Vegetation Information System Saskatchewan Spreadsheet-based Data Loading Template Version 1.2
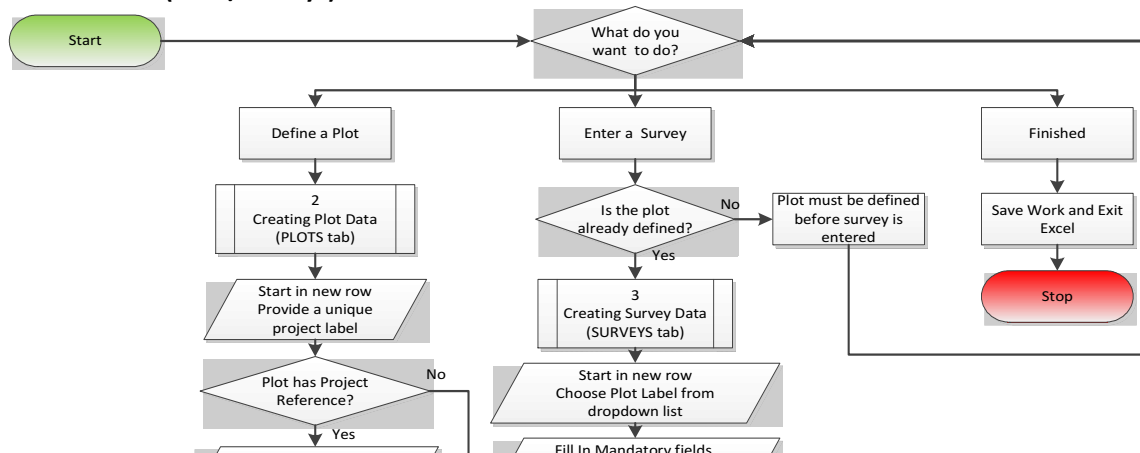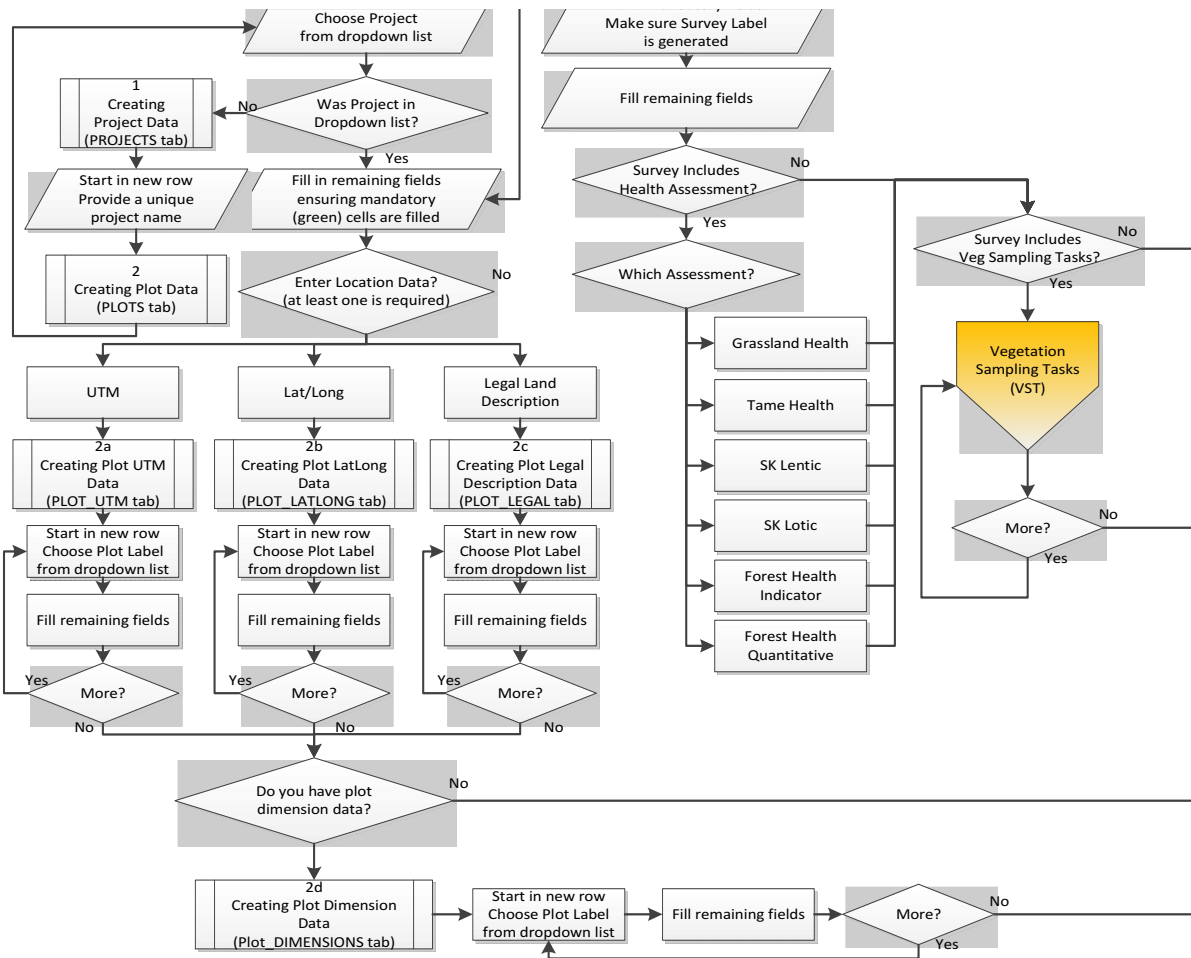
INSTRUCTIONS

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Reference

1 Template Use Flowchart

Due to the flexibility of the VegISS data model, collecting data outside the user inteface can seem rather complex. The following flow charts help walk the user through filling out this template.
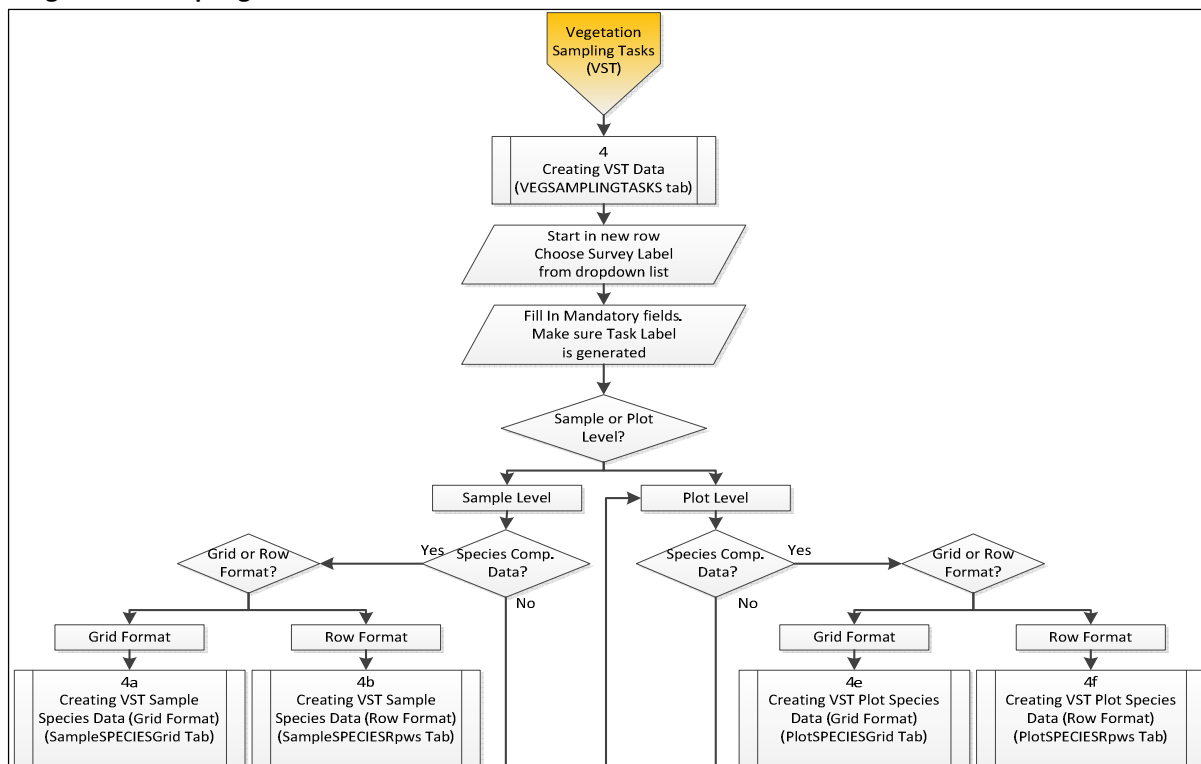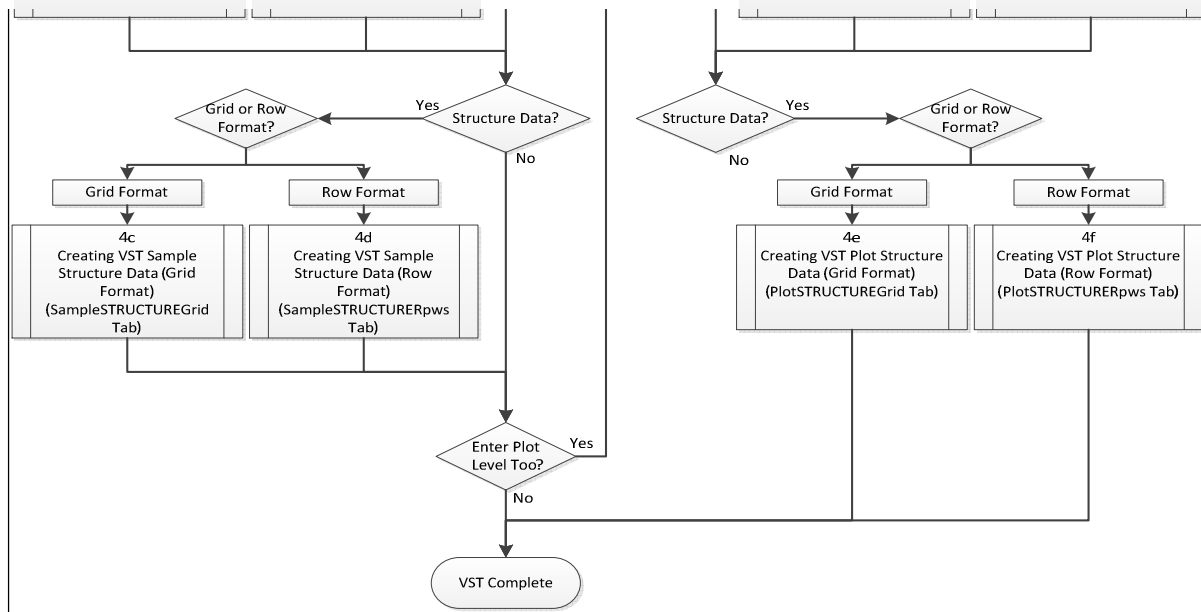
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1a General Overview (Plots/Surveys)

Choose Project from dropdown list

1
Creating Project Data (PROJECTS tab)

Was Project in Dropdown list? — No

Yes

Start in new row Provide a unique project name

Fill in remaining fields ensuring mandatory (green) cells are filled

2
Creating Plot Data (PLOTS tab)

Enter Location Data? (at least one is required) — No

UTM

Lat/Long

Legal Land Description

2a
Creating Plot UTM Data (PLOT_UTM tab)

2b
Creating Plot LatLong Data (PLOT_LATLONG tab)

2c
Creating Plot Legal Description Data (PLOT_LEGAL tab)

Start in new row Choose Plot Label from dropdown list

Start in new row Choose Plot Label from dropdown list

Start in new row Choose Plot Label from dropdown list

Fill remaining fields

Fill remaining fields

Fill remaining fields

More? — Yes / No

More? — Yes / No

More? — Yes / No

Make sure Survey Label is generated

Fill remaining fields

Survey Includes Health Assessment? — No

Yes

Which Assessment?

Grassland Health

Tame Health

SK Lentic

SK Lotic

Forest Health Indicator

Forest Health Quantitative

Survey Includes Veg Sampling Tasks? — No / Yes

Vegetation Sampling Tasks (VST)

More? — No / Yes

Do you have plot dimension data? — No

2d
Creating Plot Dimension Data (Plot_DIMENSIONS tab)

Start in new row Choose Plot Label from dropdown list

Fill remaining fields

More? — No / Yes

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1b Vegetation Sampling Tasks

Vegetation Sampling Tasks (VST)

4
Creating VST Data (VEGSAMPLINGTASKS tab)

Start in new row Choose Survey Label from dropdown list

Fill In Mandatory fields. Make sure Task Label is generated

Sample or Plot Level?

Sample Level

Plot Level

Grid or Row Format?

Species Comp. Data? — Yes / No

Species Comp. Data? — Yes / No

Grid or Row Format?

Grid Format

Row Format

Grid Format

Row Format

4a
Creating VST Sample Species Data (Grid Format) (SampleSPECIESGrid Tab)

4b
Creating VST Sample Species Data (Row Format) (SampleSPECIESRpws Tab)

4e
Creating VST Plot Species Data (Grid Format) (PlotSPECIESGrid Tab)

4f
Creating VST Plot Species Data (Row Format) (PlotSPECIESRpws Tab)

Grid or Row Format? Yes Structure Data?   Structure Data? Yes Grid or Row Format?

No

No

Grid Format   Row Format   Grid Format   Row Format

4c
Creating VST Sample Structure Data (Grid Format) (SampleSTRUCTUREGrid Tab)

4d
Creating VST Sample Structure Data (Row Format) (SampleSTRUCTURERpws Tab)

4e
Creating VST Plot Structure Data (Grid Format) (PlotSTRUCTUREGrid Tab)

4f
Creating VST Plot Structure Data (Row Format) (PlotSTRUCTURERpws Tab)

Enter Plot Level Too? Yes

No

VST Complete

2 Creating Projects

Projects are used to organize plots. Projects are defined using the PROJECTS tab. Projects are optional but users are strongly encouraged to group their plots into projects. Creating a project is like adding a code to a pick list so that duplicate project definitions are eliminated.

- Open the **PROJECTS** tab
- Find the first open row in the template and move to the **Project Name** field
- Enter a unique Project name. Optionally, you can provide a more descriptive definition of the Project name but only the Project name field will be used to generate the dropdown in the **PLOTS** tab.
- When a new record is added, an active flag will be set to "**T**". You do not need to make any other entries
- Repeat for as many projects as are required.

3 Creating Plots

Plots are the basic units for any data in VegISS. A plot can be a point, a circle, a rectangle, a transect or any other defined area for which one or more surveys/assessments will be performed. Plot definition includes basic descriptions of the site, ownership, location, landform, soil, and other important information.

- Open the **PLOTS** tab
- Find the first open row in the template and move the **Plot Label** field
- Enter a unique label name for the plot. This can be something as simple as P1, P2, etc. Please note that the name must be unique and cannot be repeated in the PLOTS tab. Validation will confirm this. Also, the length of the label is limited to 50 characters

- Optionally, select a **Project Name** with which to logically group plots. This is very useful when organizing data for use with VegISS. Select a project name from the dropdown list. If there are no projects in the dropdown, then you must create one first. Please see **Creating Projects** above. Once created, go back to the **PLOTS** tab and select the appropriate project to attach to the plot.

- Ensure that you provide the agency name with which the plots are associated. The template will automatically copy the agency in subsequent rows so you only need to provide the first row (in green). Agency is an important data organization attribute of the plot and must be defined.
- Fill in the remaining attributes that are applicable to your plot. Most of the fields have dropdown values from which to select. All fields will provide a basic tooltip describing what the field is for. Please make sure to fill out all fields that are tagged as mandatory. Mandatory fields are green in the templates.
- At the end of each row are a number of columns defined as Create By, Created On, etc. These are system attributes that are automatically generated. However, you must provide a name of the person loading the data into the template. This could be a short name, initials or other descriptive text (that does not exceed the maximum length listed in the column heading). Once the first value is entered, the value is automatically copied for all subsequent rows. If necessary, a different name can be defined and the built in formulas will copy from that point onward with the new name.
- To add UTM location data for the plot, please see **Creating Plot UTM Data** . Note, at least one entry for either UTM, LATLONG or Legal description must be provided for each plot.

- To add Latitude/Longitude-based location data for the plot, please see *Creating Plot LatLong Data* . Note, at least one entry for either UTM, LATLONG or Legal description must be provided for each plot.
- To add Legal Location data for the plot, please see *Creating Plot Legal Description Data* . If a plot is located within 1 or more legal locations (such as multiple sections) they each should be listed in a new row (*you cannot bundle multiple legal descriptions into a single entry*). Note, at least one entry for either UTM, LATLONG or Legal description must be provided for each plot.

- To define dimensional information for the plot, please see *Creating Plot Dimension Data* . This is optional
- Repeat for as many plots are required.

TIP: Work in one tab at a time rather than hopping from one tab to the other. Jumping from tab to tab between plots will slow down your data entry
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3a Creating Plot UTM Data

Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates can be attached to plots. One or more coordinate pairs (easting and northing) can be added to describe plot location.

- Make sure the plot for which the coordinates are to be entered has already been created in the *PLOTS* tab.
- Open the *PLOT_UTM* tab
- Find the first open row in the template and move the *Plot Label* field. Select a plot from the dropdown list. If the desired plot does not exist, check the *PLOTS* tab and confirm the plot label defined on that tab. If the plot does not yet exist, it must first be created (see *Creating Plots*). Selecting the Plot Label will link the entry in the *PLOT_UTM* tab with the information in the *PLOTS* tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.
- Define the coordinate *Location Type* from the dropdown. You can enter many coordinate pairs for a single plot or a single set of coordinates. Location Type describes the kind of coordinates being listed.
- Provide Datum, Zone, Easting and Northing values. All fields are required. Please note that coordinate values are in whole numbers in VegISS (no decimal places)
- Repeat for additional coordinates to describe the plot
- Repeat for as many plots are required
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3b Creating Plot LatLong Data

Geographic coordinates can be attached to plots. One or more coordinate pairs (longitude and latitude) can be added to describe plot location. Please note that longitude values are negative "-" numbers. You cannot enter degree-minute-second coordinates. They must be converted to decimal-degree format.

- Make sure the plot for which the coordinates are to be entered has already been created in the *PLOTS* tab.
- Open the *PLOT_LATLONG* tab
- Find the first open row in the template and move the *Plot Label* field. Select a plot from the dropdown list. If the desired plot does not exist, check the *PLOTS* tab and confirm the plot label defined on that tab. If the plot doesn't yet exist, it must first be created (see *Creating Plots*). Selecting the Plot Label will link the entry in the *PLOT_LATLONG* tab with the information in the *PLOTS* tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.
- Define the coordinate *Location Type* from the dropdown. You can enter many coordinate pairs for a single plot or a single set of coordinates. Location Type describes the kind of coordinates being listed.
- Provide Datum, Longitude (negative number) and Latitude values. All fields are required. Please note that coordinate values are in decimal degrees.
- Repeat for additional coordinates to describe the plot
- Repeat for as many plots are required
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3c Creating Plot Legal Description Data

Legal land descriptions can be attached to plots. One or more entries of LSD/Qsection/Section/Township/Range/Meridian can be added to describe plot location. If locations are generic, fields like LSD and Qsection can be omitted. If a plot covers multiple legal land descriptions, multiple entries can be used to describe it.

- Make sure the plot for which the legal land descriptions are to be entered has already been created in the *PLOTS* tab.
- Open the *PLOT_LEGAL* tab
- Find the first open row in the template and move the *Plot Label* field. Select a plot from the dropdown list. If the desired plot does not exist, check the *PLOTS* tab and confirm the plot label defined on that tab. If the plot doesn't yet exist, it must first be created (see *Creating Plots*). Selecting the Plot Label will link the entry in the *PLOT_LEGAL* tab with the information in the *PLOTS* tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.
- You can enter one or many descriptions for a single plot. You cannot include a range of sections/quarter sections unless they are listed, one per row in the tab for the plot.

- Legal Sub-division (LSD), Quarter Section (Qsection) and Section values are optional (but recommended). Range, Township and Meridian values are required fields.
- Repeat for additional legal descriptions needed to describe the plot
- Repeat for as many plots are required
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3d Creating Plot Dimension Data

A plot can also store dimensional measurements (eg. 100 x100m plot). The PLOT_DIMENSIONS tab collects plot dimensional information. Multiple dimension lengths (meters) can be defined for a single plot. Input of plot dimensions is **optional,** but useful if this data was collected.

- Make sure the plot for which the dimension are to be entered has already been created in the *PLOTS* tab.
- Open the *PLOT_DIMENSIONS* tab
- Find the first open row in the template and move the *Plot Label* field. Select a plot from the dropdown list. If the desired plot does not exist, check the *PLOTS* tab and confirm the plot label defined on that tab. If the plot doesn't yet exist, it must first be created (see *Creating Plots*). Selecting the Plot Label will link the entry in the *PLOT_DIMENSIONS* tab with the information in the *PLOTS* tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.
- Define the *Dimension Type* from the dropdown. You can enter many dimension values for a single plot or a single dimension value. *Dimension Type* provides context to the dimension value being entered.
- Provide the dimension distance in meters
- Repeat for additional dimension values used to describe the plot
- Repeat for as many plots as required
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4 Creating Survey Data

One ore more surveys can be associated with a plot; for example, if a particular plot was remeasured every five years, each remeasurement would constitute a survey. A single survey can only have one Health Assessment associated with it but can have multiple Vegetation Sampling Tasks (VSTs) associated with it.

- Make sure the plot for which the survey is being entered has already been created in the *PLOTS* tab.
- Open the *SURVEYS* tab
- Find the first open row in the template and move the *Plot Label* field. Select a plot from the dropdown list. If the desired plot does not exist, check the *PLOTS* tab and confirm the plot label defined on that tab. If the plot doesn't yet exist, it must first be created (see *Creating Plots*). Selecting the Plot Label will link the entry in the *SURVEYS* tab with the information in the *PLOTS* tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.
- Define the *Health Assessment Method* from the dropdown. This indicates the type of health assessement being defined. Please note that only one health assessment may be associated with a survey. Upon selection of a health assessment method, the Assessment Year will be displayed automatically. If no health assessments are part of the survey (only Vegetation Sampling Tasks) then set the Health Assessment Method to *NONE* (assessment year is blank when set to None).

- Provide the date that the survey was created. Only a calendar date is allowed (not just a year). If the actual date is not known, enter January 1st of the year it was surveyed.
- Once the plot label, assessment method and survey date are entered, a *Survey Label* will automatically be generated. This field is a concatenation of all the manadatory fields (separated by dashes) and acts like bread crumbs between tabs. While this field is automatically defined, you can enter your own custom label (e.g. S1, S2, etc.) into this cell. Just remember that when entering the vegetation survey tasks or health assessments, you will need to select the Survey Label to link the associated rows in the respective tabs.

- Fill out the remaining fields as required. Make sure that all mandatory fields (in green) are filled out.
- At the end of each row are a number of columns defined as Create By, Created On, etc. These are system attributes that are automatically generated. However, you must provide a name of the person loading the data into the template. This could be a short name, initials or other descriptive text (that does not exceed the maximum length listed in the column heading). Once the first value is entered, the value is automatically copied for all subsequent rows. If necessary, a different name can be defined and the built in formulas will copy from that point onward with the new name.
- To create *Vegetation Sampling Tasks* (VSTs), please refer to *Creating VST Data* .
- To create *Health Assessments* , please refer to *Creating Health Assessment Data* . Please note that only the Grassland Health Assessment is defined in this template at this time.
- Repeat for as many surveys as required
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5 Creating VST Data

A **Vegetation Sampling Task** (VST) is a sub-component of a **Survey** (e.g. one task might be quadrat sampling for percent biomass of herbs, another task might be line-intercept sampling for shrub cover). Tasks should be separated if different sampling methods were used, different numbers or sizes of quadrats were used, or different vegetation layers were targeted.

- Make sure the plot/survey has already been defined in the **PLOTS** /**SURVEYS** tabs respectively before creating the VST.
- Open the **VEGSAMPLINGTASKS** tab
- Find the first open row in the template and move the **Survey Label** field. Select a survey from the dropdown list. If the desired survey does not exist, check the **SURVEYS** tab and confirm the survey label defined on that tab (or the **PLOTS** tab if the plot has not yet been created). If the survey doesn't yet exist, it must first be created (see **Creating Survey Data**). Selecting the Survey Label will link the entry in the **VEGSAMPLINGTASKS** tab with the information in the **SURVEYS** tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.
- Define the applicable vegetation layers targeted by the task (e.g. tree layer, shrub layer, herbaceous layer, all layers).
- The next field is very important. Make sure to specify the **Data Level** for the VST. This indicates whether the task is **Sample-Level** or **Plot Level**. With **Sample-Level** VSTs, you will need to specify the number of samples. **Plot-Level** tasks collect data over the entire plot, while **Sample-Level** tasks collect data in a number of individual samples within the plot.

  Please note that you can provide both Sample-Level and Plot-Level data (e.g. summary values based on the sample data) for Sample-Level VSTs but you cannot provide Sample-Level data for Plot-Level VSTs .
- If the VST will be collecting species composition data as percentages, then make sure to define the **Percent Type** field. Percentage values for species composition can be everything from foliar cover to basal cover or even frequency. Select the appropriate code from the dropdown.
- Once the Survey Label, Data Level and Percent Type are entered, a **Task Label** will automatically be generated. This field is a concatenation of all the manadatory fields (separated by dashes) and acts like bread crumbs between tabs. While this field is automatically defined, you can enter your own custom label (e.g. T1, T2, etc.) into this cell. Just remember that when entering the VST details, you will need to select the Task Label to link the associated rows in the respective tabs.

- Fill out the remaining fields as required. Make sure that all mandatory fields (in green) are filled out.
- To add **Sample-Level Species Composition** data, please see **Creating VST Sample Species Data** .
- To add **Sample-Level Structure** data, please see **Creating VST Sample Structure Data** .
- To add **Plot-Level Species Composition** data, please see **Creating VST Plot Species Data** .
- To add **Plot-Level Structure** data, please see **Creating VST Plot Structure Data** .
- Repeat for as many VSTs as required
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5a Creating VST Sample Species Data (Grid Format)

Species composition data for a sample-level tasks are stored in what is called a normalized format. Each record stores one species and the abundance value(s) for that species, per sample per task. The tab **SampleSPECIESRows** is set up in this structure. When entering data in the field, this works well. However, for bulk entry of data, entering the species-name over and over when the only thing that needs to be entered is the percentage slows down data entry. The **SampleSPECIESGrid** tab is provided as a simpler way of entering species composition data. The user defines a species once and that opens a new column in which to enter percentage data.

Determine which format you wish to use for entering species composition data. If you only have species/percent values to enter, use the **SampleSPECIESGrid** *tab. If you are going to enter things like cover class, weight, density, or other information, use* **SampleSPECIESRows** *tab instead. These instructions are for the use of the* **Grid** *format.*

- Make sure the plot/survey/task has already been defined in the **PLOTS** /**SURVEYS/VEGSAMPLINGTASKS** tabs respectively before entering species data.
- Open the **SampleSPECIESGrid** tab.
- Find the first open row in the template and move to the **Task Label** field. Select a task from the dropdown list. If the desired task does not exist, check the **VEGSAMPLINGTASKS** tab and confirm that the task is defined on that tab (or the **SURVEYS** /**PLOTS** tabs if the prerequisite data has not yet been created). If the task doesn't yet exist, it must first be created (see **Creating VST Data**). Selecting the Task Label will link the entry in the **SampleSPECIESGrid** tab with the information in the **VEGSAMPLINGTASK** tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.

- Define the **Sample Number** . This number should not exceed the number of samples identified in the VST. Each row of this tab is for one sample for one VST.
- For reference, the **Percent Type** selected in the VEGSAMPLINGTASKS tab will be displayed.

- There are a series of Species columns with the entry fields grayed out. Near the top of each column are green boxes where a species can be defined. For each different species you encounter, access a new column and select the species acronym (i.e. species code) from the dropdown list. Note that only the listed acronyms can be entered (for reference these are listed in the CODES2 tab); if your data use synonyms, common names, or other types of species names, you must convert them to the standard VegISS acronyms before you start entering data. The common name will automatically display when you select a new species and the grayed boxes will turn green. 30 of these columns have been pre-created but you can make more by copying the format of an existing column to create new ones.

- Enter the corresponding percentage values corresponding the the appropriate species for the given sample.
- Fill out the remaining fields as required. Make sure that all mandatory fields (in green) are filled out.
- Repeat for as many samples/tasks as required
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5b Creating VST Sample Species Data (Row Format)

Species composition data for a sample-level tasks are stored in what is called a normalized format. Each record stores one species and the abundance value(s) for that species, per sample per task. The tab *SampleSPECIESRows* is set up in this structure. When entering data in the field, this works well. However, for bulk entry of data, entering the species-name over and over when the only thing that needs to be entered is the percentage slows down data entry. The *SampleSPECIESGrid* tab is provided as a simpler way of entering species composition data. The user defines a species once and that opens a new column in which to enter percentage data.

Determine which format you wish to use for entering species composition data. If you only have species/percent values to enter, use the **SampleSPECIESGrid** *tab. If you are going to enter things like cover class, weight, density, or other information, use* **SampleSPECIESRows** *tab instead. These instructions are for the use of the* **Row** *format.*

- Make sure the plot/survey/task has already been defined in the *PLOTS* /*SURVEYS/VEGSAMPLINGTASKS* tabs respectively before entering species data.
- Open the *SampleSPECIESRows* tab.
- Find the first open row in the template and move to the *Task Label* field. Select a task from the dropdown list. If the desired task does not exist, check the *VEGSAMPLINGTASKS* tab and confirm the task is defined on that tab (or the *SURVEYS* /*PLOTS* tabs if the prerequisite data has not yet been created). If the task doesn't yet exist, it must first be created (see *Creating VST Data*). Selecting the Task Label will link the entry in the *SampleSPECIESRows* tab with the information in the *VEGSAMPLINGTASK* tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.

- Define the *Sample Number* . This number should not exceed the number of samples identified in the VST. Each row of this tab is for one species per sample for one VST.
- For reference, the *Percent Type* selected in the VEGSAMPLINGTASKS tab will be displayed.
- Each row requires that the species be defined. Choose a *Species Acronym* from the dropdown list.
- Enter the corresponding percentage value for the species defined in the sample.
- Optionally fill out the other information in the row (Cover class, Biomass weight, etc.)
- Repeat for as many species/samples/tasks as required
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5c Creating VST Sample Structure Data (Grid Format)

Vegetation structure data for a sample-level tasks are stored in what is called a normalized format. Each record stores one vegetation layer and a % cover value for that layer, per sample per task. When entering this information in the field, this works well. However, for bulk entry of data, entering the layer names over and over when the only thing that needs to be entered is the percent cover slows down data entry. The SampleSTRUCTUREGrid tab is provided as a simpler way of entering vegetation structure data. The user defines a layer once and that opens a new column in which to enter percent cover data.

Determine which format you wish to use for entering sample structure data. If you only have layer/percent values to enter, use the **SampleSTRUCTUREGrid** *tab. If you are going to enter things like cover class, weight and other information use* **SampleSTRUCTURERows** *tab instead. These instructions are for the use of the* **Grid** *format.*

- Make sure the plot/survey/task has already been defined in the *PLOTS* /*SURVEYS/VEGSAMPLINGTASKS* tabs respectively before entering structure/layer data.
- Open the *SampleSTRUCTUREGrid* tab.
- Find the first open row in the template and move to the *Task Label* field. Select a task from the dropdown list. If the desired task does not exist, check the *VEGSAMPLINGTASKS* tab and confirm the task is defined on that tab (or the *SURVEYS* /*PLOTS* tabs if the prerequisite data has not yet been created). If the task doesn't yet exist, it must first be created (see *Creating VST Data*). Selecting the Task Label will link the entry in the *SampleSTRUCTUREGrid* tab with the information in the *VEGSAMPLINGTASK* tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.

- Define the *Sample Number* . This number should not exceed the number of samples identified in the VST. Each row of this tab is for one sample for one VST.
- There are a series of Layer columns with the entry fields grayed out. Near the top of each column are green boxes where a vegetation layer can be defined. For each different layer you encounter, access a new column and select the *Layer* from the dropdown list. The descriptive name will automatically display when you select a new layer and the grayed boxes will turn green. 30 of these columns have been pre-created but you can make more by copying the format of an existing column to create new ones.

- Enter the % cover value corresponding to the layer for the given sample.
- Fill out the remaining fields as required.
- Repeat for as many samples/tasks as required
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5d Creating VST Sample Structure Data (Row Format)

Vegetation structure data for a sample-level tasks are stored in what is called a normalized format. Each record stores one vegetation layer and a % cover value for that layer, per sample per task. When entering this information in the field, this works well. However, for bulk entry of data, entering the layer names over and over when the only thing that needs to be entered is the percent cover slows down data entry. The SampleSTRUCTUREGrid tab is provided as a simpler way of entering vegetation structure data. The user defines a layer once and that opens a new column in which to enter percent cover data.

Determine which format you wish to use for entering sample structure data. If you only have layer/percent values to enter, use the **SampleSTRUCTUREGrid** *tab. If you are going to enter things like cover class, weight and other information use* ***SampleSTRUCTURERows*** *tab instead. These instructions are for the use of the* ***Row*** *format.*

- Make sure the plot/survey/task has already been defined in the *PLOTS* /*SURVEYS/VEGSAMPLINGTASKS* tabs respectively before entering structure/layer data.
- Open the *SampleSTRUCTURERows* tab.
- Find the first open row in the template and move to the *Task Label* field. Select a task from the dropdown list. If the desired task does not exist, check the *VEGSAMPLINGTASKS* tab and confirm the task is defined on that tab (or the *SURVEYS* /*PLOTS* tabs if the prerequisite data has not yet been created). If the task doesn't yet exist, it must first be created (see *Creating VST Data*). Selecting the Task Label will link the entry in the *SampleSTRUCTURERows* tab with the information in the *VEGSAMPLINGTASK* tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.

- Define the *Sample Number* . This number should not exceed the number of samples identified in the VST. Each row of this tab is for one species per sample for one VST.
- Each row requires that the layer be defined. Choose a *Layer* from the dropdown list.
- Enter the % cover value corresponding to the layer for the given sample.
- Optionally fill out the other information in the row (cover class, weight, etc.)
- Repeat for as many layers/samples/tasks as required
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5e Creating VST Plot Species Data (Grid Format)

Species composition data for a plot-level tasks are stored in what is called a normalized format. Each record stores one species and abundance value(s) for that species, per plot per task. The tab *PlotSPECIESRows* is set up in this structure. When entering data in the field, this works well. However, for bulk entry of data, entering the species over and over when the only thing that needs to be entered is the percentage slows down data entry. The *PlotSPECIESGrid* tab is provided as a simpler way of entering species composition data. The user defines a species once and that opens a new column in which to enter percentage data.

Determine which format you wish to use for entering species composition data. If you only have species/percent values to enter, use the **PlotSPECIESGrid** *tab. If you are going to enter things like cover class, weight and other information, use* **PlotSPECIESRows** *tab instead. These instructions are for the use of the* ***Grid*** *format.*

- Make sure the plot/survey/task has already been defined in the *PLOTS* /*SURVEYS/VEGSAMPLINGTASKS* tabs respectively before entering species data.
- Open the *PlotSPECIESGrid* tab.
- Find the first open row in the template and move to the *Task Label* field. Select a task from the dropdown list. If the desired task does not exist, check the *VEGSAMPLINGTASKS* tab and confirm the task is defined on that tab (or the *SURVEYS* /*PLOTS* tabs if the prerequisite data has not yet been created). If the task doesn't yet exist, it must first be created (see *Creating VST Data*). Selecting the Task Label will link the entry in the *PlotSPECIESGrid* tab with the information in the *VEGSAMPLINGTASK* tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.

- For reference, the *Sample Type* selected in the VEGSAMPLINGTASKS tab will be displayed.

- There are a series of Species columns with the entry fields grayed out. Near the top of each column are green boxes where a species can be defined. For each different species you encounter, access a new column and select the species acronym (i.e. species code) from the dropdown list. Note that only the listed acronyms can be entered (for reference these are listed in the CODES2 tab); if your data use synonyms, common names, or other types of species names, you must convert them to the standard VegISS acronyms before you start entering data. The common name will automatically display when you select a new species and the grayed boxes will turn green. 30 of these columns have been pre-created but you can make more by copying the format of an existing column to create new ones.

- Enter the percentage value for the species.
- Fill out the remaining fields as required. Make sure that all mandatory fields (in green) are filled out.
- Repeat for as many tasks as required
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5f Creating VST Plot Species Data (Row Format)

Species composition data for a plot-level tasks are stored in what is called a normalized format. Each record stores one species and abundance value(s) for that species, per plot per task. The tab *PlotSPECIESRows* is set up in this structure. When entering data in the field, this works well. However, for bulk entry of data, entering the species over and over when the only thing that needs to be entered is the percentage slows down data entry. The *PlotSPECIESGrid* tab is provided as a simpler way of entering species composition data. The user defines a species once and that opens a new column in which to enter percentage data.

Determine which format you wish to use for entering species composition data. If you only have species/percent values to enter, use the **PlotSPECIESGrid** *tab. If you are going to enter things like cover class, weight and other information, use* **PlotSPECIESRows** *tab instead. These instructions are for the use of the* **Row** *format.*

- Make sure the plot/survey/task has already been defined in the *PLOTS* /*SURVEYS/VEGSAMPLINGTASKS* tabs respectively before entering species data.
- Open the *PlotSPECIESRows* tab.
- Find the first open row in the template and move to the *Task Label* field. Select a task from the dropdown list. If the desired task does not exist, check the *VEGSAMPLINGTASKS* tab and confirm the task is defined on that tab (or the *SURVEYS* /*PLOTS* tabs if the prerequisite data has not yet been created). If the task doesn't yet exist, it must first be created (see *Creating VST Data*). Selecting the Task Label will link the entry in the *PlotSPECIESRows* tab with the information in the *VEGSAMPLINGTASK* tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.

- For reference, the *Sample Type* selected in the VEGSAMPLINGTASKS tab will be displayed.
- Each row requires that the species be defined. Choose a *Species Acronym* from the dropdown list.
- Enter the percentage value for the species.
- Optionally fill out the other information in the row (Cover class, Biomass weight, etc.)
- Repeat for as many species/tasks as required
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5g Creating VST Plot Structure Data (Grid Format)

Vegetation structure data for a plot-level task are stored in what is called a normalized format. Each record stores one vegetation layer and the % cover of that layer, per task. When entering data in the field, this works well. However, for bulk entry of data, entering the layer names over and over when the only thing that needs to be entered is the percent cover slows down data entry. The *PlotSTRUCTUREGrid* tab is provided as a simpler way of entering vegetation layer (structure) data. The user defines a layer once and that opens a new column in which to enter percent cover data.

Determine which format you wish to use for entering sample structure data. If you only have layer/percent values to enter, use the **PlotSTRUCTUREGrid** *tab. If you are going to enter things like cover class, weight and other information, use* **PlotSTRUCTURERows** *tab instead. These instructions are for the use of the* **Grid** *format.*

- Make sure the plot/survey/task has already been defined in the *PLOTS* /*SURVEYS/VEGSAMPLINGTASKS* tabs respectively before entering structure/layer data.
- Open the *PlotSTRUCTUREGrid* tab.
- Find the first open row in the template and move to the *Task Label* field. Select a task from the dropdown list. If the desired task does not exist, check the *VEGSAMPLINGTASKS* tab and confirm that the task is defined on that tab (or the *SURVEYS* /*PLOTS* tabs if the prerequisite data has not yet been created). If the task doesn't yet exist, it must first be created (see *Creating VST Data*). Selecting the Task Label will link the entry in the *PlotSTRUCTUREGrid* tab with the information in the *VEGSAMPLINGTASK* tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.

- There are a series of Layer columns with the entry fields grayed out. Near the top of each column are green boxes where a vegetation layer can be defined. For each different layer you encounter, access a new column and define the layer. The descriptive name will automatically display when you select a new layer and the grayed boxes will turn green. 30 of these columns have been pre-created but you can make more by copying the format of an existing column to create new ones.

- Enter the percent cover value for the layer.
- Fill out the remaining fields as required.
- Repeat for as many tasks as required
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5h Creating VST Plot Structure Data (Row Format)

Vegetation structure data for a plot-level task are stored in what is called a normalized format. Each record stores one vegetation layer and the % cover of that layer, per task. When entering data in the field, this works well. However, for bulk entry of data, entering the layer names over and over when the only thing that needs to be entered is the percent cover slows down data entry. The *PlotSTRUCTUREGrid* tab is provided as a simpler way of entering vegetation layer (structure) data. The user defines a layer once and that opens a new column in which to enter percent cover data.

Determine which format you wish to use for entering sample structure data. If you only have layer/percent values to enter, use the **PlotSTRUCTUREGrid** *tab. If you are going to enter things like cover class, weight and other information, use* **PlotSTRUCTURERows** *tab instead. These instructions are for the use of the* **Row** *format.*

- Make sure the plot/survey/task has already been defined in the *PLOTS* /*SURVEYS/VEGSAMPLINGTASKS* tabs respectively before entering structure/layer data.
- Open the *PlotSTRUCTURERows* tab.
- Find the first open row in the template and move to the *Task Label* field. Select a task from the dropdown list. If the desired task does not exist, check the *VEGSAMPLINGTASKS* tab and confirm the task is defined on that tab (or the *SURVEYS* /*PLOTS* tabs if the prerequisite data has not yet been created). If the task doesn't yet exist, it must first be created (see *Creating VST Data*). Selecting the Task Label will link the entry in the *PlotSTRUCTURERows* tab with the information in the *VEGSAMPLINGTASK* tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.

- Each row requires that the layer be defined. Choose a *Layer* from the dropdown list.
- Enter the percent cover value for the layer.
- Optionally fill out the other information in the row (Cover class, weight, etc.)
- Repeat for as many layers/tasks as required
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6 Creating Grassland Health Data

The Grassland Health Assessment survey form is based on the Saskatchewan "Field Worksheet: Grassland Range Health Assessment". It consists of a questionnaire that includes 5 main questions (two questions have 2 parts) along with other descriptive data.

- Open the *GrasslandHealth* tab.
- Find the first open row in the template and move the *Survey Label* field. Select a survey from the dropdown list. If the desired survey does not exist, check the *SURVEYS* tab and confirm that the survey label defined on that tab (or the *PLOTS* tab if the plot has not yet been created). If the survey doesn't yet exist, it must first be created (see *Creating Survey Data*). Selecting the Survey Label will link the entry in the *GrasslandHealth* tab with the information in the *SURVEYS* tab. Additional ID codes will also be automatically generated for each new entry.
- Fill in the question responses. All questions need to be answered
- Repeat for as many surveys as required
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