Seth Gallagher
Program Director of Grasslands and Mountain West
National Fish and Wildlife Federation
1133 Fifteenth St. N.W., Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005

November 4, 2021

Mr. Gallagher,

The Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA) would like to express our support of the proposal by Texas Tech University and the Texas Grazing Land Coalition titled "Application of Virtual Fencing as an Innovative Tool to Improve Grazing Management, Carbon Sequestration, and Wildlife Habitat."

TSCRA is a 144-year-old trade association and is the largest and oldest livestock organization based in Texas. TSCRA has more than 17,000 beef cattle operations, ranching families and businesses as members. These members represent approximately 55,000 individuals directly involved in ranching and beef production who manage 4 million head of cattle on 76 million acres of range and pastureland, primarily in Texas, Oklahoma and throughout the Southwest.

Texas is largely made up of privately-owned grazing lands that play an often unseen yet integral role in day-to-day life. Grazing lands are critical to the capture, storage, and provision of water, as well as ensuring our soil stays on the ground rather than in our air or water. These areas provide habitat for fish and wildlife, and support hunting, fishing and recreation. The livestock sector is intrinsically linked to grazing lands, supporting economic gain and enhancing ecosystem services.

Grasslands are inherently complex and vital to ecosystem health, yet our understanding of these systems is minimal. We need to better understand how these systems and their fundamental processes operate and how we can utilize them in a synergistic manner to support their health and the services they provide. The need for more research, education and outreach on grassland ecosystems cannot be emphasized enough.

The proposed implementation of virtual fencing is novel for the Southern Great Plains. There is little information about its use outside of the Mountain West and Northern Great Plains. This project will evaluate its potential as an innovative tool to improve grassland ecosystem health and resilience to climate change through modifications of grazing intensity to address forage availability, water scarcity and soil health challenges in this region. Additionally, the project will provide local ranchers and regional conservation organizations with technical knowledge related to virtual fencing, which will accelerate use of the technology and associated improved grassland management practices. Improved grassland management will subsequently improve habitat for grassland-obligate birds, ungulates, and pollinators as well.

The team from Texas Tech University and the Texas Grazing Land Coalition is very capable of leading this project and demonstrating novel practices in rangeland management. The partnership of these two entities will yield benefits far beyond the grant period.

If you have any questions regarding TSCRA's support of this project, please contact Peyton Schumann at 512.469.0171 or pschumann@tscra.org.

Sincerely,

G. Hughes Abell
President