

## Chair's Comments

### *Vandalism hurts our community*

Over the calendar year of 2016, several areas in Ferguson Forest Centre were covered in offensive graffiti, the bridge on Turtle Trail was damaged, and vehicles repeatedly tore up the turf at Anniversary Park and the pump house. More disturbing was the loss in October of a picnic table from the shelter at Anniversary Park when it was thrown in the Kemptville Creek, and significant damage to Kinderwood children's trail, whose "animals" will remain in hibernation until the signage can be replaced. Those responsible probably will never be caught. Vandals seldom are. No less offensive is the ongoing problem of dumping in the parking areas adjacent to the crown lands, and at Anniversary Park and the pump house. Disposing of debris can be harmful to wildlife and could be a hazard for forest fires. If near watercourses, it can become an environmental problem. We all have a responsibility in keeping Ferguson Forest Centre clean and green. Vandalism hurts everyone. Whether it's a sign, or a building, or greenspace, the damage and disruption of vandalism has a high cost. Not only does the staff at Ferguson Forest Centre need to report, document, estimate and repair the damage, but they have to take valuable time out of a busy day to deal with such issues. In mid-2016 the Friends of the Ferguson Forest Centre adopted Anniversary Park in an effort to help keep the park looking great for visitors. This stewardship initiative has now expanded to regularly include the Turtle Trail and the pump house greenspace. Periodic sweeps are done along the roadways and remaining trails. We thank our dedicated members who pitch in and maintain the land we all enjoy. It is very unfortunate that some feel the need to leave graffiti on buildings and signs, damage the trails, and make the greenspace less attractive. The Ferguson Forest Centre belongs to all of us, so let's join together to keep it a fun, safe environment for people of all ages!

- **Liza Duhaime**

Trash Can Vandalism at Anniversary Park, spring 2017



## 2016 - 2017 Board of Directors

At the annual general meeting on Nov. 24, 2016, Friends of the Ferguson Forest Centre members reelected Catherine Woolham to serve another term on the board of directors, and said farewell to outgoing board members Jeslyn Thibedeau, Todd MacDonald & Jane Hunt. Continuing with the board for the second year of their terms are Liza Duhaime (chair), Monica Wallace (vice chair), William Wallace (secretary), Jim Beckett (treasurer) and Joanne Joyce Labossiere. Ivan Russell was nominated and elected as new member of the board. For personal reasons, Ivan has since stepped down from the board. At the board meeting held in January 2017, Patrick Babin elected to serve until the next AGM. Pat has since recused himself from participating on the board. At the board meeting held in April 2017, members Cathie Loos and Jennifer Gow were appointed to serve until the next AGM. Jeslyn Thibedeau continues to serve on the membership committee and Jane Hunt has agreed to be responsible for maintaining our web site.

## Upcoming Events

### **Birding with the Experts on Turtle Trail**

Saturday, May 27, 9 am - 12 pm

Meetup Location: Anniversary Park

### **Canadian Raptor Conservancy Birds of Prey**

#### **Free-Flight Demonstration**

Saturday, June 24, 3 shows

Location: Arboretum in Ferguson Forest Centre

### **Family Fun Fest**

Saturday, July 15, 10 am - 5 pm

Location: Arboretum in Ferguson Forest Centre

Celebrate Canada's 150th at a free festival of fun activities for families of all ages, with a diverse variety of entertainment, including musicians, magic shows, dog agility and trick horse demos, and opening ceremonies and concert with the Kemptville Legion pipes & drums. Thanks to Bruce Noble for being our festival coordinator, we could not do this without you.



**CANADA 150**  
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## 2016 Season Overview of Friends-Hosted Events

### Birding in Ferguson – May 14

We kicked off our 2016 event season with a Bird Walk along Turtle Trail on International Migratory Bird Day, led by experts Dave Moore and Bev McBride from the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club. The group identified more than 40 species, sometimes relying on bird calls, and a wide range of unusual forest plants along the trail. This event was our third annual and it continues to attract a wide variety of participants.

### The Sky at Night – June 3

Steve Wendt and Jim Quinn from the North Gower Science Club guided a rapt group of amateur star gazers on a tour of astronomical enlightenment and entertainment. As dusk gave way to nightfall, cloudy skies obscured a view of Saturn and its famous rings, but Mars (the red planet), and Jupiter (with its four moons) were clearly visible through the experts' large telescopes.



Photo: Ivan Russell

### Paddle the Creek – June 25

On one of the nicest days of summer, a group of avid canoeists and kayakers launched their craft from the public dock at Anniversary Park for a leisurely paddle down Kemptville Creek – the free-flowing tributary that runs into the Rideau River. Those on the trip were rewarded with calm waters, beautiful scenery, and some close up views of resident water birds and the reclusive river otter.



Photo: Ivan Russell

### Birds of Prey Show – July 23

The highlight of 2016 was the free-flying birds of prey show presented by the Canadian Raptor Conservancy on the beautiful grounds of the arboretum. In among the aerial demonstrations, families were entertained with an educational commentary of the birds' attributes, habitats and behaviors. Who knew birds have a poor sense of smell and a tasty meal for a great horned owl is a skunk!

Spectators saw an example of each of the five main groups of raptors (hawks, owls, vultures, falcons and eagles).

Photos by Ivan Russell



A juvenile Great Horned Owl with tufts of feathers not yet completely developed. A predator that hunts at night, this owl has big yellow eyes with large pupils that allow them to spot their prey, a curved beak and claws, short but wide wings, and soft feathers to help them approach prey very quietly.



Turkey Vulture: a scavenger that feeds almost exclusively on carrion. Their digestive systems kill off most bacteria present in carcasses making them "dead-end hosts" in stopping diseases like rabies from spreading. With a bright red head, dark plumage and a two metre wingspan, it's a highly distinctive bird of prey that can be seen soaring high over the landscape.



A handsome hawk of the arid Southwest, the Harris Hawk is a standout with bold markings of dark brown, chestnut red and white, long yellow legs, and yellow markings on its face. These birds are often found in groups, cooperatively attending nests and hunting together as a team.



The American Kestrel is North America's smallest falcon. In summer, kestrels feed largely on grasshoppers, dragonflies, lizards, mice and voles. They will also eat other small birds. It is the only North American falcon to habitually hover with rapid wing beats, keeping its head motionless while scanning the ground for prey.



The Bald Eagle is a bird of prey found in North America that is most recognizable as the national bird and symbol of the United States. The Bald Eagle's diet is opportunistic and varied, but most feed mainly on fish. Healthy adult Bald Eagles are not preyed on in the wild and are thus considered apex predators.

### Medicinal Herb Walk – July 24

Kemptville-based naturopathic doctor Sean Yakimovich led this popular walk along Settlers Trail teaching about the medicinal plants that grow locally in our community. Participants not only learned about different types of herbal medicines, but also how seeds, berries, leaves, roots, bark and/or flowers are used for medicinal purposes.

### What's Abuzz in the Park?

New this year was an activity specifically geared to children – a hands-on, catch-and-release bug walk held at Anniversary Park on August 24. Andrea Howard, the “bug lady” from Merrickville, kept a group of more than 20 people entertained and engaged catching and identifying insects. While most participants were children under 10, parents and guardians who accompanied their young charges also learned a lot from Andrea, such as the cicada's high-pitched song is actually a mating call belted out by males. Planning is underway to repeat this event in summer 2017.



### Tree Identification – September 10

A hugely popular activity over several earlier years has been the Tree Identification Walk led by veteran forester Alf Campbell. Unfortunately our expert event leader had to cancel last minute due to illness. People who missed the cancellation notice and showed up at the scheduled morning start time were accommodated with a two-hour impromptu forest tour led by a board volunteer.

### Walking Meditation – September 25

On a beautiful fall morning, more than 20 health-conscious individuals turned out to follow Gayle Poapst of Bhodi Tree Yoga in an hour-long guided walking meditation on Turtle Trail. The quiet of the forest and fresh air couldn't fail to promote relaxation and improve overall feelings of wellbeing. Thanks go to Gayle for helping promote topiary as therapy!



## 2016 Annual General Meeting

The Friends of the Ferguson Forest Centre's 2016 Annual General Meeting was held Thursday, November 24 at the North Grenville Public Library in Kemptville, with guest speaker Scott Danford, program manager at the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.

FFFC chair Liza Duhaime reported an exceptionally busy year of which the highlight was the Canadian Raptor Conservancy's Free-Flight demonstration of birds of prey. The July 23 show in the arboretum attracted an audience of more than 500 people. The chair thanked the volunteers and the board of directors and staff of the Ferguson Forest Centre for their assistance with the event. She also thanked the North Grenville Times and Juice FM for their support and Advantage Mobile Signs for the eye-catching advertising on County Road 43 (shown below).



Also of significance in 2016, we were able to secure funding to purchase 12, double-sided "lawn signs" as a way to advertise and provide direction to our events in the Ferguson Forest Centre.



The board also extended a big thank you to member Mark Patterson of Eclipse Productions + Design Vancouver for donation of our stunning, new, modern banner!



As Friends of the Ferguson Forest Centre we are committed to the protection, wise use and enjoyment of North Grenville's community forest. Without your help our volunteer organization would be unable to provide the necessary initiatives to accomplish our community goals. We've come a long way and we thank you for your support. [executives@friendsofthefergusonforest.ca](mailto:executives@friendsofthefergusonforest.ca)

## Explore the Trails

Detailed trail maps are available on our web site: <http://bit.ly/1NDIn3P>.

**Join Us!** We can now accept donations and membership payments through PayPal or email transfer to our treasurer, Jim Beckett, [beckettj@ripnet.com](mailto:beckettj@ripnet.com).



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