

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
Minutes of General Meeting November 28, 2017
Police Point Park.

1. Call to Order: 7:00 pm. Hugh Armstrong, Chair, asked GN Members to introduce themselves so new members attending would become acquainted.
2. Review of General Meeting Minutes from October 24: Hugh noted 6.a. only mentioned Angela Turner as the new Nature Alberta GN rep. Angela and Ian indicated they would co-chair the position in question. Thank you Ian. Adoption of General Minutes.
CARRIED.
3. Exciting Sightings: Milt Spitzer reported that Bob Frew saw a Northern Saw-whet Owl at Police Point Park. Wendy Blackwell saw a Northern Shrike successfully capture a sparrow. A herd of Pronghorn was seen near Costco. Linda Fisher remarked on a Snowy Owl she saw near Oyen on Sunday, November 26. And Corlaine Gardner mentioned a Moose seen by Redcliff River Park.
4. Treasurer's Report and Membership: Eileen reported the Casino Account stands at \$18,223.50, with proceeds from the last Casino at \$14,814.38. Eileen reported the GN balance in the Servus chequing account is \$2808.20, while the balance in the Servus savings account is \$20,335.63.

Membership stands at 83.

5. Correspondence: Eileen reported she had received a letter from the MH College Faculty Association thanking GN for the two baskets of gifts donated as prizes. Thanks to Angela Turner for arranging the baskets and working with the Faculty Association on the project.
6. Priority Business:
 - a. **Vacant Board and Committee positions:** Hugh reminded members that a Board Member-at-large is needed, as well as an External Organization rep for SEAWA, an Indoor Speaker Chair, and a Field Trip Chair. Linda Fisher volunteered to act as the Indoor Speaker Chair. Thank you Linda.
 - b. **GN Insurance Coverage:** Hugh noted the annual cost of insurance coverage is \$500.00. A percentage of the premium can be paid from the Casino account.
The approximate value of the MHIP contents are \$30,000.00. GN is responsible for that coverage.
7. **Interpretive Program Report:** Corlaine reported that a lot has been happening even though the school groups are slowing down.
 - a. The Lion's Club annual Hay Ride is booked for this Sunday afternoon, December 3rd at 1 to 4 pm. at P.P. Park.
 - b. Starting next Tuesday December 5, the works of Young Artists Inspired by Nature will be on display during December. Please come out and support these young artists. Mayor Clugston will speak at 7:15 pm at the event at the Nature Centre.
 - c. Unfortunately, Lisa Bey's last day of work for the I.P. will be December 9th. Volunteers are invited to attend a party for Lisa at Police Point Park December 10th.
 - d. The I.P. Contract renewal is supposed to be almost ready. Scott Richter said GN may be leasing the building.
 - e. Kiwanis Family Day celebrations are scheduled for February 19 at Echo Dale Park Swim Centre. Snow shoes, skies etc. will be available if there is sufficient snow.
 - f. Chicks and Bunnies School Programs are booked before Easter for March 19 to 30th in Kin Coulee Toboggan Kitchen Shelter. Volunteers are always needed for this event.
 - g. The Easter Weekend Extravaganza from March 30 to April 2 will be held at the Echo Dale Park Swim Centre. Again, volunteers are needed.
 - h. During upcoming construction, parts of the Nature Centre will remain open. Lots of events will still be happening here.
8. Committee Reports:
 - a. **Issues Committee: John Slater submitted the following written report:**
Last meeting was on Thursday Oct.26. Draft budget for 2018 was set.
Environmental Issues in the City's MDP were discussed at the joint SEAWA/City/GN meeting Oct 5th. Further meetings are to be held to discuss GN's input to the new MDP, including the environmental Significant and Sensitive sites in the City and surrounding area.
SEAWA/GN Partnership and Collaboration to be decided by the GN Board.
Plans for World Water Week in March 2018 being discussed with MH Public Library, SEAWA, Council of Canadians and Praxis. Suggest that the focus be on Riparian Health.
Wildflower brochure nearing final revisions before printing. Much appreciation to Dwayne Myers for collating the revisions and to Judith Golub for composing the brochure with many revisions. (Dwayne noted at tonight's meeting that the group is getting quotes from 3 different printers. The brochure may be ready in 3 weeks).

SEAWA Forum Nov. 2nd Tina Regehr and Marty Drut attended. Tina reported the forum was well-attended. She wrote that Robert Sissons, City Planning Department, is interested in attending another meeting to discuss the new MDP with GN and SEAWA at the Nature Centre in late November or December. Tina suggests having another Issues Committee meeting in late November before meeting with the Planning Department to go over the “talking points” they will have posted on the mymh.city website by then. Marty Drut explained the details of the Riparian Assessment Project done by GN in 2015/2016, to Robert Sissons, and will email his Draft Report to him.

- b. **MHIP Operations Committee Report submitted by John** (items covered by Corlaine tonight were omitted from John's report)

Last meeting was Monday, October 30.

Waiting for the renewal of the City Contract.

The StoryWalk “The Mitten” started this past weekend and will continue to November 30th

Renovations of the Nature Centre to start in early 2018 with plans to finish by June 2018

Christmas Bird Count and Potluck supper Sunday Dec. 17th

Chief Interpreter's Report, current projects, and events schedule presented by Corlaine.

MHIP Financial Reports presented by Eileen.

Proposed MHIP budget for 2018 presented by Corlaine. Budget approved on the basis of anticipated 2% increase in the City Contract for 2018. Budget submitted to the GN Board.

Motions to Renew Chief Interpreter's and Year-Around Staff employment tabled until the City Contract is signed. The Committee is hoping to vote on these motions before the beginning of 2018.

Percentages of Insurance to Liability of Public Programs, and GN Board, etc. to be obtained, because that portion of the premium can be paid from the Casino Account.

- c. **Field Trips-Upcoming Events:**

1. Ecotrust at Mt. Royal University in Calgary, March 8 to 10. Environmental gathering, www.albertaecotrust.com

\$250. registration but there may be some financial assistance. Hugh asked members if anyone was interested in attending this. Martha Munz Gue has attended previous years and could provide information to interested members.

2. Annual Waterton Christmas Bird Count. Fri. Dec 15, 2017. Contact Diannepachal@pc.gc.ca or phone Dianne at 403 859-5107.

3. Beaver Symposium-Cochrane RanchoHouse, Dec. 7, 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. Meals provided. \$70.00 per person. Rob Gardner will be speaking on Drought Proofing and Beavers in the Prairies. There was an information sheet provided at tonight's meeting for members to see all topics covered. Rob said he was looking forward to hearing Dr. Joseph Wheaton, Utah State University, speaking on Research, Hot Topics, and Beavers as Tools.

- d. **Indoor Program Speakers:** Tonight's speaker is City Councillor, Kris Samraj, on Paddling the Mackenzie River.

January's speaker will be Todd Sharpe on the Updated Municipal Development Plan

February's speaker, Dr. Dinesh Mategaonkar, talks about Environmental Impact

- e. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh Armstrong reported a \$1,200.00 grant has been received from the Medicine Hat REALTOR'S Charitable Foundation. More information is given below in 8.f.

- f. **Bird Tales Update:** Dee Armstrong noted the Bird Tales Project received the \$1,200.00 grant from the MHRCF listed above under the Fund Raising Committee Report. Dee said the B.T. group is interested in introducing more nature-related content rather than focusing only on birds. The group is open to any suggestions relating to the Alzheimer's Unit. Members may contact Dee, Elaine Spitzer, Paul Thibault, or anyone else in the group, with ideas.

- g. **Birding Trails Project:** Milt noted the final edition of the Birding Trails Booklet is finished. Hugh said the final results look good.

- h. **Communications Committee:** Angela said there is nothing to report at present.

- i. **Nature Alberta:** Ian and Angela Turner noted John Acorn is the new patron chosen by Nature Alberta. Dr. Grant MacEwan was the first patron.

Members are encouraged to watch Webinar Part 1: Boreal Region, Thursday December 7 from 12 to 1 pm. Preregister online at <http://eventbrite.ca/xxxxxx>

9. New Business:

- a. **Upcoming Webinars:**

Sagebrush Grasslands Restoration for Greater Sage-Grouse Recovery, by Autumn Watkinson, U. of A. Wed.

Nov. 29, 2017 CST. Free Reg. <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4416298790572025346>

Why Data Sharing? (The value of sharing info. on Saskatchewan's wild species) by Jeff Keith, Sask. Conservation Data Centre coordinator. Wed. Dec. 6, 2017 at 12 pm CST Free Reg.

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1147809162073924867>

Top 10 Non-Compliance Points for Non-Profit Groups, by Revenue Canada, Dec.7 at Hugh's house, 15 Partridge St. N.E. Contact Hugh for a start time.

- b. **Corlaine** suggested that members have name tags to wear, and the topic was discussed. **Moved that Grasslands Naturalists Society members get name tags with string/cord and a card. CARRIED**
 - c. **Linda Fisher** reported that an interesting topic was being presented Wednesday Nov.29 at 6:30 pm, at Redcliff Public Library. Wildlife biologist Sandi Robertson gives a presentation on Prairie Rattlesnake at the library.
 - d. **Tina Regehr** commented on the workshop by Alberta Energy Regulator that she attended today at the Clarion Hotel in Medicine Hat. Those interested may find more information at <http://talk.aer.ca/participant-involvement-initiative>
10. Other Business:
- a. **Webcam Project and Update:** Hugh reported there are a few problems with the webcam. The software works from Paul Thibault's location, but not at the Nature Centre. Telus will be coming in the next week or two to provide better speed and cost than the current provider. They hope to have the issues resolved by the end of December.
 - b. **UERAB park naming:** Dave McKenzie noted that Donna MacLean's name has come up as a possibility for selection in the park naming process. He said many existing parks need a name. Simonne Flynn suggested member Lorine Marshall could be contacted for ideas. UERAB will not be working on this project in the month of December.
 - c. **Next Board Meeting:** Tuesday, December 5, 2017 at 3:00 pm. Hugh and Dee's house.
 - d. **Next General Meeting:** Meeting replaced by Bird Count Potluck Supper, Sunday December 17 at 5:30 pm at the Nature Centre. Rob Gardner reminded members that everyone is welcome to the potluck.
 - e. **January 23, 2018 General Meeting:** The meeting will be held at the Nature Centre unless there is a memo sent out to members. The alternative location would be Unity Lutheran Church, 8 Palliser Pl. N.E., corner of Parkview and Police Point Park Drive, if Nature Centre renovations are underway.
 - f. **Adjournment:** 7:40 pm with GM attendance at 30 people
 - g. **Refreshment Break**
 - h. **Attendance for Program:** 39 people. Speaker, Kris Samraj City Councillor Medicine Hat.