

Strategies for Collaborative Conservation in North American Grasslands

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Erosion, drought, invasive species, woody plant encroachment, and land use conversion that affect grassland ecosystems, grassland dependent species, and the people who depend on them, occur on a landscape scale. Erosion issues that start in the headwaters or uplands need to be addressed at a watershed scale. Migratory species of birds, mammals, and insects depend on connected grassland habitat. Unfortunately, management of grassland ecosystems is fragmented by administrative and geographical regions, impeding the coordination that is needed, both within and across regions, to effectively address landscape scale issues affecting North American grasslands. This lack of coordination reduces the effectiveness of on-the-ground grassland restoration when managers and restoration practitioners within and among regions are not learning from each other.

In this session, participants will hear from presenters who are taking diverse approaches to grassland restoration and leading efforts to coordinate landscape scale grassland restoration efforts in the central and western United States. Presenters will focus on the strategies they are using to increase coordination and address priority issues in their respective regions, and lessons learned from coordination within their region and between grassland biomes. By sharing successful strategies for landscape scale coordination, participants will learn about strategies that they can implement to improve coordination and the outcomes of on-the-ground restoration and management activities in their regions of interest.

Furthermore, this session will generate dialogue about **how to move forward from this foundation of regional coordination, towards a more unified approach to grassland management on the North American continent**. One that is aligned with the needs of migratory species and recognizes the flow of species and impacts of climate change on grassland ecosystems on a continental scale.

Panelist Biographies:

Ariel Léger is a Research Scientist at the University of Arizona where they are a Program Coordinator at CART, the Conservation and Adaptation Resources Toolbox, and lead a Grassland Community of Practice.

Scott Feldhausen, is the Bureau of Land Management's Gila District Manager. He has a wealth of knowledge on grassland restoration and working cooperatively with partners.

Julia Guglielmo is the Conservation and Science Director of the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance (AVCA). The AVCA conserves healthy and productive working landscapes, promotes a thriving agricultural economy, and sustains cultural and historical traditions of the Altar Valley. Julia designs, manages, and monitors restoration projects by building on expertise and resources from local landowners as well as researchers and practitioners in Southeast AZ.

Robert Perez is the Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture (OPJV) Coordinator where he works on bird conservation in parts of Texas and Oklahoma (BCRs 20 and 21) through a self-directed partnership guided by the OPJV Management Board.

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