

Grassland and Grouse

The Grassland and Grouse Project is a three-year habitat management plan that uses a range of land management practices to protect the remaining native grassland and increase biodiversity at the Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area. This project was initiated in 2005 because we observed a steady decline in native grassland habitat as non-native species such as smooth brome, thistle, toadflax, leafy spurge and burdock are replacing native grassland species such as rough fescue, leaving the ecosystem in an altered condition. Rough fescue, Alberta's provincial grass, is considered to be the highest producing native bunchgrass on the prairies. Providing superb forage for wildlife and livestock, a vast quantity of rough fescue reveals a well-managed rangeland.

This past summer we defined and inventoried five native grassland sites on the Area, roughly totaling 133

acres. In 2006 we will continue land management practices such as mowing, hand pulling weeds, selective grazing, biological weed control, weed whipping and strategically placed fencing to improve the quality of the native grassland. These actions mimic conditions favorable to native grasses, and weaken non-native species such as brome to grant native grasses a competitive advantage.

The flagship wildlife species for the project is the Sharp-tailed grouse, as loved by Sandy Cross. Land management practices will help generate the habitat required for Sharp-tailed grouse and other indigenous bird species dependant upon native grassland habitat. Spring grassland bird surveys will also be critical in determining the presence of species and nest sites and will aid in identifying future project actions concerning native bird species using the Area.



To learn more about the Grassland and Grouse Project, please contact info@crossconservation.org or call (403) 931-1042 or visit our web site at www.crossconservation.org

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Through strategic education and communication plans the Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area hopes to promote awareness and engage the community about native grassland protection. Through a collaborative effort with Alberta Environment and Lexicom Internet Services, we are developing an educational and interactive website to provide information about native grassland ecosystems to teachers and students and look to integrate the grassland theme into our education programs.

The Conservation Education Program schedule will offer a variety of native grassland education programs in conjunction with Grassland and Grouse starting in April 2006. You can identify these programs by the

highlighted Grassland and Grouse logo.

The Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area invite the community to learn more about the Grassland and Grouse Project and to take part in protecting native grassland habitat and generating grassland awareness in their communities.

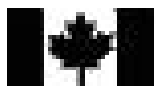
We hope to see you at all our Grassland and Grouse events!

We plan to officially launch the project on Saturday, May 27, 2006 as a tribute to the project's sponsors and partners.

The Grassland & Grouse Project is proudly supported by:



Farmway Machinery



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Envision the Future of Native Grasslands!