

MINUTES ORILLIA NATURALISTS' CLUB
Wednesday, Mar. 6, 2019, 7:30 to 9:30 pm
OMAH

1. Denis Paccagnella called the meeting to order. He began by welcoming everyone and reading the Indigenous Lands Acknowledgement statement. There were 2 new members at the meeting.
2. Sightings: Redpolls; Snowy owls (4); a coyote;
3. Minutes of last meeting. Denis moved acceptance of the amended minutes of the meeting of February 6, 2019. Seconded Barb Ryckman. Carried.
4. Publicity – members are encouraged to check the Website frequently as well as the Facebook postings for pictures and updates.
5. Committee Reports:
 - a. Treasurer's Report. Donald reported that there was no new information, and that we are still expected to be solvent until the August membership rollover.
 - b. Ontario Nature – Sue reported on upcoming events: April 9 Lobby day re the 17% of protected places; Haliburton Highland spring meeting on May 4; ON AGM on May 31 – June 2 at Mohawk College, Hamilton; ON North Regional Conference in Sudbury May 10-12.
 - c. Program: Marilyn reported that the Stayner Eco Park outing may need to be delayed by a week or so (from Mar. 30) due to prolonged winter conditions. The Website will be updated; Jean Iron will be at the April 3 meeting talking about James Bay Shorebirds; Muriel Sinclair will begin her Sights and Sounds of Spring on Thursday, April 4.; Arni and Diane Stinnissen have offered to organize an outing to Red Bay Lodge and the Bruce Peninsula for early June, and 13 have registered so far; Barb Ryckman is leading the Stewardship snowshoe to Carthew Bay on Thursday, the 7th at 10 am.
 - d. Archives – no report.
 - e. Conservation – Pat Woodford has sent a letter to PM Ford regarding the Endangered Species Act (see attached).
 - f. Social – Warren Ryckman mentioned the menu for tonight's social – including decaffeinated coffee.
 - g. Membership – no report.
6. Quiz Night – Denis laid out the rules of the road for our first ever Quiz night, organized by Sue Deadman and Nancy Ironside.
7. Social – there was a 15 minute break for social gathering.
8. Quiz night – 29 attended, and they were split into groups of 3 more or less. The winners were Team 2 with a score of 43 out of 46 – Carolyn, Kyra and Warren. Team 1 took second place – Donald, Tanya and Carol – score of 40. Other awards were given for “most honest team” etc. – this went to Fern, Alex, and Gloria. Denis thanked Sue and Nancy for their efforts in producing what everyone agreed was a very fun exercise, using Margo Holt's beautiful pictures of wildflowers. The “trophies” were various plants.

The meeting adjourned just before 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Strickland, Secretary, Orillia Naturalists' Club.

Orillia Naturalists' Club,
30 Peter st. S., Orillia,
ON., L3V 6R5.

March 4, 2019.

Dear Premier Ford:

Rod Phillips, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks:
Jill Dunlop, M. P. P.

The Members of the Orillia Naturalists' Club are deeply concerned about the changes that your Government is proposing to make to the Endangered Species Act (ESA). These changes will make it easier for industry and development to destroy the habitats of species at risk and other species as well that interfere with business. The ESA has a sound foundation in science and Indigenous knowledge. Both of these types of knowledge are essential for the ESA.

The protection of the "species at risk" and their habitats may be left up to the Minister. This would mean that the Minister would be subjected to other political influences and the pressure of powerful industrial lobbies. The scientists and Indigenous experts know what species of plants and animals are in danger not industrial lobbyists. The Government is looking for ways to make it easier for development to proceed. It must not proceed at a high cost to our most vulnerable species.

A "Conservation Fund" is being proposed so developers could pay for the destroying of species at risk and their habitats. Once a species is gone money will not bring it back. You cannot buy what has been lost from a habitat.

Have you seen many great auks lately?

The fact that species are disappearing is not that the laws in the ESA have failed. They have not been properly implemented. This is the direction in which your Government should be heading.

As the habitat for species at risk disappear so do the wild areas in Ontario. Many people in Ontario find life very stressful at present. It is being realized more and more that wild areas reduce stress and therefore improve mental health which saves the Government money.

Biodiversity and climate change are globally recognized as the greatest threats to the environment. The changes that your Government is proposing to make will increase not reduce the threats to biodiversity. Is this how you want your Government to be known both locally and internationally.

Sincerely,

Patricia Woodford, Conservation Officer, Orillia Naturalists' Club.