



# Southern Plains Grassland Program

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## FUNDING PARTNERS

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Burger King
- Cargill
- Sysco
- Walmart Foundation

## 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.

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Pronghorn

## OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Burger King, Cargill and Sysco with additional support from Walmart Foundation, announced the third round of funding for the Southern Plains Grassland Program. Fifteen grants totaling \$7.4 million were awarded to improve grassland health, support biodiversity and increase carbon sequestration to improve climate resilience. The 15 awards announced leverage nearly \$9.7 million in matching contributions from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of \$17.1 million.

These 15 grants will contribute to the goals of the Southern Plains Grassland Program by:

- Improving grazing management on 483,000 acres of Tribal lands and private ranches
- Restoring 567,000 acres of upland and grassland habitat
- Removing or improving 12 miles of fencing to wildlife-friendly specifications
- Increasing regional capacity through technical assistance to producers

*(continued)*

### **Addressing the Health and Resilience of Grasslands in the Southern Great Plains (NE)**

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited

Grant Amount:..... \$536,700  
 Matching Funds:..... \$666,500  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$1,203,200

Collaborate with partners to address the health and resilience of the grasslands of the Southern Great Plains. Project will restore 5,600 acres of grassland and 165 acres of riparian and wet meadow areas, restore hydrology to 83 acres, complete 7.5 miles of fencing, and complete removal of 260 acres of woody species within and adjacent to the Platte River, a critically threatened landscape that includes vital habitat for endangered whooping cranes.

### **Conserving and Recovering Native Tallgrass Prairie Habitat within the Osage Nation Reservation (OK)**

Grantee: Osage Nation

Grant Amount:..... \$364,800  
 Matching Funds:..... \$364,800  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$729,600

Aid with the conservation and recovery of the native tallgrass prairie habitat within the Osage Nation Reservation in north central Oklahoma. Project will implement voluntary management at large scales that facilitates persistent long-term behavioral changes which benefit grasslands, increase climate resiliency and support grassland-obligate species on working lands.

### **Developing Southern Plains Generational Grasslands III (CO, KS, NM, OK, TX)**

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy

Grant Amount:..... \$1,670,600  
 Matching Funds:..... \$1,671,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$3,341,600

Catalyze community-based landscape conservation, within the core of some of the most important remaining grassland habitats by building upon private and public partnerships with local producers. Project will improve 17,800 acres of land and change the behavior of 40 people.

### **Enhancing Grassland Resilience to Integrate Conservation and Community Partnerships (CO, NM)**

Grantee: Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

Grant Amount:..... \$388,300  
 Matching Funds:..... \$388,300  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$776,600

Work with partners to address threats to grasslands and their obligate wildlife, and support rural community resilience through capacity building and the implementation of strategic on-the-ground conservation. Project will increase grassland connectivity, improve the management of 52,000 acres of land as well as build and facilitate local and regional community conservation partnerships to change 75 people's behavior.

### **Enhancing Tallgrass Prairie in Southeastern Nebraska (NE)**

Grantee: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Grant Amount:..... \$500,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$500,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$1,000,000

Enhance tallgrass prairie on key private land parcels within the Southeast Prairies and Sandstone Prairies Biologically Unique Landscapes of southeastern Nebraska. Project will restore 12,000 acres, provide cost-share payments to farmers and ranchers to facilitate greater adoption of conservation practices, host two tallgrass prairie seminars reaching approximately 200 participants, and provide habitat technical assistance to an additional 150 private landowners.

### **Expanding Native Grassland Habitats in the Southwestern Great Plains (CO, KS, NM, OK, TX)**

Grantee: North American Grouse Partnership

Grant Amount:..... \$401,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$420,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$821,000

Protect and restore native grasslands in the southwestern Great Plains by expanding and connecting habitat for pollinators, lesser prairie-chickens, and other grassland birds and wildlife. Project will build capacity, support the Lesser Prairie-Chicken Landowner Alliance, which will lead to improved management of 20,000 acres, and change the behavior of 239 people.

### **Implementing Regenerative Management Across Working Lands (CO, KS, NE, NM, OK, TX)**

Grantee: Noble Research Institute

Grant Amount:..... \$359,800  
 Matching Funds:..... \$544,100  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$903,900

Equip farmers and ranchers to rebuild the soil on their working lands while building resiliency into their operations. Project will guide at least 1,280 farmers and ranchers to begin implementing regenerative practices across more than 287,910 acres, contributing to increased biodiversity, which is essential to attracting grassland birds and monarch butterflies.

### **Improving Grassland Ecosystem Health on Native American Lands (OK)**

Grantee: The Learning Center at the Euchee Butterfly Farm

Grant Amount:..... \$283,100  
 Matching Funds:..... \$305,200  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$588,300

Work with Tribes to build capacity for restoration of native forbs and milkweeds on Tribal lands through training workshops, on-site technical support, a native plant seed bank, and planting seedlings of milkweed and native nectar forbs. Project will engage with Tribal nations in Oklahoma to restore 250 acres of grassland habitat, improve management of 2,500 acres of grassland, remove invasive species from 1,550 acres, and provide education and technical assistance to 1,436 Tribal members.

### **Improving Working Grasslands in the Southern Plains through Incentives and Capacity (KS, TX)**

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

Grant Amount:..... \$618,700  
 Matching Funds:..... \$618,800  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$1,237,500

Provide assistance to private landowners to address the dramatic woodland invasion of working grasslands that is occurring in many places across the Southern Great Plains. Project will restore 5,768 acres by deploying a habitat strike team in Kansas to support private landowners through implementation capacity and restore 16,000 acres of grassland in the panhandle of Texas through brush management, prescribed burning, range planting, herbaceous weed treatment and wildlife habitat planting.

### **Increasing Capacity for Community-Based Strategic Prairie Restoration on Working Lands (KS, OK)**

Grantee: Comanche Pool Prairie Resource Foundation

Grant Amount:..... \$309,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$1,100,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$1,409,000

Address resource concerns to benefit ranchers and rare and declining grassland wildlife. Project will enhance and restore 6,500 acres of mixed-grass and sand sagebrush prairie within working grasslands in south-central Kansas and bordering northwest Oklahoma as well as support a coordinator position for the Comanche Pool, a community-based, producer-led conservation organization that has a need to build capacity in order to deliver available resources for increased community engagement.

### **Investing in Texas Prescribed Fire Capacity and Culture (TX)**

Grantee: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Grant Amount:..... \$300,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$300,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$600,000

Coordinate with Prescribed Burn Association (PBA) leadership in order to have a unified message and coordination across all PBAs of Texas within current laws and regulations regarding prescribed fire and brush pile burning in Texas. Project will increase capacity with a prescribed fire facilitator position to restore 500,000 acres through prescribed fire, increased numbers of Texas Department of Agriculture Certified and Insured Prescribed Burn Manager licenses, and increased enrollment in PBAs.

### **Providing Technical Assistance to Manage Grazing and Increase Land Resiliency (OK)**

Grantee: American Bird Conservancy

Grant Amount:..... \$586,400  
 Matching Funds:..... \$1,019,900  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$1,606,300

Provide targeted technical and financial assistance to private and Tribal landowners to build and support

sustainable, managed grazing and increased land resiliency. Project will improve biological diversity, ecosystem function, soil health and water conservation while also increasing the amount of suitable habitat available for declining grassland birds, pollinators, species of greatest conservation need, threatened and endangered species.

### **Removing Eastern Red Cedar to Build Functional and Resilient Grasslands in Western Oklahoma (OK)**

Grantee: Oklahoma Conservation Commission

Grant Amount:..... \$410,300  
 Matching Funds:..... \$500,000  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$910,300

Create resilient and ecologically functional grassland ecosystems in western Oklahoma. Project will apply conservation practices such as riparian pollinator or grassland cover and native range planting following cedar removal on 1,000 acres and also provide technical assistance via an additional Oklahoma Conservation Commission staff member with focus on promoting NRCS programs, facilitating education events and developing conservation plans.

### **Restoring and Enhancing Central Nebraska's Core Grasslands for Birds and Beef (NE)**

Grantee: Nebraska Community Foundation FBO Rainwater Basin Joint Venture

Grant Amount:..... \$352,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$987,800  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$1,339,800

Focus efforts to manage core grasslands by working with landowners to transition management regimes to support prescribed fire. Project will positively impact 47,500 acres of mixed grass prairie in Nebraska through acquisition of prescribed fire equipment across 15,000 acres, grazing deferment on 12,500 acres, incentives for large-scale prescribed fires on 7,500 acres, mechanical removal of eastern red cedar across 12,500 acres, and outreach efforts through mailings and landowner meetings with 15,000 individuals targeted.

### **Restoring and Enhancing Grasslands through Audubon Conservation Ranching (NM, TX)**

Grantee: National Audubon Society

Grant Amount:..... \$297,900  
 Matching Funds:..... \$297,900  
 Total Project Amount:..... \$595,800

Increase regional capacity of state-based rangeland ecologists to deliver on-the-ground conservation through management planning, technical guidance, implementation of practices and ecological monitoring. Project will engage landowners in the Audubon Conservation Ranching program which will result in 50,000 acres of land with improved management, 450 people with changed behavior and 2,500 acres of land restored.