



Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society

“The mission of the Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society is to foster excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education among wildlife professionals in Canada”

April 17, 2015

Manitoba Legislative Building
204 – 450 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8

Attention: Premier Gregory Selinger

Dear Premier Selinger:

The **Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society (CSTWS)** is a professional organization representing wildlife professionals, managers and researchers in all the Canadian provinces and territories. We are writing with regard to the divestiture of by the federal government of Federal Community Pastures in western Canada (PFRA Lands) and more particularly, Manitoba.

CSTWS is committed to maintaining a world where humans and wildlife co-exist. It has direct linkages with the international parent body of *The Wildlife Society* whose mission is to represent and serve the professional community of scientists, managers, educators, technicians, planners, and others who work actively to study, manage, and conserve wildlife and its habitats worldwide.

CSTWS recognizes the value of the PFRA lands as some of the last large previously protected and contiguous grasslands in North America. It is critically important to preserve these grasslands as part of Manitoba's network of ecologically important lands. More importantly however these lands represent a critical element of bio-diversity in Canada and have been the home to many of Manitoba's species at risk.

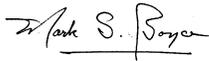
At least twelve Species At Risk, including Sprague's Pipit, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Rough Agalins and Prairie Skink have been documented on these pastures, and these pastures are critical for maintaining these species. These pastures also support at-risk ecosystems such as tall-grass prairie and alvar, as well as representing a critical opportunity to protect bio-diversity while continuing to provide economic opportunity through environmentally responsible land use practices.

We believe that the maintenance of these landscapes and their biodiversity, plus maintaining the public benefits of grazing, recreation and heritage sites may be best done through the development of a partnership between agricultural patrons and conservation organizations. Such a partnership could be an effective means to maintain bio-diversity while working to sustain land management practices and the historic productivity of these lands. The public and society benefits would be immense as would the benefits to producers.

These lands represent an excellent investment and opportunity for partnership for the Province of Manitoba. This investment would benefit not only the province and its people, but would also be a legacy in bio-diversity, a feature which has come to symbolize and represent the uniqueness of Manitoba.

We remain hopeful as the Premier of Manitoba you will consider the importance and benefits of PFRA lands and that these benefits can continue to be realized by the generations of Canadians to come. We also look forward to having an opportunity to experience all that Manitoba has to offer when we host the International Wildlife Society Conference in Manitoba in the fall of 2015.

Respectfully yours,



Dr. Mark Boyce
President,
Canadian Section, The Wildlife Society



Jim Allen
Chair, Conservation Committee, CSTWS