



Conservation Partners Program

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FUNDING PARTNERS

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Cargill
- General Mills
- The J.M. Smucker Co.
- Nestlé

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 \$8.1 billion.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org

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Cattle grazing in Montana

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) announced a new round of funding for Conservation Partners Program projects with generous support from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Cargill, General Mills, The J.M. Smucker Co. and Nestlé. Sixteen new working lands grants totaling \$6.3 million were awarded. The 16 awards announced generated \$4.9 million in match from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of \$11.2 million.

Private landowners are stewards of nearly two-thirds of our nation's land, including some of the most important fish and wildlife habitats in the United States. Private working lands have an outsized impact on not only the country's food supply and economy, but also its carbon sequestration, water quality, and fish and wildlife populations. Voluntary partnerships with farmers, ranchers and other landowners create win-win solutions for both natural resources and rural communities.

The Conservation Partners Program awards competitive grants that accelerate the adoption of conservation practices on private lands. This program provides farmers and ranchers technical assistance for applying regenerative agriculture principles that enhance conservation values while improving their operational efficiency. Since 2011, this program has awarded 278 grants totaling more than \$60 million, which has leveraged more than \$95 million in matching contributions, for a total on-the-ground impact of more than \$155 million.

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GREAT LAKES BASIN

Focusing in on the U.S. portion of the Great Lakes watersheds, projects will engage landowners in conservation and regenerative agriculture planning and peer-to-peer learning to improve soil health, water quality and biodiversity in the region.

Scaling Regenerative Agriculture in Critical Dairy Farming Geographies (MI)

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy
 Grant Amount:..... \$659,200
 Matching Funds:..... \$500,000
 Total Project Amount:..... \$1,159,200
 Support programming to expand technical assistance and access to financial incentives for dairy farmers to scale the adoption of regenerative agriculture practices such as crop and grazing management, nutrient stewardship and irrigation improvements. Project will result in significant benefits for soil health, water quality and biodiversity on dairy farms in the Great Lakes basin.

PRAIRIE POTHOLE REGION

The Prairie Pothole Region includes the region of historic tallgrass, mixed grass and shortgrass prairie spanning portions of Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. Projects in this landscape will improve grazing management, crop management and habitat with a holistic, regenerative approach that will benefit the many wildlife species that depend on the grassland-wetland complexes of the region.

Delivering Technical Assistance to Landowners in Montana’s Musselshell Plains

Grantee: Winnett ACES
 Grant Amount:..... \$201,500
 Matching Funds:..... \$219,900
 Total Project Amount:..... \$421,400
 Assist agricultural producers in Central Montana in designing projects with economic, social and ecological benefits and increase access to Farm Bill programs. Project will improve soil health while enhancing habitat on grasslands and wetlands for waterfowl, shorebirds and pollinators on nearly 30,000 acres.

Enhancing Iowa’s Lakes through Community Supported Innovative Water Solutions (IA, MN)

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy
 Grant Amount:..... \$403,800
 Matching Funds:..... \$300,000
 Total Project Amount:..... \$703,800
 Excess phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment runoff remain the primary causes of detrimental lake conditions to wildlife and the ability to recreate. The Nature Conservancy will support the development and facilitation of a farmer-led learning network focused on accelerating adoption of agricultural best management practices in Iowa’s Great Lakes region. Project

will provide technical assistance to 40 farmers to enhance conservation practices on approximately 30,000 acres, resulting in a reduction in nutrient and sediment runoff to local water bodies.

Enhancing Soil Health, Biodiversity, and Community-Led Conservation in Montana’s Rocky Mountain Front

Grantee: Western Landowners Alliance
 Grant Amount:..... \$434,200
 Matching Funds:..... \$0
 Total Project Amount:..... \$434,200
 Provide technical assistance to ranchers and farmers, including Tribal producers, to improve soil health and forage resources at the western edge of the Northern Great Plains. Project will improve grazing management, restore wetlands and riparian areas, and support cover cropping and nutrient management to enhance the resilience and economic and habitat values of working lands within the short-grass prairie of Montana’s Rocky Mountain Front.

Rotational Grazing Technical Assistance and Planning in the Prairie Pothole Region (MN, MO, WI)

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited
 Grant Amount:..... \$435,700
 Matching Funds:..... \$207,700
 Total Project Amount:..... \$643,400
 Support grazing management planners to provide technical assistance to 250 private landowners across Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin, helping them enroll in Farm Bill programs and improve grazing management. Project will foster sustainable agriculture and increase carbon sequestration while promoting wildlife habitat conservation on at least 18,000 acres.



Native grasslands (right) and cropland that has been converted to native grassland (left) in Montana

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Training Certified Crop Advisors to Increase Adoption of Soil Health Practices (ND, MN)

Grantee: Sustainable Food Lab
 Grant Amount:..... \$359,800
 Matching Funds:..... \$1,047,900
 Total Project Amount:..... \$1,407,700
 Train and support independent Certified Crop Advisors (CCAs) and agronomists to assist farmers in soil health planning and the adoption of conservation practices. Project will connect farmers to financial assistance opportunities available through supply chain and Farm Bill programs to facilitate increased adoption of cover cropping, conservation tillage and nutrient management.

SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS

The Southern Great Plains includes the Plains portions of Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming. Emphasizing a systems approach that integrates regenerative agriculture principles and peer-to-peer learning, projects in



Scissor-tailed flycatcher

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 Advising and Mentorship in the Cheney Lake Watershed (KS)

Grantee: Cheney Lake Watershed
 Grant Amount:..... \$333,000
 Matching Funds:..... \$334,000
 Total Project Amount:..... \$667,000
 Facilitate peer-to-peer advising by offering regenerative agriculture education and mentorship to a focused group of local producers who will engage additional producers in the Cheney Lake watershed. Project will reach 100 farmers and build a sustainable environment for regenerative agriculture and implementing core soil health principles in the region.

Conserving Prairie Grasslands in Northeast Texas

Grantee: American Bird Conservancy
 Grant Amount:..... \$134,900
 Matching Funds:..... \$67,000
 Total Project Amount:..... \$201,900
 Enhance grassland bird habitat in northeast Texas by developing management plans and assisting landowners in Farm Bill program enrollment. Project will increase suitable grassland habitat and habitat connectivity on 9,100 acres of private land through prescribed fire, fire breaks, brush management, prescribed grazing, range planting and herbaceous weed treatment.

Expanding Capacity of Audubon Conservation Ranching in Kansas and Oklahoma

Grantee: National Audubon Society
 Grant Amount:..... \$573,500
 Matching Funds:..... \$39,200
 Total Project Amount:..... \$612,700
 Expand capacity to fully establish Audubon Conservation Ranching in Kansas and Oklahoma via new partnership development, rancher engagement, technical assistance, bird monitoring and market connections. Project will accelerate adoption of regenerative grazing and other conservation practices to benefit birds, biodiversity and economic productivity on at least 75,000 acres of working grasslands.

Implementing Regenerative Management Across Southern Great Plains Working Lands (KS, OK, TX)

Grantee: Noble Research Institute
 Grant Amount:..... \$468,400
 Matching Funds:..... \$157,000
 Total Project Amount:..... \$625,400
 Develop a producer-centric educational program to equip farmers with the knowledge to rebuild the soil on their land while building resiliency into their operations. Project will guide at least 1,600 farmers and ranchers to begin implementing regenerative practices across the Southern Great Plains to improve soil health and support biodiversity.

Increasing Staff Capacity for Farm Bill Protection and Enhancement Projects (KS)

Grantee: Ranchland Trust of Kansas

Grant Amount:..... \$212,700

Matching Funds:..... \$63,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$275,700

Support the recruiting and onboarding of technical specialists and project managers to secure pending and manage existing easements funded through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. Project will protect 3,000 acres of grassland through perpetual easements and restore existing easements with encroaching conifer removal.

Regenerative Agriculture for a Water-Scarce Future in the Southern High Plains (CO, KS, OK)

Grantee: National Center for Appropriate Technology

Grant Amount:..... \$548,700

Matching Funds:..... \$648,400

Total Project Amount:..... \$1,197,100

Provide conservation planning and technical assistance to at least 300 farmers and ranchers to conserve water, improve soil health, and revitalize grasslands, wetlands, and their associated wildlife across the lesser prairie chicken range and Ogallala Aquifer region. Project will coordinate a peer-to-peer network and develop and implement conservation plans across nearly 170,000 acres.

Reintroducing Prescribed Fire Regimes in Nebraska's Southern Great Plains

Grantee: Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition

Grant Amount:..... \$596,300

Matching Funds:..... \$562,800

Total Project Amount:..... \$1,159,100

Sustain two current Burn Coordinator positions to expand the Nebraska Sandhills Prescribed Fire program to the Southern Great Plains region of Nebraska. Project will reach over 800 ranchers and support the holistic management of 9,600 acres, while collectively fostering systems change, environmental and social benefits at the landscape level across the grasslands of Nebraska.

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.

Accelerating Conservation Technical Assistance in Sauk River Watershed (MN)

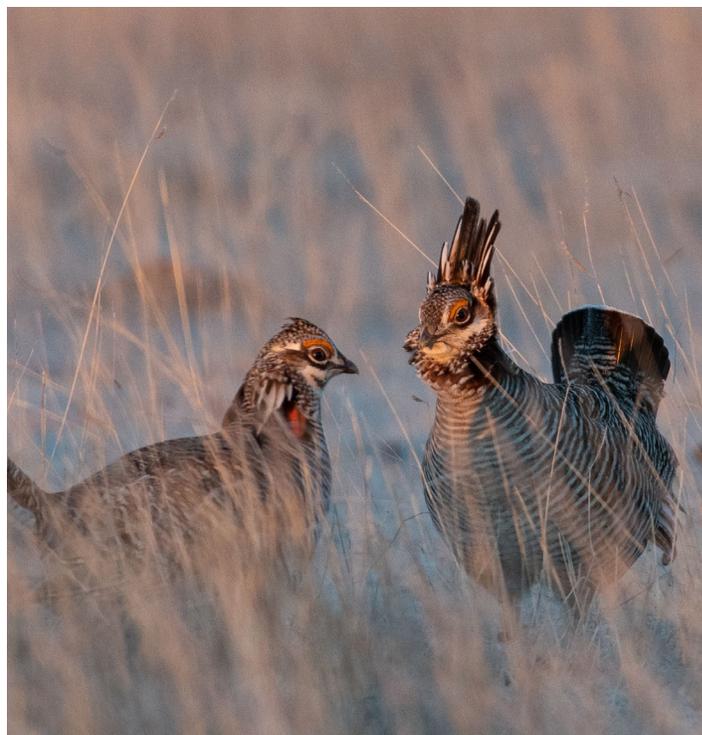
Grantee: Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District

Grant Amount:..... \$247,900

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

Total Project Amount:..... \$497,900

Accelerate agricultural best management practices in



Lesser prairie chickens

priority areas of the Sauk River watershed while focusing on historically underserved groups through targeted education and outreach. Project will advance conservation practices focusing on crop management, grazing management and habitat enhancement through participation in Farm Bill programs.

Advancing Water Quality Improvement Practices on Illinois Agricultural Lands

Grantee: The Wetlands Initiative

Grant Amount:..... \$377,600

Matching Funds:..... \$552,700

Total Project Amount:..... \$930,300

Provide technical assistance to producers to increase implementation of on-farm conservation practices for water quality improvement across Illinois. Project will engage landowners interested in implementing practices for nutrient loss reduction and wildlife habitat (e.g. tile-treatment and restored wetlands, cover crops, saturated buffers, bioreactors and prairie restoration) on over 20,000 acres of agricultural lands.

Building Forage Chain Resilience with Native Perennials in the Midwest (IA, IL, MN, MO, WI)

Grantee: Practical Farmers of Iowa

Grant Amount:..... \$324,300

Matching Funds:..... \$0

Total Project Amount:..... \$324,300

Provide grazing education and technical assistance to producers to motivate the voluntary adoption of native perennials within a forage chain. Project will outreach to farmers and hold farmer-led events to improve grazing management on 1,800 acres to benefit livestock, water quality and wildlife.