



### Annual Report 2021-2022

Report by: Karen Raven, General Manager

#### Governance and Capacity

GCC hired Karen Raven in May 2021 to build and expand on the GCC work, priorities, and funding. Two Directors Dr. Nancy Shackelford and Michael Keefer from the Coastal and Kootenay Regions respectively were asked to join the Board and have provided great insight and professional expertise. One of the key governance initiatives undertaken was the 2022-2026 Strategic Action Plan begun through a facilitated workshop with the Board in September 2021 followed by a member and public survey on the Vision, Mission and Strategic areas which was incorporated into the Action Plan with additional input from the Action Plan Committee. This work was to refine and revise our vision mission strategic areas and outcomes to reflect the changing environment and to ensure GCC is poised to meet the challenges and opportunities of the next 5 years to ensure British Columbia's grassland ecosystems are healthy, interconnected, and supporting rich biodiversity that is valued by current and future generations.

Funding opportunities

#### Education and Outreach

Through the support of our members and the Community Gaming Grant, GCC launched an outreach program in 2021 to bring awareness of the importance and value of grasslands and their stewardship. Additionally, B.C. Cattlemen's Association (BCCA) invited GCC to participate in their booth at the PNE and new posters and banners were developed to support this event and others.

The Laurie Guichon Memorial Grassland Interpretive site (LGMGIS) was host to several events this year including educational field sessions for students during Forestry Week, a weed pull at the Marquart Lake recreation site with Merritt Nature Kids as part of the Thompson-Nicola Invasive Plant Management Committee weed pull challenge and a seed collection workshop held with the Kamloops Naturalist Club.

Kristi Gordon was contracted by GCC to provide outreach to a variety of audiences and support the board in reaching a broad audience through outdoor events, webinars, and materials such as those provided for the PNE. Over 500 people were reached with the outdoor events held in the Thompson, Nicola, Cariboo, and Okanagan regions.

GCC hosted a Learning over Lunch Webinar series this fall on a variety of grassland topics that nearly 400 people attended. The Winter Webinar Series Grasslands of BC with highlighted four grassland areas with 120 people joining in.

Continuing efforts to bring videos on a variety of grassland and stewardship topics; In the early spring of 2022, the Walking on Two legs Video narrated by Director Sunny LeBourdais and Carbon 101 developed by TRU professors Dr. Wendy Gardner and Dr. Tom Pypker were completed. Work on the Oak Meadow video was begun in 2021 with filming to be complete in June 2022.

GCC began work to update the website to bring more information in a streamlined way to connect with members and the public. The addition of Eventbrite for event registration also helped with facilitating events and reporting to our granting partners. This work will continue in 2022.



Through the efforts of Director Heather Richardson, the GCC e-news and our social media platforms continued to see consistent and increased engagement with a variety of successful campaigns.

The GCC magazine enjoyed expanded readership through a partnership with BC Cattlemen's Association and their Beef in BC Magazine with funding from the Community Gaming Grant which enabled 1200 additional copies to go out to the BC Cattlemen's Association membership who steward so much of BC's grasslands.

### **Stewardship and Protection**

GCC were successful in their application to Environment and Climate Change Canada Priority Places for funding for invasive species management and restoration in the Lac du Bois Grasslands to support the Friends of Lac du Bois stewardship efforts. \$30,000 over 2 years was committed to GCC for this work and the initial \$5000 supported GCC time and planning for the successful facilitated workshop in February with the Friends of Lac du Bois members to determine priority areas and species setting the stage for the April workshop and 2022 field implementation.

To further pursue work to address invasive species at the Laurie Guichon Memorial Grassland Interpretive Site and provide a demonstration site of various treatment options GCC submitted a Letter of Inquiry to the McLean Foundation with support of Nicola Community Watershed Round Table, Thompson Nicola Invasive Plant Management Committee and Rachel Whitehouse of Forests, Lands, Resource Operation and Rural Development. The Letter of Inquiry led to the request for a formal proposal submission by GCC with the response pending in June 2022.

### **Science and Research**

A pilot project with UBC Okanagan using GCC data for the Lac du Bois Grasslands as part of a pilot project and student research testing machine learning to accurately model and map grasslands. Based on the initial results there is potential for a larger project to further test this approach in regions throughout BC with the development of standardized field data inputs and testing of grassland data to support the consistent and accurate mapping of all BC grasslands. Assistant Professor Mathieu Bourbonnais of UBCO and Conservation Planner Kathleen Moore of Environment and Climate Change Canada were key leads.

### **Policy**

GCC met with Parliamentary Secretary Greene and staff of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to share the work and mandate of the GCC and to bring forward the importance of grasslands for carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat and the many values provided to humans. Concerns regarding the impacts of invasive species on grasslands and opportunities to work together to achieve mutually beneficially outcomes were discussed.