

Public Pastures - Public Interest

What provincial election candidates can do for our native prairie

PRAIRIE GRASSLANDS – OUR CHILDREN’S HERITAGE

Grasslands are one of the most endangered habitats on the continent. Less than 20% of Saskatchewan’s native prairie remains.



The province’s Crown grasslands are vital elements of the public trust every bit as precious as our northern forests and lakes.

An important first step is keeping the 1.8 million acres of PFRA Community Pastures publicly-owned and protected.

In 2012 the federal government announced an end to the Community Pasture Program, that had operated under the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act (PFRA) since the 1930’s to restore marginal lands subject to erosion and manage them for livestock grazing. The land is being transferred to the Saskatchewan government, which has offered the pastures for sale. But these grasslands are **not “just agricultural land”**.

The PFRA pastures are habitat for over 30 Species at Risk.

Grasslands sequester carbon, mitigating climate change.

Publicly owned pastures are used by hunters, photographers, Indigenous people, researchers and people on educational tours.



Archaeological and Indigenous ceremonial sites, and homesteader sites, including the Wallace Stegner homestead, are found on PFRA pastures.

Grazing is an essential component of native prairie ecosystems.



The Community Pasture Program supports small cattle producers and rural communities.

What You Can Do

Ask the federal government to halt the transfer of any more pastures to the province, administer a Strategic Environmental Assessment and review the decision to end the Community Pasture Program.

For the PFRA Community Pastures already transferred to the Saskatchewan government:

- Retain them as publicly-owned lands, do not offer them for sale.
- Work with the federal government on additional resources needed to manage public values such as: biodiversity, carbon sequestration, ecosystem conservation, and public access.

Strongly urge the provincial government to halt the sale of public land with ecological value including Crown lands that, until removed by recent Order-in-Council, had been protected under the Wildlife Habitat Protection Act.

Conduct a complete inventory of our remaining native grasslands.

Create Saskatchewan legislation that recognizes the value of our remaining native grassland.

Protect native prairie, including monitoring and enforcing Conservation Easements preventing breaking of these lands. Once native prairie is broken it cannot be restored.