

**MINUTES OF THE
SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS BOARD MEETING**

January 4, 2022, 3:00 pm

Via zoom

1. Call to Order: 3:06 pm. Members present Phil Horch, Hugh Armstrong, Linda Fisher, Martha Munz Gue, Angela Turner, Ian Turner, Paul Thibault, Martha Maudsley

2. Review and Adoption of GN Board Minutes from December 7, 2021 Correction motion of an amendment by Angela 2nd by Linda. All in favour of item 4. C. All in favour, carried. **Motion by Angela and Linda seconded that Society of Grasslands Naturalists move the Casino bank account to the Servus Crescent Heights branch; remove Ann Bernhardt, Betty Rainville, and Eileen Cowtan from the signing authority list; and add Phil Horch, Martha Maudsley, and Angela Turner to the signing authority list (keeping Hugh Armstrong on the list). All in favor. Moved by Hugh to adopted, 2nd by Ian, all in favour, carried. Martha KM to reissue minutes with change for Servus.**

3. Review and Adoption of GN Board Minutes from September 14, 2021 **Angela motioned to adopt, 2nd by Ian, all in favour, carried.**

4. Additions to Agenda:

A. Symposium update - Phil : have not had a whole committee meeting since the last board meeting, but Hugh and Phil did meet. A draft budget of approx. \$75 000 has been created. If we can't identify this money we will scale back (but a large symposium is desired to attract new younger members). Hoping to find money from grants and corporate sponsorships. Hugh believes grant money applied for this year would have to be used this year. Phil has identified 40 potential corporate sponsors. Need to send a letter of introduction letting them know about the planned symposium. Letter is to hopefully gain interest and a meeting for discussion. Need a little money for postage but no other costs at this point. Hugh already contacted Co-op, and they're interested in sponsorship. College has not gotten back to Phil so he emailed for an update. Paul asked at what point will we decide if the project is feasible or not? Hugh says right now it's all about the money. Martha MG suggests going to the Dean of Science or Humanities, and teacher education program. She has contacts for Education. Phil is prepared to contact Deans. Ian suggests waiting for a response as going above Brent now could be seen as negative. Linda is willing to make phone calls after letters are sent out.

B. Great Plains Conservation Network - Linda reviewed the website and her notes from before and thinks it would be beneficial for promotion and increased awareness. No cost to join. Opportunities for GN to participate online and in other ways. Linda applauds their mission to conserve and restore wildlife. Adding our

activities to their website could increase our exposure. Linda read out names of over 25 organisations involved. No city of Medicine Hat or Cypress County. Phil asked what's involved in joining? Linda says she would like to volunteer, and thinks it's as much as we'd want to put into it. Martha MG looked at the website and read out parts about us". Angela motions Linda looks into Great Plains Conservation Project, and Linda acts as liaison for GN Hugh 2nd. All in favour, carried. Linda to look into it.

C. **Emerald Awards** - Phil says at the last meeting we agreed to look into it, Martha MG and David Gue to look into it in the next couple weeks. Linda thanks them, as did Angela.

D. **Policy and Procedures Training** - Paul says it's going to be addressed at a meeting at the same time as the budget committee in the middle of February. Paul wants feedback as needs are different for different groups, board, interpretive program, committee chairs. Like to do Board first as a testing ground to see what works and doesn't work. It has to be interactive with scenarios such as going out for funding. The symposium is a good test case, but also contracts. Paul wants to know our thoughts on what we're looking to get out of it. Send any questions before the Feb. meeting for discussion.

F. **Electronic Payments to GN** - Angela has talked to Paul, registration form has been revised and now go to memberships@grasslandsnaturalist.org Ian said it worked but it required a security question. Need someone to act as a test to see if that is fixed. Methanex doesn't do cheques, paperwork filled in, waiting for forms to come through to see how that would work. CF Industries will only do electronic transfers, as does TD Going Green Grants. Angela says it's now set up for auto transfer. Ian says we should encourage someone to try it. Linda suggests Eileen but she's an honorary member. Paul will test it.

G. **Casino Manager** - Hugh is making progress. Supposed to have a meeting Saturday Jan. 8/22 morning with Justine, Bruce MacLeod, Elaine Zimmer to step up! Bruce suggests having more than one person in charge so will talk about that Saturday. Also Daryl Moore will step up as needed. Need a manager before we can get training dates (Casino is Feb 26- 7th).

H. **Meeting with Mayor and City Council** - Phil and Martha Gue Last we heard we'd be notified of dates, Phil phoned the clerk but no answer, no reply to message yet. Plan to discuss having a master environmental plan.

I. **Insurance re Scenic Views Map** - Phil dealing with this with Paul. Paul wants to know what kind of liability there is in terms of making up maps for signage and websites. Does our insurance cover this? City wants us to waive subrogation (similar to MHIP contract). It looks like we're covered, Paul talked to Nigel. The city has a clause saying that GN must save the city harmless for any damages. Also we have to get city approval for anything we add to the maps. Specifically we need to get Alberta approval for using their data. This is complicated as we are using trails not on city maps. Paul wonders if we should let them know we have a subrogation waiver. Phil is ok with that.

J. Zoom speaker gifts: Linda in the past has asked noncity/government (salaried) speakers what they'd like to be paid, paid for hotel, dinner, mileage and board voted on a stipend and a Birding Trails book and mug. So far, speakers have declined payment, except for GN memberships. Should she mail a mug and Birding Trails book? One site asks for a donation on their behalf to a project or cause. So that's an option. GN membership is standard for any speakers. We have lots of books, Martha MG suggests, including a wildflower pamphlet. Ian says it's nice that the book and pamphlet can be easily mailed with a membership. It's meant to be a token of thanks. Linda wants a supply of birding books. Angela suggests including a GN rack card. She will get this from Police Point.

K. Summer Student Grant: Martha MG wants to deal with invasive species further. Volunteers already involved, it'd be nice to have extra hands. SEAWA and MHIP already have summer students but they're busy. Should we apply for our own grant with programs we've already started, such as weed pulls at Adopt a pond. Hugh contacted Alicia @MHIP about summer grants; she applied for both Young Canada work grant, and Canada summer job grant. She plans to offer students a diverse valuable work experience depending on applicants' strengths. Hugh thinks as they've applied for these 2 grants, it might be difficult to get more. Ian points out someone would have to supervise the student and we don't have anyone to do it. Martha MG agrees Marilou does supervise her students. Alicia is aware of GN needs. We need to encourage collaboration with SEAWA and summer students. Martha MG agrees students attended Wednesday walks.

L. Bird-Friendly city certification - Phil sent information on this, operated by Nature Canada. Criteria for cities and municipalities. Phil asks if we should register to be a part of this? Nature Canada is willing to work with us, and we could encourage the city council to undertake. Questionnaire to be complete, phone call, webinar. Phil thinks this is something our birding community would get involved with. Ian says you definitely have to have the municipality involved, and needs official recognition. Phil says at some point we'd need to be presented to the council. Hugh says it's a great project but do we have anyone to volunteer? Angela thinks we should pursue it and see how it goes. It requires a bird team to oversee this initiative.

M. Adopt-a-Pond 2022 - Martha Gue says we're resting over winter, relaunching on a Saturday after World Water Day March 22. Martha wants to keep it simple, will contact last year's pond adopters and try to fill any spaces. Phil asks how many are on the mailing list? Martha MG says there's 20 ponds, each usually with several people including stretching to any attached creeks with 4 or 5. So Martha doesn't know. She only contacts the group and it works on the honour system. Martha says all have been given GN website, SEAWA and Parks Department information.

N. Invasive Plants Student Grant - Martha Gue connected to summer students

O. Life-time Membership Awards : Paul says it's been 2 years since we've given an award. He'd like to see more people step up to promote people. So far 2 have possibly been nominated but needs to be confirmed and in writing. Some names are from past history so there's not a lot who would know or remember. Eileen Cowtan would know. But it's important for the membership to know. Paul suggests that we should have a committee ready to review these. These could be previous winners, as they're not in conflict and they should know the history. This committee could also work on nominations all year. It basically involves phoning. Hugh says it needs to be put in the Chronicle. Who should nominations be sent to? Phil will include it in his report. Paul also wants a text (from Policies and Procedures) to put in Chronicle as well. Paul thinks there's time to form the committee in time for March. Paul says they don't all need to be lifetime members, but they should be included. **The next step is to get someone to pull together a committee. Phil to make phone calls.**

5. Action Items:

Reports:

A. Treasurer's Report: Angela Ecotrust grant was \$3040 in July. Scenic Views signs close to \$3700 which half is paid. Is the city paying half? We don't get the rest until it's done. The city will pay \$22 or 2400. Anything left over can be transferred. Insurance is the next big expense. **Checking account \$9469.43 saving is \$16618.32** Ian asks when we receive donations to PPP or MHIP we are issuing donation receipts through GN. Angela says sometimes donations come in with memberships and she issues receipts for that. Hugh says as a nonprofit we can give out the receipts, as we manage them. Ian says what about when donations are made specifically to MHIP? But GN writes receipts. Paul says this happens often, such as with Universities. Each faculty doesn't have their own charitable number the university does and uses their number. Angela motions her report accepted as presented, Ian seconds. All in favour.

B. Membership: Angela 17 members so far.

C. Correspondence: Angela None

D. MHIP Operations Committee: Hugh says things are running smoothly, new person hired to replace Justine. It's last year's summer student Grace Porter. She started work the first of this month 4 days a week. So we have 3 staff there,

E. Issues Committee: Martha Munz Gue and John Slater. Co-chairs Martha says Marilou asked GN if they would share the cost of a table at the spring Trade Show. Phil said yes.

The Issues Committee will meet Jan. 5 (Wednesday) at 10 at the Nature Centre (in place of the Wednesday Nature Walk at minus 20). At the meeting tomorrow to discuss this report, and will also discuss Martha's request to not be co-chair of the issues committee. Tina has agreed to support John through note taking and addressing issues about which she has a passion.

Martha MG will continue to coordinate the Adopt a Pond Initiative and sit on the Issues Committee.

In discussion with Phil Martha also volunteered to help him to fill the vacant positions and form a nominating group to actively seek new board and committee members. Her goal is to have more than one nominee for each position.

Martha noted that Paul was thinking along the same lines; as of this evening will invite those who have received life memberships to form the nominating committee.

F. Indoor Committee: Linda Fisher says Jan. 25 Cliff Wallace topic Grasslands Planets coming into Alignment (on website). Send Milt the zoom link for members. Ian asks that Linda send this out to the speaker or send email to Ian so you know it's been done. Ian would like someone else to have this information just in case! Linda agrees she'd do this. Cathy Linowski talking of prairie grasses and mosses. No members beyond Milt contacted Linda for potential Petchucha presenters. Will write something up again. She talked to Paul van Huene about recovery on his ranch 10 years later, and needs to find out if he's available in March or April.

G. Fund Raising Committee: Hugh applications to TD for signs to be sent off this weekend.

1. Casino: see above

H. Field Trip Committee: John Slater (see Chronicle for walks and Field Trips) Phil's not sure about birding in February.

I. Communications Committee: need a new Chairperson. Still no responses. Paul says membership needs to include committee information. Paul asks if it's possible to include an extra page in Chronicle. It is, with paying extra postage after 5 double sided pages.

J. Birding Trails: Phil Nothing to report.

K. Bird Tales Update: Paul Thibault says because of COVID they've really struggled in senior's homes and need volunteers to get back in there. All recreation is one on one, no groups. He suspects it won't happen until late spring.

L. Nature Alberta: Phil for Brooke Kapeller: need to contact them for representation. Martha says the last magazine that came out has a nice writeup.

M. March AGM: Angela says it must be advertised ahead. It's our historical month to have it. If we have it online we can't vote. Paul says it doesn't need to be in the January Chronicle.

6. Other Business:

A. **Next Meeting February 1, 2022 at 4 pm.** Tentatively we can meet in person but more likely by zoom (unless you hear otherwise).

B. **Adjournment** at 5:19