

The Central Grasslands Roadmap Executive Summary

The Central Grasslands span across more than 600 million acres of North America and are home to both diverse ecosystems and equally diverse human communities. As it stands, disparate efforts are not adding up, and measures of human community health and healthy grassland ecosystems across the biome continue to decline. We must think, collaborate, and act differently, and that starts with us working together. We must agree to the directions we need to go and focus on what we need to do more of, what we need to know more about, and which new strategies are the most critical to save our grasslands over the next ten years.

As a collective of stakeholders from across the Central Grasslands, eight diverse sectors and three countries have come together to identify common principles and shared priorities to address these challenges. By increasing support for coordinated conservation and fostering mutual respect for the diverse people living and working across the Central Grasslands, we can ensure resilient and connected grasslands and thriving human communities, now and for generations to come.

The Eight Roadmap Sectors

- Indigenous Communities & First Nations
- Private Land Managers, Owners, & Ranchers
- Federal Agencies
- Provincial & State Agencies
- Industry, Agriculture, & Private Sector
- Academia (Scientists, Researchers, Professors)
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Foundations & Funders

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

The **Roadmap** is what you're reading here and describes the full scope of the cooperative process in detail. The **Roadmap Community** includes all stakeholders from the eight sectors and three countries across the biome - it identifies who is involved in the process (see Constellation Governance figure, p. 21).

The primary purpose of the Roadmap is to describe what the Community wants to achieve, what actions they will take to get there, and how they will work together to do so (figure 1). The **Vision** describes why the Roadmap Community is collaborating and the four **Principles** describe how the diverse Community should engage with one another when planning and implementing on-the-ground actions.

The seven **Scorecard Goals (the Goals)** describe what the Community will achieve, including goal-specific metrics, approaches to tracking progress, key questions, resources, and considerations. The three **Strategy Areas** each have four **Priorities**, which identify specific actions that contribute to achieving the Goals. Stakeholders in the Roadmap Community will report on their work and actions using a variety of reporting tools, which will be compiled in a bi-annual **Scorecard Report** to track overall progress and identify successes, continued gaps, and emerging needs.



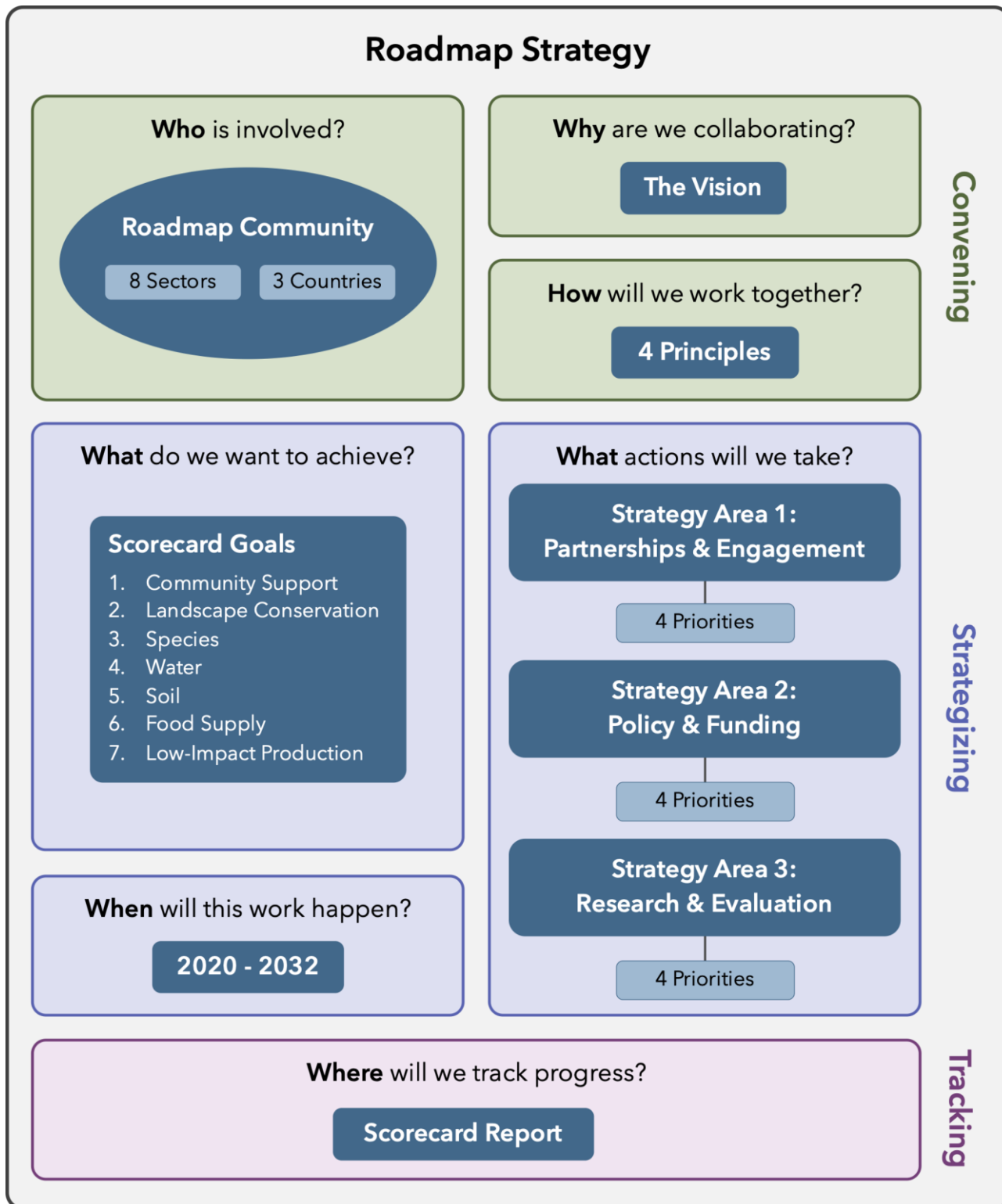


Figure 1. A visualization for how the many elements of the Roadmap fit together, and how each supports the overall goals of the Roadmap.

VISION: OUTCOMES OF COLLABORATION

The Central Grasslands Roadmap will guide us towards resilient and connected grasslands and human communities. When we look out at the diverse Central Grasslands over the next ten years, we'll witness:

- Thriving Indigenous and rural communities and economies.
- Flourishing ecosystems of soil, plants, and wildlife.
- Working land with healthy grazing populations.
- Millions of acres of resilient and connected habitat.
- Dynamic and multi-faceted approaches to sustainable grasslands management.
- Policies and extensive investments to support grasslands conservation and local expertise.
- International recognition for grasslands commitments.
- Sustainable agriculture and energy development.
- Rivers and wetlands supporting habitat, aquifers, production, and people.

PRINCIPLES: HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

These Principles were developed throughout the Roadmap process to highlight fundamental approaches to the Roadmap's strategy. Any priority actions undertaken by the Roadmap Community should follow these four Principles:

1. Respect and honor diverse voices and rights when designing priorities.
2. Identify priorities that sustain Indigenous/First Nations, ranching, and rural communities.
3. Ensure priorities are science informed.
4. Focus on priorities that meet the needs of the eight sectors and three countries.

1. Community Support
2. Landscape Conservation
3. Species
4. Water
5. Soil
6. Food Supply
7. Low-Impact Production

SCORECARD GOALS: ACHIEVEMENTS

The Scorecard Goals will enable us to understand the cumulative impact the Community is having on the biome. Given that implementation and monitoring must happen at the local and regional levels, the Goals are designed to be broad, adaptable, and approachable for each sector. Goals are organized into three categories: Socioeconomic (Goal 1), Ecological (Goals 2-5), and Industry and Private Sector (Goals 6-7). A full description of each can be found in the Appendices.



Herding cattle, Texas

STRATEGY AREAS & PRIORITIES: ACTION PLANNING

The three Strategy Areas will improve conditions to enable conservation (such as public perception and policies) and provide support to scale effective practices (such as knowledge sharing and sustainable ranch management programs). The three Strategy Areas are:

Strategy Area 1: Create and Enrich Strong Partnerships

Sustain trusted commitments among a multitude of stakeholders to achieve the Roadmap's Vision and inspire buy-in from those with decision-making power. Ensure ongoing collective action, information sharing, expansion of the network, and ample space for innovation.

Priorities for Strategy Area 1

- 1a. Broaden communications to increase support.
- 1b. Share knowledge and resources across cultures.
- 1c. Create stronger partnerships across sectors and scales.
- 1d. Build collective action.

Strategy Area 2: Refine Funding and Policy Initiatives

Provide a stable policy and funding framework using a variety of tools, including those that address current and past financial inequities and injustices. Include voluntary programs and financial incentives designed to foster stewardship, collaboration, and flexible participation in conservation initiatives that improve grasslands.

Priorities for Strategy Area 2

- 2a. Strengthen existing policies to better support connected grasslands and human communities.
- 2b. Influence new major legislation.
- 2c. Focus funding to scale proven programs and support innovative solutions.
- 2d. Identify and quantify the true economic value of grasslands.

Strategy Area 3: Prioritize Research that Benefits Conservation and Communities

Work to ensure conservation is driven by a rich and nuanced understanding of local and regional biological, social, economic, geographical, and political factors.

Priorities for Strategy Area 3

- 3a. Reduce unnecessary redundancy in research and address critical gaps.
- 3b. Elevate community-centered approaches into grasslands research.
- 3c. Construct sustainability models to support scaling programs in grazing, regenerative agriculture, and industry.
- 3d. Refine shared core monitoring standards.

STRUCTURE: CONSTELLATION GOVERNANCE, COLLECTIVE IMPACT

The Roadmap is built on the best practices of **Collective Impact**. Highly collaborative, cross-sector efforts such as the Roadmap demand a well-organized structure with decentralized leadership to ensure that effective, mutually reinforcing activities are happening across the biome.

This well-organized yet decentralized structure is commonly referred to as **Constellation Governance**. The constellation model is a complexity-inspired governance framework for multi-organization collaboration and provides a way of organizing a group of interested parties to meet a need without having to create a new organization. In addition to topic- and initiative-based **Workgroups** (e.g., Public Messaging, Metrics, Canadian, etc.), the primary entities involved in the process include the **Steering Committee** and the **Backbone Organization** (currently the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies). These two entities are responsible for ensuring that the vision, purpose, and principles of the Roadmap are utilized, and that workgroups, committees, and participants keep this guidance at the forefront of their work in support of the Roadmap

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? GET INVOLVED

Sign up for communication updates, resources, cross-sector collaboration, and workgroups: info@grasslandsroadmap.org

Support this draft of the Roadmap with a [letter of support](#).

Be an Ambassador for the Roadmap by keeping this summary easily accessible as you participate in programs and collaborations that align with these strategies.

Align your deliverables and work with the vision and principles of the Roadmap; develop an action plan describing your contributions to the twelve priority areas and help us work towards the collective goals of the Scorecard.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Badlands National Park, South Dakota

