

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 **April 1, 2015 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 * North McHenry County Soil Conservation District

Federal Tax ID# * 45-0276067

Contact Person/Title * Lorinda Haman/District Manager

Address * 705 Main St S. Suite 2

City * Towner

State * ND

Zip Code * 58788

E-mail Address * Lorinda.Haman@nd.nacdnet.net

Web Site Address (Optional)

Phone * (701)537-5471 ext. 3

Fax # (if available)

List names of co-applicants if this is a joint proposal
South McHenry County Soil Conservation District, Pierce County Soil Conservation District,
Rolette 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* North Central Grass Planting Project

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)

The objective of the North Central Grass Planting Project (NCGPP) is to assist the North McHenry, South McHenry, Rolette and Pierce County Soil Conservation Districts (SCD's) in addressing the resource concerns and achieving the conservation objectives and goals identified in their respective annual and long range plans. The NCGPP will provide financial incentives as well as financial and technical assistance directly to producers to encourage grassland restoration on historically unproductive cropland acres. The NCGPP will directly assist the SCD's in making progress toward addressing three of the top five natural resource concerns identified in their long range plans; 1) soil (soil erosion, soil salinity, soil health); 2) sustainable land use; and 3) wildlife habitat through voluntary grassland restoration projects.

The general purpose of the SCD's is to:

1. focus attention on land, water, and other natural resource problems
2. develop programs to solve these problems
3. enlist and coordinate help from all public and private sources that can contribute to accomplishing the SCD's goals.

Private ownership in North Dakota is approximately 93%, and conservation success in North Dakota hinges upon our ability to design and implement conservation practices that benefit working farms and ranches. The SCD's form a vital link between conservation plans, programs, private landowners and are key to the successful conservation of North Dakota's natural resources.

The Outdoor Heritage Funds in the NCGPP will be utilized to provide a Differential Income Payment (DIP) directly to producers who agree to plant grass on cropland acres that are historically unproductive, such as prevent plant acres, highly erodible soils, and saline soils and while the SCD's plan to focus the NCGPP on unproductive cropland acres, all cropland acres will be eligible. The DIP is meant to compensate private landowners for the reduced income potential on acres that will be planted to grass. The income reduction is a

combination of the temporary loss of agricultural income as the planted acres transition from cropland to grassland during the initial three years of establishment as well as the inherent reduced income potential that exists between grassland and cropland acres.

The DIP will be a one-time, lump sum payment provided to private landowners on all acres planted to grass. Private landowners will enter into a 10-year agreement with the SCD's and DIP's will be processed once the SCD's have verified that a grass planting project is completed according to SCD terms and specifications. All costs for grass seed, seedbed preparation, weed control, seeding, etc. will be provided by private landowners and/or other conservation interests (some examples of potential conservation interests are provided in the long range plans).

Private landowners will have a buyback option and will have the opportunity to annually hay or graze all acres enrolled in the NCGPP, although haying will not be allowed until after July 15th.

The SCD's will be responsible for helping to promote the NCGPP, assisting interested landowners with planning and implementation of grass-planting projects and processing DIP's.

Project Duration:* 3 Years

Amount of Grant request \$ * \$387,000

Total Project Costs \$* \$537,000

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

A minimum of 25% Match Funding is strongly encouraged. Amount of Matching Funds \$* \$150,000

Cash - \$75,000 for grass seed costs, seedbed preparation, weed control (pre and post-emergent), seeding, etc. will be provided by private landowners and/or other conservation interests (some examples of potential conservation interests are provided in the long range plans)

In-Kind - \$75,000 will be provided by private landowners for seedbed preparation, weed control (pre and post-emergent), seeding, etc.

Source(s) of Matching Funds*

Private Landowners and/or other conservation interests = \$150,000

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)

The SCD’s are legal subdivisions of the State, organized under the North Dakota Soil Conservation Districts Law enacted in 1937 and as later amended. They are organized by the vote of the people within the district and are managed by a Board of Supervisors, also elected by the people. Each SCD in North Dakota is managed by a five-person board of locally elected and appointed supervisors. The supervisors work with all individuals, groups and agencies interested in soil and water conservation, land use planning, watershed protection, and other local natural resource interests and endeavors.

The North McHenry, South McHenry, Pierce, and Rolette County SCD’s were organized between 1946 and 1947 with the purpose of fostering the widespread application of sound and practical soil and water conservation practices within these counties. Everything we do must promote conservation. Our primary resource concerns include soil erosion, soil salinity and soil health, sustainable land use, wildlife habitat, and wetland conservation. Our strategy for addressing our conservation concerns is working with producers and other private landowners to control erosion, manage nutrients and pesticides, maintain soil health, improve water quality, improve and promote healthy rangelands, protect, maintain, & improve water resources and improve and promote wildlife habitat throughout the Counties. Our ultimate goal is to conserve and protect our natural resources for future generations.

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.

Project Goals, Strategies and Benefits: The goal of the NCGPP is to work with private landowners to plant 1,500 acres of cropland to grassland cover in McHenry, Pierce and Rolette Counties. The NCGPP will help the SCD’s address several priority natural resource concerns (soil erosion, soil salinity, soil health, sustainable land use, wildlife habitat) through voluntary grassland restoration projects and will provide vital forage sources for livestock on private lands. The NCGPP will provide a financial instrument that helps producers compensate for the temporary loss of agricultural production that will occur as the planted

acres transition from cropland to grassland during the initial three years of establishment as well as the inherent reduced income potential that exists between grassland and cropland acres. The NCGPP will be offered to landowners in the McHenry, Pierce or Rolette counties that are interested in planting grass and willing to partner into a 10-year agreement with the SCD.

Available forage for hay production and/or grazing is quickly becoming a limiting factor for livestock producers in the McHenry, Pierce and Rolette counties. For example, approximately 7,200 acres of pasture and/or hayland near the city of Towner along the Souris River is organized into a flood irrigation district. In recent years, frequent flood events have rendered much of this pasture and/or hayland unusable because it was either inaccessible or was of very poor quality. Additional production losses are due to rising water tables, wetlands that have expanded in size and the loss of 160,000+ acres (57%) of the CRP acres since 2007.

The NCGPP is a new and innovative approach for private landowners to partner with the SCD's and other conservation interests to address the priority natural resource concerns of the SCD's as well as the forage needs of livestock producers. We have spoken with many producers about the NCGPP and many have indicated significant interest in this innovative approach.

The NCGPP directly addresses Directive B that will improve, maintain, and restore water quality, soil conditions, plant diversity, animal systems and support other practices of stewardship to enhance farming and ranching. It also addresses Directive C by developing, enhancing, conserving and restoring wildlife and fish habitat on private lands. While not a requirement of enrollment in the NCGPP, the project may also address Directive A by providing access to private lands for sportsmen, including projects that create fish and wildlife habitat, since NCGPP participants may also be offered the opportunity to enroll these lands in the North Dakota Game and Fish Department Private Lands Open To Sportsmen (PLOTS) program.

Timetable for Implementation: The SCD's have already visited with some private landowners about the NCGPP concept and interest appears to be strong. Additional outreach efforts will be implemented immediately after the grant is approved and will continue until the grant goals are achieved. SCD's will work with individual landowners and other conservation interests to raise awareness and garner interest in the project.

If approved, grant funding for the project likely will not be available prior to the typical June 20th deadline for grass plantings in 2015 which will provide plenty of time to enroll landowners in the NCGPP prior to the 2016 planting season. The NCGPP program will be open continuously to landowners until grant funds are exhausted and the SCD's will continually monitor and manage commitments and completed projects throughout the grant period. Since the earliest plantings are not likely to occur prior to 2016, we estimate the timeframe for grant completion to be 3 years.

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 Soil Conservation Districts each manage the thousands of linear feet of trees and fabric which is installed each year. They make sure trees are planted to NRCS standards and specifications. The SCD's will provide oversight and will coordinate all activities associated with the NCGPP. The NCGPP will be offered to all private landowners in McHenry, Pierce and Rolette counties on a first come first serve basis. The SCD's will develop site specific agreements with private landowners that identify project location, payment information (calculations and totals), project size, grass/forb species and seeding rates. The SCD's personnel are trained to use NRCS standards and specifications for grass seeding which will be used for every planting. The SCD's will explain responsibilities of the landowner, any haying/grazing restrictions, and buyback options. The SCD's will do annual spot checks on fields to make sure the contract is not in violation. All agreements will be signed by the landowner and the appropriate SCD and a copy will remain on file in the appropriate SCD office. The SCD's will be responsible for tracking all agreements, following grant guidelines and grant reporting.

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.

Strong landowner interest and signed agreements are the key to the success of the NCGPP and therefore, success will be measured by landowner enrollment in the program.

The SCD's will monitor NCGPP program interest, agreements, expenditures and goals throughout the grant period and regular reports, final evaluations and expenditure reports will be completed.

Financial Information (See Attached Standard Budget Form)

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.

While the duration of the NCGPP is anticipated to be 3 years, landowners will sign a 10-year agreement with the SCD's, ensuring that these sources of livestock forage remain on the landscape for several years after all OHF funds have been expended. In addition, landowners choosing to utilize these planted grass acres primarily for grazing purposes are likely to invest in additional infrastructure such as perimeter fences, interior fences, watering facilities, etc. Such investments in significant infrastructure signals a longer term

commitment by the landowner to incorporate the planted grassland acres into their grazing management plan and thus, there is an increased likelihood that these planted acres will remain even beyond the 10-year length of the SCD agreement.

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

The SCD's thank the Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board for considering our North Central Grass Planting Project proposal. The request is for \$387,000 of OHF funds and \$150,000 in match provided by private landowners and/or other conservation interests to deliver grass planting agreements with private landowners in McHenry, Pierce and Rolette Counties in North Dakota. If OHF recommends a reduction in funding from the original proposal, this will result in fewer agreements with private landowners and a reduction in the amount of match provided by private landowners and/or other conservation interests.

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

Upon receiving notice that the project is funded the SCD's will publish the Outdoor Heritage Fund partnership in all three counties newsletters and Pierce County web site. The agreement with the producers will show that the differential income payment came from the Outdoor Heritage Fund which will show they are the primary funding source. Additionally each agreement written will have the emblem of the Outdoor Heritage fund and the SCD on it.

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 August 21, 2014

Budget Standard Form - North Central Grass Planting Project

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 (Cash)	Other Project Sponsor's Share (In-Kind)	Total Each Project Expense
Differential Income Payment (DIP)	\$387,000	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$387,000
Grass seed, seedbed preparation, weed control, seeding, etc.	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$150,000
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$		\$
Total Costs	\$387,000	\$	\$	\$	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$537,000

Budget Narrative

Differential Income Payment (DIP) - Landowners will be provided a one-time, lump sum payment and will enter into a 10-year agreement with the SCD's. A DIP will be provided on all acres seeded to grass and will be calculated using \$43/acre (\$43 is the average cropland rental rate in all three counties) and a correction factor of 0.60. A correction factor is being used since landowners will be allowed to hay or graze the planted acres on an annual basis. The correction factor was determined by taking the difference between average cropland rental rate and average pastureland rental rates. (Example DIP - 100 acres planted X \$43/ac. X 10 years X 0.6 = \$25,800).

Grass seed (Cash) - Grass seed costs are very site specific and thus, species mixtures and seeding rates can vary greatly from one site to the next. We have gathered grass receipts from three previous years to determine rate. Therefore, we estimate that the cost for grass seed will average \$50/acre X 1,500 acres = \$75,000.

Seedbed preparation, weed control (pre and post-emergent), seeding, etc. (Cash and In-Kind) - Costs for activities associated with seeding grass can also be very site specific and thus, can also vary from one site to the next. Therefore, we estimate that the costs for seedbed preparation, pre-emergent and post-emergent weed control, seeding, etc. will average \$50/acre X 1,500 acres = \$75,000