

## *Grasslands Conservation Council of B. C.*

Who are we?

Where have we been?

Where are we now?

Where are we going?

### **A 2011 update for members and friends of GCC**

The Grasslands Council began in 1996 with a gathering of diverse people who were concerned and passionate about grasslands. Grasslands comprise less than 1% of the British Columbia landscape, and were being lost to housing and damaged by misuse. The vision from the beginning was that GCC would include all individuals and organizations who value grasslands for any reason, including cattle grazing, wildlife habitat, recreation, natural values, spiritual values and more. Our broad and inclusive philosophy has developed much respect and support. **The intent was for GCC to become a voice for the grasslands of our great province.**

Visionary and committed volunteers built awareness of the organization and the importance of grasslands. **GCC rapidly became widely known and respected. GCC became influential with government ministries, and our input became sought after.** As our roles broadened, staff was hired to be able to devote more time to priorities and to major projects such as:

*Mapping of BC Grasslands* to prepare the first comprehensive maps of BC's grasslands  
*ATV Legislation* proposal, done with ATV organizations, to discourage irresponsible riding  
*Grasslands Monitoring Manual – A Tool for Ranchers*, which groups the variables of grassland health into 5 understandable categories  
*Land Use Planning* with grassland input to regional and municipal governments  
*Keeping Working Ranches Working* to help keep large blocks of grasslands intact  
*Public Service ads* featuring the calf and the curlew  
*Species at Risk Planning* because one-third of all species at risk need grasslands  
*Ecological Assessment* of areas being considered for development

**We actively developed alliances with other organizations where it was mutually beneficial. We have invested much time informing government ministries about issues related to grasslands, and continue to do so.**

With the recent recession came major reductions in funding from foundations, and government curtailed many of the projects it supported through GCC. Our options were to adapt, or to go extinct. **We chose to adapt.** Staff sought greener pastures as projects and funding diminished, with Bob Moody, our immediate past Executive Director and last staff member, promoting out to give leadership to the B. C. Institute of Agrologists. Our heartfelt thanks to our dedicated former staff members.

We have now restructured into a volunteer-based model, with directors taking active management roles, and with some tasks being assigned to volunteers, and selected tasks being contracted. **Our vision remains unchanged: education (in its broadest sense) to promote the protection and wise use of grasslands,** and facilitation of work that promotes better management. Our office has been closed and is now occupied by Ducks Unlimited. Our

addresses and phone remain unchanged. However, during this transition we have encountered some gaps in phone and e-mail communication. We apologize, and hope that those deficiencies are all in the past.

This transition has had its challenges, but we are coming out the other side with our vision renewed and our enthusiasm still very intact. Our conviction remains that British Columbia needs GCC more now than ever. With the involvement of committed leadership and enthusiastic members, we will continue to be the voice for the grasslands. **The grasslands, and all those who depend on them, sorely need us.**

***Our focused emphasis is threefold:***

membership communication

with a monthly e-mail newsletter, which began last fall

with an attractive website

with regional workshops of members and associates, often to be held in conjunction with meetings of other resource focused organizations to maximize participation

doubling our membership to 700, then doubling it again. We are presently a force; we can be a much greater force with a larger membership

educating decision makers and speaking on behalf of grasslands at every opportunity

**You can help speak for grasslands by:**

- joining GCC, or renewing your membership. Membership is only \$35 per calendar year
- ensuring that we have your e-mail address, so we can be in touch
- joining like-minded people at one of the regional workshops this summer
- becoming involved as a volunteer or adding your skills and energy to the leadership team
- making suggestions about how the effectiveness of GCC can be enhanced.

Thanks for being interested in our grasslands!

Board of Directors

Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia

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