

# The Canadian Field-Naturalist

## Draft Minutes of the 142nd Annual Business Meeting (ABM) of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, 12 January 2021

Held by Zoom meeting during COVID-19 pandemic.  
Chairperson: Diane Lepage, President

The Zoom meeting was attended by 65 participants. The minutes of the previous ABM, the financial statements, Treasurer's Report, and Annual Reports of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club (OFNC) Committees for 2019–2020 had previously been available on the Club's website. During the meeting, relevant documents were projected on the screen for the audience's reference.

Diane Lepage called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm and welcomed the participants.

The Zoom host, Ken Young, explained how the Zoom meeting and voting would work.

### 1. Approval of the Agenda

It was moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Jakob Mueller, that the Agenda be accepted as distributed.

**Carried**

It was noted that, for the report following the conclusion of the business meeting on rare birds seen in the Ottawa area in the past year, Michelle Martin would replace Bruce Di Labio as joint presenter with Bernie Ladouceur.

### 2. Minutes of the Previous Annual Business Meeting

It was moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Ted Farnworth, that the minutes of the 141st ABM be accepted as distributed and published in *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (CFN).

**Carried**

### 3. Business Arising from the Minutes

#### a) Colacem L'Original Cement Plant

Gord Robertson had drawn the attention of the last ABM to the approval by the Ontario Municipal Board of the construction of a cement plant by Colacem Canada Inc. in L'Original, Ontario. The site is 2 km from the Ottawa River and 9 km from the Alfred Bog. The Vankleek Hill and District Nature Society (VKHDNS) were very concerned about emissions from the plant and had requested assistance from OFNC in opposing the necessary zoning change. OFNC had donated \$1000 to employ an expert to calculate likely emissions. Diane Lepage reported that she had attended a virtual hearing in December 2020 where it was shown that the emissions projected by

Colacem were substantially underestimated. The case is awaiting judgement.

#### b) Burnt Lands Alvar

Diane Lepage had reported at the last ABM that the Mississippi Valley Field-Naturalists' Club (MVFNC) had sought assistance in promoting protection of the Alvar. OFNC had donated \$800 towards the development of a website to promote understanding of the importance of the Alvar. Diane reported that MVFNC had advised that, due to COVID restrictions, they had been unable to make much progress with the website which they felt required face-to-face planning. OFNC will continue to monitor this initiative.

### 4. Treasurer's Report by Ann Mackenzie

Ann MacKenzie, Treasurer, presented the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 2020 as prepared and reviewed by the accounting firm Welch LLP. The complete statements as well as the Treasurer's Report for 2019–2020 were available to members on the Club website in advance of the meeting.

There were four key observations relative to the financial statements. The Club had a surplus of \$22000 in the year but this is not seen as indicative of a trend, but rather specific circumstances. Revenues were higher than the previous year, 2018–2019, as a result of higher donation levels and greater income from author's charges. Expenses were only slightly lower because of decreased activity. The necessary cancellation of the Fletcher Wildlife Garden Plant Sale meant that little revenue was received from plants.

Looking back over the last 10 years showed the spike in revenues and surpluses in 2014 and 2015 as

a result of the Czasak bequest. As programs and projects were implemented as a consequence of this bequest the next couple of years had marked losses. It appears as if revenues and expenses are becoming more balanced as they had been before the bequest with just the normal annual variations.

A question was raised about whether the Club had ethical guidelines for investments. Investments are primarily in provincial bonds which does not pose ethical issues. However it was acknowledged that guidelines might be prudent, regardless.

It was moved by Ann MacKenzie, seconded by Ken Young, that the Financial Statements be accepted as a fair representation of the financial position of the Club as of 30 September 2020.

**Carried**

### 5. Nomination of the Accounting Firm

It was moved by Ann MacKenzie, seconded by Ken Young, that the accounting firm of Welch LLP be contracted to conduct a review of the OFNC's accounts for the fiscal year ending 30 September 2021.

**Carried**

### 6. Committee Annual Reports

It was moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Gordon Robertson, that the Committee Annual Reports be accepted as distributed.

**Carried**

### Highlights from 2020

#### a) Fletcher Wildlife Garden (FWG)

Ted Farnworth discussed some of the challenges and some of the successes experienced during the year. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) had blocked off access to FWG, delaying the start of the volunteer year. The annual plant sale had to be cancelled. Some plants were sold through other channels but there was substantially reduced revenue. Once volunteer activity was able to start, with appropriate COVID precautions, a large number of new volunteers turned out, many having learned about FWG through Volunteer Ottawa. The new volunteers included a significant number of young people which is a very welcome development.

COVID restrictions left many families trying to find local areas to explore and FWG saw a considerable increase in the number of visitors, many coming for the first time. The FWG Facebook Group has also experienced a significant increase in followers. Although the increased interest is welcome, the large number of visitors resulted in some issues with social distancing. Appropriate signs were erected in the garden. Increased problems with dogs off-leash were also

noted with some unpleasant confrontations resulting. Ted warned that AAFC is now enforcing parking restrictions.

In closing, Ted brought the attention of the meeting to the two extensive developments that are planned adjacent to FWG. To the east, the new hospital is expected to be "the largest medical campus in Canada" and to the south, the planned botanical garden expects to draw "hundreds of thousands of visitors" a year. These developments will undoubtedly have a significant impact on FWG.

#### b) Conservation

Owen Clarkin summarized the work of the committee with accompanying photographs.

The committee has been involved in a Multi-Year Red Spruce Project. In February, in partnership with Janet Mason from the Ottawa Stewardship Council, they met with Norbert Lussier, a career technician partner of Alan Gordon (the discoverer of Red Spruce in Ontario circa 1950). They discussed what is, and isn't, known about the species in the province. Following this meeting, in the winter and spring they performed extensive surveys and Google Street View searching for the species and approximately doubled the known populations in Ontario east of Ottawa, including a large population at the edge of Voyageur Provincial Park (PP). They subsequently proposed a survey of Voyageur PP and turned up three new populations of Red Spruce in the Park from July to December 2020, in addition to a number of other new plant and animal records.

Other notable activities included:

- i) Establishing new amphibian records for local areas such as Spotted Salamander near Vars and Two-lined Salamander at Voyageur PP.
- ii) Finding a population of critically endangered Greater Purple Fringed Orchid near Vars.
- iii) Confirmation, via flowers, of the presence of *Euonymus nanus* at Gillies Grove, the first provincial record and second in North America.
- iv) (Late 2019) Finding a population of American Hazelnut at Torbolton Forest, an apparently isolated northern population of the species.
- v) (Late 2019) Finding a probable new population of Southern Arrowwood near Vars, near or at its northern limit, a species considered absent from Quebec north of the Ottawa River.

### 7. Report of the Nominating Committee by Fenja Brodo (Chair)

Fenja advised that the Board is very stable with only a few changes. The most notable change is that Diane Lepage is stepping down from the position

of President and will become Past President. Jakob Mueller has accepted the nomination for President.

**Relevant Excerpts from the OFNC Constitution (revised February 2000)**

Article 8 – The Council shall consist of the officers of the Club and up to eighteen additional members, all members of the Club.

Article 12 – The officers of the Club and other members of the Council shall be elected annually at the Annual Business Meeting. The nomination of sufficient persons for election to the various offices and membership of the Council shall be the responsibility of the Nominating Committee, which shall act in the manner prescribed in the By-Laws.

The Council shall, at the earliest possible date, appoint chairs and members of Standing and ad hoc committees and Editor and Business Managers, as required for club publications.

<b>Nominated Officers</b>	<b>Official Duty</b>
Jakob Mueller	President
Owen Clarkin	1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President
(vacant)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President
Elizabeth Moore	Recording Secretary
Ann MacKenzie	Treasurer
Diane Lepage	Past President

**Nominated Members of the Board of Directors (alphabetical order)**

Robert Cermak	Janette Niwa
Edward Farnworth	Gordon Robertson
Catherin Hessian	Jeff Saarela
Diane Kitching	Henry Steger
Diane Lepage	Ken Young
Ann MacKenzie	Eleanor Zurbrigg

It was moved by Fenja Brodo, seconded by Bev McBride, that this slate of nominees for Officers and other Members of the Board of Directors of the OFNC for 2021 be accepted.

**Carried**

**Nominating Committee suggestions to the Board Members for Chairs of Committees and other positions in the OFNC**

Awards Committee	Eleanor Zurbrigg
Birds Committee	Robert Cermak
Conservation Committee	Owen Clarkin
Education & Publicity Committee	Gordon Robertson
Events Committee	Jakob Mueller
Fletcher Wildlife	Edward Farnworth, Representative
Finance Committee	Ann MacKenzie
Investment Manager	Catherine Hessian

Macoun Field Club	Diane Kitching, Representative
Membership Committee	Henry Steger
Publications Committee	Annie Bélair, Representative
Editor, <i>Canadian Field-Naturalist</i>	Dwayne Lepitzki
Editor, <i>Trail &amp; Landscape</i>	Annie Bélair

**Chairs not on the Board of Directors**

Macoun Field Club	Rob Lee
Safe Wings Ottawa	Anouk Hoedeman
Webmaster	Sandra Garland
Ontario Nature Representative	Diane Holmes

Fenja advised that several of the Committees need more members and appealed to attendees to consider volunteering as committee members. The Education and Publicity Committee and the Events Committee are in particular need of new members.

**8. New Business and General Discussion**

**Celebrating Fenja Brodo’s 30 years on the OFNC Board**

On the occasion of Fenja’s retirement from the Board, several members of the Board spoke to her contributions to the Club.

Eleanor Zurbrigg noted that Fenja has been a member of the Club for 54 years. During that time, she has served in various positions including:

- 10 years as Editor of *Trail & Landscape*,
- 10 years on the Education and Publicity Committee,
- 10 years on the Events Committee, and
- 10 years on the Executive Committee.

In 2001, Fenja was awarded the George McGee Service Award for her contribution as an outstanding Editor of *Trail & Landscape*.

In 2009, Fenja was elected to Honorary Membership in the Club.

Annie Bélair noted that, during her tenure as Editor of *Trail & Landscape* from 1991 to 2001, Fenja had worked on 38 issues of *Trail & Landscape*, contributing to a major part of the Club’s work. Working initially with paper copy, Fenja was the first Editor to introduce use of a computer.

Jakob Mueller noted that Fenja had chaired the Events Committee for five of the 10 years that she was on the committee. The position involves a great deal of work, arranging field trips and speakers among other responsibilities. Fenja has also been involved in co-ordinating Awards Night and the Pelee trip over the years.

Diane Lepage noted that Fenja had served as Vice President, President, and Past President of the Club. She described Fenja as very interested in other people, very positive, and very welcoming towards new ideas. Diane remarked that Fenja will be missed on the Board and looked forward to her continued participation in the Club.

All the speakers expressed their thanks for Fenja's contributions to the Club. They also noted her remarkably persuasive talent for recruiting members into positions of responsibility within the Club which will be sorely missed.

Fenja thanked the speakers and told the meeting that she had enjoyed it all!

### **10. Adjournment**

It was moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Eleanor Zurbrigg, that the meeting be adjourned.

**Carried**

ELIZABETH MOORE  
Recording Secretary

After the meeting was adjourned, Diane Lepage presented a multiple choice identification quiz of some of the wildlife captured in her beautiful photographs.

Bernie Ladouceur and Michelle Martin then reported on some of the rare birds seen in the Ottawa area over the past year and some of the changing trends that have been documented in recent years.