

Project Overview

- The Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP) and the West Souris River Conservation District received funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) through the Species at Risk Partnerships on Agricultural Lands (SARPAL) program. The intent of the program, over a three-year period, is to deliver information and incentives to cattle producers to enhance pastureland with the goal to improve grass quality and maintain a healthy habitat for Species at Risk. The program runs until March 2019.
- These particular SARPAL projects are targeting prairie native grassland in southwestern Manitoba. This includes the Poverty Plains, Lyleton Grasslands, Blind Souris River Valley, Belleview and Maple Lake Region.
- Prairie native grassland is typically used by cattle producers to pasture cattle. This land is also the ideal habitat for wildlife including grassland birds that are native to Manitoba and North America. However, once native prairie grassland is lost, it is nearly impossible to replicate.
- Many species native to Manitoba are vulnerable and are at risk primarily because of the loss of habitat. By protecting and preserving native prairie grassland, habitat loss is reduced and the potential to increase populations greatly improves. Some of the targeted grassland Species at Risk include: Sprague's Pipit, Ferruginous Hawk, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Loggerhead Shrike, Burrowing Owl and Baird's Sparrow.
- Cattle producers in Manitoba are part of the solution to protecting this valuable component of the ecosystem. Through production practices, cattle producers are making a significant difference to Species at Risk.
- These SARPAL projects are focusing on determining what changes to grazing operations might be beneficial to everyday cattle operations, as well as to Species at Risk.
- Some examples of the incentives and/or services for which funds could be used are:
 - Fencing that supports improved grazing,
 - Watering systems designed to improve cattle distribution,
 - Management of woody, invasive plants encroaching on grasslands (shrubbing),
 - Establishing additional pastures that help to relieve grazing pressure on native rangelands, and
 - Native pasture establishment.
- Cost-shared incentives and management services are available under a ten-year agreement. Funds available to participating producers:
 - A maximum of \$10,000 per quarter section,
 - A maximum of \$50,000 per land owner.
- Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation (MHHC) is delivering the program on behalf of MBP. The projects are also supported by grassland bird surveying and monitoring carried out by Bird Studies Canada and the Important Bird Areas (Manitoba) Program.
- Cattle producers can also benefit by having a complimentary grassland assessment done on their property, as well as a grassland bird survey.

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Manitoba
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Association