Alberta: A Snapshot of 2018

Jurisdictional Update

- 58% non-profit
- 21% provincial
- 15% private
- 6% federal

Geography

Crown of the Continent

Province of Alberta

Grassland biome of Alberta

Milk River Watershed in Alberta Canada

Canada

Transboundary

Alberta prairie and parkland regions

Southern Alberta

Edmonton, Whitehorse, Yellowknife, Riverbend & Cardiff

South and west of Calgary

Red Deer and North Saskatchewan River Basins

Alberta Grassland Conservation

- Land securements, stewardship and easements
- Protected areas, public land management and policy
- Land use planning
- Ecological tools
- Resource development, infrastructure, roads
- Implementation of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan – land footprint planning, Heritage Rangelands,
- Wild Spaces 2020
- Education
- Relationship building on foothills fescue landscapes
- Species at Risk management
- Control of invasive & noxious weeds
- Wetlands management
- Range and wildlife surveys and monitoring
- Watershed Resiliency and Restoration, Watershed Education
- Weed pulls
- Grazing management to mimic bison
- Surface cover classification for remnant native grasslands in Crown
- Habitat Conservation Strategies

What's New?

- Better integrate of Species at Risk (e.g. Greater Sage Grouse) into property level planning and to build on partnerships that will allow more involvement in on-the-ground species level actions - Nature Conservancy Canada
- New parks. New Public Land Use Zones. New tools (Conservation Site Assessment). Conservation and Reclamation Standards for Renewable Energy Operations – Alberta Environment and Parks
- Changes in perspectives of some clients, having then recognize the importance of grassland conservation.. – Wood Environmental and Infrastructure Solutions

- Opportunity to engage the public for support of the Alberta's government initiative to expand and reclassify the Twin River Heritage Rangeland area. They feel they were successful with a positive response from the public at large for protection.- Alberta Wilderness Association
- New grasslands focused education program delivered in Southern Alberta – Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
- Enhanced dialogue with Tribes and First Nations as to how to move from a racial and historical 'us/them' to a larger 'us.' – Crown Round Table

- Science related to waterfowl productivity and ecosystem services, grassland situational analysis. – Alberta North American Waterfowl Management Plan
- Significant reduction in noxious weeds in treated areas – Department of National Defense
- Native grassland detailed site assessments, pipeline assessments – Jacobs
- Expanded Watershed Restoration and Resiliency Program to eastern reaches of the watershed, improved communication with Montana partners and finalizing a watershed film project – Milk River Watershed Council Canada

- Addition of soil health and biology measurement, continuance of Land EKG monitoring, advanced water pumping – Round Rock Ranching
- Concerted effort to find ways to bring back native fescues through research – Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area
- Identifying unique plant communities on specific soil types and landforms in the Grassland and Parkland Natural Regions of Alberta. Mapping surface covers particularly invasion of woody vegetation into open native grasslands - Resource Informatics Unit, Red Deer/ North Saskatchewan Region, Alberta Environment and Park

- Partnering with Alberta Parks on providing higher protection on pieces of native grasslands on public lands- the designation would be a Heritage Rangeland- protecting native grasslands with ranching as the prime management tool – Alberta Environment and Parks – Planning Branch
- Renewable energy, change analysis, public outreach project – Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum
- Update research done on the 60 prairie listed species - Canadian Forage and Grassland Association
- Worked with ranchers on an additional 100,000 acres in 2018 - MultiSAR

Wins!!

- Nature Conservancy Canada has connected with Andrew Jakes and have tried to incorporate his research into our property management for pronghorn movement.
- Information sharing
- Obtaining information and connecting with agencies and stakeholders in initial program development phases, Transboundary Grasslands Partnership workshop and core team participation

Milk River Watershed Council Canada

- “We improved relationships with South of the Divide Conservation Action Program, directly influencing our 3 year strategic plan and connecting grassland and producer incentive programs. Also have since partnered with the Milk River Watershed Alliance of Montana on a watershed educational film project as a result of the Saskatchewan workshop.” _ Milk River Watershed Council Canada

Recommendations

- Distribution list or common website for updates. Monthly or quarterly webinars.
- List of partners and assistance they provide.
- Database of projects or some kind of journal
- Additional lessons regarding improved delivery and messaging of grassland education can be learned from other partners ie) Nature Saskatchewan looking forward to inventories of Educational resources so we are not reinventing programming
- Share information (i.e. field data and classifications) with others involved in similar projects identifying plant communities on similar and different ecosites.

Emerging Projects and Trends

- Wind farm and solar developments
- Continue to engage with Canada's federal government on securing long-term conservation for the former Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Association (PFRA) pastures in southern Saskatchewan. These are critical lands required for recovery of federally listed species at risk and together with lands in Alberta and Montana, form one of the largest semi-intact blocks of native grassland on the Northern Glaciated Plains.
- Canada Pathway to Target 1. Education programs. Indigenous protected areas Indigenous guardian programs
- Conservation of regional native prairie landscapes and grassland songbirds
- Alignment of reclamation criteria between provinces and states

- The grassland and wetland linkages for conservation purposes - Prairie Habitat Joint Venture
- Potential for performance based stewardship incentives
- Big tent approach to focus on high value Species at Risk corridors
- Grass banking or stewardship credit incentives from Government of Alberta or other partners like Nature Conservancy Canada or Alberta Conservation Association
- Watershed interaction across boundaries (common projects/guidelines)
- Technical expertise sharing (eg: Cows and Fish working into Saskatchewan)
- Policy coordination
- Work on connecting corridors between the three jurisdictions – possibly the Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum

Thank you!

sasha@albertapcf.org