

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
Minutes of General Meeting, September 27, 2016
Police Point Park

1. Call to Order: 7:03 pm., Hugh Armstrong- Chair, Betty Rainville- Secretary
2. Review and Adoption of Minutes of General meeting May 24, 2016. Motion CARRIED.
3. Exciting Sightings: A Townsend Solitaire was seen in PPPark, Sandhill Cranes in groups were seen in Empress as well as White-fronted Geese. Hugh and Dee saw Sara the Golden Eagle, at Birds of Prey Centre, and a member saw a pair of either Eastern Bluebirds or Lazuli Buntings in Marlborough Coulee on August 11.
4. Treasurer's Report and Membership: Eileen reported the chequing account totals \$3,792.50, the Savings Account holds \$10,018.76, and the GIC is \$10,100.00 for a total balance of \$23,911.26.
Hugh reminded Committee heads to submit their bills to Eileen.
Membership stands at 79.
5. Correspondence: Nothing of note.
6. Priority Business:
 - a) **Nomination of GN Lifetime Membership:** Announcement on September Chronicle. Hugh noted that the deadline for submission to the Board is October 4, 2016.
 - b) **Nature Alberta AGM:** Gary is away until November 15. GN needs an alternate representative: The AGM will be held in Red Deer on October 29, 2016 as confirmed by Jerry from N.A. Location will be the Kerry Wood Nature Centre in Red Deer. Is anyone interested in attending in Gary's place?
 - c) **Birding: Watching, Carving, Painting** presentation Monday, October 3 at 7pm. in the Honor Currie room of the MH Public Library. This is presented in partnership with the Esplanade and the MHIP. The Interpretive Program will have information there on winter bird feeding and watching.
 - d) **Our Feathered Friends:** Canadian Museum of Nature travelling exhibit from Ottawa on birds will officially open in the Esplanade on Friday, September 30, 7 pm and includes photographs by local birders. The display may be viewed during the annual downtown Art Walk. Please attend and show support for our members' featured works.
 - e) **Photographs of a Feather:** This complimentary display at the Nature Centre, highlighting local photographers' bird-related works, will be a featured part of Alberta Culture Days at the Fall Festival in PPPark. It will run from September 28 to December 24. This is in coordination with the Esplanade exhibit "Our Feathered Friends".
7. **Interpretive Program Report:** Marty mentioned that the IP has had a busy summer. For more details please check their website, at www.natureline.info, as well as the Sagebrush Chronicle.
Staff person Lisa Bey has been hired as Volunteer Coordinator thanks to grants received. Lisa said there are 26 volunteers signed up to help with the Fall festival on October 2 but 4 more are needed to assist with various stations. A second fire pit is also needed if anyone has one to contribute.
Lisa stressed the need to log in volunteer hours with her for both IP events and GN projects. Even Committees need to provide their volunteer hours dating back to July 2016.
8. Committee Reports:
 - a) **Issues Committee:** John Slater said the Committee has had a busy summer. Some projects carried out:
Two tree wrapping sessions in PPPark saw approximately 50 trees protected from beaver activity.
A proposal was submitted regarding Briar Run. The City is to hold another open house on this area.
Student Brenda Powder led 3 well attended walks in the Ranchlands area in June, July and August.
31,000 Baby's Breath plants were picked over a total of 131 hours. Volunteers also pulled Leafy Spurge plants.
The Committee met with Cathy Linowski today, September 27, for more work on the Wildflower Pamphlet. John showed an example of a similar brochure which would promote Medicine Hat area wildflowers.
Dave MacKenzie is working on a pamphlet to feature local butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies and bumblebees.
Finally, John said there is a meeting at his home Thursday, September 29 at 9:30 am., to discuss proposed Species at Risk policies. All volunteers are welcome.
 - b) **Indoor Program Speakers:** The October speaker will be Rob Bouchier, Ph.D. from Agriculture and Agri.-Food Canada, Lethbridge. He is a research scientist for Insect Ecology and Biological Control.
Kris Samaraj from the Medicine Hat Public Library will be speaking in November about his hike along the Appalachian Trail, in the Eastern United States. If anyone has suggestions for future speakers, please contact Dave.

- c) **Field Trips Update:** Dwayne's suggestion for a field trip to Holsom Road, Dusty Acres, was passed on to the group. October 22 seems to be a suitable date, with no conflicting trips reported. Members reported this spot provides a vantage point looking over the river. The Ajax Coal Mine last operated in this area, Rob noted.
 - d) **Fund Raising Committee Update:** Hugh stated we need funding for 3 brochures in total; including the Birding Trails booklet and 2 others.
To upgrade the Nature Centre, a \$270k grant has been received from the Medicine Hat Accommodation Association together with \$40k from Accessibility Society. A further \$262k has been requested from CFEP. A total of \$580,000.00 is needed to do the upgrade with construction hopefully starting in March 2017.
 - e) **Birding Trails Project Update:** Phil Horch said the Committee is finished the text for 15 birding trails, and final touches are being put on the maps. The information is almost ready to put out as a link on the GN website. As well, a booklet describing the 15 birding trails will be put together for tourist destinations. Phil stated Canadian Badlands is interested in partnering with GN, so a meeting is being set up with them this month. The Committee will formulate a budget this month for start up costs.
 - f) **Communications Committee:** Angela said the rack cards are finished and are on display at various City locations such as the Farmers' Market, the Tourist Centre, MH Public Library, PPPark and others. The Committee will soon start work on the display Banner.
Angela noted their group was responsible for advertising tonight's speaker, Tanya Rushcall.
9. New Business:
- a) **Shoreline Cleanup:** John said this event was held September 24, with 8 GN members helping to remove over 1000 pounds of trash and 6 tires from Strathcona Island Park. This Saturday more volunteer help is needed to continue the shoreline cleanup of Lion's Park.
10. Other Business:
- a) **Web Cam:** Hugh noted there is a problem uploading the webcam located at the Nature Centre, but attempts to remedy this are being tried. Paul will be testing uploading, on a prototype at Hugh's location, to determine if a new carrier will help.. A setup at the actual site should be installed Fall, 2017 and operational by March 2018. Funding for equipment is still needed for this project.
 - b) **UERAB** (Urban Environment and Recreation Advisory Board): John and Hugh gave a presentation to UERAB on GN activities last Wednesday, September 21. The Board was reportedly impressed with the range of GN's involvement. There are currently 2 vacancies (3-year term) on UERAB, which meets every third Wednesday of the month, 5 to 7 pm. GN considering submitting an Application before November 4, 2016
 - c) **Myrna Pearman of Ellis Bird Farm:** spoke on Backyard Bird Feeding, September 12, sponsored by the MH Horticultural Society at the Medicine Hat Public Library, with copies of her book for purchase. Ninety-nine people attended this popular event.
 - d) **SEAWA:** Tina Regehr reminded members about the upcoming Urban Sustainability Forum to be held at Medicine Hat College Lecture Theater, on November 4 from 8 am. to 3 pm. Free Breakfast, lunch and parking are available to attendees. Please register by October 26, 2016 at SEAWA eventbrite.ca or email: executive@seawa.ca
 - e) Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, October 4 at Ian and Angela's home.
 - f) Adjournment at 7:30 pm., Attendance 23
 - g) Refreshment Break
 - h) Program 8:05 pm., Speaker: Tanya Rushcall – Alberta's Aquatic Invasive Species Program. Attendance: 30