

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS BOARD MEETING April 3, 2012

Present: John Slater, Bill Knibbs, Eileen Cowtan (host), Barry Anderson, Anne Bernhardt, Val Felesky, Tina Regehr, Milt Spitzer, Paul Thibault

Minutes: of March 13, 2012 meeting reviewed. Eileen **MOVED** minutes be adopted; John seconded. **CARRIED.**

Action Items:

1. Sage Grouse Lawsuit Affidavit: No report from Marty Drut due to his absence. Dawn Dickinson has stepped down from submitting an affidavit. Marty will continue in his role as leader of this issue.
2. Map of Designated Critical Habitat: No report due to Marty's absence.

Treasurer's Report: Eileen

1. Eileen distributed and reviewed the GN Balance Sheet and Income Statement dated March 28, 2012.
2. New bylaws sent to the Alberta Society Act for approval. Federal approval to follow.
3. **MOTION** by Eileen that Barry Anderson, replacing Tina Regehr as Secretary, be appointed as a new signing officer for the Society of Grasslands Naturalists, Bank Account #'s 600 10 8629396, 600 20 8629396 and 600 30 296396 at the Servus Credit Union, Downtown Branch, Medicine Hat. That Anne Bernhardt, Vice President, be appointed to replace Michael O'Shea (past President) as a signing officer of the above accounts. That John Slater (President) and Eileen Cowtan (Treasurer) remain as the other two signing officers. That all cheques written for the Society of Grasslands Naturalists be signed by any two of the above-mentioned individuals. **SECONDED** by Bill. **CARRIED.**
4. **MOTION** by Eileen that Eileen Cowtan, in her capacity as Treasurer, be granted online access to the Servus bank accounts. She alone will not be able to make any transactions but instead may access the information for these accounts. **SECONDED** by Bill. **CARRIED.**
5. Eileen distributed and reviewed our current GN membership list which contains 147 members.

Board: John

1. The Executive Officers of GN are as follows: John Slater (President), Anne Bernhardt (Vice President), Barry Anderson (Secretary), and Eileen Cowtan (Treasurer).
2. Appointment of Past President and Directors at Large: **MOTION** by John that Michael O'Shea (past president), Bill Knibbs and Martha Gue (directors at large) fulfill these roles. Marty Drut Director at Large in waiting until approval of new bylaws. **SECONDED** by Anne. **CARRIED**
3. Appointment of Reps to External Organizations: **MOTION** by John that Martha Munz Gue be appointed GN Rep to Nature Alberta and Marty as Alternate. **SECONDED** by Bill. **CARRIED**
4. Further reorganization and restructuring of committees to be discussed.

Issues Committee: Martha

1. No report from Martha Munz Gue due to her absence.
2. Tina provided a brief update from her speech given to the Medicine Hat City Plan on March 28. Specifically, GN is opposed to the development of the Burnside and Ranchlands areas within the city, because of flooding and ongoing agricultural use of the rich soil. Additionally, wildlife corridors need to be reviewed before the city moves forward with any potential development. The MHCP is currently tabled so that the opinions of all stakeholders can be considered. Tina can provide a hard copy of her speech.
3. The meeting with MP's and MLA's will be postponed until after the provincial election April 23.
4. John to arrange meeting with SRD Fish & Wildlife (Dale Eslinger) near the end of April.
5. With reference to the Tax Recovery Land Transfer near Vulcan and Taber, Paul Thibault spoke briefly about his concerns over the fragmentation of the land and the effects this has on the survival of indigenous species. He believes that GN should take on a preventative role in this regard rather than a reactionary one. More follow-up with this issue is needed.

Communications Committee: Tina

1. It was suggested that the communications committee (Tina, Eileen, Paul, Corlaine, Anne) convene to examine methods to promote the work of GN. Such devices would include website, facebook, brochure, displays and other such social media. Tina will call a meeting to begin this process.
2. Milt Spitzer continues as editor of the monthly Sagebrush Chronicle.
3. On April 24 Wayne Nelson will present an indoor program on Turkey Vultures. More details to follow.

Interpretive Program: Corlaine

1. No report from Corlaine due to her absence but a definite urgency for more volunteers for the Easter weekend, April 6-9 and Thursday April 5 from 2:30 – 5:00 pm to help set up.

Field Trips:

1. A possible owling trip led by Mike to the Cypress Hills on April 21 – more details to follow.
2. Milt is tentatively planning a waterfowl trip on April 28 – more details to follow.

Nature Alberta: Martha

1. No report from Martha due to her absence.
2. Martha is planning to attend the AGM on April 14-15 and share her report at a future Board meeting.

SEAWA: Tina

1. Tina attended the SEAWA AGM meeting on March 30 where two speakers voiced their concerns regarding water security and water allocation. Martha was elected to the SEAWA Board as a public member.

Other Business

Concerning the Ecojustice Sage-grouse II Lawsuit, there was considerable discussion centered on the following four points:

1. It is now realized, when the motion was voted on at the GN General Meeting on January 24, which approved GN to sign onto the Ecojustice Retainer Agreement and Lawsuit with full indemnification for GN on all costs, that there was insufficient number of members at the meeting for a quorum.
2. For an issue of significance such as a Lawsuit, there needs to be sufficient time in advance to notify the GN members in the Chronicle and give adequate time for discussion at a General Meeting before having a vote.
3. When the issue is of an advocative nature, there needs to be serious consideration given to how it could affect the GN Society and MH Interpretive Program. The consensus was that the primary focus and thrust of GN should be on educational and conservation programs and activities.
4. Because the Executive has already proceeded to sign on to the Ecojustice Retainer Agreement, the question arose as to whether GN could withdraw. Examination of the Retainer Agreement revealed that GN is free to withdraw for any reasonable cause.

Further discussion and possible vote on this issue is planned at the next General meeting April 24. A quorum of 37 members is required for passing a motion.

Adjournment: 9:15 pm. Next Board Meeting Tuesday May 8, 2012, 7pm, at John Slater's, 32 McNeely Court SE (near the college), phone (403) 526-7003.