

Rare Plants and Ranchers - A Stewardship Solution

Rare Plants and Ranchers is a project of the **Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan (NPSS)** and aims to build on Nature Saskatchewan's Rare Plant Rescue program by working with the 66 stewards and 66,719 acres involved to develop site specific beneficial management plans for plant species at risk (SAR) using an ecosystem-based, multi-species approach.



Here's how it works:

The NPSS visits participating landowners and conducts a landowner interview to determine historical and present day factors such as grazing and fire regimes, invasive species threats, management issues or any other pertinent information that would give context to the current SAR situation on the land. Following the interview, a site assessment is conducted to gather information on the current condition of the land through a series of range and riparian health assessments, photo plots, invasive species assessments, visits to SAR populations and anything else that could contribute relevant information toward the development of a management plan. Using the information collected, a site specific management plan is produced and given to the landowner.

These management plans contain all of the information collected through the oral interview and site assessment, and also list a series of recommendations to benefit SAR based upon the findings. All recommendations use the best available knowledge, follow Recovery Strategy recommendations, and are drafted in consultation with the landowners and SAR experts. Recommendations in the management plans are drafted using a holistic approach, taking the effects on the landowner's current operations and other SAR (including wildlife) into consideration.

Then what happens?

Ongoing logistical support and dollar for dollar cost sharing from NPSS helps the landowner implement the plan's recommendations. For 2013, the NPSS has a total of \$10,000 available to participating stewards to implement recommendations from the plan. After the recommendations have been implemented, ongoing monitoring will reassess the land and SAR populations to determine the effects of the recommendations on the SAR populations and habitat, and management practices would be adjusted accordingly (adaptive management).

What are the benefits?

There are many benefits associated with this project, and include:

- SAR and SAR habitat will benefit by reduced or eliminated threats, increased beneficial influences and more informed, engaged stewards.
- Landowners will benefit by having the latest information regarding their land and a customized, comprehensive management plan for SAR. They also have access to match funding and ongoing logistical support to help improve their operations to benefit SAR.
- Participating stewards get a free membership to the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan, which includes a quarterly newsletter.
- Data collected by our project will also update known occurrence data, contribute new SAR occurrence data and may address knowledge gaps such as identifying trends or factors that help explain the presence or absence of SAR in particular areas.
- Our work with the landowners may also help secure additional SAR habitat in that they will receive information on conservation easements along with their management plans and will be given logistical support in helping to establish an easement if they choose to do so.

How can I participate?

All you have to do is call Chet Neufeld at the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan Office at (306) 668-3940 or e-mail info@npss.sk.ca. The program is free and we do all the work! Ideally, you should have one of the following plant species at risk on your land:

- Buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*)
- Dwarf Woolly-heads (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*)
- Hairy Prairie-clover (*Dalea villosa* var. *villosa*)
- Slender Mouse-ear-cress (*Halimolobos virgata*)
- Small-flowered Sand-verbena (*Tripterocalyx micranthus*)
- Smooth Goosefoot (*Chenopodium subglabrum*)
- Tiny Cryptantha (*Cryptantha minima*)
- Western Spiderwort (*Tradescantia occidentalis*)



Searching for Smooth Goosefoot
(*Chenopodium subglabrum*)!



Small-flowered Sand-Verbena
(*Tripterocalyx micranthus*).