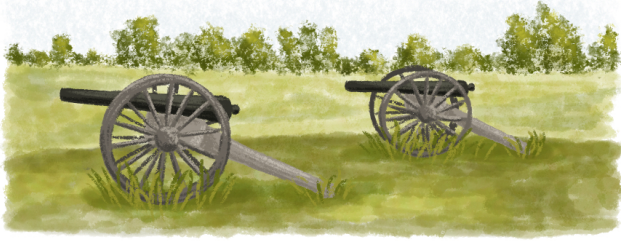


Why Rebuild Grasslands?



The National Park Service is working to rebuild native grasslands in more than 30 parks across the eastern United States.

This work helps preserve the beauty and history of cultural landscapes such as battlefields and historic farms. Healthy grasslands also provide habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, stabilize soil with their deep root systems, and store carbon below ground.



Just like planting a garden, rebuilding a grassland takes many years. Sometimes changes are subtle, but with time and care, these areas will grow and recover.

Caring for the Grassland

Rebuilding a grassland is a long-term process, and grasslands need ongoing care to stay healthy.

Land managers continue to monitor these areas after planting and may use tools like mowing, controlled fire, or invasive plant removal to help native plants thrive.



Take a Look Around!

Visit your park's grassland sites and observe:

- What plants are growing here?
- Can you see any animals?
- Do you think this grassland is in a Sleep, Creep, or Leap stage?

Learn More

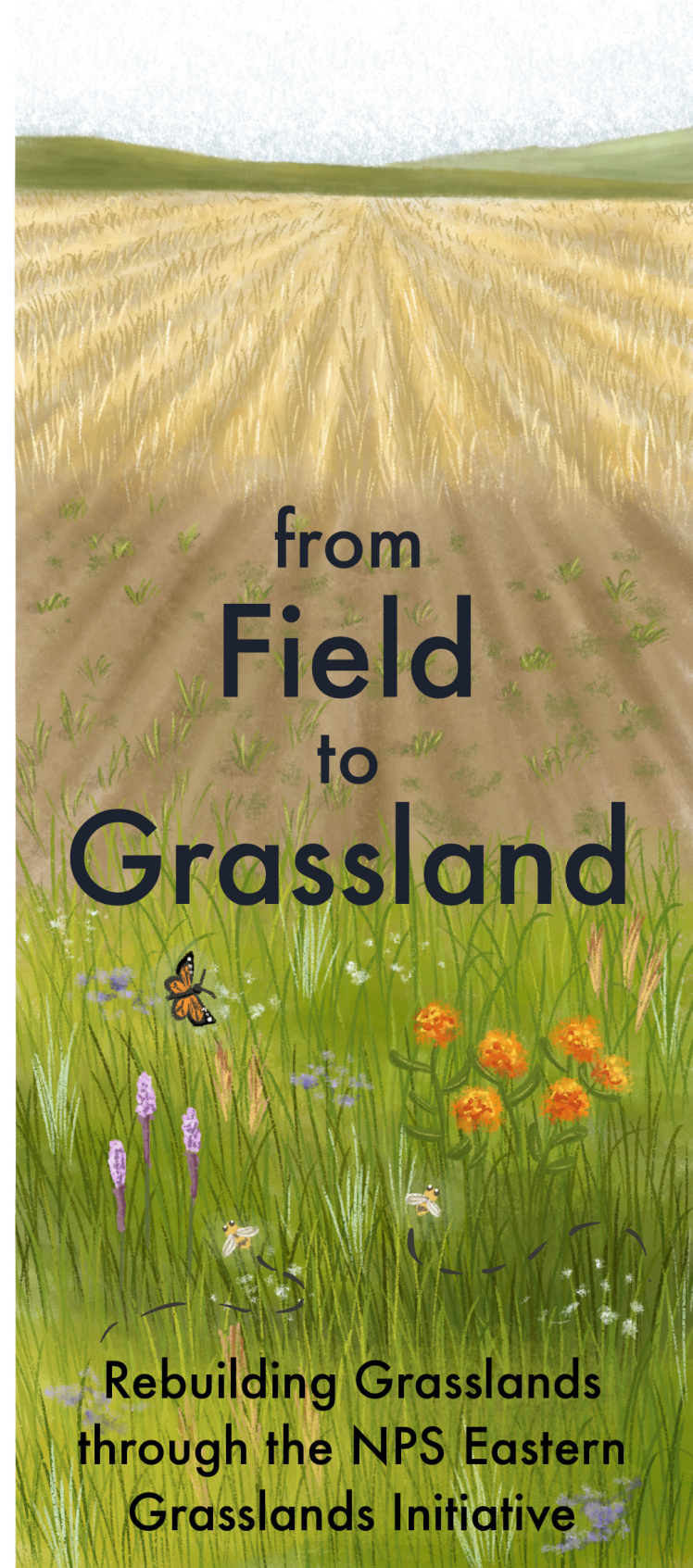
To view an accessible digital version of this brochure and learn more about rebuilding grasslands in the eastern United States, scan the QR code below:



<https://go.nps.gov/easterngrasslands>



Text and illustrations
created by Anastasia
Seckers, 2026



from
Field
to
Grassland

Rebuilding Grasslands
through the NPS Eastern
Grasslands Initiative

Starting Fresh

The eastern U.S. was once home to a variety of native grasslands. Some agricultural fields are now getting the chance to become grasslands again.



Overgrown restoration site

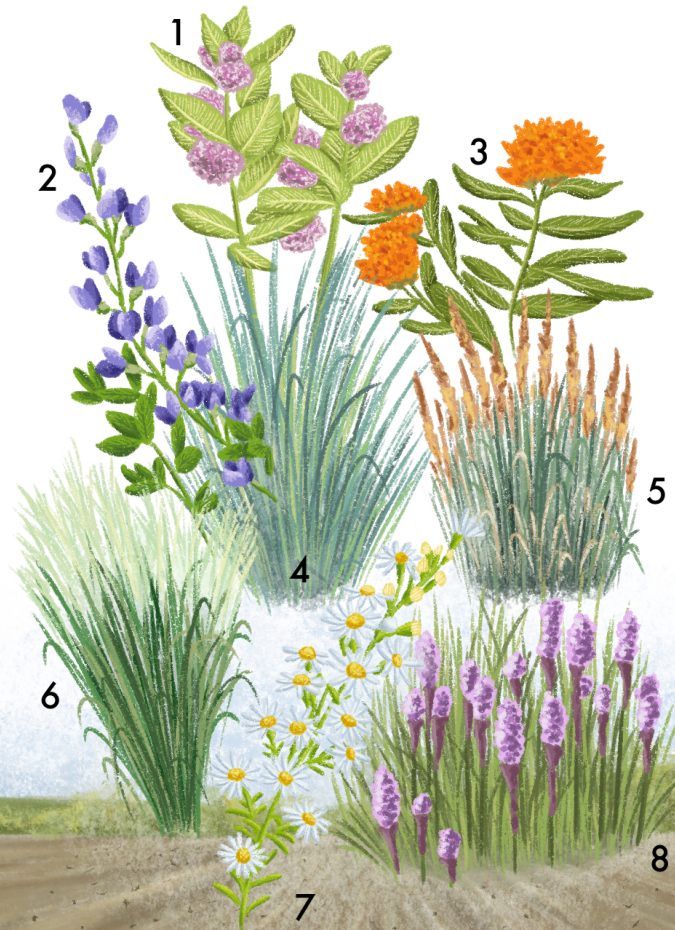
To give native grassland plants a chance to return, existing plants usually need to be removed. Site preparation often includes short-term use of mowing, fire, or herbicides.

While these steps can look dramatic, they are temporary and help create a healthy foundation for native grasses and flowers to germinate.

Planting the Seeds

Each field gets a unique seed mix based on characteristics such as location, growing conditions, and more.

These mixes include dozens of grasses and flowers. What you see below is a small sample from over 40 plants chosen for Valley Forge National Historical Park.



- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 - Common Milkweed | 5 - Indian Grass |
| 2 - Blue False Indigo | 6 - Switchgrass |
| 3 - Butterfly Milkweed | 7 - Heath Aster |
| 4 - Little Bluestem | 8 - Spiked Blazing Star |

Sleep, Creep, Leap!

Grassland plants take time to grow. Like many garden perennials, they spend their first years developing strong root systems underground.

It may look like nothing is happening at first, but these plants are building a solid foundation so they can flourish above ground later.

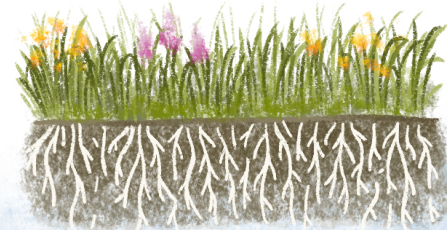
Sleep
Year 1



Creep
Year 2



Leap
Year 3+



Crop Field

Cleared Land

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3