



Inflation Reduction Act in Action:

Family in Nebraska Restores and Protects Land at Risk Near Nine Mile Prairie

In January 2024, Jon and Bill Oberg and family placed their 75-acre property in a conservation easement with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through a partnership with the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District. NRCS purchased the easement through its [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Agricultural Land Easement \(ACEP-ALE\)](#) with Inflation Reduction Act funding, the largest investment in climate action in history.

The [Inflation Reduction Act](#) provides an additional \$19.5 billion for NRCS to deliver financial and technical assistance to producers for climate-smart mitigation activities through existing USDA conservation programs. When applied appropriately, these activities are expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or increase carbon sequestration.

ACEP-ALE helps landowners and other eligible entities conserve, restore, and protect wetlands, productive agricultural lands, and grasslands at risk of conversion to non-grassland uses.

Jon and Bill's property is close to Lincoln, Nebraska, and lies a quarter of a mile from Nine Mile Prairie, a large, protected tract of virgin prairie owned by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Foundation. Being close to Nine Mile Prairie, the conservation easement adds more land to the tallgrass ecoregion.

Jon and Bill purchased the property in the early 2010s from the Eager and Furrer families, who contributed importantly to the history and development of the city of Lincoln and the state of Nebraska. Most of the property was previously terraced and farmed. In the early 1980s and 1990s, thousands of black walnut trees were planted with the intent to harvest a walnut crop or potentially harvest timber in the



[From Left] Landowners Bill Oberg and his wife Pat Leach, NRCS Chief Terry Cosby, and Rob Lawson, NE NRCS State Conservationist touring the Oberg easement area.

Photo credit: Scott Ingalsbe, Nebraska NRCS.

future. Since purchasing the land, Jon and Bill have strived to maintain the property in its native state.

The land is an important grassland of significance because of its virgin prairie and its importance to Lincoln's greenspace. Located within the tallgrass ecoregion, the property contains one of the most imperiled ecosystems in the world, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The native prairie that is in the southeast corner of the property has remained unplowed since the Otoe-Missouria Tribes cession of the land to the United States in the 1800s.

The property contains a diverse suite of habitats from a riparian corridor, woodlands planted to black walnuts, virgin prairie, and wetlands. The diversity of habitats provides home to multiple wildlife species including at-risk-species listed in the Nebraska Natural Legacy

Quick Farm Facts

Location: Lancaster, County, Nebraska

Operation Type: Land

Climate-Smart Practices: Agricultural Land Easement

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

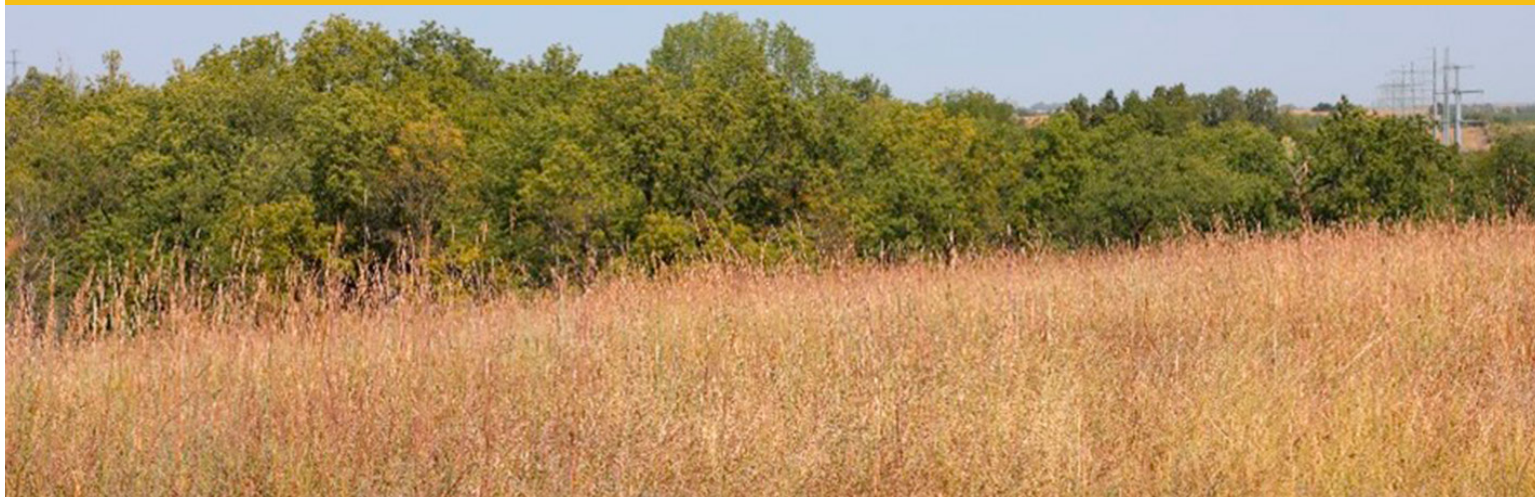
IRA represents the single largest investment in climate and clean energy solutions in American history. It provides an additional \$19.5 billion over five years for climate-smart agriculture through existing NRCS conservation programs. nrcs.usda.gov/inflation-reduction-act.

Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF)

is an integrated approach that enables farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners to respond to climate change by reducing or removing GHG emissions (mitigation) and adapting and building resilience (adaptation), while sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes. View the [practice list](#).

How to Apply

Learn more about the exciting opportunities to use Inflation Reduction Act funds for forest land conservation at your local USDA Service Center, which you can find at farmers.gov/working-with-us/USDA-service-centers.



*Jon and Bill Oberg's property is close to Lincoln, Nebraska, and lies a quarter of a mile from Nine Mile Prairie.
Photo credit: Scott Ingalsbe, Nebraska NRCS*

Plan. Tallgrass prairie once covered more than 170 million acres of the United States, from Indiana to Kansas and from Canada to Texas. Nearly all of it is gone, plowed under for agriculture or urban development, according to the National Park Service. Protecting the Oberg property with a conservation easement close to Nine Mile Prairie is essential to the preservation of the tallgrass ecoregion.

"Bill and I are both Prairie people. We grew up in Nebraska," said Pat Leach, Oberg's wife. "I would say that I think over the years often tallgrass Prairie wasn't valued like certain other kinds of landforms. And so, we are happy to do our part to preserve this."



The Obergs' dog, Ditto, on the easement property that is used primarily for hay which helps maintain the health of the prairie.

Photo credit: Scott Ingalsbe, Nebraska NRCS.