

Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club – Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, December 16, 2024 – 7:00 p.m. on Zoom

Minutes

Chair: Jakob Mueller

Present: Ann MacKenzie, Annie Bélair, Diane Lepage, Elizabeth Moore, Bev McBride, Ted Farnworth (until 9.00 p.m.), Ken Young, Lisa Chamney, Jessica Sims, Catherine Hessian, Susan Lehmann, Owen Clarkin, Gordon Robertson (until 9.00 p.m.), Katriina Ilves, Janette Niwa, Emilia Michaud

1. Approval of the Agenda – the Agenda was approved as circulated, with the addition of:
6 d) ABM
2. Acceptance of Minutes from November 18, 2024
Moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Bev McBride, that the Minutes of the November 18, 2024 meeting be approved. **CARRIED**
3. Business arising from the minutes
 - a) Research Grants – Owen has spoken with John Prescott. They are hoping to get a proposal out before the holiday break and make a start on the programme in January
4. Communications - nil
5. Treasurer's Report – Ken gave the following report:

The draft financial statements were circulated to directors on December 14 for review. These statements include:

- a Statement of Financial Position (page 2). This is usually referred to as a balance sheet.
- a Statement of Operations for the General Fund (page 3), internally restricted funds (page 4) and externally restricted funds (page 5). These are usually referred to as profit and loss statements.
- a Statement of Cash Flows (page 6).

The Club ended the 2023-24 fiscal year (October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024) in a good position. Our Fund Balance (net assets) rose by \$12,482, to \$1,543,912. Our net revenue this year was \$12,841. The following points stand out:

- The General Fund had significantly reduced revenues and expenses simply because the Pelee trip was not conducted in 2024.
- Another thing that didn't happen was a fourth issue of CFN. Since each issue of CFN costs the Club a net \$5,000 or so, this helped our bottom line, but not for a good reason.
- Research grants did not happen this year either, again reducing our deficit for a not good reason.

- We made an additional \$10,000 donation to the Ontario Federation of Nature to support a land purchase - a good reason!
- Among the restricted funds, once again the Fletcher Wildlife plant sale increased revenue, by almost \$5,000. However, their expenses were also up, since they made a one-time purchase of new grow lights.

After the report was given, there was a line-by-line discussion of the draft, focussing on the statement of operations of the General fund.

MOVED by Ken Young, seconded by Ann MacKenzie, that the Financial Statements be presented for consideration and approval by the Members at the ABM. **CARRIED**

The Board agreed that Ken can now finalise the draft and forward the financial statements to the accountant who will remove "DRAFT" from the pages.

6. Issues for Discussion

- a) Annual Committee Reports – Elizabeth asked whether adding to the rather brief Publications report might be appropriate. Jessica will give this some consideration. Ann asked Owen whether the independent environmental evaluation of Riverwood Park that OFNC funded for the Hunt Cub Community Association should be mentioned as it has been suggested that this may influence the development proposal. Owen will consider this but feels that it may be better to wait until it is known whether the report did actually have an effect on the proposal. It was agreed that reporting the launching of the OFNC Book Club should properly be included in next year's reports.

Moved by Emilia Michaud, seconded by Gord Robertson that the Committee Annual Reports be accepted with minor amendments as discussed. **CARRIED**

- b) Awards Nominations - Bev had circulated the Awards Committee report with four recommended nominees for awards for 2024, and rationales for their award.

1. **Moved** by Bev McBride, seconded by Emilia Michaud, that **Jessica Sims** be approved as Member of the Year. **CARRIED**
2. **Moved** by Bev McBride, seconded by Annie Bélair, that **Aaron Hywarren** be approved for the George McGee Service Award. **CARRIED**
3. **Moved** by Bev McBride, seconded by Diane Lepage, that **Janette Niwa** be approved for the Mary Stuart Education Award. **CARRIED**
4. **Moved** by Bev McBride, seconded by Gord Robertson, that **Ann MacKenzie** be elected as an Honorary Member of the Club. **CARRIED**

Full citations will now be prepared. Jakob will notify the recipients. This report is confidential until the President has notified all the recipients of their award.

- c) Review Investment Holdings - Catherine had circulated a list of the Club's holdings in line with the duty of the Board to be aware of the companies in which the Club is investing. Catherine invited inquiries and opinions at any time.
- d) ABM 2025 – The ABM will be held January 8, 2025 by Zoom. Ken suggested that the Nominations for the Board of Directors should precede the Committee Annual Reports on the Agenda. Diane asked Lisa to send an email reminder to the membership a couple of days before the ABM. It was agreed that a practice run through for those speaking at the ABM should be held. **Jakob will arrange a date.**

7. Committee Updates

- a) Awards – (see also 6 b above) Bev noted that only four award nominations had been put forward by the Committee and expressed some concerns about the process:
 - 1. The Committee is not receiving many nominations. They need ideas for getting more members to participate in nominations.
 - 2. They are finding that it is more and more difficult to be aware of activities that people are undertaking.
 - 3. They feel we need to rekindle enthusiasm for recognition of peoples' efforts.
 Owen agreed that we need to do more to recognise people operating both in urban natural history areas and in rural areas. The idea that we need to expand our geographical area of interest was discussed.
- b) Birds – Emilia reported that the Christmas Bird Count has just been conducted in Ottawa/Gatineau with Bernie Ladouceur organising the count in Ottawa in collaboration with the Club des ornithologues de l'Outaouais (COO). The results are being compiled. Emilia had circulated a note about the statement they have prepared about the removal of the bird feeders on NCC property. It has already been posted to the Facebook group but she wants know what else to do with it. Jakob suggested reviewing it next month with any feedback at which point it should probably be put on the website.
- c) Conservation – Owen reported that his tour of Gillies Grove had been well attended. It was intended to raise awareness of the threat to the high-quality habitat old growth forest by development of an adjacent area. Owen reported a number of positive interactions. He has also been alerted to threats from housing development to an unprotected high quality area on the Quebec side.
- d) Education & Publicity – no report
- e) Events – Jakob: nil to report
- f) Finance – (see Items 5 and 6 c above) – nil else to report
- g) Fletcher Wildlife Garden – no report

h) Macoun Club – Susan reported that the Club was continuing with its regular events.

i) Membership – Lisa had circulated the following report by email:

“Membership has updated the Membership & Donations web page & FAQ (with thanks to Jess, Janette, and Annie!). This includes gift memberships, which will support the holiday promotions. T&L label printing has been delayed due to postal strike.”

j) Ontario Nature – Jakob reported that ON had tried to send out an action alert regarding the Provincial Government’s passing of an omnibus bill a couple of weeks ago which included the removal of the requirement for an environmental assessment for Highway 413 but there was insufficient time to respond.

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

- We held our annual in-person dinner on November 29 at the Lansdowne Milestones
- In the new year, Dwayne will organize a training session with current Associate Editors. The goal is to help streamline the editorial process.
- T&L has a new font! It is “Segoe” and the change was made for accessibility reasons. The committee recommended a small blurb go in the next issue of T&L about the font change
- Canada Post strike has affected distribution of printed copies of publications
- We are monitoring closely subscriber reactions to new (increased) rates of CFN. So far Eleanor has noted only two cancellations.
- There is a full set of archived CFNs at Fletcher that might need to be moved; they’ve gotten a bit mouldy with the greenhouse-like conditions at Fletcher for the plant sale, so we talked about moving them somewhere else; there’s concern about ‘hiding them away’ in storage as they are meant to be publicly accessible copies for people to read
- The next Publications meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2025

Dwayne’s Report on CFN:

137(4)

- print copies sitting at mailer, for some time, just before or around the time Canada Post labour disruption began
- mailing is imminent although there is probably a huge backlog at Canada Post

138(1)

- seven manuscript (ms) galleys (62 journal pages) have been produced; 1 final, another author (AU) review received yesterday and ready to be finalized
- Amanda (Assistant Editor) and Dwayne are reviewing the other 5 ms and layout person Robert is making corrections as required prior to the galley’s being reviewed by the AU
- 18 page galley for Book Reviews and New Title (BR & NT) received Saturday
- 138(1) currently sitting at 80 pp, with a minimum number of journal pages being 88 because of spine thickness requirements
- tribute by Joyce Reddoch for Allan Reddoch is in final stages of edits before being sent to Robert for layout
- Amanda and Dwayne have reformatted the OFCN committee reports, including Treasurer’s report, from the January 2024 ABM and the Awards Notice (presented April 2024)

- awaiting the docx version of the January 2024 ABM draft minutes to ensure formatting is in compliance with CFN style
- discussions on the Fletcher Award for volume 137 have begun; to be added to the News and Comment, which Amanda is compiling
- with the tribute, ABM draft minutes, committee reports, awards notice, and N&C, will have sufficient pages to complete 138(1)
- will however, not be published online by the end of December 2024 because galleys still need to be reviewed by AU and for the AUs to return the copyright/AU order form before pagination can be finalized

138(2)

- BR & NT have been received from Jess
- one ms currently at formal copyediting moved from 138(1) to 138(2)
- another ms is at formal copyediting
- another ms has been accepted by the Associate Editor (AE), to be confirmed by Dwayne

Other manuscripts in the process

- 16 revisions of manuscripts have been received
- another revision returned and Dwayne sent it for AE's opinion
- 30 manuscripts are undergoing revision after the initial Editor-in-Chief (EiC) decision was made; 13 of which are from 2020 and 2021
- for 4 of these, Jeff Saarela also did initial EiC decision
- new process to ease some of Dwayne's workload for those ms which need major revision or are nearly ready for formal acceptance is being tried with a few AEs
- still some confusion about roles of AE's and use of OJS, including Dwayne's discovery of AE's making initial EiC decision with no automatic OJS or email notice being sent to Dwayne
- a teleconference with AEs is being planned for the new year to brainstorm and consider other options to streamline the review/acceptance process
- to be held before the next Publications Committee meeting scheduled for 3 February
- peer-review and AE's recommendation completed on 2 manuscripts and are awaiting EiC initial decision
- 3 reviews completed on another manuscript for which Dwayne is the AE because of the manuscript's topic (molluscs)
- 6 ms under initial review by the reviewers requested by the assigned AE
- 1 ms rejected 5 December, lack of vouchers and expert confirmation of tentative identifications from a bioblitz type study
- Dwayne has yet to assign himself as the AE on 1 ms received 7 Dec because of the subject (bird parasites)
- still no response from AU on a ms submitted in January but it was incomplete/not acceptable as submitted; the author has not responded to multiple requests to fix it
- total 24 new submissions or inquiries about submissions so far this year, including one to which Dwayne will assign himself as AE from an initial inquiry in 2021

Associate Editor with expertise on plants – still only have Jeff; Jeff did suggest someone after last publ. committee meeting

AE with expertise on mammals – Dr. Graham Forbes did suggest a few names when he resigned as AE (22 October)

Dwayne asked 2 COSEWIC members while at the COSEWIC meeting in Ottawa if they'd be interested in becoming AEs; 1 declined (again) and the other is still considering

- Dwayne wishes everyone a Merry Christmas!

Holiday Promotional Campaign (as discussed at November Board meeting):

- the goal: to promote OFNC memberships as a great holiday gift idea
- a group including Janette, Lisa, Jess, and Annie led this initiative, with assistance from Gord and Nina
- Janette designed an ad and a custom banner for the website; Lisa updated the memberships/donations page with new copy, including a mention of gift memberships
- where did we promote: December events email, OFNC Facebook page, OFNC memberships/donation web page, OFNC home page (on the banner)
- we have also created a plan for holiday promotions for next year, to start earlier (summer) so we can include something in Oct-Dec. T&L
- also for next year: creating an OFNC Facebook business page (in addition to our Facebook group page), so we can run Facebook ads
- next steps: in January we will look at membership numbers in December to see if our ad campaign contributed to larger than average membership purchases

Book Club:

- we are currently reading *Bitch: on the Female of the Species* by Lucy Cooke. The topic/theme explores gender biases in evolutionary biology.
- our next meeting will be on Zoom (online) on Tuesday, January 14 at 7 p.m. — so far we have 30 people registered to attend.
- Jess has just confirmed a very exciting guest speaker for the meeting, Dr. Lauryn Benedict, of The Female Bird Song Project — an initiative involving citizen science (like e-bird) to try and collect data on female bird song. Female bird song was long neglected in ornithology until many women researchers started paying attention to it. I will be promoting this speaker in promotions for the next book club meeting over the next month.
- Interest in the book club continues to steadily increase, with the current mailing list now including 82 OFNC members."

Jakob asked whether the Publications Committee has discussed improving the submission process for authors as concern has been expressed about the length of time to publication. Jess advised that this has been discussed and that they are hoping that reviewing the entire editorial process will help.

- I) Safe Wings Ottawa – Janette reported that Feather Friendly has been installed along the walkway between l'École secondaire catholique de l'Innovation and Collège La Cité. She also confirmed that the Museum of Nature will host their display next year on the equivalent date in spring break as this year.

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

Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Moore

Upcoming Meeting Dates

January 20, 2025

February (TBC)

March 17, 2025