



**A Multi-Species-at-Risk, Ecosystem-based, Action Plan Project  
that is being developed for southwestern Saskatchewan**





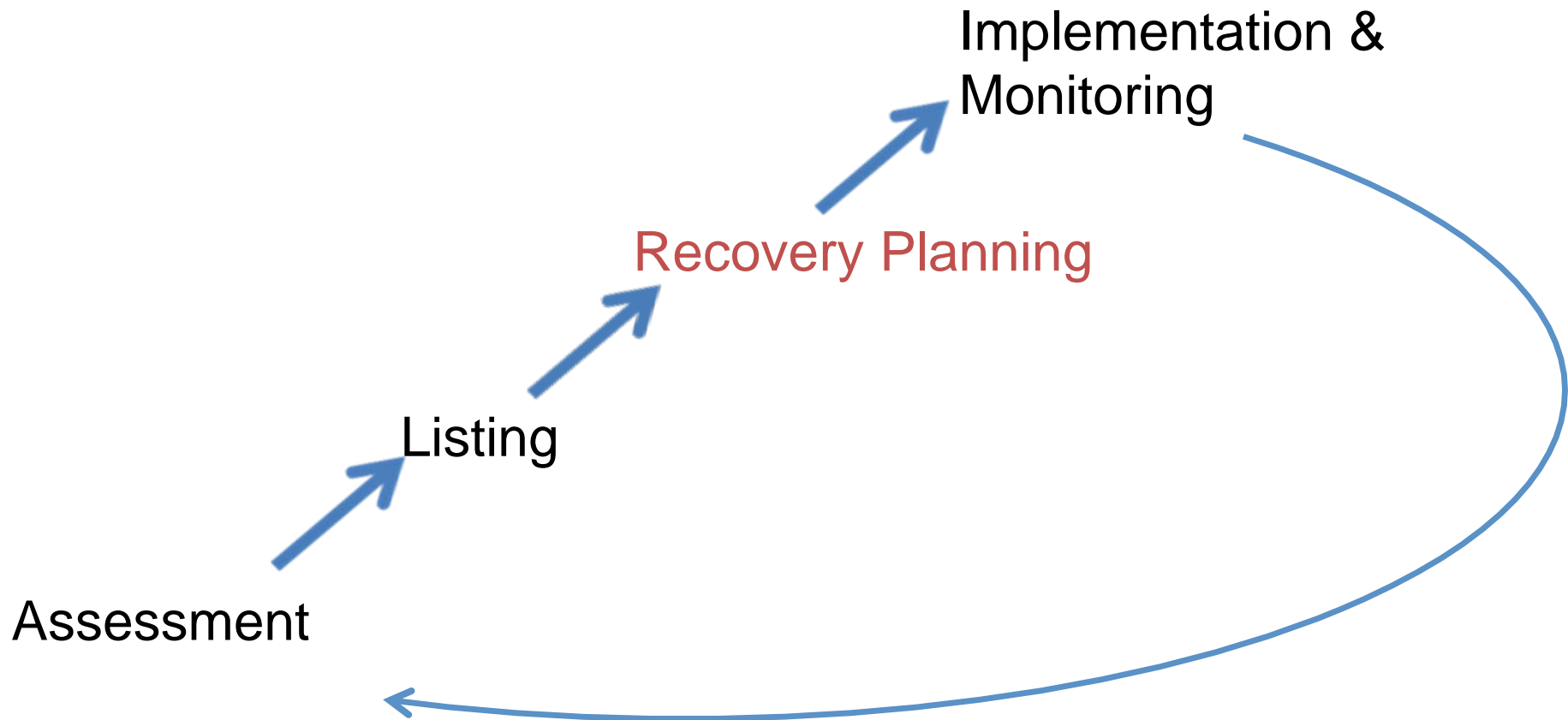
# SARA: The federal *Species at Risk Act*

The purpose of SARA is to:

- prevent species from becoming extinct or extirpated
- recover extirpated, endangered and threatened species
- ensure that species of special concern do not become endangered or threatened



# SARA Process

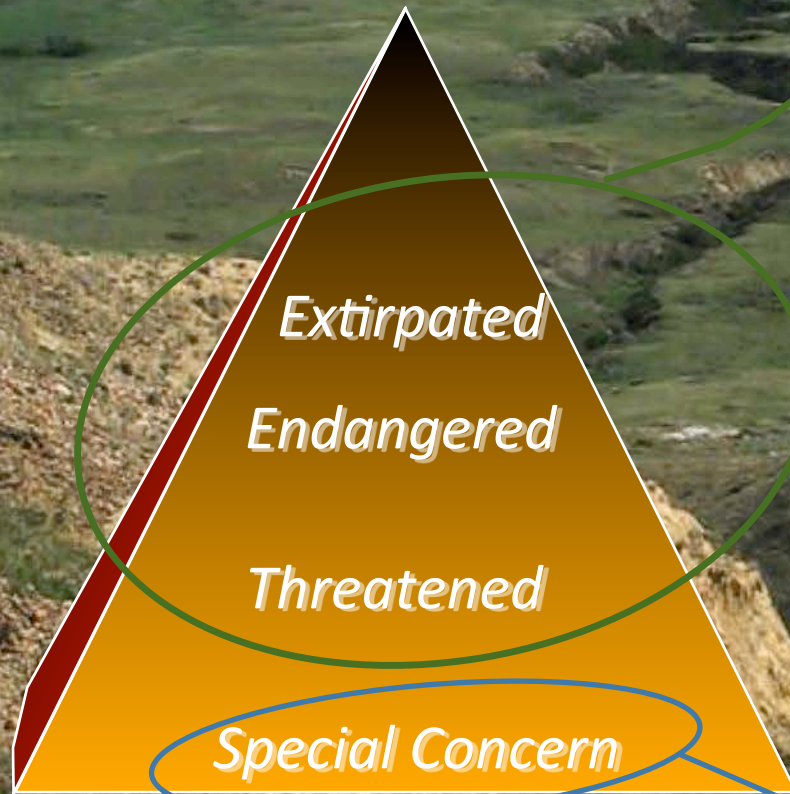




# How are species at risk recovered?

## Recovery Strategy

- provides background information on species
- sets out population and distribution objectives
- identifies threats to the species and its habitat, and ways to address them.
- May include CH & ALTDCH



## Action Plan

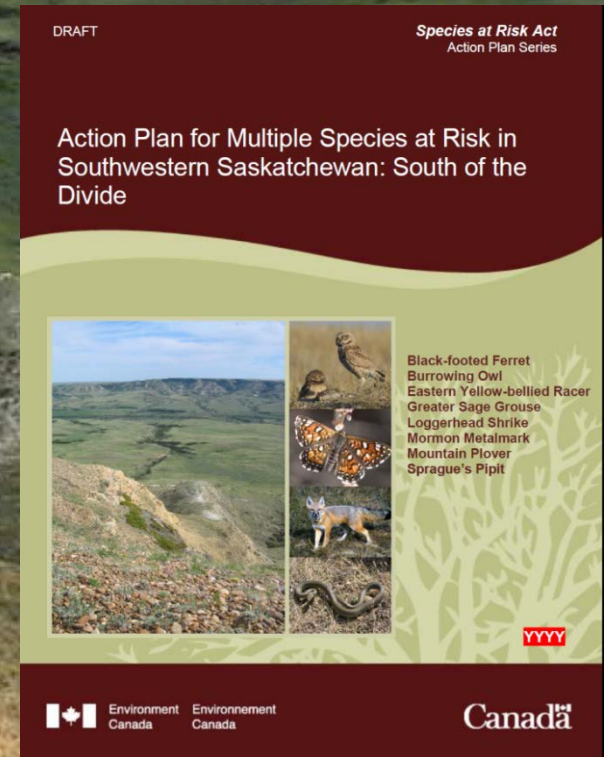
### Management Plan



# What is an Action Plan?

*An Action Plan lists the projects or activities needed for the Recovery Strategy to be successful and must include:*

- Identification of critical habitat and examples of activities that are likely to destroy it.
- a statement of proposed measures for protecting critical habitat
- Recovery Measures needed to reduce the threats to the species and to achieve population and distribution objectives.
- methods to be used to monitor the recovery of species and long-term viability
- an Evaluation of the socio-economic costs of the action plan and any implementation benefits





# What is critical habitat?

**Critical Habitat** is the habitat necessary for the survival and recovery of a **extirpated, endangered** or **threatened** species

It is identified in a Recovery Strategy or Action Plan



# Critical Habitat Protection

- SARA seeks to protect Critical Habitat on **federal lands** by law within 6 months after it is identified in a finalized RS or AP
- SARA seeks to protect Critical Habitat on **provincial and private lands** through provincial laws and/or stewardship agreements (section 11 agreements)



Section 11 Agreements: Conservation/Stewardship agreements between federal government and other governments, organizations or individuals intended to benefit a species at risk

Agreements may cover such actions as:

- monitoring the species
- reducing/mitigating threats
- protecting species habitat, including its CH
- research



# What is the South of the Divide Project?

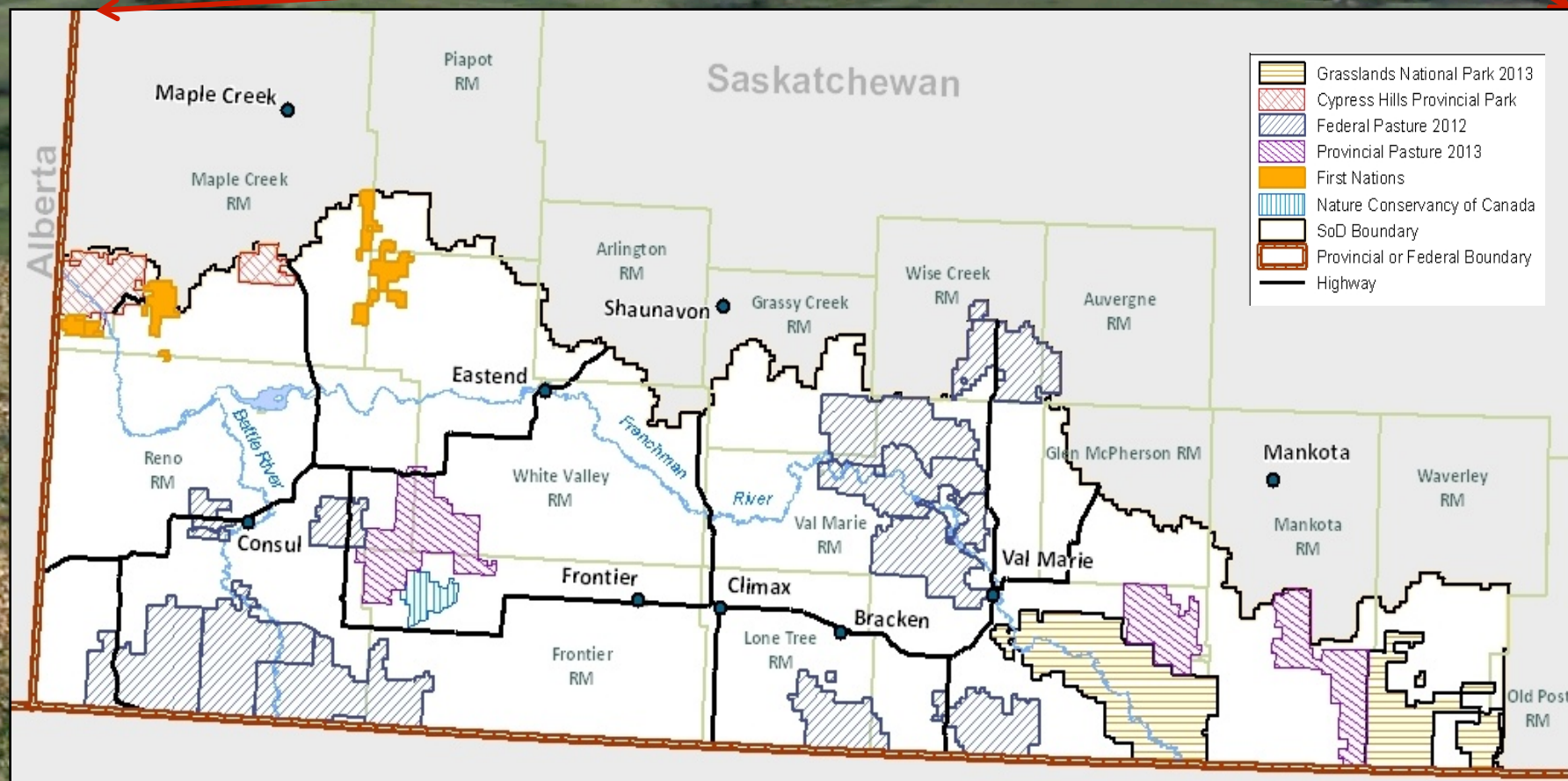
**The South of the Divide Project will develop and implement a SARA-compliant *Action Plan*.**

SoD differs from most other SAR Action Plans:

- **multi-species**
- **ecosystem –based approach**
- **collaborative process involving many federal and provincial departments**
- **involvement of stakeholders from the onset**



# Where is SoD?



Located in the Milk River Watershed, the SoD area spans 14,161km<sup>2</sup>; or 1.5 million Ha



# Why was this area chosen?

- Much of the grassland habitat remains intact
- There are at least 21 species at risk in this region
- The Canada-SK Species at Risk Steering Committee recognized the importance of SoD and tasked its government members with the development of an ecosystem based, multi-species recovery plan.





# Who? The SoD Project Structure

**The Canada-SK Bilateral Steering Committee on Species at Risk -2008**  
**Species at Risk Coordinating Committee (SARCC)**

## **THE SOUTH OF THE DIVIDE STEERING COMMITTEE**

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**Overall lead agencies:**

- Environment Canada
- SK Ministry of the Environment
- Parks Canada Agency

**Participating agencies:**

- Agriculture & Agri-food Canada
- SK Ministry of Agriculture
- SK Ministry of the Economy
- SK Water Security Agency
- Stakeholder Advisory Committee-2012
- First Nations & Métis Nation Engagement





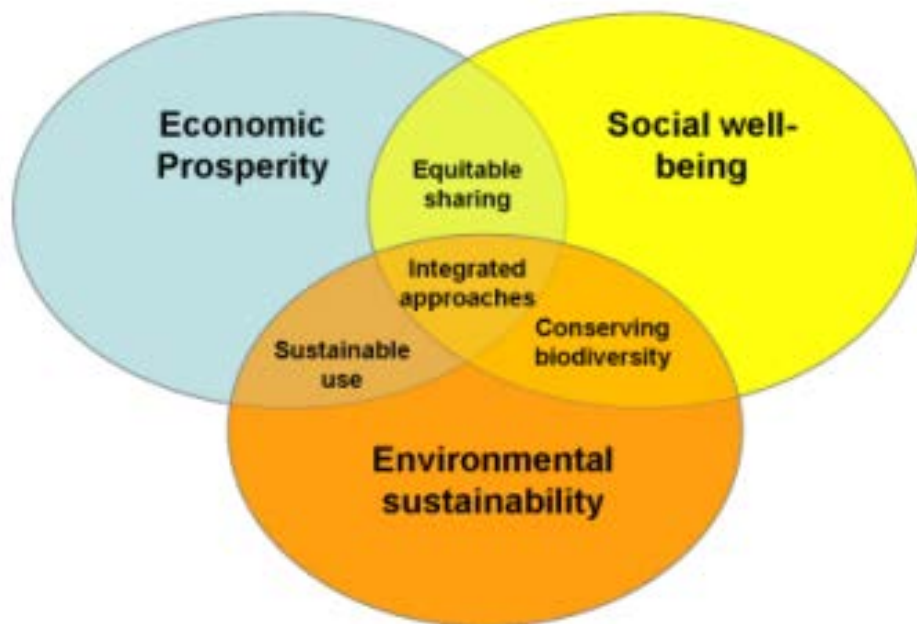
# Why an ecosystem-based approach?

## The Ecosystem

**Biotic Components:**  
Plants, Animals, Fungi,  
Protists, Monera

**Abiotic Components:**  
Land, Air, Water and  
Sunlight

## The Ecosystem Approach



Result: Developing integrated approaches, that incorporate social and economic considerations across the whole project area, for all species combined, is a more practical, appropriate and hopefully successful way to achieve success in SAR recovery.



## PROJECT GOAL

To conserve species at risk and their supporting habitat in the Milk River Watershed of south-western Saskatchewan, a region referred to as the "South of the Divide", by using cost-effective measures and by collaborating with local communities

## IMPACT

Species at risk in the South of the Divide area are stable or increasing, and the amount and condition of native habitat is stable or improving through the implementation of cost-effective conservation measures and the development of collaborative processes.



Black-footed Ferret - EX



Swift Fox - EN



Greater Sage Grouse - EN



Burrowing Owl - EN



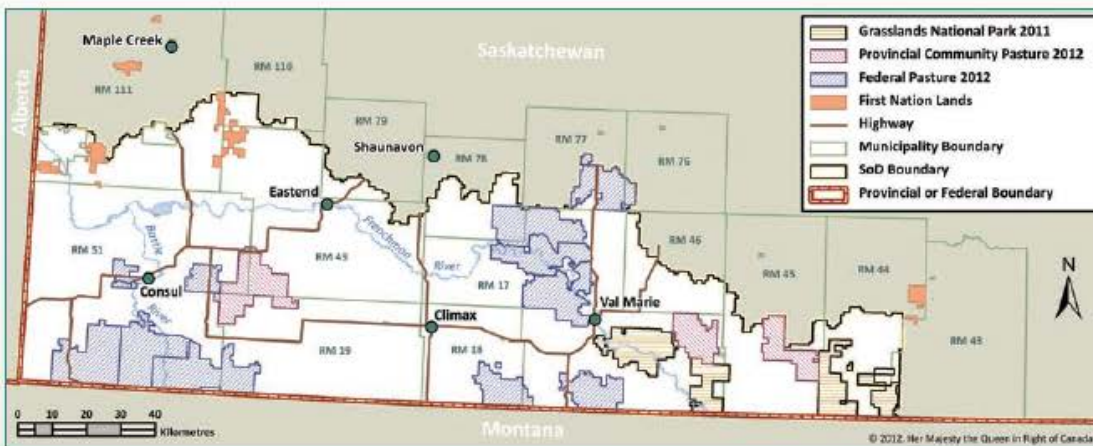
Mountain Plover - EN



Sprague's Pipit - TH



Prairie Loggerhead Shrike - TH



The Milk River Watershed in southwestern Saskatchewan contains large tracts of native prairie that have been maintained through careful stewardship. This landscape will continue to require our stewardship in the future if species at risk are to survive and recover. Today, there are 23 at risk species in the area. The *South of the Divide Multi-species at Risk Action Plan* will initially focus on the recovery of 13 of these species.



Mormon Metalmark - TH



Eastern Yellow-bellied Racer - TH



Black-tailed Prairie Dog - SC



Long-billed Curlew - SC



McCown's Longspur - SC



Northern Leopard Frog - SC

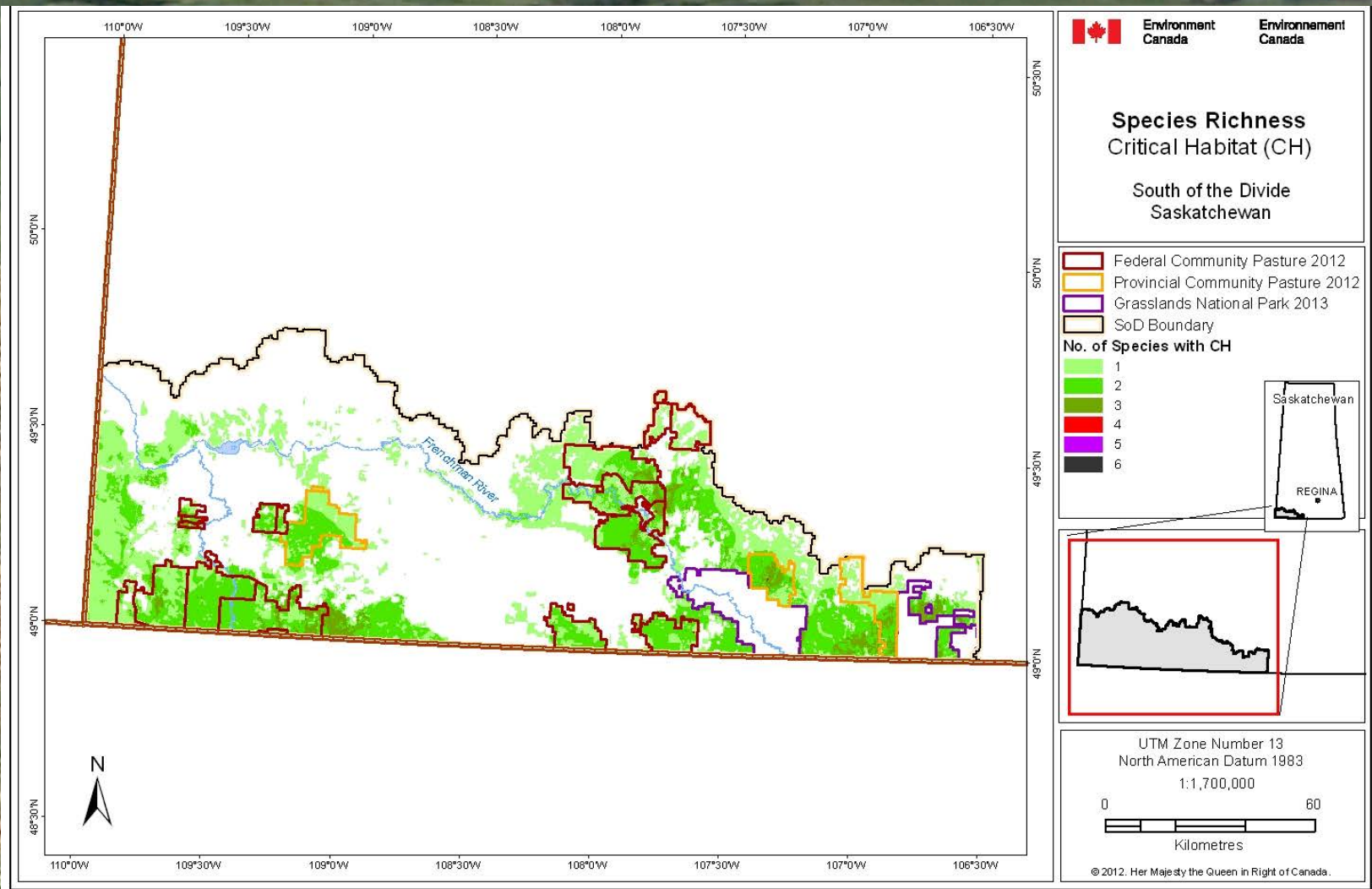
#### LEGEND

- EX: Extirpated (no longer found in Canada in the wild)
- EN: Endangered
- TH: Threatened
- SC: Special Concern



Draft

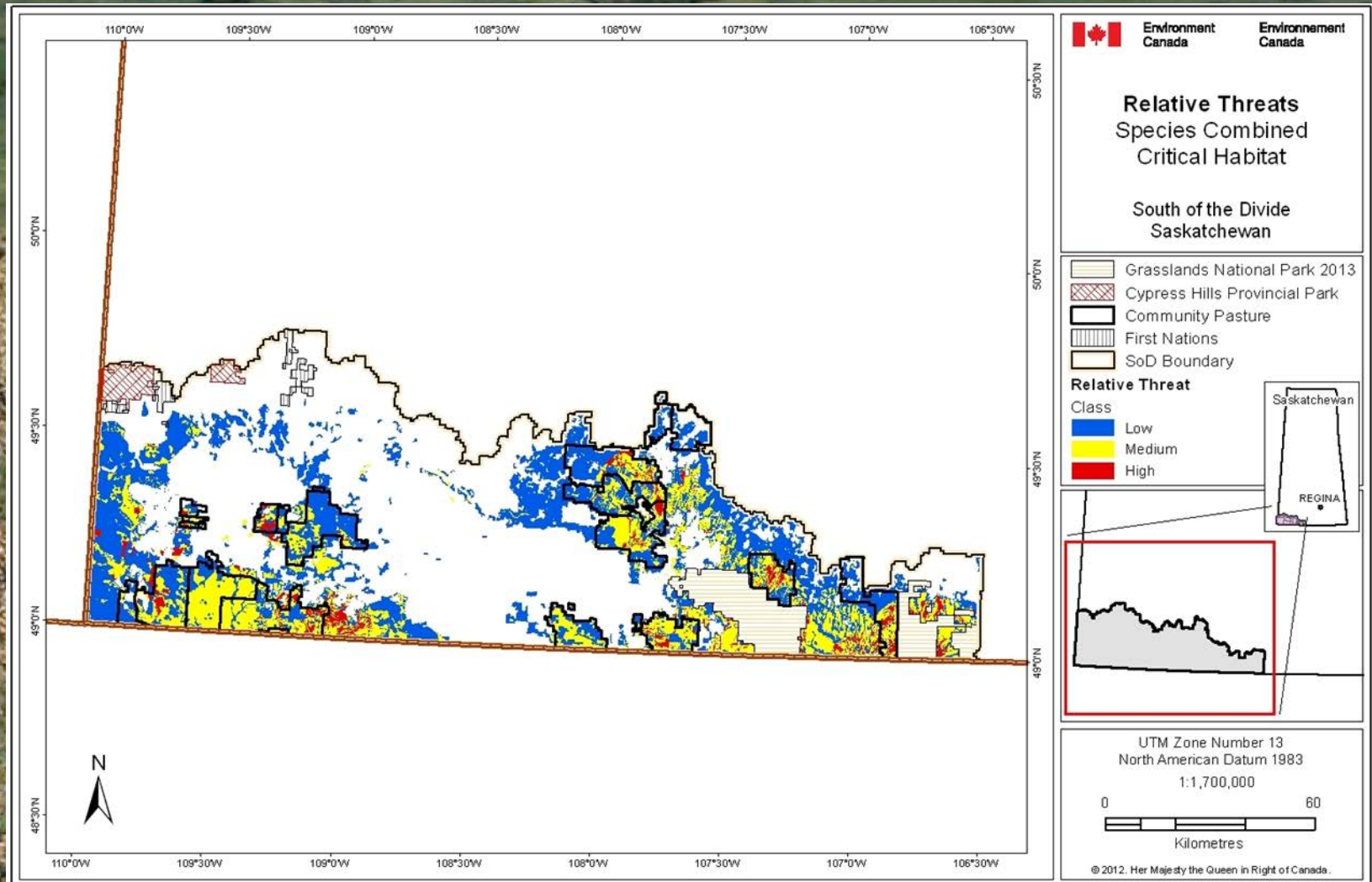
# Overlapping Critical Habitat





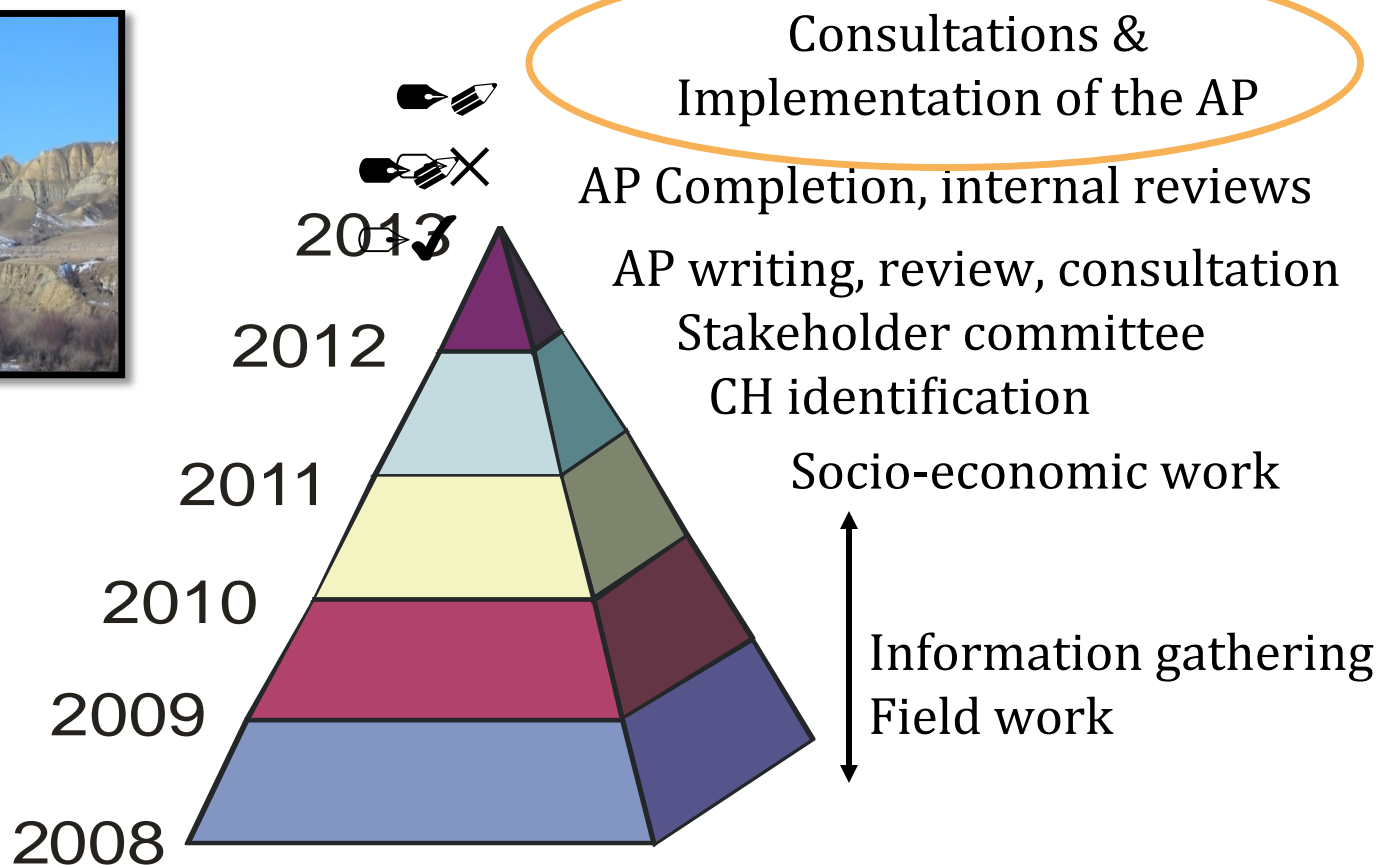
# Spatial Threats Analysis

Relative threats when critical habitat for all 9 SoD SAR are overlaid





# The SoD Project – where we are at:





# Stakeholder Advisory Committee

- Ensure stakeholder interests are understood and considered
- Provide advice and recommendations to inform the development of the action plan
- Provide advice on a broader SOD consultation & Implementation





# Road to Implementation Workshop

- Help to guide the transition towards implementation by exploring other community based, multi-stakeholder initiatives and providing input on the development of a draft governance model for an SoD Implementation Agency

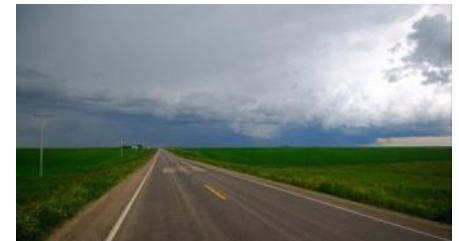
The South of the Divide Conservation Program Inc. (SODCAP) is a non-profit legal entity launched in June 2014 to help *support* the implementation of the SoD Action Plan, through funding applications and implementation of select recovery measure projects.





# *Implementation*

- Since 2013,— government and stakeholders have worked together to transition from action planning to implementation
- Deliver collaborative approaches for managing species at risk – effective land management



# *Implementation cont'd*



- Rely on a combination of regulatory and results-based stewardship approaches
  - Specifies through stewardship agreements to attain effective protection of Critical Habitat
  - Outcome-based and non-prescriptive
  - Using clear environmental targets, protection commitments and monitoring expectations

# *Implementation cont'd*



- The goal is to conserve species at risk and their supporting habitat
  - Using cost-effective conservation measures
  - Collaborating with land managers and stakeholders



# *Implementation - CH Protection Assessment*



- Once the AP is finalized on the SARA Registry, the next key step for EC, from a legal perspective, will be to assess and report on whether CH is protected
- EC has been working with federal and provincial partners to assess whether candidate CH is protected from being destroyed (i.e., a reduction in functionality of the habitat for the species).
- This activity is separate from the writing of the AP and will continue after the completion of the AP
- The CH protection assessment will support federal obligations under SARA

# *CH Protection on Provincial or Private Land*



- **Progress reports on unprotected portions of critical habitat**
- **63.** If in the opinion of the Minister any portion of the critical habitat of a listed wildlife species remains unprotected 180 days after the recovery strategy or action plan that identified the critical habitat was included in the public registry, the Minister must include in that registry a report on the steps taken to protect the critical habitat. The Minister must continue to report with respect to every subsequent period of 180 days until the portion is protected or is no longer identified as critical habitat.

# *CH Protection on Provincial or Private Land*



- Federal Minister's obligation to make recommendation to protect CH
- (4) The Minister must make a recommendation if he or she is of the opinion, after consultation with the appropriate provincial or territorial minister, that
  - (a) there are no provisions in, or other measures under, this or any other Act of Parliament that protect the particular portion of the critical habitat, including agreements under section 11; and
  - (b) the laws of the province or territory do not effectively protect the critical habitat.