

# THE SAGEBRUSH CHRONICLE



## Exciting Sightings



## Potluck Dinner at Nature Centre 6:00 PM June 25

In lieu of the monthly meeting the June event will be our annual potluck dinner; a great opportunity to socialize with fellow members. The food is always great! Simply bring a dish of your choice, either a main course, a salad, or a dessert for sharing with attendees. Also bring utensils and a plate. Coffee and tea will be available.

### Executive

President	<b>Hugh Armstrong</b> <a href="mailto:armstrongg.h@telus.net">armstrongg.h@telus.net</a>	526-1003
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The Sagebrush Chronicle is published ten times a year by Grasslands Naturalists. **Submissions of writing and artwork are welcomed but must be edited for publication. Deadline: the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month.** If you would like to advertise in the Chronicle, more information is available from the editor. Submissions are to be sent to: [milton.spitzer@gmail.com](mailto:milton.spitzer@gmail.com) (403-528-3120). Do not imbed photos in articles but **do send** them separately.

The Society of Grasslands Naturalists encourages the study, conservation and protection of all components of the natural world. The Society provides educational opportunities, assists in the collection and provision of species data, acts as stewards of the environment, discusses environmental topics and organizes member activities. The Society also manages the Medicine Hat Interpretive Program.

**General Meetings:** 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, Sept. - May **Board Meetings:** 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday Sept. - June

To join Grasslands Naturalists and/or send a tax-deductible donation, write:

**Grasslands Naturalists**  
**Box 2491**  
**Medicine Hat, AB T1A 8G8**

**Contact info: Nature Centre 529-6225**

**Annual Membership Dues: Eileen Cowtan**

Individuals \$20  
Families \$25  
Organizations \$25

Donations to Grassland Naturalists and Interpretive Program are another great way to support local nature and nature education. Tax receipts are issued for all donations over \$10. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed by the authors in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the editor and the Grasslands Naturalists. The editor reserves the right to edit, reject or withdraw articles submitted. While due care will be taken of all manuscripts, photos or artwork submitted, GN cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage to such articles.

GN Website:

<http://www.natureline.info/gn>

GN Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/GrasslandsNaturalists/>  
You must be a Facebook member to view most of it.

## MH Interpretive Program

(Managed by Grassland Naturalists)

Based in Police Point Park Nature Centre  
Open Year Round

Tuesday to Sunday: 9:00AM to 5:00PM

Washrooms are on a timer and are open from  
7:00AM to 8:00PM daily!

To get up to date information on what is  
happening at the Nature Centre call the:  
Nature Line at (403) 529-6225

Also find us on Facebook and Twitter  
[policepointpark](#)

Saturday, June 8 at 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon  
"Painted Rocks, Rocks! at the Nature Centre.

Saturday, June 8 at 2:00 PM: Butterflies and  
Bumblebees! Meet at the Nature Centre.

Saturday, June 15 at 7:30 PM: Moose Search:  
Meet at the Nature Centre.

Tuesday, June 18 at 7:30 PM: Is the River Trail  
Finally Open? Meet at the Nature Centre and  
bring your bicycle.

Sunday, June 23: Gas City Campground: Time  
to be announced.

There will be programs at the Nature Centre  
all summer long. Please contact them by  
phone, personal visit or check the website.

**The New Chairs (60) have arrived! Now  
what to do with the old chairs? Does any  
one have any good ideas as to where these  
could be useful? Contact the Nature Centre!  
They need to be removed from the Centre!**

## Member's Corner

We welcome back former members, **Darla Sawatsky and Paul and Twyla von Heune.**

Unfortunately Bob Frew is unable to produce the excellent column "Exciting Sightings" this month so in lieu of this we have featured four photos of some very interesting photos of unusual sightings this past month on the front page of this Chronicle. From the top left proceeding clockwise: Prairie Rattlesnake (photo by Ian Wallis), Pin Cushion Cactus Flowers (photo by Ian Wallis), Red Fox Kit (photo by Milt Spitzer), and Owlets with mother on nest (photo by Ian Wallis).

We look forward to a return of the Exciting Sightings column in the September issue so if you have anything of note send them to [robert.frew@shaw.ca](mailto:robert.frew@shaw.ca).

The next issue of the Chronicle will be in mid September so **Have a Great Summer Everyone!**

There was an error in the May issue regarding the report on the Invasive species workshop. Rather than endangered the word should have been invasive as is shown in the following excerpt:  
Total attendance was 50; 39 participants while the others were volunteers. Many liked to hear there is a reporting app called ED map that you can put on your phone and report sightings of **invasive** species. See <https://abinvasives.ca/invasive-species/eddmaps-alberta/>. Participants appreciated GN's wildflower and AISC and partnership's Grow-me-Instead Brochure. Shaw TV did a youtube of the presentations, and the Medicine Hat News did an interview with Rob Gardner about the workshop.

### Volunteers Needed

The Grasslands Naturalists will have a table set up at the Farmer's Market on the following Saturdays: June 22nd and September 21<sup>st</sup>. The hours of market are from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. If you can help out on either of these dates please call Angela at (403) 526-1350.

### President's Message June 2019

So, another GN club year draws to a close, and we finish it off with our June 25<sup>th</sup> potluck supper at 6:00 pm at the newly refurbished Nature Centre. We need a few people to help set up about a half hour early. I hope to see a great turn out as we finish off what, I feel, has been another very successful year of projects, speakers and IP programs.

As I write this, it is expected we are going to have the grand official opening of the Nature Centre on June 21<sup>st</sup> so keep that date open. May 30<sup>th</sup> was the official unveiling of the Prairie Viewpoint and a big thank you to those who turned out on a very hot day. It is now officially named the Co-op Community Spaces Viewpoint!

This past year we have continued to get our profile out to the public and let them know who we are and what we have to offer. A list of the programs, functions and ongoing projects GN has done this past year includes: Continued distribution of the Bird Trails Guide and the Wildflower Brochure, Butterfly Project, Tree Wrapping Program, removal and flagging of Invasive Species, the Bird Tales Program, Field Trips, and Neighbourhood Walks.

On top of all of these is the MHIP and its excellent programming. Thank you to Corlaine and staff for continuing to educate and entertain the South East on the wonders of the great outdoors and uniqueness of Police Point Park!

And a big thank you to the Board and Committee members who have put in so many hours over the past year.

**And as always, I finish with a plea to step up and volunteer at the IP and various GN projects when required.**

**Enjoy the summer and we will see you in September.**

Hugh



## Upcoming Events, Field Trips and Announcements

### Grasslands Naturalists and Nature Centre Events:

**Saturday, June 8 at 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon "Painted Rocks, Rocks! at the Nature Centre.**

**Saturday, June 8 at 2:00 PM: Butterflies and Bumblebees! Meet at the Nature Centre.** Led by Dave McKenzie

**Tuesday, June 11 at 09:00 AM: Neighbourhood Walk along McCutcheon Drive in NW Crescent Heights.** Meet at the beginning of McCutcheon Drive (east end). Led by Dave McKenzie and Martha Munz Gue.

**Saturday, June 15 at 7:30 PM: Moose Search:** Meet at the Nature Centre.

**Tuesday, June 18 at 09:00 AM: Neighbourhood Walk Ranchlands Natural Area.** Walk will be led by Ian and Angela Turner. Meet at the furthest northeast end of Ranchlands Boulevard NE.

**Tuesday, June 18 at 7:30 PM: Is the River Trail Finally Open?** Meet at the Nature Centre and bring your bicycle.

**Saturday, June 22 at 07:30 AM: Annual Cypress Hills/Elkwater Lake Trip led by Phil Horch.** Meet at the Wal-Mart Parking Lot. The trip will end around 2:30 PM so bring a lunch.

**Tuesday, June 25 at 09:00 AM: Neighbourhood Walk along the Tangle on the south side of the South Saskatchewan River.** Meet in Harlow on the east side of the Trans Canada Bridge.

**Tuesday, July 2 at 09:00 AM: Neighbourhood Walk along Riverside Trail.** Meet on 1<sup>st</sup> NW and 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW.

### Other NON GN Events and Announcements

**Thursday, June 13 from 12:30 to 4:00 PM: SEAWA Annual General Meeting** at Medicine Hat College, Crowfoot Room, 299 College Drive SE. Registration was to have been completed by May 31 but perhaps they might still do late registrations. Phone: 403 580-8980.

**Thursday, June 13 to Tuesday, June 18: Waterton Wildflower Festival:** For information and to register got to [watertonwildflowers.com](http://watertonwildflowers.com) .

### **Pollinator Gardens and a call for Watering Wizards prepared by Martha Munz Gue**

Recent conversations within and among Grasslands Naturalists, SEAWA, City Parks, and MHC have been about gardens of pesticide-free, pollinator gardens populated with native plants. Watering in the early stages is essential when there is no rain. We will need a team of volunteers to keep their eye on the pollinator garden at Police Point Park when it is planted. If we had **seven** volunteers to water and weed, that would be one for each day of the week. This would be a great family activity, or activity for a youth group or school class. Some people/groups might have time and interest to check on the well being of the pollinator wildflower garden more than once a week. That would be great! Or are you willing to offer the garden TCL for a few months at a time? If you can help water and weed the PPP pollinator garden, please let Keziah know by email: [kezles@medicinehat.ca](mailto:kezles@medicinehat.ca)

There is a native plant nursery in Montana which supplies Waterton with native prairie plant seedlings. These are sold at the Waterton Wildflower Festival. If you are attending the festival, perhaps you could pick up one or two for the wildflower/pollinator garden that is going to be replanted at PPP this year by City Parks. I bought a tufted fleabane plant there two years ago and it is blooming brightly now at the top garden at Fifth Avenue Church on the hill. Check it out on 4th Street side.

**There is an opening on the SEAWA Board which is available to a GN Member. If any one is interested please contact Hugh Armstrong (403-526-1003) as soon as possible so that your name can be brought forward prior to the Annual General Meeting of SEAWA on June 13.**

**Weekly Neighbourhood Walks began April 16: reported by Martha Munz Gue**

We have seen the wave of spring flowers; each week something different. The first two walks were on April 16 and 23 at East Glen/Ross Creek Nature Reserve. Croci were just beginning to bloom in mid April with lots of fuzzy buds showing. The next week the hill was ablaze with crocus blossoms. We also observed buds on chokecherry and saskatoon. Tiny prairie alyssum and bright white, soft lavender, and pink moss phlox were showing up in patches here and there.

The next two walks were at Ajax coulee where birdsong delighted us. On April 30 we started at the bottom of the coulee observing the wetland and pond behind the ball diamond in Kin Coulee Park, then up the coulee past the middle. Robins must have been migrating through as there was an abundance of them. One caught a butterfly mid-flight. By the second Ajax coulee walk, which started at the top of the hill near All Saints Anglican church on May 7, the chokecherries and saskatoons were in full bloom. Smaller wildflower plants were leafed out but not in bloom yet and the flock of robins had moved on.

On May 14 we met at the Connaught pond where SEAWA staff showed us their plantings and described the research projects involved. This was the largest group - 17 of us. Some of us walked all around the pond, which took some time. There we saw many beautiful yellow violets, and the golden currents were blooming.



**Photos by Len Moser: From left to right: the walking group, family of mallards and a Yellow-headed Blackbird all the the NECH Stormwater Pond.**

On May 21 we met at the extreme north of NECH to view two storm water ponds, one engineered and one natural. The engineered pond is in the middle of the Northlands subdivision, near the Coop grocery store. Besides the plantings in the original landscaping around the pond, birds have brought in seeds from all over. The growth around the pond is abundant providing habitat for a great variety of birds. We saw redhead ducks, a shoveler, mallards, a family of goslings, red-winged blackbirds, yellow-headed blackbirds, and more. Following the trail that skirts around the northern row of housing and between the housing and the 23rd street continuation of Parkview Drive we came to an undulating piece of prairie which dipped to a deep area which once held a big pond. The natural slope of the land directs water to that pond from miles away. That is until the road and ditch and excavations directed water elsewhere. The pond is still there but it has shrunk in size. A couple of mallards were enjoying the solitude. The usual choir of chorus frogs could not yet be heard. Perhaps it has been too cool for them. On May 28 the walkers met at the Palliser Airshed Air Monitoring Station across from McCoy High School where the GN nomination for Pallister Airshed Board, David Gue, explained what the air monitoring station does and how it is reported. From there we walked along the top of the coulee where wildflowers were waiting for rain to help with their spring show. Dave McKenzie helped us with noticing the butterflies and bees as they searched for blooms for honey and pollen.

**If you wish to lead a walk in your neighbourhood in July or August please call Martha at (403-526-2226). Announcements for July and August walks will be announced by email, and on the GN Facebook and Website as well as the MHIP Website and at the Nature Centre.**

## **Miscellaneous Plant and Butterfly Items: contributed by Martha Munz Gue**

### **Native Plant Rescue**

If you are interested in creating a Native Plant rescue team to remove native plants from potential developments on native grassland, please contact Martha at 403 - 526-2226. If we form such a team we could possibly replant the rescued plants at the potential PPP Pollinator Garden or other locations needing restoration. Loss of native habitat is one of the reasons for loss of pollinators. Planting small pollinator gardens will help. But also we need to become aware of ongoing loss of native prairie pollinator landscapes. Two examples are the NW gravel parking lot at the college was on unbroken prairie; some of our lovely paved paths are on unbroken prairie. If we had rescued some of the plant life from those areas before all the complex plant communities were removed, we could plant many pollinator gardens with local species. Are there GN members or others who are interested in creating a Native Plant Rescue Team?

### **Websites for wildflowers and butterflies**

When out on your walks and see a butterfly or bloom and want to know what it is, use your phone to go to the wildflower website at

**hatwildflowers.weebly.com** or to the butterfly website at **mhbutterflies.weebly.com**. We are so blessed that Dwayne Meyers created these websites from the many pictures gathered from members for the wildflower brochure, and the lovely butterfly pictures all taken by our own Dave McKenzie. The wildflower and the butterfly websites are also clickable on the first page of the GN website. Early butterflies emerge just as the first wildflowers (prairie alyssum, moss phlox) begin to bloom. Throughout the spring and summer the close relationship between butterflies and blooms can be observed.

### **Invasive Species ID**

Many who attended the invasive species workshop on May 4 wanted help with identifying invasive species. Join us on the Tuesday morning walks to get to know the bad stuff in our beautiful natural areas. We will still focus on the good stuff for our own well-being. But we do ID most species both native and introduced. Invasive plants are the leading causes of decreased biodiversity.

### **Call for volunteers**

Volunteers are needed to help with SEAWA riparian restoration projects (mostly watering and/or weeding). Contact the SEAWA office if you, your family, or your team can give a half day or more to help the staff with the riparian restoration projects. Contact Marilou.Montemayor@seawa.ca, or phone 403.580-8980.

### **Waterton Wildflower Festival**

Thursday June 13 to Tuesday June 18. For info and to register go to **WatertonWildflowers.com**. Free indoor sessions in the evenings. Our own Annette Ten Cate will be at the Artisan Fair with her clay creations. Many weekend Field trips are already filled with waiting lists. Go for a day or two or longer to enjoy this jewel of Southern Alberta in the height of the wildflower season.

### **Alberta Plant Watch**

By reporting when certain plants bloom and leaf out in spring, Albertans contribute vital information for climate change studies.

There are **two ways** to report if you want to observe plants in your area and contribute your observations. You can do it **online (link to [www.plantwatch.ca](http://www.plantwatch.ca))** and report what plants you are observing and where and when you made the observations. You can also do it by **printing the data recording sheet (data sheet in PDF)**. If you enter your observations on-line, you will immediately contribute to this year's observations and can update your records as you wish throughout the flowering season. Even observing and reporting bloom time of one plant helps ! There are very few participating people in South Alberta. Dr. Elizabeth Beaubien the "mother of Plantwatch" would very much like some participants from Southern Alberta.

## Beecitycanada.org

Here from the beecitycanada.org website is some information listing the benefits of becoming a Bee City. It is perhaps a little overblown but nevertheless it's worth considering. Additionally, I suggest you read what some of the other Bee Cities have done as part of their application.

Dave McKenzie

### **Bee City Benefits | Bee City Canada**

There are many benefits associated with becoming part of the Bee City Canada community

A Bee City is part of a North American movement to support pollinator protection. Bee City communities support collaboration and establish and maintain healthy pollinator habitat within the municipality or First Nation's boundaries.

A Bee City begins conversations about how to grow local healthy food and the importance of biodiversity.

A Bee city begins conversations about how to reduce and eliminate chemicals that are harmful to pollinators, our food system and the planet.

A Bee City raises awareness of pollinator diversity and the benefits of using native plants in habitat restoration. Cost benefits abound in using native plants. For example, water usage is reduced and there is a plant cost advantage using perennials over annuals. Lawns cost the most to maintain. It just makes good sense to plant a pollinator garden!

A Bee City sets an example and inspires residents with the knowledge that they all have a role to play. Mentoring other municipalities and First Nations across the country to take action and encouraging them to join the Bee City family.

Pollinator habitat creates beauty. Selecting pollinator friendly plants including native trees, shrubs, vines, forbs and grasses, along with herbs and vegetables, provides food for wildlife and humans too.

A Bee City improves its municipal environment and the physical and mental health of the residents by connecting people with nature and encouraging healthy, clean food consumption. Healthy citizens equal healthy, productive cities

A Bee City is an energy filled beautifully floriferous living space for everyone.

A Bee City enjoys the economic benefits of eco-tourism.



**More Exciting Sightings: From Left to Right: Inornate Ringlet, Melissa Blues (photo by Len Moser) and Baltimore Oriole.**



## May 11/19 Birding Field Trip: Trail 13(Lake Newell/Kitsim) and Part of Trail 12 (Tilley Area)

A total of 15 participants took part in this full day excursion and hopefully were not too disappointed in the results. In all 76 species of birds were tallied with some great birds seen and also some disappointing misses.

The itinerary took the group directly to the Kitsim Sloughs (north of Kitsim Reservoir) for some shorebird viewing. While the water levels of the sloughs were relatively low we did tally a number of shorebirds including a very accommodating Solitary Sandpiper perching on a fence post. Other species included: Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, Willets, Marbled Godwit, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitchers, Wilson's Snipe and Wilson's Phalarope. We also had a close-up flyby of a Prairie Falcon.

From these sloughs we proceeded directly to Kitsim Reservoir which proved disappointing in that we did not find a highly anticipated American Bittern nor did we see any Clark's Grebes.

On the east side of Lake Newell we stopped at a slough which produced both Black-bellied Plovers and a few Red Knots as well as some previously seen shorebirds. We proceeded to Kinbrook Island for lunch, a greatly anticipated biffy break and for a walk in the park (proved disappointing as very little passerine migrant activity was observed).

We wrapped up the trip by a drive along the old Highway 1 with a lengthy stop at Kininvie Slough where the bird activity did not disappoint with close-up flybys of a number of White-faced Ibis and close views of a number of duck species and of previously seen shorebirds. We also saw 5 Black-crowned Night Herons. Of course the ruckus from the Franklin Gull colony was close to deafening.

We did see a number of mammal species including: many pronghorns, a badger, a red fox and a couple of coyotes. Unfortunately only the lead vehicles were able to view the fox and coyotes as they quickly ran and hid.



Thanks to Dan Schiebelbein ( [dansnaturephotography.com](http://dansnaturephotography.com) ) for allowing us to use the above photos: from top left clockwise: Redhead, Cinnamon Teal, American Avocet and Black-necked Stilt.





**Grasslands Naturalists**  
Box 2491, Medicine Hat, Alberta T1A 8G8

## Membership Form for 2019

Name\* \_\_\_\_\_ Name of 2<sup>nd</sup> Family Member \*\* \_\_\_\_\_

Address\* \_\_\_\_\_ Membership: Individual \$20/year \_\_\_\_\_

City / Province\* \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$25/year \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code\* \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \$25/year \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone+ \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Receipt Available

Email++ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Enclosed** \_\_\_\_\_

Preference for receiving Chronicle newsletter\*:

Post or  Email or  Neither

*Current and recent Chronicles can be viewed and downloaded from the Grasslands Naturalists website [www.natureline.info/gn](http://www.natureline.info/gn)*

\* Required information. \*\* Required information for family membership.

+ Optional Information. For phone number(s), please note if it is a residence, cell phone or business number.

++ Information required if you wish to receive the Chronicle or Nature Alberta Magazine by email.

### **Informed Consent for Field Trips**

I may wish to participate in field trips and events organized by Grasslands Naturalists.

I affirm that as a participant I am prepared to stay with the group and follow the directions of the coordinator. If I choose to bring my child(ren)/ward(s), I will ensure they also stay with the group and follow the directions of the coordinator and activity leader. I affirm that, knowing my personal state of health, I feel that I am mentally and physically capable of participating in the trips and events that I choose to attend.

I acknowledge that I am aware of the inherent risks, hazards, and dangers associated with activities arising from my participation in trips and events which may result in injury to me or result in my death.

Therefore, in consideration of my participation in these trips and events, for myself, my heirs, my executors, my administrators, and my successors, I voluntarily assume all risks and hereby waive all my rights against Grasslands Naturalists and unconditionally release and discharge the Grasslands Naturalists, its members, directors, officers, its affairs and its coordinators from all manner of activities, causes of action, suits, claims and demands for damages due to personal injury, death, loss or damage to property, expenses or otherwise which may or shall arise in any way as a result of my participation in the above trips and events.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of 2<sup>nd</sup> Family Member

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Box 2491, Medicine Hat, Alberta T1A 8G8



# Consent Form

## Consent to the Use and Distribution of Personal Information

Grasslands Naturalists (GN) collects personal information subject to *Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP)*. GN may, subject to your consent, wish to make some personal information public through, for example, its Chronicle, Website, Facebook page or newspaper article. Please indicate your consent to the following release of information and note any specific exclusion of a consent such as for children.

	Yes	No	Exclusion
Name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Residence telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Cell phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Business phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Email address	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Residence address	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Pictures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

As a GN Member, you can receive, free of cost, an electronic version of the quarterly Nature Alberta Magazine. To receive the magazine, GN must supply your email address to Nature Alberta so that it can email you the magazine. Please indicate your consent to receiving the electronic version of the Magazine by email from Nature Alberta.  Yes  No

Beyond the above consents, GN will not distribute personal information to a third party without your consent unless such information is required, by law, to be released to a federal or provincial government agency in order, for example, to maintain GN's non-profit organization status.

## Consent to Receive Emails Related to Commercial Activities

GN may wish to send you emails to promote some of its commercial activities including those provided by its *Club* and *Interpretive Program*. Please indicate your consent to receiving such information.  Yes  No

## Modification of Consents

You may modify any of the above consents, at any time, through a written request to the member of the GN Executive responsible for Memberships.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of 2<sup>nd</sup> Family Member

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_