

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NFWF Announces \$2 Million in Grants from the Northern Great Plains Program

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 26, 2017) — The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) today announced 15 grant awards totaling more than \$2 million from its [Northern Great Plains Program](#) (NGP). The grants will support conservation efforts on more than 83,000 acres in eastern Montana, western North Dakota and South Dakota, eastern Wyoming and the Nebraska Sandhills.

The grants announced today will draw more than \$3.8 million in matching contributions, generating a total conservation impact of more than \$5.8 million.

NFWF awarded the grants to nonprofit conservation organizations, government agencies and other stakeholders across five states. Awardees will work with private landowners, state and federal land and wildlife managers and nonprofit partners to conserve 9,000 acres, restore over 6,000 acres and improve management on over 67,000 acres of grasslands. Grant awards include:

- The South Dakota Grasslands Coalition will receive \$200,000 to focus on infrastructure and land management in western South Dakota. The group will work with about a dozen private landowners to improve habitat on at least 12,300 acres through long-term conservation agreements.
- The Fort Belknap Fish and Wildlife Department will receive nearly \$213,000 to manage and increase Montana's reintroduced black-footed ferret population and black-tailed prairie dog colonies. The project is designed to increase the ferret population to at least 30 breeding adults and work toward the eventual removal of the species from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife.
- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Miles City Office, will receive \$46,000 to modify existing woven-wire fences that create hazards and barriers for wildlife, primarily pronghorn and mule deer. BLM will replace at least 11 miles of fence in crucial pronghorn winter range and high-use areas using wildlife-friendly techniques to ease movement across the landscape.
- The Sandhills Task Force will receive \$200,000 to improve wildlife habitat on privately owned grasslands in Nebraska. In collaboration with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, the Sandhills Task Force will control eastern red cedar infestations on 4,875 acres and improve grazing systems on an additional 3,000 acres.

Additional details about the grants announced today can be [found here](#).

“These efforts ensure the economic and environmental sustainability of ranching operations, benefit wildlife habitat, improve soil health and build a landscape more resilient to weather fluctuations,” said Jeff Zimprich, state conservationist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). “Productive grasslands are just as important to our diverse agricultural economy as they are to our wildlife. We are pleased to be a partner with many individuals and other groups in carrying out this important work.”

NFWF has been building the Northern Great Plains program since 2013. These grants represent the first slate of a 10-year commitment to the region as identified in the newly released [Business Plan](#). The Business Plan seeks to conserve, restore and improve 1 million grassland acres by 2025.

“The vast, native grasslands of the Northern Great Plains support a unique assemblage of wildlife, from iconic species such as pronghorn and prairie dogs to lesser-known but fascinating grassland songbirds such as the Sprague’s pipit, which performs the longest known flight display of any bird,” said Jeff Trandahl, executive director and CEO of NFWF. “Thanks to generations of stewardship by ranchers, tribes and public agencies, much of the Northern Great Plains remains productive for both people and wildlife.”

The continuation of this program is made possible through public funding from the NRCS, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service. Additional financial support came from BNSF Railways and private foundation funding secured by NFWF.

Learn more about the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s [commitment to the Northern Great Plains](#).

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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 \$3.8 billion to conservation projects. Learn more at www.nfwf.org.