

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS  
Minutes of Board Meeting June 4, 2019  
Hosted by Hugh Armstrong

Present: Hugh Armstrong (Chair), Betty Rainville (Secretary), Phil Horch, Eileen Cowtan, Angela Turner, Ian Turner, Linda Fisher.  
Absent: Anne Bernhardt

1. Call to Order: 6:30 pm
2. Review and Adoption of Board Minutes from May 7, 2019. **CARRIED.**
3. Additions to Agenda:
  - a. **Follow-up to May 4<sup>th</sup> Workshop:** Hugh reported that Gerry Ehlert will have an Invasive Species meeting with Councillor Chris Samraj. This Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, there is a General Meeting with Parks and Recreation, SEAWA, the College and others, to decide on the next steps after the Workshop held in May.  
Thursday June 13<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 3:00 pm Hugh will attend a 2 hour meeting with Parks and Recreation. Everyone is welcome to attend.
  - b. **SEAWA leafy spurge dig-out days** June 4 and 5<sup>th</sup> along Seven Person's Creek: Hugh asked if anyone was available to volunteer. Contact [Brooklyn.Neubeker@seawa.ca](mailto:Brooklyn.Neubeker@seawa.ca) for more information.
4. Action Items:
  - a. **Casino set up** for June 6 and 7<sup>th</sup> is arranged. Thanks Dave.
  - b. **Volunteers for GN table:** The GN table date at the Farmer's Market is changed to August 24. Ian and Angela have volunteered to supervise it.
  - c. **Volunteers for coffee set up** for September General Meeting: Hugh reported that Corlaine may provide 2 or 3 keys for volunteers. In the May Chronicle, Corlaine suggested a small group of people form a committee to take turns opening the Nature Centre and making coffee before General Meetings. Call Corlaine at 403 529-6225.
  - d. **Grand Reopening of the Nature Centre:** The date is June 21 but a time hasn't been set yet. Hugh reported Mayor Clugston will be attending.
  - e. **Audio Visual Training:** Ian inquired about setting up training for the new Audio Visual equipment that will be used at General Meetings).
5. Reports:
  - a. **Treasurer's Report:** Eileen reported the T3010 Registered Charity Information Return was completed. She reported the GN "Club" Savings Account stands at \$16,454.16 as of May 31, 2019 and the Chequing Account balance is \$3,883.00 on May 31. Common shares are \$1.30 bringing Total Current Assets to \$20,338.46. Other assets consist of a Prepaid Insurance Expense of \$729.11. This brings the Total Assets to \$21,067.57. The Casino Account balance is \$3149.23 with \$2500. from Kiwanis (\$1500. for Family Day and \$1000. for School Programs).
  - b. **Membership:** Eileen reported some members had not renewed while new members have signed up. The Sagebrush Chronicle will end in June for those members who have not renewed.
  - c. **Correspondence:** Eileen brought a copy of the Wildrose Advocate that she received by mail.
  - d. **Operations Committee/MHIP Report:** Hugh reported that the new chairs that were ordered arrived today from the U.S. The tracking cart for the chairs has not arrived yet.  
Hugh noted that 60 school children were at the Nature Centre today. The new summer staff does a very good job of carrying out their related tasks, he said.
  - e. **Issues Committee:** Martha submitted the following report:  
**Issues that are ongoing:**  
**Invasive Species.** Special interest of Gerry Ehlert.
    1. A follow-up of the Invasive Species Workshop has been planned for June 7 at the College. Invasive Species ID is a part of the Tuesday morning Wildflower/Neighborhood Walks.
    2. Do the board members have suggestions for how to address the invasive species issue?  
**\*(Note: The Board suggested that Gerry, Marty and Rob could offer excellent suggestions on this topic).**
    3. **Leafy Spurge:**
      - a) SEAWA removes leafy spurge from the riparian areas where they are doing restoration. This is the last year for the three year riparian restoration grant.
      - b) It would be good if GN could help find volunteers to help with heavy spurge removal. Perhaps GN could promote a leafy spurge day and see how many volunteers we could muster on a particular day?  
i.e. Could GN put together a team for a GN day with SEAWA on a leafy spurge day?
      - c) If board members know of other groups/teams that could be called upon to help please inform Marilou or Martha.
      - d) Bugs. How has the release of bugs worked in Police Point Park?

- e) Goats. A goat herd owner attended the Invasive Species Workshop. He said goats can be trained to eat leafy spurge exclusively. Calgary, Red Deer, and Edmonton have all engaged his goats to deal with invasive species. He has 600 goats on his goat ranch near Monarch. He rents them out in groups of 20.

**\*(Note: Hugh reported he will be meeting with the City on June 13<sup>th</sup> to bring up topics 3. b, c, d, & e).**

#### **4. Baby's Breath**

- a) City sprays for baby's breath except on environmental reserves and riparian areas.
- b) City has contacted a firm to deal with baby's breath on Ranchlands Environmental Reserve.
- c) GN has removed truckloads of baby's breath from Ranchlands and hauled it to landfill.
- d) Goats can be trained to eat baby's breath.
- e) There is a heavy infestation of baby's breath in the coulee between the Ranchlands Environmental reserve and the river. Big seed load there.

#### **5. Downy Brome**

- a) in back lanes everywhere
- b) SEAWA staff removed downy brome from lane behind SEAWA office.
- c) One farmer near river had to plow under his sprouted winter wheat crop because it was infested with downy brome.
- d) Could GN launch a public challenge for property owners and renters to remove downy brome from their property and lanes.
- e) Energy department needs to address the invasive species problem under their power lines.

#### **6. Crested Wheat**

- a) taking over areas of natural prairie in coulees in NECH, NWCH, Ross Creek Environmental Reserve (east of east glen), and around teepee.
- b) No longer used in seed mixes for restoration beside trails (hopefully). Formerly used extensively for restoration beside roads and paths.
- c) Big seed load if it is not grazed or mowed.
- d) Goats?

#### **7. Russian Olive**

- a) Birds love the fruit and spread the seed through their flight paths.
- b) Original landscaping of MHC included Russian olive. These have been removed, but their progeny are around the college pond and Connaught pond, and are found at some of the storm water ponds. Heavy infestation of Russian olive was seen on birding trips to areas near Brooks. The Brooks Agricultural Station may have been the source for the RO trees for the MHC in early 1970s.
- c) SEAWA staff created an information sheet about Locally Invasive Russian Olive and distributed the sheet to all suppliers of horticultural trees. It seems they have stopped the orders for that tree. Perhaps there should be a visit to the Brooks Agriculture Diversification Station?

#### **8. Municipal Development Plan**

- a) Go to mymh.city to keep up with developments of new MDP and possibly for opportunities for input.
- b) Watch for open house for public input.

#### **9. Environmental Advisement to Municipalities**

- a) Decades ago when Ted Grimm was mayor, GN presented to the mayor and council the need for an environmental advisory committee that had the ear of all departments of the city. Such a committee was formed and reported directly to the mayor and council. Mayors and councils changed as did GN executives. Memory was lost as to why we had such an advisory council outside a particular department. So the Environmental Advisory Council was dropped and environmental concerns were supposed to be included in the existing Parks and Recreation Advisory Council. Thus was formed the Urban Environment and Recreation Advisory Board (UERAB). **\*(Hugh noted this will be discussed by the City).**
- b) Environment is affected by all departments, not just Parks and Recreation.
- c) Environment includes air, water, land, waste, energy, transportation. It is not possible for Parks and Recreation to handle all the issues in all those spheres.
- d) Most of the time at UREB meeting is consumed by recreation topics. Little time to discuss environmental concerns.
- e) SEAWA has sent a letter to the Mayor asking that the environmental advising group be set up with representation from all city departments.
- f) City Parks Department has invited GN president, IP chief interpreter, and one or two others to meet with their managers perhaps once a month to discuss environmental concerns.
- g) I don't know if the other municipalities have environmental advisory groups.

- h) Hat Smart does not have an advisory committee.
- 10. **Pollinators** Special Interest of Dave McKenzie
  - a) Pollinator Gardens. PPP garden; Connaught Golf Course; wildflowers and blooming shrubs everywhere. Best to preserve what natural pollinators we have in coulees and parks and prairies. Fruit trees in peoples yards are a-buzz. **(Note: Hugh Armstrong reported at the June 4 Board Meeting, that Keziah Lesko-Gosselin visited with Hugh and Corlaine at PPP to discuss a Pollinator Garden there. It is too late in the year to start one, but the City wants to install water lines for it, in the future, with the help of GN volunteers).**
  - b) Pesticides. Check websites for progress on limiting "neonics": Friends of the Earth, David Suzuki Foundation, Canadian Wildlife Federation, Nature Alberta, etc. etc.
  - c) Honey bees vs indigenous bees. Ask Dave McKenzie about the difference.
  - d) GN Interest in butterflies and bees has increased now that we have a website of local butterflies and Dave McKenzie comes on many of the Tuesday morning walks.

#### 11. **Single Use Plastics**

- a) Grade fours in Riverside active on this issue.
- b) There are no plastics on your tray at the A&W.

#### 12. **Bottled Water**

- a) See literature of Council of Canadians and of the Polaris Institute.
- b) Good to see water fountains back again at the college and that these have an additional feature that encourages folks to refill their own water bottle.
- c) City has coolers in 5 (?) locations, including one in City Hall. These water coolers look like a vending machine but they are not. You can fill your water bottle at these stations.

#### **End of Issues Committee Report.**

- f. **Indoor Committee:** Linda Fisher reported that the September speakers, Mark and Joan Wierzba from Lethbridge, will be talking about their recent trip to Mexico to visit 3 Monarch Butterfly Sanctuaries. In October, Mecah Klem, will discuss the Sage grouse Recovery Program. The November speaker, employed by the Calgary Zoo, will be discussing Endangered Species.
- g. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh said there is nothing to report at this time.
- h. **Field trip Committee:** See May Chronicle and upcoming June Chronicle for more information on Neighbourhood Walks and out-of-town trips.
  - Walk and Wheel on the West access trail, evening event June 18 at 7:30 pm.
- i. **Communications Committee:** Angela reported that she and Tina Regehr supervised the GN table June 4<sup>th</sup> at the MHP Library for the Spring Into Action Fair in the Honor Currie Room. Eileen asked about the change of Domain name. Ian noted the both GN and MHIP have changed Domain names. The Community Foundation has sent a new logo, Eileen reported, and asked how we could acknowledge that. Ian suggested making an impact list, or perhaps a temporary link. Hugh said he will talk to Paul Thibault about this, since Paul is the liaison person with Sandfly Marketing Inc.
- j. **Birding Trails:** Phil has written an article for Nature Alberta on the Birding Trail Guidebook which has been published. He will set up a meeting with Lonna Hogan of Canadian Badlands Tourism about a second phase to collaboration between CBT and GN. This would involve signage, road pullouts, boardwalks, viewing towers and a few other amenities.
- k. **Bird Tales:** Hugh reported for Paul and Dee that the group continues to meet every Thursday. This will slow down over the summer. Two volunteers are lending a good deal of assistance with the Fairy Garden, which residents are enjoying. Sunnyview office remains quite amenable to the attached window feeders for birds.
- l. **Nature Alberta:** Ian and Angela reported that Phil has submitted an article to N.A., as explained in 5j above. Thank you Phil.
  - N.A. is recruiting volunteers for July 8 and 9<sup>th</sup> in Edmonton to help with the Nature Alberta Casino.
- m. **Web Cam Update:** Hugh noted David Gue reported an issue with speed. If that can be addressed, and speed is improved, perhaps the web cam could be set up this Fall. Paul will do a speed test of the web cam. Thanks to David Gue for his untiring help with computers and Audio Visual equipment.

#### 6 Other Business

- a. **UERAB Nomination for Dawn Dickinson:** Phil completed a profile of Dawn and submitted it to Dave McKenzie, who is a member of UERAB. Thank you Phil. Hugh will check with Dave.
- b. **GN Pot Luck:** will be held on June 25 in place of a General Meeting. A discussion was held about the possibility of inviting City Parks staff this year.
- c. **Bee City Initiative:** Dave McKenzie will bring this up at the upcoming June 13<sup>th</sup> meeting with Parks and Recreation.

- d. **SEAWA AGM:** Will be held on June 13 at Medicine Hat College. There is 1 seat open for election for a representative to ENGO (Environmental Non-Government Organizations). Hugh will ask Milt to put a request in the June Chronicle.
- e. **CAP advisory:** Ian asked the Board about giving a presentation about GN to this Methanex Committee, of which he is a member. Hugh asked if Ian could write an article in the Chronicle, possibly for September.
- f. **Filing Cabinet:** Eileen would like help with this substantial sorting project.
- g. **Next Board Meeting** 6:30 pm Tuesday September 3, 2019 at Eileen's house. Note address change.
- h. **Adjournment:** 8:20 pm
- i. **Refreshments**