



Northern Great Plains Program

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PARTNERS

- Bezos Earth Fund
- Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies
- Cargill
- Nestlé
- Sysco
- Burger King
- Capri Holdings Ltd
- Occidental
- Marathon Oil
- U.S. Forest Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

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 6,800 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of more than \$10 billion. NFWF is an equal opportunity provider.



Pronghorn

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Forest Service, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, Capri Holdings, Bezos Earth Fund, Marathon Oil, Nestlé, Cargill, Sysco, Burger King, and Occidental announced the 2024 round of funding for Northern Great Plains projects. The 27 awards announced were awarded for \$22.8 million, which will be further leveraged by \$42 million in grantee matching contributions for a total on-the-ground impact of \$64.8 million. The following 27 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 27 grants will contribute to the goals of the Northern Great Plains Business Plan by:

- Restoring 123,338 acres
- Improving management on 1,310,742 acres
- Improving 277 miles of fencing
- Protecting 101,471 acres via conservation easements

(continued)

MONTANA**Grassland Conservation Delivery through Technical Assistance in Central Montana**

Grantee: Winnett ACES

Grant Amount: \$665,000

Matching Funds: \$677,900

Total Project Amount: \$1,342,900

Provide technical assistance for producers through building capacity with a full-time Land Health Specialist and a full-time Conservation Technician. Project will assist agricultural producers with adaptive management by providing soil health technical assistance as well as technical assistance in designing and implementing wet meadow restoration projects resulting in the restoration of 150 acres, improved management of 200,000 acres, installation of 250 structures and three studies completed.

Increasing Private Land Conservation in Montana's Northern Great Plains

Grantee: The Montana Land Reliance

Grant Amount: \$277,900

Matching Funds: \$300,000

Total Project Amount: \$577,900

Build capacity to complete private land conservation easements on threatened sagebrush and grassland landscapes in Montana's Northern Great Plains Priority Area. Project will protect 45,000 acres under easement as a result of expanded staff.

Supporting the Conservation Teams of the Montana Grassland Partnership

Grantee: Ranchers Stewardship Alliance

Grant Amount: \$561,500

Matching Funds: \$265,800

Total Project Amount: \$827,300

Work collaboratively with the ranching and conservation community in Montana's important grassland landscapes to protect healthy, resilient, grazing landscapes and wildlife habitat into the future. Project will improve management of 4,200 acres, restore 800 acres and improve 5 miles of fencing.

Using Low-Tech Process-Based Restoration for BLM's Restoration Landscapes Strategic Investments (MT)

Grantee: National Wildlife Federation

Grant Amount: \$486,900

Matching Funds: \$299,900

Total Project Amount: \$786,800

Address resource concerns such as riparian degradation, climate resiliency, native plant diversity and fire/fuels. Project will use low-tech, process-based restoration to restore up to 30 miles of riverscape within or near the Hi-Line Sagebrush Anchor as well as increase capacity to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) field office staff by providing science-driven restoration assistance.

Using the MOTUS Animal-tracking System to Understand Imperiled Grassland Birds (MT)

Grantee: Smithsonian Institution-National Zoological Park

Grant Amount: \$321,800

Matching Funds: \$352,000

Total Project Amount: \$673,800

Aid grassland bird conservation through research and field work. Project will conduct one study to estimate demographic rates, understand migratory ecology and build toward a full understanding of the key factors that regulate grassland bird populations across the full annual cycle.

NEBRASKA**Growing Sustainable Stewardship Networks and Healthy Ecosystems in the Nebraska Sandhills (NE)**

Grantee: Sandhills Task Force

Grant Amount: \$480,000

Matching Funds: \$480,000

Total Project Amount: \$960,000

Reduce the threat of eastern red cedar infestation in key areas of the Nebraska Sandhills by promoting the practice of removing cedar seed sources found in planted windbreaks and block plantings of cedars that are surrounded by intact prairie. Project will restore 4,200 acres.

Supporting Prescribed Fire Across the Sandhills (NE)

Grantee: Nebraska Community Foundation FBO Rainwater Basin Joint Venture

Grant Amount: \$699,300

Matching Funds: \$700,000

Total Project Amount: \$1,399,300

Integrate prescribed fire into ranch management to limit initial invasion and/or reinfestation of invasive plants. Project will improve the management of 44,400 acres through the acquisition of mobile prescribed burn units across 14,400 acres, leverage funding for a prescribed fire specialist on 15,000 acres and a cost-share for hiring a prescribe fire burn crew to support implementation on 15,000 acres.

SOUTH DAKOTA**Capacity Building to Expedite Delivery of ACEP-IRA Easements (SD)**

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited

Grant Amount: \$180,600

Matching Funds: \$183,000

Total Project Amount: \$363,600

Create a new collaborative position designed to develop emerging opportunities with ACEP-IRA easement to act as a liaison between landowners, land trusts, and NRCS with an emphasis in western South Dakota. Project will protect 20,000 acres under easement as a result of this position.

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Black-footed ferret

Capacity Building for Grassland Easements in the Northern Great Plains (SD)

Grantee: South Dakota Agricultural Land Trust
 Grant Amount: \$600,000
 Matching Funds: \$13,333,000
 Total Project Amount: \$13,933,000
 Deliver conservation easement solutions to South Dakota landowners. Project will grow capacity to increase connectivity and protect 8,000 acres of land under easement.

Establishing the O’onakizin (Stronghold) Buffalo Homeland (SD)

Grantee: Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation
 Grant Amount: \$700,000
 Matching Funds: \$620,000
 Total Project Amount: \$1,320,000
 Create a harmonious environment where bison herds can flourish while respecting the cultural and ecological values of the region. Project will install 55 miles of wildlife-friendly fencing, which will protect sensitive habitats, ensure connectivity and underpin sustainable land management that will foster biodiversity, support ecosystem regeneration, and facilitate rotational grazing patterns that enhance soil health, and improve the management of 40,000 acres to introduce up to 390 bison.

Habitat Enhancement and the Protection of Black-Footed Ferrets and Prairie Dogs from Plague (SD)

Grantee: Prairie Wildlife Research
 Grant Amount: \$422,900
 Matching Funds: \$1,125,200
 Total Project Amount: \$1,548,100
 Protect the largest population of reintroduced black-footed ferrets located in Conata Basin/Badlands National Park through plague surveillance, mitigation, vaccination and investigation of habitat enhancement tools. Project will protect two sites, protect 1,000 acres from disease and complete one study to inform management of black-footed ferrets.

WYOMING

Improving Sagebrush and Mixed Grass Habitat in the Thunder Basin Ecoregion (WY)

Grantee: Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Association
 Grant Amount: \$1,100,800
 Matching Funds: \$1,105,200
 Total Project Amount: \$2,206,000
 Assist in maintaining and enhancing the sagebrush-grassland system within the Thunder Basin Ecoregion and increase landscape permeability within key habitats. Project will improve 29 miles of fencing, restore 8,150 acres and improve management of 40,700 acres.

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Spring Creek Grazing Association Rangelands Restoration (WY)

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

Grant Amount: \$535,800

Matching Funds: \$606,300

Total Project Amount: \$1,142,100

Collaborate with partners to expand the conservation of North Gillette Sage Grouse Core and Connectivity Area and Thunder Basin National Grasslands. Project will improve grazing on 28,300 acres, remove/modify 32 miles of fence to facilitate wildlife movement, and bury 0.5 miles of power line to enhance sage-grouse brood-rearing habitat.

CANADA

Caretakers & Keepers - Tomorrows Grassland Managers (SK)

Grantee: South of the Divide Conservation Action Program

Grant Amount: \$737,900

Matching Funds: \$1,022,500

Total Project Amount: \$1,760,400

Mentor the next generation of caretakers and keepers of valuable prairie landscapes that provide habitat for pronghorn and grassland birds within the Northern Great Plains of Saskatchewan. Project will foster collaborative conservation actions with landowners, land managers and First Nations to improve management of 200,000 acres and improve 18 miles of fencing.

Conserving Critical Grassland Habitat in the Milk River Ridge of Alberta and Saskatchewan (AB; SK)

Grantee: Nature Conservancy of Canada

Grant Amount: \$1,000,000

Matching Funds: \$6,797,500

Total Project Amount: \$7,797,500

Partner with the Southern Alberta Land Trust Society, landowners, Canadian government and individual NCC supporters to conserve areas of intact, native grassland to benefit grassland-dependent species such as greater sage-grouse, chestnut-collared longspur, Baird's sparrow, Sprague's pipit and pronghorn. Project will secure at least 15,000 acres of high-priority native grassland for conservation in the Missouri-Milk River Grasslands of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Implementing the Bird-friendliness Index for Grassland Obligate Bird Conservation in Canada (AB; SK)

Grantee: Bird Studies Canada

Grant Amount: \$1,090,700

Matching Funds: \$1,387,600

Total Project Amount: \$2,478,300

Facilitate a market environment to incentivize voluntary efforts and behavioral changes on privately-owned lands that maintain working ranches and co-benefit grassland-obligate birds at a large scale. Project will drive forward the implementation of a dependable, scalable and actionable biodiversity indicator ("the Bird-friendliness Index"), pilot an innovative outcome-based incentive program ("Bird Banking"), improve the management of 100,000 acres and create 61 studies to inform management.

MULTIPLE STATES

Building a Cohesive Model for Grassland Conservation across the Great Plains

Grantee: Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

Grant Amount: \$777,800

Matching Funds: \$777,800

Total Project Amount: \$1,555,600

Develop strategic grassland investment opportunity maps to guide targeted action, support community engagement through social science and communications, and enhance on the ground the delivery of acres through technical assistance. Project will improve 50,000 acres of land and restore 15,000 acres.

Catalyzing Conservation Easement Protection Across the Northern Great Plains (MT; SD; WY)

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy

Grant Amount: \$1,955,300

Matching Funds: \$1,955,300

Total Project Amount: \$3,910,600

Implement a coordinated protection strategy directed at the highest risk, most ecologically significant and climate resilient lands and waters in the Northern Great Plains. Project will use conservation easements to protect 2,471 acres of critical habitat for NFWF priority species by working with multigenerational ranch families in Montana and South Dakota.

Conservation Leasing on Tribal Lands (MT; ND; SD)

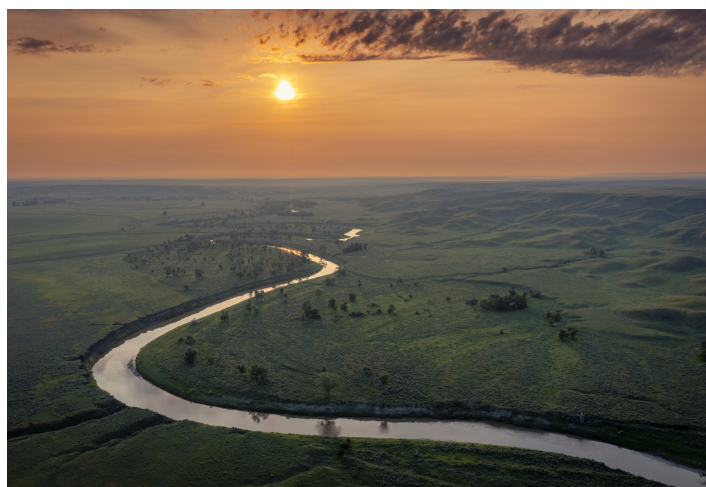
Grantee: Buffalo Nations Grasslands Alliance

Grant Amount: \$825,000

Matching Funds: \$837,800

Total Project Amount: \$1,662,800

Work with Native Nations in the Northern Great Plains to restore grasslands by providing funding to partnering Tribal Fish and Wildlife Departments to secure leases to land and conduct outreach to inform communities on the importance of conserving grasslands ecosystems. Project will restore 3,000 acres of land.



Milk River

Conserving Working Ranchlands in the Missouri-Milk River and Dakota Grasslands (MT; ND; SD; WY)

Grantee: The Conservation Fund

Grant Amount: \$1,013,200
 Matching Funds: \$550,000
 Total Project Amount: \$1,563,200

Implement a comprehensive strategy to work with land trust partners to purchase conservation easements on privately-owned ranches in the Missouri-Milk River Grasslands and Dakota Grasslands Focal Areas. Project will protect native grasslands via conservation easement on 8,000 acres.

Enhancing Grazing Systems for Grassland Conservation in the Northern Great Plains (MT; NE; SD; WY)

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy

Grant Amount: \$938,600
 Matching Funds: \$129,500
 Total Project Amount: \$1,068,100

Improve voluntary management of native grasslands by enhancing grazing systems in ways that facilitate persistent long-term behavioral changes that benefit conservation and underlying ranch operation viability. Project will restore 221 acres, improve the management of 20,210 acres, install 560 structures and complete one study.

Native Nations Restoring Black-footed Ferrets (MT; SD)

Grantee: Buffalo Nations Grasslands Alliance

Grant Amount: \$1,192,200
 Matching Funds: \$1,198,700
 Total Project Amount: \$2,390,900

Maintain and build the capacity in which to increase ferret populations and their habitat on lands of six Native Nations: Fort Belknap, Crow, Northern Cheyenne, Cheyenne River, Lower Brule and Standing Rock. Project will monitor and protect black-footed ferret and prairie dogs from sylvatic plague at six sites for a total of 8,340 acres, maintain and/or increase Tribal personnel, and engage communities in restoration efforts.

Nebraska Sandhills and Dakota Grasslands Largescale Restoration (ND; NE SD)

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

Grant Amount: \$2,230,200
 Matching Funds: \$2,232,800
 Total Project Amount: \$4,463,000

Provide landowner incentives to implement conservation practices on private working lands, implement conservation practices on public lands through local contractors to defend existing core grasslands of public lands and build capacity that aligns with NRCS priorities. Project will improve management of 40,000 acres, restore 71,500 acres and create more than 40 jobs for rural communities including increased capacity and reaching 120,000 people through outreach efforts.

Phase II: Restoring Native Grassland and Riparian Systems (MT; NE; SD; WY)

Grantee: World Wildlife Fund

Grant Amount: \$1,066,900
 Matching Funds: \$1,066,900
 Total Project Amount: \$2,133,800

Partner with ranchers across the Northern Great Plains to develop and implement sustainable grazing plans and practices that are supported by ecological monitoring, on-ranch infrastructure improvements and habitat restoration activities. Project will improve the management of 60,000 acres and restore 3,600 acres.

Phase III Supporting Resilient Rangelands and Carbon Sequestration (MT, WY, ND, SD)

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited

Grant Amount: \$300,000
 Matching Funds: \$770,800
 Total Project Amount: \$1,070,800

Expand and enhance the impact of existing programs, partnerships and community engagements by administering funds through the Northern Grasslands Restoration Incentive Program, enhancing private lands biologists' networks and supporting grasslands conservation workshops. Project will improve management on 9,640 acres and restore 25 acres of wet-meadow and grasslands and conduct one study to inform management.

Restoring Sage-Grouse and Pronghorn Habitat in the Northern Sagebrush Steppe (AB; MT; SK)

Grantee: Alberta Conservation Association

Grant Amount: \$790,000
 Matching Funds: \$1,040,800
 Total Project Amount: \$1,830,800

Collaborate with landowners to enhance grasslands for sage-grouse, grassland songbirds and pronghorn. Project will improve 50 miles of fencing, reseed 860 acres of marginal cropland back to native prairie, conserve 177,292 acres of habitat within the sage-grouse core area of Alberta and produce three studies to inform management.

Scaling Grassland Conservation and Restoration (MT; ND; NE; SD; WY)

Grantee: National Audubon Society

Grant Amount: \$1,847,200
 Matching Funds: \$2,198,200
 Total Project Amount: \$4,045,400

Guide habitat restoration and improve management practices to beneficially and directly impact grasslands through the expansion of the Audubon Conservation Ranching program. Project will improve the management of 165,400 acres, restore 7,000 acres and complete three studies to better inform management.