

Missouri Native Grasslands Collaborative (MoNGC) Guidance Document

I. Name

Missouri Native Grasslands Collaborative (MoNGC)

II. Who we are

The Missouri Native Grasslands Collaborative is a network of diverse organizations, agencies, and individuals who support native grasslands to retain native grassland remnants and increase the acres of planted native grasslands for working lands and wildlife, while sustaining rural economies and healthy communities.

MoNGC welcomes partners from all facets of Missouri, including those with a focus on our agricultural, urban, environmental, economic, and social components.

Through coordinated efforts focused on our grasslands, we are able to amplify our impact to support the ecological, urban and rural communities that once made up 33% of our state. Note: The MoNGC considers the term native grassland remnants to include remnant prairie, savannas, glades, open woodlands and restored/reconstructed prairie

III. Core values (in no particular order)

- A. Retention of Missouri's native grassland remnants
- B. Expansion and management of Missouri's native plantings for working lands and wildlife
- C. Science- based education and decision making
- D. Acknowledgement of traditional knowledge
- E. Discussion that honors opposing viewpoints and perspectives
- F. Support for communities, producers & landowners who want to expand or improve native grasslands
- G. Recognition that diversified income streams are essential to sustainable agricultural operations for the benefit of all Missourians
- H. Support the use of native grasslands as nature-based solutions to resource concerns across Missouri's landscapes.

IV. Mission

The MoNGC seeks to promote all aspects of Missouri native grasslands, implement the recommendations of stakeholders, elevate public awareness, and support those who want to make an impact for the benefit of current and future generations.

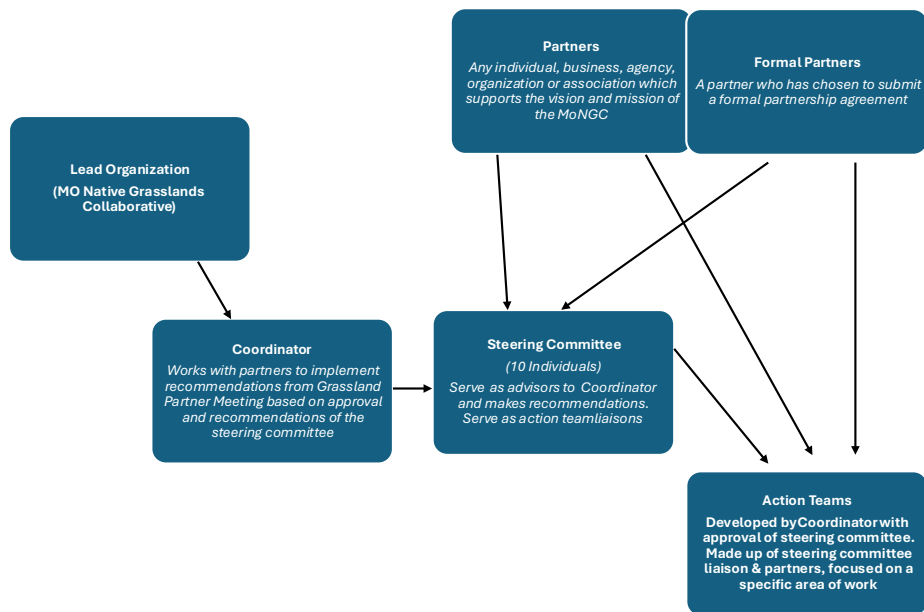
V. Vision

MoNGC envisions a future where native grasslands are elevated in their value as an integral part of Missouri's social, ecological, and agricultural fabric.

VI. Logo:



VII. Organizational Format



- A. **Lead Organization** (MO Native Grasslands Collaborative, CFM, MDC): CFM obtains and manages initial funds to launch MoNGC, manages the employment of the Coordinator, and assures funding guidelines are followed, while the MoNGC assures that priority action items are addressed. MDC provides initial funding for the Coordinator position.

VIII. Coordinator

- A. Hired by Conservation Federation of Missouri, at the recommendation of the steering committee.
- B. Tasks include:
 - 1. Implement recommendations from the steering committee, unless the decision goes against the mission & vision of the Collaborative, or would otherwise be detrimental towards progress in its goals.
 - 2. Serve as lead for MO Native Grasslands Summit planning committee
 - 3. Serve as a spokesperson for the MoNGC
 - 4. Communicate with existing and potential partners
 - 5. Through communications with partners and steering committee, implement recommendations of stakeholders:
 - a) Assist with development of action teams to complete priority recommendations
 - b) Secure funding for projects determined to be priority
 - 6. Work with partners to develop and deliver messaging around the importance of grasslands for all of Missourians.
 - 7. Represent the Collaborative's interests within the Midwest Landscape Initiative and other state grassland initiatives.
 - 8. Convene and facilitate quarterly meetings of the MO Native Grasslands Collaborative
 - 9. Support metrics and tracking of key measurables with partners and action teams to meet annual goals.
 - 10. As needed, secure and supervise contractual workers to provide educational programming, technical assistance or other functions.

IX. Partners

- A. **Definition & Purpose:** A partner may be an organization, agency, business, or association, or may be an individual representing themselves. Through participation with MoNGC, partners can 1) increase their own knowledge 2) gain support for work they are doing that relates to MoNGC's mission and 3) find ways they can collaborate with others for a greater impact.
- B. **Qualifications:** Any individual who supports the mission, vision and core values of MoNGC is welcome to participate as a partner. An organization, agency, business or association which wishes to be listed as a **formal partner** is asked to submit a form to assure MoNGC has accurate contact information and logo graphic. An individual, organization, agency, business or association may lose its status as a

MoNGC partner if they engage in behavior contradictory to the mission, vision or core values of MoNGC, as determined by a majority of the steering committee.

- C. **Partner Meetings:** Biannual meetings will be held, either in person or virtually. Attendance is open to any formal partner or their employee/member or any stakeholder. For any business that requires a vote to be made at partner meetings, each **formal partner** present is eligible for one vote. A vote must have 51% of partner organizations approval to pass. Biannual partner meetings will be led by the MoNGC Coordinator.

X. **Steering Committee:**

- A. **Definition & Purpose:** The steering committee is made up of 11 individuals. Eight positions are to be filled through election, and 3 lead organization positions, filled by a designee of the Missouri Department of Conservation Director and a designee of the NRCS State Conservationist serve in an ex officio role. The host organization for the Coordinator position (CFM) may also assign a designee to serve in an ex officio role. Steering committee members are asked to represent the best interests of MoNGC's mission and its partners based on their own knowledge, skills and experiences, rather than serving as a representative of the organization, agency, business or association with which they are employed or work with. Tasks include:

1. Serve as advisors to the Coordinator
2. Advocate for the MoNGC
3. Serve as action team chairs
4. Provide input on the strategic direction of MoNGC.

- B. **Qualifications:** Any formal partner in good standing or a stakeholder can be nominated, or self-nominate, for an open position on the steering committee. When possible, nominations for steering committee members will reflect diversity in organizations, experiences, and geographic location. Once selected, steering committee members are asked to complete a MoNGC steering committee participation agreement which outlines expected conduct (page 6). Steering Committee positions will initially include:

1. **prairie** (experience in policy, restoring/managing remnant prairies)
2. **livestock grazing** (experience with livestock grazing of native grasses/forbs or regenerative grazing)
3. **ag crop** (experience with integrating natives into crop systems)
4. **recreational landowner** (experience with recreational landowners using natives)

5. **communities** (experience with municipalities and community partners)
6. **public lands** (experience with managing grasslands on public lands)
7. **MO Native Seed Association** member
8. **Easement Programs** (ie CRP, ACEP, GRP, state and local programs) – experience working with grassland conservation programs

C. **Steering Committee Compensation:** Members of the steering committee will not be compensated for services done in line with committee tasks; however, actual expenses may be reimbursed if funds are available and subject to Steering Committee approval.

D. **Meetings:** The steering committee will meet at a minimum of 4 times per year, at a time mutually determined by committee members. The Steering Committee Chair or Coordinator may call additional meetings as needed.

E. **Elections & Terms:**

1. In summer 2026, 2 committee members will step down to open up their spots. In summer 2027, another 3 of the original steering committee will step down, with 3 original members staying on to provide continuity. Going forward, committee members will serve three-year terms, with up to 1/3 of the steering committee being replaced annually.
2. Schedule of elections will be as follows:
2026 - Ag Crop and Easement Programs representative
2027 - MO Native Seed Association, Prairie and Communities representatives
2028 - Grazing Lands, Recreational Landowner and Public Lands representatives
3. A committee member may serve no more than two consecutive terms.
4. Open spots will be filled in the fall of each year. Any individual who is a formal partner of the MoNGC may nominate, or self-nominate, an individual for an open position.
5. The current steering committee will review applicants and recommend to the MoNGC formal partners the best candidates to fill the openings for their approval.
6. Only one representative from each formal partner (with a signed MOU) may vote during elections.
7. To assure diverse perspectives on the steering committee, no more than 2 elected individuals employed with the same

employer can serve on the steering committee simultaneously.

8. At least one member will provide a grassland producer perspective.
9. If an individual resigns or is removed from their role during the term, the steering committee may select an individual to fill their role for the remainder of the term.

F. Steering Committee Roles:

1. During initial development, the Coordinator will be responsible for agenda development, distribution, meeting facilitation and notes.
2. Steering committee members may be tasked with assisting with the above steps.
3. Roles of a chair, vice chair and secretary may be developed if a need is indicated through a consensus made by the steering committee.
4. To maintain focus the Steering Committee will conduct an annual review of activities and report progress to the Collaborative.
5. The Steering Committee may appoint an Interim Coordinator in the event of a vacancy.

XI. **Decision Making:** A minimum of 6 steering committee members must be present for a quorum. The steering committee will provide recommendations for action to the Coordinator, after coming to a consensus through agreement by a majority of the steering committee present. The lead organization(s) has the right to overrule the recommendation if it is contradictory to funding agreements. The Coordinator has the right to not implement recommendations that go against the mission & vision of the Initiative, or would otherwise be detrimental towards progress in its goals.

XII. **Action Teams (See Attachment A)**

- A. Action teams will be formed to address priority recommendations in the subject areas of prairie, grazing lands, communities, public land, staff training, communications, policy and ag crop/Easement Programs. Other action teams can be formed by the Coordinator with the recommendation from the steering committee. Action teams may be asked to work jointly on any priority recommendation.
- B. The Coordinator may also dissolve an action team upon completion of their work.
- C. Each action team will have at least one steering committee member serving on it as chair.

- D. Any partner is welcome, and encouraged, to participate in up to two action teams
- E. Coordinator will be responsible for agenda development, distribution, meeting facilitation and notes for Action Team meetings.
- F. Each team would be following the framework and feeding information/recommendations into the Steering Committee. Each team will define their goals and objectives and develop a “charter” for the team.

XIII. **Bank account**

- A. Until a need is seen, MoNGC will not have a separate bank account or 501c3 status.
- B. MoNGC brings partners together, many with their own non-profit or 501c3 status. Should those partners choose to collaborate on a project that requires financial management, they could choose to do so through a collaborator or work with MoNGC’s lead organizations.

XIV. **Amendments**

- A. This guidance document may be amended through a 2/3 recommendation of the steering committee and approval by the Coordinator.

Attachment A

Building an Action Team

Focus within Action Teams – Each team will identify issues/items within the categories listed. Use identified issues to develop and prioritize action plans.

- Education and support
 - External
 - Internal
 - Technical assistance
- Funding and incentives
 - Grants
 - Federal programs
 - State programs
 - NGO programs
 - Market incentives
- Research and monitoring
 - Metrics of success
 - Priority research needs
- Communication and collaboration
 - External
 - Internal
 - Professional staff
 - Partners
- Policy
 - Municipal/local
 - State
- Barriers not addressed above

Action Team size and structure

Each Action Team will be led by a chairperson or co-chairs. Chairperson will be a member of the Steering Committee. If co-chairs are used for the Action Team structure, then at least one of the co-chairs will be a Steering Committee member.

Action Team will consist of at least 4 members (5 total with Chair), but no more than 10.

The goal is to have a manageable team representing diverse stakeholder input and should be determined by the Action Team chairperson.

Chairs/co-chairs identify skill sets needed for their Action Team and build a team based upon skill needs. Members can be recruited by personal invitation or advertisement within a minimum of 3 to 5 key stakeholder groups.

Missouri Native Grasslands Collaborative Steering Committee Participation Agreement

1. I recognize that I will be responsible for:
 - Supporting the mission & vision of MO Native Grasslands Collaborative.
 - Abiding by the core values
 - Serving as an advocate for initiatives that the steering committee deems worthy of focus.
 - As needed, serving as an action team liaison for at least one committee.
 - Providing input on the strategic direction of MoNGC.
 - Helping plan, and attending, the Missouri Native Grasslands Summit.
 - Actively participating in meetings and email discussions.
2. In this role, steering committee members are asked to represent the best interests of MoNGC's mission and its partners based on their own knowledge, skills and experiences, rather than serving as a representative of the organization, agency, business or association with which they are employed or work with. While serving on the committee may also fulfill a responsibility to your employer, you are asked to make decisions that represent the best interests of all MoNGC partners.
3. The steering committee will meet at a minimum of 4 times per year, at a date, time and format to be agreed upon by that steering committee. Steering committee members are expected to participate in at least 70% of meetings, and may be asked to step down if their absences are a hindrance to the remaining committee.
4. **Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** In the course of meetings or activities, I will disclose any interests in a transaction or decision where I (including my business and/or other nonprofit affiliations), my family, and/or my significant other, employer, or close associates will receive a benefit or gain. After disclosure, I understand that I will be asked to leave the room for the discussion and will not be permitted to vote on the question.

I _____(name) agree to serve on the MoNGC steering committee from summer 2025- summer 2028 (*with 3 volunteers asked to step down in each 2026 and 2027*). I agree to abide by the above statements.

_____ (signature) _____ (date)