



Nature Conservancy of Canada Lands

Land Designation

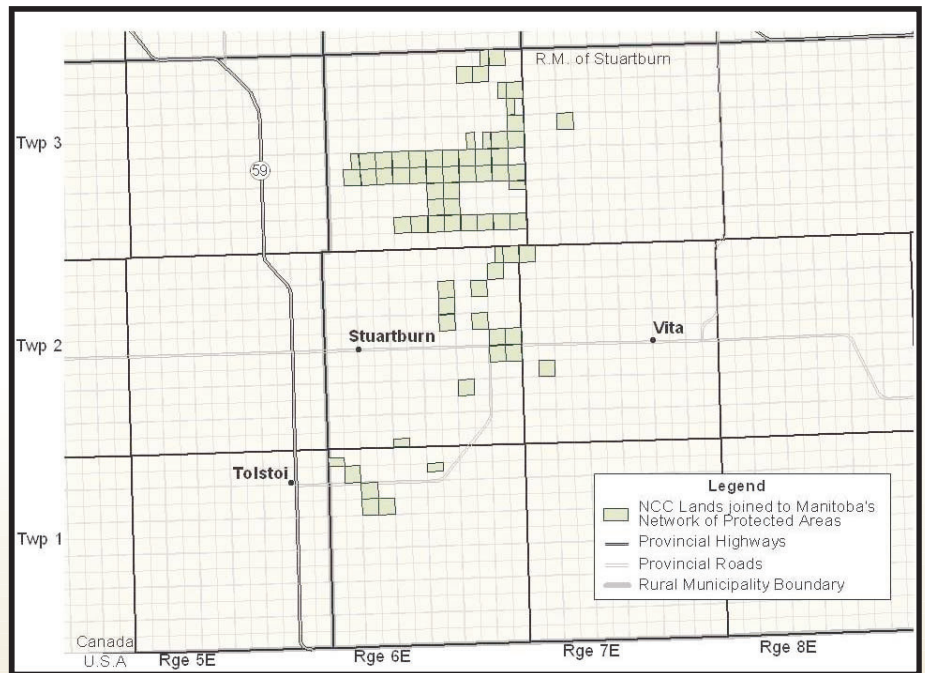
Protected Private Lands

Landscape Description

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) owns over 4,000 hectares of land within the endangered tall grass prairie of south eastern Manitoba and its associated ecosystems. Through a Memorandum of Agreement between the Government of Manitoba and the NCC, 4,118 hectares of these lands in the Rural Municipality of Stuartburn now contribute to Manitoba's network of protected areas. This agreement provides a legal mechanism to ensure that NCC 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

Prior to European settlement, the tall grass prairie ecosystem covered much of the Red River Valley in south-central Manitoba. Since then, most of this land has been largely transformed for agricultural purposes. The tall grass prairie is now considered to be one of the rarest and most endangered 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.

In addition to preserving portions of the tall grass prairie ecosystem, establishment of a protected area within this region has also increased protection for several endangered and threatened species. The Western Prairie Fringed Orchid and Small White Lady's Slipper are two plant species that have been listed provincially and federally as endangered species. Both of these orchids require the presence of a companion fungus to survive; a fungus that can easily be destroyed when the plant is dug up. Other plants such as Great Plains Ladies'-tresses, Culver's Root and Riddell's Goldenrod are additional tall grass prairie species that have been listed under Manitoba's Endangered Species Act. This area also provides habitat for the Powesheik Skipperling, a threatened butterfly whose very limited range includes this region of southeastern Manitoba.

The joining of NCC owned lands to Manitoba's network of protected areas marks the first time privately owned land has been included in the network. It has also provided the chance to establish protected areas within southern Manitoba where opportunities to do so are often limited due to the high proportion of developed land within this region.