



# Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative

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## PARTNERS

- Apache Corporation
- Chevron
- ConocoPhillips
- Occidental
- Shell USA
- XTO Energy, an ExxonMobil subsidiary
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bezos Earth Fund

## 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](http://www.nfwf.org)

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Chestnut-collard longspur

## OVERVIEW

Occidental, Shell USA, LLC, XTO Energy, an ExxonMobil subsidiary, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management with additional support this year from the Bezos Earth Fund announced a fifth-year round of funding for Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative projects. Nine new watershed conservation grants totaling \$1.5 million were awarded. The nine awards announced generated over \$3.8 million in match from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of \$5.3 million.

The Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative was launched in 2017 to fund projects that will have the greatest positive return on investments for the unique wildlife species, habitats and local communities of the Pecos River Watershed, a riparian corridor in the Chihuahuan Desert home to many species found nowhere else in the world.

The Initiative's long-term goals include strengthening the health of existing habitats along the Pecos River and its tributaries, improving the management and function of native grasslands, addressing water quality and scarcity concerns for wildlife and agricultural uses, and identifying opportunities to re-establish species to areas of their range where they have been lost or to bolster small remnant populations.

*(continued)*

**Vegetative Restoration of Blue Springs (NM)**

Grantee: Carlsbad Soil and Water Conservation District  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$222,200  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$222,200  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$444,400  
 Remove invasive salt cedar and Russian olive trees in and around the riparian area of Blue Springs and mesquite in adjacent upland areas. Project will enhance soil, water, vegetation and wildlife habitat along the springs and wetlands.

**Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge Restoration Project (NM)**

Grantee: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$72,500  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$130,000  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$202,500  
 Restore the Rio Hondo river channel and replace five miles of boundary fencing with pronghorn-friendly fence at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Project will improve the overall health of the river channel and improve conditions for federally endangered and threatened species such as the Pecos gambusia (*Gambusia nobilis*) and state species of concern Pecos pupfish (*Cypriondon pecosensis*), as well as improve habitat connectivity for pronghorn.

**Northern Hudspeth County Grassland Restoration (TX)**

Grantee: Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$250,000  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$250,000  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$500,000  
 Conduct herbicide application to restore an additional 6,000-9,000 acres of brush-invaded dry mixed prairie in northern Hudspeth County, Texas. Project will strategically expand the existing grassland for the greatest net gain of contiguous, usable habitat for grassland obligate species like pronghorn.

**Fence Management to Improve Connectivity and Habitat Quality in the Pecos Grassland Focal Area (NM)**

Grantee: New Mexico Department of Game and Fish  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$195,000  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$585,000  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$780,000  
 Modify, remove, and install at least 40 miles of fence on 27 Wildlife Management Areas spread across the Pecos Grassland Focal Area. Project will increase grassland connectivity, improve grazing and range management practices, improve habitat quality and bolster populations of Chestnut-collared longspur, Sprague's pipit, pronghorn and other grassland wildlife.

**Native Seeds Development and Outreach for Grassland Restoration in the Pecos River Watershed (NM, TX)**

Grantee: Texas A&M University-Kingsville  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$195,900  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$202,100  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$398,000  
 Develop ecotypic native seed sources for the Pecos River

watershed in West Texas and New Mexico to support successful grassland restoration. Project will address limitations to native grassland habitat restoration through outreach and technical assistance to landowners, energy operators, and related contractors reseeding in the watershed, by expanding an established native seed research and development program, and by collaborating with the commercial seed trade to expand seed source availability.

**Central Trans Pecos Native Grassland Restoration and Management (TX)**

Grantee: Toyah Limpia SWCD  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$195,000  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$195,000  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$390,000  
 Restore high-quality Chihuahan native grassland habitat for migratory grassland birds and pronghorn on private land in Reeves, Jeff Davis, Culberson, and Pecos Counties, Texas. Project will address habitat quality, connectivity and management for native grasslands by managing encroaching woody species like mesquite, tarbrush, whitebrush, acacia and creosote brush.

**Southeast New Mexico Plains Pronghorn Restoration (NM)**

Grantee: Chaves Soil and Water Conservation District  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$106,100  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$2,005,900  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$2,112,000  
 Enhance grassland habitat and improve landscape connectivity for pronghorn across ranches and pastures in Chaves County, New Mexico. Project will restore nearly 5,000 acres of grassland habitat through mesquite brush control and install at least five miles of pronghorn-friendly fencing.

**Assessment of the Rio Grande Cooter (*Pseudemys gorzugi*) Population Structure in the Delaware River (NM)**

Grantee: Eastern New Mexico University  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$88,800  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$88,800  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$177,600  
 Conduct high trap intensity Rio Grande cooter (*Pseudemys gorzugi*) surveys along the Delaware River and compare findings to capture data on the Black River. Project will enhance knowledge of overall species occupancy, distribution and habitat preferences, which are essential to implementing sound management practices for species protection.

**Black River Sensor Array (NM)**

Grantee: CEHMM  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$197,200  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$197,200  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$394,400  
 Establish a sensor array within the reach of the Black River in southeastern New Mexico occupied by the endangered Texas hornshell mussel (*Popenaias popeii*). Project will greatly improve the precision and accuracy of water quality readings and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of conditions endured by the mussel.