

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
Minutes of General Meeting, January 28, 2020
Police Point Park..

1. Call to Order: 7:08 pm with Hugh Armstrong presiding and Betty Rainville, Secretary.
2. Review of General Minutes from November 26, 2019.
Business arising from these Minutes-See item 6a.re. UERAB Application.
Hugh reported that Gerry Ehlert has been accepted as a GN member on the City advisory board, UERAB.
Minutes of General Minutes were then Adopted. **CARRIED**
3. Exciting Sightings:
 - Milt and Elaine Spitzer reported a Varied Thrush around the Nature Centre recently.
 - Eric Vokes reported seeing a Pileated Woodpecker at Police Point Park, and 3 others along the river across from PP Park.
 - Dan Schiebelbein saw 3 Short-eared Owls on R.R. 71-North of Township Rd. 120.
 - Hugh noted seeing a large coyote close to his dog in the off-leash area at 6:30 a.m.
 - Martha saw a Woodpecker and a Chickadee.
 - Dan Shiebelbein viewed a Townsend Solitaire in his backyard, and a mink in Seven Persons Creek.
 - Eric Vokes also reported seeing a Mocking Bird and Greater white-fronted goose at Lethbridge.
 - A new member reported recording a video of 3 local beavers.
4. Treasurer's Report and Membership: Eileen reported a balance in the Chequing Account as of January 28, of \$4,518.53, and a balance of \$16,526.65 in the GN "Club" Savings Account, for a total of \$21,045.18.
Eileen that about half of the GN members sign up in the month of January. She estimated that we may reach 90 members when everyone has signed up this year.
5. Correspondence: Eileen noted that a letter was received from Paul Strickland, who was the first president of Grasslands Naturalists from 1986 to 1990.
6. Priority Business:
 - a. **New Committee members are needed:** Hugh noted the Committees usually meet 2 or 3 times/year. Board members meet 10 times/year. Three members-at-large are appointed to the Board, while the President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary are part of the executive.
Eileen noted the Treasurer's job is not onerous, and she would be happy to start training someone for the position. She suggested anyone interested could come to a monthly Board meeting.
 - b. **Written Nomination for Lifetime Membership due to Board 60 days before March AGM:**
Hugh reported that one written nomination has been received by the Board.
 - c. **Volunteers needed for pre-meeting setup Feb. 25 at the Nature Centre:** Hugh thanked Ian and Angela for volunteering tonight.
Elaine Spitzer outlined the duties which include buying snacks and picking up a key for the Nature Centre. Talk to Elaine, Milt, Ian, or Angela for more information. Volunteers should arrive by 6:30 pm.
 - d. **Ask Members:** (1) GM Agenda on screen at meetings (2) Wildlife/Nature photos on screen during GMs
Hugh suggested that an agenda on screen would save paper and allow all attending members to see it. Photos on screen would allow members to share their outstanding wildlife/nature photography.
Moved that wildlife/nature photographs be displayed overhead before the meeting, and that the General Meeting Agenda be displayed on screen during the meeting. **CARRIED**
7. Interpretive Program Report: Corlaine noted the following:
 - The Art Show on display, "Young Artists Inspired by Nature", will be left up one extra week until Sunday. Corlaine contacted the high-schools involved, who agreed to extend the show. Members are encouraged to enjoy the display during refreshment break.
 - Last Saturday, January 25, was the opening of the new Storywalk, which is run in conjunction with the MH Public Library. The trail was a "sheet of ice" for Saturday morning, but the Library staff provided crafts and assistance at the Nature Centre. There was a good turn-out of about 120 people.
 - The Winter Walk next Wednesday, Feb.5 starting at 3 pm. at the Nature Centre, is a new event. Martha and John will lead the walk, and there will be hot chocolate provided after. (Winter Walk Day is a province-wide initiative to get Albertans up and moving. www.winterwalkday.ca). (See 8a below).
 - Family Day celebrations, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club, will be celebrated on Family Day February 17 from 11 am. to 4 pm. Corlaine noted that the Interpretive Program needs help with this.
Hugh asked about helping to put no parking signs out in the morning.

Marty has a Volunteer list at tonight's meeting for assistance with building bird houses, etc. There are also some related jobs that need doing before Family Day.

8. Committee Reports:

a. **Issues Committee:** Martha reported the following:

- See the poster Martha brought about Winter Walk Day, a provincial endeavor. (see item 7 above). The group will be registered and participant numbers will be recorded and sent in after the walk in PP Park.
- SEAWA "Winter Water Art Show" continues in the Arcade Plaza on 3rd Street Downtown, 419 3 St. SE. January through March: open at 11:30 am to 1:30 pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- The Issues Committee met January 23, 2020. Thanks to Tina Regehr who has done a great deal of work regarding City policies and more.
- Brier Run Development Open House revealed the Housing section will be built on unbroken prairie. (Plants will be transferred to the pond).
- 1) **Gather information:** Municipalities, GN, the College etc. on where the Natural Areas are. Phil Horch noted there used to be burrowing owls on the property to be developed. Betty Aitken offered to take photos of owls, for example, and archive the information.
- 2) **Plant Rescue Groups:** These exist in Edmonton. The plants are rescued and moved before development occurs. See Martha at the break if you are interested in volunteering.
- 3) **Value of the Complexity of Unbroken Spaces:** City leaders need to know this. Education of the decision-makers.
- Climate Conversations continue at Café Verve Fridays at 4 pm.

David Gue commented that planners need to look at costs, and balance it with the benefits.

Rob asked how far do we want to go with Wind Farms? The Club needs to look ahead and look at the "bigger picture".

John Slater and Gerry Ehler have been investigating research on wind farms. 3 towers produce 3% of power in the City of Medicine Hat.

b. **MHIP/Operations Committee:** Hugh reported there were no meetings held, and no issues.

c. **Field Trips and events:** from Chronicle

- (Storywalk, Winter Walk Day, and Kiwanis Family Day were all covered in the I.P. Report by Corlaine in Item 7 above).
 - Tuesdays & Saturdays to March end: X-Country ski in Elkwater. For details contact jslater@telusplanet.net or cell 403-866-8415, or home 403-526-7003. Carpooling available.
- Angela noted that one skier reported having to ski in from the road.

d. **Indoor Program Speakers:** Linda Fisher reported that Brent Smith will be speaking tonight on the New Agroecology Program at MH College.

The February speaker will be Roxanne Doerksen presenting, "Worms are Awesome".

March presenters will be Rob and Corlaine speaking about one of their trips and showing slides.

In April, Paul Von Huene will be speaking on the June 2010 flood in southern Alberta.

The May speaker will be Brian Keating. GN members are encouraged to attend his Part 1 presentation at the Esplanade at 7:00 pm on May 25, entitled "Going Wild". As of this GM date, there are only 125 tickets left at \$15.00/ticket.

Brian's Part 2 presentation will be held at the Nature Centre on May 26 with limited seating capacity. Contact Linda for more information.

e. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh noted there was nothing to report.

f. **Birding Trails:** Phil reported there was nothing new at this time.

Rob Gardner suggested that any GN members, who travel out of the city, take copies of the Birding Trail Guide with them for distribution.

g. **Bird Tales:** Hugh noted Sunnyside/South Country Village has been on lockdown for the past 3 weeks. Twenty-four out of forty residents are ill at the facility. The Bird Tales program may start up again next week, but that is uncertain.

Hugh explained that this project has been in existence for the past 3 years in Medicine Hat. Thanks to this Audubon based program, seniors in various facilities with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia have enjoyed wooden "comfort" birds, outdoor bird feeders and fountains, and terrariums made into "fairy" gardens.

To volunteer, contact Hugh, who will pass the information to program leaders Dee and Paul.

h. **Nature Alberta:** Ian and Angela Turner forwarded a January email to GN members regarding important updates for N.A.

One change includes having the online version of N.A. Magazine available at no charge to the general public. Go to info@naturealberta.ca for more information.

Nature Alberta staff expressed their respect for and gratitude to GN member Dennis Baresco for filling the position of magazine editor for the past 15 years.

9. New Business:

- a. **Letter of support from GN:** Hugh reported that the Board will send a letter supporting the development of an Environmental Master Plan for the City of Medicine Hat.
- b. **Palliser Air Shed Society:** David Gue reported he has been on this board for several years. The Air Shed Society has representatives from different areas of society and meets 4 times/year. David said the Society is currently revising its membership. He would be able to give a brief summary at the next GN General Meeting. Hugh will bring this topic up at the next Board meeting in February.
- c. **Two Native Speakers Webinars:** Hugh noted 2 upcoming webinars are:
 - Wednesday, Jan. 29 at 12:00 pm. **CST** Plovers on Shore: How Landowners are Conserving Endangered Piping Plovers in Saskatchewan. <https://www.pacp-sk.org/upcoming-events/pcap-speaker-series?>
 - Friday, Feb. 28 at 12:00 pm. **CST** How Alternative Grazing Practices Affect the Diversity and Abundance of Grassland Birds. (See website in previous entry).

10. Other Business:

- a. **Update on Methanex written or oral presentation:** Ian Turner reported that at the last Methanex CAP (Community Action Plan) meeting, the Environmental Specialist was away. Ian is not sure if a representative will come out to a GN meeting in the future.
Ian will get a response on this at the March CAP meeting.
- b. **Next Board Meeting:** Tuesday, Feb.4, 6:30 pm. at Betty's house
- c. **Adjournment:** 8:10 pm. Attendance at GM is 30.
- d. **Refreshment Break**
- e. **Program Start** 8:20 pm. Attendance approx.36. The speaker is Brent Smith, BSc in Biology, and Masters in Geography. Presentation: "The New Agroecology Program at MHC."