

Birding Trails Committee Report

2016 AGM of Grasslands Naturalists

As reported at previous general meetings of Grasslands Naturalists, work is continuing on the development of Birding Trails for Southeastern Alberta. The volunteer members of our committee have a vision to create a series of birding trails that will enable visiting birders to locate the best birding locales in our region. It will also act as an encouragement for avid birders from throughout our continent and beyond to visit our region in their birding pursuits and be able to maximize their time here by having a guide that directs them to the best birding locales.

Members of the Grasslands Naturalists have already had a glimpse at some of the work being done by this committee as the last several issues of the Sagebrush Chronicle have published excerpts of this committee's efforts. It is hoped that by doing this all members of our society will have the opportunity to review this project and provide feedback and suggestions to committee members.

At this time over 80% of the text for this project has been written, in large part by Milt Spitzer, and work is progressing on the many maps that are needed, thanks to Paul Thibault. It is hoped that these maps will be completed this year. Upon completion, this work will be published in a format that will lend itself to use in the field and as well, it is planned, that a website will also be created. Possibly an app can also be developed in the future based on this work. Fund-raising is necessary for these efforts to reach fruition and efforts are being, and will continue to be, directed accordingly.

While Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan all have extensive birding trails already, Alberta has been remiss in developing same. The Calgary Field Naturalists have produced a good birder's guide to the Calgary area but little else has been done beyond that to date. It is hoped that this project will ultimately contribute to the knowledge and appreciation of the many excellent birding locales in Southeastern Alberta while at the same time generating more birding activity in our area which can only contribute to the collective natural history knowledge of our area.

Due to the absence of key committee members during the winter months, no meetings have taken place since November. However, meeting of the committee are planned to resume in May, 2016.

Members of this committee include Phil Horch, Chairperson, Milt Spitzer, Bob Frew, Rob Gardner, Marty Drut, Paul Thibault, Ben Verner, McKenzie Fai, Colton Prins, Hugh Armstrong, Bill Knibbs, John Slater, Lloyd Bennett and Mike O'Shea.

Submitted by Phil Horch,
Chairperson,
March, 2016