

Welcome to the Transboundary Grassland Partnership Workshop

Native Grasslands: Culture, Carbon and Conservation

December 6-7, 2023

Swift Current, SK



Montana Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) Program



PFW is the private-lands branch of the US Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge Program. PFW works with landowners to implement voluntary, incentive-based wildlife habitat restoration and enhancement on private lands. Along with our partners in Fiscal Year 2023, we implemented 40,919 acres of grazing system enhancements, restored or enhanced 1,078 acres of wetlands, restored 2,222 acres of cropland to perennial grassland, restored or enhanced over 30 miles of streams and riparian areas, and removed or replaced over 25 miles of low-permeability fencing for migratory pronghorn all within the TGP geography of Montana.



Canadian Wildlife Federation

The success of our field work depends on our dedicated crews. CWF crews do more than collect insects for the multi-taxa project. They connect with landowners and carry their experiences forward with a new appreciation for prairie biodiversity.



Alberta Conservation Association

- ACA continues to work with Miistakis and our Pronghorn Xing stakeholders to build support for the development of a mitigation system (overpass/underpass and fencing) to reduce the impact of Highway 1 on the migration and movement of pronghorn and other wildlife.
- Working on restoring native grasslands on 600 acres over the next two years.
- Wrapping up three year insect study on native grass restoration project.
- Continue to collaborate with landowners within the Transboundary Area through the MULTISAR Project who manage ~750,000 acres, this includes ~104,000 acres of critical habitat for Greater Sage Grouse.



The Nature Conservancy 
Montana

- 7,632 acres enrolled in a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances, protecting some of the northernmost sage-grouse in Montana
- Ongoing songbird monitoring with Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) in Montana on private lands
- TNC's Matador Ranch began a long-term monitoring project in 2023. And documented 60+ mating pairs and 50+ successful nests. Nest success was more than 90%!



World Wildlife Fund's Sustainable Ranching Initiative

Protect, Manage, Restore

WWF established the Sustainable Ranching Initiative in 2011, recognizing the importance of working with private landowners for keeping the grasslands of the NGP intact. We work to provide resources to ranches for improved grassland management and restoration of marginal cropland back to grass.

- 86 Ranches enrolled in Ranch Systems & Viability Planning network encompassing 807,267 acres across MT, NE, SD, and WY since 2021. With a goal of one million acres by 2025.
- 17,509 acres of native grasslands reseeded on marginal cropland over the last 3 years.

Birds Canada Highlights



1. Surveyed birds at 188 unique site years representing >615,000 acres as part of collaborations with Environment and Climate Change Canada's Grassland Bird Monitoring Program, the Saskatchewan Stock Growers, SODCAP Inc., and Nature Conservancy of Canada
2. Successful completion of Saskatchewan Breeding Bird Atlas.
3. Adapting the Bird-friendliness Index to the Canadian Prairies to serve as biodiversity indicator.
4. Active in grassland conservation initiatives and policy work.
5. Marsh Watch citizen science program to build citizen science capacity.



Chestnut-collared Longspur
Photo: Yousif Attia

Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan

A large herd of goats of various colors (white, black, brown, and grey) is grazing in a lush green field. The field is situated on a gentle slope of a hillside. In the background, there are more hills and a few scattered trees, including a prominent evergreen tree on the right. The sky is clear and bright.

The Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan continues to support prairie conservation through many of our projects.

Our **Rare Plants and Ranchers program** works with landowners who have species at risk by creating customized beneficial management plans, with matched funding and long-term monitoring to support them. There are currently over 136,000 acres enrolled in our program.

Our **Rose Creek Ranch conservation grazing project** is using goats to target Leafy Spurge in areas that cattle avoid and where herbicide isn't a good option. The ranch is approximately 5,600 acres and includes species at risk and sensitive habitats.

Finally, our **South of the Divide Invasive Alien Species Strategy** aims to provide a more cohesive approach to invasive species and species at risk management in the southwest corner of Saskatchewan, with matched funding to landowners who need support in implementing activities. The South of the Divide encompasses 14,157 square kilometers or 5,466 square miles.

2023/07/08

Farm Bill Policy -Director Steve Riley

2018 Bill re-authorization was due Sept. 2023, now on 1-yr continuing resolution

“Bird Saver” Platform-

- conservation easements- ↑funding
- rangeland rest- payment for forgone forage
- incentive-based conservation- payment for conservation targets
- reinforce USDA National Seed Strategy for restoration
- partner technical assistance, wildlife as a co-equal priority
- discourage seed coatings (neonics)
- even playing field between crop insurance and ranching

Continental/hemispheric Coordination

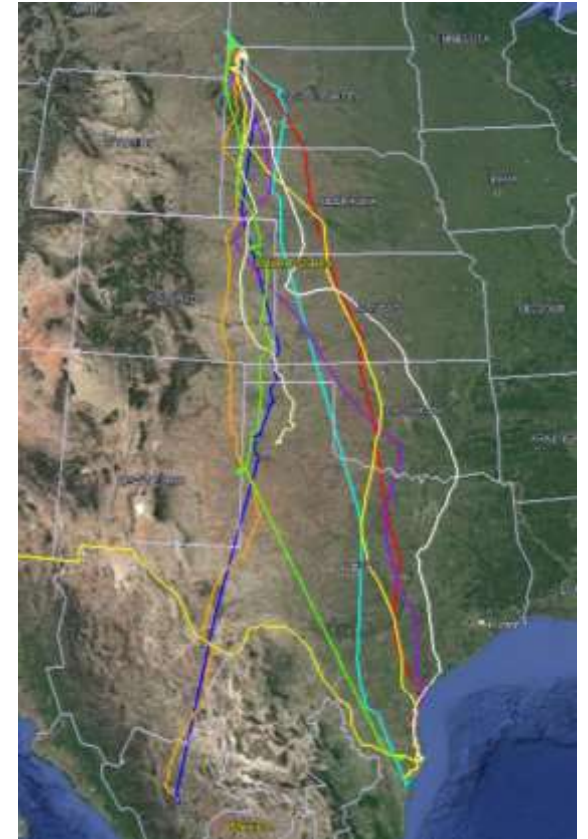
C. Grasslands Roadmap, JV8, Partners In Flight, Road to Recovery

Connectivity stories

- 15 tagged curlews Washington Post article, videos to 13 news stations in ND and OK
- 9 tagged meadowlarks e. MT birds go toward AZ, w. MT birds to CA

Standardized Vegetation Monitoring

Grassland Effectiveness Monitoring (GEM)- 3 compatible tiers of data collection, aligns with US Bureau Land Mgt. AIM methods



SK Stock Growers Foundation

Our first round of the Reverse Auction for Grassland Restoration was successful with 5 landowners signing agreements and committing over 300 acres of cultivated land to be seeding to native grass in the coming year.

The Saskatchewan Stock Growers Foundation held its first Field Day in August of 2023 and had over 60 attendees come out and explore a grassland restoration site and a native pasture in the beautiful Sandhills.



Nature

SASKATCHEWAN

Stewards of Saskatchewan programs successfully launched a Milkweed Monitoring project to fill knowledge gaps about Monarch habitat within their prairie range. We also celebrated Shrub for Shrike's 20th year, observed a mild rebound of Burrowing Owl numbers in the Regina Plain, and found thousands of Tiny Cryptantha, a very rare plant that had never been seen before by Nature Saskatchewan staff.





- **Initiated delivery of "Deep Roots"; interactive virtual educational program directed at educating grades 4-6 on the importance of native grasslands.**
- **Look for our new mapping tool on the PCF website!! New layers being added with details of isolated habitats for specific species and new pronghorn layers to be added soon!**

Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds

The Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds (SAW) has partnered with the Manitoba Association of Watersheds to deliver the **Prairie Watersheds Climate Program (PWCP) in Saskatchewan**, which is an On Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) program funded through AAFC. Under the PWCP, there is funding to assist producers with the implementation and expansion of beneficial management practices (BMPs) under the categories of rotational grazing, cover cropping, and nitrogen management. The goal of the program is to see an increase in the adoption of these BMPs throughout the province while ensuring producers receive sound agronomic advice.

The Prairie Watersheds Climate Program is helping producers in Manitoba and Saskatchewan to deploy real, measurable, and practical climate solutions for agriculture in the Canadian Prairies by assisting them to create and implement rotational grazing plans. Rangelands managed under rotational grazing practices have been found to have higher soil carbon sequestration rates than under continuous grazing, therefore may serve as an effective carbon mitigation option.



Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et
Agroalimentaire Canada

Canada

SK Ministry of Agriculture

Your partners in range health management



SK Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport



saskatchewan.ca

Saskatchewan

In 2023 the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport employed targeted grazing at Condie Nature Refuge and White Butte Trails using sheep and goats to reduce invasive plants and flammable fuels near park infrastructure. Under specific environmental conditions, we reintroduce prescribed fire for many reasons, such as reducing the risk of wildfire and enhancing habitat for wildlife. In addition, we are a founding member of the Canadian Prairie Prescribed Fire Exchange. In October, we participated in the Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TRES) hosted by Meewasin Valley Authority in Saskatoon to burn with 20 other agencies, advancing our skills to apply the practice in parks more safely and effectively.



Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan

- SK PCAP and Partners developed a new 5-year Strategic Plan for 2024-29, stay tuned for finalized Plan in Spring 2024
- 10th Native Prairie Restoration/Reclamation Workshop in February 2024
- Our suite of Education and Awareness programs continue to do well, despite challenges with consistent funding

Society for Range Management – Prairie Parkland Chapter

This year Society for Range Management – Prairie Parkland Chapter hosted a 'Back to the Field' training event focused on tame pasture and forested health assessments near Tisdale, SK.

This upcoming year we are excited to start planning a tour with SK-PCAP for Native Prairie Appreciation Week in June 2024 and kick off planning for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in 2026.

Watch for opportunities to engage in the IYRP 2026 planning process in the new year!



Southern Alberta Group for Environment



Proposed major irrigation expansion projects in Alberta for the following areas:

- Snake Lake Reservoir just north of Antelope Creek Ranch
- Chin Reservoir
- Deadhorse Coulee Reservoir

Threat to Alberta's native grasslands, potential impacts to sturgeon on the Bow River.



sodcap

SOUTH OF THE DIVIDE
CONSERVATION ACTION PROGRAM INC.

SODCAP Inc is currently engaged with research (investigating the relationships between carbon and biodiversity through our Living Lab - Central Prairies) and producer partnerships (developing site-specific habitat management agreements with individual ranchers and patron groups to improve and restore native prairie).

Watch for a Living Lab - Central Prairies website and our YouTube channel for a series of short videos showcasing Nekaneet First Nation Elders and their relationship with the land, both soon to be released!

Thank you to our TGP Workshop Sponsors!



Canadian Forage & Grassland Association
Association Canadienne pour les Plantes Fourragères

