

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS

Minutes of Board Meeting March 5, 2019

Hosted by Ian and Angela Turner..

Present: Hugh Armstrong (Chair), Betty Rainville (Secretary), Ian and Angela Turner, Linda Fisher, Anne Bernhardt. Eileen Cowtan was delayed but presented her report later in the meeting.

Guest: Paul Thibault

1. Call to Order: 1:45 pm.
2. Review and Adoption of Board Minutes from February 5 2019.
3. Additions to Agenda:
  - a. **Cheque presentation:** Honourable Robert Wanner, speaker of the Legislative Assembly for Alberta, will be presenting a cheque to the Interpretive Program on March 7th for over \$71,000. This will assist the IP to continue to offer their high quality events and displays.  
GN members attending should be at the Nature Centre before the start of the presentation at 1:00 pm.
  - b. **Chronicles to the Esplanade:** Eileen, Anne, and Paul have worked on preparing previous Sagebrush Chronicles for the Medicine Hat Archive Department at the Esplanade who will digitize them so they can be added to the GN website.
4. Action Items:
  - a. **Paul's presentation to the Board:** Paul researched detailed information (including estimates) on website development, web hosting servers, domain names, and remote backup, and presented a written and verbal report at this meeting.  
Moved that GN use **grasslands-naturalists.org** as a Domain Name. **CARRIED**  
For the Web Hosting Server, Paul noted he already has a SiteGround GrowBig account and can add GN as an additional website without any additional cost.  
Moved that GN use Paul's IDrive (Remote Backup) on a trial basis. **CARRIED.** Paul will give directions how to set up and use.  
To hold off on the Web Hosting Server for now. Paul will start up a "welcome page".
  - b. **Board and Committee members:** Hugh reported there have been no nominations received. He said he has approached several members about taking over the position of President. Phil Horch has indicated he may be willing to accept the role of Vice President.
  - c. **Location and start time of AGM:** Linda Fisher said she would contact MH Public Library about start time for the upcoming speaker, Rick Andrews. She will let Milt know about the change in location of the AGM for the Chronicle. Anne asked if the MH News might wish to interview Rick. Linda said she will ask the News.
  - d. **Committee Reports:** Committee Chairs are asked to have these to Paul by March 15 to be posted on the GN website at [www.natureline.info/gn](http://www.natureline.info/gn)
  - e. **IP Budget and Paul's discussion points to MHIP Operations Committee:** Moved that the Interpretive Program Budget and Grasslands Naturalists Budget be Approved as Amended. **CARRIED.**
5. Reports:
  - a. **Treasurer's Report:** Eileen Cowtan reported the GN "Club" Savings Account stands at \$16,423.10 as of February 28, 2019 and the Chequing Account balance is \$5,035.49 on February 28, 2019. Cash to Deposit is \$20.00 and Common Shares are \$1.30 bringing Total Current Assets to \$21,479.89.  
Eileen will copy expense forms for Linda Fisher for the Indoor Speaker program.
  - b. **Membership:** No number available at this time.
  - c. **Correspondence:** No correspondence.
  - d. **MHIP/Operations Committee:** No report. Bob Townsend is away.
  - e. **Issues Committee Report:** Martha Munz Gue submitted the following written report:  
Issues Committee Report  
February 26, 2019  
**Composition of Committee.** We welcome Gerry Ehlert to the committee and acknowledge John Slater's need to take leave from leadership for now. Other members include Marty Drut, Dave McKenzie, Tina Regehr and Hugh Armstrong. We welcome any GN member interested in helping Grasslands Naturalists address environmental issues.

**We tackled three issues this month:**

1. **Scope of UERAB.** The lack of time spent on environmental issues at the UERAB meeting has been a continual problem since environmental advisement was folded into the existing Parks and Rec Advisory Board. President Hugh Armstrong, Gerry Ehlert, and I met with Marilou Montemayer at the SEAWA office to discuss proposed changes to the

scope of the advisory committee to include all four parameters of the environment: air, water, land and biodiversity. Marilou shared her proposal which she also presented to the SEAWA executive the same day. Following the meeting with us from GN at noon and with the SEAWA executive in the afternoon, Marilou changed the SEAWA proposal to this (on phone).

GN may choose to write a letter in support of the SEAWA position, or we may choose to put our own priorities into a separate letter – or carry on with the situation as it is now.

2. **Incorporation Low Impact Development Standards**, and those of Livable Cities, and Smart Growth into permits granted. Permits currently attend to the minimum standards legislated by the province rather than to best practices in SG, LC, and LID. In making an appointment to see the mayor about this ongoing issue, I was asked to describe the concern. Today I was phoned by Imram Ahmed, Manager of Development Services, and Erin Onofrychuk, Superintendent of Planning Implementation. They advised that a letter be sent to the Planning Department. They advised that I send the letter ASAP as a private citizen, and then share that letter with GN who may wish to back it up – or not. The situation is timely because if it gets written into the MDP and subsequently into municipal legislation, and planning guidelines, then those are the standards by which permits will be approved. Until then, we continue on with the minimum required by Provincial Legislation.

3. **Invasive Species.** Gerry Ehler and Marty Drut have plans for an Invasive Species Workshop to be held May 4, 2019. Speakers are lined up and grants have been applied for. Volunteers will be needed on the day of the Workshop to handle logistics.

#### Announcements of Three Events coming up:

1. **Water Week at the Public Library.** March 17 to 22, 2019, GN will have a display table. The Paddling Film Festival will be on the Tuesday. The film Anthropocene will be shown Friday afternoon. This year SEAWA is taking the lead on organizing the water week events at the library.
2. **SEAWA Spring Forum. Friday, April 5th.** 8 am to 2:30 ish. The topic is "Water management", and we have people talking about everything from the Water Act to future water supply forecasts, etc. it will take place at the Medicine Hat Cultural Centre room CC169. GN is invited to have an info table and to lead a walk around the college pond. This could take 15 minutes during the lunch break.
3. **Invasive Species Workshop May 4, 2019 at the Nature Centre.**
4. **EcoTrust Environmental Gathering.** While the Issues committee has the budget to send someone to this gathering we will not be attending, because it is the same date as the SEAWA Spring Forum (April 4 and 5).

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End of Issues Committee Report

- f. **Indoor Speaker Report:** Linda Fisher is looking into having GN members, Ian Wallis and Wendy Blackwell, show slides of their recent trip to India for the April 23<sup>rd</sup> General Meeting. She is currently investigating the possibility of Brian Keating, celebrated wildlife expert and Anthropology Professor, coming to speak at a GN General Meeting possibly in 2020.
- g. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh reported that two possible funding sources for the May 4<sup>th</sup> Invasive Species Workshop might be \$1,000.00 from the Native Plant Council and \$500.00 from Methanex.
- h. **Field Trip Committee:** John Slater sent a written report.
  - 1). If the snow conditions continue then enjoy cross-country skiing in Police Point Park as well as Elkwater.
  - 2) The next Field Trip event is the Birding Trip to Manyberries on Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup> led by Ben Verner.
  - 3) Neighbourhood walks, due to inclement weather and snow pack, are not likely to start until April.
- i. **Communications Committee Report:** Angela Turner reported that she will be placing advertising for the upcoming AGM as well as for the Indoor Speaker, who will present two documentaries. The Communication Budget has been amended by removing the cost of a new banner, and allowing for enough funds for a Domain Name and for Remote Backups.
- j. **Birding Trails:** Hugh reported that he is storing a number of Birding Trail Guide Books in his garage. Linda Fisher will pick some up from Hugh, and will let Rob Gardner know the amount.
- k. **Bird Tales Update:** Paul reported that the B.T. group spoke to a number of University of Lethbridge students who have developed protocol for "fairy gardens" for people with Dementia. The Bird Tales group want to purchase terrariums for residents at Sunnyview- South Country Village to work on and display in the recreation room. This project will begin in April, starting with two large terrariums.

- l. **Nature Alberta:** Ian and Angela reported the next NA meeting will be held by teleconference. Anne suggested submitting an article on the Birding Trails Guide to Nature Alberta Magazine. Angela will ask Phil Horch about this.
  - m. **Web Cam Update:** Paul reported that a working internet connection or a transportable system is needed. Hugh will contact Corlaine about the possibility of relocating the web cam to a GN member's house.
- 6 Other Business:
- a. The Board Moved that the **Contracts and Agreement Policy** be adopted as amended. **CARRIED**
  - b. **UERAB discussions:** (see Issues Committee report above 5.e.1) After discussion, it was MOVED that SEAWA pass its final letter/proposal on to the Board who will review it, and may write a letter of support. **CARRIED**
  - c. **World Water Day/Week:** Angela will speak to Marty Drut about using the IP Riparian Health Assessment display at the GN table at the Public Library, along with GN rack cards and advertising for the upcoming AGM.
  - d. **Litter Blitz Easter Saturday date change:** Angela will contact Keziah Lesko- Gosselin, from Parks, to confirm April 13<sup>th</sup> as GN's Litter Blitz weekend for cleaning up Ranchlands and the Off- Leash Trail at PP Park, and to pick up gloves and bags. Hugh will contact the City on where to pick up the resulting trash bags. This takes place one week earlier than the scheduled City Litter Blitz to avoid volunteer conflict with the Nature Centre's Easter celebrations. Angela and Ian will put a Litter Blitz sign on mail boxes in the area, and will look for suitable locations needing cleanup in Ranchlands. Milt will need to know the Litter Blitz date to post in the Chronicle.
  - e. **Lifetime Membership Nominations:** There will be no Lifetime Membership awards at the upcoming AGM in March.
  - f. **Next Board Meeting:** 6:30 pm Tuesday, April 2 at Hugh and Dee's house.
  - g. **Adjournment:** 3:55 pm
  - h. **Refreshments**