

**Scientific Name:** *Buchloe dactyloides*

**Common Name:** Buffalo Grass

**Element ID:** 12715

## Taxonomy

**Taxonomic class:** Monocotyledoneae

**Order:** Cyperales

**Family Name:** Poaceae

**Genus Name:** Buchloe

**Family Common Name:** Grass Family

**Genus Common Name:**

### Taxonomic Comments:

## Ranking and Protection Status

**Global Rank:** G4G5

**COSEWIC Status:** Threatened

**Provincial Rank:** S1

**Provincial Protection Status:**

## Diagnostic Characteristics

### Identification Comments:

Buffalograss is a grayish-green, stoloniferous, curly-leaved grass that forms dense matted sods. Male and female plants are strongly dimorphic (physically different). Male plants have slender erect stems 6-12 cm high, bearing 1-3 short spikes about 1 cm long, consisting of two-flowered spikelets. The females plants have very short, often prostrate stems beneath the leaves, bearing tight clusters of one-flowered spikelets that form hard globular burs of 1-5 seeds; these become the dispersal units. (Harms, V.L. 1997. N97HAR02SKCA)



Ladyka, C. © Private

### Lookalikes:

Currently no identified similar looking species

## Habitat Information and Comments

### Habitat Comments:

-Around Estevan, SK. Buffalo grass occurs on clay to clay-loam, moderately sodic or sub-sodic to non-saline soils, mostly below shale outcrops, on dry shallow coulee bottoms and lower slopes. It can also occur on south or west-facing mid-slope benches of the main Souris River Valley bluffs. A situation of reduced competition from ranker grasses and herbs seems necessary. Thus, it appears to represent a sub climax or disclimax species in its ecosystem. Cattle grazing and moderate trampling represent a common and perhaps necessary local habitat condition. (Harms, V.L. 1997. N97HAR02SKCA)

### Threat Comments:

TH-1; HABITAT INCLUDES ALKALINE, SHALEY, CLAYEY RAVINE SLOPES AND FLATS IN THE AGRICULTURAL ZONE.

### Protection Comments:

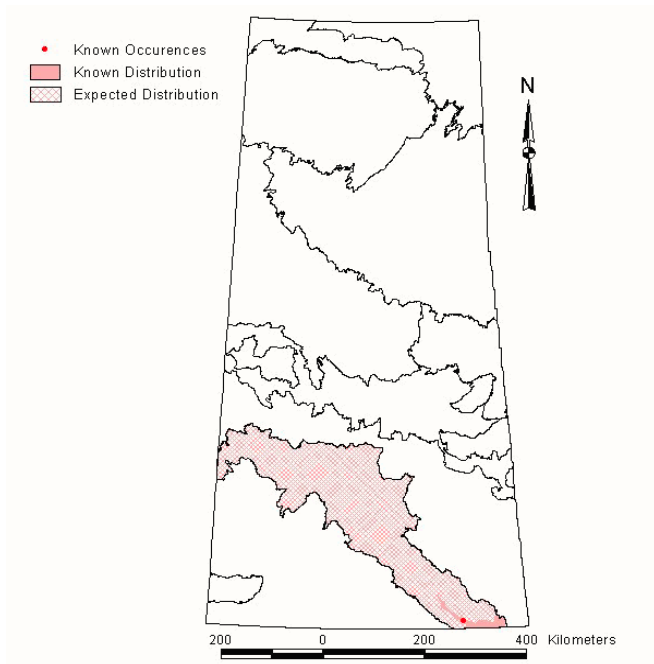
-Buffalo grass has a better rate of survival when competition from other mixed grasses are not present, like the regionally predominant species such as *Bouteloua gracilis* and *Stipa curtiseta*.

-Moderate grazing, and soil disturbances appear to help the development of Buffalo grass. Prairie fires seem to be important for the species to keep an advantage over the taller grasses, and more woody plant species. Fire-suppression might be a limiting factor for Buffalo grass. Avoid conversion to agricultural tillage.

-The construction of small catchment dams for cattle-watering ponds has destroyed some prime habitat for Buffalo grass.

-Clay pit mining and coal strip mining should be avoided in the areas present with Buffalo grass.

Saskatchewan Distribution



Rural Municipalities:

ESTEVAN (SK)

Range Extent Comments:

- RR-1; SOURIS RIVER VALLEY, WEST OF ESTEVAN.
- Found at sites approximately 5km and 7km west of Estevan.
- Found at 3 sites approximately 4km and 5km Southwest of Estevan.

Phenology

Time of Year

Phenology

Currently no phenology for this species.

Phenology Comments:

Currently no phenology comments for this species.

Reproduction and Ecology Comments

Reproduction Comments:

Currently no reproduction notes for this species.

Management Needs:

- Soil disturbances should be monitored to prevent weedy species and other invasives moving into the area, causing competition for Buffalo grass. Maintain moderate grazing as this has a definite benefit for the species.
- Maintain the appropriate habitat for Buffalo grass including grazing and possibly prescribed burns for the area.
- Increase the protected area for Buffalo grass (Buffalo grass Ecological Reserve), as it currently does not encompass enough of the species habitat. The majority of the Buffalo grass falls outside of this reserve.
- Most of the land where the Buffalo grass is found is on Crown land or privately owned. See the COSEWIC report (Harms 1997 pg. 33) for the recommended critical habitat for Buffalo grass in the Estevan Area.
- Contact the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Centre for specifics on a particular site.

Management Comments:

Activity restrictions require year round **low** intensity activity be limited to **foot traffic only** adjacent to populations, **medium** intensity activities\* should occur only at distances greater than **25 metres** from the population and **high** intensity activities\* at distances greater than **50 metres** from the population.

\*Examples of **medium** intensity activity include small vehicles <1 ton, ATVs, operating oil or gas wells, pipelines, trucks>1 ton (gravel, oil, grain), tractors (including farm tractors), pipeline construction (diameters <1 foot), operating compressor station or battery.

\*\*Examples of **high** intensity activity include road construction, roads, drilling rigs, mines and quarries, construction of compressor station or battery, forest harvest, large-diameter pipeline construction, seismic exploration, blasting, rock crushing, asphalt batching, gravel pit.

References

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Citation</u>
19551	Harms, V. L. 1997. COSEWIC Status Report on Buffalograss ( <i>Buchloe dactyloides</i> ) in Canada.