



The Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA) in partnership with the South of the Divide Conservation Action Program Inc. (SODCAP Inc.) have secured funding to establish *Grass-Banking* projects in southwest Saskatchewan.

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), a “*Grass Bank*” is a physical place where forage is made available to ranchers, at a reduced fee, in exchange for tangible conservation benefits being produced on participants’ home ranches. The main goal of *grass-banking* is to have a community-based conservation plan that provides meaningful benefits for both the environment and participating ranchers. According to NRCS, roughly two dozen grass banks have emerged across the U.S. over the last 15 years. Lands in grass banks can be entirely private, public, or a mix of both. Typically, grass banks are operated by a conservation organization and include a privately owned or managed base property with associated public land grazing allotments.

Native grasslands in southwest Saskatchewan are the last refuge for many *species at risk* in the province. Native grasslands are also an important forage resource for the cow-calf sector in southwest Saskatchewan. Together, these grasslands are valuable from an ecological and cultural perspective and are also economically important.

SSGA and SODCAP Inc. are seeking to establish a *Grass Bank* in southwest Saskatchewan in cooperation with partner agencies. The grass banks will be voluntary agreements between a conservation or producer organization and a group of local producers that provides benefits to *species at risk* and their habitat.



Two well-known examples of grass-banking include:

- The Nature Conservancy’s Matador Ranch, which has a grass-banking agreement with the Montana Rancher’s Stewardship Alliance Inc.
- the Nature Conservancy of Canada’s Sandstone Ranch, which has an agreement with five members of the Sandstone Ranch Grazing Co-op in Alberta.

For more information, contact Tom Harrison, Executive Director, SODCAP Inc. at ed@sodcap.com or 306-530-1385

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