

**Contract No. 006-090**

**"Working Grassland Partnership"**

Submitted by North Dakota Natural Resources Trust and  
North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever  
Principal Investigator: Terry Allbee  
Directives B, A & C

**PARTICIPANTS**

<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Cost Share</b>	
ND Natural Resources Trust	\$200,000	
Partners for Fish & Wildlife	\$ 25,000	
Subtotal Cash Cost Share		\$225,000
Pheasants Forever (in-kind)	\$ 5,000	
Ducks Unlimited (in-kind)	\$50,000	
Landowners (in-kind)	<del>\$80,000</del>	\$694,925.00
ND Natural Resources Trust (in-kind)	<u>\$10,000</u>	
Subtotal In-kind Cost Share		<del>\$145,000</del> -\$759,925
North Dakota Industrial Commission	<del>\$1,097,250</del>	<u>\$1,094,637.50</u>
Total Project Cost		\$1,467,250*
		\$2,079,562.50

~~\*In addition Game and Fish Department PLOTS is providing a \$240,000 non-match~~

Project Schedule – 10 years  
Contract Date – 5/9/2016  
Start Date – 5/9/2016  
Completion Date – April 1, 2026

Project Deliverables:  
Status Report: October 1, 2016 ✓  
Status Report: April 1, 2017  
Status Report: October 1, 2017  
Status Report: April 1, 2018  
Status Report: October 1, 2018  
Status Report: April 1, 2019  
Status Report: October 1, 2019  
Status Report: April 1, 2020  
Status Report: October 1, 2020  
Status Report: April 1, 2021  
Status Report: April 1, 2022  
Status Report: April 1, 2023  
Status Report: April 1, 2024  
Status Report: April 1, 2025  
Final Report: April 1, 2026

**OBJECTIVE/STATEMENT OF WORK:**

Provide land development assistance to landowners interested in livestock fencing and livestock water development on SAFE and adjacent acres with a project area focus that is important for grassland birds with declining populations (funding for fencing costs and water development costs). Funding is included for project staff.

**STATUS:**

The Industrial Commission approved the funding with the stipulation that there will be a 60/40% cost sharing for the implementation of the livestock and grassland bird friendly development practices.

With that stipulation the project costs as outlined above will be revised. Contract 006-090 has been executed by the applicant and the three co-applicants.

**October 1, 2016 Status Report received.** It states: Since the Working Grassland Partnership (WGP) grant was approved in spring of 2016 the Trust and partners have been working collectively to ensure that the program is successful. The bulk of the activity was spent finalizing all the detail of administration and program delivery. The Trust and partners held many smaller meetings about program delivery and partner coordination. Then the partnership held a larger coordination meeting at the ND Game and Fish Department to discuss the program detail. The meeting was attended by twenty-two representatives from six different organizations all learning more about WGP and having the opportunity to provide input to ensure program success. The WGP was also presented by webinar to all USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service county offices that are included in the WGP project area.

A WGP binder has been developed for all partners, which provides a checklist for all program activities from start to finish, promotional material, landowner eligibility requirements, example agreements and the WGP partners contact information.

The WGP agreements are currently being drafted and it is expected that many agreements will be signed before the end of 2016.

A revised budget has been developed based on the ND Industrial Commission's stipulation there be a 60/40 cost sharing for development practices. The 40 percent will be match from landowners and partners. (The revised budget is reflected above by strikeouts.)

## Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Funds Available for Expiring CRP Grazing Developments

The North Dakota Natural Resources Trust and partners have successfully received Outdoor Heritage Fund grant funding for a proposal called the Working Grassland Partnership (WGP).

"The Outdoor Heritage Fund advisory board is excited to offer funding to programs like the Working Grassland Partnership," says the board's chairman Jim Melchior. "These types of programs support landowner conservation practices while providing sportsmen with access to private lands, allowing them to enjoy the benefits of such conservation practices."

WGP's primary focus is to provide landowners with funding assistance to install the infrastructure needed to transition expired or expiring U.S. Department of Agriculture Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts into healthy grazing grasslands. The program will promote livestock grazing for retaining and improving grassland habitat. A 60 percent cost-share grant will be available to assist landowners with installing livestock and grassland bird-friendly development practices including livestock watering systems and fencing, but it does require an approved grazing plan. The program's partners include the North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts, Pheasants Forever, and Ducks Unlimited. In addition, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department will offer public access through the Private Land Open to Sportsmen, or PLOTS, program.

The WGP project area includes 31 counties (see figure 1) and focuses on grassland habitat that would benefit rare and declining grassland bird species. Last year, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department updated the State Wildlife Action Plan and the species of conservation priority for North Dakota. The newly updated plan has raised awareness of grassland loss by identifying some widely recognized species, including North Dakota's state bird, the Western meadowlark, as a species of conservation priority.

Projects that are set to expire from CRP this year and next year and allow public access will be given the highest priority in the WGP.

To receive more information about the WGP, contact Terry Alibee with the Natural Resources Trust at 701-223-8501 or any farm bill specialist at designated USDA offices.



The primary focus of the Working Grassland Partnership is to provide landowners with funding assistance to install infrastructure such as livestock watering systems (pictured above) or fencing (pictured right), needed to transition expired or expiring CRP contracts into healthy grazing lands.



Figure 1.

## WORKING GRASSLAND PARTNERSHIP

The North Dakota Natural Resources Trust, North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, and the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund have partnered to offer landowners the Working Grassland Partnership program.

### How WGP Works

The Working Grassland Partnership (WGP) grant proposal will promote livestock grazing as a management tool for improving grassland bird conservation. WGP will provide landowners with voluntary options to help develop existing CRP acres into a livestock grazing system that will also benefit grassland birds.

### Outdoor Heritage Fund

OHF is a state grant program which provides grant funds for projects that include access to public and private lands for sportmen, implementation of best management practices for farming and ranching stewardship of the land and water, fish and wildlife habitat preservation, and development of parks and outdoor recreation areas.



Dated 10/24/2016