



Southern Plains Grassland Program

2026 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NFWF is committed to operating in full compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and Executive Orders. We continuously monitor legal and regulatory developments to ensure our policies, procedures, and operations align with current federal directives. We encourage all applicants to do the same.

The ability and extent to which NFWF is able to make awards is contingent upon receipt of funds from federal agencies and/or other funding partners. Final funding decisions will be made based on the applications received and the level and timing of funding received by NFWF.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information [[Southern Plains Grassland Program](#)].

Applicant Webinar ([Register Here](#))

Full Proposal Due Date

Review Period

Awards Announced

Wednesday, October 8, 2025, 3-4 PM ET

Thursday, November 13, 2025, 11:59 PM ET

November 2025 -February 2026

March 2026

OVERVIEW

The Southern Plains Grassland Program seeks to work closely with nonprofit and government partners and the ranching community to bring important financial and technical resources to address the health and resilience of the grasslands of the Southern Great Plains. These actions will increase the vitality of this often-overlooked ecosystem, providing benefits to wildlife and to rural, ranching-based communities. In addition, these actions increase the ability of grasslands to store carbon, contributing additional benefits to much larger efforts to address environmental changes. Major funding partners include Sysco, Burger King, Cargill, Walmart Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Projects in the following areas are eligible for Southern Plains Grasslands support: Eastern Colorado, Kansas, Southern Nebraska, Northeastern New Mexico, Oklahoma, and the Texas Panhandle.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Projects that voluntarily improve management on grazing operations, increase organizational capacity and utilize innovative and community-based approaches are encouraged. All projects should emphasize strategies that improve landscape-scale resilience or that specifically address rapidly intensifying environmental threats and stressors. The Southern Plains Grassland Program seeks projects that address the following desired outcomes.

Demonstrate successful models for grassland habitat conservation that:

- Implement voluntary management at large scales that facilitates persistent long-term behavioral changes that benefit grasslands, increase resiliency and support grassland-obligate species on working lands (e.g. conversion of expiring Conservation Reserve Program to managed grazing systems, installation of grazing management agreements).
- Increase connectivity through grassland restoration efforts (e.g. re-seeding, removal of woody invasives, prescribed fire).
- Implement or provide capacity to engage in conservation delivery for NRCS Great Plains Biome Framework.

Community Benefits - Increase institutional and regional capacity:

- Provide ranchers and community-led organizations with technical assistance to accelerate on-the-ground delivery and implementation of conservation and improved grassland management practices.

Wildlife Benefits - Improve population levels and related outcomes for grassland species:

- Improve landscape permeability for pronghorn and other ungulates by removing and modifying fence.
- Increase habitat for monarch butterfly and other pollinators.
- Sustain populations of lesser and greater prairie-chicken through restoration of meadows and removing or marking fence around leks.
- Projects that help identify and address limiting factors for grassland obligate songbirds.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Southern Plains Grassland Program has a list of metrics in Easygrants for full proposal applicants to choose from for future reporting. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below). If you do not believe an applicable metric has been provided, please contact Seth Gallagher (seth.gallagher@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

If awarded, grantees may be requested to submit additional county-level data as it becomes available in addition to self-selected metrics for the quantification of project carbon benefits as modeled by the NFWF Carbon Calculator Tool.

PRIMARY PROJECT OUTCOMES <i>All proposals must select at least one of the following metrics to report on throughout the life of the project that will directly restore, improve or enhance grasslands on private working ranches and/or publicly owned properties in ways that build landscape resilience.</i>		
Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Land restoration	Acres restored on private land	Enter # acres of habitat restored on private land. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (grassland).
Land restoration	Acres restored on public land	Enter # acres of habitat restored on public land. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (grassland).
Land restoration	Acres restored on tribal lands	Enter # acres of habitat restored on tribal lands. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (grassland).
Removal of invasives	Acres restored	Enter # acres of invasives removed. In the NOTES, specify: vegetation removed (Junipers, Shrubs, Grasses/forbs, etc.), desired dominant vegetation (i.e. native grasses), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No). Note whether prescribed burning is included as part of the restoration project.
Restoring hydrology	Acres with restored hydrology	Enter the number of riparian and meadow acres restored, including riparian buffers. In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland), the dominant vegetation being planted (Shrub, Grass), and the average width of the riparian buffer.
BMP implementation for fencing improvements	Miles of fencing improved	Enter miles of fence removed or improved, specify in notes specific practice and target species: Prairie Chicken (fence markers, fladry etc, report practice in the notes section) pronghorn/deer (raising the bottom wire, drop fence).

Improved management practices	Acres under imp mgt (public)	Enter the number of acres with managed grazing (i.e., grazing approaches to optimize stocking rates, livestock rotations, utilization rates, and plant rest and recovery, including development of grazing infrastructure). In the Notes, describe the practice. Note whether prescribed burning is included as a management practice.
Improved management practices	Acres under imp mgt (private)	Enter the number of acres with managed grazing (i.e., grazing approaches to optimize stocking rates, livestock rotations, utilization rates, and plant rest and recovery, including development of grazing infrastructure). In the Notes, describe the practice. Note whether prescribed burning is included as a management practice.
Improved management practices	Acres under improved management on tribal lands	Enter the number of acres with managed grazing (i.e., grazing approaches to optimize stocking rates, livestock rotations, utilization rates, and plant rest and recovery, including development of grazing infrastructure). In the Notes, describe the practice. Note whether prescribed burning is included as a management practice.
Outreach/ Technical Assistance	# people with changed behavior	Enter the number of individuals demonstrating a minimum threshold of behavior change.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, rancher and community-led organizations, educational institutions, Native Nations and Indigenous-led organizations, and state or local units of governments (e.g. state agricultural and/or conservation agencies, counties, townships, cities, conservation districts, utility districts, drainage districts).
- Ineligible applicants include for-profit entities and unincorporated individuals.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- NFWF funds and matching contributions are strictly prohibited from being used for a number of reasons to include, for example, political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities, or in violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. See [OMB Uniform Guidance](#) for additional information.

- **Equipment:** Applicants are encouraged to rent equipment where possible and cost-effective or use matching funds to make those purchases. NFWF acknowledges, however, that some projects may only be completed using NFWF funds to procure equipment. If this applies to your project, please contact the program staff listed in this RFP to discuss options.
- Federal funds and matching contributions may not be used to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems (including entering into or renewing a contract) that uses telecommunications equipment or services produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) as a substantial or essential component, or as critical technology of any system. Refer to Public Law 115-232, section 889 for additional information.
- NFWF funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation, and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

MATCH

Project duration may extend one to three years. A minimum match requirement of 1:1 is required and will be considered in application review. Organizations that are unable to provide significant non-federal matching contributions are encouraged to contact NFWF prior to submitting a proposal. Discussing challenges and setting expectations will help ensure matching contributions do not become an undue barrier during the review process.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Proposals will then be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

Partnership and Community Impact – The applicant organization partners and engages collaboratively with local community members, leaders, community-based organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement the proposed project. This ensures long-term sustainability and success of the project, integration into local programs and policies, and community acceptance of proposed restoration actions. Partners or communities are enlisted to broaden the sustained impact from the project. Describe the community characteristics of the project area, identify any communities impacted, describe outreach and community engagement activities and how those will be monitored and measured. Use data to support descriptions and submit letters of support from community partners and/or collaborators demonstrating their commitment to the project and engagement in project activities as proposed.

Budget – Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF's [Budget Instructions](#) cost categories. Federally-funded projects must be in compliance with [OMB Uniform Guidance](#) as applicable.

Matching Contributions – Matching Contributions consist of cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised, spent, and acquired for the Project during the Period of Performance. Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a range of partners are encouraged and will be more competitive during application review.

Cost-Effectiveness – Cost-effectiveness analysis identifies the economically most efficient way to meet project objectives. Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation includes, but is not limited to, an assessment of effective direct/indirect costs across all categories in the proposed budget according to the type, size and duration of the project and project objectives. Project budgets will be compared to similar projects to ensure proposed costs across all budget categories are reasonable for the activities being performed and the outcomes proposed.

Spatial Data – Project spatial data submitted to NFWF’s online mapping tool accurately represent the location(s) of conservation activity(ies) at the time of proposal submission. Successful projects will be required to submit improved spatial data for each conservation activity within the period of performance as necessary.

Transferability – Project has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies.

Communication – Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences.

Funding Need – Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested, and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding.

Conservation Plan and Context – The project advances an existing conservation plan or strategy.

Monitoring – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

Long-term Sustainability – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. This should include how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

Past Success – Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation practices with specific, measurable results.

Partnership – An appropriate partnership exists to implement the project and the project is supported by a strong local partnership that leverages additional funds and will sustain it after the life of the grant. Identify proposed partners, if known (including potential or contemplated

subawards to third party subrecipients of the applicant), the roles they will play in implementing the project, and how this project will build new or enhance existing partnerships. (Note: a project partner is any local community, non-profit organization, Native Nation, and/or local, state, and federal government agency that contributes to the project in a substantial way and is closely involved in the completion of the project.)

OTHER

Environmental Services – NFWF funds projects in pursuit of its mission to sustain, restore and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations. NFWF recognizes that some benefits from projects may be of value with regards to credits on an environmental services market (such as a carbon credit market). NFWF does not participate in, facilitate, or manage an environmental services market nor does NFWF assert any claim on such credits.

Intellectual Property – Intellectual property created using NFWF awards may be copyrighted or otherwise legally protected by award recipients. NFWF may reserve the right to use, publish, and copy materials created under awards, including posting such material on NFWF's website and featuring it in publications. NFWF may use project metrics and spatial data from awards to estimate societal benefits that result and to report these results to funding partners. These may include but are not limited to: habitat and species response, species connectivity, water quality, water quantity, risk of detrimental events (e.g., wildfire, floods), and carbon accounting (e.g., sequestration, avoided emissions).

Procurement – If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services, an award by NFWF to the applicant does not constitute NFWF's express written authorization for the applicant to procure such specific services noncompetitively. When procuring goods and services, NFWF award recipients must follow documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable laws and regulations.

Publicity and Acknowledgement of Support – Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF's financial support for the grant in press releases, publications and other public communications. Recipients may also be asked by NFWF to provide high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) photographs depicting the project.

Receiving Award Funds – Award payments are primarily reimbursable. Projects may request funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF. A request of an advance of funds must be due to an imminent need of expenditure and must detail how the funds will be used and provide justification and a timeline for expected disbursement of these funds. Requests for monthly advances will not be considered.

Compliance Requirements – Projects selected may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act (state and federal), and the National Historic Preservation Act. Documentation of compliance with these regulations must be approved

prior to initiating activities that disturb or alter habitat or other features of the project site(s). Applicants should budget sufficient time and resources to obtain the needed approvals. As may be applicable, successful applicants may be required to comply with additional Federal, state or local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances.

Quality Assurance – If a project involves significant monitoring, data collection or data use, grantees will be asked to prepare and submit quality assurance documentation (www.epa.gov/quality). Applicants should budget sufficient time and resources to complete this task.

Permits – Successful applicants will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project expects to receive or has received all necessary permits and clearances to comply with any Federal, state or local requirements. Where projects involve work in the waters of the United States, NFWF strongly encourages applicants to conduct a permit pre-application meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers prior to submitting their proposal. In some cases, if a permit pre-application meeting has not been completed, NFWF may require successful applicants to complete such a meeting prior to grant award.

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HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Easygrants system.

1. Go to easygrants.nfwf.org to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information. Please disable the pop-up blocker on your internet browser prior to beginning the application process.
2. Once on your homepage, click the "Apply for Funding" button and select this RFP's "Funding Opportunity" from the list of options.
3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

A *Tip Sheet* is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This document can be downloaded [here](#). Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website's "[Applicant Information](#)" webpage.

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:

- Seth Gallagher, Program Director of Grasslands and Mountain West, seth.gallagher@nfwf.org
- Dani Tinnin, Regional Programs Coordinator dani.tinnin@nfwf.org

Or schedule a meeting with the team [here](#).

For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact:

Easygrants Helpdesk

Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org

Voicemail: 202-595-2497

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday-Friday.

Include: your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.