

Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Application

Name of Organization RENVILLE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Federal Tax ID# 45-6002761

Contact Person/Title DARA ABERNATHEY, DISTRICT MANAGER

Address PO BOX 220

City MOHALL

State ND

Zip Code 58761

E-mail Address dara.abernathey@nd.nacdnet.net

Web Site Address (Optional)

Phone (701) 756-6351 Ext. 3

Fax # (if available) (701) 478-4506

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

WARD COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BURKE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
DIVIDE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MAJOR Directive:

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.

Additional Directive:

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.

Type of organization:

State Agency

Political Subdivision

Tribal Entity

Tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation.

Project Name: UPPER SOURIS CONSERVATION PROJECT

Abstract/Executive Summary:

The last four years have led to a shift in the resource concerns within the Upper Souris River Watershed due to an excessive water regime which has caused large-scale flooding of cities, farmsteads, cropland fields, and pastures. This increase in water has caused large acreages of preventive planting and more overland run-off than the land resources are accustomed. Gullies have developed in areas that were well vegetated, salinity has moved to the surface causing cropland acres to be unproductive and reducing the soil health and structure, and native rangeland acres are getting sacrificed as the water moves through.

The Renville County Soil Conservation District, in partnership with the Ward, Burke, and Divide Soil Conservation Districts would like to propose a concerted effort to address the increased gully erosion and salinity development within the Upper Souris Watershed. The goal is to provide additional funding to help individual farmers and ranchers to develop grassed waterways, critical area seedings, water diversions, and other long term conservation practices as deemed necessary will address two primary resource concerns--Soil Erosion and Water Quantity. Secondary resource concerns of water quality and soil health will also be addressed with the increase in grass seedings and soil stabilization that can occur with filter strips along water courses and wetland edges. Tertiary resource concerns addressed include wildlife habitat from the incorporation of natural corridors and the emphasis on establishment of forbs with the grass seedings and critical area plantings will lead to more holistic resources for pollinators and non-game wildlife.

Our plan is to hold informational meetings such as workshops, field days, and one-on-one consultations with farmers and ranchers within the watershed. Then each year will hold a batching deadline to contract individual contracts within the basin to assist with implementation of the conservation activities. Considering this project would be a unique conservation partnership between Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF), & local Soil Conservation Districts, success stories will be outreached to state media sources and at completion a success field day will be held for the general public and local landowners to see the beauty of their stewardship efforts.

For cost share to landowners, we would offer financial assistance through Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), and seek additional grant funds to maintain and enhance our cost share to landowners. Landowners would be responsible for 10 percent of the total project cost, and the OHF funds would be used to supplement the remainder of the cost.

Total project costs is \$1,100,000 over a 5 year period. Grant objectives will be completed in the period from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2019.

Project Duration: January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2019

Amount of Grant request: \$400,000.00

Total Project Costs: \$1,100,000.00

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

Amount and Source of Matching Funds:

\$500,000	-- NRCS – EQIP funding from RCPP
\$100,000	-- SCD in-kind match
\$400,000	-- Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF)
\$100,000	-- Landowners (cash & in-kind)
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\$1,100,000	Total Project Budget over 5 years.

Over 5 Year Period – Expenditures

\$ 25,000	Administration & Development –Workshops, Outreach, Newsletters, Brochures, etc. (In-Kind)
\$ 75,000	Salaries, Travel, Supplies (In-Kind)
\$500,000	EQIP Contracts (Federal)
\$400,000	Additional Cost-Share (OHF)
\$100,000	Landowners (cash & in-kind)
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\$1,100,000	Total Dollars Expended to increase conservation within Upper Souris Watershed.

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:

Resident farmers and landowners of Renville County voted to approve the formation of their district. Districts are organized by the vote of the people within the district and are managed by a board of supervisors also elected by the people. The Renville County board consists of three elected and two appointed supervisors.

Mission Statement:

To promote soil and water conservation by offering financial, technical, informational and educational assistance and opportunities to the people of the district, as we have a real duty to use resources wisely and to preserve them for the future.

The district employs one full time District Manager, one part-time District Technician, as well as temporary summer help.

The district assists landowners with planning and installation of farmstead shelterbelts, field windbreaks, and wildlife plantings.

The district is involved with the State-Wide Eco-Ed program for 6th grade students. The district is the coordinator of the Mouse River Loop Envirothon for teams of high school students to compete at a regional scale. The district holds shop talks and farm talks with farmers and ranchers on an annual basis and sends out quarterly newsletters. The district also sponsors Tom Gibson in the schools, participates in the KMOT Living Ag Classroom, and gives Earth Day presentations to all the 4th grade classes within the county as part of their educational outreach.

Purpose of Grant:

The Souris River Basin has seen record precipitation beginning in 2010 and continuing to the present. This has resulted in a change in the landscape, a degradation of soil health, and erosion of natural watercourses, and increased sedimentation within the riparian habitat. Gully erosion and washouts have developed in cropland, pastures, and native range. Left unaddressed, these areas will become more difficult to manage and costly to repair. Our agricultural producers have been watching their productive soil resources washing down the Souris River.

In addition to the erosion seen along the Souris River Basin, we have also witnessed a degradation of our soil in the form of salinity. This salinity is destroying the productive capabilities of our cropland and pastures. We will be addressing this problem through permanent vegetative plantings which will benefit the entire watershed by utilizing moisture through transpiration and infiltration and holding the soil in place.

Understanding the need to deal with these problems in a timely manner, the Renville County Soil Conservation District in partnership with the Ward, Burke, and Divide Soil Conservation Districts have agreed to come together to begin a new partnership which addresses these specific concerns. Our goal is to reduce sedimentation, water erosion, and soil salinity in the upper reaches of the Souris River Basin including the sub-basins of Deep Creek, Upper Souris, and Des Lacs River. By making contacts with producers and landowners we can offer both technical and financial assistance to improve soil health, lessen wind and water erosion, stabilize river and stream banks, and create grassed waterways where deemed appropriate.

The plan is to implement conservation practices to address water erosion and salinization due to water quantity increasing in climate regime over the past 4 years. Conservation practices to be focused on include, but not limited to: (412) Grassed Waterways, (512) Forage & Biomass Plantings, (393) Filter Strips, (410) Grade Stabilization Structures, (362) Diversions, (356) Dikes, (348) Diversion Dams, (342) Critical Area Plantings, (584) Channel Bed Stabilization, (580) Streambank and Shoreline Protection, (350) Sediment Basins, (638) Water and Sediment Control Basins, (391) Riparian Forest Buffer and (390) Riparian Herbaceous Cover.

If approved the Upper Souris Conservation Project would start January 1, 2015 and end December 31, 2019 or sooner if funds are expended.

Management of Project:

The outreach and management will be jointly shared between the four Districts utilizing current staff. Landowners will have an opportunity to apply for funds to address water erosion and/or salinity. These applications will be expected to meet the NRCS participant eligibility criteria. They will then go through a universal ranking process to maintain consistency. This will also focus funds on the most imminent needs within the Souris River Basin.

An Executive Board will oversee the project. This board will consist of a representative from each Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors. These four representatives will choose 3 additional members who also have a vested interest in the watershed, for example, Water Resource District members, County elected officials, etc.

All SCD/NRCS personnel within the Mohall, Minot, Bowbells, and Crosby field offices will be responsible for promoting, outreach, ranking, planning, design, and check-out of projects.

Dara Abernathey, Renville District Manager, will be the lead point of contact. She has worked with Renville County producers for 8 years. She has developed an excellent rapport with landowners and the general public in her outreach and educational activities.

Beth Brandt, Ward District Clerk, will manage the bookkeeping and payment processing of the project. She has worked with the Ward SCD for 2 years and has a BS in Accounting.

Evaluation:

Success will be documented through the number of conservation practices implemented and the number of producers given service. Annual status reviews will be completed for the life of their individual contracts.

Landowners/Operators are required to sign an Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Agreement for the practices implemented with EQIP financial assistance. Landowners/Operators must agree to the proper maintenance and care of financially assisted projects for the life of the installed project. For example, Grassed Waterways have a life expectancy of 20 years and must be maintained by the operator. All practices must meet NRCS standards and specifications. Upon completion the designing engineer or conservationist must verify each practice before a payment application can be processed.

All districts involved in this project complete monthly reporting and evaluations currently through NRCS contribution agreements and the State Soil Conservation Committee Technician Program. Expenditure reports will be available each quarter at regularly scheduled Executive Board meetings.

Financial Information

FUNDING SOURCES	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	TOTALS
RCPP EQIP FUNDS*	100,000.00	100,000.00	100,000.00	100,000.00	100,000.00	500,000.00
OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUNDS**	80,000.00	80,000.00	80,000.00	80,000.00	80,000.00	400,000.00
PRODUCER MATCH/IN-KIND (FA)	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	100,000.00
LOCAL SCD (IN-KIND)	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	100,000.00
TOTAL BUDGET	220,000.00	220,000.00	220,000.00	220,000.00	220,000.00	1,100,000.00

*EQIP FUNDS WILL BE USED FOR ALL ASPECTS OF PROGRAM

**OH FUNDS WILL BE USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR CONSERVATION PRACTICES WITHIN THE PROGRAM

Project Budget:

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

Sustainability:

Once Outdoor Heritage and RCPP-EQIP funds are expended, the project will be completed. Our sustainability will continue with the practices installed, the crop and rangeland management of our producers, and with the education of water quality, soil health, and water quantity we have provided to landowners and operators.

If goals and objectives are not met by the end of the project, and there is continuing interest in applying more conservation practices by landowners/operators the district may seek additional funding from more sources.

Partial Funding:

In the case of a reduced amount of dollars being awarded by the Outdoor Heritage Fund, fewer practices will be implemented and thereby producing less water quality improvements. As we stated earlier, the problem is not going away. With less funding, the issues will increase and repairs and reclamation will become more costly.

Awarding of Grants

- I certify that all provisions of the sample contract will be met.

Attachments:

- Map of Proposed Watersheds
- Letters of Support



Upper Souris Watershed

Date: 7/10/2014

Field Office: MOHALL SERVICE CENTER

Agency: USDA - NRCS

Assisted By: LENA BOHM

State and County: ND, Renville





Natural Resources
Conservation Service

July 29, 2014

Bismarck State Office
PO Box 1458
Bismarck, ND
58502-1458

Renville County Soil Conservation District
PO Box 220
Mohall, North Dakota 58761

Voice 701.530.2000
Fax 855-813-7556

Dear Renville County SCD:

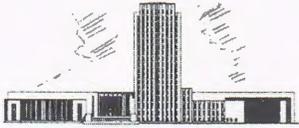
I support your Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant proposal to provide additional funding to help individual farmers and ranchers develop grassed waterways, critical areas seeding, water diversions, and other long term conservation practices to address two primary resource concerns – soil erosion and water quality.

This project will partner the Renville County Soil Conservation District with the Ward, Burke, Divide, and Ward Soil Conservation Districts to reduce sedimentation, water erosion, and soil salinity in the upper reaches of the Souris River Basin including the sub-basins of Deep Creek, Upper Souris, and Des Lacs River.

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service supports sustainable agriculture through its technical and financial assistance programs such as Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

Sincerely,

MARY E. PODOLL
State Conservationist



NORTH DAKOTA SENATE

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



COMMITTEES:
Human Services
Transportation

Senator John M. Warner
District 4
33200 331st Avenue SW
Hyder, ND 58779-9519
jwarner@nd.gov

26 July 2014

Mr. Wade Moser, Chair
North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 405
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501

Dear Mr. Moser:

It is my understanding that the Outdoor Heritage Fund often receives proposals that dovetail nicely with programs of the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS). These types of partnerships can do much to leverage available resources that enhance the quality of our outdoor resources by stabilizing the geology of agriculture areas and maintaining the integrity of soil quality from losses by erosion or salinization.

Accordingly, please consider this a letter of support for the efforts of the Renville County Soil Conservation District, as well as its co-applicant districts in Ward, Burke, and Divide Counties to access funds available from the Outdoor Heritage Fund for the Upper Souris Conservation Project. I believe that the implied goals of your enabling legislation of providing access for sportsmen, creating fish and wildlife habitat match well with the stated goals of the Project of improving water quality, soil conditions, plant and animal systems and other practices of stewardship that enhance farming and ranching.

I look forward to working closely with the project, both in my public role as a legislator and in my private role as a farmer and resident of this very special state.

Sincerely,

John Warner, Senator
Fourth Legislative District