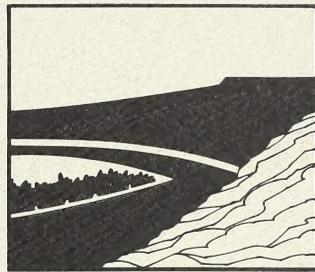
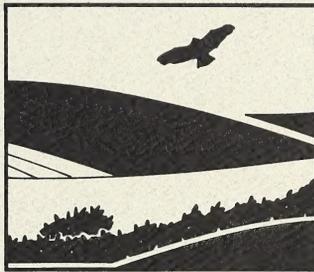
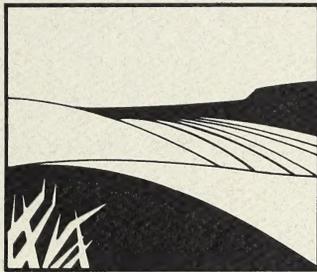


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**PRAIRIE CONSERVATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**1992 Annual Report**



ISBN 0-86499-965-8

Pub. No. 1/500

March 1993

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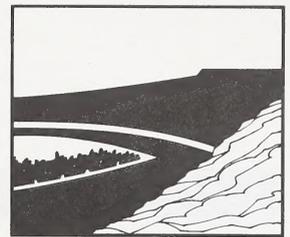
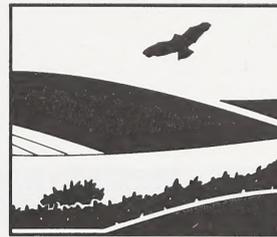
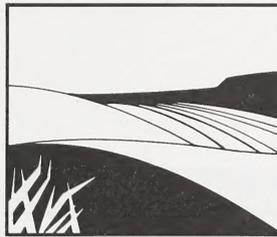
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**PRAIRIE CONSERVATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

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## Chairperson's Report

1992 was an exceptional year for the Prairie Conservation Coordinating Committee (PCCC). A more streamlined approach to the Goals of the 1988 Prairie Conservation Action Plan (PCAP) enabled several key prairie conservation issues to be addressed, and key achievements to be made.

A major highlight of 1992 was the signing of an agreement between the Department of National Defence and Environment Canada to establish the Canadian Forces Base Suffield National Wildlife Area. This large base is one of the few native mixed grass prairie areas left in Alberta and a key to the preservation of native grasslands in the province. HRH Prince Phillip, the Duke of Edinburgh, was present at the signing of the agreement. The important role played by the PCCC was noted during the ceremony. The designation of this area will deliver one of the cornerstone recommendations of the Prairie Conservation Action Plan. With this designation, however, comes controversial management questions that must be addressed if our native grassland is to be conserved.

The PCCC provides a forum for more than 40 government and non-government agencies to discuss prairie conservation issues in Alberta. This partnership results in a better understanding by all agencies of the different goals and opinions of each agency. Sometimes views conflict, however, the discussions that arise out of controversial issues are constructive and helpful to all agencies involved in the PCCC. When goals and ultimate objectives coincide, this cooperative mechanism realizes significant progress on prairie conservation issues.

1992 saw the establishment of a formal funding mechanism through cooperation between Environment Canada, Alberta

Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, the Provincial Museum of Alberta and the Friends of the Provincial Museum of Alberta Society. On behalf of all members of the PCCC, I would like to thank the Friends of the Provincial Museum of Alberta Society for providing administrative support to the PCCC. The support has expedited the administrative functions of the PCCC.



Also, it is important to acknowledge the continued efforts of the Secretary of the PCCC, Ian Dyson. Ian manages to keep this large group flowing consistently and efficiently.

As I reflect on the past two years over which I have been pleased to serve as the Chairperson of the PCCC, I must express my satisfaction and support for the group and the conservation ideals it espouses. I am reminded of my trip to East Africa during 1992 and noting how similar the grasslands appeared to ours in Alberta. Closer examination of the African plains indicated many domestic overgrazing problems. Much of our prairie is conserved through the efforts of private landowners, without whose cooperation our conservation efforts would be unsuccessful. Through continued cooperative effort, we can avoid those severe management questions that face countries elsewhere. The members of the PCCC must and will continue to work to the conservation of this most endangered of Canadian landscapes. There is much to do and eager and willing people to do it. That is the continuing mission of the PCCC.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald McKeating". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

Gerald McKeating  
Chairperson, 1992-1993

## The Plan and The Committee

The Prairie Conservation Action Plan (PCAP) is the result of a three-year World Wildlife Fund Canada (WWF) program, the "Wild West" program. Published in the fall of 1988 and released jointly by WWF Canada and each of the three prairie provinces, the plan is a five-year action plan aimed at prairie-wide efforts to conserve, protect and manage native and parkland species, communities and habitats.

The Prairie Conservation Coordinating Committee (PCCC) is the Government of Alberta's response to the challenge posed by the PCAP. It was established in 1989 to ensure that the goals and intentions of the PCAP are carried out. With over four dozen member organizations, it is the largest and most broadly representative committee of its kind in Canada.

## Summary of Meetings

Each meeting of the PCCC provides an opportunity to share information and discuss a wide range of issues and projects that involve member organizations. Topical updates are provided on environmental initiatives, the provincial integrated resource planning program, environmental legislation, local land use planning initiatives, non-government conservation projects, and other subjects. This forum ensures that all member organizations are well-informed about prairie conservation issues, and it also encourages networking and liaison among member organizations.

The PCCC held three meetings in 1992, two of which were combined with field trips. They are described below.

### Calgary, January 1992

The committee held a one-day meeting to approve its 1991 annual report and review and adopt procedures to fund the activities of the committee. A charitable organization, Friends of the Provincial Museum, agreed to administer PCCC funds. Subsequently, Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Provincial Museum of Alberta contributed monies to this fund. Fact sheets were prepared dealing with the Prairie Conservation Action Plan, the PCCC, Environmental and Conservation Initiatives, and Alberta's Protected Areas.

The Alberta Wilderness Association made a presentation on the "Wilderness 2000" initiative, Ducks Unlimited screened the educational video, "If You Build It," and a Canadian Wildlife Service biologist provided a detailed status update on

the Swift Fox reintroduction program. The reintroduction program has been quite successful and the goal of a self-sustaining population appears to be within reach.

The PCCC adopted new procedures for conducting committee business. They include establishing an executive committee and setting up "Goal Subcommittees" to track and evaluate closely the progress made by the committee toward implementing each of the PCAP's 10 goals.

### Hanna, May 1992

Over the course of a two-day meeting, members conducted a workshop for the newly constituted Goal Subcommittees, heard a presentation on the proposed objectives of the Special Areas Water Supply Project, and undertook a field tour of the Special Areas north of Hanna to review grassland management and cooperative wetland habitat development projects. The Goal Subcommittee workshop resulted in the appointment of chairpersons and the identification of means of tracking progress toward the achievement of each goal.

The committee reviewed the progress of various workgroups established to pursue individual PCAP action recommendations. It also reviewed and adopted a strategy for conserving and managing riparian cottonwoods, and discussed procedures for selecting an Alberta Prairie Conservation Award recipient.

### Red Deer, September 1992

A second workshop was held to discuss progress made by the Goal Subcommittees. Participants shared ideas and viewpoints about how the approach is working and how it might be improved. In addition, Jim Robertson, head of interpretation for Waskasoo Park, provided a tour of the Kerry Wood Nature Centre and a guided tour of the Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary trail.

Several presentations were made. The Alberta Wilderness Association dealt with the Neutral Hills, the Edmonton Municipal Regional Planning Commission talked about municipal planning in Alberta, and the Canadian Wildlife Service discussed feral horse management on CFB Suffield. Discussion topics included implementing the Riparian Cottonwoods Conservation and Development Strategy, the progress of implementation workgroups and power-boating on rivers.



## Key 1992 Achievements

### National Wildlife Area, Canadian Forces Base, Suffield

In March 1992, HRH Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, visited Alberta in his capacity as International President of the World Wide Fund for Nature. At Ralston, he participated in a ceremony to witness the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of National Defence and Environment Canada to establish the Canadian Forces Base Suffield National Wildlife Area (NWA).

The PCCC stimulated the discussions that led to signing the memorandum, and its contribution was recognized during the ceremony.

The NWA will encompass 420 km<sup>2</sup> (162 sq. mi.), almost 15 percent of the Suffield Range. This unique prairie ecosystem includes the Middle Sand Hills, native prairie representative of the dry mixed grassland ecoregion and riparian areas along the South Saskatchewan River.

### Alberta Prairie Conservation Award

In March 1992, on the occasion of Prince Phillip's visit to Alberta, the Government of Alberta announced a series of initiatives related to conservation, including the intention to award an annual Alberta Prairie Conservation Award (PCA).

The annual award will acknowledge significant contributions made by individuals, groups or corporations in conserving or enhancing Alberta's prairie and parkland ecosystems. The PCCC will play a large role in determining criteria for the annual award and in soliciting and reviewing nominations.

At year-end, plans were underway to solicit nominations publicly. A PCCC selection subcommittee has been struck and the first Alberta PCA will be awarded in 1993.

### Riparian Cottonwoods Strategy

In May 1992, the PCCC reviewed and formally endorsed a "Conservation and Management Strategy for Riparian Forests in Southern Alberta". The strategy was developed by a private consultant acting on the direction of a multi-party Advisory Group with funding from the Prairie for Tomorrow program.

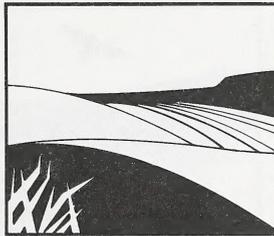
The strategy identifies opportunities and challenges for improving the way that riparian forests are managed. It also

identifies various goals, objectives and action steps to accomplish the stated mission:

*"To sustain native riparian forests as key components of southern Alberta river ecosystems by managing land, water and resource use to protect ecological integrity."*

The strategy document was the final step in a process that began with the publication of a technical report on the biology and status of riparian poplars. This was followed by interviews with 45 key stakeholders and culminated with a workshop. This workshop, jointly sponsored by the PCCC, was attended by more than 40 people representing a broad diversity of interests. All attendees reviewed the draft strategy.

In November 1992, the final report was issued along with a covering letter from the Minister of Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife. At year-end, the PCCC was working on a plan to implement the strategy and had awarded funds for developing an educational brochure that is being produced by the Federation of Alberta Naturalists. The brochure will contain information on the values associated with riparian forest ecosystems.



## Implementing the PCCC

### Meeting the PCAP Goals

In January 1992, Goal Subcommittees were formed to monitor progress on achieving PCAP's 10 goals. The tasks of the subcommittees include recording progress toward each goal, determining a final product for each goal, and addressing concerns raised

by PCCC members.

The following provides a summary, of the progress made toward each goal in 1992.

#### Goal #1

*Identifying the remaining native prairie and parkland.*

The following specific initiatives which form a key part of the identification process, are being undertaken by Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife:

- Information on environmentally significant areas, gathered in numerous individual studies, is being compiled into a database.
- Native vegetation is being identified, at a 1:100 000 mapping scale, for over 30 000 km<sup>2</sup> in southern Alberta. Reconnaissance scale vegetation classification is also being carried out for a portion of the Central Region and a large area extending from Edmonton and Athabasca to Cold Lake and Wainwright.

## The Prairie Conservation Action Plan

- Specialized studies are also being conducted on specific native prairie and parkland sites by Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, as well as other groups and agencies to characterize vegetation and other biophysical features.

### Goal #2

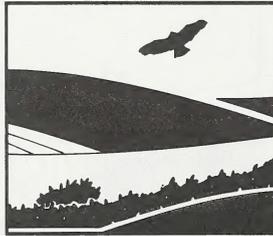
***Protect at least one large, representative area in each of the four major prairie ecoregions.***

- Through the upland Prairie Care program, upland and wetland habitat initiatives are being planned, developed and implemented at Big Hay/Bittern Lakes, Viking East, Derwent, Thomas Lake and Lone Pine Lake landscapes (Ducks Unlimited).
- A local land use plan has been prepared that will provide significant protection for a large area of native aspen parkland in the Rumsey Parkland South area (Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife).
- A range management specialist was hired to inspect the condition and management of grazing leases, and to develop range management plans (Special Areas Board).

### Goal #3

***Establish a system of protected native prairie ecosystems and, where possible, connecting corridors, across the three prairie provinces which includes representative samples of each ecoregion and habitat subregion.***

- The provincial government announced its intention to establish ecological reserves at Ross Lake and Prairie Coulees (Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation).
- "Special Places 2000", a discussion paper outlining Alberta's proposed plan for a protected areas strategy, was released in November 1992 (Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation; Forestry, Lands and Wildlife; Environment).
- Maps of environmentally significant areas for the Alberta prairies are virtually completed. The Southern Region is undertaking a large-scale inventory of the prairie that will identify significant sage communities to augment the completed inventory of sage grouse dancing areas. A more detailed inventory of significant areas of public land is underway so that appropriate reservations can be placed on important habitat areas (Fish and Wildlife, Public Lands).
- The Endangered Species Campaign in Alberta was actively promoted (Alberta Wilderness Association, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, World Wildlife Fund Canada).



- Property at Eattle Lake in the aspen parkland region was placed under reservation for a Natural Area (Public Lands).
- A 47-minute video on the importance of wildlife habitat was produced (Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation).
- Endangered species brochures were produced on peregrine falcons, swift fox, trumpeter swans, burrowing owls, piping plovers, peregrine hawks and leopard frogs. Four more brochures are planned (Fish and Wildlife).
- Two new fact sheets were produced on rare plants (Public Lands).

### Goal #4

***Protect threatened ecosystems and habitats by preparing and implementing habitat management and restoration plans.***

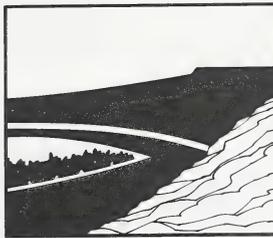
- An operational management plan for the Milk River Natural Area and Kennedy Coulee Ecological Reserve was produced and ratified by the ministers of Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation and Forestry, Lands and Wildlife at Medicine Hat in September 1992 (Forestry, Lands and Wildlife; Tourism, Parks and Recreation).
- A draft management plan was prepared for the Hand Hills Ecological Reserve and is undergoing review before being approved. Management plans for the Rumsey and Prairie Coulees Ecological Reserves are being initiated (Tourism, Parks and Recreation).
- The existing management plan for the Antelope Creek Habitat Area has been used as a basis for a number of other plans, which will include several southern Alberta ranches (Alberta Fish and Game Association).
- Integrated resource plans (IRPs) are underway for the Central and Southern regions and the Eastern Irrigation District. An IRP for the Red Deer Corridor is being initiated and background inventory work was undertaken for the Pakowki-Cypress IRP in preparation for initiating in the 1993/94 fiscal year. Protecting habitat and ecological resources is an important component of all IRPs (Forestry, Lands and Wildlife).
- A Waterton Lakes Park Management Plan was completed. It recognizes the fescue grasslands as a Zone 1 - Special Protection Area (Canadian Parks Service).
- An agreement has been reached to prepare management plans for the Suffield National Wildlife Area and the One-Four ranch in the future (Canadian Wildlife Service).

- Inventories of Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) were completed for four Edmonton area rural municipalities. One will soon be prepared for the City of Edmonton. The County of Strathcona has prepared a draft "Lakes Management Plan" for a large part of the Cooking Lake moraine (Edmonton Municipal Regional Planning Commission).
- Native and non-native species have been successfully re-established along the right-of-way to Waterton Lakes National Park. Control of non-native species is in progress (Canadian Parks Service).
- A program to develop mountain bluebird nestbox trails is continuing. From 1989-92, over 3,000 new boxes were built and an additional 246 km of new trails was developed. It is anticipated the program will begin to wind down in 1993, as most areas are now covered. However, maintenance of trails and boxes will continue indefinitely (Alberta Fish and Game Association).
- A discussion paper was prepared for an Endangered Species Act. It has been forwarded to other departments and is still being reviewed (Fish and Wildlife).

**Goal #5**

*Protect and enhance the populations of prairie species designated nationally or provincially as vulnerable, threatened, endangered or extirpated by implementing recovery and management plans.*

- Work will continue to protect the habitats of COSEWIC-designated species through proposed and/or established Natural Areas. Projects on COSEWIC species will be funded as budgets allow (Public Lands).
- A status report on the leopard frog was completed. National recovery teams under RENEW (the Committee on the Recovery of Nationally Endangered Wildlife) have been established for the following species: swift fox, Baird's sparrow, burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, loggerhead shrike, greater prairie chicken and black-footed ferret (Fish and Wildlife).
- Several local fish and game clubs have held special events to help thin out coyote populations in southern Alberta. Coyotes hunt swift foxes and are also a competing predator (Alberta Fish and Game Association).
- A three-year feasibility study has been completed on re-establishing the swift fox population. A national recovery plan will be written to implement direction provided by Western Wildlife Directors based on their review of the forthcoming report (Canadian Wildlife Service, Fish and Wildlife, World Wildlife Fund).
- In 1992, the Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) assumed total funding and control of Operation Burrowing Owl. Before 1992, the AFGA provided close to \$8,000 to Operation Burrowing Owl, with an additional \$40,000 provided in volunteer efforts. In 1992, the AFGA will spend approximately \$34,000 in direct funds and an additional \$20,000 in volunteer effort. A similar level of funding is planned for 1993 (Alberta Fish and Game Association).



**Goal #6**

*Ensure that no additional species become threatened, endangered or extirpated.*

- Inventories of ESAs were completed for all rural lands in the Red Deer Regional Planning Commission (RDRPC) area. Piping plover and other locally rare species were identified. The Commission plans to revise its regional plan to reference all ESAs having regional, provincial and national significance (RDRPC).
  - ESA inventories are complete for all rural municipalities except the ID of Ranchland #6 (Oldman River RPC).
  - No ESA inventories have been undertaken to date, but the commission is supportive of the concept (Battle River RPC).
  - ESA inventories for County of Newell #8, County of Forty and M.D. of Cypress #1 were completed, published and distributed.
- The Southeast Alberta Regional Plan was rewritten to include an environmental protection section (SE Alberta RPC).
- Two articles were published in a magazine for members, outlining the dangers of furadan. A meeting was held with Alberta Agriculture to discuss the use of furadan for controlling Russian Wheat Aphid and grasshoppers. In conjunction with Agriculture Canada, a brochure was published about the hazards of furadan to farmers and burrowing owls (Alberta Fish and Game Association).
- The Alberta Bird Atlas was published in October 1992 (Federation of Alberta Naturalists).
- Fieldwork on the critical habitat needs of prairie falcons was conducted from 1989 to 1991. A report is being prepared (Canadian Wildlife Service).

- The survey of toxic chemicals in raptor eggs (Canadian Field Naturalist 104(2):222-243) showed that levels of DDE dieldrin and heptochlor epoxide declined from 1966 to 1988. However, levels in some species still exceeded minimum critical levels. The need for future monitoring is being assessed (Canadian Wildlife Service).
- An important nesting site of the piping plover at the Hand Hills Ecological Reserve has been protected by removing cattle from the area. Studying piping plover reproductive success and habitat requirements at the reserve would make a good project for someone (Canadian Wildlife Service).
- Tourism, Parks and Recreation is seeking partnership arrangements with the Canadian Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, Fish and Wildlife and others to establish an ecological reserve for shorebird staging and/or production (Tourism, Parks and Recreation).
- The Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves has recommended that chemicals for controlling of noxious and invading non-native plant species be used only as a last resort, and then only with the consent of the Minister. This should increase the protection of native species vulnerable to chemical applications (Tourism, Parks and Recreation).
- A third Endangered Species Workshop was held in Brandon in 1992 and co-hosted by the Manitoba Department of Natural Resources, the Rural Development Institute, the Manitoba Naturalists Society and Environment Canada. Numerous organizations provided support for the workshop (Canadian Wildlife Service, Fish and Wildlife).
- As management plans are prepared for rare and endangered species, habitat requirements are being determined and listed (Fish and Wildlife).
- A shorebird inventory is being compiled, together with a list of potential candidates for shorebird reserves (Canadian Wildlife Service, Fish and Wildlife).
- Research on integrated pest management is continuing with emphasis on the biological control of weeds (Alberta Agriculture).



#### **Goal #7**

***Encourage governments to more explicitly incorporate conservation of native prairie into their programs.***

- A report entitled "Petroleum Activity on Native Prairie: Guidelines for Surface Disturbances," was issued by the ERCB in November together with an Informational Letter (IL92-12). The report resulted from a collaborative inter-agency project with the objective of minimizing the impact that oil and gas activity has on native prairie grassland (ERCB).
- Conservation of native prairie is being specifically incorporated in a number of provincial government programs including the ecological reserve, natural area and integrated resource planning programs (Forestry, Lands and Wildlife; Tourism, Parks and Recreation).

#### **Goal #8**

***Encourage balanced use of private lands that allows sustained use of the land while maintaining and enhancing the biological diversity of the prairies.***

- The Canada/Alberta Soil Conservation Initiative and Canada/Alberta Agreement on Soil, Water and Cropping Research and Technology Transfer programs conclude in March 1993 (Agriculture Canada).
- Lobbied for the elimination of the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan (GRIP) (Alberta Wilderness Association).

#### **Goal #9**

***Promote public awareness of the values and importance of prairie wildlife and wild places.***

- Federation of Alberta Naturalists held a conference called "12% by 2000" (Federation of Alberta Naturalists).
- Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) continue to carry on a wide range of activities to promote and protect environmentally significant areas through consultation with landowners. Where ESA inventories have been completed, RPCs make reports available to their staff and the public (Regional Planning Commissions).
- At Lake Newell, viewing areas and walkways for bird watchers were constructed in Jack Fish Bay. Despite problems with pathway maintenance, similar trails were constructed in the Swen Bayer Wildlife Area (Eastern Irrigation District).
- The Alberta Wilderness Association is producing a video on wild birds (Alberta Wilderness Association).

- Canadian Wildlife Service is looking at the possibility of focusing on native prairie areas for National Wildlife Week in 1993 (Canadian Wildlife Service).
- Friends of the Environment Education Society of Alberta has finished developing the Adopt-A-Stream program, and a resource binder is available to teachers and youth group leaders (Alberta Environment).
- Within Alberta, many education programs are available about prairie conservation. These programs will be advertised in the winter issue of Update magazine (Alberta Environment).
- Development of the University of Calgary's (U of C) "Prairie Lifeline" course was completed. The course is intended to promote awareness of the prairie environment and is targeted toward grades four, five and six (U of C).

- The Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMD&C), Alberta Agriculture, Agriculture Canada, Ducks Unlimited and the County of Stettler are participating jointly in a Municipal Conservation Project. The objective is to develop a soil and water conservation plan for a municipality that also considers integrating resource management programs in the area, including those for wildlife and waterfowl management (Alberta Agriculture).



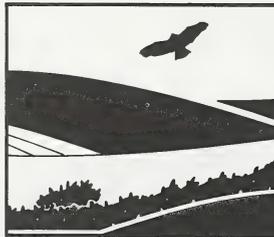
- In conjunction with its annual meeting, the Alberta Wilderness Association held a field trip to the Rumsey area (Alberta Wilderness Association).
- Canadian Wildlife Service has published a landowner's guide to preserving and enhancing the native prairie (Canadian Wildlife Service).
- The World Wildlife Fund provided the Wainwright Wildlife and Conservation Society with funds to protect 18 ac. of land within the City of Wainwright (World Wildlife Fund).
- Alberta Tourism and Fish and Wildlife Division's Watchable Wildlife Unit are working together on an Alberta Resident Watchable Wildlife User survey (Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Fish and Wildlife).
- Alberta Tourism has started studying the phenomenon of ecotourism (Tourism, Parks and Recreation).
- The Federation of Alberta Naturalists is working with the Alberta Amphibian Monitoring Committee, using volunteers across Alberta to survey amphibian populations (Federation of Alberta Naturalists).
- Fish and Wildlife is developing teacher activity kits to accompany the endangered species fact sheets. These should be completed over the next year (Fish and Wildlife).
- The Federation of Alberta Naturalists and the Alberta Native Plants Council is working on an "Atlas of Rare Vascular Plants" to be published in late 1993 (Federation of Alberta Naturalists).
- The Southeast Alberta Regional Planning Commission's Regional Plan will encourage the development of wildlife areas within the urban environment to ensure that residents of cities and towns have opportunities to observe and enjoy prairie species (Southeast Alberta Regional Planning Commission).

#### **Goal #10**

#### ***Promote research relevant to prairie conservation.***

- A four-year experiment was completed to determine the feasibility of grazing rough fescue prairie over the winter period. Rough fescue grasslands will not maintain the desired level of health for hereford cows in winter, but pre-conditioning will enable them to achieve optimal condition in spring. Studies were initiated to determine weathering losses of herbage and feed intake in winter relative to nutrient supplementation (Agriculture Canada).
  - A new program is being developed at Lethbridge Research Station to develop native species for reclamation (Agriculture Canada).
- An inventory of native flora in the vicinity of the Oldman River Dam site was completed (Alberta Environment).
- Research is underway to develop and register lines of native grasses for use in reclamation (Canadian Parks Service, Alberta Agriculture).
- Work is underway to review the literature on reclamation in native prairie ecosystems and to review pipeline reclamation (Alberta Environment, Land Conservation and Reclamation Council).
- A research program has been started to monitor the effects of cover conversion on waterfowl recruitment on the aspen forest range. Range conversions and their subsequent effect on waterfowl populations will be monitored. Study results should result in guidelines for pasture management to provide compatible benefits for both livestock and breeding waterfowl. In 1992, the following were accomplished or started:

1. Native prairie habitat conservation — landowner's guide published.
  2. Waterfowl recruitment — cover conversion; three annual reports on impact of pasture management practices on waterfowl production.
  3. Prairie pothole project — monitor waterfowl production under a variety of experimental treatments.
  4. Effects of habitats/predator manipulation on ducks — designed to show effects of intensively managing nesting cover and predator populations on waterfowl production.
  5. Prairie ecosystems study — designed to increase understanding of the dynamics of prairie wetland ecosystems in relation to climate variability and wildlife populations.
  6. Migratory bird conservation in uplands adjacent to wetlands — project will result in journal articles and public brochures that provide advice on how landowners can integrate habitat needs of prairie raptors into land management practices.
  7. Prairie habitat monitoring designed to measure type and magnitude of change in waterfowl habitat base and use on long-term basis.
  8. Agricultural-wildlife integration grazing systems — determine which livestock grazing prescriptions have the best potential to improve upland nesting cover for waterfowl; to be reviewed. (Canadian Wildlife Service).
- The Chinook Applied Research Association (CARA) is currently conducting trials to determine the suitability of treatments such as fertilization, aeration, interseeding and spraying as "quick fix" methods of range improvement. CARA has ongoing trials to determine the effectiveness of protein supplementation on growing animals (calves and yearlings) on pasture.



## Implementation Workgroups

The following summarizes the year-end status of implementation workgroups that were addressing specific PCAP action recommendations:

### *Protection Issues — Lost River/Milk River*

#### Action Recommendation

The Lost River portion of the federal One-Four Research Station and the Milk River are home to several rare and endangered plants and animals such as the short-horned lizard, mountain plover, pronuba moth and soapweed. Parts of these areas have been proposed as Natural Areas and ecological reserves that should be given permanent protection.

#### Membership

Public Lands (chair), Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Agriculture Canada, Alberta Cattle Commission, Alberta Wilderness Association, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Canadian Wildlife Service, and Fish and Wildlife.

#### Status

The workgroup's final report was adopted by the PCCC at its May 1992 meeting. The report recognizes the national environmental significance of the entire Lost River/Milk River block. This is part of the largest tract of remaining mixed grassland in Canada and supports intact ecosystems containing a diversity of mixed grassland species. The report also recognizes that grazing is an integral component of grassland management and pays tribute to the stewardship demonstrated over time by the large ranches operating in the area. It concludes that long-term management by local ranchers will likely be the best way to achieve continued economic and environmental health. The report's recommendations include the following statements:

1. Lands within the breaks of the Lost and Milk rivers be protected from all industrial development;
2. Upland grassland areas remain largely in native grass, with the associated traditional use of livestock grazing;
3. There should be no fragmentation of the land into smaller parcels with many land controllers; and
4. Alternatives for establishing a protective designation of the key Lost River portion of Agriculture Canada's One-Four Research Station should be explored.

The report's recommendations will be implemented through cooperation among the various jurisdictions and stakeholders involved, and through the Pakowki-Cypress Integrated Resource Plan that will be initiated in 1993/94.

### *Maintaining Wildlife and Habitat in Municipalities*

#### Action Recommendation

Regional and municipal planning commissions should set objectives to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat on both private and public land within their jurisdictions. A target of at least 10 percent of the land should be maintained. All major ecosystems within the jurisdiction should be represented. The commissions should immediately undertake inventories of the native habitat within their boundaries to identify the area's species, ecosystems and ecologically sensitive sites. Provincial managers of public lands should agree to these regional planning objectives.

### Membership

Oldman River Regional Planning Commission (chair), Calgary, Edmonton Metropolitan, Battle River, Palliser, Red Deer and Southeast Regional Planning Commissions, Alberta Energy, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Federation of Alberta Naturalists.

### Status

The workgroup tabled a report at the September 1992 PCCC meeting that will be considered at the January 1993 meeting. The report outlines the inventories of Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) that have been completed to date, identifies tools available to local authorities and regional planning commissions to protect ESAs, and highlights the strategies the various regional planning commissions may adopt to ensure the protection of ESAs.

### Environmental Education

#### Action Recommendation

Environmental education, including wildlife conservation, should be incorporated into the school curriculum. All schools should be encouraged to grow natural gardens or to care for a Natural Area.

#### Membership

Alberta Environment (chair), Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Canadian Parks Services, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, Fish and Wildlife, Public Lands and the Waterton Biosphere Association.



### Status

The workgroup compiled an inventory of educational programs on the topic of prairie conservation and recommended these programs be promoted. As a first step, an article on prairie conservation has been prepared for the winter "Update" magazine (produced by the Friends of Environmental Education Society of Alberta) which focuses on the topic of Agriculture and Environment. The workgroup's report was tabled at the September 1992 PCCC meeting and will be reviewed and discussed at the PCCC's January 1993 meeting.

### Urban Native Prairie Areas

#### Action Recommendation

Small native prairie areas near towns and cities should be recognized, preserved and used for educational, recreational and inspirational purposes, e.g., Calgary's Nose Hill.

### Membership

Federation of Alberta Naturalists (chair), Alberta Municipal Affairs, Battle River, Calgary, Edmonton Metropolitan, Oldman River, Palliser, Red Deer and Southeast Regional Planning Commissions, University of Calgary.

### Status

The work group contacted seven cities and towns in prairie and parkland Alberta to assess the amount of native prairie that is preserved in urban areas, as well as identify the level of protection, future issues and concerns, educational opportunities and public support. The results were compiled in a report tabled at the September 1992 PCCC meeting. This report will be reviewed and discussed at the PCCC's January 1993 meeting.

### Cooperative Prairie Conservation Initiatives

During 1992, several progressive cooperative prairie conservation initiatives took place. Included were projects that have not been initiated formally by the PCCC, but which have a direct PCAP/PCCC linkage and involve several member organizations playing key roles.

#### *Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA) Inventories*

##### Project

Produce ESA inventories for rural municipalities.

##### PCAP/PCCC Link

The PCAP recommends that inventories of remaining native prairie be undertaken at the habitat sub-region level. The inventories undertaken in the Oldman River Regional Planning Commission area in the mid-late 1980s provide a model.

#### PCCC Members Involved

Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife agencies, the Palliser Regional Planning Commission and the Special Areas Board.

### Status

During 1992, an ESA inventory report was produced for the Red Deer River Corridor. ESA inventories have now been undertaken for the vast majority of prairie and parkland Alberta.

#### *Energy/Prairie Project*

##### Project

Develop guidelines for petroleum and natural gas activity on native prairie.

#### PCAP/PCCC Link

The project resulted from an Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) hearing in response to concerns expressed by a leaseholder in the Altario area to a wellsite application on native prairie. The ERCB permitted the well to go ahead, with conditions, and recommended that affected agencies collaborate to develop policy guidelines to protect native prairie environments while allowing reasonable access to oil and gas resources.

#### PCCC Members Involved

Alberta Energy, Alberta Environment (Conservation and Reclamation Council), ERCB, Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, (Fish and Wildlife, Public Lands, Regional Coordination Services), Special Areas Board.

#### Status

The final report was issued by the ERCB, together with an ERCB Informational Letter (IL92-12) in November 1992.

#### *Rumsey Regionally Integrated Decision*

#### Project

Develop a local land-use plan for almost 50 sections of native aspen parkland on public land located south of the Rumsey Ecological Reserve.

#### PCAP/PCCC Link

The PCAP recommends large areas of native aspen parkland be retained, specifically the Rumsey block which is the largest remaining representative site of aspen parkland remaining in the world. In 1990, the Government of Alberta formally established 13.25 sections at the north end of the block as the Rumsey Ecological Reserve. Management issues have been raised repeatedly, particularly by public interest groups, for the remainder of the block. Surface impacts associated with oil and gas activity are the primary issue.

#### PCCC Members Involved

Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism, Alberta Energy, Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife (Fish and Wildlife, Public Lands, Regional Coordination Services), Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Alberta Wilderness Association, ERCB. A number of other key stakeholders were also involved in drafting the plan.

#### Status

After being publicly reviewed in November 1991, the draft plan was revised by the planning team and reviewed and endorsed by an interdepartmental director-level committee. The draft plan was undergoing a final review before approval at year-end.

#### *M.D. of Acadia — Tax Recovery Lands*

#### Project

Retain tax recovery lands in the M.D. of Acadia that are environmentally significant parcels of native grass prairie.

#### PCAP/PCCC Link

The PCAP recommends retention of native grass prairie. The M.D. of Acadia had developed a draft sale policy for 84 quarter sections of tax-recovery land, but heard about the PCCC initiative through the media and made contact with the members.

#### PCCC Members Involved

Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife (Fish and Wildlife, Public Lands, Regional Coordination Services), Palliser Regional Planning Commission, World Wildlife Fund Canada.

#### Status

A land exchange proposal has been endorsed by the M.D. Council and is being implemented. In this proposal, most of the 84 quarter sections of tax recovery land will be retained as native grass prairie under long-term grazing leases administered by the Public Lands Division.

#### *Milk River Management Committee*

#### Project

Develop an operational management plan for the Milk River Natural Area and Kennedy Coulee Ecological Reserve.



#### PCAP/PCCC Link

The PCAP identifies the Milk River area as a mixed prairie ecoregion requiring permanent protection. A multi-party management committee was formed to develop a management plan for the two protected areas.

#### PCCC Members Involved

Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife (Public Lands, Regional Coordination Services), Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation (Provincial Parks Service), Alberta Wilderness Association, Alberta Cattle Commission (grazing lessee representatives).

#### Status

A management plan was produced and was formally signed by the ministers of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife and Tourism, Parks and Recreation at a signing ceremony held in Medicine Hat in September 1992.

### *Environmentally Significant and Sensitive Resources*

#### Project

Place land reservations on key environmentally sensitive public land to preclude or restrict surface disturbances.

#### PCAP/PCCC Link

The PCAP encourages governments to incorporate conservation of native prairie more explicitly into their programs.

#### PCCC Members Involved

Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife (Public Lands and Fish and Wildlife), Alberta Energy, ERCB.

#### Status

A total of 10 sites, encompassing 2,012 km<sup>2</sup> (777 sq. mi.) are being studied by Fish and Wildlife and Public Lands field staff in Southern Alberta. Placing appropriate reservations on these sites involves negotiations with other interested agencies, such as Alberta Energy and ERCB. The amount of land within each study area on which reservations are usually placed ranges from 20-80 percent. The sites being considered include: 1) key sandhills, badlands and unique areas that are significant for wildlife and are unique in elevation, topography, aesthetic qualities, etc., and where mitigation or reclamation is extremely difficult; 2) key wildlife breeding/rearing areas, such as sage grouse dancing grounds, and adjacent nesting areas and breeding sites for threatened wildlife or rare species; and 3) sites containing rare and endangered plant species.



At year-end, the first reservations had been placed and the project was about 60 percent complete.

## Member Agencies

Les Usher	Agriculture Canada
Mel Miller	Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
Linda Walton	Alberta Association of M.D.s and Counties
Chris Mills	Alberta Cattle Commission
Dr. Philip Stepney	Alberta Community Development
Diana Purdy	Alberta Energy
Stephen Dobson	Alberta Environmental Protection
Dr. Niels Damgaard	Alberta Fish and Game Association
Rae Runge	Alberta Municipal Affairs
Fred Moffatt	Alberta Parks Service, Alberta Environmental Protection
Ann Roberts	Alberta Wilderness Association
Bob Riddet	Battle River Regional Planning Commission
John Rusling	Calgary Regional Planning Commission
Major Dan Davies	Canadian Forces Base Suffield
Miles Scott-Brown	Canadian Parks and Wilderness Association
Bill Dolan	Canadian Parks Service Waterton
Gerald McKeating	Canadian Wildlife Service (Chairperson, PCCC)
Moe Mahendran	CN Rail
Bernd Martens	Coal Association
Andy Masiuk	Coordination Services, Alberta Environmental Protection
Gary Stewart	Ducks Unlimited
Bill Mortensen	Eastern Irrigation District
Peter Dickson	Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission
Cynthia Langlo	Energy Resources Conservation Board
Calvin Webb	Environment Council of Alberta
Liz Savoy	Federation of Alberta Naturalists
Gery Thompson	Fish and Wildlife Division, Alberta Environmental Protection
Jim Struthers	Fish and Wildlife Division, Alberta Environmental Protection
Marilyn Rayner	Land Information Services Division, Alberta Environmental Protection
Dr. Robert Powell	Natural Resources Conservation Board
Larry Simpson	Nature Conservancy Canada
Lynda Paterson	Oldman River Regional Planning Commission
Linda Henrickson	Palliser Regional Planning Commission
Roger Marvin	Public Lands Division, Alberta Environmental Protection
Hiske Gerding	Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation
Bill Shaw	Red Deer Regional Planning Commission
Ian Dyson	Regional Coordination Services, Alberta Environmental Protection (Secretary - PCCC)
Ajit Atwal	Southeast Alberta Regional Planning Commission
Gordon Graydon	South Peace Regional Planning Commission
Gerald Kornelson	Special Areas Advisory Council
Dug Major	Special Areas Board, Alberta Municipal Affairs
John Zeistra	Unifarm
Dr. Richard Revel	University of Calgary
Larry Frith	Waterton Biosphere Association
Ed Curry	Western Stockgrowers Association
Syd Barber	Wildlife Habitat Canada
Monte Hummel	World Wildlife Fund Canada

### PCAP Goals

1. Identify the remaining native prairie and parkland.
2. Protect at least one large, representative area in each of the four major prairie ecosystems (Mixed Prairie, Tall Grass Prairie, Fescue Prairie and Aspen Parkland).
3. Establish a system of protected native prairie ecosystems across the three prairie provinces and, where possible, create connecting corridors. This system should include representative samples of each habitat subregion.
4. Protect threatened ecosystems and habitats by preparing and implementing habitat management and restoration plans.
5. Protect and enhance the populations of prairie species designated nationally or provincially as vulnerable, threatened or endangered by implementing recovery and management plans.
6. Ensure that no additional species become threatened, endangered or extirpated.
7. Encourage governments to incorporate conservation of native prairie more explicitly in their programs.
8. Encourage balanced use of private lands that allows sustained use of the land while maintaining and enhancing the native biological diversity of the prairies.
9. Promote public awareness of the values and importance of prairie wildlife and wildlife places.
10. Promote research relevant to prairie conservation.

### PCCC Terms of Reference

#### *Authority*

Initiated by the Government of Alberta. The committee is consultative and advisory to member organizations. It does not have legislative, management or program authority or responsibilities. The acceptance of committee recommendations will remain at the individual discretion of member organizations.

#### *Duration*

The committee's duration is tied to the Prairie Conservation Action Plan, 1989-1994. The committee will exist until 31 December 1994. This tenure may be extended at the discretion of the committee.

#### *Purpose*

1. The purpose of the committee is to encourage effective implementation of the Prairie Conservation Action Plan in Alberta and to provide an ongoing profile for prairie and parkland conservation initiatives.
2. The committee will establish a focus and profile for the cooperative pursuit of initiatives identified in the Prairie Conservation Action Plan. It will:
  - serve as a forum for information exchange and cooperation between key organizations with interests in or jurisdiction over prairie conservation initiatives;
  - allow key contacts to get together periodically to review the plans, projects and programs of member organizations, to assess progress and to integrate program efforts;
  - constitute a cooperative partnership between different levels of government and non-government organizations in sharing major responsibility for implementing the Prairie Conservation Action Plan, while also allowing both groups to share their experiences and strengthen mutual goals and objectives;
  - encourage members to tailor their own programs, policies or initiatives to meet the goals of the Prairie Conservation Action Plan;
  - review progress in implementing the Prairie Conservation Action Plan in Alberta;
  - identify gaps and recommend measures to fill them in such areas as inventory deficiencies or new program requirements; and
  - adopt media communication strategies as appropriate to ensure that significant initiatives and accomplishments are widely communicated publicly.
3. The committee will encourage coordination and complementary between major conservation-related initiatives such as the Prairie Conservation Action Plan, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the Alberta Conservation Strategy, and Federal/Provincial Soil Conservation initiatives.

## Financial Report as at December 31, 1992

*Receipts*

June 12	Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife	\$ 4,000.00	
July 6	Canadian Wildlife Services	2,500.00	
July 6	Provincial Museum of Alberta	<u>1,000.00</u>	
	TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$ 7,500.00

*Disbursements*

June 30	Palliser Regional Planning Commission - Meeting Expenses	\$ 112.34	
Oct. 6	Red Deer Catering Ltd. - Meals	316.80	
Oct. 20	Deanna Knudson - Reimbursed Speaker/Books	59.90	
Dec. 29	Deanna Knudson - Reimbursed Books	<u>120.00</u>	
	TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS		<u>609.04</u>
	<b>FUND BALANCE</b>		<b><u>\$ 6,890.96</u></b>



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**PRAIRIE CONSERVATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE**