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# Taking Action

for

# Prairie

Species

Ecosystems

Water

**A Stewardship Program for Saskatchewan Schools:**

**Grade 6: Diversity of Life**

**Grade 7: Interactions within Ecosystems**

**Grade 8: Water Systems on Earth**



Saskatchewan  
Prairie Conservation  
Action Plan

DRAFT1201

# Basic Program Information

## 1. Program Framework

The steps involved in delivering environmental education as outlined in the 1977 UN Charter of Belgrade and the Tbilissi Declaration form the framework for Take Action For Prairie:

### Awareness and Knowledge

- What is native prairie?
- Why is native prairie important?
- What threatens native prairie?

### Attitudes

- Why is native prairie important to me and to others?

### Skills

- What are the skills needed to identify and investigate native prairie degradation or destruction?
- What are the skills needed to find solutions to these problems?

### Participation

- How can I help?

The content for each of the three presentations is guided by the Main Concepts and Topics listed for each of the grades. These have been derived from Saskatchewan Education curriculum objectives and indicators as well as Prairie Conservation Action Plan's goals and focus areas objectives.

The Main Concepts and Topics also generate Program Objectives which form the basis for evaluation.

## 2. Program Format

**Total Time:** 2 hours plus recess

### Session 1

**Time allocation:** 90 minutes (start time before recess if possible)

**Location:** in individual Grades 6-8 classrooms

**Activities to promote awareness, knowledge, attitudes and skills:**

- Derive 3 Big Ideas
- PowerPoint with audio
- Student-centered activity
- Develop Action Plan

### Recess: Meeting with Teachers

**Time Allocation:** 15 minutes

**Location:** in a classroom

**Activities:**

- Review Resource Package\* contents (sent at least three weeks prior to presentation)
- Discuss action plans
- Discuss program evaluation
- Answer questions

### Session 2

**Time allocation:** 30 minutes

**Location:** Meeting area that will accommodate all grades

**Activities to promote participation:**

- Rally
- Each class presents three Big Ideas learned from Session 1 and their Action Plan

### Follow up (within 2 weeks)

Activities:

- Conference call with teachers to identify any concerns, share ideas, ask questions and remind them to use the web portal

**\*Resource Packages** contain student-centered activity sheets that provide information or teach skills that support the presentation delivery. Other materials in the packages provide information from PCAP partners.

## **3. Session 1**

The following program components are common to the Grades 6, 7 and 8 presentations.

### **3.1 Introduction to the Presentations: Three Big Ideas**

This is basically just a heads up for the students.

#### **Time Allocation**

5 minutes

In your introduction tell the students that they will be watching a slide show (because you want to show them how amazing native prairie is but you can't take them there right now!), following by a game and a discussion. During the class discussion, they will be asked to come up with (collectively) three Big Ideas that they learned from the presentation.

A Big Idea is one that connects different facts and experiences together and helps us make sense of things.

Tell them that later on they will be asked to share these ideas with the other grades at a rally after recess.

At the end of action planning, ask for Big Ideas, write them on the board, take a vote for the top three if there is more than three, have a student write them down and select, with teacher's help, a student to read them out at the rally.

Record the three Big Ideas for evaluation purposes as they indicate what messages have impacted the students.

### **3.2 Action Plans!**

After the Power Point and game, students are ready to TAKE ACTION!

#### **Time Allocation**

25 minutes

#### **Supplies**

Large writing surface

## Strategic Planning

Strategic planning by the students gives them ownership of the plan and provides a base against which they can measure progress. The process is developed through consensus after listening to all suggestions.

### Strategic Planning

What are you going to do?  
How are you going to do it?  
How do you know when you have done it?

## A. What are you going to do?

### Selecting an Issue

Ask students to define stewardship. Stewardship starts by building a personal relationship to something and then caring for it.

Clarify and articulate values of students for native prairie ecosystems. Why is native prairie important to the students? Develop a list of **2-3 values**.

Compare this list to the current status. For example, a value may be that native prairie is home to many plants and animals. The reality is that many plants and animals are species at risk.

The difference between what is valued and the reality can be the focus of an action plan.

A different way to approach this is have students generate a list of **2-3 issues** facing native prairie ecosystem health. Phrase them as questions. For example, "How do we conserve more water?" or "How do we reduce pollution?"

Explain that the class is going to develop an action plan to tackle one of the problems that they have identified.

### Brainstorming Actions

Students generate a list of possible actions for the problems. At this point anything goes. Creativity is the main goal.

In terms of curriculum fit, the following connections may be considered but students may take a different track. Having curriculum fit could increase the support from the teacher.

Grade 6: Invasive or at risk species  
Holistic respect for nature – best management practices  
Grade 7: Waste reduction  
Ecosystem restoration  
Grade 8: Water conservation  
Riparian or wetland restoration

Students, by consensus, select the action that seems the most realistic and popular.

## B. How are you going to do it?

Do a strategic analysis. Use the following table for guidance.

	Contributes to Action	Barriers to Action
In the school/class	assets	
In the community	opportunities	
Outside the community	opportunities	

Some points to think about during the analysis include cost, space, equipment, materials, information, people and time.

### Brainstorming Strategies

Discuss how assets and opportunities can be utilized and barriers can be overcome.

Have contingencies if a key unknown factor (at this point) could create an insurmountable barrier, causing the whole action plan to collapse. Needing more information in order to make decisions will be common. Omit strategies that are deemed unnecessary.

### Turning Strategies into Action Plans

Set realistic measurable goals for the action.

Who is going to do what by when? List the tasks that are needed to accomplish the goals sequentially. What needs to be done early so goals are reached?

## C. How do you know when you have done it?

Goals have been met. The timetable was followed. The results have been entered on PCAP's web portal. It's time for a celebration!

## 4. Meeting with Teachers at Recess

The teacher is the key to a successful action plan so it is important that the teacher does not feel overwhelmed by added tasks. As nobody knows what the students will come up, the teacher needs to feel supported. Use this time to answer questions about the action plan, as well as the pre-teaching package and evaluations.

Arrange a tentative time for a conference call within two weeks, depending on the action plans picked, to identify any concerns, share ideas, ask questions and remind them to use the web portal.

## 5. Session 2

### The Big Rally!

This motivational session is the opportunity for grades to share their Action Plans and Big Ideas. The three educators become energetic cheerleaders as they teach each of their classes a chant, complete with actions.

#### Time Allocation

30 minutes (after recess)

#### Supplies

3 sets of pompoms  
3 poster-sized cue cards (Cheer, Clap, Stomp your Feet)  
4 poster-sized chant cards  
A bison skull

Go to [http://cheerleading.about.com/od/motions/l/bl\\_motions.htm](http://cheerleading.about.com/od/motions/l/bl_motions.htm) for cheerleading motions and use any other motion you wish. Watch this video for technique <http://video.about.com/cheerleading/5-Popular-Cheers-for-Any-Game.htm> . Don't worry, no acrobatics required!

#### Methodology

The educator demonstrates the chant once so the students can hear the rhythm and see the motions. Each grade practices their chant three times. Keep the motions simple and repetitive. As one educator leads the chant (using pompoms), the other two hold up the chant card for the class. Keep the energy level high.

Now for the grand (friendly) competition as the grades try to out-chant each other. Use the cue cards to solicit responses from the audience before or after chants are performed.

#### Chants

##### Grade 6

Grade 6 knows  
What it's all about  
We'll shout it out!  
Shout it out!  
There's no doubt  
We all agree  
It's about caring for  
Diversity!

##### Grade 7

Stomp your feet!  
Stomp your feet!  
Move to the groove of the  
Grade 7 beat!  
There's no excuse  
There's no excuse  
To not reduce  
Our resource use!

##### Grade 8

We're Grade 8  
Give us a break!  
We know how to  
Appreciate  
Water on the range  
Water in the slough  
Water underground  
And inside of you!

Roll out the big ideas and action plans. Have each grade read out the three big ideas that they learned about in the presentation and what they are doing for an action plan. If time permits, a few questions could be asked but this is not a discussion time.

The mood should have quieted down. Bring out the bison skull to serve as a focus. Perhaps mention a few bison adaptations. This is a time of reflection. Talk about how much the native prairie has changed since bison roamed free across the prairie. Tell them what the prairie means to you. Summarized some of the benefits of native prairie and the threats they face. Emphasize how little prairie is left and that the action plans that the students have developed will make a difference.

Bring up the energy level again with the final group chant.

### **Group Chant**

Hey, get with it  
Take it to the limit  
Fire up  
Feel the heat  
Clap your hands to the beat  
Take action!  
Take action!  
Take action for prairie!

Repeat the last three lines.

End of presentation