

Society of Grasslands Naturalists Board Meeting February 4, 2014

Present: Anne Bernhardt, Eileen Cowtan, Gary Martin, Bill Knibbs, John Slater, Corlaine Gardner, Martha Gue, Barry Anderson.

Hosted by Judy and Barry Anderson who provided the food and beverages.

Call to order at 7:15 pm.

Minutes:

1. The January 7, 2014, board minutes were reviewed. **Motion carried** to accept the minutes.

Special Presentation:

1. Corlaine up-dated information regarding a potential outdoor classroom and hollow-log-theme playground to be located on the southwest corner of the Nature Centre. The Kiwanis Club has approved in principle to co-sponsor this project. Required supplementary funds to the \$25,000 Kiwanis grant are expected to be in the order of \$40,000 - \$50,000 depending on the overall cost of the playground. We have two years to secure the required supplementary funding but are under no obligation if we cannot find the necessary matching funds. **Motion carried** that the Kiwanis and GN Board initiate planning for this project pending finances and approval of the GN membership.

Action Items:

1. MHIP Operations Committee Report

- Corlaine reviewed the "Chief Interpreter's Report for the IP Management Committee" from January 13, 2014 and provided copies for perusal.
- GN has received a letter of resignation from Val Felesky. Effective January 6, 2014, Val will no longer serve on the Operations Committee. Thanks to Val for his past service. The Board will investigate a more formal way to recognize Val.
- Corlaine spoke on behalf of Rob regarding the Nature Conservancy of Canada and its efforts to seek funding for a conservancy project being considered for SE Alberta east of Milk River adjacent to the US border. **Motion carried** that GN support NCC in its application for funding for this project.
- The next Operations Committee meeting will be held April 14 with time and location TBA.

Treasurer's Report:

1. Eileen provided copies of Income Statements and Balance sheets for both the MHIP and GN Club for the month of January 2014 and for the past calendar year.
2. Eileen provided an up-dated GN membership contact list for 2014. Overall, membership numbers have seen little change.
3. GN members are encouraged to receive GN correspondence electronically to help reduce increasing mailing costs.
4. Donations to GN are always welcome. See Eileen for contribution details.

Correspondence:

1. Eileen distributed the most recent newsletters, bulletins and magazines for board perusal.

Other Reports:

1. Governance Committee

- No report.

2. Budget Committee

- Board members received from Paul a detailed report via e-mail summarizing the last Budget Committee meeting held February 3.
- The GN fundraising committee now consists of Hugh Armstrong, Jim Black, Bill Knibbs and Gary Martin.

Details of “Giving Tuesday” (Canada Helps), “Earth Day Canada seeks nominees for Hometown Heroes Award Program”, the “Medicine Hat Co-op Fundraising Program Rules and Regulations” and the “Ecotrust Grant” were all outlined with discussion and some

- the “Ecotrust Grant” were all outlined with discussion and some hard-copy information.
- **Motions carried that:** a separate GN Fundraising Committee be formed, that GN investigate ways to receive club donations electronically, and that GN pursue alternate insurance quotes.
- The next Budget Committee will be held on April 4; time and location TBA.

3. I.P Operations Committee

- Details have been covered under “Action Items”.

4. Issues Committee

The Issues Committee meeting was held February 3 to discuss a number of issues concerning Energy Conservation; Movement/Transportation of Oil & Gas; Sage Grouse Recovery; PFRA; decline of Bees; Alberta Transportation Strategy Plan; and Riparian Health Assessment:

- Movement/transportation of oil and gas will continue to use pipelines, rail and highway. Main concerns are condition of pipelines and rail cars; possible rupture and leakage; contamination of soil, groundwater and water bodies; and protection of earth, air and water.
- The Amended Sage Grouse Recovery Strategy is being reviewed with recommendation to shorten the time to implement the Action Plan for the sage grouse in Alberta.
- The Federal government has transferred the PFRA land to the Provincial governments, particularly large tracks of grazing lands in Saskatchewan. In Alberta, there is concern about the future of the One-Four Research Station. Marty is drafting a letter to the Federal and Alberta governments to inquire about the current status and future of the One-Four grazing land. We encourage the continuation of grazing and recommend its use for the planned sage grouse captive breeding program by the Calgary Zoo.
- The long-term Alberta Transportation Strategy Plan is to be viewed by the public February 5th at the Carriage House, Stampede Grounds. Upgrade of Hwy #41 south and 24/7 border crossing at Wildhorse is of concern; particularly the effects the increased traffic will have on the wildlife.
- The health and sustainability of riparian areas are of concern because of plans to berm much of the river and creeks for flood mitigation.
- To address these issues, the Issues Committee recommends that a GN position/policy statement on the values of the grasslands and riparian areas needs to be written. Martha will start drafting the document which will be circulated by email for further input.

5. Communications Committee

- Thanks to Eileen and Bill who contacted GN members encouraging them to use electronic mail to receive GN correspondence to help reduce increasing postage costs.

6. SEAWA and Nature Alberta

- Martha reported that February 5 is officially “Walk Outside Day”.
- The AGM for SEAWA will be held at the Medicine Hat College on March 31. More details to follow.
- The AGM for NA will be held the weekend of April 12 in Edmonton. More details to follow.
- The Oldman Watershed Council Rural Team invites the public to join them at the **8th Annual “Holding the Reins Landowner Summit” on Tuesday, February 11th** at the Fort Macleod & District Community Hall.

Other Business

- Corlaine extended get-well-wishes to Veronica Swan (illness) and Hans Mueller (surgery).
- Corlaine indicated that February 6 is officially “Sweater Day”. WWF challenges Canadians to lower their thermostats and don sweaters to help reduce global warming.
- Paul forwarded information to Board members on February 6 indicating that the meeting with Community Foundation is set for February 19th at 1:30 pm. The meeting will take place at the conference room that Community Foundation shares with Pritchard Lerner and Johnston Morrison Hunter (430 6th Avenue SE).

Adjournment at 9:00 pm. The next board meeting will be held March 4 @ 7:00 pm hosted by Bill Knibbs - #307, 3090 15 Avenue SE. 403.527.1006.