

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
Minutes of Board Meeting- October 4, 2016
Hosts- Ian and Angela Turner.

Present: Hugh Armstrong (Chair), Betty Rainville (Secretary), Eileen Cowtan, Ian and Angela Turner, John Slater (guest).
Absent: Dave McKenzie, Gary Martin, Anne Bernhardt

1. Call to order: 6:36 pm
2. Review of GN Board Minutes from September 6, 2016 with two points brought up:
 - a. Birds of a Feather for item 3(a) changed to "A joint presentation...".
 - b. Also, in 3(a), "The display table will not need anyone to be present" was removed from the minutes. Minutes were then adopted. Motion CARRIED.
3. Additions to Agenda:
 - a. **To make a motion** that the Board approve and send the 2 letters from GN to SARA regarding SAR Draft Policies and Recovery Planning 2016-2017. See 5(e) below.
 - b. **A highly successful visit** took place when the Honourable Ricardo Miranda, Alberta Minister of Tourism and Culture, attended Alberta Culture Days Fall Festival at the Nature Centre on Sunday, October 2.
 - c. **SEAWA – Urban Sustainability Forum** organized by SEAWA, to be held November 4. Anne and Eileen may be attending this free forum to be held November 4 at the Medicine Hat College. Registration is due by October 26 at seawa.eventbrite.ca. Announcement in the Chronicle.
 - d. **Request for Assessment** of Archeological Features-Ranchlands Phase 2F&G. See 5(e) below.
 - e. **UERAB-** The City's Urban Environment and Recreation Advisory Board has 3 volunteer positions open. Deadline for applications is November 4 at 4:30 pm. GN members are encouraged to apply for the sake of advising on environmental issues.
 - d. **Casino funds**
4. Action Items:
 - a. **Lifetime Membership-** Motion to receive Phil Horch as a Lifetime Member of Grasslands Naturalists. CARRIED. Award certificate to be presented to Phil by Milt Spitzer at the next GN General Meeting, October 25.
 - b. **FCSS Association of Alberta-** Family and Community Support Services advocate preventive social services for Albertans. Moved that the Board decline the invitation from FCSS to become an Associate member. CARRIED.
 - c. **N.A. representative-** GN members Ian Wallis and Wendy Blackwell have volunteered to attend the Nature Alberta AGM to be held October 29, in Edmonton at the offices of the Land Stewardship Centre, 17503 – 45 Avenue. Gary is not able to attend at that time and requested a volunteer to go in his place. Thank you Ian and Wendy.
5. Reports:
 - a. **Treasurer's Report:** Eileen reported a balance for September 30, 2016 of \$24,332.80. Moved that the Treasurer's report be accepted. CARRIED.
 - b. **Membership:** Eileen reported there are 83 total paid memberships at this time. Hugh confirmed with Eileen that this number is made up of both Family as well as Individual memberships.
 - c. **Correspondence:** Eileen noted that she had received a magazine from Alberta Conservation Association. Moved that membership and correspondence reports be accepted. CARRIED.
 - d. **MHIP Operations Committee:** John reported that the next Operations Committee meeting would be held October 17. As part of the business, a budget will be determined and sent to Paul Thibault, chair of GN Budget Committee, before Nov 14.
 - Our Feathered Friends display at the Esplanade was well received at the opening on September 30. Several GN members displayed their bird photographs there, as well as at the Photographers of a Feather display at the Nature Centre, Sunday, October 2, featuring the Fall Festival of Alberta Culture Days at Police Point Park. See Note 3(b).
 - The Birding: Watching, Carving, Painting presentation October 3 at the MH Public Library attracted about 30 people. Hugh said two carvers generously volunteered to make small, hand-held birds by the New Year for the residents impacted by Dementia/Alzheimer at both Masterpiece and Meadow Ridge. Dee will verify the number required.
 - John mentioned a program "I Spy a Beaver" on Saturday, October 15 at 5:45 pm., Participants meet at the Nature Centre. Marty will likely lead the walk and would welcome volunteers.
 - In addition, John said Lisa is conducting a Tipi Birthday Party on Saturday, October 15 at the Nature Centre. 1 or 2 volunteers are needed that day from about 11:30 am to 4:30 pm. to help with set up and other jobs.
 - e. **Issues Committee:** Ian moved that the Board approve and send the two letters from GN to SARA (Species at Risk Act)

concerning SAR Draft Policies and Recovery Planning 2016-2017. CARRIED.

-John drafted a Request for assessment of Ranchlands 2F&G. The draft proposal with deliverables was discussed. Approximately \$800 of GN funds is remaining that could be put toward the cost of the assessment. Possibly additional funding if needed could be taken from Casino funds to go to the Medicine Hat Archeology executive. Hugh will approach the Archeological Executive with the proposal and determine level of funding needed. Board support for it was unanimous.

-John said that the Committee has not heard back from the City about further meetings concerning the proposed Brier Run Development.

-Regarding Riparian Health Assessment project: All the fieldwork is complete and Marty finished a report on it. Pictures and data will eventually be available on the IP website and the material displayed at the Nature Centre likely in 2017.

-On October 24, another meeting is planned about the Wild Flower Pamphlet to finalize the list and select pictures.

-John said he will arrange with Tina to look over the Hampton Phase 3 Development, but no date has been set yet.

Motion that John's reports be accepted. CARRIED

- f. **Indoor Committee:** The Board congratulates Dave on having monthly speakers arranged until June. The October speaker was to be Rob Bouchier from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lethbridge. However, Hyland Armstrong MSc., will be speaking in his place on Livestock Grazing Effects on Biodiversity.
 - g. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh said the Committee is looking for funding for the Birding Trails project. We are not able to use Casino funds for that project. We also need funding for the Wildflowers Brochure, as well as for the Butterflies, Dragonflies, Damselflies, and Bumble Bee project.
Hugh also reported that a Grant Application for \$262,000 has been submitted to CFEP, Community Facility Enhancement Program, for upgrades and refurbishments planned of the Nature Centre.
 - h. **Field Trips:** Neighbourhood Walks will likely be organized again next spring.
 - i. **Communications Committee:** Angela reported that she had advertised the last speaker, Tanya Rushcall, at Medicine Hat News and CHAT TV. It was suggested that we ask new visitors attending the presentations at the Nature Centre, how they heard about the speaker programs.
 - j. **Birding Trails Project Update:** Phil reported that all of the maps are finished and a GN website test page is being created. Hugh will forward it to the Board members for viewing. Hugh said as soon as we get a budget for the project we will apply to TD Friends of the Environment Fund. Up to \$14,000. is available when applying for these grants.
 - k. **Bird Tales:** Hugh said the program would be starting at Meadow Ridge this month, where Paul and Dee will direct the program for one cabin. The program at Masterpiece Retirement is on hold for now but it will likely start again next month.
6. Other Business:
- a. **Web Cam Update:** Hugh said Paul has been testing a webcam at his house over the past two days. There is further testing to be carried out and will be available on the GN Website. Some questions are still to be answered about tower height, land lines, and other factors. Hugh will be speaking to someone who operates a successful webcam at Cypress Hills Provincial Park.
 - b. **Shoreline Cleanup:** John said that 8 GN members came out for the cleanup of Strathcona Island Park on September 24, and Martha and John carried out more cleanups of Lion's Park September 30. Over 1500 pounds of trash including six vehicle tires were collected. Cathy Linowski is leading a Medicine Hat College cleanup of Seven Person's Creek in Kin Coulee on Saturday morning, October 15. Meet at MH College at 9:30 am.
 - c. **Casino Funds:** Hugh said 10% of Casino Funds may be used for Capital Expenditures. We are applying to AGLC (Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission) for change of Use of Proceeds to include reimbursement for a non-member bookkeeper. We will know in approximately six weeks. Hugh noted he would be doing a Financial Statement at the end of the year.
7. Next Board Meeting, 6:30pm, November 1st, at Eileen's home.
8. Meeting Adjourned at 8:17 pm. Refreshments served.