

2023 ANNUAL REPORT
Medicine Hat Interpretive Program Operations Committee

for the March, 2024 Grasslands Naturalists AGM,

The committee operating the Medicine Hat Interpretive Program has been comprised of the following GN members in the past year: Hugh Armstrong (Chair), Bob Townsend (Vice-Chair), John Slater (Secretary), Bruce Mcleod, Ian Turner (new member), and ex-officio voting member Paul Thibault (GN Vice-President) for Pres. Phil Horch. Also, non-voting ex-officio members are Alicia Lew (Chief Interpreter) and Scott Richter/Kara Brake (Parks and Rec reps). My thanks to all for your commitment!

The 2023 year saw the MHIP return to a more normal programming and function. Things definitely were on the upswing. There were a number of staff changes but we have had a full complement of staff since September, 2023. To date we have 4 full-time and 2 part-time employees. (see the 2023 MHIP Annual Report for more).

The Financial picture at the end of 2023 is very good, showing Income at 112% of Budget and Expenses 94% of Budget. Very well done Alicia and staff! Thank you to our bookkeeper Jane McGough for her excellent work.

Many new programs have attracted families and the public. Again, I refer you to the excellent Annual Report prepared by Alicia.

We negotiated a new 5-year contract with the city and I must say this round was much less time consuming. We look forward to another rewarding 5 years.

2023 was not without some challenges and controversies. Chief among these was the unfortunate cancelling of the XC ski rentals at the Nature Centre. Fortunately, there is a Nordic Ski Club in the Hat and ski rentals can be had at Elkwater which is where 90% of our rentals ended up. Capital costs of upgrades, logistics, and insurance coverage were all contributing factors.

And finally, in 2023, Alicia, Mhairi, and staff have continued with an admirable job of keeping the MHIP running smoothly using in-house, online, and various outdoor activities at Police Point Park. I believe the quality of life, mental and physical, of our citizens has been dramatically impacted by the program and enjoying the outdoors and nature. We continue to have, in the MH Interpretive Program, one of the finest in the country and they can feel proud of the quality programming that comes out of it.

Respectfully submitted,

Hugh Armstrong, Committee Chair