



PRAIRIE CONSERVATION FORUM

alberta prairie conservation

[2026-2030]

ACTION PLAN



The Prairie Conservation Forum wishes to thank:



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Executive Summary

The 8th Prairie Conservation Action Plan (PCAP) is a coordinated, multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at preserving and enhancing the unique prairie ecosystems of Alberta. It is developed through collaboration among government agencies, Indigenous communities, conservation organizations, academic institutions, landowners, and industry partners. The action plan outlines a strategic approach to conserve native grasslands, wetlands, and species at risk habitats across the prairie region of the province. Our vision is that the biological diversity of native prairie and parkland ecosystems is secure under the mindful and committed stewardship of all Albertans. The 2026-2030 PCAP builds on the work from previous PCAPs and continues to provide an ongoing profile for prairie and parkland conservation initiatives.

Alberta's grassland and parkland natural regions are part of a much larger grassland ecosystem, the North American Great Plains that extends from Alberta, south through the central United States, and into northern Mexico.

The PCAP recognizes the ecological, cultural and economic value of Alberta's prairie landscapes, which support biodiversity, provide carbon storage, regulate water, and sustain agricultural livelihoods. However, these ecosystems face increasing threats from land conversion, habitat fragmentation, invasive species and climate change.

This edition of the PCAP focuses efforts around three primary strategies: to complete, or further, inventories and assessments of native biodiversity in Alberta; to share knowledge and foster a dialogue around prairie conservation; and to promote stewardship of native prairie and parkland ecosystems. Four important long-term environmental outcomes are also necessary to bring the PCAP vision to reality: maintain large native prairie and parkland landscapes; conserve connecting corridors for biodiversity; protect isolated native habitats; and collaborate on transboundary and cross-cultural connections. These outcomes require close linkage to management and planning decisions by all levels of government and private landowners. Our engagement approach to achieving all outcomes includes educational and awareness programming, as well as providing web-based access to prairie conservation information.

The Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum takes a coordinating and advisory role, respecting the individual mandates and interests of its members. We recognize that the success of achieving our vision relies upon PCF members capacity to implement PCF programs and activities in their respective organizations. Implementation of the PCAP requires an involved and active membership including the PCF Board of Directors. The PCF welcomes you to join us on this journey.

Contents

4	Foreword
5	Preface
6	Alberta's Native Prairie and Parkland Landscape
8	Balancing Ecosystem Health and Function, Human Values and Economic Well-being
8	Ecosystem Health and Function
9	Human Values
10	Economic Well-being
11	History of a Prairie Conservation Strategy
12	Strategic Direction
15	Outcome 1: Maintain Large Native Prairie and Parkland Landscapes
17	Outcome 2: Conserve Connecting Corridors for Biodiversity
19	Outcome 3: Protect Isolated Native Habitats
20	Outcome 4: Promote Transboundary and Cross-Cultural Connections and Partnerships
20	Education and Communication Approaches
22	Guiding Principles of the Prairie Conservation Forum
23	Building Capacity in the Prairie Conservation Forum
24	Implementation of the PCAP
24	Future Considerations
25	Highlights from 2021-2025 PCAP
28	Glossary
31	List of Acronyms
31	Endnotes
32	Prairie Conservation Forum (current membership)
33	PCF Publications
34	Photo Credits

Figures

6	Figure 1: North American Great Plains
6	Figure 2: Northwestern Glaciated Plains General Land Cover
7	Figure 3: Alberta Prairie and Parkland: Natural Regions and Native Prairie
8	Figure 4. Alberta's Native Grasslands Human Footprint by Sectors
13	Figure 5: Native Biodiversity: High Value Landscapes in Prairie and Parkland Alberta
24	Figure 6: Members Contributing to the PCAP

Message from the 2025-26 Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum Board of Directors

The grasslands of Alberta are home to a diversity of native plant and wildlife species, and host over 75% of Alberta's species at risk. A dynamic, working landscape, grasslands are also where we work, live and recreate. Working together, we can keep Alberta's native biodiversity habitats strong and healthy, further advance reclamation practices, promote grassland ecosystem services like carbon sequestration, clean air and water, climate and environmental policies, while still allowing the sustainable enjoyment of our natural heritage.

Since 1989, the Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum (PCF) has contributed to the environmental guidelines that establish best management practices for sustainable development on our native grasslands. The PCF has been informing and facilitating conversations and partnerships centered on prairie conservation for nearly four decades.

The PCF has been instrumental in supporting environmental stewardship and conservation; providing valuable information on environmental knowledge gaps; initiating, utilizing and promoting tools including the State of the Prairie report, the Grassland Vegetation Inventory, and working with private landholders to maintain larger tracts of native landscapes for conservation of biodiversity. We hope to ensure the continued good stewardship of grasslands through our engagement with youth, communities, and current and future grassland practitioners about grasslands and the services they provide.

Through the 2026-2030 Prairie Conservation Action Plan, the PCF continues its collaborative approach among over 50 stakeholders and transboundary partners, to promote stewardship of native grasslands with its rich diversity of fish, wildlife, species at risk and prairie vegetation, continuing research on connecting corridors and isolated grassland habitats, and through these, conserve and manage our native grasslands legacy.

We thank past and current PCF chairs, committees, and members for their ongoing direction, progression and promotion of the value of the PCF and native prairie conservation. Our thanks also go to the PCF secretariates and coordinators for supporting the actions and day-to-day needs of the PCF. We endure our commitment to the conservation of Alberta's prairie and parkland regions. Through this renewed Prairie Conservation Action Plan and an inclusive approach, we are committed to help ensure these environments continue to provide ecological, cultural and economic benefits to present and future generations. We look forward to celebrating our 40th year, while preparing for the next 40 years.

Preface



The Prairie Conservation Forum (PCF) has been working collaboratively for over 35 years towards the conservation of prairie landscapes and species habitat through the development and implementation of Prairie Conservation Action Plans (PCAPs). The 2026-2030 PCAP is a 5-year action plan that builds on the work from previous PCAPs in an outcome based and focused action plan. Highlights of the successes from the 2021-2025 PCAP include:

- Completing a 30-year change analysis of native vegetation cover within the Grassland and Parkland Natural Regions of Alberta. The findings of this work confirmed that 45.7% and 21.4%, respectively, of native vegetation remains within the corresponding Natural Regions. The analysis compared imagery data from 1990-2020 and supports the need to focus on awareness of native grassland conservation that the PCF strives towards while continuing to help inform decisions that protect remaining grasslands.
- Creating an interactive map that centralizes information from government, academic and conservation organizations.
- Developing a framework to provide a standardized process to

map isolated habitats for species at risk in the Grassland Natural Region of Alberta. Habitats were mapped for 12 species at risk.

- Continuing to support the Transboundary Grassland Partnership and associated workshop, which has evolved into an annual event rotating between Alberta, Saskatchewan and Montana. The workshop continues to gather multi-jurisdictional organizations across provincial and international borders to collaborate on shared visions and common goals in prairie conservation.
- Organizing the 13th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference which was held at the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo. Participants from all three prairie provinces and other jurisdictions attended the conference and shared their prairie conservation research and personal stories.
- Delivering a strong interactive educational program called “Deep Roots” into classrooms to educate youth on the importance of native grasslands.
- Coordinating the Alberta Range Stewardship Course annually to provide field training in core range management principles,

plant identification and lessons learned to support continued stewardship of rangelands.

- Continued support of the MULTISAR program that focuses on landscape level conservation work in southern Alberta.

The strength of the PCF lies within its diverse membership and the committed and passionate individuals that choose to lead on PCF projects. This is demonstrated by the critical prairie conservation work recently undertaken by the PCF.

The 2026-2030 PCAP is the eighth (8th) edition of documenting and charting the course of continued and expanded conservation efforts for native grasslands. As actions from previous PCAPs are completed, we have identified new needs and provided direction to move conservation work forward. I invite and encourage others to join the PCF in supporting the approaches and actions identified in the proceeding pages. We trust that all Albertans will embrace the shared vision of conserving this critical piece of our landscape.

Alvin First Rider
2025-2026 Chair
Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum

Alberta's Native Prairie and Parkland Landscape

Alberta's native prairie and parkland landscapes are the most northerly extensions of the North American Great Plains (Figure 1).

This includes portions of the Northwestern Glaciated Plains (Figure 2), the Cypress Uplands and the Aspen Parkland of the Northern Glaciated Plains. The climate is largely semiarid and is located between the cooler and more humid boreal forest and the drier Northwestern Great Plains.

Alberta's grassland and parkland natural regions (Figure 3) are rich in biodiversity and have significant heritage value, while

providing ongoing ecological, cultural and economic benefits for all people who live, farm, ranch and recreate in Alberta. The extensive tracts of public and private rangelands in central and southern Alberta are home to both large and small areas of native mixed-grass ecosystems. Sustaining the ecological function of native landscapes throughout prairie and parkland Alberta and adjoining areas, as well as maintaining the connectivity of our landscape within the larger Northwestern Glaciated Plains, provides a highly valuable long-term assurance of

environmental quality for the citizens of Alberta.

Fostering a stewardship ethic among all current and future users of native prairie rangelands is critical to the success of prairie conservation efforts in Alberta. It demands a comprehensive understanding of ecological and economic relationships and an ability to resist persistent pressures to fragment land and intensify land use for short-term economic gains. A strong stewardship ethic strives to maintain long-term values and benefits.

Figure 1:
North American
Great Plains



Figure 2:
Northwestern Glaciated Plains
General Land Cover

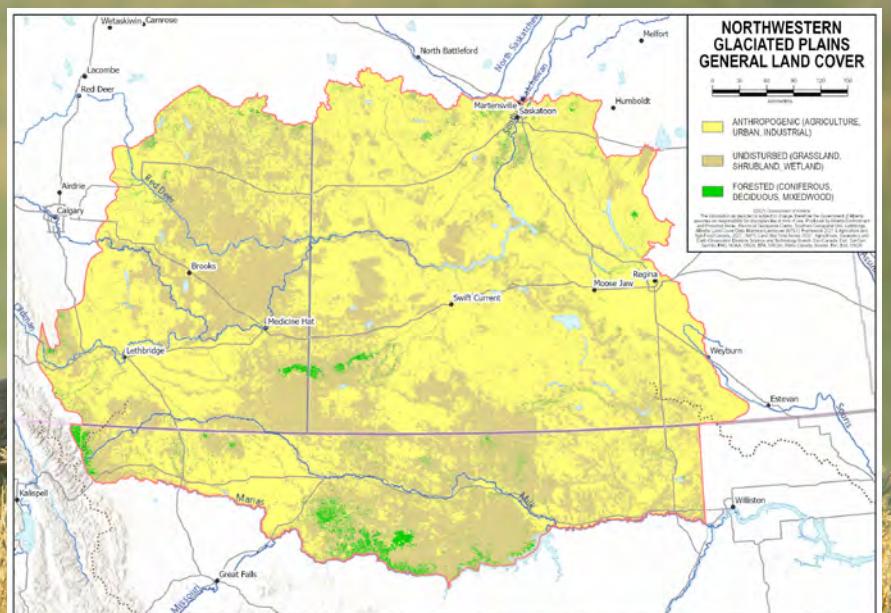
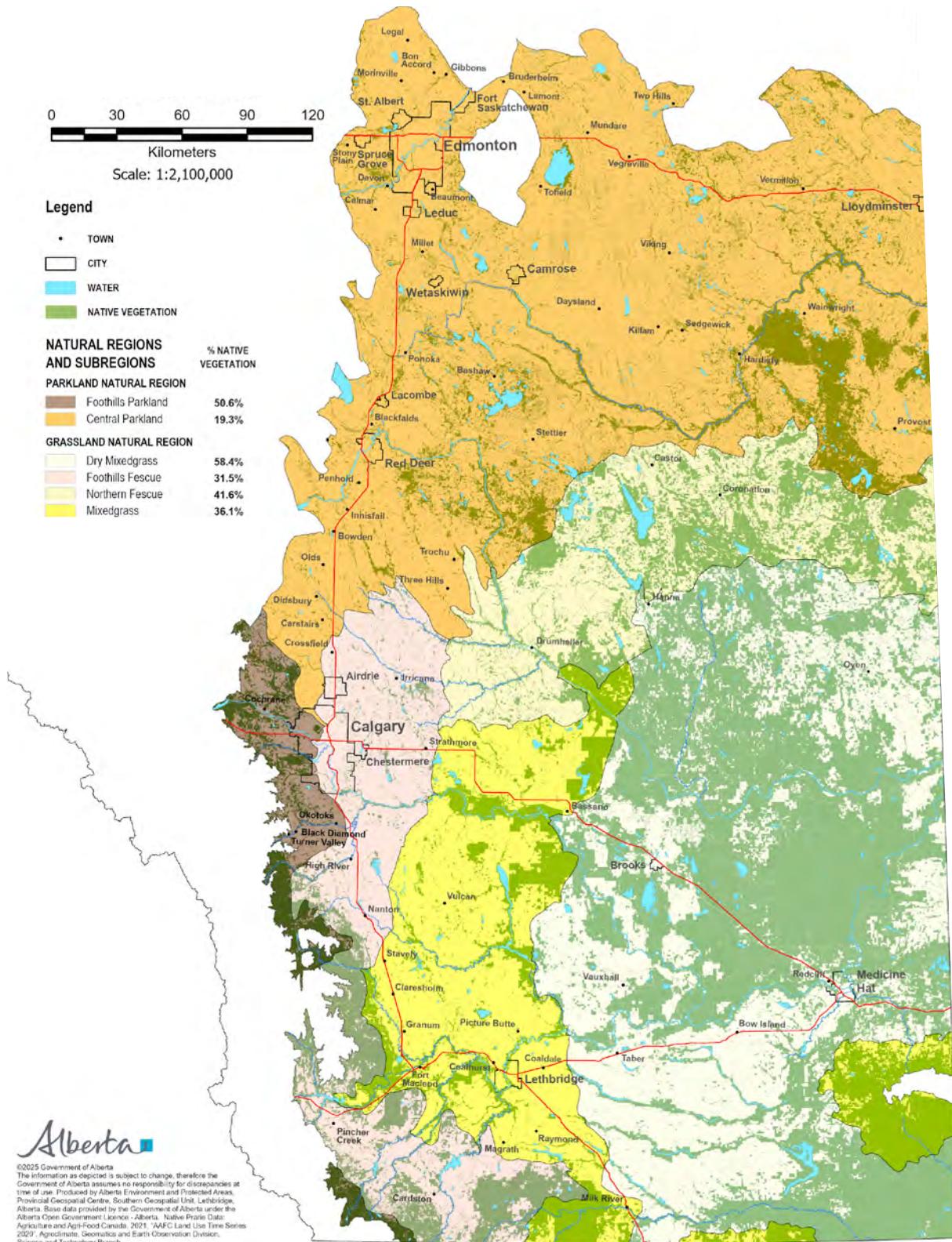


Figure 3:
Alberta Prairie and Parkland:
Natural Regions and Native Prairie



Balancing Ecosystem Health and Function, Human Values and Economic Well-being



The prairie region of Alberta is under intense pressure from competing land uses. This region contains the majority of our agricultural land, expanding cities and towns, and attracts a variety of industrial use activities including oil and gas, mining, and renewable energy development. In this landscape, native prairie is often undervalued and lost.

Historical development has caused the loss of an estimated 75 percent or more of Alberta's native prairie, and more prairie is converted for other uses each year (Figure 4). Many of the remaining prairie

sections are heavily fragmented. As the native prairie and parkland ecosystems are compromised, damaged or irreversibly altered, the biodiversity and benefits that the natural ecosystems support are markedly affected and diminished.

The Government of Alberta has recognized the challenge of balancing competing land uses, and regional planning is used to address this challenge. The South Saskatchewan Regional Plan, which emphasized a need to conserve native grasslands and set strategies for responsible development, is undergoing a

10-year review (2024-25). The North Saskatchewan Regional Plan is awaiting development. These plans can provide a framework to help manage competing interests in Alberta's prairie and parkland regions.

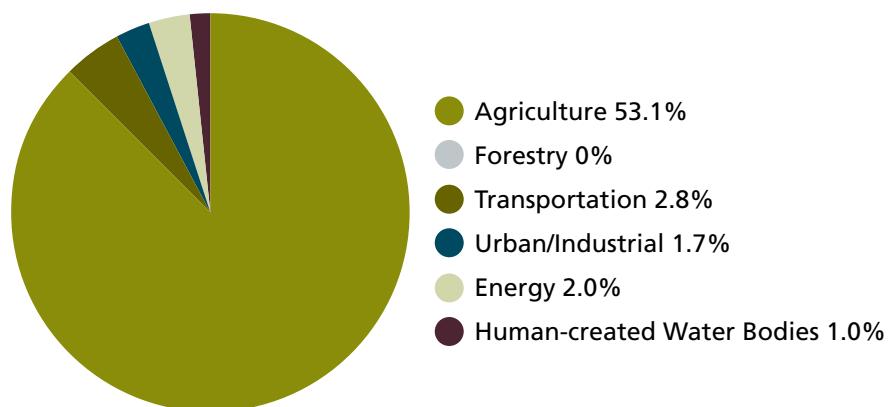
The PCF recognizes the complex and competing interests on the prairie, and is committed to represent diverse perspectives and work collaboratively to balance these interests and ensure sustainable resource use.

Ecosystem Health and Function

Healthy native prairie provides many benefits including important habitat for a range of grassland wildlife and plant species, protecting and sourcing productive soil, filtering air and water, recycling nutrients, buffering against drought and flood, storing carbon, and supporting pollinators and

Figure 4. Alberta's Native Grasslands Human Footprint Percentages by Sectors (2021 data).

Source: Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute (ABMI) - The Status of Human Footprint in Alberta. Accessed: May 15, 2025
Grassland Natural Regions



other beneficial insects. There is increasing recognition of the significant role prairie ecosystems have in supporting environmental and human health.

Prairie ecosystems can play a major role in mitigating the impacts of climate change. Grasslands store extensive amounts of carbon, mostly in plant root systems. Prairies are resilient to temperature extremes, and the ecosystem is adapted to survive natural disasters such as floods and fires, which are expected to become more common with a warming climate. Further, a diverse and healthy prairie can help to store and purify water, reducing the intensity of floods and droughts. Enhanced stewardship of our grasslands will be vital in a changing climate.

DID YOU KNOW?

Healthy rangelands can contain up to 200 tonnes per hectare of carbon that is removed from the atmosphere, with estimates of perhaps two to three billion tonnes of carbon within the uncultivated grasslands of western Canada.

Source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016706122001173>

Management programs built on collaboration are key to keeping this vital ecosystem healthy and functional. Two programs associated with PCF are the Multiple Species at Risk Program (MULTISAR) and the Transboundary Grasslands Partnership (TGP). MULTISAR, a



voluntary program working with landowners to manage land and associated species at risk, has been effective in implementing habitat enhancement projects and other sustainability measures on private and Crown land. TGP works to build connections, increase cooperation and share information across jurisdictions, and holds an annual workshop on sustainable land and resource management for native prairie.

However, there remain threats to the remnant prairie. Irrigation expansion and the construction of reservoirs can damage or flood portions of natural grasslands. Expansion of cities, roads and other infrastructure continues to convert, degrade or fragment ecosystems. As PCF's Alberta State of the Prairie reports^{1,2} have shown, the province continues to lose native prairie, although this decline has slowed in recent years. In Alberta, it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment and Protected Areas to assess cumulative effects, address and mitigate environmental impacts, manage natural resources

responsibly and ensure sustainable development. The Ministry of Forestry and Parks shares similar responsibilities including effective stewardship practices and partnerships on Alberta's provincial Crown lands, and both ministries work in alignment with each other.

Human Values

Understanding of the prairie ecosystem and the value it provides is shifting. Independent agencies of the Alberta government, such as the Alberta Utilities Commission, are requiring projects to avoid native grassland. Some other programs are attempting to assess the value of native grassland, and provide incentives or payment for ecosystem services, such as carbon sequestration.

Yet, economic development is still frequently valued above sustainable grassland use. Many of the remaining grasslands have been fragmented due to energy and resource extraction. Wildlife corridors offering connectivity between habitats have been heavily intersected by roads, trails and other linear features. PCF has worked to identify corridors and isolated habitats in the landscape, and to educate the public on the importance of native prairie through information sharing, conferences, presentations and courses.

Conservation of native prairie is affected by federal, provincial and municipal policies including boards, agencies and organizations working in the grassland and parkland regions of southern and central Alberta. Sustainable

management is complicated by the private and public ownership of lands, which require a diverse set of collaborative responses and strategies to be efficient. There is a need to continue promoting value in and prioritizing our native prairie ecosystems, and increasing public understanding of their direct impact on critical resources for human health and well-being (i.e., clean water, soil, air).

Economic Well-Being

Renewable and sustainable use of land is the best way to ensure economic well-being while supporting ecosystem health and diversity. Traditional ranching is a vital industry in the prairie region and allows for the production of considerable economic benefits while helping ensure the protection of native grassland.

Increasing demand for food may create additional pressure to convert grasslands for crop growth and irrigation expansion. Converted and irrigated lands are perceived to hold higher value, and cultivated crops can provide higher economic returns, increasing the economic benefit of converting native prairie.

Energy and mineral resources are also found in the prairie region. The prairies are easier to access, and provide an abundance of renewable resources (i.e., wind, sun). Although renewable energy projects have been recently instructed to avoid native prairie, associated infrastructure such as transmission lines can still fragment habitats at the larger landscape scale. Similarly, oil and gas developments continue to affect the region, including through abandoned wells that need to be remediated and reclaimed.

Agricultural, energy and other resource decisions are heavily impacted by global economics, politics, social factors and regulations. While land use strategies have expressed a desire to balance economic development with protecting native habitats, there remain few policies enforcing the protection of prairie ecosystems in Alberta.

Native prairie ecosystems continue to be under threat from industrial, agricultural and urban development. PCF's membership recognizes the value of maintaining our native prairie, working collaboratively to implement this Prairie Conservation Action Plan (PCAP), and contributing to conserving our grassland and parkland ecosystems.



History of a Prairie Conservation Strategy



The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) of Canada and the provincial governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta released the first Canadian Prairie Conservation Action Plan (CPCAP)³ in 1988. The five-year blueprint plan outlined a prairie-wide effort to conserve and manage native prairie species, communities, and habitats from 1989 to 1994.

The Alberta Prairie Conservation Coordination Committee in 1988 was led by the Government of Alberta to respond and deliver on the vision of the first CPCAP. Renamed in 1989 as the Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum (PCF); the committee developed its own Alberta provincial Prairie Conservation Action Plan (PCAP). Over the years, the committee evolved to a large, 50+ member consortium of all levels of government, conservation agencies and environmental interest groups, stewardship ranchers and organizations, industry, academia, the agricultural sector, Indigenous communities and interested individuals.

After 38 years, the PCF continues to deliver on that original prairie effort, while looking forward at future conservation opportunities. Alberta's PCAPs continue to be developed every five years, incorporating and building on strategies from PCAP

previous versions and including new and emerging initiatives. The plans provide adaptive and resilient environmental approaches, outcomes, solutions and actions for the PCF membership to collaborate, deliver and accomplish together. Our vision is that the biological diversity of native prairie and parkland ecosystems is secure under the mindful and committed stewardship of all Albertans.

The 2026-2030 Alberta Prairie Conservation Action Plan is the 8th action plan. Within the plan, it addresses ongoing challenges that face Alberta's native prairie landscapes and identifies actions that help build knowledge and awareness of these pressures. This work also helps to determine information gaps, conservation approaches, and ongoing collaborative partnerships; all while showcasing the successes of PCAPs past, present and preparing for the future. The PCF will be celebrating its upcoming 40th year in 2029 as a native prairie conservation organization of like-minded people, that are prepared to continue to promote, support and steward our Alberta intact native prairie grasslands.

The evolution of an organization can be viewed in the success of its outcomes, achievements and membership support. The PCF's work and publications are showcased on our website: albertapcf.org.

Strategic Direction

VISION

The biological diversity of native prairie and parkland ecosystems is secure under the mindful and committed stewardship of all Albertans.

MISSION

The Prairie Conservation Forum is open to all organizations and individuals that support and have an interest in achieving the PCAP Vision and who are willing to apply the PCF's Guiding Principles (Page 22). The Vision will be achieved by:

- Defining desired biodiversity outcomes and measuring progress towards outcomes;
- Acquiring and sharing data, information and knowledge;
- Advancing understanding and increasing awareness of the native prairie and parkland landscape and its interdependence with the social and economic needs of society;
- Collaborating to enhance the conservation and compatible use of native prairie and parkland landscapes; and
- Maintaining the stability and building the capacity of the Prairie Conservation Forum.

This PCAP recognizes the need to focus activities around three primary strategies. These strategies underlie all the approaches and actions that follow within this PCAP.

The strategies and actions identified in this PCAP continue the approach of the 2021-2025 PCAP⁴. Highlights from the previous PCAP can be found on Page 25. They are focused on an agenda that can be effectively driven by the PCF and its members or in association with other partner organizations.

The intent is to maximize conservation gain by focusing on deliverables and desired outcomes the PCF and its partners can successfully complete. Success in advancing the outcomes and vision articulated in the plan will mean connecting thoughtful and directed activities with our greatest asset - the aligned energy and capacity of the PCF's diverse membership.

STRATEGIES

This PCAP recognizes the need to focus activities around three primary strategies. These strategies underlie all of the approaches and actions that follow within this PCAP.



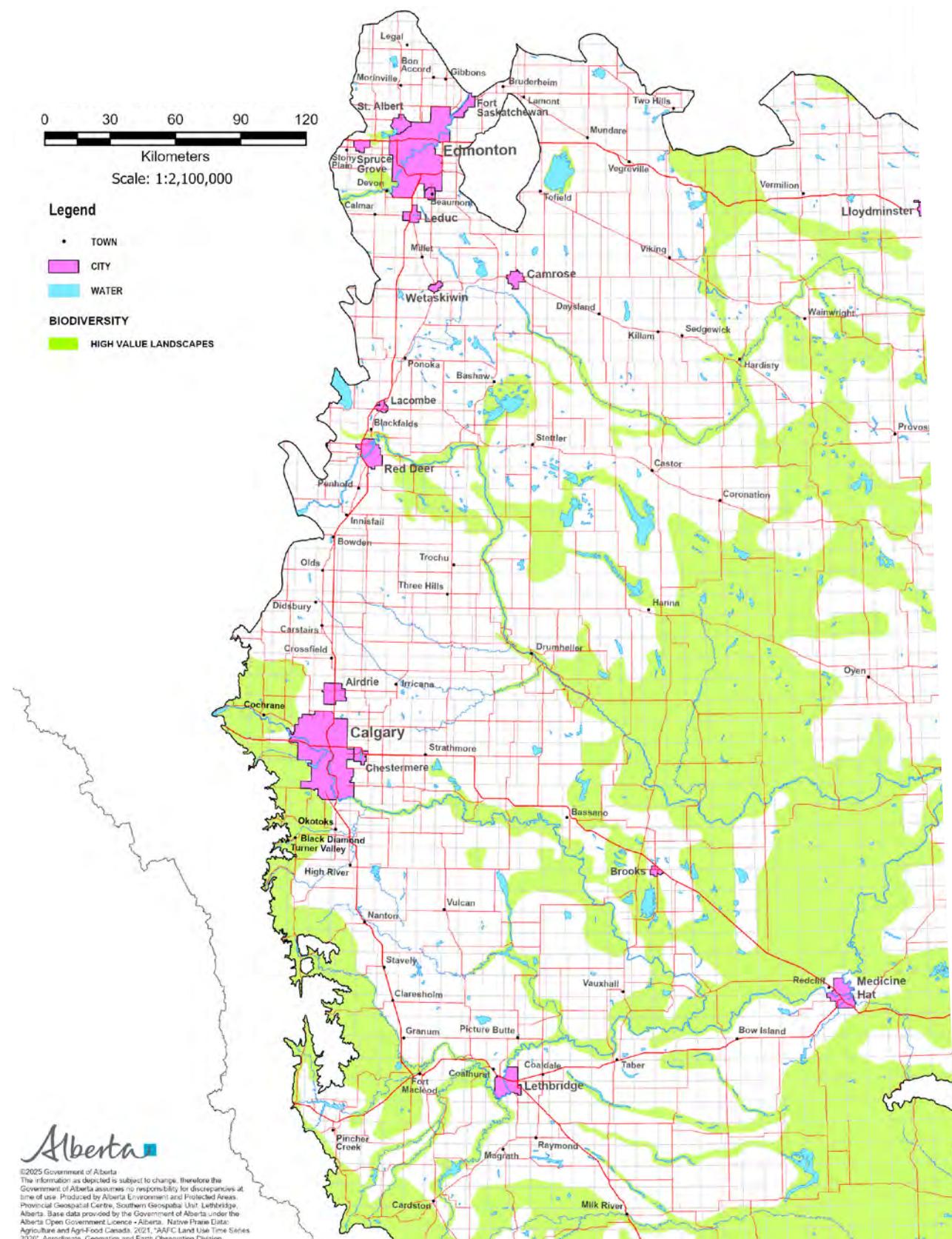
1. Completing inventories and assessments of native biodiversity within Alberta.

Identify and map areas with high native biodiversity values (Figure 5).

Maps provide a powerful tool for visualizing resource management priorities. They can depict the current state of knowledge and

represent the shared values among stakeholders. Collaboration in producing and updating maps promotes environmental understanding, forges networks of association across jurisdictions and among stakeholders, informs decision-making and facilitates coordination and cooperation for advancing collective actions.

Figure 5:
Native Biodiversity: High Value Landscapes
in Prairie and Parkland Alberta



2. Sharing knowledge and fostering a dialogue around prairie conservation

The dialogue will be focused on Albertans, Indigenous communities, local governments, provincial agencies and other organizations that share an interest in prairie and parkland conservation.

The enduring conservation of native prairie and parkland requires the active involvement and cooperation of affected interests including local communities, industry, non-government organizations, and all levels of government. The socio-economic value of these ecosystems includes (but is not limited to) maintaining biodiversity and supporting wildlife populations, regulating water flow, carbon sequestration, sustainable agricultural practices, recreational opportunities and tourism; ultimately benefitting everyone. Numerous organizations, agencies

and industries possess data, information and knowledge that, if shared, enhances our capacity to understand, plan and implement prairie and parkland conservation initiatives.

The PCF aims to foster partnerships, engage Albertans and increase awareness of the PCF mission and the new PCAP among PCF member organizations, government agencies, conservation and agricultural organizations, and industry.

3. Promoting stewardship of native prairie and parkland ecosystems.

Effective stewardship empowers PCF and members to more readily deliver on actions. A clear focus needs to be on private landowners, land managers and governments.

The collection and sharing of knowledge must support and facilitate prairie conservation. It is the stewardship of many that will be necessary to achieve the long-term outcomes of the Prairie Conservation Action Plan.

Delivering on these strategies is not simple and straightforward. They are complex and will rely heavily on activities that are consistent with the Mission and Guiding Principles. The actions listed in this action plan provide a sense of the PCF priorities in the next five years. However, the annual PCF work plan will provide more specificity and consider other actions as circumstances change and opportunities arise.



OUTCOMES

To bring the 2026-2030 PCAP Vision to reality, important strategic or long term environmental outcomes must be achieved. These outcomes require close linkage to management and planning decisions by all levels of government, land managers and private landowners. These outcomes are closely connected to existing functional ecosystems in prairie and parkland Alberta. Four long term outcomes will provide the core direction of the PCF, with approaches and actions to address each outcome.

OUTCOME 1 Maintain Large Native Prairie and Parkland Landscapes



The existence of intact and fully functioning native prairie and parkland landscapes in Alberta are the best guarantor of future regional biodiversity and environmental quality.

Native prairie and parkland landscapes provide ecological goods and services such as carbon storage, biodiversity, clean air and water, and support outdoor recreation, nature enjoyment activities and hunting and fishing opportunities that enhance our quality of life. The prairies are home to families of Indigenous and ranching communities that have frequently proven to be dedicated stewards of the environment.

During the time of western expansion and settlement at the turn of the 20th century, large tracts of native prairie were ploughed by homesteading pioneers as required by the Alberta Homestead Act of the times. As a result of the massive landscape changes associated with the settlement period

and incremental continued expansion (i.e., urbanization and industrial development), we have inherited diminished biodiversity, and the native biodiversity which currently exists is frequently under threat. Over 75% of Alberta's species at risk, including sage grouse, burrowing owls, Sprague's pipit, ferruginous hawk, swift fox, western silvery minnow, greater short horned lizard, and the western spiderwort, are associated with prairie environments. Their decline is largely due to these landscape changes. Alberta's remaining native landscapes are an integral component of a much larger continental ecosystem. The maintenance of large, intact native landscapes affords society a greater range of options in the future and will help better withstand the ongoing and projected climatic changes. Maintaining native grassland for its intrinsic value is equally important. Native grasslands help define Alberta as a province and conservation of native grassland for today is equally important to the conservation of native grassland for the future.

Approaches and Actions

Large Blocks of Native Prairie

*Actions in bold font are actions that the PCF will undertake directly, whereas actions in normal font are actions that PCF partners will undertake.

Approach 1

Promote Large Landscape Conservation

Actions

- a. **Provide input to government policy through engagement in planning, policy and program initiatives.**
- b. **Promote and facilitate large landscape conservation planning on the prairies among conservation partners and collaborators.**
- c. Share information on ecosystem services that quantifies the value of native prairie ecosystems.
- d. Support and facilitate the stewardship of large intact blocks of native prairie to ensure their retention through engagement and collaboration using various conservation approaches.
- e. Support and collaborate to update the Grassland Vegetation Inventory (GVI) and other inventories and assessments that apply to large landscape conservation.
- f. **Review key findings from PCF generated or sponsored projects and identify future initiatives which PCF membership may consider actioning.**

Approach 2

Understanding of Change Analysis and Intactness

Actions

- a. Continue analysis into the quality and condition of remaining native prairie (anthropogenic changes, invasive species or other identified factors).
- b. Pursue as appropriate the recommendations outlined within the most recent State of the Prairie Technical Report for further analysis.

Approach 3

Minimize Disturbance and Restoration of Industrial Footprint on Native Prairie

Actions

- a. Retain the structural and functional integrity of native prairie ecosystems by encouraging compatible human use and development opportunities.
- b. Support effective implementation of policies related to minimal disturbance planning, reclamation and restoration of industrial footprint through extension events and development of technical documents.

Approach 4

Encourage Stewardship among Land Managers

Actions

- a. Support conservation practices by land managers of large native landscapes. Apply best management practices of conserving native prairie.



OUTCOME 2 Conserve Connecting Corridors for Biodiversity

Habitat connectivity is essential to maintain native biodiversity and ecosystem function. The conservation and restoration of important corridors will help to maintain functional native prairie and parkland landscapes.

Most of our native prairie and parkland landscapes are fragmented, and in some areas the connectivity within and between ecosystems has been severed, creating habitat islands. This has the effect of causing species decline or extirpation from traditional ranges, reducing native biodiversity, and reducing gene flow between populations. The greater sage grouse, which once ranged north of the Red Deer River, is now confined to a small geographical area in the southeastern corner of the province and its population has been drastically declining within Alberta and Canada. This species has become a casualty of land fragmentation associated with increasing industrialization of the prairie landscape.

Habitat fragmentation is a threat to other species at risk in the grassland ecosystem, such as the swift fox and burrowing owl, both subjects of provincial recovery plans. The pronghorn, an important game species and a prairie icon; migrates through a narrow habitat corridor crossing the Trans-Canada highway to the east of Medicine Hat. This corridor is being impacted, due to increased traffic volumes and development pressures, reducing and limiting movement leading to potential isolation. Further loss of functionality in this key corridor could result in significant winter population die offs and genetic isolation within Alberta's pronghorn populations. The conservation of major river and coulee systems, and critical migratory and travel routes are essential to the integrity of ecosystems and biological diversity found in prairie and parkland Alberta.

Approaches and Actions

Connecting Corridors

**Actions in bold font are actions that the PCF will undertake directly, whereas actions in normal font are actions that PCF partners will undertake.*

Approach 1

Analyze Location and Significance

Actions

- a. **Work with partners to identify major corridors for species reliant on native prairie.**
- b. **Maintain and update PCF mapping resources.**
- c. Encourage work by agencies, research foundations or academia that can support connecting corridors.
- d. Support partners work on inventories and assessments that apply to connecting corridors.

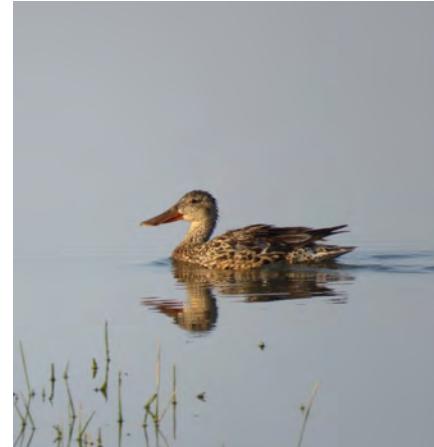


Approach 2

Build Awareness and Networking

Actions

- a. For delineated corridors, identify relevant stakeholders and partnerships. Encourage and support corridor conservation networking and collaboration.
- b. Develop and target extension materials that focuses on the importance of connectivity and connectivity retention. Target and tailor materials to landholder, municipal and industry audiences.
- c. Ensure current information related to corridor analysis, workshops or extension materials is posted on or linked to the PCF website.



Approach 3

Promote Stewardship

Actions

- a. Provide input to government policy through engagement in planning, policy and program initiatives on connecting corridors.
- b. Encourage work with stakeholders once corridors are identified to put in place a corridor conservation/retention strategy.
- c. Encourage and support development of comprehensive corridor conservation planning guidelines for right-of-way alignments, development control, industry activity and land use practices.



OUTCOME 3 Protect Isolated Native Habitats

Within fragmented landscapes there exist small, isolated pockets of ecological refugia that may be as important for native biodiversity conservation as larger prairie and parkland landscapes. These need to be identified and studied, and stewardship promoted where required.

Collectively, these smaller areas offer refuge for migrating wildlife, often contain species that are significant to hunters and anglers or they serve as oases for species at risk. As an example, Alberta's established wetlands and ephemeral shoaling and loafing areas, which are used by waterfowl and shorebirds, collectively contribute to our international commitments

for the maintenance of critical breeding grounds for North American migratory waterfowl. Some parks and protected areas are disconnected or are becoming increasingly isolated through land fragmentation, yet these protected areas can retain diverse communities of native wildlife and plants. These small, scattered pockets of natural habitat, which include (but are not limited to) riparian areas, wetlands, rocky outcrops and remnant parcels of native prairie and parkland, are usually part of the working land base that is used by farmers and ranchers. The retention of viable pockets and patches of habitat provides a concrete example of the cooperative stewardship that can be undertaken by land managers. Protecting isolated habitats provides an important link in the connectivity chain within a fragmented ecosystem.



Approaches and Actions

Isolated Habitats

**Actions in bold font are actions that the PCF will undertake directly, whereas actions in normal font are actions that PCF partners will undertake.*

Approach 1

Identify locations of isolated native prairie habitats

Actions

- Utilize existing GIS datasets held by PCF member organizations to confirm and determine locations and sizes of isolated habitat fragments.**

Approach 2

Education and Communication

Actions

- Provide a summary document of the findings of Isolated Habitats Committee work and post to the PCF website.**
- Work with Connecting Corridors Committee to integrate identified isolated native habitats information and support future stewardship initiatives.**



OUTCOME 4

Promote Transboundary and Cross-Cultural Connections and Partnerships

The initiation of a cross-boundary collaboration between Alberta, Saskatchewan and Montana was identified in the 2016-2020 Alberta PCAP⁵.

The first meeting was held in Elkwater, Alberta in 2016 and much interest was expressed to continue with a partnership between the three jurisdictions. The name of the group, the Transboundary Grasslands Partnership (TGP), has been active since that initial meeting.

In the last 8 years, the TGP has established itself as a standalone partnership but continues to have significant ties to the Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum. The TGP has developed its own shared vision and mission, strategic direction, work plans and common conservation objectives. The partnership continues to deliver on their original strategy: to work collaboratively on native grassland conservation across provincial and

international boundaries. TGP is also fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the conservation of native biodiversity and prairie grasslands beyond provincial and state boundaries.

The membership of the PCF recognized this unique partnership and its progress, which has become its own outcome in this current PCAP. This independent partnership, with its own actions, focuses on broader connections beyond Alberta. The volunteer nature of the TGP allows for accountability to the jurisdictional membership partners and not just connected to working with the Alberta PCF. The connectivity of the partnership allows for working within each jurisdiction and with partners, agencies and stakeholders outside each jurisdiction. To be effective, a core team of representatives from each jurisdiction contribute to the direction of the TGP's actions. The Alberta PCAP actions under this outcome are outlined for how the PCF membership will continue to enable and support this Transboundary Grasslands Partnership.

Approaches and Actions

Approach 1

Transboundary Partnerships and Cultural Connectivity

Actions

- a. In cooperation with Montana and Saskatchewan, support the conservation of transboundary native prairie ecosystems through the Transboundary Grasslands Partnership collaboration.
- b. Continue to participate in and support annual transboundary grasslands workshops in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Montana.
- c. Encourage and support work by agencies, research foundations or academia to fill information and research gaps or support spatial analysis of identified priorities.
- d. Increase awareness through recognition of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) with its application in partnerships.

Education and Communication

The importance of knowledge transfer will ensure youth, students, landowners, practitioners, decision makers, interested individuals and partnerships are equipped with greater awareness and understanding of the cultural connection, ecological benefits and the value of preserving Alberta's grasslands. Information empowers personal stewardship actions that contribute to the long-term sustainability and management of grasslands now and for future generations.

Prairie education and outreach have been a commitment of the PCF since its inception. PCF committees continue to develop, promote and support projects, and share important information that connects people to the Alberta prairie ecosystem. A key PCF program for Alberta's youth is an educational video conference presentation called 'Deep Roots-Exploring Alberta's Grassland' that has been running since 2011. Other programs that PCF has been involved with include collaborating

with partners in delivering range stewardship courses, hosting the Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference, and promoting PCF committee products like the State of the Prairie assessment, connecting corridors, and isolated habitats work. See the success of these initiatives in the highlights from the last PCAP on page 25 and on our website.

Education and Communication Approaches

**Actions in bold font are actions that the PCF will undertake directly, whereas actions in normal font are actions that PCF partners will undertake.*

Approach 1

Education and Awareness Programming

Actions

- a. **Promote and produce education materials and products for rural and urban audiences about the prairie and parkland habitats of Alberta.**
- b. **Promote and produce targeted education materials and products developed from PCF project initiatives.**



Approach 2

Provide Web-Based Access to Prairie Conservation Information

Actions

- a. **Continue to update and manage the PCF website to help increase the profile of work being completed in the prairies and parkland habitats of Alberta by PCF and by PCF member organizations.**



Approach 3

Promote native prairie conservation through conferences, events, speaking engagements, etc.

Actions

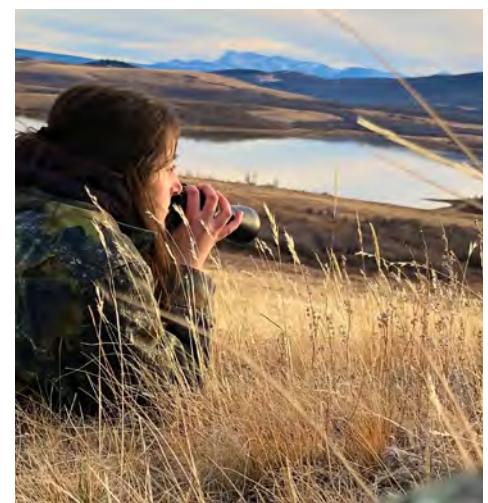
- a. **Participate and provide support for partner agencies and conservation events.**
- b. **Support the continuation of the range stewardship course and facilitate a strategy amongst collaborators to ensure the long term sustainability of the range stewardship course.**

Approach 4

Communications

Actions

- a. **Develop a Communications Plan and implement a Communications Strategy.**



Guiding Principles of the Prairie Conservation Forum

The strength of the PCF lies within its broad membership and their capacity to work both together and independently to achieve common goals. The PCF provides coordinating and advisory functions while respecting the individual mandates and interests of its members. To increase the capacity of PCF and help its member organizations to achieve the Vision and Outcomes of the Prairie Conservation Action Plan, the PCF will follow basic guiding principles:

- 1 Management responsibilities for native prairie and parkland fall primarily on public agencies (i.e. Federal, Provincial, and Local Governments), First Nations and private landowners. The PCF will only support and facilitate discussions concerning management actions that contribute positively to the Vision and Mission of the PCF.
- 2 The PCF will facilitate networking, information exchange and discussion amongst member organizations and with other jurisdictions outside of Alberta.
- 3 Partnership activities are based on the belief that the social and economic benefits, which are derived from prairie and parkland ecosystems, are dependent on the ecological health of these systems. Therefore, management strategies will be promoted that ensure the ongoing health of these ecosystems.
- 4 The PCF Partnership draws together diverse opinions and approaches to ecosystem management. To best ensure the development of collaborative and effective solutions, the Partnership will interact in a manner that is respectful of that diversity.
- 5 PCF members will strive to implement PCF programs and activities in their respective organizations in support of the PCF Vision.
- 6 The Vision can only be achieved by the efforts of many, including the PCF itself and its member organizations, accompanied by effective working relationships with others who share the vision.
- 7 The PCF supports the equitable sharing of social and economic costs and the benefits of maintaining native biodiversity and ecological services among all segments of society.



Building Capacity in the Prairie Conservation Forum

To ensure that the PCF can continue to achieve the Vision and Outcomes of the Prairie Conservation Action Plan, supporting activities are required.

These are:

- a. Continue to establish and maintain a stable funding base and institutional support to maintain the PCF Coordinator position and to advance key strategies within the PCAP.
- b. Promote and maintain a diverse membership and Board of Directors to advance the PCF's Vision and Outcomes.



- c. Promote awareness, linkages and partnerships with PCF members, government departments, public agencies and other organizations to achieve the PCAP outcomes.
- d. Encourage more participation on the PCF from organizations in the Central Parkland Natural Subregion.
- e. Establish and maintain mechanisms to facilitate the timely exchange of information and ideas amongst member organizations in the PCF.

Implementation of the PCAP

The 2026-2030 PCAP takes a new approach from the previous PCAP by adding an additional long-term outcome for a total of four. Approaches and actions have been identified to address each outcome and highlight activities that will be led and implemented by the PCF, members, or both (Figure 6). The following approaches will be used to ensure that the PCAP is implemented within the acknowledged resource constraints of the PCF, while seeking options to increase involvement of membership and expand capacity of PCAP sub-committees and Board of Directors:



Figure 6: Membership Contributing to the PCAP

- The PCF Board of Directors will be responsible for overseeing and facilitating the implementation of the PCAP and in cooperation with subcommittees, setting out a process for achieving defined plan outcomes.
- An annual work plan and a reporting structure will be established by the Board that identifies the PCF's priorities, operations, and activities.
- In preparing the work plan, the PCF will consider opportunities to engage the membership and establish effective partnerships with other organizations whose mandate is directly related to the Strategic Direction in the PCAP.
- An annual report will be prepared to document PCF achievements at the end of each year and to help identify priorities for amendments to the work plan.
- The annual report for the previous year and the draft work plan for the coming year will be presented to the PCF membership at the Annual General Meeting.
- Standing committees may be established whenever there is a clear and ongoing need to focus PCF efforts on a specific strategy or activity. Generally, these committees will be chaired by a member of the Board of Directors.
- Task groups may be established whenever a clear task emerges that has a defined outcome, deliverable or endpoint. Task groups may be led by any member of the PCF and will periodically update the Board on the task group's activity and progress.
- The next five-year Alberta PCAP (2031-2035) should include a section that summarizes key plan achievements and other PCF accomplishments during the life of this PCAP (2026-2030).

Future Considerations

The 2026-2030 PCAP committee discussed many additional items provided by the current membership that were not included due to existing, in progress actions required for completion and capacity constraints. Actions for consideration in the next 5-year PCAP (2031-2035) include the following:

- A section that summarizes PCF's key plan achievements and additional accomplishments of the 2026-2030 PCAP
- Re-evaluating the vision, mission and guiding principles that they are still relevant or require amendments
- Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation process for the PCAP actions
- Emerging pressures (e.g. renewables) encroaching on the grasslands
- Climate change adaptation

Highlights from PCAP 2021 – 2025



Strategy One: Completing Inventories and Assessments of Native Biodiversity within Alberta

Activity: Understanding of change analysis and intactness (Outcome 1)

The intent of the Alberta 'State of the Prairie' collaborative study was to report on the current extent and provide a change analysis in native prairie cover in the Grassland and Parkland Natural Region over various scales, to determine any changes or losses of native prairie over time and where they occur. The first technical report¹ was completed in 2019 using Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) Land Use raster datasets from 1990 and 2010. While implementing PCAP 2021-2025, the analyses were repeated using updated AAFC data from 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020. The results of the analysis within the project area was summarized and evaluated by Grassland and Parkland Natural Regions, Public and Private lands, Natural Subregion, Ecodistricts, Counties and other administrative areas such

as military bases and First Nations reserve lands. This data analysis provides a temporal four-point trend perspective of native cover change over 30 years. In addition to the updated PCF technical report (State of the Prairie Supplemental Data Technical Report²) released in 2024, supplementary materials in the form of a video highlighting the importance of native prairie and an occasional paper⁶ about the implications and opportunities that arise from these analyses were completed in 2022.

Activity: Build awareness and networking for connecting corridors (Outcome 2)

In 2022, PCF created an interactive map that centralizes information from government, academic and conservation organizations on ecological, geological and administrative environments in the prairie region of Alberta, including wildlife habitats, vegetation and native prairie, and protected areas.

Activity: Identify locations of isolated native prairie habitats (Outcome 3)

PCF completed a literature review⁷ in 2022 to help define isolated habitats. The review included a curated list of 65 species at risk in the Grassland Natural Region of Alberta that could be mapped for isolated habitats. In 2023, a framework⁸ was developed for mapping isolated habitats for 12 specific species. The framework provides a standardized process to ensure that future mapping efforts be repeatable, robust and scientifically defensible. Accompanying the mapping product is a species report template designed to engage landowners and land users interested in learning about a specific species at risk and its potential isolated habitat on their lands. These reports include a summary of the species, their habitat, and the mapping project approach and results, including species-specific definitions of habitat, isolating conditions, and barriers. The report also includes an action statement to promote native prairie habitat conservation and stewardship.

Strategy Two: Sharing Knowledge and Fostering a Dialogue around Prairie Conservation

Activity: Collaborate on transboundary and cross-cultural connections (Outcome 2)

The PCF identified the need for transboundary collaboration between Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Montana with a focus on large landscape conservation in the Grasslands Natural Region. The first workshop was held in Elkwater, Alberta in January of 2016, and has since been held annually, rotating between the three jurisdictions. Overall, the workshops have been deemed a great success and continue to meet the goals of the PCF by providing a forum where transboundary jurisdictions and sectors can communicate and work collaboratively to conserve and enhance native grassland landscapes.

Activity: Promote native prairie conservation through conferences, events, speaking engagements, etc. (Education Approaches)

The PCF and its membership organized and facilitated the 13th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference (PCESC), which was held and sponsored at the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo from February 21-23, 2023. The theme of the conference was 'Prairie Collaboration, Connection, and Conservation'. Participants from all three prairie provinces and other jurisdictions attended the conference and shared their prairie conservation research and personal stories. Plenary session presenters shared prairie conservation work being completed in Alberta (i.e. conservation breeding and release of prairie species at risk, sand dune habitat restoration and Ord's kangaroo rat recovery, the Kainai rematriation project), Canadian and Indigenous perspectives on the Central Grasslands Roadmap, and a ranchers' panel discussion on access and provision of necessary resources for ranchers to help support prairie conservation.

Activity: Promote and produce educational materials and products for rural and urban audiences about prairie and parkland habitats of Alberta (Education Approaches)

'Deep Roots – The Story of Alberta's Grasslands' was developed in 2011 as an educational program for youth to educate them about the importance of native grasslands. It provides students an opportunity to experience the grasslands without having to leave the classroom. Pre- and post-presentation activities were developed for teachers to further engage the students with Alberta's grasslands. In the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years, an education contractor was hired to deliver Deep Roots to schools throughout Alberta. The contractor successfully delivered the presentation to 30 different classes each year, or approximately 1,330 children, from grades 3 through 7. In addition, two \$500 bursaries were awarded to two separate regional classes to help cover the costs of visiting a grassland site near them.



Strategy Three: Promoting Stewardship of Native Prairie and Parkland Ecosystems

Activity: Support conservation practices by managers of large native landscapes. Apply best management practices of conserving native prairie and initiate pilot projects (Outcome 1)

A committee of PCF member organizations coordinated and offered a range management course for ranchers. The resulting Alberta Range Stewardship Course was first offered in 2018 with the vision of being a collaboratively delivered, annual range management course that is provincial in scope, with regional and local delivery. The course provides field training in core range management principles, plant identification and lessons learned from ranchers and agency staff, to support continued stewardship of rangelands. The principal emphasis is on sharing knowledge, demonstrating skills and enhancing working relationships both within and outside the ranching community for the long-term sustainable management of rangelands. The course was successfully offered in 2018 and 2019 in-person, 2020 and 2021 online, and 2023 in-person. The course was offered in 2022 and 2024; however, due to low registration numbers, it was cancelled. Plans were underway to hold the course in the Peace Region in 2025; however, the decision was made to postpone to 2026, allowing time to build connections in the area. The course will continue to be offered in the future when there is interest.



Activity: Support and collaborate work on inventories and assessments that apply to large landscape conservation (Outcome 1)

The PCF collaborates with and supports programs including the Multiple Species at Risk (MULTISAR) program that provides valuable on-the-ground assessments of both habitat and prairie wildlife species. The MULTISAR program is focused on multi-species conservation at the landscape level that promotes stewardship through voluntary participation of landholders on both Crown and private lands within the Grassland Natural Region of Alberta. The primary goals of MULTISAR are to implement collaborative strategies to manage multiple species on a defined working landscape and to assist with their implementation. These strategies are built as landholder-specific Habitat Conservation Strategies

(HCS), which include detailed range and wildlife assessments, leading to the implementation of habitat enhancement activities that benefit both the farm/ranch operation and wildlife. Since its inception in 2002, MULTISAR has implemented 519 habitat enhancement projects. By the end of 2025, MULTISAR influenced stewardship activities and applied best management strategies for species at risk through direct contact with landholders on 1,079,270 acres (436,765 hectares) of land, an increase of 402,964 acres (163,074 hectares) since the last PCAP. MULTISAR continues to interact with the public through its website and social media platforms, by providing live presentations at events, conferences, through a booth at the Calgary Stampede and other tradeshows, and with a newsletter and fact sheets.

Glossary

The following definitions are provided for some of the key terms used in the Alberta PCAP.

Anthropogenic

Related to the work or activity of humans.

Best Management Practices/Strategies

Methods implemented to reduce or mitigate environmental impacts, enhance ecosystems, and ensure the responsible use of resources.

Biological Diversity (Biodiversity)

The variability among living organisms from all sources, including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems; and the ecological complexes of which they are part. This includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. (Source: The Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992).

Carbon Sequestration/Storage

A natural or artificial process by which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and held in another form.

Connectivity

Habitat linkages that connect distinguishable areas (i.e., habitat nodes/patches) within a landscape and allow/facilitate movement of organisms.



Conservation

The wise use, management and protection of natural resources to maintain their quality and quantity on a sustainable basis.

Corridor

An intact passageway that allows for the movement of animals between habitats in a landscape.

Crown Land

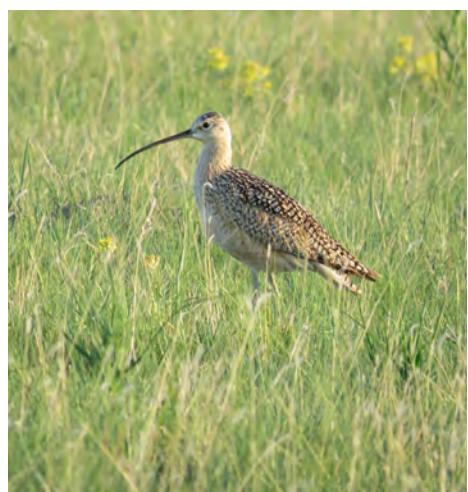
Public lands held by the Crown in Right of the provincial or federal government. Land titled to His Majesty the King in Right of Alberta, and also includes public lands under the Alberta Public Lands Act.

Cumulative Effects

The incremental and combined effects (impacts) of human actions and projects on the environment within a geographically defined area.

Ecological refugia

A location which supports and shelters an isolated relict population of a once more widespread species.



Ecosystem

The structure and function of living and non-living components and the ecological processes that link them.

Ecosystem Function

The set of processes that integrate ecosystem components and are important to the health of the system.

Ecosystem Management

The art and science of conserving natural landscape diversity, productivity and processes, while providing a sustainable flow of products to meet society's needs.

Ecosystem Services

Ecosystem services, also referred to as ecological goods and services, are the economic and social benefits humans derive, directly and indirectly, from the natural environment, such as clean air, healthy soil, biodiversity, water quality and quantity, and wildlife-related recreation (Source: Constanza et al, 1997; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2006; Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005).

Environmental Quality

The overall condition of the environment, encompassing various aspects that impact human health, well-being, and the natural world.

Ephemeral

Short-lived, as in water bodies such as ponds and wetlands that fill temporarily or streams that flow briefly after precipitation events.

Ephemeral Shoaling/Loafing

Transitory sites that provide habitat for species to congregate and rest. For example, temporary ponds following snowmelt that provide critical rest stops for migrating waterfowl.

Fragment/Fragmentation

A process where a large, continuous habitat is broken down into smaller, isolated pieces.

Functional Ecosystem

A functional ecosystem is one where ecological processes (e.g. energy flow, hydrologic cycling, nutrient cycling, predation, migration) express little to no deviation from an expected condition (Source: Pellatt et al. 2005).

Gene Flow

The transfer of genetic material from one population to another.

GIS (Geographic Information System)

A mapping tool for collecting, storing, retrieving, displaying and transforming or manipulating mapped data. GIS makes 'smart maps' in that any type of data can be mapped where it occurs in real space and used to answer management questions for particular applications. It can be used to model 'what-if' scenarios – which are an important component of environmental and risk assessments – and is used in cumulative impacts modelling, as well as examining trends over time and space.



Grassland Natural Region

The grassland region refers to the semi-arid and arid area covering most of southeast Alberta, where landscapes are dominated by grass species. The Alberta 'grassland' region includes four natural subregions (Dry Mixedgrass, Mixedgrass, Northern Fescue, and Foothills Fescue) each distinguished by differences in climate, soils (from dark brown and black chernozems and solonetzic) and vegetation (grasses from- *Stipa* spp -grass; *Agropyron* spp - wheat grasses, *Bouteloua gracilis*- blue grama, *Koeleria macrantha*- June grass and *Festuca* spp, to forbs and cottonwood forests).

This natural region also has sand dune and varying elevation locations and areas that have narrow-leaf cottonwood forests, which are found nowhere else in Canada.

Habitat

The place where an animal, plant or other organism lives.

Habitat Connectivity

The degree that organisms or natural processes can move unimpeded across habitats.

Indigenous

Includes the "Aboriginal peoples of Canada" within the meaning of section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

Industrial Footprint

The geographical area which is disturbed or occupied by an industrial project or activity.

Industrialization

The development of industries in a region on a wide scale.

Invasive Species

Organisms that are introduced to an area and cause harm to the environment, economy, or society.

Landscape

All of the biotic and abiotic features of an area including vegetation, microbes, wildlife, topography, soils, geology and climate. A landscape can be a small feature such as a hill, or a regional feature such as a natural region or subregion (refer to the definition of these terms).

Monitoring

The act of assessing some entity with the intent of detecting changes over time. Ecosystem monitoring, for example, might include establishing some benchmarks or records of initial condition and then surveying those benchmarks every few years for changes in wildlife, plant and microbial composition.

Native Prairie

An area of unbroken grassland or aspen parkland dominated by non-introduced species.

Native Prairie Ecosystem

See 'native prairie' and 'ecosystem'. Includes soil, hydrology, vegetation, climate, microbes, wildlife, landscape features, and the processes which connect them.

Natural Region/Subregion

A natural region is a broad landscape division characterized by a distinct set of climatic, vegetation, soil, and topographic features. A natural subregion is a finer subdivision of the natural region based on landform variations over a smaller area. There are six natural regions subdivided into 20 natural subregions in Alberta.

Parkland Natural Region

Transnational ecosystem between grassland and parkland, with its own distinct species. The Alberta 'parkland' includes three natural subregions (Central Parkland, Peace River Parkland and Foothills Parkland) developed on dark-brown or black chernozemic soils. Characteristic vegetation includes rough fescue in grassland portions and trembling aspen in the forested areas. This natural region has a well-developed shrub and herbaceous layer.

Protection

Retention of the integrity, authenticity, and intrinsic value of the native prairie resource in perpetuity.

Range, Rangelands

"Rangelands are lands supporting native or introduced vegetation that is either grazed or has the potential to be grazed, and is managed as a natural ecosystem. Rangelands include grassland, grazable forestland, shrubland, pastureland, and their associated riparian areas." (Source: Stewardship for Rangeland Sustainability. 2021).

Range Management

The art and science of optimizing the returns from rangelands in those combinations most desired by and suitable to society through the manipulation and conservation of range ecosystems.

Reclamation

The process of reconvert ing disturbed land to its former use or other productive use (equivalent land capacity).

Recovery Plan

A set of actions for a particular threatened, endangered or extirpated species, aimed at increasing its numbers so that it can be de-listed.

Renewable

A source of energy or resource that is not depleted by use.

Resource

Any part of the environment which society perceives as having value.

Species

A biological unit used to classify living things, describing life forms that share general physical characteristics, and which theoretically can mate and produce fertile offspring.



Species at Risk

An umbrella term that refers to species which fall into the following Federal (Canada) categories: extirpated, endangered, threatened, or of special concern (vulnerable).

- "Extirpated" species are those that no longer exist in the wild in Canada but exist elsewhere.
- "Endangered" species are those that face imminent extirpation or extinction.
- "Threatened" species are those which are likely to become endangered if limiting factors are not reversed.
- "Special Concern" (Vulnerable) species are those which may become threatened or endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

Stewardship

The individual and corporate responsibility of one generation to maintain the natural inheritance that it has received, both for its benefit and for the benefit of future generations. A commitment to conserve and maintain the natural features of the land (Source: Grasslands – Toward a North American Conservation Strategy. 2003).

Sustainable Development

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Source: Brundtland Report. 1987).

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

A cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment.

Transboundary

Anything that crosses or affects areas beyond jurisdictional borders.

Urbanization

The process where populations increasingly concentrate in cities and towns, leading to growth in urban areas and a decrease in rural areas.

Wildlife

All native species of animals (including all invertebrates and vertebrates) and some unicellular life forms.



List of Acronyms

AAFC - Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
ABMI - Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute
CPCAP - Canadian Prairie Conservation Action Plan
GIS - Geographic Information System
GVI - Grassland Vegetation Inventory
HCS - Habitat Conservation Strategy
MULTISAR - Multiple Species at Risk
PCAP - Prairie Conservation Action Plan
PCESC - Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference
PCF - Prairie Conservation Forum
TEK - Traditional Ecological Knowledge
TGP - Transboundary Grassland Partnership
WWF - World Wildlife Fund

Endnotes

1. State of the Prairie Technical Report 2019 https://albertapcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/StateofPrairieTechnicalReport_Sept11_2019_table_edits_Mar21_2021-002.pdf
2. State of the Prairie Supplemental Data Technical Report 2024 https://albertapcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/AAFC-Supplemental-Data-Report_May_2025-with-Addendum_final.pdf
3. Canadian Prairie Conservation Action Plan 1989-1994 https://albertapcf.org/rsu_docs/pcap1989small.pdf
4. Alberta Prairie Conservation Action Plan 2021-2025 <https://albertapcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/PCAP-2021-web.pdf>
5. Alberta Prairie Conservation Action Plan 2016-2020 https://albertapcf.org/rsu_docs/pcap-2016-2020--small-.pdf
6. Occasional Paper #6. The State of Alberta's Prairie and Parklands: Implications and Opportunities. 2022. <https://albertapcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/PCAP-2021-web.pdf>
7. Isolated Habitats – Assessment of native grasslands in Alberta for isolation, values, and management implications. 2022. <https://albertapcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Isolated-Habitats-%E2%80%93-Assessment-of-native-grasslands-in-Alberta-for-isolation-values-and-management-implications.pdf>
8. Framework for Grassland Species-at-risk Isolated Habitat Mapping in Alberta. 2023. https://albertapcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Framework_PCF_Isolated-Habitats.pdf

Prairie Conservation Forum

(current membership)

The Prairie Conservation Forum is a voluntary association of Alberta organizations and individuals whose interests or jurisdictions relate to prairie and parkland landscapes. It exists to encourage effective implementation of the Prairie Conservation Action Plan and to provide an ongoing profile for prairie and parkland conservation initiatives. Its key functions include:

- providing a forum for networking and information exchange
- steering implementation of the PCAP
- promoting public awareness and education

Any organization wishing to participate in the work of the Forum may join the Prairie Conservation Forum. All Forum meetings are open to the public. The Prairie Conservation Forum meets 2-3 times annually both online and in person.

The active membership of the Prairie Conservation Forum at the time of publication is as follows:

AJM Environmental Inc.
www.ajmenv.com

Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute
www.abmi.ca

Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society
www.actws.ca

Alberta Conservation Association
www.ab-conservation.com

Alberta Arts, Culture and Status of Women
www.alberta.ca/arts-culture-and-status-of-women

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas
www.alberta.ca/environment-and-protected-areas

Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Program
www.albertaefp.com

Alberta Forestry and Parks
www.alberta.ca/forestry-and-parks

Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association
<https://albertagrazinglease.ca>

Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society, Cows and Fish
www.cowsandfish.org

Alberta Wilderness Association
www.albertawilderness.ca

ALCLA Native Plants
alclanativeplants.com

Antelope Creek Ranch
www.antelopecreekranch.ca

Barbwire Consulting
<https://d.facebook.com/1234Barbwire/>

Battle River Watershed Alliance
www.battleriverwatershed.ca

Blood Tribe Land Management
<https://bloodtribe.org/land-management/>

Boundary Creek Landowners Association
<http://boundarycreekland.ca>

Bow River Basin Council
<https://brbc.ab.ca/>

C Cross Cattle Co.

Calgary Zoo/Wilder Institute
www.calgaryzoo.com

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
www.cpaws.org

City of Lethbridge, Helen Schuler Nature Centre
<https://nature.lethbridge.ca/>

Ducks Unlimited Canada
www.ducks.ca

EcoLogic Horticulture Ltd.
www.ecologichorticulture.com

Environment and Climate Change Canada
www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change.html

Environmental Strategies Inc.

Glenbow Ranch Park Foundation
www.grp.ca

Grassland Restoration Forum
[https://grasslandrestorationforum.ca](http://grasslandrestorationforum.ca)

Great Plains Conservation Network
[https://plainsconservation.org/](http://plainsconservation.org/)

LandWise Inc.

Lentz Farms

Lethbridge Polytechnic
[https://lethpolytech.ca](http://lethpolytech.ca)

Longview Ecological
www.longviewecological.ca

Medicine Hat College
www.mhc.ab.ca

Miistikis Institute
www.rockies.ca

Milk River Watershed Council www.mrwcc.ca	Parks Canada, Waterton Lakes National Park https://www.waterton.ca/	Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association www.watertonbiosphere.com
MULTISAR Program www.multisar.ca	Prairie Land Public School Division https://plrd.ab.ca/	Western Stock Growers Association https://www.wsga.ca/
Municipal District of Taber www.mdtaber.ab.ca	Safari Club International, Calgary www.sci-calgary.org	WL Heritage Connections
National Audubon Society www.audubon.org	Southern Alberta Land Trust Society www.salts-landtrust.org	Wray Ranches
Nature Conservancy of Canada www.natureconservancy.ca	South East Alberta Watershed Alliance https://seawa.ca/	Zanshin Environmental Networks Inc. https://zanshinenvironmental.com/
Nature Saskatchewan www.naturesask.ca	Special Areas Board www.specialareas.ab.ca	Individuals
Northern Resources https://northern-resources.ca/	Specialty Gardens www.specialtygardens.ca/	There are many individuals that are not affiliated with an organization that participate and support the PCF and its values. The PCF welcomes and encourages those that are interested in native grassland conservation and have their own values that align with the vision, mission and guiding principles, to join.
Oldman Watershed Council https://oldmanwatershed.ca/	Trace Associates Inc. www.traceassociates.ca	Prairie Conservation Forum Coordinators
Operation Grasslands Community, Alberta Fish and Game Association http://grasslandcommunity.org/	University of Alberta www.ualberta.ca/index.html	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katheryn Taylor • Samantha Van Ham
Parks Canada, Elk Island National Park https://parks.canada.ca/pn-np/ab/elkisland	University of Lethbridge, Natural Product Laboratory www.uleth.ca/welcome-university-lethbridge	

For contact information on active members and organizations, please refer to www.albertapcf.org

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PCF is a non-profit organization in Alberta,
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PCF Publications

Please refer to the PCF website www.albertapcf.org
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