

Quinte Field Naturalists  
General Meeting of the Membership  
January 15, 2024 @7.00pm  
Centennial Secondary School Cafeteria  
Attendance 44  
Minutes submitted by Sharron Blaney

1. Introduction and Welcome: Elizabeth Churcher welcomed everyone.
2. Land Acknowledgement: Elizabeth
3. Housekeeping items: Elizabeth explained directions to washrooms, next meeting is February 26, 2024 with speaker Robert Ormston who will talk about "Holes, Highways and Hydrocuts". This is also our Annual General Meeting; anyone with suggestions for projects or ideas for use of funds for nature education, conservation or research please contact any member of the executive. She also thanked Elizabeth Ormston and Patricia Hamilton for the evening's snacks.
4. Treasurer's report and related updates: John Lowry read Dan Guenther's report as Dan was absent. Quinte Field Naturalists total assets as of December 31, 2023 was \$15,122.40. Current Balance \$15,033. QFN is in good financial shape going into 2024; a more detailed report will follow at the February meeting. John also reported that the alcohol container collection for 2024 had already raised \$300 for the Nature Conservancy. John also had a report from Greg Parsons regarding plans for spring plantings. May 18, 2024 is date of next plant sale. For details re grants, and other happenings see below (Appendix A).
5. Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre: Denice Wilkins reported on the need Sandy Pines currently has for more funding. As well as donating directly, you can help by donating items for their jewellery sale or taking part in their 50/50 draws. For info visit their website: [sandypineswildlife.org](http://sandypineswildlife.org). Denice is still looking for someone to be the QFN Marketing Convener.
6. Beaver Project Update: Catherine Baier presented a detailed account of the Beaver sub-committee's efforts and lack of success at altering Belleville policy to prevent beaver trapping. Her detailed report is attached below. (Appendix B)
7. Christmas Bird Count: Tom Wheatley reported that 27 birders participated in the count which had a record-equalling high of 63 species. With the Bay totally open 4000 waterfowl were recorded. Total birds counted: 10,500. Next birding big day is the Great Back Yard Bird Count in February. For details check e-bird and QFN website.
8. Draw: John Lowry stated there would be no draw. Beth Wiley will run the draw next month.

9. Sightings: Denice Wilkins had seen a mink who had caught a cottontail rabbit. John Lowry reported 5 bald eagles, turkey vultures and ravens at Huff's Corners. Jonathan Balcombe had identified a Lesser black-backed gull on the Bayshore trail.
10. Guest Speaker: Bernd Baier introduced Corina Brdar, from Ontario Nature who explained the 30 x 30 targets set in Montreal at COP15 in December 2022. The goal is to have 30% of land and water worldwide preserved for nature by 2030. She explained some of the targets and considerations on which Ontario Nature is focusing: biodiversity strategies, species at risk, sustainable use of forests, wetland education, human rights. There was a lively question period following the presentation. Beth Wiley thanked Corina.
11. Closure: Elizabeth reminded all to enjoy the treats and to have a safe ride home.

### **Appendix A - Report to QFN from Greg Parsons for January 15, 2024 meeting.**

The tree committee is busy planning for a busy Spring.

#### Fundraising:

1. A beautiful handmade quilt has been donated for us to fundraise with. The money will be used to plant trees in Belleville. We are presently deciding how we can raise the most funds with it.
2. We have submitted an application for a \$10,000 grant through Trees Canada with the City of Belleville. Thanks to Terry Boyd and Dan Guenther and to Rowland Cave-Brown-Cave for all their work completing this application. We should know by March if we are awarded the grant.
3. Rotary Loves Trees is a tree planting program operated through the Rotary Club. They have indicated a willingness to join with us and provide some money for our Spring planting project! Discussions are on-going.

#### Plantings!

1. We will be using our ~ \$4,500 raised through last year's plant sale, for a planting at Clifford Sonny Belch Park (formerly Hillcrest). As mentioned, we hope Rotary will chip in some money for this planting as well. If we get the Tree Canada grant, that additional \$10,000 will be added to this event too. So at a minimum we will have \$4,500 to spend here, but possibly we'll have as much as \$17,500 if all goes well!
2. We have been contacted by Bayview Home Hardware asking us to submit another application with them for a Fall planting again, like we did for the Shirley Langer Trail last October. The Belleville Home Building centre is on board as well. According to the owner of the Bayview Home Hardware store, Tree Canada was so pleased with our event last year that "we should be a shoe-in for this year again".

3. The City is working over the winter, on a sign that will be installed in the spring, at the Shirley Langer planting, recognizing QFN, HH and Trees Canada. No charge to us.

#### Plant Sale

1. Save the Date - May 18/2024 - St. Joseph's Catholic Church  
- thanks to Patricia for setting this up again with Father Rod!

#### **Appendix B - Beaver Update January 15, 2024 by Catherine Baier**

In July 2023 a QFN sub committee met with the Green Task Force of Belleville to present the position of QFN on the importance of coexistence with beavers. The sub committee stressed the fact that beavers are critical for the preservation of the wetlands that are so important in sustaining biodiversity, particularly in the face of the current massive global loss of biodiversity and extinction of species. They implored the GTF to ask the Belleville council to follow the recommendations made by QFN in March and to amend their current wildlife/trapping policy.

In December 2023 the Belleville Council accepted the recommendation of the Green Task Force to make only one modification to their approach to beaver conflict management:

- That some members of the Department of Transportation attend an on-line course given by the Beaver Corps Training Program from the Beaver Institute.

This was not a recommendation made by QFN because it takes years of training and experience to successfully deal with wildlife conflicts in a non lethal manner.

The GTF did not adopt any of the following recommendations made by QFN that:

- Belleville council amend their wildlife/trapping policy to provide clear directives and procedures that would allow coexistence with wildlife.
- Experienced wildlife management professionals are employed to achieve this goal.

Belleville's current wildlife policy states that their goal is coexistence with wildlife, but it outlines in great length trapping procedures while including only one sentence about the use of non lethal beaver management methods. There are no clear directives and procedures with safeguards to ensure that these methods are tried before resorting to trapping.

In other words the decision to resort to trapping instead of first trying nonlethal methods is not based on any policy procedure but is made as a subjective evaluation by the Transportation Department.

In conclusion, the situation for Belleville beavers, except for a plan to attend on-line training, has not changed as is indicated by the title of the article in The Intelligencer, "Beaver trapping will continue to prevent flooding". Thirty- seven beavers have been killed in the last few years, 9 of which were killed in 2023.