Buffalo Lake Nature Club

General Meeting

March 21, 2019

Mark H called the meeting to order 21 present

Chris P , president, was unable to attend, Mark H facilitated this meeting in his absence

Simone, as the new treasurer has set up the signing authority with the bank. She deposited

$ 218.25 for memberships fees and lunch collection.

2019- memberships are due, Simon will sign you up tonight Individuals $10 Families $20

**Upcoming Events**

* March 22, 2019 - Battle River Watershed Alliance hosting

Signs of Life Biodiversity Forum in Heisler 10 - 3 pm Claudia, Simone, Marc, and Birthe will be attending

* March 20 - April 10 the first of the Alberta Nocturnal Owl Surveys

Marie gave a brief summary of what to expect if you join us

Starts ½ hour after sunset- the conditions need to be seasonal temp., low wind speed, no precipitation, and available volunteers. Unfortunately this leads to a short window of notice for participants.

Dress warm and follow protocol and instructions set out by the permitting authority: Lisa Priestley STRIX Ecological Consulting , and Beaverhill Bird Observatory

* April 16 please get out and vote in the provincial Election
* April 18 Buffalo Lake Nature Club Meeting with Guest Tina McLean. She will give a summary of the Alberta Lake Management conference she attended as well as her experience volunteering last summer with ALMS, taking water samples of Buffalo Lake. If his schedule allows, Tracy from Ducks Unlimited will also talk on the Wetlands Policy.

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Roll Call & sitings:

Gabriel – reported seeing 5 Whitetail deer, magpie and chickadees

Elmer- Very few birds in his yard this winter. Enjoyed visits from the jack rabbit and one day his daughter was surprised to see a deer eating at the feed left out for the rabbit.

Claudia- brought some show and tell - one interesting specimen was a Ruffed Grouse scat with another species scat on top of it. Interesting to see if this is territorial or predatory behaviour .

Simone –Pileated Woodpecker, Downy Woodpeckers, Apollo, the Ring Necked Pheasant seems to have moved on since the temperature has warmed up. The chipmunks are out and the Sparrows are busy collecting nesting material - must be spring

Marc. Check out some amazing Photos on the Facebook group Alberta Wildlife

Thomasina - St Patrick’s Day March 17 saw a gopher, Dad saw a Killdeer March 18

Charley B Sent a picture to most members of a Ring billed Gull and Canada Geese sighted at Erskine Lake

Please watch out for a White Deer reported south of Erskine

Ann Present

Karin- About 20 Mule Deer and 20 Canada Geese sighted

Kami seeing Ring Necked Pheasants, 2 Great Horned Owl nests and a moose North of town Her friend has gotten pictures of the White Deer

Sharron Bashaw heard and saw Starlings today

Wayne K- Tuesday March 19 Canada Geese showed up at the Wetlands area East of Bashaw. Fun to watch the pairs declaring their nest sites

John B – March 11 saw the first Crows

Friends in Calgary reported large flocks of Redpoles most of the winter where here in Stettler there were none

Alex – coyote and Geese Alex and Claudia will be hosting a Decomposer day at the Botha School April 26

Jim Green New to Alix Lake had regular winter birds at his feeders. The woodpeckers liked the Suet until he purchased a baked bird seed pie from Home Hardware the birds love it and no longer eat the suet. He cannot wait for the arrival of the Red Winged Blackbirds

Carl and Geri new, seeing the regular winter birds at their feeder at WhiteSands

Bob R - his mothers kept a record of all things related to nature. It was interesting to compare signs of spring occurring by Bob’s birthday March 22. Jan saw gophers and geese in Hanna March 20

David - new, neighbour of Simone and Marc at Pelican Point

Mark H - Drove to Holden / Vegreville a few times this week, seen gophers, Snowy Owls and Hungarian Partridges. Nature note: in 1906, 60 pairs of Hungarian Partridges were imported by someone from Hungary. If you ever get a chance to see them up-close they are a very pretty bird.

Marie - Red Polls had a large flock in Feb. when the temperatures were cold but they seem to have left March 17

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**Claudia Lipski**

**- Summary of the Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference**

Claudia and Myrna attended the Conference in February 19- 21 in Winnipeg as poster presenters for Ellis Bird Farm. Proceeds from Myrna’s book “Back Yard Bird Feeding” has been earmarked for an Educational Legacy Fund for Ellis Bird Farm. One of the ventures financed from this fund is Ellis Bird Farm attending conferences such as this. Myrna’s new publication which will soon be available is “Charlie, Winnie and the Bluebirds” a story of the history of Ellis Bird Farm. Claudia reminded us that many Buffalo Lake Nature Club members past and present have been part of the EBF as board members, presenters, award winners and employees.

This important Conference is held every 3 years in one of the Prairie Provinces; the next conference will be in 2022, somewhere in Alberta

The conferences founders Geoff Holroyd and Dave Ealey started this informative conference in 1983, bringing industry, researchers, indigenous groups, politicians, landowners, nature groups and concerned citizens together to discuss and learn about all the concerns of this Endangered Prairie Grasslands area and its species.

There were over 330 attendees

Plenary Sessions

* Trevor Herriot

“Gifts from Nature are being depleted”

* Shaunna Morgan Siegers - Indigenous led Conservation

“fight science with science”

* Christy Morrissey and Ryan Boyd

“Beyond Pesticides neonictiniods vs biodiversity”

Ryan Boyd- landowner/ grain farmer “ learn to mimic the Prairie” to battle drought and extreme elements of nature

83 break- out sessions ranging from scientific research to wildlife and plant life

Each session was 15 minutes in length, so one could listen to a huge variety of information and topics over the 2 days.

Some highlights:

Grassland Birds are on the decline many on the endangered or species at risk list. McCown’s Longspur and Chestnut collard Longspur

Canadian Forces Suffield Range in Southern Alberta is an important area for scientific research as a natural uncultivated area. However species counts may be false reported as this area attracts above average species because of the reserve quality of the habitat.

Symbiotic relationships and importance of the historical Bison herds-loss of these natural grazers has been a key factor in the decline of the biodiversity of the Prairie.

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Three types of grazing, continuous, slow rotation weekly movement of paddocks and Adaptive, moving paddocks daily, all have advantages for different species of birds

Tree Swallows and other aerial insectivores need the seasonal potholes for food source

Rejuvenation projects have used Reed grass - the water birds like the high grasses but the shore birds do not.

The vital importance of the IBA s Important Bird Areas

Decommissioned Oil and gas rejuvenation projects should include native pollination areas with native wildflower habitat

Plant native grasses and plant windrows in fields Different techniques to rejuvenate the grass lands - long term projects

New industries- breeding, collection and selling of native seeds

over 300 species of native bees in the Prairie Native bees like disturbed soil

Nematodes are very important and there are several species; some predatory, some eat grass and some eat bacteria. They all need a wide diversity of area and species to be successful

Pronghorn Xing app Many are killed at road crossings and with barbed wire. New phone app helps identify where they are crossing and their locations to alert drivers. Replace barbed wire with high-tension wire Pronghorn crawl under wire they do not jump over like deer.

Minutes and Notes, Marie Payne