

OHF FINAL REPORT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Number: 012-134

Recipient: Bowman-Slope Soil Conservation District

Award Amount: \$112,354.00

Total Project Costs: \$187,037.44

Total OHF Funds Received: \$112,223.07



Goal of Project:

To assist producers with installing Best Management Practices to facilitate a grazing system. The goal of grazing systems is to improve distribution and rangeland health. Improving soil and rangeland health improves water quality, infiltration rates, nutrient cycling, wildlife habitat, and ground cover.

Work Accomplished:

The Best Management Practices installed through this project are:

- 3,850 acres of planned and improved grazing systems on native and tame grass prairie
- 6,420 feet of livestock pipeline
- 18 livestock drinking tanks
- 1 well development
- 55,000 feet of cross fencing

Project Results:

The Best Management Practices (BMP's) installed were the tools and infrastructure these producers needed to be able to change grazing management. The new grazing rotations allow for changing season-of-use in pastures, increased days of rest for pastures, and allows for the better management of tame and native grasses. These grazing systems are the first-step in transitioning these ranches and their grasslands to Holistic Resource Management Systems.

This project's impact and investment was able to "cover-more-ground" literally, through partnerships and additional conservation programs. The combination of federal, state, and private dollars were utilized by these producers to complete these projects. USDA-NRCS Engineering services provided the needed design and technical assistance to install the water developments. The multi-agency collaboration allowed these producers to install additional BMP's that complimented and enhanced the BMP's installed through this OHF project.

Through the mindful monitoring and observations done by these producers in their grazing systems, a new awareness and attention has developed to rangeland health, wildlife habitat and watershed function.

Value to North Dakota:

Improved soil health through conservation practices and management, protect and sustain natural resources in North Dakota. Healthy, North Dakota soils sequester carbon, infiltrate moisture, create diverse plant diversity communities, and improve watershed function. Proper functioning watersheds

reduces erosion/sedimentation and non-point source pollutants from reaching our streams and in this project The Little Missouri River. These ranches and large tracts of intact rangeland in Southwest North Dakota provide important and vital habitat to a variety of native wildlife species, including numerous birds of conservation concern. These grazing systems will promote a variety of cover types for grassland birds and other wildlife.

There were positive economic impacts and investments in our local communities and state with these construction projects. These producers hired local contractors to install water developments and purchased a large amount of supplies from local businesses. The changes in management on these ranches will make improvements to the efficiency and long-term health of the grasslands and will likely keep these ranches in business. Working ranches keep grasslands intact providing wildlife habitat, food sources for our populations, keep people in our rural communities and help keep our rural economies viable.

Education gained from this project has been a very valuable professional development opportunity. Experience and knowledge gained on creative water developments, fencing, grazing rotation options, wildlife habitat needs and natural resource function help to develop better conservation employees.

The mentioned benefits from this project to North Dakota are multi-fold and valuable. As these ranches build on years of conservation management to come, the list of long-term benefits will also build.