



Weston Family
Foundation

Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Initiative Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



Spanning the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, Canada's Prairie Grasslands are among the world's most endangered ecosystems. To date, over 80% of Canada's native grasslands have been lost to conversion and land use change, leaving only remnants of this vast and complex landscape to support biodiversity, sequester carbon, and provide a wide range of ecosystem services throughout the region. The Prairies are home to diverse wildlife, including many at risk and endangered species of grassland birds. They constitute some of the highest carbon stocks in the world, storing an estimated 2 to 3 billion tons of carbon in their root systems and soil, which further capture and filter water, fix nitrogen, and minimize the occurrence of flooding and drought. Beyond their ecological value, the Prairie Grasslands are an integral part of the diverse communities who live and work on the land and play a critical role in supporting the social and cultural well-being of people across the country.

Recognizing the importance of Canada's Prairie Grasslands, the *Weston Family Foundation's Prairie Grasslands Initiative* will **protect the biodiversity of one of Canada's most ecologically valuable and threatened ecosystems**. The Initiative launches its second phase on February 18, 2025, centered on **securing the long-term protection of biodiversity in Canada's Prairie Grasslands through (i) stewardship, (ii) economic viability and (iii) training**.

Q: What is the Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Initiative?

A: The Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Initiative is a five-year, \$30M funding opportunity to **protect grasslands biodiversity** by promoting the use and adoption of best stewardship practices, addressing the economic drivers affecting land conversion, and delivering evidence-based knowledge, tools and resources in support of improved grasslands biodiversity. The program constitutes the second phase of the *Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Initiative*, originally launched in 2020, and seeks to apply learnings and new perspectives gained in the first five years to improve and protect biodiversity within this ecologically and culturally significant landscape.

Q: How does this next phase (2025-2030) differ from the program launched in 2020?

A: The second phase of the program seeks to **build upon outcomes and impacts achieved** through the first phase and **address new and emerging needs** underlying effective conservation in the Prairie Grasslands. In this next phase, the Foundation will **continue to support stewardship and training**, while applying **additional focus toward enhancing the economic viability** of grass-based systems. As with the first phase, the *Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Initiative* will prioritize scalable and collaborative projects that demonstrate capacity for measurable (quantitative or qualitative), long-term impact at a landscape scale.

Q: What types of projects are being supported?

- A:** The second phase of the program seeks to support projects that facilitate stewardship, economic viability, and training within Canada’s Prairie Grasslands.
- **Stewardship projects** include those that promote the use and adoption of best stewardship practices to protect the biodiversity and ecological function of grasslands.
Examples: Rotational grazing, prescribed fire, wildlife friendly fencing, and water development.
 - **Economic Viability projects** include those that address the economic drivers affecting land use change to reduce conversion and protect the ecological integrity of grass-based systems.
Examples: Market based incentives and insurance, and preferred lending programs.
 - **Training projects** include those that deliver evidence-based knowledge, tools and resources to support ecologically based land management.
Examples: Peer-to-peer training, practical workshops, and on-the-ground demonstrations.

All projects must be implemented in grassland dominated habitats within the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and/or Manitoba, as outlined in Figure 1. **Projects operating outside this region will not be considered for funding at this time.**

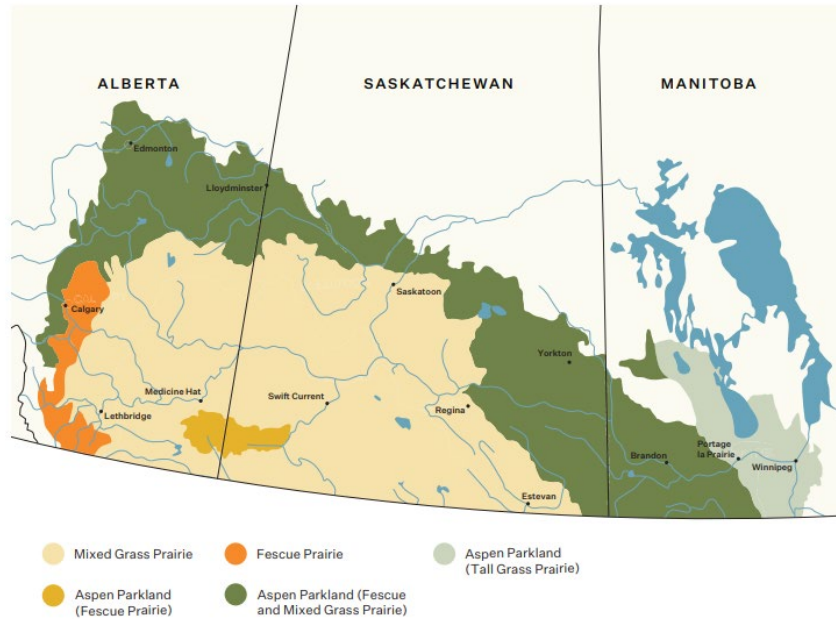


Image credit: [The Manitoba Museum](#)

Figure 1. Geographical region designated ‘Prairie Grasslands’ for the purposes of the current Initiative.

Q: Who is eligible to receive funding?

A: Organizations operating in the Prairie Grasslands (see Figure 1), with the knowledge, experience and capacity to support the identified program goals and objectives are eligible to apply. Proposed projects must be submitted by a **principal applicant that is a [qualified donee](#)**, in accordance with the Canada Revenue Agency and Income Tax Act. Organizations that meet all program criteria but are not a qualified donees are asked to [contact the Foundation](#) prior to submitting an application.

Q: When and how can I apply?

A: The Foundation will be accepting Letters of Intent (LOIs) between **Tuesday February 18 and Tuesday April 1, 2025**. LOIs must use the template provided on the Weston Family Foundation website and should be submitted as a single PDF document via email to the [Conservation Program Team \(conservation@westonfoundation.ca\)](mailto:conservation@westonfoundation.ca) no later than **Tuesday April 1 at 3 pm ET**. All LOIs will be reviewed, after which select applicants will be invited to submit full proposals (Spring 2025) for adjudication by the Foundation’s independent, external expert reviewers (Summer 2025).

The Foundation will be offering two online information sessions during which prospective applicants can learn more about the program. Full event details are available on the Weston Family Foundation website and social channels.

Webinars



Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Initiative Informational Webinar (1)
[Tuesday February 25, 2025](#)
[between 1 and 2 pm ET](#)



Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Initiative Informational Webinar (2)
[Thursday March 13, 2025](#)
[between 1 and 2 pm ET](#)

Q: Can applicants submit more than one LOI?

A: Applicants may submit up to **one LOI on behalf of their organization but may be listed as a collaborator on other LOIs**. All applicants are strongly encouraged to seek collaboration within and outside their organizations, to ensure the development of projects that are inherently systems based and relevant to the range of practitioners operating in the Prairies.

Q: Do I need to be a 'CRA Qualified Donee' in order to apply for funding?

A: The Weston Family Foundation is able to fund qualified donees, in accordance with the Canada Revenue Agency and Income Tax Act. Other non-eligible organizations may be listed as collaborators on the project. Organizations that meet all program criteria but are not qualified donees are asked to [contact the Foundation](#) prior to submitting an application.

Q: What types of costs are eligible?

A: All budgeted costs must be project related and may include, but are not limited to salaries, materials, travel expenses, workshop, training or event expenses, communication and outreach costs. Note that up to ten percent (10%) of the total project budget may be allocated toward overhead and/or administrative costs up to a maximum of \$250,000 per project. Full funding criteria are outlined in the [Program Details](#), available on the Weston Family Foundation website.

Q: Is matched funding (either cash or in-kind) required to apply?

A: No, matched funding (either cash or in-kind) is not required to apply. However, if the total project cost exceeds the amount requested from the Weston Family Foundation, applicants must clearly demonstrate that remaining funds have been secured prior to the start of the project.

Q: Can an applicant hold other grants related to their proposed project?

A: Yes, applicants may hold other grants related to their proposed project, permitting the activities outlined in the LOI are sufficiently distinct from those covered by the other grant(s). If additional funds are secured following the delivery of funding by the Foundation, applicants must provide written notification, advising the Foundation of the type(s) and amount of funds secured. The Foundation reserves the right to review and evaluate subsequent funding in consultation with the grantee.

Q: When will grants be awarded?

A: Grant funding for the second phase of the *Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Initiative* will be awarded in Fall 2025. The Foundation may change or modify the LOI, proposal or awards timelines to accommodate any unanticipated circumstances or delays and will make every effort to communicate this information to prospective applicants via the Weston Family Foundation website and social media channels.

Q: Who can I contact for more information about the program and application process?

A: Any outstanding questions related to the program and associated LOI process may be directed to Charlene Williams, Program Manager for Conservation (conservation@westonfoundation.ca).