

Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards

Annual General Meeting

Thursday May 8, 2014

Ladder Valley Hall

Present: Errol Vaadeland, Doug Panter, Harold Amundson, Lyle Molzan, Kelly Paul, Murray Peterson, Volker Schmid, Jeff Molzan, Dan Frandsen, Becky Gillespie, Norman Stolle, Seth Cherry, Gord Vaadeland, Allan Hrynkiw, Larry Potts,

1. Called to order at 7:40 pm.

2. AGM minutes from 2013 minutes.

Doug motioned to adopt the minutes from the last AGM, Harold seconded. All in favour. Carried.

3. Financial Report given by the Executive Director, Gord Vaadeland.

- Revenue from PC is not showing in the report. This will be corrected. An invoice in accounts payable was put in incorrectly so there is a \$700 correction. There is \$24,764 in the bank account today. The report is not showing any revenue last year, but \$5000 in this year from SK Environment. There are no assets in the report such as fencing supplies, cameras and other equipment, and it needs to be included.

Doug motioned to accept the financial report with amendments; Dan seconded. Carried.

- Harold motioned to have Susan Miller review the financial report instead of a full audit. Lloyd seconded it. Carried.

4. Field Technician Report given by Becky Gillespie

- Five cameras were setup this season but one was stolen so data is from 4 cameras. Camera data is bison and other wildlife that may trigger the camera as they are moving through the camera site. 5704 bison images were taken in total. Camera data showed the bison fences were effective as fewer bison were recorded at these sites. 84% of images came from two sites. Additional bison crossing areas were not monitored as we did not have permission for access. Bison moved onto private land most frequently at night, then leaving during the day.

- There are up to 11 crossings on the Sturgeon River that were recorded by canoeing the length of the river. 23 quarter sections were visited by bison; but two landowners had 55% or recorded excursions and 59% of total numbers. September had the most excursions of bison onto private land.

- During the hazing contract, Sept 26 to Oct 28, bison were hazed 54 times from 18 different land locations.

- 20 bison were harvested in 2013 from 8 different land locations. Eighty eight vegetation plots were completed, including 23 species and of those 12 species were grazed by bison.

5. Volker Schmidt Report – Spring and Summer field report

- the report is based on Volker's thesis: forage preferences of the bison population. The field season ran from Aug 5 – Sept 25, 2013. He used 63 plots on five quarters of land. The sites were chosen when bison were seen grazing at the site. The quarter with the most sightings and data plots was NW 19, with 8 sightings, and an average heard size of 55, 441 bison in total. Bison focused on only 4 species of 20 identified within the plots, with oats the most preferred.

7. Al Hryniw, SK Env report.

- All reports of Aboriginal hunting was followed up. Al asked to have more information on who is observed hunting, and what band they are from. Recently, penalties doubled or tripled in the wildlife and fisheries acts.

Bison hazing is seen as an important action and conforms to the bison management plan. The Sask Environment will participate by partially funding the hazing in 2014.

8. PANP report - Seth Cherry

- Monitoring bison population trends. Population counts are based on photos using photo recognition software. Raw counts are adjusted based on visibility issues, with confidence limits. The last 3 years are considered a stabilizing trend, 200-250 animals. 1/3 of the pop from 10 years ago. Reasons: anthrax, hunting, wolf predation.

- Wolf predation and bison: Collaring and tracking wolves, collecting scats and observations of kills. Up to 30% of scats sampled included bison protein. PANP staff followed 2 wolf packs. Each pack has at least 10 wolves. Field crews visited 270 potential kill sites over 3 months. 67 deer, 6 moose and 9 bison kills were observed in the Amyot pack area. No bison were killed in the Nesslin pack area, but that pack did scavenge hunter killed bison outside the park. Scientist may be able to predict predation using future GPS data, with this field data. Right now 7 wolf collars are active in the study area.

36 bison mortalities were recorded from 2013 summer to March 2014. The 2013 population estimate is 160 adults, 44 juveniles, and 28 calves.

- Prescribed burn plans. Paskwâw Mostos PB. The unit is 5700 ha and designed to limit aspen encroachment. Annual spring PBs will be 25-150 ha each. In 2013 about 150 ha were burnt. Millard PB may be 2850 ha of aspen and fescue. Since 2006 over 4000 ha have been burnt, and additional 5000-8000 planned over the next 5 years.

- In 2013 PANP contributed \$5000 for bison hazing. In 2014 both PANP and MOE will combine to provide \$10K.

9. Gord Vaadeland update on Bison Stewards work: WWF commitment for collars did not happen this year, but may be an opportunity for the future, not the 2014 hazing project.

- Executive Director position will be vacant as of May 31. Gord was in the position since 2006, and involved in bison issues for several years before that. He will be continuing to work on some currently drafted project proposals for funding, and reporting on the Bison Stewards work in 2013/14.

10. Executive Elections. Lloyd nominated Jeff Molzan, he accepted the nomination. Kelly nominated Erroll, who declined the nomination. Kelly nominated Harold as Director, and he accepted. Harold nominated Larry Potts for Director, and he accepted the nomination. Kelly nominated Doug Panter as Director, and he accepted.

Murray motions to close elections, Lyle 2nd. All in favour. Carried.

Next meeting is Thursday, June 5, 2014 at Ladder Valley Hall at 7:30pm.

Meeting adjourned at 10:39 pm