

Society of Grassland Naturalists
Minutes of General Meeting – October 23, 2012
Police Point Park Nature Centre

1. **Call to Order** at 7:02 pm. John Slater – Chair; Barry Anderson – Secretary
2. **Minutes:** The minutes from September 25, 2012 were reviewed and corrected. John moved the minutes to be accepted; seconded by Phil Horch. CARRIED.
3. **Exciting Sightings:**
 - Jan Scott reported seeing a northern mockingbird this past week in the SE Hill area.
 - Marty Drut reported a single surf scoter on the South Saskatchewan River near Police Point Park.
 - Judy Anderson reported seeing a brown creeper in her backyard in the Ross Glen area.
 - John Slater commented on recent photos in the Medicine Hat News involving GN related events.
4. **Treasurer's Report: Eileen Cowtan**
 - Our current balance as of October 23, 2012, is \$8071.62.
 - Recent donations have been received in the amount of \$100 and \$400.
 - Eileen reported the recent passing of GN member Glen Meidinger. Our condolences are extended to his family.
5. **Announcements:**
 - John made an announcement regarding Bylaw Clause 4.7.1 – Remuneration to Marty and Eileen: At the last GN Board Meeting held Oct. 2, 2012, Anne made a motion that Marty and Eileen be paid for their services to the Medicine Hat Interpretive Program; seconded by Barry. The motion was carried.
 - The **Esplanade and Art Gallery** from Oct. 20 to Dec. 8, 2012, will display long-time GN member Linda Cairney's art entitled "An Intricate Balance" – a retrospective of her paintings from 1968 to 2011 emphasizing a connection with the lands, birds and insects of the West.
 - Phil announced that the City of Medicine Hat has offered another 5-year contract for the operation of the Interpretive Program at Police Point Park. Consequently, John indicated that a special GN Board meeting to review and approve the City Contract renewal and MHIP Operations Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) will be held on Friday, November 2.
6. **Interpretive Program: Marty Drut for Corlaine Gardner (absent)**
 - The Nature Center continues to be busy with school programs and November bookings are filling up quickly.

- Two new part-time staff have been hired to assist with work at the Nature Center. Welcome to Kit Hilsden, a Ecotourism student, and Dakota Buck, a Global Tourism student, from the Medicine Hat College.
- Marty spoke about the Sprague Pipit Project and encouraged members to help with activities such as traveling display, field trips, guest speakers, etc. Also, Marty mentioned three publications for GN members to read. See the Oct issue of the Chronicle for more information on this project.
- The Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference will be held in Red Deer Feb.19-22, 2013. The theme of this year's conference is "Engaging People in Conservation". On behalf of the Interpretive Program, Marty will attend and present poster information on the Sprague Pipit Project. Other individuals are welcome to attend. Check out the Oct. issue of the Chronicle for a detailed synopsis of this conference.
- The Annual Snow Goose Tour will take place on Sunday Nov. 4. Meet at the Gershaw Drive A&W at 2:30 pm and dress warmly. Geese, swans and other waterfowl will be observed with visits to either Sauder's and/or Murray's Reservoirs. Expect to car pool.
- Dec. 2 the Christmas Hayride sponsored by the Lions Club will take place in Police Point Park. More details to follow.
- Dec. 23 the Annual Christmas Bird Count will happen throughout the city and surrounding area. Contact Marty for your designated area to search. A potluck supper will follow. More details to follow.

7. Field Trips:

- Milt Spitzer will lead a group of interested birders to Rattelsnake, and Sauder's and Murray's Reservoirs to look for any late migrants. Meet at the Gershaw Drive A&W at 8:30 am on Saturday, Nov. 10.

8. Issues Committee: Marty Drut for Martha Munz Gue (absent)

- Martha is drafting a letter regarding draft Bill 202 Public Land Sale.
- Marty reported briefly about today's committee meeting. Topics included the city owned gas wells near Manyberries, the protection of PFRA lands under recent provincial jurisdiction, and arranging a meeting with MP Lavar Payne to discuss the Suffield block PFRA lands and NWA.

9. Communications Committee: John for Tina Regehr (absent)

- On Thursday Nov. 1 at 7:00 pm the City of Medicine Hat's Planning, Building and Development Committee together with the Public Library will present a one-hour documentary entitled "The Next American Dream" at the **Public Library**. This film examines past, present and future concepts of downtowns across North America as well as urban renewal and case studies. A Panel discussion is to follow.

10. Nature Alberta – John for Martha Munz Gue (absent)

- Look for Martha's article in the Nov. issue of the Chronicle regarding Extended memberships and Books from NA.

10. **SEAWA** – no report

11. **Indoor Programs: John for Rob Gardner (absent)**

- The Nov. 27 program will be Milt Spitzer presenting information on his and Elaine's trip to China and Tibet. We look forward to the evening.

11. **Other Business**

- At the last GN Board meeting, a motion was passed that would allow the digitizing and archiving of GN Chronicles, minutes, scrapbooks and other historical documents at the Esplanade.
- As well, at the last GN Board meeting, Dave McKenzie offered his expertise in establishing an email notice list serve system exclusively for GN members to post sightings, photos, information, announcements, etc. Dave will include a brief write-up in this next month's Chronicle. Presently, the list serve can be tested by Board members only.
- An ad hoc committee to draft Policies and Procedures has been determined. An open invitation is extended to anyone who would like to become involved through advice, participation and/or submissions.
- Phil reminded everyone of the Rare Bird/Species Phone Around Service. More details are available in the Oct. issue of the Chronicle.

13. **Attendance tonight** – 11 members and 2 non-members

14. **Meeting Adjourned** at 7:45 pm

15. **Indoor Program:**

This evening's indoor program arranged by Rob Gardner and presented by Jenna MacDonald was entitled "Weed Wise in Medicine Hat", an informative session outlining both prohibited noxious species (must destroy) and noxious species (must control) in our province. Jenna, employed by the City of Medicine Hat Parks and Recreation Department, provided information designed to help identify and control local invasive species such as baby's breath, purple loosestrife, yellow clematis, dames rocket, creeping bellflower, tamarisk and Himalayan balsam. Jenna concluded her presentation by distributing "Weed Wise Gardening in Alberta", a provincially produced pamphlet designed to promote public awareness for gardeners who would like to learn more about alternative non-invasive plants here in Alberta. Also, she distributed another provincially produced pamphlet "Water Invaders: Plants that can change Alberta's waters and wetlands", which is a guide to invasive plants for boaters, cottage owners and water gardeners.