

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS  
Minutes of General Meeting, September 24, 2019  
Police Point Park..

1. Call to Order: 7:06 pm. with Hugh Armstrong presiding and Betty Rainville, Secretary.
2. Review of General Minutes from May 28, 2019. Hugh noted Item #3 under Exciting Sightings needed to be corrected to Milt Spitzer rather than "Switzer"  
Minutes were then Adopted. **CARRIED.**
3. Exciting Sightings: Linda Fisher reported seeing approximately 40 hawks resting near Oyen, AB.  
Corlaine Gardner reported seeing a migration of hawks this fall on the South East Hill in Medicine Hat, and has heard them calling in the past 2 weeks.  
Hugh noted seeing 7 or 8 Bluejays in his yard recently. One jay in particular was missing a significant part of its beak and appeared to be "cranky" because of it.  
Martha Munz Gue reported seeing wildflowers, on every Tuesday morning walk, that continue to bloom. Ten people participated today. EDDMapS Alberta was used this morning to report thorny buckbrush. (See item#8a below)
4. Treasurer's Report and Membership: Eileen reported that the June fundraising Casino brought in \$16,987.91, with the Casino balance on September 24, 2019 standing at \$15,045.38.  
For the benefit of new members, Eileen explained that the CFSEA (Community Foundation of South Eastern Alberta), under the Donna MacLean Endowment Fund, brought in \$900. This funding is received annually since the death of this well-known member.  
Eileen reported a balance, as of September 24, 2019 in the Chequing Account, of \$5,089.40, and a balance of \$16,474.79 in the GN "Club" Savings Account as of September 24.  
Eileen noted there are 84 memberships now, including some new out-of-town members from Schuler and Bow Island.
5. Correspondence: Eileen said she received a thank you from the Children's Wish Foundation for a donation in Bev Slater's name.  
Eileen also received gaming information for charitable groups, with information sessions being given in Medicine Hat in November. Registration is online. Eileen will put this information in the Chronicle.
6. Priority Business:
  - a. **Bee City Initiative:** Dave McKenzie reported that establishment of the Pollinator Garden at Police Point Park is moving quite slowly. UERAB (Urban Environment and Recreation Advisory Board) cancelled their September meeting, but the project will be discussed at the October meeting.  
Dave noted 2 people are needed to volunteer for fundraising. He will speak to Parks people at the October UERAB meeting.  
Dave also reported that UERAB is supportive of naming a park after Dawn Dickenson, a well-known GN member who passed away in April 2013. Ross Creek Natural area would be a perfect location to honour Dawn's name, Dave noted.  
Lastly, Dave mentioned that his term with UERAB is finished in December 2019, and asked for a GN member to apply for this position. The one meeting per month is always a dinner meeting. Please talk to Dave for more information.
  - b. **Volunteers for GN monthly General Meetings:** Hugh asked for volunteers to open the Nature Centre by 6:30 pm, put chairs out, and make coffee each month before meetings. Corlaine had previously suggested giving out a key, if a committee of 8 or 10 members is formed.
7. Interpretive Program Report: Corlaine reported having the 3 excellent summer students, enabled staff to turn over programming to them. There are lots of school programs going on now, which makes a great learning experience for local school students.  
The Pollinator Garden fence is now up, and Corlaine noted volunteers are needed for watering.  
On World River Day, Sunday 22, Corlaine led an evening walk down the newly opened West Access Trail with a campfire and marshmallows after.  
This Sunday, September 29, Alberta Culture Days are celebrated at the Fall Festival. Corlaine noted that snow is in the forecast for that day, which may impact attendance. Volunteers are still needed for the event.  
Corlaine mentioned that Jill and Elaine are running the Nature Shop. Mike Verner has done an excellent job of building display and storage racks for this, as well as shelving for the ski room and back storage area.  
To conclude, Corlaine reported the Historical Society will be having a talk about Hope Johnson, Thursday September 26 at 7 pm at the Esplanade.  
Marty Drut presented a sign-up sheet for volunteers for the upcoming Alberta Culture Days at the Fall Festival in Police Point Park.
8. Committee Reports:

- a. **Issues Committee:** Martha spoke about the following points:
- **Climate and Sustainability.** Climate Conversations take place at Café Verve every Friday at 4 pm. Contact Martha for more information at [mmunzque@gmail.com](mailto:mmunzque@gmail.com)  
Genevieve Mathieu introduced herself at tonight's meeting, and said she will be attending Friday's get together sometime after 4 pm for those members who are interested. There will also be a Climate Strike by school students and supporting adults, held at MH City Hall at 3 pm on Friday September 27, Genevieve noted.
  - **Wild Flowers:** (See comments in Exciting Sightings above item #3).
  - **Riparian Health:** Martha reported SEAWA and GN arranged for a SEAWA Water Art Show in the Arcade Building to be viewed on the Downtown Art Walk Friday September 27.
  - **Invasive Species:** Martha spoke about using EDDMapS Alberta to report locations of invasive plants to the Alberta Invasive Species Society. (See Item #3 above). There is a weed pull with SEAWA volunteers at 9 am at Saratoga Park on October 1, with a walk at 10 am after.
  - **Municipal Development Plan:** Martha reported the Planning Department met in the summer on July 31 with Martha and Phil from GN, and with Tina Regehr, from SEAWA. Martha and Phil submitted their priorities in writing.
  - **Environmental Advisement:** Martha reported GN has good communication with Parks and Recreation Department at this time, with Dave McKenzie on the Urban Environment and Recreation Advisory Board (UERAB)
- b. **MHIP/Operations Committee:** No Report. Hugh noted that Anne Bernhardt has stepped down from her position, leaving 2 members down on the Committee now.  
Hugh thanked Anne for her many years of dedicated service. (A heartfelt thank you from the Board as well, Anne, for your never-ending support and practical wisdom).  
Hugh asked members to contact Bob Townsend if they are able to serve on this committee.
- c. **Field Trips:** From Chronicle.
- Sunday, September 29-Alberta Culture Days at the Fall Festival in Police Point Park.
  - Tuesday, October 15 at 10 am there will be a viewing and dedication of the Memorial Bench for **Bev Slater** at the top end of Marlborough Coulee, College Drive SE, 800 Block. The walk will continue after, down the path into Marlborough Coulee to Saratoga Park.
  - Saturday, October 19 at 8 am-Field Trip to the Schuler and Many Island Lakes to look for migratory waterfowl. Meet at the main Medalta parking lot. Bring a lunch.
  - Saturday, October 19-Beavers at 5:45 pm. Meet at the Nature Centre.
- d. **Indoor Program Speakers:** Linda Fisher reported that Joan and Mark Wierbza will be speaking tonight about their trip to view 3 Monarch Butterfly sanctuaries in Mexico.  
The October 22 speaker is Mecah Klem, a Biologist working for Fish and Wildlife. His presentation will be an update on Greater Sage-grouse in Alberta Recovery Actions.  
The November 26 speaker will be Lacey Hebert, Conservation Research Field Technician, from the Calgary Zoo Endangered Species Program.
- e. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh noted there is nothing new to report at this time.
- f. **Birding Trails:** Hugh reported that Rob Gardner, Milt Spitzer and Phil Horch distributed 4 more cases of Birding Trails of Southeastern Alberta Guides.  
Hugh also commented that Birding Trail Guides went well at the GN table, set up for the last MH Farmer's Market.
- g. **Bird Tales Update:** Hugh reported for Paul and Dee that Bird Tales activities went well, over the summer. They are taking September off, but will return to meet every week in October.  
Hugh read a well-written summary by Paul Thibault, which was sent to the Board September 3. It covered Bird Tales funding and volunteers, listed and described projects in the past few months, and stressed the importance of staff creativity and "outside-the-box" thinking to keep residents with dementia interested.
- h. **Communications Committee:** Angela Turner reported that the new GN and Interpretive Program websites are out. The GN page has a very good butterfly site called Common Butterflies of the Medicine Hat Area, Angela noted.
- i. **Nature Alberta:** Ian and Angela reported there is a 2 day Whooping Crane and Sandhill Crane tour from Saskatoon at \$750. per person on October 12 and 13.  
They also noted there is an IBA (Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas Workshop) in Red Deer on October 25-26. There is a limit of 50 people. Replies were requested by September 5, but there may still be room to apply.  
Ian and Angela passed out colorful post cards recently put out by Nature Alberta, which offer 150+ ways to enjoy Alberta's natural heritage. Share your journey at [naturealberta.ca/explore](http://naturealberta.ca/explore).

9. New Business:

- a. **Bird Seed Orders:** Jill and Elaine, at the Nature Shop, are putting in orders for bird seed. Please place your orders now.

- b. **Methanex Community Advisory Panel:** Ian Turner represents GN on the Methanex CAP. He noted that Methanex has 6 plants world-wide.  
The CAP meets 6 times yearly, and is a liaison for community and citizens to direct questions to Methanex, and have them answered. Ian invited GN members to bring up any concerns or questions with him tonight and he would take them back to the CAP October meeting. Members and others may also contact him by email at [ianang@telus.net](mailto:ianang@telus.net) he said.

10. Other Business:

- a. **Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society:** John Whidden, CPAWS volunteer and Environmental Educator, spoke briefly about an approximate 1 hour talk that he presents, which is geared to all groups of people. It is designed to get people out to parks and wilderness spaces. John left hand-outs for interested members, with his email [jcwhidden@shaw.ca](mailto:jcwhidden@shaw.ca)
- b. **GN meetings with Parks Department re. Natural Areas in the City:** Hugh reported he attended a meeting with Randy Taves, Manager of Parks, where some of the discussion focused on leisure trails in Medicine Hat. The purpose of these numerous trails is to keep the community active. Hugh noted that another meeting will be held this fall.  
Tina Regehr said she would like to attend these GN/Parks Department meetings with Hugh, if this is possible.  
Martha brought up the negative impact on the Seven Parsons Creek riparian area, caused by the large amount of hard surface there.
- c. **SEAWA and the Civic Recognition Award:** Martha will give a 3 minute presentation just before the award to SEAWA, on October 3 at 7 pm. There is a reception, for previous award winners and guests, before the ceremony at 7 pm. Everyone is invited to attend the ceremony.
- d. **Committee Budgets Due:** Please have Budgets to Paul Thibault by November 15, and bills to Eileen by the end of this year. Thank you.
- e. **Next Board Meeting:** Tuesday October 8, 1:30 pm at Anne's house.
- f. **Adjournment** at 8:02 pm. Attendance at GM is 22.
- g. **Refreshment Break**
- h. **Program start** 8:12 pm. Attendance 25. Speakers are Mark and Joan Wierbza, who will be talking about their trip to Mexico to view 3 butterfly sanctuaries.