

# Minutes of the Grasslands Naturalists General Meeting Tuesday, January 25, 2022: Zoom Meeting 7pm

1. **Call to order – Phil Horch: Thanks to Ian for setting up the Zoom meeting plus giving instructions. Mentioned voting can't take place electronically as it's against our policies**
  
2. **Member's Exciting Sightings:** Just since Christmas (not the past 2 years)! **Phil Horch:** Merlin has taken up residence outside Horch residence, including 2 kills of rock pigeons. **Linda Fisher:** had a female snowy owl, **2 rough-legged hawks along Range Road 65, common redpolls and chickadees at her feeders.** **Hugh Armstrong:** Great horned owl in his backyard. **Rob+Corlaine Gardner** in Elkwater (townsite) by skating rink saw a cougar! **During the Orion Christmas bird count they saw a murmuration flock** of 1000- 5000 birds in the stubble. **Gerry Ehler:** saw a Bald eagle at PPP. **Lorne Scott** at Indian Head saw white throated **sparrows**, red crossbills at his feeder. **Sheila McLeod** saw a porcupine by the airport on the path.
  
3. **President's Report – Phil Horch:Upcoming Meeting with City of Medicine Hat** trying to arrange a meeting with the new Mayor + City Council to urge them to create a master environmental plan, as has been done in the past (2012). **Will be meeting with the Energy Department which has 3 City Councillors sitting on it.**
4.
  - A. **Life-Time Members Awards** Paul Thibault's new committee for policy and procedures manual for honorary memberships, usually given at AGM in spring. Anyone can make a submission to Paul, Phil by Feb. 15 for board review. Selection by March 1 announced at AGM.
  - B. **Spring Trade Show Volunteers** needed for March 4-6 with SEAWA, hopefully to find new members. Let Phil know.
  - C. **Symposium Steering Committee Report** : look at feasibility to engage SE AB in a conversation of how climate will impact our lives, specifically in South Alberta. Primary objective to act as recruitment for younger members. Tentative schedule created, including sessions for students. Potential speakers. Explored venues. Approached college to partner with us. Developed a promotional plan and budget of \$70 000. No mandate to plan this yet: need to know if college will partner with us, and can we raise grants and corporate sponsors. Without this, we can't proceed. Concerns expressed include budget and finding volunteers. We would need another Chair to organize this event. If we do not go ahead, what do we need to do to find younger members? We need feedback from members as it cannot be done without you. Contact Phi by email.

**D. Bird Friendly City Initiative** New Initiative from Nature Canada. Calgary has done this already. The GN board has contacted them to see what's needed, and will hold a meeting with Nature Canada to see what we need to do.

**E. GN's next AGM** is normally in March or April, and we hope to hold it at a traditional time. Last 2 have been in fall because of COVID restrictions. Vacancies in communications, VP positions. Usually positions such as Presidents are only held for 1 or 2 years and it's too much to expect more.

**5. Casino Participation – Hugh Armstrong** We have a new Chair, Bruce McLeod. Elaine Zimmer will be co-chair. Bruce **is doing** a good job contacting and has all positions filled. **As we** have not heard if it's cancelled due to COVID **keeping Feb. 26-27 open.**

**6. GN Finance Report – Angela Turner** So far we have 13 family, 14 individual memberships. \$500 donated by Methanex. GN spent \$200 for a zoom account so we don't share Nature Alberta's. Checking account: \$10304.30 savings \$16 618.30

**7. Scenic Views Status Report – Gerry Ehlert** : Information on projects including on GN website and other associated things such as signage and magazine articles. Partners included City, Tourism and Alberta Ecotrust Foundation. Plans for 17 signs, but only 8 so far are funded. Signs show stewardship suggestions, advice to stay on trails, and interesting information and links such as QR codes. Len and Lindy Moser have taken on the task of hundreds of photos to be used. David Gue has been an important member editing.

**8. Adopt-A-Pond and Issues Committee Report – Martha Gue** recently sent out an invitation to the current Adopt A Pond list, to see if they're willing to adopt again this year. Already received 9 positive responses. Joint SEAWA launch at Connaught Pond Saturday March 19 possible date, will be in Chronicle. Maybe a mini-launch mid week by education students. GN/SEAWA Water Art show at TREX April 19-June 14 with the theme of "Ponds, Coulees and Creek". Submissions to TREX space the first week of April. Register intent to participate by calling the SEAWA office by March 22 (World Water Day). We continue to work with City Parks, SEAWA, dealing with invasive species. Good news from the Parks department that soon we will be invited to participate in a planning meeting to include the City, SEAWA, GN and others for removing Russian Olive trees. City will remove mature trees. Volunteers will be needed to remove seedlings and saplings. Need a volunteer to deal with irrigation expansion and how it's affecting species, etc. Contact Martha by email.

**9. MHIP Report – Alicia Lew** January has been busy as we said 'see you later' to Corlaine and Marty. Many staffing changes including Justine to Surrey, thanks to her contributions. Grace Porter hired as a full time interpreter. Yesterday Drake Miley had first day

with the team. He's a graduate student in geochemistry. Public events included Birding sessions, Painter Girl, toddler treks. Student artists display of young artists inspired by nature. For Family Literacy Day a new story walk 'When the Snow falls'. Thanks to Kiwanis Club sponsorship.

**10. Other Announcements** none

**11. Coffee Break**

**12. Introduction of Guest Speaker – Linda Fisher** pleased to introduce naturalist Cliff Wallis. Next month will be **local retired botanists and archaeologist Ron and Cathy Linowski speaking on rare mosses and ferns of the arid mixed grass prairie.**

**13. Cliff Wallis Presentation**

**14. Closing remarks and speaker appreciation– Linda Fisher thanked Cliff for his wonderful photographs and presentation. Prior to the meeting Cliff received a one year membership to the Grasslands Naturalists; also a package was mailed to him containing a copy of Birding Trails of Southeastern Alberta, a red water thermos with the Police Point Park logo on it, the Common Wildflowers of Medicine Hat and Area brochure, the Southeastern Alberta Birding Trail Guide rack card and the GN information rack card.**

**15. GN is now a member of the Great Plains Conservation Network. Linda will include more information about their upcoming February 25, 2022 Zoom AGM in the February Sagebrush Chronicle.**

**16. Adjournment 9pm**