

# VINA PLAINS GRASSBANK – TEHAMA COUNTY, CA

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|------------------------|--|
| <b>Ownership Type</b>  | Privately owned land with grazing leases to private landowners |
| <b>Size</b>            | 4,600 acres  |
| <b>Primary Goals</b>   | Protect grassland habitat and endangered species               |
| <b>Activity Status</b> | Active   |
| <b>Contact</b>         | Rich Reiner Ph.D., Senior Ecologist, The Nature Conservancy    |

## Grassbank Description

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) purchased the Vina Plains Preserve in 1982 to protect rare grassland found in California's Great Central Valley. Grazing was thought to be detrimental to resident species of concern, and thus cattle were removed from a portion of the Preserve. Monitoring results in 1995, however, clearly illustrated that the abrogation of grazing in that pasture had resulted in a boon for non-native weedy annual grasses. As a result, TNC reestablished a livestock grazing and prescribed burning program focused on restoring native plant diversity. Also, the preserve is managed as a Grassbank to encourage ranchers in the region to participate in prescribed fire aimed at grassland restoration. If a rancher agrees to burn his land to reduce weeds they then have the option of moving the displaced cattle onto the Vina Grassbank. The grazing right is leased for about ½ the going fair market rate. TNC's monitoring program documents the effects of prescribed burns and rotational grazing on the productivity of the landscape and populations of plant and animal species.

## Stakeholders/Collaborating Parties

- **Government Agencies**
  - Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
  - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
  - California Department of Forestry (CDF)
  - California Department of Transportation
  - Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
  - California Wildlife Conservation Board
- **Non-profit**
  - The Nature Conservancy
- **University**
  - California State University, Chico
  - University of California, Santa Cruz
- **Private**
  - Local cattle operators

## Primary Benefits

- **Rangeland health**
  - Control of invasive species
  - Improving forage quality and native plant composition
- **Research/Information**
  - Intensive monitoring of grazing and its effects on vernal pool plant and animal communities
  - Workshops and nature walks to communicate findings to ranchers, government agencies, and the public
- **Biodiversity**
  - Maintaining rare vernal pool plants and animals
  - Improved habitat for grassland birds

## Major Challenges

Managing for multiple benefits (native species, rare species, forage quality) in the context of uncertainty.

## Main Funding Sources

TNC, NRCS, EPA, CALFED Watershed Program, BOR, California Wildlife Conservation Board