

VALLE GRANDE GRASS BANK – SAN MIGUEL COUNTY, NM

Ownership Type	Base property private non-profit/ conservation of Forest Service (public) allotment
Size	240 acres + 36,000-acre allotment on Santa Fe National Forest
Primary Goals	Enhance health and sustainability of grassland ecosystems on public lands
Activity Status	Active
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Grassbank Description

In 1996, The Conservation Fund (TCF), assisted by the Forest Service, studied the feasibility of establishing a Grassbank in northern New Mexico. By August of 1997, TCF bought a 240-acre base property and obtained a permit to graze cattle on a 36,000 acre Forest Service allotment on Rowe Mesa near the town of Pecos, NM. Their goal was to work cooperatively with ranchers and other stakeholders to return low-intensity fire in grassland ecosystems to reduce pinyon-juniper encroachment and restore rangeland health and economic viability. The first cattle arrived on the Valle Grande Grass Bank in March 1998, and by mid-summer the Bank supported 264 cows from four allotments. In 1999, a Memorandum of Understanding was created between TCF, Northern New Mexico Stockman's Association, USDA Forest Service, and the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service to institutionalize this cooperative effort by more clearly defining the roles of each party to better meet the project's scientific, educational, economic, and ecological goals. The Valle Grande is in its sixth year of successful operation.

Stakeholders / Collaborative Parties

- **Government**
 - USDA Forest Service
 - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
 - The New Mexico Environment Department
- **Non-profit**
 - The Conservation Fund
 - The Four Corners Institute
 - Southwest Grass-fed Livestock Alliance
 - The Quivira Coalition
 - The Forest Trust
- **Private**
 - New Mexico Stockman's Association
- **Other**
 - New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service
 - Colorado State University
 - Jornada Experimental Range
 - University of Montana

Primary Benefits

- Controlling pinyon pine and juniper encroachment
- Restoring rangeland health and productivity
- Helping preserve traditional ranching communities in Northern New Mexico

Major Challenges

- Maintaining funding for site management
- Ensuring restoration responsibilities of participants are met

Main Funding Sources

The Ford Foundation, The McCune Charitable Foundation, The Art Ortenburg Liz Claiborne Foundation, The Thaw Charitable Trust, The Wyss Foundation, The Frost Foundation, The New Cycle Foundation, the Southwest Revolving Fund of the Conservation Fund.