



NFWF

Great Plains Grassland Fund

NFWF CONTACTS

Chris West

Rocky Mountain Region Director
303-222-6484
chris.west@nfwf.org

Seth Gallagher

Program Director, Grasslands and Mountain West
303-222-6483
seth.gallagher@nfwf.org

Dani Tinnin

Manager, Rocky Mountain Regional Programs
202-677-3463
dani.tinnin@nfwf.org

Nora Ong

Manager, Central Region Working Lands
202-595-2608
nora.ong@nfwf.org

FUNDING PARTNERS

- Walmart Foundation
- McDonald's USA
- Cargill
- OSI Group
- Lopez Foods
- Golden State Foods
- The Coca-Cola Company

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 \$12 billion.



Bull elk congregate in a bachelor group during the summer in Montana's grasslands.

OVERVIEW

The Great Plains Grassland Fund is a landmark public-private grant fund launched in 2026 to protect and sustainably manage grasslands of the Great Plains by pairing land protection strategies with technical and financial assistance for ranchers. The Fund is intended to support and catalyze the voluntary conservation of lands and wildlife habitat and benefit local ranching communities across the Great Plains. This program aims to (1) permanently protect high-conservation-value grasslands at risk of conversion through conservation easements and other durable land protection tools; (2) support ranchers and ranching communities with resources to improve grazing land management, maintain working lands and keep grasslands intact; and (3) build a durable funding mechanism that aggregates public and private capital, supports qualified implementation partners, and encourages holistic, community-led conservation projects across the region.

NFWF is working with stakeholders across the Great Plains to plan and implement a 30-year conservation strategy. The Great Plains Grassland Fund establishes a financial structure and mechanism for providing sustained funding in a way that allows ranching communities and wildlife conservation organizations to align funding with long-term needs and objectives. The Fund, to be initiated by NFWF with funding from the Walmart Foundation, McDonald's USA and some of its key suppliers, expects to award the first slate of grants in 2027.

(continued)



Chestnut-collared longspur

On behalf of McDonald's USA, Kateri and Carbon Yield will provide independent monitoring and quantification of any improvements to soil health.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals of the Great Plains Grassland Fund include:

- Conserve critical habitats for birds, fish and wildlife
- Connect existing protected lands to unify wild places and protect migration routes
- Ensure the future of local economies that depend on ranching and grasslands

The funds for this program will focus on the Great Plains of the United States, which are among the most threatened and least protected ecosystems in North America. According

to the World Wildlife Fund's 2024 Plowprint Report, approximately 1.9 million acres of Great Plains grassland were converted to cropland in 2022 alone, and only about 55 percent of the region's grasslands remain intact. Once native grassland is plowed, the loss is effectively permanent—the soil carbon, wildlife habitat, water-filtering capacity and grazing value it provided cannot be readily restored. This conversion is driven largely by economic pressure on the families who own and steward these lands. When ranching cannot compete with the returns from row-crop conversion or development, grassland is lost—along with the rural communities and beef supply chains it sustains. The Great Plains Grassland Fund is designed to address these challenges by providing ranchers with durable, flexible tools to protect and sustainably manage their working grasslands.