

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS  
Minutes of General Meeting- February 23, 2016  
Police Point Park

1. Call to Order: 7:05 pm, Dave McKenzie – Chair, Betty Rainville – Secretary.
2. Review and Adoption of Minutes of General Meeting January 26, 2016: motion Carried.
3. Exciting Sightings: Feb. 21 about 6 pm. John Slater spotted the Great Horned Owl ,in the Marlborough area ,that had been heard before on several occasions. Gary observed what was likely a Short- eared Owl.
4. Treasurer's Report and Membership: Eileen Cowtan noted the total current assets of the 3 GN Club accounts in February remain at \$29,558.95. John Slater has submitted an invoice to the City for the Ranchlands Baby's Breath Project of \$4,637.80. A donation of \$200.00 was made to GN through Telus Cares for 50 hours of volunteer work. This Kiwanis member selected GN as the recipient.
5. Membership: There are 39 paid memberships at this time.
6. Correspondence: Eileen reported none.
7. **Priority Business:**
  - a. **Bird Tales Update:** Dee Armstrong noted that they are hoping to start a second program at Meadow Ridge Seniors Village soon. She said the cafe bird feeders attached to windows are exceptional. Dee (with Paul Thibault's input) explained a proposal of setting up a solarium in the central secure area of four Meadow Ridge cottages to be used as a botanical feature in the Bird Tales Project as well as a room for programs in colder weather. Volunteers knowledgeable in gardening are needed to help lay out the Solarium plan before the AGM on March 22. Volunteers are also needed for the regular Bird Tales program. A motion was made that GN participate in the design and funding of a botanical garden as part of the Bird Tales Program. Seconded and Carried. This is an exploratory idea at this point.
  - b. **GN AGM:** To be held at the MH Public Library in the Legion Room March 22 at 6:30 pm. At 7:00 pm participants will move to the Honor Currie Room to hear Scott Murphy speak by video conference from Pincher Creek Library on "Fire Management in Waterton Lakes National Park; Recent Prescribed and Wildfire Experiences". This information to be put into the March Chronicle. Anne proposed GN could help with cookies and coffee. Suggested the President, and a few others, give reports to highlight the events of the year. Each committee will write an annual report to be posted on the GN website and sent out by email. Also, one or two reports could be included in the Chronicle. Please note the deadline for Chronicle submission is March 10<sup>th</sup>. GN members could read these reports prior to the AGM, then raise any questions at the actual meeting, March 22. After the reports are adopted, Paul Thibault would assemble all reports on the website.
  - c. **Nomination for Life-Time Membership award update:** The February Chronicle outlined the following steps for a GN member to nominate someone for a Life-Time award: 1.Name of the nominee, 2. Rationale supporting the nomination, 3. Name of member submitting the nomination 4. Date of submission. Nominations must be submitted to the Board by February 27, 2016. The Board will review the nominations and make a selection for possible presentation at the GN AGM on March 22.
8. **Interpretive Program Report:** Marty noted Police Point Park email service should be working again in a few days. Since the IP website is down, GN website is also down. Phone PPP at (403) 529-6225 to contact them. Marty expressed his

thanks to the GN volunteers who helped at the Kiwanis Family Fun Day on Feb. 15. In addition to the Kiwanis volunteers, these GN helpers were still needed to assist the 627 people who attended. Please call the Nature Centre at (403) 529-6225 to volunteer with the following upcoming rewarding events:

1. **Chicks and Bunnies:** Starts March 14 for 8 or 9 days. School groups will be attending.
2. **Public Easter Program:** Val would appreciate help getting this program ready. It runs 4 days starting Good Friday. Help is needed with set-up, during the event, and with clean-up after. Marty said No Parking signs on one side of the Police Point Park road, volunteers directing traffic, and cars to shuttle volunteers to the Centre should help vehicle congestion over the Easter week-end.

The Medicine Hat Interpretive Program needs ONE person to volunteer to phone members and ask them for help during this very active time at the Centre. Please email Eileen at [ecowtan@hotmail.com](mailto:ecowtan@hotmail.com) or call (403) 526-1264 if you could do this. Phoning could be done from home, and would greatly help the Centre staff.

The following are more events happening at the Centre:

1. **Winter Story Walk:** continues until the end of February. "The 20 Adventures of Sunny the Bear".
2. **Art Display about Winter** at the Centre.
3. **Seedy Saturday:** Saturday, March 5 (1-3 pm). Bring your own container/s and swap seeds.
4. **String Fever:** Bill Frank and Brian Walters will provide Acoustic Guitar Music around the time of the Spring Equinox. The exact time and date will be announced later.

## 9. Committee Reports:

- a. **Issues Committee:** 1. Marty Drut and Rob Gardner attended the PCES Conference in Saskatoon Feb.16-18. They will compile notes on sessions attended for the Chronicle. Marty mentioned these points:
  - There are still endangered species on the Prairies.
  - Loss of Prairies still continues due to conversion to crop lands (Agricultural Conversion).
  - PCES works with ranchers to wisely manage private and public lands in Saskatchewan and Alberta.2. Martha Munz Gue and John are booked to attend the Alberta Ecotrust Gathering Feb. 25- 27 in Calgary
- b. **Indoor Program Speakers:** Dave said Shane Leuck cancelled as tonight's speaker due to illness. Sean Allen has offered to fill in with an outline of his Environmental Assessment Course tonight. Dave said there are some speakers in mind for April and May. To be announced.
- c. **Field Trips:** Gary explained the topic "Exploring our own Neighbourhood", will consist of GN Members acting as leaders in their own area. Hopefully local trips will encourage higher turnout. Also, a local GN couple have previously offered a field trip to their ranch.
- d. **Fund Raising Committee update:** 1. Gary thanked all those who volunteered at the recent Casino. We will find out near the end of April what the exact amount received will be. However, Gary estimated the figure could be close to \$15,000. Thank you Gary for all the time spent on this endeavor.  
2. Hugh is waiting to hear from Co-op on the \$250 grant request which he has submitted.
- e. **Birding Trails Project update:** Milt Spitzer will return on March 3. To discuss with Milt or Phil about speaking at a GM on this project. A trail map and article are printed in each Chronicle.

## 10. New Business:

- a. Sean Allen to present an Environmental Awareness Course to 12-15 GN members. He will discuss this later tonight. There was an article in the last Chronicle about Sean's course.
- b. PCES Conference Report: See 9.a.1 (above).

## 11. Other Business:

- a. **Tree Planting Project:** Dave Genio, City Parks and Maintenance, spoke at the last Board meeting and encouraged GN members to assist with engaging the public in the upcoming tree planting project. Dave McKenzie will contact the city to find the actual planting date in June. GN volunteers would receive instructions from the City, then assist and instruct public groups in planting seedlings.
- b. **Pamphlet on Wildflowers:** Martha Munz Gue still needs local wildflower photos. Please check your computers and email any you may have to Martha at [mmunzgue@telusplanet.net](mailto:mmunzgue@telusplanet.net)
- c. **Pamphlet on Butterflies:** Dave will be starting "transects", or fixed route walks, once a week in 1-3 different areas of the city. Martha will note wildflowers as well, on these walks. Members will record on eButterfly as well as on eBird and Plant Watch sites. The Dragonfly and Bumble Bee Watch projects will tie into these walks. Dave would like feedback on these projects. He will be writing an article, "Calling all Naturalists", in each Chronicle.
- d. **Nature Alberta Representative:** The Board proposed that Gary Martin be appointed. Gary said the next Nature Alberta meeting will be held April 2, 2016 in Edmonton.
- e. **AGM Nominations:** Hugh said nominations will come from the floor at the AGM on March 22.
- f. **Next Board Meeting:** Tuesday March 1, 6:30 pm at Eileen's house.
- g. **Next GN AGM and presentation:** March 22, 6:30 pm at the Public Library in the Legion Room.
- h. Adjournment: 8:15 pm with 18 people attending
- i. Refreshment Break.
- j. Program: 21 people in attendance. Sean Allen outlined his talk on Environmental Assessment for Field Personnel.

### Summary of Sean Allen's Presentation Grasslands Naturalists General Meeting Tuesday, February 23, 2016

After twelve years working in the Oil and Gas Industry, Sean Allen enrolled in the Environmental Reclamation Program at the Medicine Hat College in 2012, and graduated with Honors. Now he wants to help bring down the cost of reclaiming abandoned wells by making a course available to the Oil and Gas Industry. GN members listened to him present a brief outline of the Environmental Assessment for Field Personnel, accompanied by impressive visual images.

Sean noted that in Medicine Hat alone there are 500 wells to be reclaimed. Each reclamation effort would cost approximately \$35,000 per well, but Sean says he could reduce the cost by 10% by having oil and gas personnel enroll in his course. The goal is to help bring reclamation costs down, as well as decrease the impact on the environment. Money would be saved that could be used for other projects.

The handbook that Sean wrote for his course covers seven main topics: Biodiversity, Hydrology, Soil, Environmental Chemistry, Reclamation Requirements, Governing Bodies, Hazardous Waste, and a conclusion. We were only able to enjoy a brief outline, since Sean will present the actual course over a 2 day period. He has invited 12 to 15 interested GN members to sign up for his newly developed course in order to get useful feedback for future presentations. There is no charge for GN members to attend.