

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Now in its second year, the **Noble Land Stewardship Award** continues to elevate U.S. livestock producers who exemplify regenerative land management and a deep commitment to restoring and sustaining America's working grasslands. This national award recognizes farmers, ranchers and landowners who demonstrate that economic resilience and ecological health strengthen one another - producers whose day-to-day decisions improve soil function, enhance water resources, support biodiversity, and create durable, resilient ranching systems.

Each year, this national honor celebrates individuals or families who demonstrate measurable results in regenerative management — improving soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat while maintaining the economic strength of their grazing operations. By sharing the approaches and outcomes of each honoree, the program provides valuable insights for others contributing to healthier landscapes and more resilient grazing operations nationwide.

**Nominations may be submitted by any individual, organization, or group wishing to recognize the regenerative management of a U.S. livestock producer or operation.** The nomination process is designed to be accessible and inclusive, encouraging a broad range of voices whether fellow ranchers, conservation professionals, community partners, or local leaders - to help identify producers whose practices reflect excellence in grazing land stewardship and economic resilience. Each nomination should clearly describe the farm or ranch's regenerative strategies, document measurable impacts on the land, summarize economic impacts to ranch operations, and demonstrate the producer's leadership within their community or region.

Nominations are reviewed and advanced by the **Noble Land Stewardship Award Committee**, a multidisciplinary group that includes representatives from Noble, universities, conservation organizations as well as leaders in regenerative livestock production. The committee evaluates applications across core pillars of regenerative land management and the principles of soil health that enhance water systems, vegetation, wildlife and biodiversity, ecosystem services, livestock management, and overall operational profitability and sustainability. Leadership, community engagement, and long-term resilience of the enterprise are also key considerations.

Established in 2025, the Noble Land Stewardship Award reflects Noble Research Institute's longstanding commitment to advancing regenerative livestock production and land stewardship honoring the producers and landowners who serve as catalysts for healthy soil, healthy land, and healthy communities.

## NOBLE LAND STEWARDSHIP AWARD: APPLICATION GUIDELINES

**Sections I-III should not exceed 12 pages total.**

The following framework is intended to help nominators clearly communicate how a producer exemplifies regenerative land stewardship, ecological leadership, and the long-term resilience of their ranching operation. Total for sections I-III is 90 points.

## GENERAL RANCH INFORMATION

Please provide the foundational details of the ranching operation below:

Operation name:

Individuals/family to be recognized:

Physical address:

Primary contact information (phone, email, website, optional fax):



## **Section I** Operation Overview, History, and Ecological Context

(15 points)

This section should summarize:

### **History and Business Model**

- The origin and development of the operation
- Ownership history and current business structure
- Primary enterprise type(s)
- History of regenerative management
- Any complementary or diversified enterprises, such as hunting, agritourism, or other revenue streams

### **Ecological Setting/Context**

Describe the ecological landscape the operation manages, including:

- Total acreage (owned, leased, state or federal leases)
- Dominant watersheds, geology, and topography
- Climatic conditions and precipitation patterns
- Key plant communities and wildlife species
- Number of animal units the operation supports
- The species of livestock being managed (and wildlife if grazing is allocated for their use)
- Natural resources (e.g. timber, hunting/fishing leases, solar, wind, oil, gas, and minerals)
- Proximity to urban/suburban areas, if relevant

This section should clearly explain the ecological and economic foundation on which the ranch operates.



Section I (cont'd):

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## **Section II** Regenerative Stewardship in Practice: The Story

(65 points)

This is the heart of the application.

It should present a **coherent, practical narrative demonstrating how the operation embodies regenerative land stewardship** within its unique ecological and economic context.

Clearly articulate:

- What goals the operation aims to achieve
- Why those goals matter
- How success is defined and measured
- What decisions, strategies, and mindsets enable that success

The outline below is provided to help structure this narrative.

### **A. Environmental, Livestock, Economic, and Regenerative Goals**

List and describe the operation's primary goals, addressing:

- Soil health and ecological function
- Water resources
- Vegetation and forage diversity
- Wildlife and habitat
- Livestock and livestock management
- Grazing management
- Long-term operational resilience
- Economic stability and profitability
- Intergenerational continuity

These goals should reflect the farm or ranch's broader vision for regenerative land management and future sustainability.

### **B. Special Challenges and Opportunities**

Describe the landscape-specific constraints and opportunities the operation faces. Examples may include:

- Water availability, water quality, or drought stress
- Riparian systems requiring restoration or protection
- Native grasslands, priority habitats, or threatened species
- Invasive plants or noxious weeds
- Erodible soils or fragile watersheds
- Livestock and grazing management
- Wildlife interactions (beneficial or challenging)
- Encroaching development or land-use pressure
- Renewable energy, reclamation needs, or resource extraction
- State or federal water-quality regulations
- Endangered Species Act considerations
- Municipal or state land-use requirements
- Air-quality designations or monitoring requirements
- Nutrient-management or grazing-lease stipulations

Explain how these conditions influence the ranch's decision-making, management options, and financial considerations.

### **C. Strategies, Tactics, Practices and Partnerships**

Describe **what the operation has done to pursue its goals**, including:

- Structural or context-based management changes implemented on the land including appropriateness and effectiveness of strategies for local ecological context
- Partnerships with conservation groups, agencies, universities, nonprofits, or private organizations
- Participation in research collaborations
- Contribute to the use of technical, scientific, or educational resources
- Continued learning and training opportunities



Examples may include:

- Adaptive or rotational grazing systems
- Non-conventional or regenerative livestock management practices
- Multi-species grazing
- Water developments or infrastructure improvements
- Soil-health practices (rest, recovery, minimal disturbance, cover)
- Riparian or wetland restoration
- Grassland restoration
- Wildlife habitat enhancements
- Targeted grazing, prescribed fire, or brush management
- Pest, invasive species control, or erosion-control strategies

Explain **why** these practices were chosen and **how** they support long-term stewardship of the land.

## **D. Outcomes, Accomplishments, and Evidence of Success**

Provide the strongest possible documentation of the farm or ranch's achievements. This may include:

- Improvements in soil health, water infiltration, or water quality
- Increased native plant diversity or restored plant communities
- Improvements using multi-species grazing techniques
- Enhancements in livestock production, health, epigenetics, adaptive management, and economics
- Enhanced wildlife populations, habitat quality, or species diversity
- Greater resilience to drought or climate variability
- Improved forage productivity or carrying capacity
- Reductions in inputs such as fuel, fertilizer, or supplemental feed
- Increased profitability or operational efficiency
- Before-and-after photos, monitoring data, charts, or scientific assessments
- Conservation award recognitions and certifications
- Research partnerships or third-party evaluations that validate results

This section should clearly demonstrate **measurable progress toward regenerative outcomes.**



Section II (cont'd):

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## **Section III Leadership, Education & Community Impact**

**(10 points)**

This section evaluates how the applicant demonstrates leadership beyond their own operation, contributes to the advancement of regenerative ranching, and engages with their broader community. The outline below is provided to help structure this narrative.

### **A. Describe how you demonstrate leadership in the ranching community.**

In your response, address the following as applicable:

- Ways you share regenerative ranching knowledge with peers (e.g., mentoring, field days, producer networks, demonstrations, collaborations)
- Your role in influencing or supporting regenerative practices beyond your own ranch (e.g., participation in producer panels, podcasts that tell the story of your operations)
- Contributions to local or regional conservation efforts, initiatives, or organizations

Provide specific examples and outcomes where possible.

### **B. Describe how you engage with your community and partners to elevate regenerative ranching.**

In your response, address the following as applicable:

- Participation in or hosting of educational events, workshops, tours, or demonstrations
- Engagement with community groups, schools, universities, agencies, or research organizations
- Partnerships that strengthen conservation outcomes or expand regenerative awareness

Include the nature of your involvement and the impact of these efforts.



Section III (cont'd):

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Section III (cont'd):

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## **SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

Applicants are encouraged to submit supporting materials that strengthen and provide context for the full application. These materials should help demonstrate the operation's land stewardship, regenerative practices, leadership, education, community involvement, and overall impact.

Applicants must **provide a map** showing where the operation is located. In addition, applications may submit **three (3) to five (5) letters of support**, along with optional supplemental materials such as testimonials, photographs, monitoring data, maps, event agendas, or other documentation that supports the information presented in the application.

Supporting materials should be relevant, concise, and directly connected to the applicant's responses.

## **FINAL STEPS**

After completing the application form, please email to Elisa Jackson at [enackson@noble.org](mailto:enackson@noble.org) the following information:

- Completed application in PDF format
- Any additional required documents such as a map of the ranch
- Supplemental documents to support the application including testimonials, photographs, monitoring data, event agendas, or additional maps.