

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
Minutes of REGULAR MEETING – January, 24, 2012
Police Point Park Nature Centre

1. **Call to Order:** 7:05pm John Slater – President/Chair
 Paul Thibault - Secretary

2. **Minutes:** The minutes from the November 22, 2011 meeting were reviewed.
Linda Carney moved to adopt the minutes, Rob Gardner seconded. CARRIED

3. **Exciting Sightings:**
Michael O'Shea observed 35 Cedar Waxwings near the hospital.
Marty Drut witnessed a large flock of Common Redpolls and one Hoary Redpoll.
Linda Carney had a visit by a pair of Ring-necked Pheasants in her yard.
Milt Spitzer and Ben Velner observed 60 American Sparrows.

4. **Treasurer's Reports:**
Eileen Cowtan presented an updated financial report. The income included \$900 in membership dues and \$660 in donations. Recent expenses included costs for Chronicle, insurance, travel expenses for Henry Binder to attend the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) wind turbine workshop in Calgary on December 12 and 13th, and fence wiring attachments to protect the Sage Grouse. The incomes for December and January (as of Jan 19th) were \$787.54 and \$920.00 respectively, whereas the expenses for these two periods were \$959.45 and \$787.13.

5. **Business:**
 - A. Greater Sage Grouse - Marty Drut discussed the decline of the Greater Sage Grouse in Canada, including Southern Alberta, and the possibility of GN signing on to a lawsuit by Ecojustice against the Federal Government for not protecting the Sage Grouse habitat. The pros and cons of joining the lawsuit were actively debated in terms of the importance of protecting the Sage Grouse and implications in terms of legal cost liability and possible negative reactions from local ranchers. Marty presented 3 options:
 - Not sign on to the lawsuit,
 - Sign on to the legal action regardless of the possible legal cost liability,
 - Sign on to the law suit provided that GN is indemnified for associated costs.The above discussions led to two motions:
Motion #1 moved by Rob Gardner and seconded by Gary Martin; "GN members support a possible lawsuit against the Government of Canada concerning the protection of the Sage Grouse provided that the total cost to GN does not exceed \$500". Vote: 6 in favour and 8 against (motion defeated).
Motion #2 moved by Phil Horch and seconded by Gary Martin; "GN members support a possible lawsuit against the Government of Canada concerning the protection of the Sage Grouse provided that GN receives full indemnification for all costs related to the lawsuit". Vote: 10 in favour and 4 against (motion passed).

 - B. Interpretive Program - Corlaine Gardner informed the members of the local School Art which was currently showing, and the need for volunteers for the Kiwanis Family Day event February 20, 2012 from 11am to 4:30pm, and for the Easter weekend events.

- C. New Bylaws - John Slater indicated that a new version (#17) of the draft bylaws has been prepared following a meeting with Julie Friesen. Members were encouraged to attend the AGM on March 27 to vote on the proposed bylaws.
 - D. Field Trips - Mike O'Shea announced the coming urban birding field trip on February 4th meeting at Police Point to be led by Phil Horch. Also, Gary Martin is planning to lead field trip in Elkwater on March 3rd to follow the trail of the cougars.
 - E. Indoor Program Presentations - Rob Gardner has organised the following presentations:
 - February 28: Garth Glass will give a talk on bison ranchers discussing the similarities and differences compared to cattle. This ties in with the exhibit at the Nature Centre that features bison art.
 - March 27 AGM: Ryan Heavy, Head of the Red Crow Community College, Standoff, Kainai First Nation will speak about the timing of natural events and the way these occurrences have influenced the Kainai culture.
 - April 24: Wayne Nelson will discuss turkey vultures in Alberta: their changing distribution, diet and life style, based on results of his extensive wing-banding program.
 - May 22: Sabrina McLean, of AB Economic Development, will lead a scenario-based game played by our members. Participants will learn how land use decisions can influence the future of our community.
 - June 26: Potluck supper at Redcliff River Valley Park
 - F. Door Prize – Draw for door prize at the meeting was won by Bob Frew. He selected a book.
6. **Adjournment**: 8:00pm.
7. **Program**: “Tourism and the Environment – A Match made in Heaven?” by Jody Lamb.