



MANAGING GRASSLAND FOR HISTORICAL CONDITION AND HABITAT

Native prairie remnants are the last remaining vestiges of a vast grassland ecosystem that dominated the northern and central regions of North America. The loss of North American prairies is one of the biggest conservation challenges we face in this century. When we lose prairie habitat, animal populations decline, notably birds and pollinators. Two prairie butterflies were recently listed under the Endangered Species Act and there is strong concern over declines in monarch butterfly populations, formerly one of the most common butterflies in North America! Remnant prairies are threatened by encroaching invasive species, particularly cool-season introduced grasses and woody vegetation. A coordinated effort is required to learn over time what management practices best maintain and enhance the competitive ability of native plants in these prairies.

Vision

A Midwestern landscape where native grasslands flourish, resisting invasion by non-native plants, and serve as oases of biodiversity for grassland species, especially pollinators and nesting birds.

Mission

To improve the floristic and structural diversity of native tallgrass prairie in the Midwest while decreasing invasive and exotic vegetation.

Goal

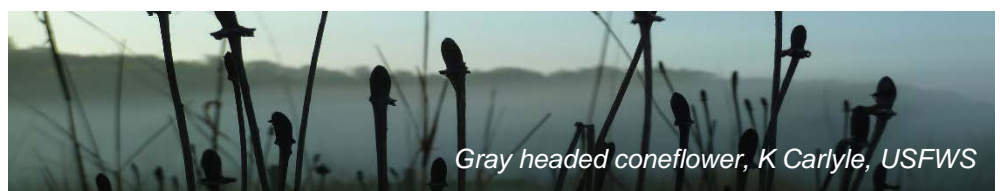
To help managers select the tools and techniques for restoration, maintenance and improvement of remnant prairies.

WHAT IS THE GRASSLAND MONITORING TEAM?

In 2007, a multi-agency group of grassland managers and scientists formed the Grassland Monitoring Team (GMT). The team includes personnel from USFWS stations as well as The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR), USGS, and the Chicago Botanic Garden. The GMT focuses on management and monitoring of native prairie remnants.

MONITORING, MANAGEMENT AND MODELS

Monitoring protocols were designed to measure baseline plant composition as well as change in composition and structure in response to selected management prescriptions. Protocols were developed to be simple, fast, robust and effective for large scale monitoring. Management tools include fire, grazing, and fire-graze combinations, as well as rest. We are using a 3-yr time frame to evaluate outcomes; monitoring data are entered into a centralized USFWS database. Data are summarized annually and site-specific management recommendations are provided to cooperators. Reports also explore trade-offs between management cost and positive biological response.





GMT Project Vegetation Monitoring, USFWS



Prairie Smoke, K Carlyle, USFWS

ENROLL YOUR GRASSLAND

We welcome new cooperators! Grassland managers can find simple effective monitoring protocols and data forms, along with native and invasive species field guides on the [GMT SharePoint](#) site. The site also hosts a data entry portal and user guide. Contact one of the project coordinators listed below for more information.

THE NUMBERS

Dates: 2008 - Present

Number of management units: 245 enrolled

Acres managed: 23,716

Cooperators: 33, including USFWS, TNC, MNDNR, DNR Parks, County Parks and lands, private landowners

BENEFITS

Documenting both management actions and status (monitoring) information, in a standardized way, allows us to learn faster from each other than we can working alone. If your station owns or manages native prairie remnants, they deserve your attention! Left alone, all indications are that they will degrade over time due to invasion by non-native grasses, trees and shrubs. By enrolling in the GMT, you can benefit from the experiences of many managers with similar goals and get specific recommendations for management of your sites.



Hoary Puccoon, K Carlyle, USFWS



Bumble bee pollinator, K Carlyle, USFWS

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