



The National Wild Turkey Federation developed the Waterways for Wildlife Initiative, a comprehensive, landscape-level effort, to address critically urgent conservation needs in riparian ecosystems along rivers and streams in the Great Plains of the United States. Announced in 2021, this ambitious initiative is designed to continue our efforts addressing declining riparian, or streamside, health in America's Great Open Spaces and America's Western Wildlands. In the West's arid plains, riparian areas are a natural magnet for wild turkeys and hundreds of other species of wildlife. Many of these important wildlife habitats, however, are in poor condition due to a variety of causes. To address critical conservation issues, the NWTF is partnering with landowners, governmental agencies and other conservation organizations to restore these vitally important ecosystems across the landscape. Over the next 10 years (2022-32), the NWTF will improve 75,000 acres of wildlife habitat along 1,500 linear miles of waterways in the Great Plains landscape.

The NWTF's Waterways for Wildlife Initiative recently announced its third year of funding vital water-related conservation projects with a \$215,000 investment in 16 high-priority conservation actions in America's Great Plains.

Project Awards FY24

Stanford Tract Acquisition and Restoration – Kansas

This project is in cooperation with Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Ducks Unlimited, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and FarWide Conservation Trust and seeks to acquire 181 acres along Buffalo Creek to add to Jamestown Wildlife Area. Once the land sale is completed, KDWP will restore riparian, wetland, and grassland habitats to create more wildlife habitat in the Republican River corridor.

Arkansas River Restoration – Colorado/Kansas

This project is in cooperation with Ducks Unlimited, Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams, Mule Deer Foundation, and Kansas Department of Agriculture and seeks to restore 1,176 acres of riparian habitat along 25 stream miles of the Arkansas River in western Kansas and eastern Colorado through removal of invasive species such as Salt Cedar, Russian Olive, and Eastern red cedar.

Cottonwood Regeneration and Demonstration area on Beaver River WMA – Oklahoma

This project is in cooperation with Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and seeks to improve riparian habitat along the Beaver River in the Oklahoma panhandle through invasive species removal and cottonwood planting. Following the restoration, the site will be used as a demonstration area where ODWC will host landowner field days to encourage other land managers to focus on cottonwood regeneration on their own properties.

Lexington WMA Turkey Roost Tree and Riparian Zone Restoration – Oklahoma

This project is in cooperation with Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and seeks to remove invasive species like Eastern Red Cedar from 156 acres of riparian areas through mulching, which will be maintained with fire in the future.

Matador WMA O.X. Spring and Pease River Improvement – Texas

This project is in cooperation with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and seeks to remove invasive woody plant species such as redberry juniper, salt cedar and honey mesquite within riparian areas by mechanical mulching on 10 acres of Matador WMA.

Cottonwood Creek Restoration – South Dakota

This project is in cooperation with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks as well as The Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Forest Service, and private landowners. This project aims to increase streambank stability and improve water quality on Cottonwood Creek, a tributary to the Cheyenne River. Through practices like livestock exclusion fencing, tree and shrub planting, and installing Beaver Dam Analogs, the partnership is hoping to improve 5 direct riparian acres and 200 adjacent upland acres.

Fall River Woody Draw Restoration – South Dakota

This project is in cooperation with the United States Forest Service and The Nature Conservancy and plans on excluding livestock from riparian sites as well as planting trees and shrubs to promote wildlife habitat and increase water quality of Moss Agate Creek, a tributary to the Cheyenne River. This project will enhance 23 riparian acres and nearly a mile worth of streambanks.



Escalante Ranch: Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area – Colorado

This project is in cooperation with The Conservation Fund, Bureau of Land Management the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. They're working to acquire and ultimately convey to the BLM, the 4,061-acre Escalante Ranch within the BLM's Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area which is a large conservation and riparian project that will support key wild turkey habitat in western Colorado.

Fifer Gulch Stream Restoration Project – Montana

This project is in cooperation with the George Grant Trout Unlimited and Montana Trout Unlimited and intends to restore the currently ditched and incised lower Fifer Gulch channel will be restored to a sinuous channel with a focus on the restoration of connectivity between the channel and adjacent floodplain on 5 acres and .2 stream miles.

Conejos River Restoration Project – Colorado

This project is in cooperation with the Colorado Rio Grande Restoration Foundation, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies and many others addressing streambank stabilization, floodplain reconnection, channel morphology reconstruction, backwater and wetland restoration, and irrigation infrastructure replacement on 2.5 acres and 1 stream mile.

Middle Fork Crazy Woman/Poison Creek BDAs – Wyoming

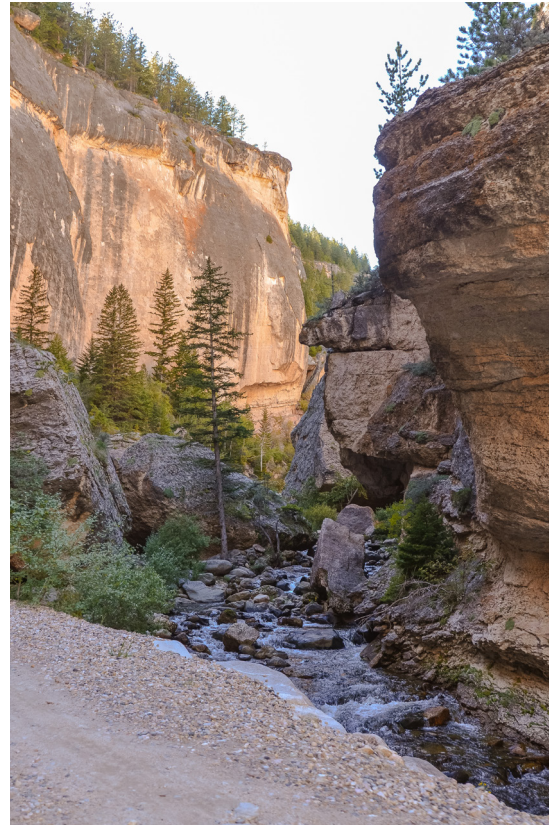
Like many of the riparian areas in the southern Bighorn Mountains, this stream exhibits channelization, loss of deciduous riparian woody species, and a disconnected floodplain. Partnering with Wyoming game and Fish, this project will plan to install a total of 26 beaver dam analogs (BDA) on .75 miles on the Middle Fork Crazy Woman Creek and 10 on .25 miles of Poison Creek.

Cold Creek Riparian Improvement – Wyoming

This project is in cooperation with Wyoming Game and Fish and seeks to restore 100 acres across 1.4 stream miles through the construction of beaver dam analogs and planting of trees and shrubs. Treatments will reduce erosion and sedimentation while maintaining water on the landscape longer throughout the year.

Flint Creek Riparian Restoration – Phase 3 – Montana

The Phase 3 Flint Creek Riparian Habitat Restoration Project is part of a long term, multi-phased effort by Trout Unlimited, state agencies, and other partners to benefit and improve multiple fish and wildlife populations. The project will implement active revegetation, a grazing management plan and streambank restoration on approximately 5,000 feet of eroded stream channels.



Middle Fork Crazy Woman Creek

Six Mile Creek Wet Meadow Enhancement – Wyoming

This project is in cooperation with Sheridan Community Land Trust, Wyoming Game and Fish, The Nature Conservancy, and Sheridan County Conservation District. It will restore a series of wet meadows along Six Mile Creek through the construction of 50 Zeedyk structures on 1.25 stream miles impacting 104 acres.

Rocky Mtn. Arsenal NWR – First Creek Restoration – Colorado

This project is in cooperation with the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, American Conservation Experience and CO Dept of Public Health & Environment. The project will use a tractor with a seed driller attachment to plant a sandyland prairie mix across the 60 acres of the burn site in the Spring of 2024 before vegetation begins to grow. Additionally, shrubs and cottonwood trees will be planted enhancing .5 stream miles and 25 acres.

Northwest Energy – MO River Restoration – Montana

This project is in cooperation with NorthWestern Energy and Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon. Partners will plant 200 cottonwood trees, install an 8-foot-tall wire mesh fence, install well and irrigation lines with drips to restore cottonwood regeneration along 6.5 acres and .27 miles of the Missouri river.



Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge