

Increasing Tolerance for Wildlife on Private Lands in Montana's Great Plains Region

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Private landowners in Montana make critical land management decisions that influence ecological conditions and wildlife coexistence across both private and adjacent public lands. American Prairie's Wild Sky Program works with landowners in Central Montana to increase tolerance for wildlife and incentivize wildlife-friendly management practices through direct economic incentives. The program currently includes 21 participants and more than 80,000 deeded acres. Participating landowners receive payments for wildlife documented on their properties via trail cameras, with incentives ranging from \$25 per image of a coyote to \$500 for a wolf or grizzly bear. Additional payments support wildlife-friendly practices such as fence modifications, carnivore coexistence agreements, and range riding. In 2025, Wild Sky distributed more than \$80,000 to participating landowners. The program is also collecting social science data to assess changes in participant attitudes toward wildlife and coexistence. Together, these efforts aim to strengthen conservation outcomes on working lands while supporting the people who steward them.