

Minutes of a Meeting of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Technical Committee

Held on October 17, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.

Fort Union Room, State Capitol Building

Present: Tyler Dokken, ND Petroleum Council – Chairman
Rhonda Kelsch, ND Association of Soil Conservation Districts
Jeb Williams, ND Game and Fish Department
Tom Claeys, ND Forest Service
Cole Garman, ND Department of Parks & Recreation

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

Chairman Tyler Dokken called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

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 facilitated the review of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Round 25 applications.

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.

Comments/Questions:

- No natural resource concerns
- Fencing does not follow NRCS specs
- Boundary fencing has not typically been allowed in the past

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.

Comments/Questions:

- No natural resource concerns
- Request exceeds the availability of OHF funds, may consider funding the project for one year vs. three years

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.

Comments/Questions:

- OHF funds budgeted for 10% contingency (\$297,037), 5% professional fee (\$148,518), topographic survey (\$7,500) materials testing allowance (\$37,500), permit review (\$15,000) and bonds and insurance (\$37,129) for a total of \$542,684 with cash match by applicant of \$180,894 for a grant total of \$723,578. These items are not typically funded by OHF
- Liability insurance should be the responsibility of the applicant, not OHF

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.

Comments/Questions:

- No maps or design plans were included in the application, would have liked to see
- OHF in the past has been hesitant to fund sidewalks, exceptions were made for handicap accessibility

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.

Comments/Questions:

- Consider consulting NRCS specs to properly plan species on suitable soils
- Most commonly planted species include: ponderosa pine, scotch pine, cedar, lilac, buffaloberry, juniper, caragana, silverberry and willow because of their survivability and because they provide tremendous cover for wildlife. Would like to see other tree/shrub species utilized where appropriate, especially in plantings utilizing weed barrier
- In particular, would like to see caragana and lilac removed from the mix

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.

Comments/Questions:

- Does this grant include woody species removal similar to other grants? Says it will build on past successful PMT projects but no mention of removals in the Abstract/Executive Summary, Purpose of Grant, Project Budget, or Budget Narrative, but a passing mention in Sustainability: “Landowners that choose to tackle invasive species or rejuvenate their grasslands will need to provide ongoing monitoring and maintenance.”

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.

Comments/Questions:

- Is this project different from the project proposed in Grant Round 24?
- The committee appreciates the comprehensive budget detail

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.

Comments/Questions:

- Total project cost (\$160,000) on page 3 does not match Total project expense in the Financial Information section on page 7 (\$198,672). The grant amounts requested do not match either (\$120,000 vs \$158,672). There is no detail in the project expense table. No individual lines or explanation for each project expense.
- Mentions landscaping the camp area and plant new native trees and shrubs (#4) in the Abstract/Executive Summary, but there is no plan, budget or list of trees. Under purpose of grant “Months 10-12 Landscaping and tree planting.” No design plan for project or for tree/shrub planting. No details regarding species, size, cost or numbers of trees/shrubs.

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.

Comments/Questions:

- No map or design plan. No details regarding species, size, cost or numbers of trees
- No tree care or maintenance plan on page 6 under Sustainability
- Concern about investing OHF funding into a place that requires an admissions fee

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.

Comments/Questions:

- No natural resources concerns
- Great skin in the game
- Great project track record from this applicant

Mr. Reice Haase shared the draft agenda for the October 24th, 2024 OHF Advisory Board meeting.

Being no further business, Chairman Dokken adjourned the meeting at 2:15 p.m.