

Society of Grassland Naturalists
Minutes of Annual General Meeting – March 25, 2014
Nature Centre

1. **Call to Order** at 6:40 pm. Anne Bernhardt – Chair; Barry Anderson – Secretary
2. **Minutes: Motion carried** to accept the minutes from the Grasslands Naturalists' AGM held March 26, 2013, at the Medicine Hat Public Library.
3. **Annual Reports:** The following reports were briefly summarized by the individuals identified (or someone speaking on their behalf) and some hard copy reports were provided at tonight's meeting. Completed reports, when possible, are available for detailed perusal on the GN website and in the April issue of the Chronicle:

- President's Report - Anne Bernhardt
- Treasurer's Report - Eileen Cowtan (absent) **Motion carried** to accept the report.
- Operation's Committee Report - no representative
- Interpretive Program Report - Corlaine Gardner
- Field Trips Report - Gary Martin and Mike O'Shea
- Issues Committee Report - John Slater
- Carol Porter Bluebird Trail Report - Milt Spitzer
- Budget Committee Report - Paul Thibault
- Communications Report - Eileen Cowtan (absent)
- Governance Committee Report - Paul Thibault
- Nature Alberta Report - Martha Gue (absent)
- Fundraising Committee Report - Hugh Armstrong (absent)

4. **Elections:**
John Slater conducted elections this evening and the following individuals were elected as the GN Board Executive Officers for 2014:

- President - Anne Bernhardt
- Vice-President - (vacancy)
- Treasurer - Eileen Cowtan
- Secretary - Monica Bartha

The remaining positions as GN Directors will be filled by John Slater (past-president), Bill Knibbs, Hugh Armstrong and Gary Martin. Thanks to all those who will serve in the next year.

5. **Other Business:**
 - The appointment of other representatives will take place at the next GN Board meeting to be held April 1 @ 7:00 pm at the Medicine Hat Public Library, Legion Room. Two such vacancies include a GN representative on the I.P. Operations Committee and a replacement for Martha Gue as the Nature Alberta representative. Contact Anne for more details.
 - Marty extended his thanks to all the individuals who volunteered to assist with the Sprague's Pipit project this past year.
 - Thanks are extended to John Slater and Milt Spitzer who examined the 2013 GN financial records as presented by Eileen in her Balance Sheet.

- A meeting will be held April 3 @ 1:00 pm to discuss further GN insurance details. Contact John for more information.

6. Announcements:

- Sean Allen provided information regarding his involvement in the Ranchland's Baby's Breath Removal Project this past year. Sean indicated that this project has been nominated for a 2014 Emerald Award – congratulations to Sean, CalFrac Well Services and the City of Medicine Hat for their involvement. Sean and his support team will return to the Ranchland's area this year for continued removal of this invasive plant species and hopes GN will provide on-going support.

7. Up-Coming Field Trips:

- Ben Velner will travel to Manyberries and surrounding area to look for the greater sage grouse and other species on Saturday, March 29. Meet at the Tim Horton's Dunmore Road location at 6:00 am to arrange for car-pooling.
- Mike O'Shea will lead a group of interested birders to the Cypress Hills on Friday, April 11, to listen for saw-whet owls. Meet @ 8:00 pm at the Medicine Hat Mall (across from Tim Horton's) to arrange for car-pooling; dress warmly.

8. Attendance tonight – 22 for the business portion and 35 for the presentation.

9. Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm

10. Indoor Program:

**Living Dinosaurs in our Rivers
a presentation by
Terry Clayton**

The lake sturgeon is really a 200 million year-old dinosaur that frequents both the North and South Saskatchewan River basins and that's no fish story! This torpedo-shaped creature has few enemies, other than man, and appears to be on the rebound since its placement on the Threatened Species List in 2007; anglers in Alberta have also been unable to purchase a legal sturgeon fishing tag since 2004. According to Terry Clayton, a Senior Fisheries Biologist from the Lethbridge Office, dams pose the greatest threat to lake sturgeon by preventing them from returning upstream to popular spawning grounds. These "hot" spots, three downstream and four upstream from the city of Medicine Hat, are now protected habitat for the sturgeon – another reason why, according to a 2012 study, Alberta's rivers and waterways were home for an estimated 6425 of these armoured bottom feeders. Lake sturgeon grow extremely slowly with a 25 year-old specimen reaching about a meter or so in length. Acoustic transmitters, surgically implanted in the belly of the fish, are now used to track movements and surprisingly, one study indicated that 99% of the tagged fishes were still alive one year after they were released. Receivers are strategically placed throughout river basins to track the movements of the tagged fish providing biologists with much needed data, since unlike bird studies which rely on visual clues, it is much harder to understand what is happening beneath the murky waters where lake sturgeon thrive. People in attendance at tonight's presentation left with a feeling that the future of this fish is in good hands; thanks to Terry for doing his part to ensure that this "dinosaur" lives for at least another 200 million years.