



Nature Alberta

11759 Groat Road, Edmonton AB T5M 3K6
Phone: 780-427-8124 Fax: 780-422-2663
Email: info@naturealberta.ca Web: www.naturealberta.ca

**Nature Alberta
Annual General Meeting Minutes
November 21, 2021
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm**

1. Welcome and Member Check-in:

Present

Executive Director – Dr. Richard Schneider

Amy Bergunde

Claudia Lipski

Kim MacKenzie

Gerben Deinum

Margot Hervieux

Brooke Kapeller

Lise Mayne

Branimir Gjetvaj

Erin McCloskey

Tony Blake

Linda Howitt-Taylor

Elizabeth Watts

Lu Carbyn

Paula Evans

Kaya Konopnicki

Kate Spencer

Shane Hammell

Hubert Taube

Quorum was established with eighteen (18) members, and one (1) pending member present at the time the meeting was called to order. Elisabeth Beaubien and Lyse Carignan arrived late to the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 1:07 pm by Linda Howitt-Taylor.

2. Review Minutes from 2020 AGM

MOTION: to approve the minutes, as presented.

MOVED: by Gerben Deinum, **SECONDED:** by Linda Howitt-Taylor **CARRIED**

3. Nature Alberta: Year in Review

President's Report (Liz)

2021 saw a year of challenges, with many lifestyle changes and a new approach to outdoor activities and the natural world. Liz decided to step down as President and will be replaced by Kim in 2022. Nature Alberta saw the continuation of programs with an extensive mix of in-person and online events offered. In particular, the family Nature Nights were extremely successful. Nature Alberta also had successful publications in the form of the magazine and e-news, and undertook development of a supported Nature Network: a platform

to share resources and knowledge across the province. The endowment fund, with 6 to 1 matching, is currently exceeding expectations. Donations made up to and including December 31, 2021, will be matched.

Year in Review Report (Rick) – Powerpoint

Nature Alberta in 2019

- Low profile, Low effectiveness
- Restructuring needed
- Start by rebuilding the foundation
- Adopt a staged approach

Strategic Plan Goals

- Goal 1 Advance nature education and appreciation within Alberta
- Goal 2. Promote nature conservation in Alberta
- Goal 3. Support Nature Alberta's Member Clubs
- Goal 4. Build organizational capacity and sustainability (membership and fundraising)

Nature Alberta Programs

- Public Outreach
 - Nature Kids
 - Hands on events, talk with next generation, relaunched live Family Nature Nights, 4 in Edmonton, 1 in Red Deer, Total attendance = 143 families (566 people), 134 e-news sign-ups, \$994 in donations (mean of \$7 per family), Starting new Nature Kids chapters in Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Grande Prairie.
 - Public Events
 - Online Outreach
 - Magazine – Revamped magazine, compliments other initiatives, focused on advocacy, issues section
 - Social Media – 9,140 followers; E-news – 2,385 subscribers, short-term and newsy; magazine and website in-depth
 - Website – Living website, constantly updated and changing, tied in with magazine, three themes: learning about nature, experiencing nature, and protecting nature; further development underway. Nature Network Speaker series – opens up club talks to entire network
- Nature Network
 - Clubs – club promotion – social media, website, etc., new monthly Nature Network newsletter, Network forum and resource library launched, Nature Network Zoom Speaker Series, Free Zoom account for club meetings, Group Insurance, more work needed to increase engagement, perhaps a concrete activity or event that clubs can rally around? Spring conference?
 - Recruit new clubs:

- Stage 1: Establish Nature Network and provide meaningful services (i.e., rationale for joining)
 - Stage 2: Identify and recruit naturalist and conservation clubs that are not yet in the network – 1 added; 8 in progress
 - Stage 3: Identify and recruit associate clubs and program partners
- Membership – online recruiting, recruit members at live events, new membership brochure, convert e-new subscribers and social followers, membership growth from 309 to 1053 between November 9, 2020 and October 20, 2021, partnerships (e.g., member clubs, Wild Bird General Store and Wild Birds Unlimited)
- Conservation – Nature Conservation, Engagement in the Defend your Parks campaign, the Eastern Slopes coal mining issue, expansion of irrigation in southern Alberta, increased forest harvesting; information advocacy using the magazine, e-news, social media, and conservation blog; sign-on to letters about coal mining, irrigation expansion, and threats to Wood Buffalo Park; Important Bird Area stewards
- Citizen Science – May Species Count, Christmas Bird Count, Plant Watch, Lake Watch (ALMS), Future: serve as a central hub for citizen science projects across Alberta
- Nature network – Naturalist Clubs, Associate Groups, Members, Stewards (IBAs), Biologists/Academics
- Office
 - Admin – financial sustainability, continued reliance on foundation funding linked to specific programs (e.g., Nature Kids), next casino delayed to 2023 (>1 year delay) – funding shortfall expected next fiscal year, Executive Director position remains unfunded, need to transition to a more sustainable funding model
 - Fundraising – Fundraising Program, new Canada Helps donation platform, effective donor thanking and tracking, endowment 6:1 matching campaign, online drive, including an online auction, over \$15,000 donated to date (25,000 target), Lu Carbyn plans to contribute \$10,000 to the endowment and has also put forward a personal \$5,000 matching challenge

Strategic Planning

- Where do we want to expand:
 - Nature Kids; events
 - Website, Magazine, social media
 - Conservation advocacy
 - Citizen Science
 - Habitat Conservation: IBAs, Key Biodiversity Areas, natural areas

4. Review of Financial Statements

Financial details are provided in the annual report on the website. Overall financial position is good – Net Assets of \$135,680 in 2020, \$200,652 in 2021. For the Statement of Operations expense to revenue comparison, the past fiscal year was better than the one before it. Previously, Nature Alberta ran a \$69,000 deficit, and are now running a \$64,000 surplus. The net assets position is \$130,000 higher at year end than the previous fiscal year. For statement of cash flow, there has been a decrease in our position from previous fiscal year, due to higher cash utilization during this period, but also a decrease in cash line entries. There has also been a decrease in grants in this fiscal year.

5. Nominations for the Board and Executive

Introductions were given by Shane and Lise.

Kim has agreed to move forward as President. Erin will take over as Secretary and Liz will take over as Past President. Gerben will continue as Treasurer and Lu will continue as Vice President. The proposed Board of Directors consists of Margot Hervieux as the North region representative, Claudia Lipski as the Central region representative, Kaya Konopnicki as the Calgary region representative, and Shane Hammell as the Edmonton region representative, with Linda Howitt-Taylor, Gillian Chow Fraser, and Tony Blake as Directors at Large; Erin McCloskey as Secretary, Gerben Deinum as Treasurer, Lu Carbyn as Vice President, Elizabeth Watts as Past President, and Kim MacKenzie as President constitute the Executive. A representative for the Southern region is still needed.

MOTION: to approve the Board of Directors, as presented.

MOVED: by Gerben Deinum, **SECONDED:** by Lu Carbyn

CARRIED

6. Additional Items

An ongoing issue is the loss of crown land to private ownership. This will be added as a future agenda item to be discussed further.

A new issue of trail management turning to private operators is a concern that needs more awareness or a call to action. No consultation has been done by the government. Kaya will pull together info for the website and social media and send it to Rick. There is the hope that Gillian can lead an Issues Committee going forward to look at issues like this. AWA is already looking into this particular issue.

Herbert looking for people to come forward as members for their initiative; Rick and Herbert to talk and see how Nature Alberta can help.

Subregional planning is coming up in the next year or so around Calgary; a coalition has been started to monitor planning and stay involved. Lise could possibly take this on if she comes on as the Southern representative.

Rick is currently acting as Nature Alberta's interim Executive Director; however, a new funding base is needed to be able to pay for a full-time Executive Director in the future.

Nature Calgary looking for two more board members. Members can contact Kaya if interested.

7. Adjourned

MOTION: to adjourn the meeting at 2:32 pm.

MOVED: by Tony Blake, **SECONDED:** by Unanimous Approval

CARRIED

8. Next Meeting

The next Annual General Meeting will be scheduled in 2022.

DRAFT