

Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club – Board of Directors Meeting
Monday, April 14, 2025 – 7:00 p.m. on Zoom
Minutes

Chair: Owen Clarkin

Present: Ann MacKenzie, Annie Belair, Elizabeth Moore, Ted Farnworth (until 9.00 p.m.), Jessica Sims, Susan Lehmann (from 7.30 p.m.), Janette Niwa (until 9.00 p.m.), Jakob Mueller, Deborah Doherty (representing Education & Publicity), Bev McBride, Emilia Michaud (until 9.00 p.m.), Lisa Chamney, Katriina Ilves, Ken Young, Catherine Hessian (until 8.30 p.m. - after Item 6 c), Gordon Robertson (from 7.45 p.m.)

1. Approval of the Agenda – the Agenda was approved as circulated.
2. Acceptance of Minutes from March 17, 2025
Moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Janette Niwa, that the Minutes of the March 17, 2025 meeting be approved. **CARRIED**
3. Business arising from the minutes
 - a) Awards Night (April 12) recap – Owen reported that the evening had gone well and complimented Diane Lepage on organising the event. There were some minor issues with the new venue. There was not a very suitable background for photos of the award winners which should be addressed for next year. Some people, who may not have viewed the items before the nature quiz, felt that the items were difficult to see and some felt that there should be a more formal scoring system. Jess suggested that the Awards Night nature quiz could be maintained as a more informal event but that, in view of the current popularity of “trivia”, the Club should consider having a separate trivia evening. Jakob also reminded the meeting about the member photo night that had been held in previous years. **Action: Owen** will bring these suggestions to the next Events meeting.
4. Communications – Ken had circulated news of the retirement of Caroline Schultz, Ontario Nature's executive director. He also made the point that there are relatively few communications received by mail these days and suggested that other Board Members who receive communications by email should consider whether they should be circulated to the Board.
5. Treasurer's Report – Ken had circulated the following report by email:

“Current Financial Processing

No issues.

Six-Month Financial review

I have reviewed the financial records for the first half of our fiscal year (October 2024 through March 2025). The actual revenues and expenditures over this period can be compared to the same period the previous year, and to the current year's budget.

I look for changes in either of these comparisons that are "large". For my purposes, large means a difference that is both greater than \$1,000 and represents more than 10% of the base value.

Even with such a high bar, about half the line items are flagged. However, most of these reflect just timing differences. In one year expenses for an item are paid in March, in the next in April. Or all the revenues or expenses are lumpy – not spread smoothly throughout the year. For example, plant sale revenues are always earned in May.

That leaves a small number of items that are worth pointing out, because they do represent something new or changed. They are:

4202-4210 CFN Subscriptions

CFN subscription revenue is down by half, which reflects an actual decline in numbers. One reason is likely the lack of timeliness. Another is possibly increased library scrutiny, both as a result of the niche nature of the CFN and increased subscription rates. We don't know for sure.

5202 FWG Habitat

Expenses are up because of the bridge reconstruction. Most of the expenses were booked in FY2025.

5310 Birds Committee

The amount of bird seed purchased so far is down, presumably due to the NCC ban.

5315 Macoun Club

Expenses are down from last year because of the anniversary event held in FY2024.

5350 Conservation Committee

This is a new line item; it is used this year for the expenses of supporting an environmental assessment.

5670 Donations

We increased the MacSkimming donation for FY2025.

5710 Professional Fees

Legal fees are down this year, because we had legal bills in FY2024, related to the conversion to ONCA"

The decline in CFN subscriptions was discussed. Issues with timeliness and possible increased library scrutiny of smaller niche publications were considered. The relative importance of maintaining CFN as a long-term archive as opposed to the value of its immediate relevance was discussed. Catherine felt that the journal should be published according to a strict schedule. Katriina advised that the tardiness displayed by some authors and the difficulty of finding people to peer review articles made this impossible. They are working on catching up (The two most recent issues of CFN were published two months apart. See Item 6 k) Publications Committee report below). If a strict schedule was adhered to, the

issues would be smaller and/or fewer issues would be published and the subscription rate would have to be decreased. Owen wondered how other small niche journals function and whether they have similar problems. Some journals are known to have amalgamated or folded. Bev noted that other journals have gone on-line only. Jess advised that Dwayne had just told her that someone had bought 25 print copies that had included an article they had written. Gord wondered whether universities were still subscribing to print and Ken advised that they are.

6. Issues for Discussion

- a) Experiments at the FWG – Ted advised that, over last few years, they have had several inquiries from the University of Ottawa and Carleton University about carrying out experiments on the property. Some projects have gone ahead but this spring FWG has had two proposals about which they are concerned. One would be a study of the different types of pollen collected by different types of bees but would involve taking the bees back to the laboratory and ultimately sacrificing them. The other proposed trapping hummingbirds and taking them to the laboratory for behavioural studies. Even if the birds were ultimately released, it is unclear what effects this would have on their natural behaviour. The FWG Management Committee is opposed to this sort of experiment. FWG purports to be a haven for wildlife. Ted is planning to create an ethical questionnaire and if proposals are not intrusive they may collaborate but if specimens are to be taken off property or euthanised they do not wish FWG to be used. Owen agreed that, even if the proposals follow ethical guidelines, we wish to minimise harm to wildlife. Ted has put together a draft of the proposed questionnaire. Owen asked him to circulate it and the final version should go into the Director's Handbook.
- b) WMBD & Earth Day - Deborah thanked everyone from OFNC on behalf of Bird Friendly Ottawa for their help with WMBD. They will also be doing a joint Earth Day presentation.
- c) Pelee Trip Planning (May 6-10, 2026: Bus, Hotel, etc.) - Owen advised that this is in hand and they plan to have details finalised by the end of April.
- d) Twitter Update & Nature Nocturne – Jessica:
At the last Board meeting it had been suggested that we delete our Twitter (now X) account and move to e.g. BlueSky. It had subsequently been pointed out that deleting the account immediately would mean that the archive would be lost and that the ofnc Twitter (now X) handle would become available to anyone. It was suggested that a final post should be made directing followers to an alternative social media account. Gord says downloading the archive is difficult but he is working on it.
Jess drew the attention of the Board to the Nature Nocturne events at the Museum of Nature at which other clubs are showcasing themselves. Nothing is permitted to be sold there but activities could be organised. Ken suggested e.g. advertising our proposed trivia night. Gord wondered whether we should be targeting other areas e.g. trails where people interested in nature are already gathering.

e) Policies (Code of Conduct, Bequest, Standing Committees, Membership, Nominations of Directors)

At the February meeting, Ann had advised the Board that the Finance Committee was reviewing the existing policies and considering what new policies might be required resulting from the change from the old constitution to the new Articles and By-Laws. For this meeting five policies were presented for consideration.

Policy on Bequests – Finance Committee recommended that this policy be terminated. It was designed for the specific circumstances of the Czasak bequest in 2014.

Moved by Ann MacKenzie, seconded by Gord Robertson, that the Club's Bequest Policy be terminated. **CARRIED**

Ken suggested that a policy on spending in general, not solely regarding bequests, be created.

Code of Conduct – Finance Committee recommended that this code of conduct be terminated. It had been introduced to address a particular problem in the Club in 2011. It is difficult to mandate behaviour and most people were not even aware of its existence.

Moved by Ann MacKenzie, seconded by Gord Robertson, that the Club's Code of Conduct be terminated.

Following discussion, it was decided to keep the code and consider revisions. The motion was **WITHDRAWN** by Ann MacKenzie and Gordon Robertson.

Policy on Membership – The Finance Committee drafted this policy to elaborate on the section in the new By-laws on Classes and Conditions of Membership (4.01). It reflects our current practice and will need to be changed if there are changes to the fees or groups of members.

Moved by Ann MacKenzie, seconded by Lisa Chamney, that the Club adopt the Membership Policy. **CARRIED**

Policy Concerning Standing Committees – The Finance Committee drafted this policy to elaborate on the section in the new By-Laws on Committees (6.08). It reflects our current practice.

Moved by Ann MacKenzie, seconded by Jakob Mueller, that the Club adopt the Standing Committees Policy. **CARRIED**

Policy for Nominations of Directors – The Finance committee drafted this policy to set out a procedure for nominating directors to the Board. This is a change from our past practices.

Moved by Ann MacKenzie, seconded by Jessica Sims, that the Club adopt the Policy for Nomination of Directors. **CARRIED**

7. Committee Updates

a) Awards – Bev had circulated the following report by email:

“Awards Night was a success! Thank you to everyone who pulled it off, and who came. Our next steps will be to contribute write-ups for T&L and CFN. Eleanor will coordinate with Annie B regarding the T&L input”. Bev thanked Diane Lepage and her team in particular.

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

- “we've been contacted by a group of retirees to provide some bird related lectures in the fall. This is a series of 6 lectures and we will be doing that.
- we're still working through the Shrike database transcription of the checklist data from paper to eBird
- we're organizing a face to face session for the team - we're all going to go birding together in early May (very excited about that).
- We submitted the Land Access Permit to the NCC for access to the Shirley's Bay causeway.
- working through regular actions on our plate.

Moved by Emilia Michaud, Seconded by Jessica Sims, that Pilar Bryson be approved as a member of the Birds Committee. **CARRIED**

c) Conservation – Jakob had submitted the following report by email:

“Owls / Bad Birding Behavior: -There are now two dead Great Grey Owls from the area on iNaturalist

Road Mortality:

-The City of Ottawa previously promised to install wildlife fencing on Roger Stevens Drive the next time road improvements were made. The understanding at the time was that this meant the next time it was repaved. It was repaved last year without the installation of fencing. The answer from the city was that road improvements now means road upgrades, as in, if the road were ever widened.

Post-derecho habitat management:

-Owen had some success flagging conifers in Pinhey Forest to prevent "cleanup" efforts from destroying natural seedlings

Rural deforestation and biodiversity loss:

-Underscoring the urgency of documenting everything possible, a ~250-year old Swamp White Oak (*Quercus bicolor*) in a farmer's field south of Ottawa was cut down over the winter for no apparent [good] reason. As you may recall, this population was only recently discovered and has been mapped well thanks primarily to Owen (south of Winchester).

This could have very easily been wiped out before it was documented. It raises questions about what else we have lost without ever knowing about it. It matters for an understanding

of natural history, regional ecology and [potentially, hopefully] future restoration efforts. (In other words, we barely know what this place is "supposed" to look like.)"

d) Education & Publicity

Moved by Gord Robertson, seconded by Ken Young, that, pending confirmation of Club membership, Michelle Michichiuc and Nora Lee be approved as members of the Education and Publicity Committee. **CARRIED**

Gord, Deb Doherty, Michelle Michichiuc and Ryan Wong had attended the Regional Science Fair. Gord noted an increase in participation by francophone students. The judges identified 7 excellent projects but had to limit OFNC prizes to two English and two French presentations.

e) Events – Owen advised that there are lots of events coming up but they are finding it difficult to get leaders.

f) Finance – Ann advised that there was nil to add to Ken's report above

g) Fletcher Wildlife Garden – (see 6a above)

h) Macoun Club – Susan noted the participation of the Club in Awards Night and particularly that of the Macoun Club's President who gave an excellent speech.

i) Membership – Lisa: nil to report

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

"-Regional meeting held Sunday April 13 at Elbow Lake Environmental Education Centre (in the Frontenac Axis, near Perth Road Village, north of Kingston).

-n.b. in 2008 the OFNC contributed \$100K towards the purchase of this site, a joint venture between Nature Conservancy of Canada and Queen's University Biological Station.

-Attendance from KFN, MFNC, MVNC, Friends of Stittsville Wetlands, Quinte FN, PECFN, L&A Stewardship Council, Friends of the Salmon River, Friends of the Napanee River, QUBS, A2A, Turtles Kingston (and OFNC).

-I highlighted the struggle with unethical birding practices to a sympathetic audience. I also noted rampant deforestation in rural areas, unabated road mortality on rural roads, and the successful "overturning" of a dubious developer-hired environmental consultant's report with a third party report.

Of note from the meeting:

-Volunteer postings via the "Nature Network" advertisement are successful way to get work parties for things

-Back issues of ON Nature and Seasons are being digitized and will soon be available online (if they aren't already)

-The Ontario Nature AGM is virtual on June 18th

- If we ever have a GIS project, a special rate is available for member groups
- Youth Sponsorship costs are now much higher, a full ride for one youth is now \$1000”

Jakob noted that some other clubs within Ontario Nature are having issues filling board positions and some have a very elderly composition.

k) Publications – Jess had circulated the following report by email:

- CFN issue 138(2) published online: <https://www.canadianfieldnaturalist.ca/index.php/cfn>
- CFN at April's monthly meeting: Jess did a short talk to let members know that issue 138(2) is out online and also to promote issue 138(1) (with a free giveaway of print copies). She again encouraged OFNC members to register for their free online CFN accounts
 - o However: our web manager said that only about 10% of new OFNC members have registered for CFN accounts lately
 - o Any way to share how to register with new members right when they join?
- CFN catch-up: in Ken's latest financial review of CFN, he noted that in order to get caught up, we need to publish an issue within 3 months of the previous one. And, we're getting there! Issue 138(1) published online January 17 (2025). Issue 138(2) published online March 26 (2025). Time between issues 138(1) and 138(2) = 2 months and 9 days!!
 - o What's helping? streamlining the editorial process to get articles through quicker
- CFN more media attention! We were approached by a reporter at bioGraphic magazine, an online magazine published by the California Academy of Sciences, one of the largest natural history museums in the world. She is pitching an article to her editors based on the study we published in 138(2), "Wood Frog (*Lithobates sylvaticus*) skeletogenic plasticity in anthropogenic habitats".
- T&L April–June 2025 issue is out!!! (I received my copy last week)
 - o Check out that mug shot on the cover!!
- T&L July–September 2025 deadline for materials/articles is May 1st

OFNC Book Club

- Current book: *Dispersals: On Plants, Borders and Belonging* by Jessica J. Lee (**Canadian author!!)
- Blog posted today: <https://ofnc.ca/uncategorized/ofnc-book-club-spring-pick>
- Next meeting: Tuesday, May 27 at 7 p.m. (on Zoom)
- No speaker booked yet for next meeting; Jess will start researching next week
- Our next meeting will be the last one before taking a break for the summer. The book club will return in the fall
- After the May meeting, Jess will send out an 'End of Year' survey to book club members to gauge how their experience has been so far”

Jess wanted to commend the CFN publishing team on getting the last two volumes out just over two months apart and also Annie on the current T&L.

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

“Rehab Plans

- Ovenbird in care for 6 months now, to be released in spring
- 1st ever Merganser from OC Transpo train collision
- Now have volunteers for food prep and cleaning cages
- Upcoming duckling season – to set-up care same as last year

Patrolling

- Patrolling to start soon – 2024’s first window collision was Apr 10
- Will have bird tag and business cards shortly
- 4 orientations sessions completed, area leads to contact volunteers

Phones

- Need more volunteers – will do SM posts and update website

Social Media/Comms

- Agreed to close X/Twitter account and open Blue Sky
- Need to have terms for SW email accounts and have access during/after volunteer terms

Advocacy

- Looking at tools for engagement/petitions for short-term use
- Letters of non-compliance have been issued so remind patrol volunteers that is asked to leave a property they should do so
- Need to monitor partially addressed 200 Kent to compare treated vs not areas and look into “due diligence”
- Patroller pictures need to be 1 of bird to ID and 1 with identifiable building
- HPDG – many buildings didn’t follow guidelines exactly for markings and need to be monitored for success and follow-up –
- City hired a Wildlife Coordinator – TBD how this supports birds & SW

Building Assessments:

- 1st one done & invoiced!

Carleton University

- Have a new student doing same projects this year (monitor & carcass persistence)

New Business

- Inquiry about birds provided to Indigenous groups (we are connected with FLAP to get clarification on process) and other groups (looking into requirements)
- Options for Indigenous engagement – teams are open to it but insufficient resources to create a project”

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

Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Moore

Upcoming Meeting Dates

May 12, 2025

June 16, 2025 (in person at FWG)

September 15, 2025

Appendices

1. Policy on Standing Committees
2. Policy on Nomination of Directors
3. Policy on Membership

Appendix 1

Policy on Standing Committees

Approved by the Board of Directors on April 14,2025

The By-laws of the Club state that:

6.08 Committees

The Board may from time to time appoint any Committee or other advisory body, as it deems necessary or appropriate for such purposes and, subject to the Act, with such powers as the Board shall see fit. Any Committee Member may be removed by the Board. Unless otherwise determined by the Board, a Committee shall have the power to fix its quorum at not less than a majority of its Members, to elect its chair and to otherwise regulate its procedure. Notwithstanding anything else in this By-law, if the Corporation creates an Audit Committee it must comprise one or more directors, and the majority of the committee must not be officers or employees of the Corporation or of any of its affiliates.

1. Policy

A standing committee may be established by a motion of the Board of Directors at a regular meeting of the Board. The Terms of Reference of the committee will also be approved by the Board of Directors.

Every committee will have a director representing it on the Board which may or may not be the Chair of the committee. Each committee will elect its own chair.

Every February, the Board will approve the membership of each committee. Any members added to a committee during the year must be approved by the Board. Members of a committee must be members of the OFNC. The Treasurer must be a member of the Finance Committee.

Each committee will determine its activities and required budget for the next fiscal year. This information will be compiled in the budget presented to the board in September and approved by the board in October.

Committees will conduct their activities according to their Terms of Reference and their approved budget plan.

Appendix 2

Policy for Nominations of Directors

Approved by the Board of Directors on April 14, 2025

1. Purpose

The Policy for Nomination of Directors ensures that the nomination process is transparent and inclusive, allowing members to have a say in the leadership of the organization.

2. Procedure

No later than the April meeting of the Board of Directors, the Board will appoint a person to chair an ad hoc Nominating Committee. The Chair will report to the Board but does not have to be a director. The Chair will then appoint at least two other members to the committee, all of whom must be members in good standing in the OFNC.

The Nominating Committee will arrange for a notice in the July issue of *Trail & Landscape* asking for interest in being a member of the board. It will provide a brief description of the role of a director and request information on the previous history of the person with the club, specifically what committee they might represent. In August or September, a similar email will be sent to members soliciting interest by a specified date. Potential candidates will be contacted by a member of the Nominating Committee to ensure that there is a good potential fit should that person be elected. In the September/October period, the members of the Nominating Committee will contact the current directors regarding their intention to stand for re-appointment.

At the November board meeting, the chair of the Nominating Committee will present a list of potential nominees to be put before the members at the Annual Business Meeting, including if the person could represent a committee on the board or would be a Member-at-Large. It is possible that there will be more nominees for directors than positions available (a maximum of 20). Upon approval, this list will be posted with the other material for members' consideration and voting at the ABM. The Nominating Committee will determine what information about candidates should be provided to the members to enable an informed vote.

Appendix 3

Policy on Membership

Approved by the Board of Directors on April 14, 2025

1. Membership

All members are entitled to

- Participate in events
- Receive Trail & Landscape
- Receive monthly emails on activities
- Vote at the annual meeting and any Special Meetings
- Hold office in the OFNC (except dependent children)
- Access an electronic copy of the Canadian Field-Naturalist journal
- Receive a print copy of CFN for an additional fee

2. Membership Categories and Fees

Individual	\$40
Family	\$45
Student	\$20 (enrolled full-time in college or university)
Macoun Club	complimentary (see below)
Honorary	complimentary (see below)

Only individuals can be a member.

Organizations may pay the equivalent of an individual membership fee to receive a copy of T&L. At the discretion of the board, some organizations such as sister naturalists' clubs, may receive complimentary copies of T&L.

Any change to the schedule of fees shall be approved by the Board and this policy will be updated to reflect the new fees.

See Director's Handbook 'A-5.3 Change to Membership Calendar' for a description of the renewal process and calendar.