

Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Application

The purpose of the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund is to provide funding to state agencies, tribal governments, political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations to:

Directive A. Provide access to private and public lands for sportsmen, including projects that create fish and wildlife habitat and provide access for sportsmen;

Directive B. Improve, maintain, and restore water quality, soil conditions, plant diversity, animal systems and to support other practices of stewardship to enhance farming and ranching;

Directive C. Develop, enhance, conserve, and restore wildlife and fish habitat on private and public lands; and

Directive D. Conserve natural areas for recreation through the establishment and development of parks and other recreation areas.

Exemptions

Outdoor Heritage Fund grants may not be used to finance the following:

- A. Litigation;
- B. Lobbying activities;
- C. Any activity that would interfere, disrupt, or prevent activities associated with surface coal mining operations; sand, gravel, or scoria extraction activities; oil and gas operations; or other energy facility or infrastructure development;
- D. The acquisition of land or to encumber any land for a term longer than twenty years; or
- E. Projects outside this state or projects that are beyond the scope of defined activities that fulfill the purposes of Chapter 54-17.8 of the North Dakota Century Code.

Application Deadline

Applications for the first grant round cycle are due on **December 2, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. CST.** All information, including attachments, must be submitted by that date. See instructions below for submission information.

Instructions

It is our intent to have this form available on line. However, until that on-line form is available we are asking that you submit your application as a Word document. Please download this Word document (available on the Industrial Commission/Outdoor Heritage Fund Program website at <http://www.nd.gov/ndic/outdoor-infopage.htm>) to your computer and provide the information as requested. You are not limited to the spacing provided except in those instances where there is a limit on the number of words. After completing the application, save it and attach it to an e-mail and send it to outdoorheritage@nd.gov .Then submit the Word document as noted in the following paragraph.

Attachments in support of your application may be sent by mail to North Dakota Industrial Commission, ATTN: Outdoor Heritage Fund Program, State Capitol – Fourteenth Floor, 600 East Boulevard Ave. Dept. 405, Bismarck, ND 58505 or by e-mail to outdoorheritage@nd.gov . The application and all attachments must be received or postmarked by the application deadline. You will be sent a confirmation by e-mail of receipt of your application.

You may submit your application at any time prior to the application deadline. Early submission is appreciated and encouraged to allow adequate time to review your application and ensure that all required information has been included. Incomplete applications may not be considered for funding. Any item noted with an * is required.

Oral Presentation. Please note that you will be given an opportunity to make a ten-minute Oral Presentation at a meeting of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board tentatively scheduled for the week of January 13, 2014. These presentations are strongly encouraged.

Open Record. Please note that your application and any attachments will be open records as defined by law and will be posted on the Industrial Commission/Outdoor Heritage Fund website.

Name of Organization * *North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts (NDASCD)*

Federal Tax ID# * 45-0277476

Contact Person/Title * Brian Johnston – Chief Executive Officer

Address * 3310 University Avenue

City * Bismarck

State * ND

Zip Code *58504

E-mail Address * NDASCD@Lincolnoakes.com

Web Site Address NDASCD.org

Phone * (701) 223-8518

Fax # (if available)

List names of co-applicants if this is a joint proposal

MAJOR Directive: (select the Directive that best describes your grant request)*

Choose only one response

Directive A. Provide access to private and public lands for sportsmen, including projects that create fish and wildlife habitat and provide access for sportsmen;

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Additional Directive: (select the directives that also apply to the grant application purpose)*

Choose all that apply

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Type of organization: (select the category that describes your organization)*

State Agency

Political Subdivision

Tribal Entity

Tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation, as described in United States Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. § 501 (c))

Project Name* *North Dakota Statewide Conservation Tree Planting Initiative (NDSCTPI)*

Abstract/Executive Summary. An Executive Summary of the project stating its objectives, expected results, duration, total project costs and participants.* (no more than 500 words)

Conservation tree planting is an important component of agricultural systems and improves rural life in the northern plains. Field windbreaks reduce soil erosion during years of drought, reduce water evaporation from adjacent cropland and increase crop yields. Similarly, other conservation plantings are designed to stabilize streambanks, filter water runoff from adjacent agricultural lands, provide wildlife habitat, protect stretches of road from snow accumulation, provide winter protection for wildlife and livestock, or protect rural homes from snow and wind. These resources are critical for the present and future needs of residents that live on the rural landscape.

North Dakota has a long history of tree planting efforts dating back to the Timber Culture Act of 1873. Early settlers planted trees to provide wind protection, fuel and food. The Dust Bowl of the 1930s had far-reaching social, economic and environmental consequences which accelerated tree planting programs. The most notable program was the Prairie States Forestry Project which resulted in 217 million trees planted in the Great Plains. Tree planting efforts continue into present times, however, the types of customers planting trees and their motivations have changed. There is also an increasing number of landowners that do not qualify for existing forms of financial assistance. Their conservation tree planting needs are significant and legitimate, but they have been overlooked for a variety of reasons. This effort will enhance outreach to promote the benefits of conservation tree planting to public health, safety, and the environment. A poll commissioned and released by the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) showed survey respondents across the country strongly valued forests as sources of clear air and water in addition to providing good-paying jobs and essential products.

The NDSCTPI will engage stewards to embrace conservation practices that promote the ecological services trees provide. The initiative will focus on encouraging and providing financial assistance to implement agroforestry practices in North Dakota including farmstead, feedlot and field windbreaks; forestry, wildlife and riparian plantings, buffers, and living snow fences.

PSAs recently developed by the North Dakota Conservation District Employee Association (NCDEA), in coordination with the North Dakota Forest Service (NDFS) and KAT Communications, were created to promote conservation tree planting to a broad cross section of the public and to encourage tree planting. The recently completed "Strengthening Our Roots" publication also produced by KAT Communications, the NDFS and NDCDEA serves as an important tool to educate landowners about conservation tree planting and helps increase the interest level. Both the PSAs and publication direct landowners to local Soil Conservation Districts (SCDs) for technical assistance. The NDCTPI provides landowners with financial assistance in the form of grant funds and complements the PSAs and publication. The grant request is \$2.5 million for a three year program, with total project costs expected to exceed \$4.8 million. The landowner's obligation will be 40% of the practice installation cost and maintenance outlined within a 10 year agreement.

Amount of Grant request \$2.5 Million

Total Project Costs \$4,875,033.00 Million

(Note that in-kind and indirect costs can be used for matching funds)

Amount of Matching Funds \$2,375,016.00 million

If applicable

Please indicate if the matching funds will be in-kind, indirect or cash.

Cash match \$1,666,678.00 million will be paid directly by the producer for the remaining cost share on a basis of 60/40.

Inkind Cost \$708,338.00 will be contributed by the ND Soil Conservation Districts in 55 counties to implement these practices through technical labor.

Source(s) of Matching Funds: ND Soil Conservation Districts will contribute the labor paid directly by each county office for technical staff to implement these practices.

Landowners will be required to pay for a percentage of the practice they are implementing through the installation of a tree establishment practice.

Certifications *

I certify that this application has been made with the support of the governing body and chief executive of my organization.

I certify that if awarded grant funding none of the funding will be used for any of the exemptions noted on Page 1 of this application.

Narrative

Organization Information – Briefly summarize your organization’s history, mission, current programs and activities. *

Include an overview of your organizational structure, including board, staff and volunteer involvement. (no more than 300 words)

From the start of 1937 the North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts (NDASCD) have been encouraging farmers, ranchers, and other landowners and occupiers to adopt conservation practices on their land which would best provide for the control and prevention of wind and water erosion. NDASCD uses a delivery mechanism by facilitating programs on a locally led process within our 55 Soil Conservation District offices represented throughout the state.

The NDASCD Board of Directors is represented by two directors from each of the five areas elected by the Board of Supervisors representing the 55 Soil Conservation Districts. The NDASCD Board of Directors employs a Chief Executive Officer to facilitate the organization’s mission statement. The Board of Directors works in partnership with the North Dakota Conservation District Employees (NDCDEA) within the ND Soil Conservation Districts to provide technical assistance, educational outreach, and cost share base programs.

Our Purpose is:

- To promote partnerships among Soil Conservation Districts to better enable them to carry out the duties of their position and to provide assistance for coordinating the efforts of the SCD Supervisors, Districts, NDCDEA, NDSU-SCC and USDA Agencies in achieving their conservation goals.
- A means of communication for Conservation Districts to effectively exchange information and ideas resulting in better coordination and effectiveness of district programs on a local, state, regional, and national level.

Purpose of Grant – Describe the proposed project identifying how the project will meet the specific directive(s) of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Program *

Identify project goals, strategies and benefits and your timetable for implementation. Include information about the need for the project and whether there is urgency for funding. Please indicate if this is a new project or if it is replacing funding that is no longer available to your organization. Identify any innovative features or processes of your project.

The success of the project hinges on a functional three-year program which links a local delivery system, to an incentives package while providing a prioritization system for ranking applications. There is an enormous unmet need for conservation tree planting financial assistance in the state. In a 2011 questionnaire to SCDs, district employees indicated that to 73% of their customers, cost share is very important. To an additional 16%, cost-share is somewhat important. They also identified numerous landowner types that are currently ineligible for cost-share for a variety of reasons. In addition, SCDs clearly agreed that “if there were a simple, quick source that provided 50-75% cost share for all types of conservation tree plantings” that there would be a 25-100% increase in conservation tree planting within their district.

This is not a replacement program for current federal conservation tree planting programs including USDA NRCS – Environmental Quality Incentives Program or Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program or USDA Farm Service Agency’s – CRP Continuous Sign-Up for trees. This program is oriented primarily to that growing number of landowners who do not qualify, for other forms of cost-share or whose specific conservation practice does not attract funding due to federal priorities.

An effective local delivery system currently exists. For conservation tree planting, leadership is provided by North Dakota’s 55 SCD offices. Field personnel provide technical assistance and/or tree planting services.

Funding will be used for: tree stock and tree planting services; weed control including fabric weed barrier; and tree growth tubes for certain species of hardwood trees to enhance growth and protect from deer.

Application materials would be available June 30, 2014, with the first batching period September 30, 2014. Applications would be ranked in October and preliminary, tentative award letters sent by October 31. Following State Historic Preservation Office Review for cultural resources, final award letters for cleared projects would be sent by November 30, 2014. The first round of tree plantings would take place in April/ May/June 2015, with reimbursement following in June and July of 2015.

Batch two would take place on a similar timeline for 2016 and the third batch would follow with trees planted and grant funds reimbursed in 2017. Closeout would take place in 2017.

Management of Project – Provide a description of how the you will manage and oversee the project to ensure it is carried out on schedule and in a manner that best ensures its objectives will be met.*

Include a brief background and work experience for those managing the project.

The program’s tree planting opportunities will be targeted at the entire State of North Dakota. Willing landowners, both public and private, will be encouraged to participate. A 3-year effort is required to attain the program’s goals.

The NDASCD will coordinate the project at the state level with program partners utilizing the leadership of the Chief Executive Officer, President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and the Board of Directors consisting of two elected members from each of the five areas or regions. The NDASCD will work alongside with the Conservation District Employees to see implementation of cost share dollars are being utilized effectively within their county.

The NDASCD Chief Executive Officer will provide an effective tracking and reporting mechanism for project resource information, location and accounting. Conservation District Employees will be required to submit timely their payment applications along with monitoring producer implementation.

The Board of Directors will be utilized to provide oversight and coordination for the program.

Partners will focus on developing a closer working relationship through a cooperative program to attain mutual goals. NDASCD has worked for years with federal and state conservation programs and they know what works and what doesn't. They will ensure grant funds are spent appropriately and with a high level of accountability. They will also develop a framework that is easy to understand and navigate for public and private landowners seeking cost-share assistance. The process should be duplicable for future state funded conservation efforts.

Funding for the program can be used to leverage other sources of federal, state, private and local funds. The cost for replacement trees and shrubs are not included in this program and will be the responsibility of the landowner, who will also be required to maintain the project through a signed 10 year agreement.

The state's 55 soil conservation districts will coordinate projects at the local level.

Evaluation – Describe your plan to document progress and results. *

How will you tell if the project is successful? Please be specific on the methods you will utilize to measure success. Note that regular reporting, final evaluation and expenditure reports will be required for every grant awarded.

North Dakota's SCDs work collaboratively with a wide range of natural resource partners on a local, state regional and national level. The development of a NDSCTPI will help the NDASCD develop an even a closer working relationship between local, state and federal agencies and enable partners to pool resources to accomplish conservation tree planting needs, while demonstrating the efficiency of interagency cooperation.

The NDSCTPI goals include:

Developing a framework for soliciting and ranking projects, that is easily duplicated for future state funded conservation efforts.

Increasing the awareness of the NDSCTPI, resulting in increased interest in conservation tree planting.

Accomplishing strategic conservation needs in the state that will also result in continued protection of vital soil, water, air, and wildlife resources. Conservation of these natural resources benefits all citizens of North Dakota.

Enhancing the mechanism for increased grass-roots involvement in implementing tree planting and improving linkage to agencies providing technical assistance.

Increasing tree planting in North Dakota to enhance the quality of life in communities and in rural areas. Conservation tree planting records exist at the county and state level. An important measure of success is the increase in conservation tree planting practices and tree planting numbers to combat the accelerating amount of tree removal. The NDASCD does not promote indiscriminant tree planting, but follows NRCS practice specifications - national and state standards. SCDs recognize that conservation tree planting is not the answer for every problem and there are places where trees should not be planted, they also embrace the philosophy of the right tree, in the right place, for the right reasons.

Financial Information

ATTACHMENT: Project Budget – Using the standard project budget format that is available on the website at <http://www.nd.gov/ndic/outdoor-infopage.htm> , please include a detailed total project budget that specifically outlines all the funds you are requesting.*

The project budget should identify all matching funds, funding sources and indicate whether the matching funds are in the form of cash or in-kind services. As noted on the standard project budget format, certain values have been identified for in-kind services. Please utilize these values in identifying your matching funds. **NOTE: No indirect costs will be funded.**

X I certify that a project budget will be sent to the Commission*

Sustainability – Indicate how the project will be funded or sustained in future years. *

Include information on the sustainability of this project after all the funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund has been expended and whether the sustainability will be in the form of ongoing management or additional funding from a different source.

Conservation tree planting is an important long-term land management tool. Trees provide opportunities to integrate productivity and profitability with environmental stewardship and result in healthy, sustainable agricultural systems that can be passed on to future generations. Trees help purify the air by absorbing pollutants; protect property and livestock from wind; enhance natural beauty; reduce soil erosion and improve crop yields; provide food and cover for wildlife; increase property values; reduce water evaporation; preserve winter moisture; and improve water quality. Trees control drifting snow; reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide; reduce heating and cooling costs; improve livestock weight, reduce calving losses; and increase our supply of renewable resources. Conservation tree plantings provide benefits for decades and make agricultural systems more sustainable by protecting crops and livestock, conserving natural resources, improving human environments, and providing sources of income. Investments made today will pay dividends for years to come.

Individual conservation tree plantings will be managed to ensure effectiveness by the landowner. Overall survival requirements will be outlined within the landowner agreements as well as unacceptable land management practices – burning, grazing or destructive tree removal. As the landowners will be 40% financially vested in their project, they have an incentive to ensure the practice is successful. Additional assistance by partnering agencies can help landowners identify potential insect and disease or long-term forest health issues. ND Conservation Districts Employees will be on site for contract reviews to ensure proper management of the tree plantings are being fulfilled within the contract requirements.

Partial Funding – Indicate how the project will be affected if less funding is available than that requested. *

A reduced level of funding would simply result in fewer landowners served and less overall tree planting accomplishment. The level of accomplishment can be moved up or down depending on available funds. To make this an effective, successful statewide program, there must be enough grant funds available to encourage participation. A multi-year program allows time to build interest and promote the opportunity within each individual SCD.

Budget Standard Form

Please use the table below to provide a detailed total project budget that specifically outlines all the funds you are requesting and if there are any matching funds being utilized to fund this project. Please note if the matching funds are in the form of cash, indirect costs or in-kind services. The budget should identify all other committed funding sources and the amount of funding from each source. Match can come from any source (i.e. private sources, State and Federal funding, Tribal funding, etc.) Note match funding is not required but an application will be scored higher if match funding is provided. (See Scoring Form.)

Please feel free to add columns and rows as needed. Please include narrative to fully explain the proposed budget.

Note that NO INDIRECT COSTS will be funded from the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

Project Expense	OHF Request	Applicant's Match Share (Cash)	Applicant's Match Share (In-Kind)	Applicant's Match Share (Indirect)	Other Project Sponsor's Share
Heritage Funding	\$ 2.5 million	\$	\$	\$	\$
Landowner Obligation 60/40 Cost Share (Financial)	\$	\$ 1,666,678.00	\$	\$	\$
District Employee Labor (Technical)	\$	\$	\$ 708,338.00	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Project Costs	\$ 2.5 Million	\$1,666,678.00	\$708,338.00	\$	\$

In-kind services used to match the request for Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars shall be valued as follows:

- Labor costs \$15.00 an hour
- Land costs Average rent costs for the county as shown in the most recent publication of the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Services, North Dakota Field Office
- Equipment Any equipment purchased must be listed separately with documentation showing actual cost.
- Equipment usage Actual documentation
- Seed & Seedlings Actual documentation
- Transportation Mileage at federal rate
- Supplies & materials Actual documentation

More categories will be added as we better understand the types of applications that will be submitted. We will use as our basis for these standards other State and Federal programs that have established rates. For example the North Dakota Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Program has established rates. If your project includes work that has an established rate under another State Program please use those rates and note your source.

Approved by OHF Advisory Board: October 17, 2013
 Approved by Industrial Commission: October 22, 2013