



NFWF

Northern Great Plains Program

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PARTNERS

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies
- Altria Group
- Bezos Earth Fund
- Marathon Oil
- Occidental Petroleum Corporation

ABOUT NFWF

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 6,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$7.4 billion.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org



Greater sage-grouse

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture (NRCS), Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, Altria Group, Bezos Earth Fund, Marathon Oil and Occidental Petroleum Corporation announced the 2022 round of funding for Northern Great Plains projects. The 18 awards announced were awarded for \$5.8 million which will be further leveraged by \$6.7 million in grantee matching contributions for a total on-the-ground impact of \$12.5 million.

The following 18 projects address all eight strategies for the Northern Great Plains program, which include: 1) permanently protect important grasslands with conservation easements and other tools to maintain large blocks of habitat; 2) restore grasslands for the benefit of grassland wildlife and agricultural operations/ranching; 3) facilitate management of grasslands for the benefit of grasslands wildlife and agricultural operations/ranching; 4) implement grassland bird monitoring; 5) implement sylvatic plague treatment; 6) conserve pronghorn; 7) conserve sage-grouse; and 8) build capacity of partners to address the other strategies.

These 18 grants will contribute to the goals of the Northern Great Plains Business Plan by:

- Placing 61,765 acres under conservation easement
- Improving management on 786,099 acres of working lands
- Restoring 69,943 acres of habitat
- Removing or improving 44 miles of fencing to wildlife-friendly specifications
- Conserving and protecting 31 greater sage-grouse leks

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Black-footed ferret

MONTANA**Improving Habitat and Plague Mitigation for Black-footed Ferrets on the Fort Belknap Reservation (MT)**

Grantee: Fort Belknap Indian Community

Grant Amount:..... \$191,900

Matching Funds:..... \$193,700

Total Project Amount:..... \$385,600

Increase the Fort Belknap black-footed ferret population from 17 to 30 breeding adults to meet federal delisting criteria and contribute to the removal of the species from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. Project will scale up annual sylvatic plague mitigation, ferret population surveys, and reintroductions on the Reservation.

Increasing Capacity to Facilitate Conservation Easements on Private Lands Grassland Habitat (MT)

Grantee: The Montana Land Reliance

Grant Amount:..... \$150,000

Matching Funds:..... \$150,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$300,000

Increase capacity for a Eastern Manager position to identify conservation easement opportunities in Montana's Northern Great Plains, work directly with landowners to answer questions, negotiate easement terms and guide easement donors through the process. Project will secure 50,000 acres under easements through this coordinator to conserve vulnerable grassland and sagebrush habitat for species including the greater sage-grouse, pronghorn, and migratory bird species.

Increasing Climate Resilience for Grassland Habitats and Ranching Communities (MT)

Grantee: Ranchers Stewardship Alliance

Grant Amount:..... \$381,100

Matching Funds:..... \$387,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$768,100

Improve soil health, hydrology and carbon storage through improved grazing management practices in north-central Montana to increase climate resilience and benefit wildlife species. Project will target ranches operating on perennial rangelands and develop infrastructure to disincentivize land use conversion and associated losses to wildlife and soil carbon to improve 10,000 acres of habitat.

Increasing Climate Resilience through Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (MT)

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy

Grant Amount:..... \$299,700

Matching Funds:..... \$299,900

Total Project Amount:..... \$599,600

Build on past success to expand the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances program for grassland birds and greater sage-grouse and implement habitat conservation activities that will help to retain the ecological integrity of climate-resilient grassland habitat in Montana. Project will place 360 acres under conservation easement, restore 20 acres of mesic habitat hydrology with Zeedyk structures, modify 14 miles of fencing and improve grazing management on 50,000 acres.

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Protecting Private Grassland Rangeland Habitat through Conservation Easements in Rosebud County (MT)

Grantee: The Montana Land Reliance
 Grant Amount:..... \$421,100
 Matching Funds:..... \$421,100
 Total Project Amount:..... \$842,000
 Permanently protect two multi-generation private working ranches in Rosebud County, Montana through conservation easements to benefit the greater sage-grouse and ensure the area remains intact and available for wildlife habitat. Project will protect the high quality grassland habitat in perpetuity.

Restoring Mesic and Wet Meadow Habitat in the Missouri-Milk River Grasslands (MT)

Grantee: National Wildlife Federation
 Grant Amount:.....\$78,900
 Matching Funds:.....\$81,600
 Total Project Amount:..... \$160,500
 Provide a replicable model for watershed-scale mesic, wet meadow, and riverscape restoration through a comprehensive assessment and prioritization of public and private lands in the Willow North Watershed in the Milk River basin, Montana. Project will restore 13 acres of mesic habitat hydrology by installing Zeedyk and beaver dam analog structures to benefit greater sage-grouse and other species.

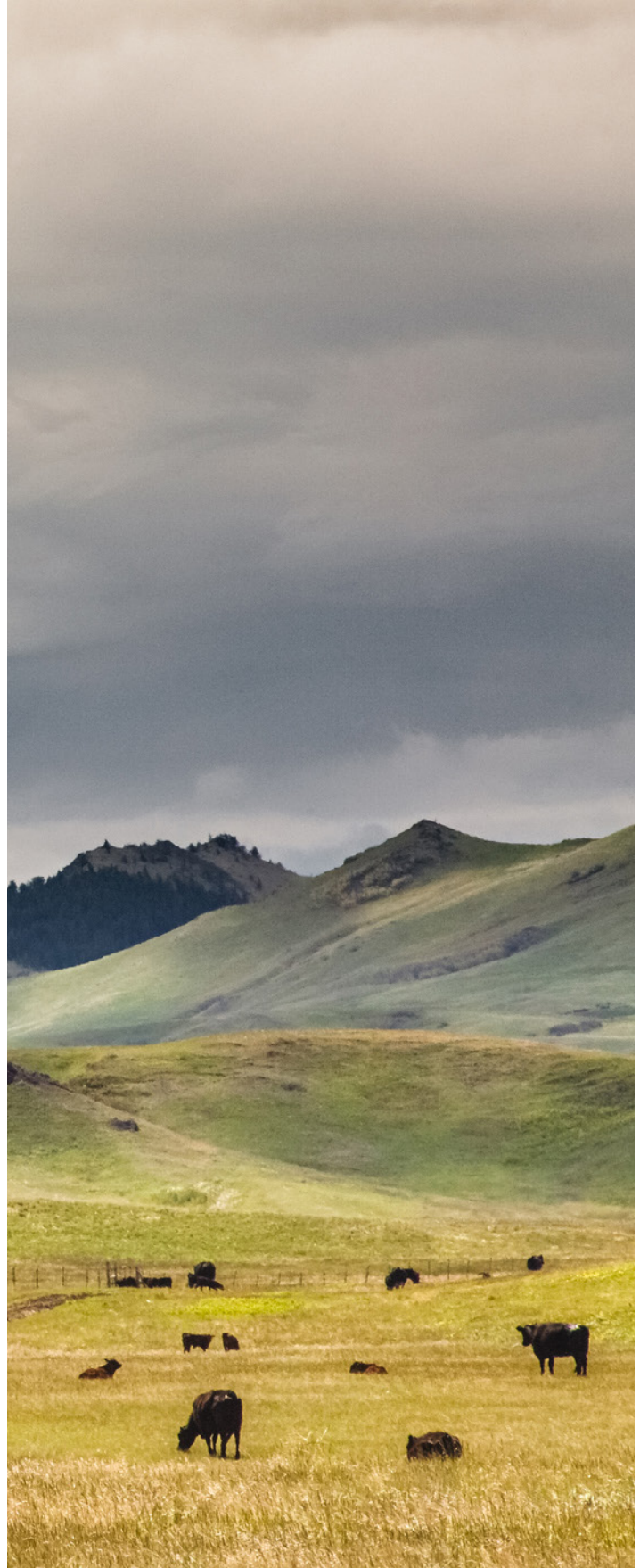
NEBRASKA

Improving Climate Resilience with Collaborative Conservation in the Sandhills Ecosystem (NE)

Grantee: Sandhills Task Force
 Grant Amount:..... \$300,000
 Matching Funds:..... \$460,000
 Total Project Amount:..... \$760,000
 Improve grassland bird and wildlife habitat, ecosystem resiliency, and carbon sequestration potential in Nebraska’s Sandhills on privately owned land by controlling eastern red cedar infestations and/or improving grazing systems. Project will restore or improve 10,000 acres through the use of prescribed fire, mechanical treatment, and strategically removing seed sources of woody invasives.

Increase Capacity and Technical Assistance to Accelerate Conservation Delivery in the Sandhills (NE)

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy
 Grant Amount:.....\$245,000
 Matching Funds:.....\$245,000
 Total Project Amount:.....\$490,000
 Hire a full-time Grassland Protection Coordinator that will enhance partner efforts in the eastern third of the Sandhills, and provide technical assistance to accelerate on-the-ground delivery and implementation of NRCS and Farm Bill conservation programs. Project will improve management on nearly 200,000 acres of private rangeland habitat by addressing woody encroachment and increasing grassland health and climate resiliency.



Cattle grazing in Montana

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Restoring Grassland Habitat by Reintroducing Historic Prescribed Fire Regimes (NE)

Grantee: Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition

Grant Amount: \$300,000

Matching Funds: \$639,400

Total Project Amount: \$939,400

Increase technical assistance through two Burn Coordinator positions to ensure capacity to implement prescribed fires to treat woody invasive species encroachment of eastern red cedars and restore native grassland habitat in the Nebraska Sandhills. Project will restore nearly 9,600 and support communication efforts that explain the value and necessity of prescribed fire in managing healthy grassland systems.

Restoring Grassland Habitat by Removing Invasive Eastern Red Cedar in the Sandhills (NE)

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

Grant Amount: \$261,200

Matching Funds: \$261,300

Total Project Amount: \$522,500

Build on past success to restore grassland habitat in the Nebraska Sandhills using prescribed fire to control woody invasive species such as eastern red cedar. Project will restore 50,000 acres of habitat by working with private landowners to remove invasive tress, reintroduce historic burning regimes, reseeding native grassland species and following best management practices for grazing.

NORTH DAKOTA

Increase Capacity and Technical Assistance to Deliver Grassland Conservation on Private Lands (ND)

Grantee: North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition

Grant Amount: \$350,000

Matching Funds: \$354,500

Total Project Amount: \$704,500

Expand programs focused on the conservation of North Dakota grasslands and the plant and wildlife species that are dependent on them by adding capacity and expanding education and outreach programs. Project will improve livestock management practices on more than 50,000 acres by working one-on-one with individual ranching operations to find ways to improve their livestock management practices.

Providing Technical Assistance to Improve Grassland Habitats and Increase Carbon Sequestration (ND)

Grantee: North Dakota Natural Resources Trust

Grant Amount: \$500,000

Matching Funds: \$750,000

Total Project Amount: \$1,250,000

Increase support and capacity for existing programs that assist livestock agriculture producers in implementing rotational grazing systems, transitioning idle grass to healthy grasslands, planting native perennial species into previously cropped areas and reclaiming ecologically

disturbed sites from oil and gas development. Project will improve or restore more than 35,000 acres of rangeland habitat to benefit native species and increase grassland carbon sequestration.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Using Decision-Support Tools to Strategically Deliver Grassland Bird Conservation – Phase 3 (SD)

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

Grant Amount: \$345,100

Matching Funds: \$346,000

Total Project Amount: \$691,100

Develop a tract prioritization protocol based on the new grassland bird decision-support tools to identify grassland tracts on private land in western South Dakota with the highest value to grassland nesting songbirds. Project will enroll 14,000 acres of highest priority grassland habitat into improved grazing management systems.

WYOMING

Improving Sagebrush-Grassland Habitat in the Cross-Jurisdictional Thunder Basin Ecoregion (WY)

Grantee: Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Association

Grant Amount: \$400,000

Matching Funds: \$400,000

Total Project Amount: \$800,000

Enhance rangeland grassland habitat on private, state and federal lands through improved grazing management, derelict fence removal and invasive species treatments to benefit greater sage-grouse, black-tailed prairie dogs, pronghorn, and other sagebrush and grassland obligates. Project will improve more than 250,000 acres within the Thunder Basin Ecoregion and increase landscape permeability within key habitats.

MULTIPLE STATES

Improving Conservation Coordination and Implementation in the Dakota Grasslands (MT; ND; SD; WY)

Grantee: The Mule Deer Foundation

Grant Amount: \$270,000

Matching Funds: \$270,000

Total Project Amount: \$540,000

Hire a habitat partnership coordinator to be the key position for increasing the capacity to identify, plan, coordinate and implement conservation projects that restore key habitats in the Dakota Grassland region. Project will improve derelict fencing to wildlife-friendly specifications, restore sage-grouse habitat through invasive species treatments, improve mesic habitat hydrology through seedyk structures and improve rangelands through modified grazing plans.

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Pronghorn in Montana

Restoring Grassland Habitat on Private Working Lands through Audubon Conservation Ranching (MT; WY)

Grantee: Montana Audubon Society
 Grant Amount:..... \$488,000
 Matching Funds:..... \$619,900
 Total Project Amount:.....\$1,107,900
 Provide capacity and technical assistance to increase landowner enrollment in the Audubon Conservation Ranching program. Program enrollment increases climate resilience and system health in grassland habitats through individualized improved grazing management plans. Project will improve management of technical plans on private and privately managed grassland habitats and enroll an additional 300,000 acres.

Supporting Climate Resilient Habitats and Increasing Grassland Carbon Sequestration (MT; ND; SD; WY)

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited
 Grant Amount:..... \$297,000
 Matching Funds:..... \$297,200
 Total Project Amount:..... \$594,200
 Provide technical assistance and incentives for on-the-ground conservation projects on private lands through the Northern Grassland Incentives Program which offers landowners financial assistance to voluntarily restore and enhance native grasslands, shrublands and mesic habitats. Project will improve or restore nearly 10,000 acres to help build rangelands that are resilient to climate change, drought, and invasive species, and which have improved capabilities to sequester carbon.

SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA

Increasing Grassland Connectivity through Habitat Restoration and Species Management in Saskatchewan

Grantee: South of the Divide Conservation Action Program Inc. (SODCAP)
 Grant Amount:..... \$265,100
 Matching Funds:..... \$266,300
 Total Project Amount:..... \$531,400
 Engage livestock producers to restore and manage native prairies in southwest Saskatchewan that increase connectivity among grasslands, maintain or improve habitats for species at risk, and foster sustainable livelihoods while preserving cultural identities. Project will improve 45,000 acres to benefit greater sage-grouse, sprague’s pipit, chestnut collared longspur and thick billed longspur and other grassland obligates.

Securing Critical Habitat for Greater Sage-Grouse through Conservation Easements in Saskatchewan

Grantee: Saskatchewan Stock Growers Foundation
 Grant Amount:..... \$239,900
 Matching Funds:..... \$239,900
 Total Project Amount:..... \$479,800
 Enhance and restore natural ecosystems and wildlife habitat to conserve indigenous species of flora and fauna in Saskatchewan by acquiring conservation easements in accordance with Canada’s Conservation Easements Act and increase public awareness of conservation easements with a comprehensive communications strategy. Project will analyze 50,000 acres of grassland habitat to identify conversion risk and engage with landowners on conserving the highest priority properties.