

# **GN Policies and Procedures**

## **Policy Section: Committees and External Organizations**

### ***Subsection: Communications Committee***

#### **Topic: Objectives and Operations**

**Status: Approved by Board**

**Date: 1 June 2021**

#### ***Policy Statement***

1. The Communications Committee informs the GN membership and general public of GN activities and interests.
2. The main Committee objectives are to:
  - a) Develop, maintain and operate various communications vehicles such as the GN Sagebrush Chronicle, website, Facebook, email and list server(s).
  - b) Communicate with the general public through media outlets such as newspapers and television.
  - c) Provide guidelines and protocols for communications to the general public and government officials.
3. Types of information distributed by the Committee include, for example:
  - a) Information on events and activities sponsored by GN or other organizations,
  - b) Issues and topics of interest to naturalists,
  - c) Society announcements,
  - d) Meeting minutes (Board and General Meetings),
  - e) AGM and committee reports,
  - f) Bylaws and Policies & Procedures ,
  - g) Sightings (birds, mammals, butterflies, flowers, ...),
  - h) Wildlife databases.
4. The intent of GN communications is to be both informative and educational.
5. Members of the Communications Committee, selected by the Board, should include GN members responsible for the various communication vehicles, the MHIP Chief Interpreter and a member of the Issues Committee.
6. Communications specifically related to the Medicine Hat Interpretive Program (MHIP) are the responsibility of the Operations Committee and the Chief Interpreter. The Communications Committee may help in the distribution of MHIP information in collaboration with the Chief Interpreter.
7. Although the Committee can provide communications guidelines, the Board is responsible for monitoring and ensuring GN's compliance. The Board will also monitor the various communications and implement safeguards to prevent the dissemination of information that infringes on copyright laws or confidentiality or jeopardizes GN's charitable organization status.

## ***Procedures***

1. The Committee shall meet annually.
2. Three committee members are required for both meeting and vote quorum. A majority vote is required for the motion to be approved. If there is a tie vote, the motion is defeated. Votes may be made by show of hands or by electronic means.
3. The Committee may prepare a yearly “Communications Plan” and a requested budget (“wish list”). The topics addressed by the yearly plan could include:
  - a) Integrated communications strategy taking into account the various communications vehicles,
  - b) Potential liability issues related to, for example, confidentiality, copyright, liable and political activities inconsistent with Revenue Canada restrictions for charitable organizations.
  - c) Selection of spokesperson(s) for communications with media outlets. These may vary depending on the communication topic.
  - d) Identification of types of communications that may require Board approval.
  - e) Submission deadlines, when applicable, for the various communication vehicles.
  - f) Membership surveys, when needed.
4. Sections of the Communications Plan may be included in a separate Committee P&P document(s) if they are not expected to vary greatly from year to year.
5. GN publication of information obtained from non-GN sources shall ensure that this is done with the written permission from the original source (usually the publisher for newspaper articles and magazines or the author for private communications). Such information shall be published with the caption “Reprinted with permission from ...”.
6. GN shall not publish any material that can be perceived as endorsing or rallying against a particular political party or election candidate. Published material can support or object to policies and actions but not political parties. When referring to previous and existing government actions, policies or proposals, the associated political parties shall not be named but simply referred to as the ‘government’ or ‘previous government’. The same approach shall be used for the ‘official opposition’.
7. Announcement of events that are not sponsored by GN shall be identified as such and separated from GN-sponsored events.