



## *Annual Report*

**April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 – March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020**



[www.sodcap.com](http://www.sodcap.com)

@SODCAPInc



## Year in Review

- Video created showcasing Bluestone Stock Farms  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBFCFK7fr68>

- 5 years of SARPAL programming wraps up
  - o Resulted in more than \$575,000 in payments directly to local land managers
  - o Summary report published on SARPAL success, showcasing a high producer acceptance of programming

Reiter, D., Pittman, J. & Parrott, L. 2020. Evaluating the Species at Risk Partnerships on Agricultural Lands program in southwest Saskatchewan: The perspective of producers. Prepared for the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association and the South of the Divide Conservation Action Program Inc.

[http://complexity-ok.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/04/SARPAL-Report\\_SODCAP-Inc\\_2020.pdf](http://complexity-ok.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/04/SARPAL-Report_SODCAP-Inc_2020.pdf)

- Habitat assessments completed on more than 50,000 acres
- More than 40 producer projects on 250,000 acres of native grasslands under conservation agreements
- SODCAP Inc. received the 2020 Native Prairie Restoration/ Reclamation Award at Transboundary Grasslands Partnership Workshop
- A new local collection site for Leafy Spurge Beetles was established
- 373 Miles of grid roads surveyed for invasive weeds and 93 sites entered into IMap Invasives
- Economic report contracted, considering the costs of conservation



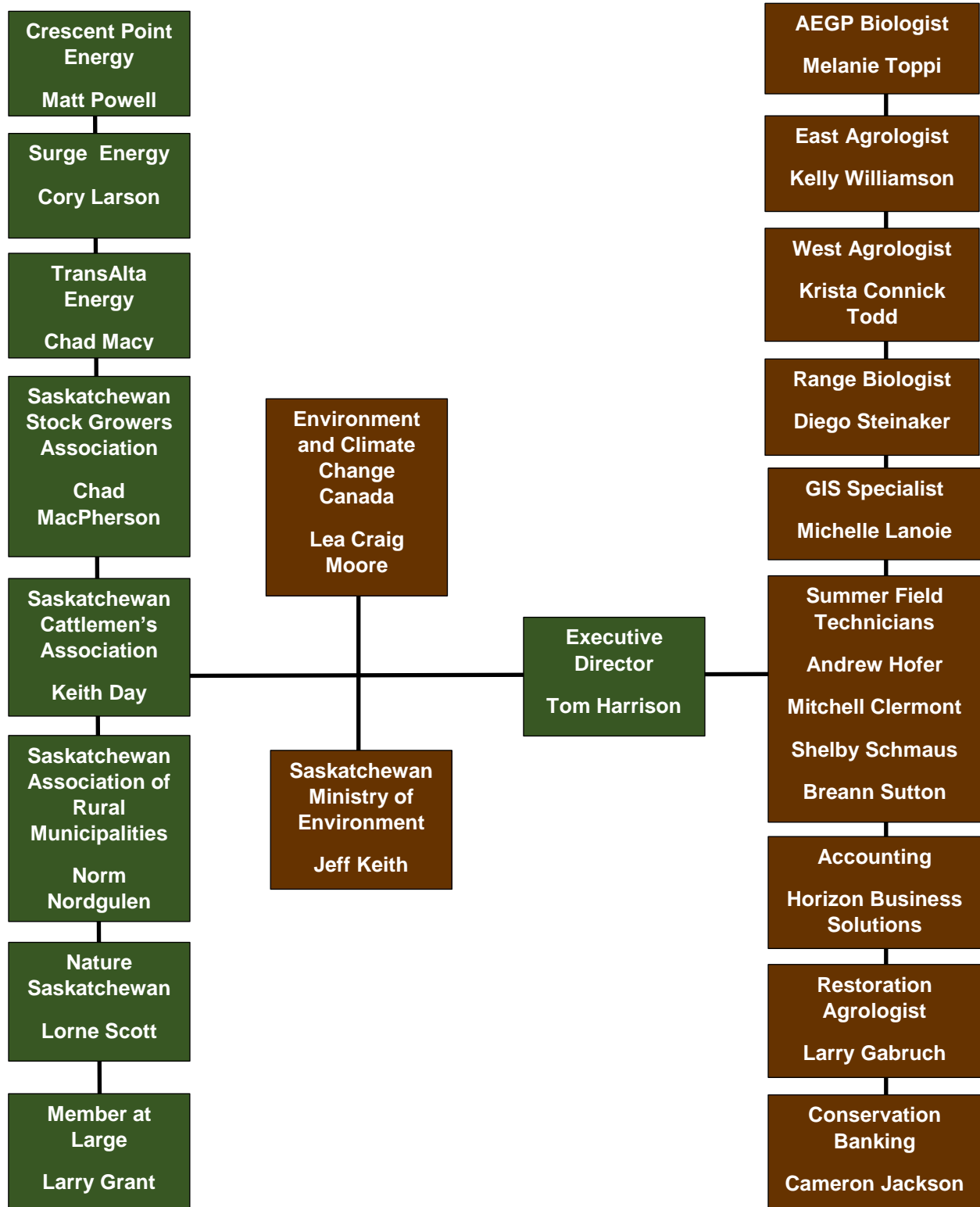




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# Organizational Structure



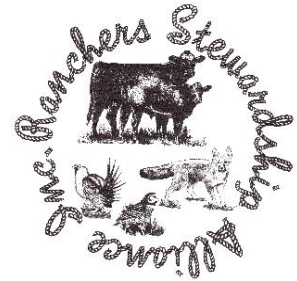
# Our Partners



SASKATCHEWAN  
**STOCK GROWERS**  
*Association*



**SCA**  
SASKATCHEWAN  
CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION



Crescent Point



**LIBER ERO**  
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM  
PROGRAMME POSTDOCTORAL



**NFWF**



Saskatchewan Association  
of Rural Municipalities



A Weston Family Initiative



Innovate. Grow. Prosper.



This project was undertaken with the financial support  
of the Government of Canada.

Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier  
du gouvernement du Canada.



## *Welcome from Our Chair*

On behalf of the South of the Divide Conservation Action Program, Board of Directors I would like to thank the many producers in the SOD area for their support in conservation initiatives while maintaining viable livestock production. Without land owners support grassland conservation efforts would be in vain. Many producers have managed their grass for generations. It is because of the long term management of grasslands by land owners that Species at Risk and other grassland flora and fauna still exist. The conservation of our natural world is in the best interest of society as a whole. Thus society should assist landowners in helping to cover costs associated with land management designed to benefit nature.

I would also like to thank our SODCAP staff for their dedicated leadership in building partnerships with producers willing to invest in their land, whether it be controlling noxious weeds or developing water systems to benefit livestock and wildlife. Altering grazing activities on native grass is producing positive results for Species at Risk. Lastly I would like to thank our many partners who contribute financially so we can collectively achieve positive results. Our partners include industry, researchers, the private sector, governments at the provincial and national level. The importance of Saskatchewan's grasslands are also recognized in the United States with agencies willing to invest dollars in the SOD area. We look forward to continued progress in the coming year.

Lorne Scott



**Our Thanks to Orin Balas for his years of service and dedication to the SODCAP Inc. Board**



## Vision

Native prairie and complementary habitat in the South of the Divide region of south-western Saskatchewan is managed and conserved as part of the province's history and identity. Through our collaboration we enable species at risk within the South of the Divide to thrive on working landscapes, providing environmental and economic benefits for all.

## Mission Statement

The S.O.D. Conservation Action Program will champion partnerships for coordinated and innovative land management practices that sustain and recover multiple species at risk and their habitats in the South of the Divide region of south-west Saskatchewan, in balance with sustainable land and resource use.



## Species List

There are a number of different species at risk found in the South of the Divide (SOD) area. Action Plans have been developed for 15 of them:

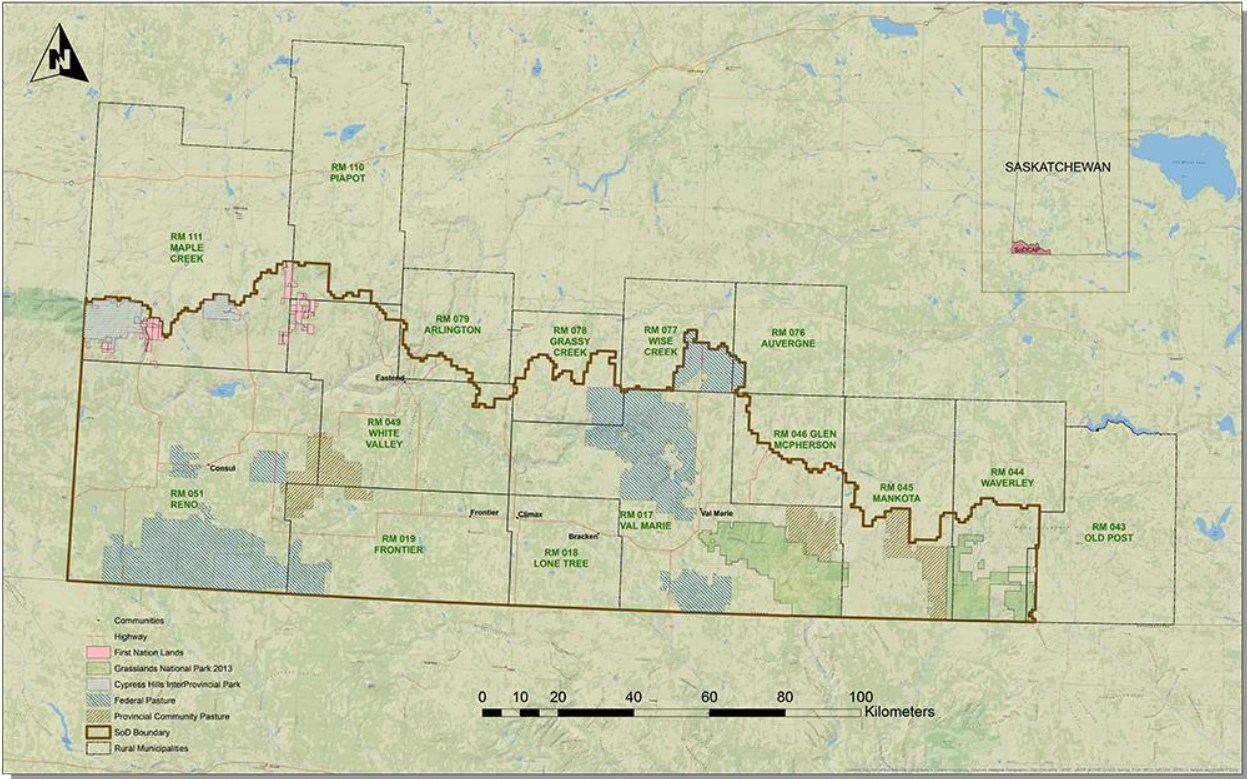
- Black-Footed Ferret (*Mustela nigripes*)
- Black-Tailed Prairie Dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*)
- Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*)
- Chestnut-Collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*)
- Eastern Yellow-Bellied Racer (*Coluber constrictorflaviventris*)
- Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*)
- Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus phaios*)
- Long-Billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*)
- McCown's Longspur (*Rhynchophanes mccownii*)
- Mormon Metalmark (*Apodemia mormo*)
- Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*)
- Northern Leopard Frog (*Lithobates pipiens*)
- Prairie Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus excubitorides*)
- Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*)

**Species at risk face a number of threats and concerns. In Saskatchewan habitat destruction and fragmentation are some of the biggest threats to species recovery.**



Krista Connick Todd

# Map of South of the Divide Area



**“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”**

▪ **Henry Ford**



Kelly Williamson

## Introduction

The Milk River Watershed, in southwestern Saskatchewan, is home to a number of different species at risk. Within the Milk River Watershed more than 50% of the land base is still native grassland, and another 25% is under perennial cover. This creates huge tracts of land that can provide habitat for a variety of species. Native Prairie supplies important habitat for the majority of our species at risk, and wildlife as a whole!

Formed in 2014, SODCAP Inc. has spent many years developing innovative programming and relationships with land managers and industry leaders in order to implement this programming. SODCAP Inc. recognizes that it is the careful management by the local ranchers, farmers, industry staff, and government have ensured that the habitat these species need remains intact. As a result, a variety species at risk still call this area home! SODCAP Inc. believes that strong relationships are key to success in providing habitat for species at risk.

**Biodiversity: the diverse collection of plants, animals, reptiles, amphibians and birds found in a particular area.**

One of the purposes of SODCAP Inc. is to assist in delivering the South of the Divide (SOD) Multi-Species Action Plan. This Multi-Species Action Plan is a partnership between the federal and provincial governments, with input from stakeholders. The Action Plan identifies critical and important habitat for 13 different species within the SOD area and lists over 60 recovery measures for Species at Risk in the SOD area. Partnerships developed over the years have led to a number of opportunities to try new and innovative programming, and test their effectiveness on the ground.

## New Species of Interest: Pronghorn (*Antilocapra Americana*)

Pronghorn are an iconic species to the Saskatchewan Prairies. Commonly known as “antelope”, they are actually in a completely separate family, and are the only living species remaining in that family!



Herds can be found throughout the southwest. They are well adapted to the prairies – they are fast and efficient runners and their excellent eye sight allow them to spot potential predators up to 6 miles away! Pronghorn roam the grasslands from Canada all the way down to Mexico and back.

Differing from deer who easily leap over most pasture fences, Pronghorn slip under the bottom wire. Low bottom wires and barbs on the bottom wire can impede their movement. On-going research is tracking pronghorn migration routes, with hopes of clarifying which areas of fence lines would have the most impact on the population.

## Project Profile: Habitat Management Agreement to Provide Habitat for Sprague's Pipit, Greater Sage Grouse, and McCown's Longspur

In 2019-20, SODCAP Inc. signed a habitat management agreement with a ranch near Bracken, SK. This ranch manages large stretches of native grassland, which provides potential habitat for a variety of species of risk, including Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*), Swift Fox (*Vulpes velox*), and McCown's Longspur (*Calcarius mccownii*). This project focuses on approximately 8,960 acres of native grass which contains a significant portion of Greater Sage Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus urophasianus*) habitat. The agreement consists of 2 parts – one focuses on activities to avoid, and one focuses on changes in grazing management.

Activities to avoid include:

- Any cultivation of native grass
- New dugouts or water development with a footprint greater than 30m<sup>2</sup> on Greater Sage Grouse habitat
- Excessive vehicle noise and traffic

- New linear developments not identified in this agreement
- Shooting of badgers or burrowing animals or destruction of burrows or dens

Grazing management will be the other focus of this 6 year project. A rotational grazing system will be implemented to improve grazing management, rangeland health, and sage grouse habitat. 3 miles of new fence (both barbed wire and electric, depending on the needs of the area) will be built in order to facilitate this grazing management system, as well as alterations to existing infrastructure. All fences constructed on lands mapped as potential sage grouse habitat will be marked with fence markers, and all fences will be constructed in a “wildlife friendly” way. Salt placement will also be used to improve livestock utilization. Areas of this ranch are currently being significantly underutilized, resulting in low species diversity and high litter loads in those areas. Others are being over used. This new grazing management system will address this concerns, and aim to provide a patchy network of habitats available throughout the ranch.

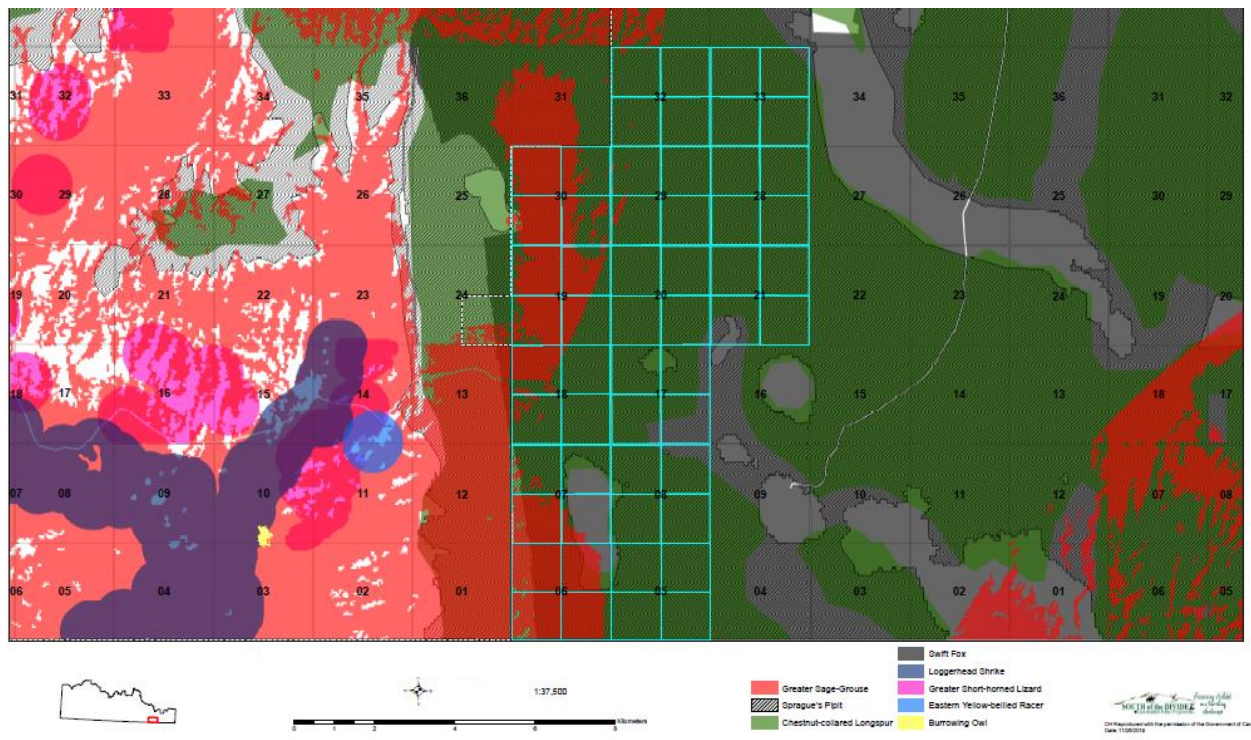


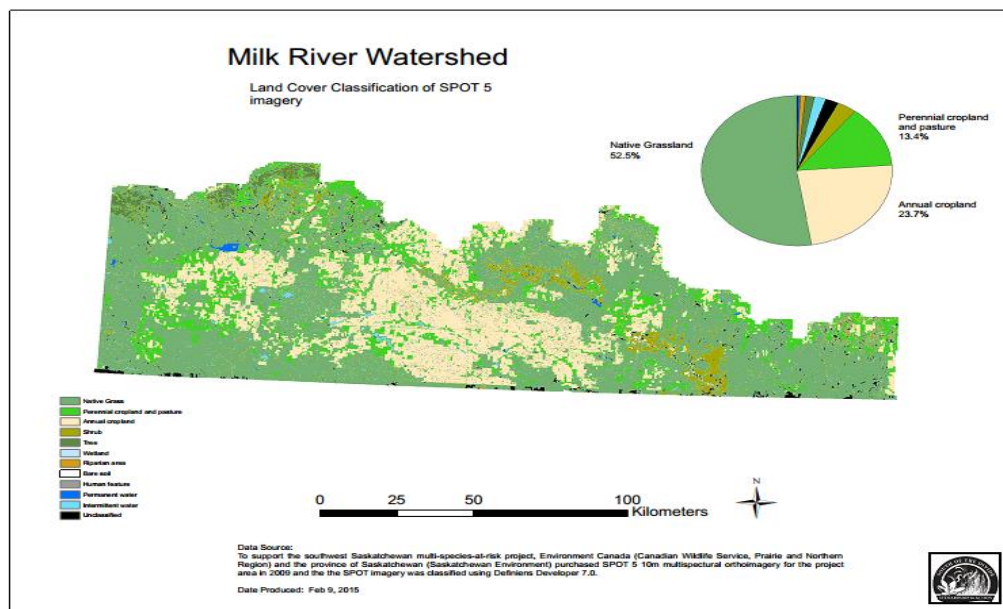
Figure 1: Habitat Map of Project Location

Initial Greater Sage Grouse habitat assessments were completed on the ranch, summarized as follows:

Attribute	Target	Upland (average)	Overflow (average)
Forb Cover (%)	>7	10.7	15
Sage Robustness (cm)	20 (upland) to 40 (overflow)	28.0	37.7
Grass Droop Height (cm)	>18		25.7
Litter (lbs/acre)	>160	540	267.5

Range Health assessments were also completed. The average range health score was 88%, in Healthy Condition. Only one of the six sites assessed scored as Healthy with Problems.

Habitat Management Agreements rely largely on active grazing management – requiring a significant commitment from the producer to notice and adjust to changes in range health and litter, as well as monitor infrastructure such as water, salt, and fences. It is not the fence line or the water system itself that will determine the habitat quality, but rather the way in which it is used.



## Funding Descriptions:

### **Species at Risk Partnership on Agricultural Lands (SARPAL)**

- SARPAL is a fund delivered by Environment and Climate Change Canada across the country to eligible agricultural producer-driven organizations. The funding was awarded to the Saskatchewan Stock Growers, who subcontracted SODCAP Inc to deliver a variety of programs, including habitat management agreements, results based conservation agreements, grassbank, habitat restoration, and niche product branding.

### **Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP)**

- SODCAP Inc. delivered two separate programs under the HSP funding this year – habitat management agreements and results based conservation agreements. HSP funding contributes to projects that directly impact the populations and recovery of Species at Risk.

### **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)**

- NFWF is an American fund that focuses on sustaining, restoring, and enhancing fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitat. The funding was used towards results based conservation agreements.

### **Ministry of Agriculture Agri-Environmental Technical Services**

- The Ministry of Agriculture has contracted SODCAP Inc. to help deliver the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) programs. The CAP program provides cost-share funding directly to producers to implement Beneficial Management Practices.

### **Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association (SCA)**

- The SCA provided funding towards the Habitat Management Agreements on Greater Sage Grouse habitat.

Habitat Management is so much more than more fenceposts in the ground. It's the management on the landscape that makes the difference whether a sprague's pipit or burrowing owl might like to call that spot home. Habitat restoration is an expensive process, but it is also the only way to physically increase the number of acres of native habitat available! Costs of habitat restoration can be more than \$400/acre. Invasive weed control is also an expensive, time consuming process, but removing those weeds can restore an area of currently unsuitable habitat back to prime habitat! What is the value of conservation?



## *What is the process for developing projects with land managers?*

Building relationships is key to delivering programs in south western Saskatchewan. A strong relationship helps pave the way to find common interests and goals. From there the details of how to improve and protect habitat can be determined.

Step 1: Communication – spreading the word to the ranching public that funding opportunities are available

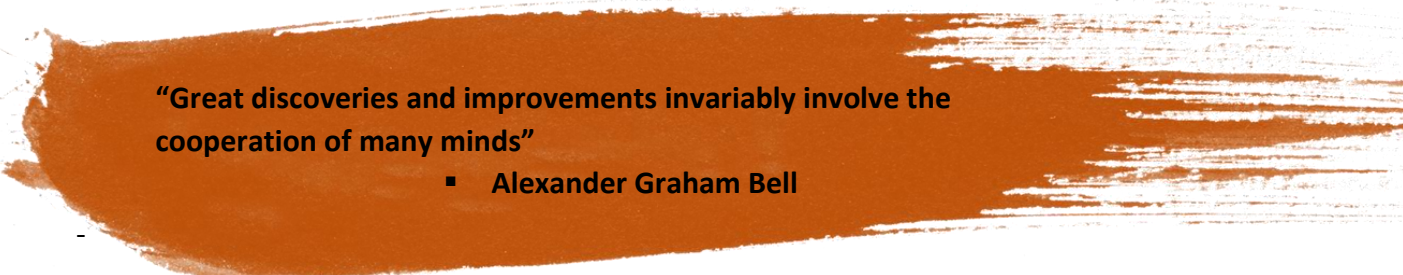
Step 2: Mapping – Once a land manager has expressed interest in a program a map is created showing the critical and important habitat present on those lands

Step 3: Discussion on goals and objectives – When the species have been identified that might be benefited from specific management, there needs to be a discussion on the goals and objectives of all parties involved. This generally involves maps and papers spread out on a kitchen table!

Step 4: Initial habitat assessment – an initial habitat assessment is completed in the field to ground-truth maps and gain more site-specific information

Step 5: Contract- a Contract is developed based on unique goals of the project

Step 6: Follow-up monitoring and communication as needed – working together in partnership is extremely important to the success of these programs. Maintaining that partnership, sharing ideas, and adapting to change leads to long-term conservation.



**“Great discoveries and improvements invariably involve the cooperation of many minds”**

▪ **Alexander Graham Bell**

## *Results Based Conservation Agreements*

Results-Based Conservation Agreements help to make habitat a management priority while still leaving management decisions in the hands of the producer. These are voluntary agreements, and focus on specific ‘results’ or desired habitat characteristics for a particular species at risk. In exchange for achieving the desired habitat targets, producers are rewarded with a financial incentive. Habitat assessments, reviews, and payments to producers occur on an annual basis. Agreements are designed to encourage producers to manage their land and make management decisions that support species at risk habitat.

Currently Results-based Conservation Agreements focus on two species: Greater Sage Grouse and Sprague's Pipit. Specific data on habitat requirements are available for both these species and habitat targets have been developed and are being monitored. Monitoring includes measuring things such as plant species composition, litter amounts, grass height or density, forb cover and sage brush density - depending on which species being targeted.

Not all prairie is created equal in the eyes of many species at risk, especially for grassland birds. Thanks to some very interesting research by Prairie-based bird biologists, data is available on what different species are looking for when they choose a home. Some like tall grass and lots of litter. Others like low levels of litter and good sight lines. Some need large expanses of uninterrupted prairie. Some need shrubs for perches, and others avoid areas with shrub. Knowing these specifics is important in determining which species will call a particular area home. More importantly, which species will successfully nest and raise young there every year.

**Strengths:**

- **Well received by land managers**
- **Guarantee that specific habitat aspects are present**
- **Targets are adaptable, based on science currently available**
- **Non-prescriptive**

Over the 5 year project, with funding provided by the SSGA, 13 projects have been signed across the Milk River Watershed, encompassing more than 52,800 acres. While projects focus specifically on habitat for either the Greater Sage Grouse or Sprague's Pipit, these ranchers are providing habitat for several species at risk simultaneously. Annual payments to producers for 2019-20 amounted to approximately \$263,500.

## *Habitat Management Agreements*

A Habitat Management Agreement is tailored to each producer's operation and the particular critical or important habitat that they are managing. The agreements are based on an evaluation of each ranch, focused planning exercises, the producer's objectives and resources, and habitat conservation goals. Producers may be funded up to 100% of the costs for implementing their agreements on qualifying lands. In these long-term agreements, there is no requirement to meet specific habitat targets. However, producers must implement the management activities outlined in the agreement.

Management activities include upholding appropriate stocking rates, avoiding destructive activities, building appropriate infrastructure, and monitoring. These projects recognize the extra time and effort that participating producers spend managing specifically for habitat.

**Strengths:**

- Long term agreements
- Goals and planning are unique and specific to the operation
- Management plans created

In total 12 habitat management agreements have been signed, impacting approximately 135,000 acres. One new agreement was signed this year on 6,400 acres of native prairie. This agreement focuses on grazing management on lands providing potential habitat for Sprague's Pipit, Chestnut Collared Longspur, Swift Fox, Northern Leopard Frog, and McCown's Longspur. Payments to producers to implement these multi-year agreements amounted to \$127,000 for 2019-20.

## *Habitat Restoration Agreements*

The goal of the Habitat Restoration projects is to re-create the grass composition, structure, and functioning of native prairie on currently cultivated lands. For many species these parcels of cultivated land beside native prairie creates gaps in their movement patterns. Restoring prairie in these areas helps create habitat corridors and allows species at risk to move freely. Projects target locations near existing candidate critical habitat.

**Strengths:**

- Creation of new habitat acreage
- Specific seed mixes to match local native populations
- increases connectivity and decreases fragmentation; targeting specific areas

Native seed mixes are carefully chosen with the assistance of a SODCAP agronomist, and agreements are signed for 21 years. The seed mixes contain ONLY native species, in order to mimic true native prairie. Tame nitrogen-fixing species, such as alfalfa or cicer milk vetch, were not allowed. The producer is responsible for seedbed preparation, weed management, and seeding. Proper weed management is essential for stand establishment. Seeded areas are rested for two years post-establishment.

To date, 6 habitat restoration agreements have been signed, impacting 700 acres. One new contract was signed in 2019-20.

# Grassbank

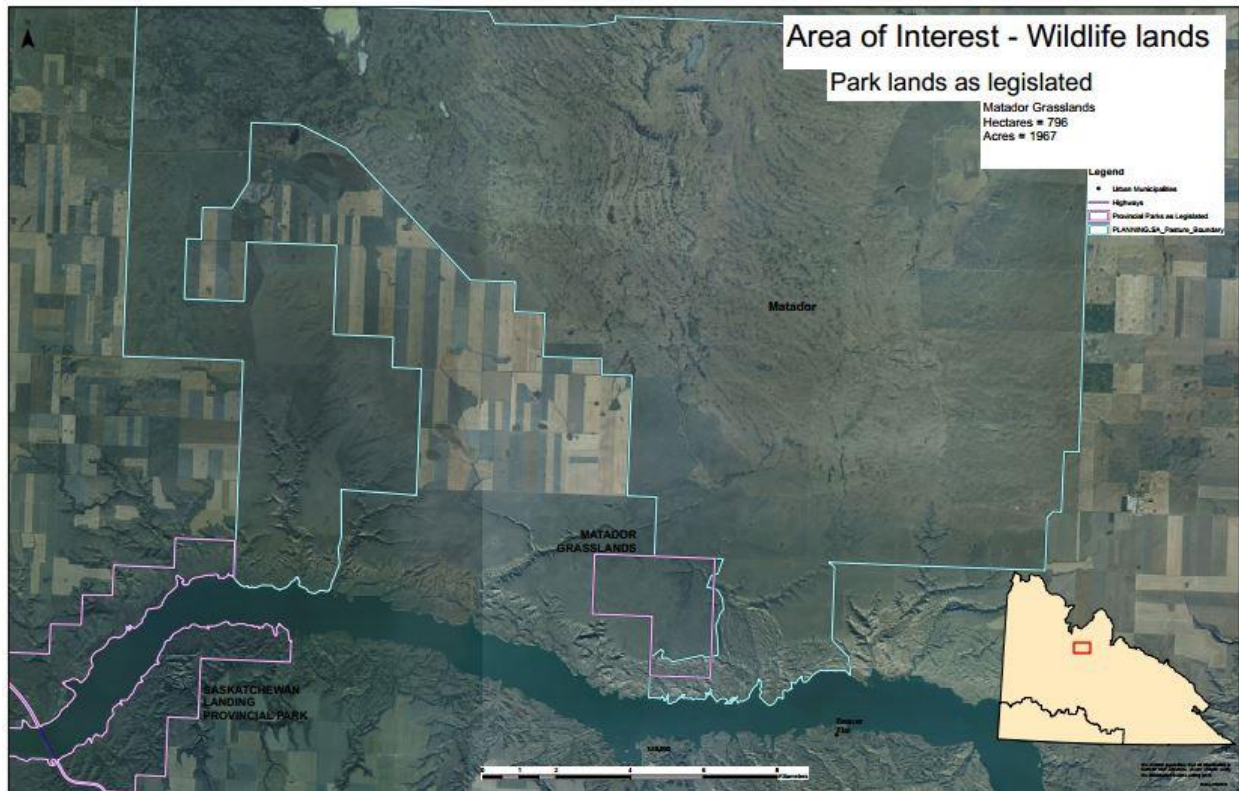


Figure 2: Grassbank Map

SODCAP Inc, the Saskatchewan Stock Growers, local ranchers, and Grasslands National Park have been working together on a Grassbank Project. The grassbank allows local ranchers to utilize the prairie grass within the Park's boundaries at a reduced rate in exchange for the producers achieving habitat targets on their own, privately managed ranch lands. By taking a multi-species approach, the grassbank focuses on creating habitat for Sage Grouse, Sprague's Pipit, and Chestnut Collared Longspur, through careful, targeted grazing across the landscape.

### Strengths:

- Impacts large acreage
- Partnership between ranchers and government
- uses conservation acres to influence decisions on privately managed lands

In the summer of 2019-20 habitat quality was monitoring along with songbird species counts.

Table of Habitat Measurements for Grassbank Sites:

Species Designation	Measurable Habitat Component
Greater Sage-grouse (Upland)	Forb foliar cover
	Visual obstruction readings (measured with a Robel pole) at sagebrush plants
Greater Sage-grouse (Overflow)	Forb foliar cover
	Visual obstruction readings (measured with a Robel pole) at sagebrush plants
	Herbaceous droop height
Sprague's Pipit	Dead vegetation foliar cover (dead material that is connected to the ground)
	Litter Load (lbs/acre)
	Bare ground (%)
Chestnut-collared longspur	Litter Load (lbs/acre)
	Visual obstruction readings (measured with a Robel pole)
	Bare ground (%)

Grassbank activities resulted in approximately \$7,000 in payments to producers as well as \$20,000 in off-set grazing for the 2019-20 year.

## Milk River Agri-Environmental Technical Services

This program provides technical support for both the Farm Stewardship Program (FSP, which focuses on BMPs), and the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program (FRWIP, which focuses on water development). These Beneficial Management Practices are funded through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP).

### Strengths:

- variety of Beneficial Management Practices to choose from
- relatively simple process

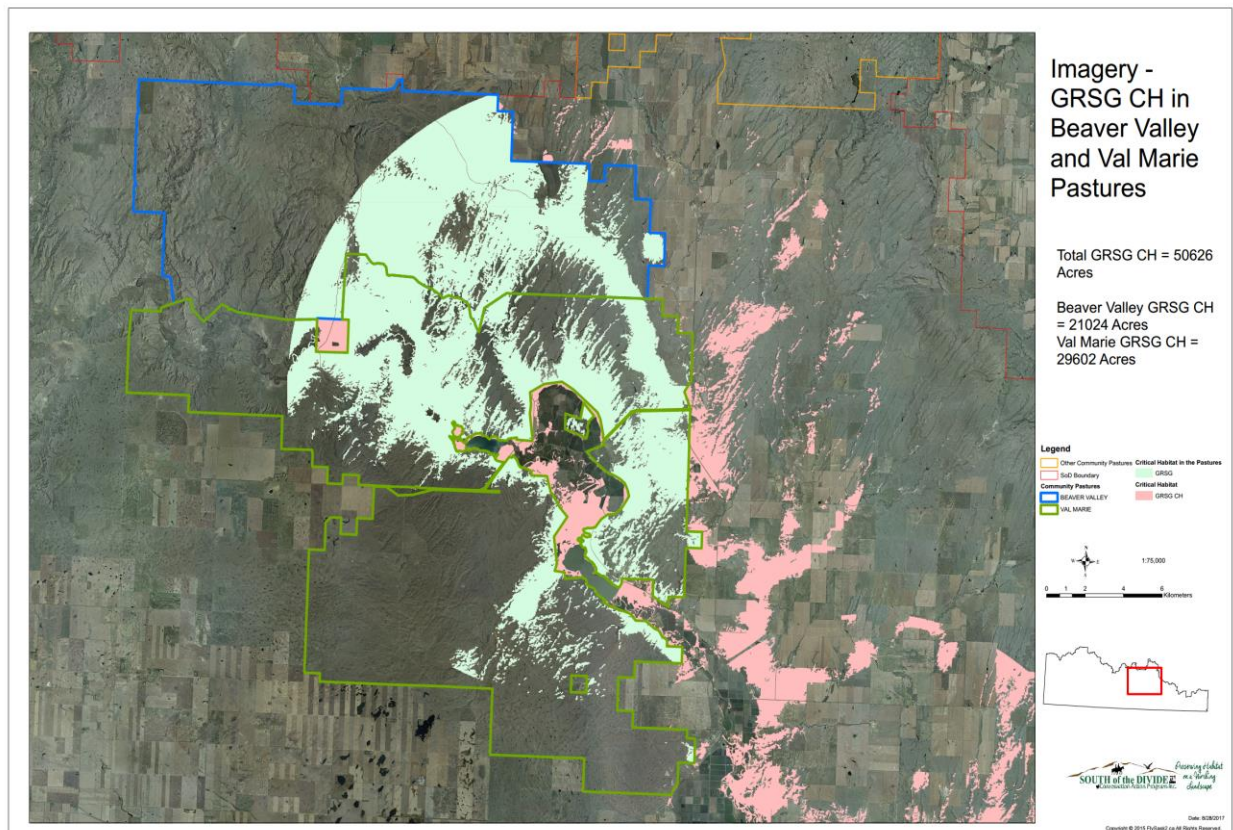
Environmentally, it is an opportunity to effect change on a watershed through a variety of actions focusing on managing native prairie, and ultimately habitat for several different species at risk.

Projects in the SOD area are screened for impacts to habitat for species at risk, along with the other necessary provincial requirements. For water development projects, in particular, habitat maps are created to ensure habitat for specific plant, bird, and animal species is not damaged.

Projects include water development, seeding permanent tame forage, and invasive plant biocontrol and targeted grazing. In the 2019-20 year, 19 FSP and 3 FRWIP projects were submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture for review. Projects focused on seeding cropland to tame grass and livestock water development.

## Project Profile: Sage Grouse Habitat on the Beaver Valley and Val Marie Grazing Corporation Lands

160,000 acres in one parcel makes the Beaver Valley and Val Marie Grazing Corporations incredibly significant for habitat preservation. Cumulatively they manage 50,000 acres of Greater Sage Grouse Habitat! SODCAP Inc. entered into a results based conservation agreement with the two Grazing Corporations on 25,000 of those acres. Habitat assessments completed in the summer of 2019 found that all three habitat targets set for Greater Sage Grouse were being met. Meeting habitat targets annually triggers a per acre payment through Results Based Conservation Agreements. Ecologically, meeting habitat targets means that the specific habitat that the birds require is available to them!



## Partnership with Frenchman Wood River Weed Management Area (FWRWMA)

2019 was a busy year for the FWRWMA. Two RM's, who had left the weed management area re-joined, making the total RMs in the Weed Management to five. Residences in those RM's were visited to let them know their RM was part of the FWRWMA.

The FWRWMA hosted a workshop in July for RM employees. It focused on invasive weed identification and management. Several live samples were brought in to give some hands-on identification opportunities.

A presentation at the Trans Boundary Conference in Regina in February was given on the relationship success of the partnerships that the FWRWMA has.

Leafy Spurge Flea Beetles were collected in early July and released at two different sites in each participating RM, for a total of 10,000 beetles released.

Road surveys within each RM were started. The purpose of these surveys was to identify invasive weeds in the RM – especially small, easily managed patches. The purpose was also to look for any new invasives that had not been observed before

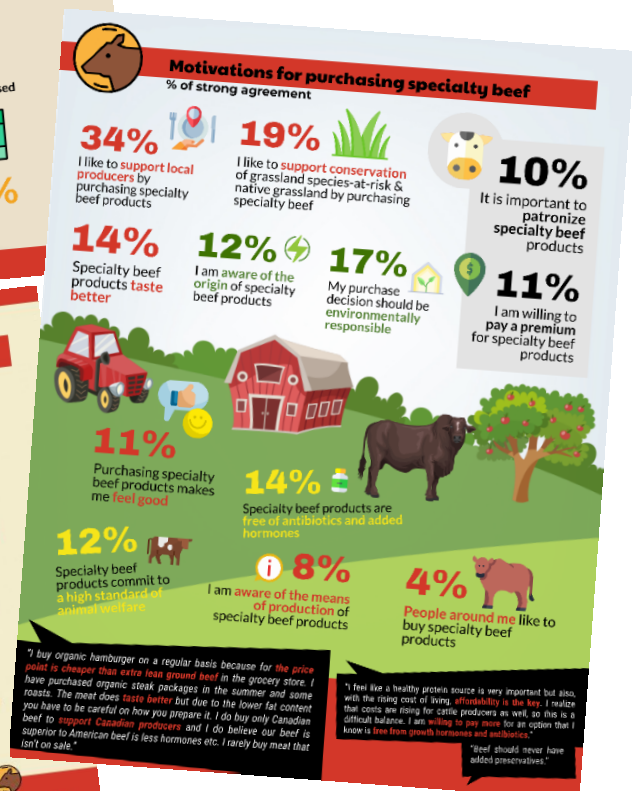
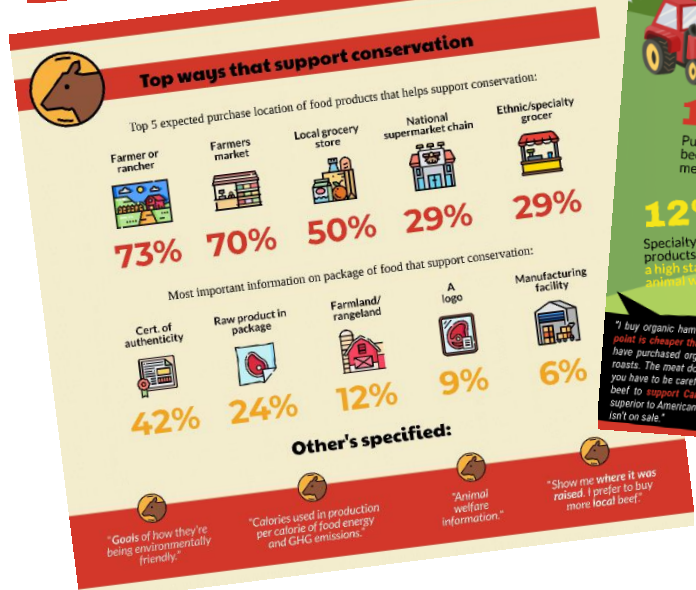
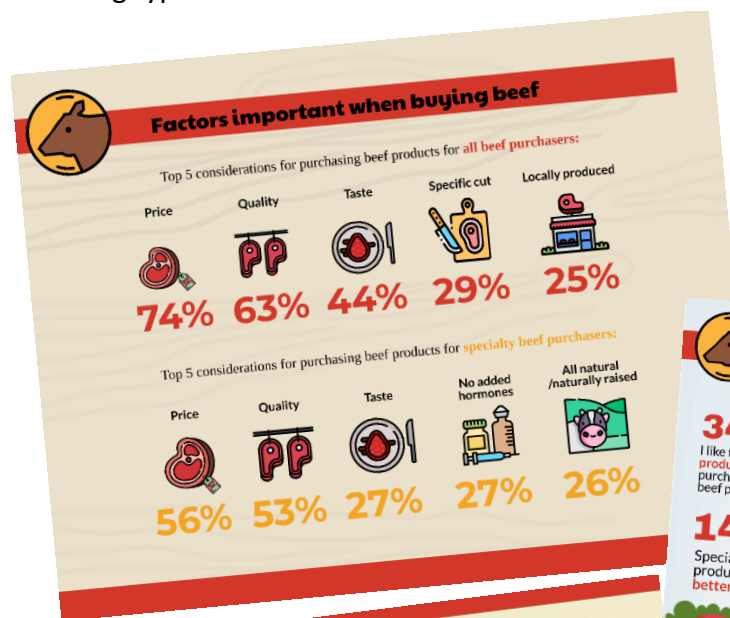
- Road Survey Summary
  - Over the months of August and September, several miles were observed.
    - RM Wood River – 56 miles covered
    - RM Waverley – 122 miles covered
    - RM Mankota – 48 miles covered
    - RM Val Marie – 92 miles covered, as well as foot surveys along the Frenchman River in the Val Marie Pasture.
    - RM Pinto Creek – 55 miles covered (another 39 miles were covered in October)
  - Weed observations:
    - 93 observations were entered into iMAPInvasives.

# Niche Product Marketing

2019-20 marked the final year of the Niche Product Marketing initiative. A video was created to showcase one of the ranches involved in the program – Bluestone Stock Farms.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBFCFK7fr68>

In order to investigate if it is worthwhile to continue with the program, Inshtrix surveyed 1000 consumers in Saskatchewan regarding their choices for beef purchases. 20% of those surveyed regularly purchased speciality beef products. They asked a variety of questions, including what are the factors for choosing types of beef.





# Extension and Communications Activities

- Native Prairie Restoration and Transboundary Grassland Workshop in Regina
- Range Health and Plant Identification Field Day at Nekaneet First Nations near Maple Creek
- Range Health and Seeded Native Forage Field Day at Fox Valley
- Invasive Weed Identification Workshop for Rural Municipalities
- Importance of Nature and Native Plants workshop with the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge by Maple Creek
- Multi-species Management and Conservation Awareness workshop in Eastend
- Presentation at the Sustainability of Canadian Agriculture “Forming Solutions” Conference in Saskatoon
- Presentation at the National Fish and Wildlife Fund Grantee Workshop in Billings, Montana
- Articles in the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Beef Business Magazine

**Stewardship**

**New Research Recognizes Benefits of SARPAL Program**

The benefits of the SARPAL program have been recognized by a new study published in the journal *Ecology and Applied*. The study, led by researchers from the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Alberta, found that the SARPAL program significantly improved the health of native prairie ecosystems. The researchers analyzed data from 100 SARPAL sites across the province, comparing them to non-SARPAL sites. They found that SARPAL sites had higher levels of native plant species, higher soil organic matter, and higher water infiltration rates. The study also found that SARPAL sites had lower levels of invasive species and lower soil erosion rates. The researchers conclude that the SARPAL program is an effective way to restore native prairie ecosystems and improve soil health. The study is a significant contribution to the understanding of the benefits of the SARPAL program and provides valuable information for landowners and policymakers.

**What is SARPAL?**

SARPAL is a voluntary program that encourages landowners to plant native prairie species on their land. The program provides technical assistance and financial incentives to help landowners get started. SARPAL sites are monitored and evaluated to ensure that the program is having a positive impact on the environment. The SARPAL program is a key component of the Saskatchewan Stewardship Program, which aims to protect and enhance the province's natural resources.

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**Stewardship**

**Ranchers Support Habitat Through SARPAL**

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## *Youth Programing*

This year SODCAP Inc. participated in the Food Farm hosted in Swift Current by the Ministry of Agriculture. Grade 3 and 4 students from Swift Current and area schools attended the day. The purpose of the Food Farm was to teach elementary students about the importance of Agriculture in Saskatchewan, and the facts of how our food is grown and raised. SODCAP Inc. provided a learning station focussing on native prairie and species at risk, and discussed the importance of habitat and presence of endangered and threatened species in southwestern Saskatchewan.

## *Minutes from last Annual Meeting*

### **South of the Divide Conservation Action Program Inc. Annual General Meeting August 14, 2019 Eastend, SK**

Co-Chair Orin Balas called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. Executive Director Tom Harrison introduced MLA Doug Steele. Doug Steele offered words of welcome. Mr. Harrison then called for an introduction of the SODCAP Inc. Board of Directors. Members of the Board present at the meeting:

- Orin Balas, Ranchers Stewardship Alliance, Co-Chair
- Tom Harrison, SODCAP Inc. Executive Director
- Jeff Keith, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment
- Keith Day, Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association
- Chad McPherson, Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association
- Lea Craig-Moore, Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Larry Grant, Director at Large
- Norm Norgulen, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities
- Lorne Scott, Nature Saskatchewan

Board Members not present at the meeting:

The SODCAP Inc. Field Crew were also introduced:

- Melanie Toppi, Biologist & Weed Management
- Krista Connick Todd, Landowner Relations and Agreements (west SoD), Communications

- Kelly Williamson, Landowner Relations and Agreements (east SoD)
- Allison Zeigler, Financial Officer
- Diego Steineker, Field Technician
- Mitchell Clermont, Summer Student
- Andrew Hofer, Summer Student
- Shelby Schmaus, Summer Student

Orin Balas opened the meeting by asking if there were any changes to make to the Agenda. No changes were proposed. **Motion AGM #19-1: Lorne Scott to approve the Agenda for the 201-19 AGM. 2nd Keith Day. CARRIED.**

Mr. Harrison announced that the Prairie Conservation Action Program (PCAP) Native Prairie Speaker Series has provided some of the funding for our event, including a guest speaker. Thank you to PCAP!

The first order of business was a Guest Presentation from two University of Saskatchewan summer students employed at the T.Rex Discovery Center in Eastend – Dallan Perkins and Jack Milligan. Both spoke about the paleontology work going on in the area – near South Fork and Pine Cree. There is a very active site there where fossils are found almost every day work is done. They discussed and addressed an important question about open communication with landowners where digs take place. It is the practice of the organization to keep lines of communication open and respect the landowners they work with.

The second presentation was given by Carl Negggers, CEO of SM Solutions. Mr. Negggers spoke to the development of a proposal to create an Indigenous Protected Areas in Southwest Saskatchewan. He spoke of the keen interest of First Nations to be involved in this proposal and how working with agriculture and conservation groups can help create prosperity and productivity for First Nations on the Indigenous lands.

There is a new disease affecting *Myotis* species that will inevitably arrive in Saskatchewan within the next year or two. Dr. Jeff Lane, of the University of Saskatchewan, presented on this – “Bracing for a Catastrophe: White Nose Syndrome on the Canadian Prairies”. White Nose Syndrome (WNS) is caused by a fungus that kills 80% of bats infected with the fungus. The first noted infection was a tourist attraction – Howe Caverns – in New York State in 2006. Since then it has been travelling at a rate of 200-250km/year. It has been documented in Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba. Currently there is little to no information about bat hibernaculum’s and nurseries in Saskatchewan. This is alarming with WNS knocking on our door. The loss of bat populations can negatively affect agriculture and the economy. With the loss of these insect-eating machines, an increase in insects, disease and need for pesticides will result. Treatments for WNS are currently being developed. Dr. Lane will be working on identifying and monitoring hibernaculum and nursery grounds of bats in Saskatchewan, hoping to gather as much information as possible before the disease hits the Saskatchewan bat populations.

The final presentation was to highlight a project that SODCAP has been heading up in the Eastend area. Melanie Toppi, Biologist for SODCAP Inc., and Lee Sexton of Sexton Grazing and Consulting, presented on the project. The project involves an integrated approach for gaining control of a Leafy Spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) invasion on a ranch that provides important native prairie habitat to a variety of wildlife, including species at risk such as the Sprague’s Pipit. Using some herbicide, flea beetles and

goats this project has been a positive experience for the landowners. Mr. Sexton and his helper spend every day with the goats, on horse back and with the help of herding dogs, ensure the goats are eating leafy spurge. Guard dogs are always close by ensuring any predators remain at bay. The grazing of the goats will prevent seed set of the invasive weed and when grazed hard, will weaken and eventually kill the plant. The project has been educational by showing that even invasive weeds can have benefits to certain livestock and can provide a business opportunity for some.

SODCAP Inc. Business Meeting – 4:30 p.m.

1. Executive Director Tom Harrison began the Business Meeting by presenting the 2018 – 2019 Annual Report.
  - Mr. Harrison brought attention to the Agriculture Projects (Page 8 in the Annual Report) that SODCAP has been a part of.
    - 16 Results Based Agreements (77,832 acres)
    - 13 Habitat Management Agreements (127,535 acres)
    - 6 Habitat Restoration Agreements (705 acres)
    - 2 Grassbank Agreements and collaboration with Grasslands National Park (40,000 acres)
  - These projects are having a major impact in the Southwest
  - A proposal has been put together to do similar projects in the Missouri Couteau due to the habitat and interest in the area.
2. Resolutions Chair (Lorne Scott) made the first call for Resolutions.
3. Nominations Chairs (Jeff Keith & Chad MacPherson) made the first call for Nominations. Board seats available include:
  - 1 Agriculture Sector (2 yr)
  - 2 Industry Sector (1 2yr seat; 1 1yr seat)
  - 1 Municipal Government Sector (2 yr)
  - 1 Non-Government Organization (NGO) (2 yr)
2. Minutes from the 2017-18 AGM in Val Marie, SK were presented by Mr. Harrison. **Motion AGM #19-2: Keith Day to accept the minutes from the 2018 AGM. 2nd by Larry Grant. CARRIED.**
  - There was no business from the 2017-2018 AGM minutes.
3. Allison Ziegler, Financial Officer, reviewed the Financial Statements. Ms. Ziegler went over the Funding Sources from the Fiscal Year. The balance sheet is strong, there was an increase of 23% in funding. Main expenditures include project delivery (monitoring, groundwork), wages and management, producer agreements, travel and accounting/legal costs. There is a surplus, which will be used for the continued operation of the organization. The Financial Statements are found on page 23 in the annual report. The Audit is by Mr. Robert Szautner (RDS Chartered Professional Accountant). RDS reported that SODCAP Inc.'s "cash flows for the period ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations". **Motion AGM #19-3: Chad MacPherson to accept the Financial Report. 2nd by Lorne Scott. CARRIED.** The Co-Chair requested an appointment for an auditor for the next fiscal year. It was noted that after five years, the Auditor should change in order to maintain a non-bias. This was the third audit completed by RDS. **Motion #19-4: Matt Powell motioned for Robert Szautner of RDS Chartered Professional Accountant to provide this service. 2nd by Larry Grant. CARRIED.**
4. Resolutions Chair (Lorne Scott) made the 2nd call for Resolutions.

5. Nominations Chairs (Jeff Keith & Chad MacPherson) made the 2<sup>nd</sup> call for Nominations. A 10-minute break out session took place. Nominations include:
  - Norm Norgulen, SARM – Municipal Government Sector
  - Orin Balas, Ranchers Stewardship Alliance – NGO
  - Cory Larsen, Surge Energy – 2 yr Industry Sector
  - Chad Macy, TransAlta Corporation – 1yr Industry Sector
  - Tanner Allemand, Gunn Grazing Coop & Chad MacPherson, SSGA – Agriculture Sector**Motion #19-5: Chad MacPherson made a motion that Nominations cease. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Keith Day. CARRIED.**
  - With two nominees for one position in the Agriculture Sector, nominees were given an opportunity to introduce themselves and a vote followed.
  - Results of the vote – Chad MacPherson, SSGA Manager will hold an Agriculture Sector seat for two years.
  - Nature Saskatchewan had come forward after the 2017-2018 AGM to sit on the board. There is one year left in their term, there was no opposition for them to remain on the board for the rest of their term.
  - After several years on the Board of Directors for SODCAP (since its inception), Crescent Point Energy has stepped down. SODCAP greatly appreciates the many years of support.
6. Resolutions Chair (Lorne Scott) made the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final call for Resolutions. The Co-Chair noted there were no calls for resolutions. CLOSED.
7. Co-Chair Orin Balas called for any other business. No other business was noted.
  - **Motion #19-6: Larry Grant to adjourn. CARRIED.**



*Draft Financials*

Please see attached