

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

NO CONSIDERATION:

In addition to those specific items in law that are ineligible for funding, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, the following projects will NOT receive consideration for funding:

- Projects that are already completed;
- Projects that are on-going (Phased projects would be considered);
- Staffing;
- Feasibility studies;
- Annual maintenance;
- Paving projects for roads and parking lots;
- Swimming pools;
- Non-permanent equipment (such as tractors, snowmobiles);
- Research;
- Projects where the applicant is not directly involved in the project.

Application Deadline

Applications for the second grant round cycle are due on **November 3, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. CT.** All information, including attachments, must be submitted by that date. See instructions below for submission information.

Instructions

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 or print it and mail it to the address noted in the next 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. 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 * Mule Deer Foundation

Contact Person/Title * Marshall Johnson, Regional Director for ND/MT

Address * 2016 Burlington Ave

City * Billings

State * MT

Zip Code *59102

E-mail Address * marshall@muledeer.org

Web Site Address (Optional) www.muledeer.org

Phone * 406-850-8785

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

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;

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

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;

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

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

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

O State Agency

O Political Subdivision

O Tribal Entity

X Tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation.

Project Name* Western ND Habitat Enhancement Projects

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)

Objective

The objective of the Western North Dakota Habitat Enhancement Projects is to utilize OHF funds to assist in the protecting, conserving and enhancing wildlife habitat on private and public lands in western North Dakota. Currently over 90% of the oil/gas development is occurring on private lands, therefore these are areas that are in the most need. Our strategy is to partner with North Dakota Game & Fish (NDGF) Private Lands Initiative (PLI) program, the oil/gas industry and other sportsman/conservation groups to enhance, improve or rehabilitate habitats in western North Dakota. We will work with private landowners that are enrolled in the Private Land Open To Sportsmen (P.L.O.T.S.) program as well as private landowners that are unsure about enrolling in the P.L.O.T.S. program. The initiatives provided in our habitat improvement projects may well make it worthwhile for the private landowner to enroll.

MDF will help seek out private landowners that may be interested in improving habitat that will benefit wildlife while also improving the grazing opportunities on their land. There will be no cost to the landowner, all that we ask for is a minimum of a three year extension to their P.L.O.T.S. agreement, which is three more years of payments to the landowner. These additional years would bring additional access for ND sportsman and women on improved/enhanced habitat conditions. Building these relationships with private producers on the land which supports the public wildlife resource are paramount. We anticipate that the landowners will realize the mutual benefits and continue to be part of the P.L.O.T.S. program for many years beyond.

We will continue to partner with other conservation groups (i.e. such as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Wild Sheep Foundation, and the National Wild Turkey Federation) as well as with the ND Petroleum Council and energy industry businesses to cost share on these habitat enhancement projects.

We will consult with local NRCS habitat specialists, NDGF biologists, landowners, grazing association as well as any other interested parties to develop the desired habitat restoration goals and address any and all concerns expressed. In the event of a prescribed burn project a professional licensed and insured burn contractor will be hired to develop a burn plan and perform the burn. Local fire officials will be contacted and consulted with in relation to the planned burn well in advance.

Expected Results

Our goal in the next three years is to employ at least six habitat enhancement/restoration projects on over 2,000 acres in western ND. These projects may involve a combination of prescribed burns, native grass/shrub plantings, invasive/noxious weed control, fencing and wildlife food plots. These habitat improvement/restoration projects would mainly occur on private lands enrolled or looking to be enrolled in P.L.O.T.S. program. We will also to continue to work to develop projects with the State Land Department and NDGF on WMA's. The results will be improved habitat for wildlife, increased sportsman access as well as improving grazing conditions for western ND ranchers.

Project Duration:* 3-4 years. Projects to be completed within four years, projects may be delayed due to weather and habitat conditions. Contract extensions will not occur until project is completed.

Amount of Grant request \$ * \$480,900

Total Project Costs \$* 719,900

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

Western North Dakota Habitat Enhancement Projects

Habitat Projects - 2,000 acres (Prescribed burns, native grass/shrub plantings, fencing, water development and P.L.O.T.S. contract extensions)	\$ 709,000
Food Plots – 100 Acres @ avg of \$109 per acre	\$ <u>10,900</u>
TOTAL	\$ 719,900

A minimum of 25% Match Funding is strongly encouraged. Amount of Matching Funds \$*

\$170,000 cash will be raised by MDF banquets/raffles and an additional \$60,000 will be solicited from specific targeted project partners.

Source(s) of Matching Funds* \$239,000

Please provide verification that these matching funds are available for your project.

Matching Funds

ND MDF Chapters fund raising - Avg for 3 yrs	\$ 140,000
MDF National Support	\$ 30,000
MDF project partners (Other conservation groups And oil/gas businesses.	\$ 60,000
<u>Indirect Match Shares (@\$15/hr)</u>	
400 hrs of MDF personnel project development	\$ 6,000
200 hrs of NDGF PLI biologist project development /contracting	\$ 3,000
Total	\$ 239,000

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 – 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)

Mission:

To ensure the conservation of mule deer, black-tailed deer and their habitat.

Goals and Objectives:

- To *restore, improve and protect* mule deer habitat (including land and easement acquisitions) resulting in self-sustaining, healthy, free ranging and huntable deer populations.
- To *encourage and support* responsible wildlife management with government agencies, private organizations and landowners.
- To *promote* public education and scientific research related to mule deer and wildlife management.
- To *support and encourage* responsible and ethical behavior and awareness of issues among those whose actions affect mule deer.
- To *support* regulated hunting as a viable component of mule deer and black-tailed deer conservation.
- To *develop* programs that focus on recruitment and retention of youth into the shooting sports and conservation.

The Mule Deer Foundation was founded in 1988 as a 501(c)3 charitable non-profit organization and key conservation group in North America working to restore, improve and protect mule deer and black-tail deer and their habitat. The foundation has a focus on science and program efficiency, acknowledges regulated hunting as a viable management component and is committed to recruitment and retention of youth into shooting sports and wildlife conservation.

Current programs & Activities:

The Mule Deer Foundation is currently active in many programs including conservation programs working and partnering alongside state and federal wildlife agencies as well as other partners in conservation. The conservation projects vary between states and regions but all are beneficial to restoring, improving and enhancing habitat. The foundation is also active in recruitment and retention of new outdoorsmen and women through its education initiative including the M.U.L.E.Y. program.

The Mule Deer Foundation Chapters of ND have been partnering with the NDGF department for several years by cost sharing on one-third of the annual landowner access agreements. Currently, MDF helps support over 27,000 acres of P.L.O.T.S. in mule deer country. This partnership enables the NDGF P.L.O.T.S. program to leverage sportsmen's license fees for enrolling additional acres across the west. Additionally, working with oil industry executives thru the Sportsman and Oil Industry Forum, we learned that the oil industry is very interested in supporting habitat projects in western ND where oil/gas development is occurring.

Recently we put together a pilot project on Tracy Mountain, approx. 20 miles south of Medora, where a prescribed burn will be completed in the Spring of 2015. The burn will thin the dense stand of juniper which is reducing the productivity of the native grasslands, limiting the carrying capacity of wildlife and livestock alike. This project is being conducted on the privately owned Kim Shade Ranch which is enrolled in the P.L.O.T.S. program. In this particular project our partners included ND Petroleum Council, Continental Resources, WPX Energy, EOG Resources, NDGF and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. This supports the initiatives of the oil industry to put money back on the ground in impacted areas and is a win for wildlife habitat and sportsman. The Tracy Mountain Prescribed Burn project budget exceeds \$75,000 to improve over 200+ acres and keep open almost 3,000 acres of prime mule deer habitat.. This project is already fully funded and no funds from the OHF will be used in this existing project.

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 purpose of this grant is two-fold, to enhance and protect wildlife habitats and increase sportsmen access to quality hunting lands.

The increasing loss and degradation of native grassland habitats in western North Dakota impacts wildlife populations and in turn threatens North Dakota's heritage of hunting and outdoor related activities. Mule deer are a sensitive species and populations have not rebounded well from the severe winters of 2008, 2009 and 2010. Many factors are contributing to mule deer not rebounding; fragmentation and loss of habitat due to development (energy, roads, commercial/residential building), loss of CRP grasslands, agricultural practices, predators, poaching, highways crossing through the middle of transitional ranges of mule deer habitat. Besides weather, the single greatest factor in the decline of mule deer is the loss, fragmentation or degradation of habitat. We cannot control the weather, however, it is possible to increase and improve habitats. Our goal is to improve and rehabilitate wildlife habitat to provide wildlife and mule deer the best opportunity to thrive and ensure sustainability on western North Dakota.

Over the years with oil/gas industry development and agricultural practices, noxious or invasive plant species have proliferated and expanded into native plant communities. Our strategy is to work closely with private landowners, enrolled in the P.L.O.T.S working lands program, to improve habitat that will not only benefit wildlife but will improve the grazing for landowners. This strategy effectively promotes agriculture economics as well as sustaining and improving North Dakota's natural resources. The Mule Deer Foundation will also look for partnership opportunities for habitat projects on other state lands in western ND.

Sportsman access is the second goal of this grant. Recreational activities are very important to the state's economy with an estimated \$1.4 billion in annual input into North Dakota's economy. Without access to areas to recreate, hunters, sportsman and recreationalists will either find somewhere else outside of North Dakota to hunt or recreate or just quit, therefore affecting the future of North Dakota's recreational industry. Additionally more access is needed to accommodate the hunting and recreational needs due to the influx of population in western ND. Our goal of six or more habitat projects on private lands is a strategy to improve access by providing landowners with an economic incentive. The habitat projects that we are going to employ will improve grazing capabilities by improving or rehabilitating new habitat that will benefit wildlife and livestock alike. In order to qualify for this habitat improvement, an extension to their current P.L.O.T.S. lease contract would be required, therefore making this a win-win-win situation. Landowner gets improved grazing capabilities due to habitat enhancement/improvement, the sportsmen gain additional access, oil/gas industry has the opportunity to give back to impacted areas and wildlife is provided with better habitats.

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.*

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

The Mule Deer Foundation will work closely with the NDGF Private Lands Initiative biologists and district NRCS specialists to develop a habitat restoration plan and the steps that need to take place to ensure its success. MDF (Regional Director and State Chairperson) will communicate with the landowner, contractors and agency personnel involved with the project to ensure that the restoration plan is being followed and moving forward to a successful completion of the desired habitat impact.

In the event of a prescribed burn project, professional licensed and insured burn contractors will be hired to develop the burn plan and perform the burn. Local fire officials will be contacted and consulted with in relation to the planned burn.

The Mule Deer Foundation has a Regional Director, State Chairman and many strong volunteer representatives that will assist wherever and whenever needed. The Regional Director and the volunteers will work to raise funds thru banquets and raffles as well as to solicit funds from area operators in the oil and gas industry. Additionally, MDF will use its national resources to promote the habitat projects and all partners involved.

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.

MDF personnel or volunteers will personally inspect the project location with the NDGF PLI Biologist to ensure that the land fits the criteria of mule deer habitat.

Working closely with the NDGF PLI Biologists and NRCS specialists we will evaluate the projects success based on the restoration plan that the NDGF and/or NRCS set for the specific project. Based on the restoration plan, annual monitoring of the habitat project site will provide the opportunity to ensure that the goals of the restoration plan are being achieved as well as to identify any opportunities that will benefit the habitat project area.

As required by the Outdoor Heritage Fund, MDF will provide a detailed summary at the conclusion of each project. This summary will include project location, landowner, project objective and goals, costs to implement project, partners involved and final result of the project.

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. Note that a minimum of 25% match funding is strongly encouraged.*

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.**

Western ND Habitat Enhancement Projects

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	Total Each Project Expense
(1)Habitat improvements or rehabilitation	\$475,000	\$165,000	\$	\$	\$60,000	\$700,000
(2)Food Plots	\$ 5,900	\$ 5,000	\$	\$	\$	\$ 10,900
(3) MDF & NDGF PLI Project hours				\$9,000		\$ 9,000
Total Costs	\$480,900	\$170,000	\$	\$9,000	\$60,000	\$719,900

- 1) Based on our Pilot Project, Tracy Mountain Prescribed Burn, cost per acre is \$350 to complete the project. We assume the average cost per acre based on this project. Our goal is to develop six projects and/or effect up to 2,000 acres. Some projects will cost less per acre, some more, all depending on what type of treatment will be done (ie; prescribed burn, native grass planting, juniper mastication food plots, fencing, ect) . If funds are still available once six projects are completed and/or 2,000 acres affected, we would be able to do add additional projects and/or acres.
- 2) Based on average cost to establish food plots, the cost per acre is \$109. The plan would be to add 100 acres of food plots. These plots would vary in size and be strategically placed throughout western ND.
- 3) 400 hrs of MDF personnel project development, 200 hrs of NDGF PLI biologist project development /contracting @ \$28 per hour

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.

Completed habitat projects will be sustained thru shared management between the landowner, MDF and NDGF and/or agency involved. The Mule Deer Foundation will continue to seek habitat projects, raise funds and develop partnerships with the oil/gas industry in western North Dakota. Based on our expected success of the Western ND Habitat Enhancement Program and needs identified, we will apply for additional OHF as the need arises. With an OHF grant, MDF and our partners can make a positive impact to western ND habitats which will help mule deer of North Dakota to recover and remain quality, sustainable huntable populations.

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

If the request is not fully granted due to funding limitations, the Mule Deer Foundation will scale down the habitat improvement acres.

Partnership Recognition - If you are a successful recipient of Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars, how would you recognize the Outdoor Heritage Fund partnership? *

Recognition would come in the form of articles published within our national magazine which is distributed to Mule Deer Foundation members throughout North Dakota as well as the country. Upon funds being granted, the Mule Deer Foundation would write and distribute a press release that would be sent to all daily newspapers in North Dakota and industry organizations newsletters as well as published in our magazine and on our website. Often times our press releases and articles are picked up by other news sites and outdoor wire sites online. We would also utilize our ND statewide and national Facebook page to promote the grant as well as updates on projects and thanking our partners for their assistance. Lastly we would recognize the OHF and our partners in regard to the projects at local banquets.

Scoring of Grants

All applications will be scored by the Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board after your ten-minute oral presentation. The ranking sheet(s) that will be used by the Board is available on the website at <http://www.nd.gov/ndic/outdoor-infopage.htm> .

Awarding of Grants*

All decisions on requests will be reported to applicants no later than 30 days after Industrial Commission consideration. Applicants whose proposals have been approved will receive a contract outlining the terms and conditions of the grant. Please note the appropriate sample contract for your organization on the website at <http://www.nd.gov/ndic/outdoor-infopage.htm> that set forth the general provisions that will be included in any contract issued by the North Dakota Industrial Commission. Please indicate if you can meet all the provisions of the sample contract. If there are provisions in that contract that your organization is unable to meet, please indicate below what those provisions would be. *

Responsibility of Recipient

The recipient of any grant from the Industrial Commission must use the funds awarded for the specific purpose described in the grant application and in accordance with the contract. The recipient cannot use any of the funds for the purposes stated under Exemptions on the first page of this application.

If you have any questions about the application or have trouble submitting the application, please contact Karlene Fine at 701-328-3722 or kfine@nd.gov

Revised November 2, 2014

EXAMPLES OF BURNS AND THE POSITIVE EFFECTS AFTERWARDS. THE VEGETATION GROWTH AFTERWARDS WAS NATURAL AND HAD NO TREATMENTS APPLIED.



Buckhorn Creek #1 - 2004



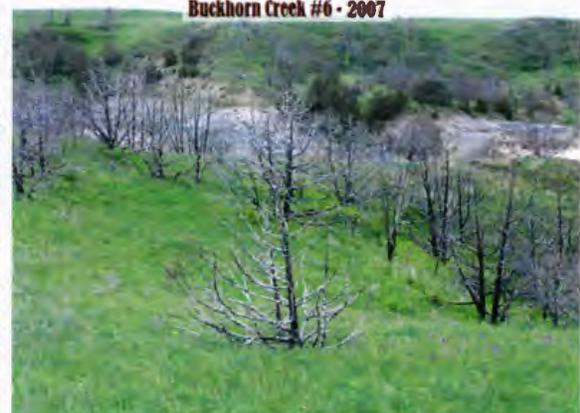
Buckhorn Creek #1 - 2005



Buckhorn Creek #1 - 2007

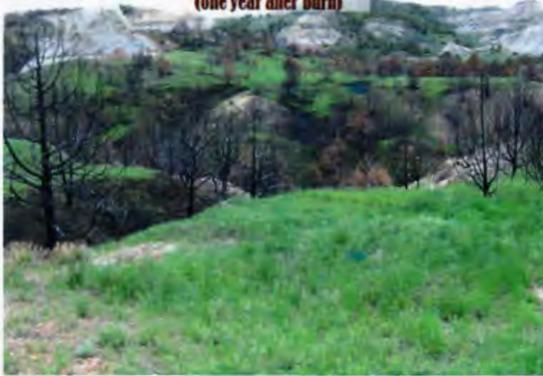


Buckhorn Creek #6 - 2004



Buckhorn Creek #6 - 2007

**Cedar Top Butte #2 - 2005
(one year after burn)**



Cedar Top Butte #2 - 2007



Mikes Creek #6 - 2004



Mikes Creek #6 - 2007



Mikes Creek #1 - 2004



Mikes Creek #1 - 2007

