

A Landowner's Experience and Guide to Restoring Prairie



Tony Kenny, TGO Conference
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Why Prairie?

- ✓ Retire farm field impacting on wetland
- ✓ Something different, something unique
- ✓ RARE....ecological imperative
- ✓ Respond to Provincial priority
- ✓ Conservation minded



Project Overview:

- ✓ Consultation, community consensus
- ✓ Some apprehension (field of weeds?)
- ✓ Site & Species selection
- ✓ Project planning & fundraising
- ✓ Planting, Tending & Touring



Site Preparation

- ❖ Options: chemical, manual, fire, mechanical, combinations
- ❖ Multi-season approach works best (2-3 seasons)
- ❖ Make sure you remove seed bank
- ❖ Chemical is preferred option



Planting Using Seed:

- ❖ Sourcing is an issue, buy or collect?
- ❖ Demand exceeds supply
- ❖ May be 3 or more years before plant maturity
- ❖ Immature sites are prone to weeds
- ❖ Key Factors affecting outcome:
 - seed viability
 - timing
 - site characteristics
 - weather
- ❖ Multi-year commitment is critical



Planting Plugs:

- ❖ Higher up front costs, limited sources
- ❖ More immediate, reliable results
- ❖ Weather and site conditions less critical
- ❖ Earlier maturity, less competition
- ❖ Better distribution control



Tending Issues:

- ❖ I.D. of young plants can be a challenge
- ❖ 'Weeds' versus noxious weeds (help, harm neither?)
- ❖ Watch out for Quackgrass, White Sweet Clover, & Mustard
- ❖ Cutting, de-heading, pulling, spraying are options
- ❖ Timing may be critical
- ❖ Tending may be critical to support (apprehension about weeds)



PBs:

- ❖ Make sure you have a plan and follow it!
- ❖ Getting fire permit may be a challenge
- ❖ Hire qualified Fire Boss and Crew
- ❖ Doing PB at best time can be tough (crew availability)
- ❖ Costs: insurance, ignition and suppression high



Site Observations:

- ❖ Great soil stabilizers
- ❖ Performance best in damp areas
- ❖ Exposed areas slower to establish
- ❖ Dramatic increase in insects, birds and herps
- ❖ large and small game increase not as great
- ❖ Great variation across site
- ❖ Tremendous use as winter food source



General Observations:

- ❖ Projects are costly (time, money, patience)
- ❖ Multi-year commitment critical
- ❖ Big learning curve...every site different
- ❖ No '*cookie cutter*' approach
- ❖ Do your homework, be innovative, experiment



Concerns:

- Prov. and Fed. SARs programs must balance regulations with incentives
- Landowners need long-term tax relief and \$ support for site management (PBs)
- If in broad public interest, public (gov't.) should pay.

Note of Thanks:

✓ Sincerest thanks for support from...

- Ontario Stewardship Program
- OMNR SAR Program
- NHIC & WWF
- area FON and OFAH clubs
- OMNR CFWIP Fund, Wetland Habitat Fund, Friends of TD Canada Trust, Sir Sandford Fleming College, RLSN, Peterborough Green-up and many others

✓ Provincial Recovery Plan (Lindsay)

The Power of People



“We abuse land because we see land as a commodity belonging to us. When we begin to see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect”

Aldo Leopold