

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
Minutes of Grasslands Naturalists Board Meeting
February 2, 2021 via Skype

Present via Skype: Phil Horch (Chair), Betty Rainville (Secretary), Hugh Armstrong, Eileen Cowtan, Ian and Angela Turner, Linda Fisher.

Rob Gardner (Guest)

1. Call to Order: 1:31 pm
2. Review of GN Board Minutes from January 5, 2021.

A change was made to Item 5.k. under Communications Committee to state that “Eileen asked if Dennis Baresco would be interested in writing an article for the Sagebrush Chronicle”. Minutes had previously stated that Eileen asked if Dennis might be interested in assuming Chairmanship of the Communications Committee, or handle some Society communications.

Adoption of Board Minutes from January 5, 2021. **CARRIED**
3. Additions to the Agenda:
 - a. **Proposal for Pollinator Farm:** Rob Gardner outlined the beginnings of Transitions M.H., which models certain ideas such as sustainable living, after the original Transitions group started by Rob Hopkins in England in 2007. See info@transitionmedicinehat.ca for details of this local organization.

Rob explained that Transitions M.H. has the use of a quarter-section of pasture seeded to Crested Wheat grass. He proposes that hand seeding of this land in wildflowers become a GN project, under the umbrella of Transitions M.H. The goal would be to achieve the “greatest possible diversity (of wildflowers) and numbers of pollinating insects”.

After discussion, it was Moved that the Board endorse the Pollinator Farm (under Transitions Medicine Hat), and encourage Grasslands Naturalists members to get involved. **CARRIED.**

Rob will help to canvass for members to assist with the project.

Phil suggested that Rob submit his article, Pollinator Farm, to the February Chronicle to better explain the project to members.
 - b. **SEATCA: (Teacher’s Convention):** Martha suggested that GN provide our Club information for the “Virtual Exhibits Area” by filling out the forms provided for the virtual convention held February 18 & 19th 2021.

Board members felt that The Interpretive Program may benefit more from this exposure to teachers seeking field trips and outdoor studies for their classrooms.

Hugh is meeting with Corlaine tomorrow, and will discuss this with her. Staff at the Nature Centre may possibly be interested in doing a power point presentation and attaching it to the Virtual Exhibits area.
4. Action Items
 - a. **World Water Week March 22:** Martha brought up the idea of partnering with other groups this year with virtual displays. Previous years saw GN setting up displays at the Public Library, along with SEAWA, and a film on water management. Board members suggested the Library may even be open for a physical GN display by March 22 week. This topic is tabled until the March Board Meeting on March 2.
 - b. **Webinar Feb.10 David Suzuki Foundation Launch of Future Ground Network:** Angela suggested this webinar may be a useful source of speakers for the possible GN Symposium being considered.

Ian & Angela, and Betty will watch the webinar on Feb.10.
 - c. **211 Report:** Linda reported that she contacted Paul Thibault and Corlaine for input with respect to GN joining 211 Alberta. This link provides information on social, community, health and government services in Alberta.

Linda suggested that we can specify exactly what services we offer to interested Albertans who phone 211. She is presently waiting to receive feedback from Calgary Field Naturalists, who are already listed with 211.
 - d. **Symposium Steering Committee Role & Members:** Phil suggested having 6 or 7 people on the Steering Committee. Thanks to Ian for stepping forward as a Board member, to Hugh in the area of Finance, and to Linda in the domain of Speaker.

Angela noted the Steering Committee is a good starting point, and questioned the possibility of SEAWA assisting with funding.

Board members brought up several names of young people who would be an asset to the Steering Committee.

Moved that we give approval to a GN Climate Change Symposium Steering Committee and authorize plans per se as presented by Phil Horch in a document called Climate Change Symposium Parameters. **CARRIED.**
 - e. **AGM. When and where to hold:** Hugh reported that Paul indicated there is nothing in GN policy regarding how a pandemic would affect holding an AGM, as long as we meet government requirements.

Eileen noted we have 6 months after May or June to submit a report to CRA.

Board members suggested that May, June or even September would be suitable because of warmer weather.

Moved that the Society of Grasslands Naturalists schedule an Annual General Meeting for the end of May 2021 because of the pandemic. **CARRIED**

A call for nominations will be put into the March 2021 Sagebrush Chronicle to allow for nominations to be received in writing by the Board no later than 30 days prior to the AGM.

5. Reports:

a. **Treasurer's Report:** Angela and Eileen

Angela reviewed the Profit and Loss sheet for the period January 2021. The executive portion of Insurance Expense was \$1,494.00, up \$130.00 in 1 year from \$1,364.00.

Total GN Club **Income** for January 2021 was \$1,057.82. Total **Expenses** of \$5,496.26 leave a Net Income of -\$4,438.75
Angela reported the "Club" **Savings** Account stands at \$16,587.93 as of January 31, 2021 and the GN **Chequing** Account Balance is \$2,569.34. Total Chequing/Savings with shares is \$19,158.62.

Total Assets, including GST Receivable, comes to \$19,200.57.

Eileen noted \$176,626.00 was received through the City contact. There is \$342,921.13 in the TD Account at the present time.

There is approximately \$500.00 left in the MHIP Servus Savings Account.

Motion to Adopt the Financial Report. **CARRIED.**

b. **Membership:** Angela/Eileen reported memberships stand at 38 at present with 31 paid members and 7 lifetime members.

c. **Correspondence:** Eileen reported she received the Alberta Wilderness Newsletter.

d. **MHIP Operations Report:** Hugh noted he will attend a meeting on February 22 concerning the search for a new Chief Interpreter

Angela reported that local sculptor, Annette ten Cate, has very kindly offered to make a donation from the sale of her ceramic goat sculptures. Angela will forward the cheque to the Nature Centre.

e. **Governance Committee:** Nothing to report.

f. **Budget Committee:** Nothing to report.

g. **Issues Committee:** Martha has suggested that GN rack cards, wildflower brochures, and other GN items would make an important addition to the Welcome Wagon of Medicine Hat gift packs.
Angela will contact the Welcome Wagon.

h. **Indoor Committee:** Linda reported that Corlaine and Rob are able to show their slide presentation on Mauritius at short notice, in the event that GN is allowed to hold a General Meeting again.

Phil noted that he and Annalora are also able to provide a presentation on a recent trip to Costa Rica.

i. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh reported he will look at the final statements for the Federated Co-op Grant. Corlaine will get back to Hugh on the matter.

j. **Field Trip Committee:** John has sent out an email for **GN Suggested Outdoor Activities for Feb.1-5th**

"With the weather forecast this week, today is a good day to get out for a walk in the local parks; especially in Police Point Park to enjoy the new StoryWalk "Over and Under the Snow". Tomorrow it may be sunny but windy so the Groundhog (or local Ground squirrel) may see its shadow to forecast 6 more weeks of winter, but who can complain with the weather we have had over the past month of January.

For the remainder of the week, with a dusting of snow likely on Wednesday and cooling down on Friday to low -23C and high of -15C, the best day for cross-country skiing will likely be on Thursday, so suggest meeting 11 am in Elkwater at Spring Creek Trail. (End of Email)

Phil reported that he and Milt will mention to John that there will be no birding outings this winter since participants can't go in vehicles due to pandemic regulations. Hopefully birding field trips this spring will be possible.

k. **Communications Committee:** Angela. Nothing to report.

l. **Birding Trails:** Phil. No report.

m. **Nature Alberta:** Ian and Angela are happy to report that Brooke Kapeller has agreed to take on the position of N.A. liaison person, if the Board agrees. This role would require a GN membership as well as reports to the Board.

The Board Moves that Brooke Kapeller be appointed to take on the role as Nature Alberta representative for Grasslands Naturalists. **CARRIED.**

Angela noted she will contact N.A. to give them Brooke's name and contact information.

6. Other Business:

a. **Adopt a Tree Donation request:** Hugh reported that Gerry Ehler is staying in contact with this organization which is working to create a diverse ecosystem at Redcliff/Cypress Regional Landfill. Gerry is able to offer advice on trees appropriate to the location.

- b. **Coal Mining Issue. Letter to the Premier:** Phil reported we have received an acknowledgement from the Office of the Premier. The letter will be referred to the Minister of Energy by the Government.
Gerry has written a letter to Mayor Clugston as a private citizen.
A member also noted that Lorne Fitch, P.Biol. wrote a Letter to the Editor of M.H. News on Dec.11, 2020 regarding this issue.
- c. **City Utility Petition:** Board members discussed this recent petition, since it was brought to our attention by a member, and after discussion, decided that this issue does not fall under the purview of our society's mission. However, GN members are free to respond to the petition as a private citizen, which many people already have.
- d. **Scenic Views of Medicine Hat Project:** Hugh suggested a low cost online site would be the start up approach, and then maybe a printed version would come later.
Hugh noted that Paul Thibault has offered to help with the website work that Gerry described, such as a possible PDF document similar to the online manner of the Birding Trail Guide. Rack cards are still an unknown at this time.
- e. **Next Board Meeting:** 1:30 pm, March 02, 2021 via Skype.
- f. **Adjournment:** Motion to Adjourn the Meeting at 3:37 pm.