

Conserving Texas' Grasslands: A Vital Investment for our Communities

Why are grasslands important for communities in Texas?



Prairies and savannas in the Trinity River watershed, a water source for more than half of Texans,¹⁵ help sustain streamflow and recharge aquifers. Restoration at Lyndon B. Johnson National Grassland could add nearly 14M gallons annually.⁵



Texas conservation lands, covering more than 1.6 million acres, save taxpayers more than \$1B every year through water protection, flood prevention, and rural economic benefits. Over 30 years, that adds up to more than \$30B in savings.¹



Texas grasslands are essential to productive ranching and grazing. With the nation's highest number of farms and ranches² and rangelands covering 59% of the state,³ they support more than \$32B in annual agricultural sales.²



Grassland conservation supports outdoor recreation like hunting, birding, and hiking, which drives tourism spending. In Texas, the outdoor recreation industry generates \$37.5B annually, accounting for over 314,000 jobs and \$15.5B in wages and salaries.⁴

How can grassland conservation be supported and scaled in Texas?



Dedicated state funding could expand conservation easements. Approximately 95% of Texas land is privately owned, and less than 4% has formal conservation protection.⁴ Texas is the only state among the 10 most populous without a dedicated funding source for private land conservation.²¹



Additional TFR LCP funding could protect grasslands before subdivision. The Texas Farm and Ranch Lands Conservation Program funds voluntary easements that keep working lands in private ownership. From 2016-2024, 60% of applications were unfunded, despite it protecting an estimated \$23 in land value for every \$1 invested.²⁰



Expanded incentive programs could support restoration practices. Incentive programs help landowners implement prescribed fire, native grass reseeding, invasive brush control, and regenerative grazing. For example, the Grassland Restoration Incentive Program provides 50% cost-sharing for some restoration practices.²²



State match funding could leverage federal, philanthropic, and private investment. The Texas Farm and Ranch Lands Conservation Program reported a 9-to-1 leverage of external funds in 2024.²⁰ State match funding can help projects compete for federal programs such as ACEP and RCPP.

71%

of Americans are likely to support grassland conservation, 47% think the future of grasslands directly affects them personally, and 58% believe their actions can make a difference in protecting grasslands.¹⁸



SCAN FOR REFERENCES