



NEWS RELEASE

Sale of Crown land under grazing leases

March 23, 2020 -- The recent posting of Crown land for sale has excited a large number of responses and triggered many media sources and special interest groups to express opinions – and so they should. Selling parcels of Crown land seems like, on the surface, a reasonable way to increase provincial revenue in tight times but this issue is not that simple. Some of these parcels of Crown lands are part of large pieces of contiguous native grassland, which makes them key to proper functioning of ecosystem processes like carbon sequestration and water infiltration and storage as well as wildlife movement, biodiversity, and species at risk.

Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association cannot support the open auctioning of parcels of native landscape that are Crown land under grazing leases. “Open auction puts these parcels of land under too great a risk of conversion to other land uses. This list would include cropping, rural residential, and recreation as the sole use,” says AGLA chairman Kyle Forbes. “Conversion would create a fragmentation of the landscape thus disrupting the ecosystem function and leading to overall grassland health degradation.”

AGLA maintains that the grazing lease system in Alberta has conserved these lands for the last 139 years thus making it the only proven system for Crown land conservation we currently have. And the leaseholder rancher as one who is most suited to manage these lands. “The best way to conserve native grassland is to let them remain to be managed by the leaseholder rancher. This could be through leaving the grazing disposition in place or selling to the leaseholder with a caveat for the land to never be broken,” says Forbes. “Science has told us that these grasslands need an adaptively managed grazing animal to keep the ecosystem processes humming along. Leaseholder ranchers provide the proper management of a cow herd to achieve stewardship of the grassland resource.”

Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association is a membership organization working to advocate on behalf of leaseholders in Alberta. AGLA has actively represented the interests of grazing leaseholders locally, provincially and nationally since 1998. There are 5,700 grazing leases in the province of Alberta covering 5.2 million acres.

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