

(Draft) SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
Minutes of General Meeting, February 28, 2017
Police Point Park

1. Call to Order 7:05 pm by Hugh Armstrong-chair. Betty Rainville-Secretary. 21 members were in attendance.
2. Review of General Meeting Minutes from January 24, 2017. Hugh noted that #3. of Exciting Sightings should be "...a leucistic **Magpie** was seen..." not a leucistic **Blue Jay**.
In addition, #8 e. should state, "An application has been **submitted** to CFEP...", rather than "An application has been **approved** from CFEP..."
Minutes were then Adopted. Motion CARRIED.
3. Exciting Sightings: Milt Spitzer and Elaine saw a cow Moose at Police Point Park on Saturday, February 25. Valerie Martins saw a leucistic deer at Police Point Park, and one was seen in Riverside area.
4. Treasurer's Report and Membership: Eileen absent.
5. Correspondence: Eileen absent.
6. Priority Business:
 - a. **Nominations for Board:** Bill Knibbs stated he would stand for position of Nomination Chairman. If there are any nominations from the floor, they are to be directed to Bill. The entire Board has decided to let their names stand for another term.
 - b. **Committee Volunteers and Committee Reports for AGM:** Hugh reported that we need people to volunteer. He suggests going on line and deciding which positions attract your interest,
Hugh reminded Committee Chairs that Annual Reports are needed at the upcoming AGM. Please email them to Paul in the next 2 weeks.
 - c. **New Casino Manager:** Gary Martin is stepping down as Casino Manager. Hugh noted this is a once every 13 to 18 month position, but someone is required for the upcoming Casino dates of September 28 and 29. The Manager has to submit all paper work 60 days before the Casino date, supervise financial transactions, and set up a schedule for volunteers.
 - d. **Canadian Badlands AGM and Tourism March 15-17:** 2-4 more volunteers to supervise the GN display table at the AGM would mean shorter volunteer times for all the groups. GN will have the banner up, rack cards, and a display from Riparian Assessment from the Interpretive Program.
Canadian Badlands have replied to Hugh about the Bird Trails presentation and stated we are on the short list for funding.
 - e. **World Water Day March 22:** GN will have a display at the Public Library that day. Elaine Spitzer kindly volunteered to help, but some GN members present at the General Meeting said no-one would be needed to supervise the table that day.
 - f. **March GN AGM:** The AGM will be held at the Nature Centre on March 28 at 6:30 pm.
Anne Bernhardt and Angela Turner have volunteered to provide snacks for the meeting.
7. Interpretive Program Report: Marty reported that Corlaine and Rob Gardner will return on March 8 or 10. Marty will be away from March 6 to 13.
He thanked the generous volunteers who helped with the approximately 1,300 attendees on the February 20 Kiwanis Family Day Program. A Chinook provided good weather, so there were other activities rather than skiing.
4 to 5 volunteers were assigned just to parking duties, and the same procedure will be followed during Easter festivities. Members of the Fire Department and the City were present to observe.
Marty reported that the 3 new displays in the main area of the Nature Centre were made available from 2 grants from Land Stewardship Centre. The displays are a Wetland Identification guide, Ariel surveys, and finally a display of the results of the Riparian Assessment-which is not quite completed.
He noted the Nature Centre remodelling will take place in the spring or summer, 2017.
Sunday, March 19 @ 2:00 pm at the Nature Centre, Bill Frank and Brian Walters will present a classical guitar program to celebrate spring.

Marty stressed the need for volunteers for the upcoming Easter Weekend (April 14 to 17) when 5,000 to 6,000 people attend over 4 days. Volunteers are also needed to staff the main desk and organize school children over the 2 week Chicks and Bunnies event. Please contact Lisa Bey at the Nature Centre. Evidently she is having a birthday tomorrow, March 1. Happy Birthday Lisa!

A meeting was held on **Projects and Partnerships 2017** with Doug Knowles on February 15. The City requires volunteers for the following projects:

-tree wrapping

-I.D. Leafy Spurge by flagging, not picking

-Pollination Project in PPP. Location to be determined.

-GPS locations of beaver lodges.

Please contact Lisa if you can volunteer.

8. Committee Reports:

- a. **Issues Committee:** John Slater texted a report to Hugh since John was out of town. Hopefully the Wildflower Brochure will be available by April 22, 2017.
Gary Martin is the contact person for an upcoming 2 hour Greenhouse Tour at Chinook Greenhouses on Bridge Street on March 11.
- b. **Field Trips Update and BioBlitz 150:** Gary Martin/ John Slater
Gary reported the upcoming summer will be a busy one with the list of Field Trips and Activities planned. Each month the pertinent events will be detailed in the Chronicle.
- c. **Indoor Program Speakers:** Dave McKenzie reported the March speaker would be someone from Alberta Conservation Association speaking on MULTISAR. (The speaker has now been confirmed as Rachel Whitehouse, Rangeland Agrologist)
April's speaker will be Don Watson on Grassland Community.
May's presenter will likely be Dustin Zdan from Connaught Golf Course, on Operation Pollination Project.
June's speaker will be Rob Bouchier Ph.D. on the topic of Biological Control of Leafy Spurge.
- d. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh Armstrong reported that all applications for grants are in, with approximately \$412,000.00 of grant applications yet to be received. (\$262,000.00 from Community Facility Enhancement Program should be in by the end of March. \$150,000.00 is expected by the 1st of May from the Co-op funding grants), and \$1,000.00 will likely be received from Walmart to go toward the Bird Tales Program.
Hugh reported that \$1000.00 was received from the Alberta Native Plant Council (ANPC) to go toward the Wildflower brochure, as well as \$500.00 received from the Horticultural Society. The only big endeavor remaining is the Webcam project which could start in fall 2017 or Spring 2018, depending on the nesting activity of the Eagles.
- e. **Birding Trails Project:** Milt Spitzer. There has been no change. By the end of March we hope to hear that Canadian Badlands Association will fund the 45 page Birding Trails booklet.
- f. **Bird Tales Update:** Hugh reported for Dee Armstrong that the Bird Tales project is continuing despite a bit of difficulty restarting at Masterpiece Retirement. The project is doing well at Meadowlands. No third location has been started yet.
- g. **Communication Committee:** Angela Turner reported that she took the new GN banner back to Boylan Imaging today. There was a small flaw in the material that might have affected the appearance of the display.

9. New Business:

- a. **Request for Proposal for Echo Dale I.P.:** Hugh asked if there were any questions or concerns from members regarding the last general email from the Board. He said a general bidding process was sent out from the City which is open now until March 2. Hugh said the short time factor allowed was detrimental to accepting the proposal as there were too many questions and concerns about the project; as well as the fear that GN's non-profit status with Canada Revenue Agency might be affected. He said GN could set up a committee should the opportunity arise another time, with a longer timeline.
- b. **2017 Civic Recognition Awards in May:** Hugh noted that March 17 is the deadline to nominate a GN member or non-member for this award. Go to www.medicinehat.ca/index?page=16&recordid+2918 to obtain necessary forms. The presentation will be made May 25 at the Esplanade.

10. Other Business:

- a. **Webcam Project and Update:** Hugh reported that the project is working well at the Nature Centre with 1,400 web visits recorded so far.
The robotics feature of the Webcam that enables pan and tilt will hopefully be completed this fall, 2017.
- b. **SEAWA , Rural Stewardship Forum March 10:** Please register by March 1 by going to the SEAWA web site. Lunch is provided, and there is no charge for lunch or parking. GN has not been asked yet to have a display table available.
- c. **Medicine Hat Accommodation Association:** A meeting was held February 9. A GN member, possibly Phil Horch, will give a presentation in May or June of this year to the Association.
- d. **Potential Draft of MOU (Mutual of Understanding) between Praxis and SEAWA:** The GN Board has decided that it is acceptable to go forward with this Potential Draft. They believe it is fine to interact with Praxis and SEAWA, but that GN will not finance anything, neither will GN be responsible for funding.
- e. **Next Board Meeting** is Tuesday March 7, 2017 at Anne Bernhardt's home. Hugh invited the general membership to attend by giving notice a day or two prior to the Board meeting.
- f. Adjournment at 7:40 pm.
- g. Refreshment Break.
- h. Program 8:05 pm with 27 people in attendance. Sarah McPike spoke on Wasps and their Potential use in Biocontrol.