

Minutes BLESS Annual General Meeting At Sir George Simpson School, January 30th, 2007

Call to order & welcome by president Dave Burkhart at 7:00pm

- A Quorum was present with 40 in attendance.

1. Meeting Agenda: (attachment A)

- Motion by Dave Burkhart, that the agenda be accepted as presented. **Carried**

2. Minutes of the 2006 AGM (attachment B)

- Motion by Nicholas Batchelor to accept the minutes of the 2006 January 31st AGM **Carried**

3. Treasurer's Report: (attachment C)

- Bruce Cameron provided a top line report of income and expenditures from January through December 2006, and a review of the financial statement audited by Stuart Loomis and Nicholas Batchelor
- Final bank balance at years end was \$5,534.65
- Motion by John Samson to accept the financial report. **Carried**
- President Burkhart thanked Bruce for his contribution as Treasurer and his contribution as a board member for the past three years

4. BLESS/NAIT WEB Cam Initiative

- David Burry and Darryl Wall from NAIT reviewed the Prototype Development program with funding provided by Alberta Innovation and Science
- The BLESS proposal for a wireless solar powered remote controlled Web Cam to be located in LHCPP was selected as the winning proposal
- NAIT have selected an existing system, the Solstice Cam PTZ network camera which has been on the market for three years as being the best system to meet the specifications.

5. Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park Update on private land acquisition negotiations

- Travis Sjovold management planner for Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park (LHCPP), Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation & Culture and Parks & Protected Areas thanked BLESS for the initiatives undertaken in support of LHCPP.
- Travis provided an update to the land acquisitions and negotiations and then held a lively Q&A session.

6. Xmas Bird Count

- Dan Stoker provided an informative and interactive review of the Xmas Bird count
- BLESS has been a key supporter of the Xmas count for the past 16 years
- Dan offered to put a briefing on next December for any BLESS members who would like to participate, but are not sure how.
- In addition to the interactive presentation, Dan provided a copy of Ducks and Waterfowls as a prize for answering the most questions correctly in the interactive presentation. The prize was won by one of the youngest persons in attendance Kaiah Thiessen.

7. Presidents Report: (attachment D)

- President Dave Burkhart gave a presentation highlighting the accomplishments of BLESS in 2006, touching on the many activities BLESS supports in St Albert such as:
 - Participation in the Sturgeon Watershed Initiative Group,
 - Park Presentation at NAIT ,
 - Concrete Pipe Removal,
 - RAMSAR Application,
 - River Edge Enhancement Project,
 - St. Albert and Area Multi-stakeholder Project,
 - Springing to Life, Earth day,
 - Spruce Up the Sturgeon,
 - Roy Financial Mayor's Walk for Charity,
 - BLESS Summer Nature Centre,
 - Edmonton City Plan,
 - Newsletters and External Communications,
 - South Riel Urban Planning,
 - Signs for LHCPP from Alberta Parks and Protected Areas,
 - BLESS Stewardship Reports,
 - Park Monitoring,
 - Water Quality Sampling Programs,
 - West Regional Road Stakeholder Meetings,
 - Pedestrian Crossing of the West Regional Road,
 - BLESS Planning Session,
 - Park Cleanup,
 - Riel Recreational Park Stakeholder Meetings,
 - Beaver Management Guidelines – City of St. Albert,
 - Park Planning - Interpretive Centre Meeting,
 - Web Cameras for LHCPP,
 - Christmas Bird Count
- President Burkhart also thanked the many members of the community both BLESS members and non members whose participation made the many accomplishments possible.
- President Burkhart reviewed the accomplishments of BLESS member and former president Louise Horstman who wrote a full chapter about the Big Lake Natural Area that was published last year in Professor Ross Wein's new book "Coyotes Still Sing in My Valley, Conserving Biodiversity in a Northern City." This is a must reading for all with an interest in the Big Lake natural area.
- President Burkhart then reviewed some of the opportunities and challenges that BLESS will face in 2007. In particular sustaining all of the programs and activities reviewed as part of the accomplishments for 2006. All of these programs are important for the society to maintain and should continue to be a part of BLESS efforts in 2007. Some programs and events require funding; all

require volunteers to make them happen. The amount of resources available determines what can or cannot be accomplished.

- There are other new and ongoing initiatives that must also be pursued in 2007.
 - Initiation last year of the RAMSAR nomination for Wetlands of International Importance status for LHCPP is critical and should be completed in 2007.
 - The water quality testing program that began with a grant from Alberta Ecotrust in 2006 must be completed and the project report must be submitted to the granting organization by May 30th.
 - Early in 2007, the City of Edmonton Planning Department received a proposed amendment to its 1991 Big Lake Area Structure Plan (ASP), as well as a Neighbourhood Structure Plan (NSP) for the first development within the ASP area. . As stewards of the park, BLESS must use every means at our disposal to ensure environmentally responsible and sustainable practices are used for these urban developments that ensure the least possible impact on habitat, natural areas and wildlife within the park – whatever the financial cost. We have only one Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park and it must be conserved in its natural state for future generations of Albertans.
- President Burkhart closed his presentation with a reminder that there is little doubt BLESS must grow in number of both its members and committed volunteers to successfully take on and accomplish the many challenges and opportunities before the society.
- Motion by Bob Russell that the Presidents report be approved. **Carried**

8. Special Resolutions (attachment E) (attachment F)

Special Resolution 1

That BLESS Bylaw 1.01 be amended to remove the Supporting Member category.

The proposed bylaw would then read:

“1.01 To become a member of this society, a person must complete an application form as prescribed by the Society and pay the membership fee or volunteer five or more hours in accordance with the membership categories of the Society.

Membership Categories are:

Voting: hereinafter referred to as Member

1) Voting Member – any person who has completed an application form and has paid the membership fee as well as any person of voting age in a family where a family membership has been paid. Or any person who has completed the application form and volunteered five hours”

The current bylaw reads:

“1.01 To become a member of this society, a person must complete an application form as prescribed by the Society and pay the membership fee or volunteer five or more hours in accordance with the membership categories of the Society.

Membership Categories are:

Voting: hereinafter referred to as Member

Supporting: hereinafter referred to as Supporter

Voting Member – any person who has completed an application form and has paid the membership fee as well as any person of voting age in a family where a family membership has been paid.

Supporting Member – Any person who has volunteered five or more hours for the Society. Receives newsletter and notice of events. No voting rights.”

Reason for Proposed Change:

BLESS Membership fees are \$10 for single members and \$15 for a family membership. The value of five volunteer hours far exceeds the monetary value of either membership fee; therefore, members who contribute the stipulated number of volunteer hours should be accorded the same voting rights as those who purchase memberships.

- Motion by Nicholas Batchelor to accept special resolution 1. **Carried**

Special Resolution 2

That BLESS Bylaw 2.02 be amended to read “The Board shall consist of up to 15 Directors who satisfy the qualifications coincident with those for Membership and are Members of the Society and shall be elected to the Board annually at the Annual General Meeting.”

Reason for Proposed Change:

Article 2.02 currently reads “The Board shall consist of up to 12 Directors who satisfy the qualifications coincident with those for Membership and are Members of the Society and shall be elected to the Board annually at the Annual General Meeting.” Article 2.15 currently reads “The Board can comprise up to 15 and not less than 5 Voting Members in good standing.” This amendment will remove the current ambiguity between the two bylaws.

- Motion by Miles Constable to accept special resolution 2. **Carried**

Special Resolution 3

That BLESS Bylaw 2.02 be amended to add the following sentence: “If all Directors positions are not filled by nomination at the AGM, the elected Board may, by unanimous vote of all elected Directors; appoint Directors who satisfy the qualifications coincident with those for Membership and are Members of the Society to fill the remaining positions.”

The complete proposed bylaw would then read:

2.02 The Board shall consist of up to 15 Directors who satisfy the qualifications coincident with those for Membership and are Members of the Society and shall be elected to the Board annually at the Annual General Meeting. If all Directors positions are not filled by nomination at the AGM, the elected Board may, by unanimous vote of all elected Directors; appoint Directors who satisfy the qualifications coincident with those for Membership and are Members of the Society to fill the remaining positions.

Reason for Proposed Change:

In past years, BLESS members have volunteered to serve on the Board of Directors after the AGM has been held. This amendment will formalize the ability of the Board to fill open positions on the Board of Directors between AGMs.

- Motion by John Samson to accept special resolution 3. **Carried**

9. Nominations for Board of Directors

- Dave Burkhart thanked the retiring members of the 2006 Board for their service to BLESS
- Bob Russell made a presentation to Dave Burkhart on behalf of all the Directors thanking him for his Leadership and Dedication as President
- Board Nominations for 2007:
 - Dave Burkhart
 - Pat Collins
 - Miles Constable
 - Lilo Engler
 - Louise Horstman
 - Stuart Loomis
 - Jack Wiercinski
- Nominations were unopposed. A vote of eligible members was taken and the nominated members duly elected

10. The following handouts available to members at the meeting:

- Agenda (attachment A), January 31st 2006 AGM Minutes (attachment B), Treasurers Report (attachment C), Presidents Report (attachment D), Special Resolutions (attachment E), Current By Laws (attachment F), Department of Community Development – Plan showing LHCPP (attachment G), The Big Lake Viewing Platform - Brochure (attachment H), BLESS History, Objectives, Activities, Membership Form – Brochure (attachment I), Big Lake Alberta A Globally Significant Important Bird Area (IBA) – Brochure (attachment J)

10. Adjournment:

- Motion by Nicholas Batchelor to adjourn at 8:37pm. **Carried**

Minutes Confirmed: _____

President - Dave Burkhart _____

Secretary – Nicholas Batchelor _____