

## ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019



## MISSISSIPPI VALLEY FIELD NATURALISTS





# **MVFN ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019**

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## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

President: Linda McCormick

Vice President: Patricia Enright

Past President & Publicity Coordinator: Brenda Boyd

Secretary: Louise Beckinsale

Treasurer: John Blais

Programs: Cliff Bennett

Finance Committee: Jim Attack

Environmental Education: Bob Smith

Conservation and Habitat Restoration Committee: David Garcia

Membership: Sylvia Miller

Director at Large: Tineke Kuiper

## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

As of 3 May 2019, 98 memberships, representing 161 members, have been renewed/received for the 19/20 Membership Year, compared to 79 in the same time period for 18/19. One hundred and thirteen memberships have not yet renewed for 19/20 .

An auto-fill membership application form with integrated PayPal function for collecting membership dues and donations was successfully launched on the MVFN website on 25 May 2018. It is an excellent means of ensuring that membership information and deposits are consistently and reliably captured. The information collected on the application form is easily accessible to those authorized to view it.

Future modifications to this system are being considered to automate confirmations, donation receipts, reminder email and print-on-demand features, such as receipts or membership cards.

The MVFN Membership spread sheet continues to evolve, and is used to glean information, such as member interests, to assist Committee Chairs in planning and in soliciting assistance.

Membership cards indicating Membership Year are helpful to identify current members and are a visual reminder of membership expiration dates.

The Membership Committee maintains name tags and makes them available at indoor MVFN functions. Name T ags are also used to identify MFVN directors and new members.

A contract was started with Welcome Wagon to include MVFN brochures and a free coupon to a Nature Talk. Based on the return of coupons, the activity has yielded limited response from new arrivals to Mississippi Mills and Carleton Place. Once the current contract expires there is no plan to renew this service.

The 2018/19 Programme Committee consisted of Sylvia Miller (Chair), Elizabeth Veninga, Georgina Wigley.

## **PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

The 2018/19 program year was most successful, with attendance ranging from 80 to 120 for all of our six speakers. In September Dr. Rob Longair, an Entomologist, spoke on the life of wasps; October's speaker was Dr. David Sharp, who spoke on area geology and ice ages; Ken Allison was our November speaker and spoke on Phragmites and other Invasives.

January's speaker was Dr. Troy McMullen, who presented an intriguing tale of lichens; February was a film night, presented by Bill Pratt and our final speaker was Dr. Paul Smith whose topic was Geese, Gizmos and Globe Trotters.

For the Spring Gathering the keynote speakers were Becky Mason and Reid McLachlan presenting "The Red Canoe: the Legacy of Bill Mason" and "View Finder: Behind the Camera with Ken Buck".

The committee has been trying to line up outings led by our speakers and was successful in getting Dr. Sharp to conduct a tour of a very outstanding geological site at Cantley Quarry on Sunday, May 5.

Our new program theme for 2019/20 presentations is "Over, Under and Through: A Closer Look at Nature" and the committee is presently lining up speakers for this series. Last year, a member survey was conducted on member interests. The committee found this survey very helpful.

The 2018/19 Program Committee consisted of Cliff Bennett, Chair, Sandy Coutts-Southerland, Victoria Miller, Gretta Bradley and Ron Williamson.

## **PUBLICITY**

The big news from the Publicity Committee this year is the resignation of Pauline Donaldson from the Publicity Committee, after many, many years of dedication to writing, editing and publishing relevant information about nature, both from a local and a broader perspective.

Pauline set up MVFN's first website, and was on the committee to modernize it a few years ago. She published a regular MVFN newsletter, "The Whippoorwill". She also set up the MVFN Facebook. Pauline, often single-handedly, kept the MVFN website and Facebook page up-to-date, posting all MVFN events, and scouring nature-related publications for relevant information that would be of interest to MVFN members and the public in our local communities.

She made sure relevant articles about upcoming MVFN events, and details from our nature talks, were published in the local media. She promoted information about MVFN at local events, such as "Mississippi Mills at a Glance". Pauline also sat on the MVFN Board of Directors for many years.

Her commitment to MVFN and to sharing nature news will be sorely missed. We hope she will still make contributions on the MVFN Group Facebook page!

Iain Wilkes has taken on the mantle of web master and is in the process of simplifying and streamlining our website.

We are also in the process of launching an MVFN Group Facebook page, where members and the general public will be able to post their nature sightings, pictures, relevant information and other items of interest to the group. Moderators from the Publicity Committee will make sure all postings are appropriate and relevant.

We are also publishing seasonal newsletters from time to time. New contributors who write or send in articles are always appreciated!

The 2018/19 Publicity Committee consisted of Brenda Boyd (Chair) Pauline Donaldson, and Chris Barlow.

## **CONSERVATION AND HABITAT RESTORATION**

This year saw the completion of the beautiful bird viewing shelter overlooking the westernmost pond at the Almonte Lagoons. Dedicated and named for former MVFN President and Champion for Nature, Mike McPhail, the shelter complements the existing Al Potvin Observation Tower by adding a stable covered structure that can accommodate a large number of people.

The MVFN Board of Directors and members are delighted with the results of the tireless efforts of the co-managers of the viewing platform project, Michel Gauthier and Howard Robinson. Our thanks to all the members who volunteered over the course of the year and built the shelter during one of the warmest summers on record. We are proud to offer the public birding community a unique place to visit, spring, summer and fall. MVFN is also very grateful to the Municipality of Mississippi Mills for allowing the shelter to be built, for the help and support they offered throughout.

The Conservation and Habitat Restoration Committee also did a major clearing of the trail leading to the tower; adding wood mulch where needed. They also stabilized the Al Potvin Tower and improved the drainage around the tower. Plans were drawn up and approved for a repair to the tower which will take place in June 2019.

The committee also completed two maintenance trips to Gunn Creek trail to clear debris and remove fallen trees.

The 2018/19 Conservation and Habitat Committee consisted of David Garcia (Chair) and many volunteers.

## **NATURE PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

The Nature Protection Committee (formerly Natural Heritage System Committee) met twice with the new Director of Planning for Mississippi Mills to discuss and comment on issues pertaining to Natural Heritage. Detailed comments were also circulated to MM Staff as well as its Councillors and to Lanark County Staff. The new Community Official Plan has not yet been approved by Lanark County. Currently, the Plan does not allow for Linkages. As such it is not in conformity with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) requirements under the Planning Act. The Director of Planning suggested that our Committee reach out to individual Councillors to explain background details, and this is underway.

In addition, the committee has connected with the Lanark Stewardship Council, which has worked with landowners. Gordon Harrison has attended our most recent meeting. He has been involved in the million tree-planting program for appropriate restoration and climate action.

In April, a committee member attended a successful meeting (100 attendees) of the Adirondack to Algonquin Park (A2A) Corridor held in upstate New York. To prevent excessive road kill, it is of great importance to develop appropriate road crossings over the 401 and Hwy. 2. Understanding hot spots of biodiversity in this corridor is also important. Lots of new tools are being developed.

Sylvia Miller (Membership Committee) and I attended two regional meetings of Ontario Nature. MVFN signed their petition and with the support of letters from our members, we successfully lobbied against several measures proposed by the new Ontario government that are harmful to the natural environment.

Our committee selected two of five applicants to attend the 2019 Ontario Nature Youth Summit. These two students are sponsored by MVFN.

The 2018/19 Committee consisted of Tineke Kuiper (Chair), Tom Coleman (secretary), Mike Macpherson and Nick de Boer.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

The Environmental Education Program Once again offers funding to schools in our area to participate in a Monarch butterfly support program, which includes: spring in class planting of milkweed, transplanting these milkweed to an outdoor area, adding to established pollinator/ butterfly gardens, and finally, in the fall, nurturing, hatching and releasing live Monarchs to begin the long migration to their winter home in Mexico.

In addition, we are introducing a new interactive program, designed for grades 4/5, dealing with Water, our most important resource. We have invited over 200 local students to this Children's Water Festival to learn about water quality, and drinking and waste water treatment, encouraging hands on interaction at 20 demonstration stations, monitored by secondary student volunteers.

MVFN is working with Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority, The River Institute for Environmental Studies, the Upper Canada District School Board and the Municipality of Mississippi Mills, and we all look forward to presenting an exciting and meaningful Water Festival". The Festival is being held at the Mill of Kintail in late September 2019.

The Young Naturalists program continues to be popular and is fully subscribed each session. Thanks to a donation from Learning in Almonte a tablet has been purchased for the program. The tablet is being used in the field to introduce the children to applications that help examine and identify species.

The 2018/19 Environmental Education Committee consists of Joanne Clayton, Catherine Arbour, Kathleen McIntyre and Bob Smith. Members of the committee take turns as the chair, hosting the meeting and writing minutes.

## **BIRDING COMMITTEE**

Updated and reprinted the Checklist of Birds in Lanark County.

Five Early Bird walks were conducted in April and early May. An outing to Presqu'île Provincial Park to observe the annual waterfowl migration was held in March.

Ten MVFN observers plus four Mississippi Lakes Association boat drivers conducted the 3rd annual Lakes Loon Survey on the entire Mississippi Lake.

At least 50 members took part in three different annual Christmas Bird Counts.

The Birding Committee consists of Tim Pullen (Chair) Howard Robinson, Mary Robinson, Michel Gauthier, Ken Allison, Cliff Bennett, David Hinks and Lynda Morgan.



## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

In April 2018, the Finance Committee brought forward a proposed budget for 2018/19 to the Board for finalization and approval. Special expenditures proposals for training, repairs for the Al Potvin Tower, permanent signs at the Lagoon, trail maintenance and a review and upgrading of the website were reviewed and recommended to the board for approval in August.

Budget consultation with the Chairs of other MVFN Committees begin in early in 2019 to arrive at suggested budgets for 2019-20. The proposed budgets were presented to the Board of Directors in March.

The Finance Committee consists of Jim Atack, John Blais, Cliff Bennett, Bob McCook and Linda McCormick.

# **MISSISSIPPI VALLEY FIELD NATURALISTS**

## **Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at March 31, 2019 and 2018**

	<u>Mar.31, 2019</u>	<u>Mar.31, 2018</u>
<u>Current Assets</u>	\$	\$
Balance in Bank per Books*	44,006.47*	45,135.66*
Petty Cash	145.00	<u>145.00</u>
Credit at Levi Home Hardware	<u>507.02</u>	
Sub-Total	44,658.49	45,280.66
 <u>Long Term Assets</u>		
Ottawa Community Foundation:		
Cliff Bennett Nature Bursary Fund	<u>14,266.26**</u>	<u>14,658.76**</u>
 Total Assets	58,924.75	59,939.42
 <u>Liabilities</u>	nil	nil

Approved on behalf of the Board of Directors:

.....  
President

  
.....  
Treasurer

### Notes

- The Balance in Bank per Books is after all cheques issued but not yet redeemed and includes outstanding deposits. As per the operating statement, the bank balance includes \$23,927 given or raised for particular programs.
- \*\* This amount includes \$564 earnings to be redeemed in 2019-2020

**Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists  
Annual Operating Statement 2018-19**

Opening Balance April 1, 2018	\$ 45,136
Funds held for: Young Naturalists Program	1,440
Environmental Education	2,250
Special Projects	5,475
CB Nature Bursary Fund	3,511
Almonte Lagoon Shelter/Mike McPhail Fund	<u>10,637</u>
Uncommitted Reserve as at April 1, 2018	\$ 21,823

	<u>Operating Results</u>	
	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
	\$	\$
Memberships in MVFN	4,850	400
Speakers Series	253	1,372
Canoeing & Kayaking	1,920	1,080
Environmental Education		2,857
Young Naturalists	5,010	3,752
Conservation & Habitat Other	215	240
Other Programs	303	1,079
Spring Gathering	7,700	4,912
Administration		3,075
Publicity		361
Miscellaneous	1,050	449
General Donations	1,004	
CB Nature Bursary Funds Other	2,684	3,381
Special Projects	4,000	
Almonte Lagoon Shelter (C&H)		<u>7,171</u>
<i>TOTALS</i>	<u>28,999</u>	<u>30,129</u>

Cash Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (1,130)
Closing Balance March 31, 2019	\$ 44,006

Funds held for: Young Naturalists	\$ 2,713
Environmental Education	1,500
Special Projects	13,685
CB Nature Bursary Fund	3,629
Spring Gathering	<u>2,400</u>

Uncommitted Reserves as at March 31, 2019	\$ 20,079
Increase (Decrease) in Uncommitted Reserve	\$ (1,744)

**Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists  
Approved Budget 2019-20**

Opening Bank Balance per Books April 1, 2019	\$ 44,006
Funds held for: Young Naturalists	2,713
Environmental Education	1,500
Special Projects	13,685
Cliff Bennett Nature Bursary Fund	3,629
Spring Gathering	<u>2,400</u>
Uncommitted Reserve as at April 1, 2019	\$ 20,079

	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
	\$	\$
Memberships in MVFN	5,000	575
Speakers Series	300	2,010
*Canoeing & Kayaking	1,000	1,000
Environmental Education		6,600
*Young Naturalists	4,110	4,220
Conservation & Habitat	200	990
Other Programs	200	480
*Spring Gathering	5,000**	5,000
Administration		4,670
Publicity		780
Miscellaneous	2,050	1,900
General Donations	1,000	
*CB Nature Bursary Funds Other	700	3,760
Almonte Lagoon Tower (New Funds +Levi Credit=\$1,350)		843
Contingency		<u>600</u>
TOTALS	\$ 19,560	\$ 33,428

Cash Surplus (Deficit)	(\$ 13,868)
Forecasted Closing Bank Balance March 31	\$ 30,138
Funds held for: Young Naturalists	2,606
CB Nature Bursary Fund	1,469
Spring Gathering	2,400
Special Projects	<u>8,842</u>
Uncommitted Reserve as at March 31, 2020	\$ 14,821
Net Increase (Decrease) in Uncommitted Reserve	(\$5,250)

\* These are forecasts not budgets

\*\* This assumes that we get paid for the same number of tickets in Jan-Mar. 2020 as in Mar. 2019

## REPORT ON INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL REVIEW

May 13, 2019  
Board of Directors  
Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists  
Almonte, ON  
KOA IA0

Dear MVFN Directors,

I have reviewed the financial information and related records and statements provided to me by your Treasurer, Mr. John Blais and Past treasurer Mr. Jim Attack, for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2019.

Based on the information provided to me by them, and upon my review of that information, it is my opinion that the most recent version of the financial records, as amended and provided May 07, 2019, fairly represent the financial position of MVFN as at March 31, 2019, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in Canada.

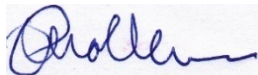
I understand the following assets apply: . . . . .

- Bank: \$44,006
- Petty Cash: 145
- Credit - Home Hardware: 507
- Ottawa Community Fdn. Fund: 14,266
- TOTAL: \$58,924

I trust you will find this report to be in order. Once again, this year, there will be no charge for this service.

I regret this will be the last year I will be able to offer this service to MVFN. I hope you will have no difficulty finding a replacement next year. It has been a pleasure serving you.

Best regards,



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Peter Moller  
265 Gore Street  
Almonte, Ontario,  
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613-256-1237 / [pete.moller@rogers.com](mailto:pete.moller@rogers.com)

## **BURSARY COMMITTEE**

In the 2018/19 year, three \$1000 bursaries and one \$500 bursary were awarded. Many sources of donations were recognized and our investments earned over \$500. The committee extends grateful thanks for interest and donations shown by MVFN members.

The Bursary Committee consists of Mike Macpherson (Chair), Jan Johns, Kim Edwards, Cliff Bennett.

## **CANOE AND KAYAK PROGRAM**

Another successful paddling season included six day trips at various locations throughout Lanark County, led by different MVFN members, and a four-day canoe camp in early September at Achray Campground in Algonquin Park. 24 people participated, including a student from France.

Two one-day CPR and First Aid courses were offered in April and May for MVFN members. This course was offered at cost by trained instructor and MVFN Vice-President Stan Holloway. Having more trained members that participate in outdoor activities was the goal of offering this course. Anyone taking the course who participated in an outing was offered a refund of the course fee.

## **ARM CHAIR TRAVELLERS**

A pilot program for a new program from MVFN titled “Arm Chair Travellers: Viewing Nature Vicariously” was conducted one afternoon a month in January, February and March at the Almonte Library. The series featured members of MVFN or friends willing to share photographs they have taken on personal trips to other regions. Two or three presenters each session made a 10-15 minute presentation each. One of the presenters was usually a student or recent graduate highlighting their research or a project they had worked on.

The series was well enough attended to be continued in 2020. MFVN has established a relationship with Ottawa University and will continue offering an opportunity to students to present their work.

## PHRAGMITES WATCH

MVFN initiated a program for reporting the occurrence of *Phragmites australis* to the EddmapS Ontario program. This was a coordinated search by MVFN members to report the occurrence at roadsides and in adjacent areas. MVFN will also be reporting observed occurrences for other invasives as well, including those five that are listed as being of serious concern by Lanark County.

Several 2- to 3-person observation parties travelled all the roads in Lanark County over the course of summer and fall. The sightings made were reported to the EddmapS Ontario program.

Designed as a census of all roads, the program documented where Phragmites are NOT occurring. By logging areas where Phragmites do NOT presently occur we will be able to provide both County and Townships with some assurance that the EddmapS Ontario program as regards to Phragmites can be relied upon to show the true extent of this invasive within Lanark County.

## **MVFN 2019-2020 CALENDAR**

### **April 2019**

3 Early Morning Bird Walk: Al Potvin's property – Leader: Michel Gauthier  
6 Young Naturalists  
10 Early Morning Bird Walk: 12th Concession to Taylor Lake – Leader: Michel Gauthier  
17 Early Morning Bird Walk: Tatlock Road, on Robinson's property – Leaders: Howard & Mary Robinson  
16 Spring Gathering Banquet  
24 Early Morning Bird Walk: Mississippi Riverwalk Trail, Carleton Place – Leaders: Howard & Mary Robinson  
25 Board of Directors Meeting

### **May 2019**

1 Early Morning Bird Walk - Ken Allison's  
4 Young Naturalists  
16 AGM-members night  
23 Board of Directors Meeting  
26 Spring Canoe trip

### **June 2019**

22 Canoe/Kayak Water Safety Course - Stan Holloway  
23 Rain date for Water Safety  
23 June Canoe trip

### **July 2019**

17 Introduction to Canoeing Almonte - Stan Holloway  
24 Rain date for Introduction to Canoeing  
28 Canoe trip

### **August 2019**

a spontaneous bird outing could be arranged in August at the Birding Shelter if the mud flats are visible in the lagoon and good for birding.  
11 First August Canoe trip  
22 Board of Directors Meeting and volunteer appreciation potluck  
25 Second August Canoe Trip

### **September 2019**

4 Lagoon Open House – Leader: Ken Allison  
7 Young Naturalists  
6-9 Annual Canoe Camp  
11 Lagoon Open House – Leader: Ken Allison  
18 Lagoon Open House – Leader: Michel Gauthier  
16 Nature Talk  
25 Lagoon Open House – Leader: Michel Gauthier



26 Board of Directors Meeting  
29 Fall Colours Canoe Trip

### **October 2019**

5 Young Naturalists  
17 Nature Talk  
24 Board of Directors Meeting

### **November 2019**

2 Young Naturalists  
21 Nature Talk  
28 Board of Directors Meeting

### **December 2019**

7 Young Naturalists  
Kintail Country Christmas  
15 Audubon Christmas Bird Count - Rideau Ferry  
27 Audubon Christmas Bird Count - Carleton Place  
30 Audubon Christmas Bird Count - Lanark Highlands

### **January 2020**

4 Young Naturalists  
16 Nature Talk  
23 Board of Directors Meeting  
Arm Chair Travellers

### **February 2020**

1 Young Naturalists  
20 Nature Talk  
27 Board of Directors Meeting  
Arm Chair Travellers

### **March 2020**

7 Young Naturalists  
19 Nature Talk  
26 Board of Directors Meeting  
Arm Chair Travellers

### **April 2020**

7 Young Naturalists  
16 Spring Gathering  
23 Board of Directors Meeting