



ANIMATED GRASSLANDS AMBASSADORS MAKE GRAND WEB DEBUT

Two major threats to grassland regions across the province will be getting much wider exposure with the launch today of two public service announcements (PSAs) on the website of the Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia (GCC). The PSAs' animated calf and long-billed curlew act as ambassadors for the grasslands and bring attention to issues that challenge our ranching industry and species at risk.



"Grasslands make up less than one percent of the land base of British Columbia, but provide habitat for over one-third of BC's species at risk. The grasslands are also the basis for ranching in the province" said Catrina Crowe, Communication and Outreach Coordinator for the GCC. "It is crucial that we get the word out about habitat fragmentation and invasive plants before it's too late."

The PSAs serve two purposes, explained Crowe. The first is to let the public know about two big grasslands issues: fragmentation and the spread of invasive plants. The fragmentation of grasslands has a disastrous effect on wildlife habitat. Particularly in hot retirement locations like the Okanagan, golf courses and vineyards are breaking up large tracts of grasslands and preventing many animals from accessing the habitat they need to reproduce. Introduced invasive plants also negatively affect habitat and ranching, by choking out native plants that wildlife and cattle depend on for forage.

Another purpose of the PSAs is to let the general public know of the work that is being done by the GCC and its funding partners to raise awareness about the issues facing grasslands and producers. This dynamic new way of communicating with the public was possible thanks to generous support from the major funders of the GCC's PSAs: the Beef Cattle Industry Development Fund (BCID Fund), the Bullitt Foundation and Tula Foundation.

"We're a non-profit driven by our members," said Crowe. "Every new membership helps and every person talking about these issues has an impact." Membership increased when the PSAs had their television premieres in the spring on Global BC and CBC. They will have further television exposure this fall on Global BC.

With the website launch, the calf and curlew's messages to care for the grasslands are available to everyone all the time.

About the GCC:

The Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia is a non-profit organization that is a strategic alliance of organizations and individuals, including the ranching community, environmental organizations, government agencies and First Nations.

For further information, please visit www.bcgrasslands.org or contact:

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