



Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia

Working
together
for the
conservation
of BC's
grasslands



STRATEGIC PLAN 2003–2008
A five year vision for BC's grasslands

**Grasslands Conservation
Council of British Columbia**
Strategic Plan
2003-2008

Prepared by:
GCC Executive Committee &
Dovetail Consulting Inc
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Foreword

This document presents the Strategic Plan for the Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia (GCC) for 2003 to 2008. The plan was developed through a two-day strategic planning workshop attended by 17 members of the GCC board and staff held in Kamloops, BC on October 29th and 30th, 2002. The GCC Board and smaller committees took the results from the meeting and developed this strategic plan with assistance from Dovetail Consulting Inc.

The Strategic Plan provides the framework to lead the GCC in the strategic delivery of its programs and in its organizational development from March 31st, 2003 to 2008. The plan is considered a blueprint from which a more detailed annual workplan will be developed outlining key strategies and action items for the GCC. While this is a five-year plan, the GCC will schedule a review of the strategic plan in three years.

On behalf of the GCC, I would like to thank all board members and staff that participated with great enthusiasm and energy in the two-day meeting and in the follow-up. Thank you also to the note taker and facilitator for their energetic and dedicated leadership that guided us through this process.

Comments on this Strategic Plan should be directed to:

Bruno Delesalle

Executive Director

Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia

954 A Laval Crescent

Kamloops, BC V2C 5P5

P: 250-374-5787 F: 250-374-6287

bruno.delesalle@bcgrasslands.org

Kristi Iverson

Kristi Iverson

Chair, Executive

Grasslands Conservation Council

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1 HISTORY & BACKGROUND OF THE GRASSLANDS CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

1.1 History & Profile

The Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia (GCC) was established as a society in August 1999, and subsequently as a registered charity in December 2001, due to growing concerns from a wide variety of organizations and individuals about the future of British Columbia's Grasslands.

The GCC is the only organization of its kind in BC, with a well-defined niche and tremendous support from a wide range of organizations and individuals, including the ranching community, environmental organizations, government agencies and First Nations. The GCC is often referred to as a strategic alliance of organizations and individuals with a broad spectrum of interests, experience and expertise.

The GCC is a volunteer-based organization, guided by a dedicated Board of Directors and Executive Committee. The GCC's Board and Executive are comprised of individuals who volunteer their time and expertise to the development of programs and assist in the day-to-day operations of the GCC. The GCC operates with a small staff and a growing volunteer base to assist in the implementation of programs (See section 8.2 for a diagram of the organizational structure).

1.2 Threats to BC's Grasslands

British Columbia's grasslands are rare, unique, life-sustaining ecosystems that provide critical habitat for more than 30% of British Columbia's threatened or endangered species. Despite this alarmingly high percentage, grasslands represent less than 1 percent of the provincial land base and are one of Canada's most endangered habitats.

In BC, 39 per cent of the grasslands are privately held, 9 per cent are in Indian Reserves, and 47 per cent are under crown grazing tenure. The majority of this area, covering 95 per cent of B.C.'s grasslands, is working rangelands. Thus, the ranching community is positioned to play a crucial role in conserving BC's grasslands. It follows that promoting sustainable ranching and working collaboratively with the ranching community—to keep working ranches working—is an important part of the GCC mandate.

BC's grasslands are threatened by human activities such as urbanization, Off Road Vehicle impacts, noxious weeds, abusive recreation, agricultural conversion, inappropriate grazing practices, forest encroachment and subdivision and development, resulting in a growing concern for the long-term sustainability of grasslands. These ever-present threats to - grasslands are what led to the inception of the GCC and continue to direct GCC conservation efforts. It has never been more apparent that BC's grasslands need a voice to ensure long-term conservation and stewardship. In response to this need the GCC will continue to work proactively and collaboratively for the conservation and wise use of grasslands in British Columbia.

1.3 Strategic Planning

Since 1999, the GCC has developed and successfully implemented an ambitious three-year strategy and action plan. Great progress has been made, and the need for the GCC has been confirmed. Yet, the necessity for continuing this important conservation and stewardship work is essential if threats to grasslands are to be addressed and grasslands are to be part of British Columbia's legacy for the future.

In an effort to address the concerns and threats to BC's grasslands, the GCC has developed an ambitious and comprehensive five-year plan that will serve to guide the strategic delivery of key programs and the GCC's own organizational development from 2003 to 2008.

The GCC Strategic Plan 2003-2008 provides:

- The GCC's vision and mission as long term milestones of success;
- A set of guiding principles that speak to the values of the GCC in working together within the organization, and with others in the pursuit of its vision;
- Key partnerships with organizations from a variety of fields and backgrounds that have been fundamental to the GCC's success;
- Three program areas: *Education and Outreach; Stewardship and Sustainable Ranching; and Conservation of Grassland Ecosystems*, designed to help the GCC achieve its vision of healthy and life-sustaining grassland ecosystems in British Columbia;
- *A series of measurable outcomes for each program area in the form of:*
 - *Goals:* medium-term milestones of GCC's success;
 - *Objectives:* shorter-term accomplishments which reflect the GCC's priorities in an effort to ensure the GCC achieve its goals;
 - *Strategies:* key activities to achieve the objectives, outlining action items, tools and approaches used to implement the strategies.
- The framework for the organizational development of the GCC, outlining the:
 - Vision and key features of the GCC's organizational structure;
 - Board development and succession plans;
 - Board Member Roles and Responsibilities;
 - Fundraising Program;
 - Staffing and Volunteer Plan;
 - Planning and Evaluation; and
- Diagrams of the GCC program and organizational structure.

1.4 The GCC Constitution

The Grasslands Conservation Council constitution forms the foundation of the GCC vision and mission, as well as its activities, programs and organizational structure. The following is an excerpt from the Constitution regarding the GCC's purpose:

- To educate and increase the public's understanding for the grassland environment by offering seminars, workshops, conferences and meetings; by collecting and disseminating information on grasslands, grassland conservation and management; and by providing education and stewardship programs;

- To organize and participate in environmental projects designed to:
 - Maintain and restore grassland flora and fauna
 - Preserve, protect and restore grassland biodiversity
 - Improve the management of grasslands
- To do all such other things as are incidental or ancillary to the attainment of the above purposes.

2 GCC'S VISION

The vision of the GCC is of healthy and life-sustaining grassland ecosystems in British Columbia.

3 MISSION STATEMENT

The GCC mission is to:

- Foster greater understanding and appreciation for the ecological, social, economic and cultural importance of grasslands throughout BC;
- Promote stewardship and sustainable management practices that will ensure the long-term health of BC's grasslands; and
- Promote the conservation of representative grassland ecosystems, species at risk and their habitats.

4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following values structure guiding principles that are fundamental to the development of the GCC and to the effective delivery of its programs:

- Respect each other's interests, values, goals and aspirations.
- Foster trust and promote inclusiveness.
- Solve issues in a collaborative manner.
- Strive to reach decisions by mutual consent.
- Ensure appropriate representation from the regions of the province that contain grasslands.
- Ensure broad representation on the Board of Directors.
- Represent and promote GCC decisions with unanimity and solidarity.

5 PARTNERSHIPS

The GCC is a strategic alliance of organizations and individuals committed to the conservation and stewardship of grasslands. These partnerships bring together a wide range of experience and knowledge from a variety of fields and backgrounds. The breadth of knowledge, experience, and the high level of commitment from its partners provide the GCC with credibility and a strong platform

from which to deliver its programs. Continuing to build and formalize new partnerships will be essential to the success of the Grasslands Conservation Council.

The following organizations support the GCC and its mission:

- Agriculture and Agrifood Canada
- BC Cattlemen's Association
- Canadian Nature Federation
- Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society – BC
- Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Environment Canada
- Federation of BC Naturalists
- Friends of Ecological Reserves
- Gerard Guichon Ranch Ltd.
- Fraser Basin Council
- South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program
- East Kootenay Conservation Program
- Union of BC Municipalities
- Outdoor Recreation Council
- Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
- Ministry of Forests
- Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- Society for Range Management
- Forest Research and Extension Partnership
- The Land Conservancy of BC
- The Nature Trust of BC
- University College of the Cariboo
- University of British Columbia
- Rocky Mountain Trench Natural Resources Society
- Columbia Basin Trust
- Parks Canada
- Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture

6 PROGRAM AREAS

This section outlines the goals, objectives and strategies for the three program areas that the GCC will pursue from 2003-2008 in order to achieve its mission and vision. Appendix section 8.1 provides a diagram that illustrates the structure of the GCC's programs.

6.1 Education and Outreach Program

The GCC will develop and deliver a well-integrated education and outreach program to promote stewardship and grassland sustainability. The GCC will develop and implement tools to ensure that awareness and understanding of the critical importance of grassland ecosystems is translated into on-the-ground action. This program will also focus on building a constituency of support among a wide range of individuals and organizations for the long-term health of grassland ecosystems.

6.1.1 Goal

To increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of the ecological, social, economic and cultural importance of British Columbia's grasslands among a wide range of individuals and organizations, and to ensure that this knowledge is applied through behaviour change on the ground.

6.1.2 Objectives for Education and Outreach

- Raise awareness and inform the public, land stewards, government, and other organizations of (a) the GCC's mission and programs, and (b) the threats to grassland ecosystems and the cultural, economic, social and ecological importance of grasslands in British Columbia.
- Provide tools to educate landowners, stewards and managers, planners, decision-makers and policy developers to encourage stewardship, conservation, and sustainable use of grasslands and help to achieve the long term health of grassland ecosystems.
- Build a constituency of support for the long-term health and sustainable use of grassland ecosystems, including a strong volunteer base in each major grassland region of British Columbia.
- Integrate and co-ordinate communication and outreach activities with all of the GCC's programs, including the GCC's fundraising program.

6.1.3 Strategies and Activities

The strategy for the Education and Outreach program is to develop and deliver activities, services, and the necessary supporting materials for target audiences. Strategies involve the use of tools for information compilation, dissemination, and extension. Outreach tools will be co-ordinated with the goals and objectives of other program areas.

What is Extension?

Extension is the process of educating people and organizations, and assists them in applying new information and knowledge to day-to-day activities. Extension is best defined by the following actions:

- **Bring together** the required people, knowledge and other resources to achieve desired goals;
- **Facilitate** the flow and dissemination of information;
- **Encourage** organizations, groups and individuals to work on problems and develop new opportunities;
- **Offer specific ideas** for change through demonstration; and ,
- **Inform** planning and decision-making processes.

The target audience for each activity will determine the approach and outreach tools that will be used by the GCC's board and staff. Audiences and the key messages for each product will be clearly identified prior to its development.

Audiences that the GCC will target include:

- The general public of BC, both rural and urban populations;
- The ranching and general agricultural community;
- Government organizations (provincial & federal agencies, municipal governments, regional districts, First Nations and crown corporations);
- Non-government organizations;

- Planners, policy-makers and decision-makers;
- Land owners and land managers;
- Professional associations (e.g. professional agrologists, biologists, etc.);
- Youth; and
- Educators and academic institutions.

Outreach tools include:

- Face-to-face and telephone communication;
- Letter or email correspondence;
- Group communication, such as meetings, tours, workshops, field demonstrations; and
- Mass communication, such as direct mail, conferences, newspapers, magazine, radio, TV, website, newsletter, fact sheets, and leaflets.

Strategies for Awareness Building and Information Dissemination

- Make use of tools such as: outdoor oriented magazines, community newspapers, other publications, press releases, and internet sites and publications, in order to:
 - Inform the general public about grasslands and the threats to grasslands (e.g., off road vehicle and invasive weeds issues, subdivision and development, demonstration projects, and special projects such as the BC Grasslands Conservation Risk Assessment;
 - Encourage stewardship, conservation and sustainable use and management of grasslands;
 - Raise the GCC's profile as a proactive grassland organization; and
 - Help to build a constituency of support.

Continue to produce bi-annual BC Grasslands magazine

- The key objectives of the magazine are to:
 - Provide a forum on key issues, such as off road vehicle impacts and invasive weeds, species at risk, subdivision and development, forest encroachment and sustainable range management;
 - Provide a diverse range of solution-oriented perspectives on grassland issues;
 - Promote the GCC, and increase its visibility provincially and in communities across BC;
 - Provide information about ecology and aspects of grasslands conservation, stewardship and sustainable ranching;
 - Feature the cultural and historical importance of grasslands; and
 - Provide updates about GCC programs and projects.

Maintain the BC Grasslands website (www.bcgrasslands.org)

- The objectives of the website are to:
 - Build broad awareness for all GCC activities and campaigns;
 - Provide key information on events occurring with respect to education, sustainable ranching, stewardship and conservation program areas;

- Provide provincial information and maps for BC's grasslands, including details on abundance, distribution, land status (including protected area status), historical extent, characterization, biodiversity and endangered species, noxious weed infestations, recreational abuses, and priority grassland areas most in need of conservation, restoration and stewardship efforts;
- Provide a comprehensive database of grassland conservation, restoration and stewardship initiatives, as a tool, to ensure this component realizes the full potential of the BC Grasslands Conservation Risk Assessment;
- Maintain a dynamic, interactive educational site about grassland ecology and biodiversity;
- Provide landowners and range managers with a component of the website that deals with sustainable range management, including information on landowner workshops and offering downloadable fact sheets; and
- Build and maintain a strong website component for the fundraising program, online membership registration and online donations.

Develop and facilitate presentations

- Develop and facilitate presentations that will:
 - Raise awareness, provide information, and tools, assist in building a constituency of support, and inform key audiences on: off road vehicle impacts and invasive weed issues, outcomes of Subdivision and Development Problem Analysis, demonstration projects, and Conservation Risk Assessment; and
 - Involve volunteers and partners in the development of presentation materials.

Develop Public Service Announcements and TV ads

- Develop public service announcements and TV advertisements with messages that will be developed in partnership with other organizations, governments, commercial advertisers, radio and television networks/stations and special interest groups in order to:
 - Raise awareness about impacts of off road vehicles, weeds and subdivision and development; and,
 - Inform audiences about GCC demonstration projects and BC Grasslands Risk Assessment.

Develop supporting materials for youth and educators

- Develop specific supporting materials that target youth and educators. Examples of resources to be developed include the development of an interactive CD Rom, and grassland educational curriculum.

Develop interpretive signs

- Continue to develop interpretive signs as funding partnerships are developed. Signs are a critical tool in targeted areas such as public spaces and schools.

Develop and disseminate promotional posters

- As resources become available, a grasslands poster will be developed with the objective of increasing awareness and support for grasslands and the GCC.

Strategies to Provide Tools and Information for Land Stewards, Planners and Decision-makers

Land stewards include government, First Nations, land and range managers, and landowners.

Plan and organize Annual Grasslands Symposiums and Workshops

- Plan and organize annual events, such as symposiums and workshops, to raise awareness of specific issues, provide information, distribute stewardship tools, and build a constituency of support for grasslands issues.
- Develop regionally based committees to help deliver the annual event, and to bring focus to and raise awareness about local issues.

Provide specific information for land stewards, politicians and decision-makers

- Disseminate technical information and key messages using outreach tools (such as fact sheets, communication media) for targeted audiences derived from:
 - The BC Grasslands Conservation Risk Assessment,
 - The Hamilton Commonage Grassland Monitoring project; and
 - Outcomes of GCC and related activities such as: the Off-Road Vehicle campaign, the Weed Campaign and the Subdivision & Development Problem Analysis.

Strategies for Building a Constituency of Support for Grasslands

Foster and maintain strategic relationships

- Foster and maintain relationships with key groups in BC such as: all levels of government (from local to federal, including First Nations bands and councils), crown corporations, utilities, business and industry (e.g., vineyard, orchard, and agricultural), range forestry, non-government organizations and other interest groups (e.g., Fraser Basin Council, BC Cattlemen's Association, livestock associations).
- Build relationships with other organizations and programs with an interest in grasslands across Canada, North America and other parts of the world in order to foster opportunities for learning, information and resource exchange.
- Develop a relationship-building protocol with key partners and supporters.
- Work with and provide educational materials for key groups, such as the ranching community, that will raise awareness of the economic, social and cultural role of ranching and grasslands.
- Continue to build partnerships with academic institutions to fulfil key research and monitoring needs such as identifying gaps or needs in range issues and to consider the development of a range research program.
- Provide researchers with resources (materials and volunteer presenters) that will facilitate the incorporation of grassland information in college and university curriculum;
- Provide resources (materials and volunteer presenters) to facilitate the incorporation of grasslands information into school curriculums.
- Undertake research to determine how education and outreach activities can target and partner with youth. Project examples include: field trips; class study, grassland video-

making contest, sponsor youth grassland awareness programs, and youth involvement in grassland restoration projects.

Disseminate brochures

- Develop a communication plan through the GCC Executive for targeting and distributing GCC brochures. This activity links to the membership drive activity in the Fundraising Strategy (section 7.6.3).

Strategies to Integrate and Coordinate Education and Outreach Activities with all GCC Programs

- Integrate and coordinate activities with all other programs, including fundraising;
- Develop outreach activities which focus on increasing GCC's constituency of support through increased membership.
- Ensure the Communication Extension Co-ordinator and Development Officer are working together with board members.
- Use clear communications in the delivery of programs and projects, and clear and consistent methods.

6.2 Grassland Stewardship and Sustainable Ranching

Grassland Stewardship is a set of strategies and practices that will be implemented to ensure the long-term health and integrity of the grassland landscape. Stewardship implies understanding, caring for, and maintaining a wide range of values, including those related to grazing. Stewardship is consistent with sustainable use – it does not mean preservation or protection from human use.

Sustainable Ranching involves domestic animal grazing practices that maintain and enhance the economic and social viability of a ranching operation, while maintaining the ecological integrity of the grassland landscape on which these operations depend.

In BC, 39 per cent of the grasslands are privately held, nine per cent are in Indian Reserves, and 47 per cent are under crown grazing tenure. The majority of this area, covering 95 per cent of BC's grasslands, is working rangelands. Thus, the ranching community is positioned to play a crucial role in conserving BC's grasslands. It follows that working collaboratively with the ranching community—to keep working ranches working—is an important part of the GCC mandate.

Through the Grassland Stewardship and Sustainable Ranching program area, the GCC will build support for the stewardship of grassland landscapes in British Columbia, encourage and facilitate the development of best management practices, and enable hands-on grazing management and restoration projects. The GCC will also emphasize the critical link between intact, working ranches and the long-term health of grassland ecosystems in British Columbia. This program will encourage the use of tools and strategies that will support ranching and mitigate the pressures leading to the loss and degradation of grasslands.

In particular, the GCC will help to build a broader understanding and appreciation of the pressures that lead to the subdivision of ranches for development. Subdivision of ranches results in the fragmentation of grassland ecosystems. This leads to the degradation or loss of grasslands and valued wildlife habitat which can adversely affect the operational viability of adjacent ranches.

6.2.1 Goals

- To maintain and restore grasslands.
- To improve society's understanding and appreciation of the importance and sensitivity of grassland ecosystems.
- To keep working ranches working by encouraging stewardship activities, information exchange and partnerships and supporting ranching culture and practices that are ecologically, economically and socially sustainable.

6.2.2 Objectives

- Foster stewardship of grasslands through information gathering, extension and partnerships that build trust and lead to the development and implementation of grassland stewardship projects and initiatives.
- Identify opportunities and priority locations for the implementation of stewardship initiatives.
- Facilitate the development of appropriate policies and programs that will lead to improved grassland stewardship and sustainable ranching.
- Develop tools and implement strategies to inform and limit subdivision and development, fragmentation and conversion of grasslands.
- Encourage inclusive, informed and ecologically based community planning that maintains a viable ranching industry and that helps protect the ecological integrity of BC's grasslands.
- Strengthen and build partnerships with ranchers and First Nations and share information that will support the sustainable uses of grasslands including grazing.

6.2.3 Strategies and Activities

Strategies Supporting Information Gathering, Extension and Partnerships

Develop and implement an incentive- and recognition-based Grassland Stewardship Program

- Organize a working group to develop the Stewardship Program.
- Facilitate the development and adoption of best management practices for grassland stewardship, ranching and range management.
- Initiate pilots.
- Evaluate progress to guide future steps.

Plan and organize field days and workshops

- Showcase stewardship and sustainable management practices of grasslands through demonstration and stewardship projects.

Undertake grassland monitoring projects

- Develop and test monitoring tools and programs for assessing condition and trend of grassland and grassland-associated ecosystems.

- Promote a standard monitoring program provincially.
- Use the Hamilton Commonage demonstration site to test monitoring approaches that will be suitable for provincial implementation.

Strategies for Identifying Opportunities and Priority Locations for the Implementation of Stewardship Initiatives

Support research for stewardship and sustainable use

- Support and endorse appropriate grasslands-related research that will assist the GCC in identifying priority locations and implementing stewardship initiatives
- Facilitate the dissemination of research results, and the accessibility of the research information through the GCC website, BC Grasslands magazine and website links with key programs and other organizations.
- Facilitate the extension of research information with people and organizations that can apply this information to achieve stewardship and conservation goals.
- Use results from the BC's Grasslands Risk Assessment to target priority grassland areas for stewardship.

Strategies to Support Development of Appropriate Policies and Programs and Develop Tools to Limit Fragmentation and Conversion of Grasslands

Support the development of a Province-wide Invasive Weed Management Strategy

- Support partners and government to develop, implement and monitor an effective Province-wide Invasive Weed Management Strategy that is integrated, comprehensive and emphasizes public education, collaboration, partnerships, and stable funding.
- Ensure that grasslands are appropriately represented in the development and implementation of the Province-wide Invasive Weed Management Strategy.
- Compile reference materials on weed impacts and control methods and provide access to key information sources through the GCC website and office.
- Communicate results, concerns, and successes of weed control management in BC.
- Assist and facilitate, where appropriate, the implementation of a provincial invasive weed communication and education strategy, including a potential weed conference and/or workshops.

Promote effective management of grassland recreation

- Continue to facilitate and work with partners to secure registration and licensing of motorized Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs) and to develop a strategy for improved management of ORV use.
- Facilitate and develop strategies and activities to minimize recreation impacts in grasslands.

Continue to inform policy and regulatory initiatives

- Review grassland-related policies and regulations to determine implications for grasslands.
- Work with the ranching industry to develop briefing notes to inform government about legislative and policy changes that will ensure ranching viability.
- Work with government, the ranching community and non-governmental organizations to develop programs that will ensure viable ranching and the stewardship of grasslands.

Complete Subdivision and Development Problem Analysis and Follow-up Strategy

- Conduct a Subdivision and Development Problem Analysis to define the pressures leading to the conversion and fragmentation of grassland habitats.
- Following the problem analysis, develop strategies to address pressures to halt the subdivision and development of grasslands.
- Work with partners to develop strategies and key activities for addressing crown land sales and development.
- Develop and implement a strategy to inform landowners of the merits of conservation tools such as conservation covenants, purchase of development rights and estate planning.
- Host a symposium focussing on the role of regional governments in the conservation of grasslands.

Support the development of a Provincial Grasslands Strategy

- Form a GCC committee to recommend an approach to facilitate or participate in developing a provincial grasslands strategy.
- Recommend the scope, content, partners and leadership needed to develop the strategy.

Strategies for Inclusive, Informed, and Ecologically based Community Planning

Educate and inform regional and municipal governments about sustainable ranching

- Develop communication strategies and tools to inform regional and municipal governments about issues, potential solutions and potential partnerships with the ranching community.
- Support and inform community planning and growth management strategies that help maintain a viable ranching industry and protect the ecological integrity of BC's grasslands.

Strategies to Strengthen and Build Partnerships with Ranchers and First Nations

Build a constituency of support with ranching and First Nation communities

- Seek additional memberships and partnerships and participate in information exchanges through a directed rancher/First Nations communications program.

6.3 Conservation of Grassland Ecosystems

Through this program, the GCC will support the designation and protection or special management of critical and representative grassland ecosystems. The Conservation of Grassland Ecosystems program supports and strengthens the Grassland Stewardship and Sustainable Ranching program to ensure the long-term sustainability of grassland ecosystems throughout British Columbia.¹

6.3.1 Goal

- To encourage the establishment of representative and critical grassland areas that are designated for protection or special management due to their ecological importance for the long-term maintenance of grassland ecosystem health. These areas may include corridors, modified grazing benchmarks, ungrazed benchmarks, protected areas and parks.

6.3.2 Conservation Program Objectives

- Provide information on the location and status of representative and critical grassland ecosystems for all levels of land use planning processes.
- Participate in key planning processes to secure benchmarks and protected areas or special management status for critically endangered and representative grassland ecosystems.
- Review and provide advice on policy, legislation, management objectives and practices that maintain and secure grassland corridors, ungrazed benchmarks, critical habitats and species at risk.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of management plans such as range and land use plans on priority grasslands.

6.3.3 Strategies and Activities

Strategies to Provide Information on the Location and Status of Representative and Critical Grassland Ecosystems

Develop and implement the following activities regarding grasslands location and status

- Complete the BC Grasslands Conservation Risk Assessment which provides a comprehensive provincial grasslands Geographic Information System (GIS) with all key information layers.
- Provide access to grassland coverage and GIS data through the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management's (MSRM) internet map service.

¹ All of the GCC's program areas and goals reflect the need for the conservation of grasslands. The Conservation Program is focused particularly on maintaining representative and critical grassland ecosystems, biological diversity, and ensuring the designation of protected habitat areas for species and ecosystems at risk. The terms "Conservation" and "Designated Areas" permit sustainable human uses where appropriate.

- Make available critical information about the abundance, distribution and status of grasslands around the province through the GCC website, other publication media and the GCC office.
- Complete provincial analysis and modelling of grasslands across BC to identify grasslands most threatened or at risk, including: the identification of representative grasslands, key areas for conservation and restoration and forecasting potential loss of grasslands.
- Provide information to the GCC Education and Outreach and the Stewardship and Sustainable Ranching Programs to assist in raising awareness about BC's grasslands and associated issues and to inform the public, local government, land stewards, government, and other organizations about the need for ecologically based planning and decision-making as well as sustainable management and stewardship.

Characterization of BC's Grasslands

- Complete a comprehensive, written synthesis and characterization of BC's grasslands to accompany the GIS data from the Conservation Risk Assessment. Characterization will entail a synoptic ecological description of grasslands in each region of BC.
- Assess and prioritise grasslands on the basis of multiple criteria, including landscape context, rarity, land status, historical extent, distribution and number of grassland-dependent species at risk, extent of noxious weeds and degree of recreational abuse.

Grasslands Classification

- Work with the provincial government and other interests to ensure that an ecological classification of BC's grasslands is complete. This process will provide mapping of ecological conditions, including seral stage and range condition.

Strategies to Review and Advise upon Policy and Management Objectives that Maintain Grassland Corridors, Ungrazed Benchmarks, Critical Habitats, and Species at Risk

Policy work based on status and risk assessment of BC's Grasslands.

- Work with partner groups such as Parks Canada and Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (BC Chapter) to identify representative Canadian grasslands for protection or special management.
- Work with the provincial government and non-government organizations to identify, establish, maintain and monitor grassland corridors, ungrazed benchmarks, critical habitats and range use areas.

Invasive weeds and Off Road Vehicles (ORVs)

- Based on the mapping and inventory work, the GCC will work closely with land managers, land use planning teams and policy-makers to provide information and knowledge on invasive weeds, recreational uses and their impacts (e.g. ORVs) in planning for grassland protected areas, benchmarks, corridors and special management areas.

Strategies to Contribute to the Development and Implementation of Management Plans

Providing and disseminating key grassland information to planning and management processes

- Work closely with land managers, land use planning teams and policy-makers to provide information for the planning of grassland protected areas, benchmarks, corridors and special management areas. Input will be based on outcomes from GCC activities and related grasslands initiatives supported by the GCC (e.g., invasive weeds and ATV uses/impacts, forest encroachment).

Campaign for a Grasslands National Park in BC

- Determine in 2003 whether to pursue this campaign. The following criteria need to be considered if the GCC pursues this campaign: extent of GCC involvement (lead or support); level of GCC priority for the campaign over the next three to five years and the development and implementation of an action plan.

7 ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This section outlines the organizational development, management and operational functions that are required to support the GCC's mission, programs and activities for 2003 to 2008. This part of the plan provides the GCC's organizational vision and organizational structure, outlining the key features of the GCC. See Appendix section 8.2 for an illustration of the organizational structure.

Goals, objectives and strategies are provided for the following organizational areas of the GCC:

- Board Development Plan
- GCC Succession Planning
- Board of Directors Role and Responsibilities
- GCC Fundraising Plan
- Staffing and Volunteers Plan
- Planning and Evaluation

7.1 Organizational Vision

The GCC's organizational vision is to be an effective, efficient and stable organization capable of supporting and perpetuating its mission, program goals and activities.

7.2 Key Features of the GCC Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of the GCC consists of the following key features:

- *Diverse membership:* A diverse membership that includes all those affected by or involved in the achievement of the GCC mission.

- *Board of Directors:* A volunteer Board of Directors, representing a wide range of interests, who bring together a breadth of experience and knowledge. The Board provides the GCC with credibility and continuity for the governance and management of the GCC's affairs, as well as ensuring the effective implementation of the GCC mission.
- *Executive Committee:* An Executive Committee that will oversee the day-to-day operation of the GCC, provide leadership and direction to the Executive Director, and monitor progress of GCC activities.
- *Executive Director:* An Executive Director that will actively represent grasslands and the GCC to a wide variety of audiences, manage GCC finances and programs, facilitate growth and development of the GCC, and ensure effective internal communication.
- *Core Staff:* Qualified staff that is capable of effective and efficient delivery of GCC programs and activities. The staff is comprised of: an Executive Director, a Development Officer, a GIS Co-ordinator and a Communication & Extension Coordinator.
- *Campaign or Project Committees:* Campaign or project committees chaired by a GCC Director that will provide leadership and ensure effective and timely delivery of campaign and/or development and implementation of projects.
- *Regional Committees:* A regional committee that will ensure a strong voice for grasslands and grassland issues in each region and will provide effective communication to the GCC Executive and Board of Directors on regional issues and conservation needs.
- *Partnerships:* Diverse partnerships that ensure a breadth of experience, knowledge and financial resources, providing credibility and a strong platform from which to deliver GCC programs.
- *Volunteers:* A diverse, qualified and committed volunteer base that will ensure effective delivery of GCC programs.

7.3 Board Development Plan

Board development planning entails a vision for the Board size, representation, the effective creation and use of regional committees and the development and implementation of a succession plan. The GCC is an interest-based organization and honours this fact. The positive energy of Board members is what makes the GCC function so well. The key to the successful future functioning of the GCC is to ensure a Board development program that informs, motivates and compels Board members to act as leaders on behalf of the GCC.

7.3.1 Goals

- To maintain a Board of Directors with broad representation from a wide range of interests that brings together a breadth of experience and knowledge that will provide continuity for the governance and management of the GCC's affairs, and ensure effective implementation of the GCC mission.
- To maintain appropriate representation on the Board from the key grassland regions of the province in the development and delivery of GCC programs.
- To maintain a Board of Directors that are proud, engaged, well informed and compelled to act as leaders and advocates in the community on behalf of the GCC.

7.3.2 Objectives

- Actively broaden and maintain Board representation from a wide range of interests and experiences, including ranching, First Nations, agriculture, range management, agrology, ecology, biology, recreation, wildlife conservation, land use planning, academia and other professional interests.
- Actively broaden and maintain regional representation on the Board from the Cariboo, Chilcotin, Peace River, Thompson/Nicola, Okanagan, and Kootenays (Georgia Basin?).
- Establish regionally based committees when and where appropriate based on GCC priorities and regional needs for education, stewardship and conservation efforts.
- Gradually reduce board size each year to the target size of 12-14 by March 2008.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive board succession plan that will ensure growth and stability of the GCC Board of Directors over the next five years and beyond.

7.3.3 Board Development Strategies

- Actively build broad sectoral and regional representation in the Board through GCC working committees (campaign/project committees) and regionally-based committees to include individuals, government, non-governmental organizations, and interest groups, such as ranchers, range managers, agrologists, grassland ecologists, biologists, academics, First Nations, recreationists and grassland enthusiasts.
- Secure First Nations representation on the GCC Board and Executive. The GCC will seek at least one First Nations Director by March 2004.
- Implement a rotating Executive Board to allow for broader representation on the executive. A rotating executive will be helpful if the Board becomes smaller over time.
- Develop a plan for regionally-based committees that involves:
 - Tasking a work group to clarify the purpose and role of regional committees for the GCC;
 - Formalizing regional committees in two key regions, on the basis of need; and
 - Over the long-term, creating regional committees in each grassland region of BC with a minimum of six members.
- The GCC recognizes regional committees are important. Regional Committees are cost-effective, help address board representation, and assist in developing and maintaining partnerships and relationships with donors and potential donors in one's own community (e.g., soliciting and obtaining gifts). See strategies for succession planning in section 7.4.

7.4 GCC Succession Planning

Through succession planning, the GCC will create a strong group of leaders for the organization. Succession planning is a dynamic, on-going process of identifying, assessing and developing directors for helping to implement present and future GCC strategic goals. These goals can only be achieved if an effective program for leadership succession is in place. Succession planning is necessary to ensure that leadership and directorship growth keeps pace with organizational growth. GCC succession planning must therefore be aligned with future strategic direction of the GCC organization.

Benefits of developing a succession planning process include:

- Engaging directors and senior staff in reviewing the current leadership in the GCC. This process identifies what steps or activities might need to occur to either develop directors or prepare for new ones;
- Assuring that the GCC has no lag in leadership. If there are vacant roles in the directorship, succession planning allows the board to effectively recruit potential directors.
- Providing clear roles, responsibilities and a succession plan for new directors.
- Avoiding transition problems by ensuring that directors will have the skills and qualifications to step in to new positions if required.

7.4.1 Goal

- To establish a clear succession plan that is consistent with the GCC's organizational goals and develops a strong group of leaders to lead the GCC organization into the future.

7.4.2 Objectives

- Complete GCC succession planning by March 2004.
- GCC will seek to build a skill set and knowledge base at board level to assist the GCC in capacity building in order to effectively develop as an organization and deliver its programs.

7.4.3 Strategies to Develop and Implement GCC Succession Planning

- Prepare draft succession plan and seek buy-in and support from directors and staff in the development and implementation of the succession plan.
- Identify key roles, skill sets and knowledge base required by the GCC Board to effectively lead and develop the GCC as a leading conservation organization.
- Identify a group of potential directors that, if prepared, might be able to fill the vacancy and/or skill/knowledge requirements.
- Consider preparation of individual development plans. Develop and initiate a GCC Training and Development program: In order for succession planning to be successful, the GCC should focus on development opportunities that will have the greatest impact - cross-functional/cross sector internal committee assignments, coaching and mentoring, along with some formalized training. Each individual in this group is responsible for taking ownership of his/her development and be prepared to commit personal energy and time to professional development.

7.4.4 Critical Success Factors

- GCC recognizes that capturing 'new blood' is important for the effective functioning of an organization.
- A clear plan of action and an active and committed working committee are needed to develop the succession plan.
- GCC needs to work each year to recruit Executive and Board members.
- Ongoing education and development of individuals is important to the success of the succession-planning program.

7.5 GCC Board Member Roles and Responsibilities

The following outlines the responsibilities of the Board of Directors, individual board members, Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary, Treasurer, committee chairs and members.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

- Establish and implement the GCC mission/purpose.
- Develop and update policy as required. Key policy areas are:
 - Constitution and by-laws
 - Mission and purpose statements,
 - Organizational and governance structure,
 - Financial,
 - Personnel, and
 - Strategic planning and programs.
- Manage the financial and capital assets of the GCC, approve the annual budget and establish percentages/levels that will be utilized for various programs and services.
- Oversee the recruitment, selection, orientation, training, performance planning and review and, as necessary, the ‘separation/firing’ of Board members and the Executive Director.
- Providing direction to the Executive Director by monitoring the progress of GCC activities and establishing short- and long-term targets and timetables in association with approved policy.
- Provide continuity for the governance and management of the GCC’s affairs.
- Represent the GCC to the community, governments, foundations, corporations and other agencies, bodies and individuals.

Responsibilities of Individual Board Members

- Prepare for and attend at least one of the two annual Board meetings. Participation by conference call can be organized for these board meetings.
- Participate on a sub-committee and/or on a GCC project or campaign.
- Participate in GCC fundraising efforts. Although not all directors will be comfortable asking for money from corporations and individuals, GCC Board members should participate in some way to assist fundraising efforts, from providing key contacts, compiling prospective donors lists, writing letters, organizing fundraising events, to actively recruiting new donors and members.
- Actively recruit new GCC members.
- Contribute financially to the society through membership dues and through other means where possible. Showing financial support from GCC Board members is critically important to fundraising efforts and to the future success of the GCC.
- Provide skills and knowledge in policy-making, planning and board/staff relationships.
- Offer personal skills and abilities to assist in the governance and development of the GCC.
- Actively promote and support the GCC.

Responsibilities of the Chair

- Provide overall leadership and inspiration.
- Manage and facilitate the decision-making process of the Board.
- Guide the process of long term planning.
- Ensures the Board regularly reviews progress of the GCC.
- Establish specific goals for each Board member, such as committee work.
- Oversee the Board member nomination process and the ‘separation’ process of Board members, as required.
- Ensure Board members actively participate.
- Communicate frequently with the Executive Director.
- Maintain regular contact with each Board member.
- Keep the Board organized and moving.

Responsibilities of the Vice-Chair

- Perform the duties of the Chair if he/she is absent.
- Provide continuity to the Board.
- Serve on the Executive Committee.
- Learn the duties of the Chair so as to assume that role when the Chair’s term ends.
- Carry out special assignments.

Responsibilities of the Secretary

- Prepare the minutes and send out notices for the Board meetings.
- Keep all the official papers of the Board safe.
- Keep an accurate record of all minutes once approved.
- Track the decision-making process to ensure actions completed.
- Serve on the Executive Committee.

Responsibilities of the Treasurer

- Ensure the financial integrity of the organization and that all financial policies are being followed.
- Oversee the financial reporting process and reports regularly on such matters.
- Ensure the annual audit is completed.
- Serve on the Executive Committee.
- Chair the Finance Committee.
- Assure the annual budget is prepared.

Responsibilities of Committee Chairs

- Ensure clear, precise goals are established for the committee.
- Ensure regular reports are communicated to the Board.
- Recommend policy and strategy to the Board for action.
- Ensure the committee stays within their financial allotment.
- Approve the meeting agenda. Preside at the meeting. Ensure records of decisions are kept.

Responsibilities of Committee Members

- Clarify your personal contribution.
- Prepare for the meetings in advance by reading relevant material.
- Assist the committee in achieving its assigned goals.
- Speak up and engage at committee meetings.
- Attend regularly and punctually.
- Respect other members' opinions.

7.6 GCC Fundraising Program

The GCC realizes that building capacity as well as ensuring a diversified and stable source of funding is critical to the continued development of the GCC and for the successful implementation of its programs. Since inauguration in August 1999, the GCC has had very limited core funding. The GCC relies on annual project funding to deliver its programs. A stable, diversified funding base will enable the GCC to strategically and effectively address grassland issues, build a strong awareness about BC's endangered grasslands and continue to deliver key conservation and stewardship initiatives on the ground. The future of BC's grasslands depends on a strong alliance of organizations and individuals, collaboration, and the capacity to deliver and ensure the conservation of BC's Grasslands.

7.6.1 Goal

- To establish a stable, diversified funding base that will enable the GCC to strategically and effectively address grassland issues and conservation needs in British Columbia.

7.6.2 Objectives

- Develop and implement a comprehensive three-year fundraising strategy that will build the capacity of the GCC to effectively deliver its programs.
- Secure annual core program funding for the next five years (2003-2008).
- Develop key partnerships with organizations that will help increase GCC funding sources.
- Increase the number of individual members to a minimum of 350 members by 2006.
- Increase the number of corporate members to a minimum of 25 corporate members by 2006.
- Increase private and corporate donations by a minimum of 20 percent each year.
- Raise a minimum of \$15,000 annually from special events.

7.6.3 GCC Fundraising Strategies

- Maintain a full-time Development Officer to co-ordinate and implement all fundraising and development activities and to develop and refine the comprehensive three-year fundraising strategy.
- Continue to secure program and project funding through a variety of government and non-government grant programs, including:

- Provincial government agencies and Programs: Ministry of Forests; Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection; Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management; Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries;
 - Federal government agencies and programs: Environment Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada;
 - Foundations: BC, USA;
 - BC Gaming Commission and Gaming funds: direct access, bingo, casino, raffles;
 - Corporations;
 - Banks,
 - Small Business;
 - Non-government organizations and funding programs; and,
 - Other funding sources.
- Increase individual and corporate memberships:
 - Complete a minimum of two membership drives per year. Utilize special appeals targeted at individuals, corporations, small businesses and government.
 - Ensure that existing individual and corporate members are up to date with membership dues. A minimum of two membership renewal notices will be sent out to overdue members.
 - Upgrade current GCC membership with a special appeal. A special appeal should be sent out at least once per year to existing members, up to a maximum of three times per year.
 - Continue to build and improve the GCC contact and fundraising database, including funders, members and donors.
 - Establish and train annual GCC Fundraising Committee(s), including GCC Directors, GCC members, and other interested volunteers. A fundraising resource manual will be produced to facilitate this process. It is believed that the GCC, to be effective, will need to establish effective fundraising committees in strategic locations throughout British Columbia.
 - Increase participation from the Board of Directors in all fundraising activities.
 - Develop and implement a fundraising plan for an annual fundraising campaign.
 - Develop a planned giving program that will assist the GCC inform potential donors about giving opportunities and options and initiate the long-term process of building an endowment fund.
 - Continue developing relationships with key community organizations, such as Rotary and Lions Clubs.
 - Initiate research and assess validity for the GCC to sell products
 - Ensure GCC fundraising efforts are effectively integrated with all GCC programs.
 - Actively build broad representation in membership to include individuals, government, non-government organizations, and interest groups, such as ranchers, range managers, agrologists, grassland ecologists, biologists, academics, First Nations, recreationists and grassland enthusiasts.

7.6.4 Critical Fundraising Success Factors

- The GCC recognizes that its members and donors are the most sustainable long-term source of funds.
- Networking with influential people and building mutually beneficial partnerships will be important for increasing revenue and funding sources.
- Focus energies on government, government programs and foundations in the short term (2003-2005) while building a more diversified funding base with an emphasis on building the GCC member and donor base (2003-2008).
- Take advantage of the government's growing reliance on NGOs to fulfil its mandate and deliver services.
- Capitalize on the trend of greater awareness and interest amongst government, NGO and the general public on grasslands, species at risk, global climate change (effects on habitat), and sustainable communities/ smart growth (subdivision and development issues).
- Prioritise projects and activities to ensure enough funding is available to "do what we need to do."

7.7 Staffing and Volunteer Plan

The GCC prides itself on having hard working, dedicated and talented staff and help from a small but well-informed and excellent core of volunteers. The staffing and volunteer plan seeks to implement a management and maintenance strategy that utilises volunteers, staff and partners to maintain and carry out programs. Volunteers include GCC partners.

7.7.1 Goal

- To attract and retain qualified paid staff and the high energy and commitment of volunteers for the effective and efficient delivery of GCC programs and activities.

7.7.2 Objectives

- Maintain a core staff to assist in effective and efficient functioning of the GCC.
- Develop annual staff workplans that are prioritised to the GCC Strategic Plan.
- Develop and implement a Volunteer Recruitment and Management Strategy in 2003.
- Establish and maintain an on-going training program for staff and volunteers relative to their areas of expertise, knowledge, and involvement in GCC programs, activities and organizational work.
- Create and develop working committees that are fun, motivate Board members and volunteers to deliver programs and activities, and reduce heavy reliance on program delivery by GCC staff.
- Implement and maintain a staff evaluation system that establishes overall objectives for positions and specific objectives for all employees.
- Develop and implement a volunteer and paid staff appreciation program.

7.7.3 Strategies

- Develop short-term goals and prioritise all GCC actions to allow programs to be delivered without need for increasing staff numbers.
- Encourage and support staff to undertake training and skills-building courses needed to perform their own and other related duties in order to ensure an up-to-date, skilled and flexible team at the GCC.
- Over the next five years, focus on activities that do not require increase in staff.
- Keep checking priorities; increase use of volunteers to assist in program delivery and GCC coordination work.
- Explore GCC regional committees as a means of assisting the GCC in organizational issues (e.g. fundraising) and delivering programs and activities.

7.7.4 Critical Success Factors

- The GCC recognizes that volunteers are important for delivering effective conservation programs and that developing an effective volunteer base takes time. The GCC needs to develop a strategy for attracting and managing volunteers.
- The GCC has experienced significant growth over the past three years. At this juncture, it is important for the Board to maintain an effective Executive Director that will establish long-term stability for the organization, particularly over the next five years.
- Based on the current program delivery model, the GCC should maintain its current core staff base, plus volunteers.

7.8 Planning and Evaluation

The development and implementation of a process to measure the success of the GCC's programs is very important. Over the past three years, evaluation has been a low priority due to limited resources. However, the GCC should begin planning for a long-term monitoring and evaluation of GCC programs and projects. The GCC recognizes that this is an important requirement for some funding sources. The GCC will need to evaluate its effectiveness. Although it is not the highest priority for 2003, the Board should consider it in long-term strategic thinking.

7.8.1 Goal

- To guarantee that our programs succeed in meeting their goals and objectives.

7.8.2 Objectives

- Develop a GCC program evaluation plan.
- Establish an on-going evaluation process for all programs to assess program results, quality of services and the ability to address the changing needs of the community.
- Hold an annual Board and staff retreat to plan for future needs and assess current capabilities and capacity.
- Establish and maintain protocols for data collection, data entry and outcome evaluation.

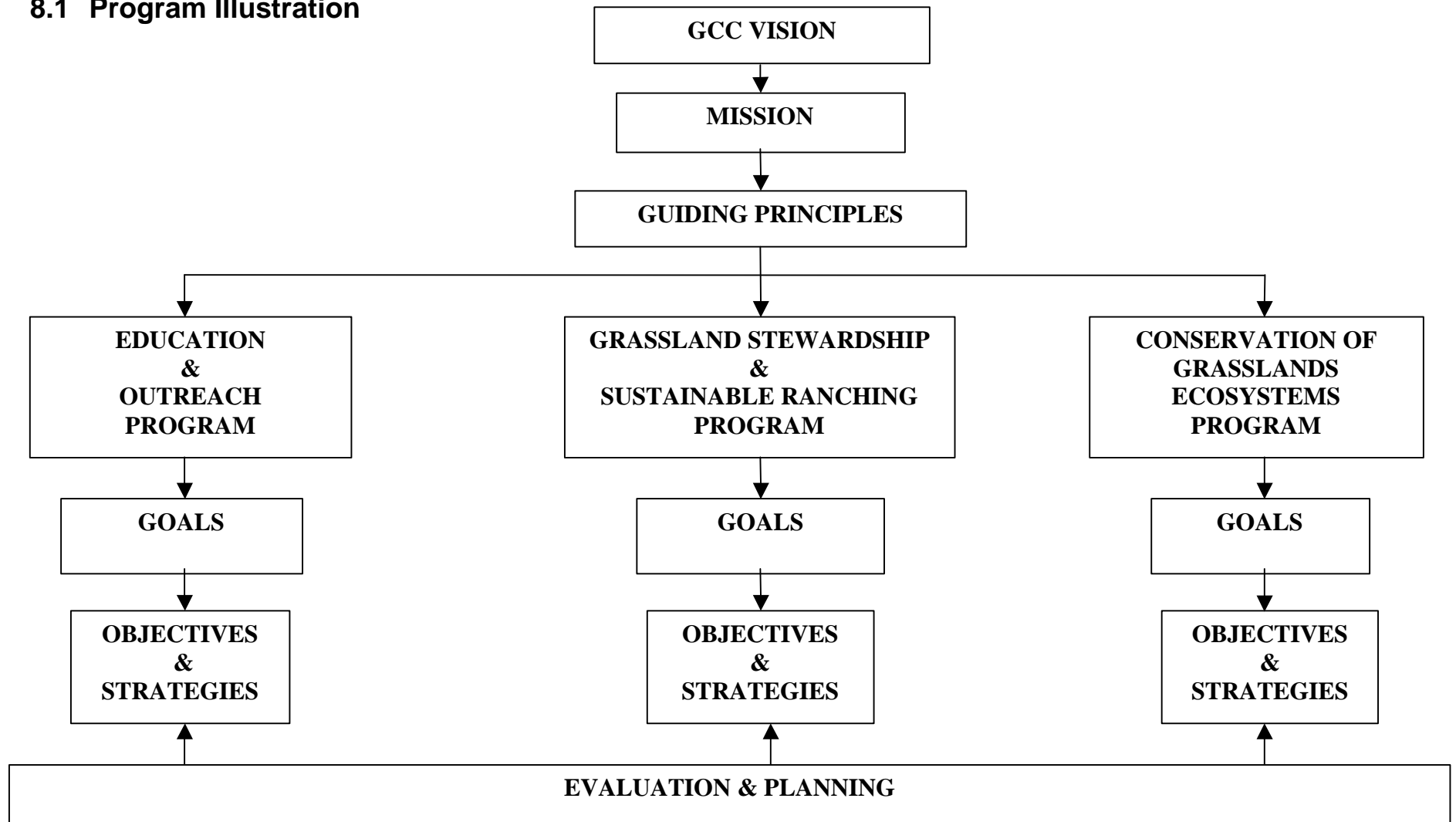
7.8.3 Strategies

When developed, the implementation process will be to gather baseline information to ensure that the GCC and its partners can evaluate the effectiveness of the GCC programs relative to GCC goals and objectives. A consultant will be hired to develop an evaluation strategy and to collect data. Surveys, program monitoring and evaluation will be completed on a two or three year basis. Key requirements include:

- Secure funding for the development of the GCC program evaluation plan and collection of data.
- Hire a consultant to conduct program evaluation and surveys.
- Assess results of surveys and establish a baseline.

8 APPENDIX

8.1 Program Illustration



8.2 Organizational Structure Diagram

