

GRASSLANDS NATIONAL PARK

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Dr. George Ledingham (President, Saskatchewan Natural History Society) has made a plea for concerned people to write letters to the Federal and Saskatchewan governments regarding the lack of progress in establishing a Grasslands National Park worthy of that name.

The core lands already purchased by the government and managed by Parks Canada have not been fenced properly and they continue to be overgrazed by domestic cattle. It seems that the Park managers do not understand the purpose of a grassland park—they are not tuned into the diversity of natural grassland and its rarity in our country.

At higher levels, there has been a failure to develop on-going purchases of private land and negotiations with the province to take over Crown land. At this time, many farmers would be willing to sell much of their land in this area for a fair price, yet nothing is happening. The federal Ministry of the Environment just paid B.C. \$25 million for Pacific Rim—a similar amount would successfully purchase all the necessary land for a Grasslands Park.

Write to:

Hon. Thomas McMillan, Minister of Environment, Room 533, Confederation Building, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario. K1A 0A6.

Hon. Grant Devine, Premier, Legislative Building, Regina, Saskatchewan. S4S 0B3.

THE OJIBWAY PRAIRIE PROVINCIAL NATURE RESERVE, ONTARIO

K.G.A. Hamilton, Biosystematics Research Center, Agriculture Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0C6.

Eastern extensions of the "true" (tallgrass) prairie once occupied extensive areas of the north-central U.S.A. as far east as the southern shores of Lake Erie. This land is highly valued for farmland, and the areas with native vegetation have been decimated to such an extent that the easternmost, or "prairie peninsula" grasslands are widely believed to have been "100% destroyed" (Wallis in *Grassland Ecology & Classification*, 1982, reviewed in issue no. 3 of this newsletter). Fortunately, this is not true. There still exist tracts of grasslands at Ojibway, Ontario, on the southern edge of Windsor. One small area is preserved in Ojibway Park, which is maintained by the City of Windsor Department of Parks & Recreation, and a somewhat more extensive area north of Titcombe Road along a power line transect has been added to that Park's holdings. A larger area south of Titcombe Road and east of Matchette Road has been designated as the Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve and is operated by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Other prairie stands are scattered throughout the industrial area, e.g. west of the Ojibway Parkway, but these are not protected areas and are much disturbed by roads, buildings and corn rows. Some of these, such as the field SE of the school on the S side of Spring Garden Road between Malden and Hwy. 3, are being considered as additions to the Prairie Reserve. Where topsoil has been scraped away, exposing underlying sand, thickets of switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*) may occur. A particularly fine stand of this grass is located beyond the lumber yard across the Ojibway Parkway from the racetrack.

The Prairie is best exemplified by its NW corner, which is a savanna-like grassland interspersed with post oaks. Dry areas are dominated by Andropogon and Poa, while lower areas with clay substrate have Spartina and Calamagrostis. Fields to the E and S of this area are disturbed ground that is being selectively burned to regenerate prairie vegetation.

Persons interested in sampling this grassland preserve should contact Wendy McNab, (519) 354-7340, Chatham District Office, Box 1168, Chatham, Ontario, N7M 5L8. Information on the grasslands of the area, and permission to collect within Ojibway Park, may be obtained from Paul Pratt, (519) 966-5852, Nature Centre, Ojibway Park (corner of Matchelle & Titcombe roads).

