

3. IDENTIFYING YOUR GRASSLAND COMMUNITY



PHOTO MIKE DUFFY

IDENTIFYING YOUR GRASSLAND COMMUNITY

Before going into the field to start your assessment, you need to identify the grassland plant community you are managing. The site's dominant species will dictate how you assess your grassland and will affect the interpretation of your results.

Each grassland community is described in a separate booklet accompanied by details describing how they are to be assessed and scored. Identifying your grassland community is a three step process:

Step 1 Select your region on the BC map

- See the map on page 25, Grassland Regions of Southern British Columbia
- Five regions are discussed in this manual:
 - 1 Thompson–Nicola Region
 - 2 Okanagan–Similkameen Region
 - 3 Boundary Region
 - 4 East Kootenay Region
 - 5 Cariboo–Chilcotin Region

The Peace River and northern grasslands are not included in this version of the manual.

Step 2 Identify your grassland community(s)

Select the fold-out map of your region that shows grassland community delineations. Here you will be able to identify the grassland communities relevant to your operation. In most cases, you will not have more than two grassland communities.

A total of seven grassland communities are identified:

- Big Sagebrush, Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands (Lower Grassland)
- Antelope-brush, Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands (Lower Grassland)
- Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands (Middle Grassland)
- Rough Fescue Grasslands (Upper Grassland)
- Rough Fescue, Antelope-brush Grasslands (Upper Grassland)
- Porcupinegrass, Bluebunch Wheatgrass and Spreading Needlegrass Grasslands (Upper Grassland)

Step 3 Choose the monitoring booklet(s) that correspond to the grassland community(s) identified on your map

Each grassland community is colour-coded. Turn to the correspondingly coloured booklet in Chapter 5 of the manual. The booklet will take you through a step-by-step process for completing your assessment. There are five booklets:

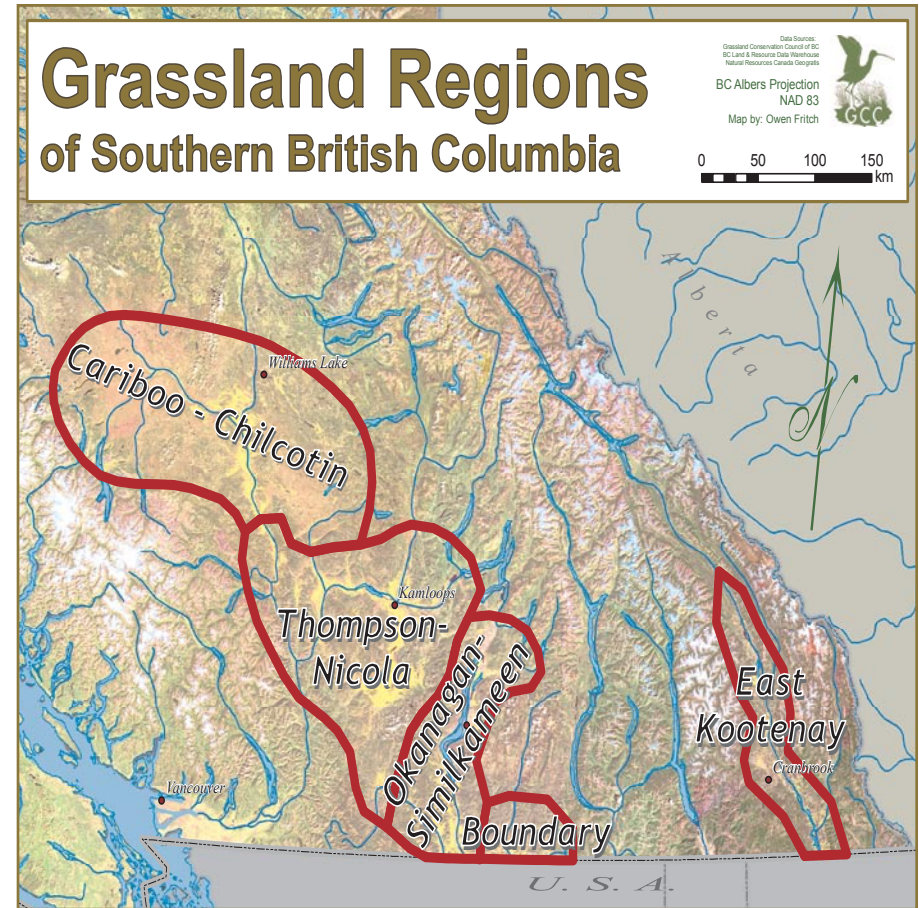
-  1) Big Sagebrush, Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands and Antelope-Brush, Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands
-  2) Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands
-  3) Rough Fescue Grasslands
-  4) Rough Fescue, Antelope-Brush Grasslands
-  5) Porcupinegrass, Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands and Spreading Needlegrass Grasslands

Ensure you have identified and field-checked your grassland community carefully, as the maps in this manual are a general guide and may not distinguish variations in plant communities based on topography and climate. In other words, ensure you are scoring the right plant community!

The number of sites you assess depends on the number of pastures and plant communities you want to assess. If you want to assess one large pasture that contains two community types, you will need to complete two different assessments, one for each community.

Grassland Regions of Southern British Columbia

Select the map of your region from the following fold-out maps.



Thompson–Nicola Region Map pages 27-28

Okanagan–Similkameen Region Map 29-30

Boundary Region Map 31-32

East Kootenay Region Map 33-34

Cariboo–Chilcotin Region Map 35-36

Grassland Communities by Region

Region	Lower Grassland	Middle Grassland	Upper Grassland
Thompson–Nicola	Big Sagebrush, Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands	Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands	Rough Fescue Grasslands
Okanagan–Similkameen	Big Sagebrush, Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands OR Antelope-brush, Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands	Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands	Rough Fescue Grasslands
Boundary		Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands (limited)	Rough Fescue Grasslands
East Kootenay		Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands (limited – not mapped)	Rough Fescue Grasslands OR Rough Fescue, Antelope-brush Grasslands
Cariboo–Chilcotin	Big Sagebrush, Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands	Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands	Porcupinegrass, Bluebunch Wheatgrass Grasslands AND Spreading Needlegrass Grasslands