



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Initiatives protect wildlife and aircraft, strengthen sustainability

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A new, cutting-edge study will help Dayton International Airport (DAY) determine best land management practices to deter hazardous wildlife around the airport.

The "Planes & Prairies: a DAY Safety Program" serves as a conservation effort and a life-saving measure. As the leading airport participating in this national study, DAY demonstrates a commitment to safe, effective travel while using its property to the fullest potential.

"We're always looking for new ways to improve," said Terry Slaybaugh, City of Dayton aviation director. "This unique study is a great example of that."

The intersection of aircraft and wildlife concerns airports, airlines and conservationists. Typically, airports are surrounded by agricultural fields or airfield turf, which provide habitat and food for large wildlife that can endanger planes. Through Planes & Prairies: A DAY Safety Program, airport land is being converted to dense, native tallgrass prairies that attract small, threatened grassland species while deterring larger, more hazardous birds.

In close partnership with the Aullwood Audubon Society and with the support of the City of Dayton, DAY maintains over 400 acres of tall prairie grasses along Frederick Pike and West National Road. Tall prairie grasses will include native, perennial flowers to support a healthy population of pollinators such as bees and butterflies. Maintaining prairie grasses is also more cost-efficient and lowers the overall carbon footprint when compared to cropland airfield turf.

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Additionally, DAY is one of six airports nationwide participating in a monoculture switchgrass scientific study. Developed and lead by the research team at Mississippi State University, switchgrass is a native, perennial, warm-season grass with high potential as a cellulosic biofuel crop and as animal forage. This means there may be a

market for it as a harvestable crop, producing income for the airport. Mowed only one or twice per year, it grows over most of the eastern half of the U.S. and can thrive in poor soils. Early research suggests that conversion of some airport turf-grass areas to switchgrass production would not increase the risk of damaging wildlife hazards and may reduce such risks.

"Converting cropland to prairie would reduce our carbon footprint by 1.9 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e per acre," explains Mike Cross, the environmental scientist leading the project. "Converting all our cropland to prairie would result in a reduction of over 2,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e, where CO<sub>2</sub>e is the carbon dioxide equivalent of measuring the effect of all the different types of greenhouse gasses."

For more information about Dayton International Airport, visit [flydayton.com](http://flydayton.com).

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#### About Dayton International Airport

Located near the "Crossroads of the America" - Interstates 70 and 75 - Dayton International Airport (DAY) provides air service to travelers to and from Southwest Ohio. The DAY mission is to contribute to the prosperity of Southwest Ohio by connecting it to the rest of the world through our aviation system. Airport staff provide an enjoyable travel experience, making DAY an easy to and through experience. For more information about Dayton International Airport, visit [flydayton.com](http://flydayton.com) or call Marketing Manager Linda Hughes at 937-454-8200.

