

CENTRAL GRASSLANDS ROADMAP

Guiding us toward resilient and sustainable grasslands and human communities

VISION

When we look out at the landscape, we witness diverse grasslands with thriving Indigenous and rural communities, millions of acres of connected land under various types of conservation, profitable working land with livestock and regenerative agriculture, flourishing ecosystems of soil, plants, and wildlife, and rivers and wetlands supporting aquifers, wildlife, production, and people.



2020

Collaborators

- Indigenous Communities & First Nations
- Province & State-level Agencies
- Industry
- Private Land Managers & Producers
- Academia
- NGOs
- Foundations & Funders
- Federal Governments of Canada, U.S. & Mexico

This roadmap enables the collaboration of 8 sectors to see how we can gain traction on unified initiatives for policy and funding, how more local strategies can be connected across the Flyway, and how we can share and leverage best practices, research, and funding to make scaling great work more straightforward. The Roadmap will enable us to save what we have left, restore and improve what we can, and support biodiversity and resiliency across the landscape.



THE ROADMAP

How We'll Get There

The Roadmap is a collaborative guide to increase conservation of North America's Central Grasslands, which span 500 million acres across Indigenous Lands, Canada, the United States and Mexico. By bringing together 8 diverse sectors, the Roadmap identifies common principles and collaborative priorities for the many people and organizations living, working on and influencing the Central Grasslands.



THE CHALLENGE

Why This Matters

Disparate efforts are not adding up, and measures of wildlife populations, grassland acres, human community health and sustainability are down, and continue to decline. We have to think, act and do differently, and that starts with us working together to get on the same map, agreeing to the directions we need to go that focus on what we need to do more of, what we need to know more about, and what new strategies are critical to saving our grasslands over the next ten years.



CRITERIA FOR COLLABORATIVE ACTION

How We Want to Focus Our Efforts

This guidance was developed throughout the Roadmap process by delegates and leaders, and it highlights fundamental approaches to a Central Grasslands strategy that improves conditions to enable conservation (such as public perception and policies), and provides support to scale effective practices (such as knowledge sharing and sustainable ranch management programs).

Priorities were established and should be implemented with this criteria in mind:

- Combined, collaborative priorities are **science-based and respect and honor diverse voices** (including cultural strategies, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and generations of experience of private landowners, ejidos, and Indigenous/First Nation communities).
- Combined, collaborative priorities **improve the health of the land and water to support ecosystem processes and sustain human populations**, while helping the individual producer or working lands communities (e.g. ejidos in Mexico) to maintain their way of life and enhance their livelihood and well-being through innovative conservation practices.
- Combined, collaborative priorities **keep as many large tracts of native grassland habitat intact** while enhancing adjacent grasslands, **improve biodiversity on cultivated lands, conserve water, and increase the habitat quality overall** for declining grassland species to arrest, and eventually reverse, declining population trends.
- Combined, collaborative priorities **meet needs of eight sectors and inspire mutually reinforcing activities** that are applicable on a North American scale and adaptable regionally.

STRATEGY AREA 1

Create and Enrich Strong Partnerships

Overarching Objectives

- Sustain trusted, expansive, and long-term commitment among a multitude of stakeholders to achieve the Roadmap vision and inspire buy-in from those with decision-making power.
- Catalyze partnerships and engagement from a broad and diverse audience across scales including county/regional collaboratives to Indigenous lands to states and provinces to countries.
- Develop a consistent process to ensure ongoing collaboration, networking, information sharing, expansion of the network and its impact, and ample space for innovation.

Collaborative Priorities

- 1. Broaden communications to increase support**
Work with partners across sectors and regions to establish a shared understanding of the importance of grasslands. Co-create a unified vision and message about the importance of grasslands to share broadly in rural and urban settings.
- 2. Share knowledge and resources across cultures**
Develop opportunities and systems to share science, databases, success stories, best practices, trainings, and learning across the Central Grasslands.
- 3. Create stronger public/private partnerships across sectors and scales**
Increase bringing together agriculture, ranching, industry, and other private entities with conservation organizations, agencies, and funders.
- 4. Build collective action**
Overall, strengthen existing collaborative work and foster collaboration where there are gaps or innovative opportunities.

STRATEGY AREA 2

Refine Effective Funding and Policy Initiatives

Overarching Objectives

- Build policies which support cross-boundary grassland conservation efforts that make investments in rural economies, resiliency and human well-being.
- Provide a solid, stable, and flexible funding framework, using a variety of funding mechanisms.
- Include consistent and reliable voluntary programs and financial incentives to Indigenous/First Nations, private landowners, ejidos and other producers, and land-based communities to participate in conservation initiatives and ground-up, peer-to-peer training on sustainable practices that sustain grasslands and human communities.

Collaborative Priorities

- 1. Strengthen existing policy to better support both grasslands and human communications**
Improve and reinforce current policies to ensure economic sustainability and grassland conservation at the local, tribal, state, and federal level.
- 2. Develop new major legislation to support grasslands conservation across the continent**
RAWA is likely the first major new piece of legislation that the cross-sector collaboration of the Roadmap should support.
- 3. Focus funding to scale proven programs and support innovative solutions**
Direct funding towards innovative solutions that incentivize grassland conservation for producers and land stewards, in addition to increasing personnel in technical assistance, research, and extension.
- 4. Identify and quantify the true economic value of grasslands**
Develop long-term security and predictability to make grasslands conservation economically viable by incorporating wildlife, ecosystem services and land and water conservation into working lands.

STRATEGY AREA 3

Focus on Research to Improve Conservation

Overarching Objectives

- Focus on research and evaluation that directly supports and drives conservation efforts through understanding biological, social, economic, geographical, and political factors that drive conservation (or the lack thereof), as well as establishing overall methods for integration of mapping tools, models, and databases.
- Identify the crucial information gaps in wildlife and ecosystems that scientific research can and should be addressing.

Collaborative Priorities

- 1. Address research needs to support sustainable grasslands, wildlife, and human communities**
Increase access to existing research to avoid duplication and prioritize new research that addresses knowledge gaps in wildlife, ecosystems, human dimensions and limiting factors.
- 2. Integrate community-centered approaches into grasslands research**
Co-produce research and learning between researchers and land managers, producers, Indigenous/First Nations, and working lands communities.
- 3. Construct sustainability models to support scaling programs in grazing, regenerative agriculture, and industry**
Models are informed by research and proven best practices to then be adapted for varying contexts and local conditions, and to develop industry standards for supporting sustainable grassland communities.
- 4. Refine shared core monitoring standards**
Apply the data to inform evaluation and strengthen existing standards including biological, ecological, and socio-economic factors, and ensure conservation activities address resource needs.



How will we measure success?

Draft metrics to start the conversation



MILLIONS

of acres of land actively managed for resilient grassland conservation



Grassland bird declines cut in half in

10 YEARS

and stabilized in

30 YEARS

Aquifer recharge rates are **DOUBLED** and community water availability **EXTENDED**

New legislation adopted that supports grassland conservation along with international recognition for grassland commitments



BILLIONS

invested in grassland roadmap priorities

Grassland economics reflect ecosystem services and support viable human communities



Grassland conversion rates are reduced by

90%

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Ongoing: *Communication* about updates, resources, and cross-sector collaboration, facilitating workgroups, and *planning* for the 2021 Summit.

September 2020: We're asking delegates to review and endorse this draft of the Roadmap. www.surveymonkey.com/r/grasslandsreview

October 2020: The core planning team will begin having additional conversations with target sectors to further *validate priorities and modify metrics* within the Roadmap, and work with key groups like Joint Ventures, landowner collaboratives, and funders to align initiatives.

November 2020: Delegates and the core planning team will seek additional endorsements from cross-sector leadership.

Spring 2021: Ongoing conversations with sectors and key groups, and summit planning.

Summer 2021: Convene the 2nd Roadmap Summit to review progress modify, and commit to advancing the roadmap.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

How can you stay involved?

1. **Take the survey** to endorse and provide feedback about the initial final Draft of the Roadmap.
2. **Watch for direct emails** announcing additional research, initiatives, and growing resources on the website, as well as updates about the evolution of the Roadmap, events, and opportunities to get involved in collaborative efforts.
3. **Contribute to the gap analysis** work of Grasslands conservation programs.
4. **Participate in sector conversations and workgroups**, (such as with other funders, producers, and regional members): email your interest to info@grasslandsroadmap.org
5. **Be an ambassador for the Roadmap by keeping the one-page diagram and this summary** of the Roadmap easily accessible as you participate in programs that align with these strategies.

STAY TUNED: GRASSLANDSROADMAP.ORG