

GN President's Report 2015-16

My term has now ended. As a last contribution, I am submitting in point form some of the highlights of my tenure.

-the response from Rob Gardner and Bob Townsend to the South Saskatchewan River Biodiversity Management Framework as requested by Todd Sharpe, General Manager, Parks and Recreation for the city of Medicine Hat. When I read this document, I was struck by the value of our long-time members. You had to be in the trenches to write stuff like this. Thank you again, Rob, for taking the lead.

-life members appointed. At the AGM we recognized the contributions of two of our own with life memberships. Eileen Cowtan and Michael O'Shea have been active for many years, both serving on the executive and volunteering countless hours.

-the Baby's Breath Project. Grasslands Naturalists volunteers spent many hours removing the seed load from the remaining plants to maintain the hard-won gains of the previous year. The value of the project was recognized when its designer and driving force, Sean Allen, received an Environmental Civic Recognition Award and was nominated for an Emerald Award, a provincial award for environmental excellence.

-the spring bird and flower count. Again, a good walk for a dear project.

-Great Sand Hills birding and butterfly trip. The dry spring limited our sightings of birds and butterflies, but what a sight for any naturalist!

-Janet Ng's presentation on the success of the Ferruginous Hawk recovery program. The numbers appear to have returned to pre-1990 levels.

-I.P. staff benefits program. We are now extending health benefits to the staff at Police Point Park. I'm glad we could add this during my term.

-Medicine Hat Community Foundation Endowment Plan. A fund has been set up that anyone can contribute to so that we have an ongoing income stream. We spent quite a bit of time on this, and it was gratifying to see it created.

-Riparian Health Assessment Project. We were tasked with assessing the health of the South Saskatchewan River system within the city limits. Cows and Fish provided training which enabled us to accurately calculate the environmental health of this most valuable resource. Again, we walked the walk.

-GN 30th anniversary celebration. “On Sunday afternoon, September 27th, the Grasslands Naturalists Club celebrated its 30th Anniversary by hosting the MHIP Fall Festival with the Alberta Cultural Days at Police Point Park. The air was crisp and the fall leaves were turning as many folks from Medicine Hat came to enjoy local music, dance and food as well as make scarecrows and enjoy family treasure hunts.” (courtesy John Slater)

-the Christmas bird count. An annual institution. Wouldn't miss it.

-Policies and Procedures Manual. I had very little to do with this initiative, but must acknowledge the excellent contribution by Paul Thibault. That's doing the tough slogging.

-the casino. We put in some long hours, but we'll pat ourselves on the back when the check comes in.

-the City Tree Planting Initiative. GN is gratified to be invited to assist with this project. We shall endeavour to ensure this project will be a source of pride for all.

Respectfully submitted
Dave McKenzie, President