

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
Minutes of General Meeting, April 25, 2017
Police Point Park

1. Call to Order 7:05 pm
2. Review and Adoption of General Meeting Minutes from February 28, 2017 Motion CARRIED.
3. Exciting Sightings: Phil Horch saw a Hooded Oriole -not locally- but on a recent trip to Arizona! John Slater and Granddaughter Angela spotted about 49 Snow Geese in a field north of Gleichen, Alberta. Another member saw a Turkey Vulture in the south east part of the city, while Marty reported the Cow Moose still remains in Police Point Park.
4. Treasurer's Report and Membership: Eileen is absent, but Hugh noted there were 10 memberships added in the past month, as well as 1 tonight at the meeting.
5. Correspondence: There was no correspondence.
6. Priority Business:
 - a. **Canadian Badlands:** Hugh reported that on April 20 an email from CB Association gave notice they will fund printing of the Birding Trails Guide booklet with a \$12,000.00 grant. Hugh showed copies of the email. Chris McLellan is the contact person for CB Association. Phil Horch will hold a meeting at his house on May 17. Hugh wondered if Chris could be available for that.
 - b. **Committee Chairs and Volunteers:** A list of Committee Chairpersons will be in the May Sagebrush Chronicle showing their contact information. Hugh asked that members who wish to be Committee Volunteers contact the appropriate Chairperson as soon as possible.
 - c. **Casino Volunteers:** Hugh urged attendees at tonight's meeting to sign up as bankers, runners, or counters for the 2 shifts per day needed for September 28 and 29. Seven volunteers per shift are needed to fill a total of 28 positions in the four shifts.
 - d. **Tulip Ceremony:** Members are invited to attend this ceremony on May 11 at Robertson Park at 1 pm. 1000 red and white tulips were planted at this park in October 2016 to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday and to commemorate Private James Robertson who resided in Medicine Hat.
7. Interpretive Program Report: Marty Drut reported that Corlaine is presently attending a conference in Vancouver. He said two new grants will allow for two new summer staff at the MHIP.
Marty reported the Nature Centre was very busy during the Easter programs with nearly 5000 people attending. He thanked everyone for their help, and said none of it would have been possible without volunteers. Marty listed upcoming events as follows:
 - a. This Saturday, April 29, Geocache Club SEARCH and PP Park clean up starts at 10:30 am. (Spring Shine up the Park). Some tree wrapping will also take place with a noon hot dog roast after.
 - b. Mental Health Awareness week takes place this week May 1-7. Take in some Vitamin N- for Nature- in a guided walk at PP Park at 2 pm May 6.
 - c. Dee Armstrong spoke about Koffee Klatches running Sundays at the Nature Centre May 14, 21 and 28 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. She would like to promote the shade grown, bird friendly coffee for GN. A volunteer is needed to assist with dishes and other related jobs from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm on these Sundays.
 - d. Sunday, May 7, meet at the Nature Centre at 2 pm. for a guided Wildflower Walk.
 - e. Saturday, May 27, 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm watch artist of the month Siew Mak demonstrate Chinese Brush work themed "Beastly Trees of Police Point Park". This event was changed from May 20. Limited spaces.
 - f. The Spring Bird and Flower Count takes place Sunday, May 28. Contact Marty for placement in a group, or to act as a group leader.
8. Committee Reports:
 - a. **Issues Committee:** John reported the Wildflower Brochure contact person in Edmonton, Judith Golub, is undergoing treatment at this time; therefore, the subcommittee is not expecting her to collate the brochure photographs while ill.
-John said the Issues Committee is still working on the Municipal Development Plan. They will meet in the next 2 weeks.
-10 GN volunteers and friends spent the morning cleaning up the Brier Run area by the Family Leisure Centre this Earth Day. John reported over 200 people, organized by the Parks and Recreation Department and SEAWA, volunteered to assist with clean up in other parts of the City the same morning.
Martha Munz Gue and others identified several wildflowers during the clean up. John suggested reporting flower finds to Alberta Plant Watch at plantwatch.naturealberta.ca where plant descriptions and more may be found.
 - b. **Field trips Update and BioBlitz 150:** Gary Martin/John Slater Please note that there have been changes to the list originally published in the February Chronicle. See each monthly Chronicle for Field trip updates. (Dave McKenzie will also post a Calendar App.in the May Chronicle that will enable members to view updates on their phone once synced).

Some upcoming field trips and Webinars are listed below:

- May 2, Neighbourhood Walk along Seven Persons Creek starting at 10:30 am.
 - May 6, Field Trip to Wildhorse Area, meet at Tim Horton's at 7:00 am. (This is #6 Birding Trail route).
 - May 9, Neighbourhood Walk around the NE Storm water Retention Ponds. Meet N.Hill Co-op.
 - May 13, Annual Field Trip to Sauder's/Murray Reservoir. Meet A&W Gershaw Dr. 7:30 am.
- John noted the Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan has 2 webinars coming up soon. They are:
- April 26, Counting Birds for Conservation at 12:00 pm
 - May 3, The Saskatchewan Master Naturalist Program: Creating Citizen Scientists at 12:00 pm

- c. **Indoor Program Speakers:** Dave McKenzie. Dustin Zdan, Superintendent of the Connaught Golf Course will speak about Operation Pollination.
The June speaker will be Rob Bouchier from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lethbridge, speaking on Bio Control of Leafy Spurge. Perhaps this speaker could speak at the June pot luck.
- d. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh Armstrong reported that the committee is still waiting for \$150,000.00 from the Co-op Community Spaces Grant as well as the \$262,000.00 from CFEP to go toward the renovations and upgrade of the Nature Centre. Hopefully we should hear about this in May or June of this year.
He said the Birding Trails booklet funding has been approved by the Canadian Badlands Association.
John suggested that TD Friends of the Environment Foundation might be another possible source of funding for future projects.
- e. **Birding Trails Project:** Phil Horch noted there will be a meeting at his house on May 17 at 2:00 pm to do some concluding work. Phil will give a presentation, possibly May 18, to the Medicine Hat Accommodation Association.
- f. **Bird Tales Update:** Dee Armstrong reported the (former) Masterpiece Retirement residence received a second donation of 50 wooden "comfort birds" today. Twenty more birds are to be donated to another floor of the residence. Dee noted Alberta Health Services checked the wild bird feeding areas outside, and was satisfied with the hygiene and sanitation despite some staff complaints about bird droppings. As always, more volunteers are needed to make the Bird Tales Program successful.
- g. **Communications Committee:** Angela absent.

9. New Business:

- a. **Bird Watching Tours to Cdn. Badlands and S.E. Alberta:** Hugh contacted the Canadian Badlands Association about their AGM which will be held here in March 2018. Perhaps GN can facilitate something with them. CBA will have more information at a later date. Approximately 400 people attended the Association's 2017 AGM in Brooks.
- b. **Tree Wrapping:** Saturday April 29, four people will be needed for the tree wrapping event. Some members of the Geocache club may assist with wrapping during PP Park clean up.
- c. **Endowment Reminder with CFSEA:** John reminded members that GN has an endowment fund set up with the Community Foundation of Southeastern Alberta. Donations may be bequeathed through a Will, or given now.

10. Other Business:

- a. **Webcam Project and Update:** Hugh said there is nothing to report at this time since the webcam is shut down until fall when feeding starts again. Hugh would like to arrange a tour of the Heron area once the birds have settled. The eventual goal would be to set up a webcam to observe the Herons.
- b. **Medicine Hat Accommodation Association:** Next meeting is May 18th. Hugh will contact Laurie from the Association, and ask Phil Horch to attend the May or June meeting.
- c. **2017 Civic Recognition Award:** May 25 at the Esplanade, 6:30 pm arrival suggested. Well-deserved congratulations to John Slater on being nominated and elected for the award.
- d. **Nature Alberta:** Gary Martin, GN representative, could not attend the AGM in Edmonton due to illness. He did report that N.A. has been in existence for 45 years and noted three of the programs they promote are; 1) Nature Kids (2) Living by the Water and (3) Birds and Biodiversity. The current President is Lu Carbyn.
- e. **Next Board Meeting:** Tuesday, May 2 2017 at Ian and Angela's house.
- f. Adjournment at 7:58 pm. 15 people in attendance.
- g. Refreshment Break.
- h. Program 8:15 pm. Attendance 16 people. Speaker: Don Watson. P.Biol. Stewardship Co-ordinator/Project Manager: Operations Grassland Community (OGC). Alberta Fish and Game.