

## Grasslands Naturalists Society Board Meeting

Minutes from March 1, 2022 4 pm

**1. Call to order 4:03pm**

**2. Roll Call Members present** Phil Horch, Ian Turner, Angela Turner, Linda Fisher, Hugh Armstrong, Martha Munz Gue, Martha Maudsley  
**Guest** Kim MacKenzie, of Nature Alberta

**3. Review and adoption of previous minutes Feb. 1 Angela motions, Linda 2nd All in favour, passed.**

**4. Business arising from the minutes**

**A. Nature Alberta reorganization - Kim MacKenzie President of Nature Alberta will be joining us at this meeting via zoom.** Introduction (Kim is an environmental consultant based in Edmonton. Volunteered at NA in 2015, now President). NA board operated as an Executive, but structure has changed and Kim would like to tell GN about it, including questions and concerns. Funding is somewhat precarious, based on things like casinos. Executive Rick Schneider. 2 staff, Step Weisenbach as full time coordinator, another as support. Phil asked how NA views its role with member clubs? Kim admits it's a weakness, as clubs are meant to strengthen NA. NA has provincial opportunities that other clubs don't such as Endangered species Scientific Provincially. NA wants GN's voice in these initiatives. NA has an issues committee working on tackling provincial and regional issues. Including gravel pits, irrigation among others. NA is mostly run by volunteer power. Phil asks up until recently GN has had a rep on NA board, including Martha MG and Angela. Why the change? Kim says what was happening was that there was a lot of work outside the board such as fundraising and involvement in many communities including Medicine Hat. It was a model that worked well with fewer communities but now there's 70+ clubs of various sizes and NA can't operate with a board of 50+. NA wants to attract people to the club who are more than just a liaison, but be on NA committees and initiatives, such as issues committee, communications. Phil asks that under this new organization there's 1 representative from the south. Phil says he's not familiar with some of these groups. Kim says a request for nomination was sent out for a director to act as regional representative and apologizes if GN did not get this. One difficulty is that some clubs have greater member numbers than others such as Edmonton and Calgary Nature clubs. Linda asks because we're off by ourselves in the southeast with a different ecosystem, how does NA envision a rep from another club being educated on our unique needs? Kim sees these concerns as being more administrative. It is difficult to say until

board meetings define these roles, and does not intend to constrain these roles without input. Ian mentions that he and Angela have attended meetings and been one of the only clubs attending. He wonders at the value of these long meetings but not doing any of the legwork such as fundraising, issues committee. GN is our local concern and he got the feeling that NA wanted more from GN but it was difficult to do from a 6+ hour distance. Kim asks if participation and involvement is improved (using zoom). Angela feels that Kid's club is pushed but MHIP is an excellent thing already. Stephanie does put events on NA pages. Kim asks if GN has gained from this? Martha MG says local initiatives have helped such as weekly walks and Adopt a Pond. Kim asks if we do grants? Hugh answers we have 3 currently, including TD. Kim asks and was told we're a registered charity. Martha MG described Adopt a Pond, 27 locations adopted. Many done in coordination with the city of MH. Kim says the southern region covers east to west in Alberta (everything south of Calgary). There's 5 regions including Edmonton, Calgary, Central, Northern, Southern. Martha MG mentions that as a NA rep she came up with the idea of a wildflower brochure based on attending meetings. Martha MG brings up that this new way is more about organization and less about serving clubs. Martha suggests (and Angela agrees) that NA meetings need a separate part of the meeting to share experiences. Kim says having semiregular events is on the radar including brainstorming and sharing events like conferences, group picnics. Not every event is going to be in Edmonton. Linda asks if there's some way to have housekeeping/ managing/ communication meetings separate from the networking meetings? Kim will bring this back to NA. Phil is concerned that the lines of communication become more cumbersome with this new style. Kim will suggest this as something that management can handle as paid members for governance, and club liaisons done separately. Ian suggests provincial concerns be done formally through NA issues committees. Kim says she is working to have meetings focused, and more decisions made at board level, with an issues committee. Kim really wants more services and support to clubs through Nature network, website, provincial magazine. Martha MG asks if NA has ever met face to face with the Premier or minister of Environment? Kim does not know, but is making a note. Kim says to contact Executive Director Rick Schneider and or Tony Blake email [Exec@naturealberta.ca](mailto:Exec@naturealberta.ca) Phil mentioned he feels this meeting made NA a little more aware.

**B. Spring Trade Show Date** Phil changed April 22 to 24 Elaine Spitzer will help out.

C. **Emerald Nomination** Phil says application nomination sent in, great job by David and Martha Gue. Can be used as a history of GN

D. **Upcoming Environmental Days** Phil asks if there's anything we need to add to that? Migratory Bird day May 14th. **Martha motions to GN formally partners with SEAWA to plan for and promote activities for special days. Hugh seconds.** Martha MG points out that SEAWA is not just water, but watershed which includes the land. The Council of Canadians has joined us in the past, but joining one group does not preclude joining with another. Motion should be subject to SEAWA's approval. Martha MG already attends their meetings as a communications committee. Hugh asks if Martha MG will continue to liaison for all issues? **All in favour. Martha MG will go to SEAWA with this.**

E. **Indigenous Acknowledgment** Linda proposed

"The Society of Grasslands Naturalists honours and acknowledges that we live and work on Treaty 7, and are a neighbour to Treaty 4 Territory, traditional lands of the Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, Stoney-Nakoda and Tsuut'ina, including the Cree, Sioux and the Saulteaux bands of the Ojibwa peoples. We honour and acknowledge we are on the homelands of the Metis Nation within Region III.

**We recognize and respect cultural heritages and relationships to the land. We extend our hands in peace and friendship to all Indigenous peoples who have made these places their homes since time immemorial, as we forge together towards a relationship of reconciliation, respect, understanding and healing."**

Linda suggests showing this to a friend who is Metis and is U of Alberta's Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programming and Research) for feedback. If she vets this we can begin using it with the March 22 meeting? Hugh suggests putting into Chronicle first for membership discussion. Martha MG motions that this wording be used, Angela seconds. All in favour.

## **5. Current business**

A. **Bird Friendly City** Phil says outline for criteria has been sent, Bird team organized. The whole key is will the city participate and maintain and continue this? Angela suggests getting someone from Tourism involved. Phil says at the moment there doesn't need much official involvement from GN and NA.

B. **Master Environmental Plan - City of MH** Phil sent out an email with some points to discuss. Martha MG to forward email with her thoughts.

C. **New Brochure by David Gue** Phil sees all kinds of uses for the (Emerald Award) application and has sent it on to the city and College ahead of meetings. Phil wants it published as a recruiting tool, with meetings anytime, anywhere. We could add our membership form to the end of it. It could go on the website too. We can explore quotes for publishing. Can casino funds qualify? Hugh says yes. **Phil asks for a consensus to do this? Yes.**

D. **Symposium Report** At last meeting we came to a consensus that we're probably not able to pursue this symposium without MH College partnership, so based on future meeting with Clay Bos.

E. **AGM Plans** scheduled for June. Martha MG has been working hard sending letters. She asks that we also ask friends, family, colleagues as well. Phil is willing to let his name stand for another year, although he's willing to step aside if there's someone else. Ian and Angela will stay on. Martha KM as secretary, Linda will stay on for both programming and director at large as is Ian. Hugh will stay on as past president.

F. **Alberta Solar Farms:** Linda has been working on this. There's some mega projects proposed. GN needs to have a position on these things coming at us with the goods and bads and the cumulative effect. These projects are being done to move away from fossil fuels but how do you put a cost on the life of a rare bird or the value of a viewscape? Hugh suggests bringing this up with Rob Gardner, and John Slater. Phil says wind and solar farms are very land hungry. When they use up land it's either endangered grassland or farmland which takes it out of food production. We do need to have a position on it. Gerry Elhert did convince the wind turbine company to not put it on native grassland. Martha MG says we should bring this up to NA, including irrigation issues. Linda wonders if it is best to have smaller projects spread out or larger projects? David Gue came up with a page of points that developers need to bring up including standards such as government guidelines for oversight, cleanup, remediation. Phil asks if this is something John Slater and Gerry Elhert can tackle. Ian points out it's not that it is coming, but the way the information and misinformation is being handled and presented. **Phil asks Linda to write a letter to Nature Alberta. She will draft one and send it to the board for input.**

## 6. Committee Reports

A. **Treasurer's Report** - Angela \$290 individual donations, \$350 memberships. Insurance cost \$2730. Had 6 charitable donations

receipt books printed. \$159 Checking account at \$7866.64 savings \$16 623.69

**B. Membership** - Angela 23 individual 28 family, 6 lifetime. At least half a dozen by e transfer.

**C. Correspondence** - Angela Letter from city Parks of John and Gerry's letter. Phil passed it on

**D. Governance** - no

**E. Budget** - Paul no

**F. Indoor Program** - Linda. Dr. Glynnis Hood is the March Zoom speaker. April speaker is GN member Bob Townsend with Medicine Hat's history of the Interpretive Program. In May she is looking into Indigenous speaker but has complex feelings and feels it's a big ask. She wants to make sure she is ready. And how to handle potential issues and or embarrassment or offenses. Martha MG suggests inviting potential speakers to a fireside chat at PPP? And invite them to the TREX show. Both Martha's each offered a name for Linda to talk with. Also for the pecha kucha style members as speakers meeting, best done in person, not sure if we are ready for in person gathering in the theatre at the Nature Centre. Linda is wondering about recording Zoom speakers. How do you store it? Need Speaker's permissions. Leave that for now. Ian is willing to look into the technological aspects. Phil points out we can look into hybrid meetings even when we go back to in person meetings. Linda apologized for not having the draft Speaker Expense form ready for input. And will have it completed for the April Board meeting. Linda attended the Great Plains Conservation Network AGM Zoom meeting and will forward any summary she receives.

**G. Field Trips** - Milt, Phil, John usually one in March. Assume weekly ones still happening. One in honour of Ben (early waterfall, grouse ones in Manyberries).

**H. Communications Committee** - no

**I. Birding Trails** - Phil no

**J. Nature Alberta** - done above

**K. Operations**- Hugh says quiet, meeting in spring and then in fall.

**L. Issues** - Martha says the same report as done at the general meeting last week.

**M. Scenic Views** - no

**N. Fundraising- Casino** - Hugh says Bruce MacLeod and Elaine Zimmer worked well together. Was very busy! License applied for next Casino. Money comes in the 3rd quarter.

- 7. Other business**
- 8. Next Board Meeting - Tuesday April 5 at 4pm over zoom**
- 9. Adjournment 6:40 pm**