Temperate Grasslands at the World Parks Congress

As the World Parks Congress (WPC) approaches in November, 2014, the Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (TGCI) is actively preparing for events immediately before and during the Congress. On November 11, 2014, immediately prior to the opening of the WPC, the TGCI will hold a one-day workshop entitled “The Conservation and Protection of the World’s Indigenous Temperate Grasslands: Current Status and Strategic Directions for the Next Decade”. This important gathering will:

- assess global progress towards the conservation and protection of the world’s temperate grasslands;
- develop new partnerships and linkages with other like-minded organizations; and
- refine strategic directions, organization and funding for the TGCI in preparation for the coming decade.

You are invited to attend! See pages 3 and 4 of this newsletter for more details. Please e-mail Bruce Downie, the TGCI Project Coordinator, to confirm your attendance: bdownie@thekeshotrust.org.

During the Congress, on Friday, November 14, the TGCI has also secured two 15-minute sessions in Stream 1, Achieving Conservation Goals. The TGCI is also pursuing a session in Stream 4 Supporting Human Life that will address the implications of climate change to the ability of temperate grasslands to continue to provide a host of ecological goods and services. Details of this Stream’s sessions are not yet confirmed.

In the Stream 1 sessions, the TGCI will focus on recognizing the significant deficit in the level of conservation and protection of temperate grasslands. The underlying premise is that conventional methods of creating protected areas, usually by central governments, are struggling to succeed in the highly fragmented, heavily utilized and often privately owned temperate grassland environments. This traditional approach will likely continue to yield insufficient numbers or area and with functional connectivity to retain the ecological integrity of these ecosystems. Therefore, the central representation and effective management objective of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 cannot be met unless more innovative solutions to securing land for conservation purposes can be successfully implemented in this biome.

At the WPC, the TGCI will explore two such approaches to the protection of temperate grasslands that provide valuable lessons for the development of conservation and protection strategies for this biome. The first example focuses on private sector partnerships and their role in protecting the Patagonian steppe by acquiring, reassembling and restoring a large area of formerly fragmented and highly utilized grasslands and then donating these lands to the Government of Chile as a new national park.

The second explores the intersection of biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use in the Daurian steppes of Mongolia, Russia and China. These grasslands present the potential to apply the concept of “other effective area-based conservation measures” embedded in Aichi Target 11. Such an approach to conservation can do what more conventional protected areas cannot - serve the dual purpose of protecting the culture and livelihood of traditional nomadic communities through sustainable land use while conserving grassland biodiversity and retaining vital ecosystem services at a landscape scale.

From these examples we will highlight strategies that may have potential in other high priority grassland conservation areas such as aspects of partnership, institutional arrangements and governance, benefit sharing and collaborative sustainable management.

Join in the discussion. We hope to see you there! Bill Henwood, TGCI Project Director
Report from the Asia Parks Congress

Although the TGCI was not able to attend and participate in the Asia Parks Congress, the outcomes of the Congress present some interesting opportunities for the further conservation and protection of temperate grasslands in that region. The following is an excerpt from the Chairs’ Summary of the First Asia Parks Congress – November 17, 2013.

“The first Asia Parks Congress (APC) was held in Sendai, Miyagi from 13 to 17 November 2013 under the auspices of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOE - J). The meeting was attended by approximately 800 participants from central and local governments, international organizations, NGOs, academia and students of 40 countries and regions across the World, including protected area authority officials from 22 Asian countries. The participants of the first APC shared their rich experiences including current status, challenges and best practices of protected area management in Asia with the aim to facilitate the establishment of a regional partnership for achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and implementing the Programme of Work on Protected Areas of the Convention on Biological Diversity, thereby sending a message from Asia towards the World Parks Congress to be held in November, 2014 (WPC 2014). ..... 

..... The participants also affirmed their commitment to cooperate through the provision of their latest national information for the “Protected Planet Asia” Report which is under preparation by UNEP/WCMC.

The following six Working Groups (WGs) were organized to present and discuss advanced cases related to protected areas: WG1 Natural Disasters and Protected Areas; WG2 Tourism and Environmental Education in Protected Areas; WG 3 Culture/Tradition, and Protected Areas; WG4 Collaborative Management of Protected Areas; WG5 International Cooperation for Protected Areas; WG6 Biodiversity and Protected Areas. ..... 

..... The participants recognized the need of a cooperative framework in relation to protected areas in Asia. This led to the creation of a partnership planning committee (tentative name) consisted mainly of IUCN Asia Regional Office, the WCPA and Japan (MOE-J), as well as interested governments and international organizations.”

For more information regarding the outcomes of the Congress visit: http://asia-parks.org/materials.html

The TGCI will be hosting a side event at the WPC and you are strongly encouraged to attend if at all possible [see our notice on pages 3 and 4 of this newsletter]. It is an important time to catch up, make connections and set directions for the future.
Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative

announces

A PARALLEL EVENT
TO THE WORLD PARKS CONGRESS
IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

November 11, 2014
8:30 am to 4:30 pm
The Aquatic Centre, Dawn Fraser Room - Sydney Olympic Park

“The Conservation and Protection of the
World’s Indigenous Temperate Grasslands:
Current Status and Strategic Directions for the Next Decade”

Workshop Objectives:
• assess global progress towards the conservation and protection of the world’s temperate grasslands;
• identify and build new partnerships and linkages with like-minded organizations to improve collaboration in conservation and protection efforts globally; and
• refine strategic directions, organization and funding for the TGCI.

JOIN US IN SYDNEY!

This is an open meeting which encourages new participation.
Please circulate this announcement widely throughout your networks.

We would appreciate confirmation of your attendance.
E-mail us at: bdownie@thekeshotrust.org
“The Conservation and Protection of the World’s Indigenous Temperate Grasslands: Current Status and Strategic Directions for the Next Decade”

Tentative Workshop Program

**Global Progress: Updates and Discussion**

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<td>8:30 – 8:45</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>8:45 – 10:00</td>
<td>Case studies and discussion:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Chile &amp; Argentina: Patagonia Steppe Ecosystem</td>
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<td>- Kris Tompkins, The Conservation Land Trust and Conservacion Patagonica</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Mongolia / China / Russia: Daurian Steppe Ecosystem</td>
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<td>- David Wilkie, Wildlife Conservation Society</td>
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<td>10:00 – 10:30</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<td>10:30 – 12:00</td>
<td>Updates and discussion:</td>
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<td>• Australia &amp; New Zealand</td>
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<td>12:00 – 13:00</td>
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<td>Updates and discussion:</td>
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**Planning TGCI’s Future**

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<td>14:00 – 15:30</td>
<td>Opportunities for partnerships and collaboration:</td>
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<td>• Presentations from organizations represented in the meeting and discussion of potential collaborative activities</td>
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<td>• Discussion of links among local, regional and international level activities and participant</td>
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<td>15:30 – 15:45</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<td>15:45 – 16:30</td>
<td>Strategic directions:</td>
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<td>• Creation of regional network</td>
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<td>• Budget and fundraising</td>
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Temperate Indigenous Grassland Gains in South Africa: Lessons Being Learned in a Developing Country

Clinton Carbutt and Greg Martindale

The fragile state of temperate indigenous grasslands globally has galvanised action in the form of the Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s World Commission on Protected Areas. However, despite this initiative raising the profile of temperate grassland conservation on the global conservation agenda, one still requires country-based interventions at the hands of local conservation authorities, in collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to improve protection levels on the ground. To this end we report on progress made with temperate indigenous grassland conservation in South Africa since 2006, a landmark heralding the birth of biodiversity stewardship in our temperate grassland biome. Since then an additional 124,983 ha of temperate grassland have been brought under formal protection with a further 96,641 ha in the declaration process, most of which should be secured by the end of 2014. We also discuss the driving forces underpinning these gains - namely the National Protected Area Expansion Strategy, the Grasslands Programme of the South African National Biodiversity Institute, provincial biodiversity stewardship units and funding channelled through the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund into civil society to augment the state’s contribution. Given the clear benefits derived from each intervention, we encourage other relevant countries with temperate indigenous grasslands to develop similar structures in the quest to safeguard representative, viable samples of one of the world’s great terrestrial biomes.

Full article: Parks. Vol. 20.1 March 2014
www.iucn.org/parks

Bird-friendly burning and grazing best-practice for grasslands: Achieving bird conservation and economic grazing objectives together in South Africa’s grasslands

Dr Charmaine Uys, Dr Hanneline Smit-Robinson and Mr Daniel Marnewick

This ‘bird-friendly best-practice’ document is intended as guidance for management planning and to compliment the draft Biodiversity-Friendly Grazing and Burning Best-Practice for Grasslands (Lechmere-Oertel in prep.) that is being developed by the Agricultural Component of the South African National Biodiversity Institute’s (SANBI) Grasslands Programme. It is not intended to be an academic output and is not equivalent to Ecosystem Guidelines or Biodiversity Management Plans for Ecosystems (BMP-E) or Species (BMP-S), as provided for in the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (Act 10 of 2004). We acknowledge our data deficiency limitations and encourage researchers to fill these gaps for the benefit of bird conservation.

This ‘bird-friendly best-practice’ forms a component of BirdLife South Africa’s Grassland Programme commitment to produce a user-friendly set of management recommendations to promote the conservation of threatened grassland bird species, primarily in the agricultural (red meat production) sector.

Full article and related information: BirdLife South Africa, Version 1 (May 2013)
Grazing and Burning Guidelines: Managing Grasslands for Biodiversity and Livestock Production

Compiled by: Dr Richard Lechmere-Oertel

South Africa’s grasslands stretch from the eastern seaboard into a very large part of the interior, and hold many areas considered high priority for biodiversity at an international, national and regional scale. Grasslands also provide indispensable ecological infrastructure and significant economic benefits to South Africa. These often unseen benefits are enjoyed by a range of end-users, including communities near and far, living in both cities and rural areas.

Endowed with rich soils, abundant water resources, minerals and a moderate climate, grasslands are where much of South Africa’s agriculture, forestry and mining activities occur. While vital to the economy, these activities have resulted in significant modification of the landscape and the ongoing and necessary growth of these sectors continues to place pressure on the natural systems that sustain these activities. While some economic activities have a greater impact, commercial and subsistence grazing also affect the delivery of grassland ecosystem services over a period of time. As grazing and burning regimes are altered, so grasslands can quickly lose native species, resilience, productivity and ultimately ecosystem service delivery. As this occurs, eventually leading to a very degraded and unproductive state, current and future generations are deprived of the many benefits that are directly or indirectly derived from intact grasslands.

Ecosystem Services In New Zealand’s Indigenous Tussock Grasslands: Conditions And Trends

Alan F. Mark, Barbara I.P. Barratt and Emily Weeks

Indigenous vegetation such as grassland provides a range of services of varying values to humanity, depending on grassland type and degree of intactness. Understanding this complex relationship in a particular ecosystem or related ecosystems is most important and should be an integral component of environmental planning. To set the scene, some historical aspects of the origins, development, management and research in New Zealand’s indigenous grasslands are described, and changes in land tenure are outlined to provide a background against which the ecosystem services that grasslands have to offer can be better understood. The ecosystem services that different grassland types are able to provide are described according to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment categories, especially those of provisioning (biodiversity values); regulating (water production, pollination, biological control); cultural (educational, scientific, recreational and tourism values); and supporting (soil conservation values, carbon storage and sequestration). The threats to these services are then described with emphasis on land use (grazing and intensification, mining), invasive weeds and invertebrates, and climate change. We conclude by pointing out that indigenous grassland ecosystems deliver a wide range of important ecosystem services that provide many tangible benefits to human well-being, which are best protected in public ownership and managed as a critically important public-good resource.

Making Grasslands Sustainable in Mongolia: International Experiences with Payments for Environmental Services in Grazing Lands and Other Rangelands


There has been considerable interest in the potential for economic incentive schemes to support stakeholders to conserve forests and biodiversity and to provide watershed services. Much less attention has been paid to the potential of incentive schemes to deliver improved environmental services (also called ecosystem services) in grasslands and other grazing lands. Grasslands and other grazing lands store up to 30% of the world’s soil carbon, and provide a range of other use and nonuse values, including biodiversity and soil conservation, water supply and retention, recreation, and spiritual values. The environmental services provided may be categorized as provisioning services, regulating services, and cultural services. The primary use by herders of grasslands is grazing by livestock, and the production of livestock products makes major contributions to herders’ livelihoods.

Payments for environmental services (PES) are one potential mechanism to provide land users in grasslands with incentives to increase the supply of positive externalities of grassland utilization (e.g., biodiversity), and decrease the supply of negative externalities (e.g., soil erosion or carbon emissions). The main distinction between PES and other forms of incentives or support is that PES schemes make payments conditional upon performance of improved management or delivery of environmental services. Evidence suggests that PES schemes can result in an increase in the supply of environmental services, although some schemes have not increased their supply and there have been few rigorous evaluations. One general set of reasons for the limited environmental impact is that market-based instruments may be less effective in contexts where other markets are missing or not working well, since these constrain the opportunities for land users to pursue more profitable livelihood options. Even where schemes are able to increase the supply of one environmental service, there may be trade-offs with other environmental services. Similarly, not all PES schemes have improved incomes for the poor or addressed equity concerns. Careful design and a thorough assessment of these issues can improve PES implementation.

PES is currently not widely practiced in Mongolia, but has been included in the recent Green Development Strategy of the Government of Mongolia. This knowledge product provides a descriptive overview of 50 PES schemes in operation in grasslands and other grazing lands worldwide as well as a number of schemes under development in Mongolia. It also discusses some key issues relating to the design of PES schemes in the context of Mongolian grasslands.


Toward Viable Landscape Governance Systems: What Works?


2014. EcoAgriculture Partners, on behalf of the Landscapes for People, Food, and Nature Initiative. Washington, DC

Available online at: http://landscapes.ecoagriculture.org/global_review/landscape_governance
UPCOMING EVENTS

• Stakeholder Meeting on the Conservation of Large Mammals in Central Asia
  Convened by: Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) Secretariat
  http://www.cms.int/en/meeting/stakeholder-meeting-conservation-large-mammals-central-asia

• 12th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
  October 6 – 17, 2014 in Pyeongchag, Republic of Korea.
  http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=cop-12

• 6th IUCN/WCPA World Park Congress -
  Parks, people, planet: Inspiring solutions
  November 12-19, 2014 in Sydney, Australia.
  http://www.worldparkscongress.org/index.html

• XXIII International Grasslands Congress -
  Sustainable Use of Grassland Resources for Forage Production, Biodiversity and Environmental Protection
  November 20-24, 2015 in New Delhi, India.
  http://www.igc2015.in

• 12th European Dry Grassland Meeting
  Population Biology and Community Ecology of Dry Grasslands and Dry Grassland Species
  May 23-26, 2015 in Mainz, Germany.
  http://www.edgg.org/events.htm

• 7th International Symposium “Steppes of Northern Eurasia”
  May 2015 in Orenburg, Russia.
  Convened by: UNDP/GEF Project: Improving the Coverage and Management Efficiency of Protected Areas in the Steppe Biome of Russia

Want to be part of the TGCI Team?

- Know someone who you think would like to get this newsletter?
- Want to be added to our distribution list?
- Want more information on the TGCI?
- Want to send us an article for the newsletter?

We look forward to hearing from you. Please contact Bruce Downie, Project Coordinator.

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Acknowledgements

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Tuinsock Grasslands, New Zealand
Photo: R. Figuracion