



## Heather Peat Hamm

Ecologist

### Bio

Heather Peat Hamm is a plant ecologist, initially working in pasture weed research for Agriculture Canada. Her subsequent graduate research investigated shifts in C3/C4 plants and climate change in Grasslands National Park.

Academic research led her to Alaska and British Columbia, studying organic nitrogen cycling in forested ecosystems. In 2000, Heather began consulting, based on ecological field research and science communications. Since 2006, Heather has worked on species at risk, including co-managing a pilot study to develop agricultural beneficial management practices for species at risk on the prairies. Field work is an important part of Heather's work, including rare plant surveys, occupancy surveys for species at risk, and field surveys for management of invasive species on natural landscapes. When not in the field, Heather works on management planning for species at risk, invasive species and natural habitats. As an extension of her science-based conservation work, Heather is a science illustrator, focussing on the full range of prairie species and habitats.



Canadian Forage & Grassland Association  
Association Canadienne pour les Plantes Fourragères

## CFGA NATURE FUND PROJECT MEET THE PROS

### Role in CFGA Nature Fund Project

Working with a steering committee of people involved with species at risk in Saskatchewan, Heather is developing the background information and requirements for the public interface of the online Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool for Saskatchewan.

### Project description

The CFGA Nature Fund Project provides the opportunity to put the best available conservation information into the hands of the land stewards who are working towards the preservation or enhancement of habitat for native species within Canada's agricultural landscape. The centerpiece of the project is the Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool, an online tool developed in Alberta that enables interested agricultural producers to integrate the needs of multiple native species into the management of their land.

The Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool provides an opportunity for landowners, farmers and livestock producers to access a broad list of management options based on their location and the habitat types present on their land. As an access point to information, it allows each user to review a range of management options that can help foster the persistence of native plants or animals, including those at risk, by maintaining or improving the quality of habitat on their agricultural land. In addition, the online tool provides confirmation of the positive effects that many current management practices have on the quality of habitat for local native species.

Under the leadership of the CFGA, the online tool is being adapted and customized for use in provinces across Canada as a source of conservation information for all of



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those interested in habitat stewardship. The majority of the background work in Saskatchewan is expected to be completed, and the user interface in the works, by late 2020.

### Link to forages and grasslands

The Saskatchewan roll out of the Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool for the Environmental Farm Plan will enable a one-place interface for ranchers and farmers to look for innovative ways to improve their practices in terms of environmental conservation and long-term grassland stability. Utilizing these services, in conjunction with programs designed to directly help with the implementation of conservation practices, will further the ability of producers to increase the sustainability of their land and their farm as a whole. While the perception may be that such conservation practices are beyond the reach of most farmers, there are many practices offered that reinforce current practices, and also many that require only small tweaks to current practices, on both grasslands and forage fields.

### Why is it important

The vast majority of the southern half of the province of Saskatchewan is under management focused on agricultural production. Grassland is the habitat of some of Saskatchewan's most at-risk species. This project will help with management of these habitats in ways that help both the native species and the land managers. For industrial landscapes without grasslands, this project will also endeavour to provide conservation practices for use in monoculture cropping situations.

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