

OHF FINAL REPORT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Number 006-090

Recipient North Dakota Natural Resources Trust

Award Amount \$1,094,637.50

Total Project Costs \$2,188,095.31

Total OHF Funds Received \$1,094,637.50

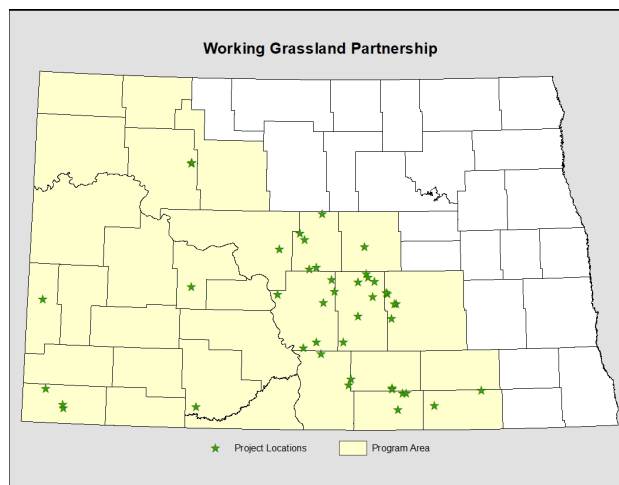


Goals of Project:

The Working Grassland Partnership (WGP) grant promoted livestock grazing as the management on current and expired Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres with the focus of improving declining grassland birds. The grant brought together the partnership of North Dakota Natural Resources Trust (Trust), ND Association of Soil Conservation Districts, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife and landowners with Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) to provide the financial assistance in the form of cost-sharing of water and fence developments. The development cost-share for fence was 60% of total fence rate per foot and water developments at 60% of documented costs. Landowners provided the remaining 40% cost-share. The North Dakota Natural Resources Trust provided cash match in the form of a one-time incentive for the expired CRP acres.

Work Accomplished:

The Trust coordinated the delivery of this grant through the grant submitting partners. The North Dakota Industrial Commission (NDIC) and Trust started in 2016. Landowners were soon informed about the availability of the program. The first WGP landowner agreement was signed on August 4, 2016. A total of 43 landowner agreements were signed for the Working Grassland Partnership grant for a total of 18,343 acres. The breakout by ND counties, number of agreements and acres are as follows: Bowman County 3 agreements – 1,687 acres, Burleigh County 6 agreements – 4,083 acres, Dickey County 2 agreement – 758 acres, Emmons County 3 agreements – 480 acres, Golden Valley County 1 agreement – 160 acres, Grant County 1 agreement – 480 acres, Kidder County 7 agreements – 3,738 acres, Logan County 2 agreements – 840 acres, McIntosh County 3 agreements – 1,150 acres, McLean County 1 agreement – 253 acres, Mercer County 1 agreement – 400 acres, Mountrail County 2 agreements – 720 acres, Sheridan County 5 agreements – 1,430 acres, Stutsman County 5 agreements – 1,523 acres, Wells County 1 agreement – 640 acres.



Project Results:

The total project costs were \$2,188,095.31. The OHF grant provided a total of \$1,094,637.50 in grant funds, this was split between \$1,042,387.50 in cost-share developments for grazing systems and \$52,250 in staffing support. The grant fulfilled the \$1,042,387.50 for OHF funded grazing systems, this was matched with 40% landowner cost-share in the amount of \$704,463.32. In addition, the Trust provided \$14,307.48 in grazing system cost-share. The full staffing amount of \$52,250 was utilized by the grant. The Trust and Partners providing \$121,201.51 of additional staffing of in-kind match to the grant.

All landowners were made aware of the public access availability of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Private Land Open to Sportsmen (PLOTS) program. Seven agreements participated in the PLOTS program for a total of 2,077 acres. These agreements were in Burleigh, Bowman, Dickey, Golden Valley, and Sheridan counties.

Value to North Dakota:

The Working Grassland Partnership agreement was well received by landowners in North Dakota. With over 300,000 acres of Conservation Reserve Program expiring in 2017, many landowners were interested in converting these acres to grazing lands. The partnership created through the WGP grant enhanced agricultural operations in a working lands concept and helped support healthy wildlife communities. The WGP meets the directive of the 2015 State Wildlife Action Plan. Annual bird surveys conducted by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department emphasize the importance of contiguous grassland acres for grassland bird species. The WGP helped provide well managed grassland for these species to use.

The WGP program addressed OHF Directive B by improving, maintaining, and restoring water quality, soil conditions, plant diversity, and animal systems, and by supporting other practices of stewardship to enhance farming and ranching. WGP also addressed Directive C by supporting agricultural stewardship and improving water quality. The WGP program encouraged grazing management on all the agreement acres making it a working concept that was beneficial to livestock producing operations.