

Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Application

Name of Organization: Pheasants Forever, Inc.
Federal Tax ID#: 41-1429149
Contact Person/Title: Matt Olson, Regional Representative
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City: Forman
State: ND
Zip Code: 58032
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Web Site Address: www.pheasantsforever.org
Phone: 701.680.1137
Fax #: NA
List names of co-applicants if this is a joint proposal

MAJOR Directive:

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

Additional Directive: Choose all that apply

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

X **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;

Type of organization:

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

Project Name: Kitchen Table Conversations for Private Land Conservation
Abstract/Executive Summary:

More than 90 percent of North Dakota is in private ownership, making it imperative that wildlife habitat conservation organizations and agencies work cooperatively with ranchers and farmers. Pheasants Forever's Farm Bill Biologist Partnership is grounded in the belief that landowners know their land best, and can quickly evaluate what programs are viable. Most North Dakota landowners endeavor to steward their wildlife resources, and wish to preserve our outdoor & hunting heritage for future generations. In many cases landowners are uncertain where to get information or are overwhelmed with the number of programs, agencies and options. Given these challenges, PF partnership biologists work one-on-one with producers, often literally having conversations at landowners' kitchen tables, to provide one-stop-shopping on the myriad of voluntary federal, state and local programs available to assist landowners in achieving their goals. While technology makes this program information available at the click of a mouse, we believe the key to successful private land conservation

is and always will be based on personal relationships and mutual trust that only comes with time spent together.

Pheasants Forever prides itself on working collaboratively with partners, most notably the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the North Dakota Game and Fish Department and the ND Natural Resources Trust, to employ a team of professional wildlife biologists that are stationed in NRCS offices and have responsibilities for generally three to four counties each. Currently, PF has five farm bill biologists located in Mandan, Devils Lake, Hettinger, Jamestown, and Forman. PF proposes to sustain this proven model by leveraging new funds to keep this talented team in place and to add a sixth biologist to add capacity to serve landowners.

In addition to bolstering capacity, we propose to increase the habitat quality on private land by conducting undesirable tree removal and upgrading perennial cover to increase diversity of native grasses and forbs. Habitat enhancements will be targeted to lands enrolled in 30-year Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) contracts administered by USDA NRCS, thus making the investment by the ND Outdoor Heritage Board sustainable for years to come. The major goal of the WRP program is to restore wetlands, which directly address water quality in Directive B. WRP contracts also enrolled into PLOTS will be prioritized addressing access in Directive A.

The final component we propose is to provide cost share incentives to landowners for the establishment of pollinator habitat. National attention has been brought to the plight of pollinators and their key role in the production of our human food supply. One urgent issue is that domesticated honey bees and native pollinating insects are experiencing alarming declines. Thus, North Dakota is a strategic state to launch a pollinator program given the 34 million pounds of honey produced in the state in 2012, making it the number one state in the country for honey production. By partnering with landowners, honey bee producers, school classes/groups and communities, PF will deliver ten community-based pollinator habitat projects and raise awareness about the importance of pollinators to our food supply.

Amount of Grant request \$316,000

Total Project Costs \$947,916

Amount of Matching Funds \$631,916

Total Match	Cash Match	In-kind Match	Indirect Match
\$631,916	\$492,000		\$139,916

Source(s) of Matching Funds:

Match funds are coming from the following sources:

Source	Cash	In-kind	Indirect
Pheasants Forever	\$100,000		\$139,916
ND Game and Fish Dept.	\$240,000		
ND Natural Resources Trust	\$15,000		
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	\$137,000		
TOTAL	\$492,000		\$139,916

Certifications

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

X 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 – Pheasants Forever is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of pheasants, quail, and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public awareness, education and land management policies and programs. Formed in 1982 in response to declining pheasant populations, PF has grown to over 140,000 members and 650 chapters across North America. The board of directors includes the President/CEO and 14 volunteers from across the country. One key to PF's success has been the model of empowering local chapters to decide how funds are raised and invested to impact the Pheasants Forever mission. North Dakota is currently home to 27 Pheasants Forever chapters, 200 volunteers and more than 4,000 members. Pheasants Forever chapters hold annual fundraising events, support statewide partnerships and programs, work on habitat projects, and promote youth outdoor education. North Dakota Pheasants Forever currently has six biologists, including a regional representative (Forman, ND) and five farm bill wildlife biologists located in Mandan, Devils Lake, Hettinger, Jamestown, and Forman. Pheasants Forever's Farm Bill Biologist Program is a partnership with North Dakota Game & Fish, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the ND Natural Resources Trust to put capacity on the ground locally to work directly with farmers, ranchers and other private landowners to accelerate enrollment in voluntary wildlife habitat programs offered through the Farm Bill. This partnership has impacted 300,000 acres of private land habitat in North Dakota since 2008. Pheasants Forever's tagline is "*The Habitat Organization*" and we bring a unique model and mission that empowers local people to impact local habitat for pheasants and other wildlife in meaningful ways across North Dakota.

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

The purposes of this grant are restore, enhance and conserve wildlife habitat and stewardship on private land by: 1) increasing the adoption of voluntary conservation practices and programs on private farms and ranches in North Dakota by sustaining and increasing the staff capacity to work one-on-one with landowners; 2) improving habitat quality on existing 30 year WRP contracts by removing undesirable trees (1,500 acres) and upgrading upland cover to native grasses and forbs (300 acres); and 3) creating ten community based pollinator plots in cooperation with landowners, honey producers, and school classes to increase understanding of role of pollinators to food production and wildlife habitat.

The goal for purpose number one is to make personal contact with 600 North Dakota landowners during the two year grant period. These contacts will occur through a combination of meetings in USDA Service Center offices where the Farm Bill Biologists are stationed, hosting workshops and field days/tours, as well as pro-active meetings the biologists initiate with the landowner. A priority will be placed on quality contacts that establish personal relationships to allow for an exchange of information so the biologist can best assist the landowner in reaching his/her goals and objectives. As previously mentioned, 90 percent of North Dakota is in private ownership and a positive working relationship with landowners is critical to the future of habitat and wildlife populations. The ability to predict how many acres will be positively impacted through each contact is challenging but the Farm Bill Biologist Partnership has a proven history of getting results and working collaboratively with landowners. This entire effort is based on voluntary conservation programs (federal, state and local) and the adoption of best management practices that are determined at the sole discretion by the landowner. Programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program bring significant dollars to North Dakota landowners enrolled (\$72.2M in 2013 according to a November 20, 2013 North Dakota FSA press release) as well as provide high-quality wildlife habitat. The biologists will quantify how many contacts are made by program, how many acres are enrolled as a direct result of the contact and will estimate how many acres are positively influenced.

The goal for purpose number two is to increase habitat quality and diversity on 1,800 acres of land already enrolled into 30-year Wetland Reserve Program contracts. PF will work closely with NRCS and NDG&F to prioritize WRP contracts also enrolled into PLOTS, thereby further increasing the habitat function for sportsmen and women that utilize these properties for hunting. There are approximately 69 WRP contracts totaling 16,278 acres enrolled into PLOTS. This goal will be accomplished using two primary strategies including tree removal for undesirable woody vegetation (1,500 acres), such as Russian olive and Siberian elm that are encroaching into the upland prairie zone. The trees will primarily be removed through mechanical means using a skid-steer along with following up with stump spraying to ensure the management action achieves the desired results. The trees will be piled and burned. The second strategy to increase habitat diversity (300 acres) will be to upgrade stands of low diversity grass by inter-seeding additional species or replacing monotypic stands of introduced species such as Kentucky bluegrass or smooth brome grass with warm and cool season natives.

The goal for purpose number three is to improve plant diversity on private land for the purpose of increasing wildlife habitat and creating an education opportunity to help establish a greater awareness about the role of pollinators for wildlife and our food supply. Through the Farm Bill Biologists and in conjunction with CRP – Conservation Practice 42 Pollinator Habitat where applicable, create 10 community-based pollinator plots. Each plot will be a minimum of one acre and wherever possible, will serve as an outdoor classroom for local schools to provide hands-on educational opportunities for adults, teachers and students. We will strive to select sites that have public access for additional educational opportunities for the general public.

Result	Estimated Completion
Hire 1 new Farm Bill Biologist	April 1, 2014
Sustain 5 existing Farm Bill Biologist Team	June 30, 2015
Make 600 unique landowner contacts	June 30, 2015
Remove Undesirable Trees on 1,500 acres of WRP	December 31, 2014
Upgrade upland cover on 500 acres of WRP	June 1, 2015
Create 10 community pollinator plots	June 1, 2015
Project administration and final reporting	June 30, 2015

Management of Project – Provide a description of how 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.

The Farm Bill Partnership in North Dakota includes representatives from ND Game and Fish, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Pheasants Forever. If this proposal is approved for funding, the partnership will meet at least semi-annually to coordinate on all grant activities and ensure timelines are being met. The partnership will guide the overall effort including the hiring of the new Farm Bill Biologist, WRP site prioritization for habitat upgrades and the creation of the 10 community pollinator plots. The Farm Bill Biologists will be the primary implementers for making the landowner contacts to increase the adoption of voluntary conservation programs and best management practices.

The project manager is Pheasants Forever’s North Dakota regional representative, Matt Olson. A North Dakota native, Matt resides in Forman. Olson earned an A.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Management in May of 2003 from Minot State University-Bottineau, prior to completing a B.S. in Zoology with an emphasis in Wildlife and Fisheries Management in May of 2005 from North Dakota State University. He has served as a Farm Bill Biologist in Forman, ND for the last four years working with farmers and ranchers on habitat conservation programs. He has considerable experience in delivering USDA conservation programs like CRP, which includes significant paper work, reporting, follow through and attention to detail. Matt also has the support of Pheasants Forever’s grant development and grant administration teams along with the North Region Leadership to assist with proper grant administration, financial reporting and contracting.

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.

PF will measure the success by reporting directly on the deliverables outlined above. In addition to employing six farm bill biologist positions in North Dakota to assist landowners with existing and new conservation programs, we will report on the number of landowner contacts and relevant program achievements (e.g. acres enrolled, management completed, etc). We will report the number of acres seeded, enhanced and pollinator habitat acres restored. Additionally, we’ll report on any further partnership enhancements as a result of Outdoor Heritage Fund support of this partnership across the state of North Dakota. Our

goal is to bring as many Farm Bill Conservation program dollars as possible to assist North Dakota farmers and ranchers in improving their operations while also enhancing their land for wildlife.

Financial Information: - Please see attached budget

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.

There are a variety of private land programs available to North Dakota producers including federal, state and private efforts. Each program has requirements and agreements that dictate the duration of habitat benefit and as always, our efforts work with producers for a long-term vision for the management and stewardship of that land. CRP contracts last for 10-15 years while EQIP, Partners for Wildlife, and PLOTs offer contracts that can vary in duration. The bottom line is that we hope to build a good relationship with North Dakota farmers and ranchers to deliver common sense programs that work for wildlife and the producer. When programs are implemented correctly, expectations explained, and obligations met, better results are realized for the program and the producer alike. By adding capacity to assist landowners in understanding their land use options and wading through the programmatic barriers, changes, and updates, North Dakotans will benefit from federal, state and private programs that directly address Directive C.

Partial Funding – Indicate how the project will be affected if less funding is available than that requested. If provided less funding, Pheasants Forever and its partners will impact fewer acres and help fewer North Dakota landowners achieve their conservation goals. Should less funding be awarded, PF will scale back accomplishments and evaluate with our partners how to best proceed and achieve results with a reduced budget.

Pheasants Forever can meet the provisions of the contract proposed by the North Dakota Industrial Commission.

Budget Standard Form
Kitchen Table Conversations for Private Land Conservation
Pheasants Forever, Inc.

Project Expense	OHF Request	Applicant's Match Share (Cash)	Applicant's Match Share (Indirect)*	ND Game & Fish	USDA NRCS	ND Natural Resources Trust
Private Landowner Technical Assistance	\$ 186,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 102,000	\$ 240,000	\$ 137,000	\$ 15,000
Undesirable Tree Removal	\$ 60,000	\$	\$ 13,152	\$		
Upland Diversity Upgrade	\$ 45,000	\$	\$ 10,134	\$		
Pollinator Habitat	\$ 25,000	\$	\$ 5,630	\$		
Total Project Costs	\$ 316,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 139,916	\$ 240,000	\$ 137,000	\$ 15,000

*PF's approved federal indirect rate is 22.52%

Private Landowner Technical Assistance includes: Sustain and grow 6 professional partnership farm bill biologist positions to provide assistance to North Dakota landowners in understanding voluntary, incentive-based conservation program options available in North Dakota. The Farm Bill Biologists will make 600 direct landowner contacts and accelerate enrollment into federal farm bill conservation programs and stateside private land programs. Total budget for this result is \$340,000 annually and this budget is for the time period of 7/1/2013 – 6/30/2015. OHF request is \$186,000 while PF provides \$202,000 (\$102,000 indirect), NDG&F provides \$240,000, USDA-NRCS provides \$137,000 and the North Dakota Natural Resources Trust provides \$15,000. PF cash contribution may come from chapters, corporate supporters, foundations or government partners with new grant agreements

Undesirable Tree Removal includes: Scattered/dense tree removal on private lands impacting 1,500 acres. Work includes cutting, treating, piling, removal, chipping of trees per the private landowner agreed upon site prescription. OHF request is \$60,000 and PF will provide \$13,152 in indirect match.

Upland Diversity Upgrades includes: 30-year WRP easements will be targeted to upgrade upland cover by primarily by inter-seeding 300 acres @ an average \$150/acre. Work is site specific and could include: site preparation, herbicide treatment, seed, seeding & clipping. OHF request is \$45,000 and PF commits \$5,630 in indirect match.

Pollinator Habitat includes: PF will work with private landowners to install 10 community pollinator projects @ \$2,500/project, utilizing the CP-42 pollinator practice wherever possible. Work is site specific but could include: site preparation, herbicide treatment, seed, seeding, clipping, plant plugs, and pollinator habitat promotion. OHF request is \$25,000 and PF is providing \$5,630 in matching indirect.

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



NORTH DAKOTA
NATURAL RESOURCES
TRUST

Keith Trego
Executive Director

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December 2, 2013

Karlene Fine, Executive Director
North Dakota Industrial Commission
ATTN: Outdoor Heritage Fund Program
State Capitol – Fourteenth Floor
600 East Boulevard Ave., Dept. 405
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Ms. Fine:

The North Dakota Natural Resources Trust mission is to preserve, enhance, restore, and manage wetlands and associated wildlife habitat, grasslands, and riparian areas in the state of North Dakota. We are writing in support of the Pheasants Forever "Kitchen Table Conversations for Private Land Conservation" grant proposal for Outdoor Heritage Funds.

The Pheasant Forever grant proposal seeks to leverage new funds to keep their talented and proven farm bill biologist team in place and to add a sixth biologist to add capacity in other priority counties. The Pheasants Forever grant proposal also proposes to increase habitat quality on private land and provide cost share for the establishment of pollinator plots.

We are happy to provide our endorsement of the Pheasants Forever grant proposal, as well as \$15,000 cash match. We look forward to working with Pheasants Forever to accomplish the grant goals.

Sincerely,



Keith Trego
Executive Director

"Dedicated to the preservation, enhancement, restoration and management of wetlands and associated wildlife habitat, grasslands, and riparian areas in the state of North Dakota."