

Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan



Framework 2009 – 2013

PCAP Partners – 2009¹

- ☐ Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada
– Agri-Environment Services Branch
- ☐ Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada –
Semiarid Prairie Agricultural Research Centre
- ☐ Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society
- ☐ Ducks Unlimited Canada
- ☐ Environment Canada – Canadian Wildlife Service
- ☐ Ministry of Agriculture (SK)
- ☐ Ministry of Energy and Resources (SK)
- ☐ Ministry of Environment (SK)
- ☐ Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport (SK)
– Royal Saskatchewan Museum
- ☐ Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan Inc.
- ☐ Nature Conservancy of Canada
- ☐ Nature Saskatchewan
- ☐ Parks Canada – Grasslands National Park of Canada
- ☐ Prairie Learning Centre
- ☐ Saskatchewan Burrowing Owl Interpretative Centre
- ☐ Saskatchewan Environmental Society
- ☐ Saskatchewan Forage Council
- ☐ Saskatchewan Research Council
- ☐ Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board
- ☐ Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association
- ☐ Saskatchewan Watershed Authority
- ☐ Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation
- ☐ SaskPower
- ☐ Society for Range Management – Prairie
Parkland Chapter
- ☐ University of Regina
- ☐ University of Saskatchewan – College of
Agriculture and Bioresources

*Cover Photo by
Branimir Gjetvaj*

¹ For the most current listing of the Partner agencies and the representatives to the PCAP Partnership from these agencies, please see PCAP website <http://www.pcap-sk.org> under Partnership.

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Saskatchewan
**Prairie Conservation
 Action Plan**

A photograph of a field of tall grass and purple flowers at sunset. The sky is a warm, golden-brown color, and the grass is silhouetted against it. The flowers are in the foreground, some in focus and some blurred.

What if...

conservationists, producers,
industry, communities,
government and scientists

all worked
together?

Photo by Wanda Knoss



What if we believed
we could make it happen?

Photo by Wanda Knoss

Executive Summary

Since 1998, the Prairie Conservation Action Plan [PCAP] Partnership has brought together agencies and organizations representing producers, industry, provincial and federal governments, non-government organizations and research and educational institutions under a common vision for prairie conservation in Saskatchewan. The mission of the Partners is to work together to deliver prairie conservation activities that represent shared objectives and that benefit the social, cultural, economic and ecological fabric of Saskatchewan.

The PCAP Partners base their approach on eight Guiding Principles:

- ☐ The Power of the Collective
- ☐ Partnerships
- ☐ Sustainable Use of Prairie
- ☐ The Intrinsic Value of Prairie
- ☐ Engaging People
- ☐ An Integrated Approach
- ☐ Adaptability
- ☐ Commitment to Action

The 2009 - 2013 Framework applies to native aquatic and terrestrial habitats within the Prairie Ecozone of Saskatchewan and is built on a Vision, three goals and five areas of focus for action:

Vision

Healthy native prairie ecosystems as vital parts of our vibrant and strong communities

Goals

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

Focus Areas

At Home on the Prairie:
Connecting to Native Prairie

Prospering with Prairie:
Sustainable Land Use and Development


Caring for Prairie:
Managing Invasive Alien Plant Species

Accounting for Prairie:
Valuing Ecological Goods and Services

A Working Prairie:
Grazing Management in Prairie Ecosystems

Objectives 2009 - 2013

- ☐ More people are aware of and appreciate native prairie ecosystems and support and are engaged in sustainable, prairie related activities.
- ☐ PCAP Partners identify, adopt, implement, and promote best management practices, planning processes, policies and/or regulatory requirements, important for the conservation and sustainable use of native prairie in Saskatchewan.
- ☐ Prairie land managers understand the importance of managing alien plant species on the prairie landscape and Saskatchewan has a coordinated approach to invasive alien plant species management.
- ☐ More people are aware of the ecological goods and services provided by native prairie ecosystems and begin to account for them in decision making.
- ☐ Increased land manager knowledge and adoption of grazing management practices that benefit both prairie ecosystems and economic returns, improved understanding of current range health and range health trends in Saskatchewan, and improved scientific understanding of the role of grazing management in prairie ecosystem health and biodiversity.



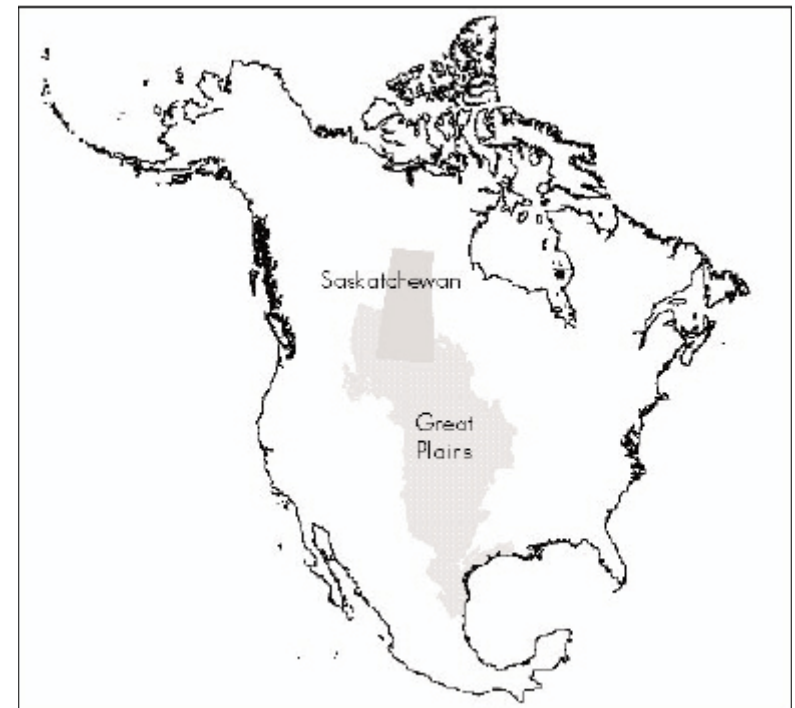
What if we recognized
that native prairie is one of our
most precious resources?

Background

What is Native Prairie?²

Native prairie is a grassland ecosystem. Grassland ecosystems cover between 41-56 million km² (31-43%) of the earth's surface. They represent one of the earth's major biomes and, historically at least, are one of the most productive and diverse terrestrial ecosystems. This framework applies to native aquatic and terrestrial habitats within the Prairie Ecozone of Saskatchewan.

In North America, the central grassland region covers around one-fifth of the continent and represents 7-10% of the grasslands of the world. It extends over the widest latitudinal range of any single North American ecological region and constitutes a relatively continuous and roughly triangular area covering about 4.1 million km². The central grassland region extends from the provinces of British Columbia,



Source: U of R-CPRC

Photo by Branimir Gjetvaj

2 Except where noted, section is excerpted from Gauthier and Riemer, 2003. "Introduction to Prairie Conservation" in the Prairie Conservation Action Plan 2003-2008. For the full discussion, please see the document online at the PCAP website <http://www.pcap-sk.org/> under Action Plans.

Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba in Canada, south through the central, northern and mid-west states of the United States to southern Texas into northeastern and central Mexico, and from western Indiana to the foothills of the Rockies.

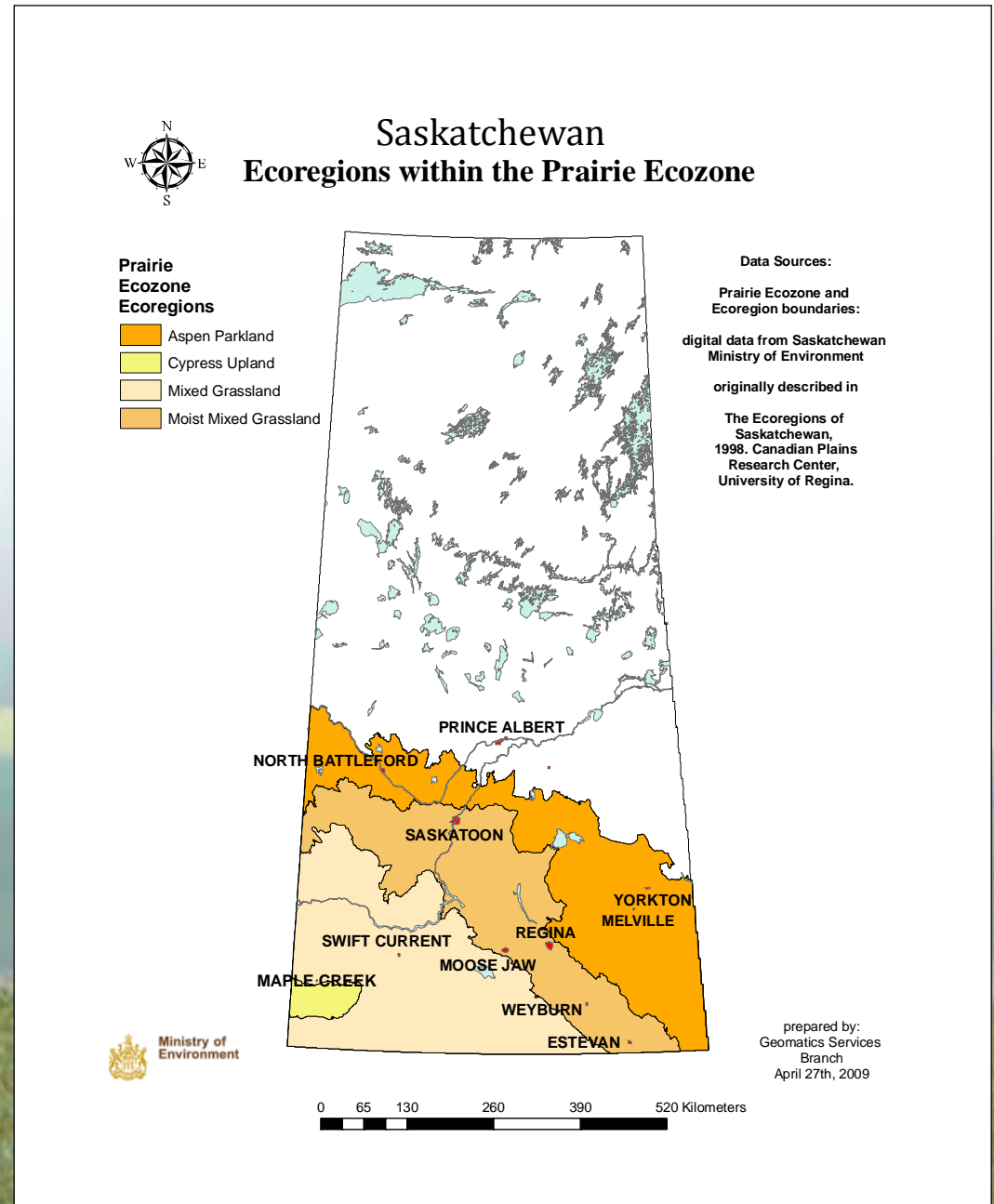
In their native state, the central grasslands supported rich and highly specialized plant and animal communities. The interaction of climate, fire and grazing influenced the development and maintenance of the central grasslands.

The increasing amounts of rainfall from west to east define different types of native prairies. Short-grass prairie occurs in the south and in the west, in the rain shadow of the Rocky Mountains, with mixed-grass prairie in the central grasslands, tall-grass prairie in the wetter eastern region and fescue grasslands in the northwestern plains and parkland from central Saskatchewan to the foothills of the Rockies.



Photo by James R. Page

In Saskatchewan, natural prairie vegetation is dominated by spear grasses, wheat grasses and blue grama grass. Drier sites in the southwest support sparser grass cover with abundant prickly pear and sagebrush. Northward and eastward from the mixed grassland, moisture deficits are less severe and droughts are less prolonged. Here “mid-grass”-dominated mixed grasslands alternate with plains rough fescue grasslands, more extensive shrublands, aspen grove woodlands, and wetlands. The aspen parkland, the northern transition zone to the boreal forest, has expanded south into former grassland areas since European settlement effectively stopped prairie fires.



Why a PCAP Partnership?

Grasslands are one of the world's most threatened ecosystems, making them a conservation priority. In North America, tall-grass prairie has been reduced to 1%, and mixed-grass and short-grass prairie to 20-30% of their former range, together exceeding losses reported for any other major ecological community on the continent.³ In Saskatchewan, it is estimated that between 17% and 21% of the original native prairie remains intact.⁴ Despite increasing awareness of the value of healthy prairie ecosystems, loss of native prairie continues.⁵

Our remaining native prairie is a valuable resource that touches many lives and many interest groups. Some, such as ranchers, rely on the sustainable use of prairie for their very livelihood. For others, native prairie may be of cultural, spiritual

or recreational importance. Many landowners, government and non-government agencies play a role in the stewardship and protection of native prairie as well, representing many interests. Integrating these efforts and defining common outcomes among the players is fundamental to effective prairie conservation.

To that end, the PCAP Partnership works to:

- Develop and foster common vision and goals, identify priority issues and develop and implement actions to address conservation and sustainable management of native prairie,
- Avoid duplication and identify and fill gaps in native prairie research and activities among the partners,
- Improve public understanding and valuing of native prairie through initiatives such as the Native Prairie Appreciation Week,
- Share ideas and find common ground where possible while respecting differing ideas.

3 Gauthier, D.A., A. Lafon, T.P. Toombs, J. Hoth, and E. Wiken. 2003. Grasslands: Toward a North American Conservation Strategy. Commission for Environmental Cooperation and the Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan.

4 Hammermeister, A.M., D. Gauthier, and K. McGovern. 2001. Saskatchewan's Native Prairie: Statistics of a Vanishing Ecosystem and Dwindling Resource. Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan Inc., Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

5 Watmough, M. D. and M. J. Schmoll. 2007. Environment Canada's Prairie and Northern Habitat Monitoring Program Phase II: Recent habitat trends in the PHJV. Unpublished Report. Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service, Edmonton, Alberta.

What is the PCAP Partnership?

The 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 work toward a common vision for prairie conservation in Saskatchewan. A number of the Partners provide financial or in-kind contributions toward the PCAP administration and all of them contribute to the realization of the Partnership objectives.⁶

Key and unique to this partnership is the collaboration with the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA). The SSGA provides a Chair and Representative, as a means to recognize the

critical importance of the ranching community to the conservation of native prairie and to emphasize how central the concept of a working landscape is to the vision of the PCAP Partnership.

The PCAP Partnership recognizes the importance of partnerships beyond Saskatchewan borders including within Canada and internationally, as this allows for consultation on common issues and sharing of resources, experiences and solutions for best practices. The PCAP Partnership liaises with the Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum, Carolinian Canada Coalition in Ontario and the Chihuahua Mexico Grasslands Partnership, which was modelled on PCAP.



Photo by Krista Connick

⁶ See Appendix 1 for a list of all PCAP Core and Program supporters.

History of the PCAP Partnership

Since its inception in 1998, the PCAP Partnership has grown from 16 to 27 Partner groups that represent industry, multi-sector federal and provincial agencies, non-governmental organisations, and Saskatchewan's two universities.

The PCAP Partnership has developed two five-year Action Plans - covering the periods from 1998-2003 and 2003-2008. Building on the first plan, the 2003-2008 Plan consisted of a Vision, five Goals, 25 Objectives and 78 Actions supported by a detailed implementation strategy complete with time-lines and lead and support Partners. In

addition, Partners have completed annual progress reports in order to assess the status of the Action Plans.⁷

The PCAP Partnership has proven to be an important forum for guiding conservation and management efforts within Saskatchewan's Prairie Ecozone. The Partnership has been effective in reducing duplication, increasing coordination and addressing gaps in programming, as well as guiding the development of programs and policies that reward sustainable use and promote ecological health and integrity including species at risk recovery.⁸



Photo by Wanda Knoss

⁷ The annual reports are available online on the PCAP website <http://www.pcap-sk.org/> under Communications.

⁸ For a fuller discussion, please see the Prairie Conservation Action Plan 2003-2008 document online at the PCAP website <http://www.pcap-sk.org/> under Action Plans.

Development of the 2009-2013 Framework

After ten years of collaborative prairie conservation experience, the PCAP Partnership decided to embrace a new approach over its next five years. Rather than a five-year action plan, the Partnership has developed a five-year Framework for Action upon which annual action plans will be built. The Framework sets out a renewed Vision, a Mission, and Guiding Principles for the PCAP Partnership. It also outlines three goals and five priority areas

of focus. Working groups have formed around these focus areas, and they will develop, report on, and revise action plans around each focus area annually.⁹ The Partnership will work to implement prairie conservation initiatives that grow out of the unique capacity provided by a partnership such as this.

⁹ See Appendix 2 for more details around the implementation of the 2009-2013 Framework.



Photo by Randy McCulloch

The 2009-2013 Framework

Our Mission

The PCAP Partnership represents the collaborative efforts of multiple interests toward promoting and conserving Saskatchewan's native prairie.

The PCAP Partners work together to deliver innovative and critical prairie conservation activities that represent the shared objectives of a diverse mix of stakeholders and that benefit the social, cultural, economic and ecological fabric of Saskatchewan.



Our Guiding Principles

The PCAP Partners believe in:

The Power of the Collective: The PCAP Partners believe that more can be accomplished by acting together than by acting alone. The PCAP Partnership brings diverse groups together to speak with one voice and to work together under a common vision for prairie conservation.

Partnerships: Partners believe that it is both possible and desirable for groups with diverse interests and needs to find mutually agreeable solutions to the challenges of prairie conservation. Participants respect and seek to understand the views and interests of all of the Partners.

Sustainable Use of Prairie: The PCAP Partners see prairie as a working landscape that can include people and their livelihoods as a positive part of the ecosystem. We view sustainable uses of prairie as fundamental to its conservation.

The Intrinsic Value of Prairie: The PCAP Partners recognize that prairie ecosystems provide many benefits to humans. Partners also recognize that prairie ecosystems and the species found within them have intrinsic value, beyond any human use.

Engaging People: People who understand prairie learn to value prairie, and people who value prairie will work to conserve it. The PCAP Partners engage Saskatchewan people in learning about and experiencing the prairie as a means to promote conservation.

An Integrated Approach: Partners approach prairie conservation in a way that considers and integrates the ecological, socio-cultural, and economic interests related to native prairie conservation issues.

Adaptability: In the quest to reach prairie conservation objectives, the PCAP Partners seek and adapt to new knowledge with enthusiasm and creativity.

Commitment to Action: The PCAP Partnership is an action-orientated organization. Partners set out clear implementation plans and commit to achieving measurable results that contribute to the goals of the Partnership.

Our Vision

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

Our Goals

Our Ecosystem Goal

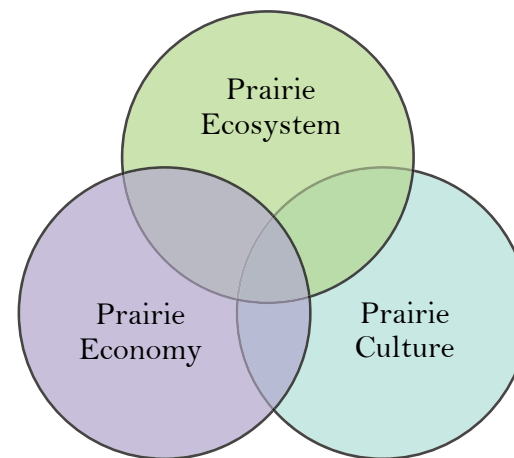
Native prairie ecosystem health and biodiversity are conserved and restored as part of a functioning landscape

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



Our 2009-2013 Focus Areas

- At Home on the Prairie:
Connecting to Native Prairie
- Prospering with Prairie:
Sustainable Land Use and Development
- Caring for Prairie:
Managing Invasive Alien Plant Species
- Accounting for Prairie:
Valuing Ecological Goods and Services
- A Working Prairie:
Grazing Management in Prairie Ecosystems

During the renewal process, the PCAP Partners identified five major areas of focus for the next five years of the Partnership. These focus areas are what the Partners believe to be either the highest risk to native prairie conservation or the greatest opportunity. The focus areas also represent issues that can best be addressed through the collaborative approach embodied by the PCAP Partnership.

The Partnership will concentrate their efforts on these areas for the next five years and have set

out achievable yet challenging objectives, along with strategies for achieving success in each area. While the strategies are specific to the focus area, they can be summarized as falling into a number of cross-cutting themes: Education, Coordination, Monitoring, Research, and Participation.

Over the five year span of this framework, the Partners will develop and deliver five annual action plans for each of the focus areas. In these action plans, concrete action items will be laid out along with measures of success, timelines, and committed agencies.¹⁰

The Focus Groups will annually assess their success, and adjust their approach as necessary. In this way, the Partnership will be guided by the strategic five year framework and will maintain the ability and energy to act by way of a detailed, flexible, and relevant plan of action. This flexibility will also allow the Partnership to adjust actions to reflect influences such as climate change, economic uncertainties, labour force shifts, and demographic changes - all of which impact on human behaviour and native prairie.

10 Annual Action Plans and progress reports are available online at the PCAP website <http://www.pcap-sk.org> under Action Plans and Communications respectively.

A person wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a light-colored jacket is sitting on a large rock, looking out over a vast, rolling prairie landscape. The terrain is covered in green grass and shrubs, with distant hills visible under a clear sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

What if one of our favourite ways
to spend the weekend was out
hiking in the prairie?

“ You can stand out there and
feel like the only living being in the
entire 360-sweep of the horizon. ”

James R. Page, photographer
Vancouver Island, B.C.

Photo by James R. Page



At Home on the Prairie

Connecting to Native Prairie

The first step toward conserving something is recognizing that it has value. When we deeply value something, we also have an emotional connection to it. The Partnership believes that this type of connection to native prairie is fundamental to its conservation.

Some of the outcomes of connecting to and valuing prairie will be the formation of an appreciation of its diverse values and beauty, a responsible attitude towards sustainable development and conservation of native prairie, and a personal conservation ethic.

Many Saskatchewan residents know very little about our native grasslands and the vast array of plants and animals found there. Communication and education about native prairie are important steps in helping people form a connection with this landscape. Providing and encouraging opportunities

to directly engage in activities in native prairie landscapes are also important, including hands on involvement in conservation work and participation in recreational activities such as hiking, camping, and other outdoor pursuits.

Through this focus area, the Partners continue to target elementary school children in southern Saskatchewan and begin to reach out to the adult urban (non-agricultural) public, as this large group has not been a focus in the past.

Objective 2009-2013

More people are aware of and appreciate native prairie ecosystems and support or are engaged in sustainable, prairie related activities.




Photo by Tracy Harrison

Strategies 2009-2013

- ☐ Continue to educate Saskatchewan youth about prairie ecosystems and prairie species at risk
- ☐ Target communication about and promotion of native prairie to an urban audience
- ☐ Promote and provide opportunities to participate in prairie-related activities

Measuring our Success 2009-2013

- ☐ Comparison of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in people who have participated in prairie education programs vs. those who have not
- ☐ Target-group appreciation of prairie and support for prairie conservation
- ☐ Educational partnerships formed by promoting prairie-related activities
- ☐ Visitors to prairie sites promoted by the PCAP



What if prairie plants
were prized in our
yards and green spaces?

Photo by Wanda Knoss



“ Every time I walk in our prairie plot
there’s something new to see.
The biodiversity is delicious. ”

Rhonda Phillips, teacher and native plant gardener
Lumsden, Sask.

Photo by Wanda Knoss



Prospering with Prairie

Sustainable Land Use and Development

The prairie landscape is continually transformed by agricultural, industrial, commercial, recreational, residential and urban development. Human population and demographic trends, the economics of farming and ranching, and high commodity prices, combined with agricultural policy and industrial development, shape the conversion of native prairie to other uses.

Within the Prairie Ecozone of Canada, 21% of the land base is publicly owned and 79% is privately owned; less than 9% is formally protected by legislation.¹¹ Therefore, while land-use policies and regulation have a role, conservation practices and programs depend mostly on the voluntary participation of landowners.

Native prairie has multiple-use values (e.g., extensive recreation, hunting), environmental significance (e.g., habitat, natural landscapes, and biodiversity), and provides environmental services (e.g., groundwater recharge, carbon storage). Society values these areas and conserving them is in the public interest. Through the Prairie Conservation Action Plan, diverse groups of stakeholders and partners from agriculture, industry, and conservation, can collectively provide advice and support for the conservation and sustainable use of native prairie.

11 Riley, J.L., S.E. Green, and K.E. Brodribb. 2007. A Conservation Blueprint for Canada's Prairies and Parklands. Nature Conservancy of Canada, Toronto, Ontario.

Objective 2009-2013

PCAP Partners identify, adopt, implement, and promote best management practices, planning processes, policies and/or regulatory requirements, important for the conservation and sustainable use of native prairie in Saskatchewan.



Photo by Malin Hansen

Strategies 2009-2013

- ☐ Increase awareness of how Partners currently conserve and restore native prairie, and document progress in this area
- ☐ Exchange ideas and new knowledge with Partners and other stakeholders about ways to successfully conserve and restore native prairie at each stage of a land use or development activity
- ☐ Assist Partnership with monitoring and communicating trends in native prairie conservation

Measuring our Success 2009-2013

- ☐ Native prairie – its extent, functions, and biodiversity – is conserved or restored as part of land use and development activities in Saskatchewan.

What if
our children recognized
pronghorn antelope and crocuses
as easily as elephants
and dandelions?



“ To be the future stewards
of the planet – our students
need to have a
relationship with
the natural world
around them. ”

Laura Steinbach, student support teacher
William Grayson School, Moose Jaw, Sask.



Photo by Saskatchewan 4-H



Caring for Prairie

Managing Invasive Alien Plant Species

Invasive alien (aka exotic) species include aquatic and terrestrial plants, animals, insects, and micro organisms that originate in other regions, but it is invasive alien plants that currently present the greatest invasive species threat to the Prairie Ecozone in Saskatchewan. Several of these weedy plant species have invaded the landscape and altered large areas of natural vegetation in Saskatchewan.

Alien plant species rarely have natural enemies. They respect no boundaries and once established can spread rapidly. The impacts of invasive exotic plants in native prairie areas include: degradation of natural ecosystems, loss of biodiversity (and all associated consequences), loss of livelihood, loss of revenue, decreased land values, reduced stocking rates on grazed lands, reduced habitat value, and greater potential for erosion. In addition, control of weedy exotics can be more difficult or costly in prairie areas than in cropped lands.

The threats posed by invasive alien plants are growing. While the full extent of the problem is not understood, there are many areas where control programs need to be implemented. The key to invasive alien plant management is to recognize the problem early and have a serious, effective plan of attack when an invasive problem is identified so as to reduce or eliminate the problem.

Maintaining the health of the native prairie through the control of invasive alien plants will require coordination, cooperation and education. It will also require knowledge about the scope of the problem and ongoing research into improved control methods.

Objective 2009-2013

Prairie land managers understand the importance of managing alien plant species on the prairie landscape and Saskatchewan has a coordinated approach to invasive alien plant species management.



Photo by Tracy Harrison

Strategies 2009-2013

- ☐ Educate public and private land managers about the threats of invasive alien plants to native prairie
- ☐ Implement collaborative Invasive Alien Plant Species prevention and control measures
- ☐ Monitor the occurrence of alien invasive plants in the Prairie Ecoregion
- ☐ Coordinate research and development activities

Measuring our Success 2009-2013

- ☐ Target-audience knowledge of invasive alien plant issues
- ☐ Collaborative invasive alien plant management initiatives

What if prairie wildlife
lived in harmony
with our farms, towns, and cities?



“

Recently, while working at a site along the river,
I saw an osprey with a sturgeon in its talons.
That was the wildlife view of my lifetime
and it was right in the city.”

Luc Delanoy, resource management officer
Meewasin Valley Authority, Saskatoon, Sask.

Photo by Andrea Kotylak



Accounting for Prairie

Valuing Ecological Goods and Services

Native prairie provides a wide range of “goods and services” that are critical to our health, well-being, and prosperity. These goods and services include clean air, clean water, carbon storage and sequestration, soil formation, waste treatment, biological control, genetic resources, water regulation, erosion control, pollination, recreation and food production.

Even though they are vital to our sustained health and economy, these ecological goods and services are only now beginning to be considered in the calculation of assets and in land use planning. Each time we lose another hectare of native prairie, we are depreciating our natural capital asset base and losing the goods and services that they once provided. We may only recognize the loss of important goods and services once they are gone – and sometimes the loss is irreversible.

Various land use practices have led to the wide spread alteration and loss of native prairie and our natural capital in Saskatchewan. While society supports the wise use and protection of native prairie, we rarely recognize and ensure that the ecological goods and services that they provide are accounted for when making land use decisions.

Commodity prices have a large impact on how the land will be used to generate income as landowners currently receive limited economic returns for providing ecological goods and services to society. In order to properly account for native prairie in our decision making, the Partnership believes it is important to raise awareness about the numerous services native prairie provides, and to begin to account for the value of these ecological goods and services in land use decision cost-benefit analyses.

Objective 2009-2013

More people are aware of the ecological goods and services provided by native prairie ecosystems and begin to account for them in decision making.

Strategies 2009-2013

- ☐ Communicate to target groups about the ecological goods and services provided by native prairie
- ☐ Identify and communicate to Partners the program and policy options that support the consideration and maintenance of ecological goods and services

Measuring our Success 2009-2013

- ☐ Target-group awareness of native prairie ecological goods and services [EGS] and threats to them
- ☐ EGS-based programs that support prairie conservation
- ☐ Acres of prairie influenced by EGS-based programs




Photo by
www.grambophoto.com



What if ranchers
were recognized
as prairie heroes?

Photo by Wanda Knoss



“ If we’re going to raise beef, we need grass.
And as long as we keep our native prairie in
good condition, we’ll have nesting grounds
and habitat for wildlife. In the end, a lot of people
will benefit from it. ”

Wes Kemp, cattle producer
Broadview, Sask.

Photo by Sarah Vinge, Nature Saskatchewan



A Working Prairie

Grazing Management in Prairie Ecosystems

This focus area is built on the important role of domesticated grazing animals (foraging livestock) in maintaining a healthy prairie ecosystem, including native uplands, riparian areas, water courses and waterbodies, tame pastures, and treed/parkland areas. Native prairie ecosystems evolved with and are dependent on grazing, and proper grazing management is an important tool in managing prairie landscapes.

The focus here is on proper grazing management and ecosystem function, regardless of the type of grazing animal. Grazing management approaches must recognise the needs of the producers that rely on grazing. To be sustainable and continue to provide benefits, grazing must be both economically and ecologically sound.

It is important the livestock producers understand the functioning of rangelands in order to properly manage it. Not all native prairie is in healthy

condition, and with more education we believe that the percentage of remaining prairie in healthy condition could increase significantly.

Being able to measure and track changes in the condition of our native prairie is difficult, largely due to the fact that there is inconsistency in monitoring techniques in the province. When all agencies begin to use the same monitoring techniques, it will be possible to provide a good baseline of information regarding the actual state of native prairie in Saskatchewan.

Ranching provides an excellent example of a sustainable use of native prairie. Ranchers maintain large tracts of native prairie, and the native prairie has sustained ranching families and communities for generations. The PCAP Partnership recognizes the importance of active management in maintaining a healthy prairie ecosystem and is the united voice to say, “Yes, it is important to all of our partners.”

Objectives 2009-2013

Increased land manager knowledge and adoption of grazing management practices that benefit both prairie ecosystems and economic returns;

Improved knowledge of current range health and range health trends in Saskatchewan; and

Improved scientific understanding of the role of grazing management in prairie ecosystem health & biodiversity.

Strategies 2009-2013

- Communicate with public and private grazing land managers about grazing management practices and their benefits



Photo by Tracy Harrison

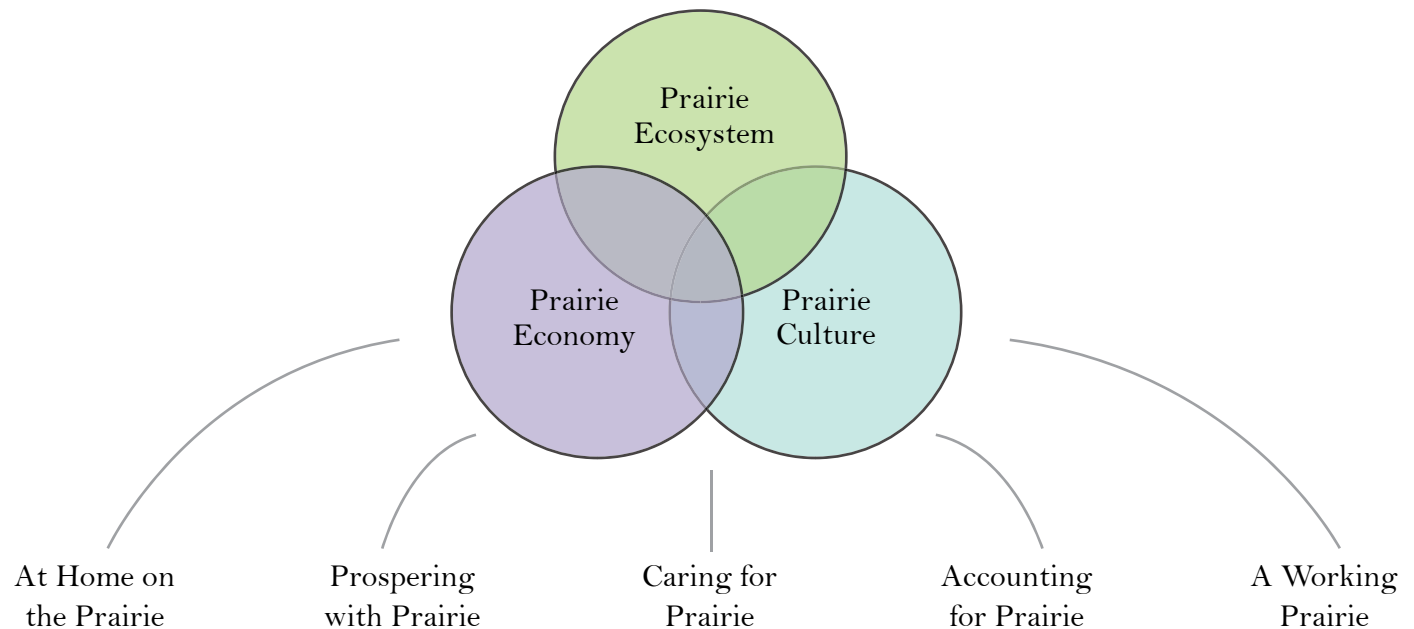
- Facilitate integrated approaches to program and policy development related to grazing management
- Improve range health aggregated data storage and sharing
- Coordinate comprehensive and standardized range health data collection
- Improve our knowledge of relationships between grazing management and wildlife populations

Measuring our Success 2009-2013

- Public and private land manager knowledge of best grazing management practices and their benefits
- Coverage and frequency of range health monitoring
- New knowledge of relationship between grazing management and prairie ecosystems

Meeting our Goals

To achieve an integrated approach to prairie conservation, each of the Focus Areas addresses all three of the PCAP Partnership goals.



PCAP Partnership Focus Areas 2009-2013

Meeting our Ecosystem Goal

Native prairie ecosystem health and biodiversity are conserved and restored as part of a functioning landscape

At Home on the Prairie:
Connecting to Native Prairie

- ☐ Building a foundation of public support for prairie conservation

Prospering with Prairie:
Sustainable Land Use and Development

- ☐ Promoting consideration of native prairie conservation and restoration in land use and development planning

Caring for Prairie:
Managing Invasive Alien Plant Species

- ☐ Addressing the significant threat of invasive alien plant species to prairie ecosystem health and biodiversity from a whole-system, landscape perspective

Accounting for Prairie:
Valuing Ecological Goods and Services

- ☐ Supporting the maintenance and restoration of native prairie with economic analysis

A Working Prairie:
Grazing Management in Prairie Ecosystems

- ☐ Working toward continued adoption of grazing management systems that improve and sustain the health and function of native prairie

Meeting our Economic Goal

Sustainable uses of native prairie improve the livelihoods of Saskatchewan people

At Home on the Prairie:
Connecting to Native Prairie

- Increasing interest in and support for local native prairie products, including livestock, and local prairie recreation and tourism opportunities

Prospering with Prairie:
Sustainable Land Use and Development

- Recognizing the importance of development and its contribution to economic prosperity while working to ensure its sustainability

Caring for Prairie:
Managing Invasive Alien Plant Species

- Reducing the economic impact of invasive alien plant species on the livelihoods of sustainable users of native prairie

Accounting for Prairie:
Valuing Ecological Goods and Services

- Aiming to understand and quantify the economic value of the ecological goods and services provided by native prairie so that we can make strategic economic decisions around land use practices

A Working Prairie:
Grazing Management in Prairie Ecosystems

- Promoting the maintenance and understanding of livestock production as a profitable, sustainable and wise use of native prairie

Meeting our Cultural Goal

Native prairie is a valued part of our culture and identity as Saskatchewan people

At Home on the Prairie:
Connecting to Native Prairie

- Promoting pride in our native prairie and a Saskatchewan cultural identity that is closely tied to native prairie

Prospering with Prairie:
Sustainable Land Use and Development

- Increasing awareness of native prairie conservation issues across a variety of sectors and interest groups

Caring for Prairie:
Managing Invasive Alien Plant Species

- Reinforcing the value of protecting native prairie and the understanding of the distinction between alien and native plants

Accounting for Prairie:
Valuing Ecological Goods and Services

- Assigning an economic value to native prairie that adds to our full valuation of native prairie

A Working Prairie:
Grazing Management in Prairie Ecosystems

- Supporting understanding and valuing of the culture and lifestyle of the livestock production and ranching community

A group of people, including an adult and several children, are walking away from the camera through a field of tall, dry grass. The trees in the background have yellow and green leaves, indicating autumn. The people are holding hands, suggesting a group walk or hike. The text "Together we are" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Together
we are

making it
happen

Appendix 1: *Core and Program Support*

Core Funding Support

Cattle Market Deductions Fund

Ducks Unlimited Canada

Ministry of Agriculture

Ministry of Environment

Program Support

- ☐ Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada – Agri-Environment Services Branch** and Semiarid Prairie Agricultural Research Centre**
- ☐ Carl Block Memorial Stewardship Education Fund*
- ☐ Cattle Market Deductions Fund*
- ☐ Ducks Unlimited Canada***
- ☐ Environment Canada – Canadian Wildlife Service**
- ☐ Fisheries and Oceans Canada**
- ☐ Government of Canada – Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk*
- ☐ Horned Cattle Purchases Fund*
- ☐ Ministry of Agriculture (SK)***

- ☐ Ministry of Environment (SK)***
- ☐ Ministry of Environment (SK) - Fish & Wildlife Development Fund (FWDF)*
- ☐ Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport (SK) – Royal Saskatchewan Museum**
- ☐ Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan Inc.**
- ☐ Nature Conservancy of Canada**
- ☐ Nature Saskatchewan***
- ☐ Parks Canada – Grasslands National Park of Canada**
- ☐ Saskatchewan Burrowing Owl Interpretative Centre**
- ☐ Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists – Saskatoon Branch*
- ☐ Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association**
- ☐ Saskatchewan Watershed Authority***
- ☐ Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation**
- ☐ SaskEnergy*
- ☐ SaskPower*
- ☐ University of Regina*
- ☐ University of Saskatchewan – College of Agriculture and Bioresources*

* funding Partner (cash)
 ** funding Partner (in-kind)
 *** funding Partner (both)

Appendix 2: *Implementation Strategy*

PCAP Partnership Structure

The functions of the partnership are structured around a Steering Committee, an Executive Committee, and a number of Focus Groups.

The PCAP Steering Committee is comprised of representatives of each of the Partner organizations and is responsible for the overall direction of the Partnership activities.

An Executive Committee, responsible for oversight of business and operational matters, is made up of the Chair plus three or four Partner representatives. The Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association has chaired the PCAP Partnership since it was launched in 1998.

Focus Groups are established by the Steering Committee to deal with special projects or with focus areas identified in the five-year framework. Focus Groups are responsible for the annual work plans.

Besides outlining the planned Partnership activities, the work plans guide communications, program delivery and budgetary and fund-raising strategies lead by the PCAP office.

The Steering Committee meets twice per year in order to approve and set the direction for the upcoming year, discuss the progress of the Focus Groups and other PCAP initiatives, and review outcomes of the annual work plan. When the five-year Framework is nearing completion, the Steering Committee will undertake a Framework review and renewal process. The Executive Committee and Focus Groups each meet an additional two times per year. Each committee of the PCAP uses a consensus-based approach to decision making.

How the 2009-2013 PCAP Partnership will work:

The following activities will help to ensure sustained momentum towards the delivery of this Plan:

1. Obtain formal endorsement of the 2009-2013 PCAP Framework

A senior official from each PCAP Partner agency were asked to formally approve this Framework. This approval signifies support of the Partnership Mission and Principles and commitment toward achieving the Vision, Goals and Focus Area objectives and strategies outlined in the Framework. An official signing ceremony further demonstrates the significance of the PCAP Partnership and the role of the various PCAP Partners in its implementation.

2. Establish Focus Groups

Interim Focus Groups made up of Partnership Steering Committee members have been put in place to develop this five year Framework. In order to move forward with annual work planning and implementation around each of the Focus Areas, membership on the Focus Groups is confirmed on an annual basis. Focus Groups can include non-Steering Committee and non-Partner representatives. The critical criterion for membership is having interest or expertise in the prairie conservation issue being addressed by the Focus Group.

3. Develop, approve and implement annual work plans

The Focus Groups develop annual work plans that outline in detail the activities to be undertaken by the PCAP Partnership on a yearly basis. Each of the work plans is developed by a Focus Group and is based on the five year objectives and strategies identified in the framework. Each work plan identifies actions for the upcoming year, measures of success, timelines, and involved agencies.

The annual planning process is outlined as follows:

- Two weeks prior to the annual Plan Evaluation and Renewal Meeting, each Focus Group Lead submits a draft annual work plan to the PCAP Office.
- The PCAP Office compiles the draft work plans for discussion and approval at the annual Plan Evaluation and Renewal Meeting.
- The individual work plans are compiled as a PCAP annual work plan by the end of December and be an addendum to the five-year framework

- The finalized PCAP annual work plan is made public.
- 4. Evaluate and report on progress annually**
Partner updates are developed and distributed annually to provide an inventory of Partner activities and summarize progress and shortfalls in annual work plan implementation. The evaluation process is outlined as follows:
 - Two weeks prior to the annual Plan Evaluation and Renewal Meeting, each Focus Group Lead submits a progress report to the PCAP Office that identifies their Group's activities and provides an evaluation of progress relative to the Focus Area success measures and outcomes as identified in the annual work plan
 - The PCAP Office compiles the progress reports for discussion and finalization at the annual Plan Evaluation and Renewal Meeting - thereafter the reports are made public.
- 5. Secure financial and in-kind support from PCAP Partners and other sponsors**
Adequate financial and in-kind support is required to maintain operations of the PCAP Partnership. Many PCAP Partners contribute funding and in-kind support for the PCAP Partnership and additional funding is provided through federal granting agencies and other sponsors

6. Maintain a home office, a full-time manager and support staff

The PCAP Office operates out of the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association Office in Regina. A full-time manager, part-time staff, and technical support are required to maintain current levels of communication and programming.

7. Welcome Partners capable of contributing to progress on the PCAP framework to join the Partnership

Ongoing recruitment of Partners is essential to the development of an inclusive forum that is able to appreciate and address issues related to the entire complement of native prairie-related issues and values. The recruitment of additional Partners also aids the PCAP Partnership in promoting awareness of its vision and goals to broader audiences and can enhance opportunities for funding, in-kind support and/or collaboration on objectives or actions of mutual concern. New Partners must be a recognized organization, agency or association and support the intent of the PCAP Partnership Framework, including the Mission, Principles, Vision, and Goals.

Acknowledgements

Throughout the duration of the 2003-2008 Prairie Conservation Action Plan (PCAP), committee meetings experienced high levels of attendance and participation from Partner representatives. Allen Patkau (2000-2005), Michael Burgess (2005-2007) and Ray McDougald (2007-present) of the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association did an outstanding job of chairing PCAP meetings throughout the course of the last Plan. Karyn Scalise, the PCAP Manager from 2000-2008, was instrumental in the development of the 2003-2008 and 2009-2013 Plans and PCAP as a whole, making the Partnership what it is today.

The new 2009-2013 Framework is a result of the hard work and dedication of all the PCAP Partners under the leadership of the renewal committee. The executive committee, manager and partner representatives played an extremely important role in the development of the new Framework and should be commended for the final result.

The 2009-2013 Renewal Committee consisted of Chuck Deschamps/Joel Peterson (Ducks Unlimited Canada), Pat Fargey (Parks Canada-

Grasslands National Park of Canada), Bill Henley (Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture) and Lesley Hall (Saskatchewan Watershed Authority). Ray McDougald (Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association) and Karyn Scalise (PCAP) were ex-officio members by virtue of their roles as PCAP Chair and PCAP Manager respectively. The Renewal Committee secured the services of Diane Fletcher and Randy Robinson who worked in conjunction with the renewal committee, and facilitated the first two of the three renewal workshops.

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*June 2009 – Prairie Conservation
Action Plan (PCAP)*