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Conservation Notes

Current topics and issues affecting hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation in our North Dakota.

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Saving our Prairie Heritage- The Meadowlark Initiative

Native prairie grasses in North Dakota have been declining since the first settlers started turning the grass upside down. As urbanization and modern agriculture developed, the conversion pace accelerated, and continuing today, we are left with less than one-third of our native grassland remaining. Native prairie grasses play an important role, providing essential forage for our livestock industry, critical wildlife and pollinating insect habitat, regulating our hydrologic cycle, capturing pollutants, reducing soil erosion, and storing carbon. Unfortunately, with the loss of native prairie, these vital functions are also in decline. Economic and quality of life impacts from declining prairie are often subtle making them easy to overlook.

To stem this debilitating decline, the North Dakota Game Fish Department has initiated the “**Meadowlark Initiative**”. This initiative is a landscape level effort that will partner with “landowners, conservation groups, scientists, and others, to enhance, restore, and sustain native grasslands in North Dakota”. Long overdue, this initiative will work towards stemming the decline of native prairie grasses, thereby maintaining, and in many cases increasing the valuable economic and quality of life functions native grasslands provide. Recognizing the important functions that native prairie provides to our culture and economy, a strong partnership developed within the **Meadowlark Initiative** should be enthusiastically supported by the legislature and all North Dakota agencies.

For more information on this message or other conservation topics, contact: John Bradley, Executive Director, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, (jbradley.ndwf@gmail.com), Mike McEnroe, Past President, North Dakota Wildlife Federation(memcenroe@midco.net) or Rick Nelson, Past President, North Dakota Chapter, The Wildlife Society, (bluebill@bis.midco.net). For a complete list of Conservation Notes visit (ndctws.org)-library