

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
Minutes of General Meeting, February 26, 2019
Police Point Park..

1. Call to Order 7:03 pm with Hugh Armstrong presiding and Betty Rainville, Secretary.
2. Review of General Minutes from January 22, 2019:
Hugh Armstrong noted the Great Horned Owl he reported at the last GM under the heading Exciting Sightings, was not found on a perch. However, it was found frozen and in perfect condition. He has reported this find.
Minutes were then Adopted. CARRIED
3. Exciting Sightings: Members reported the following sightings:
Angela Turner saw 2 Richardson's Ground Squirrels on January 10th
On Saturday, February 23rd Corlaine spotted 2 Robins, then 25 more in Marlborough Coulee near the College.
She also saw about 12 Cedar Waxwings.
Hugh spotted a Cooper's Hawk in his back yard eating a Collared Dove.
4. Treasurer's Report and Membership: Eileen Cowtan reported a balance as of Feb. 26th 2019 in the Chequing Account of \$4,885.49, and a balance of \$16,413.66 in the GN "Club" Savings Account as of Feb. 26th The Casino Account balance stands presently at \$3,190.83.
Eileen noted that Insurance costs the IP and GN "Club" \$4,725.00, which is a major expense.
Casino funds may pay part of the cost.
There was some discussion with various members present on what Insurance covers. Marty Drut suggested more detailed information be put in the Sagebrush Chronicle regarding why we have Insurance, and what it does. This topic will be put on the upcoming Board Agenda.
Eileen reported about half of the individual or family memberships have renewed to bring the present count to 44.
5. Correspondence: the only correspondence Eileen reported consists of forms to be filled in.
6. Priority Business:
 - a. **New Board and Committee Members needed:** Hugh thanked Phil Horch for allowing his name to stand as new Board member. Hugh reported GN needs 1 more member on the Board as President. Two additional members are needed on the Operations Committee as well as the Issues Committee.
 - b. **World Water Day/Week:** Angela Turner has volunteered to set up the GN Table at the Public Library. Martha suggested the GN display table also advertise our upcoming AGM during WW Day/Week.
 - c. **Birds of Prey, Coaldale:** Hugh reported that B. of P. already receives significant corporate donations. He suggested members may make donations as individuals if they wish. The website is found at www.burrowingowl.com
Martha Munz Gue suggested the Field Trip Committee could set up a trip to Birds of Prey for members to learn more about the facility.
 - d. **UERAB Urban Environment and Recreation Advisory Board:** Martha Munz Gue gave an oral report for Marilou Montemayor who is a member of UERAB and also of SEAWA. Marilou was not able to attend tonight's GN meeting. (See Issues Committee Report below, item 8.a.1, **Scope of UERAB** which explains Marilou's proposal).
 - e. **Location and start time of March AGM:** Hugh reported the AGM will likely be held in the Honor Currie Room at the Public Library with a start time of 6:30 pm. However, he will also check with Anne to see if the Library Theatre is available. The Theatre would be a better room for Rick Andrew's presentation on Sea Wolves of British Columbia.
7. **Interpretive Program Report:** Corlaine reported the Nature Centre renovations are almost completed. Staff is gradually moving items back into the Centre.
Corlaine said the Kiwanis Family Day program on February 18th was quite successful with approximately 350 people attending. She thanked the volunteers who helped make the day a success.
The following week was busy, Corlaine reported, with many children coming out to snowshoe.
The 5th Annual Seedy Saturday will be held March 16th with the Community Food Connections Association, Family & Community Support Services, and the MH Interpretive Program. The Horticultural Society will be attending, as well as Valerie Martin with her permaculture display, and other participants.
The Annual Easter celebrations at the Nature Centre will be held in late April this year from April 19-22nd. Corlaine stressed the need for volunteers at this very popular event.
Corlaine reported that the Nature Centre signed a contract with the Provincial Government to receive \$71,000 over the next 3 years. The Provincial Government is recognizing work that the Nature Centre and other groups like GN do, Corlaine said.
In late March there will be a Party for Volunteers where attendees may practice egg dyeing, as well as enjoying other activities.
Main Floor Carpets supplied the complimentary protective carpet for the Nature Centre's Meeting Room floor Corlaine noted.

She said new desks and shelving for the Centre was provided by Janet Hamilton with the Royal Bank Medicine Hat. Thank you Janet.

The Centre is hoping for a new AV Projector and possibly new chairs. Jamie McLeod with the City, Hugh Armstrong, and David Gue met to discuss this recently.

Marty Drut and Gerry Ehlert explained the upcoming May 4th Workshop:

It will run from 11:00 am to 4 pm at the Nature Centre.

They have contacted Nurseries, and Realtor Associations, and hope to contact School Boards.

The Horticultural Society will sponsor the morning snacks, but funding is needed for the lunch. Methanex will indicate by February 28th whether or not it will provide financial support for the Workshop.

Some presenters include Cathy Linowski from MH College, Nicole Kimmel- Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist, as well as many others. There may be Learning Tables placed outside the Centre. City Parks Department and Municipal Bylaw staff will be attending.

Marty reminded members there may be a need for some volunteers. Please contact him about volunteering.

8. Committee Reports:

a. **Issues Committee:** Martha Munz Gue gave an oral report at tonight's meeting. Following is her written report:

Composition of Committee. We welcome Gerry Ehlert to the committee and acknowledge John Slater's need to take leave from leadership for now. Other members include Marty Drut, Dave McKenzie, Tina Regehr and Hugh Armstrong. We welcome any GN member interested in helping Grasslands Naturalists address environmental issues.

We tackled three issues this month:

Scope of EURAB. The lack of time spent on environmental issues at the UERAB meeting has been a continual problem since environmental advisement was folded into the existing Parks and Rec Advisory Board. President Hugh Armstrong, Gerry Ehlert, and I met with Marilou Montemayer at the SEAWA office to discuss proposed changes to the scope of the advisory committee to include all four parameters of the environment: air, water, land and biodiversity. Marilou shared her proposal which she also presented to the SEAWA executive the same day. Following the meeting with us from GN at noon and with the SEAWA executive in the afternoon, Marilou changed the SEAWA proposal to this (on phone).

GN may choose to write a letter in support of the SEAWA position, or we may choose to put our own priorities into a separate letter – or carry on with the situation as it is now.

Incorporation Low Impact Development Standards, and those of Livable Cities, and Smart Growth into permits granted. Permits currently attend to the minimum standards legislated by the province rather than to best practices in SG, LC, and LID. In making an appointment to see the mayor about this ongoing issue, I was asked to describe the concern. Today I was phoned by Imram Ahmed, Manager of Development Services, and Erin Onofrychuk, Superintendent of Planning Implementation. They advised that a letter be sent to the Planning Department. They advised that I send the letter ASAP as a private citizen, and then share that letter with GN who may wish to back it up – or not. The situation is timely because if it gets written into the MDP and subsequently into municipal legislation, and planning guidelines, then those are the standards by which permits will be approved. Until then, we continue on with the minimum required by Provincial Legislation.

Invasive Species. Gerry Ehlert and Marty Drut have plans for an Invasive Species Workshop to be held May 4, 2019. Speakers are lined up and grants have been applied for. Volunteers will be needed on the day of the Workshop to handle logistics.

Announcements of Events coming up:

Water Week at the Public Library. March 17 to 22, 2019, GN will have a display table. The Paddling Film Festival will be on the Tuesday. The film Anthropocene will be shown Friday afternoon. This year SEAWA is taking the lead on organizing the water week events at the library.

SEAWA Spring Forum. Friday, April 5th. 8 am to 2:30 ish. The topic is "Water management", and we have people talking about everything from the Water Act to future water supply forecasts, etc. it will take place at the Medicine Hat Cultural Centre room CC169. GN is invited to have an info table and to lead a walk around the college pond. This could

take 15 minutes during the lunch break.

Invasive Species Workshop May 4, 2019 at the Nature Centre.

EcoTrust Environmental Gathering. While the Issues committee has the budget to send someone to this gathering we will not be attending, because it is the same date as the SEAWA Spring Forum (April 4)

End of Issues Committee Report. More Committee Reports follow below with 8.b.

- b. **MHIP/Operations Committee:** No Report
 - c. **Field Trip Committee:** John Slater wrote that the next event will be Ben Verner's Annual Birding Trip to Manyberries on Saturday March 30th. Meet at 6:00 am at Tim Hortons along Dunmore Road across from the MH Mall. John sent a written request regarding member preferences for Tuesday or Wednesday morning Neighbourhood Walks. However, the show of hands didn't give a clear indication. John noted that Neighbourhood walks will likely start in April because of snow pack and weather.
 - d. **Indoor Program Speakers:** Tonight's speaker will be Dr. David Larson on Goodbye Prairie Rose.
 - e. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh reported that he will find out shortly if Methanex will provide the \$2,800.00 requested.
 - f. **Birding Trails:** No report.
 - g. **Bird Tales Update:** No report
 - h. **Communication Committee:** Angela reported that the Committee met, and will go ahead on website updates. Paul Thibault will get quotes from several software companies.
 - i. **Nature Alberta:** Angela noted NA will be picking a date for their next meeting in Edmonton.
9. New Business:
- a. **Litter Blitz Day April 20th:** Ian and Angela will be organizing the Ranchland area Clean-up, but it falls on Easter Sunday. Marty noted this is one of the busiest days at the Nature Centre because of Easter celebrations. Hugh will talk to Keziah Lesko Gosselin to explain the conflict in dates for GN.
 - b. **SEAWA –Working Well Workshop March 7:** County of Warner Ag. Service Board Bldg. Information handouts are available at the front table at tonight's meeting.
10. Other Business:
- a. **Ecotrust Conference Calgary April 4th and 5th:** Interested GN members contact Martha for information.
 - b. **Casino Volunteering:** Contact Dave McKenzie 403 527-1701
 - c. **Next Board Meeting:** Tuesday March 5, 2019, 1:30 pm at Ian and Angela's house.
 - d. **Adjournment** after 8:00 pm. Attendance 25.
 - e. **Refreshment Break**
 - f. **Program Start:** close to 8:30 pm. Speaker Dr. David Larson on Goodbye Prairie Rose.