

## Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum

The PCF began in 1988 and is a large voluntary coalition of stakeholder groups. Members are interested in the conservation of native prairie and parkland environments in Alberta.

### Our Vision

To conserve the biological diversity of Alberta's native prairie ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations.

### Our Goals

#### Research



C. Lockerbie

Research helps us determine the state of biodiversity in prairie and parkland Alberta and provides direction for future conservation efforts.

#### Stewardship

Stewardship is the responsibility to take care of our natural resources to ensure that they are sustainably managed for current and future generations. It is an ethic that embodies cooperative planning and management of environmental resources.



C. Wallis

#### Education



K. Pearson

Education is essential to teaching people about the prairies so that they understand what is being done on the landscape around them, and what we can potentially lose with unsustainable management practices.

### For more information please contact:

Cheryl Dash, Secretary  
Telephone: 403-381-5562  
Fax: 403-382-4428  
E-mail: Cheryl.Dash@gov.ab.ca

Prairie Conservation Forum  
2nd Floor, Provincial Building  
200—5th Ave. South  
Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 4L1

Or check out our home page:  
[www.albertapcf.org](http://www.albertapcf.org)

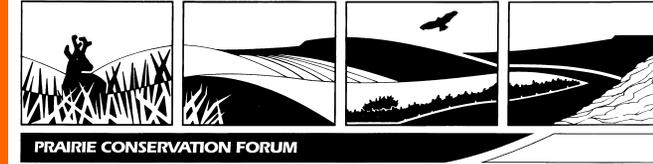


Pronghorn antelope. C. Wallis

### Current Membership

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Alberta Conservation Association; Alberta Conservation Tillage Society; Alberta Fish and Game Association; Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation; Alberta Native Plant Council; Alberta Sustainable Resource Development; Alberta Wilderness Association; Canadian Forces Base Suffield; Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (Calgary/Banff); City of Calgary; City of Lethbridge; Community Development (Alberta); Cows and Fish; Dryland Salinity Control Association; Ducks Unlimited Canada; Eastern Irrigation District; Economic Development (Alberta); EnCana Corporation; Energy (Alberta); Federation of Alberta Naturalists; Fish and Wildlife Division (ASRD); Grasslands Naturalists; Lands Division (ASRD); Lethbridge Naturalists Society; National Energy Board (Canada); Natural Resources Conservation Board (ASRD); Nature Conservancy of Canada; Oldman Watershed Council; Parks Canada; Pekisko Group; Petro Canada, Red Deer River Watershed Alliance; Regional Services (Alberta Environment); Resource Information Management Branch (ASRD); Sandy Cross Conservation Foundation; Secretariat (Alberta Environment); Society for Range Management; Southern Alberta Land Trust Society; Special Areas Advisory Council; Special Areas Board; Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture — Parks and Protected Areas (Alberta); University of Alberta; University of Calgary; University of Lethbridge; Western Sky Land Trust Society; Wildlife Society.

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## Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum



L. Cronkrite

*Is not our sense of who we are defined  
by what we experience in the places  
we live our lives?*

Website: [www.albertapcf.org](http://www.albertapcf.org)

# ≡ The Prairies – Our Home



Foothills Rough Fescue Grassland. H. Eijgel

The North American prairie is a vast landscape dominated by grasslands. In Canada, the prairie region extends from eastern Manitoba, through southern Saskatchewan, to the foothills of Alberta. The prairies are dominated by deep-rooted grasses, a variety of forbs and small shrubs, as well as taller shrubs and trees (such as cottonwoods) that can be found in moist draws and river valleys. Along its fringe, grasslands intermingle with aspen woodlands to produce the aspen parkland.

Many processes are at work on the prairies, including fire, flood, drought, grazing, decomposition, erosion, deposition, and soil disturbance. These processes, along with low annual precipitation, temperature extremes, and a drying wind continue to shape the prairies of today and add to the diversity of life that can be found here.



Prairie Riparian Area. I. Dyson

From a global perspective, the prairie is a relatively young ecosystem, with less variety than many others.



Blue grama grass. C. Wallis

Still, immense populations of grazing animals, including bison and pronghorn antelope, roamed it for millennia. Prairie vegetation reflects this long history of grazing, although cattle are now the dominant grazer in many areas.

## A changing landscape...

When the first settlers came to the prairies, they thought of it as an inhospitable land where it would be difficult to survive. Since then, the prairie landscape has undergone many changes as people realized they could not only survive here, but thrive. Resource extraction, agricultural conversions and intensification, urban development, introduced species, climate change uncertainty, and the development of energy resources have all contributed to the uncertain future of the prairies. Ranching, an industry long important to prairie people and a system to which prairie plants have adapted over time, can also lead to habitat degradation unless it is sustainably managed. In fact, many of the largest tracts of native prairie in Alberta can be found on ranchlands, making ranching one of the most important industries in maintaining and conserving native prairie.



Cows. K. Taylor

## Where do we go from here?

The Prairie Conservation Forum is made up of many member organizations that are committed to the conservation of Alberta's prairies. Part of this process involves working together and sharing knowledge of what work has been done on the prairies, and what work is currently being done on the prairies.



Integrated land use. D. Boyd

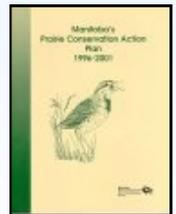
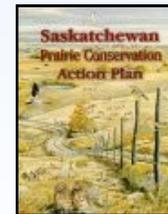
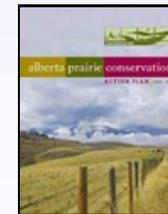
## The Alberta Prairie Conservation Action Plans

(or PCAPs) are five-year blueprints aimed at prairie-wide efforts to conserve and manage native prairie species, communities, and habitats. The Forum exists to promote the Alberta PCAP and to provide an ongoing profile for prairie and parkland conservation initiatives. The first Alberta PCAP, developed in 1996-2000, broadened the base of support for prairie conservation and acknowledged community empowerment, the emergence of ecosystem management, information technology, the importance of microfauna, and changes in the role of government. Today's PCAP, 2006-2010, remains true to these enduring characteristics by focusing on the conservation of native species, communities and habitats, a commitment to a prairie-wide vision, and the adoption of multi-party partnerships.



Burrowing Owls. Swift Fox. G. Court. Prairie Rattlesnake. C. Wallis

Alberta's PCAP is linked to a larger prairie conservation strategy, with similar documents in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Together, these plans promote prairie-wide conservation practices.



*"Nature is an open book for those who care to read. Each grass-covered hillside is a page on which is written the history of the past, conditions of the present, and predictions of the future. Some see without understanding; but let us look closely and understandingly, and act wisely, and in time bring our methods of land use and conservation activities into close harmony with the dictates of nature."* From J.E. Weaver, *North American Prairie*, Johansen Publishing, Lincoln, NE 1954.

You can request a copy of Alberta's Action Plan by contacting the address provided on the back of this pamphlet. Alternatively, a copy of the plan can be downloaded from our website at [www.albertapcf.org](http://www.albertapcf.org).