

Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club – Board of Directors Meeting
Monday, May 13, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.
Minutes

Chair: Jakob Mueller

Present: Ann MacKenzie, Annie Bélair, Janette Niwa, Elizabeth Moore, Eleanor Zurbrigg, Ted Farnworth, Owen Clarkin (from 8.30 p.m.), Ken Young, Gordon Robertson, Catherine Hessian, Jessica Sims, Katriina Ilves, Diane Lepage, Susan Lehmann

Absent: Kerri Keith, Derek Dunnett

1. Approval of the Agenda – the Agenda was approved with the addition of:
 - 2 i) Acceptance of corrected Minutes from March 18, 2024
 - 3 d) OFNC Book Club
 - 6 b) Relationship between OFNC and Bird Friendly Ottawa
 - 6 c) Bird themed banners for the Capital
2. Acceptance of Minutes from April 15, 2024
Moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Gord Robertson, that the Minutes of the April 15, 2024 meeting be accepted. **CARRIED**
- 2 i) Acceptance of corrected Minutes from March 18, 2024
It was noted that Jessica Sims and Katriina Ilves had been omitted from the list of those present at the March meeting. The March Minutes had been corrected to reflect their attendance.
Moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Eleanor Zurbrigg, that the corrected minutes of the March 18, 2024 meeting be accepted. **CARRIED**
3. Business arising from the minutes
 - a) Research Grants - deferred
 - b) Bug Day – Gord noted that OFNC has previously put out two tables with four microscopes. Fenja has provided slides and usually collects some live specimens on the day. It was suggested that a call be put out to the membership for people to assist with the microscopes. Diane will probably be there and can bring photos and live insects and a computer with insect pictures. Derek had suggested putting on some “bug” events after Bug Day although it was noted that there are fewer insects around in September. It had previously been agreed that OFNC will give \$1500 to support Bug Day.
 - c) Macoun Marsh – Jakob felt that the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation would be the best entity to become involved with in this initiative as they are already involved in the management of the Marsh. It is still not clear what amount of support from OFNC is being sought and exactly what the planned restoration involves. Diane offered to be the OFNC

contact and will ask Michael Leveillé for the name of a contact within the Foundation.

Action: Diane

- d) OFNC Book Club – Jessica has had 118 responses to her email with 85 members expressing interest and 33 saying they would not be interested. 68 members felt such a club should meet in person and 34 felt it should be virtual. The survey will run until June 15 with a reminder before then. FWG was felt to be the best in person venue. Ted will check the maximum capacity there. Registering was suggested to prevent overcrowding. Diane asked who would choose the books. Jessica felt she would be in the best position to do so as CFN book reviewer. She suggested looking at the past two years of Canadian books reviewed in CFN, picking 3 or 4 options and voting on a choice. **Action: Jessica and Ted**

4. Communications - nil

5. Treasurer's Report – Ken reported that the Articles of Amendment that the Club's lawyer has submitted to start the transition under ONCA have been accepted. The transition from Ann to Ken as Treasurer is going fairly smoothly.

6. Issues for Discussion

- a) Letter Opposing Changes to Conservation Authorities Act – Jakob had endorsed the Ontario Nature letter (appended) opposing changes to the Conservation Authorities Act. This had been circulated and approved by email and signed under the authority granted to Jakob.

- b) Relationship between OFNC and Bird Friendly Ottawa

Ted reminded the Meeting that Bird Friendly Cities is an initiative that was started by Nature Canada three years ago. The Bird Friendly Ottawa (BFO) group was created two years ago with a view to encouraging the City to adopt the criteria that would enable it to become a Bird Friendly City (BFC). Although the City meets many of the criteria, it is currently reluctant to declare itself a BFC, apparently having an issue with the requirement to take steps to reduce the number of bird deaths caused by roaming cats. It was noted that several other cities in Ontario, including Toronto, and across the country have been certified BFCs.

Three levels of affiliation with BFO have been defined recently (appended) with different levels of responsibility. Ted suggested that OFNC should become affiliated with BFO. Some concern was expressed that such an affiliation could make it appear that OFNC was supporting the City for efforts that it is not actually making, particularly as a number of the required criteria are being met by non-profit groups rather than the City. The general feeling of the Meeting, however, was that OFNC would be in a better position to advocate for bird friendly measures in association with BFO.

Moved by Ted Farnworth, seconded by Janette Niwa, that OFNC become a Community Partner and Special Advisor of the Bird Friendly Ottawa Team. **CARRIED**

c) Bird themed banners for the Capital – OFNC had been approached by a graphic designer who is planning to create bird themed banners for the capital. They are seeking advice to ensure that the representations of birds are accurate. The Board felt that this was a commercial venture outside the mandate of OFNC.

7. Committee Updates

a) Awards – Eleanor: nil to report

b) Birds – no report

c) Conservation – no report

d) Education & Publicity – Gord reported that they have given a number of tours of FWG to groups such as Scouts Canada. Two Jane’s Walks had been organised. A number of people have expressed interest in volunteering.

e) Events – Diane noted that she had created a poster detailing some of the Club’s requirements for volunteers and had displayed it at Awards Night. She had a response from a member interested in joining the Events Committee.

Moved by Diane Lepage, seconded by Annie Bélair, that Cheryl Soulliere be approved as a member of the Events Committee. **CARRIED**

f) Finance – Ann: nil to report

g) Fletcher Wildlife Garden – Ted reported that:

1. The outdoor volunteer season has begun. This year we have work groups on Monday morning, Tuesday afternoon, Tuesday evening, Thursday morning, and Friday morning.
2. The Jane’s walk at the FWG did take place last Sunday. The weather did not stop 30 visitors. Gord R, Sandy G, and several volunteers welcomed the guests and explained the activities carried out at the Fletcher
3. The FWG annual plant sale is now underway. Information of how to submit and pay for an order are found on the OFNC website
4. At the present time new volunteer recruitment has paused. All work groups have enough volunteers for the time being
5. The Back Yard Garden bird feeder is going to be moved to a location along the road leading to the Resource Centre. The feeder will continue to be filled during the summer months.
6. The large number of visitors to the Back Yard Garden is preventing grass from growing

h) Macoun Club – Susan circulated the following report by email:

“Macoun Club is continuing to run our weekly meetings and field trips and are back on schedule to what we were doing pre-pandemic. Currently we are getting enough new members finding us that we do not need to do additional promotion as we are pretty much at capacity.

While in the past there were more kids simply being dropped off at Macoun events, Rob has always invited parents to stay if they would like and as of late many more parents are choosing to do so. This makes the club more of a family club and increases the number of participants. While the additional number of participants can be challenging logistically and it sometimes changes the nature of the socialization, we are also benefiting from new volunteers and are continuing to adapt.

We have resumed the publication of *Little Bear* and are looking at switching from black and white to colour (similar to what T&L did) and so we are looking at the costs probably doubling from \$500 previously to around \$1000. During the pandemic we didn't draw from any of the income coming from the Camfield Endowment Fund, and they have accumulated. Income from the Fund was to be used to promote the Macoun Club and to enhance the program; it was emphatically not for "bricks and mortar." The OFNC was still responsible for routine expenses, including the printing of *The Little Bear*. In the past we used the funds for things like bus trips and hats and toques for the kids with the Macoun logo on them. Going forward we propose two new uses of the funds: one, to pay transportation costs such as leaders who have no vehicle to get to meetings or field trips (this was a use specifically approved by the Camfield family in 2010); and two, to pay for the added cost of colour reproduction for *The Little Bear*, as an enhancement of a routine OFNC expense."

Ann pointed out that the Camfield Fund cannot be used for these purposes per se but that money feeding into the Macoun Fund from the Camfield Fund can be used. In response to a question from Jakob, Susan advised that there are currently approximately 30 youth attending meetings and/or field trips.

- i) Membership – no report
- j) Ontario Nature – Jakob reported that the Regional Meeting had been held on May 4 at FWG. Participants had been shown around FWG and seemed to have been impressed. ON had send their thanks to OFNC for hosting the meeting and Jakob had thanked FWG for accommodating them.
- k) Publications – Jessica had circulated the following report by email:
"Next Pub. Committee Meeting: May 28th

Update on Discussion of CFN Financials:

The committee met on April 16 with Jakob and Ann in attendance to give us some fresh perspective on this discussion.

- We agreed that a large increase to the subscription rates of CFN could result in a significantly diminished subscriber base (as this has happened in the past). However, smaller increases for OFNC member print copies and for individual subscriptions are more manageable.
- We agreed there is also a risk of losing subscribers (particularly institutions) if we move to an online-only version of the journal. But, some other options were discussed to limit print costs:
 - o Have fewer issues in a year (go from four issues published to three)
 - o Have smaller issues (be more selective with the types of articles we accept)

- o Have smaller issues by moving some content to online-only (for example, some of the book reviews, News & Comments, etc.)
- Bill has updated the CFN website with an easy-to-find “Subscribe” section to make subscribing to the journal more accessible
- o We also discussed the possibility of having a “Subscribe” button that would allow new subscribers to pay right away through PayPal
- We also discussed extending the paywall on our website to 18 months or longer (thus, access to recent CFN archives would require a subscription)

Annie’s update on promotional materials:

- Based on a discussion of having inserts about the OFNC that we could include in old issues of T&L and CFN — to serve as promotional materials (not just for our publications, but for the OFNC in general)
- Annie has looked into designing this insert (but it would have to wait until she is finished with the July-Sept issue of T&L). She already spoke with the T&L printer and costs would be minimal: \$100 for 500 9”x4” “rack cards” (and not much more if we chose to print 1000).”

Jessica thanked Jakob and Ann for attending the April Committee Meeting.

Annie sought input on the use of the proposed inserts. She asked whether the Board thought the insert should be a traditional bookmark or a new style of insert with a QR code promoting the Club. A QR code with membership details could be put on the cover of T&L or on the membership page.

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

“Migration & Patrolling

- Has begun, a number of new volunteers have been trained
- Checking on options to park downtown at 200 Kent church – a small stipend?

2024 Duckling season

- Parks Canada to be encouraged to make locks more duckling /gosling friendly
- WBCC taking only Wood ducks & Mergansers
- Safe Wings created a plan for Mallards with a foster out near Winchester - 12 drivers signed up from SM ads

Better Impact Volunteer Software

- Renewal in July based active & inactive volunteers threshold

Advocacy

- Asked by ECCC to present at a Wildlife conference in Baltimore – have submitted an abstract (15-minute pre-recorded presentation if selected)
- Carleton U team presented their Carcass Persistence trials, to be conducted outside of any Safe Wings schedules therefore should not have any impact on our activities. Some of the concerns about the primary research were also discussed, needing clearer communication to support volunteers

- Waiting to see the new buildings (e.g. the Civic Campus, the new central Library) which have committed to using bird-friendly glass on their windows.
- Will be doing a campaign to document BF buildings (ties in with BFO)
- Ottawa City Council is considering implementing High Performance Development Standards; they are waiting for the province to implement a new building code before they vote. Safe Wings will initiate a campaign on social media prior to the vote asking people to lobby their councilor to vote to adopt them.

Events

- May 4: Jane's Walk downtown
- May 11: World Migratory Bird Day events at various locations
- June 1: Sandy Hill EcoFair (10-3) at Strathcona Park Adawe Crossing
- June 5: Department of Finance EnviroFair (10-2) 90 Elgin St.
- June 15: Carp Market"

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

Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Moore

Upcoming Meeting Dates

June 17, 2024 – in person at FWG

September 16, 2024

October 21, 2024

November 18, 2024

December 16, 2024

Appendices

1. Bird Friendly Ottawa Structure
2. Ontario Nature Letter opposing amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act

BIRD FRIENDLY OTTAWA STRUCTURE*

We are a community organization made possible by contributions of many people, from all walks of life. Everyone and anyone living in Ottawa or the surrounding area, including nearby First Nations, is welcome to participate in helping Ottawa to be a Bird Friendly City.

Bird Friendly Ottawa membership is organized into three tiers. Each tier comprises a vital part of our growing network! All membership is free and there is no contract or other requirements involved!

First, there are [Core Bird Friendly Ottawa Team members](#). These volunteers include representatives from organizations affiliated with the Bird Friendly Ottawa team who meet regularly and work on specific assigned tasks and events. Core Bird Friendly Ottawa Team members have voting privileges and generally take on more responsibility and involvement in organizing projects and programs. They may also act as liaisons between the Bird Friendly Ottawa Team and external groups. Core Bird Team members usually join by invitation, but the Team may also accept applications from individuals and organizations in the community.

Second, there are Community Partners and Special Advisors **of the Bird Friendly Ottawa Team**. Community Partners are organizations, clubs or businesses, while Special Advisors are individuals who are joining independently. Community Partners and Special Advisors are not expected to attend regular Bird Team meetings, and will only be called upon to participate as needed. For example, members of this tier may be invited to submit content to the Bird Friendly Ottawa group Facebook page or our website about a specific topic, to provide advice on organizing an event, or to help get the word out about ongoing programs and public education messages. Community Partners and Special Advisors are always welcome to bring forward ideas and feedback to the Bird Team by attending meetings. We suggest joining as a Community Partner or Special Advisor if you intend to contribute to the work of Bird Friendly Ottawa somehow.

In general, the third tier – General Membership – is the best option for newcomers and people who support Bird Friendly Ottawa but are unable to dedicate time or energy to actively participating. As a general member, you will receive updates from the Bird Friendly Ottawa Core and can still participate projects led by the Bird Friendly Ottawa Team.

We are always accepting new applications to become a General Member, Community Partner or Special Advisor of Bird Friendly Ottawa. No prior experience or qualifications are required – just be interested in birds and nature!

*Thanks to the Bird Friendly London group for sharing this model

May 6, 2024

The Honourable Graydon Smith
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
Whitney Block
5th Floor
99 Wellesley St.
Toronto, ON
M7A 1W3

Dear Minister Smith,

**Re: ERO No. 019-8320: New Minister's Permit and Review powers under the
*Conservation Authorities Act***

We, the **xx** undersigned organizations, strongly oppose the proposed regulation regarding the Minister's new permit and review powers under the *Conservation Authorities Act*. The proposed regulation, if passed, would enable the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry to override a very broad suite of permitting decisions issued by conservation authorities for activities prohibited without a permit. In such cases, rather than having permitting decisions informed by the deep local knowledge, technical expertise and watershed-health mandate of conservation authorities, they will be politically driven at the request of development proponents seeking to reduce their cost burden and proceed with otherwise prohibited activities regardless of risks.

We urge you not to proceed with the proposed regulation for the reasons outlined below.

New ministerial powers

Recent changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* came into effect on April 1, 2024. These include new ministerial powers to take over conservation authority permitting decisions for development activities requiring a permit, such as changing or interfering with watercourses and wetlands or undertaking development activities in areas under a conservation authority's jurisdiction (e.g., hazard lands, wetlands, river valleys, shorelines and inland lakes).

Specifically, these new powers (section 28.1.1) enable the Minister to:

- prevent a conservation authority from issuing a permit for a specified activity or class of activity;