



Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum

2008 Annual Report

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Page 2, 6, 7 — EGS picture and sunset picture, Ian Dyson

Page 2 — Teachers Institute, Shannon Frank

Page 4 — Coyote, Katheryn Taylor

Page 5 — Whaleback, Cheryl Bradley

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Prairie Conservation Forum Vision

To conserve the biological diversity of native prairie ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations

Guiding Principles

A conservation ethic that will guide all activities and management decisions on the prairies.

All stakeholders will have the opportunity to be involved in the process of achieving the prairie conservation vision. Stakeholders will work cooperatively and form partnerships to achieve prairie conservation objectives.

Stakeholders will be empowered at a local community level to work towards prairie conservation initiatives, drawing on local knowledge and expertise.

Goals—2006-2010

Research	Enhance the information base for Alberta's native prairie and parkland landscapes
Stewardship	Conserve Alberta's native prairie and parkland landscapes
Education	Increase awareness of the values and importance of Alberta's native prairie and parkland ecosystems



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*'To live in the grasslands is to see where the earth touches the sky.  
A place where golden grasses sway in the wind, and the lonely,  
piercing cry of a hawk fades across the land. The rivers, the life-  
blood of the grasslands, mirror the colour of the sky and the coulees  
hug them closely. Wildlife abounds, although many are hidden in  
the grasses, underground, or even the sky itself. It is a beautiful,  
rich, and intriguing land for those who take the time to look, and  
offers joy and inspiration to countless generations of people who  
live there'*

*Katheryn Taylor*

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Message from the Chair

The PCF is poised to celebrate its twentieth year of operation. The past year was very significant because the transition to a registered society with constitution and bylaws was finally a reality. With the help of many, but particularly Dug Major and Cheryl Dash, the registration was completed in the spring of 2008. I was proud to serve as the first chair of the new Board of Directors. This was my third term as chair of the Prairie Conservation Forum and it was quite a year.

We had some excellent meetings and tours beginning in the Cochrane and Calgary area in the spring, and Waterton in the fall. In Waterton, we had an opportunity to get some valuable feedback from our membership and started to look at ways we could tie ourselves closer to a strategic plan and work within the Land Use Framework. The annual general meeting in January, 2009 saw Don Watson elected as new chair, as well as a new committee formed to look at the possibility of tying the next Prairie Conservation Action Plan into the Land Use Framework.

2008 was a year where the membership pulled together to ensure that the PCF had adequate funding to continue its efforts in Education, Research and Stewardship. Thanks to those organizations that dug deep to assist us with funding. Our coordinator position relies heavily on membership sponsorship and contributions. Our efforts are starting to pay off as we are gaining in recognition across the prairies and parkland and in the places where partnerships and funding opportunities can develop. Examples of this are meetings we held with representatives of the Forestry and Agriculture Committee and the EG&S Strategic Committee.

As the PCF moves forward, the opportunities are many. While some of the opportunities may seem difficult to take advantage of, there is a bright side to everything and, in this economic down turn, partnerships are more important than ever. The PCF is a partnership ready to celebrate its 20th year of operation and our membership, now approaching 60 organizations and individuals, has a wealth of experience and know how in accomplishing things in partnership with others.

I would like to end by saying congratulations and best wishes, it has been an honour to serve as your chair and to get to know most of the membership, including our newest recruits, on a first name basis.

Brian Laing



Message from the Coordinator

I was introduced to the PCF at the AGM in January, 2008, at which time I took over the coordinator role from Katheryn Taylor, who was going on maternity leave. I was overwhelmed with the number and diversity of organizations sitting around the same table, all coming together to talk about their efforts in prairie and parkland conservation.

My adventures as coordinator took me to a few conferences, including the Greencover TAC Fair in Regina, Crossing the Medicine Line Forum in Elkwater, and the Alberta Environment Conference in Edmonton. At these conferences, I was able to promote PCF's goals and vision. Travel and registration for all of these conferences was made possible by the Alberta Conservation Association GECF grant.

My number one priority as coordinator in 2008 was to keep the membership informed of news and events happening around Alberta and within the PCF, as well as providing a guaranteed contact for members and non-members. I also took care of the meeting logistics for general meetings, board meetings, and PCF working committee meetings. Being chairperson of the Education and Communication Committee and sitting on the EGS and Funding Committees ensured that I stayed informed and active on the PCF's working committees. In addition, I was also responsible for website updates, newsletters, grant applications, keeping on top of the financial tracking and statements, and working on the PCF business plan. I would like to commend the individuals that took care of these tasks in addition to their already full schedules previous to the hiring of the coordinator -- you have made huge contributions to the achievements of the PCF.

I would also like to thank Cheryl Dash for her mentoring and guidance, as well as the members of the Board of Directors who provided me with direction during my first year. I admire and praise the individuals that make extra time and commit themselves to working on PCF's board of directors and committees, past and present. I look forward to 2009 and welcome back Katheryn Taylor, with whom I will join forces in covering the roles and responsibilities of coordinating for the PCF throughout the year.

Sasha Harriott



Education and Communication Committee

- Alberta Parks (Southern Management Area) hired two seasonal reclamation technicians to control noxious and restricted weeds using mechanical control techniques. Certified pesticide applicators were hired to spot-apply low-toxicity herbicide to noxious weeds.
- The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance developed a 'State of the Red Deer River Watershed' report, had 2 general meetings (Managing Oil and Gas in the Watershed & Urban Watershed Management), were present and gave presentations at several local events, and started their Stewardship summer student program.
- Operation Grassland Community entered into 5-year voluntary stewardship agreement with 4 landholders, effectively protecting over 18,000 acres of native grassland habitat in southern Alberta.
- NRCB worked with partners on a multi-year study to examine the long-term impacts of earthen manure storage facilities on groundwater, and to lead the development of an environmental risk screening protocol to enable a consistent, science-based evaluation of risk posed by a confined feeding operation facility to groundwater. Currently, the NRCB is using the risk screening tool to assess and review the groundwater monitoring requirements at over 280 CFOs in Alberta. NRCB participated in work related to important provincial initiatives such as the Land Use Framework and the assessment of regional cumulative effects.

The PCF Education and Communications Committee focused most of its attention on educating teachers about the grasslands in 2008. Members attended and presented the Grassland Education Kit at the Southeast Alberta Teachers Convention in Medicine Hat in February. They also developed an online survey for Alberta teachers intended on finding out the extent that grassland topics were being covered in the curriculum. In June, the committee partnered with Inside Education in the planning of the Teacher's Grasslands Institute. About 25 teachers took part in a 5-day tour that took them to various locations within the grasslands.



The Education and Communications Committee continues to explore the possibilities of distance-learning education. Distance-learning education is an ideal and interactive way to connect students and teachers to experts in the field. Distance learning broadcasts will enable the PCF to bring grasslands topics into schools across Alberta and potentially the world. The Education and Communication Committee sent a representative to the Elevate 2008 Conference, which focused on educational video conferencing.

With funding provided by the Alberta Conservation Association, the committee created a new PCF display to be used at tradeshow and conferences.

Ecological Goods and Services Committee

The Prairie/Parkland Ecosystem Goods and Services Valuation Project began in 2008 with the hiring of Deloitte and Touche. The purpose of the project is to support the conservation of biodiversity within the prairie and parkland regions of Alberta by increasing the understanding of ecological goods and services (EGS) and their value among local landowners and resource/land-use decision makers. The project will identify and describe EGS at local scales relative to their contribution to social, cultural, and economic values as well as the factors that contribute to the provision of these ecological goods and services. In addition the project will also increase the awareness and understanding among local stakeholders of EGS, their value, and factors of influence on the prairie and parkland landscapes.



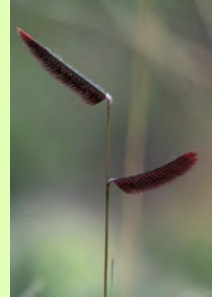
Deloitte and Touche completed Phase 1 of the EGS Valuation Project which included the design of a strategic approach to conducting a small-scale EGS valuation project enabling an integrated understanding of economic, social, and ecological values on the landscape. This strategy involves effective incorporation of stakeholder input, insights, and considerations into the design and implementation of the project by means of a stakeholder workshop. A business proposal was developed in the fall and currently, the PCF is in the process of looking for funding and support to complete the subsequent phases of the Prairie/Parkland Ecosystem Goods and Services Valuation Project.

Grassland Vegetation Inventory

- The Oldman Watershed Council celebrated 5 years of watershed management.
- The Nature Conservancy of Canada, in addition to its annual securement and stewardship activities, hosted 17 volunteer events with over 240 volunteers to help care for its 200 properties and 170,000 acres across Alberta.
- The Lethbridge Naturalists Society are involved with developing fundraising ideas and applications to assist in the expansion of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre in Lethbridge, and are in the process of updating their by-laws.
- The Alberta Native Plant Council helped advance conservation and restoration of rough fescue grasslands through the Foothills Restoration Forum, Rumsey Natural Area Technical Advisory Committee, and their annual conference (Fragments of the Grasslands). Information on rare plants was filed with the Alberta Natural Heritage Information Centre through the Adopt-a-Plant Program and Botany Alberta weekend.
- The Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation area continued to care for 4800 acres of wildlife habitat (including native prairie) and educated over 6700 people on the importance of conservation.
- Cows and Fish completed over 150 riparian health inventories with a dozen groups, and delivered more than 130 presentations, field days and youth education activities on riparian function and management.

The Grassland Vegetation Inventory is in its third year of production and a significant development for 2008 is that the data is finally becoming available for public consumption.

Significant fund contributions were received from the Land Use Secretariat, AENV, and AFD including core funding from ASRD. Of note to the PCF, there has not been any other significant contribution to this initiative other than provincial funds. The original strategy of a 50/50 province/other-funding model has not materialized; consequently only about half the original scope is completed.



The GVI program is moving from the prairie ecosystem into the ecotone area to the west and north. Adaptations are being made that will enable wetland information to be reported by using either the core system based on Steward and Kantrud and/or the Canadian Wetland Classification System.

ASRD is currently doing a feasibility pilot to test the use of a more automated process using digital imagery and high resolution DEM information (LiDAR) in the Hand Hills. The results should be available in time for the PCF's spring meeting.

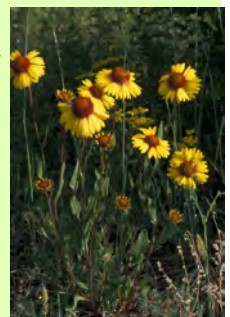
The Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute has adopted the GVI specifications (with some minor enhancement) as their monitoring protocol for the province's white area. The ABMI samples 3X6km plots on a 5-year interval to assess change in biodiversity. This work further establishes GVI as the standard the biophysical land use reference dataset.



Initiatives currently using GVI include: Alberta's Biodiversity Monitoring Program, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Research Branch of Agriculture Canada, reclamation criteria, industry, and the Alberta Land-use Framework.

Funding Committee

Fundraising has become an important part of ongoing business for the Prairie Conservation Forum. The PCF Funding Committee met a couple of times throughout the year to discuss strategies for securing core funding and to search for new funding opportunities. As in previous years, funding request letters were drafted and sent, requesting support for PCF operations. The drafting and approval of a business plan was completed in the fall and is intended as an information supplement to the 2006-2010 PCAP document. We hope this plan will help PCF promote and solicit funding for the balance of our five year plan. Several new opportunities were discussed, including participation casino fundraising and more direct solicitation of businesses and individuals. The PCF will apply for a casino and gaming option when our organization becomes eligible in 2009.



Financial Report

Statement of Operations and Net Assets (Deficiency)

December 31, 2008

Revenue

Grants	\$ 61,500.00	
Donations	\$ 13,572.00	
Other Income	\$ 308.00	
Total		\$75,379.00

Expenses

Meeting Expenses	\$ 3,205.00	
Licenses and dues	\$ 70.00	
Advertising	\$ 728.00	
Speaker Gifts	\$ 819.00	
Coordinator Contract	\$ 49,623.00	
Coordinator Expenses	\$ 6,247.00	
Printing Expenses	\$ 3,881.00	
EGS Expenses	\$ 10,888.00	
Registration Expenses	\$ 475.00	
Office Expenses	\$ 124.00	
Total		\$76,059.00

Excess of Revenue over Expenses **\$ (680.00)**

Balance Sheet

December 31, 2008

Assets

Cash	\$ 19,093.00
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Liabilities and Net Assets

Current liabilities	\$ —
Net Assets	\$ 19,093.00

PCF Board of Directors

Brian Laing — Chair. Brian Laing P.Ag is the program manager for Sustainable Resource Development, Lands Division, Prairies Area, Rangeland Management. He works out of the Lethbridge office and has worked in Alberta and B.C. as an agrologist and manager for the past 35 years. He was a District Agriculturist in Provost, Three Hills, Claresholm and Creston (BC) and managed the Northeast Region of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development prior to moving to Lands in Lethbridge. He has been a member of PCF since 1998.

Don Watson — Vice Chair. Don is currently employed as the Head of Habitat Retention, Alberta, Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC). Don has worked for over 26 years with non-government and government agencies and has worked as a field biologist for DUC in the aspen parkland and grassland region of Alberta. Don has volunteered with the Breeding Bird Survey, TD/Canada Trust Friends of Environment advisory board and Ducks Unlimited Lethbridge Chapter. Don is also a member of the Board of the Milk River Watershed Council Canada and the Oldman Watershed Council. Don has been a PCF member of the Board for two years.

Stephanie Palecheck — Treasurer. Stephanie is the executive director of the Oldman Watershed Council located in Lethbridge, Alberta. She grew up in central Alberta (Ponoka area) and completed her diploma in Renewable Resources from NAIT in 1998 and her BSc in Environmental Sciences from the University of Lethbridge in 2000. Before working for the OWC, Stephanie worked for Public Lands and Forests out of Rocky Mountain House in Range Management, and for the St. Mary Irrigation District as a Wildlife Habitat Technician.

Dana Blouin — Board Member. Dana Blouin is Conservation Coordinator for the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) in the grasslands of Alberta. Dana is a Professional Biologist and has worked in the prairie grasslands for several years from Manitoba to Alberta, and has been an active member of the Alberta PCF for 7 years. Dana currently works to conserve and steward NCC projects in the southern grasslands of Alberta, and experiences the grasslands first hand with her family whenever possible.

Ian Dyson — Board Member. Ian has a geography/planning background, and was educated at London University (BA) and the University of Calgary (MSc). He is currently the director, cumulative effects strategy, with Alberta Environment and is responsible for the strategic approach to support a transition to an environmental management system capable of managing cumulative effects. He has 25 years experience dealing with integrated resource management, water management and regional sustainable development plans in Alberta. Particular focus on building multi-stakeholder partnerships dealing with approaches to address environmental cumulative effects such as water quality in the Oldman River Basin, trans-boundary collaboration to sustain ecological health in the Rocky Mountains, and the conservation of prairie and parkland biodiversity. In 1999, he was awarded an Emerald Award for Corporate and Institutional Leadership and received the Prairie Conservation Award in 2001.

Bill Dolan — Board Member. Bill has recently joined the Parks Division of Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation as the Land & Resource Management Coordinator in southern Alberta. In this new position, Bill has a leadership role for a number of programs in parks & protected areas including science, planning, resource management, land use and community engagement. Bill previously worked for Parks Canada at various national parks in western & northern Canada. He has been a member of the Prairie Conservation Forum for 19 years.

Cliff Wallis — Board Member. Cliff Wallis, P. Biol. is Vice-President of the Alberta Wilderness Association, a member of the board of Nature Canada, and President of Cottonwood Consultants Ltd., an environmental consulting firm. He has spent 40 years volunteering on prairie conservation and conducting research on species at risk and environmentally significant areas. He works with local communities, both in Canada and internationally on the protection of grasslands and other important ecosystems. Cliff serves on the Milk River Management Society, a non-profit group that manages the Milk River Natural Area in southeastern Alberta. He also works on a community forest project in Southwest Province, Cameroon and leads the twinning relationship between two Ramsar Wetlands: Dalai Lake Nature Reserve in the Daurian Steppe grasslands of Inner Mongolia and Hay Zama Wildland Park in the Boreal Forest of Alberta.

Vern McNeely — Past Chair. Individual, Dryland Salinity Control Association, and Alberta Conservation Tillage Society.

Dug Major — Board Member. Director of Land Administration and Environmental Resources, Special Areas Board.

Livio Fent — Board Member. Manager, Data Operations and Analysis, Data Management Branch, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.

Staff

Sasha Harriott — Coordinator. Sasha started out her career in the environmental field as a forest fire fighter. From there she joined the Cows and Fish Program and traveled across Alberta conducting riparian inventories, engaging landowners and promoting healthy riparian areas. After acting as a Safety and Logistics Coordinator with AMEC Earth and Environmental and taking a few years off to have two beautiful children she is now acting as PCF Coordinator while Katheryn Taylor is on maternity leave.

Katheryn Taylor — Coordinator. Katheryn has worked on many wildlife and vegetation research projects on the prairies, including her Masters degree on the effects of grazing on riparian birds. She has also done some teaching (college and University) and private consulting in the form of environmental impact assessments. She was on maternity leave in 2008 and is now back working with the PCF.



Recognition of PCF Supporters

Funding support is very important to the PCF to keep our coordinators working and provide money for printing costs, meetings, projects, etc. We would like to thank our funding partners of 2008 as without them, we wouldn't be the society we are today.

Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development — Lands Division
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development — Fish and Wildlife
Alberta Native Plant Council
Ducks Unlimited Canada
EnCana
Alberta Wilderness Association
Alberta Environment
Parks Canada (Waterton Lakes National Park)
Special Areas
Petro-Canada
Alberta Conservation Association
Dryland Salinity Control Association

And a special thanks to individuals that make donations to the PCF out of their own pockets:

Lisa Lumley
Cheryl Dash
Don Stiles
Don and Debra Watson

We would also like to thank:

Neil Thrussell, our website manager.

Members who incur expenses, without reimbursement, while attending PCF meetings.

Those individuals who made themselves available to serve as tour guides on PCF field trips.

Chairpersons of PCF committees who provide valued leadership and committee members who assume a heavier workload to fulfill action recommendations contained in the PCAP.

We will inevitably have failed to identify the generous contributions of some individuals and organizations in this section. We apologize for any oversight on our part.

PCF Member Organizations

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Alberta Conservation Association
Alberta Conservation Tillage Society
Alberta Economic Development
Alberta Energy
Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation
Alberta Environment
Alberta Fish and Game Association
Alberta Native Plant Council
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Alberta Wilderness Association
Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area
Antelope Creek Ranch
Canadian Forces Base — Suffield (Department of National Defence)
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (Calgary/Banff Chapter)
Canadian Wildlife Service
City of Calgary
City of Lethbridge
Cows and Fish — Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society
Dryland Salinity Control Association
Ducks Unlimited Canada
Eastern Irrigation District
EnCana Corporation
Federation of Alberta Naturalists
Foothills Restoration Forum
Grasslands Naturalists
Lethbridge Naturalists Society
National Energy Board (Canada)
Natural Resources Conservation Board
Nature Conservancy of Canada
Oldman Watershed Council
Operation Grasslands Community
Pekisko Group
Petro-Canada
Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada)
Red Deer River Watershed Alliance
Royal Alberta Museum (Alberta Community Development)
Society for Range Management
Southern Alberta Applied Research Association
Southern Alberta Land Trust Society
Special Areas Advisory Council
Special Areas Board
Tera Environmental Consultants
Tourism, Parks, Recreation, and Culture (Alberta Parks and Protected Areas)
Town of Taber
University of Alberta
University of Calgary
University of Lethbridge
Waterton Lakes National Park (Parks Canada)
Western Sky Land Trust Society
Wildlife Society



Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum

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