



MFGA LANDS CONSERVATION TRUST PROJECTS 2021

Back to back years for two producer-based one-year projects; MFGA partners on Grazing App with Manitoba Organic Alliance on third project

Winnipeg, MB (April, 27, 2021) — Earth Day 2021 had a particularly positive spin for Manitoba Forage & Grassland Association (MFGA) as the organization received official public notice from Manitoba Agriculture Resource Development Minister Blaine Pedersen and the Conservation Trust that two MFGA-led projects and one partnership project had received 2021 approval.

Via the two 2021 one-year MFGA-led projects, MFGA will work with farmers and on-the-ground project leaders from Ducks Unlimited Canada (Manitoba); Assiniboine West, Central Assiniboine, and Souris River Watershed Districts; and an exciting partnership with the Manitoba Organic Alliance to develop a Grazing App modelled after a successful application stateside. This is the third year that MFGA has successfully applied for projects via the unique-to-Manitoba Conservation Trust. The 2021 announcement brings the MFGA project tally to seven projects over that time.

“The ultimate goal for MFGA is producer profitability resulting from healthy agricultural lands being managed with wise land-use practices that vastly improve soil, water and air quality,” says Wegner. “When combined with our producer networks, our growing leadership profile on Regenerative Agriculture and the successful projects on our resume, MFGA’s constant focus on the interests of producers and working with project partners really is a winning formula for all. We are proud to have the opportunity to successfully deliver all three of these excellent projects.”

On Earth Day 2021, The Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation (MHHC) announced \$2.8 million in new Conservation Trust grants to 23 projects delivered by 20 Manitoba-based agricultural and conservation groups including the three projects connected directly to MFGA.

“These funds provide new opportunities to improve land, water, wildlife and soil conservation across the province,” said Tim Sopuck chief executive officer of Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation.

The revenue source for these projects is the Province of Manitoba’s recent \$204 million in contributions to endowments at The Winnipeg Foundation that are dedicated to land, water and wildlife conservation.

“The major investments made by Manitoba continue to bear fruit for new conservation projects that will help to make our landscape more resilient to the impacts of climate change in the future,” said Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development Blaine Pedersen.

The Conservation Trust project formula requires the project proponent to work with the partners to organize matching levels of cash and in-kind contributions at 1:2 ratios. That means that to be funded for \$1, that \$2 in-kind or funding match needs to be secured for project application success. This match also successfully expands the level of commitments to the project, enabling the project proponent and partners to be able to support the Conservation Trust’s focus on conservation and restoration of natural areas in the rural landscape for a number of conservation purposes: addressing floods and droughts, water quality, wildlife habitat and biological diversity, soil health and carbon sequestration.

The 2021 MFGA Projects and the Conservation Trust Category and funding are:

- ***Conservation Trust Category: Wildlife and Habitat: A new approach to restoring profitability, wildlife habitat and soil health on a watershed basis:*** \$240,000 to the Manitoba Forage and Grasslands Association to work closely with Ducks Unlimited Canada for one year to engage farmers with farmers to conserve wetlands and develop grasslands and forages on surrounding croplands to improve soil health, water and nutrient capture and wildlife habitat. The project –which follows a successful delivery of a similar project in 2020 -will deliver an incentive-based forage program that restores grasslands and protects the adjacent wetlands. Two distinct forage programs that sign long-term agreements with private landowners will be delivered that targets both grain and cattle producers. Success of the proposed project will be measured by the number of grassland acres restored and the number of wetlands protected by the programs.
- ***Conservation Trust Category: Soil Health: Soil Health and Cover Crops for Producers and Wildlife:*** \$100,000 for MFGA to lead a one-year project for interested new producers from the Central Assiniboine, Assiniboine West and Souris River Watershed Districts to target 3600 acres over the one year project to improve the ecological health of the soil, increase profit at the farm gate and advance continued improvement in ecological services being delivered from the farming landscape. Besides helping producers, the project represents many potential conservation benefits via ecological goods and services outcomes including increased soil health, enhanced carbon sequestration and increased biodiversity among others. With a key focus on cover crops, the project will support landowners’ Regenerative Agriculture practices that benefit their farms and the soils of their operations by keeping living roots in the ground for as many days of annual sunlight as possible.
- ***Conservation Trust Project: Improving soil stewardship on Manitoba organic farms:*** As a part of a larger project, the Manitoba Organic Alliance and MFGA are excited to be partnering together on a joint project partly funded by the Conservation Trust. The partners will build and coordinate a grazing exchange website to make it easier for

livestock producers to connect with grain producers. Integrating livestock onto crop and pastureland is becoming increasingly adopted by climate-friendly farmers who are building their soil health and reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.

-30-

**For More Information: Duncan Morrison, MFGA Executive Director, 204.77.3548,
Duncan@mfga.net**