

The Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan Partnership

2018-2019 Annual Report

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Saskatchewan
Prairie Conservation
Action Plan

Front cover photo: Diego Steinaker (Monet Pastures)

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 (the Partners). 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 (http://www.pcap-sk.org/rsu_docs/documents/PCAP_framework_2014.pdf), 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 20th year in 2018-19. 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.

This report indicates the activities undertaken by SK PCAP in the 2018-19 implementation timeframe. Where applicable, these activities are reported to align within the 2014-2018 Framework and work towards our Vision, Goals, and Objectives as they are relevant to each of the three focus areas identified.

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, Instagram and Facebook; articles in print media and monthly e-newsletters; as well as education programs for students of all ages.

Highlights from this year include the development of the 2019-2023 SK PCAP Framework that will outline the PCAP's strategies and focus areas for the next 5 years. SK PCAP also led the development of two new Guides to Managing for Optimal Habitat Attributes for two Species At Risk: Chestnut-collared Longspur and Baird's Sparrow. The Guides, developed by prominent species at risk specialists, describe site and landscape-scale habitat features that are optimal for those species at risk at different life stages, as well as important beneficial management practices. PCAP also provided five in person Native Prairie Speaker Series presentations through public forums and twelve webinars across the province for a total of 17 Native Prairie Speaker Series presentations. We also organized a workshop for landowners and land managers on "Multiple Species Management". In addition, SK PCAP hosted the 3rd annual Ecological Goods & Services Week titled, "Prairie's Got the Goods!" where more than 500 participants were engaged in eight webinar broadcasts. We successfully delivered our youth Education Programs, Adopt a Rancher (Grade 10) and Taking Action for Prairie (Grade 6-8), to 11 classes, 267 students and 21 teachers and ranchers. We hosted displays at four landowner and producer, and participated in different meetings and workshops (PCESC, TGP). Finally, we improved the visibility of SK PCAP in the Social Media, increasing the number of Facebook and Instagram followers and impressions in Twitter, as well as the e-newsletter subscribers and page viewers in our website.

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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 on 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 1,426 PCAP subscribers.
- Prepared and distributed three **news releases**
 - Provincial Declaration of the 2018 Native Prairie Appreciation Week (June 18, 2018)
 - Prairie's Got the Goods Week (March 18, 2019)
 - SaskPower Contribution to SK-PCAP Programs (April 29, 2019)
- Curated web content on our **website** www.pcap-sk.org
 - 17,897 page views from 7,005 users, representing 14% new visitors and 86% returning visitors. This is significant increase from the same time period in 2017-2018 (11,825 page views). 54% of website users were male, 33% between 25-34 years old and 27% between 18-24 years old. 73% of users were from Canada and 11% are from USA. Top Four Pages were: Upcoming Events, Native Prairie Speaker Series and Native Prairie Appreciation Week
- Communications on Social Media:
 - The SK PCAP **Facebook** page currently has 2265 followers compared to 1764 of 2017-18. However the Facebook page had a total reach of 415,982, which is down from the 2017-18 total reach of 457,531. SK PCAP produced about 36 posts per

month in average during 2018-19, compared to 28 in 2017-18. A total of 2546 'likes,' is an increase from 1916 'likes' from the previous year. Of the 409,868 impressions, 276,272 are "organic" impressions (i.e. not paid), while 142,461 are "paid" or sponsored impressions

- The SK PCAP **Twitter** account currently has 1316 followers, which has grown by 96 followers since April 1, 2018. SK PCAP currently posts an average of 29 tweets per month. This is higher than the last period (22 tweets per month) and mainly due to our monthly #SARSweetTweet Campaign. We averaged approximately 18,000 monthly impressions which an increase compared to last period (13,951). The successful #SARSweetTweet campaigns may explain this increase.
- The SK PCAP Instagram averaged 11 posts per month, and most were NPSS webinar promotions or #SARSweetTweet Campaign. Total followers to date are 359, up from about 307 at this time last year. Every month, we reached an average of 468 people. The best post (most liked) for 2018-19 was a Burrowing Owl on a Burrowing Owl Sign. Audience was 73% women, 45% were between 25-34, and 22% from Regina and 20% Saskatoon.
- SK PCAP posted 28 new videos on YouTube in 2018-19, including 15 from the Native Prairie Speaker Series, as well as 8 from the Ecological Goods & Services Week, and 5 from the Multiple-species Management Workshop. SK PCAP has a total of 11,700 views to date on its YouTube channel, up from 8,149 views last year (www.youtube.com/user/SKPCAP).
- Provided displays at **four** urban and **four** relevant producer venues across Saskatchewan:
 - SK PCAP hosted displays at four landowner and producer locations in 2018-19, including the 2018 Saskatchewan Stock Growers Annual General Meeting in Swift Current (230 attendees for two days), the South of the Divide Conservation Action Plan Annual General Meeting in Val Marie (45 attendees), Annual Transboundary Grassland Workshop in Lethbridge (85 attendees for two days), and Agribition in Regina (2,000 estimated producer/landowner attendees over six days in the Family Ag Pavilion), reaching an estimated total of 2,360 people over 11 days.

- SK PCAP hosted displays at **four** urban venues in 2018-19, including during the Native Prairie Appreciation Week at the Regina Farmer's Market (estimated 2000 attendees); Weyburn Farmer's Market (estimated 50 attendees); the Swift Current Farmer's Market (estimated 500 attendees); and at the National Aboriginal Day in Regina (estimated 1500 attendees), reaching an estimated total of **4,050** members of the urban public over **4** days.
- Provided **five** Native Prairie Speaker Series presentations through public forums and **twelve** webinars across the province for a total of **17** Native Prairie Speaker Series presentations.
 - Impacted a total impact of **923 people** (165 people through in-person presentations and 758 webinar attendance)
- During Ecological Goods and Services Week, provided 8 webinars across the province.
 - Impacted a total of **534 people** through webinar live attendance. The YouTube videos of these presentations have been viewed by **527** more people to date.
 - Ecological Goods & Services Week presentations generated media communications including 2,200 impressions, 56 retweets, 41 link clicks, 357 profile visits and 90 'likes' on Twitter. On Facebook, the page had a total reach of 15,496 people.
- Provided **five** articles in *Beef Business* magazine and **one** in Nature Saskatchewan Annual Newsletter
 - Articles included: 1. Ecological Goods and Services from Native Prairies. *Beef Business* magazine, April 2019, 2. Managing habitat for single species, multiple species, communities, or ecosystem? *Beef Business* magazine, February 2019; 3. Managing for Optimal Habitat Attributes for Species at Risk. *Beef Business* magazine, December 2018; 4. Cattle production and native grassland conservation: a positive tale. Nature Saskatchewan Annual Newsletter, December 2018; 5. Grassland conservation on private lands: instruments and incentives. *Beef Business* magazine, November 2018; and 6. Livestock Grazing and Native Grassland Conservation. *Beef Business* magazine. September 2018.

- Two radio interviews in CBC Radio, in French, by Kerry Gaillard. <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/premiere/emissions/pour-faire-un-monde/segments/entrevue/76789/reconnaissance-prairies-saskatchewan>
- Organized annual NPAW events, including NPAW declarations.
 - NPAW was declared by the province (Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture), and the cities of Regina, Saskatoon, Swift Current, Weyburn and Moose Jaw.
 - SK PCAP held a Youth Poster contest for children ages 7-16, which received **250** entries. Three winners were chosen for each category. The 1st place winning entries were printed on a bookmark that was handed out at Farmer's market booths.
 - SK PCAP held a Photo Contest on our social media platforms. **120** photo entries met the criteria and were posted to the SK Photo were chosen by the public in our PCAP Facebook page. One winner and one runner-up were selected in each of the four categories: Best Native Prairie Wildflower, Prairie People on the Landscape, Prairie Wildlife in Action and Native Prairie Landscape.
 - PCAP help to organize and promote the Society for Range Management - Prairie Parkland Chapter Tour on June 21-22nd, 2018, in the Beechy, Matador Pasture. **40** people attended.

Strategy

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

Measuring success

Our education coordinator, Julie-Anne Howe, promotes and delivers SK PCAP education programming as well as assesses the current programs to ensure they are meeting curriculum needs.

Teachers were recruited mainly by word of mouth, with multiple teachers participating in the program for a third or fourth time. No education/science forums were attended this year as we already had a sign-up sheet with 20 teachers and funds for attending these forums were limited.

- Delivered and planned *Adopt a Rancher* Grade 10 curriculum-supported program.
 - In 2018-19, *Adopt a Rancher* was delivered to **5** classes reaching **161** students and **14** adults (teachers, ranchers).
 - AAR produced **two** radio interview with CBC Radio One (estimated reach of 300,000 listeners)
 - Pre and post-program evaluation surveys are given to all participating students to gauge knowledge uptake and to garner suggestions to make the program more effective. All student evaluations indicated increased knowledge of native prairie grasslands and an improved knowledge of the function of native prairie grasslands. The students shown an improvement in their attitudes towards the importance of native prairie. Teachers and ranchers were asked to complete program surveys. Teachers indicated an enthusiasm about the program and its value to the students. All teachers and ranchers indicated that they agreed with the components and delivery of the program and would participate again, stating that students discovered a link between the natural environment and economics.
 - The *Adopt a Rancher* program currently has **five** classes signed up for May/June delivery.
- Delivered *Taking Action for Prairie* programming
 - *Taking Action for Prairie* was offered in 2018-19 to **six** classes with **106** students in 2018 (two grade 6 classes and four grade 8 classes) and **8** teachers.
 - Evaluation surveys indicated a very positive response from students and teachers. Teachers agreed with the components and delivery of the program and would participate again.
- Provided Canadian Western Agribition with Agri-Ed programming at the Family Ag Pavilion with **five** days of class-specific programming and **one** interactive booth display.
 - Provided class-specific *Pitch it for Pipits and Plovers* programming to **22** classes from **19** schools, impacting **535** students and **46** adults.

- Provided an interactive booth display featuring example nests of Burrowing Owl, Piping Plover and Barn Swallow. Plush animals (Burrowing Owl, Prairie Dog, Bison and various songbirds) were a great draw for the kids. Booth traffic was estimated at **9,000** registered students, impacting an additional estimated **5,000** members of the public.

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** PCAP Steering Committee meetings.
- SK PCAP hosted **three** PCAP Executive Committee meetings.
- SK PCAP is continuing to look for ways to improve the partnership, including new ways to actively engage partners, such as regular partner presentations at Steering Committee meetings, as well as continually looking for new partners to join the PCAP partnership.
- We're still looking for a First Nations representative for the partnership

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

- Native prairie development and land use was not discussed in 2018-19 but there was a presentation at the Spring Partner meeting about the Sk Ministry of Environment's Prairie Landscape Inventory initiative.
- This strategy will continue to be reviewed in the future.

Strategy

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

Measuring success

- Hosted a Workshop for landowners and land managers on "Multiple Species Management" in Consul, SK on March 12, 2019.
 - The workshop on management for multiple species included presentations by 4 experts from the Alberta Conservation Association, Grasslands National Park and SODCAP Inc. as well as a hand-on activity was delivered to **27** stakeholders.
- PCAP participation including booth display in the 4th Transboundary Grassland Partnership Workshop in Lethbridge, AB, on December 2018.
- PCAP collaborated in the organization of the 12th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference, which took place in Winnipeg on February 19-21, 2019. The PCAP' Interim Manager and the Stewardship Coordinator participated in the Planning Committees. In addition, PCAP was in charge of collecting nominations for the "Prairie Conservation Award" for significant long-term contributions to native habitat or species at risk conservation.
- PCAP is organizing **two** important Workshop Meetings for 2020: the 7th Native Prairie Restoration and Reclamation Workshop (NPRRW) and the 5th Transboundary Grassland Partnership Workshop, which will take place together in Regina on February 25-27, 2020.
- Provided event participants with **five** formal opportunities to share feedback through an evaluation of PCAP informational events, including Adopt a Rancher, Native Prairie Speaker Series, and Multiple Species Management Workshop.

- SK PCAP will be co-hosting with Public Pasture - Public Interest NGO a field tour in the Caledonia-Elmstrhorpe Community Pasture on June 22, 2019, as a NPAW celebration.

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 a **Workshop** for landowners and land managers on “Multiple Species Management” in Consul, SK on March 12, 2019.
 - The workshop on management for multiple species included presentations by 4 experts from the Alberta Conservation Association, Grasslands National Park and SODCAP Inc. as well as a hand-on activity was delivered to **27** stakeholders.
- Hosted **six** in-person Native Prairie Speaker Series presentation in Val Marie, Mankota, Regina, Assiniboia and Weyburn, sharing information on Habitat Management plans for Species at Risk including Loggerhead Shrikes, Baird’s Sparrows, Sage-Grouse, Burrowing Owl, Sprague’s Pipits and Northern Leopard Frogs. The total audience was approximately **140** people.

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

- SK PCAP hosted the 3rd Annual Ecological Goods & Services Week – “**Prairie’s Got the Goods!**” on March 17th – 23rd, 2019.
 - **8** webinars were organized to highlight the wide range of ecological goods & services that native prairie provides. Topics included carbon storage, species at risk habitat, and partnerships.

- **534** people watched the webinars in real time and other **527** people viewed the uploaded presentations through our YouTube channel to date.
- Ecological Goods & Services Week presentations generated Social Media communications including **2,200** impressions, **56** retweets, **41** link clicks, **357** profile visits and **90** 'likes' on Twitter. On Facebook, the page had a total reach of **15,496** people.

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

- In March 2019, SK PCAP hosted two **species at risk online workshops**; one for **Baird's Sparrow** and one for **Chestnut-collared Longspur**. These workshops were designed to summarize and update species management strategies and research for stakeholders involved in their conservation.
 - **12** stakeholders participated in the Loggerhead Shrike workshop and **13** stakeholders participated in the Northern Leopard Frog workshop.
 - A workbook outlining habitat requirements and habitat targets was developed by workshop participants and species

experts. An **Environmental Benefits Index** was developed for each species that will aid stakeholders in evaluating the suitability of a given piece of land for each species.

- SK PCAP aims to continue to develop species at risk workbooks in coming years, depending on funding.
- Hosted **twelve** webinars and **five** in person speaker series across the provincial prairie region highlighting conservation of prairie species (including species at risk and rare species) in a variety of land-use settings, including rangeland, in an urban setting and in protected areas.
- SK PCAP hosted Ecological Goods & Services Week – “**Prairie’s Got the Goods!**” on March 19th – 23th. Through 8 webinars, the relationship between healthy prairie ecosystems and economic returns was highlighted.
 - **534 people** were reached through webinar live attendance. The YouTube videos of these presentations have reached other **527** views to date
- Provided **five** articles in “Beef Business” magazines that reached producers and land managers in Saskatchewan
 - Articles included: 1. Managing habitat for single species, multiple species, communities, or ecosystem? February 2019; 2. Managing for Optimal Habitat Attributes for Species at Risk. December 2018; 3. Grassland conservation on private lands: instruments and incentives, November 2018; 4. Livestock Grazing and Native Grassland Conservation, September 2018. 5. Drones are migrating into Prairie Grassland Research Projects, May 2018.
- Participated in and engaged with prairie land managers at **four** producer or land-user events, including the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Annual General Meeting, South of the Divide Conservation Action Plan Annual General Meeting, Transboundary Grassland Partnership Workshop, and Agribition.
- Monthly twitter campaigns about Species At Risk: #SARSweetTweet
- Shared at least **five** 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, and species at risk occurrences).

Measuring success

- Through the Native Prairie Speaker Series, participants were afforded the opportunity to learn about many new initiatives, databases, programs and concepts.
- SK PCAP facilitated a Steering Committee discussion in September 2018, 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).

Measuring success

- In March 2019, SK PCAP hosted an online **workshop** for **Chestnut-collared Longspur** and **Baird's Sparrow**. These workshops were designed to help sustain landscapes that are able to support multiple species at risk and maintain biodiversity.
 - **13** stakeholders participated in the Chestnut-collared Longspur workshop and **12** stakeholders participated in the Baird's Sparrow workshop.
 - An **Environmental Benefits Index** was developed for each species that will aid stakeholders in evaluating the suitability of a given piece of land for each species. Targets include considerations for multiple species at risk.

- SK PCAP plans to host themed weeks (similar to Ecological Goods and Services Week) and day-long workshops to promote minimizing the threat of invasive species and supporting practices that allow native prairie to withstand extreme weather events, as funding permits.

Appendix 1: 2018-19 SK PCAP Partnership

- Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) - Science and Technology Branch
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS)
- Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC)
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) - Canadian Wildlife Service.
- Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan Inc. (NPSS)
- Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC)
- Nature Saskatchewan (NS)
- Parks Canada – Grasslands National Park of Canada (PC-GNP)
- Prairie Wind & Silver Sage – Friends of the Grasslands (PWSS)
- Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve Association Inc. (RLBR)
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Energy and Resources
- Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM)
- Saskatchewan Burrowing Owl Interpretative Centre (SBOIC)
- Saskatchewan Environmental Society (SES)
- Saskatchewan Forage Council (SFC)
- Saskatchewan Outdoor and Environmental Education Association (SaskOutdoors)
- Saskatchewan Research Council (SRC)
- Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA)
- Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association (SCA)
- Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation (SWF)
- Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds (SAW)
- SaskPower
- Society for Range Management (SRM) - Prairie Parkland Chapter
- South of the Divide Conservation Action program Inc. (SODCAP Inc.)
- University of Regina
- University of Saskatchewan – College of Agriculture and Bioresources
- Water Security Agency (WSA)

Appendix 2: 2018-19 Financial & In-Kind Support

SK PCAP gratefully acknowledges financial support in 2018-2019 from:

Crescent Point Energy Corp., Ducks Unlimited Canada, EcoFriendly Sask, Enbridge Pipelines Inc., TransCanada, CanNorth, Husky Energy, K+S Potash, Parks Canada – Grasslands National Park, Ranchers Stewardship Alliance Inc., Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment - Fish and Wildlife Development Fund, SaskEnergy, SaskPower, SaskTel, SaskWater, The Mosaic Company, TransCanada, University of Saskatchewan - College of Agriculture and Bioresources, , Water Security Agency of Saskatchewan, Wildlife Habitat Canada, and the Government of Canada through the federal Department of the Environment (Environment and Climate Change Canada).

SK PCAP gratefully acknowledges in-kind support in 2018-19 from:

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada - Science and Technology Branch, Alberta Conservation Association, ALUS Canada, Blazing Star Wildflower Seed Company, Cameco Corporation, Canadian Parks & Wilderness Association, Canada North Environmental Services, Canadian Western Agribition, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Friends of the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, Friends of Wascana Marsh, Information Services Corporation, Meewasin Valley Authority, Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Nature Saskatchewan, Parks Canada – Grasslands National Park, Prairie Wind & Silver Sage – Friends of Grasslands, Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve Association, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Saskatchewan Burrowing Owl Interpretive Centre, Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre, Saskatchewan Environmental Society, Saskatchewan Forage Council, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment, Saskatchewan Ministry of Energy and Resources, Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, Saskatchewan Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, Saskatchewan Research Council, Saskatchewan Science Centre, Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, SaskCulture Inc. SaskOutdoors, SaskPower, SaskTel, Simply Agriculture Solutions Inc., Society for Range Management - Prairie Parkland Chapter, South of the Divide Conservation Action Program Inc., University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan – College of Agriculture and Bioresources, and Water Security Agency.