



Media Release from the South of the Divide Conservation Action Program Inc.

2nd Annual General Meeting Demonstrates Strong Interest from South of the Divide Stakeholders

EASTEND, SK – August 13, 2015 - More than fifty farmers, ranchers, prairie conservationists, industry professionals and government representatives attended the South of the Divide Conservation Action Program (SODCAP Inc.) Annual General Meeting in Eastend, SK on August 12, 2015.

The South of the Divide area is in southwest Saskatchewan and is comprised of land that drains into the Milk River Watershed. This area is the subject of a draft Multi-Species Action Plan that currently focuses on the recovery of thirteen different species listed under the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA). Officially established last fall, SODCAP Inc. is a board-governed partnership between stakeholders and multiple levels of government with the goal of establishing best practises cooperatively, making habitat management for species at risk an important priority while ensuring economic sustainability on the landscape.

Dave Zehnder, a rancher from British Columbia, was one of the keynote speakers. He discussed his experience coordinating incentive-based on-farm projects that enhance species at risk conservation, simultaneously rewarding the farmer and providing public ecosystem services. “There are untapped opportunities for these types of programs in Saskatchewan,” Zehnder says, citing numerous successful examples in Western Canada and around the world. “There is so much potential for farmers working together down the same path.” Other speakers included Miles Anderson, a Fir Mountain rancher who is managing his cattle alongside the endangered Greater Sage-grouse, and Bruce Howard from SaskPower, who spoke about the company’s species at risk mitigation efforts.

The business portion of the meeting followed and there were three board positions up for renewal or election. Jeff McManus, representing Crescent Point Energy, and Kelly Williamson, representing the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association will maintain their positions on the board of directors through acclamation. Orin Balas, who represents the Ranchers Stewardship Alliance, was re-elected to sit on the board. Other board members include Larry Grant representing Saskatchewan Cattlemen’s Association, Bruce Howard with SaskPower, Jeff Keith with the Ministry of Environment, Jennifer McKillop from Nature Conservancy Canada, Doug Steele as a member at large, and Mark Wayland with Environment Canada.

“The strong attendance and discussion at the meeting demonstrates the level of interest in species at risk conservation in the South of the Divide,” says Tom Harrison, Executive Director of SODCAP Inc. “It’s good to bring everyone together, there are a lot of diverse individuals and organizations that are managing operations alongside these species at risk,” Harrison explains.

The mission of SODCAP Inc. is to “champion partnerships for coordinated and innovative land management practices that sustain and recover multiple species at risk and their habitats in the South of the Divide region of southwest Saskatchewan, in balance with sustainable land and resource use.”

For more information, please contact the South of the Divide Conservation Action Program (SODCAP Inc):

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