

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Private Land Programs for Ranchers, Grass Managers, and Wildlife Enthusiasts



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Programs Include:

- *Grazing Systems*
- *Water Developments*
- *Native Grass Plantings*
- *Wetland Restorations*
- *Conservation Easements*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) offers a suite of voluntary private landowner programs focused on maintaining a profitable ranching lifestyle while providing wildlife habitat. Programs range from simple financial assistance cost share projects to permanent conservation easements with monetary payments. All programs

are based on the fact that well-managed grass and ample water supplies are beneficial for livestock production and the wildlife species for which the Service is concerned. For these reasons, thousands of landowners in North and South Dakota have partnered with the Service to implement projects on their land.

Common Interests

It is not a surprise that the Service has spent over 50 years working with private and tribal landowners on their land in North and South Dakota. The vast majority of the land in these states is owned by one of these two entities. The common interest of good grass and adequate water has forged thousands of projects between ranchers, tribal members, grass managers, wildlife enthusiasts, and the Service.

Assistance

Financial assistance provided to landowners by the Service is used to implement mutually beneficial projects. The landowner is responsible for either a financial portion of the project or the labor to construct the project.

Grazing Systems

Grazing systems typically involve cost sharing of exterior or cross fence for managed grazing systems. In most cases, the Service pays for the fence material and the landowner is responsible for installing the fence or hiring a contractor to install the fence. Managed grazing allows landowners to control timing, intensity, and duration of livestock grazing.



Hereford cow

Water Developments

Water developments include pipelines and tanks, dugouts, and wetland creations needed as water supplies for livestock grazing. Depending on the type of water development, the Service typically cost shares between two-thirds and one-half of the cost of the project. Water developments are usually in conjunction with some sort of managed grazing system.



Wetland establishment

Native Grass Plantings

Native grass plantings are the planting of mixtures of warm and cool season native grass species which are important for good grazing management. Mixtures of warm and cool season grasses provide stable grazing throughout the growing season.



Planting native grass

Often times, native forbs are added to the plantings as well which also enhance grazing opportunities and add nitrogen to the soil.

“The Partners for Fish and Wildlife program fits in wonderfully with a shared vision for retirement. We wanted to give back to the land and at the same time ensure viable agriculture for future generations.”

*Landowners Janet and John Henke
Logan County, North Dakota*



Mellette County South Dakota grassland
Joe Nichols / USFWS

Wetland Restorations

Wetland restorations involve restoring drained wetlands important as livestock water and to a number of avian species. Restored wetlands not only provide valuable sources of water for livestock, but also can produce a huge amount of vegetation for livestock. Wetlands are also a critical part of many bird life cycles.



Redhead duck

Steve Fairbairn / USFWS

Conservation Easements

The Service offers wetland and grassland conservation easements which provide a monetary payment to landowners for the protection of both wetlands and grasslands. Conservation easements are designed for the landowner to maintain a fully functional farming or ranching operation. Examples of the flexibility of the conservation easements include unrestricted grazing of the grasslands and farming of wetlands under naturally dry conditions.

Conservation easements can be an important tool for the long-term preservation of the family ranching community.

“It is about the only type of water improvement program that has been consistently available to me. Besides providing wildlife water and habitat, it helps to expand pasture utilization and prevent over grazing in certain areas of the pasture.”

*Landowner
Bill Whipple,
Roberts County
South Dakota*



Dickcissel

USFWS

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Pheasants Forever and Service biologists loading a grass drill

“I want to thank you for putting this seeding project together and making it workable for us. What a great thing to do for our land, our wildlife, and our operation.”

*Landowner
Brett Nix,
Jones County
South Dakota*

Steve Fairbairn / USFWS



Eared grebe with chick



Landowners Pam and Dan Petrik with a Partners for Fish and Wildlife Biologist

USFWS



Wetland with cattle

Kurt Forman / USFWS

“Our family ranch was able to add our daughter, son-in-law, and their family into the operation. This was thanks to the Service’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, conservation easements, and the expertise of their biologists to add low red tape

cost share for fence and water improvements. It was a real win-win project for us by improving our sustainability, profitability, lifestyle, and improving our natural resources for the future.”

*Landowner
Jim Faulstich
Hyde County
South Dakota*

**Landowner Jim Faulstich with
Chuck Pyle, Partners for Fish and Wildlife
Boyd Schulz / USFWS**



Please contact the following offices for more information regarding U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grassland and wetland programs.



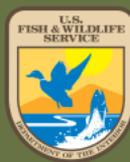
South Dakota

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Brookings Wildlife Habitat Office
P.O. Box 247
Brookings, SD 57006
605 / 697 2500**

North Dakota

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
3425 Miriam Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58501
701 / 250 4481 or
701 / 250 4403**

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**Landowners with cattle near a wetland.
Joe Nichols / USFWS**