

Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Application

Working Grassland Partnership



Name of Organization: North Dakota Natural Resources Trust

Federal Tax ID#: 36-3512179

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

Address: 1605 E. Capitol Ave., Ste. 101

City: Bismarck

State: North Dakota

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E-mail Address: terry@naturalresourcestrust.com

Web Site Address: www.ndnrt.com

Phone: 701-223-8501

Fax #: 701-223-6937

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
USDA – Farm Service Agency
USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service

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.

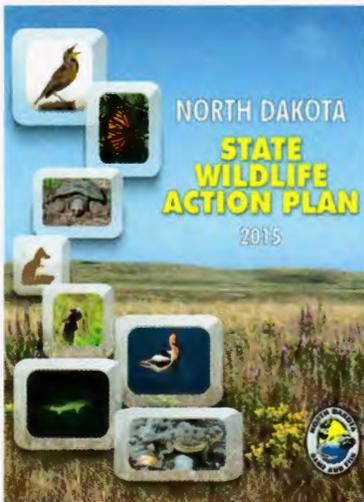
Type of organization:

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

Project Name: Working Grassland Partnership

Abstract/Executive Summary: The Working Grassland Partnership (WGP) grant proposal will promote livestock grazing as a management tool for improving grassland bird conservation. This will be completed by providing landowners with voluntary options to help retain existing grasslands, create new grasslands, and increase livestock management abilities. The grant proposal will offer landowners who enroll into the new continuous conservation reserve program (CRP) or currently have CRP contracts near expiration the opportunity for habitat leases, grassland agricultural developments, and technical guidance with a project area focus that is important for grassland birds with declining populations. The WGP will bring together a diverse partnership to accomplish this project. Through the WGP, the North Dakota Natural Resources Trust (Trust) will provide additional voluntary habitat lease options. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGFD) will provide landowners public access payment through Private Land Open To Sportsmen (PLOTS) program. The grant request from Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) will provide funding assistance for livestock and grassland bird friendly development practices. These practices will include, but not limited to livestock watering systems and livestock fencing. The landowner will provide in-kind labor to coordinate and install many of these practices. In addition, through new and existing partnerships, North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts (NDASCD), Pheasants Forever (PF) and Ducks Unlimited (DU) will provide landowners with program promotion and assistance. Ultimately, the program will work to maintain grassland on the landscape by promoting working lands concepts for incoming and outgoing conservation program participants. The WGP's primary focus is to provide producers the infrastructure needed to transition from idle grass contracts to healthy grasslands utilized in their operations. The WGP will promote landowners to use livestock grazing as a management tool on property during the CRP program and after CRP expires.

This WGP's priority is to work with landowners who select the NDGFD's requested U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) continuous CRP Declining Grassland Birds State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Program (SAFE), but if the requested SAFE doesn't receive acreage allocation from USDA, WGP will work with current and expiring CRP contracts. The timeline for receiving an acreage allocation for the declining grassland bird SAFE proposal is estimated to be the end of 2015. This SAFE proposal focuses on habitat that would benefit rare and declining grassland bird species and is a direct result of the 2015 NDGFD's updating of species of conservation priority and the revised State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). This updated SWAP has raised awareness of grassland loss by identifying some widely recognized species like the Western Meadowlark (North Dakota's state bird) as species of conservation priority. The meadowlark and many other bird species of conservation priority require grassland habitat to maintain their populations. It's important for landowners, energy developers, and conservation groups to support programs that will minimize the probability of any federal listing of additional rare and declining species.



Project Duration: 10 years

Amount of Grant request: \$1,097,250

Total Project Costs: \$1,707,250

Amount of Matching Funds (A minimum of 25% Match Funding is required): \$370,000

Please indicate if the matching funds will be in-kind, indirect or cash.

Cash	\$225,000
In-kind	\$145,000

Source(s) of Matching Funds

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

North Dakota Natural Resources Trust	\$200,000	(Cash)
Partners For Fish and Wildlife	\$ 25,000	(Cash)
Landowners	\$ 80,000	(In-kind)
Ducks Unlimited	\$ 50,000	(In-kind)
North Dakota Natural Resources Trust	\$ 10,000	(In-kind)
Pheasants Forever	\$ 5,000	(In-kind)
North Dakota Game and Fish Department	\$240,000	(Non-Matching)

Supporting Partners (Non Match)

North Dakota Game and Fish Department
North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts

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 three staff.

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 – 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. Please note that if your proposal provides funding to an individual, the names of the recipients must be reported to the Industrial Commission/Outdoor Heritage Fund. These names will be disclosed upon request.

Background and Funding Urgency

The concept for this proposal started when the NDGFD released its preliminary draft of the SWAP which updates, through science and monitoring, North Dakota's wildlife species of conservation priority. The SWAP focuses on the species habitat and management needs in order to maintain their populations in the state. With a changing landscape in the past 10 years, the state species of conservation priority list and state action plan was recently revised. The revision documented additional declining species that are more widely recognized such as the Western Meadowlark. With the recognition that the state bird is a bird of conservation priority highlights awareness of the habitat concerns of these declining species and how that can potentially impact producers when populations reach critical lows.

As a direct result of this SWAP the NDGFD submitted a continuous SAFE proposal to USDA that will provide landowners options to enroll into CRP that focuses on new native habitat for breeding grassland birds with declining population trends. These grassland birds and the need to maintain native grassland habitat is important for landowners, energy developers and conservation groups to minimize the probability of federal listing of additional rare and declining species. Proactively dealing with bird species of concern, while at the same time increasing the viability and profitability of the ranching industry, is the ultimate win-win situation.

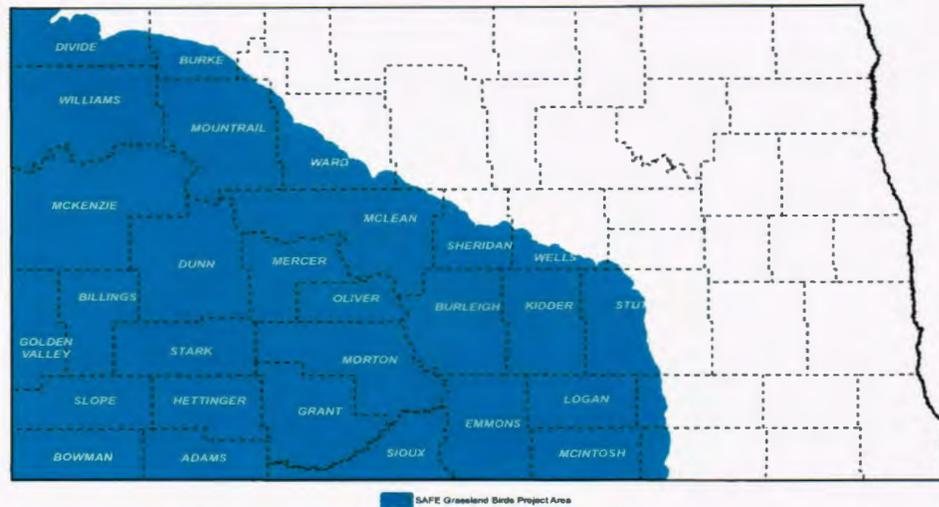
With the loss of over 1 million acres of grassland being converted to other land uses since 2007, North Dakota also has the potential to lose more than 500,000 acres of CRP in the next 5 years. Additional conservation options are desired by landowners wanting to keep restored grasslands on the landscape through incentives and with greater management flexibility over time. One popular option that has been successful in North Dakota is the SAFE program. However, the SAFE Program has been traditionally under-funded and over-subscribed. There are typically more applications submitted than what can be funded. Where the SAFE program is limiting and/or is not compatible with a producers operation, additional working lands grassland options would increase participation and retention of prairie habitat on the landscape.

In a time when the demand for agricultural commodities is necessary 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 grasslands persist.

Goals, Strategies and Benefits

The WGP will offer conservation habitat leases through cooperating partner programs and provide associated grassland development cost on land associated with the enrollment into the USDA SAFE program and/or other CRP programs. This will encourage landowners to enroll into the SAFE program and assist landowners in managing these SAFE acres and adjacent grasslands. OHF funding will provide the management infrastructure for livestock grazing on new voluntary short-term grass-based contracts or on existing CRP contracts set to expire in the next two years. By providing grazing infrastructure to these idle grass programs, the likelihood that grass remains after the life of the contract will greatly increase if that land can be utilized in livestock producers' operations.

The objective of the WGP OHF proposal would be to deliver, through a broad-based partnership, additional working lands options to producers applying for CRP SAFE acres. Through promotion and delivery of SAFE and WGP, conservation specialists (NDASCD, NDGFD, DU, and PF) would provide additional support where appropriate, maximizing program funds and opportunities for landowners (grazing infrastructure, grassland planting/enhancement, wetland restoration, PLOTS payments for public access). The partnership of multiple conservation organizations and the OHF would provide those options and opportunities for willing landowners.



The WGP and SAFE proposal target landscape and species:
 Western Meadowlark Baird's Sparrow
 Grasshopper Sparrow Sprague's Pipit
 Chestnut-Collared Longspur

OHF will provide land development assistance to landowners interested in livestock fencing and livestock water developments on SAFE and adjacent acres.

The Trust will provide funding for conservation habitat leases on adjacent lands not eligible, accepted, or enrolled in the USDA SAFE program

NDGFD offers PLOTS payments on land in and around the WGP and SAFE program acres. These PLOTS agreements will be paid 100% by NDGFD as nonmatching funds.

The Partners For Fish and Wildlife program will provide funding for grass seeding and wetland restoration on any acres in and adjacent to the WGP and SAFE program.

Exhibit 1) Two examples of WGP implementation on the ground.

Directives and Timeline

The OHF major directive is (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 a major directive of the OHF grant request and will provide landowners the cost assistance and technical guidance to accomplish this directive on their property.

In addition, the directives (A) 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.

The 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 proposal project will be 10 years in length, with the majority of the lease payments and livestock/ bird-friendly development practices will be completed in the first five years. The WGP will create livestock and conservation benefits to an expected 60,000 acres. This includes the 40,000 of CRP declining bird populations SAFE and an additional 20,000 acres of grasslands and wetlands.

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 Trust will provide management, coordination, and administration to the WGP grant. The Trust and partners will work collectively to provide landowners with program information to assist program participants.

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 program coordinators. Terry and Jesse have a combined 18 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 Trust will have assistance from other private lands delivery partners to 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 biologists, PF's Farm Bill biologists, and DU biologists.

As these biologists 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. WGP funding will be provided similar to the SAFE program where enrollment is continuous, meaning there will be no batching period and funding stops when the funds limits and/or acre allocation is reached.

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.

Success will be measured on the level of agreements completed with landowners and the amount of acres affected by the lease and development activities. Ultimately success is best

measured by increased conservation habitat for grassland birds, satisfied landowners, and increased access for public enjoyment.

There will be continued evaluation of grassland bird population trends and responses. The NDGFD's breeding bird survey routes will be used as a tool for monitoring population trends or indices of grassland bird species of concern. There are 45 active breeding bird survey routes in North Dakota run annually and target species occurrence and abundance will be tracked in the proposed project area. In addition other wildlife observations by field biologists will be conducted to determine presence/absence.

Project Budget

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

Sustainability – Indicate how the project will be funded or sustained in future years.

Include information on the sustainability of this project after all the funding from the OHF has been expended and whether the sustainability will be in the form of ongoing management or additional funding from a different source.

The WGP, if funded, will be implemented and delivered in 2016. The Trust will work with partnership to promote the program and landowner agreements will start in early 2016 and be completed when all funding is obligated. Operation and maintenance of the land development activities will be completed throughout the agreement period by landowners. The partnership will perform periodic field checks.

The WGP will be associated with the Declining Grassland Birds SAFE and/or other CRP programs. The current maximum requested allocation of the SAFE acres through USDA is 40,000 acres. If landowner interest is high and the program demonstrates success through enrollment of acres, then there is potential for more SAFE acre allocation nationally. This would also give the partnership the opportunity to expand the distribution of this WGP program to new landowners.

If the SAFE proposal is successful, there is a tremendous opportunity to provide additional options to producers interested in the FSA program. With limited funds, program rules and eligibility requirements, and more habitat option potential on each farm, additional funds focused on working grassland concepts would maximize habitat benefits. Capitalizing on the initial inquiry into the SAFE program will provide greater opportunity for outreach of other available programs that would complement SAFE projects, increase project opportunities, assist producers with additional options, and provide an alternative if SAFE acres become limited. Additional program funding would utilize the SAFE project as a starting point to build relationships with landowners providing technical assistance and programs for the entire farm initiated by the SAFE acre portion.

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

If the grant proposal is partially funded, the Trust would reduce the number of development activities, focus the highest priority activities and which would reduce the number of acres that can be improved.

Partnership Recognition - If you are a successful recipient of Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars, how would you recognize the Outdoor Heritage Fund partnership? Please note it is a requirement that there be signage at the location of the project acknowledging the funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund if appropriate for your project.

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 landowners who will request information and participate in the WGP will be aware of the OHF funding.

References:

2015 State Wildlife Action Plan

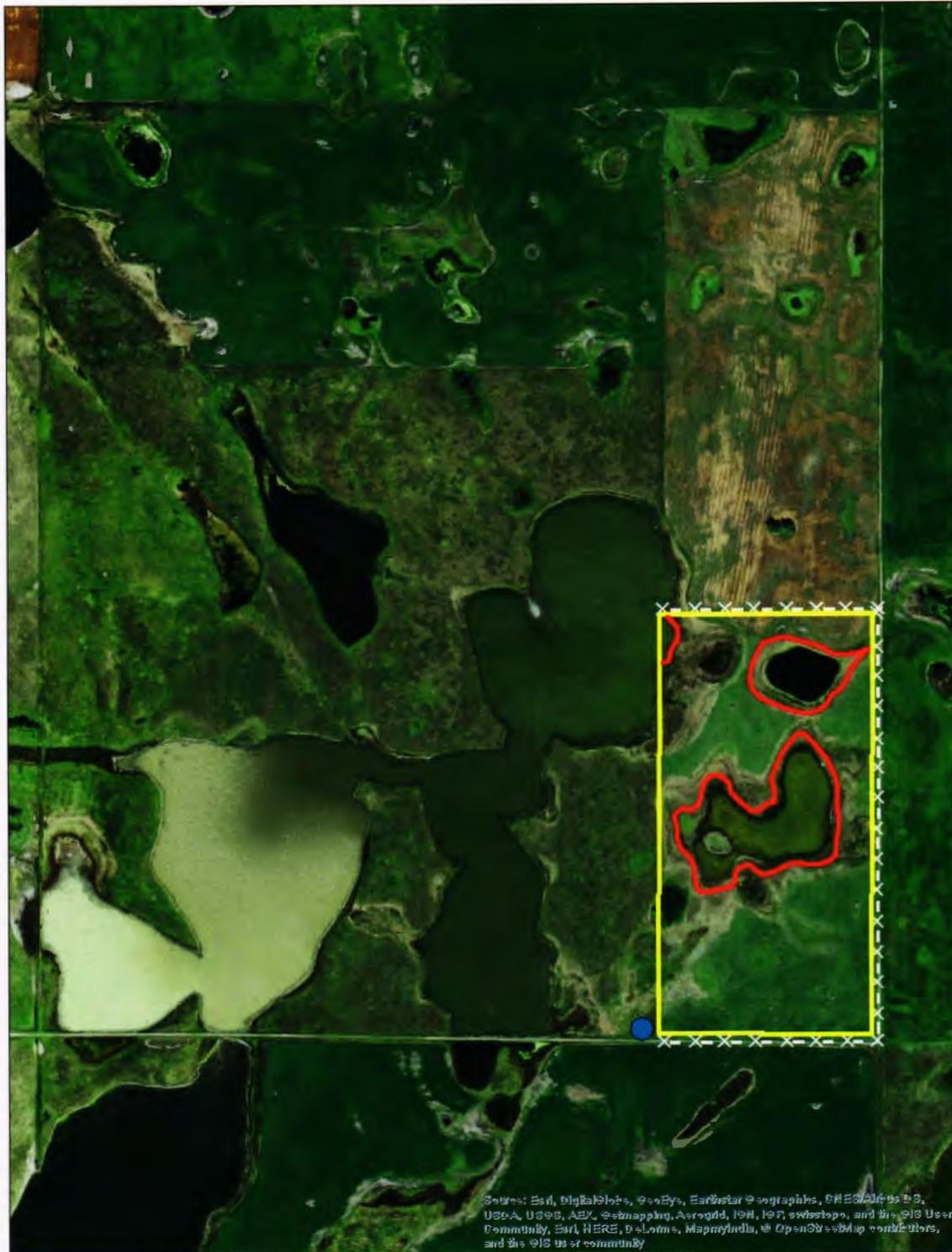
ATTACHMENT: **Project Budget – Using the standard project budget format that is available on the website at <http://www.nd.gov/ndic/outdoor-infopage.htm> , please include a detailed total project budget that specifically outlines all the funds you are requesting. Note that a minimum of 25% match funding is required.***

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

Project Expense	OHF Request	Applicant's Match Share (Cash)	Applicant's Match Share (In-Kind)	Other Project Sponsor's Share (Cash)	Other Project Sponsor's Share (non-match)	Total Each Project Expense
Livestock and Conservation Projects	\$ 1,045,000	\$	\$ 135,000	\$ 25,000	\$	\$ 1,205,000
NDGFD PLOTS	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$ 240,000	\$ 240,000
Trust Lease	\$	\$ 200,000	\$ 10,000	\$	\$	\$ 210,000
Staffing	\$ 52,250	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$ 52,250
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Costs	\$ 1,097,250	\$ 200,000	\$ 145,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 240,000	\$ 1,707,250

- Livestock and Conservation Projects:
 - Boundary/cross fencing ranging from \$.50/ft to \$.80/ft dependent on fence type (2 strand tensile, 3 strand barbed, 4 strand barbed and 5 strand barbed). The OHF will provide landowners with costs for fencing materials. Landowners will provide in-kind labor for installation.
 - Water Development costs provided by OHF will include water pipelines, watering facilities, water pumping stations, water wells, and rural water hookups.
 - Grass seeding and wetland restoration will be funded 100% by Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.
- NDGFD PLOTS – 10 year payment based on PLOTS payment rates.
 - * *This number could be exceeded depending upon landowner interest.*
- Trust Habitat Conservation Lease - 10 year lease based on 75% of the North Dakota Department of Land Trust's non-irrigated pasture land average rental value. All payments will be a one-time upfront payment. There will be 31 counties in WGP project area. (see Exhibit 2 for current rental rates)
- Staffing – The staffing funds will be utilized to provide program delivery assistance through NDASCD, PF, and DU.
- USDA Continuous CRP Declining Grassland Birds SAFE has an estimated budget of \$30,566,800 to enroll up to 40,000 acres.

Exhibit 1) Examples of Working Grassland Partnership



Sources: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, IGP, Swiremap, and the GIS User Community, Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Mapbox, and the GIS user community

Example 1: Napoleon Area landowner enrolls 60 acres into SAFE (YELLOW). NDNRT habitat conservation lease on the remaining 20 acres (RED). Fence placed on north, south and east side to allow for CRP management (WHITE X DASHED). Rural water hook-up SW corner (BLUE)



Example 2: Stanley Area landowner enrolls 140 acres into SAFE (YELLOW). NDNRT habitat conservation lease on the remaining 20 acres (RED). NDGFD PLOTS on all acres (ORANGE HASH). Fence placed on west and south side to allow for CRP management and on adjacent grassland (WHITE X DASHED). Well drilled in SE corner with tank and pipeline (BLUE).

Exhibit 2) Rental Rates

COUNTY RENTS AND VALUES NON-IRRIGATED PASTURE LAND - AVERAGE RENTAL RATE

2015

Adams	15.50
Billings	21.90
Bowman	15.40
Burke	10.80
Burleigh	22.60
Dickey	41.60
Divide	13.40
Dunn	18.70
Emmons	29.10
Golden Valley	16.00
Grant	17.80
Hettinger	19.60
Kidder	25.40
LaMoure	35.50
Logan	25.20
McHenry	19.20
McIntosh	29.40
McKenzie	11.40
McLean	17.60
Mercer	15.90
Morton	19.60
Mountrail	13.00
Oliver	19.70
Sheridan	17.30
Sioux	17.10
Slope	16.10
Stark	22.40
Stutsman	25.90
Ward	17.40
Wells	19.90
Williams	12.40

September 30, 2015

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

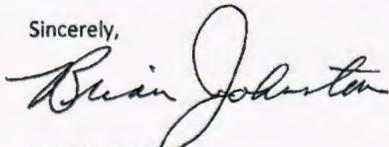
Dear Ms. Fine:

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 has recently embarked on a new partnership with agricultural entities and conservation organizations to provide education and a "one-stop shop" for farmers and ranchers to learn about the availability of a 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 private land biologists 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 is in the process of hiring four farm bill biologists that will be working on the ground with producers to deliver voluntary conservation programs in North Dakota. If the Working Grasslands Partnership proposal is successful, the Association biologists will assist in educating and promoting the new 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,



Brian Johnston
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

September 30, 2015

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

Dear Ms. Fine:

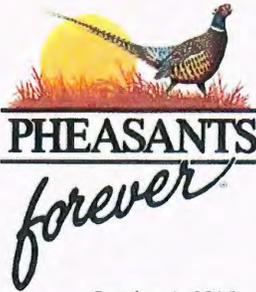
Please accept this letter of support by Ducks Unlimited for the North Dakota Natural Resources Trust's "Working Grasslands Partnership" Outdoor Heritage Fund proposal. We commend the Trust for their hard work in the development of this project and efforts to bring together a diverse group of local, state and federal stakeholders. We are pleased to provide \$50,000 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 Working Grasslands Partnership proposal has tremendous potential to deliver—through a broad-based partnership—additional working lands options for landowners interested in keeping grasslands and wetlands on the landscape while integrating that habitat into 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,

Stephen E. Adair, Ph.D.
Director, Great Plains Region

Conservation for Generations



October 1, 2015

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

Dear Chairman Moser and Advisory Board Members,

Please consider this a letter of support to the 'Working Grassland Partnership' 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 CRP State Acres For wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) 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 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. Rachel Bush, our new State Coordinator in North Dakota will be the lead on these efforts and will the point of contact for this proposal.

Sincerely,

James Koerber, Chief Financial Officer
Pheasants Forever, Inc.

C.c. Rachel Bush, North Dakota State Coordinator, Pheasants Forever, Inc.
Ryan Heiniger, North Region Manager, Pheasants Forever, Inc.
Tom Fuller, North Region Director, Pheasants Forever, Inc.
Matt Olson, North Dakota Regional Representative, 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

NORTH DAKOTA GAME & FISH DEPARTMENT

"Variety in Hunting and Fishing"

GOVERNOR, Jack Dalrymple

*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 1, 2015

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 OHF grant proposal compliments the Department's mission and is an important and positive step in implementing the 2015 SWAP. Direct loss and fragmentation of grassland habitat are threats identified in the action plan; conversely, protecting, enhancing and restoring grassland habitat is identified as a conservation action to address those threats. The Department and its partners have submitted a "Declining Grassland Bird SAFE" proposal through the USDA Farm Service Agency, which will provide a special allocation up to 40,000 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to North Dakota and address important habitats for declining species of grassland birds, such as our state bird, the Meadowlark. More commonly known as State Acres For wildlife Enhancement, these "SAFE" acres will be the backbone for NRTs Working Grassland Partnership OHF proposal.

As landowners enroll into SAFE, the Department will make its PLOTS program available to any producers interested in allowing walk-in public access on their property. As a supporting partner, we anticipate enrolling up to 4,000 of acres into our PLOTS program for a total of \$240,000.

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

Sincerely,



Terry Steinwand, Director



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



September 30, 2015

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

RE: Working Grassland Partnership OHF Grant Proposal

Dear Ms. Fine:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife program supports the Working Grassland Partnership OHF grant proposal jointly developed by the North Dakota Natural Resource Trust, North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts, Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever.

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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's North Dakota Partners for Fish and Wildlife (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 3,600 habitat projects with more than 3,000 North Dakota farmers, ranchers and other private landowners.

As a project partner, the USFWS ND PFW program will provide \$25,000 in cash as match for associated restoration and enhancement activities outlined in the proposal.

Sincerely,

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



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources
Conservation Service

October 2, 2015

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

Voice: 701.530.2000
Fax: 855.813.7556

Terry Allbee
North Dakota Natural Resources Trust
1605 E. Capitol Avenue, Suite 101
Bismarck, ND 58501-2102

Dear Terry,

I am very pleased to collaborate with the Natural Resources Trust and other partners on a "Working Grassland Partnership" proposal. USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works closely with many agriculture producers that are very interested in working lands conservation programs. Ranchers are looking for assistance to keep grassland acres in grass to ensure they have a viable business operation that works now and for future generations.

NRCS will provide occasional technical assistance through voluntary one on one conservation planning to write prescribed grazing management plans. There may also be ways to add value to the Outdoor Heritage Funding with the addition of financial assistance Farm Bill programs.

Please consider this letter as documentation that NRCS will help promote this opportunity to producers across the State. If you need additional information, please call me at 1-701-530-2003.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary E. Podoll".

MARY E. PODOLL
State Conservationist