2025 Project Awards

2025 Bearlodge Riparian Restoration Project – Wyoming

This project seeks to restore riparian health across 3 watersheds (Whitelaw Creek, Blacktail Creek, Beaver Creek) and 271 acres in the Bearlodge Mountains. All funding will go to on-the-ground efforts to promote riparian restoration with the ultimate goal of repopulation of beavers to maintain these ecosystems. Project work will include installation of LTPBR structures (BDA's/PALS, etc.), aspen restoration, meadow restoration, livestock management, noxious weed control, and riparian vegetation planting. Partners include US Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, South Dakota State University, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Wyoming Game & Fish, South Dakota Game Fish and Parks, Crook Country Conservation District, RMEF, MD & TU.

2025 Northern Hills Riparian Restoration – South Dakota

This project will restore riparian health in two watersheds in the Black Hills of South Dakota. On-the-ground work will conserve/enhance nearly 89 acres of riparian habitat by installing beaver dam analogs, meadow restoration work, livestock and noxious weed management as well as native vegetation plantings. All of this work is possible by our partners at the US Forest Service, SD Game, Fish, and Parks, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation and the Black Hills FlyFishers Club.

Black Kettle WMA Riparian Enhancement – Oklahoma

This project is in cooperation with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and the US Forest Service. It seeks to restore 299.8 acres along the Canadian River in the Black Kettle National Grasslands and Wildlife Management Area in northwest Oklahoma. The project consists of removing eastern red cedar through mastication or by hand crew, benefiting Rio Grande wild turkey, bobwhite quail, white-tailed deer, mule deer and the Texas horned lizard.

Cannonball River Riparian Management Improvements – North Dakota

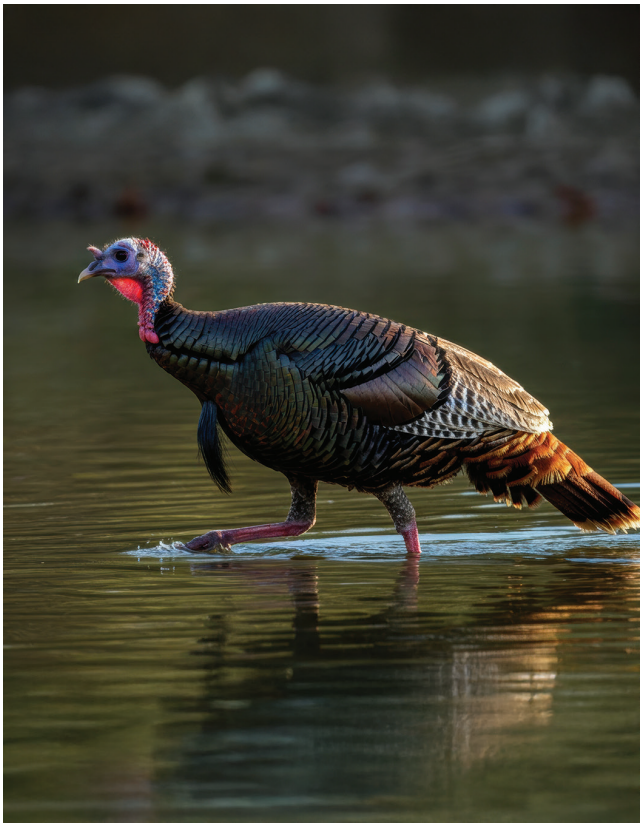
By working with partners like the US Fish and Wildlife Service, North Dakota Natural Resources Trust, Ducks Unlimited, North Dakota Game and Fish Department and a private landowner, we are able to increase water quality and enhance 137 acres of riparian habitat on the Cannonball River. By enhancing grazing management practices and infrastructure, we are able to move cattle from a stream-dependent system to sites away from the river to allow for less disturbance to the water source and prolonged rest periods for the vegetation being grazed.

Kohmetscher Tract Acquisition – Kansas

This project is in cooperation with Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Ducks Unlimited, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Kansas Department of Health and Environment and Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams. It seeks to acquire 91 acres bordering Jamestown Wildlife Area's Puddler Marsh. The tract includes 28 additional wetland acres to integrate with Puddler Marsh, enabling unified management. Once the land sale is completed, KDWP will restore riparian, wetland and grassland habitats to create more wildlife habitat in the Republican River corridor.

Painted Woods Creek PLOTS – North Dakota

This project will increase water quality and improve 25 acres of wildlife habitat by removing full access to the creek by livestock and reducing that to about 15% of the time. This project will improve grazing infrastructure and add additional grazing units. Doing so will allow longer rest periods for the vegetation in the riparian areas as well as reduce foot traffic and waste from within the waterway. Partners on this project include the US Fish and Wildlife Service, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, North Dakota Natural Resources Trust and the landowner.



Sheridan Community Land Trust – *Improving Habitat on the Buyok Conservation Easement* – Wyoming

This project will construct Zeedyk structures and BDAs on 17 riparian acres in partnership with the Sheridan Community Land Trust. The structures are designed to initiate restoration of natural processes, but additional interventions are often necessary to slowly build incised channels backup to desired floodplain levels. As structures fill with sediment and vegetation, it may be desirable to plan a new project with additional structures on top of or near existing structures to further raise the water table and expand riparian and wet meadow areas.

Upper Moose Creek BDA Project – Montana

US Forest Service, Big Hole Watershed Committee, Sagebrush Partnership and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks partners will construct several beaver dam analog structures in this upper watershed where historic beaver activity was present to reestablish properly functioning stream conditions that have been degraded by loss of beavers and grazing impacts. USFS would also build a starter lodge and food cache to aid in the relocation of problem beavers from nearby areas in coordination with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Treatments will restore 132 acres.

West Rifle Creek State Wildlife Area Wetland Restoration and Assessment – Colorado

This project combines wetland restoration with water infrastructure planning for 36 riparian acres of the West Rifle Creek State Wildlife Area managed by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. This proposal will 1) implement targeted beaver mimicry wetland restoration treatments along West Rifle Creek and assess restoration opportunities along Middle Rifle Creek and 2) assess water management infrastructure and support engineered design planning for future repair and modernization. Partners on this project include Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Mule Deer Foundation and Colorado Ducks Unlimited.

Wannagan and Magpie McKenzie Juniper Reduction – North Dakota

Through our partnership with the US Forest Service, Mule Deer Foundation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, ND Outdoor Heritage Funds and the ND State Chapter of NWTF, invasive species removal work will take place on the Wannagan and Magpie McKenzie units of the Dakota Prairie Grasslands. This work will remove rocky mountain juniper from 27 acres of riparian habitat with roughly a quarter-mile buffer from Wannagan and Magpie creeks.

Wind River Indian Reservation Crow Creek Restoration Project – Wyoming

This project will restore a riparian ecosystem that has been severely degraded due to impacts from overgrazing by cattle and a channel realignment. The creek will be moved back to its original channel, and LTPBR practices will be used to improve riparian habitat. Traditional ecological knowledge will be used to guide revegetation efforts at the site. We will rely on tribal volunteers (elders, youth, and others) for assistance with building LTPBR structures and the revegetation efforts. In collaboration with the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, EPA and Conservation Alliance, this project will treat 72 riparian acres.

Walsh County Wildlife Land Acquisition – North Dakota

This project is in partnership with the North Dakota Natural Resources Trust and the American Foundation for Wildlife as well as the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. This acquisition, located in northeastern North Dakota, will open up 542 acres of land for public use and be protected in perpetuity. Located in the prairie pothole region of the state, the property has a lot of grassland and wetland habitat that will be beneficial for a wide variety of wildlife.

Tin Can Hill Prescribed Fire Re-introduction – Montana

This project will implement prescribed fire the Musselshell Breaks near Winnett Montana. It encompasses 3,110 acres of BLM, State, and private lands. This area was previously burned in 2009 and a reintroduction will continue to target conifer encroachment in order to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires while increasing the water retention on the landscape. Additionally, by reducing conifer and juniper encroachment, a more open understory will be created allowing for a more diverse plant community.

Riparian Re-vegetation on Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge – Montana

North Burnt Fork Creek is one of the largest tributaries to the Bitterroot River, MT and is also among the most impacted with 40% of the drainage classified as having low riparian cover. This project will improve riparian habitat along half mile of North Burnt Fork Creek and seven acres on Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge through weed removal and planting of native shrubs and trees. This builds on a broader effort by Trout Unlimited, NWTF, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, and the Steele-Reese Foundation to open fish passage and improve riparian habitat and water quality in the drainage.