



OWEN SOUND FIELD NATURALISTS
2023 - 2024 ANNUAL REPORT
JUNE 13, 2024

Knowing Nature Better

Table of Contents

Page 0	Title Page
Page 1	Table of Contents
Page 2	AGM Agenda
Page 4	AGM Minutes June 9, 2023
Page 6	President's Report 2023/2024
Page 7	Treasurer's Report 2023
Page 9	Program Report 2023/2024
Page 11	NeighbourWoods North 2023/2024
Page 11	Publications Report 2023/2024
Page 12	Stewardship 2023/2024
Page 14	OSFN Young Naturalists 2023/2024
Page 15	Ontario Nature Great Lakes Region 2023/2024
Page 16	Web Activity Report 2023/2024
Page 17	Communications and Newsletter Report 2023/2024
Page 17	Membership 2023/2024
Page 18	Park Advisory Committee 2023/2024
Page 19	Policies Approved by the Board of Directors
Page 24	Membership Survey Results 2024
Page 26	Thank You
Page 26	Standing Committees of OSFN
Page 27	OSFN Volunteers & Representatives



Owen Sound Field Naturalists
2023 – 2024 Annual General Meeting
Thursday June 13, 2024
5:45 pm – Social time
6:30 pm – Meeting starts

AGENDA

Welcome

1. Traditional Territory Acknowledgement
2. Presentation of the Annual Report
3. Review of the Minutes of June 8, 2023 AGM
Motion – to adopt the minutes of the June 8, 2023 AGM
4. President's Report – Presentation
5. Treasurer's Report - Presentation and Review
Motion – to accept the Treasurer's Report for 2023
6. Nominations to Board of Directors
 - a) Jeannine Kralt and Lloyd Lewis
Motion to accept Jeannine Kralt and Lloyd Lewis as Directors
 - b) Warren Steckle
Motion to accept Warren Steckle as Treasurer
 - c) Remaining slate of Directors
Brendan Mulroy – extending term as President for one further year
Bella Waterton and Paul Scriver – Co-Vice President for one year followed by assuming President position in 2025
Pam Kinchen – remaining as Past President for one more year
Susan Pouget – Secretary
Directors at Large:
Michael Rankin
Kathleen Pierce
Diane Lawler
Marsha Courtney
Are there further nominations from the floor

- Motion: to adopt the proposed slate of Directors and for the board to be able to appoint someone in future
7. Proposed New OSFN Policies
 - a) Code of Conduct
Motion – to accept Code of Conduct as distributed
 - b) Media Policy
Motion – to accept Media policy as distributed
 8. Affairs of the Board
Motion – to accept all the affairs and transaction of the Board over the past year.
 9. Awards Presentation
 - a) Conservation awards
 - b) Honorary Life Membership
 10. Stewardship
 11. Adjournment
Motion for Adjournment of Annual General Meeting

OSFN Board of Directors, 2023 - 24

Past-President – Pam Kinchen
President – Brendan Mulroy
Vice-president – vacant
Treasurer – Warren Steckle
Secretary – Susan Pouget

Directors

Director at Large – Jeannine Kralt
Director at Large – Kathleen Pierce
Director at Large – Marsha Courtney
Director at Large – Michael Rankin
Director at Large – Diane Lawler
Director at Large – Lloyd Lewis
NeighbourWoods North – Lloyd Lewis
Conservation and Stewardship – Jeannine Kralt (as of March 6, 2024)
Young Naturalists – Amanda Eriksen
Website – Brian Robin
Membership – Gordon Toth
Newsletter & e-Herald – Norah Toth
Programming – John Dickson

Owen Sound Field Naturalists 2022 - 2023 Annual General Meeting June 8, 2023

Welcome by Brendan Mulroy, President

Quorum achieved

Motion: to approve agenda Moved Lorraine Sutton, Seconded Judy Armstrong
Approved

1. Presentation of the Annual Report
2. Review of the Minutes of June 9, 2022 AGM
Motion – to adopt the minutes of the 2022 AGM
Moved: Neil Baldwin, Seconded: Marsha Courtney
Approved
3. President's Report – Presentation
4. Treasurer's Report - Presentation and Review
Motion – to accept the Treasurer's Report for 2022-23
Moved: John Dickson Seconded: Barbara Palmer
Approved
5. Nominations to Board of Directors
Presentation of nominees put forward for the Board of Directors
Kathleen Pierce, Michael Rankin
Are there further nominations from the floor - none
Motion - to adopt the proposed slate of Directors and for the board to be able to appoint someone in future
Moved: Kate McLaren Seconded: Rob Rae
Approved
6. New OSFN Bylaws
Motion – to accept new OSFN Bylaws
Moved: Judy Duncan Seconded: Norah Toth
Approved
Suggestion in future to post old bylaws with new bylaws if change in future
7. New OSFN Policies
 - c) Screening Policy
Motion – to accept screening policy as distributed

Moved: John Dickson Seconded: Warren Steckle

d) Code of Conduct

Motion – to accept Code of Conduct as distributed

Suggestion that Code of Conduct be different for Board and membership. The proposed Code of Conduct is for membership

Diversity and Inclusion policy is also suggested

Motion - to table current proposed Code of Conduct for further discussion at Board and bring back to membership

Moved: Beverly Kerr Seconded: Gord Edwards

Approved

8. Affairs of the Board

Motion – to accept all the affairs and transaction of the Board over the past year.

Moved: John Dickson Seconded: Elaine Mason

Approved

9. Awards Presentation

Community Conservation Award – Lynn Richardson

Lifetime Honorary Membership – Audrey and Willie Waterton

10. Adjournment

Motion for Adjournment of Annual General Meeting

Moved: Kate McLaren

President's Report

Over the past year, your Board has dealt with many issues; perhaps the most satisfying was dealing with the proposal from the Lorraine Brown Conservation Fund Committee.

At its inception, the LBCF committee was tasked with supporting the stewardship of natural areas in Grey and Bruce, as well as supporting the acquisition of significant natural areas in those same two counties.

Initially, it was hoped that a property could be acquired in Lorraine Brown's name. However, with the passage of time, it became increasingly apparent that OSFN could never afford the purchase of a property to commemorate Lorraine.

Instead, the LBCF committee proposed that we donate their fund to Nature Conservancy Canada, specifically to the NCC Stewardship Endowment Fund, designed for the benefit of properties on the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula, in perpetuity.

To quote the chair of the LBCF committee, Peter Middleton, it was felt that Lorraine would be, "most pleased with this plan."

At last year's AGM, the Board brought forth a Code of Conduct for club members. Members questioned this idea, and asked the Board to further review the concept. Upon review, our Board discovered that codes of conduct are the zeitgeist of this time in the 21st century. In our banks, grocery stores, airports, ferry terminals and libraries, we are instructed on what behaviour is, and is not, acceptable. Therefore, the Board again brings forward a Code of Conduct.

In addition, we have adopted a social media policy. We now live in a time where people need reminders on what is, and is not, acceptable.

The Board has also decided that the use of waivers will become mandatory for all club outings. Finally, the Board has introduced the requirement of police checks for the club president, treasurer and for those involved with the Young Naturalists programme.

A year ago, I was distraught with the resignation of Jody Johnson Petit. Jody had done an admirable job of running our Young Nats programme for several years. Fortunately, Amanda Eriksen stepped into the role and has continued to run the programme at a high level.

Our Publications committee, headed up by Audrey Armstrong, has done sterling work with their updating and revision of club publications. Their work has been a financial boon for OSFN.

I must give thanks to Warren Steckle, who has taken over as club treasurer. Warren, together with Diane Lawler, has made us take a hard look at club finances. The news is that our club revenues, without the windfall from publications, fall far short of our operating expenses. This fact will explain to you why we must look at an increase in club fees. I should also acknowledge Elaine Mason; she has given enormous help to organize our financial books.

Susan Pouget, our club secretary, has also gone above and beyond her role, to better serve the club. You will see Susan's analysis of our membership survey in your AGM package.

Other members of the Board include Kathleen Pierce and Michael Rankin, both of whom have given me sage advice over the course of this past year. The Board also warmly welcomes our most recent member, Jeannine Kralt, who is already proving to be a strong addition. Finally, I must acknowledge Marsha Courtney, who does tremendous work presenting and promoting our club.

I would be remiss not to mention those who work tirelessly to connect our club to its members and the public: John Dickson, Norah Toth and Brian Robin.

It has been a very successful year for OSFN. I conclude by thanking all those who have given me so much support. Now I urge them, and all of our membership, to get out and enjoy the natural world. Make most of it!

Respectfully submitted,
Brendan Mulroy

Treasurer's Report 2023

OSFN Operating Account

REVENUE

Memberships		\$3,774.51
Donations		
LEAF	\$1,928.85	
NWN	\$855.00	
L.B. Cons. Fund	<u>\$200.00</u>	
Total Donations	\$2,983.85	\$2,983.85
Loraine Brown Cons. Fund Interest		\$379.24
Book Sales		\$19,057.00
Birdathon		\$252.50
Advertising		\$240.00
<u>Earth Day – Caframo</u>		<u>\$500.00</u>
TOTAL REVENUE		\$27,187.10

EXPENSES**PROGRAM**

Hall Rental	\$1,482.80	
Zoom Charges	\$1,263.34	
Speakers, Hike Leaders	\$2,425.00	
Young Nats	\$949.02	
Newsletter	\$463.86	
<u>Book Expenses</u>	<u>\$15,293.12</u>	\$21,877.14

ADMIN

P.O. Box Rental	\$205.66	
Insurance	\$1,113.48	
Bank Serv. Chg.	\$39.50	
<u>AGM Expenses</u>	<u>\$38.42</u>	\$1,397.06

OUTREACH

St. Mary & OSDSS	\$800.00	
Signs	\$1,764.59	
Science Fair	\$200.00	
Awards & Gifts	\$350.58	
Owen Sound Library	<u>\$117.56</u>	<u>\$3,232.73</u>

TOTAL EXPENSES \$26,506.93

NET OPERATING SURPLUS \$680.17

ACCOUNT BALANCES December 31, 2023

Chequing Account	\$30,555.74	
Stewardship Grey Bruce Holdings	<u>-\$15,118.03</u>	
OSFN Chequing Balance		\$15,437.44
LBCF Savings Account	\$ 7,941.59	
LBCF GIC	<u>\$12,699.81</u>	
LBCF TOTAL		\$20,641.40
NeighbourWoodsNorth Account		\$12,766.27

NOTES

Canada Helps charges a 4% fee

PayPal charges a 2.9% fee

We have a Square that can accept credit card charges

The Meridian GIC matures in November 2024

Submitted by Warren Steckle, Treasurer

Programme Report

During this past season OSFN has presented many well-attended events (i.e. learning opportunities) with a wide array of topics and speakers:

The Indoor Meetings at the Bayshore kicked off in September, with the always popular Beth Gilhespy, featuring her new Beaver Valley area geology book, *Walking Through Time* and with hints about her next one. I am glad we were also able to arrange an update via Zoom, on the Chimney Swifts and other aerial insectivores, with Natasha Barlow and her team from Birds Canada.

October featured two timely presentations with discussions, led by Thorsten Arnold, that centred around the premiere of the important film *Regenerating Life*. In November John Hlynialuk took us on an exciting adventure to the Galapagos, and in December we followed Adam Shoalts from Lake Erie to Ungava Bay's Torngat Mountains *Where the Falcon Flies* to the nesting sites of Peregrine Falcons there.

In January of 2024, Susan McGowan enlightened us on the strategies in place for dealing with the Emerald Ash Borer infestation. We also heard from Dr. Anne Uings (suggested by Bob Gray) an excellent and sobering update about the various health threats from ticks.

In February I was very happy to present Arunas Liskauskas (suggested by Monica Starr) with his update on the status of fish populations in the Great Lakes near us.

For Members' Night in March we had ten terrific presentations (a new record?) from ten terrific OSFN members (no surprise there!). After March Break, OSFN returned to Grey Roots to co-present two first class Nature themed lectures there, featuring the Orchid Quest of Audrey Armstrong and Willy Waterton, followed by Robert Burcher's 'John Muir Lived Here in Grey County.'

In April we welcomed back John Reaume and the amazing Kestrel Family. Our sincere gratitude to Caframo for their valued sponsorship as we held our 9th annual Keynote Speaker event on the Chi Cheemaun with guest Bob Bowles sharing some of his learning aids - Nature Drawing and Nature Journalling - as well as his concern and dismay at the clearing of mature trees to make room for more development, instead of giving the trees priority, and working around them.

May will showcase the Beautiful World of Turtles, with Jenna McGuire, while the month of June will feature Scott and Acadia Parent, with their film and story *Three Waters*.

The hybrid presentation continued to be the norm, attracting good sized audiences in the Bay Room, as well as online via zoom. I have recently encountered more and more OSFN members for whom the Zoom version is so important, whether due to their health and mobility limitations, or sometimes their distance from Owen Sound, and of course, the weather conditions too. Special thanks to Brian Robin for continuing to facilitate these presentations for the club, and editing them for posting on our website.

The Outdoor Programme included some familiar outings and some new ones too.

Four Hikes in September included these: Kevin Predon's tour of the Amabel Tract, beside the Sauble River; Bob Knapp guided a visit to see the Lindenwood Pond Nature Reserve; Beth Gilhespy's Kemble Mountain area Geology Hike; and Lilla Fodor's Beaver Valley Fall Colours and Nature Hike from Webwood Falls.

October featured these three outdoor events: Waterfowl and More in the Beaver Valley with David Turner; The Old Growth Forest of the Marshall Woods with Bob Knapp; and an Aquatic Invertebrate Workshop for the club and the Young Naturalists too, planned by Rosie Martin, and with some timely help from John Bittorf.

November's outdoor highlight was Birding Around the Bay with Kiah Jasper and Erik van den Kieboom.

December included a Woodlot Tour and History of the Derby Tract by Carl Sadler, as well as many OSFN members and friends who were engaged in the Christmas Bird Counts throughout the area.

Kevin Predon again offered something new for the club members in January 2024 - snowshoeing high and dry along an esker that snakes through the Osprey Wetlands.

The snow conditions in early February did not cooperate for Beth Anne Currie's planned Nordic Ski event but we still lucked out with snow for Jeff Kinchen's popular Tracking Event, which had the welcome bonus of hot beverages and gourmet treats from his Mom, (OSFN's Past President Pam Kinchen) waiting at the finish line.

In March we had a great time birding the waters and meadows of the Beaver Valley with David Turner, and in April rainy weather shifted three hikes so that in late April Lilla Fodor led a great hike (that is included in Beth Gilhespy's *Walking Through Time*) on the Stew Hilts Side Trail with its beautiful waterfalls. Then, in early May we were treated to Springtime at Neyaashiinigmiing with Lenore Keeshig, followed by a Mushroom ID adventure with Joanne Anderson.

A Turtle themed hike with Jenna McGuire is in the works to complement her Turtle Talk in May. I also anticipate a few more selected outdoor offerings in May, June, July and even in August 2024, and look forward to announcing those soon.

We have been invited by the Maher family for a return in June to their Saugeen Valley Lookout to discover and witness some of the natural highlights of this very special property, and experience the legacy of Nels and Jean Maher and their family.

Many thanks to all the presenters, and hike leaders for a very fulfilling season, and to Norah Toth and Brian Robin for sharing the many programme updates with the OSFN membership.

With a Song in My Heart,

John Dickson

NeighbourWoods North (NWN) Report

In 2024, NeighbourWoods North (NWN) is excited to continue the development of phase one of the Hospital Healing Path. Last Fall, the 400m stretch around the helipad was excavated and replaced with crushed stone. So far this Spring, we have planted 150 tree and shrub seedlings along the new path, and we are repairing and correcting some Spring erosion along the pathway. Already one bench has been put in place and our goal this year will be to complete all the benches and 4 interpretive signs. Furthermore, in 2024 we will begin our work, laying out and planting for phase 2 of the pathway, which will run south of the visitors parking lot and through the SE woodlot. Soon, we will enjoy building a 16' wooden bridge, so walkers can cross an expanded ditch.

Our work continues with the Grey County Headquarters staff, but we may have run into a snag. It appears that some of our previous plantings may be on City property, and may have to be moved. We are awaiting the decision. Meanwhile, we hope to soon gather and do some maintenance work, followed by a planting session of fruit trees.

Finally, NWN is making positive strides in developing a collaborative relationship with the City of Owen Sound. The new manager of Parks and Open Spaces, Eckhard Pastrik, has been open to our suggestions, and is keen to have NWN assist in the maintaining our downtown trees, while being part of any future big planting projects. In fact, recently NWN was involved in a City project to reforest the Kiwanis soccer facility after many trees were removed due to the ash bore disease.

Submitted by Lloyd Lewis

Publications Committee

The Publications Committee consisting of Norah Toth, Barbara Palmer, David Morris, Pam Kinchen and Audrey Armstrong, have had another busy year! After completing the revision of our cornerstone publication, *Vascular Plants Bruce & Grey*, by Tyler Miller, field Ecologist, on March 9th of 2023, we launched this book in three formats; print, PDF and the PDF *Compendium of Vascular Plants Bruce & Grey*.

Over the winter of 2023, our committee worked on updating and revising the Orchid book. Willy Waterton designed the book covers, took almost all the 147 orchid photos and designed the layout for the photo pages. We launched the Orchid book at our May 11, 2023 meeting, in both print and PDF downloadable versions. They are available through our e-store on our website, special thanks to Brian Robin for this. We sell both new books on line, at meetings and through several retail outlets; Grey Roots in Rockford, Tom Thomson Art Gallery in Owen Sound, Suntrail Source for Adventure in Hepworth, Coles at Heritage Place Mall, Dandyliion in

Lion's Head, McKenzies in Wiarton, Reader's Haven in Tobermory, Kimberly General Store, Jessica's Book Nook in Thornbury, Huron Fringe gift shop at MacGregor Point Provincial Park, Bruce County Museum and Earthbound in Red Bay.

All through late spring, fall and winter of 2023 and winter/spring of 2024, we have been working on the Fern book revision. In November of 2023, the Maher family donated \$10,000 to the Publications Committee towards the revision of *Ferns Bruce & Grey*. We have fully revised and reprinted the popular ***Fern Checklist*** which is now available at our meetings. We plan to launch the revised *Ferns Bruce & Grey* this fall, 2024.

During the summer and fall of 2023, Bob Gray formed a Geology/Landforms sub-committee under our umbrella, meeting monthly. It consists of Daryl Cowell, Victor Last, Torben Hawksbridge, Chris Stott, Norbert Woerns and Clarke Birchard and they are working on revising and updating the out-of-print *Geology and Landforms of Grey and Bruce Counties*, to be released in 2025. The 2nd edition is available on line as a PDF.

We anticipate a busy summer with talks, on-going book sales and fern photography.

Publication Sales summaries:

2022 – total sales \$1,561.00

2023 – total sales \$19,057.00 (corrected)

Submitted by Chair, Audrey Armstrong

Stewardship

General Update

The Owen Sound Field Naturalists (OSFN) Stewardship Coordinator facilitates and supports oversight of properties and projects that are under OSFN responsibility. This position was filled, following a gap, by Jeannine Kralt in March of 2024. Neil Baldwin, past Stewardship Coordinator, kindly provided basic oversight of the portfolio in the interim, as well as transition support.

In his role, Neil was successful in gathering and organizing historical documents and agreements. These agreements have been reviewed, and meetings were held in April with each of the 3 primary conservancies that OSFN has formal relationships with: Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy (EBC), Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and Ontario Nature (ON). OSFN also has an informal relationship with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) for monitoring in the Oliphant area.

OSFN continues to coordinate stewardship for 8 properties:

- Crowe-Barwell (NCC)*
- Davis (NCC)
- Dwarf Lake Iris (NCC)

- Galbraith (NCC)
- Malcolm Kirk (ON)*
- Sauble Dunes (ON)
- Trout Hollow (EBC)
- Oliphant Wetland (MNRF)

*Long Swamp Complex

Additionally, OSFN has 2 listed projects: the Lorraine Brown Boardwalk at the Oliphant Fen, and an avian viewing tower at Baie du Doré (joint build with Saugeen Nature). The current status of the latter project is unknown, and on the list to ascertain in the coming months.

The Lorraine Brown Boardwalk at the Oliphant Fen was recently outfitted with revised interpretive signage – many thanks to the Publications Committee who updated the text of these interpretive panels and the Lorraine Brown Conservation Fund for providing the funding for producing these signs.

A big thank you, also, to our current stewards: Alex Adair, Audrey Armstrong, Deane Atherton, Robert Burcher, Beth Anne Currie, Barbara Gray, Brendan Mulroy, Brian Popelier, Marcia Ranger, Brenda Stewart and Willy Waterton, as well as to Kate McLaren, who has recently moved on from being a long-time steward.

Plans for The Next Year

The primary role of the Stewardship Coordinator will be to continue to develop relationships with Conservancies in our region. As part of this, an effort will be made to visit all currently stewarded properties and projects, as well as to keep an open line of communication with existing stewards. There are plans to highlight each of these properties to OSFN Members in the future.

We are looking for additional stewards. Stewardship is a unique way to get to explore our region. Stewards are volunteers supported by OSFN, and have a relationship with the landowners (i.e. land trusts / conservancies). Stewards are relied upon to occasionally visit properties at a time convenient to them – seasonally is ideal, though annually is acceptable. Each of the conservancies has simple reporting requirements, and training is provided. There is occasionally the opportunity for stewards to visit the properties with our partner organizations. **If you are interested in becoming a Land Steward and helping to care for these properties, or if you have any questions, please contact Jeannine at stewardship@owensoundfieldnaturalists.ca.**

Submitted by Jeannine Kralt

Owen Sound Young Naturalists

The Owen Sound Young Naturalists Club was very active this year, enjoying and exploring our local natural areas. This year, 14 families (22 children) registered with the club.

The first meeting in September was kicked-off with a hike around the Grey Sauble Administration property to clean out the bird boxes. The children had a hands-on experience of using a screwdriver to open the boxes, inspect the contents and clean them out. We had fun trying to figure out what species used the box. We also saw many other field species such as garter snakes and praying mantis. We then went and saw the salmon spawning in the river and learned about their life cycle. Ian Eriksen from Grey Sauble Conservation Authority then gave us a demonstration of elevation, erosion and flood patterns with the living sand table.

In late October, the Young Naturalists received an introduction to aquatic insects at Harrison Park with John Bittorf from the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority. We learned tips on how to identify aquatic insects like (larval) dragonflies, damselflies, mayflies, caddisflies. John gave a stream sampling demonstration, and we had the use of some microscopes to see the creatures up close.

In November, the November meeting was held at the Kinghurst Nature Reserve. I led a "Winter is Coming" scavenger hunt where we looked for signs of animals getting ready for winter, some of the things the creatures may be gathering to prepare, as well as places creatures may be living. The kids were great searchers and had great ideas about how creatures survive winter. We were lucky enough to be able to go to the old cottage which is full of information about the property and the plants and animals you can see.

While there was no in person meeting in December, we had a backyard birding challenge in which the kids were encouraged to hang a bird feeder and record what birds they saw. This went well. Most families participated and found many of the birds on the list. The club was encouraged to attend a Christmas bird count and the dates and locations were sent out. I do not think any families attended.

At the end of January, the meeting was held at the property of Owen Sound Field Naturalist members Elaine and Doug Van Den Keiboom. Due to some perfectly timed snow, the Young Nats were able to get out snowshoeing. Elaine and Doug Van Den Kieboom were wonderful hosts. We were able to snowshoe through their forest which starts out as hardwood then becomes cedar woods as it connects with the Bognor marsh complex. We learned a bit about the decline of the butternut tree (which they only have one still producing nuts and a few in different stages of illness), how the resident porcupines help keep the maples out of the cedar forest (by eating them), and how different animals like to take different trails. We also saw some tracks in the snow that we decided as a group were coyote, porcupine, and red squirrel. After our hike we came back to the house where we had a campfire with hot chocolate and cider. Elaine showed us how to cook Bannock by wrapping a piece around the end of a stick and cooking it in the coals.

In February, the group met at the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority building where Krista McKee brought a wonderful amount of pinecones, acorns, wood disks and all the other necessary supplies to get crafty. Krista had some sample ideas made up for us, but the kids let

their imaginations and creativity shine. There was some great art created. The adults had just as much fun.

In March, the group headed to Bob and Mary Beth Gray's maple syrup farm. Bob was a wealth of knowledge. We learned how to tell trees apart when there are no leaves. We also learned about the invasive species affecting butternut, beech and ash trees. Bob also explained how the changing weather patterns are changing the species composition in his forest. His property also had some great examples of how differences in sun exposure (north vs south slopes) and different moisture levels (lots of drainage vs. groundwater seeps) can change the species composition. We also got to see his very impressive maple syrup production – and sample some fresh syrup. They also made some very fun and yummy maple taffy for us to sample. Our April meeting was cancelled due to a high chance of thunderstorms and very heavy rain. At the time of writing this report, there are still three planned outings for the club – the Huron Fringe Birding Festival at MacGregor Point Provincial Park, a possible visit to a farm as a make-up meeting for April, and a hike at Hibou conservation area in June.

Submitted By: Amanda Eriksen

Ontario Nature Great Lakes Western Region Nature Network

As the OSFN representative for ON Nature, this is a summary of our two meetings with the Great Lakes West Region Nature Network this past year 2023/24. For each meeting, I prepare and submit an outline of our group's activities to share with the other GLW Regional clubs. There are two meetings per year, spring and fall and they rotate among member groups. The fall meeting was hosted by Huron Fringe Field Naturalists in Kincardine Nov. 4th, 2023. Pam Kinchen, Brendan Mulroy and Audrey Armstrong attended. Don Scallion presented a talk about species of special concern, including the Jefferson Salamander and several turtles.

The spring 2024 meeting, April 17th was via zoom and both Audrey and Brendan attended. Sarah Hasenack talked about loss of Provincially Significant Wetlands under new system. Some highlights are:

- changes to Ontario Wetland Evaluation system
- how this is contributing to wetland loss especially PSWs
- what can be done on municipal level
- **groups are encouraged to keep an eye on potential wetland development in their area and connect with Ontario Nature if there is anything of concern.**

And Jenna Kip spoke about the 30x30 Protected Places targets. Highlights included:

- What is 30X30 (Canada's Target to protect 30% of lands and waters by 2030)
- Municipal protected areas project pilots

- How groups can help

Lesley Rudy, ON Nature Network co-ordinator gave an ON Nature update:

- **New volunteer posting newsletter, groups invited to submit postings through [this form](#).**
- Groups are encouraged to sign and share the [413 action alert](#).
- Groups were asked to share any thoughts on automated billing or combining membership and insurance billing.
- [Ontario Nature Annual Gathering](#) is on the Saugeen this year (in this region!).

Regional Director Marilyn Baxter explained the new smaller board format ON Nature is working towards and led groups in a quick round table, being asked to highlight one or two items that they wished to share. There were 18 people in attendance. Members gave reports from their clubs. A few highlights:

Erin Mills have divested their holdings, donated to RARE land trust. Saugeen Nature have revived their Junior Nats program. Waterloo field Nats are involving teens in monitoring salamanders, snakes and tree frogs, adding to their volunteer community hours. Waterloo Region Nature are also working on community science, especially a pollinator roadsides project. They formed a working group with partners including the City. They have begun pilot plantings in a trial area, planting native wildflowers, and enabling the public to see the benefits. Waterloo Region has a goal to be a bee region, so this is a work in progress. Headwaters Nature held a “Nature Nerd” night. Instead of having a speaker they invited members to bring artifacts, microscope slides, photos, etc to share. The night included a trivia competition with everyone divided into teams. There was a lot of club participation and members brought friends, it was a lot of fun. Nature Guelph noticed since they stopped Zoom and hybrid meetings that membership has gone up.

The next group in-person meeting is being hosted by Headwaters Nature, Orangeville, in Fall of 2024. OSFN members are encouraged to attend.

Submitted by OSFN representative, Audrey Armstrong

Web Activity Report

Our website, owensoundfieldnaturalists.ca, continues to be updated regularly with events, past issues of the Hart’s Tongue Herald, John Dickson's Nature Club News, and more. An online shop to sell our publications was started last spring. Since March 11, 2023, it has received 119 orders covering \$4,000 worth of books (both digital and hardcopies).

Most of our indoor meetings this past year were hybrids with attendees at both the Bayshore and over Zoom. The Zoom side had an average of 30 attendees (down from 37 last year).

Some of our presenters consent to having the Zoom feed recorded and uploaded to our YouTube channel and you can find over 24 recordings (with a cumulative 3,169 views) here: <https://youtube.com/channel/UCKjgtg1HLKGT7nMPp4MIzEQ> or you can find a link to it

on our website. We currently have 78 subscribers to our channel.

The Facebook group grows and grows - about 2,800 people now use it to share nature observations or ask nature questions. It is open to both OSFN members and the general public.
Submitted by Brian Robin

Communications and Newsletter Report

E-heralds are sent out through a platform called MailChimp. They are digital communications used to ensure you are kept up to date about the programs available as well as changes to the program. They also make you aware of activities related to the natural environment that are similar to what we provide. From time to time, we make members aware of issues that are timely, and you may or may not want to provide comment upon.

Regularly opening your e-herald ensures that your name continues on this list. The current list includes 544 contacts which includes current and past members as well as a small number of interested individuals.

Members have the benefit of receiving the Hart's Tongue Herald newsletter.

Three Hart's Tongue Herald newsletters are produced annually. Thank you to the many people who have submitted articles and photos, and to the advertisers who help to reduce our costs. Putting together a 16-page newsletter is not always easy and I always appreciate Club members who provide articles or photo essays to be included.

Members in good standing and their spouse receive the Hart's Tongue Herald. This past year I was able to update the Club's mailing list. The number of e-heralds being sent to members is 378 individuals.

In our 2023/24 year we have, to date, distributed 41 e-heralds. We also used the e-herald system to send out the survey to members.

Submitted by Norah Toth

Membership Report 2023 - 24

OSFN Membership to 05/2024

Honorary Life Members	11
Single	117
Family	112
Student	1

Total 241

Honorary life membership is up one this year with the addition of the husband and wife team of Willy Waterton and Audrey Armstrong.

Total membership has increased from 233 last year.

The Membership year is from September 1 to the end of August.

What does your Annual membership do?

1. Programming – We provide honorariums to guest speakers and hike leaders. In some cases, we provide compensation for travel. We rent indoor facilities.
2. We continue to steward Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ontario Nature, Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy, and several other properties in Grey-Bruce.
3. We actively support and participate with the efforts of NeighbourWoods North, a committee of the OSFN.
4. We continue to work on signage upgrades at the Lorraine Brown Boardwalk Fen near Oliphant.
5. We provide funding and support for the Young Naturalists program, including sending children to Camp Kawartha and youth to the Ontario Nature Youth Summit. We are offering a Youth Scholarship to students in Owen Sound area high schools.
6. When land acquisition projects are brought forward by such groups as Ontario Nature or the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the Board may decide to financially support these acquisitions.
7. The Hart's Tongue Herald newsletter comes out 3 times a year - usually late August, December and late March. E-Heralds are sent out regularly to update you on coming events, local concerns and activities.
8. As a Charity, we are able to issue charitable receipts.

Submitted by Gord Toth

Bruce Peninsula National Park Parks Advisory Committee

Meeting was held Feb. 9 2024

Parks Canada Visitor Centre, Tobermory

“The park is in a period of relative stability after more than a decade of significant change and challenge. The steep growth in visitor demand has levelled off in recent years, and we have great systems in place to address it”. - Acting Superintendent- Ethan Meleg

The park is at 90% completion, now planning to proactively contact private landowners in the study area and ask if they are interested in selling to Parks Canada.

Continuing to strengthen the relations with Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) and their contribution to stewardship of these special places.

Continuing with initiatives like Together with Giigoonyag (Whitefish and Lake Trout research) collaborative project between SON, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (OMNRF) and Parks Canada.

On the Road Again program to reduce road mortality for reptiles and amphibians from 2018-2023 protected 531 turtle nests, 1076 turtle hatchlings released, 7 eco-passages installed and 2.2 km of eco-fence installed.

Population models suggest that declines in black bear population in Bruce Peninsula National Park (BPNP) from 2009-2018 may have stabilized.

Actively managing 20 invasive species through mechanical and chemical control programs in BPNP and Fathom Five National Marine Park (FFNMP)

First year of pilot program for a five-person Emergency Response team to address visitor safety, wildfire and wildlife conflict incidents.

In year 3 of pilot project offering winter services at Cyprus lake.

Such as yurts for rent, office open at Cyprus Lake. Cost-recovery analysis will occur at end of this year.

First year selling bulk firewood instead of bagged wood. Saves 22,000 woven polypropylene firewood bags.

Continuing to green operations, replacing vehicles with either electric or hybrid, installing high efficiency heat pumps at Park buildings.

Willy Waterton, OSFN PAC representative.

Policies Approved by the Board of Directors

OSFN Code of Conduct

The following Code of Conduct shall apply to the President, all Directors, Members, Guests and Volunteers (herein after referred to as “Member” or collectively “Members”) of the Owen Sound Field Naturalists (the “OSFN”).

Preamble

OSFN strives to maintain an environment where all Members feel safe and respected when interacting with, or on behalf of, OSFN and or when participating in OSFN activities.

Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct (the “Code”) is to provide Members with guidelines as to the expected standards of comportment when dealing with other Members or representing OSFN.

Code

Members shall at all times treat others with respect and dignity, being mindful to not harass, bully, or make unwanted advances towards others. Members shall communicate without derision or denigration. Members shall behave in a manner that is not disruptive or harmful to others, or OSFN activities. Members shall ensure a safe environment for all OSFN activities and in connection therewith shall abide by all OSFN bylaws and all applicable civil laws, rules and regulations.

Inclusivity

OSFN acknowledges that its Members come from a broad spectrum of lived experiences and from a wide and culturally diverse population including but not limited to race, Religion or sexual orientation. Members shall comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code and shall not discriminate against people based on a protected ground in a protected social area, as defined within the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Confidentiality

Members shall not disclose any OSFN information that the Directors have deemed confidential. Members shall not use or access any personal information regarding another Member without first having that Member’s direct consent.

Conflict of Interest

If any Member has or believes there may be a conflict between the interests of the OSFN and their personal interests, the Member shall declare the conflict to the Directors. Such Member shall excuse themselves from any vote taken by the Directors, and the Member shall abide by the terms of any resolution declared by the Directors.

OSFN Outdoor Activities

Members taking part in an OSFN outdoor activity understand the importance of local flora and or fauna and will minimize any negative impact. Unless consent has been granted by the private property owner, Members shall not trespass onto private property and Members are encouraged to remain on sanctioned trails.

Attendance and Reporting

Directors shall make every effort to attend OSFN board meetings and are expected to have reviewed all relevant materials provided to them in advance. Any Director or Member who has additional duties including but not limited to, the President, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Coordinator, shall exercise their duties thoroughly and any reports or statements produced in connection therewith shall be accurate and may be relied on by the other Members and OSFN.

Failure to Comply

Any Member failing to comply with any of the terms of the Code may be asked to leave the OSFN venue or withdraw from the OSFN activity. If in the opinion of the Directors, the failure is significant then the Directors may revoke membership of that individual with OSFN.

November 13, 2023

OSFN Media Policy

The following is the editorial policy guides for the production and distribution of the Owen Sound Field Naturalists (“OSFN”) media, both Print Media and Social Media, which includes the following publications: (1) our newsletter, the Hart’s Tongue Herald, (2) the e-Herald, (3) the Nature Club News column and (4) various print and text publication series. This policy shall also serve as a guideline for the content of OSFN publications and clarifies the accountability of those involved.

Through our publications and resources and our conservation, education, and public engagement efforts, the OSFN promotes and builds awareness of nature conservation and the protection of wild species and wild spaces.

Print Media

The Hart’s Tongue Herald newsletter, e-Herald communications and the Nature Club News column, along with OSFN resource related publication series, encompass the print media through which we communicate with members and the public.

Hart’s Tongue Herald Newsletters, e-Heralds, and Nature Club News Column

- Provide information about Club activities.
- Announce upcoming events of both OSFN and like-minded organizations, which relate directly to the mandate of the Club – Knowing Nature Better.
- Content addresses matters that directly affect Grey & Bruce counties.
- Content does not promote commercial enterprises.
- The goal is to be fair, honest, open-minded, respectful and accurate.

Content

- Articles are vetted by the respective Editor, see listing below.
- When the Editor deems that articles may be considered controversial, the articles will be reviewed and approved by the President prior to publication.
- Photos are used only when the photographer is credited and with prior permission.

- The Hart's Tongue Herald newsletter will normally contain a President's message, a listing of programs, summaries or writeups of programs that have happened, timely information, resource related articles, and other information that would be considered appropriate for distribution to the OSFN members and subscribers.
- The Newsletter will be produced primarily in digital format and distributed through MailChimp or a similar system. A small number of hard copies will be printed for government offices, advertisers, members who do not have internet access and for promotional purposes.

Advertising

- Advertisers should not contradict the overall values of the OSFN in other words, they are not cross purposed (i.e. they do not have goals or objectives that conflict with the OSFN) as this can lead to confusion and misunderstanding.
- We do not sell or share our subscriber or membership list.

e-Heralds

- E-Heralds will be used to distribute messages of timely importance.
- This is the format through which issues, and the means to act on them, are presented to OSFN members and to the public when such issues are a concern to OSFN, Ontario Nature, or any other group whose mandate is similar to that of OSFN. OSFN members are encouraged to educate themselves with regard to such issues and any action taken by OSFN members shall be in accordance with the OSFN Code of Conduct.

Nature Club News Column

- Provided to local communication and news outlets such as the Owen Sound Sun Times, and others considered appropriate by the Editor.

Social Media

OSFN is committed to maintaining a respectful community and fostering a safe space online. To maintain our online platforms, including the OSFN Website, we continuously monitor our social media channels, currently Facebook and YouTube. Our aim is to foster a positive environment where our audience feels welcome to express their opinions while at the same time reflecting OSFN's values. Please refer to the OSFN Code of Conduct for additional details regarding our values.

We welcome photography of local natural spaces and species, promotion of not-for-profit events with a similar mandate to OSFN, opinions or content that are important to healthy and productive discussion.

We will not tolerate the following:

- Hate speech
- Harassment
- Swearing or profanity
- Defamatory and personal attacks
- Demonstrably false statements
- Spam
- Off topic
- Or other comments that the Editor or the OSFN President deems inappropriate.

While we are not responsible for the content of visitor comments, we reserve the right to remove or not approve any comment. If a person is a repeat offender, we reserve the right to ban them from our Facebook.

Communication Outlets

When we are consulted by media, the OSFN President or his/her delegate will be the spokesperson for OSFN.

When the President is asked to be the spokesperson for OSFN, he/she needs to ensure they are well versed about the topic. They can also defer to an organization like Ontario Nature where experts are readily available.

March 6, 2024

The current Editors with communication responsibility are:

Hart's Tongue Herald – Norah Toth

e-Herald – Norah Toth

Nature Club News Column – John Dickson

Publication Series – Audrey Armstrong

Social Media – Website - Brian Robin

Facebook - Brian Robin & Norah Toth

YouTube - Brian Robin

OSFN MEMBERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS 2024

A huge thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to our Survey!

Number of responses: 72 (all electronic, no paper surveys submitted)

RESULTS

Indoor programming

85.7% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the indoor programming

Your thoughts:

- **89.7%** approved of hybrid method of meetings (Zoom and in person)
- Improve use of sound system for speakers and repeat questions asked from the audience
- Focus on impact in Grey Bruce area
- Record presentations – *See Website report. Some speakers do not allow recording of their presentations.*
- Lots of suggestions around topics and speakers – *all have been sent to John Dickson*

Outdoor programming

78% of the respondents who attended outdoor programming were satisfied or very satisfied with the programs

30% of the respondents do not attend outdoor programming

Your thoughts:

- Vary the weekend vs weekday events (this year 9 of 20 outdoor events so far have been on weekdays)
- In some cases transportation or physical mobility prevents attendance
- If hosting repetitive event year to year, give priority to those individuals who have not attended before
- Some suggestions for outdoor programming – *all have been given to John Dickson*

Communication

94% satisfied or very satisfied with communication (e-herald, Hart's Tongue, website)

Your thoughts:

- Lots of positive comments – *Norah Toth has been given these comments*
- Some parts of website not up to date or hard to navigate

What is Unique about OSFN

Most responses related to

- Enthusiasm for nature
- Vast knowledge of members
- Local organization

- Publications great
- Great speakers and hikes

Top 5 shared memberships of OSFN members

Brucetrail Conservancy, Ontario Nature, Bruce Grey Woodlands Association, Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy, Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory

Your thoughts on partnerships

- Share programming and speakers – *have been given to John Dickson*
- Advertise each other's events

Top Suggestions to Improve OSFN

- Attract younger members
- Combine events with other organizations

Top Suggestions for Attracting Younger Members

- Better Association with Schools (*Note: Discussion with schools has occurred on numerous occasions without success to date*)
- Invite students to meetings (*this is being done*)
- More family friendly/youth appealing meeting topics and hikes
- More promotion of. The Young Naturalists

Should OSFN take on a more political role/stance in the realm of protection/conservation of nature

73% yes

Some comments:

- Only well researched areas
- Support but not political
- Work carefully
- Stick to conservation

What next?

A committee of the Board has met to review all the responses and review trends and priorities.

This is ongoing and will be discussed further at Fall Meetings with the new Board

It was evident from some of the comments that the Board needs to do a better job of outlining for membership what work has been done or attempted related to programming, youth recruitment, and conservation activism. You will see more information shared in the future

Some preliminary priorities being discussed to date include:

- Support speakers to be clearer with volume and responding to questions for both in-person and Zoom participants
- While we cannot return to coffee/snacks at meetings that we have had in the past due to lack of volunteers and resources at the Bayshore (without additional cost), encourage pre-meeting social time

- Continue to diversify the outdoor programming to attract more members
- Monitor the website to ensure the priority areas are up to date (we only have a volunteer managing our website, so setting priorities is important) eg make donation tab more visible
- Continue to explore options to galvanize more youth participation (we are looking as well for sponsorship for YN events)
- Share with membership Board updates and work on advocacy of the environment

Completed by Susan Pouget (OSFN secretary)

Thank You

Our Sponsors and Supporters in 2023/2024 including:

Owen Sound Transportation Company and *Caframo*[®]

Standing Committees of the OSFN

NeighbourWoods North

Lloyd Lewis, Chair

Gord Edwards, Vice Chair

Meg Dean, Secretary

Dave Reid, Treasurer

Michael Jeavons

Shawna MacIvor

Brendan Mulroy

Mayda Reid

Ruth Scheel

Vicki Winterton

Lorraine Brown Conservation Fund

Peter Middleton, Chair

Deane Atherton

Willy Waterton

Ex officio

Warren Steckle

Brendan Mulroy

Publications Committee

Audrey Armstrong, Chair

Pamela Kinchen

David Morris

Barbara Palmer

Norah Toth

OSFN Volunteers & Representatives Members working on Behalf of our Club.

Charitable Return – Bruce Price

Program & Owen Sound Sun Times Nature Club News - John Dickson

Records – Lynne Richardson

Great Canadian Birdathoner – Judy Duncan

Bruce Peninsula National Park Advisory Committee – Willy Waterton

Ontario Nature – Audrey Armstrong

GSCA Arboretum Alliance Rep – Lynne Marie Sullivan

Hart's Tongue Herald - *Editor* – Norah Toth

Hart's Tongue Herald - *Mailing* – Monica Starr

E-Herald – Norah Toth

Young Naturalists – Amanda Eriksen

Rankin Resource Management Committee Rep – vacant

Stewardship Grey Bruce – Norah Toth

Stewardship Grey Bruce Piping Plover Committee Rep – Lynne Richardson

Owen Sound Christmas Bird Count – Erik Van Den Kieboom

Grey Bruce Bird Check List – Lynn Sullivan

Breeding Bird Atlas – Grey County – Lynne Richardson is the co-coordinator with Paul Eagles. Many individuals from our club have squares in Grey and Bruce counties.

NeighbourWoods North Committee - Lloyd Lewis & the many community members who have assisted the NeighbourWoods North Committee as they green our city.