

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS  
(Draft) Minutes of General Meeting September 26, 2017  
Police Point Park

1. Call to Order: 7 pm. Bill Knibbs asked for a moment of silence in support of member Bev Slater who is ill at this time.
2. Review of General Minutes from May 23, 2017. Adopted, CARRIED.
3. Exciting Sightings: Rob Gardner reported seeing an innumerable number of gannets while touring Scotland recently. Gannets are the largest seabird in Europe, close to a metre in length and with a wingspan of around two metres. Scotland holds more breeding gannets than does anywhere else in the North Atlantic.  
Bill Knibbs commented that his son Jason noticed a beaver on River Road actually removing some beaver-proof mesh near City Hall.
4. Treasurer's Report and Membership: Eileen reported the GN Club balance stands at \$3,397.37. She said Hugh Armstrong has worked hard as fund-raising Chair.  
The Casino balance is \$6,470.21. Eileen noted the Casino fund is useful because it can be used for items directly related to program expenses.  
The MHIP balance stands at a total of \$95,890.58 with \$87,610.19 in the TD Account and \$8,280.39 in the Servus Account.  
The Savings account for Grasslands Naturalists club has a balance of \$20,333.90.  
Membership total is 80 consisting of 36 individuals and 44 families. Eileen noted SEAWA has taken out a membership with GN.
5. Correspondence: Eileen received 1 letter for Hugh.
6. Priority Business:
  - a. **Casino Volunteers:** At tonight's meeting Dave McKenzie passed around a sheet of Casino times and dates for volunteers to confirm their assigned duties.
  - b. **Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup September 30:** Hugh asked members if anyone could direct this effort since John Slater was unable to. Wendy Blackwell volunteered. Thank you Wendy.
  - c. **Five GN positions to be filled:** These include Board Member, GN rep for Nature Alberta, Indoor Speaker coordinator, Field Trip Chair, GN rep on SEAWA. The Indoor Speakers are booked until May 2018. Thank you Dave!  
Angela Turner will speak to Martha about duties involved with being a GN rep for Nature Alberta.
7. Interpretive program Report: Corlaine Gardner noted there are lots of activities happening:  
Strathcona Centre is hosting a week of activities for Active Aging Week from September 24-30.  
Thursday, September 28, starting at the Strathcona Centre, Corlaine and Greg Campbell will lead a Nature Walk focused on bringing balance to our spirits and souls.  
As part of Alberta Culture Days from September 29 to 31<sup>st</sup> PP Park will host storywalk on Sept. 29, 4:30 pm near the Public Library. Culture on the Street also includes author readings, Art Walk, dancing and more.  
On October 1 from 11 am to 3 pm the Annual Fall festival & Miywasin Kitchen Party takes place at Police Point Park. Lisa has a volunteer sign-up sheet at tonight's meeting.  
Lisa Bey will be giving a talk on Backyard Birds at the Nature Centre on October 14, and Marty will be leading a walk on October 21 at 5:30 pm called Beavers-See them in Action. Meet at the Nature Centre.  
Corlaine noted she would meet with designers tomorrow to discuss major upgrades to the Nature Centre. The goal is to finish the project by Easter 2018.
8. Committee Reports:
  - a. **Issues Committee:** Written report from John Slater:
    - 1) For the joint GN and City Parks Dept. project, Beaver activity was surveyed in Strathcona Island Park, Lion's Park, Police Point Park and Harlow Kiwanis River Park, and then 360 trees were wrapped involving 66 person-hours.
    - 2) Over 500 Baby's Breath plants in Brier Run were flagged for the City Parks Dept. to spray, and over 525 plants were removed from NECH, Police Point Park, SE Hill and East Glen Coulee involving over 30 person-hours.
    - 3) The GPS location of Leafy Spurge in Strathcona Island Park and Lion's Park and along River Road were recorded and reported to the City's Parks Dept. for spraying.
    - 4) A draft layout of the Wildflower Brochure has been completed by Judith Golub in Edmonton for review and finalizing. Dwayne Myers created a website of the wildflower pictures, and a Rack card was printed and distributed to advertise the website.

John suggested having Wildflower Rack Cards available to hand out at the General Meeting, as well as the general GN rack cards, and the Birding Trails Guide.

Hugh asked members to pick up some available cards. He commented on the good job that was done on the rack cards.

b. **Field Trip Update and BioBlitz 150.** Thank you to Gary Martin for his past work setting up Field Trips for GN. Phil mentioned there was no wind on the Field trip to Sauder Reservoir on Saturday morning, September 16. Surprisingly, 200 to 300 Sand Hill Cranes were seen, which was a high number for that area. Approximately 65- 70 species of birds were seen in total, as well as shorebirds at the Reservoir. The GN bird watching group did not get to Murray Lake on this trip because of the time spent at Sauder.

c. **Indoor Program Speakers:** Tonight's speaker is Vern Hyde speaking on Cycling Across Canada to assist a school in Ethiopia.

Wendy Nuttall, Photographer, is booked for October's meeting.

d. **Fund Raising Committee:** no changes.

e. **Bird trails Project:** Phil Horch noted over 1000 volunteer hours have been spent creating a birding trails booklet for Southern Alberta. GN members saw the binder which is waiting publication. After showing members various birding trail guides from United States, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, Phil explained why the format of the Manitoba Guide is preferable. This guide will help to establish sensitive habitats and develop eco-tourism. Rob Gardner noted the guide will also reduce potential conflict between birders and local landowners.

A very positive letter to the GN President from a birder in Nanoose Bay, B.C. was read aloud.

Hugh then explained the background to the motion passed by the Board on September 5, 2017. The Birding Trails Committee is ready to proceed with the design and printing of 2500 copies of the Birding Trail Guide. The successful bid from Flag-5 Design estimated a budget of \$15,000.00 which was initially believed to be covered by Canadian Badlands Tourism (CBT), consisting of \$12,000.00 plus 25% (\$3,000.00) to cover GN's work-in-kind-contribution. However, after further consultation with the government, CBT indicated to GN this would have to be cash rather than work-in-kind. Also, the 25% would come off the \$12,000.00 rather than added to it. Therefore, instead of CBT funding the entire \$15,000.00, it would cover \$9,000.00 and GN the remaining \$6,000.00. CBT then suggested it could double the \$12,000.00 with a matching Tourism Alberta Cooperative Grant for a total of \$24,000.00. It was then decided we needed a written agreement between CBT and GN to ensure both parties fully understood the funding from CBT and the associated GN cash contributions. A clause of this agreement allows GN to have until the end of January, 2018 to come up with our funds thus allowing us to apply for further grant money to cover our share. It must be kept in mind that all the work and printing needs to be finalized by the end of February 2018.

With this in mind, the Board met and passed a motion on September 5. At tonight's General Meeting it was moved that **“the funding requirements for the Birding Trails Booklet be presented at the GM of September 26<sup>th</sup> and recommends to the membership a funding amount of \$3,000.00. This amount will be dispersed to Canadian Badlands Tourism (CBT) prior to January 31, 2018. In the interim the Fund Raising Committee will continue to search for grants which can be dispersed prior to February 2018, as described in the agreement between Grasslands Naturalists and CBT. Should CBT acquire the additional funds from Tourism Alberta prior to February 2018, no additional fund will be required”.**

The above motion was Seconded and CARRIED at tonight's General Meeting.

f. **Communications Committee:** Angela Turner thanked Anne Bernhardt and Eileen Cowtan for hosting a GN display table at the September 16<sup>th</sup> Farmer's Market.

Angela has put together two baskets of stuffies, books Rack Cards and more for the MH Faculty upcoming auction.

g. **WebCam Project:** Hugh reported the robotics have arrived for the webcam. It will hopefully be installed by mid-October. Lisa Bey asked if set-up would be possible before her October 14<sup>th</sup> presentation on Backyard Birding, at the Nature Centre. Hugh will check with Paul Thibault.

9. New Business:

a. **Personal Information Protection:** Eileen reported that FOIP does not apply to GN member email addresses, however PIPA (Personal Information Protection Act) may apply. She requested that members let her know if there are any concerns with personal information.

b. **UERAB:** Dave McKenzie noted he met with UERAB last Wednesday. The group is looking for local parks to be named after local people, for example early pioneers. One member suggested the Millington family, who lived at the present Echo Dale Farm. Another member suggested using John Slater's name for a park in the Marlborough area of Medicine Hat.

Rob Gardner suggested submitting a paragraph explaining why a particular name and park would be appropriate.

Hugh then recommended that members email paragraphs to Dave McKenzie.

c. **Jane's Walk:** Urban design in the Downtown and Riverside-Jane's Walk. Tina Regehr reported the walk starts at City Hall on September 30 at 10:00 am. Space is limited. Register by emailing [planning@medicinehat.ca](mailto:planning@medicinehat.ca)

- d. **Capital Budget Request** from the City: Hugh explained the project sheet from Parks Planning and Development to be filled out by October 20 with suggestions from GN members for potential projects. Some suggestions from members included goats and sheep for invasive weeds, solar and wind power projects, and establishing the environmental & cultural interpretive park Ranchlands Phase 2F&G Environmental Reserve.
10. Other Business:
- a. **SEAWA Public Education Forum** November 2, Medicine Hat Lodge 8 am to 2:30 pm. Free. Registration details out soon. Riparian Health and Water Quality Display/Presentation from Nature Centre? (SEAWA funding possible to landowners for riparian health assessments).  
Hugh asked who would sit at the GN table? Angela Turner has the banner.
  - b. **Location of next year's AGM** March 27, 2018: Anne Bernhardt will check with the MH Public Library. The AGM cannot be held at the Nature Centre because of renovations.
  - c. **Budgets due:** Committee Chairs to have Budget amounts to Paul Thibault by November 1, 2017.
  - d. **CFEP Grant:** no change
  - e. **Divika Shaw, World Wildlife Fund:** Canada blog at [blog.wwf.ca/blog/author/devika](http://blog.wwf.ca/blog/author/devika) (GN invasive plant work reported)  
Hugh suggested looking up the Living Plant Report, Sept. 15 blog.
  - f. **Next Board Meeting:** Tuesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> 6:30 pm at Betty's house, Dunmore.
  - g. **Adjournment** at 8:00 pm. Attendance 32
  - h. **Program** 8:15 pm. Attendance 33. Speaker Vern Hyde on Cycling Across Canada for an Ethiopian School.