



Northern Great Plains Program

NFWF CONTACTS

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PARTNERS

- Bezos Earth Fund
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies
- Cargill
- Burger King
- Capri Holdings
- Sysco
- Bureau of Land Management
- Occidental Petroleum Corporation

ABOUT NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) works with partners to foster sustainable and impactful conservation solutions so that people and nature thrive together. Chartered by Congress in 1984, NFWF has grown to become the nation's largest conservation foundation. Since its founding, NFWF has funded more than 23,300 projects that have generated a total conservation impact of \$11.3 billion. NFWF is an equal opportunity provider.



Pronghorn

OVERVIEW

The Bezos Earth Fund, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, Cargill, Burger King, Capri Holdings, Sysco, Bureau of Land Management and Occidental Petroleum Corporation in partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) announced the 2025-year round of funding for Northern Great Plains projects. The program awarded \$18.7 million to 23 projects. The 23 awards leveraged \$17.7 million in grantee matching contributions for a total conservation impact of \$36.4 million.

The following projects address all eight strategies for the Northern Great Plains program, which include:

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| 1. Permanently protect important grasslands with conservation easements and other tools to maintain large blocks of habitat; | for the benefit of grasslands wildlife and agricultural operations/ranching; |
| 2. Restore grasslands for the benefit of grassland wildlife and agricultural operations/ranching; | 4. Implement grassland bird monitoring; |
| 3. Facilitate management of grasslands | 5. Implement sylvatic plague treatment; |
| | 6. Conserve pronghorn; |
| | 7. Conserve sage-grouse; and |
| | 8. Build capacity of partners to address the other strategies. |

These 23 grants will contribute to the goals of the Northern Great Plains Business Plan by: 1) restoring 90,465 acres; 2) improving management on 578,127 acres; 3) improving 93 miles of fencing; and 4) protecting 63,976 acres via conservation easements.

(continued)

MONTANA**Collaborating with Ranching Communities to Protect Grasslands in North-Central Montana**

Grantee: Ranchers Stewardship Alliance

Grant Amount:..... \$524,900

Matching Funds:..... \$170,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$694,900

Facilitate partnerships by providing project and capacity funding to expand conservation programs and coordinate education resources. Project will enhance grazing systems for grassland retention by improving management of 1,500 acres, improve 10 miles of fencing, expand Ranchers Stewardship Alliance's Grassbank program, and maintain capacity to facilitate large-scale collaborations and on-the-ground projects.

Expanding Grassland and Wildlife Corridor Improvement Efforts (MT)

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

Grant Amount:..... \$1,400,000

Matching Funds:..... \$969,900

Total Project Amount:..... \$2,369,900

Deliver conservation through proven partnerships, pilot conservation finance for Montana's grasslands and conduct novel research and assessment to substantially expand grassland and wildlife corridor improvement efforts across Montana. Project will impact 3,333 acres of grassland restoration, 6,000 acres of land rental contracts, 17,000 acres of grazing system enhancement and 24 miles of fence improvements that integrate important research to target outcome-based projects.



Greater sage-grouse

Native Producers Restoring and Conserving Grasslands (MT)

Grantee: Buffalo Nations Grasslands Alliance

Grant Amount:..... \$370,600

Matching Funds:..... \$470,300

Total Project Amount:..... \$840,900

Support Native Nations in the Northern Great Plains with capacity building, wildlife conservation, grassland restoration and creating sustainable nature-based economies. Project will provide technical assistance to 12 native producers on six reservations, build partnerships between native producers, conservation incentives program leaders, and Tribal natural resources programs, and restore 600 acres of grassland.

Supporting Capacity for Conservation Easement Transactions in Montana's Northern Great Plains

Grantee: The Montana Land Reliance

Grant Amount:..... \$460,000

Matching Funds:..... \$4,300,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$4,760,000

Support the permanent conservation of private grasslands in Montana's Northern Great Plains. Project will provide capacity funding to maintain staff capacity for conservation easement transactions to protect at-risk prairie landscapes, sagebrush habitat, and threatened species, including the greater sage-grouse.

NEBRASKA**Strengthening Ecosystem Resilience through Collaboration (NE)**

Grantee: Sandhills Task Force

Grant Amount:..... \$697,000

Matching Funds:..... \$640,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$1,337,000

Increase personnel to monitor and protect black-footed ferret and prairie dog populations from plague. Build on longstanding partnerships and growing landowner interest to enhance the Sandhills ecosystem. Project will improve grassland bird and wildlife habitat in Nebraska's Sandhills on at least 50,000 acres of privately owned land using prescribed fire, mechanical treatments, and developing management plans with landowners to increase rangeland resiliency and overall habitat quality.

Protecting Nebraska's Sandhills

Grantee: Nebraska Community Foundation FBO Rainwater Basin Joint Venture

Grant Amount:..... \$745,600

Matching Funds:..... \$714,700

Total Project Amount:..... \$1,460,300

Collaborate with partners to positively impact 62,320 acres of core grasslands associated with Nebraska's Sandhills. Project will utilize strategies such as prescribed fire and mechanical removal of woody invasives to improve management of 32,400 acres and restore 29,920 acres of grasslands.

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North Dakota Grassland Management, Land Restoration and Biological Carbon Capture Program

Grantee: North Dakota Natural Resources Trust

Grant Amount:..... \$479,700

Matching Funds:..... \$855,000

Total Project Amount:.....\$1,334,700

Provide administrative and delivery support for programs that improve existing grasslands through implementation of rotational grazing, transitioning idle grass to healthy grasslands, planting grass, invasive woody tree removal, and reclaiming ecologically disturbed sites from oil and gas development. Project will work closely with sub-grants, conservation partners, the energy industry and landowners to increase native wildlife populations and improve management of 41,186 acres.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Buffalo Gap Hogbacks Conservation Easements (SD)

Grantee: Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Grant Amount:..... \$201,800

Matching Funds:..... \$0

Total Project Amount:..... \$201,800

Conserve working agricultural land and vital wildlife habitat for game and non-game species. Project will place 5,046 acres in southeastern South Dakota under conservation easement.

Expanding Community-based Partnerships with Landowners to Support High Priority Grasslands (SD)

Grantee: South Dakota Grassland Coalition

Grant Amount:.....\$1,500,000

Matching Funds:.....\$1,920,900

Total Project Amount:.....\$3,420,900

Provide technical assistance and outreach resources to participating landowners to complement grassland enhancement and restoration projects. Project will promote regenerative agriculture practices to enhance grasslands and coordinate with partners to deliver financial support for 80 projects with infrastructure needs for grazing management, grassland restoration, and invasive species control on over 140,000 acres of grasslands on private land.

Restoring Grassland Habitat via Native Plant Production (SD)

Grantee: Phoenix Conservancy

Grant Amount:..... \$268,100

Matching Funds:..... \$174,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$442,100

Upscale native plant propagation to enable grassland restoration. Project will build from successful ongoing partnerships to provide complimentary support through native, local forb cultivation, enabling restoration of more than 6,000 acres of prairie bird habitat.

Revitalizing Grasslands and Sustaining Tribal Livelihoods (SD)

Grantee: Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation

Grant Amount:..... \$400,000

Matching Funds:..... \$100,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$500,000

Revitalize grasslands and sustain Tribal Livelihoods by strengthening ecosystems, cultures and food sovereignty through O'onakizin Tatanka Pte Ta Makoce (Stronghold Buffalo Homeland). Project will reintroduce bison to promote biodiversity, restore 33,729 acres.

Securing Contiguous Acres into South Dakota Working Lands Program

Grantee: Second Century Habitat Fund

Grant Amount:..... \$543,500

Matching Funds:..... \$0

Total Project Amount:..... \$543,500

Enhance Second Century Habitat Fund's Working Lands Program which is a targeted conservation initiative designed to restore and enhance native grasslands while supporting agricultural producers. Project will enroll landowners in the program to convert marginal croplands into sustainable grasslands and improve soil health, biodiversity and water retention.

WYOMING

Growing Capacity for Conservation and Protecting the Falxa Ranch through Conservation Easement (WY)

Grantee: Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust

Grant Amount:..... \$495,600

Matching Funds:.....\$1,115,000

Total Project Amount:.....\$1,610,600

Ensure land in the Northern Great Plains is protected from fragmentation and provides wildlife habitat, open spaces and agricultural opportunities for future generations. Project will protect 12,640 acres of the Falxa Ranch located in the Powder River-Thunder Basin Grassland priority area in Wyoming, through a perpetual conservation easement, support a new Eastern Wyoming Conservation Coordinator and support existing Conservation Director position.

House Draw Fire Sagebrush Restoration (WY)

Grantee: Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Grant Amount:..... \$257,500

Matching Funds:..... \$260,000

Total Project Amount:..... \$517,500

Restore Wyoming sagebrush post-House Draw Fire. Project will conduct aerial herbicide treatments for invasive annual grasses on seeded areas to promote sagebrush growth in approximately 2,000 acres and reseed native grass on 500 acres.

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Black-footed ferret

MULTIPLE STATES

Averting Sylvatic Plague to Advance Black-footed Ferret Recovery (MT, SD, WY)

Grantee: World Wildlife Fund
Grant Amount:..... \$724,100
Matching Funds:..... \$580,200
Total Project Amount:.....\$1,304,300
Increase personnel to monitor and protect black-footed ferret and prairie dog populations from plague. Project will protect 13,000 acres of prairie dogs and associated black-footed ferrets from plague at existing and potential black-footed ferret sites on Tribal and public lands in Montana, South Dakota and Wyoming.

Building Capacity to Improve Habitat for Grassland and Sagebrush Birds (MT, ND, SD, WY)

Grantee: American Bird Conservancy
Grant Amount:..... \$259,800
Matching Funds:..... \$183,600
Total Project Amount:..... \$443,400
Advance the North Dakota Meadowlark Initiative through capacity building. Project will hire a North Dakota Conservation Specialist to assist producers with grazing management plans, infrastructure cost share, and conservation practice incentive programs to improve management on 60,000 acres of grassland bird habitat.

Enhancing Sustainable Bison Herd Management to Support Healthy Grasslands (MT, ND, SD)

Grantee: World Wildlife Fund
Grant Amount:..... \$573,700
Matching Funds:..... \$242,900
Total Project Amount:..... \$816,600
Coordinate with Tribal Buffalo Lifeways to develop a Tribal Buffalo food security pilot. Project will enhance sustainable bison herd management through mobile field harvest to support healthy grasslands, strengthen Tribal food security, and advance conservation and community-based objectives.

Growing Community Capacity and Collaborative Action in the Sagebrush-Grasslands (MT, ND, SD, WY)

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited
Grant Amount:..... \$685,000
Matching Funds:..... \$392,500
Total Project Amount:.....\$1,077,500
Foster long-term community engagement, restore and enhance greater sage-grouse and imperiled grassland songbird habitat and protect wildlife habitat from being permanently lost to subdivision development. Project will reach 20 private landowners, restore 3,335 acres of encroached grasslands, enhance 5,000 acres of grasslands for long-term persistence, protect 5,500 acres of grasslands from subdivision development, sustain one job and create and aid in job creation.

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Growing Grassland Protection through Conservation Easements (MT, NE, SD)

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy

Grant Amount:.....\$2,200,000
 Matching Funds:..... \$483,000
 Total Project Amount:.....\$2,683,000

Use conservation easements to protect habitat for NFWF priority species by working with multi-generational ranch families in Montana, Nebraska and South Dakota. Project will secure conservation easements protecting approximately 20,459 acres predominantly in native mixed-grass prairie to preserve biodiversity and safeguard habitats from development, ensuring that future generations can benefit from their ecological services.

Innovative Working Lands Partnership for Wildlife and People in the Dakota Grasslands (ND, SD)

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited

Grant Amount:.....\$2,000,000
 Matching Funds:.....\$1,857,700
 Total Project Amount:.....\$3,857,700

Partner with private and public land managers to facilitate grass restorations, grazing enhancements and long-term conservation projects in areas at risk of conversion in North and South Dakota. Project will enhance or restore more than 17,740 grassland acres and permanently protect an additional 1,800 grassland acres.

Integrating Land Stewardship and Monitoring for Early-successional Grassland Birds (MT, NE, SD, WY)

Grantee: Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

Grant Amount:.....\$1,229,800
 Matching Funds:..... \$149,100
 Total Project Amount:.....\$1,378,900

Integrate conservation delivery and grassland bird monitoring to improve grassland stewardship and understanding of early successional grassland species in the Northern Great Plains. Project will restore 200 acres of cropland and enhance 80,000 acres, convert 10 miles of fencing into wildlife-friendly fencing, build and maintain conservation partnerships by visiting 100 new landowners, offer six workshops and provide outreach to at least 2,000 people.

Phase III: Restoring Native Grassland and Expanding Regenerative Grazing (MT, ND, NE, SD)

Grantee: World Wildlife Fund

Grant Amount:.....\$1,976,700
 Matching Funds:.....\$1,346,300
 Total Project Amount:.....\$3,323,000

Expand Ranch Systems and Viability Planning (RSVP) Network by recruiting new ranches, providing cost-share funding for ranch infrastructure improvements, and conducting ecological monitoring to assess biodiversity, soil health and water retention. Project will enhance grazing practices on 150,000–200,000 acres, restore 3,000 acres of marginal cropland to native grassland and install 130 beaver dam analogs.

Restoring Grassland Connectivity and Enhancing Wildlife Habitat in the Northern Great Plains (MT, ND, NE, SD, WY)

Grantee: The Mule Deer Foundation

Grant Amount:..... \$744,600
 Matching Funds:..... \$750,000
 Total Project Amount:.....\$1,494,600

Expand on current work in the Northern Great Plains by improving connectivity and habitat quality for mule deer, pronghorn, greater sage-grouse and grassland birds through targeted restoration efforts. Project will improve management of 50,000 acres, restore 6,000 acres, improve 45 miles of fencing and support 25 landowners through the work of Mule Deer Foundation's Private Lands Conservation program by staffing and partnering with NRCS and state fish/wildlife agencies.



Mule deer