



## News Release: Public Land Sale Opposed



Grasslands like these serve vital ecosystem functions. Photo © C.Wallis

A quarter section of public land, SE 31-9-13-W4, located near Taber is slated for auction on March 31, 2020. The provincial government should be proactively avoiding any further losses of native prairie landscapes. With less than 2% of Alberta's native prairie grasslands protected, we need this piece left as is under public land management. Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) is calling for this public land sale to be withdrawn.

“To the best of our ability we found this land consists of native prairie (classified as a Category 4 under the latest Grassland Vegetation Inventory), a threatened ecosystem in Alberta. The land also has a relatively large wetland or ephemeral water body. Native grasslands and wetlands contribute significantly to carbon

sequestration and drought resiliency while providing habitat for almost 75% of Alberta's species at risk" said Cliff Wallis, AWA Board of Directors.

"There has been no public consultation, and a lack of transparency surrounding this sale" said Nissa Petterson, AWA conservation specialist.

AWA is also concerned that Alberta may have failed to appropriately monitor, and protect the ecological integrity of this parcel from infringing agricultural activities. Irrigation on the southwest corner of this quarter was started sometime between 2009 and 2012. "An investigation is needed to determine whether permission was granted to irrigate this land, and if not, why the transgression was not pursued with enforcement actions. Irrigating native prairie is unacceptable and changes the ecosystem significantly," said Wallis.

The proposed sale of public land in Taber illustrates deficiencies within the current management framework that provides no transparency, hinders public participation, and enables an unacceptable standard for monitoring and managing public lands.

**For more information:**

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