

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS  
Minutes of General Meeting, October 23, 2018  
Police Point Park.

1. Call to Order 7:00 pm with Hugh Armstrong presiding and Betty Rainville, Secretary
2. Review and Adoption of General Meeting from September 25, 2018. **CARRIED.**
3. Exciting Sightings: Dwayne Myers recently saw a moose and calf off the Connaught Golf Course.  
While driving to Winnipeg, Phil Horch spotted over 200,000 geese near Reed Lake, close to Chaplin Saskatchewan. In Winnipeg he was fortunate to see a flock of 32 Wood Ducks at Kildonan Park, a Black Duck at Fort Whyte Nature Centre, and also a Grey-Cheeked Thrush at Fort Whyte. That was his first sighting of the Thrush this year.  
John Slater commented on the impressive full moon this evening. It was a spectacular sight over Police Point Park.  
Ian Turner was surprised at the sight of a moose in a dugout near Bassano. At first glance he mistook it for a large cow.  
Carol O'Brien reported 4 adult deer leaping up to get out of an enclosure near Meadowlands Retirement Residence.
4. Treasurer's Report and Membership: Eileen Cowtan reported a balance at present in the Chequing Account of \$4457.14, and a balance of \$16,379.23 in the GN "Club" Savings Account. The Casino Account balance stands at \$7,813.17.  
  
Eileen noted GN membership may be renewed in January 2019. The total currently stands at 78.
5. Correspondence: Eileen reported no correspondence.
6. Priority Business:
  - a. **SEAWA's Fall Education Forum, Biodiversity in Riparian Areas:** November 2, 2018 MH College.  
Hugh noted the topics and speakers listed in the Forum Agenda look interesting. There are copies at the front desk for anyone to view at the GN General meeting tonight.  
Brooklyn Neubeker suggested GN members try to register by October 28<sup>th</sup> on the SEAWA website or by phone.  
Ian and Angela Turner said they will attend and set up a GN table. Thank you Ian and Angela. (see item #8h below).
  - b. **Budgets to Paul:** Hugh asked that all Committee Chairs get Budgets to Paul Thibault by November 15.
  - c. **Committee Bills:** Hugh asked that all Committees get outstanding bills to Eileen before the end of the year or even before the end of November. Thank you.
7. Interpretive Program Report: Corlaine Gardner reported that the Nature Centre renovations are almost finished. She encouraged members to go and see the newly rebuilt Prairie View Point. (See item #8b3 below)  
Corlaine noted there are several changes in staff:
  - Valerie Martins has retired and the date of a retirement party will be announced.
  - The four part time staff hired are Justine, Kat, Maureen and Taylor. (Corlaine introduced Kat at tonight's meeting.)Justine and Kat will be holding a drop-in bird feeding program at the Nature Centre on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.  
Maureen is organizing a Neighbourhood Park Celebration in Central Park November 23<sup>rd</sup> from 6-8 pm. Volunteers are needed.  
Corlaine reminded members that the Hat Club Art Show is still available for viewing at the Nature Centre. The Centre is open for weekends for now.  
December 2<sup>nd</sup> from 1 to 4 pm is the Annual Lions Club Hayride, and December 16<sup>th</sup> is the Christmas Bird Count and GN Potluck (see item # 9a below). Contact Marty at the Nature Centre to sign up for the Count.
8. Committee Reports:
  - a. **Issues Committee:** John Slater gave a verbal report and emailed a written report.
    1. Committee is hoping to meet soon with the City Parks Dept to discuss the report of the survey that we have conducted along the south side of the river from Trans Canada Bridge to the MH Public Library to record the beaver activity & lodges as well as invasive weeds. The committee and volunteers were busy this year with tree wrapping: along River Road below the City Hall; in Kiwanis River Park and Police Point Park; and along NW Riverside Trail. Total 204 trees wrapped. Also, invasive Baby's Breath plants were dug in Police Point Park and along NECH Trail and SE Hill Trail. Total 428 plants dug.
    2. Great Cdn Shoreline Cleanup of Ranchlands Environmental Reserves and River Shoreline was conducted on Saturday October 6<sup>th</sup>. Nine volunteers came out to collect about 15 bags full of trash and wooden pieces and plastic stuff. Also the GPS locations and pictures were recorded of eight very large items such as a frig, freezer, BBQ, old boat trailer, hide-abed, tires and barrels; and smaller items such as a sink, chair, metal nesting barrels and other trash. (John left photos of items found for members to view at tonight's General Meeting.)  
The committee would like to meet with the City to present this information as well as discuss future plans and protection of the environmental reserve.

3. Committee will be meeting in the next few weeks to discuss issues and events of interest as well as set next year's budget.
  - b. **MHIP Operations Committee:** John presented a verbal report and emailed a written report.
    1. Next committee meeting now scheduled for Monday November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 pm at the Nature Centre. Main business will be **1.** Chief Interpreter's reports of current projects, events schedule, grants and budget for 2019; **2.** Review current Financial reports for 2018; discuss Internet and Computer equipment requirements for the Nature Centre; **3.** Review and update the Chief Interpreter's Job Description; and **4.** Discuss & establish Workplace Substance Use Policy for Staff and Volunteers. GN members are invited to attend the meeting to ask questions and/or submit their views on any of the topics.
    2. Renovation of Nature Centre progressing with completion expected soon.
    3. Construction of View Point has commenced with completion expected soon. (see item #7. IP Report above)
    4. This year, many of the MHIP public activities were conducted off site; and programs were well attended.
    5. The last event was Alberta Cultural Days on Sunday September 30<sup>th</sup>. Many thanks to the Metis Society for the Bannock Kitchen Party and Dancing with fiddle music which was enjoyed by the public. Also to the Hat Art Club for the excellent display "A Closer Look at Nature". As always, many volunteers came to help to make this another successful event.
  - c. **Field Trip Committee:** John presented a verbal report and emailed a written report.
    1. 24 Neighbourhood Walks were held so far this year. Generally well attended and enjoyed by the participants.
    2. Come out and enjoy the next Neighbourhood Walk: tomorrow Wednesday Oct 24<sup>th</sup>, will walk around the NECH Storm Water Pond to view the changes and proposed viewing platforms. Meet at the Northland Liquor Store, south side gravel parking lot at 10:30 am. And if time permits, we will walk along the trail to the other pond.
    3. 6 Birding Field Trips were conducted out of town. Many thanks to Milt and Phil for leading these events which were enjoyed by the participants, and especially to Ben Verner for the last trip on Saturday Oct 13<sup>th</sup> to see the Fall Migration at Shuler/Many Island Lakes Trail #8.
    4. More Neighbourhood Walks and Birding Field Trips may occur depending on the weather so please check the announcements in the Chronicle.
  - d. **Indoor Program Speakers:** Linda Fisher reported that Randy Taves and Scott Richter will be speaking tonight. Jasveen Brar will be speaking on Environmental Literacy and Passion at the November General Meeting. There will be no General Meeting in December because of the Bird Count and pot luck supper on December 16<sup>th</sup>. Lorne Fitch will be speaking in January 2019. Entomologist David Larson from Maple Creek will be speaking in February on the demise of the wild rose due to wood-boring beetles.
  - e. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh noted this is a fairly quiet time for fund raising. He said there may be a need to fund raise for new chairs and audio visual equipment at the Nature Centre. We are waiting to hear from Parks.
  - f. **Birding Trails Project:** Phil Horch reported that the Birding Trail Guide Booklets are being distributed to more distant locations like North Battleford, Moose Jaw, Regina, and several distribution sites in Winnipeg. Rob Gardner requested that GN Members help distribute these Guides to distant places on their travels. Please contact Phil or Rob to pick up the Guides.
  - g. **Bird Tales Update:** Hugh reported for the group that 1 program is still running at one of the senior retirement residences. After next week, the Bird Tales group hopes to start at a different facility.
  - h. **Communications Committee:** Angela reported that she and Ian would supervise a GN display table at the SEAWA Forum on November 2 (see item #6a above).
  - i. **Nature Alberta:** Ian and Angela said there is nothing to report.
9. New Business:
- a. **Christmas Bird Count and GN Pot Luck:** Potluck starts at 5:30 pm (See item #7 IP Report above)
10. a. **New Board Members needed:** Hugh invited members to attend a Board meeting to see what takes place.
- b. **Feedback on Vital Conversations** hosted by Community Foundation of South Eastern Alberta: on Oct.4<sup>th</sup>. Phil and Annalora Horch attended for GN. Phil said about 150 people were present including those from the Community, City Councillors, and City Employees. Many different organizations were represented. Phil noted the discussion group probably most relevant to GN was "Parks and Recreation in the City" under the Creative and Active Living "Pillar".
  - c. **Next Board Meeting:** Tuesday November 6, 2018 at Ian & Angela's House.
  - d. **Adjournment** :7:30 pm. Attendance at GM is 31
  - e. **Refreshment Break**
  - f. **Program Start** 8 pm. Attendance 31. Speakers are Randy Taves, Manager of Parks, and Scott Richter, Superintendent of Parks Operations.

