

**Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club – Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Monday September 19, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.**  
**Minutes**

Chair: Jakob Mueller

Present: Elizabeth Moore, Eleanor Zurbrigg, Catherine Hessian, Gordon Robertson, Ann MacKenzie, Annie Bélair, Bob Cermak, Diane Kitching, Janette Niwa, Diane Lepage, Owen Clarkin, Kerri Keith

Absent: Ken Young

1. Approval of the Agenda – the Agenda was approved as circulated
2. Acceptance of Minutes from June 20, 2022  
**Moved** by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Bob Cermak, that the minutes of the June 20, 2022 meeting be accepted. **CARRIED**
3. Business arising from the minutes
  - a) Compound Microscope Donation – waiting for feedback. Nothing further has been heard about this item which will be removed from the Agenda going forward.
4. Communications – Ken had circulated, by email, details of communications received.
5. Treasurer's Report – Ann reminded the Board that the Club's fiscal year ends on September 30 and that any claims for reimbursement of expenses should be submitted immediately.
6. Issues for Discussion
  - a) Monthly Meeting Venue – the Club is not expecting to regain access to the Neatby Building, even if pandemic restrictions are relaxed. Many other clubs are also still doing virtual meetings. The Macnamara club is moving to a hybrid model. Jakob suggested waiting until at least January before trying to reinstitute in-person meetings. Janette suggested that the public libraries offer reasonably priced rental space. Diane L will start looking into possible spaces. It was noted that, depending upon the venue chosen, it may be necessary to invest in some audio visual equipment.
  - b) 2022-2023 Budget – On behalf of Ken Young, Chair of Finance, Ann presented the draft of the budget for 2022-23 prepared by the Finance Committee. Directors are invited to provide Ken with any modifications they consider needed and the revised budget will be approved at the October meeting. Ann mentioned that the actual deficit will not be as high as the projected deficit of about \$50k. Our experience has been that revenues are underestimated and spending is overestimated. Regardless, there is some concern regarding the size of the projected deficit and what this might mean for our future deficits. We will need to watch this new year carefully to determine if more spending restraint is required. The possibility of increasing membership fees, particularly the family rate, was discussed. Jakob expressed a preference for a membership drive rather than increased fees. It was suggested that any increase in fees should be reviewed in a year. Ann suggested, bearing in mind item 6a), that \$1500 be added to the Events budget for possible room rental.

c) Update on Bird Friendly Ottawa Committee - Ted reminded the Board that he had been approached by Nature Canada (NC) to become involved with an initiative to have Ottawa certified as a Bird Friendly City. Others involved include representatives from Safe Wings and the Wild Bird Care Centre, together with individuals with various backgrounds, including education and landscape design. The group has submitted a first draft of an application to NC who advised that the application is pretty close to allowance. Some of the points require some clarification. Support from City Hall is required. Council members may be busy because of the upcoming Election but it could also be an opportunity to highlight this issue. Ted has realised that the group assembled for this initiative could be a resource for various birding events. October 8 is World Migratory Bird Day and the group will try to put on an event at FWG. They plan to set up information tables and might also offer walks if they can recruit guides with birding knowledge.

d) Instagram for OFNC/FWG – Gord reported that Education and Publicity is setting up an Instagram account. They will make a start with pictures from FWG.

## 7. Committee Updates

a) Awards - Eleanor will ask Annie to put a call for nominations in the next T&L and will contact Kerri to get an email out.

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

“Chris Traynor has retired from BC. His contribution to BC, OFNC and Ottawa/Gatineau area naturalists has been remarkable. He will be missed at committee but will be available for consultation. We are talking to one individual who we hope will volunteer as Chair of the Bird Feeders Sub-committee. Two feeder support volunteers have also retired, we are talking to possible replacements.

BC now has nine committee members, we have invited five more area birders to join our committee.

BC will support the yearlong bio inventory of Morris Island CA by conducting a Morris Island bird survey in the summer of 2023.

After a long struggle I have finally been able to find someone who has provided sound information about birders' access to the Shirley's Bay causeway. "the causeway is the responsibility of the City of Ottawa and that OFNC needs to secure an agreement first with the City of Ottawa that is satisfactory to DND. Prior to the OFNC providing proof of such an agreement with the City which will require to be reviewed, DND will not be able entertain entering into an agreement for OFNC to access the mainland path at CRPTC." "Property and Facilities Manager, Real Property Services Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) / Government of Canada"

I will now try to find an appropriate person at the City of Ottawa to further this discussion.”

Bob noted that BC is catching up with Certificates of Appreciation.

He also asked whether the Board felt that it would be of interest to get reports for T&L from those who had attended the two camps that OFNC had supported this year. It was agreed that this would be desirable.

c) Conservation – Owen reported that they have started the Morris Island year-long inventory project. Ontario Power Generation and the Macnamara FNC are also involved. They plan to make at least 6, maybe 8-10, visits over the next year. The first took place in September (not July as previously reported). Approximately 60-70 people took part and they have already found some new species.

d) Education & Publicity – Gord reported that the Committee had met recently. They are planning to label some of the trees at FWG with a key linking to a database in English, French and Ojibway. Gord has a volunteer who could assist with the Ojibway labelling. It was agreed that this would be a desirable initiative but it was suggested that the Committee should consider consulting more widely with the Indigenous Community before proceeding. Several members of the Board noted that they had contacts who might be of value. Fall storyboards are going up to replace the late summer ones.

e) Events – Jakob reported that he is hopeful of getting some new Committee members. (See also Item 6a) above – Meeting Venue)

f) Finance – nil to report

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

- “Over \$10,000 raised by the FWG plant sale this spring. Again this year, we used a pre-order, pre-pay, curbside pick-up format
- Work was carried out on our bulletin boards (at the Resource Centre and the Baseball diamond) to make it easier to open them and post items. The plastic pane was replaced for the baseball diamond bulletin board to make it easier to see through.
- Fallen and hung-up trees has been a problem several times over the summer. The response to our request for help from Ag Canada has been very slow and in several cases non-existent. One of our volunteers will be taking a chain saw certification course. We hope to become less dependent on Ag Canada in the future
- The requests (via both e-mail, and voice mail) to several Ag Canada officials for bicycle racks for the Fletcher was ignored for most of the summer. Very frustrating to our volunteers and visitors.
- We had only two external organizations come to the Fletcher to carry out half-day work parties. This is very much fewer than normal
- New volunteer recruitment was steady but down from previous years due to a variety of reasons (problems with the Volunteer Ottawa website, miscommunications with potential new volunteers, persistent fears related to COVID). This summer we had five weekly work groups meeting at various days/times throughout the week.
- Ag Canada has eased their COVID rules that apply to use of the Resource Centre. The attestation of vaccination is no longer required. Masking is only required where social distancing is not possible. Sandy G who is in charge of booking the Resource Centre has been made aware of the changes.
- Ag Canada has requested we stop using “plastic” such as tarps and pool liner on the property. The request has been circulated to our work team leaders about the use of tarps and work has begun to take up pool liner that we have used in the past to stabilize pathways.
- Coon Tail (*Ceratophyllum demersum*) has been added to the list of plants of concern on the property. The growth of Coon Tail in the amphibian pond has gotten to the point where turtles have been seen struggling to swim in the pond.

- Guided tours were given to two groups this summer – as part of the Jane’s Walk weekend, and to a group from the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW). Gord has started giving tours to local sparks / brownie groups now that school is back in.
- The battle with Dog Strangling Vine continues. However, a walk around the property shows that where we have planted Snake Root (*geratina altissima syn. Eupatorium rugosum*), golden rod, (*Solidago spp.*) and wild raspberry (*Rubus carolinianus etc.*), growth of DSV is significantly reduced.
- Again this year, the Fletcher is the site of several scientific experiments in collaboration with local universities, including one where the weight gain of Monarch Butterflies that are feeding on different plants is measured.
- There is a growing concern about the “encroachment” of our neighbours to the south – Canadensis (Botanical Garden). Maps of what they propose for the future obviously include part of the Fletcher, and signage that has appeared also gives a false impression where their property ends.”

Diane noted that there is also another invasive plant in the pond.

With respect to the border with Canadensis, Catherine asked whether FWG has been surveyed. Diane and Jakob will see what they have in their records.

h) Macoun Club – Diane K reported that the Club has held its first indoor meeting since Covid. They have also had their first field trip of the season at Pakenham.

i) Membership – Transition plan: Kerri is unable to continue as Chair of the Committee for work-related reasons. Arthur Gladstone, a past president of Kawartha FNC, is interested in taking over. Kerri is prepared to keep dealing with email notifications and will continue to support Arthur.

j) Ontario Nature – the Fall Regional Meeting is on November 12.

k) Publications – Annie reported that the next T&L is at the printer and should arrive later next week. The Committee met on September 7. The new Book Review Editor is doing well.

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

**“We have 2 new volunteers who we would like to have join the Safe Wings Committee:**

- Tracy Clint Chapman – volunteering since 2020 including manning the phones and monitoring buildings and driving birds
- Nui Esser – volunteering since 2021 and is the lead for the volunteer application and will be taking over web site responsibilities in addition to supporting Social Media during a personal leave of another volunteer
- Both have been integral on support during the transition and will ensure they have an OFNC membership when approved.”

**Moved** by Janette Niwa, seconded by Annie Bélair, that Tracy Clint Chapman and Nui Esser be approved as members of the Safe Wings Committee. **CARRIED**

## **Transition**

- Rotating Chair: we will trial having the chair position rotate among committee members for the next 6 months, looking for new volunteer support with admin (invites, agenda etc.). Will ask for guidance on rotating chair from OFNC.
- Will establish a lead for each major category: Admin, Communication, Advocacy and Outreach, Events, Volunteer engagement, Rehab, and Monitoring/patrolling/bird management

## **Communications**

- Autumn Jordan and Nui will be handling social media while Amanda is away.
- September 15 *When Worlds Collide*: infographic shared FLAP and on social media.
- Nui is connecting with the web contractor for website redesign.

## **Volunteer activities/update**

- Fall Recruiting and Orientation: Several new members have been trained across a couple training sessions.
- Volunteer Software: All patrollers and drivers are encouraged to use Sign-up Genius.
- Exploring if we can text *Alerts* messages to drivers.
- uOttawa update: Michelle M and Michelle C are the new coordinators for the Bird Safe Campus project where the 2<sup>nd</sup> mural is completed.
- Deb still working on the OttawaU research proposal with ECCC; external funding for a research coordinator; locations for data collection include UOttawa, Carleton University and downtown.

## **Rehab and rescue update**

- There is now a location at the Nature Canada offices on Bank St Ottawa for temporary drop off of birds.
- Christina Aboud, who lives in the Glebe close to Anouk's is still willing to help with receiving / holding and storing birds once she is available in September.
- Willow is able to help with keeping downtown birds for the month of August.
- We still have access to the location on Elgin Street.
- We are still looking for regular drivers to shuttle birds from downtown to Christina at Canotek and to the WBCC.
- Duckling update: From May 24 to July 10, we took in 73 ducklings; 12 Wood Ducks and 61 Mallards. Holly's Haven took 19 and all have left, 2 were lost to predators, 10 have fledged and 34 went to Sandy Pines.
- New Central location: The provincial and federal permits are now in Christina Huppe's name. The official address on the provincial permit is Christina's office location on Canotek Road.
- Collision data: recorded 667 collisions to date.

### **Annual display/specimens**

- The 2021 birds will be displayed with the 2022 birds early next year.
- Will be emailing volunteers interested in event planning to be contacted for interest in organizing.

### **Events**

- World Migratory Bird Day: October 8 This event will be held at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. Volunteers are needed.
- Open House at Canotek Road facility: the group was in favour of having an open house to view the set up. Deb D will coordinate a date with Christina H. Sahar S has offered to help.

### **Advocacy**

- Soliciting new volunteers and reaching out to those who indicated interest in advocacy.
- The Migratory Bird Convention Act now prohibits unintentional killings of birds, which greatly helps us in our submissions for investigations. We are waiting to hear from ECCC on how this will play out.
- Gatineau is interested in adopting Bird Friendly Design Guidelines – team will reach out.
- City plan to trap and euthanize pigeons nesting on the Laurier St Bridge: Contacted the office of Councilor Catherine McKenney to express our objections to this method of pigeon control.
- OC Transpo will be pilot testing Feather Friendly on 25 of the “worst” bus shelters in the city. Because of accessibility requirements, they will only treat two sides. The front and left sides must be left clear for visually impaired riders. We will check the database to help them decide which are the most problematic shelters.

### **Bird Friendly Ottawa**

- Bird Friendly Ottawa draft application submitted and reviewed by Nature Canada contact – need to make updates on a few areas, but progress is good.

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

Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Moore

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### Upcoming Meeting Dates

October 17, 2022

November 21, 2022

December TBD (? December 19 or 12)