

**Society of Grassland Naturalists
Minutes of General Meeting – April 22, 2014
Police Point Park**

1. **Call to Order** at 7:17 pm. Anne Bernhardt – Chair; Monica Bartha – Secretary.
2. **Introductions:** Debbie from Fort McMurray (Bill’s guest) and Jennifer who has recently bought land near Irvine, AB who would like to learn more about ecosystems within the Grasslands region.
3. **Minutes: Motion carried** to accept the minutes from the February 25, 2014, meeting.
4. **Exciting Sightings:** This months’ sightings included: a coyote within the Police Point Park, spotted by Hugh Armstrong. Please be sure to keep your pets nearby. Marty Drut sighted a flock of turkey vultures near Crescent Heights. Rob Gardner observed a mink swimming and jumping out of the water nearby. Also, 3 wood ducks were spotted along the South Saskatchewan River.
5. **Newspaper Clips:** A couple news clippings were shared on the controversial topic of the Emergency Protection Order on the Sage Grouse. Local landowners, land users and leaseholders in SE Alberta have joined together to express their concerns to the federal government.
6. **Treasurer’s Report:** – Eileen provided a hard-copy report for perusal outlining GN and IP Balance Sheets and Income Statements for January 1, 2014 to March 31, 2014.

As well, Eileen shared the following current account updates:

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| • GN Account | Chequing (Servus) | \$10,211.97 |
| | Savings (Servus) | \$ 4,938.13 |
| | Tangerine | <u>\$ 6,102.38</u> |
| | | \$21,252.48 |
| • IP Account | TD | \$11,677.45 |
| | SERVUS | \$ 479.84 |
| | Tangerine | <u>\$44,088.98</u> |
| | | \$56,246.27 |

Eileen wrote up a cheque for the park bench (expensed last year) and renewed Nature Alberta membership. 24 members still have not renewed memberships. Eileen passed around membership list to all attended meeting to review who has not renewed. An up-dated membership count was not available at this time since only about half of the GN members (55) have renewed memberships for 2014. Please contact Eileen as soon as possible to renew.

Also, Bill is still looking for a VP. If you know of anyone that maybe interested in being the VP please contact Bill Nibbs.

7. **Priority Business:**
 - **Budget Committee** – July will be the next Quarter meeting to share Budget Report.
 - **G.N. Fundraising Committee Report** - Hugh Armstrong presented Casino Fundraiser. For this fundraiser to begin we are in need of a gaming & liquor license. A General Manager for the Casino Fundraising Project is required and a separate bank account for this to take place. We will also need 15-17 volunteers for this 2-day fundraising opportunity. Volunteers can be anyone. Does not have to be Grasslands Naturalists members. To be slotted into the schedule would be 12-18 months from when we proceed to fill out the application. **Motion Carried Forward** by Marty to carry on Discussion on the floor. Gary Martin **Second Motion.**
 - **Discussion** - Questions arise from members such as “What projects will the funding be going to?” Hugh mentions, “We are targeting the playground park presently as Sprague’s

- Pipit project is currently winding down. Presently outdoor education is where the funding will be going towards.”
- Suggestions for further fundraising ideas arose from new members such as Internet fundraising.
- **Casino Fundraising Project Passed by General Membership.** Motion was moved, seconded and passed to permit Grasslands Naturalists to apply for Casino License.
- **Interpretive Program** – Corlaine shares with us over Easter weekend the program brought in ~5000 visitors from small children to grown adults. Everyone praised on the program and were happy to see it!
 - Sunday April 27 is Spring Clean up in the Park so come on and help out!
 - May 2nd Communities in Bloom to kick off the summer about communities thriving together and discussing heritage & environment. Please contact Corlaine if you are interested.
 - The Nature Centre will also have a new intern who will be assisting in sharing and expressing her knowledge of riparian areas through events, programs, etc. Natural Resources Canada will be paying half the wages from now until the end of March 2015.
- **Field Trips - Governance Committee** – For up-coming field trips and events be sure to check the Chronicle.
 - Gary Martin shares with us an exciting list of field trips he is planning for this spring & summer. Again, be sure to continue checking out the up-coming Chronicles for further dates.
 - Rob Gardner is hosting an NCC volunteer program on April 26th in Forty Mile Coulee. A search of archaeological sites will be performed with 4 professional Archaeologists. 8:45am – 4:00pm (check out the Chronicle). Please pre-register by contacting Rob.
- **Nature Alberta** – Martha shared the Nature Alberta Annual General Meeting Minutes. A new president is needed for the Nature Alberta Board of Directors. Next Month Petra Powell, Executive Director plans to visit us and speak to us about Nature Alberta and the major programs Nature Alberta holds such as the “Living by Water” program.
 - Young Naturalist Club – Edmonton very organized and includes Big Brothers and Big Sisters. Can we consider something like that? If anyone is interested in having a Young Naturalist Club please contact Martha.

8. Other Business:

- The next GN Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 6th @ 7:00p.m. hosted by Eileen Cowtan #1519 - 11 Ave NE. 403.526.1264.
-

9. Attendance tonight: 18 for the business portion and 22 for the indoor program.

10. Meeting adjourned: Adjournment at 8:18p.m.

11. Indoor Program:

“Inside the Butterfly House”

Presented by Cindy Ciona, Manager

Cindy Ciona shared with us in her hour-long presentation at the Nature Centre on Tuesday evening how the Butterfly house came about and how tranquil this beautiful place truly is. John Van Dam is the man who created the Butterfly House. In 1972 he went to Key West and fell in love with the Butterfly house there. Yearly he visited the butterfly house and decided to build a Butterfly house here in Medicine Hat. It took him a while to create it just how he wanted it.

Once he required all the info he needed to know. He cleared everything he needed to know with his brother Art and started from scratch to build the proper humidity, temperate green house for the butterfly house. John stopped a year later to build the waterfall, which he built with his own hands. After that he designed the butterfly house. He went

to Key west while Art continued with the development of the pond and a gazebo just like the one in Key West. He also developed pathways and a continuous flowing stream, which hold fish within the butterfly house. An observation deck had been built for the learning programs to take place and benches placed along the paths to just enjoy the atmosphere.

After the building was complete a beautiful contrast of foilage plantings were planted and placed. The Butterfly House is pesticide free. Natural maintenance is used to keep the bad bugs out such as incorporating biological remediation. Interpretive programs are held on the observation deck and also there are informative signs throughout the Butterfly House for your pace of learning. A Gift Shop and Coffee Shop were developed which also has ice cream for sale.

There are several different species to be observed! Not only butterflies, but also birds, fish tropical plants and moths! The world's largest moth is also present within the Butterfly House. It is from London, England and is called the, Atlas Moth. The Atlas Moth is active only at night. Its cocoons are hung on the only man made apparatus. They stay dormant for a year or more and 12 hours of sunlight is needed for 4-6 days to warm them up and get themselves moving to emerge. This is just one of the most intriguing species to observe!

The Butterfly House holds children's birthdays, weddings, school tours, and programs for all ages. Each year there is also a Butterfly release, which occurs during Father's Day weekend. Everyone who participates receives their own box with a butterfly to be released. Keep in mind these butterfly are found within Alberta, so there is no releasing of non-native species. A BBQ, interpretive talk and fundraiser are held at this event! The Butterfly House hours of operation are 9:00a.m. to 5:00p.m., 7 days a week. During the summer months, hours of operation are 9:00a.m. to 6:00p.m.

This indoor Butterfly House is a tranquil haven to be shared by everyone!