

# *Perceived benefits, barriers, and enabling conditions of ranch management planning across the Northern Great Plains*

*The sun setting over a native grassland. -photo credit, Ryan Schroeder*

## **Project Overview**

This project seeks to better understand the current state of ranch management planning (RMP) in the Northern Great Plains by surveying cattle producers in Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, New Mexico, and Colorado. We aim to document the extent to which ranchers have and use RMPs, and to explore ranchers' perceptions of the benefits, costs, enabling conditions, and barriers to developing RMPs. We also want to understand how ranchers perceive the impacts of management planning on ranch ecological, social, and economic outcomes (e.g., plant diversity, rancher well-being, financial viability).

## **Why Research Ranch Management Planning?**

Adaptive management plans have long been promoted by agencies like NRCS and other organizations (e.g., Holistic Management Institute, Extension), but on-the-ground adoption remains low at approximately 10% of US producers. Further, we don't know how ranchers develop plans, what they contain, and whether using RMPs leads to positive ecological, social, and economic outcomes. This research will improve understanding of ranchers' use and perceptions of RMP, informing tailored needs-based outreach and support.

## **Research Objectives**

1. Characterize ranch management plans (RMPs) and use patterns, including adoption, among cattle ranchers in the Northern Great Plains (NGP)
2. Characterize ranchers' monitoring practices and associated approaches to adaptive ranch management planning
3. Explore rancher needs and preferred knowledge sharing models to support RMP adoption and development
4. Understand producers' occupational and environmental identities and assess the relationship between RMP adoption and rancher identity
5. Assess the relationship between RMP adoption and measures of rancher well-being
6. Capture the diversity of experiences among NGP ranchers, including Native American ranchers, women producers, small-scale and first-

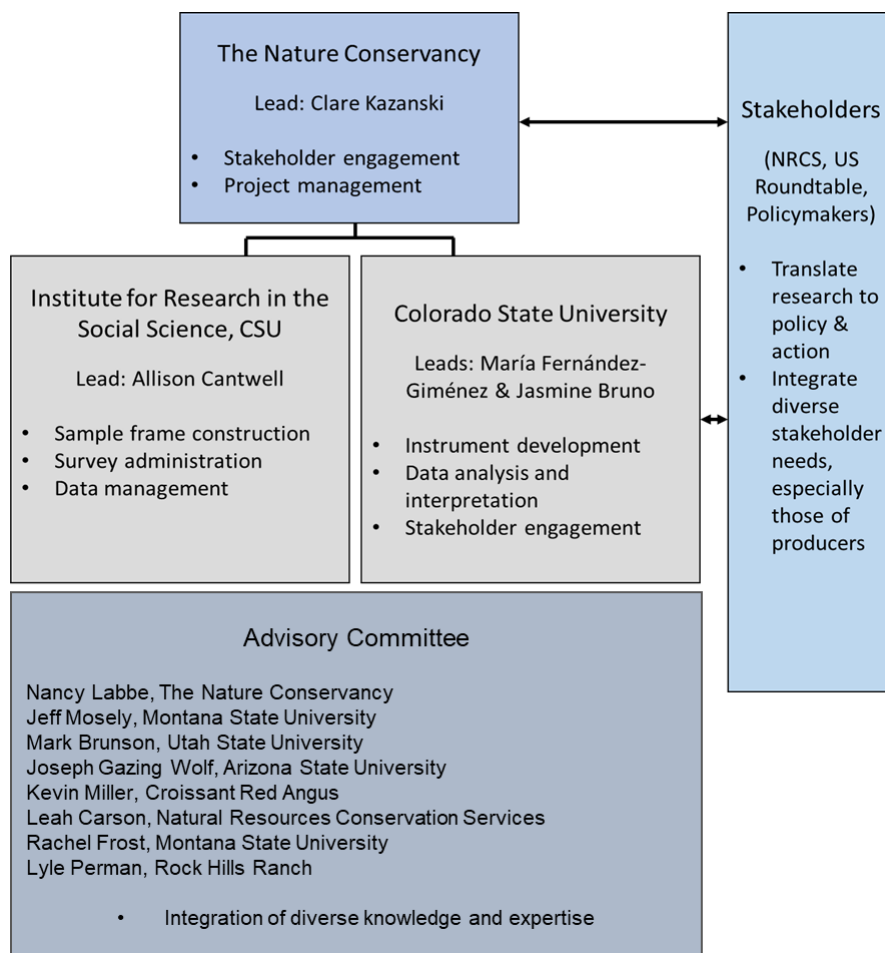


Figure 1. Project organizational chart outlining leads and

## Project Management & Advisory Committee

Dr. Clare Kazanski of The Nature Conservancy oversees the project (Fig. 1). The core research team consists of Dr. María Fernández-Giménez and Jasmine Bruno of Colorado State University (CSU) and Dr. Allison Cantwell of the Institute for Research in the Social Sciences, CSU.

The following Advisory Committee members bring knowledge from extension, ranching, government, conservation, and research, including understanding of diverse and underrepresented ranchers:

Nancy Labbe, The Nature Conservancy  
 Jeff Mosely, Montana State University  
 Mark Brunson, Utah State University  
 Joseph Gazing Wolf, Arizona State University  
 Kevin Miller, Croissant Red Angus  
 Leah Carson, NRCS  
 Rachel Frost, Montana State University  
 Lyle Perman, Rock Hills Ranch

### Anticipated Advisory Committee Contributions & Timeline

- 1) Research Phase: Survey Design & Sample Frame Construction
  - Timeline: June-July 2020
  - Communication: Email
- 2) Research Phase: Data Analysis and Interpretation
  - Timeline: April 2021
  - Communication: Email and Remote Call

### Contact Information

Jasmine Bruno  
 Ph.D. Candidate,  
 Department of Forest  
 and Rangeland Stewardship  
[Jasmine.bruno@colostate.edu](mailto:Jasmine.bruno@colostate.edu)  
 (207)-441-9717





