



Conservation Partners Program

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FUNDING PARTNERS

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

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 23,900 projects that have generated a total conservation impact of more than \$12 billion.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org



Soybean and corn crops

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) announced 12 new awards from the Conservation Partners Program, in partnership with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), The J.M. Smucker Co., PepsiCo and General Mills. The 12 technical assistance grants total \$8.7 million and leverage \$6.4 million in matching contributions from grantees, providing a total conservation impact of \$15.1 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. Every year, farmers, ranchers and other landowners voluntarily participate in federal Farm Bill conservation programs designed to address some of the nation's most pressing conservation issues. 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 regenerative agriculture principles and conservation practices on private lands. Grant recipients will provide technical assistance to landowners and operators to help them develop management plans, design and implement best practices, participate in Farm Bill programs, and share their experiences and lessons learned. Through the 2025 funding opportunity, projects will address resource concerns in the Great Lakes Basin, Great Plains, Upper Mississippi River Basin and Western Grazing Lands across 12 states. Collectively, projects will develop at least 1,900 management plans to improve conservation on more than 490,000 acres of farmland and ranchland across the United States.

(continued)

GREAT LAKES BASIN

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

Increasing Access to Conservation Education for Producers on Minnesota Working Lands

Grantee: Minnesota Grazing Lands Conservation Association
 Grant Amount:..... \$995,500
 Matching Funds:..... \$176,500
 Total Project Amount:..... \$1,172,000
 Expand access to technical assistance and peer-to-peer learning across Minnesota's grazing lands. Project will expand participation in NRCS conservation programs and increase the adoption of prescribed grazing to improve soil health and enhance habitat across 7,500 acres.

GREAT PLAINS

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

Improving Water Quality, Soil Health and Wildlife Habitat through Technical Assistance (KS)

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited
 Grant Amount:..... \$1,000,000
 Matching Funds:..... \$1,000,000
 Total Project Amount:..... \$2,000,000
 Place six watershed coordinators in east-central and southeastern Kansas to help private landowners develop and implement voluntary conservation practices. Project will advance site-specific solutions including cover crops, managed grazing, riparian buffers, and wetland restoration to address nutrient and sediment runoff, improve hydrologic function, and build resilience in agricultural communities on at least 35,000 acres, while increasing enrollment in Farm Bill programs.

Utilizing Technical Assistance to Restore Grasslands and Conserve Water on Kansas Working Lands

Grantee: The Kansas Association of Conservation Districts
 Grant Amount:..... \$857,900
 Matching Funds:..... \$348,400
 Total Project Amount:..... \$1,206,300
 Position four soil conservationists across priority counties in Kansas to support landowners in adopting irrigation emerging technology and regenerative agricultural practices. Project will improve water use efficiency, enhance soil health and restore native habitats across 60,000 acres.

Expanding Sustainable Farming to Restore Grassland and Wetland Habitat in Renville County (MN)

Grantee: Renville County Soil & Water Conservation District
 Grant Amount:..... \$237,100
 Matching Funds:..... \$30,000
 Total Project Amount:..... \$267,100
 Hire a new conservation technician to expand technical assistance delivery to farmers adopting conservation practices that improve soil health, water quality, and habitat for grassland and wetland species. Project will drive adoption of cover cropping, reduced tillage and prescribed grazing across 15,000 acres, with annual reductions of 5,000 pounds of nitrogen, 500 pounds of phosphorus and 100 tons of sediment delivered to waterways.

Providing Technical Assistance to Enhance Soil Health and Improve Water Quality in Texas

Grantee: Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
 Grant Amount:..... \$847,600
 Matching Funds:..... \$526,500
 Total Project Amount:..... \$1,374,100
 Provide technical assistance to at least 300 producers, supporting adoption of conservation practices including cover cropping, adaptive grazing, tillage and irrigation management, and habitat restoration. Project will enhance soil health, water conservation and wildlife habitat on 125,000 acres across Texas.

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.

Streamlining Farmer Adoption of In-field and Edge-of-field Practices for Water Quality and Habitat (IA)

Grantee: Iowa Soybean Association
 Grant Amount:..... \$999,800
 Matching Funds:..... \$1,867,500
 Total Project Amount:..... \$2,867,300
 Drive the adoption of practices that treat tile drainage, fill conservation drainage and wildlife habitat needs, and incorporate in-field practices with a focus on water quality and farm economics. Project will provide technical assistance and engineering support to deliver 80 water quality structures and edge-of-field practices and 34,000 acres of in-field conservation practices, such as cover crops, nutrient management and reduced tillage systems, to improve soil health, reduce nutrient and sediment runoff to local waterways and enhance wildlife habitat.

Providing Technical Assistance to Improve Soil Health, Reduce Runoff and Enhance Habitat (IA)

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited
 Grant Amount:.....\$500,000
 Matching Funds:.....\$500,000
 Total Project Amount:.....\$1,000,000
 Develop conservation plans and wetland engineering designs to support enrollment in NRCS and Iowa Department of Land Stewardship financial assistance programs. Project will drive the adoption of native grass buffers and filter strips, oxbow wetlands, saturated buffers, bioreactors, reduced tillage and cover crops on at least 2,000 acres.

Advancing Conservation Tillage and Nutrient Management for Water Quality and Habitat (IL)

Grantee: Illinois Corn Growers Association
 Grant Amount:.....\$1,000,000
 Matching Funds:.....\$1,200,000
 Total Project Amount:.....\$2,200,000
 Continue to deliver the PCM program for corn, soybean and wheat farmers in 32 counties in Illinois to increase the adoption of cover crops, no-till, strip till, reduced till and nutrient management. Project will result in 140 farmers receiving technical assistance, with 60 farmers enrolling more than 45,000 acres in NRCS programs, to adopt conservation practices that improve water quality and soil health.

Enhancing Soil Health and Water Quality through Conservation Planning Support for Farmers (IL, IN)

Grantee: American Farmland Trust
 Grant Amount:.....\$530,900
 Matching Funds:.....\$151,300
 Total Project Amount:.....\$682,200
 Conduct on-farm assessments to identify resource concerns, make practice recommendations, develop conservation or soil health plans and support farmer applications to federal Farm Bill programs. Project will improve soil health, reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment runoff into local waterways, and enhance habitats for migratory birds, fish and other aquatic species in priority watersheds on at least 12,000 acres.

Providing Technical Assistance to Reduce Phosphorus and Sediment Loading from Working Lands (MN)

Grantee: Chicago Soil & Water Conservation District
 Grant Amount:.....\$250,000
 Matching Funds:.....\$250,000
 Total Project Amount:.....\$500,000
 Provide technical assistance to landowners to enroll in federal Farm Bill programs and develop conservation plans with prescribed best management practices in order to improve water quality by reducing phosphorus and sediment loading from agricultural and forestry lands. Project will engage more than 500 people through outreach and develop at least 100 new conservation plans over 1,000 acres in the watershed over three years.

WESTERN GRAZING LANDS

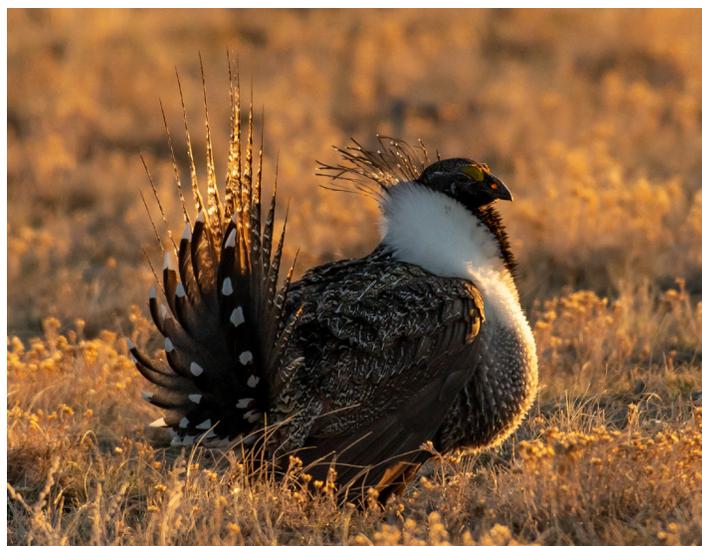
The following projects will sustain and enhance conservation and economic values associated with working grasslands, pasturelands and shrublands; improve soil health and maximize soil carbon on grazing lands; and enhance habitat quality and connectivity for birds, pollinators, and other species that depend on grassland complexes in the Western United States.

Enhancing Working Lands Resilience in Southwest Colorado

Grantee: Mancos Conservation District
 Grant Amount:.....\$703,000
 Matching Funds:.....\$140,000
 Total Project Amount:.....\$843,000
 Enhance technical assistance capacity to support producers to implement priority conservation practices and more easily access Farm Bill programs. Project will improve grazing management, irrigation efficiency and wildlife habitat improvement actions that enhance the long-term resilience of working lands on 130,000 acres throughout the southwest corner of Colorado.

Supporting Oregon Producers to Restore, Enhance, and Sustain Natural and Working Rangelands (OR)

Grantee: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
 Grant Amount:.....\$777,700
 Matching Funds:.....\$196,100
 Total Project Amount:.....\$973,800
 Provide technical assistance to assist agricultural producers across eastern Oregon as they enhance, restore, and sustain priority rangeland and habitats critical to mule deer, greater sage-grouse and pronghorn. Project will address primary threats to Oregon’s rangeland health and productivity including conifer encroachment, exotic annual grass invasions, riparian and wet meadow degradation, and land use conversion on 20,000 acres.



Greater sage-grouse