



# Conservation Partners Program

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## PARTNERS



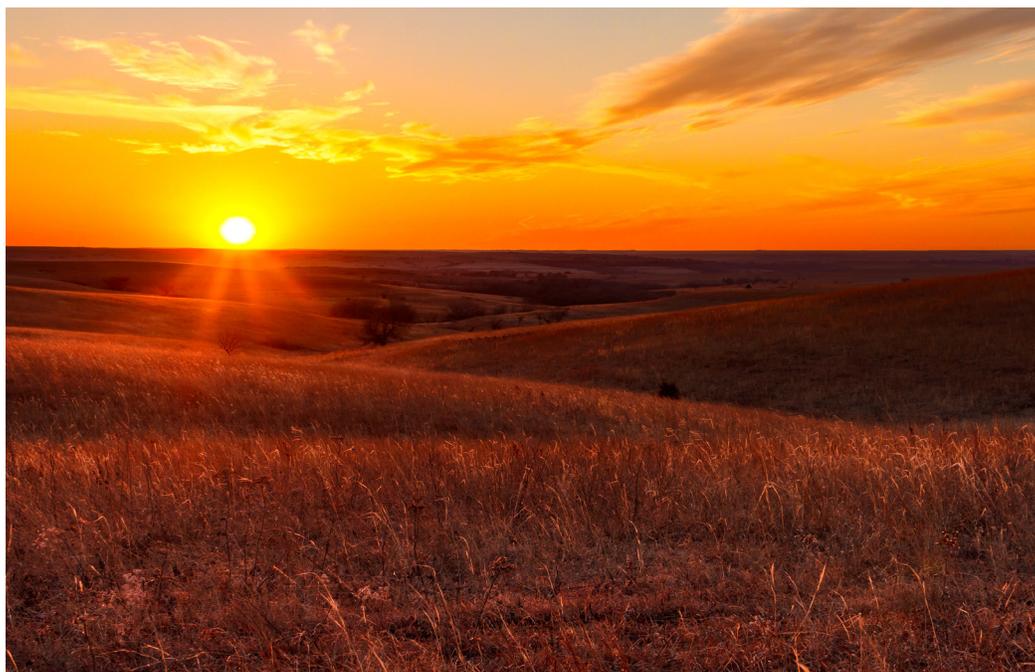
## ABOUT NFWF

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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Flint Hills, Kansas

## OVERVIEW

As two-thirds of the U.S. contiguous land base, private working lands have a huge influence on not only the country's food supply and economy, but also its soil health, water resources, and fish and wildlife populations. Implementing conservation on those lands is one of the most important ways to generate benefits for species, water, carbon storage, and human communities. That vital work can be achieved only by engaging the farmers, ranchers and other landowners who steward most of our nation's land.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation manages the Conservation Partners Program to help address this need. With essential funding from the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, General Mills and Truterra, this program helps farmers and ranchers apply regenerative agriculture principles and adopt practices that maximize conservation values while improving the bottom lines of their operations. Since 2011, this program has awarded 232 grants totaling more than \$44 million, which has been leveraged with more than \$82 million in matching contributions, for a total on-the-ground impact of more than \$126 million.

In 2021, the Conservation Partners Program awarded \$3.9 million to support 21 projects. Grantees are matching the grants awards with an additional \$5.1 million to generate a total conservation investment of \$9 million. Collectively, the 21 projects funded in 2021 will:

- Improve management and conservation on 416,000 acres of agricultural lands
- Provide technical assistance to more than 30,000 agricultural producers
- Reduce nutrient and sediment runoff to local waterways by 700,000 pounds per year
- Develop and implement more than 400 working land management plans

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## SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS

The Southern Great Plains includes the Plains portions of Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, New Mexico, Iowa, Missouri and Arkansas. Emphasizing a systems-approach that integrates regenerative agriculture principles and peer-to-peer learning, projects in this landscape will engage farmers and ranchers to improve soil health, water quality and quantity, fish and wildlife habitat, and carbon storage on croplands and grazing lands.

### Advancing Soil Health Technical Assistance in the Republican River Watershed (CO)

Grantee: Colorado Department of Agriculture

Grant Amount: .....\$265,813  
 Matching Funds: .....\$443,467  
 Total Project: .....\$709,280

Launch a Colorado Soil Health Program in Eastern Colorado that includes technical assistance, producer incentives, soil health testing, and participation in the STAR program with the goal of increasing participation in the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Project will implement best management practices across 960 acres, prevent 5,760 pounds in nutrient runoff annually and sustain water supplies for the Ogallala Aquifer.

### Increasing Technical Assistance for Grassland Conservation in the Red Hills (KS, OK)

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy

Grant Amount: .....\$250,017  
 Matching Funds: .....\$255,443  
 Total Project: .....\$505,461

Increase capacity for The Nature Conservancy's Red Hills Initiative, a ten-year community-based conservation effort for the Red Hills landscape of Kansas and Oklahoma that provides a full suite of technical private lands assistance, such as prescribed burn and regenerative grazing plans, as well as assistance with management of invasive species. Project will improve management on 100,000 acres and restore 50,000 acres of private working lands.

### Increasing Technical Assistance for Regenerative Agriculture Peer Mentoring Programs (KS)

Grantee: Kansas Department of Health and Environment

Grant Amount: .....\$450,000  
 Matching Funds: .....\$450,000  
 Total Project: .....\$900,000

Hire and train two full time positions to work directly with new and emerging farmers participating in regenerative agriculture in Kansas. Project will expand on an existing Farmer-to-Farmer peer mentorship program to bring 30,000 acres under improved management by implementing 150 best management practices plans aimed at significantly improving soil health, water quality and carbon sequestration.



Western meadowlark, Kansas

### Increasing Technical Assistance for Regenerative Agriculture to Protect Water and Soil Health (KS)

Grantee: Cheney Lake Watershed, Inc.

Grant Amount: .....\$219,910  
 Matching Funds: .....\$219,910  
 Total Project: .....\$450,910

Promote the implementation of regenerative agricultural principles on a watershed scale in south-central Kansas as a primary tool to protect and restore water quality, build soil health, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and build resilient farms and communities. Project will implement 150 best management practices plans to improve management on 2,250 acres, protecting water quality, improving soil health and enhancing wildlife habitat.

### Expanding the Audubon Conservation Ranching Program on Private Working Grasslands (KS, OK)

Grantee: Pheasants Forever, Inc.

Grant Amount: .....\$200,000  
 Matching Funds: .....\$200,000  
 Total Project: .....\$400,000

Build upon the success of the Audubon Conservation Ranching Program (ACR) partnership in Oklahoma and expand ACR technical assistance efforts and resources into Kansas. Project will result in the direct enhancement and protection of 90,000 acres of grassland, soil and water resources in Oklahoma and Kansas, keep viable working lands productive, and demonstrate the benefits of wildlife habitat conservation and regenerative grazing practices with participating producers.

### Increasing Technical Assistance for Regenerative Agriculture and Cover Crops (NE)

Grantee: Pheasants Forever, Inc.

Grant Amount: .....\$204,963  
 Matching Funds: .....\$205,000  
 Total Project: .....\$409,963

Increase capacity to implement best management practices (BMPs) for cover crops and standing crops, finding scenarios that work within a farming operation with a wildlife benefit in southeastern Nebraska. Project will implement 35 BMPs and prevent 26,400 pounds of nitrogen and 8,830 pounds of phosphorus runoff annually.

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## UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN

The following projects will engage farmers and the broader agricultural sector in best management practices that benefit water quality, fish, and wildlife in the Upper Mississippi River basin. Projects focus in NRCS's priority watersheds and subwatersheds as identified for the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative and priority areas for the Driftless Area Initiative.

### Increasing Technical Support for Priority Conservation Practices in the Vermilion Watershed (IL)

Grantee: American Farmland Trust

Grant Amount: .....\$192,604  
 Matching Funds: .....\$192,977  
 Total Project: .....\$385,581

Increase capacity for a full-time conservation technician position in the Vermilion Watershed, Illinois that will promote priority conservation practices, develop conservation plans, assist with Farm Bill contracting, and support farmers to implement practices that reduce sediment and nitrogen losses. Project will prevent 15,000 pounds of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment runoff annually by implementing 30 best management practices and improving management on 6,000 acres of private working lands.

### Increasing Technical Assistance to Improve Water Quality with Soil Health Retention (SD)

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Grant Amount: .....\$137,463  
 Matching Funds: .....\$137,500  
 Total Project: .....\$274,963

Increase Ducks Unlimited's technical assistance capacity to work with growers interested in expanding regenerative

agriculture principles that improve water quality, benefit wildlife, and improve profitability across eastern South Dakota. Project will implement 50 best management practices to improve management on 50,000 acres of private working lands.

### Increasing Technical Assistance to Conserve Grassland Habitat in the Rock River Basin (WI)

Grantee: Glacierland Resource Conservation & Development Council

Grant Amount: .....\$149,994  
 Matching Funds: .....\$150,000  
 Total Project: .....\$299,994

Conduct conservation planning and provide technical assistance, education and outreach regarding managed rotational grazing systems to farmers in Wisconsin's Rock River basin region. Project will implement 85 best management practices on 400 acres of private working lands to reduce agricultural runoff, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat and ecosystem resilience, and improve the livelihoods of local farmers.

### Expanding Agricultural Conservation and Adoption of Farm Bill Conservation Programs (IA, IL, IN, MO)

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Grant Amount: .....\$240,000  
 Matching Funds: .....\$593,360  
 Total Project: .....\$593,360

Hire three conservation specialists to promote and implement Farm Bill conservation programs within the agricultural communities of central/north-central Iowa, northern Illinois and Indiana, and central/northwest Missouri. Project will work directly with 390 producers to design and implement wetland-friendly conservation practices that reduce nitrogen and phosphorous runoff and improve water quality and wildlife habitat on 4,050 acres of cropland.

### Advancing Adoption of Regenerative Agriculture and Soil Health Practices (IN, OH)

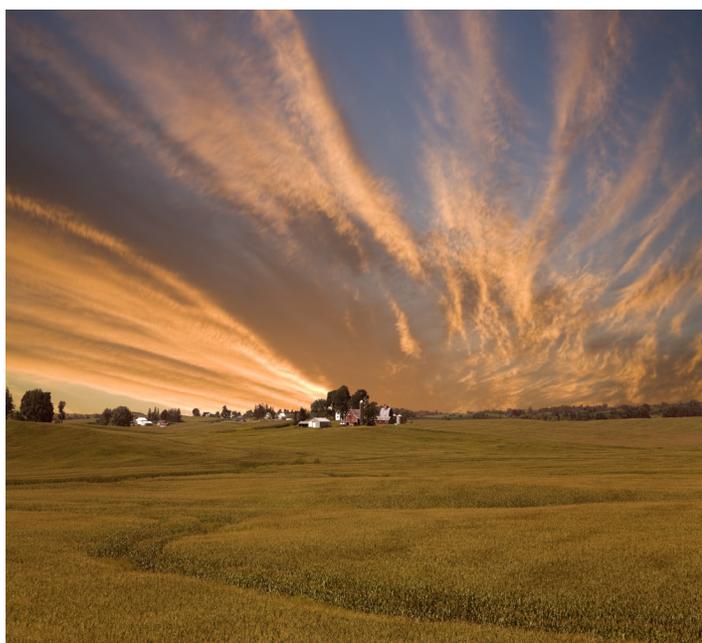
Grantee: American Farmland Trust

Grant Amount: .....\$202,323  
 Matching Funds: .....\$211,165  
 Total Project: .....\$413,488

Build models of one-on-one farmer engagement, benchmarking of farm practices, development of continuous improvement plans and implementation of improved soil health management practices in Ohio and Indiana. Project will develop 50 best management practices recommendations to improve 15,000 acres of private working lands.

## PACIFIC SALMON

The following projects will improve the efficiency of on-farm irrigation practices and provide quantifiable benefits to instream flows through state-approved transfers or other forms of enforceable agreements. Projects are located in Bureau of Reclamation-supported areas in Idaho and Wyoming as well as priority anadromous salmonid streams in California



Cornfield, Iowa

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and Washington. Projects will benefit stream reaches where insufficient instream flows are identified by a state or federal agency as a key limiting factor for fish survival.

### **Restoring Streamflow for Coho and Steelhead by Increasing Landscape-Scale Resilience (CA)**

Grantee: Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District  
 Grant Amount: .....\$150,000  
 Matching Funds: .....\$150,000  
 Total Project: .....\$300,000

Provide technical assistance and engineering to landowners along salmonid-bearing streams to measurably improve instream flows, promote groundwater recharge, and enhance instream habitat, with special emphasis on watersheds devastated by recent catastrophic wildfires. Project will complete a minimum of 12 comprehensive water conservation plans or engineered designs for streamflow enhancement and connect willing landowners with NRCS programs.

### **Advancing Adoption of Agricultural Best Management Practices Through Landowner Education (ID, WY)**

Grantee: Friends of the Teton River, Inc.  
 Grant Amount: .....\$197,280  
 Matching Funds: .....\$669,388  
 Total Project: .....\$866,668

Provide targeted educational opportunities for agricultural producers that accelerate the adoption of farming and ranching best management practices in the Teton Watershed to benefit water quality, water quantity, and yellowstone cutthroat trout. Project will employ workshops and peer-to-peer education, engage 20 producers in a pilot program, improve management on 1,650 acres, reduce nitrogen and sediment runoff and increase long-term adoption of sustainable land and water management practices.

### **Increasing Adoption of Water Conservation Practices for Anadromous Salmonid in Chelan County (WA)**

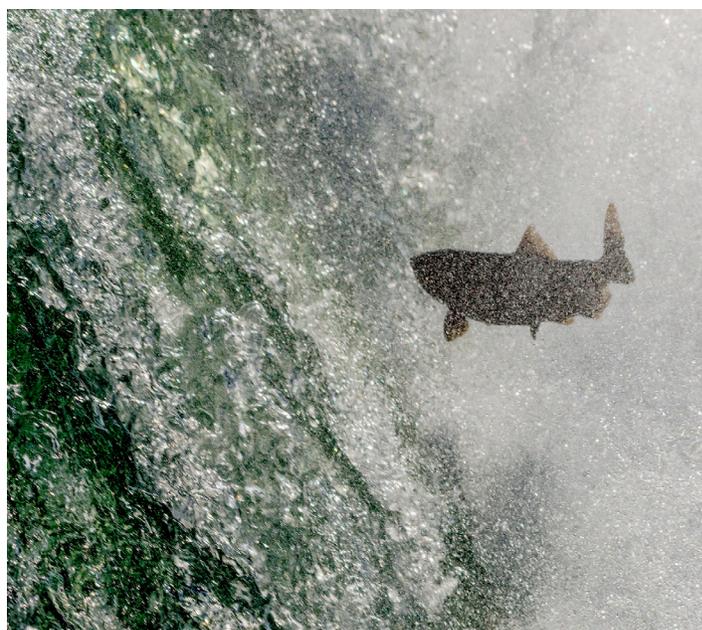
Grantee: Cascadia Conservation District  
 Grant Amount: .....\$78,281  
 Matching Funds: .....\$80,000  
 Total Project: .....\$158,283

Accelerate the implementation and adoption of irrigation efficiency and other agricultural conservation practices by conducting outreach and technical assistance to private landowners in the Entiat, Wenatchee River, Stemilt-Squilchuck, and Wenatchee watersheds to improve aquatic species habitat and survival. Project will bring 50 acres under improved management and implement 15 best management practice plans with private landowners to conserve 25 million gallons of water per year.

### **Partnering with Producers to Restore Instream Flow in the Methow and Okanogan River Basins (WA)**

Grantee: Okanogan Conservation District  
 Grant Amount: .....\$115,656  
 Matching Funds: .....\$130,000  
 Total Project: .....\$245,656

Produce high-resolution orthomosaic and thermal maps



Chinook salmon, California

to plan irrigation efficiency improvements that benefit instream flow for anadromous salmon species in northcentral Washington. Project will improve irrigation management by implementing 25 best management practices plans to reduce water usage and improve instream flow conditions, conserving more than 6.6 million gallons of water per year.

### **Restoring Streamflow for Salmon and Steelhead in the Wenatchee River Watershed (WA)**

Grantee: Chelan County Natural Resource Department  
 Grant Amount: .....\$100,000  
 Matching Funds: .....\$225,000  
 Total Project: .....\$325,000

Improve instream flow in the Wenatchee River watershed, Washington, for federally listed salmon, steelhead and bull trout by providing on-farm technical assistance to facilitate the implementation of conservation practices. Project will provide outreach and technical assistance to develop water conservation plans and engineered designs and implement best management practices to conserve nearly 100 million gallons of water per year.

### **WORKING LANDS FOR WILDLIFE**

The following projects will advance priorities under the NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife program. Projects include planning and partner coordination, building staff capacity, and targeted outreach and technical assistance to engage private landowners in developing and implementing practices that benefit priority species under the Working Lands for Wildlife.

### **Increasing Technical Assistance to Benefit Northeast Turtles on Private Working Lands (MA, NH, VT)**

Grantee: Connecticut River Watershed Council, Inc.  
 Grant Amount: .....\$100,000  
 Matching Funds: .....\$105,000  
 Total Project: .....\$205,000

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Bobwhite

Provide private landowners with technical assistance to accelerate on-the-ground delivery and implementation of Farm Bill conservation programs designed to specifically benefit two Working Lands for Wildlife priority species: wood turtle and spotted turtles in the Connecticut River watershed. Project will develop 15 best management practices to improve water quality through reductions in sediment and nutrients runoff, plus riparian buffer plantings to improve habitat for rare freshwater turtles.

**Increasing Technical Assistance to Benefit Gunnison Sage Grouse on Private Working Lands (CO)**

Grantee: Gunnison Conservation District  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$90,091  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$90,120  
 Total Project: ..... \$180,211  
 Increase capacity to implement Gunnison sage-grouse habitat improvement projects and develop conservation plans on private working lands in southwestern Colorado. Project will improve management on 21,000 acres and restore 225 acres through noxious weed treatment and reseeding.

**Increasing Habitat Quality on Private Working Lands for Lesser Prairie Chicken in Playa Lake (TX)**

Grantee: Pheasants Forever, Inc.  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$100,000  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$200,000  
 Total Project: ..... \$300,000  
 Increase capacity and wildlife expertise within the Playa Lake region to increase quality habitat for lesser prairie chicken populations and other southwestern grassland dependent wildlife populations. Project will design 75 management plans to improve management on 30,000 acres of private working lands.

**Implementing Gopher Tortoise Habitat Management on Private Ranchlands (FL)**

Grantee: Florida Conservation Group  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$258,540  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$488,560  
 Total Project: ..... \$747,100  
 Provide technical assistance to ranch operators to accelerate the implementation of prescribed fire and other practices that benefit upland habitats that are vital for supporting gopher tortoise populations in southcentral and southwest Florida. Project will design and implement 15 best management practices to improve 6,000 acres of private working ranchland for gopher tortoise.

**Increasing Technical Assistance to Benefit Northern Bobwhite on Private Working Lands (AR, MO)**

Grantee: Pheasants Forever, Inc.  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$249,939  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$249,985  
 Total Project: ..... \$499,924  
 Support five technical assistants with expertise in northern bobwhite conservation in Arkansas and Missouri who will assist private landowners in managing their lands to benefit bobwhite and many wildlife species while also improving working land productivity. Project will improve management on 10,000 acres of private working lands through the development of 400 conservation management plans and associated best management practices.