

## 2019 Rangeland Cup - Minneapolis

Prairie grasslands are diverse and productive ecosystems that provide society a wide array of ecosystem goods and services. Unfortunately, these ecosystems are some of the most threatened globally, with estimates ranging between 40-50% of original biome areas having been converted to other uses and less than 5% in permanent conservation (compared to tropical/subtropical grasslands and forests, ≈28% converted but with 13% in permanent conservation)<sup>#</sup>. Historically, mechanisms arose to retire converted lands to allow restoration back to native communities or to place threatened lands into permanent conservation status (e.g., easements), but often these are limited by state and national budgets and may detract conservation efforts due to required management policies regarding potential and future uses of the prairie.

- 1) What are the drivers of prairie losses to other land uses? Why are permanent prairie conservation efforts so far behind the conservation efforts of other biomes globally? How do the mechanisms of prairie ecosystem conservation differ from those of other biomes (e.g., tropical forests) that are more widely publicized?
- 2) Identify a particular prairie ecosystem that is currently threatened by some of the pressures you identified in Part 1 and develop a new, innovative conservation strategy that would enhance the long-term conservation of the ecosystem. Describe how your strategy would provide incentives for landowners and managers to adopt your recommendations as well as what ecological processes would be improved post-implementation.

<sup>#</sup> - Heidenreich, B. 2009. *What are global temperate grasslands worth? A case for their protection*. Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative, Vancouver, BC, Canada.

**PLEASE REGISTER NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 16, 2018 AT**

<https://rangelandcup2019.eventbrite.com>