

HEART MOUNTAIN GRASSBANK – EASTERN ABSAROKAS LANDSCAPE; CODY, WY

Ownership Type	Grassbank owned by TNC / restoration for both private and public lands
Size	15,137 acres: 5,732 deeded land + several state and federal allotments
Primary Goals	Mitigate exurban development, altered fire regimes, incompatible grazing practices
Activity Status	Currently operating, but in need of supplemental funding
Contact	Laura Bell, The Nature Conservancy

Grassbank Description

In the spring of 2001, The Nature Conservancy began using irrigated portions of their recently acquired Heart Mountain property as a Grassbank. During the summer season, approximately 1,700AUMs (animal unit months) were made available to three separate ranch families. In return, these ranchers moved their cattle from a combination of private, USFS and BLM allotments for prescribed burns and recovery via rest from overgrazing and drought. In addition to home range restoration, each participant has been required to pay a grazing fee (\$9/AUM in 2003) and perform Heart Mountain Advisory Group defined monitoring protocol on their home ranges.

Stakeholders

- **Government**
 - BLM
 - USDA Forest Service
 - Wyoming Game and Fish Department
 - Conservation Districts
- **Non-profit**
 - The Nature Conservancy
- **Private**
 - Participating ranchers
- **Advisory**
 - Heart Mountain Grassbank Advisory Group
- **Other**
 - Draper Natural History Museum

Primary Benefits

- **Land Conversion/Fragmentation**
 - Enhanced economic viability of surrounding ranchlands
 - Conservation of Heart Mountain Ranch
- **Rangeland health**
 - Rest for drought-stricken and overgrazed allotments
 - Prescribed burns on allotments. USFS fuel reduction burns, BLM sage grouse habitat restoration burns
 - Riparian restoration
- **Research/Information**
 - Monitoring programs established on Grassbank and participating home ranges

Major Challenges

Over \$900,000 of land debt remains on the project with some significant possibility of being resolved by 2004. If land debt is resolved by February 2004, the project will continue. However, grazing fees for the Grassbank do not cover the \$60,000/year operating costs. Currently TNC, with the help of foundation grants and several charitable pledges, is absorbing this cost.

Main Funding Sources

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Doris Duke Foundation, National Forest Foundation, Scott Opler Foundation, private donors