

OHF FINAL REPORT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Number: 005-083

Recipient: City of Fargo

Award Amount: \$350,000

Total Project Costs: \$1,070,845.61 (this phase)

Total OHF Funds Received: \$350,000



Goal of Project: The World Garden Commons (WGC), a pilot of The Fargo Project, is an initiative engaging diverse communities in the transformation of an 18-acre stormwater detention basin into a public commons that will restore wildlife habitat as well as provide new opportunities for outdoor recreation. The WGC will serve as a regional attraction by providing a desirable natural area as a unique outdoor gathering space, providing social and cultural amenities that brings together community residents and visitors. The goal of this phase of work with the Outdoor Heritage Funds was to establish and maintain existing vegetation and return the water to a more natural system that benefits water quality in the process, while adapting new knowledge to construction practices in this region.

Work Accomplished: Work accomplished includes all major restoration within the basin we intended to do, including removing the concrete channel and earthmoving and shaping for a more natural ecological system, vegetation management and establishment, and construction of the Overlook and Boardwalk.

Project Results: The basin is a restored natural ecosystem of prairie stream and wet meadow that provides habitat and amenities to visitors. The project extended two additional years, but in doing so, we were able to effectively use adaptive management and best practices to minimize disturbance, select more cost effective methods, and work more closely and deliberately with consultants and contractors. We learned different ways to construct in different conditions, such as winter construction on frozen ground to minimize disturbance. Through restoration and vegetation establishment, we learned ways to manage land that is less intrusive and more cost effective over time. Our project team is incorporating what they have learned into other work they do, such as adaptive management and broadening the capacity of the team for a more successful project.

Value to North Dakota: The project features ecological restoration, creation of habitat, and is a significant regional attraction to the community, while still functioning as an integral component of stormwater infrastructure within the urban environment. The space serves as a commons for people to gather and connect with each other and with nature. We have already witnessed success of the project by activation and programming, and by new animal and bird species inhabiting the space that previously had not. This site will serve as a template throughout Fargo as stormwater basins are constructed and retrofitted, and for North Dakota as a case study on ecological restoration in an urban environment using adaptive management.