

Society of Grasslands Naturalists
2023 Indoor Program Report

January 2023 – December 2023

The Indoor Program Committee has one member, Linda Fisher.

Grasslands Naturalists conducted the 8 general meetings, including the AGM, in the hybrid format using Zoom and in-person speakers. Members have indicated that they appreciate the choice of attending in person or online so the hybrid meetings will continue to be offered. The technical team of David Gue and Ian Turner continue to tweak the Zoom meetings and their efforts are very appreciated. Cookies and coffee/tea were again offered at the meetings.

The Board is experimenting with different schedules for the general meeting; one variation tried was having a 30 minute socializing time before the first 30 minute part of the Business Meeting, followed by the one hour long Guest Speaker portion, and the approximately 20 minutes long second part of the Business Meeting to round out the evening. Other options are being considered and tried out in 2024.

Programs offered in 2023

January 24 - The Pathway to an Environmental Framework for the City of Medicine Hat. Co-presenters: Kevin Redden, (City of Medicine Hat Director of Environment, Land & Government Relations), and Adria Coombs, (Manager, Environmental Strategy and Compliance), provided an update on the City of Medicine Hat Environmental Framework status currently underway.

February 28 - A Brief Look at Scotland. Mhairi Donnelly, a new Interpreter at the Nature Centre, graciously stepped in at the last minute and provided a very general overview of landscape, language, food, culture and the political system in Scotland.

March 28 - Annual General Meeting. Elections were held. Following the Election of Officers, a presentation entitled, Russian Olive Tree. An Invasive Ecological Weed in SE Alberta, was presented by Marilou Montmayor, P. Ag., Executive Director of SEAWA. Marilou discussed SEAWA's efforts in controlling Russian olive.

April 25 - Members' Night. 7 GN Members each presented a short slide show on a topic important to them. Presenters in order of Appearance: Tina Regher "Heygo Virtual Tours"; Milt Spitzer "Feeder Birds in Queensland"; Nick Regher "Installing and Using EDD Mapping on a cell phone"; Val Felesky "Inglewood Bird Sanctuary"; Martha Munz Gue "Adopt-a-Pond"; Margie Booyens "Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens Cape Town; David Gue "Palliser Airshed".

May 23 - Ecology, Human Footprint, and Tree Cover of Medicine Hat. Biologist and Medicine Hat College instructor, Brent Smith summarized 2 years of work examining the local ecology and human footprint in the Medicine Hat area. He explained the different types of ecological systems in the city, and the relationship between those systems and tree/shrub cover. The mapping product he developed can be used for climate change adaptation, food security planning, ecological restoration, and land use planning.

June 27 - The Annual Picnic was held on the back patio at the Nature Centre.

September 26 - Midnight Sun Safari. GN members Rob and Corlaine Gardner detailed with beautiful photographs and educational information, their long distance June 2023 trek exploring the landscapes and wildlife from Medicine Hat to Tuktoyaktuk, NWT.

October 24 - A Pathway for Environmental Reconciliation. Shirley Boomer shared the way First Nations viewed the land and all that is part of it. She discussed ways that the land was replenished and taken care of, and touched on what some Nations are doing today to build and live in a way that helps heal Mother Earth.

November 28 - Time Traveling to Alberta's Past and Future Under a Changing Climate. Nature Alberta Executive Director, Dr. Richard Schneider, a conservation biologist took us on a journey through time; starting 6,000 years ago, then jumping forward to 2123 to explore how Alberta's ecosystems are likely to shift in the future under best-case and worst-case warming scenarios. He also examined how changes in climate drive these large-scale ecosystem shifts, as well as implications of ecosystem changes for biodiversity conservation efforts.

December 17 – The Annual Potluck Dinner was held at the Nature Centre, following the Annual Christmas Bird Count. We extend a big Thank You to the MHIP staff for organizing of the Bird Count and Potluck Dinner.

Submitted by Linda Fisher