

MINUTES
SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
GENERAL MEETING FEBRUARY 24, 2015
POLICE POINT PARK NATURE CENTRE

1. Call to Order 7:10 pm with 26 members and guests present.
Monica Bartha, GN Secretary, has resigned due to other commitments. Rob Gardner offered to take Minutes for this meeting.
2. Review & adoption minutes of General Meetings October 28 and November 25, 2014
John Slater moved, and Hugh Armstrong seconded, the adoption of the Minutes of the October 28, 2014, general meeting as distributed. CARRIED
Bill Knibbs moved, and Gary Martin seconded, the adoption of the Minutes of the November 25, 2014, general meeting as distributed. CARRIED
3. Exciting Sightings Honeybees have been observed, especially downtown.
4. Newspaper Clips - John Slater summarized quite a few newspaper articles relating to GN activities. In particular, the elk situation at CFB Suffield and the Interpretive Program's Family Day received extensive coverage.
5. Treasurer's Report - Eileen Cowtan thanked other members for their help in managing the finances while she was on holidays. The GN books show current assets of \$22,345. The Interpretive Program received 50% of the grant from the City of Medicine Hat, amounting to \$68,000. Member auditors are needed to review the financial statements for the club. Dave McKenzie offered to help, but another person is still needed. Please contact Eileen if you are interested. This is an easy way to improve your financial skills.

Membership Renewal (new waiver form) is now available. To date, 97 memberships for the 2015 year have been received.

6. Priority Business - No items were brought forward under this topic.
7. Interpretive Program Report
Corlaine reported that the Kiwanis Family Day was a good success, with 600 people taking part. Over 60 bird house kits, donated by Ben Andreas and Ben Verner, were assembled with the help of volunteers.
Upcoming programs include:
The last String Fever concert will be presented by classical guitarists Bill Frank and Brian Walters on Saturday, March 21 at 7 pm. Lyle Rebbeck will make a guest appearance.
Easter Fun - Volunteers are always welcome at this popular event. Donated supplies such as 4 litre vinegar jugs, ice cream buckets with lids, paper egg cartons and stick candles can be dropped off at the nature centre.
8. Committee Reports:
 - a) Indoor Program: Dave McKenzie, Gary Martin
The March program will feature Peter Swain, Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park, speaking about elk management in the Cypress Hills.
Ron Linowski has offered to speak informally about rare plant species in our area at the June picnic. Members agreed that this would be welcome.
 - b) Field Trips: Gary Martin, Mike O'Shea
No field trips are scheduled at this time.

- c) Fundraising:
Hugh Armstrong reported that grant applications had been submitted to the City of Medicine Hat and the Community Foundation of Southeastern Alberta.
Members are encouraged to save cash register receipts from Medicine Hat Co-op grocery store and gas purchases, and bring them to the nature centre by March 15. GN receives a donation from the Co-op amounting to 1% of the value of the receipts.
- d) Bird Tales Project:
Hugh and Dee Armstrong described this nature program to enrich the lives of dementia patients who live in local group residences. Paul Thibeault is working with them. Volunteers will be trained in how to help patients enjoy nature activities such as bird feeders. This action is proceeding well at Masterpiece Seniors Residence, and Dee hopes to expand to other residences as people come forward to help.
- e) Issues Committee:
Martha reminded members of the wide range of World Water Week activities that will be happening March 16 - 30: Field Trips March 21; World Water Day Forum March 22 at the MH Public Library.
9. Other Business
- a) Nature Alberta:
Martha Munz-Gue announced that she will be stepping down as the GN representative to Nature Alberta. This is an opportunity for someone to get a provincial perspective on environmental issues.
- b) Young Explorers Day - Sunday March 1st 1:30 pm at the College & Kin Coulee Park
- c) Next GN meeting will be the Annual General Meeting on March 24 at 6:30 pm in the Crowfoot Room in Medicine Hat College
- d) Nominations to GN Board
Bill Knibbs is seeking nominations for the executive, particularly for the positions of Secretary and Directors at Large.
- e) Next GN Board Meeting: Thursday March 5th 6:30 pm at John Slater's home.
- f) Adjournment
At 7:50 pm, Val Martins moved the meeting be adjourned. CARRIED
- g) Refreshment Break
- h) Program 8:00 pm Swift Fox Census 2014-15
Lacy Hebert and Carolyn Prentice, both with the Calgary Zoo Centre for Conservation and Research, described how they determine how many swift fox now live in southeastern Alberta, southwestern Saskatchewan and north-central Montana. Numbers have not been tallied, but the population seems healthy. These counts have taken place every five years since the fox were first reintroduced. This year, in addition to typical live traps, wildlife cameras were placed near scent posts. This approach caused far less stress on the animals while providing incidental documentation of other species such as badger.

A total of 35 people were present for the program.