

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN FRONT GRASSBANK - HELENA, MT

<b>Ownership Type</b>	Privately owned land used as a Grassbank / restoration of private lands
<b>Size</b>	380 acres
<b>Primary Goals</b>	Maintain core mega-fauna habitat, range restoration
<b>Activity Status</b>	Active
<b>Contact</b>	Lisa Bay, TNC; Dave Carr; TNC

### Grassbank Description

In 1999, The Nature Conservancy established a 15-member Rocky Mountain Front Advisory Committee, which soon began looking into the subject of grassbanking. They identified two contiguous landowners who were willing to allow their property to be grazed in exchange for natural resource information, land management, reduced grazing fees, and monitoring. From 2001 - 2003, a rancher has pastured 70 to 80 yearlings on the 380-acre grassbank in exchange for services to the landowners as well as conservation practices on his home ranch. The landowners and the rancher signed a 3-year lease for this exchange in 2003.

### Stakeholders / Collaborative Parties

- **Government**
  - US Fish & Wildlife Service
  - Natural Resource Conservation Service
- **Non-profit**
  - The Nature Conservancy
- **Private**
  - Grassbank property owners
  - Local landowners
- **Advisory Groups**
  - Rocky Mountain Front Advisory Committee

### Primary Benefits

- **Rangeland health**
  - Lessors were able to restore the natural disturbance regime
  - Lessee's home range was properly rested after a fire
  - Exclusion and perimeter fences rebuilt to prevent overgrazing
- **Research/Information**
  - Monitoring programs established on Grassbank and participating home ranges
- **Land Conversion/Fragmentation**
  - Allowed flexibility for keeping local ranch economically viable

### Major Challenge

The grassbank is too small to effect large-scale, enduring results. The ultimate goal is to link this grassbank with several other grassbank properties along the Rocky Mountain Front to expand the benefits of this tool.

### Main Funding Sources

Startup: The Nature Conservancy, General Motors Community-Based Conservation Fellowship, USFWS Partners for Wildlife  
Program Operation: The Nature Conservancy pays the estimated \$1,500 to \$2,000 per year required to administer the grassbank.