What is the Foothills Restoration Forum?

The Foothills Restoration Forum (FRF) promotes the conservation and restoration of native grasslands in Alberta through education, outreach and research to improve reclamation practice and foster stewardship.

The FRF began in 2006 as a collaboration between members of provincial agencies, the ranching community, conservation organizations, industry, plant ecologists and reclamation practitioners.
**Where Do We Work?**

The focus of the FRF is Alberta’s Grassland Natural Region and grasslands of the neighbouring Parkland and Montane Natural Subregions.

**Declining Native Grassland**

Native grasslands are one of the most developed and threatened landscapes in Canada. Industrial, urban and recreational development, intensification of agriculture and non-native species invasion are rapidly changing prairie landscapes. Loss and fragmentation of this ecosystem is reflected in the number of Endangered and At Risk grassland species.

To reverse this trend, we need to improve management of cumulative effects, reduce fragmentation, and maintain native grassland integrity, including connecting corridors for wildlife and other species. Lastly, to reclaim disturbances with the goal of restoring sustainable native grassland landscapes.

**Why Are Native Grasslands Important?**

Grasslands are a rich landscape that provides important ecosystem functions, such as cleansing our air, storing and filtering our water, capturing carbon and supplying sustainable grazing. Native grasslands, from flat, dry prairie to montane meadows, provide a diversity of habitats that support a suite of wildlife from sage grouse to grizzly bears. Alberta’s native grasslands provide environmental, economic and social benefits to the residents of Alberta and beyond. Conservation of intact native grassland landscapes and successful restoration practices are critical to maintaining habitat, biodiversity and ecosystem function in a multiple use landscape.

**Restoration Challenges**

- Our ability to restore native grassland plant communities is uncertain, especially in moister environments like fescue grasslands.
- Recovery can take decades and require on-going adaptive management.
- Establishment and spread of invasive species are a significant threat to native grasslands habitats.
- Reclamation requirements vary widely among industries operating on grasslands.

**Information Transfer & Research**

**FRF Information Portal**

The FRF website hosts a portal to facilitate information transfer on conserving and restoring native grasslands.

- Recovery Strategies for Industrial Development
- FRF Research Prospectus
- Research and Technical Reports
- Guidelines & References
- Wind Energy Development: Issues and Guidance
- Canadian Native Plant Materials Exchange
- Video Links to Information Session Presentations

**Grassland Recovery Strategies**

These guidance documents are designed for industry, to improve reclamation outcomes on native grassland ecosystems with the goal of restoration after industrial disturbance. Guidance is based on long-term monitoring, literature review, peer review and stakeholder workshops.

**Technical Advisory Committee**

The FRF Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is a diverse group of prairie stakeholders that provide support and expertise for FRF initiatives.