

Minutes of a Meeting of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board  
Held on October 24, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. CST  
Brynhild Haugland Room, ND State Capitol Building

Present: Tyler Dokken, OHF Advisory Board Chairman  
Brian Amundson, OHF Advisory Board  
Patsy Crooke, OHF Advisory Board (Online)  
David Dewald, OHF Advisory Board  
Jeremy Eckroth, OHF Advisory Board  
Tyler Stafslie, OHF Advisory Board  
Tyler Jacobson, OHF Advisory Board  
Randy Kreil, OHF Advisory Board  
Dana Kaldor, OHF Advisory Board (Online)  
Rachel Retterath, OHF Advisory Board  
John Weinand, OHF Advisory Board  
Tom Claeys, OHF Advisory Board (Non-voting)  
Rhonda Kelsch, OHF Advisory Board (Non-voting)  
Jeb Williams, OHF Advisory Board (Non-voting)  
Cole Garman, OHF Advisory Board (Non-voting)

Others Present: Reice Haase (NDIC), Brenna Jessen (NDIC), Erin Stieg (NDIC)

Also Present: A complete list of attendees is available in the Commission files. The meeting was also available by Microsoft Teams so not all attendees are known.

Dr. Joseph Carlson, OHF Advisory Board was absent from the meeting.

Chairman Tyler Dokken called the meeting of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board (“Board”) to order at 10:05 a.m. CST with a quorum being present.

**It was moved by Rachel Retterath and seconded by Brian Amundson that the Board approve the May 29, 2024, OHF technical committee meeting minutes and the June 4, 2024, OHF advisory board meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Reice Haase presented the Outdoor Heritage Fund project management and financial report. There has been a total of 239 cumulative projects and 77 of those are currently active through the program. OHF currently has \$38,599,587.91 in funds committed, and \$4,631,978.67 available to commit to new projects.

Chairman Dokken asked the Board to complete their Conflicts-of-Interest Forms.

The Grant Round 25 Presentations began.

25-1 (C): Western Big Game Connectivity and Habitat Fragmentation, Mule Deer Foundation – OHF funding request: \$750,000, Total Project Costs: \$1,400,571. Project Summary: Construct 60+ miles of wildlife-friendly fencing in Western ND.

(A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available in the Commission files).

In response to questions, the applicant stated: Fencing lasts anywhere from 30-50 years as long as it is maintained and they prefer to use metal fire-resistant posts even though they are a little more expensive. The private match is heavily dependent on donors and volunteers, local chapters, landowners in-kind work, etc.

25-2 (B): ND Statewide Tree Planting Initiative, ND Conservation District Employees Association – OHF funding request: \$5,317,000, Total Project Costs: \$7,426,500. Project Summary: Cost-share for landowner tree plantings and landowners must sign a 10-year agreement to maintain.

(A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available in the Commission files).

In response to questions, the applicant stated: They have started to do a lot more tree plantings outside of farmstead with their most recent grant, and that they do not fund urban plantings outside of city limits – it has to be rural in the country that the district serves. There is a shortfall in funding so they try to get funding a year in advance. There is always one year of carry-over so it looks like they have more funds available than they actually do – the funds are allocated. They could potentially come in the spring 2025 for funding for 2026, but would like the funding now to finish out 2025 (approximately \$100,000).

25-3 (D) Fargo Southwest Pond Regional Recreation Area, Fargo Park District – OHF funding request: \$3,231,810.94, Total Project Costs: \$4,684,081.25. Project Summary: Establish wetland, upland prairie vegetation around a new stormwater pond on the outskirts of Fargo, and connect to Fargo trail system.

(A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available in the Commission files).

In response to questions, the applicant stated: The park district signed the MOU in 2020. Phase 1 was recently completed, and phase 2 is scheduled to be completed in 2025. They did not go to the State's Park and Rec for funding. RTP caps out at \$250,000 per project and they had other priorities for those fund dollars and other projects that took priority over this one. The recreation area was always going to come second to the stormwater pond, and the project can be phased if need be.

25-4 (A): Manvel Community Park Improvement Project, Manvel Park Board – OHF funding request: \$45,746, Total Project Costs: \$66,746. Project Summary: Install sidewalks at Manvel City Park.

(A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available in the Commission files).

In response to questions, the applicant stated: There were no questions asked by the Board.

25-5 (C): Planting for the Future, ND Petroleum Foundation – OHF funding request: \$660,530, Total Project Costs: \$1,847,740. Project Summary: Planting of 340,000 trees across North Dakota.

(A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available in the Commission files).

In response to questions, the applicant stated: They only anticipated planting 75,000 trees, but there was a large increase in partnerships with conservation groups. When it comes to Petroleum council mitigation requirements, if a company comes in and builds a pipeline and removes X amount of trees, then X amount of trees have to be planted again. This request is above and beyond what trees need to be mitigated. Most trees are being scalped around the Kidder County area, one up in Montreal County, and one up in Williams County – about 1/3 of the trees are actually scalped.

There was an increase in timeline as more projects came in faster, so the funds were used sooner, and they are trying to account for the higher demand.

25-6 (B): ND Grazing Management Toolbox, Audubon Great Plains – OHF funding request: \$635,000, Total Project Costs: \$1,234,506. Project Summary: Financial assistance to landowners to improve grassland habitat on 7,500 acres.

(A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available in the Commission files).

In response to questions, the applicant stated: For every toolbox, a couple landowners end up signing up for PLOTS. The indirect costs include staff time for administrating the grant, negotiating with the department of interior yearly, the overhead, keeping the lights on, etc. This specific grant is not going after woody/invasive species.

The Board took a 15-minute break.

25-7 (D): UWP Educational Prairie Trail, Audubon Great Plains – OHF funding request: \$164,331, Total Project Costs: \$295,158. Project Summary: Native plantings and seeding with educational signage at Urban Plains Park in Fargo.

(A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available in the Commission files).

In response to questions, the applicant stated: The difference from this application to the last is the budget was shifted, they clarified source of seed, the costs of the prairie plugs, etc. To address it, they moved a lot of the partner match to pay for the prairie plugs rather than OHF dollars paying for it. The United Prairie Foundation is a ND organization headed by John DeVries. They use local eco-type seeds, high diversity prairie plantings. They source, harvest, and have greenhouses where they grow the plugs.

25-8 (D): TMBCI Sky Chief Park Beachfront Landscaping Project, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa – OHF funding request: \$120,000, Total Project Costs: \$160,000. Project Summary: Landscaping of beach and camping area at Sky Chief Park along with installation of retaining wall.

(A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available in the Commission files).

In response to questions, the applicant stated: They are negotiating with the contractor to get the fees removed and put the total for \$120,000 for landscaping. The retaining wall is due to fluctuation levels. It was cheaper to do that then have a rock wall based on quotes. It is used to stop runoff into the lake, help with the erosion issues, and keep vehicles off the beach. They noted that their 2020 project is complete, they just haven't sent the final report over and their other two projects are still in process, but it took a while for environmentalists to come back.

25-9 (D): ND State Fair Association – Tree Planting, ND State Fair Association – OHF funding request: \$100,000, Total Project Costs: \$125,000. Project Summary: Replacement of dead or dying trees and new tree plantings.

(A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available in the Commission files).

In response to questions, the applicant stated: In regards to design plans, there are areas of the west park where much of it will be planted and they have outlined trees that need to be removed.

25-10 (B): Working Grasslands Partnership 7, North Dakota Natural Resources Trust – OHF funding request: \$762,500, Total Project Costs: \$1,267,500. Project Summary: Cost-share for landowners for transition of CRP acres to grazing.

(A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available in the Commission files).

In response to questions, the applicant stated: There is about \$350,000 left to be allocated between all programs 1-6. They allow haying as an option, but almost no landowners utilize that option and graze land instead. They partner with Meadowlark as a relationship originator to help find participating partners.

**Chairman Dokken opened it up to public comments on applications.**

Patrice Delaney made a clarification that the United Prairie Foundation is a non-profit organization based in North Dakota.

There were no other public comments.

Board Discussion Comments

25-1: Western Big Game Connectivity and Habitat Fragmentation, Mule Deer Foundation:

- Excited to see this project – wildlife conservation is needed and it's a new partner for OHF
- Removals have been done before and boundary/perimeter fencing – would love to see the grazing addition added

25-2: ND Statewide Tree Planting Initiative, North Dakota Conservation District Employees Association:

- Would like to see the group come back in the future with a more refined and prioritized project that specifically meets the directives of OHF
- Concern regarding about 50% of project total being targeted around farmsteads

25-3: Fargo Southwest Pond Regional Recreation Area, Fargo Park District:

- The Board is normally supportive of habitat projects
- The project would get the program closer to the 15% goal for the directive
- It is a large project, so the Board could ask them to come back in the spring with phases that meet OHF directives
- Urban areas are important and would love to see the state Parks and Reg organizations be part of these projects also and do it conjointly
- It has been awhile since the Board has seen a gravel walking path

25-4: Manvel Community Park Improvement, Manvel Park Board:

- The project consists of walking paths to sidewalks to park benches
- Applicant should have focused more on the landscaping aspect for the OHF funds – there may be other aspects of the project that they need funding for that would fall into OHF directives

25-5: Planting for the Future, North Dakota Petroleum Foundation:

- They aren't necessarily meeting NRCS standards, and the specifications aren't tight enough to fund this project
- They had it per tree or per planting while most have it per perimeter – are the costs similar?
- Every county charges differently for trees and fabric
- This is one of the highest percentage cost-share out there so want to applaud the applicant
- It is above and beyond what they are mitigating

25-6: ND Grazing Management Toolbox, Audubon Great Plains:

- No questions/comments

25-7: UWP Educational Prairie Trail, Audubon Great Plains:

- Did the applicant answer the questions that the Board had last time?
- It's understood that they tried to reorganize funding for the grass seedings, but it's still challenging to support – the cost per acre is high
- Supportive of these kinds of projects and pollinator use – the public loves these projects

25-8: TMBCI Sky Chief Park Beachfront Landscaping, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa:

- Applicant should come back with a better plan than a 4ft retaining wall, and after they finish their other 3 projects that OHF is currently funding
- There are a number of other items in the project that the Board could support and fund, minus the retaining wall

25-9: Tree Planting, North Dakota State Fair Association:

- Match totals – should the Board require the match to be towards total project costs or just OHF request

25-10: Working Grasslands Partnership 7, North Dakota Natural Resources Trust:

- It is great to see how much of the funding has been used and what is left
- They are successful, so we should continue being supportive
- They put their own money into their projects and their match is always over 25%

**Tyler Dokken noted the following Conflicts of Interest:**

- 25-5 ND Petroleum Foundation: Planting for the Future

**It was moved by Randy Kreil and seconded by Rachel Retterath to allow Tyler Dokken to vote on that application noted with the conflict. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Brian Amundson noted the following Conflicts of Interest:**

- 25-6 Audubon Great Plains: North Dakota Grazing Management Toolbox
- 25-7 Audubon Great Plains: UWP Educational Prairie Trail

**It was moved by Tyler Jacobson and seconded by Randy Kreil to allow Brian Amundson to vote on those applications noted with conflicts. The motion carried unanimously.**

**The OHF Advisory Board filled out their scoring sheets for the Grant Round 25 applications at this time.**

Chairman Dokken listed the applications that received less than 7 votes for funding which include application numbers 25-2, 25-3, 25-4, 25-7, 25-8, 25-9.

**It was moved by Brian Amundson and seconded by Randy Kreil that the following applications not be forwarded to the Commission for funding:**

- 25-2 NDCDEA: ND Statewide Tree Planning Initiative - \$5,317,000
- 25-3 Fargo Park District: Fargo Southwest Pond Regional Recreation Area - \$3,231,810
- 25-4 Manvel Park Board: Manvel Community Park Improvement - \$45,746
- 25-7 Audubon Great Plains: UWP Educational Prairie Trail - \$164,331
- 25-8 TMBCI Sky Chief Park Beachfront Landscaping: Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa - \$120,000
- 25-9 North Dakota State Fair Association: Tree Planting - \$100,000

**On a roll call vote, Amundson, Crooke, Dewald, Dokken, Eckroth, Jacobson, Kaldor, Kreil, Retterath, Staflien, and Weinand voted aye. The motion carried unanimously.**

	Yes	No
<b>Brian Amundson</b>	X	
<b>Dr. Joseph Carlson</b>		
<b>Patsy Crooke</b>	X	
<b>David Dewald</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Dokken</b>	X	
<b>Jeremy Eckroth</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Jacobson</b>	X	
<b>Dana Kaldor</b>	X	
<b>Randy Kreil</b>	X	
<b>Rachel Retterath</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Staflien</b>	X	
<b>John Weinand</b>	X	
Total	11	0

**It was moved by Randy Kreil and seconded by Patsy Crooke that application 25-1: Western Big Game Connectivity and Habitat Fragmentation, submitted by the Mule Deer Foundation, be recommended to the Industrial Commission for Outdoor Heritage Fund funding in the amount of \$750,000.**

On a roll call vote, Crooke, Dewald, Dokken, Eckroth, Jacobson, Kaldor, Kreil, Retterath, Stafslie, and Weinand voted aye, and Amundson voted nay. The motion carried.

	Yes	No
<b>Brian Amundson</b>		X
<b>Dr. Joseph Carlson</b>		
<b>Patsy Crooke</b>	X	
<b>David Dewald</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Dokken</b>	X	
<b>Jeremy Eckroth</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Jacobson</b>	X	
<b>Dana Kaldor</b>	X	
<b>Randy Kreil</b>	X	
<b>Rachel Retterath</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Stafslie</b>	X	
<b>John Weinand</b>	X	
Total	10	1

It was moved by Rachel Retterath and seconded by Brian Amundson that application 25-5: Planting for the Future, submitted by the North Dakota Petroleum Foundation, be recommended to the Industrial Commission for Outdoor Heritage Fund funding in the amount of \$220,177.

On a roll call vote, Amundson, Dokken, Eckroth, Jacobson, Kaldor, Kreil, Retterath, Stafslie, and Weinand voted aye, and Crooke and Dewald voted nay. The motion carried.

	Yes	No
<b>Brian Amundson</b>	X	
<b>Dr. Joseph Carlson</b>		
<b>Patsy Crooke</b>		X
<b>David Dewald</b>		X
<b>Tyler Dokken</b>	X	
<b>Jeremy Eckroth</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Jacobson</b>	X	
<b>Dana Kaldor</b>	X	
<b>Randy Kreil</b>	X	
<b>Rachel Retterath</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Stafslie</b>	X	
<b>John Weinand</b>	X	
Total	9	2

It was moved by David Dewald and seconded by Tyler Jacobson that application 25-6: North Dakota Grazing Management Toolbox, submitted by Audubon Great Plains, be recommended to the Industrial Commission for Outdoor Heritage Fund funding in the amount of \$635,000.

On a roll call vote, Amundson, Crooke, Dewald, Dokken, Eckroth, Jacobson, Kaldor, Kreil, Retterath, Staflien, and Weinand voted aye. The motion carried unanimously.

	Yes	No
<b>Brian Amundson</b>	X	
<b>Dr. Joseph Carlson</b>		
<b>Patsy Crooke</b>	X	
<b>David Dewald</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Dokken</b>	X	
<b>Jeremy Eckroth</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Jacobson</b>	X	
<b>Dana Kaldor</b>	X	
<b>Randy Kreil</b>	X	
<b>Rachel Retterath</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Staflien</b>	X	
<b>John Weinand</b>	X	
Total	11	0

It was moved by Randy Kreil and seconded by Patsy Crooke that application 25-10: Working Grasslands Partnership 7, submitted by North Dakota Natural Resources Trust, be recommended to the Industrial Commission for Outdoor Heritage Fund funding in the amount of \$762,500.

On a roll call vote, Amundson, Crooke, Dewald, Dokken, Eckroth, Jacobson, Kaldor, Kreil, Retterath, Staflien, and Weinand voted aye. The motion carried unanimously.

	Yes	No
<b>Brian Amundson</b>	X	
<b>Dr. Joseph Carlson</b>		
<b>Patsy Crooke</b>	X	
<b>David Dewald</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Dokken</b>	X	
<b>Jeremy Eckroth</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Jacobson</b>	X	
<b>Dana Kaldor</b>	X	
<b>Randy Kreil</b>	X	
<b>Rachel Retterath</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Staflien</b>	X	
<b>John Weinand</b>	X	
Total	11	0

Conversations were had pertaining to the wildfires in western ND and whether the Outdoor Heritage Fund could play a role in helping farmers and ranchers with the remaining, uncommitted Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars.

**It was moved by Brian Amundson and seconded by Rachel Retterath that the Outdoor Heritage Fund board open up a special grant round for farmers and ranchers who have been effected by the wildfires, be recommended to the Industrial Commission.**

**On a roll call vote, Amundson, Crooke, Dewald, Dokken, Eckroth, Jacobson, Kaldor, Kreil, Retterath, Stafslie, and Weinand voted aye. The motion carried unanimously.**

	Yes	No
<b>Brian Amundson</b>	X	
<b>Dr. Joseph Carlson</b>		
<b>Patsy Crooke</b>	X	
<b>David Dewald</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Dokken</b>	X	
<b>Jeremy Eckroth</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Jacobson</b>	X	
<b>Dana Kaldor</b>	X	
<b>Randy Kreil</b>	X	
<b>Rachel Retterath</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Stafslie</b>	X	
<b>John Weinand</b>	X	
Total	11	0

Discussion was held pertaining to a possible sub-committee for the potential Outdoor Heritage Fund wildfire grant round.

(Dana Kaldor left the meeting).

**It was moved by Brian Amundson and seconded by Rachel Retterath that the Outdoor Heritage Fund, contingent upon the Industrial Commission’s approval, name 3 voting members and 1 technical review member to the wildfire sub-committee – Rachel Retterath, Randy Kreil, Brian Amundson, and Rhonda Kelsch, be recommended to the Industrial Commission.**

**On a roll call vote, Carlson, Crooke, Dewald, Dokken, Jacobson, Kreil, Kuylen, and Retterath voted aye, and Amundson and Weinand voted nay. The motion carried.**

	Yes	No
<b>Brian Amundson</b>	X	
<b>Dr. Joseph Carlson</b>		
<b>Patsy Crooke</b>	X	
<b>David Dewald</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Dokken</b>	X	

<b>Jeremy Eckroth</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Jacobson</b>	X	
<b>Dana Kaldor</b>		
<b>Randy Kreil</b>	X	
<b>Rachel Retterath</b>	X	
<b>Tyler Stafslie</b>	X	
<b>John Weinand</b>	X	
Total	10	0

Potential dates and venue for the next Outdoor Heritage Fund advisory meeting were discussed.

Under other business, Brenna Jessen gave an update on the new grant software that was being procured by the Office of the Industrial Commission.

**Being no further business, it was moved by David Dewald and seconded by John Weinand to adjourn the meeting of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board. The motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.