

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY FIELD NATURALISTS ANNUAL REPORT - 2022



MVFN ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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Front Cover: Burnt Lands Provincial Park, former DND antenna site on March Road

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Layout: John Blais

Date: February 12, 2023

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In May of 2022, right after our last AGM, previous president Linda McCormick set off on an exciting yearlong boating trip around the great lakes, down the Mississippi River and around the Gulf of Mexico. She had introduced many new ideas for improving communications and storage of information. Technological improvements that were much needed. That work is still not complete and will continue to move forward. She had begun work on an improved website and we were to be thankful for that when our calendar stopped functioning properly and brought down the site every time an update was made. Brent Eades was able to put up the new site he had already been working on with Linda and is currently looking after that for us. We appreciate his help and support. Iain Wilkes who was previously posting our information has stepped back and the members of the board wish to thank him for the many hours he dedicated to looking after our website.

The MVFN program had been kept active for a couple of years with zoom presentations, thanks to members like Ken Allison who gave us numerous nature sightings and bird recognition presentations and Denis Gallant who made the zoom meetings and presentations possible. It was a relief to be able to return to normal programming for the spring and summer of 2022. There was good news when we had the removal of compulsory masking for Covid 19 and no restrictions on numbers for outdoor meetings. In April the bird walks began and were hugely popular. Likewise the paddlers had a very successful summer with double the usual number of participants at their fall canoe camp. Everyone was pleased to be able to meet outdoors.

MVFN is very supportive of environmental education for young people and in the early part of the year we issued a grant to the Wild Bird Care Centre in support of a summer student from Lanark County. Unfortunately a suitable student was not found. Patty McLaughlin, previously the Leader of our Young Naturalist Program came forward looking for us to partner in a Naturehood grant already being supported by Ontario Nature, for a fall youth program. Therefore the previously offered \$4,500.00 was donated to this cause. As mentioned Patty is no longer working with the MVFN Young Naturalists. She developed and led the group very capably and enthusiastically for a number of years and we thank her for her time and effort.

The Environmental Education Committee is delighted to have found an excellent new leader for our Young Naturalists; her name is Stephanie Cleland. Stephanie began work in June.

Sadly, Cathy Keddy passed away on October 14th. Cathy was a well-known environmentalist who devoted hours in support to community activities and conservation. She was a member of MVFN for many years and made major contributions including her work as Nature Talks Co-ordinator. Her vast natural history knowledge and her ability to be able to identify every species she was asked about, made her an irreplaceable participant in the MVFN paddles. She worked for Ontario Nature and in more recent times was an important member of the board of the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust, helping them acquire several of their natural areas. She was also a key figure in the development of the A2A organization (Algonquin to Adirondacks).

As arranged at the last AGM, our 2022 financial year began in April but finished on December 31st, hence our February AGM. This means that the 2022 accounts are a little distorted because the year is 9 months rather than 12 months. The membership year remains the same so membership payments are still due by April 1st.

We will be working hard to make 2023 an even more successful year than 2022. Including the return of our Spring Gathering in April.

I would like to thank the members of the board for their support and assistance during my first year as president. I would also like to thank our technical support members, crucial to the organisation of member information, website maintenance and on line presentations. Finally thank you to all those committee members and volunteers who work hard to make belonging to the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists an enriching experience.

Val Wilkinson

President



BIRDING COMMITTEE REPORT

In preparation for the 2022 birding seasons, Ken Allison offered a workshop on Owl Calls on Tuesday, February 1 and two Birding by Ear workshops on common bird calls and songs on Thursday, March 10, and March 24. At the request of participants, a special add-on was included to review typical frog calls of Lanark County. All workshops were held on Zoom in the evenings and were much appreciated by participants.

With the ease of COVID restrictions, MVFN invited members to participate in the Early Morning Bird Walks each Wednesday in April at the same locations as in past years. The walks were led by Ken Allison, Michel Gauthier and Rémy Poulin. An average of twenty-five birders participated each morning and a record number of species was observed.

The Birding Committee also organized the following very successful birding outings:

- a walk at the Perth Wildlife Reserve on Saturday, May 7, 2022, led by Rémy Poulin with 16 participants.
- a drive in the Westport area on Thursday, May 12, 2022, led by Jim Attack as guide and Ken Allison as the expert birder.
- a walk on the Allison's property on Saturday, May 14, 2022, led by Ken Allison with 14 participants.
- a walk on the Burnt Lands Alvar on Saturday, June 4, 2022, led by Ken Allison with 28 participants.

MVFN members also participated in the Grassland Ontario Projects administered by the Lanark County Stewardship Council in 2022. The aim of the project is to monitor the health of grassland bird species. This year Rémy Poulin and Ken Allison conducted surveys on two properties that are hosting Grasslands Ontario projects.

Open Houses were held each Wednesday afternoon in September at the Almonte Sewage Treatment Lagoon to view the fall migration. Ken Allison and Michel Gauthier offered their expertise and assistance to attendees. The numbers of birds and species observed seemed lower than in previous years, but the data points to an average year except for the lower duck and shorebird numbers. High water levels at the lagoons without any draw-down during the summer seems to be making the habitat less attractive for both waterfowl and shorebirds.

As in past years, MVFN members took part in three Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) in December: Rideau Ferry, organized by Alison Bentley; Carleton Place, organized by Iain Wilkes; and Lanark Highlands, organized by Jeff Mills. The 32nd Rideau Ferry CBC took place on December 27, 2022 where 59 species and 11,778 individual birds were recorded. The 72nd Carleton Place CBC took place on December 27, 2022, where 47 species and 7,147

individual birds were recorded. A detailed report is on the MVFN website. The 19th Lanark Highlands CBC took place on December 30, 2022. The Birding Committee and volunteers continue to provide habitat and feed for the birds at the Almonte Lagoon property. Members of the Birding

Committee are Val Wilkinson (chair), Ken Allison, Cliff Bennett, Michel Gauthier, Rémy Poulin, Tim Pullen and Mary Robinson (secretary).

MVFN - LANARK COUNTY BIODIVERSITY PROJECT

2022 report (23Jan2023)

Ken Allison did a great job at summarizing the MVFN iNaturalist project at the Members' Night meeting but here are some additional details for your information/interest.

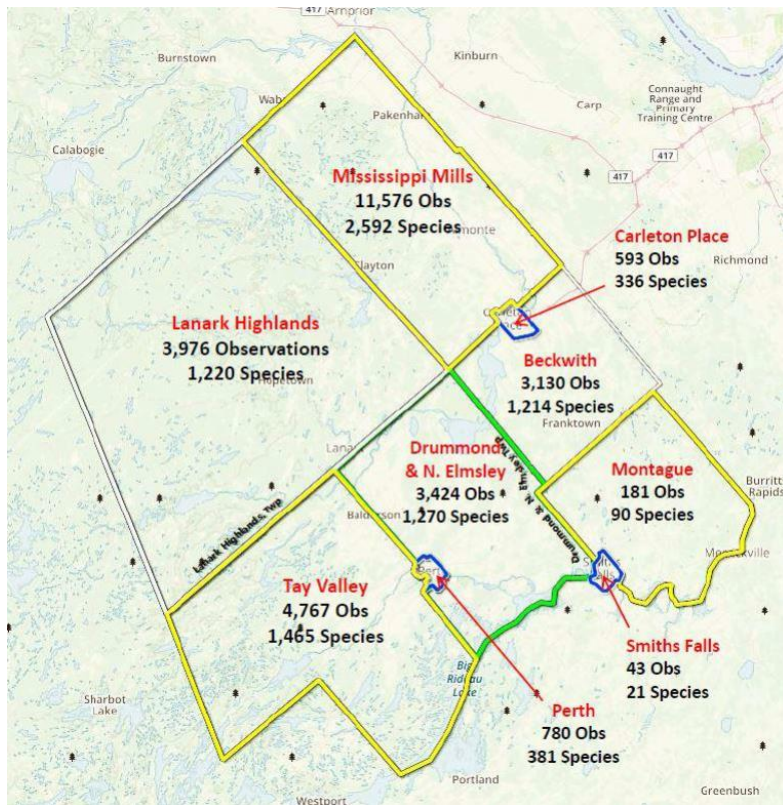
The MVFN Lanark County Biodiversity iNaturalist project made good progress in 2022 - both in terms of posted observations and a substantial increase in the total number of species.

Here's a comparison of the project from Dec 31st, 2021 to Dec 31st, 2022.

	2021, Dec 31	2022, Dec 31	% change
Observations, total	19,308	28,507	48%
Species, total	2,951	3,716	26%
Threatened species	101	125	24%
Introduced species	340	396	16%
Observers, total	65	68	5%

The two diagrams below show the breakdown of observations and species by townships across Lanark County. The first county map shows the total observations and total species per townships/towns in the project to date. You will notice that the number of observations and species for Montague Township and Smiths Falls is quite low compare to other parts of Lanark County. If you live or spend lots of time in those areas, please joining iNaturalist and adding to the biodiversity record of Montague Township and Smiths Falls!

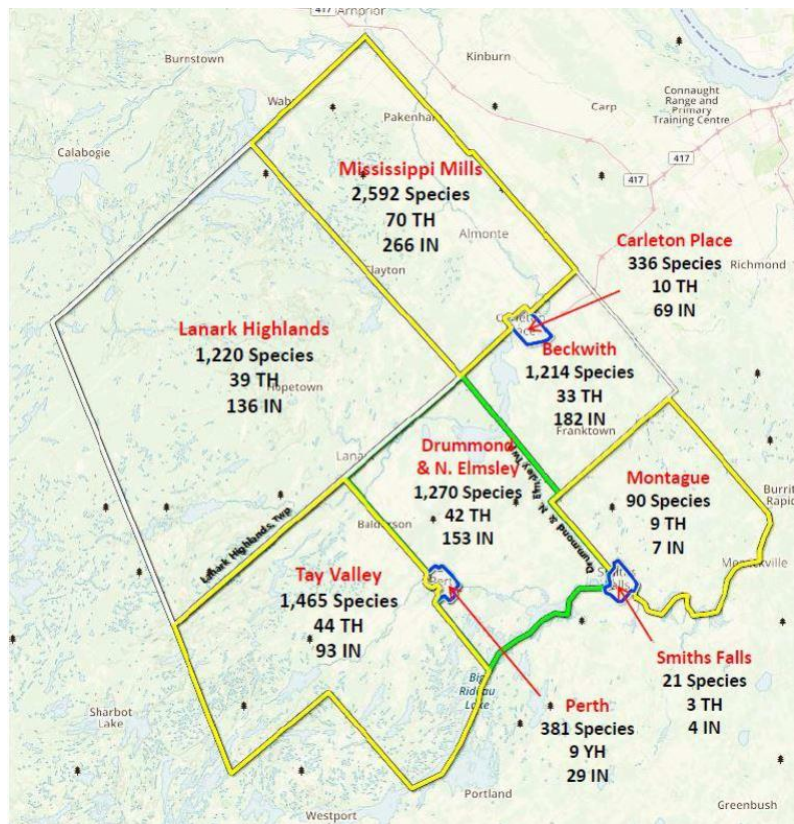
The second map shows the total number of species per townships/towns with the iNaturalist stats on threatened (TH) and introduced (IN) species. On average, 3.5% of Lanark County species are flagged as threatened on iNaturalist and 10.5% of species are flagged as introduced. As you might expect, the iNaturalist data shows an above average number of introduced species for the towns of Lanark County.



If you are interested in joining the MVFN Lanark County Biodiversity project and making a local contribution to citizen science – go to <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/mvfn-lanark-county-biodiversity>.

For more information on these diagrams and data, you can contact Denis Gallant

(denisag2@yahoo.com or “denisag2” on iNaturalist).



CLIFF BENNETT NATURE BURSARY REPORT

The Bursary is named for Cliff Bennett, a founding member of the MVFN. It was established in 2007 by Cliff's many friends on his 75th birthday, to honour, with a legacy, his lifelong contribution to nature education. The Cliff Bennett Nature Bursary is offered annually to assist students entering post-secondary studies in a field related to the natural environment. One or more bursaries of \$1,000 is awarded each year to deserving students from our catchment area. To date over \$25,000 has been awarded to 32 students who have gone on to studies at colleges and universities across the country.

This report includes a catch up for the 2021-2022 CBNB year – the 15th Bursary Year! The Committee agreed to extend our outreach program to students graduating in both the current Bursary year as well as those who may have taken a gap year because of COVID-19. Students completing high school through an adult education program are also eligible.

In the Spring, the CBNB account received a significant influx of funds thanks to being the recipient of the net proceeds from the 'Birdhouse Auction' – a tremendous effort led by Barbara Carroll, Glenda Jones and Linda McCormick. We are also thankful for ongoing interest and contributions of MVFN members.

In May 2021, four \$1,000 bursaries were awarded to: Daniel Anderson, Christian Gates, Emily Lee, and Delaney Stone. Members' night also included a presentation from past recipient Ruth Tamas. We learned about Ruth's interests and goals related to environmental engineering. Ruth highlighted how important it was for her to receive the bursary, as it validated her interest in how infrastructure can be built to limit environmental impacts on the natural world. In addition, four 2020 recipients who were entering 2nd year were awarded a small supplementary bursary after providing an update regarding their studies, reflections for their chosen program, and aspirations/future plans. It is always rewarding to catch up with prior recipients.

This year (2022) saw two \$1000 bursaries awarded to: Sadie Hilton and Jordan-Anne Rich. We were fortunate with many sources of donations and our investments at the Community Foundation continue to earn over \$650/yr. Ultimately, the goal is for the Community Foundation investment to earn and return \$1,000/year to support at least one Cliff Bennett Nature Bursary every year.

The committee extends grateful thanks for interest and donations shown by MVFN members. The Bursary Committee consists of Patricia Larkin (last year as Chair), Jan Johns, Rudi Mueller, Robert Barnett, and Cliff Bennett (ex officio).

CONSERVATION AND HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT

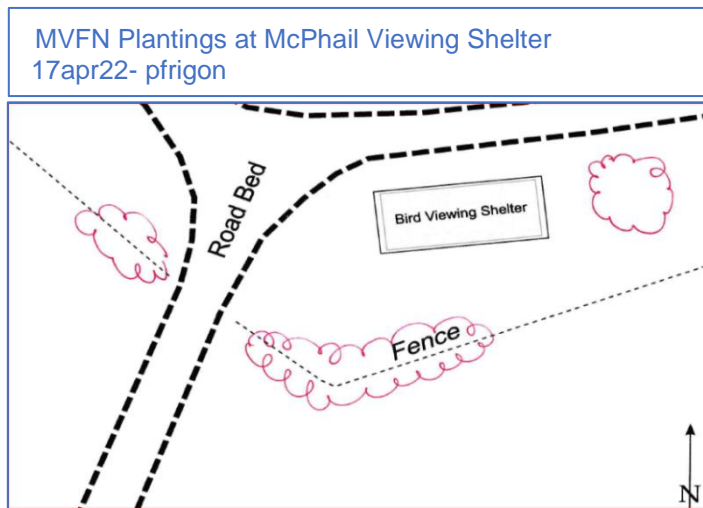
- Committee Meeting - 03May22 – Paul Frigon and Nick de Boer – discussed BB House “build” and pathway/trail maintenance: Gunn Creek Trail and Almonte Lagoon Pathways.



- Bluebird Houses – Naismith Men’s Shed cut the materials and volunteers gathered at the Mill of Kintail Gatehouse Centre on 29Nov22 and 40 bluebird houses were assembled. Ten people attended including organisers Nick de Boer, Art Clarke, Paul Frigon and volunteers Don and Beth Wigle, Sabine Jaekel, Genevieve Patchell, Patty Watters, Tom Shoebridge and Bob Betcher. All 40 BB Nest boxes assembled in under 2 hours – see photo by Sabine. Facility provided free of

charge by MVCA. Currently, of the total of 50 nest boxes in stock, six have been sold and six have been ordered. The MM Youth Centre and youth volunteers were considered as an alternative “build” resource but was not required this year. Sales to be continued in 2023

- Other Bird Houses– none identified for construction; discuss with Birding Committee in 2023
- Bird House maintenance – being discussed internally; and externally with MVCA. To be continued in 2023
- Trail and Pathway Maintenance: Almonte Lagoon Pathways mowed in the first week of September by Paul Frigon in anticipation of waterfowl observations this Fall; including Viewing Shelter and Viewing Platform connecting path. Nick de Boer had County replace the Community Forest sign at the Gunn Creek Trail that had blown down in the derecho. Pathway maintenance to include 4’ wide mow width, in grassed areas, as a tick precaution. Overhangs and deadfalls to be removed as necessary. No trail maintenance in 2022. To be continued in 2023.



- Plantings at McPhail Viewing Shelter – Almonte Lagoons. Initial discussion with Town regarding improvements to landscaping to attract more birds. The plantings would likely include plant types bearing fruit/seeds to make the site more attractive to birds, other than waterfowl, as well for a general site enhancement. This may include removal of nasty species such as buckthorn and possible planting of

future refuge/resting trees/shrubs adjacent to the site. They have asked to be kept informed as plans develop. Initial sketch provided to Town. Initially working with Dan Nelles on a plant list – to be reviewed and moved forward in 2023.

- Mississippi Lake Loon Survey 2022 results – provided by MLA rep Doreen Donaldson and MVFN rep Nick De Boer. MVFN support for boat fuel - \$400. To be continued in 2023
- The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has a program on Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). They are researching a stretch of the Mississippi River, from Almonte to Pakenham, as a potential KBA since it is one of only a few confirmed Rapids Clubtail Dragonfly sites in Canada. Ken Allison has recent iNaturalist records for this species along the Mississippi River and he was asked to share more details about this species at the sites. WCS could present to MVFN about this KBA; the Program Committee is aware of this opportunity. There may also be opportunity for development of further study in the Almonte-Pakenham reach of the Mississippi River to confirm this KBA; perhaps a WSC/MVFN joint project. To be continued in 2023
- Ontario Nature, in November, forwarded information on responding to the Provincial Government's Bill 23 and related changes to processes and policies that significantly affect Conservation Authorities, and wetlands in particular. The information was forwarded to the membership for individual responses.
- John Blais and CHR Committee investigated potential for an EnAbling Change grant from provincial government to improve pathway access to birding tower/shelter. On review, the grant was not applicable and Sharon Proulx, program coordinator, suggested trying for upcoming grants that might be more in line with our potential infrastructure improvement plans. If these grants occur (December, January) MVFN should be ready with a proposal (plans/cost/timing). Expect a 50/50 with province – MVFN should also seek partners with Town/County for MVFN 50%. Possible expansion to Viewing Shelter accessibility. To be continued in 2023.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM REPORT

In general 2022 has been a successful one, especially in terms of a gradual recovery from the restrictions imposed by the pandemic over 3 years. Although we have been able to maintain all of our programs, Covid protocols limited our access to some schools, thereby reducing the impact of, for example, the Monarch program, where we were not able to enter some schools in May but were allowed entry in September. Those restrictions largely relaxed now, we are anticipating the next year to return to normal.

As for 2022, our efforts were largely concentrated on the following programs and events.

1. Monarch Classroom Release Program...As mentioned above the May component of the program is aimed at habitat restoration, with in class planting of milkweed followed by June planting outside somewhere e.g. school fence line, ditch, school pollinator garden. This spring we were able to join the students in class, with a few exceptions which required us to drop off the seed kits at the school entrance. By September however, all schools opened their doors and we were once again able to bring to the classes the Monarch release kits, 4 caterpillars and 2 chrysalis to be observed through their development stages to hatching and release, then to migrate to Mexico, to hibernate for 5 months only to start the cycle once again.

This program for the past 3 years has been offered to 19 schools in the Mississippi watershed area and the Almonte Youth Club.

Credit for making this program as popular and successful as it is goes to Joanne Clayton, Cate Arbour, Karen Thomson, Scott Hortop, and Bob Smith

2. Young Naturalists Program...The YN program was originally developed by Patty McLaughlin about 10 years ago. She created a binder full of themes and resources over those years and the program has become very popular. But Patty chose to withdraw this year and we were faced with the daunting task of replacing her. We formed an interview team (Brenda, Cate, Scott and Bob) and soon found ourselves interviewing four candidates. One of these stood out immediately by far. She had poise and personality, energy and enthusiasm, and a resume that showed her knowledge and intelligence. She was Stephanie Cleland, our new YN Coordinator. The program had largely stagnated during the covid years and Stephanie quickly got it up and running again with a one day workshop in June, fully booked. The Fall sessions were equally popular, with topics like stream studies, tree identification,

bird watching and snowshoeing. As Brenda Boyd happily says these days, the YN program is back in good hands.

3. Mississippi Mills Youth Club...the EEP initial collaboration with the Club began a few years ago with a request that we help them plan their Nature Days summer camp activities. These have evolved from canoe lessons, bird identification, night time photography jaunts and butterfly hunts, to winter indoor activities like birdhouse building and a wild bird workshop. Brenda Boyd ably coordinates these activities.
4. Festival of the Wild Child...An event organized by MMLT, the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust, with whom we have been associated for the past few years. The event is aimed at attracting more families and children, to get out into nature, the Wilds. Of the many events taking place on that day,
5. 2 were run by EEP members. Stephanie Cleland presented a walk which demonstrated examples of how Nature Adapts to Disaster, or how nature compensates and recovers from what we would call a natural disaster...Hurricanes, floods etc. And Bob Smith, with his team of Emily Moynes, and Mayah and Asher Newman created the Pollinator Path, a short walk showing the many examples and importance of possible pollinators...bees, birds, butterflies, bats, beetles and other bugs, not to mention mice, moles, squirrels etc. These efforts were well received and have been invited back next year.
6. Children's Water Festival...After 3 years of postponements due to weather and Covid, EEP finally got the Festival off the ground. This event, which took place at the North Lanark Agricultural Fair Grounds in Almonte, is aimed at students of gr4,5,6, and is intended to discuss and reveal all things water, our most important resource. The River Institute, in Cornwall, provided and delivered 15 interactive stations demonstrating the many aspects of water quality, treatment and purification, and water conservation. They also provided training for 30 high school students, led by their science teacher, Emily Sheffield, who monitored and interpreted these stations to the elementary kids. The Festival was generously funded by the municipality of Mississippi Mills, and will be taken next year to the Carleton Place schools and be referred to then as Waterfest 2023. Hopefully Scott will assist again at the water saver toilet station.

As stated at the top, we regard this as a year which returns us to a semblance of Normal. We hope that normal takes us through the next year

Bob Smith---Chair of Environmental Education Program, on behalf of Cate Arbour, Karen Thompson, Scott Hortop, Joanne Clayton, and Brenda Boyd.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The MVFN Membership Year (MY) continues to begin 1 April, and end 31 March, regardless of Club changes to financial fiscal period (1 Jan to 31 Dec)

The Membership List was most recently updated 22 January 2023. However, the Membership Year for 22/23 does not end until 31 March 2023

Membership Year	Memberships	Members
2022/23 (31 Dec 2022)	199 (32new)	~365 (+2 corporate)
2022/23 (31 Mar 2022)	109 (14new)	182 (+2 corporate)
2021/22	211 (19new, 6 trial)	

- As of 31 Dec 2022, there were **199** MVFN memberships (including 32 new memberships for 22/23), and representing **~365** members. In addition, there are two corporate memberships.
- 173 memberships will lapse on 1 April 2023, including 7 complimentary Young Naturalists family memberships and 2 Youth Summit applicants of past years.
- Membership fees remain at \$35 per family; \$25 per individual; \$20 for seniors (65+); students \$10. Complimentary “Trial” memberships were granted to seven (7) families who entered children to the YN program, and one to the Club’s sponsored Ontario Nature Youth Summit participant.
- The auto-fill Membership Form with integrated PayPal function for collecting membership dues and donations (launched May 2018 on <https://mvfn.ca/membership>), is the favoured choice for Membership Application and Renewal and for donations to the Club. Automated membership confirmations, and printable Membership cards and donation receipts remain under consideration for implementation
- The MVFN Membership spread sheet is used to assist Committee Chairs in planning and in soliciting volunteers

- Membership cards facilitate easy identification of current members and indicate Membership expiration date; cards are issued as soon as possible upon receipt of Membership application, and letters of welcome and copies of Club brochures are also sent to new members
- Name tags of members are normally kept current and will be available at future MVFN functions

The 2022/23 Membership Committee consists of Sylvia Miller (Chair), with assistance from George Yaremchuk and Patty Waters



NATURE TALKS COMMITTEE REPORT

In 2022, the Program Committee (PC) continued to organize monthly virtual Nature Talks due to provincial (and Almonte United Church) COVID restrictions. In total, we had eight well-attended Nature Talk events using the Zoom platform.

Theme (continued from Fall 2021): Human Interactions with the Natural World

Jan 2022	Dr. Peter Soroye - Key Biodiversity Areas: Mapping out Canada's Most Important Areas for Wildlife
Feb 2022	Dr. Steve Colombo - What is Climate Change Doing to Ontario's Forests?
Mar 2022	Dr. Heather Kharouba - Climate Change and the Timing of Species Interactions
April 2022	Jean Thie – 90 Years of Change in the Boreal and Subarctic Environments
May 2022	Annual Members Night – Dave Overholt: Phragmites: Updates From a Local Invasive; Trish Larkin: Cliff Bennett Nature Bursary Awardees; Joachim Moenig: Biotic Diversity: A View From My Backyard.

Theme (to be continued through May 2023): Small Wonders

Sept 2022	Jakob Meuller – Salamanders of Eastern Ontario
Oct 2022	Jennifer Doubt – Meet The Mosses
Nov 2022	Sasha Newar – Flying Squirrels

Throughout 2022 the PC has been active in acquiring an upgraded set of audio/visual equipment. A huge vote of thanks to both **Denis Gallant and Bill Pratt** for their thorough research, purchase, set up and on-going testing of the 'AV Technical Requirements' in order to eventually offer our members "hybrid meetings" in which they may choose to be an in-person participant at the AUC Social Hall or to watch the meeting through a simultaneous Zoom broadcast.

We are grateful to the Elizabeth Kelly Foundation for donating \$2500 to The MVFN to assist in the purchasing of this equipment. It is our hope to invite representatives of the Foundation to an upcoming hybrid meeting so that they may be publicly recognized for their generous support as well as to witness the new 'hybrid system' in action.

It is our hope to begin to offer hybrid meetings as of March, 2023, when we plan to have our first "in-person" presenter since February, 2020!

The PC will soon (April '23) begin our annual "search process" for the Fall 2023 (through Spring 2024) Nature Talk series and we look forward to sharing a new theme and an exciting line-up of presenters.

The PC is very excited that we were able to secure internationally renowned “Canadian Geographic Explorer-in-Residence”, Jill Heinerth, to be the Spring Gathering Keynote Presenter on April 20, 2023.

The PC would like to acknowledge and thank ALL of the MVFN members who have volunteered their time to assist the PC in delivering the “Nature Talks” program for 2022. Special thanks to:

- i) **Ken Allison** – for his incomparable Monthly Nature Sightings segment;
- ii) **John Blais** – for his assistance in securing “Honouraria” for our presenters;
- iii) **Leslie Williamson and Bill Pratt** – for preparing & sending individualized Thank You gift packages to each of our presenters;
- iv) **Ruth Dubois, Rob Longair, Trish Larkin and Leslie Williamson** – for their well-crafted and heart-warming “Presenter Introductions”;
- v) **Victoria Miller** – for her monthly, always unique, Thank You’s to our presenters;
- vi) **Chris Baburek** – for her beautifully ‘word-smithed’ monthly publicity notices;
- vii) **Ros Reid** – for volunteering to be our new “Meeting Host” as of Sept. 2022;
- viii) **Cliff Bennett** – for his always thoughtful, “corporate memory” perspectives.
- ix) **Denis Gallant** – for his superb guidance and stewardship of the PC throughout the previous 2 years in his role as Committee Chair.

The Program Committee currently consists of Cliff Bennett, Victoria Miller, Chris Baburek, Bill Pratt, Leslie Williamson, Rosalind Reid and Ron Williamson CoChairs.

Respectfully submitted by Ron Williamson (Co-Chair)



PADDLING REPORT

The MVFN completed a very successful paddle season, with six of the seven planned trips and the Fall Camp completed.

In all 42 individual members registered for the day trips, and 33 members attended the Fall Camp. As usual, anyone who registered for a day trip as a non-member took out an MVFN membership following the trip.

The success of the program was largely due to the efforts of the various members who took on leadership of the day trips, or stepped up to help at the camp. It was a true testament to the expression “Many hands make light work.”

The May trip took us to Canonto Lake. Our closest encounter with wildlife occurred when we tried to pull onto a small rock island for lunch, and unfortunately discovered a nesting loon. We gave her a wide berth, although she let her displeasure be known. We have noted the file to avoid the island, particularly during nesting season.



The Common Loon on her nest - Arcol Island, Canonto Lake (29 May 2022)

The June outing blew us away – literally. The wind was up, and many of the registered paddlers cancelled early. Those who arrived at the launch watched the white caps building until someone wisely asked, “Where is the nearest coffee?” We all retreated to Balderson for coffee and butter tarts courtesy of one of the members.

July saw us back on a couple of popular routes. We had a good day on Taylor Lake where we observed a number of loons, including a few babies which are always fun to watch. Later in the month we met at Smiths Falls Detached Lock for a weather-shortened but enjoyable paddle up the marsh-lined Rideau River, returning under the old Bascule (Railway) bridge to the lock station for lunch. Though wildlife activity was dampened by a steady breeze, we were serenaded by several marsh wrens guarding their nests among the cattails while we enjoyed a snack break in a sheltered back channel.

In August, we explored a new route through the Mississippi Lake National Wildlife Area. This is a protected area that is actually closed during Fall migration. Unfortunately, there was little evidence of early migration during our visit and we found it rather lacking. Evidence of 1 beaver lodge (no other mammals), one water snake, a few snails ... the topography was flat, few species of trees or shrubs, and shoreline completely bordered with grasses, sedges and reeds (no place to land boats for lunch or any other reason). In spite of signs prohibiting recreational boating and fishing, posted by Canadian Wildlife Services, motorboats were regularly launched while we were there. The wild rice had been harvested. All this said, calling this area a “NATIONAL Wildlife Area” and a “Migratory Bird SANCTUARY” is rather disappointing and embarrassing. Unless someone really wants to put this area on their “been there, done that” list, we wouldn’t recommend it. On the plus side, after the trip was over, we all drove down Hwy 7 to a nearby picnic area and had a good time over lunch!!!

Later in the month we returned to the Mississippi River at County Road 15 to complete the trip to Stewarts Island that we had abandoned in June.

September was our Fall Paddle Camp, which is being reported elsewhere. One group took a full day paddle down Whitefish Lake to Rock Lake Campground, while another group of canoeists and kayakers enjoyed a half day paddle up the Madawaska River toward Pog Lake Campground, before returning back downstream and then paddling part way into Whitefish Lake and back. Wildlife highlights included a friendly brood of Black Ducks, several basking turtles, a small armada of mergansers, and the full day paddlers even sighted 2 moose.

We completed our season on Park Lake to view the Fall colours. The group toured Lower Park Lake then Upper Park Lake by following the shoreline. We then ducked through the culvert on Ranger’s Camp Road toward Bowers Lake where we had lunch on a small island. As part of our ‘leave it better than you found it’ philosophy we took out a couple of small bags of garbage.

The day trip program incurred no expenses for the year. The Fall Camp has submitted a financial report to the Treasurer, but was fully funded by the participants, with the surplus going to the Young Naturalists Program.

I want to thank the members of the Committee for their efforts this season. The Committee consisted of Cliff Bennett, Denis Gallant, Brenda Boyd and Art Solomonian (Chair). If the Board wishes, I am prepared to continue in my role.

In accordance with our Terms of Reference we met in January to begin planning 2023’s program.

Art Solomonian

MVFN FALL PADDLING CAMP REPORT

Finally, after a three-year hiatus, MVFN was once again able to run our annual four-day paddling camp in mid-September – hurray!

An amazing 33 people signed up, more than double the usual number of participants. We dusted off our tenting and cooking gear, and arrived at Whitefish Group Camp in Algonquin Park to glorious sunshine and 25C temperatures during the day – ALL weekend!!! Record temperatures for this time of year – we have had frost on our tents in Septembers past.

We participated in some or all of the following activities led by our intrepid leaders: full and half-day paddles, hikes, nature walks, a potluck supper, campfire activities; and just socializing with a group of wonderful, interesting people; some old acquaintances, some new, around the campfire at the communal cooking and eating site.

It felt wonderful to be able to be outside for a few days, surrounded by stunning nature, and engage with a large social group again – so vital for we social humans. We're looking forward to Fall Camp 2023 already.

See you this fall – plans are already in progress!

Brenda Boyd



NATURE PROTECTION

At the November 2022 MVFN Board meeting, the chair of the committee Tineke Kuiper presented the *draft* Burnt Lands Alvar ANSI Website which, she, Ken Allison and Brent Eades are currently working on. The aim of the web site is to reach a general audience, such as the MVFN's membership, as well as letting the public, Municipal Council and other authorities know about the beauty and risks to the Burnt Lands Alvar (BLA). The BLA is an extreme habitat of high natural significance. It is home to five alvar communities that can be considered as key islands of biodiversity. Currently there are a number of species lists specific to the BLA showing rare species that vary with specific locations. Part of the BLA is in Mississippi Mills, and part is in the City of Ottawa.

During this past year, there have been several issues related to the Burnt Lands Alvar and the ANSI (Area of Natural and Scientific Interest). One issue was the Municipality passing the OPA-29 (Official Plan Amendment). This OPA re-zoned a section of the ANSI from Rural to Prime Agricultural Land under the LEAR process. The other issue was with council approving the "minor Variance" allowing two dwellings on a single vacant lot on the Alvar directly adjacent to the ANSI. Another issue involves the increase of mineral extraction in a section of the alvar on the Ottawa side of the alvar (see facebook page by John Blais).

All of these issues are examples of the continual nibbling away at this North American significant area of biodiversity. The attempts to educate and inform the staff and council of Mississippi Mills about the importance of protecting this jewel of nature, appear to have been unsuccessful

Once again, MVFN sponsored a high school student to attend the Ontario Nature Youth Summit for Mother Nature (Lead: Nick de Boer). The weekend summit was held in September 2022 and due to COVID, the summit was held using a hybrid format. Along with the virtual component, in-person sessions were available to those who wished to take part. One of the three locations for the in-person sessions was at Trent University in Peterborough and was attended by Ashe Williams, our sponsored student. We look forward to continuing the sponsorship of this program in 2023.

Tineke Kuiper, Nick de Boer.



NATUREHOOD PROGRAM WITH THE MMYC

In the fall of 2022 the Ottawa Valley Wild Bird Care Centre received a \$5,000 Nature Canada NatureHood grant to pilot a birding program specifically aimed at youth who encounter barriers to accessing nature. MVFN graciously provided \$4500 in matching funds to help bring this program to the Mississippi Mills Youth Centre!

A 6-session birding program was offered to registrants and drop-in participants at the youth Centre from mid-sept to mid-October. Each week we spent 2 hours exploring wild bird characteristics, completing fun activities and having great discussions to help us all gain a greater appreciation for wild birds. Weather permitting, each session we went on a local bird walk armed with some very nice vortex birding equipment purchased with the grant funds. Youth were challenged to think of and implement a community action project to help wild birds in their backyard or elsewhere in the community. The final session was a field trip to the Mississippi Lake Migratory Bird area (grant requirement)

In total, over 30 youth from the MMYC participated in at least one session, 5 volunteers helped run the session, and 5 different MMYC staff helped run at least one session.



FINANCIAL REVIEW

Report on Financial Statements of the Mississippi Valley field Naturalists (MVFN)

I have reviewed the financial statements for the period April 1 to December 31, 2022 My review included:

- An overview of the accounting system
- A review of the bank statements and tracing the transactions therein to the bank account in the accounting records of MVFN;
- Tracing the account balances to the financial statements of MVFN;
- An examination of a limited sample the source documents of revenue and expenses and verifying that they are accurately recorded.

It is my opinion, as a professional accountant, that the financial statements of MVFN, accurately reflect the operations of MVFN for the period April 1 to December 31, 2022



John Moore

February 8, 2023

MVFN YEAR END TREASURER'S FINANCIAL STATEMENT

MVFN YEAR END TREASURE'S FINANCIAL STATEMENT for FISCAL YEAR 2022

It was agreed at the AGM last year to change our fiscal year from 1st April to the 31st of March the following calendar year. So fiscal year 2022 becomes a transition year of only 9 months and this is reflected in the statement which follows. 2023 and subsequent years will be full years corresponding to the calendar, January 1st to December 31st. Note that our membership renewals will still be due on April 1st thus placing the bulk of all renewals well within the annual accounting period. Memberships renewed for 2022 will be valid until March 31st, 2023.

There are three main components to the Financial Report which follows:

- 1) **Bank Reconciliation** – There is a lag between the recording of payments by cheque in the accounting system and when the cheque is cashed and appears on the bank statement. This means the accounting system and the bank account are out of sync at the beginning and end of a year. Similarly, some deposits recorded at the end of a fiscal year may not appear in the bank statement until the next year. This statement reconciles our internal account with the bank records.
- 2) **Financial Statement of Income and Expenses** – This statement is an account of MVFN's income and expenses as recorded in the accounting system. It's broken down into categories and subcategories to show the different income sources and expense categories that we use.
- 3) **Nature Bursary Fund – Multi-Year Summary** – The Cliff Bennett Nature Bursary has funds held in an investment at the Ottawa Community Foundation, another charitable organization. Every year, a small dividend is given back to us for bursary use and this is added to the amount of available money held in MVFN's main bank account at BMO. The principal investment remains with OCF. At the end of the year, any left over money held in the BMO account for the Bursary is carried over to the next year.

MVFN FY2022 YEAR END BANK RECONCILIATION

April 1, 2022 to December 31st, 2022 (9 Months)

Reconciled with Accounting System (Intuit Quicken 2012)

BANK OPENING BALANCE FY2022	48,236.20
Uncashed Cheques at FY2021-22 Year End	(1,591.98)
Delayed bank deposits at FY2021-22 Year End	717.37
QUICKEN OPENING BALANCE FY2022	47,361.59
Quicken Total Income	10,955.51
Quicken Total Expense	(18,016.68)
Net Income/Deficit	(7,061.17)
QUICKEN CLOSING BALANCE FY2022	40,300.42
Uncashed Cheques at FY22 Year End	1,444.36
Delayed bank deposits at FY22 Year End	(2,792.50)
BANK CLOSING BALANCE FY2022 Year End	38,952.28

MVFN YEAR END FINANCIAL STATEMENT of Income and Expenses

April 1, 2022 to December 31st, 2022 (9 Months)

INCOME

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	AMOUNT	TOTAL
11R - Membership Committee	Membership Sales	2,185.00	2,185.00
12RA - Birding Committee	Birdathon	50.00	50.00
13R - Canoeing & Kayaking	Member Payment	2,480.00	2,480.00
18R - Conservation & Habitat	Donations, Conservation & Habitat	30.00	
	Sales, Bird Houses - Cons. & Hab.	150.00	180.00
19R - Other Programs	Bird Book Auction	280.00	
	Kintail Christmas Donations	41.00	321.00
22R - Miscellaneous	HST Rebate	1,134.51	1,134.51
23R - General Donations	General Donations	828.00	828.00
	Total Regular Income		7,178.51

EXPENSES

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	AMOUNT	TOTAL
11E - Membership Expenses	Supplies	(84.75)	(84.75)
12E - Program Committee	Cards & Gifts	(379.01)	
	Hall Rent	(540.00)	
	Honorarium	(100.00)	
	Major Equipment	(610.18)	
	Postage	(51.95)	(1,681.14)
12EA - Birding Committee	Auction expenses	(170.00)	
	Bird Cards & Envelopes	(101.70)	
	Bird Seed for Feeders	(94.90)	(366.60)
13E - Canoeing & Kayaking Outings	Member Fee Rebate	(40.00)	
	Other Expenses	(186.44)	
	Use of Facilities Fees	(1,279.28)	(1,505.72)
15E - Nature Protection	Website - burntlandsalvar.com	(12.42)	(12.42)
16E - Environmental Education	Monarch Program	(1,306.90)	
	Other	(471.42)	
	Water Festival	(1,314.00)	(3,092.32)
18E - Conservation and Habitat	Bluebird House Kits etc.	(237.40)	
	Loon Survey	(400.00)	(637.40)
19E - Other Programs	Mill of Kintail Christmas	(178.39)	(178.39)
21E - Administration	Paypal Fees	(90.71)	
	Postage & Box Rental	(200.01)	
	Supplies	(65.97)	
	Travel & Expenses	(173.20)	
	Website	(19.20)	
	Zoom Meetings	(271.20)	(820.29)
35E - Gifts to Qualified Donees	Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust	(500.00)	
	Ottawa Valley Wild Bird Care Centre	(4,500.00)	(5,000.00)
	Total Regular Expenses		(13,379.03)

MVFN YEAR END FINANCIAL STATEMENT of Income and Expenses - continued
April 1, 2022 to December 31st, 2022 (9 Months)

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	AMOUNT	TOTAL
17R - Young Naturalists Income			
	Donations, Young Naturalists	140.00	
	Fees, Young Naturalists	2,635.00	2,775.00
17E - Young Naturalists Expenses			
	Advertising	(236.17)	
	Miscellaneous	(41.00)	
	Other Education	(129.95)	
	Stipend	(1,957.00)	
	Supplies	(273.53)	(2,637.65)

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	AMOUNT	TOTAL
24R- Nature Bursary Fund - Income			
	Donations, Bursary Fund	360.00	
	OCCU Interest	642.00	1,002.00
24E - Nature Bursary Fund - Expenses			
	Bursaries	(2,000.00)	(2,000.00)

TOTAL INCOME		10,955.51
TOTAL EXPENSES		(18,016.68)
NET INCOME/DEFICIT		(7,061.17)

There is \$145 held in Petty Cash.

Please note that we have a deficit this year of \$7061.17. Part of it is due to the grant we gave to the Wild Bird Care Centre. The club may be able to sustain this deficit for a few years but eventually we'll run out of funds. This issue needs to be addressed in the coming year; do we need to increase revenue somehow or cut programs?

We should probably maintain at least \$15,000 in our bank account at the end of any year.

NATURE BURSARY FUND - Multi-Year Summary**Funds Held in BMO Bank Account and Ottawa Community Foundation (OCF)**

Nature Bursary Year-to-Year Comparison - Funds Held in BMO Bank Account					
	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022
Opening Balance	3,511.00	2,814.00	(201.00)	(931.40)	4,175.00
Revenue	2,684.00	985.00	1,857.00	10,514.50	1,002.00
Expenditures	3,381.00	4,000.00	2,587.40	5,408.10	(2,000.00)
Closing Balance	2,814.00	(201.00)	(931.40)	4,175.00	3,177.00

Nature Bursary Fund Statements from OCF Investment			
Statement Date	31-Dec-20	30-Nov-21	31-Dec-22
Contributed Capital	13,560.66	13,560.66	13,560.66
Increase/Decrease in Capital	1,649.62	1,862.30	3,517.45
Total Invested	15,210.28	15,422.96	17,078.11
Investment Activity	1,048.77	1,858.92	(798.76)
Service Fee	(219.09)	(167.23)	(231.32)
Disbursements	(617.00)	(616.00)	(642.00)
Balance	15,422.96	16,498.65	15,406.03

Notes to Bursary Fund Statements:	
Contributed Capital	MVFN's initial investment
Accumulated Change in Capital	The total amount the fund has made/lost since the initial investment
Total Invested	Sum of Contributed Capital plus Accumulated Change
Investment Activity	What the fund has made in the period to date
Service Fee	Self-explanatory
Disbursements	The amount we take out every year
Balance	Total Investment Plus Investment Activity Less Service Fee Less Disbursements

NOTES: