

Project Highlight – SD State Wildlife Grant

Project Type Inventory and monitoring

Title Survey and mapping of Black Hills montane grasslands

In a nutshell This unique habitat type, found in the higher elevations of the Black Hills, hosts several rare species, but has declined significantly in acreage and quality since settlement. This project was designed to survey and assess remaining areas of montane grasslands in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Relevant Habitats montane grasslands in the Black Hills

Cooperators Hollis Marriott, Don Faber-Langendoen, and Jim Drake

Purpose

- Digitally map higher quality Black Hills montane grasslands; construct a montane grassland GIS layer in cooperation with public agencies.
- Provide a set of photos of survey sites from relocatable points.
- Thoroughly characterize the Black Hills montane grassland vegetation type.
- Develop a field key to the type.
- Share information through national databases and publication in an academic journal.

Location Black Hills, South Dakota

Timeframe July 2010 – December 2012

Summary or Important Findings

- This effort followed up on a previous survey in 1999, when many of these grasslands were found to be dominated by nonnative hay grasses and clovers.
- Only 8 of 78 montane grasslands surveyed in 2011 and during previous projects ranked high in ecological integrity assessment.
- This habitat type is impacted by cattle grazing and water development for livestock, hay cutting, road construction, and construction of homes.
- Due to various threats and lack of protection, this habitat type is considered critically imperiled.

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More Information

Marriott, H. 2012. Survey and mapping of Black Hills montane grasslands. Prepared for the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. State Wildlife Grant T-45-R-1, CFDA # 15-634.