

**The North American Grasslands Conservation Act**  
*Section by Section Summary*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

The North American Grasslands Conservation Act of 2022

**SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

Grasslands, including sagebrush shrub-steppe systems, are some of the most threatened ecosystems in the world. These ecosystems are working lands that are critical for rural economies, carbon sequestration, and wildlife habitat but are at risk from fragmentation, invasive species, catastrophic wildfire, and degradation. As these ecosystems decline, the country has lost more and more grassland ecosystem wildlife, particularly grassland and sagebrush birds.

**SEC. 3. PURPOSE.**

The North American Grasslands Conservation Act takes bold action to conserve and restore native grasslands and sagebrush shrub-steppe in North America while supporting ranchers, farmers, Indian Tribes, sportsmen and sportswomen, rural communities, and other interests. This Act invests in North America's grassland and sagebrush shrub-steppe ecosystems through voluntary, science-based efforts. This investment will help conserve grassland ecosystems while supporting working lands conservation in order to sequester carbon, prevent wildfire and further loss of grassland and sagebrush wildlife.

**SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

**SEC. 5. NORTH AMERICAN GRASSLANDS CONSERVATION COUNCIL**

This section establishes the North American Grasslands Conservation Council, composed of Federal, State, Tribal, conservation organizations and different farming, ranching, or grazing groups. This Council would work closely with the Regional Grasslands Council established in Section 6, assist with developing the North American Grasslands Conservation Strategy described in Section 7, and recommend and select grassland conservation projects.

**SEC. 6. REGIONAL GRASSLANDS CONSERVATION COUNCILS**

This section establishes Regional Grassland Conservation Councils made up of diverse stakeholders in each established region, including individuals from conservation organizations, ranchers, Tribes, and State wildlife agencies. These councils provide recommendations on grasslands projects and best practices for their specific regions that will support on-the-ground work already being done.

**SEC. 7. NORTH AMERICAN GRASSLANDS CONSERVATION STRATEGY**

In consultation with the national Council established in Section 6, the Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service will develop a coordinated North American Grasslands Conservation Strategy which would identify grassland regions and highlight the protection, restoration, and management of grassland ecosystems across the United States. The Strategy would identify areas at high risk for grassland habitat loss, high potential conservation areas; at risk populations of grassland obligate bird species; and will identify specific goals for enhancing grasslands. This Strategy would draw from existing local, State, Tribal and regional conservation plans and wildlife action plans.

## **SEC. 8. GRASSLAND CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM**

This section establishes a grant program to support voluntary grasslands conservation projects for conservation, restoration, management, and education activities. Projects can include prescribed burns, management of invasive species, grazing management training programs and projects that conserve intact grasslands at risk of conversion to cropland, residential or commercial development. Projects established in the Conservation Strategy will also be eligible.

## **SEC. 9. NATIVE SEED CROP SYSTEMS RESEARCH.**

This section directs the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out research relating to native seed crop systems. This research includes agronomic research to improve the understanding of native plants as seed crops, research on plant seed physiology to improve seed quality, storage, and seeding success in the landscape, and the development of best management practices and technologies for seed production, seed storage, and reseeding success in the environment. This research will help improve understanding and promote adoption of native seed cropping systems on rangelands.

## **SEC. 10. REGENERATIVE GRAZING DATA COLLECTION.**

This section establishes a jointly run pilot program to holistically study the effectiveness of regenerative grazing practices to mitigate the effects of climate change on Forest Service and BLM lands. The program would consult with a diverse range of stakeholders to develop a set of practices to study, such as: silvopasture, season of use, forage and biomass management, and range monitoring methods. Implementation of these practices would then be studied to see their effectiveness on: soil health, carbon sequestration, watershed biodiversity, and air quality including as a result of catastrophic wildfire avoidance.

## **SEC. 11. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

The Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service shall submit to Congress an annual report on the implementation of this Act, which shall include an annual assessment of the status of grasslands conservation projects, including an accounting of expenditures by Federal, State, and other entities.

## **SEC. 12. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

The Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service will have \$290,000,000 to carry out the grant program established in section 8. There will be \$1,000,000 to carry out the establishment of the Conservation Council established in section 5. Each section will be funded from fiscal years 2022 through 2026. The Secretary of Agriculture will have \$1,000,000 to carry out the Native Seed Crop Systems Research in section 9 and the Secretary of Interior will have \$10,000,000 for the Regenerative Grazing Data Collection in Section 10.