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NFWF Announces \$2.81 Million in Grants to Benefit Grasslands in Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and Wyoming

Projects in five states will sustain wildlife and support ranching communities

DENVER (April 10, 2018) –The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) today announced \$2.81 million in grants to maintain or improve nearly 65,000 acres of interconnected, native grasslands in Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and Wyoming. The grants will generate \$9.66 million in matching contributions for a total conservation impact of \$12.47 million.

The 16 grants will bolster efforts to sustain, restore and enhance habitats that support populations of grassland species such as greater sage-grouse, mule deer, pronghorn and black-footed ferrets while also fostering sustainable livelihoods and preserving cultural identities in the Northern Great Plains.

The grants were awarded through the [Northern Great Plains Program](#) (NGP), a partnership between NFWF and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, a private funding source and BNSF Railways.

“Healthy grasslands support a wide range of wildlife species, as well as ranches and other working lands,” said Jeff Trandahl, executive director and CEO of NFWF. “Many of these collaborative projects are led by local ranching communities, and NFWF is excited to support such voluntary efforts.”

A grant to the Bureau of Land Management – Miles City Field Office will help apply practices such as fence removal and modification to reduce obstacles in the migratory pathways of pronghorn and mule deer. Another grant to Prairie Wildlife Research will examine the use of sylvatic plague vaccine to conserve populations of the endangered black-footed ferret.

“The actions of these partners provide the framework to keep the northern Great Plains grasslands healthy and supporting natural and social resources for generations to come. This initiative helps improve the grasslands and surrounding communities, working across ownerships and interests,” said Jane Darnell, deputy regional forester for the U.S. Forest Service, Northern Region.

The Northern Great Plains Program also supports local projects where ranching communities and conservation organizations promote the common interest of intact grasslands. Grasslands provide valuable forage for livestock and habitat for a host of species that rely on grazers to maintain a

variety of vegetative conditions and structure on the landscape. A grant awarded to Ranchers Stewardship Alliance will help restore native grass and enhance management of working rangelands in Montana's Milk River Grasslands.

"The USDA Forest Service National Grasslands are an important part of supporting rural economies and conservation efforts to keep these working lands providing key wildlife habitat, cultural heritage resources and clean water. We are proud to support and participate in this initiative," Darnell said.

The Northern Great Plains Program was launched by NFWF in 2013. The program seeks to conserve, restore and improve 1 million grassland acres by 2026.

A complete list of the 2018 grants made through the Northern Great Plains Program is [available here](#).

About the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

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 4,500 organizations and committed more than \$4.8 billion to conservation projects. Learn more at www.nfwf.org.

About the U.S. Forest Service

Established in 1905, the Forest Service's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Public lands managed by the Forest Service provide 20 percent of the nation's clean water supply and contribute more than \$10 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. The agency has a direct or indirect stewardship role in caring for about 80 percent of the 850 million forested acres in the U.S. This includes 100 million acres in urban areas where most Americans live. The U.S. Forest Service is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For more information, visit www.fs.fed.us.

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