Grassland Inventory Project

Why a Grasslands Inventory

Grasslands are vitally important ecosystems. They are also the most fragmented and altered terrestrial ecosystem on the planet. Conversion of grassland reduces its capacity to support biodiversity and further threatens to reduce critical services – carbon storage, nutrient cycling, forage production, water storage, and pollination.

Approximately 80-85% of Canada's native grasslands have disappeared. Consequently, project partners recognize a need for ongoing, comprehensive grasslands inventory. While other land-use types are regularly assessed using a consistent methodology, there is no national inventory methodology applied to Canadian grasslands (native and tame). Further, grassland classification terminology has not been nationally defined, thus limiting effective collaboration across Canada. Management and accounting of ecological services have been hindered as a result.

What is Proposed

This project will identify and describe all existing grasslands inventories in Canada and determine how various inventories can be harmonized to develop a cohesive national grasslands inventory.   The ultimate aim is to construct a national grasslands inventory, including all major grassland types and ecoregions. This would update and inform grassland policy, decision-making, and risk assessment across Canada going forward.

The inventory will also allow the Canadian grassland sector and stakeholders to more accurately assess carbon stores in grassland soils, and to predict real or expected loss of grasslands over time.

Who will contribute to the Grassland Inventory?

The project development team comprises agriculture representatives, ENGOs, and provincial and federal collaborators. As such, the first and last components of this project will be to create a collaborative network that can drive grasslands inventory and report sensing projects into the future.

Canadian Forage and Grassland Association
Association Canadienne pour les Plantes Fourragères

CFGA