



# Southern Plains Grassland Program

## NFWF CONTACTS

### Christ West

Director, Rocky Mountain  
Regional Office  
chris.west@nfwf.org  
303-222-6484

### Seth Gallagher

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

### Daley Burns

Manager,  
Rocky Mountain Regional  
Programs  
daley.burns@nfwf.org  
202-595-2440

## FUNDING PARTNERS

- Bezos Earth Fund
- Burger King
- Cargill
- Sysco
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

## 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 6,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$7.4 billion.

Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)

### NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

1133 15th Street, NW  
Suite 1000  
Washington, D.C., 20005  
202-857-0166



Silhouette of cows

## OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with Cargill, Sysco, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and with additional support this year from Burger King and the Bezos Earth Fund, announced the inaugural round of funding for the Southern Plains Grassland Program in April, 2022. Ten grants were awarded to improve grassland health, support biodiversity and increase carbon sequestration to improve climate resilience, totaling nearly \$2.6 million in awards which generated more than \$3.3 million in matching contributions from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of nearly \$5.9 million.

These 10 grants will contribute to the goals of the Southern Plains Grassland Program by:

- Improving grazing management on 322,000 acres of private, working ranches
- Restoring 47,100 acres of upland and grassland habitat
- Removing or improving 4 miles of fencing to wildlife-friendly specifications
- Increasing regional capacity through funding of six Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions

(continued)



Pronghorn running

**Increasing Capacity and Technical Assistance for Grassland Conservation On Working Ranches (TX)**

Grantee: Pheasants Forever  
 Grant Amount:..... \$200,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$200,000  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$400,000  
 Increase capacity and technical assistance in the Texas Panhandle to improve grassland health, increase habitat quantity and quality, and provide benefits to priority wildlife species including lesser prairie-chicken, pronghorn, migratory songbirds and monarch butterfly. Project will improve management on 8,000 acres of working ranches to improve grassland health, support biodiversity and increase carbon sequestration to improve climate resilience.

**Advancing Shortgrass Prairie Conservation at Heartland Ranch Nature Preserve (CO)**

Grantee: Southern Plains Land Trust  
 Grant Amount:..... \$183,480  
 Matching Funds:..... \$200,000  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$383,480  
 Promote conservation of bison, black-footed ferret, grassland birds, and species of concern on Heartland Ranch Nature Preserve in southeastern Colorado. Project will improve grassland health, support biodiversity and increase carbon sequestration on more than 40,000 acres by improving water infrastructure, removing internal fence, and protecting ferrets and the prairie dog ecosystem from disease.

**Restoring Grasslands by Removing Dead Standing Mesquite to Benefit Lesser Prairie-Chicken (NM)**

Grantee: CEHMM  
 Grant Amount:..... \$74,300  
 Matching Funds:..... \$78,933  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$153,233  
 Prioritize landscape habitat connectivity projects by implementing brush control across multiple cross-jurisdictional properties within the lesser prairie-chicken Core Management Area in southeastern New Mexico. Initiative will remove previously treated, dead, standing mesquite structures from nearly 7,000 acres and remove 5 miles of derelict fencing to improve grassland health, support biodiversity and improve climate resilience.

**Piloting Grassland Conservation to Catalyze Regional Adoption of Climate-Resilient Practices (KS)**

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy  
 Grant Amount:.....\$334,490  
 Matching Funds:.....\$414,711  
 Total Project Amount: .....\$749,201  
 Launch a scalable model for grassland “stronghold” development in western Kansas, to achieve long-term voluntary conservation of high-quality habitat in large enough blocks to sustain ecological function, biodiversity, carbon sequestration and climate resilience over time. Project will build upon private and public partnerships with local producers to improve on 11,000 acres of working ranches.

(continued)



### Using Community-Based Collaboratives to Improve Grassland Habitat for Migratory Birds (CO, NM)

Grantee: Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

Grant Amount:.....\$315,615  
 Matching Funds:.....\$315,615  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$631,230

Help reverse the decline of grassland bird populations and improve grassland ecosystem health and resilience to climate change through prescribed grazing and associated infrastructure, drought management plans, maintaining grass cover, reducing woody invasion, and delivering workshops in the eastern plains of Colorado and New Mexico. Project will provide focused technical and financial support to improve 75,000 acres of private working lands through community based collaboratives.

### Using Virtual Fencing to Improve Grazing Management, Carbon Sequestration and Wildlife Habitat (TX)

Grantee: Texas Tech University

Grant Amount:.....\$193,672  
 Matching Funds:.....\$196,177  
 Total Project Amount:.....\$389,849

Utilize virtual fencing as grazing management tool to implement an adaptive grazing system to improve grassland health and associated ecosystem services in the Texas Rolling Plains. Project will employ virtual fencing on 10,000 acres of private, working ranches to promote healthy grasslands that increase productivity, soil health and function, carbon sequestration, and habitat for grassland-obligate songbirds.

### Enhancing Grassland Habitat through Data-Informed Adaptive Grazing Management and Restoration (NM)

Grantee: Western Landowners Alliance

Grant Amount:..... \$295,823  
 Matching Funds:..... \$316,787  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$612,610

Implement a regional collaborative approach to landscape-scale enhancement of lesser prairie chicken and pronghorn habitat upon working lands using a combination of adaptive grazing management and land restoration practices informed by robust soil health data collection. Project will improve grazing management on more than 127,000 acres of private, working ranches to improve grassland health, support biodiversity and increase carbon sequestration to improve climate resilience.

### Conserving Shortgrass Prairie Habitat through Conservation Ranching (NM, TX)

Grantee: National Audubon Society

Grant Amount:..... \$175,346  
 Matching Funds:..... \$225,568  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$400,914

Implement on-the-ground restoration efforts in the shortgrass prairie ecosystems of the Texas panhandle and southeastern New Mexico through the Audubon Conservation Ranching Initiative. Project will improve grazing management on 50,000 acres of private, working ranches and implement a spectrum of technical guidance tools and development of



Black-footed ferret

ranch-specific habitat management plans and monitoring efforts to benefit Lesser Prairie-Chickens and other native species.

### Increasing Capacity to Deliver Grassland Conservation on Private, Working Ranches (KS)

Grantee: Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition

Grant Amount:..... \$500,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$651,700  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$1,151,700

Increase capacity for a local, community-based conservation collaborative to regenerate Kansas' grazing lands through landowner agreements that address grassland restoration via native grass planting, invasive species control, grazing management and appropriate use of prescribed fire. Project will enhance 16,500 acres of native prairie on private, working ranches improve grassland health, support biodiversity and increase carbon sequestration to improve climate resilience.

### Increasing Technical Assistance to Restore Grassland Habitat through Prescribed Fire (NE)

Grantee: Central Platte Natural Resources District

Grant Amount:..... \$300,000  
 Matching Funds:..... \$710,000  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$1,010,000

Increase technical assistance and financial assistance to landowners to reintegrate prescribed fire and improve range condition for grassland birds and cattle producers in central Nebraska. Project will restore 12,000 acres of grassland habitat on private, working ranches through the development of burn plans, improved grazing management, mechanical removal of eastern red cedar, and implementation of prescribed fire.