



The Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA) in partnership with the South of the Divide Conservation Action Program Inc. (SODCAP Inc.) have secured funding to establish *Grass-Banking* projects in southwest Saskatchewan.

Native grasslands in southwest Saskatchewan are the last refuge for many *species at risk* in the province. Native grasslands are also an important forage resource for the cow-calf sector in southwest Saskatchewan. Together, these grasslands are valuable from an ecological and cultural perspective and are also economically important.

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), a “*Grass Bank*” is a physical place where forage is made available to ranchers, at a reduced fee, in exchange for tangible conservation benefits being produced on participants’ home ranches. The main goal of *grass-banking* is to have a community-based conservation plan that provides meaningful benefits for both the environment and participating ranchers. According to NRCS, roughly two dozen grass banks have emerged across the U.S. over the last 15 years. Lands in grass banks can be entirely private, public, or a mix of both. Typically, grass banks are operated by a conservation organization and include a privately owned or managed base property with associated public land grazing allotments.

SSGA and SODCAP Inc. are seeking to establish a *Grass Bank* in southwest Saskatchewan in cooperation with partner agencies. The grass banks will be voluntary agreements between a conservation or producer organization and a group of local producers that provides benefits to *species at risk* and their habitat.



- Two well-known examples of grass-banking include:
- The Nature Conservancy’s Matador Ranch, which has a grass-banking agreement with the Montana Rancher’s Stewardship Alliance Inc.
  - the Nature Conservancy of Canada’s Sandstone Ranch, which has an agreement with five members of the Sandstone Ranch Grazing Co-op in Alberta.

For more information, contact Tom Harrison, Executive Director, SODCAP Inc. at [ed@sodcap.com](mailto:ed@sodcap.com) or 306-530-1385



The **Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA)** in partnership with the **South of the Divide Conservation Action Program Inc. (SODCAP Inc.)** have secured funding to explore *niche marketing projects* for beef raised on critical and important habitat for *species at risk*.

Beef can be branded as environmentally or ecologically-friendly and promoted to specialty markets. Certification programs have been used to market beef raised on grasslands that are managed for conservation purposes. Certification attaches certain attributes to beef products and some consumers value that. Consumers will choose certified products over other products and are willing to pay a premium for them.

Individual companies and producers have been successfully marketing beef based on environmental benefits. Producers have been niche marketing beef that is grass-fed, natural, free-from-added hormones, antibiotic-free, animal-welfare approved and humanely raised in a natural environment. This type of niche marketing takes a real sense of entrepreneurship and time must be invested into marketing.

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SSGA and SODCAP Inc. are seeking **cooperating producers** interested in marketing beef raised in an environment supportive of wildlife and species at risk habitat. Assistance may be available for market plan development.

For more information, contact Tom Harrison, Executive Director, SODCAP Inc. at [ed@sodcap.com](mailto:ed@sodcap.com) or 306-530-1385

This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada.

Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier du gouvernement du Canada.



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The Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA) in partnership with the South of the Divide Conservation Action Program Inc. (SODCAP Inc.) have secured funding to develop *Habitat Management Agreements* with producers who own or manage **identified critical and important habitat** for *species at risk* in southwest Saskatchewan.

A *Habitat Management Agreement* is tailored to each producer's operation and the particular *critical or important habitat* that they are managing. The agreements will be based on an evaluation of each ranch, focused planning exercises, the producer's objectives and resources, habitat conservation goals, and any other relevant circumstances or conditions that are present.

Producers may be funded **up to 100%** of the costs for implementing their agreements on qualifying lands.

Management activities that are beneficial to both the producer and species at risk will be identified and included as part of each agreement. There will be no requirements to meet specific habitat targets. However, producers must implement the management activities.

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SSGA and SODCAP Inc. are **seeking producers with identified critical or important habitat** who are interested in entering into *Habitat Management Agreements* that would be developed to meet the needs of species at risk in southwest Saskatchewan.

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The Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA) in partnership with the South of the Divide Conservation Action Program Inc. (SODCAP Inc.) has **funding available for producers to develop habitat restoration projects** that create habitat for species at risk in southwest Saskatchewan.

SSGA and SODCAP Inc. are seeking **cooperating producers** to submit bids to undertake a habitat restoration project that meets the outlined criteria.

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Potential qualifying sites for habitat restoration include:

- Areas up to 200 acres in size
- Land that is currently cultivated or was previously cultivated (i.e. tame grass)
- Locations near existing **candidate critical habitat** for species at risk

Producers can submit bids to complete a habitat restoration project that meets the following terms and conditions:

- Prepare seedbed and perform necessary weed control
- Seed appropriate mix of native species, plugs and seedlings
- Rest seeded area up to 2 years post-establishment
- Work with a SODCAP Inc. Agrologist to implement a grazing plan
- Maintain site in perennial cover for 12 years
- Sign a habitat restoration agreement with SSGA & SODCAP Inc.

There will be **no land use restrictions** for cooperating producers following the terms of the agreement.

For more information or assistance in calculating bids, contact Tom Harrison, Executive Director, SODCAP Inc. at [ed@sodcap.com](mailto:ed@sodcap.com) or 306-530-1385





The **Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA)** in partnership with the **South of the Divide Conservation Action Program Inc. (SODCAP Inc.)** have secured funding to enter into *Term Conservation Easements* with cooperating producers who own or manage critical and important habitat for *species at risk* in southwestern Saskatchewan.

A *conservation easement* is a voluntary legal agreement between a grantor, generally a landowner and a registered holder, who could be a conservation organization or a government agency.

The terms of the agreement are negotiated to meet the interests of the landowner and the conservation objectives of the holder, with the main objective being to protect and preserve the biological, physical and cultural attributes of the land.

A conservation easement is registered against the title for a specified time or in perpetuity. Currently, conservation easements that are held in Saskatchewan are 'in perpetuity' and only restrict development, cultivation and drainage. However, the option exists to register the conservation easement for a *specified term*.



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SSGA is investigating becoming a registered holder of *conservation easements*. SSGA and SODCAP Inc. are also seeking producers to enter into conservation easements for a specified time period with the conditions of the easement acting to protect *species at risk* habitat.

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Ranch managers and producers should have the ability to continue managing family operations in a sustainable and profitable manner that provides environmental benefits to all of society.

The Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA) in partnership with the South of the Divide Conservation Action Program Inc. (SODCAP Inc.) have secured funding to implement *Results-Based Conservation Agreements* with producers.

'Results-Based Stewardship' is a tool that can be used to produce environmental benefits including habitat for species at risk. *Results-Based Conservation Agreements* are agreements signed with producers that identify and describe specific 'results' or desired habitat characteristics that producers can work towards. In exchange for achieving the desired habitat targets, producers are rewarded with financial incentives.

SSGA and SODCAP Inc. are looking to sign *Results-Based Conservation Agreements* with **producers** who own or manage **candidate critical habitat** for *species at risk* in southwest Saskatchewan.

Habitat assessments, reviews, and payments to producers will occur on an annual basis. Agreements are designed to encourage producers to manage their land and make management decisions that support species at risk habitat.

Habitat attributes identified must be within the site potential based on soils, hydrology and climate or other bio-physical attributes. Habitat attributes that are described will be based on the best available information and current state of knowledge.



The 'results' are more than current, normal industry standards that achieve livestock and forage production objectives. Agreements are structured so that the producer is rewarded financially upon achieving the results. If habitat goals are not met, it simply means a financial payment is not triggered.

Management decisions must be within a producer's capability. Decisions on range and livestock management, forage production, land accessibility, predator control, and agricultural development are all examples of those within a producer's capability. Decisions on industrial development, road construction, prevention of disease spread, or artificial rearing of species are examples of those outside of the capability of a producer.

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