email:

“I'm currently very busy with T&L 57(1), January-March 2023; issue will probably be the biggest one in a while!

Link to newest CFN, 136(2), mailed to members and subscribers on Nov. 8

I've set up a meeting with Kerri and Lisa (our membership team), Ken, Karen Mclachlan Hamilton (T&L mailout coordinator) and Henry on Nov. 24 to set up a system for mailing T&Ls to new members

Since Dwayne will be in Ottawa for the upcoming COSEWIC meeting, the Publications Committee is having an in-person dinner-meeting on Dec. 3.

Jeff reported that Brent Patterson, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry, became CFN's newest associate editor in early October.”

l) **Safe Wings Ottawa** – Janette sent the following report by email:

“2 areas I want to address with the board:

- The suggestion of SW volunteers applying FF and insurance impact/conditions (see discussion below).

- Heads-up that we're still working on spending the website donation; the original contractor is going to be way too expensive, so looking at options

Communications

- Global Bird Rescue week Oct 3-9) – SW data to be submitted.
- Sign up Genius - review to be conducted on volunteer scheduling software to determine if needed; also going to pilot it for driver alerts.

New website – planned consultant too expensive (proposal is \$1500) – options: checking with universities to find student options, connecting with FLAP to get their designer, Webshark service.

Volunteer Activities

- Final volunteer training for the season is done – going to revamp material, includes emailing documents and links to videos to watch to be more self-guided then have Q&A session and connect with patrol mentor.
- Phone system – have approved budget and received quote from Ring Central and requested a demo.

Suggestion on ways to increase use of Feather Friendly included having a Safe Wings team do installation (seniors/disabled); concerns to explore: liability and related waivers and insurance requirements (university for students, OFNC for Safe Wings members) - limit to a certain height/ground floor, no more than up to first floor applications?

Rehab and Rescue

- Very busy first solo migration season for Christina is now over.
- October. intakes: 69 birds total (66 were collisions); Sept-Oct total is over 200 birds and year to date # is 693.
- Canotek Open House: likely a weekend in Jan/Feb timeframe – a good PR event.

Collision Data

- Ongoing entry, approx. 1,762 reports so expecting end year around 2000+ after contacting team to complete entry.
- Sept 24/25 was busiest weekend this year (kinglet migration)

Annual Display & Specimens

- Year end collection & consolidation request to be sent.
- For a volunteer to organize the annual display - we sent ~100 emails to listed volunteers who indicated interest for event planning and only received ~10 replies.
- Public display may not be a good idea again this year with current public health trends (RSV, flu, COVID) plus optics of the avian flu and water birds/raptors/etc. in the display.
- Agreed to a virtual display in 2023 (with live streaming?) and then offload 1-2 years of freezer specimens with a return to in-person display planned for 2024.

Events

- Canadian Federation of University Women - Ottawa branch expressed interest in a presentation on bird collisions. March/April usually 2nd Monday in afternoon - attended by 20-45; Janette interested and hopefully have Willow to assist.

Advocacy

- Algonquin College at early stage of building a leadership program; goal is to reach out to different areas on campus to tape or art cover high traffic collision corridors on campus and to create a sustainable group; working with horticultural group to understand where the birds are being found.
- Migratory bird laws changes - Federal investigation is ongoing for KRP and Kent; hoping outcomes include precedence to use in future cases.
- Bird Friendly Cities – Ottawa’s big gap is regarding keeping cats indoors so working to strengthen this with social media post engagement with the city for November launch.
- Concern over impact of Bill 23 and impact on wetlands/conservation as well as removal of influence on building exteriors – will share appropriate social media posts to lobbying.”

SW had been asked if they would put in Feather Friendly for low income and challenged people. After discussion, it was agreed that the insurance implications for OFNC would be unacceptable.

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

Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Moore

Upcoming Meeting Dates

December 12, 2022

January 10, 2023 (Annual Business Meeting)

January 16, 2023

February 13, 2023 (TBC)