

The Canadian Field-Naturalist

Minutes of the 147th Annual Business Meeting (ABM) of the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club, 14 January 2026, 7:30 p.m. (draft)

Chairperson: Owen Clarkin, President

56 people attended part or all of the Zoom meeting

The minutes of the previous Annual Business Meeting (ABM), the Financial Statements, Treasurer's Report, Annual Reports of Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club (OFNC) Committees for 2024–2025, and the report of the Nominating Committee had previously been available on the Club's website. The meeting was called to order at 7:40 pm. During the meeting, relevant documents were projected on the screen for the audience's reference.

Before the meeting, the Zoom host, Jessica Sims, explained how the Zoom meeting would work.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

It was moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Gordon Robertson, that the Agenda be adopted as distributed.

Robert Bergquist pointed out that Item 6 should read: "Review for the FY 2024-2025 Financial Statements".

Carried

2. Welcoming Remarks – Owen Clarkin, President, welcomed the attendees.

3. Minutes of the Previous ABM

It was moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Jessica Sims, that the minutes of the 146th ABM be accepted as distributed and published in *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (CFN).

Carried

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

None

5. Treasurer's Report by Ken Young

It was moved by Ken Young, seconded by Ann MacKenzie, that the Financial Statements be accepted as a fair representation of the financial position of the Club as of 30 September 2025.

Ken Young, Treasurer, presented the Financial Statements for 30 September 2025 as prepared and reviewed by the accounting firm, Welch LLP. Copies of the complete statement, as well as the written Treasurer's Report, had been available on the Club's website. We ended the 2024–2025 fiscal year with net assets of \$1 545 966.

Ken noted that our finances are quite stable and

highlighted the following:

- The editorial team of CFN has worked hard to improve the journal's timeliness. After two years of publishing only three issues, this year saw four. That resulted in a corresponding increase to CFN expenses.
- We increased our ongoing support for buses to the MacSkimming Outdoor Education Centre, from \$5000 to \$7000. The Centre is a program of the Ottawa–Carleton District School Board that provides education about natural history. Our support enables elementary students from schools in low-income neighbourhoods to participate.
- We made a \$5000 donation to the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust to support a land purchase.
- A major fundraising program, the native plant sale, is run by the volunteers of the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. Once again plant sale revenue increased, to \$19 981.

The following questions were raised:

- Ted Farnworth noted that the Club's income from investment interest is currently substantial and wondered what will happen in future as interest rates fall. Ken advised that a ladder approach is used, in which we purchase a number of bonds that mature at intervals over many years. This smooths out the fluctuations in short-term interest rates. Currently, investments are restricted to investment-grade bonds. These practices produce a stable stream of interest income.
- Erwin Dreessen inquired whether it is sustainable to continue to publish *Trail & Landscape*

(T&L) in its current form. Ken felt that it is sustainable. The Club doesn't expect its various activities to break even and, as we are in a good financial position, we can afford to do this. He feels that the cost of T&L is justified in terms of our mandate and attempts to grow the Club—it is a popular benefit of membership. It is an incentive to belong to the Club and drives engagement. It is also an important repository of information about local natural history.

Carried

6. Review for the FY 2025–2026 Financial Statements

It was moved by Ann MacKenzie, seconded by Ken Young, that a review, rather than an audit, of the OFNC's accounts be conducted for the fiscal year ending 30 September 2026.

The Club can have either a "review" or "audit" of next year's finances undertaken, but members must approve if the choice is to perform a review. Ann had prepared some background documents that had been available on the website ahead of the meeting. These detailed the differences between a review and an audit. The costs of an audit are typically twice that of a review, in both dollars and volunteer time. An audit is worthwhile if large grants are received or if there is an identified need to have a closer scrutiny of an organization's financial systems. Ann recommended that the members pass the motion to have a review this year.

A number of members had comments or queries:

- Martin Rice, treasurer of another not-for-profit organization that is required to have an audit by virtue of a grant that it receives, inquired whether OFNC is entirely independent and was advised that it is. Martin also pointed out that not every transaction is looked at in an audit—only a sample.
- Ted Farnworth inquired whether a review has to be done by an accounting firm and was advised that it does.
- John Foster inquired what criteria OFNC uses to determine whether a review or an audit is done in any particular year. He was advised that no such determination is made. It is assumed that we will do a review unless the membership votes for an audit. Ann suggested that we would only opt for an audit if concern was expressed about mismanagement.
- Owen Clarkin inquired whether we should do an audit periodically. Ann stated that an audit would have to go back a year on many aspects which would really be an audit of two years. She suggested that one would need to identify a problem

in order for the additional costs and labour of an audit to be of benefit. The Club has multiple professional entities and volunteers involved in its financial management and oversight such that it is very unlikely that problems would go unnoticed.

The motion was **Carried** by a majority of more than 80%

7. Nomination of the Accounting Firm

It was moved by Ken Young, seconded by Ann MacKenzie, 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 2026.

Carried

8. Nominations for Board of Directors positions

It was moved by Jakob Mueller, seconded by Lisa Chamney, that the slate of nominees presented be accepted as members of the Board of Directors of the OFNC for 2026.

Jakob presented the slate of candidates nominated to the Board of Directors for 2026. He noted that there has not been much change. It would be desirable to plan for the future and the Board will be taking steps to do some succession planning.

Slate of Nominees for Officers and Other Members of the Board of Directors

Officers	Position
Owen Clarkin	President
Jessica Sims	Vice President
Elizabeth Moore	Secretary
Ken Young	Treasurer

Other Members of the Board of Directors (in alphabetical order)

Annie Bélair	Ann MacKenzie
Robert Bergquist	Beverly McBride
Lisa Chamney	Emilia Michaud
Edward Farnworth	Jakob Mueller
Katriina Ilves	Janette Niwa
Susan Lehmann	Gordon Robertson

Carried

9. Committee Annual Reports

It was moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Beverly McBride, that the Committee Annual Reports be accepted as circulated.

Correction to the spelling of Cheryl Soullière's name and the use of a capital I for "Indigenous" in the Education and Publicity Committee's report were requested. Janette Niwa presented an illustrated slide show of some of the highlights of the work carried out by the various committees over the past year.

Carried

10. Adjournment

It was moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Gordon Robertson, that the meeting be adjourned.

Carried

After the meeting was adjourned, a natural history quiz based on species photographed during Conservation Committee outings was presented by Jakob Mueller.

ELIZABETH MOORE, Secretary