

Nature Saskatchewan (Sarah Vinge, Habitat Stewardship Coordinator, Rare Plant Rescue)

The Stewards of Saskatchewan (SOS) is a suite of four stewardship programs that engage rural landowners in voluntary stewardship actions to conserve prairie habitat in southern Saskatchewan and increase awareness among rural and urban residents to benefit ecosystem integrity (health) for wildlife and people. The four programs are Operation Burrowing Owl (OBO, initiated in 1987), Rare Plant Rescue (RPR, 2002), Shrubs For Shrikes (SFS, 2003), and Plovers On Shore (POS, 2008). The SOS programs use ambassador species (Burrowing Owl, plant-species at risk, Prairie Loggerhead Shrike, and Piping Plover, respectively) to promote voluntary stewardship by rural landowners as a means of conserving grasslands. While the programs focus on a small number of species, ultimately an array of prairie species benefit from SOS activities. The success of the SOS programs is attributed to the creation of lasting, respectful relationships with landowners. Together, the four programs currently have 567 participants who are conserving 75,500 hectares (186,500 acres) of prairie habitat and 17.2 km (10.75 miles) of shoreline.

In Saskatchewan, there are no similar stewardship programs that specifically target these species at risk.