



Nature London

The McIlwraith Field Naturalists of London Ontario Inc.

2016- 2017

ANNUAL REPORT

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A Brief History of Nature London

The origins of Nature London go back to 1864. In that year, William Saunders, a local druggist, and several of his contemporaries organized the London Branch of the Entomological Society of Canada. The study and collection of insects was a popular hobby during Victorian times and the society flourished. In fact, local interest was so strong that, by the early 1870s, the parent society had moved its headquarters, insect collections, and the publication of its monthly scientific journal to London which, for several decades, functioned as the entomological capital of Canada.

In 1890, the Entomological Society broadened its interests to include other branches of natural history. Accordingly, sections devoted to botany, ornithology, geology, and microscopy were organized. These prospered for a time, and meetings, field trips, and collecting expeditions were held to study insects, plants, birds, fossils, rocks and microscopic life.

William E. Saunders, son of William Saunders, was the founding president of the ornithological section and was to remain its driving force and most prominent member until his death in 1943. In 1902, the ornithological section became the McIlwraith Ornithological Club, in honour of Thomas McIlwraith of Hamilton, the foremost ornithologist in Ontario at the time.

By 1904 interest had waned, and all four sections – botany, ornithology, geology, and microscopy – had ceased active operation. Two years later, the parent Entomological Society moved its headquarters to Guelph. For a number of years, no London organization having natural history as its focus held formal meetings, though members of the ornithological section continued to associate, go on field trips, and maintain bird records.

London's annual Christmas Bird Count – first organized in 1909 by two local school boys – soon after came under the auspices of the McIlwraith group. Today it stands as the longest continuously running count in Canada.

The only branch of the Entomological Society to survive the decade-long hiatus of meetings was the McIlwraith Ornithological Club. Reorganized in 1915, this time without ties to the Entomological Society, it has met continuously ever since. In 1965 its name was changed to the McIlwraith Field Naturalists (MFN) to reflect an expanded interest in all aspects of natural history. A constitution was adopted in 1970, and the society was incorporated in 1972. In 2009, MFN changed its common name to Nature London while retaining as its business name The McIlwraith Field Naturalists of London Ontario Incorporated.

In its early years the revived club met in a variety of locations including members' homes, the Collegiate Institute, Normal School, YMCA, and London Life. In 1940 it began meeting in the new library at 305 Queens Avenue, where it remained for 56 years. In 1996 the meeting place became First-St. Andrews Church, and in 1998 the Civic Garden Complex on Springbank Drive, which is the current venue.

Initially, meeting programs focussed on birds and relied on study skins, with later transitions to films, slides and, more recently, digital images. Over time there was a gradually increasing interest in non-bird species and also in conservation issues. Field trips were, and continue to be, held on a regular basis. A quarterly publication, *The Cardinal*, first appeared in 1951.

At various times over the years, among other things, the club sponsored public lectures, Audubon film nights, inventories of natural areas, non-credit courses in natural history, junior naturalists' groups, Trees for London (which promoted the planting of native trees and shrubs), and local and regional reptile and bird research and protection initiatives. Several times the club has hosted conferences of its national and provincial affiliates – the Canadian Nature Federation (Nature Canada) in 1974 and 1990, and the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (Ontario Nature) in 1949, 1962 and 1981.

A conservation committee was established in 1966 and an archives in 1967. Nature London's nature reserve, Cedarcroft, located near Delaware, was officially opened in 1983. A Birding Wing, for those particularly interested in birds, began meeting in 1988. In 2000, a group of MFN members was instrumental in setting up the Thames Talbot Land Trust, which maintains close links with Nature London. Nature in the City, a winter series of talks on nature has been offered to the public since 2006. The Christmas Bird Count for Kids was first held in 2014.

A highlight of Nature London's year is the annual Conservation Awards banquet. The club conducts the London Christmas Bird Count each December, and the Skunk's Misery Butterfly Count in July. The popular *Guide to the Natural Areas of London . . .* first appeared in 1995; a fifth, much expanded edition, was published in 2015. Nature London's Information Line (519-457-4593), website (www.naturelondon.ca), facebook page and semi-monthly e-newsletter keep members and others informed of nature sightings and club activities. Nature London representatives sit on several advisory committees that work to protect various natural areas and parks.

During 2014, many special events were held to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the London Branch of the Entomological Society of Canada, the group from which Nature London traces its roots. For more detailed information about Nature London's history, please see *150 Years: The Nature London Story 1864 to 2014*, published in 2015.

Winifred Wake

REPORTS from THE PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT & PAST PRESIDENT

President's Report for 2016-2017

Last fiscal year Nature London continued a steady course of quiet progress. Our membership continued to increase, reaching 441 memberships and at least 750 individual members. Field trips continued to be very popular with 34 separate events over the full twelve months, each with between 5 and 135 attendees. The events with over fifty participants were at the Auzins property, the Coves ESA, Huron Woods, Kilally ESA and Greenway Park. The Awards Banquet had capacity attendance for a successful evening at a new location, the Greenhills Country Club. The seven regular Indoor meetings and five Birding Wing meetings also had capacity attendance at most meetings. The club recognized eight members with significant awards and the Conservation Action Committee created a new Enviro-Hero Award which they presented to two individuals in the community.

The public is interested in our programs, with excellent attendance at the six Nature in the City talks and many visitors to our display at the Carolinian Canada Go Wild, Grow Wild expo in April, the Master Gardeners' Seedy Saturday in March and the Children's Museum Bug Day in September.

With increasing popularity, we always need more volunteers. New volunteers did step forward to fill many roles. Gord Cameron, Gail McNeil, Paul Nicholson, Joan Taylor and Ian Platt formed a new committee to organize Birding Wing meetings; Jeff Paul and Gord Kovacs constructed and installed a new wooden bridge at Cedarcroft; Chris Baldock became our new webmaster in the spring; Summer Qiu completed the layout for three issues of *The Cardinal* and Gordon Neish, Mike Channon and Paul Stevens joined the Board as Directors at Large.

We continued to have an information telephone line, general club email address, a comprehensive website, Facebook presence, an e-newsletter at least once a month to 482 email addresses and four hard copy issues of *The Cardinal*. There were four events plus regular maintenance occurring at our Cedarcroft property. Over 1400 copies of the Natural Areas Guide to London and Vicinity have now been sold, and a second printing was authorized.

In recognition of Canada's 150th anniversary and to also recognize our founding as the London Branch of the Entomological Society of Canada on July 1st 1864, we asked members to submit insect photographs taken in Canada, between July 1 2017 and December 31 2017, with the best ones to be printed in colour on the front cover, the back cover or in the centre fold of the Spring 2018 issue of *The Cardinal*.

Nature London received a significant bequest of \$17,536 from the estate of Jean Comfort. Jean and her husband Maurice were long time members of the club and had been active conservationists and teachers. After consulting with their family, the Board donated \$5000 to the Thames Talbot Land Trust toward the securement of Beryl Ivey Woods in Skunks Misery, and \$12,500 to the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority's "Communities for Nature" program to be used for restoration work with elementary students at the Cade Property near St. Mary's, and \$2,000 for 4 secondary school classes to participate in the Watershed Report Card Program. The club also received a generous gift from hiking friends of Bruce and Mary Lois Cooper, in honour of their 50th wedding anniversary. Susan Relecom subsequently offered to manage a commemorative giving program for Nature London, which will be developed over the coming year.

It was my privilege to work with many volunteers who nurtured and sustained Nature London into our 153rd year. My thanks to the Board members, particularly Karen Auzins, and to our appointees, coordinators and representatives. Thank you all for the support and dedication you bring to Nature London.

Muriel Andreae

Vice President's Report for 2016-2017

This past year, I have had the privilege of joining the Board of Directors in the capacity of Vice-President. One of my responsibilities in this role has been to become familiar with all aspects of the club's operations in preparation for assuming the Presidency in the coming year. I am especially grateful for the considerable assistance of Muriel Andreae and Karen Auzins in this regard. Throughout this process, I have been impressed with the broad scope of activities within the club as well as with the countless hours devoted by club members in their various capacities.

A second important responsibility of the Vice-President is to serve as Chair of the Finance Committee which was reactivated this year. Also serving on the committee were Henry Przysiezny and Sandy Levin whose assistance proved invaluable. Tasks undertaken this year included a review of the draft 2016-17 budget in advance of its presentation to the Board, as well as providing recommendations with regard to the management of the club's investments (GICs). The committee also considered the issue of how large our cash holdings should be so as to serve as a sufficient reserve fund. The position of the committee, endorsed by the Board, was that the club should maintain approximately \$50,000 in cash reserves plus sufficient working capital with any additional funds available for allocation at the Board's discretion. Finally, the committee undertook a preliminary review of its terms of reference as stated in the Board Manual. Revisions to the terms of reference were prepared for consideration at the September 2017 meeting of the Board.

Having served on the Board approximately twenty-five years ago, it has been a privilege and a pleasure to become reacquainted with the club's operations this past year, and to serve with such capable and committed fellow Directors. I look forward to serving the membership in the role of President in 2017-18 with the much-valued assistance of Muriel Andreae in her capacity as Past-President.

Bernie VanDenBelt

Past-President's Report for 2016-2017

With this being my last year to serve as Past President I made it a priority to finish the revamping of the club's Manual of Procedures before the end of my term. I have been working on this for over five years but now I needed to put in this final push. At the end of August I forwarded on to the incoming president, Bernie VanDenBelt, the incoming Past President, Muriel Andreae and to Nature London's Manual Secretary, Cathy Quinlan my final version in draft form.

In order to make it more "user friendly" I separated it out into five sections as follows:

- Manual Number 1 of 5: Documents of Incorporation – Letters Patent, By-law No. 1, Constitution
- Manual Number 2 of 5: Manual of Procedures – Main document for running the corporation
- Manual Number 3 of 5: Additional Guidelines for Directors and Appointees
- Manual Number 4 of 5 Recipients of Nature London's Awards over the Years

- Manual Number 5 of 5: Members who served as Directors and Appointees over the Years

During this process, new appointed positions were considered and were added as possibilities with others than myself taking them on to see if they would work for Nature London. As for myself, I have volunteered to continue with Manual Number 5 and will be working with our club's archivist, Winifred Wake, to attempt to recognize all who have served Nature London in various capacities over the years.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the directors and appointees who over the span of the last five years provided their assistance and recommendations. Without their input this project could not have been completed. Many parts of the manuals have already proven useful in recruiting new volunteers to serve on the board or in appointed positions as well as providing guidance to those serving on the board. I sincerely hope that future boards will keep these manuals current by reviewing them each year so they continue to be useful to the directors and appointees and that the manuals serve as a place where documents and records are kept and updated so that such a major update is not required in the future and new ideas and procedures can be built from these foundations.

As chair of the nominating committee, I continued to provide to the board updated spread sheets showing the terms served by the board members and thus flagging those positions that were or would become vacant and spread sheets showing the terms served by the appointees and, although there is not a set term for appointees to serve, some did say they would be stepping down and so these too were flagged. The major effort in recruiting was done by Norm Corrin and Muriel Andreae and we were fortunate to have members step forward as well. Gordon Neish, Mike Channon and Paul Stevens joined the board as new Directors at Large leaving one Director at Large position open. Nature London needs to have an experienced member step forward to serve as Vice President so please if you can serve, or you know of someone who can serve in this important capacity, please let Muriel know. Nature London was fortunate to have Chris Baldock volunteer to be our new webmaster; Gerry Pierce to represent Nature London on the Urban League; Laurie Neish to join the Birding Wing program team and Paul Nicholson to volunteer to look after the audio-visual requirements for the Birding Wing meetings. Positions that remained open at year's end were the Editor of the Cardinal; a representative for the London Environmental Network and an audio-visual technician for the general meetings. We are fortunate to have Muriel Andreae continue as managing editor for the Cardinal and Eric as AV technician for the general meetings but if you or you know someone who would like to learn more about what is involved please contact Muriel.

As Past President, it was one of my duties to work with the board to help determine who would receive awards at the Annual Awards Banquet. The W. E. Saunders Award of Merit was to be presented to Barbara Bain for her exceptional contributions to Nature London in numerous capacities over many decades. Bruce Parker was to be presented a Conservation Award for his contributions to education about, and efforts to conserve, the Monarch butterfly and Bill Maddeford was to be presented a Conservation Award for his multiple efforts to preserve, and help others enjoy, nature. Special Recognition Awards were to be presented to Ann White for spending 20 years making us more aware of the rich diversity of butterflies in our region and to

Pete Read and Dave Martin who shared their knowledge and expertise with the birding community through Birding Wing for 27 years.

It has been a privilege to serve on Nature London's Board of Directors over these past six years and to be able to work with such talented and dedicated people. I will miss the camaraderie of the board meetings and interfacing with all the appointees but I know the future of the club is in excellent hands.

Karen Auzins, Past President 2016-2017

REPORTS from the DIRECTORS, APPOINTEES & COMMITTEES

Archivists' Report 2016-2017

Organization and storage of Nature London (NL) fonds

During the year, much time went into the ongoing process of reorganizing the filing system for the archives. The new approach is modeled on current archival practices. Items are organized using a hierarchical system of Series, Sub-series, Files and Items, thus allowing related documents to be stored together. This system is gradually replacing the former regime in which all Items were arranged in the order in which they were received. So far, 21 Series have been defined, and many of the thousands of Items in the NL archives have been assigned to a Series. The contents of about half of the identified Series have been further grouped into about 100 Sub-series and 100 Files. For example, Items relating to the club's by-law are located in Series 3 (Club Records), Sub-series 4 (Governance), File 1 (By-laws). The NL fonds continues to be housed in the restricted-access area of the London Room of the Central Public Library (LPL).

Acquisitions

During the year, four bankers' boxes of potential material were sorted according to Series but not formally accessioned into the NL archives due to current space constraints.

Activities carried out in response to requests

For Nature London:

- Compiled complete list of NL Conservation Certificate recipients
- Compiled list of articles submitted by Conservation Action Committee to *The Londoner*
- Searched *The Cardinal* 1961-2017 to compile list of members carrying out various duties

For City of London:

- Compiled historical material on Westminster Ponds area and supplied photos for new kiosk sign at Tourist Info Centre on Wellington Rd
- Provided info and photos on history of natural history activities at Saunders Pond and vicinity for new sign to be erected at site of Saunders' cabin

For others:

- Researched naturalist Frank Farley's connections to West Nissouri Township for Heather Marshall of Alberta

- Provided advice to Dan Procop on disposition of a cabinet of stuffed birds
- Provided info on the history of the mill at Pond Mills to John Parker of Toronto

150th anniversary plaque

We continued to liaise with the Historic Sites Committee of LPL regarding a plaque in Springbank Park to mark the 150th anniversary of NL's founding in 1864. We helped determine wording and location of the plaque, and prepared background documents and other publicity materials. In July an NL plaque committee (Muriel Andreae, Betsy Baldwin, Ros Morehead, Dave Wake and Winifred Wake) was struck to organize the unveiling event set for Oct 13, 2017.

Professional development

Both archivists maintained membership in the Southwestern Ontario Chapter of the Archives Association of Ontario, continuing to learn through networking.

Winifred and David Wake

Annual Report for Bird Records Secretary

This report covers the actual 2016 year as the not completed 2017 year report will come out for the next Annual Report in 2018 and will be published in the spring edition of The Cardinal for that year. The Annual Report for 2016 is published in its entirety in the Spring 2017 edition of The Cardinal, Flight 247, which includes details on sightings, unusual bird species recorded and a chart showing the comings and goings of avian life in Middlesex County. It is also available on the Nature London website.

Here are a few details of that Annual Bird Report for Middlesex County.

The total number of species reported for the 2016 year was 223 which is a very good number of species.

The number of individual sightings reported to eBirds for Middlesex County in 2016 was in excess of 49 650. At least 30 birders entered data on their field trips. All of these records are easy to retrieve from the eBird.org website. In the annual report published in the Spring 2017 edition of The Cardinal, Flight 247, I have also included data from the London and Skunk's Misery Christmas Bird Counts, the London one from our stats and the Skunk's from eBird data submitted by Donald Pye. As well I have incorporated the many sightings given to me personally, and have taken sightings from the local Middlesex/Elgin/Oxford Listserv, monitored by Peter Burke. Thanks to all who contributed to that data.

The discovery of a Lark Sparrow near Komoka by two birders was very noteworthy, only our second sighting for Middlesex ever. Also interesting was our third year of Harlequin Duck wintering in London, though none were subsequently found in the second winter of the year. A few other waterfowl were exciting too, including a number of White-fronted Geese, Cackling Geese, and even a Trumpeter Swan. We had a Yellow-throated Warbler reported in the spring. Also a Raven was found in the first winter. A group of Dickcissel appeared on territory northwest of Strathroy in an area where they were trying a few years ago. An unusual sighting of Ruddy Turnstone added to the great year.

A big loss to our records for subsequent years will be that Dave Martin and Linda Wladarski who have moved out of our County. They were responsible for many sightings over the years and Dave particularly helped to produce the annual reports with his generous act of reviewing the data. They will be an asset to Essex County bird record-keeping.

The London and Middlesex Birds Records Committee was not active in the 2016 year as it is only called upon for extreme and difficult to identify rarities or new birds to the County.

Pete Read

Birding Wing Report 2016-17

Members of the Birding Wing for the 2016-17 season included Gordon Cameron, Gail McNeil, Paul Nicholson, Ian Platt, and Joan Taylor. Without a lead, the Birding Wing has been operating as a self-directed work team. The Board liaison person was Gordon Cameron.

The 2016-17 season was a successful one with five presentations. Laure Neish presented on The Birds of the Okanagan, Ian Shanahan and Sofia Shanahan spoke about the shorebirds, seabirds and wildlife at the Bay of Fundy, Pete Read with Sue Read presented on the birds of Ghana, Mike Burrell spoke about the importance of citizen science in conservation, and Gail McNeil and Paul Nicholson presented a spring migration tune-up.

All events were again held at the Civic Garden Centre on Friday evenings. For this season, based on feedback from members, the start time moved from 7:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Although not perfect for everyone, feedback about this shift was generally very positive. Attendance is the acid test and every Birding Wing event was very well attended. The format of Birding Wing evenings was also tweaked. Each meeting was launched with Gail McNeil making welcoming remarks, reviewing recent bird sightings, sharing birding announcements, and leading a bird-themed “teach piece.” The featured presenters then followed a brief break during which attendees could purchase Nature London items, socialize, etc. This format has also been well-received.

At the end of the 2016-17 season, Birding Wing participation shifted a bit. Gail McNeil, Laure Neish, Paul Nicholson, Ian Platt, and Joan Taylor are current members. There is still no Birding Wing point person. A five-event program for 2017-18 was planned. The Board liaison person is now Gordon Neish.

Paul Nicholson

Brochure Producer/Editor’s Report 2016-2017

Nature London produced and distributed 2 editions of the brochure in 2016/17 - September and again in January. The September issue had 945 brochures distributed and the January issue had 1,090.

The largest distribution was to the libraries with 75 copies going to the Central Library and 15 to each of the Branches. Nature in the City received 400 copies. Retail outlets in the city including Featherfields, Mountain Coop, Wild Birds Unlimited and Springbank Gardens Nursery received 205 copies. Not-for-profit organizations including Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, Tourism London, butterfly banding at Hawk Cliff and Friends of the London Civic Garden

Complex received 65 copies. The remaining brochures went to NL volunteers including the Conservation Committee, Field Trip Coordinator, Publicity Administrator, Membership Secretary and Board of Directors.

Eight volunteers were involved in providing input and helping to “get it right.” Thank you to those NL members. If you can help by a) suggesting new outlets for the brochure, b) assisting in the distribution and/or c) in other ways, please let us know.

Ray Robertson

Butterfly Count Co-ordinator’s Report 2016-2017

We held our 18th official, (actually 21st) N.A.B.A. Skunk's Misery count, on July 2 this year, the customary first Sunday in July. Due to the wet weather, butterflies had been scarce through all June, and early counts recorded fewer species and numbers. However, when we tallied our results the 33 participants were happy to find we had an average number of species, 50, although rather fewer individuals, 2130. Curiously one species, the Snout, of which we counted 3, must have liked the weather as it was seen on several counts. whereas some years it is not seen at all. As summer progressed more butterflies emerged, and later counts fared better. Clear Creek, for example had a record number of species.

This year was a transition year, as I have now retired as coordinator. George Prieksaitis came out to the parking lot of Newbury 4-counties hospital, at 8.30 a.m., to see our starting procedure and collect the dues for N.A.B.A. He sent in our results, and is now the official Coordinator. The count lasted from 8.30 a.m. until around 5p.m. when everyone gathered in Rodney, where Bill and Marjorie Prieksaitis kindly hosted our BBQ supper once again. Most of the participants were there, and we had a great time with heaps of food! Nature London contributed the hamburgers and buns, and participants provided desserts and salads. George Prieksaitis cooked and provided the beverages.

I would like to thank all the participants who have turned out over the last 20 years, many of them from our early beginnings, and I hope they will still continue to do so, as I will too I hope!

Ann White

The Cardinal Report 2016-2017

Publication of the *Cardinal* continues to be dogged by a search for a permanent layout editor with access to suitable computer software. Leslie Kostal has used Word to produce the Summer and Fall issues in 2016 and while Summer Qui volunteered her considerable skills to produce the Spring and Summer issues she is no longer available to us. Leslie has agreed to prepare the Fall issue this year. Nature London and the *Cardinal* are grateful for the generous help of both Leslie and Summer.

While the search for a new editor remains an important goal the options remain much the same as last year: more extensive use of email, inclusion of more material on the Nature London

website, and access to the *Cardinal* for members only using a password.

Personal privacy issues have arisen concerning the amount of information including phone numbers and email addresses of the editorial board and/or inclusion and content of the “New member list”.

The *Cardinal* remains in a state of flux, much as in the past year, efforts to find a layout editor and to resolve outstanding issues will continue.

Ron Martin

Cedarcroft Report Sept 1, 2016- Aug 31, 2017

September 10 Fall potluck

The fall potluck was cancelled because of the weather. However several new members arrived and since it had stopped raining a walk was done on both on both the River and Beech Point trails. It was a pleasant walk through the trails and since there were only a few people, everyone took their food home.

Oct 8 2016 Cedarcroft walkabout

Seventeen enthusiastic participants were blessed with a beautiful fall day, to walk the trails at Cedarcroft. When given a choice of the shorter walk or the longer one, they all chose the longer one. A well- deserved round of applause was given to Jeff, when we approached him down by the stream, working hard on the new bridge. The wild turkeys we often see, must have known it was Thanksgiving weekend, because they were nowhere around. We were able to identify some of the trees, plants, and the different types of fungi were of interest to many. We finished the morning with some cookies and apple cider.

The Second Bridge

Several years ago, it was realized that the existing three foot bridges at Cedarcroft were failing and no longer safe to use. The Committee discussed alternatives and a long term plan was developed with new walking trails laid out on a map. It was agreed that one trail (Northern Trail) would completely encircle the 11 hectare property taking in as much of the property as possible. It would be classed as difficult giving consideration because of the slopes, terrain and the length of the walk. The trail would allow complete access to the back of the property. A steep climb from the new bridge also gives a view of the farmer’s fields adjoining Cedarcroft. Two years ago the first bridge was built at the far east end of the property close to the neighbouring home adjoining Cedarcroft. This spring the second older bridge was dismantled, thereby cutting off easy access to the north portion of the property.

Beside the fall walkabout, Cedarcroft was a busy place in October this fall. Practically every Saturday, Jeff Paul a Professional Engineer and a member of the Cedarcroft Committee volunteered his expertise and time. As a result Cedarcroft is the grateful recipient of another new foot bridge. Figure 1 shows the start back in early October



The new bridge was built at the northerly end of Cedarcroft thereby giving access to the western part of Cedarcroft.

Dying white ash trees (a result of the Emerald Ash Borer) had to be felled to ensure the new bridges would not be endangered. Jeff and Gord are the two men who primarily made the second bridge a reality spending four Saturdays, carrying the wood in, drilling the supporting posts and putting the bridge together piece by piece. We can surmise that their love of nature and generosity made it possible and we owe them a thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

The new bridge is completed and ready for use (Figure 2). The trail across from the new bridge is not well marked yet and of course the complete through way will not be possible until the third bridge is completed at the other end. Our thanks also to Janice for the delicious lunches she



provided to keep the men fueled. The slope leading down to the bridge is somewhat steep and can be slippery when wet. Wooden steps have been inserted into the ground to give some footing. A rope is also strung between the trees alongside the steps to provide some assistance in the descent to the bridge.

Cedarcroft Committee Meetings (Nov 14 2016 and April 13 2017)

At the April 13 meeting key discussions and decisions included:

- a. We will no longer pursue the contractor to pull the original culvert as was agreed. Attempts to contact the contractor led to commitments but nothing was done. It was suggested that the money left could be used to have someone else look into pulling the old culvert.
- b. A letter Nature Ontario received from a member questioning the use of herbicide was discussed. All agreed that the herbicide control of the periwinkle was successful and is important if we want to retain our native flowers and plants. A further look at the periwinkle invasion will be done to see if another project is warranted to contain the spread.

- c. Barb, Daisy, Morag and Phyllis agreed to continue colour marking the trails. The colours for the trails are as follows: Northern-yellow, River-orange and Beech Point-white
- d. David Daugharty has volunteered to make trail signs. He is the gentleman who made the Cedarcroft sign.

At the November 14 meeting a warm thank you was extended to Jeff, Gord and Alex for their incredible work on building the second new bridge last fall. The fall and 2017 activities and dates were determined and planned. It was decided to hold the fall potluck again next year to see what the turnout would be.

May 6 2017 Spring Cleanup

A lot of work was completed by nine hard working people during the spring cleanup on May 6. Our thanks to the ladies who diligently again pulled out bag loads of garlic mustard, to clean up the walk into the cabin. The men dismantled the remaining old bridge so that it could no longer be used. It had simply become too dangerous due to the wood deteriorating. Many thanks to Jeff and his gang of men who dismantled the old bridge.

May 20 Introductory Walk at Cedarcroft

Sixteen people attended the May 20 walkabout at Cedarcroft and enjoyed the beautiful weather. A short walk was offered but everyone felt comfortable about doing the longer one, so we divided into two groups. We started with the history of the cabin and property, discussed the building of the two new bridges and removal of the old ones, along with future plans for trail improvement. Birders were scouting for interesting birds and everyone discussed many of the trees and plants that were identified by markers. Several people in the group were very experienced in identifying plants so some new ones were identified. The morning was finished with cider and cookies. People seemed to enjoy viewing the property. Some had been hesitant about going alone and were appreciative of the walk.



During the summer new trail signs were placed at the appropriate locations and feedback will determine if they are useful. Additional brochures were needed for the box on the cabin indicating that the trails are being used. It is interesting to note that many walking sticks are being used to assist folks using the trails and are placed at the cabin and gate for others to use. The lawn mowing work formerly done by Jeff has

been taken over by Evelyn and Wayne Rogers. The old lawnmower in the cabin was cleaned up, gassed and from what I understand worked like a charm. Thank you to Wayne and Evelyn for keeping the grass to a decent level.

The winter monthly Cedarcroft check list was completed and we are fortunate that no vandalism occurs. The deer are the most serious problem since all the young saplings and small bushes are heavily browsed.

It would be remiss if a sincere thank you is not given to the Cedarcroft Committee members for their dedication and help throughout the year. Without their participation the work would not be possible. The Cedarcroft Committee member's members are: Daisy McCallum, Jeff Paul, Phyllis Ede, Morag Kinchlea, Barb Kaiser, Evelyn Rogers, Ray Robertson, Bill Romer and Herb Bax. Special thanks to David Daugharty for his contribution with the trail signs and Cathy MacCrae for her birding expertise in the walkabouts. Much appreciated.

The deer are active and turkeys and squirrels are busy looking for walnuts and hickory nuts before and after the snow comes. If you have the opportunity; get out and enjoy our Cedarcroft.

Herb Bax

Chimney Swift Liaison for Nature London Report 2016-2017

Introduction

This account covers the period Nov 1/16 to Oct 31/17. Nature London's swift initiatives are carried out under the club's Chimney Swift Liaison. In early June, Sandy Symmes became London SwiftWatch Coordinator under the Ontario SwiftWatch program of Bird Studies Canada (BSC). Her main activity involved organizing volunteers to monitor swift roosts, which resulted in a substantial increase in the amount of roost data collected compared to previous years.

Core volunteers were Marguerite Annen, Barry and Joan Attridge, Betsy Baldwin, Garth Casbourn, Gail McNeil, Olga Nemerovski, Wendy Russell, Susanne Sutherland, Ric and Sandy Symmes, Pat Tripp, David and Winifred Wake, Garry and Heidi Williams. Thanks to all.

The sections below highlight a selection of the activities carried out during the year.

Education and Outreach

- Answered inquiries and provided information to chimney owners as opportunities arose
- Published article on chimney conservation efforts in London (*Ontario Birds*, Aug '17)
- Gave PowerPoint presentations on swifts to naturalists' clubs in Woodstock (Nov 7/16, attendance 26) and St Thomas (Feb 3/17, attendance 55); led downtown walking tour of potential swift chimneys in Woodstock (May 30/17, attendance 25)
- Shared information re roost monitoring and/or conservation of swift chimneys with monitoring groups and others in Cambridge, Mississauga, St Thomas, Windsor and Manitoba
- Organized wrap-up gathering of London swift monitors (Oct 18/17), with speakers Liz Purves (Ontario SwiftWatch) and Debbie Lefebvre (Swift Care Ontario) (attendance 15)

Monitoring and Data Collection

- Liaised with Ontario SwiftWatch Coordinator; also helped find locations for data loggers
- Recruited, mentored and scheduled volunteers for roost monitoring; data sent to BSC
- Monitored 4 roost chimneys: spring blitz May 14 to June 5, weekly mid-June to mid-Sep
- Monitored active roosts daily mid-Sep to mid-Oct; conducted spot checks at lesser roosts
- Provided timely updates of roost count results to monitors throughout season

- Visited known swift chimneys to look for nesting (22 active, 13 inactive, some uncertain)
- Collected and submitted data on Common Nighthawks to BSC
- Prepared end-of-season report for London swift monitors
- In 2017, London volunteers made 196 monitoring visits to 53 chimneys: 131 visits to 7 active roosts, 8 visits to 7 potential roosts, 57 visits to 43 chimneys to check for nesting

Conservation

- Advocated for preservation of individual swift chimneys and chimneys in general
- Submitted comments re draft Federal Species-at-Risk policies document
- Provided comments on Subject Lands Study Report for London's proposed Bus Rapid Transit routes in relation to possible impacts on swifts
- Made input to draft Committee on Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) threats calculation and assessment of status of the Chimney Swift in Canada
- Helped Swift Care Ontario and Le Nichoir (of Hudson, Quebec) find suitable release locations for hand-reared swifts from Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba

Winifred Wake

Annual Report for Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Compiler

This report is for the CBC from December 17, 2016. The 2017 report will be included in the 2018 annual report. Planning for the 108th London CBC started in October as I was to be away for the actual Count Day this year. Booking the church for the Pot Luck, checking on participants and all other preliminary tasks were completed by the time we left. Ian Platt and Joan Taylor took on the jobs of placing later contacting and new participants and organizing the food for the Pot Luck. Many thanks to them.

I returned soon after Count Day and was pleased to see that other than the weather, the CBC was completed safely and efficiently by the participants, and was able to compile the info and send it off to Bird Studies Canada, for inclusion in the official CBCs across the Western Hemisphere. Apparently there was a cold snap and heavy snows just before the CBC. And with the overcast and somewhat poor conditions on Count day, and with flurries and drizzle, that meant that the field participants had a tough time wandering through 23 cm snows, and somewhat unploughed roads, and not surprisingly more than a few parties had reduced access, or had to cancelled entirely, resulting in fewer individuals and species being counted (8 fewer routes covered). As a result total kms walked, hrs walked, kms driven, hrs driven, were all below the last few years. Our participation list included 128 people, despite the poor weather.

A mere 21248 individual birds were counted, a few thousand less than the average count totals. As perhaps would be expected from such weather conditions, feeder people reported more birds at their feeders making use of easier to acquire food sources. A fewer number of species were counted this year, 74, but that can be the luck of the Count as much as weather conditions and less coverage. A full report of the unusual species and trends found on this CBC were put on the Nature London Website but have now been removed. If a member wants to read the full report they can contact me.

Pete Read
London Christmas Bird Count Co-ordinator

Conservation Action Committee Report September 1 2016 – August 31 2017

The following abbreviations are used in this report:

CAC = Conservation Action Committee

CMP = Conservation Master Plan

EEPAC = Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee

ESA = Environmentally Significant Area

NL = Nature London

UTRCA = Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

This year's Conservation Action Committee consisted of 10 Nature London members: Sandy Levin, Chair; Anita Caveney, Will Lyons, Daphne Lowe, Roslyn Moorhead, Gerald Pierce, Carolyn Beacroft, Bill Maddeford, Jack Blocker, and Susan Blocker.

The CAC met 3 times during the period of this report: September 14, 2016, and February 16 and June 19, 2017.

1. ESA Visits. CAC members made an ESA visit to Kains Woods ESA in summer 2017.

2. Work Undertaken: The CAC monitored numerous items and attended a variety of public meetings throughout the year. In many cases, the CAC initiated correspondence with the City of London, Provincial and Federal Ministries, UTRCA and other groups or agencies for the purpose of stating the CAC's support, opposition or recommendations. For some issues, comments were submitted to the Ontario Environmental Registry. Issues monitored or addressed included:

- **Komoka Provincial Park** – No new initiatives have been pursued since the creation of two new entrances and the beginning of paid parking. The CAC has decided to drop this item from its agenda pending further changes requiring its attention.
- **London Health Sciences Centre.** Responding positively to an initiative by a CAC member, London Health Sciences Centre has left unmown a 3-hectare area of lawn near Parkwood Hospital for the use of grassland birds, and this breeding season at least two Eastern Meadowlarks have been seen in the area. A donation to Nature London paid for signs informing the public of the project.
- **Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA.** The Conservation Master Plan process continues for the southern portion of this ESA (south of Fanshawe Park Road). Mady Hymowitz represented NL on the Local Advisory Committee, and two members of the CAC also served on the committee, representing different organizations. The public input phase, during June, included an open house and an interactive website. The fifth meeting of the Local Advisory Committee is scheduled for November 2, and a public meeting will be held on November 15, at which the CMP will be presented. City staff are hoping to have the CMP approved by Council this fall.
- **The Coves ESA**– Purple Loosetrife-eating beetles were released at the East Pond on June 7, 2017. The Friends of the Coves has been awarded a Trillium Foundation grant of \$69,500 to stabilize the banks of the Southcrest Ravine and the Silver Creek Ravine.

- **Westminster Ponds/Pond Mills ESA** The City inster Ponds project to have a buckthorn infestation removed and restoration plantings done by St. Williams Nursery and Ecology Centre, and install new granular trails between the Tourism Building and the Saunders Cabin site, and the Tourism Building and Dearness Home, is continuing.
- **Thames Valley Corridor Plan / Thames Valley Parkway** – The new link for the Thames Valley Parkway, from Ross Park to the Huron Street Woods playing fields, which was described in a *London Free Press* article on July 10, will pass through a Black Walnut woodland (the significance of which was not mentioned in the article). As well, in reviewing the Environmental Impact Study for the project, members of the Environmental and Ecological Policy Advisory Committee, noted that the study area met enough of the City’s criteria that it could have been designated as an ESA. The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and EEPAC made recommendations to the project that they hope will minimize negative impacts on species at risk.
- **Conservation Award** – The 2016 Conservation Award recipients were Bill Maddeford and Bruce Parker.
- **Strategic Planning Initiatives** – In two of the *Cardinal* flights during the reporting period, the CAC has included in the Conservation section a boxed notice urging members to take action on a specific issue.
- **Annual Meeting with City Staff and UTRCA.** The annual meeting of the CAC with City staff and UTRCA staff was held on October 27, 2016.
- **Enviro Hero Award** – Two nominations for NL’s newest award were accepted by the CAC and confirmed by the Board. In June, a CAC member presented the fourth Enviro Hero Award certificate to Ms Claire Gulliver, a teacher at Jack Chambers Public School, to recognize her passionate concern for the environment and use of engaging and effective strategies to encourage her students to learn about and conserve their natural environment. At NL’s September 2017 meeting, Tom Cull and the Thames River Rally are scheduled to be awarded an Enviro Hero Award for their work in carrying out environmental cleanups on the Thames River Valley in London.

Complete information on the above items is detailed in the CAC meeting minutes.

Selected details were published in the Conservation section of *The Cardinal*, flights 245, 246, 247, and 248.

Jack Blocker

E-mail Coordinator’s Report 2016-2017

This task consists of monitoring and redirecting email that is sent to info@naturelondon.ca and preparing the email newsletter.

The number of members requesting the newsletter has grown steadily:

Oct 2014	192
Oct 2015	333
Oct 2016	411

The proportion “opening” the twice-monthly email was 63.3 % in October, and similar to past years. This percentage does not include the members who scan the email summary without “clicking” on the message.

At Info@naturelondon.ca, we get some interesting inquiries such as “What is this bird ?” and “What is this skull”. We pass these along to members that we think might be able to answer. Normally we request member help with a blind copy to protect our sources from unwanted email. We also forward information mail to the (hopefully) appropriate volunteers.

We would like to extend thanks to all those who answered inquiries for us and particular thanks to Gail McNeil and Hugh Casbourn who maintain the member database and provide us with changes for our news list. In addition, many thanks are due to our Cardinal Editors and WebMaster, Chris Baldock, whose basic copy we summarize in the Email News & Events.

Email Coordinators
Ric and Sandy Symmes

Facebook Coordinator

NL's Facebook presence is integrated with the website, *The Cardinal* and the email newsletter. As of October 2016, the Nature London Facebook page has 370 “Likes,” an increase of approximately 25% in the past year, while announcements for Nature in the City can reach close to 1000 viewers.

Mady Hymowitz

Field Trips Report 2016-2017

Date	Location	Leader/s	Duration	No. of participants	Weather	Highlights
Aug. 27/16	Auzins Property	K. Auzins, S. Gilling-water	3.5 hours	135	seasonal	- displays by various groups - release of baby Spiny Softshell turtles
Sept. 11/16	Hawk Cliff and Port Stanley S.L.	C. McCrae	5 hours	18	sunny, warm	- novice birder outing - Common Nighthawk, Merlin, Canada Warbler
Sept. 18/16	Sharon Creek C. A.	C. McCrae	2 hours	16	partly sunny, breezy	- migrating blue jays - Zigzag

						Goldenrod - Sulphur butterflies
Sept. 24/16	Springwater C.A.	C. McCrae	2.5 hours	9	sunny	- photographing trees and pond, reflections
Oct. 2/16	Westminster Ponds	C. McCrae, G. McNeil	2 hours	34	mostly cloudy, mild	-Trails Open London - 15 bird species including Bald Eagle and Black- throated Blue Warbler
Oct. 8/16	Cedarcroft	B. Kaiser, D. McCallum, P. Ede	3.5 hours	17	beautiful fall weather	- lots of types of fungi - birds were quiet
Oct. 15/16	The Coves ESA	C. McCrae, S. Southon	2 hours	51	mild, sunny	- Walnut and Tulip trees - Hermit Thrush, Pied-billed Grebe
Oct. 23/16	Stoney Creek Area	C. McCrae, L. Verbeen	2 hours	25	mostly sunny, 14°	- lots of Cedar Waxwings, Kinglets
Oct. 29/16	Sifton Bog ESA	C. McCrae, B. Maddeford	1 hour	20	cloudy, mild	- Deer - Pitcher Plant - Bayberry Plant
Nov. 6/16	Forest and Grand Bend S. L., Kettle Point area, Pinery P.P.	C. McCrae, L. Warren	9 hours	25	sunny, 16°	- 53 bird species including American Pipit and White- winged Scoter
Nov. 20/16	Weldon Park	C. McCrae, S. Levin	1.5 hours	15	windy, snow flurries	- 17 bird species - Nine-bark, Beech, Cranberry
Dec. 3/16	Springbank Park Area	B. Van Den Belt, C. McCrae and others	3 hours	23 (13 kids)	cold, windy, overcast	- third annual Christmas Bird Count for Kids - 32 species, 669 birds including 28 Sandhill Cranes and immature Red- headed Woodpecker
Jan. 1/17	Greenway	C. McCrae	2.5 hours	55	sunny, 0°	- 24 bird species

	Park					- Bald Eagle, Hooded Mergansers
Jan. 29/17	St. Clair River and Sarnia	C. McCrae	9.5 hours	14	seasonal, overcast	- 44 bird species including Northern Pintail and Snowy Owl
Feb. 11/17	Winnett Swamp/ Huron Woods area	G. Cameron, C. McCrae	1.5 hours	44	overcast 3°	-20 bird species including Horned Lark and Belted Kingfisher
Feb. 19/17	Fanshawe C.A.	C. McCrae	1.5 hours	42	sunny, 9°	- Bald Eagle, Black-capped Chickadees eat from hand
Mar. 4/17	Greenway Park	G. McNeil	2 hours	20	sunny but cold, -7°	- Red-winged Blackbird, American Robin - few birds around
Mar. 19/17	Aylmer WMA and S. L.	C. McCrae	2 hours	30	overcast, 3°	- 700 Tundra Swans, Trumpeter Swan, Long-tail Duck
Apr. 10/17	Hullett WMA	C. McCrae	5 hours	25	beautiful, 18°	- 56 bird species including Sandhill Crane, Eastern Phoebe, Great Horned Owl
Apr. 23/17	Five Points Forest	D. Koscinski (TTLT)	2 hours	5	sunny, seasonal	- pulled Garlic Mustard along stream - noted some migrant birds
Apr. 26/17	Kilally ESA	C. McCrae	1.5 hours	52	seasonal	- heard and saw territorial display of American Woodcock - heard Spotted Sandpiper and Wild Turkey
Apr. 29/17	Rondeau P.P.	P. Nicholson, G. McNeil, C. McCrae	10 hours	10	cloudy, cool	- disappointing no OFO young birders came - 67 bird species including White-

						eyed and Blue-headed Vireo, 4 warbler species
May 3/17	Pottersburg Park	M. Channon	2 hours	25	clear, 12°	-Northern Oriole, Rose-Breasted Grosbeak, Brown Thrasher
May 6/17	Cedarcroft	H. Bax	3 hours	9	mild, breezy	- pulled Garlic Mustard - old bridge removed - checked Periwinkle growth
May 10/17	Huron Woods	C. McCrae	2 hours	54	cloudy, 9-12°	- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Red-Bellied Woodpecker, Wild Turkey
May 13/17	Circle R Ranch	G. McNeil, D. and W. Wake	2 hours	24	mostly sunny, 15°	- varied display of wildflowers and migrating birds - Pileated Woodpecker nest site
May 17/17	Kains Woods ESA	D. Wake	2 hours	25	warm, clear	- nice variety of wildflowers - Ospreys, Northern Oriole
May 20/17	Cedarcroft	D. McCallum, B. Kaiser	1.5 hours	16	beautiful, 17°	- viewed native plants and trees - Northern Oriole
May 21/17	Meadowlily Woods ESA	M. Channon	2 hours	7	overcast, some showers	- photographing birds, wildflowers, animals
May 26 – 28/17	Bruce Peninsula	C. McCrae	2 days	26	sunny to partly sunny, 18°	- 115+ species: American Bitterns, Whip-poorwills - 16+ warbler types - Black Bear at dump
May 24/17	Port Stanley	C. McCrae	2 hours	13	warm and	- 30 bird species:

	Harbour and S.L.				showers	Ruddy Turnstone, Dunlin, Eastern Bluebird
May 31/17	Thames Valley Trail north of Plover Mills	C. Quinlan	2 hours	14	mild, partly cloudy, breezy	- 2 Bald Eagles - Water Hemlock, Canada Anemone
June 10/17	Andreae Property	G. Thorn	2 hours	30	sunny, 27°	- 22 fungi species - Bobolink, Great-crested Flycatcher
July 2/17	Skunk's Misery	A. White	10.5 hours, then BBQ	8	warm, mostly sunny	- 50 butterfly species: 2 Snouts - numbers down a lot

Director Cathy McCrae

Guide to the Natural Areas in London & Vicinity Report 2016-2017

The 5th edition of the *Guide to Natural Areas in London and Region* continued to sell well during the 2016-2017 fiscal year. By July there were only 29 copies remaining of the 1500 originally printed. After discussions with the Nature London Board of Directors, it was decided to reprint 500 more copies using the same printer, Accell Graphics. The 500 copies were delivered on August 25. At the end of the fiscal year, August 31, 509 copies were available for sale. Copies may be purchased for \$15 at all Nature London events and at select retail outlets. In addition, they may be ordered through the Nature London website for a slightly larger price, \$20, which includes the cost of mailing.

Roslyn and Jim Moorhead, Editors

Image Data Base Report 2016-2017

The image database has grown to approximately 14,400 items, representing additions of about 600 items and deletions of about 100 duplicate images. Most of the new images are of Nature London events, both indoor and field trips. Work on deletion of duplication continues. There has been greater use of images on the Nature London website as well as more colour images in the Cardinal. Our coverage of local birds is still very uneven. The database has a great many images of waterfowl and the more common raptors, while we have relatively few photos of passerines,

particularly warblers. This reflects in part the greater difficulty of securing good images of such birds.

John Berry

Indoor Meetings Annual Report 2016-2017

September 16

Ken Laing spoke on the topic of “**Soil Health/ Climate Change: Two Problems, One Solution**”. Ken and his wife and farming partner Martha Laing have farmed near Sparta since 1979. They operate a horse powered organic farm that grows fresh vegetables and grains for naturally leavened breads for 250 families in the London-St Thomas area.

Ken explained that climate change is caused by the release of too much carbon (CO₂) into the atmosphere. Declining soil health is caused by the loss of soil carbon (organic matter). Ken spoke about how our new understanding and appreciation for life in the soil can be used to take the carbon out of the air and put it back in the soil, thus mitigating climate change while at the same time increasing food quality, soil productivity and drought tolerance. Approximately 85 people attended.

October 21

Jeremy McNeil's presentation was entitled “**Entomological Snowbirds: How Some Insects Migrate to Avoid Winter**”. McNeil is Distinguished University Professor and H. Battle Professor of Chemical Ecology at Western University.

Jeremy spoke about his research on how insects have evolved two general strategies to cope with habitat deterioration. They either enter diapause (a form of dormancy) and resume normal activities once conditions improve, or emigrate in search of suitable habitats. Jeremy explained how cues as varied as the availability of host plants, fire, temperature and day length are used by migratory moths and butterflies to “decide” if they remain in the habitat or emigrate. An estimated 65 people attended.

November 18: Banquet

Our keynote speaker was **Jeremy Ward**, Curator of the Canadian Canoe Museum, who spoke on “**The Canoe: Transforming a Canadian Icon**”.

Jeremy drew upon The Canadian Canoe Museum's remarkable watercraft collection to illustrate a lively exploration of our country's complex and evolving relationships with this little watercraft. The canoe has long provided an essential link for connecting us with the unique geography of Canada. As an object steeped in culture, it also offers an elegant reflection of our changing relationship with this land of lakes and rivers. Ward also provided a behind-the-scenes glimpse into The Canadian Canoe Museum's current ambitions to create a new, purpose-built home worthy of its mission.

The banquet was attended by 128 people.

January 20

Alan MacEachern, Professor of History at Western University, gave a talk entitled “**Of First**

Blossoms, First Peepers, and First Lawn Mowers: What a Century of Weather Observations Can Tell Us about Climate Change.”

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the predecessor agency of Environment Canada encouraged its daily weather observers to make remarks about the changing seasons, extreme weather, etc. But it never figured out a way to use these remarks. With the Environment Canada collection of weather observations now at Western, Prof. MacEachern is studying what they tell us about changing climate. Alan’s presentation was followed by lively discussion.

February 17

Steve Sauder, Marketing Specialist at the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, spoke about **“The Diverse Thames: A Canadian Heritage River.”**

Steve’s presentation explored the Thames River through video, photos and stories. He introduced us to unique places and interesting people, and stimulated ideas for further conservation of this Canadian Heritage River.

March 17

Greg Thorn, Professor of Biology at Western University, took us on an illustrated woodland tour to demonstrate **“The Secret Life of Mushrooms”**. His illustrated lecture was a valuable introduction to the field experience he led in June to find and learn about wild mushrooms on Muriel and Peter Andrae’s wooded property.

April 21

Members’ Night

The following short illustrated presentations were given:

Diane Weiler, “A Little Love in Africa,” and “Antarctic Blues”

Suzanne Southon, “Paint the Sky”

Evelyn Symons, “The Spirits of Nature”

Cathy Quinlan, “Kauai Plants and Landscapes”

Chris Ellis, “Iceland”

Carol Agocs,
Indoor Meetings Co-ordinator

London Advisory Committee on Heritage (LACH) Report 2016-2017

Built heritage is the main focus of LACH. Following are some issues with some relevance to natural heritage.

1. The Coves ESA trail building has made great strides with completed trails from Cove Road to Springbank and through Euston Park. The old paint factory site near the trailer park is still not resolved.
2. Cultural Heritage work is continuing for the Meadowlily area, however various key studies and reports on the area are still not completed. Heritage protection for the area may be advanced as consultants work is completed. A heritage designation for the ruins of the Mill, east of the bridge is not in place yet. A survey and mapping of the site has

been completed. It is possible the site will be covered with sand to protect it until proper protection can be implemented.

3. While built heritage is the main focus of LACH, the preservation of heritage homes often includes the preservation of the surrounding mature vegetation as demolition of a heritage home usually results in total removal of all trees and shrubs and an increase in the new building footprint leaving no room for replanting. Development continues to be the biggest threat to all aspects of heritage preservation.

Jim Cushing

Membership Secretary's Report 2016-2017

Our membership for 2016/2017 continues to increase with a high this year of 440 memberships and at least 754 individual members. There was only 1 complimentary membership given this year. Three of our members chose to give a membership to Nature London as a gift. One third of our members or new members paid on line.

Let us continue to enjoy the many activities of Nature London and encourage others to be part of this growing club.

Gail McNeil
Membership Secretary

Membership Database

Hugh Casbourn continued to provide support for the Membership Database and prepared summary reports as needed.

Nature in the City Report 2016-2017

Another banner year for Nature in the City! Although we have always had great speakers, this year's lectures seemed to be better than previous years. The speakers, their topics, and the number of attendees were as follows:

January 17th Paul Nicholson Warning: winter bird watching may cause you to embrace the cold 367
January 24th Daria Koscinski Invasion of the habitat snatchers 296
January 31st Mhairi McFarlane Learning from the past so we don't repeat it 285
February 7th Beth MacDougall-Shackleton Do birds have post or Cockney accents? 125
February 14th Chris Smart Save a little love for wetlands! 244
February 21st Dave Wake Magical Meadowlily: a four-season oasis 249

Average attendance was 261 - the highest number since 2014, in spite of the fact that the February 7th talk was moved to the smaller Stevenson-Hunt Room due to a new sound and lighting system being installed in Wolf Hall. For two evenings, February 7th with the smaller room and January 17th for Paul Nicholson's talk on winter birds would-be attendees had to be turned away due to lack of room – regrettable for the attendees affected and “too well-done”

marketing efforts.

The lecture series put on for the 12th year continues to be a successful partnership with London Public Library. Its Wolf Hall provides very comfortable seating and excellent projection equipment, well managed by London Public Library tech staff.

Others who helped included Cathy McLandress of London Public Library; Dave Wake who took photos of our presentations; and Ann Henderson, Nature London's Sales Coordinator, who sold \$703 worth of nature guides and the very popular the *Guide to natural areas of London and vicinity*. Although getting new members for Nature London is not the purpose of Nature in the City, 9 new members joined inspired by their attendance at the lectures.

Getting the word out about Nature in the City is integral to its success. The London Public Library designed and printed flyers and posters. Nature London's webmaster Mady Hymowitz kept the lecture series up front on the web page and on social media. Paul Nicholson in his role as publicity administrator for the Club and not incidentally *London Free Press's* The World Outdoors columnist attracted a lot of attention for the lecture series. Other tasks include emailed notices to clubs, teachers, former speakers and attendees, and local events columns, and also arranging and participating at interviews, organized articles in the print media and hanging flyers on public notice boards. As an ongoing marketing effort for the Club, Ray Robertson prepared the Club's Walks and Talks brochure, which ensured Nature in the City attendees had information about other Club events.

Other tasks, performed by Nature in the City committee members included greeting, introducing and thanking speakers and attendees on each evening of talks. The "buzz" in Wolf Hall for all of the talks was enthusiastic. Thanks to all members who came out to support Nature in the City and to our speakers for sharing their wealth of knowledge and passion. Planning is underway for Nature in the City 2018.

Committee members are Winnie Wake, Leslie Rockwell, Lisa Bilty, Paul Nicholson and Pat Tripp. Winnie Wake, the founder of Nature in the City and the driving force and invaluable committee member has resigned from the committee. Her hard work and good ideas will be missed.

Pat Tripp,
Chair, Nature in the City Committee

Nature Line Coordinator(s) Report 2016-2017

Every week throughout the year, one of the three volunteers, Bob McGee, Gail McNeil, or Rick Martin, collected information about bird, butterfly and other sightings in the area that would be of interest to naturalists and along with information about NL's indoor and outdoor activities a recording was prepared each Thursday for inclusion on the Nature Line (519-457-4593). People calling this number could then hear this message and leave a message as well. If a message is left, one of the three volunteers would endeavor to contact the caller and provide an answer.

Bob McGee

Ontario Nature (FON) Report 2016-2017

Nature London (NL) representatives attended the fall and spring meetings of the Carolinian West Region (CWR) of the Ontario Nature Network, hosted by member groups. These meetings provide an opportunity for naturalists to share ideas and report on successes and failures of programs they have undertaken, as well as seek advice from the umbrella organization. Staff representatives from Ontario Nature (ON) give an update on the organization's conservation science programs, Nature Network, youth programs, and educational programs. Through these Nature Network meetings, NL is able to keep abreast of regional and provincial matters relating to natural heritage. Member groups are the "grassroots" of the federation, and the McIlwraith Ornithological Club was one of FON's founding members.

This year, regional meetings were hosted by the Friends of Ojibway Prairie at the Ojibway Nature Centre in Windsor on October 29, 2016; and jointly by the Ingersoll District Nature Club and Otter Valley Naturalists at the Senior Centre in Ingersoll on March 25, 2017 (Muriel Andreae and Anita Caveney represented NL at both meetings). Anita Caveney, ON's Carolinian West Regional Director, chaired the regional meetings. Full reports of these meetings were published in the Winter 2017 and Fall 2017 issues of *The Cardinal*.

Anita and Stan Caveney and Dave and Winifred Wake represented NL at ON's 86th AGM & Gathering, *All Creatures Great & Small*. It was held at the Kempenfelt Conference Centre in Innisfil, alongside Lake Simcoe, June 2—4, 2017, and included a Great Ontario Natural History Quiz, guest speakers, workshops, the AGM and Conservation Awards Ceremony, a banquet, and field trips.

Some dominant issues on ON's agenda this year were 1) Being notified that the Supreme Court of Canada had refused to hear ON's appeal of the Ontario Court of Appeal's ruling in favour of the Provincial Government's exemptions to Ontario's *Endangered Species Act, 2007*; 2) Calling for stronger policies in the *Wetland Conservation Strategy for Ontario*, and the draft new Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan, and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe; 3) Awaiting a decision from the Federal Court in a court case brought by ON, David Suzuki Foundation, and Friends of the Earth Canada against the Federal Government for the conditional registration of two neonicotinoids (Clothianidin and Thiamethoxam) by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency; and 4) Calling for a ban by the Ontario Government on the hunting of Snapping Turtles.

Nature London—ON interactions during the year included the following: NL was a signatory on 1) ON's comments on the Ontario Government's proposed Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine, Niagara Escarpment, and Greater Golden Horseshoe plans; 2) ON's comments on the MNRF's draft *Wetland Conservation Strategy for Ontario*; and 3) ON's comments to the EBR Registry urging a ban on the hunting of Snapping Turtles. Several NL members supported ON's call for an immediate ban on the harmful neonicotinoid pesticide Imidacloprid and submitted comments to the Pesticide Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA). At ON's request, several NL members submitted comments to the Ontario Government asking for stronger policies in the final version of the *Wetland Conservation Strategy for Ontario*. A number of joint NL/ON members attended ON's event alongside the

Sydenham River on May 7 to celebrate the acquisition of ON's new Sydenham River Nature Reserve, ON's 25th Nature Reserve.

Anita Caveney.
Ontario Nature Representative for Nature London
Carolinian West Regional Director, Ontario Nature

Osprey Nesting Report for London, 2017

2017 was a successful year for the Ospreys over all with 8 active nests and 10 plus chicks fledged:

- On the positive side, a new Osprey couple nested successfully in the Clarke & Fanshawe location where one mate died last year and the nest was abandoned. Fishing must have been good at Fanshawe Lake because the airport Ospreys fledged three young. The Gore Road & Veterans nest tower that disappeared over the winter was rebuilt a little bit north at Tartan & Sovereign. In addition, we had active Osprey nests at: Labatt Park, Kilally Ball Park, TD Waterhouse Stadium, Hudson Boatworks (near Fanshawe Lake), and on a cell phone tower near the Dingman and White Oak intersection.
- On the “not so good” side, our smart new nest platforms in Greenway Park had one visitor but no nest builders this first year. However, with so many young fledging in London, we are hopeful some will return to use at least one platform next year. Because we did not find the new Sovereign Road nest until late in the season, we could not tell if there were any chicks fledged. Similarly, we missed the crucial July check at Hudson Boat works (It was Sunday and the gate was locked) so we don't know the result there.

Looking forward to 2018, we hope to make more checks and recruit more nest monitors to improve the quality of our information. We will try to help monitors identify the young birds in July (red/orange eyes, “scaly” brown backs) vs adults (yellow eyes, dark backs). We would also like reports regarding Bald Eagle nests in the London area and reports of any conflicts with Ospreys.

Many thanks to observers who kept us posted on Osprey arrival and activity: Peter Vanderweg by the Airport, John Berry downtown, Mark Spitzig at Greenway Park and Dave Wake in the west end. Your reports make all the difference.

Ric & Sandy Symmes

Publicity Report 2016-2017

Publicity efforts for Nature London during this reporting period were again satisfactory. As in recent years, the approach was very low cost and multi-modal. Flyers were printed and distributed by various Nature London members at various events. These were also distributed through other organizations (e.g. libraries.) Nature London programs and events were promoted in local newspapers and web sites as well as through e-mail, Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms, and broadcast media. Aspects of Nature London's efforts were frequently featured in The London Free Press and were also written up in The Londoner. There were also dozens of references to Nature London initiatives in many Southwestern Ontario dailies over the

course of the 12 months. Information was also shared routinely at Nature London events, other events, and of course word of mouth. Partnerships (e.g. with the London Public Library for the Nature in the City series) again allowed for low cost cross-promotion.

On Dec. 17, 2016 Postmedia and The London Free Press declared that "London's best support for bird watching" was provided by Nature London. "Year after year through all seasons, Nature London plans bird watching and nature hikes in and around the city. All of these outings are led by experienced naturalists with advanced birding knowledge and most are free and open to the public. Nature London also many hosts bird-related indoor events each year. These events are so frequent it's almost easy to take them for granted but they represent a great resource and continue to launch many people into the world of bird watching."

Paul Nicholson

Sales Co-ordinator Report 2016-2017

	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
Total Revenue	\$ 1,785.90	\$ 3,088.80	\$ 1,601.50
Expenses	\$ 376.00	\$ 402.50	\$ 192.10

Sales are down this year versus 15/16, due to the fact we had no new publications for sale this year and four of the venues we sold at last year we didn't go to this year. Sales though are up versus 14/15

Nature in the City did well again this year for a total of \$703.00, just \$7.00 short of last year's total. Selling used books and jigsaws again we collected \$237.40 in donations, just \$12.00 less than last year.

I feel we have had another very good year. If anyone has thoughts for new items please let me know.

Ann Henderson

Saunders Library Report 2016 - 2017

For many years Nature London has been making a donation to London Public Library to buy books for London Public Library.

The following is a note received in September outlining the Library purchases, usually multiple copies of each title, for the period of September 2016 to August 2017.

Thank you to Nature London for its commitment and generous support of London Public Library. We greatly appreciate the funding and resources you have provided to our organization with giving of more than \$14,000 since 2004. This year, the Library received a Nature London gift of \$1,000 to make additions to the library collection with books for adults and children that includes a wide variety of material on nature, ecosystems and nature, with a focus on London and area, all new to our collection.

Collection Additions

Title	Author
Backyard Wildlife : How to attract bees, butterflies, insects,	Lavelle, Christine
Bee-Friendly Garden : Design an Abundant, Flower-Filled	Frey, Kate
Dam Builders : The Natural History of Beavers and Their	Runtz, Michael
Georgian Bay : A Unique North American Ecosystem	Eyles, Nick
Greenbelt : Protecting and Cultivating a Great Ontario Treasure	Mausberg, Burkhard
Guide to the natural areas of London and region	Moorhead, Roslyn & James
Creatures up close	Gillian Watts
Falcons in the city	Chris Earley
Natural World	J. A. Wood
Robins	Eileen Christelow
A wasp builds a Nest	Kate Scarborough
Weird Butterflies and Moths	Ronald Orenstein
Wildlife Watcher Guide	Michael Leach

With these additions, the London Public Library has 677 items purchased by Nature London, available to children and adults, at various branch locations. These have been borrowed a total of 6,709 times. There have been 1,244 loans in the past year alone.

Pat Tripp,
Saunders Librarian Liaison.

Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) Report 2016-2017

The idea of establishing a local land trust developed within the McIlwraith Field Naturalists (Nature London) in the late 1990s. In the year 2000, the Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) was launched as a separate entity. TTLT is a registered Canadian charity, governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

From these early beginnings to the present, the two organizations have worked together to protect ecologically significant land in the London region. TTLT currently owns 14 conservation properties and holds one conservation easement, for a total of more than 1300 acres protected. The trust employs a small staff consisting of an Executive Director, Conservation Property Manager, Stewardship Coordinator and a Development/Communications Officer. As noted below, students joined us again in the summer of 2017.

This report covers Thames Talbot Land Trust activities during the period September 2016 to August 2017.

September 2016 was a time of celebration. Following a successful \$1.6 million fundraising campaign, the dedication and official opening of Hawk Cliff Woods took place on September 18th. Many Nature London members turned out in the crowd of supporters. Hawk Cliff Woods is one of the largest remaining deep interior forests in Elgin County. A work day in November 2016 brought out more than 40 volunteers to help with cleanup of garbage from the property.

In February 2017, TTLT's work at Hawk Cliff Woods received special recognition with the presentation of the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation. This award was presented to TTLT representatives Suzanne McDonald (Executive Director) and Stan Caveney (Chair of the Hawk Cliff campaign) by the Lieutenant Governor at Queen's Park.

In February, Jody Allair of Bird Studies Canada was guest speaker at TTLT's annual speaker event in the Wolf Hall of the London Public Library. Then, in April, the second annual Eco Folk concert was held at Aeolian Hall. Once again, this fundraising event provided an enjoyable afternoon of music for everyone and an opportunity for music fans to learn about TTLT.

TTLT received federal funding for three summer students in 2017. One student worked in the office, taking on many tasks including website upgrades. Two worked in the field as property stewards. They carried out removal of invasive species, management, inventory and monitoring of native species, including species at risk. In addition, they assisted with outreach events and helped maintain records and conduct general maintenance on TTLT properties.

TTLT commenced and completed a new campaign in 2017. Beryl Ivey Woods is a 50-acre parcel of rich Carolinian forest, nestled within the Skunk's Misery Natural Area in the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex. Well known by local naturalists, Skunk's Misery is one of the largest and most significant forested blocks remaining in the Carolinian Region of southern Ontario. Natural habitats within the Carolinian zone are considered critically endangered due to widespread and intensive agricultural and industrial land uses. Thames Talbot Land Trust places a high priority on protection of properties in Skunk's Misery. The property we now refer to as Beryl Ivey Woods has long been recognized as an important parcel. In 2015, when this piece of woodland became available, TTLT moved quickly to purchase it, dipping into the financial reserves of our Opportunities Fund.

The purpose of the fundraising effort in 2017 was two-fold. First there was the need to establish a stewardship fund for the property. Secondly, it was important to replenish TTLT's reserve funds so that we will be ready to protect additional woodlands and wetlands when opportunities arise. Contributions to the Beryl Ivey Woods campaign came from many sources. At this time, I acknowledge with appreciation, the donation from Nature London, which allocated \$5,000 from the estate of the late Jean Comfort. Jean and her late husband Maurice were long-time members of the McIlwraith Field Naturalists.

Volunteers are essential to the operations of TTLT, and assist in many ways. Opportunities include serving on the board and committees, as well as "hands-on" work at properties. Spring and fall work days are scheduled for maintenance of trails and removal of invasive species such as garlic mustard, buckthorn and autumn olive. The "adopt a patch" program aims to engage volunteer property stewards in ecological restoration. Regular removal of invasive species from a "patch" helps to protect surrounding habitat. Once the invasives have been removed, native species may recolonize the site, or may be encouraged through planting.

There are several ways to keep up to date on the activities of TTLT. Members and friends of TTLT receive a newsletter, the *Tattler*. Electronic communications include email updates, the website, facebook, and twitter.

Donations from the broader community are essential to the ongoing work of the trust. TTLT thanks Nature London and its members for ongoing support. We look forward to working together on more projects in future.

Dave Wake, TTLT Liaison

The Urban League of London - Annual Report 2016-2017

Wes Kinghorn is the capable and enthusiastic president of UL. The agenda for monthly meetings regularly included specific UL business followed by London UL neighbourhood association member reports on current issues and activity. Select meetings featured a guest speaker presentation. Certain presentations covered topics that related to human impacts on the natural world such as the topic of “London Strategy for Attaining Ontario’s 2050 Waste Management Targets” by J. Stanford, C. Warring, P. van der Werf and “The Thames: Heritage River and Phosphorus Source” by S. Sauder and T. Copeland. The 2017 UL Annual General Meeting at Aeolian Hall featured G. Cape from the Evergreen (brick works) project in Toronto. A number of UL neighbourhood community members generate observations and undertake activity related to “enhancing the natural environment” and “green themes” of environmental significance.

1. Lambeth Community Association is pleased with the final naturalization of a local gravel pit. The association continues to work for protection of Dingman Creek.
2. Soho C A has initiated meetings with the London Planning Department. regarding a new rain garden (Waterloo south of Portland area).
3. Coves Community Association is seeking grant money to enhance a small park space with trees and a pollinator garden.
4. Numerous Community Associations have undertaken river clean ups, “clean and green” work sessions and overseen neighbourhood tree planting in conjunction with Reforest London.
5. A number of schools have embraced school garden projects. Oxford Park school features fish themed/clean water display projects around the school exterior. (Sherwood Fox and Jack Chambers were recipients of the NL Conservation Action Committee “Enviro Hero” award).
6. It is evident that the most active UL Community Associations use Facebook to communicate, publicize events and in general, engage their neighbourhood and a wider community.

UL meetings do provide a platform for introducing UL member association representatives to NL events and outings. I have found the audience of 15 to 25 attentive and accepting. Examples of NL events I have promoted include:

- (a) “Nature In the City” program. (one page hand- out distributed).
- (b) NL booth at Carolinian Canada’s “Go Wild Grow Wild” expo.
- (c) Any NL sponsored walks and hikes open to the public. On occasion, I remind UL members of many events offered to NL members only and hence, the benefits of NL membership.

- (d) Shared the recent NL initiated Eastern Meadow lark signage and limited grass cutting at Parkwood.
- (e) Promoted the Springbank Park ceremony that dedicated and unveiled the NL plaque marking 150 years.
- (f) Publicized the availability of the latest edition of “Natural Areas of London and Region”. Five copies were sold at UL meetings.

Although not all special guest presentations and UL neighbourhood association reports have a direct link or relevancy to NL, I strongly recommend NL continue representation at UL. The annual membership fee is well worth continuing this special connection with the broader London community.

Gerry Pierce

Volunteer Coordinator’s Report 2016-2017

Nature London runs on volunteers; we are grateful for the many members who step forward to selflessly meet the needs for leaders and workers for club activities. Volunteers include Board members, committee leaders, team members, and individual workers - over 80 in all. Every member contributes in their own way to support the purposes of Nature London, and build the positive atmosphere that helps us achieve our mission. Thanks to those who volunteered for a role, recruited workers or suggested a capable worker or leader.

Norm Corrin
Volunteer Coordinator

Website Annual Report 2016-2017

2017 was a busy year for web site enhancements. Highlights include:

- Dynamic content was added to the home page.
- A feature-rich Events Calendar was brought online.
- Video and picture gallery functionality were implemented.
- Field trip and event reports were added.
- Infrastructure to support publication of an on-line version of The Cardinal was built.
- The collection of web site usage statistics was enabled allowing us to evaluate the effectiveness of the web site as a communication medium. By the time you read this, the web site will have accumulated over 10,000 hits in just the past six months!

Our website continues to be hosted by Ken and Gail Dimson through their company Cambrian Software. Thank you, Ken and Gail, for donating the computer resources, for your continued assistance, and for paying the domain fees.

Chris Baldock

AWARDS 2016-2017

W. E. Saunders Award of Merit

Barbara Bain

Conservation Award

Bill Maddeford

Bruce Parker

Special Recognition Award

Dave Martin

Pete Read

Ann White

Thank-you Award (Suncatcher)

Herb Bax, Jack Blocker, Cathy Quinlan

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2016-2017

President	Muriel Andreae
Past President	Karen Auzins
Vice-President	BernieVanDenBelt
Treasurer	Henry Przysieszny
Recording Secretary	Lisa Bildy
Field Trips Co-ordinator	Cathy McCrae
Volunteer Co-ordinator	Norm Corrin
Director at Large	Ron Martin
Director at Large	Gordon Cameron
Director at Large	Gordon Neish
(Feb-August)	
Director at Large	Mike Channon
(April-August)	
Director at Large	Paul Stevens
(April –August)	

APPOINTMENTS 2016-2017

Archivists	Dave Wake Winifred Wake
A/V Technician	Eric Auzins
Awards Banquet Coordinators	Karen Auzins Deb Gorman-Smith
Birding Wing Program Coordinators	Gord Cameron Gail McNeil Paul Nicholson Ian Platt
Brochure Producer	Ray Robertson
Butterfly Count Coordinator	Ann White
<i>Cardinal</i> Editor	vacant
Chimney Swift Liaison	Winifred Wake
Christmas Bird Count Coordinator	Pete Read
Conservation Action Committee Chair	Sandy Levin
Cookie/Coffee Coordinators	Linda Bristow Jim Bristow
E-mail Coordinators	Ric Symmes Sandy Symmes
Facebook Coordinator	Mady Hymowitz
Friends of the Coves Rep	Bill Maddeford
Guide to Natural Areas in London & Vicinity Editors	Jim Moorhead Roslyn Moorhead
Heritage Coordinator	Jim Cushing
Indoor Meetings Coordinators	Carol Agocs Kathy Ellis Laure Neish
Manual Secretary	Cathy Quinlan
Membership Secretary	Gail McNeil
Membership Database Support (Bird) Migration Secretary	Hugh Casbourn Pete Read
Nature in the City Coordinator	Pat Tripp
Nature Line Coordinators	Bob McGee, Gail McNeil, Rick Martin
Ontario Nature Representative	Anita Caveney
Publicity Administrator	Paul Nicholson
Sales Coordinator	Ann Henderson
Saunders Library Liaison	Pat Tripp
Thames Talbot Land Trust	David Wake
Urban League of London	Gerry Pierce
Web Host	Ken Dimson
Webmaster (Sep-Mar)	Mady Hymowitz
Webmaster (Apr-Aug)	Chris Baldock

**This annual report has been compiled by
Muriel Andreae, Past President 2016-2017**