Biodiversity and whole farm approaches

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PES Working Group
Introducing the Wild Farm Alliance

Since 2000, Wild Farm Alliance has been working with farmers to achieve healthy, viable agriculture that protects and restores wild nature.
Principles of “wild farming”

The four principles of Wild Farming are easy to see:

1. Soil is kept covered with plants.
2. Flowers are present.
3. Native trees and shrubs are part of the farm.
4. Wildlife, from bees and birds to larger animals, are present.
PES WG Outcomes

How does “wild farming” fit with PES working group charges?
Soil health metrics (from research team)

- Organic matter (CASH tests)
- Aggregate stability
- Bulk density
- Greenhouse gas flux
- Soil biodiversity
Quantitative indicators

- Crop yields
- Forage recovery between grazing (forage height, cover)
- Downstream flooding
- Diversity of above ground beneficial organisms (insects, birds, mammals, etc.)
Qualitative/visual indicators

- Flowering plant abundance
- Diversity and abundance of noncrop habitat
- Diversity of pasture and hayfield species
- Water holding capacity and drought resistance
In-field practices

- Reduced tillage
- Keep soil covered
- Seed multi species cover crop and pasture mixes
- Well-designed rotational grazing
Edge of field practices

Buffers as "filter strips"

Plant native species in hedgerows and field boundaries
Whole farm practices

Increase structural diversity on farm property (downed trees, shrubs, trees, wildflowers, grasses)

On-farm native plant corridors especially along waterways
Next steps

- Setting dates and milestones on calendar for meaningful progress on whole farm approach
- WG subcommittee on whole farm approaches
- Incorporating whole farm approach into outreach and interviews with farmers
- What does research team need help with that WG can contribute to?
- Indigenous participation in process
- Expanding Ben’s study to include edge of field/whole farm practices?