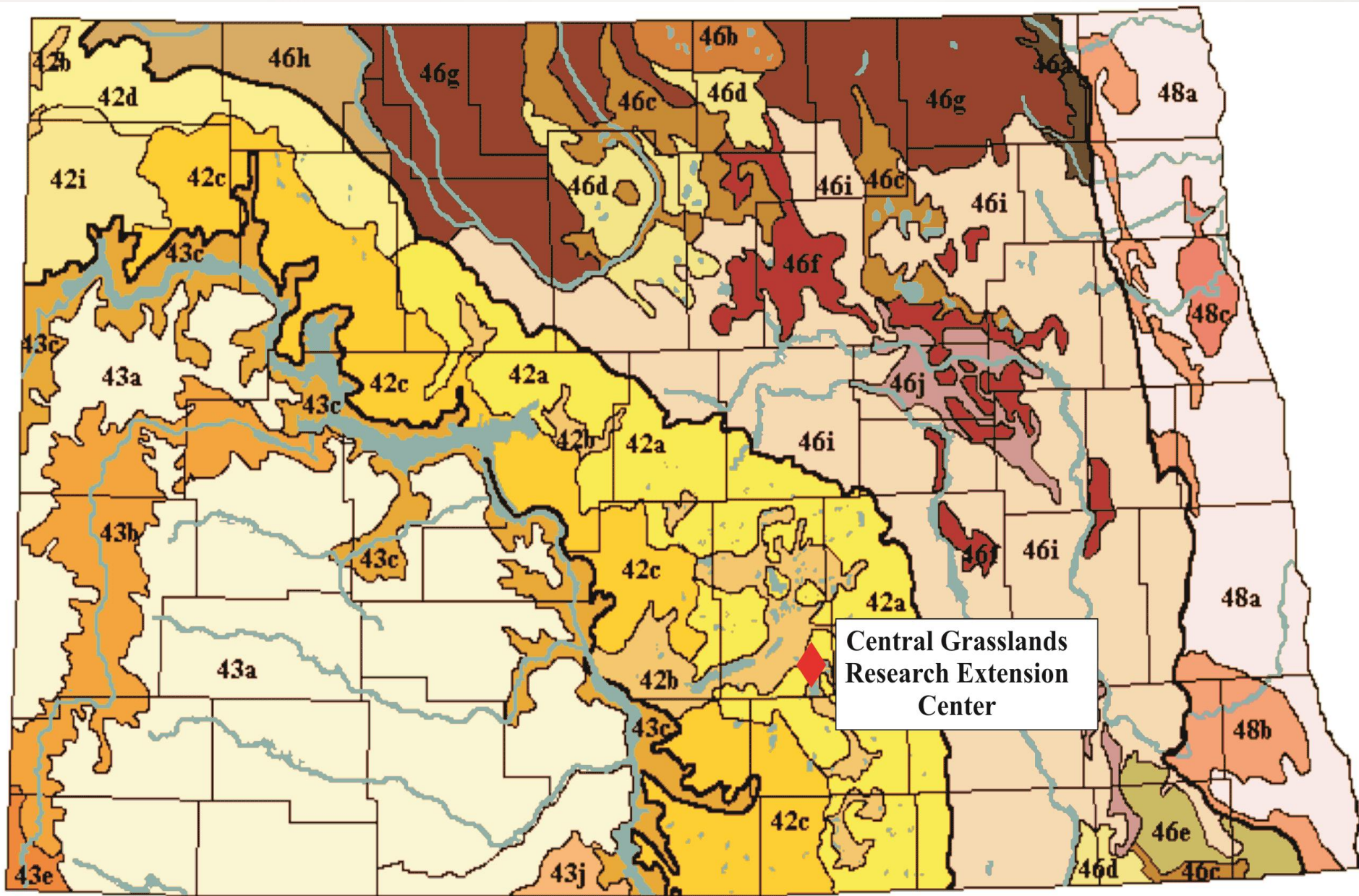


The Publication and Distribution of the Central Grasslands Research Extension Center Annual Report Through Newspaper Media

**Anne C. Nyren
Administrative Officer
NDSU Central Grasslands Research
Extension Center**



Central Grasslands
Research Extension
Center

In 1987 at the request of the Advisory Board we began a public relations effort:

- Articles in the Farm Section of the local Daily Paper.**
- Consultation with the editor of the paper regarding expanding the distribution of the annual report.**
- Development of a “tabloid” style annual report to be inserted in the local daily paper. Distribution approx. 23,000.**

The Learning Process

- We had to learn how to “layup” for a newspaper: no tabletop publishing, email, or internet.
- The newspaper had to learn how to “layup” a scientific document: table 1 before table 2 etc.
- The first attempt had all the text up front and the tables at the back and was 30 days past deadline!

Writing for the Public

- Newspaper layup was a huge learning curve for us.
 - Large paper formats
 - Early computers frequently crashed with the large files.
 - Tables and figures moved around during layup
 - Getting scientists to write for the public
 - Getting contributors to meet the deadline

Writing for the Public, cont'

- Editors were hired to assist in polishing and refining the technical language for the laymen.
- We strived for a mix of fairly technical reports to more popular articles.
 - For several years I wrote an article entitled “*Soundings*” describing drought, education, prosperity, etc.

Writing for the Public, cont'

- We did the final editing at the Center, the whole process took about six weeks.
- We increased the distribution to 50,000 and contracted with the paper to ship the report to other papers for inclusion - some by zip code.

Writing for the Public, cont'

- We continue to strive to improve the report:
 - We have included cultural, economic, and production data on the 19 counties within the Coteau region.
 - My goal of making the report readable and attractive was met, in part, by inserting a special center section.

Writing for the Public, cont'

- In 2007 we worked with a multidisciplinary team of scientists, a historian, an English Professor and a group of landscape architect students to develop “The Concept of Prairie Voices
- The center section was a success and the 2007 section led to the development of a research and cultural symposium in conjunction with our summer field tour.

Central Grasslands Research Extension Center: For the Coteau and its People

"This place is about family, roots and the unique quality of life."

The Central Grasslands Research Extension Center is in the Coteau region of North Dakota and serves 18 counties in an area bounded by the Missouri River on the west and the James River on the east. The people of the Coteau make their living from the land and manifest their distinctive way of life through agriculture and industry, which sustain them; through the foods that grace their tables, which nourish them; and through daily interaction with the land, its plants and its animals, which keeps them grounded.



Graduate Students More than 30 to date have completed degrees in animal and range science, botany, wildlife science, economics, soils, hydrology and civil engineering and work with the people of the Coteau.



The CGREC reflects the culture of the Coteau: its people are people of the Coteau. The center strives to keep the region prosperous and sustainable, and it shares in the Coteau's quality of life.



International Scholars Students and faculty from the Chinese Academy of Science, Institute of Botany, in Beijing, China, bring new talent and expertise to the Coteau, fostering international insights about communities.

NDSU

The Central Grasslands Research Extension Center: A Long-term Partnership in the Coteau



Range, Natural Resources and Livestock Research



Forage Research

Feedstocks for the 400-cow CGREC herd are grown at the Coteau.



Biofuels Research

The CGREC is taking the lead on a project studying perennials for biofuels at six sites spanning central and western North Dakota.

**more than 100 scientific projects
have been completed.**

Cattle Herd Management and Marketing
Cattle Nutrition
Cattle Health
Grazing Systems
Rangeland Monitoring

Coteau contributions to the state's economy

	Coteau Totals	State Totals	Percent of State
Market value of ag products sold	\$1,435,776,000	\$4,016,750,000	36%
Crops receipts	\$970,668,000	\$2,898,109,000	33%
Livestock receipts	\$469,108,000	\$1,118,641,000	42%
All cattle production(5 year avg.)	764,400	1,806,000	42%
Beef cattle production(5 year avg.)	399,700	960,400	42%
Number of farms	11,935	30,300	39%
All hay production (tons/acre)	1,420,000	3,137,000	45%

Data from 2007 ND Ag Statistics

The CGREC wishes to thank Tom Isern, NDSU History Department professor, for his vision and generosity; David Martinson, NDSU English Department lecturer, for his suggestions on using "Coteau voices" as part of the literature of this section; professor Catherine Wiley and her students in the NDSU Architecture and Landscape Architecture Department, for their insight and enthusiasm; Rick Bohn, CGREC naturalist, who contributed all of the photos in Pages 1-3; Deb Tanner, NDSU Agriculture Communication, for her artistry, skill and assistance with this project; our Advisory Board for its support of this project; and finally, the dedicated staff at CGREC. - Anne Nyren, editor

"My ranch was homesteaded in 1882. I have a strong family tradition. I came back to farm because I am optimistic about agriculture. There is lots of opportunity in ag. You just need to see it. ... Things are changing so fast, my biggest fear is keeping up."

Jerry Doan, McKenzie, N.D.

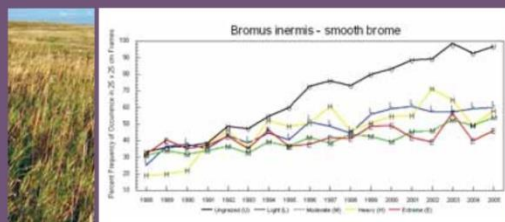
"I love the grasslands and their pristine beauty. My grandfather settled here and I am thankful that he chose to do so."

Robert Erbele, Lehr, N.D.

"I have lived here for 43 years. I have grown to love the spaciousness of earth and sky, the solitude, and the wonderful atmosphere that is all around me here."

Sourey Schmidt, Medina, N.D.

CGREC Field Laboratory and School



In 18 years of ecological research, CGREC range scientist Bob Patton has documented nearly 200 plant species, such as smooth brome, and documented sustainability under varying grazing intensities.



Carbon Sequestration and Root Decomposition: A developed ecophysiology program studies the details of complex plant communities of the mixed grass prairie. The computer models from this study produce results that will assist land managers in decision making, including capitalizing on potentially lucrative carbon sequestration.



Wildlife Studies and Ecotourism



Soils, Soil Water and Hydrology



The Grazing Intensity Trial: The grazing intensity trial, conducted since 1988, continues as the CGREC's main research ecological project. New facets of the trial include carbon recycling, runoff and erosion, range fertilization, drought effects, gas exchange and photosynthesis.

"The small amount of untouched native prairie left on the Coteau is truly a national treasure. I came to Medina to teach Vocational Agriculture in 1956 and I'm still here in 2007. The Coteau is where my wife Janet and I built our homestead and raised our family. The Coteau offers such a variety of opportunities to raise crops and livestock that is almost unequaled. The wildlife and migratory bird populations on the Coteau has been a definite influence on our family as they grew and started careers in agriculture and education here in North Dakota and on the Coteau. I wouldn't have traded my life and experiences on the Coteau for anything."

Bill Well, Medina, N.D.

"The beauty of the rough hills covered with native grasses, flowers and rocks of every kind is what fills me with delight. God's extreme creativity is so apparent here."
Anne (Whitman) Ongstad

Living in the Middle Landscape

By Tom Isern

This could be the year we put it all together,
This could be the year we finally get it right.
With a little luck and we don't draw into hard cattle,
We'll be riding in the saddle on Saturday night. - Ian Tyson

My Norwegian Lutheran neighbors, like many of my fellow historians, are determinists. They believe human history is driven by great forces that cannot be resisted. History, they say, is way bigger than we are, and there's not much we can do about it. As I look at the history of my country — the Great Plains of North America — it turns out that while some things are determined, and some things run in cycles, the important things have been matters of choice. We are living the story of the Plains. Where are we going with it?

Old-fashioned ecologists say we are returning to a state of nature, whatever that is, that the region is destined again to be wilderness, whatever that is. This sort of ecology, however, and most of all, the very idea of wilderness, is discredited. White explorers and settlers never knew wilderness on the prairies. The prairies always have been a landscape under human influence and care.

Old-fashioned economists, on the other hand, say we are moving forward into the brave new productive world of an industrialized landscape. They say we have wasted too many tears and resources on impractical family farms and

unrealistic rural ideals. It's time to reorganize the country and put it on a paying basis.

To those who say an industrialized agriculture can prosper and endure across large tracts of the country, I say in reply, good luck. Show me a time and place in human history where this has happened. I am wary of historical law-givers, but it is something like a historical law that concentrations of land, and fossilizations of land use, will crumble, usually sooner rather than later.

Between these two rocky shores of ecology and economics, where might we steer? Fortunately, we do not have to make this up. An admirable ideal exists, one at least as old as Rome, as old as the Virgil I read in high school. It is the ideal of the middle landscape, a place that is neither a howling wilderness nor a degenerate industrialization. As described by Leo Marx in his classic history, "The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America," our only philosopher-president, Thomas Jefferson, had a vision of "the society of the middle landscape." Here there would be no taking care of itself. The middle landscape would be sustained by responsible husbandry.

Let me highlight in particular the phrase Marx coins to register the origin of such a landscape. He calls it, in words wonderfully evocative of our crying need on the Plains of North America, the "landscape of reconciliation."

Let us disregard those who take exclusive positions in regard to the story of the Plains and rather seek reconciliation in the middle landscape. We can have canvasbacks and bison and prairie smoke on the Plains, canvasbacks and bison and prairie smoke in abundance, without driving farmers from the land. We can have pro table, diversified farms on the Plains while fostering the restoration of prairie environments and the proliferation of wildlife. We cannot have any of these things, however, if we assume that nature or economics will work them out for us. Husbandry is work. And the working out of that husbandry, the science and thought and trial of it, is the work of the Central Grasslands Research Extension Center.

This middle landscape that Jefferson envisioned and Marx analyzed looks a lot like the Missouri Coteau. The middle landscape is no longer possible in much of America, but it is manifest here. Kidder County is neither Slope nor Cass, and thank God for that.

Often physical geographers speak of the Coteau as a border or margin.



Homemade merry-go-round windmill, Kidder

It delimits the western reaches of the glaciated region, or it bounds the Missouri Plateau on the east. Viewed from within, though, as a place to live and work, the Coteau is not the edge of anything, it is the middle of everything. It is, still, the middle landscape, if we can keep it.

"Keeping it" is not just a matter of possessing it. Keeping it means keeping it up, taking care of it, and the keepers have to be able to make a living. Both husbandry and pro tableity require continual adaptation in response to evolving nature and the changing marketplace. That's why we pay people to help us get these things right.

As a farmer, with a land payment to make; as a grouse hunter, with a Labrador retriever to be amused; and as a scholar, with a life interest in the prairies, I want this project of the middle landscape to succeed. It is an American dream. Let's do it for America. No, let's do it for ourselves. Let's make a living, and a life, in the middle landscape.



Erin Nyren-Erickson

"I left home several years ago to pursue educational and professional opportunities, but in some ways I never really left it. Hearing a song on the radio from my childhood days, or the scent of sweetclover or hawthorn in the air is all it takes to bring me back in heart and mind. I am of the Coteau."

Anonymous



Intimate to inf

NDSU landscape architecture students studied the spirit of place at Grasslands Research Extension Center. Micro and macro phenomena of the intimate to infinite textures of the extended landscape which serve as inspiration for one project there.

nite, Kayla Odell

Lane

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HOME

Writing for the Public, cont'

- In 2008 we tried, with the help of a NDSU graphics artist, for a shorter version of the articles partly to respond to those who complained about how technical the articles were and in part due to budget constraints.
- This created increased difficulty working with more editors, etc.
- While it worked I was not pleased with the looks of the report – in 2009 we did our own layup and strove for a mix of articles which are written concisely and without jargon.



Advantages

- Satisfied the mandate to disseminate the research results to the people of ND.
- Name recognition for the Center
- Easily made available to legislators, taxpayers, scientist.
- Local newspapers distribute 30,000-45,000 reports through their outlets.

Advantages, cont'

- Easy to bulk mail to our mailing list of producers outside the Coteau, other Universities, and researchers outside the US. (1000+)
- Increased staff awareness of the need for clear communication with the public.
- An asset when applying for grants.
- It provides a platform for scientists from other departments at NDSU such as Geologists, Archeologists, Ag. Economists and Landscape Architects to publish their reports.

Advantages, cont'

- It provides a platform to highlight our visiting scholar program to the public.

Disadvantages

- Expensive, 2009 costs totaled \$4,500 including the cost of distribution.
- Report will not fit on a shelf
- Absolute deadlines – newspapers are run on a very tight schedule.
- The need to educate new media experts at the local newspaper about the need for clear pictures and clean print free of streaks and smudges.

Disadvantages

- It is a “one-size-fits-all report containing both technical and popular articles.
- The tabloid format makes transferring the information to a web site more complex – cannot just publish to .pdf.