

Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Application

Working Grassland Partnership Phase II



Name of Organization: North Dakota Natural Resources Trust

Federal Tax ID#: 36-3512179

Contact Person/Title: Terry Allbee, Business Manager/Biologist

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

- North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts
- Ducks Unlimited
- Pheasants Forever

Additional Supporting Agencies:

- North Dakota Game and Fish Department
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's North Dakota Partners For Fish and Wildlife Program

MAJOR Directive: Choose only one response

- Directive A.** Providing access to private and public lands for sportsmen, including projects that create fish and wildlife habitat and provide access for sportsmen;
- Directive B.** Improving, maintaining and restoring water quality, soil conditions, plant diversity, animal systems and by supporting other practices of stewardship to enhance farming and ranching;
- Directive C.** Developing, enhancing, conserving and restoring wildlife and fish habitat on private and public lands; and
- Directive D.** Conserving natural areas and creating other areas for recreation through the establishment and development of parks and other recreation areas.

Additional Directive: Choose all that apply

- Directive A.** Providing access to private and public lands for sportsmen, including projects that create fish and wildlife habitat and provide access for sportsmen;
- Directive B.** Improving, maintaining and restoring water quality, soil conditions, plant diversity, animal systems and by supporting other practices of stewardship to enhance farming and ranching;
- Directive C.** Developing, enhancing, conserving and restoring wildlife and fish habitat on private and public lands; and
- Directive D.** Conserving natural areas and creating other areas for recreation through the establishment and development of parks and other recreation areas.

Type of organization:

- State Agency
- Political Subdivision
- Tribal Entity
- Tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation.

Project Name: Working Grassland Partnership (Phase II)

Abstract/Executive Summary: In 2015, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGFD) completed a ten year update of the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) through extensive population data collection. The updated SWAP resulted in the number of wildlife species of conservation priority being increased from 110 to 115, including the Western Meadowlark, our state bird. The SWAP reported a significant decline of many grassland bird species due to habitat loss. A group of like-minded partners—including North Dakota Natural



Resources Trust, Pheasants Forever, North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts, Ducks Unlimited, NDGFD, United States Fish and Wildlife Service's North Dakota Partners For Fish and Wildlife Program, and United States Department of Agriculture—collaborated on the submission of an Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) grant in fall of 2015 called Working Grassland Partnership (WGP) to assist in providing livestock/grassland bird friendly development cost-share and technical advice for expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres. This OHF proposal was ultimately approved in May 2016 by the North Dakota Industrial Commission. WGP provided livestock water and

fencing cost-share assistance to landowners to retain CRP acres in grasslands and technical rotational grazing plans to utilize livestock as the primary management tool.

An important part of implementing the WGP grant, because of the diverse partnership and large geographic project area, was to gather for several coordination meetings. Through these collective, strategic discussions it was decided to prioritize the efforts towards expiring CRP acres in 2017. Within the WGP project area, a total of 187,056 acres were set to expire in September of 2017. With that focus, the partners proceeded to sign over 40 WGP agreements with nearly 20,000 acres into the program. The interest by landowners and coordination among WGP partners was so progressive all the funds had been obligated by the end of October 2017. Interest continues to be strong in the WGP agreements, so much so, there are partners that have producers waiting in the wings if we are able to advance the program.

This grant proposal called WGP II is a second phase of the previous successful grant. With continued inquiries in funding availability and a short window to work with the 2017 expired acres, the partnership is requesting additional backing to continue the success in maintaining grasslands for the future of grassland birds and productive grazing areas. The WGP Phase II will focus on the significant expired 2017 CRP acreage and the 10,981 expiring 2018 CRP acres. The project area will add four new counties in the southeast where higher number of CRP contracts are set to expire in 2018. In summary, this proposal is requesting the OHF advisory board to consider investing in additional landowner's interests in transitioning expired/expiring CRP acres into productive working livestock grazing operations by approving Phase II of the Working Grassland Partnership.

Project Duration: 10 years

Amount of Grant request: \$933,750.00

Total Project Costs: \$1,773,750.00

Amount of Matching Funds: \$840,000 (47% of total project costs)

Cash \$175,000.00
In-kind \$665,000.00

Source(s) of Matching Funds

North Dakota Natural Resources Trust	\$175,000	(Cash)
Landowners	\$600,000	(In-kind)
North Dakota Natural Resources Trust	\$ 32,500	(In-kind)
Ducks Unlimited (DU)	\$ 30,000	(In-kind)
Pheasants Forever (PF)	\$ 2,500	(In-kind)

Supporting Partners (Non-Match)

North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts (NDASCD)
North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGFD)
USFWS's North Dakota Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (FWP)

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: The Trust was created in 1986 and was originally called the North Dakota Wetlands Trust until 2000. The Trust's mission is to preserve, restore, manage, and enhance wetlands and associated wildlife habitat, grasslands, and riparian areas in the state of North Dakota. The Trust achieves this mission by partnering with agricultural and conservation organizations to promote productive use of private agricultural lands and private property rights that result in enhancement and protection of private lands, to effectively use North Dakota's public lands both for agriculture and recreation, to promote good land use along urban river corridors, and to enhance the state's significant water resources. The Trust helps shape the landscape through its programs and does its best to help shape both public attitude and public policy to support natural resource protection.

The Trust is managed by a six-member board of directors. Three of the directors are appointed by the governor of North Dakota, one by the National Audubon Society, one by the National Wildlife Federation, and one by the North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society.

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department Director is an ex-officio member. The Trust has an Executive Director and four staff members.

From its inception, the Trust has played a role as facilitator between agricultural and conservation interests. In addition to facilitating and funding sound, on-the-ground conservation of natural resources, its goal is to identify common issues, create dialogue, and resolve conflicts.

Purpose of Grant:

Background and Funding Urgency: Over 1 million acres of grassland have been converted to other land uses since 2007. Looking forward, North Dakota has the potential to lose more than 785,000 acres of established CRP in the next 5 years. The need to maintain native grassland habitat is vitally important for landowners, energy developers and conservation groups to minimize the probability of federal listing of additional rare and declining species. The model for the original WGP proposal started when the NDGFD released its preliminary draft of the SWAP which updated North Dakota's wildlife species of conservation priority through science and monitoring. That revision documented additional declining species that are more widely recognized, such as the Western Meadowlark. The state bird, being a conservation priority, highlights awareness of the habitat concerns of declining species and the impact to producers when populations reach critical lows. As an outcome of the SWAP, the NDGFD initiated a request to USDA Farm Service Agency to provide a Declining Grassland Bird CRP State Acres for Enhancement (SAFE) acre allocation to provide additional grassland habitat. Approval for 40,000 SAFE allocation acres was issued in December 2016, but with the "pause"—which occurred in May 2017—due to the decreasing CRP national acreage cap, only 1,083 acres made it into the program.

Phase I of the WGP program was intended to team up with the SAFE and CRP expiring acreage to maintain existing grassland habitat, while offering productive and financial support to landowners. When the SAFE program ended up being so significantly reduced in coverage, the priority for WGP switched to the expiring CRP lands to proactively deal with bird species of concern, while at the same time increasing the viability and profitability of the ranching industry. It steadily became a definitive win-win situation and was well-received as the implementation progressed. Phase II is being requested because the outreach for additional conservation options is being prompted by landowners wanting to keep grasslands on the landscape through incentives and with greater management flexibility over time.

In a time when the demand for agricultural commodities is increasing to support the growing human population with food, fiber, and fuel, it is necessary to encourage grassland production opportunities and provide grassland wildlife conservation at the same time. North Dakota has approximately 90% private ownership and the fact that livestock operation numbers have decreased from a high in 1965 of 35,000 to a current level of under 10,000 emphasizes how important that grasslands remain an integral part of the North Dakota landscape and heritage. Viable grassland ranching is the key to ensuring that grasslands persist.

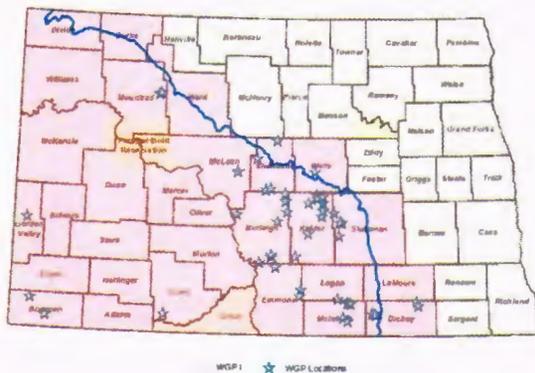
Goals, Strategies and Benefits: WGP Phase II will focus on grasslands from expired 2017 and expiring 2018 CRP contracts with landowners. The fate of many of the 2017 expired acres will be decided this winter. The goal of this grant is to provide options to landowners looking to retain these acres in grassland. By providing 60% cost-share on livestock and bird-friendly developments the grant has a goal of signing agreements on over 15,000 acres.

In addition to OHF funding for developments, the Trust will provide a habitat lease on acres expired from CRP. This will be a one-time, upfront payment that would be issued when WGP Phase II agreement are signed. The habitat lease will serve as an additional incentive to keep these acres in grassland. This proposal is asking for OHF to provide funding for grazing system developments that include livestock water and fencing. Technical advice, such as grazing plans, will be provided by the co-applicants and supporting partners. NDGFD may offer PLOTS payments on land in and around the WGP program acres.



The WGP Phase II works to build on the initial success of Phase I, benefiting grassland productivity and condition, water quality, soil health, and enhance wildlife habitat for grassland birds. Equally valuable, this will improve the sustainability and profitability of many existing livestock operations. By supporting grazing infrastructure we believe these former CRP acres will transition into working bird friendly grazing lands for livestock operations, potentially for long-term investment.

Original WGP Project Area (Agreements Blue Stars)



WGP II Project Area



Directives and Timeline: The OHF major directive states (B) improving, maintaining and restoring water quality, soil conditions, plant diversity, animal systems, and by supporting other practices of stewardship to enhance farming and ranching. This is the major directive of this OHF grant request and will provide landowners the cost assistance and technical guidance to accomplish this directive on their property.

In addition, directive (A) of providing access to private and public lands for sportsmen, including projects that create fish and wildlife habitat and provide access for sportsmen will be achieved by NDGFD offering landowners PLOTS through this project.

Directive (C) of developing, enhancing, conserving and restoring wildlife and fish habitat on private and public lands will be achieved by NDNRT habitat conservation leases in combination with the OHF development assistance.

The proposed project will be 10 years in length, with the majority of the lease payments and livestock/bird-friendly development practices being completed in the first two years. The WGP will create sustainable agriculture and conservation benefits to an expected 15,000 acres.

Management of Project: The Trust will provide management, coordination, and administration of the WGP funding. The Trust and partners will work collectively to provide landowners with program options. The Trust will complete all program coordination from our office located in Bismarck, ND. Terry Allbee, Biologist/Business Manager, and Jesse Beckers, Conservation Program Coordinator, will serve as the coordinators. Terry and Jesse have a combined 20 years of experience in delivering conservation projects for the Trust. The Trust will provide tracking and reporting of all landowner agreements following grant guidelines.

The partnership provides a “one stop shop” through a team of in-the-field partners for landowners to work with from beginning to end. Private lands delivery partners help promote and work directly with landowners. The majority of direct contacts with landowners will be done by NDGFD private lands biologists, NDASCD’s Farm Bill Specialists, PF’s biologists, and DU biologists. As these field staff work with landowners that are interested in USDA conservation programs or on expiring CRP, grazing infrastructure development options, conservation habitat leases, and NDGFD PLOTS agreements will be promoted. All grant funds will be paid as agreements and development activities are completed and proper documentation is supplied to the Trust.

Evaluation: We are fortunate with how this diverse partnership came together for implementation and evaluation reasons. Our partners enable “boots on the ground” contact with landowners, and that relationship development sets the tone for positive results in how the program can benefit their operation and wildlife habitat. Our field agent partners help with contract facilitation and the implementation aspects, verifying that fence and water resources are completed as prescribed and following up on grazing plans. Our administration ensures timely payments and support lines for both participating landowners and partners. More

specifically, success will be measured on the level of agreements completed with landowners and the amount of acres benefited by the lease and development activities—by increased conservation habitat for grassland birds, satisfied landowners, and increased access for public enjoyment.

Project Budget:

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

Sustainability: The WGP Phase II, if funded, will be implemented and delivered in 2018-2019. The Trust will work with partners to promote the program and landowner agreements will start as soon as possible and be completed when all funding is obligated. Operation and maintenance of land development activities will be completed throughout the agreement period by landowners. The partnership will perform periodic field checks. Creating working relationships with landowners provides potential for furthering other OHF funded grants.

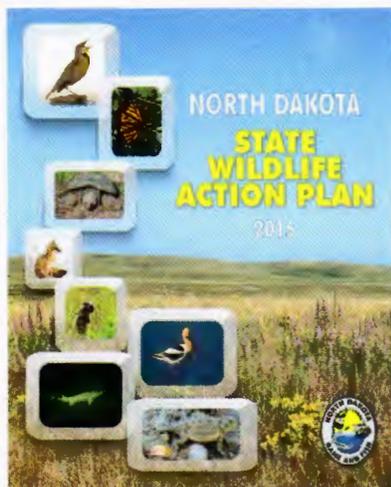
Partial Funding: If the grant proposal is partially funded, the Trust would reduce the number of development activities, focusing the highest priority activities and the number of acres that can be improved would be reduced.

Partnership Recognition: The Outdoor Heritage Fund will be recognized as the major partner in the WGP. All promotional material will have the OHF logo and describe the OHF recognition. All WGP agreements will have OHF logo on agreement header. All landowner interaction with WGP will involve disclose of OHF funding source and the importance of OHF funding.

References:

2015 State Wildlife Action Plan

<https://gf.nd.gov/wildlife/swap>



Project Budget:

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

Project Expense	OHF Request	Applicant's Match Share (Cash)	Applicant's and Other Project Sponsor's Match Share (In-Kind)	Total Each Project Expense
OHF - Livestock and Grassland Bird Friendly Development Practices 60%	\$ 900,000			\$900,000
OHF - Livestock and Grassland Bird Friendly Development Practices 40%			\$600,000	\$600,000
Trust Lease		\$175,000		\$175,000
Contracted Services	\$3,750			\$3,750
Staffing	\$30,000		\$65,000	\$95,000
Total Costs	\$933,750	\$175,000	\$665,000	\$1,773,750

- WGP Agreements – All WGP agreements with landowners will be 10 years.
- Livestock and Grassland Bird Friendly Development Practices:
 - Fencing will follow the June 2016 North Dakota Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Program's Cost-Share Guidelines for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Best Management Practices (319 program). The WGP OHF grant will provide landowners a **60%** cost-share payment based on the BMP cost-share payment rates. Landowners will provide the remaining **40%** cost-share.
 - Water Development will follow the June 2016 North Dakota Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Program's Cost-Share Guidelines for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Best Management Practices (319 program). The WGP OHF grant will use the BMP planning rates for agreement development, but will pay **60%** cost-share based on actual costs. The landowners will provide the remaining **40%** cost-share.
- Trust Habitat Conservation Lease - The Trust will offer landowners a lease payment for all CRP acres expired 2017 and/or expiring 2018 that are included in the WGP agreement. The lease rate will be \$5.00 per acre per year, so landowners will receive a \$50/acre one-time payment for the 10 year agreement. Lease payments will be on expired/expiring CRP acres only.

- Contracted Services – All projects will be reviewed by State Historical Society of North Dakota for cultural resources and North Dakota State Historical and Preservation Office approval. If the project requires a cultural resources professional, we outsource that to conduct a field review. For example, in Phase I, out of 40+contracts, we needed to contract a field review three times. Each pedestrian review cost \$1250 and costs would advance depending on findings.
- Staffing – The OHF staffing funds will be utilized to provide partial program delivery assistance through the Trust, NDASCD, PF, and DU. The Trust and partners will provide the majority of additional in-kind staffing as match needed for program delivery.

Exhibit 1) Example of Working Grassland Partnership II



Landowner owns two sections of land in Sheridan County. On these two sections there are three quarters with 2017 expiring CRP acres. The landowner wants to add these expiring CRP acres into existing livestock grazing operation. There are three quarters of existing pasture in section 20 that will be part of the rotation grazing plan and the north half of section 21 will remain cropland.

- **Lease Payment:** A one-time Trust funded lease payment will be made only on the expiring CRP acres. Lease payments will be 100% funded by the Trust.
- **Boundary Fence:** The grant will provide cost-share to complete boundary fence around the expiring CRP quarters where no suitable fence exists (white lines on map). The grant would not provide cost-share on the adjacent pasture land where fence should already be present (red lines on map). Grant will not provide any cost-share for boundary fence on existing pastures. The landowner will determine the type of fence this may include multi-strand barbed or electrical wire. All activity is cost-shared at 60% OHF grant and 40% landowner.
- **Cross Fence:** The grant will provide cross fencing (white dashed line on map) for the expiring CRP pastures. To complete the grazing system the grant will also provide some cross fence on existing pasture land (white dashed line on map). The landowner

will determine the type of fence this may include multi-strand barbed or electrical wire. All activity is cost-shared at 60% OHF grant and 40% landowner.

- **Water Development:** A water source will be developed along the south border of section 21 which may include rural water hook-up, traditional electrical water well or solar well. A shallow pipeline, water tanks and associated costs will be added to complete the development (Blue squares and blue line on map). All activity is cost-shared at 60% OHF grant and 40% landowner.
- **Rotational Grazing Planning:** Determine landowners rotational sequence whether a once over or twice over rotation, number of animals units, desired pasture size, soil productivity, existing vegetation (cool season/warm season grasses), and length of grazing days. The grazing plan technical guidance will be delivered by the partnership through the WRP II partnership field staff, PFW, and/or NRCS.



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
North Dakota Partners for Fish and Wildlife Office
3425 Miriam Avenue
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501



October 19, 2017

Keith Trego
Executive Director
North Dakota Natural Resources Trust
1605 E. Capitol Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58501

RE: Working Grassland Partnership Phase II

Dear Mr. Trego:

The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service's North Dakota Partners for Fish and Wildlife (ND PFW) program fully supports the Working Grassland Partnership Phase II OHF grant proposal. We fully support your vision of collaborative conservation and feel that working with willing landowners to improve livestock management has valuable, lasting effects on the grassland and wetland dependent wildlife that call North Dakota home.

The USFWS has a long history of working closely with private landowners, providing financial and technical assistance on voluntary conservation efforts to restore, enhance and create wetland and grassland habitat on private land. The ND PFW program works closely with private landowners to foster partnerships on working lands that help conserve important wildlife habitat and also provide economic benefits for North Dakota's farmers and ranchers and other private landowners. Our approach is simple: Engage willing partners through non-regulatory incentives to conserve fish and wildlife values on their property. The ND PFW program was established in 1987 and since that time has worked on more than 4,200 habitat projects with more than 3,200 North Dakota farmers, ranchers and other private landowners.

During the implementation of Phase I of the Working Grasslands Partnership OHF grant, the ND PFW program was able to work collaboratively with the North Dakota Natural Resources Trust (NDNRT) on many projects and was able to assist with project implementation and installation. In many cases, landowners working with the NDNRT on their expiring CRP also had additional needs on other areas of their farms or ranches and the ND PFW program was able to provide technical and financial assistance to help address those needs. Oftentimes, the additional needs included practices such as installing additional grazing infrastructure and grass plantings. When packaged with the improved management capability on expired CRP provided by the Working Grasslands Partnership, these projects helped landowners develop a more holistic approach to managing their farms and ranches that improves the forage for livestock and the habitat for wildlife. We feel that this was a fantastic partnership that greatly improved the grazing management and wildlife habitat on thousands of acres in North Dakota.

Should your proposal be selected for funding, the ND PFW program once again stands ready to assist in any way that we can in order to help make Phase II of this project as successful as the first one.

Sincerely,

Scott J. McLeod,
USFWS, State Coordinator, ND Partners for Fish and Wildlife

NORTH DAKOTA
GAME & FISH
DEPARTMENT

"Variety in Hunting and Fishing"

GOVERNOR, Doug Burgum

DIRECTOR, Terry Steinwand
DEPUTY, Scott A. Peterson

100 North Bismarck Expressway
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501-5095
Phone: (701) 328-6300
FAX: (701) 328-6352

October 26, 2017

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

Dear Ms. Fine:

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's (Department) mission is to protect, conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for sustained public consumptive and nonconsumptive use. The Department is the agency responsible for managing the state's fish and wildlife resources and the Department's State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) is the principle document for safeguarding rare and declining species in North Dakota. Partnerships are critically important, ensuring the Department can carry out its mission and implement conservation actions outlined in the SWAP.

We believe the North Dakota Natural Resources Trust (NRT) Working Grassland Partnership (WGP) OHF grant proposal complements the Department's mission and is an important and positive step in implementing the Department's SWAP. Few options currently exist for landowners who wish to renew expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres or transition them into grazing operations. With few options, producers are opting to convert many of these acres back to agricultural production. Continued loss and fragmentation of grasslands has been identified as a conservation threat in the SWAP, negatively affecting several species of grassland birds and other wildlife and pollinator species.

We feel that the expansion of this already successful program will provide landowners with valuable options for their grasslands, help maintain healthy grasslands and ranching communities and complement the Department's mission.

We look forward to working with the Industrial Commission and our partners on this project.

Sincerely,



Terry Steinwand
Director



PHEASANTS

forever

October 31, 2017

North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board
600 E Boulevard Avenue Department 405
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501

Dear Chairman Melchior and Advisory Board Members,

Please consider this a letter of support to the 'Working Grassland Partnership II' proposal submitted by our partners at the North Dakota Natural Resources Trust. Pheasants Forever fully supports and has a long history of working with private landowners in North Dakota through voluntary conservation programs, including the Conservation Reserve Program. Our history working with CRP and private landowners has helped us realize, that opportunities complimenting federal conservation programs can be beneficial not only to landowners, producers and ranchers, but can provide additional benefits to soil, water, livestock and wildlife. The opportunities highlighted in the Working Grassland Partnership will provide private landowners flexibility to better manage expiring federal conservation lands and adjacent acres, ultimately improving their entire operation. A win-win-win scenario.

Pheasants Forever applauds the efforts of the North Dakota Natural Resources Trust to bring together a broad coalition of partners to develop and deliver this opportunity to North Dakota landowners. They have reached out to partners across the State and developed an opportunity to better manage conservation lands that has the potential to provide long-lasting benefits to North Dakota's landowners, sportsmen and women and wildlife populations.

Pheasants Forever supports efforts that benefit North Dakota's rural economies, working lands, and wildlife populations now and into the future. Pheasants Forever as a co-applicant has pledged to assist the Trust, OHF and other partners with the promotion and delivery of this opportunity to private landowners through our network of chapters, members, and staff.

Sincerely,

Richard E. Young
VP of Field Operations
Pheasants Forever, Inc.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

1783 Buerkle Circle
St. Paul, Minnesota 55110
(651) 773-2000
(651) 773-5500 FAX
(877) 773-2070 TOLL-FREE
www.PheasantsForever.org

NDASCD



October 27, 2017
Karlene Fine, Executive Director
North Dakota Industrial Commission
ATTN: Outdoor Heritage Fund Program
600 East Boulevard Ave., Dept. 405
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Ms. Fine:

The purpose of the North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts is to further the widespread application of sound and practical soil and water conservation practices in North Dakota. Our goal is to provide quality services to carry out the soil conservation program of the soil conservation districts of North Dakota. The association is currently leading a partnership with agricultural entities and conservation organizations to provide education and a "one-stop shop" for farmers and ranchers. The goal is to inform producers about the availability of the wide range of voluntary private land conservation programs offered by federal and state agencies and non-governmental conservation organizations, and to assist farmers and ranchers with all steps of program enrollment through the expertise of Farm Bill Specialists located throughout the state.

Consistent with that mission, we are in support of the North Dakota Natural Resource Trust Working Grasslands Partnership grant proposal for Outdoor Heritage Funds. The proposal plans to incentivize and assist landowners by offering conservation and landowner friendly practices that can provide greater flexibility to a producers operation while still realizing the wildlife benefits. The association currently has 10 Farm Bill Specialists plus a Supervisor that work on the ground with producers to deliver voluntary conservation programs in North Dakota. If the Working Grasslands Partnership proposal is successful, the Farm Bill Specialists will assist in educating and promoting the continued grant opportunity to landowners interested in USDA and other conservation programs.

We are happy to provide endorsement of the Working Grasslands Partnership grant proposal and look forward to its potential to provide additional options to North Dakota producers.

Sincerely,

Luke Gilbert
ND Association of Soil Conservation Districts
3310 University Drive
Bismarck, ND 58504



Great Plains Regional Office
2525 River Road
Bismarck, ND 58503-9011
(701) 355-3500 fax (701) 355-3575
www.ducks.org

October 30, 2017

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

Dear Ms. Fine:

Please accept this letter of support by Ducks Unlimited in cooperation with the North Dakota Natural Resources Trust's "Working Grasslands Partnership II" Outdoor Heritage Fund proposal. We commend the Trust for their hard work in the continuation of this successful project and efforts to bring together a diverse group of local, state, and federal stakeholders. We are pleased to provide \$30,000 of in-kind staff support for this project. On-the-ground Ducks Unlimited biologists and engineers will promote and assist private landowners with enrollment and delivery into this innovative program dedicated to providing simple and flexible options that work for both the producer and wildlife. The Phase I Working Grasslands Partnership project had tremendous landowner interest in working lands options that assisted in keeping thousands of acres in grasslands and wetlands on the landscape. With more CRP acres expiring in the next five years, the program has the potential to further assist producers with expanding grass and pasture in their operations.

We greatly appreciate the Industrial Commission and the Advisory Board's collective efforts to implement the Outdoor Heritage Fund program. It has provided the opportunity to foster strong partnerships exhibited in this proposal to achieve "win-win" solutions for both North Dakota producers and wildlife habitat.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stephen E. Adair
Director, Great Plains Region

Rescue Our Wetlands
Banding Together for Waterfowl