



SOUTH NATION
CONSERVATION
DE LA NATION SUD

Grasslands

Grasslands provide habitat for bees, butterflies and at risk birds such as Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark; these insects and birds provide key ecosystem services such as pollination, seed dispersal and pest control.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has defined specifications for the creation of Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark habitat and South Nation Conservation's (SNC) grasslands all meet or exceed these specifications. In order to establish grasslands, SNC's work began with the removal of all shrubs and trees from the grassland area; followed by soil preparation and the sowing of native grass seeds which Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark show preference for nesting within.

SNC uses the following species of grasses and forbs when establishing grassland habitat:

- Virginia Wild Rye (*Elymus virginicus*)
- Riverbank Wild Rye (*Elymus riparius*)
- Canada Wild Rye (*Elymus Canadensis*)
- Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*)
- Brown-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
- Common Evening-Primrose (*Oenothera biennis*)



Female and Male Bobolink observed on SNC 97, North Stormont (2018).

Naturally occurring grasslands are often maintained as grasslands by natural or human caused fire. Future mowing of SNC managed sites will discourage the growth of weeds, shrubs, and trees and will mimic the disturbance that fire would normally provide.



Bumble bee observed pollinating grassland species on SNC 114, North Dundas (2018).

Size of grassland habitats managed by SNC:

- SNC 97 (*North Stormont*): 11.5 ha
- SNC 114 (*North Dundas*): 10.5 ha
- Upper Canada Migratory Bird Sanctuary (*South Stormont*): 13.68 ha
- Reveler Conservation Area (*North Stormont*): 24.28 ha

Moving forward, SNC will continue monitoring these grasslands to document Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark sightings and nesting activities and will use the findings to guide future grassland restoration projects.

Support for the creation of grasslands was provided by Ontario Power Generation and through the Species at Risk Benefit Exchange program under the *Endangered Species Act* (2007).