

The Canadian Field-Naturalist

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club Awards for 2021, presented February 2022

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The 2021 Club awards were presented virtually on 11 February 2022. Awards are given to members or non-members who have distinguished themselves by accomplishments in the field of natural history and conservation or by extraordinary activity within the Club. Six awards were conferred for 2021, for: (1) outreach and engagement in support of bird

conservation, (2) initiating a research grant program and modernizing two Club publications, (3) contributions to five conservation organizations, (4) turtle conservation efforts, (5) researching Red Spruce distribution, and (6) long-time service to the Club on financial matters.

Member of the Year: Deborah Doherty

In recognition of the member judged to have contributed the most to the Club in the previous year.

Safe Wings Ottawa, an initiative of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club (OFNC), is committed to reducing the number of birds being killed by window strikes. In Ottawa, the number of bird fatalities by windows is staggering—approximately 250 000 annually. Deborah Doherty contributed a great deal to Safe Wings this past year in engaging new volunteers and new connections within the community to support and contribute to bird conservation.

Deborah, with her background in leadership and training, has been a wonderful asset to Safe Wings since becoming a member in 2016. Her strong communication skills as well as her natural ability to easily engage people, enabled her to undertake many valuable functions and allowed her to make new connections with people and communities. She has inspired the next generation of leaders to make Ottawa safer for birds.

Throughout the pandemic, she found creative ways to connect with the general public via videos and virtual events, like the virtual Jane's walk. When possible, she helped train patrollers, provided 10 virtual orientations to volunteers, and tours for groups such as WILD Outside youth's program. Deborah's partnership with WILD Outside resulted in the installation of the mural seen at the Ottawa Public Library's Centrepointe Branch.

Because it is Deborah Doherty's achievements in 2021 that are being recognized with this award, here are some of her accomplishments that year. Apart

from her usual Safe Wings activities, she managed to guide new volunteers through the testing of new software for Safe Wings activities, deliver a strategic planning session, and co-write a Naturehood funding grant from Nature Canada allowing Safe Wings to be part of an after-school program with racialized communities this winter.

One of her more noteworthy achievements was the ability to connect with a new demographic—students. She mentored three groups of University of Ottawa students through an ambitious, multi-phase project to develop a more bird-safe campus. The first group researched historical bird collisions, patrolled during migration for new injuries/fatalities, conducted building assessments to determine what buildings are threats, and liaised with the Office of Sustainability. She helped another group develop a design contest which resulted in a Bird Safe mural installed on an overhead corridor. The last group gained funding and facilities management experience as they worked on a proposal to apply bird-friendly film on the Social Sciences building using an Indigenous art motif. She guided this group through writing project proposal presentations, coordinating team meetings, and organizing meetings with at least two different university departments. All of these communications were bilingual ... a mighty task for a unilingual person.

If Deborah had a wish, it would be to see community engagement and citizen science promoted through collaborative efforts of the newly formed Ottawa Bird Team (a Nature Canada Bird-Friendly Cities initiative). She believes that working together

effects policy change and the Ottawa Bird Strategy recommendations will happen. This summer, try strolling around the University of Ottawa campus, or along the Rideau River. You may see Deborah or other volunteers making a difference, one building at a time.

George McGee Service Award: Jeffery M. Saarela

In recognition of a member who has contributed significantly to the smooth running of the Club over several years.

Jeff Saarela is being recognized for his leadership on the OFNC research grant program and publications modernization.

Jeff joined the Board of Directors in 2011–2012 as a member-at-large. At the January 2015 Board meeting, he proposed a new initiative: the research grants program. He quickly formed a subcommittee to develop guidelines for the research grants, put out a call for proposals in April 2015, and the first round of research grants were awarded in June 2015—quite a feat! Jeff has taken part in the research grants process every year since, and the program has proven to be a great success. Research grants support field-based research activities in all fields of natural history and has generated significant original Ottawa Valley natural environment research. It is valued by other researchers and by OFNC's members through the documentation of the findings of these studies in *Trail & Landscape* (T&L).

Jeff Saarela found his way to the Publications Committee soon after joining the Board, and he accepted the responsibilities of Committee chair in 2015. A lot has been accomplished under his guidance.

The Publications Committee brought innovative updates to the 'look and feel' of the OFNC's two publications: *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (CFN) and T&L. New types of content were introduced to CFN including: Great Canadian Field-Naturalists (<https://doi.org/10.22621/cfn.v13i3.2071>) and Thematic Collections (<https://doi.org/10.22621/cfn.v13i1.1962> or <https://doi.org/10.22621/cfn.v13i2.1989>). A Thematic Collection is a compilation of previously published contributions in CFN and T&L on a central theme with electronic hyperlinks to each manuscript.

Jeff led the initiative to increase institutional subscription fees in 2017 based on a survey of fees for journals similar to the CFN. Simpler page charges

This past year Deborah Doherty has contributed to the success of Safe Wings Ottawa thanks to her outreach and engagement efforts and is the reason for the OFNC selecting her as Member of the Year for 2021.

(Prepared by Karen McLachlan Hamilton)

were instituted in October 2019. He managed a major editorial transition for CFN (Editor-in-Chief, Assistant Editor, Book Review Editor, online journal manager) and T&L (Editor).

Jeff efficiently supervised the final transition of CFN to its fully digital submission, reviewing, editing, and publication form while maintaining its important traditional hard copy identity. Many issues were addressed. Jeff ensured the incorporation of DOIs (digital object identifiers) for CFN articles and integration with CrossRef. A DOI is a permanent electronic link to an article's online location, and CrossRef summary tracks the number of times a DOI is followed. All older content in CFN (1920–2012) is freely available at the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL: [https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/39970#/#/](https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/39970#/)). To further disseminate journal content, Jeff undertook to have CFN, and later T&L, full-text content included in a prominent environmental journal database.

Jeff was also instrumental in updating and modernizing the complex issue of copyright for all things published in CFN and has been consulted regarding other copyright problems based on his expert knowledge of copyright outside CFN.

Jeff smoothed the way for the T&L team to transform our regional publication into the appealing and effective, all-colour format that has been so well received by readers and contributors alike. He helped connect T&L editor Annie Bélair to the librarian at the Canadian Museum of Nature to get T&L scanned and uploaded to the Biodiversity Heritage Library website, the same place older content of CFN is archived and freely available ([https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/115961#/#/](https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/115961#/)).

Jeff is noted for his professionalism and for getting things done. The OFNC is pleased to present Jeff Saarela with the George McGee Service Award for 2021.

(Prepared by Eleanor Zurbrigg, based on material from Dan Brunton, Dwayne Lepitzki, and Annie Bélair)

Conservation Award—Member: Janet Mason

In recognition of an outstanding contribution by a member in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley.

Janet Mason is being recognized for outstanding contributions to the conservation work of several community organizations in the Ottawa area. She currently leads the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (vice-chair), the Friends of the Carp Hills (chair and co-founder), and the Friends of the Carp River (chair). She has led the Ottawa Stewardship Council since founding it 20 years ago. She has served on the boards of the Mississippi-Madawaska Land Trust and the Macnamara Field Naturalists Club. How generous!

After graduating from Queens University as an electrical engineer, Janet worked for 30 years in the defence and technology industries with leadership positions. Since retiring, she has volunteered with several community organizations involved in environmental stewardship. She writes newsletters, blog posts, grant applications, and study reports. She gives public talks and engages persuasively with municipal politicians, scientists, and business leaders alike. Colleagues have attributed her success in conservation to incredibly hard work, tremendous communication skills, persistence, and the ability to solve problems with insight and analysis.

Janet and others incorporated the Friends of the Carp Hills in 2013 to preserve areas of the Carp Hills where there is little human activity and to offer other specific areas for public recreation. The Friends envisage a collaborative forum for stewardship of the highland (which is mostly privately owned) to strike a balance between protection, conservation, and the desire to experience its natural beauty. They build trails and hold organized walks, lectures, and public meetings on conservation issues. They try to protect species at risk in the area, especially Blanding's Turtle, Whip-poor-will, and Common Nighthawk. The City

of Ottawa and Ducks Unlimited partner with them on assessments, management plans, and conservation measures. The Carp Barrens Trail Study (2019–2020), led by consulting ecologist Holly Bickerton, is a good example of this collaboration. Following the impact assessment of trail use, the Friends worked with the City of Ottawa to reduce disturbance in this popular recreational destination.

The Friends of the Carp River is another organization that Janet chairs. Since 1997, the organization raised funds and planted 50 000 trees and shrubs to restore shorelines along the river. In recent years, they worked with the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority on a major wetland restoration project in West Kanata along 2 km of the Carp River. This is the Carp River Conservation Area, a floodplain previously channelled and farmed, and now restored with meanders, a pond, wet meadows, and a loop trail with bridges for recreational use. The site is animated by an educational program with curriculum for use by schools, a mobile app called Eco-Trekr, a downloadable brochure, interpretive signs, an osprey nest tower, a viewing platform, and citizen science projects on iNaturalist. The Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority, Ottawa Stewardship Council, and Friends of Carp River all participate in this project.

Like all members of OFNC, Janet Mason loves to explore local natural areas herself. She also has an extraordinary ability to collaborate with others to get things done. She has described herself as “an advocate for neighbourhood involvement in the stewardship of local natural areas for the mutual benefit of their human and wildlife communities”. People throughout western Ottawa have joined in conservation projects that she leads. We are grateful to Janet for her generous work in conservation.

(Prepared by Lynn Ovenden)

Conservation Award—Non-Member: Tammy MacKenzie

This award recognizes an outstanding contribution by a non-member in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley.

Tammy MacKenzie is being recognized for her exceptional efforts in turtle conservation in Lanark County.

All of Ontario's eight species of turtle are listed as species at risk by the Federal Government. Five of these eight species occur within the Ottawa Valley. Turtles face numerous threats, chief among them is loss of habitat and road fatalities. Slow-moving turtles are no match for speeding cars. Add to this predation

on eggs and young turtles and it is easy to see why our native species are facing serious problems.

Wanting to help these vulnerable creatures, Tammy MacKenzie founded OUR Turtles (Observing, Understanding, Rescuing Turtles), a volunteer organization based in Perth. She has since become a remarkable champion for turtle conservation and education of the public about turtles.

Tammy organizes all of the volunteers, coordinates checks on nests during hatching season in late summer, and advocates for turtles whenever and wherever she can.

Volunteers are trained to help injured turtles on roads, watch for nesting turtles, and install nest protectors on roadside nests that are in safe locations (e.g., behind guard rails).

She worked with the roads department in Lanark County to help create a roadside nest protection strategy that will be safe for turtles as well as motorists. She worked with the Perth Men's Shed to get nest protectors built, which are then also sold by OUR Turtles to the public.

She has developed outreach materials which she takes to various events and locations to help spread the word about turtle conservation and to get more people interested in volunteering to help protect turtles and their nests. In 2021, she held turtle conservation and education events in Perth at Watershed Discovery Days and at Starbucks. She has been interviewed or profiled in various media including an appearance on Lake 88.1 radio station to promote turtle conservation. Spreading the word about turtle conservation and ways in which the public can help

is an important part of her work.

In 2021 alone, OUR Turtles installed over 30 nest protectors on turtle nests along roadsides to protect the eggs from predation by Raccoons and other nest predators. While doing so, Tammy discovered a previously unknown nesting location for Northern Map Turtle in an unusual location. During nesting season, it seems like Tammy is everywhere: driving roads to find nesting turtles, delivering nest protectors to those who want to purchase one, and coordinating the Facebook group for OUR Turtles which is used to organize all of their volunteers.

Tammy MacKenzie does all of this work as a volunteer. She is incredibly passionate about helping turtles and tireless in her efforts. Her dedication to turtle conservation makes her a very worthy recipient of the OFNC Conservation Award (Non-member) for 2021.

(Prepared by Christine Hanrahan and David Seburn)

Anne Hanes Natural History Award: Owen J. Clarkin

The Anne Hanes Natural History Award recognizes outstanding contributions of an amateur naturalist to our understanding and knowledge of the natural history of the Ottawa Valley.

Red Spruce is a distinctive tree, native to eastern North America. In the Ottawa district, recent records were few, and those that were known were found primarily in small plantations or single trees in scattered locations east of the City of Ottawa. However, Red Spruce was apparently more common in Ontario in the past, but was largely logged out, according to research by Owen Clarkin.

From his knowledge of the species and its habitat requirements, Owen was convinced there were more Red Spruce populations than previously recorded in the district. Having driven past likely looking forests, he decided to conduct a detailed search of potential sites, using Google Streetview to do a preliminary check of roadsides in selected locations prior to checking them in the field. In addition, he spent countless hours driving through other areas searching for the species.

From 2019 through 2020 and 2021, Owen conducted a number of surveys in locations such as Garlandside Road and Lavigne Natural Park, both north of Limoges; the Plantagenet area, Rockland, a section of forest near Anderson Road and Highway 417, areas he calls "the Ottawa-Hawkesbury Red Spruce belt", i.e., acidic clay on sandy substrate. During 2021 he

also conducted Red Spruce surveys in Lennox and Addington County.

Many new populations of Red Spruce were found and recorded, both single trees and stands of three or more. Numerous photos were taken, and all records added to iNaturalist. Owen has added 1000 observations of Red Spruce to iNaturalist (<https://www.inaturalist.org/lifelists/owenclarkin>).

These records are complemented by Trees Canadensis (<https://treescanadensis.ca/>), a website where he shares identification features, illustrative photos and distribution maps, not only for Red Spruce, but also for 12 other native trees. Owen and Janet Mason began the website in 2016 to record and disseminate their experiences with and appreciation for native trees of eastern Ontario and western Quebec. The website also includes accounts of Owen's search for extant populations of Red Spruce and, just last year, the spread of Eastern Elm Sawfly westward from Quebec into eastern Ontario.

While Owen is a chemist by vocation, he has been an avid naturalist since his youth. Through his efforts, Owen Clarkin has added to our knowledge of the distribution of Red Spruce in the area, previously poorly documented. These activities and accomplishments make Owen a very fitting recipient of the Anne Hanes Natural History Award.

(Prepared by Christine Hanrahan, Lynn Ovenden, and Eleanor Zurbrigg)

Honorary Member: Kenneth Young

This award is presented in recognition of outstanding contributions by a member or non-member to Canadian natural history or to the successful operation of the Club. Usually, people awarded an honorary membership have made extensive contributions over many years.

The OFNC is very pleased to welcome Ken Young as our newest Honorary Member in recognition of his many years of extraordinary service and leadership in the Club. Ken joined the OFNC in 1985 and was a member of the Board for 15 of those 36 years.

Ken enjoys problem solving and tackling new challenges, talents he has put to good use as a Board member. If a problem comes up that Ken thinks he could help solve, he never hesitates to offer his assistance. Examples abound.

In 2013, the Club was the beneficiary of a million-dollar bequest from the late Violetta Czasak. Someone was needed to manage the myriad of decisions that had to be made regarding the gift, and Ken, as Club Treasurer at the time (2012–2016), volunteered to take on this enormous job. And what a job it turned out to be! Among other things, it involved his becoming executor of Ms. Czasak's entire estate. He dealt with the estate and the bequest extremely well and was given the 2015 President's Prize for his efforts.

Ken used his skills to manage other business matters for our Club. He served on the Finance Committee as Chair in the 1990s and again from 2018 to the present, and as Treasurer for five years. He has always been the "go-to" person for any question involving the business end of running the Club, including making sure that the Club's insurance is appropriate and up to date. He takes on various problems, does the

often time-consuming but essential research, and comes up with recommendations for action.

This is particularly true regarding Ken Young's involvement with Club publications. He created and then ran the subscription management system for CFN for several years and has been the Author Charges Manager for the journal from 2014 until the present. In fact, Ken has been the Publication Committee's key contact for all financial matters related to publications, including keeping an eye on the status of the Manning Fund and helping the Committee understand how far into the future the fund will carry us at the existing 'spend rate'. The financial reports Ken has regularly and consistently provided for the Committee are always detailed, insightful, informative, and highly relevant. While wearing his financial hat, he's been a consistent champion for the journal, showing a keen understanding of its deep history as core Club activity, and its important role in the Canadian natural sciences.

Ken also was an engaged member of the Fletcher Wildlife Garden Committee in the 1990s and was on the Conservation Committee for many years, including serving as its Chair, expressing his views and offering sage advice on many issues.

More recently, with the COVID pandemic making online meetings and activities a necessity, Ken has taken on the job of handling the Zoom account, which has enabled our club to function virtually and to keep members connected.

This Honorary Membership is a fitting way for the OFNC to acknowledge Ken Young's many years of service.

(Prepared by Irwin and Fenja Brodo)