

The Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan Partnership

**Annual Report
2014-15**



Front cover photo by Tara Mulhern Davidson

Introduction

The Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan (SK PCAP) Partnership brings together agencies and organizations representing producers, industry, provincial and federal governments, non-government organizations and research and educational institutions. Together, the Partners establish a five year Framework for collective action which provides the context for annual work planning.

The 2014-2018 Framework is built on the Partnership's Vision and three Goals:

Our Vision: Healthy native prairie ecosystems as vital parts of our vibrant and strong communities.

Our Ecosystem Goal: Native prairie ecosystem health and biodiversity are conserved and restored as part of a functioning landscape.

Our Economic Goal: Sustainable uses of native prairie improve the livelihoods of Saskatchewan people.

Our Cultural Goal: Native prairie is a valued part of our culture and identity as Saskatchewan people.

In the 2014-2018 Framework*, the Partnership identified three strategic focus areas to prioritize actions. These are:

1. **Native Prairie Education and Awareness**
2. **Responsible Land Use on Native Prairie**
3. **Native Prairie Ecosystem Management**

Executive Summary

The Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan (SK PCAP) celebrated its 16th year in 2014-15 and also achieved another milestone with the development of the *2014-2018 Framework for Action*. SK PCAP's goals and vision are enduring in an ever-changing landscape as diverse partners and stakeholders continue to come together to support prairie and species at risk conservation efforts in Saskatchewan.

SK PCAP continues to have a broad audience and network with which to share information, methodologies, new and applied research, and strategies. SK PCAP endeavours to provide audience-specific information through a variety of forums which includes: public displays, workshops and speaker series; online and social media outlets, such as our website (www.pcap-sk.org), Twitter and Facebook; articles in print media and monthly e-newsletters; as well as education programs for students of all ages.

SK PCAP receives an overwhelming amount of positive feedback throughout the year. The following are some recent examples:

"It's always interesting to receive and read the Prairie Conservation Action Plan newsletters. Keep up the good work. Congratulations on an effective and professional organization and newsletter. Today I will give readings from the most recent newsletter to the 35 students in ENVS4000 "Current Events in Environmental Science."

- Dan Johnson, PhD, Professor of Environmental Science, Dept of Geography, University of Lethbridge

"Great overall event and well attended by diverse individuals working in the native prairie world."

- 2015 NPRRW participant

"I have a better understanding of the ranking system following this Speaker Series presentation."

- 2014 Speaker Series audience member

This report indicates the activities undertaken by SK PCAP in the 2014-15 implementation timeframe. Where applicable, these activities are reported to align within the newly developed 2014-2018 Framework and work towards our Vision, Goals, and Objectives as they are relevant to each of the three focus areas identified. Note that a formal 2014-15 Workplan was not developed as the year was considered a 'Renewal Year' and bridged the gap between the previous 2009-2013 Framework and the newly developed 2014-2018 Framework.

* Please refer to the SK PCAP website at www.pcap-sk.org under *Action Plans* for a copy of the *Framework*.

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1. Native Prairie Education & Awareness

Objective 2014-2018

Increase awareness of the importance of native prairie and species at risk, targeting students, industry and provincial and municipal policy makers.

Strategy

Gather and share balanced, science-based information at native prairie and species at risk conservation. Share this information broadly with the public, and specifically, within the Partnership, our networks and with target policy makers.

Measuring success

- Produced and distributed **twelve** electronic newsletters to the SK PCAP distribution list, sending a total of 7,064 e-newsletters.
- Prepared and distributed **three** news releases
 1. Native Prairie Appreciation Week Youth Colouring Contest (released May 1, 2014)
 2. 2014-2018 SK PCAP Renewal Ceremony (released June 13, 2014)
 3. Native Prairie Restoration and Reclamation Workshop (distributed January 23, 2015).
 4. SK PCAP also collaborated on a province-wide official news release with Saskatchewan's Ministries of Agriculture and Environment highlighting the joint proclamation of the 16th Native Prairie Appreciation Week (released June 14, 2014).

- Curated web content on our website www.pcap-sk.org
 1. The total log of site visits was disrupted due to site maintenance by our site provider. Unfortunately data was not collected from June 1-September 22, 2014, however data was recorded from April 1, 2014-March 31, 2015 outside of that period:
 - 12,587 page views, representing 57.6% new visitors and 42.4% returning visitors, from 69 different countries. Even though data wasn't recorded for almost 4 months, this still represents an increase in site view from 2013-14, which saw 7,979 total site views.
 - A website was also established and is administrated by SK PCAP for the 2016 Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference (PCESC) at www.pcesc.ca
 - 180 page views, representing 89% new visitors and 11% returning visitors, from 10 different countries.
- Increased interaction on social media
 1. Hosted five weeks of targeted Species at Risk social media campaigns tagged as #SARSweetTweets including Burrowing Owls(July 21-25, 2014); Greater Sage-Grouse (Oct 27-31, 2014); Piping Plovers (Nov 17-21); Sprague's Pipits (Jan 12-16, 2015); and general species-at-risk information (Feb 8-14, 2015).
 2. The SK PCAP Facebook page had a total reach of 58,788 views in 2014/15, and a total of 327 'likes,' an increase from 177 the previous year. SK PCAP also created a PCESC 2016 Facebook page in January of 2015, which has 58 'likes' and a reach of 1710 views to date.
 3. SK PCAP's Twitter account grew from 250 followers in 2013-14 to 587 current followers who have contributed to 173,500 total impressions. Some notable Twitter interactions include tweets by RealAgriculture.com, two tweets by Environment Canada (currently with 164,500 followers, and collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture to develop tweets to share during NPAW. SK PCAP also created a @PCESC2016 account in early January, which currently has 88 followers.

4. SK PCAP posted 7 new videos in 2014-15, including six from the Speaker Series, as well as archived an additional 12 videos from previous years on its YouTube channel. SK PCAP has a total of 702 views to date on its YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/SKPCAP).
- Provided displays at **five** urban and **three** relevant producer venues across Saskatchewan:
 1. SK PCAP hosted displays at **three** landowner and producer locations in 2014-15, including the Canadian Cattlemen's Town Hall (100 attendees); the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Annual General Meeting (165 attendees for two days); the Foraging Into the Future conference (170 attendees for two days); impacting an estimated total of 770 producers over five days.
 2. SK PCAP hosted displays at **five** urban venues in 2014-15, including during **NPAW** at the Regina Farmer's Market (estimated 2000 attendees); Saskatoon Farmer's Market (estimated 2000 attendees); the Regina National Aboriginal Day Celebration (estimated 2000 attendees). SK PCAP also hosted booths at other urban venues including Swift Current Market Square (750 estimated attendees); the Heritage Forum (65 attendees over two days); impacting an estimated total of 6880 members of the urban public over six days.
 - Provided ten Prairie Speaker Series presentations through public forums as well as two webinars across the province for a total of **twelve** Prairie Speaker Series presentations.
 1. Impacted a total of **1201 people** through in-person and webinar attendance.
 - The Speaker Series presentations generated a total of **four** media communications including one news article in the *Gull Lake Advance* (circ. 4500); one news article in the *Prairie Post* (circ. 18,978); one radio interview on Goldenwest Radio (estimated reach of 20,000 listeners); one blog post on Grass Notes (an estimated reach of 1,500).
 - At least one SK PCAP Partner (Ministry of Agriculture – Swift Current regional office) shared information about the Speaker Series in a producer newsletter to **610** subscribers

- Provided **seven** articles in *Beef Business* magazine
 1. Topics included Native Prairie Appreciation Week, framework renewal, invasive species and grassland biodiversity, university student case study project, Native Prairie Restoration and Reclamation Workshop, wildlife-friendly fencing, greater sage-grouse recovery in Canada from a landowner perspective.

- Organized annual Native Prairie Appreciation Week events, including **one** tour and workshop.
 1. NPAW workshop and tour was held in Val Marie, SK in conjunction with the Society for Range Management – Prairie Parkland Chapter with approximately 73 adults in attendance. A youth tour was also initiated which garnered 13 children.
 - The NPAW Tour and workshop generated a total of **seven print media** communication pieces including three articles in the *Gull Lake Advance* (circ. 4500); one article in the Ministry of Agriculture's *Agriview* publication (circ. 40,000 producers); one article and photo in the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* (circ. 5800); one editorial in the *Carlyle Observer* (circ. 3599); and one news article in the *Western Producer* (circ. 45,545).
 - NPAW generated a total of **two radio interviews**, including one with Goldenwest Radio (estimated reach of 20,000 listeners) and one with Weyburn radio station. NPAW also generated **one** guest-blog post on NCC's Land Lines blog, which received a total of 6845 views.
 - Information about NPAW activities was shared by a minimum of **six** partners, including the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, the Saskatchewan Forage Council, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Environment and SaskOutdoors. Information was shared through e-newsletters and upcoming event notices to a minimum of 11,640 in-boxes.
 2. SK PCAP hosted a 2014-2018 PCAP Framework Renewal Ceremony and reception for partners and past staff and chairs, with 45 people in attendance.
 - The Framework Renewal Ceremony garnered media attention including **one** radio broadcast with 620CKRM Jim Smalley (estimated reach of 93,268) and **one**

- television broadcast on CTV 6pm and 11:30pm evening news (estimated reach of 40,000).
 - Partners and organizations also shared information through their media outlets, including Nature Saskatchewan, who published one article in their summer newsletter (circ. 1400) and another article in their fall newsletter (circ. 1400). Environment Canada also published an article on the Framework Renewal event in their internal employee newsletter (circ. 6000).
- 3. SK PCAP held a Youth Poster contest for children ages 5-16, which received **524 entries**. Three winners were chosen for each category and announced at the 16th NPAW workshop.
- SK PCAP was invited to present at Prairie Wind and Silver Sage's speaker series, and shared a presentation on the 2014-2018 Framework to an audience of **17**.
- SK PCAP received general media attention, and was mentioned in **five** additional articles, including two articles in the Gull Lake Advance featuring current PCAP Chair Orin Balas and other prairie advocates (for a total reach of 9000); two additional articles in Nature Views (for a total reach of 3600); and one article featuring past PCAP Chair in the Western Producer (circ. 40, 545).

Strategy

Continue to provide Saskatchewan students with information about native prairie and species at risk conservation.

Measuring success

An education coordinator, Barry Putz, was hired in October, 2014, to promote and deliver SK PCAP education programming as well as assess the current programs to ensure they are meeting curriculum needs.

A mail-out with information on the program was delivered to **201** schools across Saskatchewan in early January to promote SK PCAP's education programs.

- Delivered and planned *Adopt a Rancher* Grade 10 curriculum-supported program
 1. In 2014-15, *Adopt a Rancher* was delivered to one school reaching **eleven** students and **six** adults.
 2. Global TV's *Focus Saskatchewan* program prepared a seven minute piece on the *Adopt a Rancher* program. The program aired a total of **seven** times on Global TV, six times on Focus

Saskatchewan, and once on the News Hour Final, to an estimated audience of 319,000.

3. Upon reviewing the programming, our Education Coordinator identified a need to add a climate change activity to the program to ensure it complies with SaskLearning standards. Barry also identified a potential deficiency in the program as there is no grading/marking rubric included in the material. He developed one and has added it to the program, as well as developed pre- and post-educational surveys for students participating in the program to gauge knowledge uptake.
4. The *Adopt a Rancher* program currently has **nine** classes from **eight** schools signed up for May/June delivery. *Adopt a Rancher* is scheduled to reach an estimated 189 students, eight teachers, and five ranchers.

➤ Delivered *Taking Action for Prairie* programming

1. *Taking Action for Prairie* was delivered to **thirteen** different classes, in **nine** schools, impacting **eleven** teachers and a total of **538 students**.

➤ Provided Canadian Western Agribition with Agri-Ed programming at the Family Ag Pavilion with **four** days of class-specific and **one** interactive booth display.

1. Provided class-specific *Pitch it for Pipits and Plovers* programming to **32 classes from 24 schools, impacting 760 kids and 160 adults**.
2. Provided an interactive booth display, featuring traffic estimated at **5751 registered students**, impacting an additional estimated **2500 members of the public**.

➤ Participated in **two** external prairie and species at risk conservation education opportunities

1. SK PCAP participated in Saskatoon's Ag in the City event in April, 2014, sharing information about native prairie and SK PCAP education programs to an audience estimated at 11,500 participants.
2. SK PCAP participated in the Regina Teachers' Conference on March 6, 2015, showcasing native prairie and species at risk conservation and promoting SK PCAP educational opportunities to an audience of over 1,000 attendees.

Strategy

Maintain positive relationships that are inclusive of all Saskatchewan native prairie and species at risk partners, stakeholders, and users.

Measuring success

- SK PCAP hosted **three** regular PCAP Steering Committee meetings.
- SK PCAP hosted **three** PCAP Executive Committee meetings.
- SK PCAP updated its *Terms of Reference* to be more reflective of the current partnership and management.
- SK PCAP participated in **four** native prairie stakeholder meetings, including the South of the Divide Conservation Action Plan inaugural meeting, the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Annual General Meeting, the Foraging into the Future meeting, and the Heritage Forum annual general meeting.

2. Responsible Land Use on Native Prairie

Objective 2014-2018

Guide native prairie land users with balanced, evidence-based information about ecological footprints and best practises to sustain healthy native prairie and species at risk populations while mitigating human impact.

Strategy

Identify and understand the current types of development and land-uses of native prairie in Saskatchewan, and associated monitoring, management and risk of these developments.

Measuring success

- Prepared a 52-page report titled **Catalyzing North American Grasslands Conservation and Sustainable Use Through Partnerships: A Compilation of Statistics on the Canadian Cattle Ranching Industry, Beef Cattle Trade and Grasslands**. The report was prepared for the Commission for Environmental Cooperation. The final draft has been accepted by CEC and will be released to the public pending CEC's internal communications approval.

Strategy

Engage and interact with key policy makers, stakeholders and the public about the value of native prairie in Saskatchewan.

Measuring success

- Hosted the *2015 Native Prairie Restoration and Reclamation Workshop (NPRRW): Building Blocks of Restoration* including information available for all stakeholders related to native prairie restoration and conservation. (More information on the NPRRW can be found in a later deliverable).
- Hosted a formal 2014-2018 Framework Reception, inviting partner representatives and dignitaries, including Assistant Deputy Minister Karen Aulie with the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as Deputy Minister Cam Swan with the Ministry of Environment.

- Provided participants with **seven** formal opportunities to share feedback through an evaluation of PCAP informational events, including NPAW, NPRRW, and the speaker series.
- Initiated planning the **Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference**, ensuring planning committee is comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders representing multiple interests.

Strategy

Communicate best management practises, planning processes, policies and regulatory requirements for sustainable and responsible land uses of native prairie in Saskatchewan.

Measuring success

- Hosted the 2015 NPRRW event in Saskatoon, SK on January 28 & 29 2015. The workshop included panel discussions, break-out sessions, poster presentations and trade show opportunities. More details can be found in the final report: http://www.pcap-sk.org/rsu_docs/documents/2015-nprrw-final-report---public1201.pdf
 1. **239 participants** from 2 countries, representing a variety of different sectors registered.
 2. The 2015 NPRRW generated a total of **three radio interviews**, including one on Goldenwest Radio (estimated reach of 20,000 listeners); CFR 90.5 Saskatoon Community Radio (estimated reach of 15,000 listeners); and CJWW Saskatoon Radio (estimated reach of 30,000 listeners).
 3. The 2015 NPRRW generated a total of **three print** media articles, including one article in the *Gull Lake Advance* (circ. 4500); one news article in the *Western Producer* (circ. 40,545); and one article in the *Southwest Booster* (circ. 7114).
 4. The 2015 NPRRW generated a total of **two online** media posts, including a blog post featured on www.prairieecologist.com (2000 subscribers), and one on the Lakeland College Student Website (estimated audience of 1000).
 5. **Four** partners and affiliates shared information about the event through their media outlets, including the Society for Ecological Restoration and the Alberta Society of Professional Biologists, who published information in each of their newsletters (with an estimated collective impact on 600 individuals); as well as the Saskatchewan Eco-Network e-newsletters (two newsletters shared for an estimated total impact on 300 individuals) as well as the Ministry of Agriculture Stay Connected weekly e-newsletters (distributed to an estimated 7850 producers).

- Hosted a Prairie Speaker Series on March 5, 2015 to an audience of 15 people, sharing information on Rangeland Beneficial Management Practises from a land-owner perspective.
- Six presentations and sessions shared at the 2015 NPPRW explored best management practises related to prairie restoration and reclamation.

Strategy

Support Ecosystem Goods and Services (EGS) research and knowledge transfer of values and benefits derived from native prairie in Saskatchewan and other jurisdictions.

Measuring success

- Shared an article in the December monthly SK PCAP e-newsletter titled the Value of Wetlands: a Natural Partnership, shared by Ducks Unlimited Canada, a SK PCAP Partner.

3. Native Prairie Ecosystem Management

Objective 2014-2018

Promote the importance of land management knowledge and adoption of practices that have a positive impact on biodiversity, species at risk, and prairie ecosystem health.

Strategies

Increase knowledge among native prairie land managers regarding the function of grazing management and the relationship between healthy prairie ecosystems and economic returns.

Promote access to balanced, evidence-based information and decision-making tools for native prairie land owners and managers through regular communication channels including newsletters and the website.

Measuring success

- Hosted **eight** speaker series highlighting conservation of prairie species (including species at risk and rare species) in a variety of land-use settings, including rangeland and industrial activity.
- Hosted a Prairie Speaker Series on March 5, 2015, sharing information on Rangeland Beneficial Management Practises from a land-owner perspective.
- Participated in and engaged with prairie land managers at **three** producer or land-user events, including the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Annual General Meeting, the South of the Divide Conservation Action Plan inaugural meeting as well as the Foraging into the Future biennial workshop and meeting.
- Shared **five** articles in the *Beef Business* magazine, designed to share information and awareness about prairie and species at risk conservation as it relates to producers.
- Shared at least **three** articles related to ranchers and rare species, including rare plants and species at risk in SK PCAP's monthly e-newsletter.

Strategy

Among stakeholders, increase knowledge and use of current and proposed data collection and monitoring methods and facilitate entry of data into applicable databases (range health, invasive species occurrences, species at risk occurrences).

Measuring success

- Through the 2015 NPPRW, participants were afforded the opportunity to learn about many new initiatives, funding opportunities, databases, programs and concepts through the speakers, break-out sessions, poster and trade show presentations.
- SK PCAP facilitated a Steering Committee discussion on September 24 and 25, 2014, whereby partners shared information related to their own species at risk conservation programs, monitoring, activities and initiatives, increasing comprehension of overall SK PCAP partnership efforts towards species at risk conservation.

Strategy

Identify best practices to sustain resilient native prairie ecosystems that are able to support multiple species at risk, minimize threats of invasive species, maintain biodiversity, and withstand extreme weather events (such as droughts or floods).

- This strategy will continue to be reviewed in the future.

Appendix 1: 2014-15 SK PCAP PARTNERSHIP

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada – Science and Technology Branch
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
Ducks Unlimited Canada
Environment Canada – Canadian Wildlife Service
Ministry of Agriculture (SK)
Ministry of Environment (SK)
Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport (SK) – Royal Saskatchewan Museum
Ministry of the Economy (SK)
Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan Inc.
Nature Conservancy of Canada
Nature Saskatchewan
Parks Canada – Grasslands National Park
Prairie Learning Centre
Prairie Wind & Silver Sage – Friends of the Grasslands
Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve Association Inc.
Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities
Saskatchewan Burrowing Owl Interpretative Centre
Saskatchewan Environmental Society
Saskatchewan Forage Council
Saskatchewan Research Council
Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association
Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation
SaskOutdoors
SaskPower
Society for Range Management – Prairie Parkland Chapter
University of Regina – Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative
University of Saskatchewan – College of Agriculture and Bioresources
Wanuskewin Heritage Park
Water Security Agency
Western Development Museum

Appendix 2: 2014-15 Financial & In-Kind Support

SK PCAP gratefully acknowledges financial support in 2014-2015 from:

CN, Cenovus Energy, Crescent Point Energy, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Horned Cattle Purchases Fund, Husky Energy, Information Services Corporation, Nature Saskatchewan, North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action - Commission for Environmental Cooperation, Parks Canada - Grasslands National Park of Canada, Saskatchewan Beef Industry Development Fund, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture – Ag Awareness Initiative, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment - Fish and Wildlife Development Fund, SaskEnergy, SaskPower, SaskTel, SaskWater, The Mosaic Company, TransCanada Corporation, University of Saskatchewan - College of Agriculture and Bioresources, Water Security Agency of Saskatchewan, Westmoreland Coal Company - Poplar River Mine & Estevan Mine. This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada through the federal Department of the Environment. Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier du gouvernement du Canada agissant par l'entremise du ministère fédéral de l'Environnement.

SK PCAP gratefully acknowledges in-kind support in 2014-15 from:

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada - Science and Technology Branch, Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Innovates, Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum, Assinibione Watershed Stewardship Association, Blazing Star Wildflower Seed Company, Calgary Zoo, Canadian Parks & Wilderness Association, Canadian Western Agribition, Environment Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service, Evergreen Environmental, Foothills Restoration Forum, Friends of Wascana Marsh, Lonesome Dove Ranch, Meewasin Valley Authority, Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Nature Saskatchewan, Parks Canada – Grasslands National Park, Perrin Ranching Ltd 1990, Prairie Wind & Silver Sage – Friends of Grasslands, Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve Association, Sage Grouse Initiative, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Saskatchewan Burrowing Owl Interpretive Centre, Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre, Saskatchewan Environmental Society, Saskatchewan Forage Council, Saskatchewan Forage Industry Network, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment, Saskatchewan Ministry of the Economy, Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, Saskatchewan Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport - Royal Saskatchewan Museum and Friends of the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, Saskatchewan Research Council, Saskatchewan Science Centre, Saskatchewan Stock Growers

Association, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Saskatoon Nature Society, SaskOutdoors, SaskPower, Scatliff+Miller+Murray, SeedCheck Technologies, Society for Ecological Restoration – Western Chapter, Society for Range Management - Prairie Parkland Chapter, South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards Inc., Stantec, Swift Current Creek Watershed Stewards, Tannas Conservation Services, University of Regina – Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative, University of Saskatchewan – College of Agriculture and Bioresources, Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Westmoreland Coal, Wild About Saskatoon-Nature City Festival.