

# Finding Common Ground

By creating an agricultural conservation easement, the Lightning Creek Ranch found common ground with conservation partners. The easement protects portions of the native grasslands of the Zumwalt Prairie Preserve from development while continuing to allow grazing for the ranch's cattle and providing increased financial security for the ranch.



**OREGON**  
Zumwalt Prairie Preserve,  
Wallowa County, OR

**The organizations that are involved with this project include:** The Nature Conservancy, Lightning Creek Ranch, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Climate Trust, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

**Funding partners include:** USDA National Resources Conservation Service: Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Agricultural Land Easements, The Climate Trust, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The Zumwalt Prairie Preserve in Wallowa County, OR is North America's largest remaining grassland of its type. The preserve includes portions of the Lightning Creek Ranch, a 12,225 acre cattle ranch owned by the Probert family.

The Probert family sold the development rights for a portion of their ranch to the Nature Conservancy as an agricultural conservation easement. Such an agreement prohibits the development of the native grassland encompassed by the ranch while allowing the Probert family to maintain ownership and continue to use the land for grazing.

Reduced property taxes for the Probert family means their ranch can continue to thrive despite rising land prices. "...We were able to reduce the land cost to one that is manageable for our family," says Probert. "Conservation easements are a great way to do this while ensuring the Zumwalt Prairie remains an intact grassland with the same characteristics that make us proud to call this beautiful place home."

## KEY PROJECT BENEFIT

- Water quality improved
- Soil erosion prevented
- Carbon sequestered
- Native Zumwalt Prairie preserved
- Biodiversity supported



Dan Probert of Lightning Creek  
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Zumwalt Prairie Preserve Wildflowers bloom in spring on Zumwalt Prairie Preserve  
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## WACC MEMBERS

