

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
Minutes of Board Meeting, February 7, 2017
Host- Ian and Angela Turner.

Present: Hugh Armstrong (chair), Betty Rainville (secretary), Eileen Cowtan, Ian and Angela Turner, Anne Bernhardt. Guest, John Slater.

Absent: Dave McKenzie, Gary Martin

1. Call to Order: 6:42 pm.
2. Review and Adoption of GN Board Minutes from January 3, 2017. A correction was made regarding 5.a. Treasurer's Report. The correction states that "**Hugh** will send a thank you letter to Cenovus..." rather than "**Eileen** will send...". Corrected Minutes were then Accepted. Motion CARRIED.
3. Additions to Agenda:
 - a. **SEAWA Forum-Rural Stewardship Forum, March 10:** Register by March 1 at 8:00 am at Medicine Hat Lodge. Start time is 9:00 am and ends at 3:00 pm. Lunch is provided, and parking and registration are free. <https://seawa.eventbrite.ca/>
 - b. **MH Accommodation Association meetings:** February 9 is the first meeting with this Association, then on March 9 at a second meeting, Rob Gardner, and Hugh Armstrong will give a presentation on the Birding Trails Guide. They will take Birding Trail rack cards that will be distributed to hotels, tourism offices, tour bus operators etc., to promote the Trail Guide.
 - c. **Projects and Partnerships 2017 meeting with Doug Knowles:** John, Hugh, and Corlaine Gardner will meet with Doug on February 15 to discuss potential projects and partnerships for 2017 between GN and the City of Medicine Hat Parks Dept.
 - d. **Echo Dale Interpretive Program and Services Request for Proposal from Scott Richter:** Parks and Recreation Department is seeking an organization to operate the Interpretive Program at the Echo Dale Farm from May to mid September. Rob Gardner submitted a proposal to the Board that he would like to operate such a program under the GN umbrella. After lengthy discussion, the Board moved; Approval in Principle of Echo Dale Interpretive Program and Services Request for Proposal presented by Rob Gardner, providing it is a one year contract, and presented for approval by the GN membership at the next GN General Meeting. CARRIED. 5 votes in favor, and 1 vote against the motion.
4. Action Items:
 - a. **World Water Display on March 22** to co-ordinate with the Interpretive Program: John suggested 3 stand-alone displays may be available for display at the MH Public Library; 1. The Riparian Health Assessment for which Marty Drut has information; 2. A map showing the Wetlands; and 3. Rob's display about Beavers.
SEAWA will have displays at Medalta Market on Thursday, March 16, which will move to the Public Library the next morning until Saturday March 25, when they will be on display at the MH College. Four speakers, including Rob Gardner, have been asked to do a ten minute presentation Saturday at the MH College.
On March 21 there will be a water film and discussion at the Public Library followed by other special events on March 22.
 - b. **GN Issues sub-committee to formulate input to City Environmental Policy:** Marty, Tina Regehr, and John have held one meeting already. Tina is to go through the City Municipal Development Plan in point form to highlight the positive features of the plan and what changes are suggested. The sub-committee will start to list environmentally sensitive areas, and environmentally or culturally significant areas. They will meet again in one month before meeting with the city.
 - c. **GN AGM, March 28:** The call for Nominations from the Board and Executive has to be in this month's Chronicle. Hugh will contact Paul Thibault then send information to Milt Spitzer for publication in the Chronicle.
5. Reports:
 - a. **Treasurer's Report:** Eileen reported the Casino Account is still \$9,897.00, with the next Casino to be held on September 28 and 29, 2017. This date was changed from a previous March 2018 schedule.
The GN Club balance is \$25,799.54. Hugh recommended sending a thank you card to the local Horticultural Society.
 - b. **Membership:** Eileen reported the membership numbers are in a state of flux at this time, with membership renewals coming in.
 - c. **Correspondence:** Eileen said there was no correspondence to report.
 - d. **MHIP Operations Committee Report:** John reported Corlaine met with Scott Richter and Doug Knowles. Public parking for the February 20 Family Day event will be structured, with Ian Turner and Hugh in charge of parking, and positioned at the top of the hill entrance to Police Point Park. Visitors will be encouraged to park on the outbound side of the road, and to walk on the trail rather than the road.
During Easter activities, visitors may possibly be able to use a shuttle to the Nature Centre. The Fire Department may require a member of the Department to be available every day of the Easter festivities because of fire regulations.
The new contract between GN and the City of Medicine Hat will be ready this summer.
 - e. **Issues Committee Report:** 1. John reported that he and Rob Gardner, Dwayne Myers and Martha Munz Gue met today for

- four hours to work on the Wildflower brochure. He showed the Board an excellent draft of this brochure, based on an existing Edmonton brochure. The group hopes to have the pamphlet completed before the upcoming AGM in March.
- f. **Indoor Committee:** Sara McPike from the Maya Evenden Research lab at the University of Alberta, will be speaking on Parasitoid Wasps as Bio-control Agents, at the February 28 GN General meeting.
 - g. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh reported a \$150,000.00 application for a Co-op Community funding grants was submitted. Notice of reply should be given in April 2017. Any funds from this application would go toward MHIP renovations. \$270,000.00 has already been received from the Medicine Hat Accommodation Association, and \$50,000.00 has been received from the Federal Accessibility Grant Program. A \$262,000.00 funding request to CFEP, Community Facility Enhancement Program, was submitted, and results should be back by the end of March 2017.
 - h. **Field Trip Updates:** John reported the Field Trip draft is ready for submission in the February issue of the Sagebrush Chronicle. He cautioned that some trips, such as the trip to Waterton on June 15-20, require GN members to book in advance. Registration is in April. The field trip to Grasslands National Park takes place around July 15, 2017. Each month, Milt will give more details of the trip in the Chronicle and Tina will post event details on Facebook. Motion to approve the draft list of Field Trips. CARRIED.
 - i. **Communications Committee:** Angela Turner reported she has been placing advertising for the GN General Meeting monthly speakers. CHAT TV said their service is mainly for weekend community events. The Board suggested a couple of minor changes after seeing the draft of the portable banner. Angela will take these suggestions to Boylan's Imaging for revision.
 - j. **Birding Trails Update:** Hugh said the rack card is finished. Samples will be available at the Nature Centre, and others will go to the Tourism Centre and to the Medicine Hat Accommodation Association. The budget for the project is approximately \$5,000.00 of which part may come from Canadian Badlands Association support.
 - k. **Bird Tales Update:** Hugh reported on behalf of Dee Armstrong and Paul Thibault that the project is going well. There was a recent article in the Medicine Hat News showing the Medicine Hat Carving Club donating wooden "comfort birds" to the residents at Meadow Ridge Seniors. The Bird Tales program at Masterpiece Retirement may be operational again by June.
6. Other Business:
- a. **Web Cam Project Update:** Hugh reported the project has a new camera to replace the previous borrowed camera. The robotics which Scott Hoyland will install, will allow more movement to the camera. Hugh noted the Eagles have definitely taken over the Blue Heron nesting site. Their activity in the spring will be observed.
 - b. **GN attendance at the Canadian Badlands Association AGM in Brooks March 15-17:** Hugh and Rob will present and put up a display. On March 17, Ian and Angela will look after the display, and Anne and Eileen will volunteer on another day. Gary and Janet Martin also have volunteered
 - c. **Potential Draft of MOU between Praxis and SEAWA:** GN and SEAWA will use a template of the Mutual of Understanding drawn up by Cathy Linowski formalizing a partnership with SEAWA. GN may include PRAXIS in a tri-lateral MOU.
 - d. **BioBlitz 150:** John reported Dave McKenzie will focus on Butterflies, Dragonflies, Bees, etc and will set a goal for one walk each month. The results will likely be reported to BioBlitz.
 - e. **Renewal of GN Insurance:** Renewal completed Feb 7th. John will check on GN insurance for the Easter festivities at the Nature Centre, as well as if GN is involved in the Interpretive Program proposal at Echo Dale Farm.
 - f. **FCSS Grant and Children's Book:** Joanne Marion conveyed the thanks of the Children's Guide Interest Group to the GN Board for being helpful with the FCSS Grant. She noted that the group could not have done it without GN's support.
 - g. **Civic Recognition Award:** The Board held a discussion regarding the call for nominations, by the City of Medicine Hat, for the Environmental Award.
 - h. **Next Board Meeting** March 7, 6:30 pm at Anne Bernhardt's home.
 - i. **Meeting Adjourned** at 8:50 pm. Refreshments served.