

Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia

Strategic Plan 2000 - 2003



GRASSLANDS CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

STRATEGIC PLAN

2000-2003

Ratified by:
GCC Board of Directors

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Our vision is of healthy and life-sustaining grassland ecosystems in British Columbia

1. THE GRASSLANDS CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Grasslands are a unique and vital landscape in British Columbia. Although grasslands represent only 1.5% of the provincial land base, they provide vital habitat for a wide variety of wildlife and they play a very significant role in supporting British Columbia's ranching industry.

Increasing pressures on British Columbia's grasslands, such as urban expansion, ATV impacts, noxious weeds, agricultural conversion, inappropriate grazing practices, forest encroachment, the subdivision of grassland to development, and abusive recreation, have resulted in a growing concern for the long-term sustainability of BC's grasslands. This concern, coupled with a perceived need to take action on priority issues, resulted in the formation of the **Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia (GCC)**. Established in 1996, the GCC is a strategic alliance of organizations and individuals, including government, range management specialists, ranchers, agrologists, grassland ecologists, First Nations, environmental groups, recreationists and grassland enthusiasts. This diverse group shares a common commitment to education, conservation and stewardship of British Columbia's grasslands.

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.
- Recommend changes to policy and legislation that support continued ranching and sustainable range activities.
- Promote the conservation of representative grassland ecosystems, species at risk and their habitats.

The GCC will use a range of education, extension, hands-on demonstration and research projects to achieve its mission. The following program plan outlines the GCC strategy and various projects that the Council will accomplish over the next three years to deliver on its mandate.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles are fundamental to the development of the GCC and to effective delivery of its programs.

Regional Representation

The Grasslands Conservation Council will ensure appropriate representation from the regions of the province that contain grasslands, in the development and delivery of its programs. These regions are Cariboo, Chilcotin, Peace River, Thompson/Nicola, Okanagan, Kootenays and Vancouver Island.

Broad Representation from Organizations, Individuals & Interest Groups

The Grasslands Conservation Council will ensure broad representation on the Board of Directors and committees from government, environmental organizations, ranchers and range managers, agrologists, grassland ecologists, biologists, First Nations, recreationists and grassland enthusiasts that have a commitment to the conservation and stewardship of British Columbia's Grasslands.

3. PROGRAM GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The GCC has four main goals:

Goal 1
Education
Build public interest and common commitment to healthy, life-sustaining grassland ecosystems for current and future generations

The GCC will help promote awareness and understanding of the critical importance of grassland ecosystems, and build a constituency of support among a wide range of individuals and organizations for the long-term health of grassland ecosystems. The GCC objectives are to:

- Foster, through education and extension, a greater understanding and appreciation of the ecological, economic and cultural importance of grasslands.
- Build a constituency of support among a wide range of individuals, groups and governments for the long term health and sustainable use of grassland ecosystems.
- Raise awareness of the importance of grassland ecosystems for biodiversity, and the present and potential threats to grasslands.

Goal 2

Grassland Stewardship

To ensure the long-term health of grasslands by broadening the understanding of users about the relationship between land use and ecosystem health, encouraging restoration, promoting ecologically sustainable management practices, and preventing degradation

The GCC will build support for the stewardship of grassland habitats in British Columbia, encourage and facilitate the development of *Best Management Practices* (BMP), and promote hands-on restoration and management projects. The GCC will seek to broaden the perspectives of grassland users to include a better understanding of the relationships between various uses of the land and ecosystem health. The GCC objectives are to:

- Increase the understanding among all users of grasslands about the relationships between land use and ecosystem health.
- Identify and refine approaches for the restoration and management of grassland habitats.
- Identify priority habitat types and areas for stewardship initiatives through local knowledge, mapping and inventory.
- Secure broad support for and participation in hands-on restoration and management that demonstrate the economic and ecological benefits of stewardship.
- Identify key opportunities under existing government policy and programs, and recommend new legislation, policies and programs that support grassland conservation and stewardship.

Goal 3

Support Sustainable Ranching

To improve the understanding of grassland ecosystems and to promote ecologically sustainable & economically viable management practices that will ensure the long-term health of BC's grasslands

As more than 70% of BC's Grasslands are found on private land and a significant portion of that are on ranch lands, working collaboratively with the ranching community is an important component to the GCC mandate. The GCC will emphasize the critical linkage between viable and sustainable ranching and the long-term health of grassland ecosystems in British Columbia. The GCC will help to build a broader understanding and appreciation for the pressures that lead to inflated land values and the subdivision of ranches for development. Subdivision of ranches often results in the fragmentation of grassland ecosystems and ultimately the degradation or loss of grasslands and valued wildlife habitat. The GCC objectives are to:

- Develop tools and implement strategies that address pressures that inflate land values of working ranches and result in the subdivision of grassland.

- Promote planning approaches, policy, legislation and financial incentives that halt fragmentation and the conversion of grasslands to rural subdivisions and urban development.
- Promote improvements or changes to legislation, policies and programs, to support viable and sustainable agricultural activities associated with grasslands. For example, the GCC will explore opportunities to encourage improvements and/or changes in range use planning as prescribed in the *Forest Practices Code*.
- Encourage the development and implementation of tax, and other incentives, to support ranching and sustainable range management over the longer term.

Goal 4

Conservation of Representative Grassland Ecosystems

To promote the conservation and management of a mosaic of representative grassland ecosystems that include corridors and ungrazed benchmarks, and that are capable of sustaining critical species and habitats

The GCC will support the long-term conservation and ecologically sustainable management of grassland habitats through land use planning and other vehicles, including the establishment of protected areas and reserves, where necessary. The GCC will help stakeholders broaden their understanding of grassland ecosystems, biodiversity values, and current or potential threats to grasslands. The GCC objectives are to:

- Contribute information on the location and status of grassland ecosystems to regional and landscape level land use planning processes.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of management plans, such as Range Use Plans and the development of benchmark or protected areas.
- Contribute to the development of management objectives and practices for species at risk and grassland habitats.
- Participate in planning processes to secure protected status for critical grassland ecosystems.

4. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The GCC received Society status on August 24, 1999 and is run by a Board of Directors (see Appendix A). The Board of Directors represents the diversity of organizations, individuals and perspectives that characterize the council. The GCC is currently in the process of applying for charitable tax status.

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 provides the council with credibility and a strong platform from which to deliver its programs.

The following organizations support the GCC and its mission:

- Agriculture Canada
- BC Cattlemen's Association
- Beef Cattle Industry Development Council
- Canadian Nature Federation
- Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society
- Cattle Horn Advisory Committee
- Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Environment Canada
- Federation of BC Naturalists
- Friends of Ecological Reserves
- Guichon Ranch
- Habitat Conservation Trust Fund
- Kamloops Stockmen's Association
- Ministry of Environment, Lands & Parks
- Ministry of Forests
- Society for Range Management
- Southern Interior Forest Extension & Research Partnership
- The Land Conservancy of BC
- The Nature Trust of BC
- University College of the Cariboo
- University of British Columbia

Continuing to build and formalize new partnerships will be essential to the success of the Grasslands Conservation Council.

6. GCC PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The GCC is developing an ambitious three-year program that will use a variety of educational, extension, research and hands-on projects to deliver on the aforementioned goals & mandate. This program builds on the work already underway by the council. The program is divided into four main components (see Figure 1):

- 1) Communication
 - Program Promotion
 - Extension and Education
- 2) Research
- 3) Demonstration Projects
- 4) Program Evaluation

6.1 COMMUNICATION

Developing and delivering a well-integrated communication program with a strong extension and education component is a key to promoting stewardship and achieving grassland sustainability over the long term. For this reason, communication forms the core to the GCC program.

GCC Goals Addressed Through Communication & Extension:

1. Education: *Build public interest and common commitment to healthy, life-sustaining grassland ecosystems for current and future generations.*
2. Grassland Stewardship: *To ensure the long-term health of grasslands by broadening the understanding of users about the relationship between land use and ecosystem health, encouraging restoration, promoting ecologically sustainable management practices, and preventing degradation.*
3. Support Sustainable Ranching: *To improve the understanding of grassland ecosystems and to promote ecologically sustainable & economically viable management practices that will ensure the long-term health of BC's grasslands.*
4. Conservation of Representative Grassland Ecosystems: *To promote the conservation and management of a mosaic of representative grassland ecosystems that include corridors and ungrazed benchmarks, and that are capable of sustaining critical species and habitats*

The communication program has two components: 1) Program Promotion, and 2) Extension & Education.

6.1.1 Program Promotion

As a fledgling organization, the GCC needs to embark on a promotional campaign. The specific objectives are to:

- Inform the public and other organizations about grasslands, the GCC and its mission.
- Build a constituency of support for grasslands, grassland conservation and stewardship amongst individuals, groups, industry and government.
- Build a strong membership base for the council to ensure its ability to deliver its mandate over the long term.

Tasks & Deliverables

1. Expand existing GCC contact list and database of individuals, organizations and resource people that are interested in grasslands and/or are involved with grassland related management, research, monitoring, stewardship, demonstration, communications or education.
2. Complete an extensive membership drive to individuals and groups, including: cattlemen, landowners, environmental organizations, first nations, provincial and federal government agencies, municipalities, regional districts, academic institutions, professional associations and the interested public (goal is to reach 250 members by March 2001).
3. Promote the GCC through:
 - TV Public Service Announcements (CBC, BCTV, Knowledge Network, Discovery, Shaw, Rogers, others), and
 - Newspaper & magazine advertising.

6.1.2 Extension & Education

Extension and Education is a long-term process that is fundamental to achieving the GCC goals and objectives.

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 roles:

- **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.

Specifically, the objectives of extension and education are to:

- Foster a greater understanding and appreciation of the ecological, economic, social and cultural importance of grasslands.
- Secure support from ranchers and range managers.
- Raise awareness and encourage action on key grassland issues, including noxious weeds, ATV impacts, fragmentation of grasslands to subdivision & development, etc.
- Identify opportunities and participate in planning and decision-making processes to raise awareness of critical grassland areas, habitat needs for species at risk, the role of ranching in stewardship of grasslands, bio-diversity values, and impacts of various land uses on grasslands.
- Nurture collaborative alliances and partnerships among diverse groups and interests.

Tasks & Deliverables

1. Increase general awareness of grasslands by:
 - Producing and distributing a grassland and GCC brochure,
 - Producing and distributing a BC Grasslands poster (companion poster to the brochure),
 - Producing regular articles for newspapers and magazines,
 - Developing and producing a professional grassland display for use at public events, conferences, etc.,
 - Developing a grasslands & GCC website,
 - Producing a series of Public Service Announcements for TV on: grasslands, threats to grasslands, BC's ranching heritage and grassland stewardship.
2. Compile existing information on BC's grasslands, including: past and current grassland research, current grassland conservation and stewardship initiatives, a list of organizations and contacts currently involved in grassland research and/or conservation/stewardship initiatives.
3. Make information available through the GCC office and on the grassland website.
4. Produce and distribute *BC Grasslands* Newsletter.
5. Plan and deliver a yearly *Sustaining Healthy Grasslands* symposium.
6. Collaborate with the Thompson Nicola Noxious Weed Management Committee and other government and non-government organizations to begin planning and organizing a Pacific Northwest Weed Conference to be based in the Central Interior for the summer 2001 / 2002.

7. Develop a targeted communication strategy for the ATV issue:
 - Promote awareness of ATV impacts on grasslands through motorcycle & mountain bike associations.
 - Utilize existing ATV “Tread Lightly” brochures for distribution and look for opportunities to publish articles in newspapers and magazines concerning ATV impacts.
 - Provide information and encourage government, Insurance Corporation of BC, and non-government organizations to work on implementing ATV licensing in British Columbia.
8. Develop and produce grassland factsheets for landowners and managers on specific topics, such as the proposed Sharp-Tailed Grouse brochure and factsheet.
9. Profile demonstration projects and success stories from around the province, Canada, and the USA on grassland management and stewardship.

**See Appendix C for a detailed description of Deliverables.*

6.2 RESEARCH & MONITORING

The GCC will not seek to deliver an intensive research program, but support those organizations and academic institutions that undertake grassland related research. The council will develop partnerships and co-operative alliances to ensure specific research needs are met, and that grassland related information is extended to groups and individuals where that information can best be utilized to improve land management practices, support grassland conservation / stewardship programs, and educate British Columbians about grasslands. Further to the support role, the GCC will be required to address specific research needs to achieve its goals.

GCC Goals Addressed Through Research & Monitoring:

2. Grassland Stewardship: *To ensure the long-term health of grasslands by broadening the understanding of users about the relationship between land use and ecosystem health, encouraging restoration, promoting ecologically sustainable management practices, and preventing degradation.*
3. Support Sustainable Ranching: *To improve the understanding of grassland ecosystems and to promote ecologically sustainable & economically viable management practices that will ensure the long-term health of BC's grasslands.*
4. Conservation of Representative Grassland Ecosystems: *To promote the conservation and management of a mosaic of representative grassland ecosystems that include corridors and ungrazed benchmarks, and that are capable of sustaining critical species and habitats.*

The following research has been identified as important building blocks to the GCC program:

1. Mapping, characterization and inventory of British Columbia's grasslands.
 - Identify location and status of critical grasslands.
 - Identify priority areas for stewardship activities.
2. Determine the impacts of agricultural practices, Forest Practices Code and range use planning on grasslands. To achieve this, the GCC will continue to implement and further develop the Hamilton Commonage Demonstration Project. Please refer to the next section.

Other research that the GCC will support:

- The Sharp-tailed Grouse Stewardship Project.
- Continued monitoring of existing plots on the Hamilton Commonage (follow-up on past research: *The Effects of Grazing on the Biodiversity of Grassland Riparian Ecosystems*).
- Identify economic pressures that lead to the conversion and fragmentation of grassland habitats (the Council would like to see steps taken to reduce these impacts).
- Mapping of existing weed inventory information for the Kamloops region (Support for the MOF weed mapping project currently being developed).
- Forest encroachment research.
- Grassland fire regeneration study and demonstration.

Further research needs and priorities will be identified as the GCC develops its program.

Tasks & Deliverables:

1. Initiate grassland mapping project:
 - Compile existing information,
 - Complete gap analysis & initiate process to fill information gaps,
 - Characterize and map all grassland systems within British Columbia on a GIS.
2. Proceed with inventory and research on the Hamilton Demonstration Project in conjunction with the Guichon Ranch.
3. Define and assess future research needs and opportunities for the GCC.

6.3 DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

The purpose of demonstration projects is to show, through land-based projects, the economic and ecological benefits of stewardship. As seventy percent or more of BC's grasslands are on private land, working with ranchers, First Nations and the range management community on developing and implementing sustainable range management practices and demonstrating new and innovative approaches to range management is critical to successfully achieving the GCC goals and objectives.

GCC Goals Addressed Through Demonstration:

1. Education: *Build public interest and common commitment to healthy, life-sustaining grassland ecosystems for current and future generations.*
2. Grassland Stewardship: *To ensure the long-term health of grasslands by broadening the understanding of users about the relationship between land use and ecosystem health, encouraging restoration, promoting ecologically sustainable management practices, and preventing degradation.*
3. Support Sustainable Ranching: *To improve the understanding of grassland ecosystems and to promote ecologically sustainable & economically viable management practices that will ensure the long-term health of BC's grasslands.*

6.3.1 Hamilton Commonage Demonstration Project: Developing sustainable Range Use plans to Conserve Grasslands

The Hamilton Demonstration Project was initiated in the fall of 1998 to work with the Guichon Ranch, environmental organizations and government agencies to review the present range use planning process and develop a management strategy to maintain and enhance the biological diversity of the Hamilton Commonage.

The purpose of this project is to help define a long-term vision for the Hamilton Commonage and to improve how the land is managed, by applying various land management tools and practices that will restore and maintain healthy grassland communities and biological diversity.

Specifically, the projects aims to:

1. Work with the Guichon Ranch to revise the current Range Use Plan (RUP) for the Hamilton Commonage, and to pursue changes to the RUP that will improve the natural biodiversity of the area; encourage a mosaic of different successional plant communities, including an increase in later successional stages over a larger area; help protect red and blue listed species; and maintain or improve the profitability of the ranching operation. This will be accomplished by:
 - Completing an inventory of the areas' existing biological, cultural and ecological resources to aid in future management decisions.
 - Fencing, developing alternative water sources, and changing cattle movement and forage utilization to improve habitat conditions.
 - Establishing controls and permanent plots to monitor the effects of management changes on the conditions of grasslands, riparian areas, ponds, wetlands, and associated native species at risk.
2. Use this project as a basis to review the existing range use planning process and the

- range management guidelines under the Forest Practices Code (FPC).
3. Create a new template for range use planning and recommend changes to government policies to ensure they are operationally feasible, economically viable, and achieve biodiversity objectives.
 4. Use this project as a basis to continue improving communication and education and foster partnerships among groups concerned with conservation of BC's grasslands.
 5. Work with ranchers and landowners to encourage the adoption of stewardship and sustainable management principles, as well as specific land management practices and tools.
 6. Develop and produce appropriate extension materials to assist the GCC in promoting stewardship and the sustainable use of grasslands.

The project is divided in four stages:

1. Inventory and mapping to determine the distribution and abundance of known species at risk, as well as other unidentified species.
2. Segregate those areas that are identified as sensitive by controlling grazing through fencing, riding and water development.
3. Monitoring of grasslands to determine response to changes in management activities.
4. Extension and education activities, including a workshop.

A work plan is outlined in the original Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society & GCC proposal. The first phase, which is inventory and mapping, is currently in progress and will be completed in fall 2000.

6.4 PROGRAM EVALUATION

A key feature of the GCC program will be the implementation of an effective process to measure the success of the three program components. Baseline information will be gathered during the first year of the program to ensure that the GCC and its partners can evaluate the effectiveness of the GCC program – Communications, Research and Demonstration Projects – relative to the GCC goals and objectives.

A consultant will be hired to develop an evaluation strategy and to collect preliminary data on the first year. Surveys, program monitoring and evaluation will be completed on a two or three year basis.

7. ANTICIPATED BENEFITS FROM THE GCC PROGRAM

The following benefits are anticipated by implementing the GCC Program:

- Increased awareness and understanding about grasslands and related land

use/management issues among industry, government, and non-government organizations.

- Increased understanding within urban populations about grasslands, ranching and stewardship.
- Improved communication, access and exchange of grassland related information between industry, government organizations (federal, provincial, municipal & regional districts), environmental organizations, First Nations, academic institutions, and other groups.
- Increased ability to target and effectively address priority grassland issues, such as weed control, ATV impacts and licensing, tree encroachment of grasslands, wetland & riparian management, subdivision of grasslands to development, and best management practices.
- Identification of priority areas for stewardship, conservation and research projects.
- Forging new partnerships and developing new opportunities for stewardship, education and applied research.
- Fostering cooperation within the ranching industry and among government and non-government organizations on grassland management and stewardship issues.
- Working in partnership with the cattle industry to improve its responsiveness to changing times.

8. RECOGNITION OF FUNDING PARTNERS

Funding partners will be fully recognized for their support in the *GCC BC Grasslands* Newsletter, annual report, and other educational and promotional materials.

9. WORK PLAN

9.1 YEAR ONE – APRIL 03, 2000 TO MARCH 31, 2001

1. Communication & Extension

- Produce, print and distribute grassland/GCC brochure
- Purchase portable display unit & produce Grassland display
- Organize and deliver grassland symposium and GCC annual general meeting in the Okanagan, BC
- Produce and distribute biannual *BC Grasslands* Newsletter (June, January)
- Produce regular GCC updates for membership
- Develop & produce pilot grasslands PSA (1 PSA for TV/Radio)
- Produce and distribute first feature article

- Develop basic grassland website
- Initiate discussions, planning & fundraising for Pacific NW Weed Conference
- Begin planning and organizing grassland information project
- Continue participating in the development of the Laurie Guichon Grassland Interpretive Site near Merritt, BC
- Public relations & education

2. Research & Monitoring

- Secure funding for year one & two of BC Grasslands Mapping Project
- Hire Contractor to coordinate and implement project
- Implement project as outlined in the BC Grasslands Mapping Proposal Workplan
- Develop a three year workplan for the mapping project
- Develop proposals for a long-term monitoring strategy on the Hamilton Commonage

3. Demonstration Projects

- Complete final phase of the Hamilton Commonage Demonstration Project
- Organize and deliver final workshop for Hamilton project, September 2000
- Participate in the development of watering demonstration for the Grasslands Interpretive Site

4. Program Evaluation

- Develop GCC evaluation plan
- Secure funding for development of GCC program evaluation and collection of preliminary data
- Hire consultant to conduct preliminary surveys

5. Fundraising & Capacity Building

- Implement provincial membership drive
- Secure funding to hire staff member to assist in delivery of GCC Program
- Establish GCC Fundraising Committee
- Develop detailed 5-year fundraising strategy
- Secure core funding for 3-year GCC program
- Develop and submit funding proposals for GCC program and associated projects

6. GCC Committees

- Establish the following committees to develop GCC strategies and action plans:
 - Fundraising Committee
 - ATV Committee
 - Weed Committee
 - GCC Membership Committee
 - GCC Policy Development Committee
 - Volunteer Committee

9.2 YEAR TWO – APRIL 01, 2001 TO MARCH 31, 2002

1. Communication & Extension

- Produce grassland PSA series (3-4 segments)
- Produce and distribute BC Grasslands poster – a call to action
- Further develop BC Grasslands website layers and critical links
- Organize and deliver Sustaining Healthy Grassland Symposium and GCC AGM in the Kootenays, BC
- Produce and distribute biannual *BC Grasslands* Newsletter (June, January)
- Produce regular GCC updates for membership
- Public relations and education – Attend public functions with BC Grasslands display & educational materials
- Begin inventory and collection for grassland information project
- Produce and distribute feature articles (at least 2 per year)
- Perform needs assessment for grasslands factsheets, other extension/information materials, and workshops
- Participate in organization and delivery of Pacific NW Weed Conference
- Complete inventory and collection of grassland information & define future steps and requirements

2. Research & Monitoring

- Complete year two of the BC Grasslands Mapping Project
- Secure funding for third and last year of mapping project
- Secure funding for Hamilton Commonage monitoring strategy
- Initiate monitoring program on Hamilton Commonage

3. Demonstration Projects

- Organize workshop for ranchers and landowners on the Hamilton Commonage
- Complete needs assessment for future demonstration projects

4. Program Evaluation

- Assess results of preliminary surveys

5. Fundraising & Capacity Building

- Implement yearly provincial membership drive
- Secure funding for delivery of GCC Program
- Implement strategic Fundraising
- Secure core funding for year 2 & 3 year GCC program
- Develop and submit funding proposals for GCC program and associated projects

6. GCC Committees

- Implement action plans of the following committees:
 - Fundraising Committee
 - ATV Committee

- Weed Committee
- GCC Membership Committee
- GCC Policy Development Committee
- Volunteer Committee

9.3 YEAR THREE – APRIL 1, 2002 TO MARCH 31, 2003

1. Communication & Extension

- Update BC Grasslands website layers and critical links
- Organize and deliver Sustaining Healthy Grassland Symposium and GCC AGM (location to be determined)
- Produce and distribute biannual *BC Grasslands* Newsletter (June, January)
- Produce regular GCC updates for membership
- Public relations and education – Attend public functions with BC Grasslands display & educational materials
- Produce and distribute feature articles (at least 2 per year)
- Develop grassland factsheets for landowners and managers
- Organize grasslands field workshop (topic to be announced)

2. Research and Monitoring

- Complete year three of the BC Grasslands Mapping Project
- Secure funding and continue to implement monitoring program on Hamilton Commonage
- Identify opportunities and partnerships for additional grassland monitoring programs

3. Demonstration Projects

- Identify opportunities and partnerships for future demonstration projects

4. Program Evaluation

- Secure funding for final survey and evaluation of GCC Program

5. Strategic Planning

- Develop and finalize 5 year GCC Strategic Plan & Program

6. Fundraising & Capacity Building

- Implement yearly provincial membership drive
- Secure funding for implementation of new GCC 5-year strategy & program
- Implement strategic Fundraising
- Secure core funding for year 2003 – 2006
- Develop and submit funding proposals for GCC program and associated projects

7. GCC Committees

- Develop 5 year plans:
 - Strategic Development Committee
 - Fundraising Committee

- GCC Membership Committee
- GCC Policy Development Committee
- Volunteer Committee

10. OTHER GCC FUNDING PARTNERS & PROPOSALS

10.1 CURRENT PROJECT AND FUNDING : THE HAMILTON COMMONAGE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The Hamilton Demonstration Project was initiated in the fall of 1998 to work with the Guichon Ranch, environment organizations and government agencies to revise the present range use planning process and develop a management strategy to maintain and enhance the biological diversity of the Hamilton Commonage.

The purpose of this project is to initiate changes to how the land is managed by applying various practices to rehabilitate grassland health and encourage later succession plant community composition. This is considered important in supporting grassland species, some of which are considered at risk.

Funding Partners

- Vancouver Foundation
- Citizens Bank
- EcoAction 2000

Funding Partners - in-kind contributions

- Human Resources & Development Council
- Guichon Ranch
- The Land Conservancy of British Columbia
- Ministry of Forests
- BC Wild
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society

10.2 OTHER FUNDING PROPOSALS

Funding Proposals are currently in the works to assist in delivering the GCC Program. For details Contact Bruno Delesalle at (250) 374-5721 or email: bruno_delesalle@telus.net

11. GCC FUNDRAISING STRATEGY

Fundamental to the short-term and longer-term success of the GCC and its program is to become financially sustainable over the longer term and less dependent on government funding programs. The following objectives have been identified for the funding strategy:

1. Secure sufficient seed funding to enable the strategic development of the GCC and establish an infrastructure by which the GCC can operate and deliver its programs.
2. Secure funding from various government and non-government sources to effectively deliver the three-year GCC program.
3. Develop a long-term fundraising strategy that will build the capacity of the GCC to deliver on-going education, conservation and stewardship programs in BC.

The GCC Funding Strategy:

A. Establish the GCC as a Charitable Organization

B. Develop and Secure Core Program Funding For Three Years

Pursue core / operational funding from:

- (a) Existing GCC Partners,
- (b) Government Agencies & Related Funding Programs:
 - Ministry of Forests,
 - Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks,
 - Ministry of Agriculture and Food,
 - Environment Canada,
 - Agriculture Canada,
 - BC Gaming Commission,
- (c) Corporations & Banks,
- (d) Environmental Non-Government Organizations and Funding Programs,
- (e) Foundations, and
- (f) Other funding sources.

C. Develop Partnerships and Secure Project Funding for Three-Year Program

Pursue project specific funding from a variety of funding sources, including:

- (a) Government Agencies & Related Funding Programs:
 - Ministry of Forests,
 - Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks,
 - Ministry of Agriculture and Food,
 - Environment Canada,
 - Agriculture Canada,
- (b) Corporations & Banks,
- (c) Environmental Non-Government Organizations and Funding Programs,
- (d) Foundations, and

- (e) Other funding sources.

D. Develop and Expand GCC Membership

1. Develop a 5 year strategy to expand the GCC membership,
2. Solidify formal support from GCC partners and other key groups, such as the BC Cattlemen's Association (support from the ranching industry is critical to the success of the GCC), and
3. Implement promotional campaign and membership drive to increase the GCC membership base.

E. Secure Private and Corporate Donations

1. Instigate targeted fundraising efforts (Contacting specific individuals and/or organizations for donations), and
2. Organize at least one large fundraising event per year.

F. Develop Five-Year Funding Strategy

1. Secure funding beyond the three-year program for five years, and
2. Establish and secure a provincial fund for grasslands conservation.

12. ROLE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors has played and continues to play a critical role in the development of the GCC (see *Appendix A*: list of Board of Directors). All Board members will actively:

- Participate in monthly strategy and update meetings.
- Assist in developing GCC programs and strategies.
- Engage in targeted fundraising efforts.
- Coordinate specific projects, such as the Hamilton Demonstration Project. Board members and other GCC members have participated in completing critical inventory and other field work required for the successful completion of the project.
- Represent the GCC at conferences and other important meetings.
- Participate in GCC committees.
- Assist the Executive Director in promoting and building partnerships with key organizations and government agencies.

As the council represents a broad range of interests, it is essential that **all** members of the Board of Directors play an active role in the delivery and further development of the proposed program.

13. VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers will continue to play an important role in the development of the GCC, as well as the delivery of the GCC programs. As it will take time to develop a coordinated and effective volunteer force, the following steps will be taken by the GCC:

1. Establish a volunteer committee, chaired by a GCC Director.
2. Develop a short-term and long-term volunteer strategy:
 - (a) Recruitment of volunteers,
 - (b) Definition of roles, including GCC office support, GCC committees, and projects,
 - (c) Management of volunteer force,
 - (d) Evaluation of volunteer program.
3. Establish a volunteer coordinator position (volunteer) to:
 - (a) Develop volunteer application forms,
 - (b) Build a volunteer database that will include necessary contact information, related skills, availability, and professional or personal development goals, and
 - (c) Coordinate the GCC Volunteer Force.
4. Continue to utilize and expand the use of volunteers in the day-to-day operations of the GCC.

14. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GRASSLANDS CONSERVATION COUNCIL

From its inception at the Big Bar Ranch Grassland Symposium in June 1996, to its inauguration as a Society on August 24, 1999, the council has:

- Organized five grassland symposiums and strategy workshops in different regions of British Columbia.
- Initiated the Hamilton Commonage Demonstration Project with the Guichon Ranch near Merritt BC (currently in progress, see funding section).
- Produced a GCC strategic document in July 1998 (mission, goals & objectives), which now forms the basis of the GCC Program Plan.
- Contributed to the collaborative process to secure the Empire Valley Ranch, as agreed to by the Cariboo CORE process.
- Produced and distributed a GCC newsletter twice a year.
- Produced *Grasslands: Our Most Endangered Spaces* brochure (1999).
- Received Society status on August 24, 1999.
- Hired the Executive Director in May, 1999 to further develop and establish the GCC, the GCC program and to secure long-term funding for the organization.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: GCC Board of Directors

Appendix B: GCC Program Budget (not included)

Appendix C: Description of Deliverables: Communication & Extension Program

Appendix D: Letters of Support (available upon request)

APPENDIX A: GCC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Note: The GCC has a total of 22 board members, including 4 executives.

APPENDIX B: GCC BUDGET INFORMATION

Not included

APPENDIX C: DESCRIPTION OF DELIVERABLES: COMMUNICATION & EXTENSION PROGRAM

1. Grassland & GCC Brochure

This will be an attractive, full colour brochure with high quality images and simple messages on grasslands such as: What are grasslands? Where are they found? Why are they important? What are their ecological values? Who depends on grasslands? The brochure will also introduce the GCC, the GCC mission, and how to help support grasslands and grassland stewardship initiatives. Distribution will be broadly based.

Objectives

- Increase awareness about grasslands and key grassland issues including threats, such as ATV impacts & weeds.
- Increase awareness about the Grasslands Conservation Council and its mission.
- To reach a broad audience and build a constituency of support for grasslands in BC.
- Increase GCC membership base.

Audience

- General public, particularly urban populations,
- Government organizations (provincial & federal agencies, municipal governments, regional districts, first nations, crown corporations),
- Professional Associations (eg. Professional Agrologists, Biologists, etc.),
- Agricultural community,
- Environmental organizations,
- Academic institutions.

Specific Messages: to be developed

Proposed Format: 8 ½ x 7 ½ folded to 8 1/2 x 3 3/4 (4 sheets, 12 panels)

Estimated Cost: \$7,800 for approx. 6000 copies

2. Grassland Poster

To be developed as a companion poster to the grassland brochure. Objectives and audience are similar to that of the brochure and the poster will be widely distributed.

Specific Message: to be developed

Proposed Format: 18 X 24

3. Public Service Announcement Series for Television

Three to five PSA spots for TV ranging from 1 to 2 minutes in length. Essentially grasslands and associated ranching industries have not had a high profile in the province, nor have they been perceived as a “sexy” topic. This PSA series is an opportunity to begin a process in changing perceptions and misunderstandings about grasslands, BC’s valued ranching industry, and the stewardship of BC’s grassland landscape. This will coincide with and support the Ministry of Agriculture & Food promotion: “BC’s Sunrise Industry - Agriculture.”

Objectives

- Increase awareness among British Columbians about grasslands, their values and importance.
- Increase awareness among urban populations about ranching, its role in grassland stewardship and ensuring long term sustainability of the industry.
- Increase awareness about the Grasslands Conservation Council and its goal to work proactively with industry and other groups in the management and stewardship of BC’s grasslands.

Audience

- TV viewers for stations such as Shaw, Rogers, Knowledge Network, Discovery, CBC, BCTV

Specific Messages: to be developed

Proposed Format: Beta SP (broadcast quality / film treatment)

4. Grassland Portable Display

Produce a portable grassland display that can be transported around the province and used for public and formal events, including but not limited to: BCCA annual convention; provincial and regional resource management conferences, workshops and seminars; BC Parks Day and other educational days; Society for Range Management meetings and other professional meetings. The list of opportunities for using the display is very extensive. Concept and design must allow flexibility in content and presentation to suit a range of display opportunities and audiences.

Objectives

- Increase awareness among British Columbians about grasslands, their values and importance.
- Increase awareness about threats to grasslands.
- Increase awareness among urban populations about ranching, its role in grassland stewardship and ensuring long term sustainability of the industry.
- Increase awareness about the Grasslands Conservation Council and its mission.

Audience

- General public,
- Government organizations (provincial & federal agencies, municipal governments, regional districts, first nations, crown corporations),
- Professional Associations (Professional Agrologists, Biologists, etc.),
- Agricultural community,
- Environmental organizations,
- Students,
- 4H clubs.

Specific Messages: to be developed

Proposed Format: stand-up portable 8 panel display

5. Grassland Website

One of the key roles of the GCC is to make available and facilitate the flow of grassland-related information to a wide variety of groups and individuals. A single site encompassing current provincial grassland information and research, including grassland conservation and stewardship initiatives does not exist. The development of a BC Grasslands website enables the GCC to make information available to and educate a broad audience. The website will include topics such as grassland ecology and location, grassland threats such as noxious weeds, damage by ATV's, fragmentation, etc., and other current issues. The development of a website will allow the GCC to link with other grassland related programs in Canada, USA and worldwide. The long-term research, information sharing and educational potential for a grassland website is extensive. The primary goal is to have an effective infrastructure in place that can meet initial demand while ensuring future growth and development.

Objectives

- To make a variety of grassland information available on the internet.
- Increase awareness about grasslands, using:
 - map of BC's grasslands
 - grassland ecology, grassland types, locations
 - grassland wildlife and habitat, plants, soils
 - threats to grasslands / priority grassland issues
- Increase awareness among urban populations about ranching, its role in grassland stewardship and ensuring long term sustainability of the industry.
- Increase awareness about the Grasslands Conservation Council and its mission.

Audience

- General public – Web users,
- Government organizations (provincial & federal agencies, municipal governments, regional districts, first nations, crown corporations),
- Professional Associations (Professional Agrologists, Biologists, etc.),

- Agricultural community,
- Environmental organizations,
- Academic institutions.

6. GCC Grassland Newsletter

The ultimate goal of the GCC newsletter is to become a voice for grassland stewardship in British Columbia. It is a platform to communicate program activities, inform readership about what is happening elsewhere in the province, for example, grassland research, demonstration projects, or advertising a public event. It is also a platform to print articles or editorials on grassland, grassland wildlife and range management related topics.

Objectives

- Inform readers about GCC activities and other grassland programs across BC and Canada.
- To provide a forum on grassland ecology, range management, grassland conservation and stewardship.

Audience

- GCC membership / partners,
- BC Cattlemen's Association,
- Provincial government agencies,
- Environmental organizations,
- First Nations,
- Academic institutions.

Proposed Format: 4-6 pages, 8 1/2 x 11

7. Article Series: *British Columbia's Grasslands*

Three comprehensive feature articles to be written on grassland stewardship, demonstration projects and range management issues. The themes for the articles have yet to be developed.

Audience

- Beef in BC, Country Life in BC, BC Agri Digest readers,
- Local media and Provincial media where appropriate,
- Agricultural, Environmental, and Professional Association newsletters.

Proposed Format: 1500 - 2000 words with colour photographs

8. Spring Grassland Symposium (coincides with GCC Annual Meeting)

On an annual basis, the GCC organizes a grassland symposium or field tour to bring together a variety of interests, including the ranching and range management community, environmental organizations, government, First Nations, recreation and other interests to discuss key issues concerning grasslands and their management.

Objectives

- To encourage discussion of key issues.
- For participants to gain a better understanding and appreciation for the ecological, social, economic and cultural importance of grasslands.
- For participants to gain a better understanding of the management practices essential to balancing ranching and other land uses to ensure the long term health of grasslands.
- To learn from each other's experiences on ATV impacts, grassland restoration strategies, weed problems and weed control programs, grazing management strategies, forest encroachment and ecologically sensitive areas.

Proposed Format: Field day for 60 – 90 participants

9. Collection of Grassland Information and Development of Database

The GCC will collect and inventory existing information from around the province on BC's grasslands and organizations involved with grasslands research, management, and conservation.

Objectives

- Compile and inventory existing grassland information
 - Past & current research.
 - List organizations involved in grassland research, management, conservation, restoration, education, etc.
 - Compile information about the projects these organizations or individuals are working on.
- Create a physical filing system and a database for this information.
- Incorporate appropriate information on the BC Grasslands website to make it available to organizations and the interested public.

APPENDIX D: SUPPORT LETTERS

Available upon request