



# Manitoba Naturalists Society Lands

## Land Designation

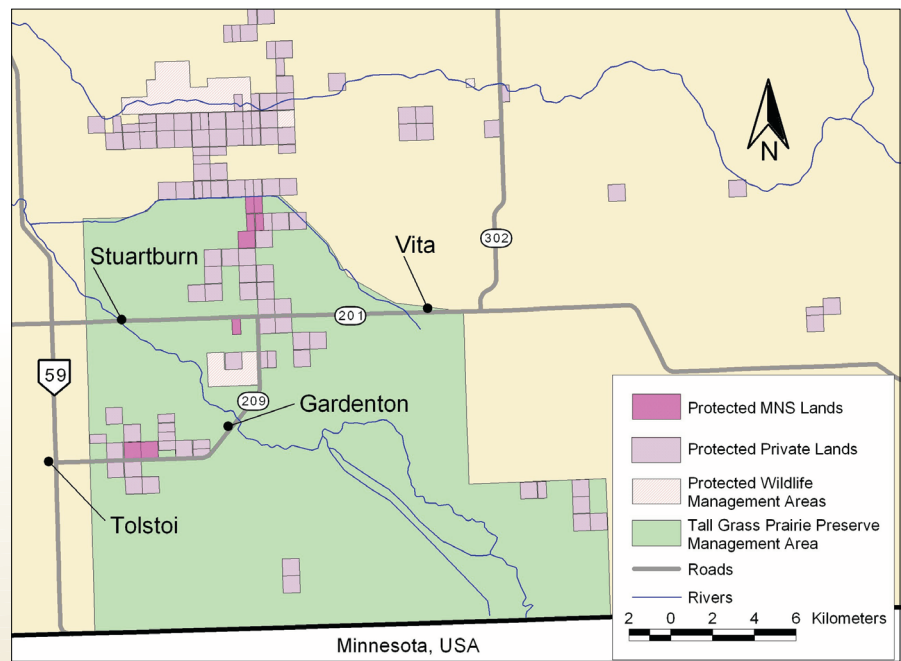
Protected Private Lands

## Land Description

One of the objectives of the Manitoba Naturalists Society (MNS) is to work for the preservation of our natural environment. To this end, MNS owns a number of parcels of land within Manitoba's Tall Grass Prairie Preserve, in the Rural Municipality of Stuartburn. A Memorandum of Agreement with the Government of Manitoba will add 355 hectares of MNS-owned land to Manitoba's network of protected areas. This Agreement provides a legal mechanism to ensure that MNS lands meet the provincial government's definition of a protected area in which logging, mining, hydroelectric, oil and gas development, as well as other activities that could significantly and adversely affect natural habitat, are prohibited.

## Outstanding Features

When European explorers first broke through the perpetual forests that dominated eastern Canada they were greeted by a literal sea of grass. At more than two metres high a person could step into this sea and vanish. The prairie's potential was soon realized by settlers in Southern Manitoba, and the vast fertile grassland that once dominated this landscape was quickly converted into agricultural production. Today the tall grass prairie landscape has since been reduced to less than 1% of its original expanse, currently remaining as one of the rarest ecosystems in North America. The remaining tracts of this ecosystem are found in and around the Rural Municipality of Stuartburn in Southeastern Manitoba. The tall grass prairie and its associated ecosystems are home to numerous plant species, from flowers and grasses to shrubs and trees, and a variety of animals including birds, butterflies and frogs.



The early vision of MNS to identify and protect Manitoba's remaining tall grass prairie habitat has led to the creation of the Tall Grass Prairie Preserve. Today, together with partners in government and the conservation community, MNS attempts to manage the Preserve with fire and large herbivore grazing to replicate natural prairie conditions. Plants such as the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid, Small White Lady's Slipper, Great Plains Ladies'-tresses, Culver's Root and Riddell's Goldenrod are all tall grass species found within the Preserve that have been listed under Manitoba's Endangered Species Act. This area also provides habitat for the Poweshiek Skipperling, a threatened butterfly whose very limited range includes this region of Southeastern Manitoba. The addition of these MNS lands to those already protected within the Preserve will help to protect these and other endangered and threatened species that inhabit this fragile ecosystem.