

Society of Grassland Naturalists
Minutes of General Meeting – May 22, 2012
Police Point Park Nature Centre

1. **Call to Order** at 7:05 pm. John Slater – Chair; Barry Anderson - Secretary
2. **Minutes:** The minutes from April 24, 2012 were reviewed. Rob Gardner moved the minutes to be accepted; seconded by Gary Martin CARRIED.
3. **Exciting Sightings:** Recent sightings included the following:
 - about 25 red knots near Brooks (Rob Gardner and other birders)
 - 3 Baltimore orioles, 2 at Bullshead and one in his backyard (Barry and Judy Anderson)
 - whimbrel sightings near Taber (Rob Gardner on behalf of a Taber bird-watcher)
4. **Announcements**
 - The GN Potluck supper will take place on Tuesday, June 26 @ 6:00 pm at the Nature Centre. Volunteers are still needed to help with set-up, clean up, food, refreshments, etc. Contact Tina Regehr for details or to add your name to the sign-up sheet.
 - The Medicine Hat Annual Spring Bird and Flower Count will take place on Sunday, May 27 throughout the city and surrounding area. Help still needed! Do your own territory or help with an assigned one. Count birds or flowers or both! Go all day or just for an hour or two! Contact Marty Drut at the Nature Centre for details or sign-up at (403) 529-6225 or email Marty
 - The Butterfly Walk scheduled for Saturday, May 26 is cancelled due to unfavourable weather forecast. Jan Scott will reschedule this event. More details to follow.
 - The Cypress Hills Bird Count will take place on Saturday, June 2 @ 8:30 am. Meet at the Elkwater Visitor Services Centre at 8:30 AM. You may wish to phone (403) 893-3833 (ask for Chris Dodds) to reserve a route.
 - A Wildflower Walk in Police Point, Prairie Bells and Blooms, will take place on Sunday, June 10. Meet at the Nature Centre at 2:00 PM.
 - Prairie Wildflowers and Birds Trail Walk is scheduled on Friday, June 15. from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. Meet at the Ross Creek Trailhead, 110 Ewart Crescent SE. Follow Carry Drive from Dunmore Road. Turn right at Ross Glen Drive. Take the first left turn. Stop at the posts. Phone (403) 504-1662. Led by Mike O'Shea.
 - Heritage Trees Walk will happen on Thursday evening, June 21, with a likely start @ St. Joseph's on 3rd St NE, Riverside. Details for this walk will be announced in the June Chronicle. Also, Dennis will be making a short 10 minute presentation at the Potluck Dinner regarding the old cottonwood trees in Police Point Park.

- The Medicine Hat Jane's Walk will occur on Saturday June 23 with more details to follow in the June Chronicle. Just who is Jane Jacobs??? Check out the link http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Jacobs
- Mike and Gary are planning summer field trips to the King Ranch located near Aiden and Blackfoot Crossing near Cluny. More details to follow as they become available.

5. **Discussion**

- Marty reported that the recent meeting with Dale Eslinger, SRD Fish and Wildlife Officer, on May 9 was a positive one. Dale noted at the meeting that the lawsuit was helpful to the staff in Medicine Hat because it allowed them to go forward with stronger protective measures for sage grouse habitat. The lawsuit put pressure on higher authorities in the province to allow Fish and Wildlife staff to act; they felt the province might also be sued. Secondly, reports from Dale indicate that during the spring lek count 13 male grouse were seen which is the same as last year, but in Saskatchewan there was significant decline in numbers from 40 to 18 males. Consequently, Alberta Fish and Wildlife is taking immediate steps to protect the remaining sage grouse population.
- Marty indicated that the Elk Management Plan in the Suffield Block is looking for a GN member to join its committee.
- Marty gave an update regarding the Sage Grouse Lawsuit and the Judicial Dispute Resolution. At one point it looked like the federal government was going to provide clarity as to whether or not the Minister has made an emergency order. However, it cancelled a scheduled meeting and reasserted its original position that the entire issue is covered by Cabinet confidence. As for the Judicial Dispute Resolution (regarding further critical sage grouse habitat identification) Ecojustice is still waiting to hear back from the federal government as to whether it is agreeable to the terms and conditions outlined.

6. **Meeting Adjourned** at 7:30 pm

The meeting was followed by Selena Mclean-Moore of the Alberta Treasury Board and Enterprise with her presentation entitled the Future Game. This was a hands-on activity to "create" a green community in this scenario-based program and to gain a better appreciation of why regional planning is important.