



Transboundary Grasslands Workshop
Community Hall, Elkwater, Alberta (318 – 4th Avenue, Elkwater)
January 19-20th, 2016

Workshop Context

The environment doesn't respect human boundaries. Watersheds, wildlife, airsheds, invasive species...all parts of the environment transcend multiple boundaries on any given landscape. These boundaries are real and can impact the environment and our human objectives for it, especially at the edges of jurisdictions. The workshop area of focus will include the shared grassland regions of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Montana.

Traditionally, such issues have been addressed sector-by-sector or in a transactional and contractual manner. However, collaborative, broad-scope, large landscape conservation initiatives with commonly-desired outcomes are evolving in North America. Some of the best examples on the continent are in our backyard – the transboundary Crown of the Continent Ecosystem and the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative.

In southern Alberta, native grassland and watershed initiatives include the Government of Alberta's South Saskatchewan Regional Plan and partnership initiatives, such as the Prairie Conservation Forum's Prairie Conservation Action Plan; and the Milk River Watershed Council of Canada's transboundary State of the Watershed report and watershed management plan.

In southern Saskatchewan, prairie conservation initiatives include numerous partnership initiatives such as the Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan; the South of the Divide Conservation Action Program; and the network of regional watershed stewardship programs supported by local municipal governments, the Government of Saskatchewan and the Government of Canada.

Across the expanse of Montana's Hi-Line habitat and watershed initiatives include the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks' Milk River Initiative, the Natural Resources Conservation Service Sage Grouse Initiative, and the Charles M. Russell Community Working Group. Numerous other watershed and regional-scale efforts are also in-place.

Workshop Objectives

1. Become familiar with the broad scope of work and accomplishments of large landscape conservation transboundary collaboratives.
2. Review the status of selected transboundary grassland initiatives with a focus on successes, challenges and outcomes.
3. Discuss existing jurisdictionally-based environmental, land use and natural resource management priorities and challenges.
4. Identify potential topics where new or enhanced transboundary collaboration may result in better outcomes.

Workshop Outcomes:

- ✓ Identify and assess potential areas of mutually-desirable importance for new or enhanced transboundary work; and
- ✓ Collectively agree whether there is interest in pursuing a broader transboundary collaborative effort.
- ✓ Confirm interest in pursuing additional topical transboundary issues or a broad grassland transboundary large landscape collaborative.

Tuesday, January 19, 2016

1:00 **Opening Prayer** – Mike Bruised-Head, Blood Tribe Councillor
Welcome, Introductions and Workshop Objectives – Pat Gunderson, Bureau of Land Management, Montana

Setting the Scene – Global View

1:30 **Lines in the Grass: Jurisdictional and Environmental Boundaries:** Bill Dolan, Alberta Environment and Parks

2:00 **Grasslands Case Studies Panel** Moderator: Sue Michalsky, Ranchers Stewardship Alliance, Saskatchewan.

- **2:00 – 2:20 - Grassland Conservation** - Prairie Conservation Action Plans: Karen Raven, Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum/Kayla Balderson and Orin Balas, Prairie Conservation Action Plan, Saskatchewan
- **2:20 – 2:30 - Protected Areas:** Interprovincial Park Story: Peter Swain, Alberta Environment and Parks

- **2:30 – 3:00 - NGO Landscape Conservation Efforts:** Jeff Nelson, World Wildlife Fund, Montana; and Kelly Williamson, Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association

3:00 **Break**

- **3:15 – 3:30 - Innii Initiative:** Melissa Weatherwax, Blackfeet Bison Program and Helen Augare-Carlson – Blackfeet Community College
- **3:30 – 3:45 – The Northern Sagebrush Steppe Initiative – A Current Example of Transboundary Collaboration:** Joel Nicholson, Alberta Environment and Parks
- **3:45 – 4:00 – Erasing Political Boundaries of Watersheds – Transboundary State of the Watershed Reporting: Opportunities, Challenges and the Future:** Tim Romanow – Milk River Watershed Council of Canada

4:00 **Q & A for Panel Members**

4:15 **Session 1 Break-out - Theme: Achieving or Struggling - What and Why?**

Groups to address the following questions:

- What has worked well and why?
- What has worked not so well and why?
- What are the top 'must have' and 'must avoid' lessons?

5:00 **Small Group Report Back & Plenary Discussion (Themes & Insights)**

5:30 **Wrap-up Day 1**

6:00 **Cash Bar**

6:30 **Supper - Followed by Evening Speaker: Holistic Approaches to Large Landscape Conservation** - Ian Dyson, Alberta Environment and Parks

Wednesday, January 20th, 2016

8:15 **Summarize Day 1 and Day 2 Objectives,** Lisa Talavia-Spencer, Alberta Culture and Tourism

8:45 **Small Group Activity: Issues and Interests - Identifying and mapping perspectives from each jurisdiction**

- Landholders/Agriculture
- Agencies
- Stakeholders

9:45 **Break**

10:00 **Session 2 Break-out: Theme - Gaps and Opportunities**

Groups to address the following questions:

- What transboundary issues are not currently being addressed?
- What issues (priorities) present the greatest opportunity for transboundary collaboration (action)?

- 11:00 **Case Study – Invasive Weeds** - Kelly Cooley CoolPro Solutions Environmental Consulting, Alberta
- 11:30 **Lunch – Biocultural Diversity in Large Landscape Conservation on the Great Northern Plains** - Paulette Fox, Aboriginal Relations, Alberta
- 12:30 **Session 3 Break-out: Theme - Overcoming Obstacles**
Groups to address the following questions:
- For the priority issues, what are the obstacles (e.g. science/data, travel, resources)?
 - What are strategies to overcome the obstacles?
- 1:30 **Session 4: Putting it all Together: Concluding Plenary**
- Connecting the dots
 - Success factors, interests and gaps/opportunities
 - Avoiding pitfalls and overcoming obstacles
 - Is there an appetite to address a new, specific, transboundary conservation priority? And if yes, where?
 - Is there an appetite for a new, broad tent, transboundary collaboration in southwest Saskatchewan, southeast Alberta and northern Montana?
- 2:45 **Closing Remarks, Next Steps and Workshop Evaluation**
- 3:00 **Workshop Closes**