

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, with higher priority given to projects that enhance conservation practices in this state by:

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.

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 a finding of exceptional circumstances by the Industrial Commission, the following projects will NOT receive consideration for funding:

- A completed project or project commenced before the grant application is submitted;
- A feasibility or research study;
- Maintenance costs;
- A paving project for a road or parking lot;
- A swimming pool or aquatic park;
- Personal property that is not affixed to the land;
- Playground equipment, except that grant funds may be provided for up to 25% of the cost of the equipment not exceeding \$10,000 per project and all playground equipment grants may not exceed 5% of the total grants per year (see Budget Form for how this will be calculated);
- Staffing or outside consultants except for costs for staffing or an outside consultant to design and implement an approved project based on the documented need of the applicant and the expenditures may not exceed 5% of the grant to a grantee if the grant exceeds \$250,000 and expenditures may not exceed 10% of the grant to a grantee if the grant is \$250,000 or less (see Budget Form for how this will be calculated);

- A building except for a building that is included as part of a comprehensive conservation plan for a new or expanded recreational project (see Budget Form for definition of comprehensive conservation plan and new or expanded recreational project); or
- A project in which the applicant is not directly involved in the execution and completion of the project.

Application Deadline

Applications for this grant round cycle are due on **November 1, 2016 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: Cass County Soil Conservation

Federal Tax ID# 45-6002736

Contact Person/Title: Eric Dahl - Watershed Coordinator

Address: 1665 43rd St. S

City: Fargo

State: North Dakota

Zip Code: 58103

E-mail Address: eric.dahl@nd.nacdnet.net

Web Site Address. www.casscd.org

Phone: 701-282-2157 x3

MAJOR Directive:

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;

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Directive D. Conserving natural areas and creating other areas for recreation through the establishment and development of parks and other recreation areas.

Additional Directive:

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;

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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: Cass County Cover Crop Project

Abstract/Executive Summary.

The Cass County Cover Crop Project is intended to provide financial and technical assistance for establishing conservation cover crops in Cass County. Cover crops are beneficial in reducing erosion, enhancing soil health, decreasing soil compaction, improving water quality, and providing food and cover for wildlife. The project will be beneficial in providing financial incentive for local producers to get started growing cover crops. Providing financial assistance for planting cover crops is a great way to get people involved in soil health and can be a gateway to other conservation enhancements.

Land use within Cass County is dominated by intensive row crop agriculture, with corn, soybeans and spring wheat being the primary crops. Extensive tillage and flat, open terrain gives way to wind erosion of our soils. Planting cover crops is a great way to reduce erosion and utilize excess moisture in the soil. Habitually people use extensive tillage practices to promote early warming and drying of the soils. Often cover crop can help use excess moisture and provide root structure for spring planting. This program is designed to help promote conservation cover crops and provide cost share to willing participants.

Cover crops are still a relatively new concept in Cass County. Some local growers are utilizing cover crops and noticing their benefits. Others, although somewhat skeptical, are also joining the conversation. By providing a cost share incentive to give cover crops a try, the Cass County Cover Crop Project will help producers get started using cover crops and enhancing soil health.

Project Duration: 2 years

Amount of Grant request \$60,000

Total Project Costs \$ 100,000

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

A minimum of 25% Match Funding is required.

Amount of Matching Funds \$ 40,000 (cash match) 40%

Source(s) of Matching Funds

Matching funds will be provided by the owner / operator participating in the project.

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 Cass County Soil Conservation District is a governmental subdivision of the State of North Dakota organized under law to exercise public powers in the conservation of soil and water resources. This provides a means for all interested parties to work together in the conservation of natural resources.

Originally formed in 1937 as four separate Districts, they were combined over the ensuing years until 1974, when the present day District was formed to cover the entire county. It is governed by a 5 member Board that control and supervise the activities of the District. Board members include Curt Knutson, Warren Solberg, Brad Kellerman, Terry Hoffmann, and Brooks Whitmore. The District board and employees develop a plan of work to ensure district organization has a well-developed plan to carry out local projects for improvement of soil and water resources.

The staff of the SCD consists of: Jeffrey Miller – Operations Coordinator, Eric Dahl - 319 Watershed Coordinator, Tony Peterson - District Technician, Amy Cole - District Clerk, and Ashley Fisk - Urban Conservationist. The staff is well versed in cover crop planning and implementation. The District operates 2 No-Till grass drills and has substantial experience in seeding cover crops. The staff is also experienced in grant administration.

In addition to full time staff, the District hires 2-4 seasonal employees for tree planting and fabric application.

Purpose of Grant – Describe the proposed project identifying how the project will meet the specific directive(s) of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Program

The Cass County Cover Crop Project will provide financial assistance to producers who would like to plant cover crops. The program will contribute 60% cost share for the cost of the seed only, and participant will provide their 40% matching funds. By providing financial assistance for the planting of cover crops, local producers will have an incentive to try conservation covers as a way to improve soil health and prevent erosion. In the past, the Cass County Soil Conservation District has had success working with farmers and ranchers planting cover crops, specifically through section 319 watershed projects. Currently our watershed project only covers a small portion of the county, making it more difficult for farmers and ranchers to find cost share opportunities. USDA funding through NRCS can fill a portion of the void, but due to lengthy applications and multi-year contracts, finding cost-share on short notice for planting cover crops is extremely difficult. The Cass County Cover Crop Project would be designed to fill the holes in cover crop cost share to make funding readily available to all producers in Cass County. As a requirement to those receiving cost share, cover crop must include multiple crop species, and must be left standing through the winter. By doing this, the cover crops will keep the ground covered through the winter months to reduce erosion and provide a winter food source for wildlife. Planting of cover crops will follow the NRCS standards and specs for Conservation Practice 340 (Cover Crops) to ensure the highest degree of success.

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.

Project will be carried out and managed by District staff, specifically Watershed Coordinator. The Watershed Coordinator works with promotion of best management practices and is familiar with the planning and implementation of cover crops. The Watershed Coordinator also holds educational events to promote cropland BMPs including cover crops and has the resources to promote and educate local producers about new projects. Notice of available funding will be advertised on our website and our quarterly newsletter.

Evaluation – Describe your plan to document progress and results.

Success for this project will be measured by meeting an acreage goal. Because this is a pilot project, our goal is to successfully cover 2,500 acres per year for 2 years with the Cass County Cover Crop Project. This goal was created based on the acreage we have successfully implemented in our watershed project per acre of the watershed, extrapolated over the entire county. Site visits to fields seeded in cover crops will ensure the planting was carried out in accordance with the contract. In addition, a yearly report will be submitted to the Cass County SCD Board and regular reporting, final evaluation, and expenditure reports will be submitted to the Outdoor Heritage Fund Program.

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 required.*

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. Effective July 1, 2015 no State General Fund dollars can be used for a match unless funding was legislatively appropriated for that purpose. 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.**

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.

Cover crops are increasingly becoming part of agriculture. A large amount of producers only need the first step to realize the benefits of cover crops. After the funding is exhausted, it is expected many will continue to use cover crops on their farms. Furthermore, producers may be more likely, after experiencing success, to enroll in multi-year programs such as EQIP and CSP through the NRCS to continue planting cover crops.

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

If less funding is available than requested, the acreage goal would be reduced.

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

Recognition of the OHF grant would be multi-faceted. The local newspaper, the SCD quarterly newsletter, and SCD website would all have information about the partnership. In addition, at highly visible locations seeded in cover crops, signage would advertise the partnership to the public.

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. The Commission can set a limit on duration of an offer on each application or if there isn't a specific date indicated in the application for implementation of the project, then the applicant has until the next Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board regular meeting to sign the contract and get the project underway or the commitment for funding will be terminated and the applicant may resubmit for funding. 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: December 16, 2015

Cass County Cover Crop Project Budget

Project Expense	OHF Request	Producer Match (cash)	319 and District Match	
2,500 ac cover crop year 1	\$30,000	\$20,000		
2,500 ac cover crop year 2	\$30,000	\$20,000		
Administrative costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	All associated costs	

*OHF request is based on planning rate of \$20/acre to achieve 2,500 acre goal

* Cost-share will be paid on the seed cost only. Other associated costs will be the landowners responsibility