



# NFWF

## Northern Great Plains Program

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### FUNDING PARTNERS

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies
- Avangrid Foundation
- Noble Energy

### 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 5,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$6.1 billion. Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)

### NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Greater Sage Grouse

### OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, Avangrid Foundation, Noble Energy, United States Department of Agriculture (NRCS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, announced the 2019-year round of funding for the Northern Great Plains Program. The sixteen awards announced generated nearly \$4 million which will be further leveraged by more than \$4.9 million in grantee matching contributions for a total on-the-ground impact of more than \$8.9 million.

The following 16 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.

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## GRASSLAND RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF WILDLIFE AND AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS/RANCHING

The following projects seek to improve or restore more than 200,000 acres of grassland habitat, benefiting greater sage-grouse, pronghorn and multiple grassland bird species.

### Restoring Native Prairie and Increasing Grassland Connectivity in Southwest Saskatchewan

Grantee: Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association

Grant: ..... \$300,000

Matching Funds: ..... \$448,720

Total Project: ..... \$748,720

Engage livestock producers to conserve and restore native prairies that benefit greater sage-grouse, pronghorn and multiple grassland bird species in southwest Saskatchewan by increasing connectivity among grasslands, maintaining or improving habitats for species at risk, and fostering sustainable livelihoods for landowners. Project will restore 90 acres of cultivated grasslands, bring 82,000 acres under improved management and modify 12 miles of fencing to wildlife-friendly specifications.

### Achieving Grassland Conservation by Providing Technical Assistance to Landowners (SD)

Grantee: National Audubon Society

Grant: ..... \$331,951

Matching Funds: ..... \$333,370

Total Project: ..... \$665,321

Improve existing grassland habitat health and establish 5-10 year conservation agreements with landowners through the South Dakota Prairie Management Toolbox which provides cost-share and technical assistance for woody species removal, prescribed fire, and grazing infrastructure. Project will bring 10,000 acres under improved management and restore 1,500 acres of habitat.

### Restoring Grasslands and Quantifying Outcomes for Ecosystem Function on Private Lands (MT)

Grantee: World Wildlife Fund

Grant: ..... \$266,206

Matching Funds: ..... \$367,340

Total Project: ..... \$633,546

Hire a Ranchers Stewardship Alliance Project Coordinator to recruit and implement restoration projects and to collect soil carbon data to monitor changes in ecosystem function at restoration sites on private lands in Blaine, Phillips and Valley Counties in Montana. Project will restore more than 3,622 acres of marginal cropland to grassland.



Cows graze in Nebraska Sandhills

### Restoring Habitat and Improving Connectivity in the Thunder Basin Grasslands (WY)

Grantee: Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Grant: ..... \$250,000

Matching Funds: ..... \$250,000

Total Project: ..... \$500,000

Benefit sage-grouse, pronghorn, and other sagebrush and grassland obligates by addressing encroaching juniper, modifying fences to wildlife-friendly specifications, and replanting native sagebrush on a post-wildfire site within the Thunder Basin Grasslands. Project will restore 600 acres of habitat, improve 12 miles of fencing and conserve eight sage-grouse leks.

### Incentivizing Grassland Habitat Restoration on Private Working Lands in the Sandhills (NE)

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

Grant: ..... \$75,837

Matching Funds: ..... \$102,000

Total Project: ..... \$177,837

Provide incentives to landowners to enhance wildlife habitat on working lands in the Eastern Nebraska Sandhills by removing invasive cedar, improving grazing infrastructure and restoring habitat with prescribed fire. Project will improve management on 48,922 acres of private working lands, resulting in high quality grassland health and soil health benefiting both cattle and wildlife.

(continued)

### Expanding the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances Program to Protect Grasslands (MT)

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy

Grant: ..... \$142,178  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$142,237  
 Total Project: ..... \$284,415

Expand the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances program to enter into voluntary agreements with landowners to conserve habitat for greater sage-grouse and multiple grassland bird species in the Missouri-Milk River Grasslands. Project will improve 26 miles of fencing to wildlife-friendly specifications, restore five acres of riparian habitat and improve management on 50,000 acres.

### Enhancing, Expanding and Protecting Grasslands through Technical Assistance for Ranchers (MT)

Ranchers Stewardship Alliance

Grant: ..... \$298,888  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$326,000  
 Total Project: ..... \$624,888

Fund a position to coordinate between the ranching and conservation communities in Blaine, Phillips and Valley Counties, Montana, offering a suite of technical and financial tools for landowners. Project will improve management on 5,700 acres of grassland habitat to maintain this core grazing landscape.

### Improving Grassland Habitat by Addressing Invasive Eastern Red Cedar Infestations (NE)

Grantee: Sandhills Task Force

Grant: ..... \$300,000  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$505,000  
 Total Project: ..... \$805,000

Improve grassland bird and wildlife habitat in Nebraska's Sandhills on privately owned land by controlling eastern red cedar infestations and improving grazing systems. Project will use prescribed fire, mechanical treatment, remove seed sources and install watering locations to improve 10,000 acres and increase rangeland resilience to drought and future cedar invasion.

### Improving Grassland Habitat on the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation (MT)

Grantee: Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation

Grant: ..... \$220,000  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$250,000  
 Total Project: ..... \$470,000

Enhance, protect and preserve the natural resources on the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation in north-central Montana while protecting the rights of all tribal members, promoting sustainability, and providing for economic opportunity and education. Project will improve grassland connectivity and restore habitat by altering grazing management, using prescribed burning and modifying 19 miles of fencing.



Black-footed ferret

### IMPLEMENTATION OF SYLVATIC PLAGUE TREATMENT

The following projects seek to conserve populations of black-footed ferrets and prairie dogs by mitigating sylvatic plague and other threats.

### Securing Black-Footed Ferret Populations Through Sylvatic Plague Mitigation (MT, SD)

Grantee: World Wildlife Fund

Grant: ..... \$271,946 (11%)  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$319,580  
 Total Project: ..... \$591,526

Establish a population of black-footed ferret protected from sylvatic plague in the Missouri-Milk River Grasslands, Montana and central South Dakota. Project will improve the status of 20 black-footed ferrets at two reintroduction sites, recover prairie dog habitat lost to sylvatic plague at a third site, and set the stage to establish a new ferret population on private lands.

(continued)

### Conserving Pronghorn and Black-Footed Ferret Populations on the Lower Brule Indian Reservation (SD)

Grantee: Lower Brule Sioux Tribe

Grant: ..... \$295,201  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$387,000  
 Total Project: ..... \$682,201

Modify fences to improve passage and habitat connectivity for pronghorn and continue efforts to conserve prairie dogs and recover black-footed ferrets on the Lower Brule Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Project will increase tribal capacity, improve 15 miles of fencing, and mitigate threats from sylvatic plague on 1,800 acres of black-footed ferret habitat.

#### PRONGHORN CONSERVATION EFFORTS

The following project will implement fence modification and removal on 14 miles of fence, improving landscape permeability for pronghorn.

### Improving Habitat Connectivity for Pronghorn and Mule Deer by Modifying Woven Wire Fences (MT)

Grantee: Bureau of Land Management - Miles City Field Office

Grant: ..... \$50,000  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$50,000  
 Total Project: ..... \$100,000

Facilitate pronghorn and mule deer movement across the landscape and reduce neonatal mortality on Bureau of Land Management lands throughout eastern Montana. Project will replace 14 miles of woven wire fence in big game winter ranges to wildlife-friendly specifications.

#### PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT GRASSLANDS THROUGH CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

The following project will permanently protect 60,000 acres of grassland with a conservation easement to maintain a large block of uninterrupted habitat.

### Conserving Private Grasslands with Easements through an Agricultural Land Easement Coordinator (MT)

Grantee: Prickly Pear Land Trust

Grant: ..... \$234,286  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$387,500  
 Total Project: ..... \$621,786

Build on past success by sustaining the Agricultural Land Easement Coordinator position that is shared between the Montana Association of Land Trusts and the Natural Resource Conservation Service to facilitate coordination between the entities and increase the number of volunteer conservation easements on private lands in Montana. Project will bring 60,000 acres under permanent conservation easements.



Pronghorn

#### RESEARCH, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The following projects will work throughout the Northern Great Plains to measure the impact of NFWF investments on grassland bird species and finish a statewide evaluation of South Dakota grasslands to help prioritize and inform future conservation efforts.

### Identifying Native Grassland Habitat to Inform and Prioritize Conservation Investments (SD)

Grantee: South Dakota State University

Grant: ..... \$299,509  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$299,619  
 Total Project: ..... \$599,128

Complete an ongoing assessment currently underway to identify native, undisturbed, land tracts within priority grassland regions of western South Dakota to determine the extent of known tillage history to better inform and prioritize future conservation investments. Project will establish a publicly available baseline inventory of the potential extent of native grassland habitats in western South Dakota for the benefit of all endemic grassland species and communities.

### Monitoring Grassland Bird Population Responses to Investments in the Northern Great Plains (MT, ND, SD, WY)

Grantee: Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

Grant: ..... \$372,899  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$372,902  
 Total Project: ..... \$745,801

Continue evaluating and quantifying the impacts of NFWF-funded conservation easement and grazing management projects on priority grassland bird species in the Northern Great Plains. Project will compare density, population size, and trend of priority grassland birds between NFWF projects and controls within the Northern Great Plains region.