

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS  
Minutes of General Meeting, January 22, 2019  
Police Point Park.

1. Call to Order 7:05 pm with Hugh Armstrong presiding and Betty Rainville, Secretary
2. Review and Adoption of General Meeting Minutes from November 27, 2018. **CARRIED.**
3. Exciting Sightings: Members reported the following sightings:
  - 5 Snow Buntings near Echo Dale
  - 1 over-wintering Robin near Echo Dale
  - 1 Grackle near Echo Dale
  - A Goshawk being mobbed by 5 Magpies
  - 2 Sap Suckers in a back yard yesterday
  - A friend reported a coyote being chased by 1 deer in a herd of 9
  - A Great Horned Owl frozen on a perch in perfect condition
  - See Hugh's comments on raptor deaths (New Business 9.b below).
4. Treasurer's report and Membership: Eileen Cowtan reported a balance as of Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 in the Chequing Account of \$5,365.89, and a balance of \$16,404.02 in the GN "Club" Savings Account as of Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Casino Account balance stands presently at \$4,919.64.  
Eileen reminded members that annual memberships are now due. Please fill in the required information for PIPA (Personal Information Protection Act).
5. Correspondence: Eileen announced that Casino training sessions for volunteers will be held soon. Please see her to fill in the form if you are interested.
6. Priority Business:
  - a. **New Board & Committee Members needed:** Hugh noted GN is in dire need of new Board and Committee members. John Slater has stepped aside as Chair of the Operations Committee and the Issues Committee. Martha Munz Gue is filling in temporarily on the Issues Committee, and Bob Townsend is filling in temporarily on the Operations Committee. Thank you Martha and Bob.
  - b. **Nominations for Lifetime Membership:** Hugh reported these are due 60 days before the AGM on March 26. Will Martha be emailing a Nomination to the Board?
  - c. **Kiwanis Family Day celebration Monday Feb. 18, 11 am-4 pm.:** Marty passed around a sign-up sheet for the 16 volunteers needed. He said approximately 700 or 800 people attended previously. There will be free snow equipment provided, as well as other activities.  
More information will be listed in the upcoming Sagebrush Chronicle, Hugh reported.
7. Interpretive Program Report: Marty reported that Corlaine would be back on February 1<sup>st</sup>. He said there have not been a lot of school groups lately but other activities have been taking place.  
Renovations are almost complete, and soon staff and volunteers can start bringing certain items back into the Nature Centre. There is a small problem with the Centre's electrical system, Marty pointed out, but the water is on again and washrooms are fully functional.  
The High School project, Young Artists Inspired by Nature, is still on display at the Nature Centre until January 27<sup>th</sup>. An interactive display from Parks Canada, What's the Connection? may be viewed from February 6<sup>th</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>. The winter StoryWalk, "Froggie gets Dressed," opens January 27<sup>th</sup> to March 10<sup>th</sup>. Come for the opening from 1:30 to 3:30 pm. This Saturday a volunteer is needed to answer phones and greet visitors from 2 to 5 pm during the 4H Club visit at the Centre. In conclusion, Marty asked for 1 member who is able to volunteer for the Invasive Species Workshop on May 4<sup>th</sup>. Please let Gerry or Marty know.  
(Gerry Ehler reported briefly that many groups will be participating in the upcoming workshop. A draft agenda is in the process of being built and is going well. Gerry commented on the increase of Invasive Species in Alberta- from only 50 listed in 2004, up to 279 listed in 2015. This increase is costing Alberta millions of dollars.)(See 8a.9 below).
8. Committee Reports:
  - a. **Issues Committee:** Written report submitted by John. **See Martha's oral report in brackets.**
    1. Next committee meeting to be held in a few weeks hosted at Martha's house. (Martha reported the committee will try to set up a date for the 1<sup>st</sup> week of March).
    2. (Martha thanked John and Hugh for the work they have done.)
    3. Committee Budget 2019:\$1600=\$800 for Conference and Miscellaneous Expenses plus \$800. For the reprint of 2000 Wildflower Brochures. Waiting approval by the GN Board.

4. Marty would like to expand the report for the Riparian Health Assessment project by including comments and pictures and graphics. He plans to talk with Cathy Linowski at the MH College about getting a student to help complete the task.
  5. Martha plans to enquire with Robert Sissons, City Planning Dept., when the next public open house will be held, and ask if GN can meet separately to provide further input to the revision of the City's MDP. (Martha reported that Robert Sissons wants to meet with the Issues Committee).
  6. Martha to check with SEAWA, MH Public Library, College Library and Council of Canadians about meeting to cosponsor the World Water Day/Week in March 18-23, 2019 (Martha reported that SEAWA will book tables for groups, possibly in the Honor Currie Room. People are still being contacted. She said the MH Art Club will be contacted about a possible display).
  7. Joint GN and City Parks Dept. Projects: a meeting was held December 12<sup>th</sup> at the City Parks Dept. Office with Randy Taves, Scott Richter and Keziah Lesko-Gosselin and attended by Hugh, Corlaine and John. Topics discussed:
    - A. GN report of the Shoreline Cleanup in Ranchlands Environmental Reserve for protection of the area was submitted and discussed concerning removal of the very large pieces of trash and having the area designated dog on-leash for protection of the wildlife. **Action Parks Dept.**
    - B. Saamis Archeological Coulee Site to be dog on-leash except for a fenced area for dog off-leash. Seven Persons Creek riparian to be restored (SEAWA and GN assist). **Action Parks Dept.**
    - C. Pollinator Garden at Police Point Park needs fencing and water source available for IP Staff to care for the garden. **Action Parks Dept.**
    - D. Northland Storm Water Pond: following the presentations by Randy and Scott at the GN General meeting on October 23, a walk was conducted the next morning around the NECH Pond. Viewing platform and floating dock to be installed in 2019, and move bench and trash bins to north side. A viewing of the other Storm Water Ponds in the City Southland area is planned; likely in the spring.
    - E. East Glen Nature Trail: nine bridges being replaced but concern about the ecological disturbance to the native prairie by heavy equipment particularly on the hill where the Prairie Crocus only grow. Ian Wallis, Hugh and John met on Dec 13 to view the trail and vehicle tracks caused to the prairie with replacement of two of the large bridges. Hugh sent email with pictures to Randy concerning protection of the Crocus Hill.
    - F. Joint Projects for 2019 to be discussed at a later date.
  8. Butterfly Project: Dave McKenzie is coordinating with Dwayne Myers the expansion of the database and website to include pictures of butterflies. (See 10.c below)
  9. Invasive Plant Species: A public workshop as educational awareness is being organized by Gerry Ehlert and Marty Drut to be held at the Nature Centre May 4<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with MHIP display to address the problem of invasive weeds in alleyways, streets/boulevards and vacant lots. (See 7 IP Report above)
  10. Please note that I intend to step aside as Chair but offer to remain on the committee if the GN Board so wishes. **(The Board highly recommends that John stay on the Issues Committee as a member. The Board is grateful for the exceptional work that John has accomplished as Chair of this committee as well as Chair of the MHIP Operations Committee.)**
- b. MHIP Operations Committee:** Written report by John Slater :
1. Next meeting of the committee tentatively scheduled for Monday February 25<sup>th</sup> at the Nature Centre.
  2. MHIP Budget 2019 approved and accepted by the Operations Committee.
  3. Draft of Chief Interpreter's Job Description reviewed. Some revisions needed.
  4. Update of MHIP Terms of Reference reviewed. Some revisions needed.
  5. Propose P&P covering Substance in the Workplace to be drafted and submitted to the Governance Committee.
  6. Handicap Parking (at least 2 stalls) in PPP close to the Nature Centre will be selected by the Parks Dept.
  7. Provision of Chairs and A/V equipment to be investigated by the Parks Dept.
  8. Detailed Financial Statements of expenses of money from grants for the Renovations of the Nature Centre and construction of the View Point have been requested from the City/Parks Dept.
  9. The Annual Christmas Bird Count on Sunday Dec 16<sup>th</sup> was a great success followed by the Potluck Supper enjoyed by many GN members. Special Thanks to Marty Drut for organizing and to the many contributors who made the event possible.
  10. Next major upcoming GN MH Interpretive Program Events: The Young Artists Inspired by Nature display at the Nature Centre in January with opening reception on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. Then the Kiwanis Family Day activities at Police Point Park on Monday February 18<sup>th</sup>. Check the GN's monthly newsletter, The Sagebrush Chronicle, for further details. Volunteers always appreciated.
  11. Please note that I announced at the last committee meeting on November 5<sup>th</sup> that I would be stepping aside as Chair but offer to remain on the committee if the GN Board so wishes.

(The Board highly recommends that John Slater stay on the Operations Committee as a member). Anne Bernhardt has offered to take future minutes, and Angela Turner will type the minutes and forward them to John. Anne has informed Bob Townsend and John of this decision. Thank you Anne and Angela.

- c. **Field Trip Committee:** John sent a written report.
  - 1. 25 Neighbourhood Walks and six Birding Field Trips were conducted in 2018. Generally well attended and enjoyed by the participants.
  - 2. We plan to resume our Neighbourhood Walks and Birding Field Trips in March or April.
  - 3. We plan to enjoy X-Country Skiing or Snowshoeing in Police Point Park and/or Elkwater when conditions are suitable. First skiing was enjoyed in Elkwater on December 28<sup>th</sup>. John met up with Bob and Cynthia Mutch on the Spring Creek Trail. Let John know if you are interested and would like to receive an email notice.
- d. **Indoor Program Speakers:** Linda Fisher reported that Lorne Fitch, P. Biol., will be speaking tonight on Hearts and Minds: Developing a Prairie Story.  
February speaker will be Dr. David Larson on Goodbye Prairie Rose.  
The March AGM speaker will be Rick Larson with a stunning documentary on Sea Wolves of British Columbia.  
April's presenter is Sandi Robertson speaking on Ord's Kangaroo Rat, which is found in parts of southeastern Alberta.
- e. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh reported an application for \$2,8000. to the Methanex Community Advisory Panel, as well as a request for \$400. from the MH Horticultural Association to assist with the May 4<sup>th</sup> Invasive Species Workshop at the Nature Centre.
- f. **Birding Trails:** Phil Horch reported that the Calgary Inglewood Bird Sanctuary had exhausted their supply of GN Birding Trails of Southeastern Alberta guide books before Christmas 2018.
- g. **Bird Tales Updates:** Hugh reported for Paul and Dee, that window bird feeders will be set up at Sunnyview Care Centre in the spring.
- h. **Communications Committee:** Angela Turner away.
- i. **Nature Alberta:** Ian and Angela absent. (See Nature Alberta Update in the January Chronicle. Page 3)

9 New Business:

- a. **EcoTrust Conference Calgary April 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>:** Martha suggested the members check online at Alberta EcoTrust: Environmental Gathering 2019. Members may apply for funding through Ecotrust bursary applications, and there are also funds available for this conference through the Issues Committee.
- b. **Birds of Prey, Coaldale:** Hugh reported that this raptor rescue and conservation organization lost many birds to West Nile Virus. Birds of Prey are asking Albertans to donate to the Rescue Centre so it can continue rehabilitating raptors. Phil Horch asked if Casino funds could be put toward this project. Hugh said he would look into it. Hugh asked the members to share their thoughts, about donating to this Centre, at the next General meeting Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>. (See item 3 Exciting Sightings above).

10 Other Business:

- a. **Bill Knibbs:** Hugh reported that a donation of \$100. has been made to St. John's Presbyterian Church, Medicine Hat, in memory of long time GN member Bill Knibbs. See the January Sagebrush Chronicle.
- b. **Casino Volunteering June 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>:** Dave McKenzie reported the Casino's name has changed to Copper Coulee Casino. Dave hopes to recruit the GN volunteers from last year's Casino event, but members may contact him at 403 527-1701 to volunteer for this June.
- c. **Butterfly Project:** Dave McKenzie reported that the Butterfly Project he has been working on has the same format as the Wildflower Brochure, although he may revise his design somewhat. To see Dave's eye-catching project check online at [mhbutterflies.weebly.com](http://mhbutterflies.weebly.com) Dave hopes to obtain photos from John Acorn and/or Ted Pike.
- d. **Next Board Meeting:** Tuesday February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 1:30 pm, at Anne Bernhardt's house.
- e. **Adjournment at 7:59 pm.** Attendance at GM 18
- f. **Refreshment Break**
- g. **Program Start:** 8:15 pm Attendance 25. Speaker Lorne Fitch, P. Biol.