



Protected and Conserved Areas Roadmap



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Executive Summary

Protected and conserved areas safeguard ecosystems and wildlife habitat, help us mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, provide benefits such as clean water and air, support tourism and recreation, and foster healthy connections with nature that contribute to the well-being of Saskatchewan residents. They also provide valuable opportunities to support reconciliation and renewed relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

A network of protected and conserved natural areas representing and sustaining the full range of habitat for wild species, unique physical features, and ecosystem values that provide diverse benefits for Saskatchewan.

The *Protected and Conserved Areas Roadmap* responds to the Government of Saskatchewan’s commitment to protect 12 per cent of terrestrial and aquatic environments in Saskatchewan to support national commitments under the Convention on Biodiversity. Currently, 9.8 per cent of Saskatchewan (the equivalent of 6.5 million hectares) is protected or conserved through various means and contribute to this goal.

Developed in collaboration with the Habitat Advisory Committee (HAC) and the Protected and Conserved Areas Working Group (PCAWG), this roadmap also supports the Government of Saskatchewan’s commitment to prairie resilience as identified in *Prairie Resilience: A Made-in-*

Saskatchewan Climate Change Strategy, as well *Saskatchewan's Growth Plan 2020-2030*, which includes conserving Saskatchewan's water and land resources.

The vision is to have a network of protected and conserved natural areas representing and sustaining the full range of habitat for wild species, unique physical features and ecosystem values that provide diverse benefits for Saskatchewan. The *Protected and Conserved Areas Roadmap* is focused on achieving two outcomes:

Outcome 1: Protected and Conserved Areas meet the Government of Saskatchewan’s goal of 12 per cent of Saskatchewan's land and water.

Outcome 2: Protected and Conserved Areas are managed to retain, improve and restore the ecological, natural and cultural values for which they were established.

The roadmap identifies goals, objectives, and actions to achieve these two outcomes over the 2021-2025 period, inclusive of performance metrics. The Government of Saskatchewan believes that this document's range of commitments provides a coherent roadmap for safeguarding our ecological diversity's long-term future. Regular review of the progress in implementing the roadmap and its impact will result in continual re-examination and improvement to policies, procedures and legislation.

| Outcome | Objectives | Performance Metric |
|---|--|---|
| Protected and Conserved Areas meet the Government of Saskatchewan’s goal of 12 per cent | Provincial funding is targeted to priority areas for inclusion in the Protected and Conserved Areas. | Amount of provincial funding targeted to priority areas for inclusion in the Protected and Conserved Areas. |
| | Increased funding for attainment of Protected and Conserved Areas is obtained through new and existing partnerships. | Amount of new funding targeted to priority areas for inclusion in the Protected and Conserved Areas from new and existing partnerships. |

| Outcome | Objectives | Performance Metric |
|---|--|---|
| of Saskatchewan's land and water. | New funding mechanisms are developed to provide additional funding for Protected and Conserved Areas attainment. | Amount of funding attained from new funding mechanisms. |
| | Internal and external stakeholders and Indigenous communities are aware of, engaged and actively participating in Protected and Conserved Areas planning and securement. | Number of partners actively participating in Protected and Conserved Areas planning and securement. |
| | The public is aware of, supports, and understands the value of Protected and Conserved Areas. | Surveys/social media/media measurement indicate support for Protected and Conserved Areas by Saskatchewan people. |
| | Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), and Protected Areas (PAs) are provincially defined and endorsed. | Provincial Protected and Conserved Areas definitions are established. |
| | A framework for recommendation and selection of candidate Protected and Conserved Areas is developed and approved. | Process to recommend and select potential Protected and Conserved Areas is established. |
| | Habitat mitigation offsets and/or conservation banking approaches are tested as a means to create Protected and Conserved Areas. | Area protected via habitat mitigation offsets or conservation banking as a proportion of total Protected and Conserved Areas. |
| Protected and Conserved Areas are managed to retain, improve, and restore the ecological, natural, and cultural values for which they were established. | Funding for Protected and Conserved Areas management is sufficient. | Management objectives are met and adequately funded. |
| | Human and technical resources for Protected and Conserved Areas management is sufficient. | Number of management objectives on Protected and Conserved Areas that are met. |
| | Protected and Conserved Areas are effectively monitored to ensure management objectives are achieved. | Proportion of Protected and Conserved Areas monitored. |

In this roadmap, we:

- Consider new tools and new approaches that make sense for the unique needs of Saskatchewan, including Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and Protected Areas (PAs)
- Recognize and celebrate the partnership approach required to achieve the desired outcomes; and,
- Focus on Saskatchewan while appreciating the national and international perspectives.



Protected Areas

(PAs)

Clearly defined geographical spaces. Recognized, dedicated and managed for long-term conservation values. Governance and ownership recognize conservation objectives.

Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs)

Clearly defined geographical spaces. Not protected areas, but governance and management approach results in long-term conservation in addition to other values. Governance and ownership recognize conservation objectives.

A strong economy and biodiversity conservation are joint responsibilities shared by Saskatchewan’s government, industries, communities, organizations, and residents. The Saskatchewan *Protected and Conserved Areas Roadmap* has been developed with that view, in which we work in partnership, together and holistically, to find a viable, sustainable path forward. The establishment of protected and conserved areas on Saskatchewan Crown lands is solely

within provincial jurisdiction. To establish a protected and conserved area within the province of Saskatchewan, proposed areas must be vetted through the Saskatchewan Protected and Conserved Areas Network Program. For more than 25 years, this program has provided a standardized, one-government approach for protected and conserved areas in Saskatchewan.

Introduction

Protected and conserved areas safeguard ecosystems and wildlife habitat, help us mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, provide benefits such as clean water and air, support tourism and recreation, and foster healthy connections with nature that contribute to the well-being of Saskatchewan residents. They also provide valuable opportunities to support reconciliation and renewed relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Saskatchewan has an extensive diversity of ecological systems. From wide-open rolling grasslands in the south to a mix of prairie and aspen groves in the central section of the province and, further north, deep dark forests of spruce, fir and tamarack and extensive stands of jack pine above a groundcover of lichens. A wide range of wetlands are found throughout the province, including potholes, bogs and fens, with rivers, streams and lakes increasing in abundance from south to north.

This roadmap continues a path initiated in 1997 when Saskatchewan established the Representative Areas Network (RAN), now known as the Protected and Conserved Areas Network (PCAN). The overarching goal was to represent and protect unique examples of Saskatchewan's diverse landscapes in 11 ecoregions (Figure 1 – Ecoregions of Saskatchewan).

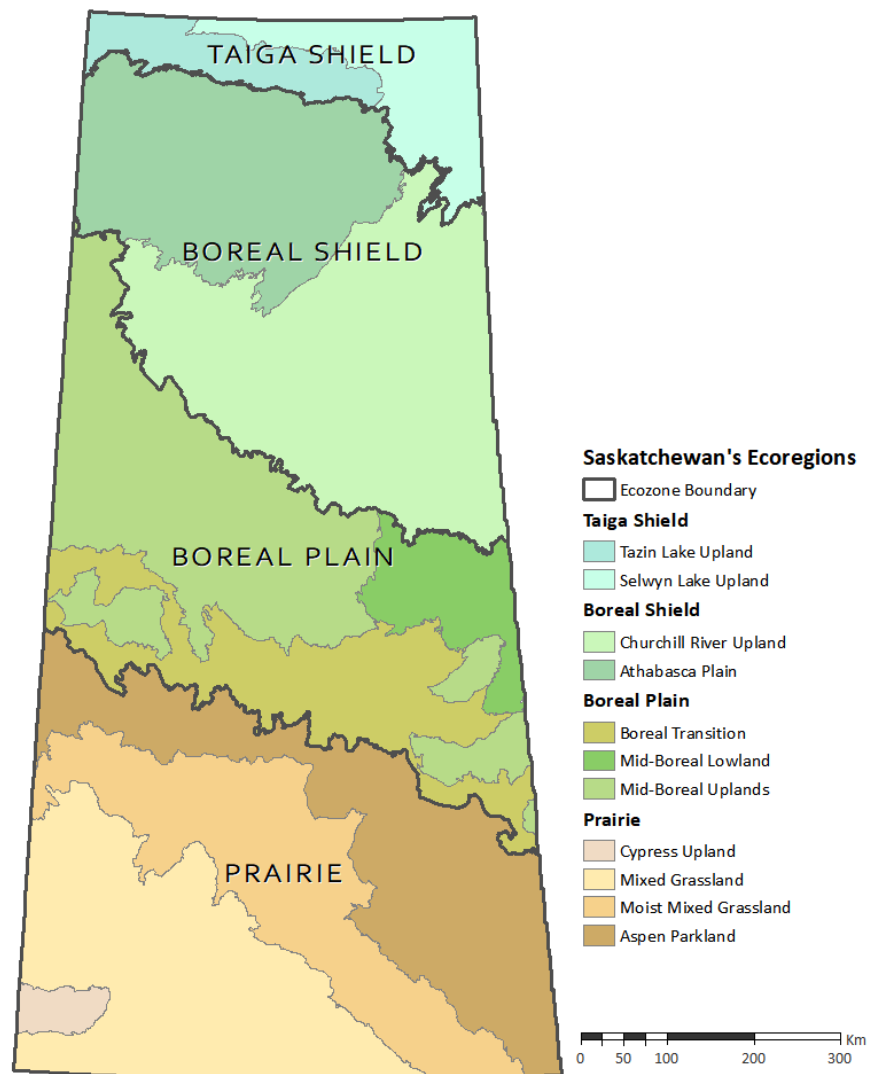


Figure 1: Ecoregions of Saskatchewan

| Ecoregion | Key Attributes |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Selwyn Lake Upland | This part of the Canadian Shield forms a broad and sloping upland. In some places, the soil stays frozen all year. There are sandy ridges, bedrock outcrops, and lakes in this ecoregion. Because of the cool temperatures and low rainfall, the trees are shorter, and the forests more open than in other ecoregions in the province. Black spruce is common. |
| Tazin Lake Upland | This rugged part of the Canadian Shield is located north of Lake Athabasca. In low-lying areas, black spruce trees are found on soil that is frozen year-round. The rocks are treeless, with black spruce and jack pine found on sandy lower slopes. |
| Athabasca Plain | A key feature is the large sand dune field on Lake Athabasca's south side, which derives from the flat-lying Precambrian sandstone bedrock. This ecoregion is flatter than the Tazin Lake Upland and has fewer lakes; forest fires are frequent. Jack pine, spruce, and birch trees are common in the Athabasca Plain. It is also home to several plants — such as Turnor's willow, sand chickweed, and Mackenzie hair-grass — found nowhere else in the world. |
| Churchill River Upland | Almost 40 per cent of the Churchill River Upland of the Canadian Shield is covered in lakes and rivers. The lakes are long and narrow and controlled by linear bedrock features accentuated by glacial ice movement. Sandy soils with low jack pine and black spruce stands are common, with clay soils with white spruce and aspen scattered throughout. Frozen peatlands in this region are home to black spruce and tamarack. |
| Mid-Boreal Upland | Glacial landforms dominate the Mid-Boreal Upland. The soils are mostly loamy gray, though some poorly drained sandy soils are also found. Aspen and white spruce are common in this ecoregion. Jack pine is found in sandy areas and is mixed with black spruce in upland areas. Tamarack and black spruce are found in the common low-lying, treed peatlands. |
| Mid-Boreal Lowland | The Mid-Boreal Lowland is a flat, low-lying region dominated by organic plain deposits with an abundance of wetlands containing some of the most productive forest lands in the province. Common trees include white spruce, balsam fir, aspen, American elm, green ash, and Manitoba maple. |
| Boreal Transition | This ecoregion is at the boundary between forest to the north and farmed land to the south. Much of the landscape is either glacial lake or organic plains. In hilly upland areas, aspen is common, white spruce and jack pine. |
| Aspen Parkland | Much of this ecoregion in Saskatchewan is farmed. In its natural state, it consists of aspen and fescue grassland. It is dotted with lakes and sloughs created by the movement of glaciers through the area. Landforms are controlled by glacial moraine and lake deposits, and by organic-rich plains. |
| Moist Mixed Grassland | This ecoregion marks the northern extension of open grassland in the province. It is dominated by glacial moraine landforms and glacial lake plains. It is closely correlated with semi-arid moisture conditions and dark brown soils and used for agricultural purposes. Native vegetation is confined mainly to non-arable pasture lands, where speargrasses and wheatgrasses, and deciduous shrubs, such as snowberry, rose, chokecherry, and wolf willow, are among the more common species. |
| Mixed Grassland | The Mixed Grassland is the driest ecoregion in Saskatchewan. There are few lakes or sloughs in this area. The landscapes include glacial lake plains, sand dunes, badlands, and the hilly pothole terrain known as the Missouri Coteau. Common plants are wheatgrass, speargrass, and occasionally blue grama grass. Common shrubs include snowberry and wolf willow. |
| Cypress Upland | This unique ecoregion rises 500 metres above the surrounding plains. At the upland's base, brown soils and grassland are found, while a sub-montane fescue prairie occurs on the south-facing slopes. Lodgepole pine, white spruce, and aspen are found on the upper slopes. Lodgepole pine is not found in any other ecoregion in Saskatchewan. Steep hills, lakes, and streams are characteristic landscape features of the Cypress Upland. The plateau's top is the only part of Saskatchewan to escape glaciation during the last ice age. |

Currently, 9.8 per cent of Saskatchewan (the equivalent of 6.5 million hectares) is protected or conserved through various means (Figure 3: PCA Designated Area (HA) as a proportion of the total Saskatchewan area (per cent)). This includes Wildlife Habitat Protection Lands, Provincial Parks, Special Management Areas, Ecological Reserves, Community Pastures, and National Parks. Additionally, non-government organizations, such as Ducks Unlimited, Nature Conservancy of Canada, and Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, have also protected significant areas (Figure 2: Saskatchewan Protected and Conserved Areas Network). However, these areas are not uniformly distributed. Six of the 11 ecoregions have significant hectares contributing to Protected and Conserved Areas. Several ecoregions in the north (Athabasca Plain, Churchill River Upland) and south (Boreal Transition, Aspen Parkland, and Moist Mixed Grassland) have limited areas in protected or conserved status (Table 2: Protected and Conserved Areas by Ecoregion).

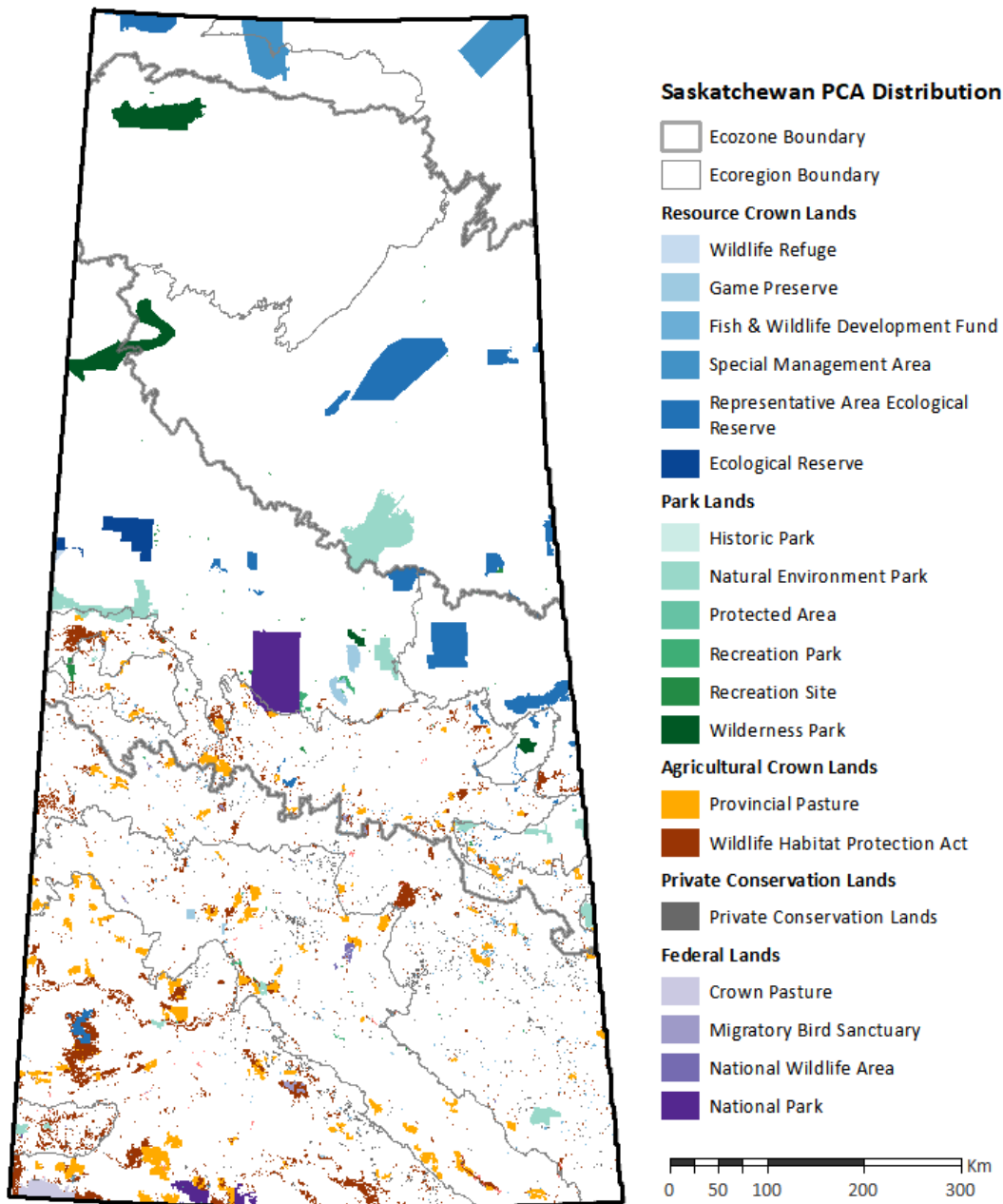


Figure 2: Saskatchewan Protected and Conserved Areas Network, December 2020

| Ecoregion | PCA Area (HA) | PCA Area (% Ecoregion) | PCA Area (% SK) |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Cypress Upland | 107,735 | 21.46% | 0.17% |
| Mixed Grassland | 1,347,466 | 15.59% | 2.07% |
| Mid-Boreal Lowland | 329,977 | 15.26% | 0.51% |
| Tazin Lake Upland | 253,534 | 14.10% | 0.39% |
| Mid-Boreal Uplands | 1,329,561 | 13.05% | 2.04% |
| Selwyn Lake Upland | 337,069 | 11.80% | 0.52% |
| Boreal Transition | 497,452 | 9.18% | 0.30% |
| Churchill River Upland | 942,911 | 8.32% | 1.45% |
| Moist Mixed Grassland | 466,445 | 6.88% | 0.72% |
| Aspen Parkland | 527,880 | 6.46% | 0.81% |
| Athabasca Plain | 208,197 | 2.82% | 0.32% |
| N/A | 6,158 | N/A | 0.01% |
| TOTAL | 6,354,385 | | 9.76% |

**Note: N/A indicates PCAs outside of the ecoregions listed, as Saskatchewan's Ecoregion Boundary dataset excludes a small portion of Saskatchewan's total area.*

Table 1: Protected and Conserved Areas by Ecoregion



Figure 3: Relative proportion of Designated Areas within the Protected and Conserved Areas Network (per cent total PCA), grouped by relevant jurisdiction, where "MULTI" indicates PCAs with more than one Designated Area Type (e.g., Provincial Pastures and WHPA).

Additionally, the level of protection or conservation differs. Some lands are being protected or conserved in practice, private grazing lands, for example, that have not been formally designated. This varied landscape sets the context for developing a roadmap and highlights the need for a coherent strategy to guide the Government of Saskatchewan, stakeholders' and Indigenous communities' efforts in protecting and conserving land.



Figure 3: PCA Designated Area (HA) as a proportion of total Saskatchewan area (per cent) as of December 2020. Note: Individual Designated Area statistics do not account for overlap within the PCA Network; therefore, hectare values should not be summed within this figure.



Roadmap Development, Planning Principles, and Process

The Protected and Conserved Areas Roadmap articulates the desired outcomes and goals, and includes the significant steps needed to reach those.

It serves as a communication tool, a high-level document that helps articulate strategic thinking—the why—behind both the objectives and the plan for getting there.



In delivering on the *Protected and Conserved Areas Roadmap*, the ministry will be:

- Collaborative – engaging, involving, and co-operating with of all appropriate Government of Saskatchewan ministries, agencies, stakeholders and Indigenous communities.
- Respectful – accommodating different perspectives, experiences, values and priorities of all people and respecting the unique rights, responsibilities and knowledge of Indigenous peoples.
- Transparent – ensuring openness in all facets of the initiative and communicating clearly to all audiences.
- Innovative – incorporating new and innovative solutions to achieve goals in a dynamic and changing environment and economy.
- Interconnected – planning integrated with other local, provincial and national efforts to protect and manage species, habitats, and landscapes.
- Balanced – maintaining a balance between biodiversity conservation and economic opportunities and cultural and societal needs.
- Evidence-based – grounded in western science and Indigenous knowledge systems and based on the best ecological and local knowledge.
- Resilient – designing for persistence and flexibility under current and future conditions.
- Adaptive – planning and implementation is responsive to learning and dedicated to improvement.

While the roadmap identifies the actions to achieve the outcomes, foundationally, these outcomes can only be successful with engagement and collaboration at each step.

Development of this roadmap has been supported through the efforts of the Protected and Conserved Areas Working Group (PCAWG). The PCAWG is comprised of government representatives across several ministries (Agriculture, Energy and Resources, Environment, Government Relations and Parks, Culture and Sport) working together to identify goals, objectives, and actions to support the desired outcomes as a one-government approach. The PCAWG will also lead in many of the action steps identified and be responsible for engagement and collaboration to complete those actions.



Additionally, throughout the development of this roadmap, the ministry met with the Habitat Advisory Committee (HAC), which includes representatives from industry, non-government conservation organizations, landowner stakeholders, the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) and Métis Nation–Saskatchewan.

Discussions from these meetings illustrated the need for the roadmap to deliver on tangible actions ensuring decisions are consistent, fair to all interests, and reflect the necessary balance between conserving our natural resources and the demand for social and economic opportunities.

The HAC provided thoughtful analyses of the key issues and solutions to establishing a *Protected and Conserved Areas Roadmap*. This roadmap also informed the ministry's companion document, *Analysis of Protected and Conserved Areas by Ecoregion*.

This document provides a comprehensive, flexible, and iterative roadmap to reach and maintain Saskatchewan's target of 12 per cent of land and water as Protected and Conserved Areas. Additionally, this roadmap supports Saskatchewan's Growth Plan 2020-2030, which includes conserving Saskatchewan's water and land resources.



Vision and Outcomes

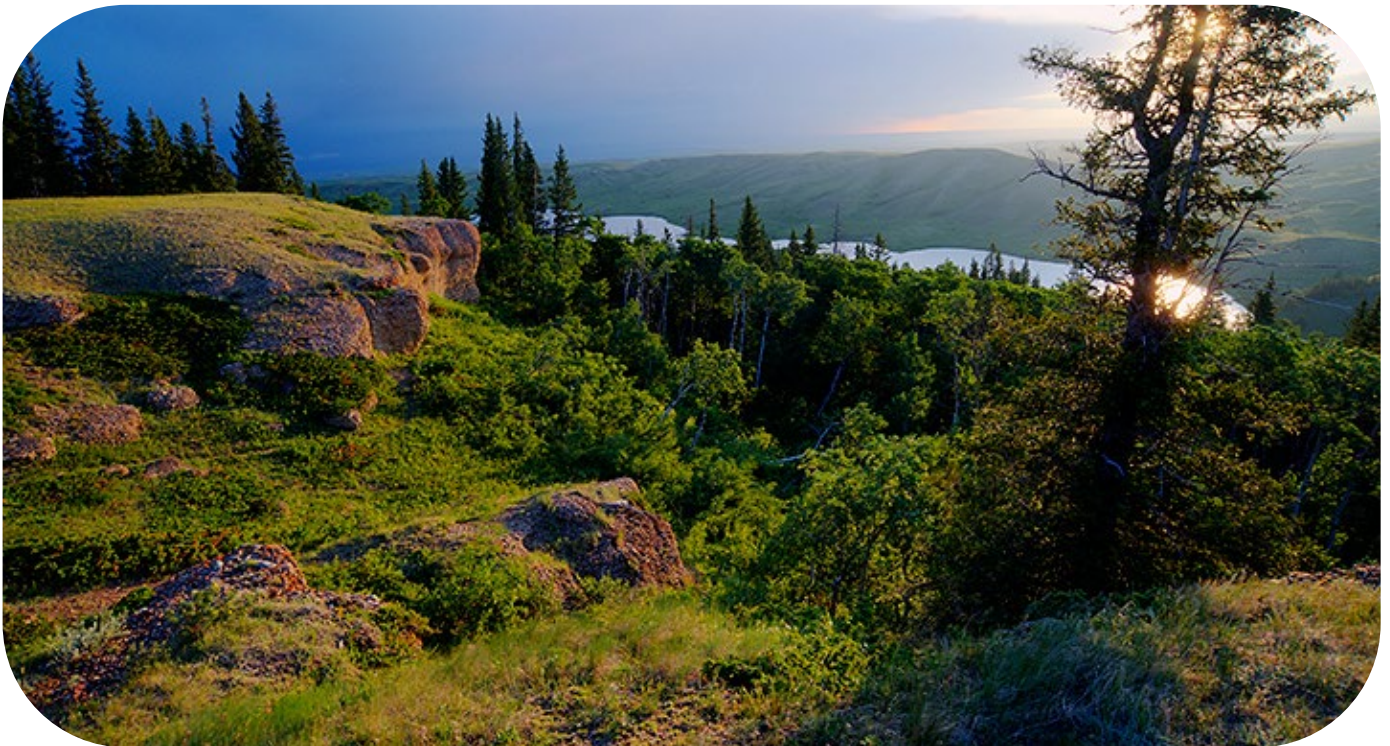
A network of protected and conserved natural areas representing and sustaining the full range of habitat for wild species, unique physical features and ecosystem values that provide diverse benefits for Saskatchewan.

Outcome 1

Protected and Conserved Areas meet the Government of Saskatchewan's goal of conserving and protecting 12 per cent of Saskatchewan's land and water.

Outcome 2

Protected and Conserved Areas are managed to retain, improve and restore the ecological, natural, and cultural values for which they were established.



Goals, Objectives, and Actions

Outcome 1: Protected and Conserved Areas meet the Government of Saskatchewan's goal of conserving and protecting 12 per cent of Saskatchewan's land and water.

Saskatchewan is committed to the protection and conservation of 12 per cent of the province's land and water. This outcome is about more than protecting and conserving a certain number of hectares; it is also about protecting and conserving in the right places and right ways. Ideally, this 12 per cent will be representative across the ecoregions, but this may not be realistic in all cases, and some regions may have more or less than the target. Goals, objectives and actions are summarized below and expanded upon in the subsequent pages.

| Goal | | |
|---|---|--|
| Funding is available to meet the 12 per cent Protected and Conserved Areas goal. | | |
| Objective | Provincial funding is targeted to priority areas for inclusion in the Protected and Conserved Areas. | |
| Performance Metric | Amount of provincial funding targeted to priority areas for inclusion in the Protected and Conserved Areas. | |
| Timeline | Action | Output/Completed When |
| Ongoing | Align provincial spending/programs with the conservation of priority areas. | Provincial funding oversight and allocation documented to align with Protected and Conserved Areas 12 per cent goal. |
| Ongoing | Participate in cost-shared Protected and Conserved Areas securement by non-government stakeholders and Indigenous communities. | Hectares protected and conserved through cost-sharing. |
| Objective | Increased funding for attainment of Protected and Conserved Areas is obtained through new and existing partnerships. | |
| Performance Metric | Amount of new funding targeted to priority areas for inclusion in the Protected and Conserved Areas from new and existing partnerships. | |
| Timeline | Action | Output/Completed When |
| Ongoing | Work with current/existing partners to understand the ability/opportunity to expand funding to priority areas. | Partner funding commitments to priority areas. |
| 2021/22 | Complete a scan of potential funding partners. | Potential Partners Report. |
| 2021/22 | Engage new potential partners for funding. | New partner funding commitments to priority areas. |
| Objective | New funding mechanisms are developed to provide additional funding for Protected and Conserved Areas attainment. | |
| Performance Metric | Amount of funding attained from new funding mechanisms. | |
| Timeline | Action | Output/Completed When |

| | | |
|---------|---|--|
| 2021/22 | Identify potential funding mechanism(s) successfully deployed in other jurisdictions in Canada, internationally and those unique to the province. | Jurisdictional scan of potential funding mechanisms is completed. |
| 2022/23 | Explore the application of funding mechanism(s) identified in the jurisdictional scan in Saskatchewan. | Prioritized list of potential funding mechanism(s) applicable and relevant to Saskatchewan is completed. |
| 2022/23 | Pilot new funding mechanism(s). | New funding mechanism(s) are piloted. |
| 2023/24 | Implement new funding mechanism(s). | New funding mechanism(s) are in place and operational. |

| | | |
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| Goal | Strong support for attainment of Protected and Conserved Areas with internal and external stakeholders, Indigenous communities and the public exists. | |
| Objective | Internal and external stakeholders and Indigenous communities are aware of, engaged and actively participating in Protected and Conserved Areas planning and securement. | |
| Performance Metric | Number of partners actively participating in Protected and Conserved Areas planning and securement. | |
| Timeline | Action | Output/Completed When |
| 2021/22 | Develop and implement a communication and engagement strategy, acknowledging that each group may have unique considerations and engagement requirements. | Communication and Engagement Strategy developed and implemented. |
| 2021/22 | Develop a sharing forum to understand where and how other groups are participating in protecting and conserving habitat. | Sharing forum established. Conservation actions are tracked within the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre. |
| 2021/22 | Develop partnerships to conserve priority sites. | Securement of new Protected and Conserved Areas by the province and partners in priority areas. |
| 2021/22 ongoing | Establish regular reporting on combined Protected and Conserved Areas accomplishments to internal and external stakeholders and Indigenous communities. | State of the Protected and Conserved Areas Report as part of the State of Environment Report established. |
| 2022/23 | Develop an online, real-time, public-facing Protected and Conserved Areas tracking system. | Protected and Conserved Areas Tracking system is developed. |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Objective | The public is aware of, supports, and understands the value of Protected and Conserved Areas. | |
| Performance Metric | Surveys/social media/media measurement indicate support for Protected and Conserved Areas by Saskatchewan people. | |
| Timeline | Action | Output/Completed When |
| 2021/22 | Identify the co-benefits of Protected and Conserved Areas. | Co-benefits Summary completed. |
| 2021/22 | Develop a communications strategy for communicating co-benefits and measuring support. | Regular reporting structure and surveys/social media/media measurement process in place. |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Goal | Tools and processes for Protected and Conserved Areas identification and attainment are in place. | |
| Objective | Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and Protected Areas (PAs) are provincially defined and endorsed. | |
| Performance Metric | Provincial Protected and Conserved Areas definitions are established. | |
| Timeline | Action | Output/Completed When |
| 2021/22 | Work with internal and external stakeholders and Indigenous communities to define Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECM), and Protected Areas (PAs) for Provincial approval. | Protected and Conserved Areas Policy supported and approved. |
| 2021/22 | Assess current Saskatchewan Protected and Conserved Areas for appropriate International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) category designation and determine if/how they qualify as PA, or OECM under provincial/national/international guidance, with recategorization as required. | Report of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Category designation and rationale for Saskatchewan's Protected and Conserved Areas is completed and used to help guide future IUCN Category Designations. |



| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Objective | A framework for recommendation and selection of candidate Protected and Conserved Areas is developed and approved. | |
| Performance Metric | Process to recommend and select potential Protected and Conserved Areas is established. | |
| Timeline | Action | Output/Completed When |
| 2021/22 | Complete the first iteration of the Prairie Landscape Inventory (PLI). | Prairie Landscape Inventory (PLI) is published. |
| 2021/22 | Work with internal and external stakeholders and Indigenous communities to develop a model that identifies priority areas for Protected and Conserved Areas. | Protected and Conserved Areas Prioritization Model / Priorities Areas Map is completed and endorsed by parties. |
| 2021/22 | Work with internal and external stakeholders and Indigenous communities to develop a selection, consultation, and approval process for specific candidate sites. | Protected and Conserved Areas Selection/Consultation/Approval Process is completed and endorsed by parties. |
| 2021/22 | Work with internal and external stakeholders and Indigenous communities to identify candidate sites that are not currently reported as Protected and Conserved Areas but result in biodiversity conservation. | List of candidate sites developed. |
| 2021/22 | Work with ministry program areas to evaluate program opportunities to identify and develop Protected and Conserved Areas. | All program areas with the potential to contribute to Protected and Conserved Areas are identified and engaged. |
| 2021/22 Ongoing | Work with internal and external stakeholders and private landowners to develop policy tools to support additional private conservation measures. | Private conservation policy tools developed and approved. |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Objective | Habitat mitigation offsets and/or conservation banking approaches are tested as a means to create Protected and Conserved Areas. | |
| Performance Metric | Area protected via habitat mitigation offsets or conservation banking as a proportion of total Protected and Conserved Areas. | |
| Timeline | Action | Output/Completed When |
| 2021/22 | Finalize and operationalize the Habitat Mitigation Framework. | Habitat Mitigation Framework released. |
| 2022/23 | Review and assess how Protected and Conserved Areas criteria accommodate or can be expanded to qualify restored habitat offsets. | Protected and Conserved Areas criteria updated. |
| 2022/23 | Develop and communicate how habitat offsets and/or conservation banking projects can support Protected and Conserved Areas outcomes, supported by tools and processes operationalized under the habitat mitigation framework. | Offsets delivered through industry action or conservation banks are qualified and secured as new Protected and Conserved Areas. |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Objective | A clearly defined process is developed and communicated with Indigenous communities and partners on how they can propose protected and conserved areas within the existing processes. | |
| Performance Metric | A clear process is developed, approved and communicated. | |
| Timeline | Action | Output/Completed When |
| 2021/22 Ongoing | Participate in and report on Indigenous-led approaches for the creation of protected and conserved areas. | Report on Indigenous-led participation activities. |
| 2021/22 Ongoing | Develop and implement agreements for protection and conservation with Indigenous communities for hectares protected under the Protected and Conserved areas network. | Agreements established. Agreements established and nationally reported. |



Outcome 2: Protected and conserved areas are managed to retain, improve and restore the ecological, natural and cultural values for which they were established.

Saskatchewan is committed to ensuring the management of Protected and Conserved Areas into the future. Natural ecological processes, such as fire, grazing, flooding, precipitation and temperature regimes are required to maintain natural spaces. For example, sustainable cattle grazing of native prairie provides a similar disturbance regime as bison once provided. This maintains and enhances habitat for native species, protecting biodiversity. Naturally occurring fire is one of the most widespread biological processes providing native species with diversity and regeneration. Flooding along creek and river courses and high water in lakes and wetlands maintains native species' diversity, both on land and in the water. As modifications have been made to these natural processes, mimicking or reintroducing these processes is often necessary to maintain and enhance the values for which these Protected and Conserved Areas were established.

Management is also crucial for maintaining regional and landscape biodiversity. Many species need movement corridors or stopover sites to migrate from winter to summer breeding areas and back, such as various birds and monarch butterflies. Other species need to move among breeding sites to ensure genetic diversity and assist in the long-term survival of species.

Protected and conserved areas provide a range of benefits to the people of Saskatchewan. These include water, food, wood, fuel and, with the right safeguards, potentially oil and gas, forestry, mining of sand and gravel and other minerals, and hunting and fishing. Culturally, these areas provide opportunities for recreation, spiritual growth, ceremonies, aesthetic enjoyment and education. They regulate the local climate and floods, purify water, contribute to soil health and sequester carbon.

Goals, objectives and actions are summarized here and expanded upon in the subsequent pages.



| Goal | Sufficient resources are readily available for the management of Protected and Conserved Areas. | |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Objective | Funding for Protected and Conserved Areas management is sufficient. | |
| Performance Metric | Management objectives are met and adequately funded. | |
| Timeline | Action | Output/Completed When |
| 2022/23 | Set objectives for optimal dynamic management of Protected and Conserved Areas. | Management objectives are identified. |
| 2022/23 | Document baseline existing management on Protected and Conserved Areas and costs to do so. | Report on existing management on Protected and Conserved Areas is developed. |
| 2023/24 | Make information related to Protected and Conserved Areas management publicly accessible. | Reports identifying management objectives and identifying existing management on Protected and Conserved Areas are online and accessible. |
| 2021/22 Ongoing | Develop partnerships with agencies, universities, NGOs, local communities, Indigenous communities, corporations and businesses, and others for funding to implement management. | Funding and/or partnerships for Protected and Conserved Areas management is obtained. |
| Objective | Human and technical resources for Protected and Conserved Areas management is sufficient. | |
| Performance Metric | Number of management objectives on Protected and Conserved Areas that are met. | |
| Timeline | Action | Output/Completed When |
| 2022/23 | Baseline existing human and technical resources for the management of Protected and Conserved areas. | All resources currently utilized in managing Protected and Conserved Areas are identified. |
| 2022/23 | Identify gaps in human and technical resources for the management of Protected and Conserved Areas. | Protected and Conserved Areas that have not met management objectives are identified. |
| 2022/23 | Make management outcomes of Protected and Conserved Areas publicly accessible. | Protected and Conserved Areas' management outcomes are online and accessible. |
| 2021/22 Ongoing | Develop partnerships with agencies, universities, NGOs, local communities, Indigenous communities, and others for human and technical resources to plan and implement management on Protected and Conserved Areas. | Gaps in management of Protected and Conserved Areas are addressed through partnerships. |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Objective | Protected and Conserved Areas are effectively monitored to ensure management objectives are achieved. | |
| Performance Metric | Proportion of Protected and Conserved Areas monitored. | |
| Timeline | Action | Output/Completed When |
| 2022/23 | Establish monitoring criteria for Protected and Conserved Areas. | Criteria to monitor Protected and Conserved Areas are established. |
| 2023/24 | Implement monitoring criteria for Protected and Conserved Areas. | Protected and Conserved Areas are effectively monitored for appropriate management based on established criteria. |
| 2024/25 | Monitor management and assess success of management actions on Protected and Conserved Areas. | Gaps in management are assessed on an ongoing basis. |
| 2024/25 | Identify corrective approaches when habitat management objectives are not attained in Protected and Conserved Areas. | Gaps in management are addressed. |

Actions Timeline Table

| Action | 21/22 | 22/23 | 23/24 | 24/25 |
|--|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| Align provincial spending/programs with the conservation of priority areas. | Ongoing | | | |
| Participate in cost-shared Protected and Conserved Areas securement by non-government stakeholders and Indigenous communities. | Ongoing | | | |
| Work with current/existing partners to understand the ability/opportunity to expand funding to priority areas. | Ongoing | | | |
| Complete a scan of potential funding partners. | | | | |
| Identify potential funding mechanism(s) successfully deployed in other jurisdictions in Canada, internationally and those unique to the province. | | | | |
| Explore the application of funding mechanism(s) identified in the jurisdictional scan in Saskatchewan. | | | | |
| Implement new funding mechanism(s). | | | | |
| Develop and implement a communication and engagement strategy, acknowledging that each group may have unique considerations and engagement requirements. | | | | |
| Develop a sharing forum to understand where and how other groups are participating in protecting and conserving habitat. | | | | |
| Develop partnerships to conserve priority sites. | | | | |
| Establish regular reporting on combined Protected and Conserved Areas accomplishments to internal and external stakeholders and Indigenous communities. | Ongoing | | | |
| Develop an online, real-time, public-facing Protected and Conserved Areas tracking system. | | | | |
| Identify the co-benefits of Protected and Conserved Areas. | | | | |
| Develop a communications strategy for communicating co-benefits and measuring support. | | | | |
| Work with internal and external stakeholders and Indigenous communities to define Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECM), and Protected Areas (PAs) for Provincial approval. | | | | |
| Assess current Saskatchewan Protected and Conserved Areas for appropriate International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) category designation and determine if/how they qualify as PA, or OECM under provincial/national/international guidance, with recategorization as required. | | | | |
| Complete the first iteration of the Prairie Landscape Inventory (PLI). | | | | |
| Work with internal and external stakeholders and Indigenous communities to develop a model that identifies priority areas for Protected and Conserved Areas. | | | | |
| Work with internal and external stakeholders and Indigenous communities to develop a selection, consultation, and approval process for specific candidate sites. | | | | |
| Work with internal and external stakeholders and Indigenous communities to identify candidate sites that are not currently reported as Protected and Conserved Areas but result in biodiversity conservation. | | | | |
| Work with ministry program areas to evaluate program opportunities to identify and develop Protected and Conserved Areas. | | | | |
| Work with internal and external stakeholders and private landowners to develop policy tools to support additional private conservation measures. | Ongoing | | | |

| Action | 21/22 | 22/23 | 23/24 | 24/25 |
|---|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| Work with internal and external stakeholders and private landowners to develop policy tools to support additional private conservation measures. | | | | |
| Review and assess how Protected and Conserved Areas criteria accommodate or can be expanded to qualify restored habitat offsets. | | | | |
| Develop and communicate how habitat offsets and/or conservation banking projects can support Protected and Conserved Areas outcomes, supported by tools and processes operationalized under the habitat mitigation framework. | | | | |
| Participate in and report on Indigenous-led approaches for the creation of Protected and Conserved Areas. | Ongoing | | | |
| Develop and implement agreements for protection, conservation, and shared stewardship with Indigenous communities for hectares protected under the Protected and Conserved Areas Network. | Ongoing | | | |
| Set objectives for optimal dynamic management of Protected and Conserved Areas. | | | | |
| Document baseline existing management on Protected and Conserved Areas and costs to do so. | | | | |
| Make information related to Protected and Conserved Areas management publicly accessible. | | | | |
| Develop partnerships with agencies, universities, NGOs, local communities, Indigenous communities, corporations and businesses, and others for funding to implement management. | Ongoing | | | |
| Baseline existing human and technical resources for the management of Protected and Conserved areas. | | | | |
| Identify gaps in human and technical resources for the management of Protected and Conserved Areas. | | | | |
| Make management outcomes of Protected and Conserved Areas publicly accessible. | | | | |
| Develop partnerships with agencies, universities, NGOs, local communities, Indigenous communities and others for human and technical resources to plan and implement management on Protected and Conserved Areas. | Ongoing | | | |
| Establish monitoring criteria for Protected and Conserved Areas. | | | | |
| Implement monitoring criteria for Protected and Conserved Areas. | | | | |
| Monitor management and assess success of management actions on Protected and Conserved Areas. | | | | |
| Identify corrective approaches when habitat management objectives are not attained in Protected and Conserved Areas. | | | | |

Implementation, Review and Evaluation

The Government of Saskatchewan believes that this document's range of commitments provides a coherent roadmap for safeguarding our ecological diversity's long-term future. This roadmap is treated as a 'living document' with ongoing processes for reviewing, evaluating and amending the plan as needed.

Regular review of the progress in implementing the roadmap and its impact will result in continual re-examination and improvement to policies, procedures and legislation.

The Habitat Advisory Committee will play an important role in plan implementation, review, and evaluation by providing advice to the Government of Saskatchewan and communications with the broader public, as well as ensuring accountability for implementation.

Regular review of implementation and progress reporting will be undertaken as follows:

1. Annual progress review and reporting, which will include preparing annual progress reports on roadmap implementation.
2. Five-year plan evaluation, in which the Government of Saskatchewan will review and evaluate plan effectiveness every five years through a "State of the Protected and Conserved Areas Roadmap" reporting process.

Separate from progress reporting on the roadmap, the Government of Saskatchewan will regularly report on Protected and Conserved Areas attainment and progress towards the 12 per cent.



Glossary

Aquatic: Pertaining to or living in water.

Biodiversity (biological diversity, ecological diversity): Includes all species of plants, animals and microorganisms, ecosystems, and the ecological processes of which they are part.

Conservation: Wise use of our resources; planned use and management of a natural resource to prevent depletion or exploitation.

Conservation banking: Conservation banking is a mechanism to store and deliver conservation offsets - actions that counteract unavoidable habitat impacts arising from development projects. "Banks" of offsets are created and stored through delivery of conservation projects, and offset credits are sold to developers to counteract the effects of their activity. Funds generated are usually reinvested into the conservation bank to maintain a stock of offsets that can be applied against other future development impacts.

Crown land: Land owned by the provincial government.

Ecosystem/ecological system: An interdependent system consisting of all the living organisms in a given area, all the physical and chemical factors of their environment and the processes that link them.

Ecosystem values: The benefits that the space, water, minerals, biota, and all other factors that make up natural ecosystems provide to support life forms. Ecological values can accrue to both humans and nonhumans alike.

Ecological integrity: A condition where human-induced stresses do not impair an ecosystem's function and structure (including genetic, species and ecosystem diversity).

Ecoregion: A relatively large unit of land or water containing a geographically distinct assemblage of species, natural communities, and environmental conditions.

Habitat: Wildlife habitat includes the food, water, shelter, space and access to breeding partners to sustain a species population.

Habitat Advisory Committee (HAC): Created in part to contribute to the development of the Protected and Conserved Areas Roadmap, and includes representatives from industry, non-government conservation organizations, and landowner stakeholders, the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) and Métis Nation–Saskatchewan.

Habitat mitigation: A process for applying a stepwise progression of actions to avoid, minimize and offset adverse effects, followed by monitoring to ensure goals are met over time, managing development impacts.

Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs): See Appendix B – Current Categories of Protected and Conserved Areas.

Prairie Landscape Inventory (PLI): The initiative is working on providing a spatial product that covers the Prairie Ecozone with the ability to distinguish between native and tame vegetation, as well as cropland, water, and trees and shrubs. Currently the Mixed Grassland Ecozone has been finalized, and work is in progress to complete the Moist Mixed Grassland and Aspen Parkland ecozones.

Protected Areas (PAs): See Appendix B – Current Categories of Protected and Conserved Areas.

Protected and Conserved Areas Working Group (PCAWG): An inter-ministry working group responsible for identifying goals, objectives and actions to support the desired outcomes as a one-government approach. Additionally, the PCAWG is responsible for delivering on selected action steps to achieve the outcomes as part of their work objectives. Current membership of the PCAWG includes representatives from the ministries of Agriculture, Environment, Energy and Resources, Government Relations, and Parks, Culture and Sport.

Representative Areas Network (RAN): Conserves representative and unique landscapes in Saskatchewan's 11 ecozones, originating in 1997. Protected and Conserved Areas now replaces this historical reference.

Terrestrial: Pertaining to or living on the land.

Stewardship: The individual and corporate responsibility of one generation to maintain the natural inheritance that it has received, both for its benefit and the benefit of future generations.

Wetland: An area of low-lying land permanently submerged or inundated periodically by water.

Wildlife: A vertebrate animal of any species, excluding fish, that is wild by nature in Saskatchewan and include: (a) Any part, tissue, genetic material, eggs, sperm, embryo or other forms of developmental life; and (b) Any exotic wildlife found in Saskatchewan.

Appendix A – Designations of Saskatchewan Protected and Conserved Areas

Crown Pasture (CP): Former Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) pastures formerly under federal jurisdiction. Established to accommodate sustainable grazing practices and other compatible land uses.

Ecological Reserve (ER): Created under *The Ecological Reserves Act*. Provincial Crown lands sustain or are associated with unique or representative parts of the natural environment, including water, land, plants, wildlife and people.

Fish and Wildlife Development Fund (FWDF) Lands: Lands purchased for conservation purposes using funds derived from a portion of all Saskatchewan hunting and trapping licenses. FWDF Lands aims to provide the best possible wildlife habitat year-round for the greatest number of species.

Game Preserve (GP): Created under *The Wildlife Act*. Established to stabilize or increase wildlife populations in localized areas through propagation, management, control, regulation, or enhancement. Game preserves encourage the pursuit of recreational activities compatible with wildlife and habitat protection objectives (e.g. bird watching, photography).

Migratory Bird Sanctuary (MBS): Bird sanctuaries are established under *The Migratory Bird Convention Act* and administered by the Canadian Wildlife Service. Areas set aside for special protection of migratory birds, their nests, eggs and habitat.

Natural Environment Park (NEP): Created under *The Parks Act*. Relatively large natural tracts of provincial Crown land that protect representative and unique landscapes. They aim to provide outdoor recreational activities consistent with the protection of natural landscapes.

National Historic Parks: Created under *The National Parks Act*. Federally owned lands that have been set aside to: a) commemorate a historical event; or b) preserve a historic landmark or object of historic, prehistoric or scientific interest of national significance.

National Historic Sites: Created under *The National Parks Act*, or *The Historic Sites and Monuments Act*. Any place declared by the federal Minister of Canadian Heritage to be of national historical interest or significance to: a) commemorate a historic event; b) preserve a historic landmark; or c) preserve a historic (includes prehistoric) or scientific object of national importance.

National Park (NP): Federally owned lands administered by Parks Canada designed to protect natural resources and natural processes through the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity. National parks are dedicated to present and future Canadians for their benefit, education and enjoyment.

National Wildlife Area (NWA): Created under *The Canada Wildlife Act*. Federally owned lands that protect migratory birds and other wildlife as well as their habitat.

Private Conservation Lands (PCL): Protected and Conserved Areas with limitations on public data sharing. Includes privately owned lands managed by non-governmental organizations through fee simple ownership or Conservation Easements and Crown Conservation Easements.

Protected Areas (PA): Created under *The Parks Act*. Designated Provincial Crown lands that offer maximum protection to important, rare or fragile resources, either natural, historic or archaeological.

Provincial Historic Park: Created under *The Parks Act*. Designed to preserve and interpret prehistoric or historic resources representative of themes and events that have contributed to Saskatchewan's history. They also provide opportunities for various outdoor recreational activities that are largely dependent upon a historic setting.

Provincial Historic Site: Created under *The Parks Act*. Small parcels of Crown land that protect and provide a limited interpretation of a prehistoric or historical resource of provincial significance.

Provincial and Municipal Heritage Property: Created under *The Heritage Property Act*. Consists of any property, whether a work of nature or human-made, that is of interest for its architectural, historical, cultural, environmental, aesthetic or scientific value. The distinction between municipal and provincial is based upon the jurisdictional level at which the designation is made; municipal designations are deemed significant at the municipal level, while provincial designations carry province-wide significance.

Provincial Pasture (PP): Blocks of Crown land that have been assembled to provide supplementary grazing for livestock producers while ensuring environmental and agricultural sustainability of the land. Includes former Federal Community Pastures that the Ministry of Agriculture now manages.

Recreation Park (RP): Created under *The Parks Act*. Provide opportunities for a wide variety of intensive outdoor recreational activities in a natural setting. Three tiers are recognized: Tier 1 parks have a high level of capital development and management commitment and provide a great diversity of facilities and opportunities. Tier 2 parks have a more moderate level of facilities and opportunities, while Tier 3 parks are the smallest category, having relatively low levels of capital development, management commitment and recreational opportunity.

Recreation Sites (RS): Created under *The Parks Act*. Small areas of Crown land developed to take advantage of particular recreational activity of facility, such as a campground, picnic area or lake access point. They are also designed to complement the provincial park system through the possible protection of natural environments found within these sites.

Regional Parks: Created under *The Regional Park Act*. Provide outdoor recreational facilities on a regional basis throughout the province.

Representative Area Ecological Reserve (RAER): Provincial Crown lands that protect ecologically representative areas of Saskatchewan's ecoregions and are selected to represent specific enduring features (specific soil attribute combinations based on soil development, parent material, surface form, slope).

Special Management Area (SMA): Provincial Crown lands managed to protect, enhance or restore natural ecosystems, wildlife habitat or habitat of rare, threatened or endangered plant or animal species; retain significant natural and historical features respecting the land; conserve soil, air and water quality; and permit scientific research and study related to the ecological health of the area. SMAs allow traditional land use activities such as hunting, trapping, commercial fishing and outfitting, and personal recreation.

Water Security Agency (WSA) Lands: Created under *The Water Security Act*. Provincial Crown lands managed to protect water quality, reduce flood and drought damage, protect aquatic habitat and ensure safe drinking water and wastewater treatment.

Wilderness Park (WP): Created under the provincial *Parks Act*. A) Preserve large and remote tracts of undisturbed Crown land in a natural state, and b) allow for the pursuit of low intensity and non-mechanized wilderness recreation. Wilderness parks aim to protect representative areas of the province's major ecoregions for the benefit of present and future generations; protect a self-sustaining piece of the environment and allow the continuation of natural processes by minimizing human interference.

Wildlife Habitat Protection Act (WHPA) Lands: Created under *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*. Designated multiple-use provincial Crown lands, which provide seasonal or year-round habitat critical to wildlife survival, including rare and endangered species. WHPA lands are located primarily in agricultural and forest fringe regions of Saskatchewan.

Wildlife Refuge (WR): Created under *The Wildlife Act*. Constituted as areas for the protection, propagation, perpetuation, management, control, regulation and/or enhancement of wildlife and its habitat. These sites restrict hunting and destroying or altering any wildlife or their habitat.

Appendix B – Current Categories of Protected and Conserved Areas

International, federal and jurisdictional governments and agencies have recognized three categories of protected areas (Protected Areas, Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures and Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas). While the three categories allow for flexibility in the recognition and accounting of protected areas, Saskatchewan will be focusing on two of the categories: Protected Areas and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures. All areas count toward the Saskatchewan Protected and Conserved Areas target and the Canada Target 1 goal. The process Saskatchewan has developed will support indigenous led proposals in achieving protection and conservation. *Saskatchewan will be refining these definitions in policy to be more directly applicable to Saskatchewan.*

Protected Areas are areas that are dedicated and managed primarily for biodiversity conservation. These include national parks, national wildlife areas, wildlife refuges, and natural environment parks and represent the strongest and most effective areas.

Protected areas are places that have clearly defined geographical spaces that are recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means (e.g. policies and agreements), to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.

Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) differ from protected areas in that biodiversity conservation may not be the primary goal yet are managed over the long term in ways that result in effective and enduring protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services. This concept expands conservation of biodiversity into areas with low to moderate human use levels but with safeguards to ensure significant components of biodiversity have long-term protection.

Because of the greater integration with the human community, OECMs broaden the range of conservation partners, raise awareness, and encourage further conservation. Examples of OECMs are expected to include conservation easements, Crown conservation easements, lands listed under *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, and private land under long-term protection through private agreement.

OECMs are a geographically defined area other than a protected area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values.

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) are lands and waters protected and conserved by Indigenous people (First Nations, Métis, Inuit). These protected areas are set aside to conserve both ecosystems and culture, and the land managed, in part, for continued traditional use. IPCAs are Indigenous-led, involve a long-term commitment to the conservation of lands for future generations, and highlight Indigenous rights and responsibilities. To be counted towards Target 1, IPCAs may be either PAs or OECMs.