



Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre

CELEBRATING OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY!

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

The Best is Yet to Come

The Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. We have a lot to be thankful for – a newly-renovated Centre, community members who believe in our mission and who have invested heavily in our future, along with recognition by a growing number of the public of the importance of wildlife and the natural world.

Thirty years ago, a small orphaned squirrel led to the founding of the Centre. There was no program to help such animals at the time. Setting up a wildlife rehabilitation program for wild mammals presented lots of challenges. Locating free space and outfitting it each year as we prepared for the frantic birthing season, recruiting and training up to 80 in-centre volunteers and foster families, hiring university students without any idea of where their salary was to come from was, as one city councillor described, a “herculean task”.

We had no idea there would be such a demand for our services. Very quickly a desperate public was seeking our help for upwards of 1,200 orphaned and injured wild mammals a year, representing more than 24 different species. They included everything from baby raccoons and cottontail rabbits to flying squirrels, river otters and black bear cubs.

From the outset, we recognized the need to provide the public information that would reduce the risk of ‘creating’ orphans. It meant setting up a labour-intensive human-wildlife conflict service, responding to 8,000-10,000 calls a year.

A Change in Direction

When, in 2002, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry seized healthy baby raccoons from the Centre, taking them to a rabies research facility as well as changing regulations that did not, in our estimation, permit humane care and release, our Board decided we could no longer work with the Ministry with any degree of trust.

The community though felt the expertise gained in rehabilitating a wide range of wildlife along with the experience acquired in conflict resolution could be put to good use.

Current Mission is Vital

For the past 15 years, the Centre has taken a different course. It’s built on the belief that education and outreach is critical to bringing about change for wildlife, particularly in tackling misinformation and irrational fear.

The Centre works to educate youth through its school programs, helps the public to humanely resolve wildlife conflicts, assists groups in protecting habitat and wildlife in their neighbourhoods, and works with animal protection and environmental organizations, locally and across North America, to promote individual, municipal and provincial wildlife stewardship.

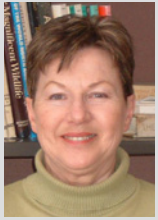


“While we sometimes miss the satisfaction that comes from caring for individual animals, our work allows us to focus on the bigger picture, getting at the cause of the problems facing wildlife rather than solely treating the symptoms”, said Kate MacNeil, Education Coordinator.

All told, the Centre’s evolution over the past 30 years makes it well equipped to continue to provide an important voice for wildlife. And, to build a constituency among those who share the view that our future lies in our ability to live in greater harmony with all species.

Editorial

Understanding Wildlife



A coyote was recently shot in Ottawa's west end. The coyote wasn't acting aggressively, rather it's only crime was that it simply seemed unafraid of people.

A week before it was killed, we saw this coyote lying in a field one morning. When I got within thirty feet, it got up and ambled off. It did not

exhibit any signs of disease nor was it thin – just wet and a little bedraggled as it had been raining.

I concluded it had lost its denning site due to the extensive construction in the area and was likely unfearful given the proximity of people that may have intentionally or unintentionally been feeding it.

Unfortunately for the coyote, what we humans don't understand, we fear and what we fear, we destroy.

Education is Key

Thanks to Councillor Mark Taylor who hosted a meeting for residents and City Ecologist, Dr. Nick Stow along with Trevor Horvatin from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, those attending learned a great deal about coyote biology and behaviour, the difference between risks and hazards as well as practical tips for living with coyotes.

Many people attending the meeting said they enjoyed the abundant wildlife in the area and want to see it protected. The Ottawa River and the extensive NCC Greenbelt serve as both habitat and wildlife corridors in this area so wildlife will regularly be seen.

One resident best summed up things: *'proactive education is the key to coexistence with all wildlife, including coyotes; and, when needed, wildlife experts and police should be jointly involved in any response – police are not trained with regards to wildlife and they shouldn't be put in a position of taking an action that is widely criticized'*.

The Importance of Wildlife Linkages

Extensive transportation construction along Moodie Drive and Corkstown Road and the traffic it will generate means that the City of Ottawa and the National Capital Commission must work together to ensure a safe corridor for wildlife so that the Greenbelt and its Core Natural Areas aren't further severed by roads.

Other cities are protecting biodiversity by factoring wildlife into planning decisions, so too must the nation's capital.

Not only will wildlife benefit but it will increase motorist safety while reducing human-wildlife conflicts in adjacent neighbourhoods.

Donna DuBreuil
President, OCWC

Amid outdated policies that harm wildlife and the promotion of fear by those self interests that exploit animals, there are an increasing number of inspirational stories that we want to share with you. This one is of Joelle Wong of Richmond Hill, Ontario.

An Inspiration



The Royal Canadian Mint revealed the winning designs for the Canada 150 circulation coins on November 2, 2016. Joelle Wong of Richmond Hill, Ontario designed the 25-cent coin called Hope for a Green Future – Royal Canadian Mint

When eight-year old Joelle Wong learned of the Royal Canadian Mint's national contest, inviting the public to create new designs for a 2017 coin series celebrating Canada's 150th anniversary, she immediately started thinking about images that would represent what the country means to her.

"I love animals and green spaces and that gave me the idea of showing my hope for Canada's future in a painting that celebrates the importance of our nature and native Canadian culture," said Joelle.

She worked with one of her teachers to research Canadian wildlife and indigenous art techniques to develop her painting of animals commonly represented in aboriginal culture. A turtle, bird and beaver, all decorated with aboriginal patterns, are reaching for a plant growing out of a pair of hands to symbolize how we are all connected in protecting Canada's nature.

The Mint launched the contest in 2015, putting forward five theme perspectives. After the public cast over one million on-line votes, Joelle's design won the popular vote among five finalists in the running for the coin celebrating Canada's Future. The finalists in each category were determined by the Royal Canadian Mint and a panel of notable Canadians.

Joelle channelled her appreciation for animals and greenspaces into Hope for a Green Future, a design that shares her personal, heart-warming vision for a tomorrow in which all Canadians work together to preserve and protect nature and its creatures.

Joelle Wong reaffirms our belief in and commitment to the Centre's education program, knowing that reaching young people and giving them an understanding and appreciation for all wildlife will not only change their relationship with other species but our world for the better.

Centre Renovation Readies It for the Future

Thanks to Public Services and Procurement Canada



After 25 years of exceptional use by thousands of people and nearly 12,000 wild animals rehabilitated at the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre, the building was due for a makeover.

Thanks to Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) the renovation, started in the Fall of 2016 and completed this past Spring, is receiving rave reviews.

"We are particularly pleased because the approach taken by PSPC was not so much a renovation but a sensitive restoration of the building", said Dr. Dan Rodgers, Centre Vice-President.

The original building was built in 1992 on a corner of the Nortel Campus. It was constructed entirely with funds raised - \$758,000 - by the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre. The fundraising was supported by a challenge grant from the Environmental Partners Fund that required broad public support and was based on the Centre, the first purpose-built wildlife centre in Canada, becoming a model for other cities. Bell Northern Research (later known as Nortel Networks) became the corporate partner as a way of giving back to the environment.

There was wide political and community support for what was a needed environmental service.

Centre volunteers designed every square inch of the building's interior footprint as well as the exterior, wanting to achieve a functional space along with one that fit into its natural surroundings, along the lines of Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural style.

In 2001, an addition to the building was constructed with nearly \$400,000 raised by the Centre in private and corporate support.

The on-going operations of the Centre are privately funded through public contributions.

The Public Services and Procurement Canada Team

"We can't say enough about the team put together by PSPC for the renovation in 2016. From the outset, they understood the 'ownership' that Centre volunteers felt, with so much of their energy and substantial fundraising efforts invested in not only the building but its programs over the past 25 years", said President Donna DuBreuil.

The team consisted of Jerome Maltais, at the time Property and Facility Manager, PSPC; Stephen Lynch, Project Manager from Brookfield Global Integrated Solutions (BGIS), the property management company for the Carling Campus; Steve Leahy of Dredge Leahy, architect; Hugh

Trudeau of Dredge Leahy; Andre Durand of Profex Construction; Donna DuBreuil and Kate MacNeil of the OCWC.

Meetings were initially held weekly to review all aspects of planning and then, bi-weekly, once the contract had been let and work got underway. One of the key issues was to ensure that the materials chosen for the renovation would deter wildlife from re-entering the attic. The Centre's location in the woods had, in the past, made it easy for raccoons and squirrels to choose the building's attic as a safe spot to have their young in the spring.

"Having lots of experience in resolving wildlife conflicts and understanding effective animal-proofing measures meant we were very involved in the choice of materials for the exterior cladding, soffit and roof", said Kate MacNeil, the Centre's Education Coordinator.

As the Centre is a rather unique addition to a government campus, we have great admiration for the collaborative approach that the PSPC team took in working with us to make sure everything went smoothly. Even apart from regular meetings, Stephen Lynch, the Project Coordinator, dropped into the Centre every few days after work just to make sure things were on track.

We are thrilled with the final product.

And, also, with the very supportive role that Jerome's successor, Pierre Lacroix, PSPC Property and Facility Manager, and the BGIS Team continue to play in servicing the Centre and ensuring that it remains an important environmental anchor for the Carling Campus as well as a key interface with the community.

We look forward to a continued strong relationship with PSPC as our landlord and DND as the client-department accommodated at the Carling Campus.

WILLIAM HAWES – MAKING A



A generous annual donor and active member over many years, Bill made a very significant contribution of \$460,000 in gifts and a major bequest to the Centre before his death on October 28, 2016. His support will be used to continue the Centre's work in helping young and old alike develop a better understanding and appreciation for the wildlife that share our urban spaces.

It reflects the regard and joy that Bill gained from observing local wildlife. *"If people spent a little time watching the amazing cirque du soleil skills and fun-loving antics of juvenile squirrels playing with one another or the gentleness of a mother raccoon with her kits, they'd have more respect for these species",* said Bill.

His love of animals first developed when he was around 10 years old with a dog called Sparky. According to Bill, Sparky was such a smart little terrier that you had to spell 'b-a-t-h' or the dog would take off. Pretty soon the dog even caught onto the spelling ruse.

Born and raised in Montreal, Bill attended McGill and graduated from

The Centre is very fortunate to have had the support of visionary individuals throughout its transition from caring for individual animals to education and outreach programs that attempt to make a difference for all animals. William or Bill, as we came to know him, was one such individual.

Sir George Williams University with a Science degree, majoring in Math and Physics. He joined the Canadian Navy and spent most of his career working in systems engineering during the move from analog to digital.

Bill's adventure-filled career started on the HMCS Fraser, a destroyer and helicopter carrying vessel but after several tours he decided to volunteer for submarines. That led to an intensive 6-month course at Sub School in New London, Connecticut.

But, it was during an exchange with the Royal British Navy in 1972-74 that he got first-hand experience with another country's submarine fleet as well as saw a lot of the world. His first posting was on the HMS Olympus while stationed in Faslane, Scotland. The tours were to the south, allowing Bill to see much of the Mediterranean, including Malta and Gibraltar and the cheeky Barbary monkeys.

Bill's second posting, while on exchange with the British Navy, was on the HMS Onslaught, stationed in Gosport, England. He fondly remembers living in historic Fort Blockhouse, with a magnificent view of the harbour and only a 30 yard walk to work. The submarine activity out of this port was in the Arctic Circle during the Cold War. One of the more interesting assignments was monitoring and taking pictures of Russian ships from below, often with little distance between the sub and the ship.

A letter from the Commander at Maritime Command Headquarters spoke



of Bill in glowing terms. *"As a Combat Systems Engineer, LCDR Hawes has few equals in the Canadian Forces. An inquisitive and intensely analytical individual by nature, he has developed remarkable abilities for design, installation, maintenance, repair and modification of sophisticated computer systems. I can only describe those abilities as unique."*

When Bill retired in 1985-86 from the Canadian Navy, he went to work at Paramax Electronics where his activities involved a great deal of interaction with System Engineering. According to long-time friend, Jim Fisher, *"Bill*

DIFFERENCE FOR WILDLIFE

became so well regarded that he was the only unofficial 'guest' at our legendary after work get togethers. When the National Security Agency program was cancelled, Bill was the only person spared lay-off, because he was deemed too valuable to let go, a result of his work on submarine proposals." The company later became Lockheed Martin, the global aerospace, defense, security and advanced technologies company where Bill continued to work in the field of systems engineering up until his retirement in 2011.

In spite of many health challenges, including a liver and kidney transplant along with heart surgery, Bill remained an independent person focused on the world around him. *"His caring, thoughtful nature and his delightful sense of humour has helped to motivate and inspire those of us at the Centre",* said Donna.

Bill's diverse interests were shown by the variety of his reading materials. They included Sterling Hayden's *'Rascal'*, a story of an orphaned raccoon and the young boy that befriends him along with Horace Freeland Judson's *'The Eighth Day of Creation'*, an account of how molecular biologists came to understand the fundamental processes of life. Perhaps, more than anything, they reflect the respect that Bill had for all forms of life.

Celebration of Life

A Celebration of Life ceremony for Bill was held on June 22, 2017 at the Centre. Friends, family and colleagues including Lauren Dawe, Bill's cousin from Calgary, came from far and wide to share memories, many quite hilarious, showing different sides of a very accomplished and well-liked individual. Among the tributes: *"One of the best pirates I ever sailed with";*



A Love of Nature

Bill Hawes was a very kind and special person who had a great love of all wildlife. That said he had a special spot for raccoons. In fact the first time I met Bill was over 15 years ago when we were still doing rehab. He stopped by with "some" peanuts for the raccoons in our care. It took 3 of us to unload the trunk full of peanuts.

We invited him in to watch the raccoons enjoy some of the special treats he brought. He watched them with such interest and amazement, his fondness was evident.

After getting to know Bill, I am not surprised that he had such affection for raccoons, they are very intelligent, love a challenge and are a little bit mischievous. I think these would be qualities Bill could relate to.

Bill was also very circumspect so his belief in our programs and the work we were doing was very encouraging and inspiring.

"I'll miss your thoughtful rebellious spirit and insightful ironic sense of humor"; "A man whose heart was as big as his smile".

His niece, Janet Mason, wrote a letter sharing some early memories: *"My uncle Bill's many adventures and wry observations of human nature made him a talented story-teller. Most of all I remember his kind, gentle, funny, considerate ways."*

Distance prevented his cousin, Alex Lamoureux, from attending but her frequent lovely letters express how important Bill was to her, a feeling that was reciprocated.

A Red maple tree was planted in Bill's memory at the Centre, along with a plaque. The tree is already the favourite of many birds and squirrels, something we're sure Bill would approve of.

The Centre's Board unanimously decided to honour Bill's generous legacy by establishing *'The William Muir Hawes Wildlife Fund'*. Dr. Dan Rodgers, Vice-President of the Centre said *"Bill's shrewd investment ability made possible this generous gift. We are deeply honoured that he regarded the Centre's work such a worthy investment."*

'Best Wildlife Management Practices'

National Capital Commission-Rescuing Wildlife Part of its Mission

The Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre has long advocated for a co-ordinated response by wildlife agencies and police that would produce a humane outcome for wildlife in distress. We celebrate the National Capital Commission (NCC) for its initiative in putting such a progressive policy into practice.

The NCC's broad environmental mandate includes managing and protecting natural habitats and ecosystems, and ensuring biodiversity of flora and fauna. This is accomplished by adhering to best practices, by undertaking research with key partners and academic institutions. The management of wildlife is accomplished by a specialized Conservation team that has acquired expertise in the relocation of large wildlife mammals when they inadvertently find themselves in an urban environment.



When it comes to rescuing large wild mammals that have wandered into built-up areas, the National Capital Commission (NCC) has an impressive response.

In July 2017, NCC Conservation officers were called to help a 650 lbs. moose trapped in an Orleans backyard. Jason Pink, Senior NCC Conservation officer, said dealing with situations such as these requires *"a great deal of strategic planning, training and close collaboration with police."*

The police will typically assume the responsibility for public safety, keeping crowds and traffic away, allowing the Conservation Officers to focus on the circumstances of the animal. *"The successful outcome in this case resulted from the excellent teamwork between Conservation Officers and Ottawa police,"* said Jason.

"The key is to keep the animal calm, as stress will jeopardize its safe tranquilization and ensure safety for the public should the animal bolt," said Jason. NCC Conservation Officers are certified in chemical immobilization by the Canadian Association of Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarians (CAZWV), but it takes skill to properly assess the animal's weight and to administer the suitable dose via a dart gun.

Once down, a gel was applied to the moose's eyes to keep them lubricated, a mask was placed over its head to keep it calm and vitals were monitored. The animal was also hosed down to ensure that its body temperature was kept at a certain level to ensure its survival. A nearby resident observing the rescue was

impressed with the professional concern exhibited by the Conservation Officers, saying *"they even administered oxygen to the moose."*

The creation of this specialized team did not happen overnight. Ivana Copelli, Director of the Conservation team, explained that the Natural Resources Management team was restructured 4 years ago by *"refocusing the team's efforts towards the management of natural resources and enforcement to ensure the protection of NCC assets. A comprehensive approach to regional wildlife management was also developed in collaboration with the City of Ottawa."*

"As the largest landowner in Canada's Capital Region – over 536 square kilometers, stretching from Gatineau Park in Quebec to Ottawa's Greenbelt in Ontario – the NCC has a keen interest in environmental protection and conservation and this is embedded in all that we undertake," said Ivana.

Extensive development in rural areas, new roads and infrastructure can force large mammals to wander into urban areas such as the moose did in the Orleans backyard.

Ivana said *"the NCC established a training program with the assistance of a nationally-recognized veterinarian from Quebec City and revamped its policies by consulting with federal partners. Once the accreditation was obtained, the NCC retained its own veterinarian and developed new procedures for the chemical immobilization of wildlife."*

Through yearly refreshers, the team works in close collaboration with this veterinarian who brings to the table years of experience and a great love for wildlife."

Like any well-organized emergency response team, the officers are ready to go at a moment's notice, with stretchers, blankets, oxygen and medical kits that allow them to give the animal the necessary attention, emergency grooming and sutures if required.

Tranquilizing and relocating an animal is always as a last resort. In many situations, the collaborative approach between Police and the Conservation Officers will allow the animal alternate options and provide its own escape route.

When asked what species of wildlife they have rescued, Jason indicates *"white-tailed deer, bears, coyotes but you never know as there was once a lynx found in the parking garage of the National Arts Centre in downtown Ottawa and an iguana rescued from an ornamental tree."*

When asked about the satisfaction in helping wildlife, he was even quicker to respond, saying *"there were a lot of high fives when the moose was successfully released back into the wild. Knowing that our training investment has paid off by saving an animal and knowing that the public feels very good that we were able to do so."*

Giving Wildlife a Voice –

The Story of the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre



left to right: Leslie James, Elizabeth Graham, Donna DuBreuil, Michelle Lavoie; Jean McKibbin, Dan Rodgers, Kate MacNeil, Paul Huppe, Gary DuBreuil

Thanks to Elizabeth Graham's Vision

The creation of this video legacy would not have been possible without the vision and generous support of Elizabeth Graham. Elizabeth has long admired the entrepreneurial spirit on which the Centre was built and believed that a video, recording and sharing the Centre's history, is important in shaping and securing its future.

Elizabeth and her late husband Tony have supported the Centre since it was established in 1987. Well-known philanthropists they contribute to a wide variety of social and health needs in the community. They both had a love of animals and enjoyed the abundant wildlife they saw around their home on the Ottawa River. We are so grateful for their leadership on behalf of animal welfare and the environment, their generosity is truly inspiring.

Revelstoke Communications

Michelle Lavoie and Paul Huppe are the partners behind Revelstoke Communications, a video production company that produces broadcast-quality legacy videos for individuals and corporations.

They are gifted story tellers with an extraordinary ability to help people preserve their own unique memories and stories.

They make a great team, the combination of Michelle's research and interviewing skills with Paul's production, directing and editing skills were evident in the outstanding job they did.

By Kate MacNeil

This fall we were pleased to hold the official launch of the documentary telling the story of the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre. We could not think of a better event to christen our newly-renovated Centre, or a more fitting way to celebrate our 30th anniversary.

The video is entitled, "Giving Wildlife a Voice" and it does a remarkable job of following the inception and evolution of the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre and its Programs over the past 30 years.

Prior to the creation of the Wildlife Centre, there was no care available for orphaned and injured wild mammals. This situation began to change in 1987 when Donna and Gary DuBreuil found an orphaned squirrel. They, along with the help of dedicated volunteers, began caring for wild mammals in need and returning them back to the wild.

With the growing demand, the necessity for a dedicated space was soon realized. This came in the shape of several temporary locations until the building we call the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre today, was built in 1991.

From 1987 to 2002, the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre cared for close to 15,000 orphaned and injured wild mammals from 24 different species. During this time they also responded to more than 100,000 human wildlife conflict calls.

The video highlights the redirection of the Centre's focus from wildlife rehabilitation to Public Education and Outreach which has really provided an opportunity to change the circumstances that produce animals in distress in the first place. The Centre's Programs are aimed at uncoupling the lethal management from the conflict itself to lead to the development of a peaceful coexistence model.

Through work with community members, organizations and children the Wildlife Centre is changing public attitudes about wildlife and our relationship with other species.

The video also pays tribute to the Centre's co-founders, Donna and Gary DuBreuil. While Donna and Gary are quick to recognize the efforts of so many others who have helped make the Centre a success, they are extremely modest about their own contributions.

Having worked with them for 20 years I can attest to their admirable and unwavering efforts on behalf of making a difference for wildlife and in helping people foster an appreciation for nature. They truly are remarkable.

This video will serve as a cherished legacy of not only their efforts, but also in recognizing our valuable supporters and volunteers who have helped the Centre grow through the years.



Room Service

Did you know what this animal was at first glance? If you didn't you are not alone. When discussing wildlife with people, and we talk about the Fisher, *Martes pennant*, we often find people are unfamiliar with them. For those who know what a Fisher is, the reaction invoked tends to be fear and concern.

This reaction is unfortunate, for both the animal and the person. But the good news is that education is fear's enemy. We have found that the more people learn the less fearful they are and the more they are able to enjoy our wildlife neighbours.

"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less." Marie Curie

Fishers are found in the Ottawa area. Although associated more with forests and large wooded areas, given the greenspace in and around our City, it is not surprising that we can call them one of our wildlife neighbours.

Fishers are often maligned for being vicious; they are good hunters that must survive by finding small mammals for food. Sadly, cats will occasionally fall into their prey category, so it is important to keep cats inside or ensure safe outdoor access.

They are normally quite secretive, so even if they are an occasional visitor to a property, people often will not see them. We saw this first-hand during our rehab days, when treating a pair of young orphaned fishers. They were only 5 weeks old when they arrived at the Centre, so were still being formula fed.

As this pair got older, and needed more space to practice their climbing skills they moved to a large outdoor cage with a nesting box high on a shelf. If there was any human activity in the compound they would sequester themselves in their nesting box. Even when we entered their cage with their dinner, we would see no signs of them. We would leave the dish on the ground and then we would check back to discover the dish and its contents had been moved into the privacy of their box. When they were done, the empty dish would magically appear on the ground. Like the empty room service tray in the hall, waiting for pick up.




It's about time you humans found a way to keep those pesky Grey Squirrels out! Photo credit: Royleen Robinson

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