

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS  
Minutes of General Meeting, January 24, 2017  
Police Point Park.

1. Call to Order 7:03 pm
2. Review of GN Minutes from November 22, 2016: Hugh noted that 10 c. should state, "Edmonton, for example, shows multipurpose use of buildings with a Library close to a Senior Complex and a Recreation Centre" and not "Lethbridge" as written in the Minutes.  
In addition, 8.e. should state, "Hugh mentioned that Canadian Badlands Association were very supportive..." rather than Canadian Badlands "Limited" as written in the minutes.  
Minutes were Adopted. Motion CARRIED.
3. Exciting Sightings: Corlaine Gardner reported that a leucistic Blue Jay was seen at the Interpretive Centre recently. As mentioned in the November Minutes, Leucism is an abnormal plumage condition.  
A cow Moose was seen in the City again.  
Hugh noted that Eagles have indeed taken over the former Blue Heron Nesting area.
4. Treasurer's Report and Membership: Eileen Cowtan reported total current assets are \$34,065.66.  
Twenty members have renewed which makes up about 25% of the total membership. Eileen said there were 85 memberships registered at the end of 2016.
5. Correspondence: Eileen said there is no correspondence. Moved that the Treasurer's Report be Adopted.  
CARRIED.
6. Priority Business:
  - a. **Kiwanis Family Day Program Feb.20:** Lisa Bey discusses this in # 7.
  - b. **Alberta Badlands AGM and Tourism Development Conference March 15-17:** Rob Gardner and Hugh Armstrong will give a presentation on behalf of GN .There are currently 6 volunteers registered to assist at the GN display table. Please call Hugh if you are able to volunteer help with the table.
  - c. **World Water Day March 22:** Two volunteers are needed to assist at a GN display table at the MH Public Library. Please call Hugh if you are willing to help.
  - d. **March AGM:** On March 28 at the Nature Centre. Anne Bernhardt and Angela Turner have volunteered to bring snacks.
7. Interpretive Program Report: Corlaine Gardner spoke about the current Annual January Exhibit comprised of works from 3 local High School students. 92 people attended the reception.  
Last Saturday, January 21, LEARN and the Public Library put on a new Storywalk, with about 75 people attending and participating in crafts. "Ten on the Sled" will be up until February 28 on a trail at Police Point Park.  
Corlaine suggested GN members show support for "Winged Tapestries", an Esplanade exhibition of 45 large format moth images which shows from January 23 to May 14, 2017. A public reception with artist Jim des Rivieres will be held February 16 at 7 pm. with a presentation by Jim at 8 pm. in the Main Theatre of the Esplanade.  
Several Grade 1 and Kindergarten teachers worked together with their students to produce an entertaining booklet called, "Children's Guide to the City". This has just been published by Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSS) receiving a grant with the help of GN. Corlaine passed around copies of the book and said they will be on sale at the Nature Centre.  
Corlaine noted that the Nature Centre will be holding Easter activities as usual, with renovations on the lighting system and the exhibition area likely not interfering with the annual program. Volunteers are needed for the annual Chicks and Bunnies program because of the high number of visitors and school classes expected.  
Lisa Bey spoke next on the need for approximately 28 volunteers for the Kiwanis Family Day event February 20 .In the event that there is not enough snow for skiing and snowshoeing, letter boxes holding clues will be set up.  
A GN member, present at tonight's meeting, kindly volunteered a large truck to bring tables to the Nature Centre before the event.
8. Committee Reports:
  - a. **Issues Committee:** John Slater reported that the Wildflower sub-committee continues to work on the Brochure. On Tuesday January 31, Martha Munz Gue, Cathy Linowski, and Dwayne Myers will meet to work on pictures. The Alberta Native Plant Council has granted \$1000.00, and the local Horticultural Society has donated \$500.00 toward the brochure.  
John said Dave McKenzie is continuing to put together a database of butterflies and other insects.

b. **GN Issues Sub-committee:**

John reported there has been one meeting with the City regarding Phase 3 of Hamptons Development. The City has asked GN to help improve environmental policies in their Municipal Development Plan. Last Friday January 20, Marty Drut, John Slater and Tina Regehr discussed what should be done such as preparing an inventory of sensitive sites in the City. Tina will highlight sections of the City MDP, which was approved by City Council in 2012.

c. **Field Trips Update and BioBlitz 150:** Gary Martin/John Slater

John Slater and Gary Martin drafted a list of GN's 2017 Field Trips, Activities and Events which include trips both in the City and outside the City, as well as events at the Interpretive Program. Each month in the Chronicle, Milt Spitzer will highlight monthly events. For February, John noted Elkwater Winter Festival takes place February 4 from 11 am to 3 pm. Bob Townsend will speak on February 7 at 7:30 pm at the Nature Centre on Cross Country Ski Basics. On March 11 there will be a Greenhouse trip pertaining to seedlings. World Water Day on March 22 will see a display at the MH Public Library and a possible tour of the City Water Plant.

John said Gary Martin proposed an Orchid hunt at the end of May in Elkwater. Other suggestions included attending the Wildflower Festival in Waterton since there are free passes to Canada's National Parks this year. Finally, a weekend at Grasslands National Park was also suggested.

John mentioned some ideas for BioBlitz 150 including Dave McKenzie's suggestion of butterfly walks, possibly on Tuesday mornings.

d. **Indoor Program Speakers:** Dave McKenzie has arranged for Sara Joan Armour to speak on Straw Bale Gardening tonight. February's presentation will be on Parasitoid Wasps as Biocontrol Agents presented by Sarah McPike.

e. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh Armstrong reported that \$1000.00 was received from the Alberta Native Plant Council (ANPC) to go toward the Wildflower brochure as well as \$500.00 from the Horticultural Society.

An application for \$262,000.00 has been approved from CFEP, Community Facility Enhancement Program. An application has been submitted for \$150,000.00 from the Co-op funding grants.

Finally, an application to Walmart for a donation of \$1,000.00 to go toward the Bird Tales Program was submitted.

f. **Birding Trails Project Update:** 1. Rob Gardner briefly mentioned Bird Studies Canada, a national charity dedicated to bird science and conservation. They will be doing a tour with their members from May 27 to 31 of the Alberta Badlands. 2. Canadian Badlands Association also promotes a circle tour from Medicine Hat and Walsh area featuring the Canadian Badlands Provincial Parks. Rob suggested that perhaps one of the routes from the GN Birding Trails could be included. The Canadian Badlands Association may fund the cost of printing this 44 page Birding Trails Guide. Rob noted that anyone may print out a copy of the Guide themselves by going on the GN website and click on Birding to see the Birding Trail Maps and Guide. GN has been getting requests for Birding Trail information.

g. **Bird Tales Update:** Dee Armstrong reported that Masterpiece Retirement has undergone a change of ownership. She said the Recreation Director would promote the Bird Tales Project to the new owners.

Terry Butterwick and Ron Fox are two members of the Medicine Hat Carving Club who made "comfort birds" for residents at Masterpiece Retirement and Meadow Ridge Seniors Village living with Dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Dee said Windsor Plywood generously donated wood for the project. Medicine Hat News will be taking photographs of residents at Meadow Ridge Seniors Village receiving comfort birds this Thursday, January 26.

h. **Communications Committee:** Angela Turner said the Committee has held 2 meetings this year. Members are collecting suitable pictures for a banner to be designed by Boylan Imaging.

9. New Business: None.

10. Other Business:

a. **Webcam Project Update:** Hugh reported for Paul, that the Webcam at the Nature Centre works well now. \$300.00 will go to Scott Hoyland to work on the robotics that move the camera.

b. **December Bird Count and Pot Luck:** The Bird Count was well attended despite windy conditions. Numbers of individual birds were down. Marty Drut has posted a summary of the count in the January Chronicle. Paul will post the report on the GN website.

c. Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, February 7, 2017, 6:30pm at Ian and Angela's home.

d. Adjournment at 7:46 pm. Attendance 21 members

e. Refreshment Break

f. Program 8 pm, Attendance 25 people. Speaker: Sara Joan Armour on Straw Bale Gardening.