

Minutes of the General Meeting  
of the Kingston Field Naturalists  
15 February 2018 7:30 pm  
Biosciences Building, Queen's University

1. Opening

Vice President Anthony Kaduck welcomed everyone and thanked Jackie Bartnik for providing treats.

2. Minutes of 18 January

Anthony asked if there were errors or omissions in the minutes of the previous meeting. There were none noted.

3. Member's Observations

- Rose Marie Burke brought a dead shrew that she found in her shed. She invited members to have a close look at this specimen.
- Ken Robinson and the North Leeds Birders travelled to Wolfe Island this week and observed Longspurs, Snow Buntings and Horned Larks.
- Anthony Kaduck observed Red Crossbills north of Hwy 7 in Frontenac County. The birds were on the road and two were killed by a passing truck. He subsequently read that the Crossbills eat salt, but that the salt is toxic to them and specifically slows their reaction time.
- Gaye Beckwith found a sick Hairy Woodpecker at his feeder. He captured it and took it to Sandy Pines. About a week later he picked up the now-healthy bird and returned it to his yard.
- Peter Waycik has seen a Northern Shrike at his property on Howe Island.
- Chris Hargreaves asked about Red-tailed Hawks. The North Leeds Birders saw some on Wolfe Island, and Carolyn Bonta reported seeing average numbers along Hwy 401 between Kingston and Trenton.
- Barry Robertson has seen a Junco at his feeder.

4. Project Snowstorm

Anthony Kaduck showed pictures of the tracks of Snowy Owls Stella and Emerald from Amherst Island. Stella seems to spend a lot of time during the day on the ice out on Lake Ontario. Kurt Hennige suggested that some Snowy Owls may be more comfortable on ice than in open fields.

5. Upcoming Events:

- Members were reminded of the upcoming Family Day trip to Wolfe Island; this field trip is open to the public.
- Upcoming field trips and rambles are listed in the newsletter.

- Advance notice: the May Dinner Meeting is on 17 May. The speaker will be Steve Burrows, a mystery writer who incorporates bird themes in his stories.
- Ontario Woodlot Association, Limestone Chapter will be presenting *Managing your Woodlot for Wildlife* by Kerry Coleman 28 February 7:00 pm at Elginburg United Church Hall, 2170 Unity Road, Kingston. Contact Dave owalimestone@gmail.com for more information.

#### 6. Offer to Donate Property

Paul Mackenzie spoke on behalf of the committee (of Larry McCurdy, Erwin Batalla, Kurt Hennige, Dale Dilamarter and Paul), who have been dealing with the family of Jack Sylvester concerning the donation of a property on Amherst Island. Jack Sylvester has died and it was his wish that the property be kept for a nature conservation area. His daughter, Emily Sylvester, wants to donate funds to the KFN that we can use to purchase the property from its current owners. The current owners are Jack's son and Emily's two daughters; they have agreed to sell the land to KFN.

The property is 92 acres on the eastern part of Amherst Island adjacent to the Martin Edwards Reserve. The original property had three lots along the southern (lakeside) border; the middle one of these lots has been sold, the other two are part of the property being offered. **The whole property is zoned residential.** The appraised value of the property is \$140,000.

Jack Sylvester and his son planted many trees on the property. Much of the land is open grassland; there is a seasonal stream. Bobolinks and Meadowlarks, both species at risk, have been observed here. A wind turbine is planned for an area to the north west of the property, but a strip of land to compensate for this loss of bird habitat is planned **for an area adjacent to the Sylvester property.** The committee felt that this property is highly valuable for protection because of its natural state, and because it will provide a buffer for the Martin Edward Reserve.

The anticipated costs are:

- \$3200 for appraisal (KFN has paid \$1600, the other half was paid for by Land Conservancy of Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington.)
- closing costs \$2800. (Lawyer Annie Clifford is providing her services at a reduced rate.)
- on-going maintenance cost including taxes (**\$???**), signs, and fences. There is a possibility of applying to the provincial Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests for Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (which reduces taxes by 75%) or Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (which reduces taxes by 100%).
- Even without the reduced taxes, there is enough money in the KFN's habitat preservation fund to sustain this property.
- Treasurer Larry McCurdy noted that members can donate funds to KFN habitat preservation (the Marion Webb Fund) through the Kingston Community Foundation.

In accepting this property, the Kingston Field Naturalists agree to conserve the property in perpetuity. The agreement with Emily Sylvester is in effect until 18 March.

At the 15 March general meeting, KFN members will be asked to accept this property with its costs and responsibilities. According to KFN bylaws, no proxy votes will be recorded.

7. Featured Speaker

Anthony Kaduck introduced speaker Oliver Reichl, who gave an informative talk about the ecology of trees, and the insects, fungi, other plants and exotic species that attack trees. He reminded us that what we see of a tree is usually only half of it. Oliver finished his talk by accompanying himself on guitar while he sang *The Trees* from the band RUSH (written by Neil Peart).

Anthony thanked the speaker for his words and song, and presented him with a copy of *Birds of the Kingston Region*.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm. There were 60 people in attendance.