

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
Minutes of Board Meeting, November 7, 2017
Host-Ian & Angela Turner

Present: Hugh Armstrong (Chair), Betty Rainville (Secretary), Eileen Cowtan, Anne Bernhardt, Ian & Angela Turner
Absent: Dave McKenzie

1. Call to Order: 6:37 pm
2. Review of Board Minutes from October 3, 2017. Changed spelling in 3.f. from Donna McLean to Donna MacLean. The Casino Advisor expense and Casino revenue as written in the Board Minutes, were explained and clarified by Hugh and Eileen (Treasurer). Board Minutes from October 3 were then approved. **CARRIED.**
3. Additions to Agenda:
 - a. Shaping Future Conversations. Tuesday Nov.28 9 am-3 pm Clarion Hotel. Free. The AER (Alberta Energy Regulator) is meeting with Albertans and Indigenous communities...to gather input...on potential new participant involvement requirements. Notice to be put in the upcoming Sagebrush Chronicle.
 - b. Christmas Hayride Sunday December 3, 1 pm-4 pm. (Lions Club) at Police Point Park. 6 volunteers needed from 12- 4 pm.
 - c. Discovering Didymo Distribution-Sampling Kits from Trout Unlimited regarding the Didymo Alga. Corlaine Gardner noted our river tends to be too warm for trout, so the IP will not become involved with this project at present.
 - d. Location for General Meetings in the new year-Renovations are scheduled to start at the Police Point Park Nature Centre in January 2018. Anne Bernhardt will look into booking a room at the MH Public Library for January to May General Meetings. Thank you Anne.
 - e. EURAB (Urban Environment and Recreation Advisory Board) looking for GN submissions for park names using local people. After some discussion of excellent suggested names, the Board supported the choice of Donna MacLean as a good recommendation. Since Donna was well known as an artist, the Board suggested a member of the Hat Art Club, located in the Cultural Centre, would be qualified to write up a paragraph for nomination. Eileen Cowtan will speak to Dave McKenzie about this.
4. Action Items:
 - a. **Four positions need to be filled** by GN members- Board Member, External Organization rep for SEAWA, Indoor Speaker organizer, and Field Trip Chair. The Board discussed the urgency of having these positions filled, but need GN members to step up and indicate their willingness to participate.
 - b. **Christmas Bird Count and Potluck supper**-to be held Sunday December 17. A few Board members have volunteered to help set up before 5 pm at the Nature Centre. Thank you.
 - c. **Steward Program Check**-Hugh will forward information to Corlaine or Rob Gardner on the Kennedy Coulee Ecological Reserve and the Milk River Natural Area. Inspection Reports are part of the Steward Program.
 - d. **Beaver Symposium**- Cochrane Ranchehouse, Cochrane. December 7, 7:30 am-4:30 pm. Meals provided. \$70.00 per person. Hugh will pass this information to Milt to put in the upcoming Chronicle. Rob Gardner will be speaking on Drought Proofing and Beavers in the prairies.
5. Reports:
 - a. **Treasurer's Report:** Eileen reported the GN balance on October 31 was \$23,495.00. As of September 27 \$5,154.49 remains in the Servus Chequing Casino account. The program expense of Chronicle printing was raised at this Board meeting. Hugh will check with Corlaine regarding the number of colour copies distributed at the Nature Centre.

It was moved that Gary Martin and Dave McKenzie be removed as signing officers of the Society of Grasslands Naturalists Casino account and that Hugh Armstrong, Anne Bernhardt and Betty Rainville be added as signing officers to said account at Servus Credit Union. CARRIED.

- b. **Membership:** Eileen reported there are 83 members at present. Tabled until the next Board meeting- the suggestion of providing a copy of the Birding Trails Booklet to monthly speakers and to club members upon membership renewal. Would the cost of mailing be prohibitive?
- c. **Correspondence:** Eileen pointed out a copy of Nature Alberta as the only correspondence.
- d. **Operations Committee/ MHIP Report:** Hugh read a written report from Corlaine. He noted that Corlaine has been working at the Interpretive Centre for 11 years now. Well-done Corlaine! Four staff are now working close to full time at the Nature Centre.

Volunteer, Olivier Mognard, has updated a very informative MHIP brochure for teachers and schools. Shaw is now providing half hour programs from the Interpretive Program. They can be found on YouTube under the main title "Prairie Adventures".

Volunteers are requested to write nature articles in Connection Magazine, such as a write-up on Bird Tales, Birding Trails, or Butterflies, and other topics. In the past, Corlaine has written informative articles for this publication. She will edit her Interpretive Program report to the Operations Committee for the Sagebrush Chronicle.

John Slater provided a written summary for the **MHIP Operations Committee Report** as follows:

1. Last meeting was Monday, October 30.
 2. Waiting for the renewal of the City Contract
 3. Renovations of the Nature Centre to start in early 2018 with plans to finish by June 2018.
 4. The StoryWalk "The Mitten" started this past weekend and will continue to November 30.
 5. Christmas Hayride with the Lions Club on Sunday Dec. 3 in Police Point Park.
 6. Young Artists exhibit month of December.
 7. Christmas Bird Count and potluck supper Sunday Dec. 17.
 8. Kiwanis Family Day Feb 19 to be held at Echo Dale Park Swim Centre.
 9. Chicks and Bunnies School Programs March 19 - 30 in Kin Coulee Toboggan Kitchen Shelter.
 10. Easter Weekend Extravaganza March 30 to April 2 to be held in Echo Dale Park Swim Centre.
 11. Chief Interpreter's Report, Current Projects, Events Schedule (above) presented by Corlaine.
 12. MHIP Financial Reports presented by Eileen
 13. Proposed MHIP budget for 2018 presented by Corlaine. Budget approved on the basis of anticipated 2% increase in the city contract for 2018. Budget submitted to the GN Board.
 14. Motions to renew Chief Interpreter's and Year-Around Staff employment tabled until the City Contract is signed. The Committee is hoping to vote on these motions before the beginning of 2018.
 15. Percentages of Insurance to Liability of Public Programs, and GN Board, etc. to be obtained, because that portion of the premium can be paid from the Casino Account.
- e. **Issues Committee Report:** Written report by John Slater:
1. Last meeting was on Thursday Oct.26. Draft budget for 2018 set.
 2. Environmental Issues in the City's MDP were discussed at the joint SEAWA/City/GN meeting Oct 5th. Further meetings are to be held to discuss GN's input to the new MDP, including the environmental Significant and Sensitive sites in the City and surrounding area.
 3. SEAWA/GN Partnership and Collaboration to be decided by the GN Board.
 4. Plans for World Water Week in March 2018 being discussed with MH Public Library, SEAWA, Council of Canadians and Praxis. Suggest that the focus be on Riparian Health.
 5. Wildflower brochure nearing final revisions before printing. Much appreciation to Dwayne Myers for collating the revisions and to Judith Golub for composing the brochure with the many revisions.
 6. SEAWA Forum Nov.2nd. Tina Regehr and Marty Drut attended. Tina reported the forum was well-attended. She wrote that Robert Sissons is interested in attending another meeting to discuss the MDP with GN and SEAWA at the Nature Centre in late November or December. Tina suggests having another Issues Committee meeting in late November before meeting with the Planning Department to go over the "talking points" they will have posted on the mymh.city website by then. Marty Drut explained the details of the Riparian Area Assessment Project done by GN in 2015/2016, to Robert Sissons, and will email his Draft Report to him.
- f. **Indoor Speaker:** Kris Samraj spoke previously in November 2016 about hiking the entire Appalachian Trail. He will be speaking again at the November 28 General Meeting about another of his memorable trips.
- g. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh reported he has applied for a grant of \$1,200.00 from the MH Realtors' Charitable Foundation (MHRCF). Results should be back by mid-December 2017.
The \$1,000.00 grant expected from Walmart will not be available for GN at this time.
- h. **Communications Committee:** Angela Turner announced their Committee may consider placing an ad for the upcoming AGM in March.
Angela will ask Paul Thibault if there are any advantages to GN having their own website.
- i. **Birding Trails Project Update:** Hugh reported that he has spoken to Lonna Hogan recently of Canadian Badlands Tourism. CBT will be applying for co-operative funding once GN gets the printing invoices.
- j. **Bird Tales Update:** There has been an application to the Medicine Hat Realtors' Charitable Foundation (MHRCF) for a grant of \$1,200.00. Hugh reported the Committee will meet with the MHRCF this coming week.
- k. **Nature Alberta:** Angela Turner reported that she and Ian attended the latest Nature Alberta meeting via teleconference on Saturday from 9 am to 3 pm. The new Patron chosen for a 5 year term is John Acorn.

NA has an awards program of 5 various categories. GN member Dennis Baresco was awarded the Loran Goulden Memorial Award in 2005, and also received the Honorary Life Member award in 2015.

Nature Alberta is celebrating their 50th anniversary in 2020. Learn more about two upcoming pelagic trips at naturealberta.ca

- I. **Webcam Update:** Hugh reported the webcam is up and running, and thanks to Paul Thibault the device is preprogrammed. A Harris's Sparrow has been spotted feeding there, as well as Goldfinches.

6. Other Business:
 - a. **SEAWA:** Several GN members attended the SEAWA Public Education Forum on November 2. Angela and Eileen noted the Forum was well organized, with a good selection of topics. They both agreed that the Guest Speaker, Norine Ambrose from Cows and Fish, was an excellent speaker.
 - b. **Canadian Badlands Tourism:** CBT will be holding their AGM in Medicine Hat in March 2018. They are planning the official release of the Birding Trails booklet. They are interested in a couple of programs here, perhaps a tour of Police Point Park and the Interpretive Centre? Hugh will speak to Corlaine about this.
 - c. **MHIP volunteer list:** In the November Volunteer Newsletter, Lisa Bey has created 3 separate mailing lists so that volunteers may choose only to be contacted at short notice, to just receive the newsletter of events, or not to be contacted at all. This is an excellent way to cut down on email requests and still keep volunteers informed.
 - d. **Next Board Meeting:** Tuesday, December 5 at Hugh and Dee's house. 15 Partridge St.NE
(Time to be decided)
 - e. **Meeting Adjourned** at 8:56 pm