



PRAIRIE CONSERVATION FORUM

2000 & 2001 Annual Report

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Chairman's Report

Chairman's Report 2000 and 2001

I have, again, the pleasure of chairing the Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum. Over the past two years the Forum has pursued and achieved many undertakings. The most significant of these is the production of the Alberta Prairie Conservation Action Plan. This plan is the result of the dedicated efforts of all PCF members. Without their spirit of cooperation, our direction would flounder. I would like to personally thank everyone who took the time to help create this strategic document, which is presented in more detail in Appendix 3 of this report.

Our periodic meetings are always informative and sometimes fun. The Forum prides itself in covering a tremendous diversity of topics. The success of the Forum stems from the unfettered participation of all members who sit at the table. The Forum continues to offer unhindered opportunities for members to present items of interest and to debate issues with others. From this we all broaden our horizons, and become closer working partners.

The PCF work groups have risen above the normal call of duty to shepherd these special priorities for our collective benefit. Included are work groups known as:

- Prairie Ecology Research Committee
- Alberta Native Plant Council Provincial Grass Initiative
- 'Topics in Prairie Conservation' post-secondary course

The efforts of these and newly created work groups are detailed under the Strategic Priorities section of this report. The individuals involved with these work groups have given freely of their time to help with research and understanding of native prairie interests. We owe them all a debt of thanks.

As always, Ian Dyson and Sam Wirzba have kept us on the straight and narrow. They relentlessly provide the Forum with reams of background material, and take meticulous notes at our formal meetings.

My thanks to all who contribute to making the Prairie Conservation Forum a fulfilling experience. I look forward to supporting the direction our action plan will take us over the next few years.

Dug Major
PCF Chairperson (2000 and 2001)

Summary of Meetings

The Prairie Conservation Forum typically meets three times each year, holding meetings in the winter, spring, and fall at different venues throughout prairie and parkland Alberta. Each meeting provides an opportunity for members to share information and discuss a wide range of prairie conservation issues. Topical updates are provided on environmental initiatives, planning projects, environmental legislation, member organization activities, emerging issues, and other themes. A field trip is usually held in conjunction with the spring and fall meetings. The PCF's executive committee (known as the PCF Steering Committee) meets in advance of each scheduled Forum meeting to develop a meeting agenda, conduct the PCF's business, ensure necessary follow-ups from the previous PCF meeting have been completed, and to prepare recommendations for consideration by the PCF.

The PCF held six meetings in the two-year period from January 2000 to December 2001. Highlights from these meetings are as follows.

Lethbridge, January 2000

A presentation was given on the Year 2000 Review of Water Management, which will determine the maximum water allocation for consumptive uses in the South Saskatchewan River Basin after in-stream water considerations are taken into account. A joint proposal by Ducks Unlimited, Canadian Wildlife Service, and Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration for a new conservation cover program was reviewed and discussed at length.

The Forum approved a strategy for developing a revised PCAP and struck a work group to oversee the process; it also approved a new 'Prairie Notes' web site feature for implementation. Prairie Notes will allow for the posting of information and perspectives in a briefer form than the more substantive 'Occasional Paper' series currently provides.

Various strategic issues facing prairie and parkland Alberta were reviewed. It was agreed to make these a key priority in the next PCAP. Dug Major was elected as Chair for 2000.

Warner, May 2000

Prior to the PCF meeting, an excellent full day tour, arranged with the assistance of Vern McNeely and conducted by Ed Sloboda, was held south of Warner. Tour stops included Devil's Coulee, the Milk River Ridge Reservoir, and the Twin River Provincial Grazing Reserve. The effects of two 'dry' years on the Milk River Ridge were markedly evident with respect to the range condition that was observed during the tour.

At the business meeting, updates were given on changes underway to the web site and progress made by the Provincial Grass Work Group. A work plan for 2000 was adopted and a first draft of the new Alberta PCAP was distributed.

Roy Audet of the Last Sands Ranch gave a well received presentation on the farm/ranch conservation and environmental stewardship practices that he has adopted. Roy was the recipient of the Alberta Cattle Commission's Environmental Stewardship Award.

Wainwright, September 2000

Prior to the PCF meeting a full day tour of the Wainwright area was capably conducted by Public Lands Specialist's Harry Loonen and Patrick Porter. Tour stops included the Wainwright Dunes Ecological Reserve and a grasslands site overlooking the Battle River that the provincial Crown had acquired through a land trade.

At the business meeting, members were invited to some extremely informative perspectives on Parkland conservation issues given by: landowner and U of A range professor Ed Bork, Public Lands Specialist Harry Loonen, and wildlife biologist Ron Bjorge.

Members reviewed a second draft of the revised PCAP. The Provincial Grass Work Group reported success in garnering political support for adopting a new provincial emblem and is applying for funding to develop printed and web-based materials that will allow for province-wide voting on a provincial grass. The 'Topics in Prairie Conservation' course at the U of L is underway for the third year and significant progress on PCF web site development was reported.

Airdrie, January 2001

The new Alberta PCAP was adopted by the PCF. It will be published and distributed later in the year, following the spring provincial election so that a current ministerial Foreword can be provided for inclusion in the plan. A brochure and article for the Provincial Grass emblem have been developed. A third Occasional Paper, contrasting European and aboriginal world views about the prairies, has been posted on the PCF's web site.

A presentation on the cumulative effects of development and land use change being undertaken in the Grasslands Natural Region was given. Members were also apprised of a process underway to review and update an Alberta Energy and Utilities Board Information Letter that provides guidance for industry on how petroleum and natural gas exploration, development, production and reclamation should be conducted in areas of native prairie and parkland to minimize impacts.

Jackie McCall was elected as the Chair for 2001.

Foremost, May 2001

In conjunction with representatives of soil salinity and soil conservation organizations from the prairie provinces and Montana, the PCF hosted a field trip prior to its spring meeting. The following themes were incorporated in the full day tour: issues being faced by the County of Forty Mile (Leonard Mitzel); DU's wetland project at Forty Mile Coulee (Morgan Stromsmoe); completing range health assessment forms – Etzikom (Terry Hood / Dennis Milner); salinity mapping (Don Wentz), and sage grouse research at Manyberries (Cameron Aldridge). The wide ranging tour in south-east Alberta afforded participants an opportunity to see a parched prairie landscape which was experiencing its fourth consecutive year of drought.

The PCF's work plan for 2001 was tabled and adopted. Production of the new Alberta PCAP has been completed. Through the generous support of the Canadian Wildlife Service and the

Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division, the PCF was able to proceed with printing of the plan. A communications strategy for releasing the PCAP was in the development stage.

The Provincial Grass Work Group reported that voting for a provincial grass had been completed. Approximately 2000 Albertans cast ballots, choosing rough fescue as the new provincial grass emblem from five candidates. Forum members who attended the 6th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference in Winnipeg (in February) provided highlights from the conference. It was decided that the PCF would hold its fall meeting in conjunction with the Waterton-Glacier International Writer's Workshop. PCF members shared their views and opinions on nuisance ground squirrels and how to deal with this problem in prairie Alberta.

Waterton, September 2001

The PCAP media release, cover letter, and Communications Strategy were presented. Forum members discussed striking new work groups to focus on the three strategic priorities in the new PCAP.

Presentations were given on 'The Biodiversity Gradient' (one of several talks in the Prairie Environmental Series), managing grizzly bears and wildlife in Waterton Lakes National Park, and the Nature Conservancy of Canada's habitat securement projects on the periphery of Waterton Lakes National Park.

It was reported that an application in support of rough fescue becoming Alberta's provincial grass was sent to the Provincial Museum. Members discussed an emerging initiative underway, through the auspices of NAFTA's Commission on Environmental Cooperation, to develop a North American Grasslands Strategy. Work is underway to strike a Calgary based organizing committee to prepare for the February 2004 Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference. The PCAP indicated its receptivity to holding a joint meeting with the Saskatchewan PCAP Committee in 2002.

Strategic Priorities of the PCF

Inter-provincial Co-ordination

The Forum continues to participate on the *Prairie Conservation Working Group*, which includes PCAP representatives from Manitoba and Saskatchewan and individuals from the Canadian Wildlife Service and World Wildlife Fund (Canada). The Working Group holds periodic conference calls to exchange information and to identify joint prairie conservation initiatives that would benefit all three prairie provinces. Plans are underway to bring the PCF and Saskatchewan PCAP Committee together for a joint meeting in 2002 (the two bodies last met together in June 1999).

Alberta PCAP: 2001-2005

The first Alberta PCAP: 1996-2000 reached the end of its 5-year life span on December 31, 2000. In recognition of this, preparations for the development of a successor plan commenced early in 2000. At its winter business meeting in January 2000, the PCF reached agreement that the emphasis of a second-generation provincial PCAP (for the period 2001-2005) would be as follows:

- retain the framework and fundamental intent of the first Alberta PCAP (a systematic review and fundamental re-write of the Alberta PCAP will be contemplated when the second Alberta PCAP is concluded in 2005)
- bring objectives and action recommendation in the first Alberta PCAP up-to-date
- identify logical next steps for achieving the plans four broad goals

A work group, under the leadership of Jackie McCall (Bow River Project), was struck to guide the plan revision exercise. Draft versions of the new PCAP were initially developed by sub-committees of the work group and circulated to Forum members for feedback. Successive drafts were developed and discussed at scheduled PCF meetings. The second-generation Alberta PCAP: 2000-2005 was unanimously adopted by PCF member organizations on January 12, 2001. Ministerial endorsement for the new PCAP was subsequently obtained and the plan was produced and printed. Limited circulation of the PCAP occurred during the summer months. Formal public release of the PCAP occurred on October 1, 2001, following the PCF's fall business meeting.

Efforts are currently underway to implement the strategic priorities and action recommendations contained in the latest Alberta PCAP. The new PCAP will be implemented through initiatives undertaken by the PCF and its member organizations. All Albertans (i.e., landholders, industry, organizations, and concerned citizens) who value our prairie and parkland ecosystems are encouraged to participate in achieving the plan's goals and objectives.

PCF Work Groups 2000 - 2001

Three PCF work groups were active in 2000 and 2001.

Prairie Ecology Research Committee (PERC)

Under the leadership of Dean Nernberg (Canadian Wildlife Service), PERC was struck in September 1996 to encourage research leading to a better understanding of prairie ecology, the improved management of resources, habitats and species occurring on prairie and parkland landscapes, and to facilitate the exchange of research information and reference materials. The work group includes representatives from a broad range of organizations and institutions having research interests. Work Group members are encouraged to make contacts, share information, and network with researchers and scientists interested in prairie research in other jurisdictions.

PERC is currently undertaking the development of a web site that will include the following:

- a reference (bibliographic) database with uploading and downloading capabilities
- a list of research priorities in prairie ecology
- a list of active research projects, with a capacity for uploading and downloading project information
- links to other related prairie ecology web sites and information databases

Various obstacles were encountered during 2000 and 2001 in developing PERC's web site. These issues are being systematically addressed. It is anticipated that a functional web site will be ready for review by PCF members early in 2002. Once the web site is operational, PERC will be re-convened to review the web site's content and operations, and to 'populate' the databases with information. The committee will also review its Terms of Reference and chart the course for future activities.

Get a Grass! In Search of A Prairie Symbol for Alberta

In the fall of 1999 the PCF launched a new initiative to select a provincial grass emblem for Alberta. The purpose of this project is to establish an official symbol of our prairie heritage which recognizes the prairies as 'home place' for many Albertans. The process of selecting and designating a provincial grass will help Albertans understand and appreciate the ecology of native grasses and grasslands and their cultural and economic importance. The concept was approved in February 2000 by the Minister of Community Development, who has responsibility for the *Emblems of Alberta Act*.

In April 2000 a provincial grass work group was established. The work group is comprised of individuals (most of whom are affiliated with the PCF) having expertise in native plants, range management, soil conservation, communications, and education. The Alberta Native Plant Council's representative on PCF (Cheryl Bradley) chairs this work group. As of December 2001, over 500 volunteer hours have been devoted to this project. A grant of \$5,000 from the Alberta Sports, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation has helped to cover various costs. Generous contributions of photographs and art work have been provided to assist the work group.

Of the more than 135 different native grasses found in Alberta, the work group selected five to be short-listed for consideration as a provincial grass – blue grama grass, green needle grass, june grass, rough fescue, and western wheat grass. These five species are

widespread in Alberta, are easy to recognize, have high ecological significance (i.e., dominance, wildlife use, ecological function, at risk), cultural importance, and economic importance (i.e., livestock forage, use in reclamation). An attractive colour brochure was developed profiling the five species and providing information on grasslands in Alberta.

Media releases inviting all Albertans to participate in selecting a provincial grass were distributed throughout the province from January to April, 2001. Articles appeared in numerous magazines and newspapers. Several interviews with work group members were aired on radio and television. Information on candidate species was posted on the PCF's web site. Over 8,000 brochures were distributed to some 40 PCF member organizations, schools, 4-H clubs, interpretation centres, relevant academic institutions, MLAs, and the general public (upon request and through government offices). Brochures also were made available at several conferences on agriculture, the environment, and education.

The overwhelming choice for a provincial grass, as identified by over two thousand Albertans who participated in the selection process, is rough fescue. The selection was officially announced on May 25, 2001 at the PCF's spring meeting in Foremost. The Provincial Museum of Alberta has reviewed the work group's recommendation and finds the choice of rough fescue most appropriate for a provincial grass. The Museum has recommended to the Minister of Community Development that the *Emblems of Alberta Act* be amended to designate rough fescue as a provincial emblem.

The work group will now seek to find a Member of Alberta's Legislative Assembly who is willing to sponsor amendments to the existing legislation by introducing an amendment bill at a future sitting of the Legislature. The PCF intends to pursue further public awareness initiatives on the value of native grasses and native prairie in concert with the designation process.

'Topics in Prairie Conservation' Course

A PCF work group (chaired by the PCF's Secretary, Ian Dyson) was struck in September 1996 to develop a senior seminar course to be offered at the University of Lethbridge. Through the cooperation of the Department of Biological Sciences, and under the leadership of Dr. Andy Hurly (course facilitator and instructor), the seminar – Topics in Prairie Conservation – has been successfully offered three times at the U of L (i.e., during the fall semesters in 1998, 1999, and 2000). As a result of student interest and owing to the success of the course, it has now been included in the university's calendar as a regular course offering.

The course exposes students to a broad range of native prairie topics including: the physical environment, resource values, land uses, resource management practices, world views, jurisdictional responsibilities, conservation issues, and ecosystem management. Further information on the course can be obtained at the following web site:
<http://www.albertapcf.ab.ca/courseoutline.htm>

As opportunities permit, the PCF will encourage other post-secondary institutions within Alberta (and the northern Great Plains) to consider offering this multi-disciplinary course. The PCF work group responsible for developing the course was disbanded in 1999 after completing an evaluation of the first offering of the seminar course at the U of L.

New Work Groups

At the September 2001 PCF meeting in Waterton, three new work groups were struck to address the three strategic priorities identified in the 2001-2005 PCAP.

Change Analysis

This work group will be responsible for pursuing the first strategic priority listed in the 2001-2005 PCAP: documenting and quantifying landscape changes taking place over time. During the term of the 1996-2000 PCAP, a reconnaissance level inventory was undertaken, using early 1990's aerial photography, to classify and map native vegetation in the Grassland Natural Region of Alberta. Native vegetation in each of the six cover classes was estimated to the nearest five percent for every quarter-section of land. The resulting data base can be queried at the PCF's web site.

During the term of the new 2001-2005 PCAP, this inventory will be subject to change analysis. Work will proceed in two phases. First, a methodology to quantify landscape/vegetation changes at three pilot areas will be developed and tested. Second, once the methodology is refined, geo-spatial analysis will be completed using current LandSat imagery to identify and classify changes that have occurred in the decade since the baseline inventory was conducted.

With the PCF as the client, this project will be undertaken primarily by the Resource Data Division of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.

Cumulative Effects Modeling

This work group will be responsible for pursuing the second strategic priority of the 2001-2005 PCAP: achieving a better understanding of the implications of landscape change over time.

Under the direction of a large Steering and Technical Committee, a landscape simulator model was parametrized for the Grassland Natural Region in the 1999-2001 period. 'A Landscape Cumulative Effects Simulator' (ALCES) allows the exploration and quantification of dynamic landscape responses to multiple human landscape practices and various natural disturbance regimes. Work is continuing on refining the wildlife, air-shed, and threshold components of the model. A PowerPoint presentation has been produced to highlight key outputs in terms of population, energy sector, and agriculture sector growth.

The new PCF work group will hold its inaugural meeting in February 2002. Together with the existing Steering and Technical Committee, it will be responsible for completing the modeling work, verifying data accuracy and assumptions, and developing a 'hands on' understanding of the model in order to run multiple scenarios. Its primary role, however, will be to identify the risks to biodiversity associated with various development trajectories and to identify mitigative, compensatory, and preventative strategies.

Societal Awareness

This group will be responsible for pursuing the third strategic priority of the 2001-2005 PCAP: promoting a better understanding of the implications of impacts on landscape integrity amongst decision makers and the public.

An initial step in this task has been taken with the development of the 'Prairie Environmental Series' by the PCF Secretary. These six illustrated presentations incorporate previous PCF work on ecosystem management (Occasional Paper #2) and cumulative effects (see Cumulative Effects Modeling above) and attempts to answer various questions: Why should we concern ourselves with what is happening to the environment at a strategic level? What are the processes that have shaped our natural environment and what effect is human activity having on them locally? What are the ecological attributes of different categories of land use? How do we perceive our environment and how do our beliefs motivate us to modify it? Given a finite land base, where is growth in all sectors of the economy taking us? What are some of the choices that face us and how can we respond intelligently to the challenges?

Decision makers and the public are being targeted through presentations offered to groups, at seminars, and conferences. Funding proposals are underway to contract formatting of the presentations for web-based delivery on the PCF's web site.

Once the other two strategic priority work groups (identified in this section) begin to generate output, a PCF Societal Awareness work group will be struck to develop materials and dissemination strategies.

Other Activities

The following activities were undertaken during the 2000 - 2001 period and are worthy of mention:

- significant additions and enhancements were made to the PCF's web site. In particular, the web site now contains the following: native prairie baseline inventory, latest Alberta PCAP and other PCF documents, information on 'environmentally significant areas' (ESAs) in prairie and parkland Alberta, information and voting results on the 'Get a Grass' initiative, and information on the *Topics in Prairie Conservation* course.
- the PCF issued its first essay in the new *Prairie Note* series (Management of the Last Sands Ranch), and published a 3rd report in its *Occasional Paper* series (The Prairie Landscape: Perceptions of Reality). A draft version of Occasional Paper #4 (Minimizing the Effects of Oil and Gas Activity on Native Prairie) was reviewed at the end of 2001 and a new Prairie Note (Richardson's Ground Squirrel) is nearing completion, which will likely be posted on the PCF's web site early in 2002.
- the PCF secretary (Ian W. Dyson) was the recipient of a prestigious *Alberta Emerald Award* (2000) for his work with the Prairie Conservation Forum and was also awarded the *Prairie Conservation Award for Alberta* at the 6th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference (Winnipeg, February 2001). Other PCF member organizations and individuals have also been recipients of the Alberta Emerald award.

- the PCF's Terms of Reference was brought up-to-date in January 2001 to more clearly address the Forum's mode of operating.
- the PCF will act as a catalyst in establishing an organizing committee that will plan and put on the 7th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference in Alberta in 2004 and will provide assistance where necessary to ensure the success of this large prairie conference.

Appendix 1 PCF Member Organizations

The membership of the Prairie Conservation Forum grew during the last two-year period. Membership remains open to any organization that is willing to align itself with the Alberta PCAP and the PCF's Terms of Reference. The following organizations were represented on the PCF at the end of 2001.

Alberta Cattle Commission
Alberta Conservation Association
Alberta Conservation Tillage Society
Alberta Fish and Game Association
Alberta Native Plant Council
Alberta Wilderness Association
Bow River Project
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
Dryland Salinity Control Association
Ducks Unlimited (Canada)
Eastern Irrigation District
Federation of Alberta Naturalists

Government of Alberta

Alberta Community Development (Provincial Museum of Alberta)
Alberta Community Development (Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation)
Alberta Economic Development
Alberta Energy
Alberta Environment
Alberta Municipal Affairs
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (Public Lands)
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (Fish and Wildlife)
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (Resource Data Division)
Alberta Transportation
Energy and Utilities Board
Natural Resources Conservation Board

Government of Canada

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (PFRA)
Department of National Defence, Canadian Forces Base- Suffield
Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service
Parks Canada (Waterton Lakes National Park)
National Energy Board

Grasslands Naturalists
Lethbridge Naturalist Society

Nature Conservancy of Canada
Operation Grassland Community
Palliser Regional Municipal Services
PanCanadian Petroleum Limited
Parkland Community Services
Shell Canada Limited
Society of Range Management
Southern Alberta Land Trust Society
Special Areas Advisory Council
Special Areas Board
University of Alberta
University of Calgary
University of Lethbridge
Wildlife Society

Appendix 2 Terms of Reference (*Prairie Conservation Forum*)

revised 12 January 2001

AUTHORITY

Initiated in 1989 by the Government of Alberta as the Prairie Conservation Coordinating Committee. At the discretion of individual member organizations, the committee was reconfirmed and renamed in 1995 as the Prairie Conservation Forum (PCF). The Prairie Conservation Forum is consultative and advisory to member organizations. It does not have legislative, management or program authority or responsibilities. The acceptance of Prairie Conservation Forum recommendations will remain at the discretion of individual member organizations.

DURATION

The Prairie Conservation Forum is tied to the Alberta Prairie Conservation Action Plan (PCAP), 2001-2005. The committee will exist until 31 December 2005. This tenure may be extended at the discretion of the Prairie Conservation Forum.

PURPOSE

The purpose or role of the Prairie Conservation Forum is to encourage effective implementation of the Alberta PCAP and provide an ongoing profile for prairie and parkland conservation initiatives. This role has and will continue to focus on three key elements:

Networking and Information Exchange

- Serve as a forum for **information exchange and cooperation** between key organizations with interests in or jurisdiction over prairie conservation initiatives;
- Allow **key contacts** to get together periodically to review the plans, projects and programs of member organizations, to assess progress and to integrate program efforts; and
- Where appropriate, **coordinate actions** to manage potential conflicts, avoid duplication and ensure effectiveness amongst the projects of member organizations.

Steering Prairie Conservation Action Plan Implementation

- Constitute a **cooperative partnership** between different levels of government and non-government organizations in sharing major responsibility for implementing the Alberta PCAP, and also allowing both groups to **share their experiences and strengthen mutual goals and objectives**;

- Assess and make **recommendations on overall priorities** for implementation of the Alberta PCAP to those member organizations who are involved in implementation actions. Provide advice to those same members on program or project design and implementation;
- Encourage members to tailor their own programs, policies or initiatives to meet the goals of the Alberta PCAP;
- **Review progress** in implementing the Alberta PCAP;
- **Identify gaps and recommend measures** to rectify such areas as inventory deficiencies or new program requirements; and
- **Encourage coordination and compatibility** amongst major conservation-related initiatives such as the Prairie Conservation Action Plans, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, habitat conservation, wetland conservation, cover programs, protected areas programs, and biodiversity initiatives.

Public Awareness and Education

- Adopt **media communication strategies** as appropriate to ensure that significant initiatives and accomplishments are widely communicated publicly; and
- Develop **educational resources** to enhance awareness of the value and importance of biological diversity and Alberta's native prairie and parkland.

MEMBERSHIP

There is an "open door" policy on membership in the Prairie Conservation Forum. Organizations or agencies who wish to participate in the work of the committee may join the Prairie Conservation Forum on request. Meetings will be open to the public.

PRAIRIE CONSERVATION FORUM OPERATIONS

- Chair - elected annually from amongst the membership. There is no limit to the number of times PCF members can be elected to serve as chair, provided no more than two consecutive terms are served at one time.
- Secretary - provided by the Government of Alberta (Department of Environment).
- Steering Committee - consists of representatives from a cross section of the membership (elected annually), chair, past chair and secretary.
- Working Groups - established to address specific tasks or issues by the Prairie Conservation Forum. Working groups will be disbanded once their task has been completed.

LOCAL COMMITTEES

The Prairie Conservation Forum will facilitate and encourage the development of local or regional committees. However, the Prairie Conservation Forum prefers a loose arrangement without an organizational hierarchy or sanctioning functions.

PRAIRIE CONSERVATION FORUM OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Meetings

- The Prairie Conservation Forum will conduct three general meetings per year. Meetings will be held in the winter (January), spring (April/May) and fall (September). The chair will be responsible for chairing these meetings;
- Additional Prairie Conservation Forum meetings may be called at the discretion of the steering committee when circumstances warrant;
- Notification of the dates(s), location and anticipated agenda items will be mailed to all members at least 30 days in advance of the meeting; and
- The steering committee will meet three times per year to guide the Prairie Conservation Forum in implementing the Alberta PCAP and related initiatives and to prepare an agenda for Forum meetings. Steering committee meetings will be called by the chair with as much notice as possible between Forum meetings.

Decisions

- The preferred method of decision making is by consensus. However, if that approach is not feasible, decisions of the Prairie Conservation Forum will be recorded through a vote of the attending membership. A motion will be adopted and implemented if it receives an affirmative vote by two-thirds of the members present at a meeting. All members will have an opportunity for input through discussion at a Prairie Conservation Forum meeting;
- In the event that a decision is required between meetings, membership votes will be obtained through the appropriate referral mechanism (e.g., mail, fax, E-mail, phone);
- Minority opinions will be recorded if the member(s) holding those views so request; and
- All members will receive advance notification and background information concerning upcoming decisions, at least **30 days in advance**.

Documentation and Correspondence

- The Secretary will be responsible for developing the agendas for the general meetings in close consultation with the chair and steering committee;

- All minutes of meetings and correspondence from the Prairie Conservation Forum will be prepared, distributed and retained by the Secretary;
- Correspondence of the Prairie Conservation Forum will be factual and non-advocacy in tone. Correspondence reflecting the Forum's views will be signed by the chair. Forum correspondence neither binds nor necessarily reflects the views of any given member organization.
- Signature sheets will only be used to convey personal support.

Prairie Conservation Issues

- When issues are brought to the Forum for comment or deliberation or when the Forum is asked to provide support for initiatives (research, program proposals, causes etc) the Forum will be guided in its deliberations by these Terms of Reference and the Alberta Prairie Conservation Action Plan.
- The Prairie Conservation Forum will register views as a committee on issues which, following discussion, the majority of members feel meet the following criteria:
 - The issue relates directly to the Alberta PCAP and is significant (i.e., is provincial in scope or is otherwise of a sufficient magnitude to be considered as a significant prairie conservation issue);
 - Prairie Conservation Forum representation would be useful or will likely make a difference to the final outcome (resolution) of the issue.

Prairie Conservation Forum Report

- A report summarizing the activities, projects, decisions and financial transactions of the Forum will be prepared every two calendar years, by March 31 of the following year.

Appendix 3 Vision, Goals, and Objectives (*Alberta PCAP: 2001-2005*)

VISION

The biological diversity of native prairie and parkland ecosystems in Alberta is being conserved for the benefit of current and future generations.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Document and quantify changes taking place over time.
2. Achieve a better understanding of the implications of change over time.
3. Promote a better understanding of the implications of impacts on landscape integrity amongst decision-makers and the public.

GOAL 1

Advance the identification, understanding, and use of information about Alberta's prairie and parkland ecosystems.

Objectives

- 1.1 Complete the identification of native vegetation in the aspen parkland and conduct studies of prairie landscape change.
- 1.2 Improve the accessibility and use of available information.
- 1.3 Promote research relevant to prairie conservation and encourage the integration of research and inventory efforts.
- 1.4 Ensure that research and inventory results are applied to ecosystem management in the prairies.

GOAL 2

Encourage government policies, programs and regulations that favour the conservation of Alberta's native prairie and parkland landscapes while preserving their cultural and economic values.

Objectives

- 2.1 Support those policies for Crown lands that promote the retention of Alberta's native prairie rangelands.

- 2.2 Promote those laws, regulations, policies, and programs that encourage the conservation of Alberta's native prairie ecosystems under all other types of ownership.

GOAL 3

Adopt land use management practices and protective strategies that sustain diverse ecosystems across the whole prairie and parkland landscape.

Objectives

- 3.1 Adopt and encourage ecosystem management practices to sustain and conserve all prairie landscapes.
- 3.2 Determine the biotic and abiotic requirements of native prairie species and communities and the management practices needed to sustain them.
- 3.3 Provide specific protection for significant, representative, and sensitive ecosystems.
- 3.4 Actively pursue the reclamation of degraded or disturbed prairie ecosystems.

GOAL 4

Increase awareness of the values and importance of Alberta's native prairie and parkland ecosystems.

Objectives

- 4.1 Promote an understanding and appreciation of our native prairie ecosystems amongst the public.
- 4.2 Continue to promote an understanding and appreciation of native prairie ecosystems amongst users of prairie landscapes. Provide information and resources to assist landowners, lessees, and a growing number of rural-fringe homeowners in conserving native prairie habitats.
- 4.3 Promote an understanding and appreciation of our native prairie ecosystems amongst decision-makers at the municipal level.
- 4.4 Encourage the incorporation of prairie ecosystem studies in formal educational curricula at all levels.

Appendix 4 Financial Report for 2000 and 2001

Financial Report as of December 31, 2001

Opening Balance, January 1, 2000	\$ 14,390.03
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REVENUES

Total Revenues	0
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EXPENDITURES

2000

Sheneals Catering - PCF meeting (Feb)	\$ 52.50
Sam Wirzba – gift books, PCF tour (May)	\$ 49.90
Sam Wirzba – Laura Balog Catering, PCF tour (May)	\$ 210.00
Ian Dyson – refreshments, PCF tour (May)	\$ 47.03
City of Lethbridge – PCF tour (June)	\$ 421.60
Custom Catering – PCF tour (Sept)	\$ 144.45
Sam Wirzba – refreshments, PCF tour (Sept)	\$ 49.58
Bison Bus – PCF tour (Sept)	\$ 385.20
Robert Powell – PCF website domain name (Sept)	\$ 53.50

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Sam Wirzba – Irene's Catering, PCF meeting (Jan)	\$ 251.00
DeJong Printing Ltd – Occasional Paper No. 3 (April)	\$ 2,945.71
Sam Wirzba – PCF tour/mtg; catering, gift books, hall rental (May)	\$ 831.03
City of Lethbridge – PCF tour (May)	\$ 508.16
DeJong Printing Ltd – printing of PCAP (July)	\$ 525.10
Waterton/Glacier Int. Writers Workshop – hosting (Oct)	\$ 100.00
Ian Dyson – PCF meeting, room rental (Oct)	\$ 164.70

Total Expenditures	\$ 6,739.46
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Net (revenue/expenses)	-\$ 6,739.46
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Closing Balance, December 31, 2001	\$ 7,650.57
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Appendix 5 Recognition of PCF Supporters

The PCF would like to acknowledge the support and contributions of members and friends, without which the ongoing functioning of the Forum would be hampered. In particular, the following are singled out:

1. Members who incur expenses, without reimbursement, while attending PCF meetings.
2. Dean Nernberg (Canadian Wildlife Service) for making literature available to Forum members on various conservation themes.
3. Rob Powell for serving as the PCF's Web Master.
4. Kurt Gonzales (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development) for converting PCF documents into 'pdf' files for posting on the PCF's Web Site.
5. Lorraine Jeffery (Alberta Sustainable Resource Development) for desk-top publishing services: Occasional Paper #3; Alberta PCAP 2001-2005.
6. Eastern Irrigation District for making its meeting rooms available for use by the PCF Steering Committee.
7. Cheryl Dash (Alberta Environment) and Janice Smith (Parks Canada) for providing advice and for assisting with the development and distribution of various PCF communications products.
8. Alan Violette for assistance with mapping projects.
9. Livio Fent and Alan Violette for the development of the Grasslands native vegetation baseline inventory.
10. Andy Hurly for the delivery of the *Topics in Prairie Conservation* course at the University of Lethbridge: Fall 1998; Fall 1999; Fall 2000.
11. Financial contributions:
 - Canadian Wildlife Service - \$4000.00 (for printing of the Alberta PCAP)
 - Fish and Wildlife Division, Alberta SRD - \$1000.00 (for printing of the Alberta PCAP)
 - Canadian Wildlife Service - \$ 828.98 (EID server upgrades to host the PERC and PCF Web Sites)
12. In-kind contributions:
 - Marilyn Danish (Alberta Environment): photo-copying; mail-outs
 - Alberta Environment: printing of PCF Annual Reports, furnishing supplies

13. Those individuals who make themselves available to serve as tour guides on PCF field trips (which are held in conjunction with spring and fall meetings).
14. Those individuals who agree to share their knowledge and insights as presenters at PCF meetings.
15. The authors of:
 - PCF Occasional Papers:
 - John Dormaar / Russel Barsh - Occasional Paper #3
 - Heather Sinton / Christine Pitchford - Occasional Paper #4 (in preparation)
 - PCF Prairie Notes
 - Roy Audet (transcribed by Rob Gardner): *Management of the Last Sands Ranch*
 - Gail Michener / Josef Schmutz: *Richardson's Ground Squirrel* (in preparation)
16. Chairpersons of PCF work groups who provide valued leadership and who assume a heavier work-load to fulfil action recommendations contained in the PCAP.
17. The Friends of the Provincial Museum of Alberta Society for holding and disbursing PCF funds.
18. Barb Grinder for auditing the *Topics in Prairie Conservation* course and producing 3 Background Papers for the PCF.
19. Brad Stelfox for assistance in applying the ALCES model to the Grasslands Natural Region.
20. Ryan Johnson for the development of PCF web pages.

We will inevitably have failed to identify the generous contributions of some individuals in the above list. We apologize for any oversight on our part.