

## GN Issues Committee 2022 Annual Report for AGM 28 March 2023

**Members:** John Slater, Martha Munz Gue (co-chairs), Jesse Roberts, Dawn Dougan, Hazel Gray, Cathy Linowski, Gerry Ehlert and others were included from time to time.

When an issue arises, we meet to discuss appropriate actions to recommend to the board. All issues that GN addresses have to do with conservation and restoration of prairie grasslands. These were some of the issues we addressed in 2022-23.

1. Disturbance of prairie grasslands by **recreational paths**, e.g. 1) wide paved path on the environmental sensitive area at Ranchlands 2 F & G; Cathy Linowski worked on wording for new signage.; and 2) new mountain bike trails cutting through the coulees from MH Gas City Campground to Echo Dale Regional Park.

2. **TransitionMH.** GN members helped support the Transition demonstration Garden. That project has ceased, but the Transition Website remains with information about many of the groups and initiatives in Medicine Hat and area working to reduce our footprint and to demonstrate “Drawdown” principles. Examples of living lightly on the earth are found at the “Gallery” section of the website.

3. **Solar and Wind farm** rapid expansion. Anita Jenkins approached us that the three energy projects near Bow Islands would have unsustainable cumulative effects on four species of wildlife. Anita was an intervenor at the hearing. Our committee discussed what an appropriate response would be and a letter was written to support conservation and restoration of ecosystems. Land hungry projects continue to be a concern for conservation of grasslands.

4. **Irrigation modernization** and expansion in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Projects are already underway. South Alberta Group for the Environment (SAGE) has been having on-line meetings and has engaged Eco Justice in order to access information about environmental assessments and cumulative effects of the many projects that are assessed separately, without plans to assess cumulative effects of all the projects together. Without leakage and drainage from the open irrigations canals, Seven Persons Creek may dry up. GN President and VP met with MP about this matter and also wrote a letter in support of the work done by SAGE to procure more transparency in the environmental assessments and a request for an analysis of cumulative effects of all the projects together.

5. **Invasive Species.** For the past two years, GN has focussed on removing buckthorn from Police Point Park with two members meeting every Tuesday and Thursday morning. As well, they tagged buckthorn throughout the City for removal by city crews. Collaborative work with SEAWA, City Parks and Rec, and the Pond and Path Adopters is slowly moving forward. To support collaboration and more volunteers, an ad hoc committee of GN has been formed. The first report from this new committee is on the GN website. So far members of the emerging ad hoc committee on Invasive Species are: John Slater, Gerry Ehlert, Hazel Grey, Jesse Roberts, Rob Gardner, and Martha Munz Gue.

6. **Water and World Water Day (March 22).** Year two of the ‘Adopt a Pond or Path’ initiative was launched at Connaught Pond. Participants did their spring cleaning of their adopted spaces. Year 3 was launched at the College Pond on March 3, 2023. 2023 is also year three for the **World Decade for Ecosystem Restoration**. Many of our members also volunteer with SEAWA whose newsletters and fact sheets are at [www.seawa.ca](http://www.seawa.ca) The SEAWA AGM will be in June 2023.

7. **Air Quality.** Check [www.pas.ca](http://www.pas.ca) for information about the Palliser Airshed Society. David Gue sits on the board of the Palliser Airshed.

8. Co-chairs John Slater and Martha Munz Gue have completed their terms. They are now engaged in follow-up organizations and activities that grew from actions of the Issues committee: Invasive Species, SEAWA, World Water Day, and Adopt a Pond or Path. Board and GN members need to decide how to address other issues in the future.

### Recommendations

1. Network with other nature organizations in discussions with elected representatives (municipal, provincial and federal), with college and school boards, and with professional organizations.
2. Link with broad campaigns that address ecosystem conservation and restoration; e.g. World Water Day, World Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, Prairie Conservation Forum, EcoTrust, etc.

Respectfully submitted by John Slater and Martha Munz Gue, co-chairs.