



## ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3400 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3400

ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS,  
AND ENVIRONMENT

March 1, 2023

Dr. Willem van Leeuwen  
Interim Director, School of Natural Resources and the Environment, and Director, Desert Southwest  
Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit  
University of Arizona  
ENR2-Room N327, 1064 E. Lowell Street, Tucson AZ 85721

Dear Dr. van Leeuwen,

On behalf of the Department of Defense (DoD), I am writing in support of the Grasslands Regeneration Project (GRP), LLC's application to become a member of the Desert Southwest Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (DS CESU) network as a new non-federal organization.

The GRP's mission is to create an environment that promotes the well-being of all living creatures calling native grasslands their habitat—from the smallest organisms and animals to rural communities, landowners, and workers living on the land. Led by Alejandro Carrillo (educator, technical expert, community leader, and Chihuahuan Desert cattle rancher), the GRP team conducts research and development in semi-arid environments; teaches new partners, agencies, and landowners how to manage grazing as an effective, restorative tool; and is committed to increasing desert habitat resiliency, and arresting desertification and land degradation in the Desert Southwest. GRP's mission and professional proficiencies align well with the land management priorities of the DoD, as well as many regional landowners and DS CESU network members.

Of particular relevance to the DoD, the GRP is currently collaborating with the Department of Navy's climate change resilience initiatives in the Desert Southwest, specifically at Marines Corps Air Station in Yuma, Arizona. Through this unique and beneficial partnership, the DoD is developing a regenerative grazing pilot, as a nature-based solution practice, to support the Department of Navy's climate adaptation and installation resilience goals. A broader goal for the DoD and our partners is to expand the application of this and other innovative management techniques to a broad range of DoD lands in the Southwest. In addition and comparably advantageous to the entire DS CESU network, the GRP works closely with the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, American Bird Conservancy, Environmental Protection Agency, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation, World Resource Institute, and The Nature Conservancy to promote habitat resilience, biodiversity, migratory bird and wildlife conservation, dust storm mitigation, regenerative ranching and farming principles, and carbon sequestration crediting.

I am confident that admitting the GRP to the DS CESU would facilitate the establishment of additional research and educational collaborations for a wide variety of CESU members. Moreover, the DoD and Department of Navy would benefit through Mr. Carrillo's expertise, knowledge, and guidance, in addition to the development of opportunities to build resilience to climate change-induced impacts to DOD installations and training ranges across Southwest. The DoD would welcome the ability to utilize the DS CESU as a vehicle for conducting future work with the GRP.

I respectfully request that you consider the GRP's application to become a member of the DS CESU. Please feel free to contact me regarding this letter of endorsement at [elizabeth.j.galli-noble.civ@mail.mil](mailto:elizabeth.j.galli-noble.civ@mail.mil) or 406.581.8148.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Galli-Noble  
Program Director, Department of Defense, Legacy Resource Management Program  
Environmental Planning and Conservation Program  
Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Environment and Energy Resilience  
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment

Cc:

Ashley Stewart, Program Coordinator, DS CESU  
Ryan B. Orndorff, Director, Environmental Planning and Conservation Program  
[ODASD(E&ER)/OASD(EI&E)]  
Vanessa Shoblock, Natural Resource Specialist, NAVFAC SW and DoD Representative to the DS CESU  
Deborah Loomis, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Navy (Climate Change)