

# Prairie Parkland Province



### Quick facts

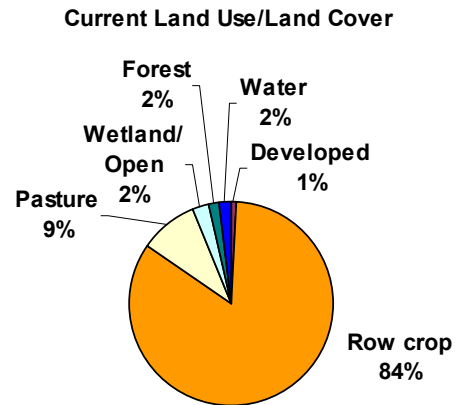
Acres: 16,094,655 (30% of state)

#### Ownership

Public	Private	Tribal
2.2%	97.8%	0.0%

Population density (people/sq. mi.)

Current	Change (2000-2010)
27.6	+0.2



## Overview

The Prairie Province traverses western Minnesota, Manitoba, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana. The Prairie Parkland Province stretches across most of the southern and western parts of Minnesota. Before European settlement, the area was covered mostly by tallgrass prairie and wetlands. These habitats ranged from sparsely vegetated sand dunes, to vast expanses of tallgrass prairie, to wet sedge meadows and marshes, to short-grass prairies on the Prairie Coteau. The topography of the province is predominantly level to gently rolling. Major landforms include lake plains and ground moraines.

The land surface is the result of glaciation. The last lobe of ice deposited calcareous drift in the southern part of the province and was fronted by the largest proglacial lake in North America, Glacial Lake Agassiz. The deep-water sediments of Glacial Lake Agassiz cover the northern part of the province. Glacial River Warren, the early outlet at the southern end of Glacial Lake Agassiz, cut a deep, broad valley that bisects a portion of this province. This valley is now occupied by the Minnesota River. Bedrock is exposed along valley walls of the Minnesota River and where smaller river valleys cut through a bedrock high at the extreme southwestern corner of the state, known as the Prairie Coteau.

With the advent of European settlement, much of the flat and fertile prairie land fell to the settler's plow. Now, just a century and a half later, less than 1 percent (about 150,000 acres) of the original 18 million acres of prairie remains. As prairie habitats dwindle, populations of prairie-dependent mammals, birds, and insects also decline. At one time, prairie birds—marbled godwits, upland sandpipers, Sprague's pipits, chestnut-collared longspurs, bobolinks, western meadowlarks, western kingbirds—were numerous. Waterfowl covered the region's wetlands, which have declined significantly since settlement. Abundant species included trumpeter swans, Canada geese, mallards, American pintails, canvasbacks, blue-winged teal, gadwalls, redheads, and northern

shovelers. Waterbirds included whooping crane, Wilson’s snipe, American bittern, sora, Virginia rail, and western grebe. Gallinaceous birds included the greater prairie chicken and sharp-tailed grouse. Bison roamed throughout the Prairie Parkland Province and American elk and white-tailed deer were common. Other mammals included Franklin’s and Richardson’s ground squirrels, as well as badgers and an occasional pronghorn. Less conspicuous species included Topeka shiner minnows and regal fritillary and Dakota skipper butterflies.



C. Anderson MN DNR

Remnant prairie and the Pomme de Terre River amidst an agricultural landscape – Minnesota River Prairie Subsection

### ***Province Subsections***

[Coteau Moraines](#)

[Inner Coteau](#)

[Minnesota River Prairie](#)

[Red River Prairie](#)

### ***Summaries of Species in Greatest Conservation Need***

A list of the species in the province, including identification of those unique to the province, is found in [Appendix F](#). Table 5.15 presents the number of species in greatest conservation need in each subsection and the number unique to each subsection. Subsections are ranked from most to fewest SGCN. This ranking can help conservation stakeholders prioritize their efforts in a province. The Minnesota River Prairie subsection has considerably more species in greatest conservation need than the other subsections in

the Prairie Parkland Province. Part of this difference reflects the fact that this subsection is considerably larger than the other subsections, but further investigations into the reasons for these differences should be carried out during implementation of the CWCS.

**Table 5.15. Number of SGCN in and Number Unique to the Prairie Parkland Province by Subsection**

<b>Subsection</b>	<b>Number of SGCN</b>	<b>Number of SGCN Unique to Subsection</b>
Minnesota River Prairie	116	1
Red River Prairie	83	4
Inner Coteau	78	1
Coteau Moraines	78	0
Prairie Parkland Province	139	13

***SGCN Problem Assessment***

The SGCN problem assessment provides information on the factors influencing the vulnerability or decline of SGCN that are known or predicted to occur in the province. The following table lists the percentage of SGCN in the province influenced by nine possible factors or problems. The results of the species problem assessment indicate that habitat loss and degradation in the province are the predominant challenges facing SGCN populations.

**Table 5.16. SGCN Problem Analysis for the Prairie Parkland Province**

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Percentage of SGCN for which this is a known problem.</b>
Habitat Loss in MN	88
Habitat Degradation in MN	91
Habitat Loss/Degradation Outside of MN	30
Invasive Species and Competition	27
Pollution	33
Social Tolerance/Persecution/Exploitation	20
Disease	4
Food Source Limitations	4
Other	19

NOTE: The inverse of the percentages for each problem does not necessarily represent the percentage of SGCN for which the factor is not a problem, but instead may indicate that there is not sufficient information available to determine the level of influence the factor has on SGCN in the subsection.

## Summaries of Key Habitats

Table 5.17 ranks the habitats by the frequency with which they are identified in the subsections as key habitats. Table 5.18 ranks the subsections by their number of key habitats.

**Table 5.17. Frequency of Key Habitats in the Prairie Parkland Province by Subsection**

<b>Key Habitat Ranked by Frequency</b>	<b>Number of Subsections</b>	<b>Percentage of Subsections</b>
Prairie	4	100
Wetland-Nonforest	4	100
River-Headwater to Large	4	100
River-Very Large	2	50
Forest-Lowland Deciduous	1	25
Shoreline-dunes-cliff/talus	1	25
Lake-Shallow	1	25

**Table 5.18. Number of Key Habitats in the Prairie Parkland Province by Subsection**

<b>Subsection</b>	<b>Number of Key Habitats</b>
Minnesota River Prairie	6
Red River Prairie	5
Coteau Moraines	3
Inner Coteau	3

### *Assessment of SGCN and Key Habitats*

Table 5.19 provides the number of species that use at least one key habitat at the subsection, province, and statewide scales. Subsections are ranked within each province by the percentage of SGCN that use at least one key habitat in the subsection. The percentage among the subsections in the Prairie Parkland Province does not vary greatly.

**Table 5.19. SGCN That Use Key Habitats in the Prairie Parkland Province by Subsection**

<b>Subsection</b>	<b>Total Number of SGCN</b>	<b>Number of SGCN Using at Least 1 Key Habitat</b>	<b>Percentage of SGCN Using At Least 1 Key Habitat</b>
Red River Prairie	83	78	94.0
Inner Coteau	78	73	93.6
Coteau Moraines	78	72	92.3
Minnesota River Prairie	116	102	87.9
Province total	139	127	91.4
State total	292	269	92.1

Note: Subsections are ranked by the percentage of SGCN that use at least one key habitat in the subsection.



W. R. Smith MN DNR

Birdwatchers at Salt Lake – Lac Qui Parle County – Minnesota River Prairie Subsection

