

Society of Grasslands Naturalists Board Meeting October 2, 2012

Present: John Slater, Bill Knibbs (host), Eileen Cowtan, Marty Drut, Anne Bernhardt, Corlaine Gardner, Paul Thibault, Dave McKenzie, Barry Anderson

Minutes: Sept. 4, 2012, minutes were reviewed. **John moved the minutes be adopted; Bill seconded. Carried.**

Action Items:

1. John will contact SRD Fish and Wildlife to request a meeting regarding elk management in the Suffield Block and to discuss declining numbers and habitat of the sage grouse throughout SE Alberta.
2. John reiterated the need for membership/waiver forms to be completed annually for insurance purposes.

Treasurer's Report – Eileen

1. Eileen presented a Balance Sheet and Income Statement as of Sept. 30, 2012.

Other Reports and Discussion

1. Issues Committee – John
 - Marty spoke briefly about Bill 202 Public Lands Amendment Act and GN meeting with MLA member Drew Barnes. Drew concedes that the idea behind the act is worthwhile but requires far more transparency: consequently, he opposes Bill 202. Martha to draft a letter to Alberta Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development Diana McQueen supporting Bill 202 but pointing out some of the deficiencies of the bill.
 - Marty will continue to monitor recent release of PFRA lands to the provinces. Marty also spoke about the Suffield Coalition concern to maintain the National Wildlife Area.
 - The meeting with MLA Blake Pedersen has yet to be arranged by Martha.
 - The Ports-to-Plains Conference was held in Medicine Hat Oct. 2-3 with local coverage by the MH News. There is concern about the realignment and upgrade of Hwy 41 through the Sage Grouse area south of Cypress Hills.
2. Communications Committee
 - Work continues on a 2-sided GN and IP brochure.
 - John asked Dave for his assistance in designing a new display board at the Nature Centre.
 - Paul presented three possible GN website updates with estimated costs for each. Option One includes layering the photo gallery with categories and text with an estimated cost of \$100 – \$150. Option Two includes automatic email reminders for field trips with an estimated cost of \$300 - \$600. Option Three includes on-line membership payments through PayPal or credit card with an estimated cost of \$150 - \$210. **Eileen moved to proceed with Option One; Anne seconded. Motion carried.** The remaining two options will be considered at a later date.
3. Interpretive Program – Corlaine
 - Corlaine reported that summer staff has now left. Kit, an Eco-Tourism student from the Medicine Hat College, is assisting at the Nature Centre.
 - John reported on the Interpretive Program Operations Committee meeting held Sept. 24. The next meeting will take place at the Nature Centre on Oct. 18 with Anne attending.
4. Outdoor Programs and Field Trips
 - Phil Horch will lead a bird outing on October 6 to Sauder's Reservoir and Murray Lake. Meet at the A & W Hwy. 3 at 8:00 am. The trip is expected to last until noon.
 - Ben Velner will lead another bird outing to Many Islands Lake on October 13. This will be an all day trip so pack lunch. Meet at the bingo hall on Hwy 41A promptly at 8:00 am.

Other Business:

1. Discussion regarding speaker's compensation and expenses such as mileage, accommodation, meals, etc. An ad hoc committee consisting of Rob, Eileen, Bill, Anne and John formed to draft the guidelines. This committee will then report back to the board with its recommendations.
2. **Anne's motion, seconded by Bill -to digitize and then archive GN Chronicles, minutes, scrapbooks and other historical documents at the Esplanade-was approved.** However, measures should first be taken to negotiate with the City of Medicine Hat re the archiving of these materials.
3. Dave McKenzie offered his expertise in establishing an email system exclusively for GN members to post sightings, photos, information, announcements, etc. **John made a motion to allow Dave to proceed; seconded by Bill. Motion carried.** He hopes to have the system operational in a few weeks time.
4. By-law Clause 4.7.1: **Anne made a motion that Marty and Eileen be paid for their services to the Medicine Hat Interpretive Program; seconded by Barry. Motion carried.** (4 votes in favor, 0 votes against, 2 votes abstained).
5. An ad hoc committee consisting of Paul, Eileen, Anne, and John will be formed to begin drafting GN policies and procedures.
6. The Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference will be held in Red Deer, Feb. 19-22, 2013. The theme of this year's conference is "Engaging People in Conservation". On behalf of the Interpretive Program, Marty will attend and present poster information of the Sprague's Pipit Project. Other individuals are welcome to attend. Check out the link for more information: <http://www.pcesc.ca/> .