



OUTDOOR HERITAGE FUND GRANT APPLICATION
INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION
 SFN 61465 (06-2018)

Project Name North Dakota Soil Recovery Program		
Name of Organization Audubon Dakota		Federal Tax ID Number 13-1624102
Contact Person/Title Marshall Johnson, V.P. and Executive Director		
Address 118 N. Broadway Ste. 716		
City Fargo		State ND
		ZIP Code 58102
Email Address mejohanson@audubon.org		Web Site Address (optional) dakota.audubon.org
Telephone Number (701) 298-3373		Fax Number
List Names of Co-Applicants (if this is a joint proposal)		

Major Directive (choose only one response)

Directive A: Providing access to private and public lands for sportsmen, including projects that create fish and wildlife habitat and provide access for sportsmen;

Directive B: Improving, maintaining and restoring water quality, soil conditions, plant diversity, animal systems and by supporting other practices of stewardship to enhance farming and ranching;

Directive C: Developing, enhancing, conserving and restoring wildlife and fish habitat on private and public lands; and

Directive D: Conserving natural areas and creating other areas for recreation through the establishment and development of parks and other recreation areas.

Additional Directive (choose all that apply)

Directive A Directive B Directive C Directive D

Type of Agency

State Agency Political Subdivision Tribal Entity Tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation

Abstract/Executive Summary

Summarize the project, including its objectives, expected results, duration, total project costs and participants. (No more than 500 words)

a. The North Dakota Soil Recovery Program (NDSRP) is a state-based incentive program that encourages North Dakota producers and ranchers to adopt adaptive and holistic management on their native and cover crop pastures and croplands. Audubon Dakota is partnering with NDSU Extension to deliver the program in high priority North Dakota counties within key soil health recovery geographical areas, as determined by North Dakota Web Soil Survey. The objectives of the NDSRP include enrolling 100,000 acres of private lands over 4 years with the goal of improving soil health, forage quality, and wildlife habitat through the implementation of rotational grazing on enrolled acres, designed by NDSU and Audubon staff. Soil health, vegetation communities, and wildlife responses will be measured on an annual basis by NDSU Extension staff and Audubon Dakota's North Dakota range ecologists. The NDSRP not only will improve soil health on native/planted grass and cover crop pastures and croplands, but will also become a viable option for private landowners who are faced with the inability to re-enroll their expiring CRP acres and for landowners who desire to incorporate and/or expand an adaptive management system within their operation. By incorporating or maintaining production, local tax bases remain unaffected. In addition, Audubon Dakota will work with NDSU Extension to develop an educational program for the enrolled North Dakota producers on the importance of soil health and the role of holistic management in improving soil quality. To quantify growth of producer knowledge, a knowledge assessment tool will be developed and implemented before and after a soil health and holistic management landowner course offered by NDSU Extension. Audubon Dakota and partners will also provide participating landowners access to cost sharing opportunities for grazing infrastructure through existing conservation partner cost share programming. Incentive payment total each year is calculated at \$775,000, and over the 4 year project period the incentive payment total is \$3,100,000.

Project Duration

Indicate the intended schedule for drawing down OHF funds.
September 2018 to October 2022

Amount of Grant Request \$2,923,566.00	Total Project Costs Note: In-kind and indirect costs can be used for matching funds. \$3,956,899	Amount of Matching Funds \$1,033,333.00
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A minimum of 25% Match Funding is required. Indicate if the matching funds will be in-kind, indirect or cash. Please provide verification that these matching funds are available for your project. Note that effective as of July 1, 2015, no State General Fund dollars can be used for a match unless funding was legislatively appropriated for that purpose.

Amount of Match	Funding Source	Type of Match
\$307,400.00	Audubon Dakota	<input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-Kind <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect
\$490,128.00	Audubon Dakota	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect
\$50,000.00	North Dakota Wildlife Federation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect
\$100,000.00	Brad Freeman Waterfowl Fund	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect
\$10,000.00	Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-Kind <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect
\$75,805.00	Audubon Dakota	<input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indirect
		<input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect
		<input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect
		<input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect

Certifications

- I certify that this application has been made with the support of the governing body and chief executive of my organization.
- I certify that if awarded grant funding, none of the funding will be used for any of the exemptions listed at the back of this form.

Narrative

Organization Information - Briefly summarize your organization's history, mission, current programs and activities. Include an overview of your organizational structure, including board, staff and volunteer involvement. (No more than 300 words.) Audubon Dakota is the North and South Dakota state program within the National Audubon Society. Since 1905, the National Audubon Society has been focused on conserving bird habitat, promoting avian education, and engaging communities in conservation. Audubon Dakota as a state program was instituted in 1997, however Audubon's role in the Dakotas spans back to the mid-1970s. The mission of the National Audubon Society is to protect birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow. Audubon seeks partnerships that advance its habitat conservation goals, including partnerships that support grassland habitat projects and the production ag. industry. Currently, Audubon Dakota manages roughly 150, 000 acres and administers a multitude of conservation based programs aimed at enhancing and protecting North Dakota's natural heritage in rural and urban settings. ND Outdoor Heritage Fund has been a committed supporter of this work by providing financial support for a number of those programs, including the Grand Forks County and Stutsman County Prairie Management Toolbox projects and the continued support of the Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative expansion throughout North Dakota. These programs would not be possible without the support and help of many different private cooperators, agencies and programs, local businesses and individuals, many volunteers and local Audubon Chapters. As a state office, Audubon Dakota has six full time staff members for the two-state region. Audubon Dakota's Advisory Board is comprised of six ND citizens, and one SD citizen.

Purpose of Grant - Describe the proposed project identifying how the project will meet the specific directive(s) of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Program.

Identify project goals, strategies and benefits and your timetable for implementation. Include information about the need for the project and whether there is urgency for funding. Indicate if this is a new project or if it is replacing funding that is no longer available to your organization. Identify any innovative features or processes of your project. Note: if your proposal provides funding to an individual, the names of the recipients must be reported to the Industrial Commission/Outdoor Heritage Fund. These names will be disclosed upon request. **(see additional notes below)**

The North Dakota Soil Recovery Program (NDSRP) is a state-based incentive program that encourages North Dakota producers and ranchers to adopt adaptive and holistic management on their native/planted grass and cover crop pastures and croplands. Audubon Dakota is partnering with NDSU Extension and NRCS to deliver the program within key soil health recovery geographical areas, as determined by North Dakota's Web Soil Survey. NRCS will assist NDSU Extension and Audubon Dakota with technical assistance. As a new conservation program, the NDSRP can be considered a dependable alternative option for landowners who are unable to re-enroll in the federal Conservation Reserve Program (just 9% of ND CRP applications were funded in 2017) or for landowners interested in financial and technical assistance to incorporate a working grasslands element on their privately-owned acres. Incentive payments are a valuable tool by cost-sharing portions of the upfront investment associated with initiating new management decisions which demand more time. Over the project period, NDSRP will provide private landowners holistic management education and financial support to implement adaptive rotational grazing to improve soil and habitat health statewide. Adaptive rotational grazing is a systematic approach to improving resources through high stock density grazing and periodic rest.

In recent past years, diminishing federal funding has left many private landowners without access to conservation programs aimed at improving soil health, water quality, and habitat. With over 400,000 acres of CRP expiring in 2018, it is important to guarantee landowner access to conservation programming and imperative that ND conservation entities develop and implement state based incentive options to ensure continued improvement of soil health, forage productivity, and expand suitable habitat for game and non-game species. Many ND ranchers practice holistic management currently, and the NDSRP is designed to complement and enhance these positive efforts for soil and rangeland health. The NDSRP aims to enroll 100,000 acres of private lands over 4 years with the goal of improving soil health, forage quality, and wildlife habitat through the implementation of rotational grazing on enrolled acres. 20,000 acres will be reserved for enrolling cover crops or croplands into the program.

Focus has been placed on improving soil health as rangelands and croplands are dependent upon soil quality. High functioning, and therefore healthy, soil performs a variety of functions including sustaining animal and vegetation productivity, enhancing water and air quality, and supporting human health (NRCS 2016). Rangelands and croplands depend on the successful functioning of both soil and plant communities within an ecosystem. When one or both of these communities are degraded due to idleness, mismanagement, invasive species, etc., then critical ecological functions such as plant growth, nutrient cycling, and water cycling become disrupted.

Please list the counties that would be impacted by this project:

Program will be offered in all North Dakota counties.

Is this project part of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan?

No Yes, If yes, provide copy of plan with the application.

Note: Projects involving buildings will only be considered if part of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Please refer to the "Definitions" section at the back of the form for more details.

- For tree/shrub/grass plantings: provide a planting plan describing the site design, planting methods, number of trees/shrubs by species and stock size, grass species and future maintenance. A statement certifying that the applicant will adhere to USDA-NRCS tree/shrub/grass planting specifications along with the name of the governmental entity designing the planting may be substituted for a planting plan.
- For projects including Section 319 funding: provide in detail the specific best management practices that will be implemented and the specific projects for which you are seeking funding.
- For projects including fencing: A minimum cost share of 40% by the recipient is preferred. Include detailed information on the type of fencing to be installed, whether funding is requested for boundary fencing, new or replacement of existing fencing, and/or cross fencing.

Management of Project - Provide a description of how you will manage and oversee the project to ensure it is carried out on schedule and in a manner that best ensures its objectives will be met.

Include a brief background and work experience for those managing the project.

The program will be managed by Audubon Dakota and its' partners. NDSU will develop and implement educational mentorship and monitoring for enrolled landowners. Since its inception in 1914, NDSU Extension has empowered North Dakota communities to improve their lives through science based curriculum focused on many programmatic areas including livestock management, natural resources management, and human health. NDSU Extension has a presence in every county in North Dakota. The Extension Agent aims to strengthen agriculture and improve the potential of their respective communities. The educational program component will be coordinated by a program manager who will work closely with a number of county Extension Agents and Extension Specialists. Extension's network and connections to local communities will prove advantageous as they connect and assist Audubon Dakota with the ND Soil Recovery Program. Ducks Unlimited, Inc. conserves, restores, and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. In alignment with this mission, Ducks Unlimited will also work collaboratively to provide producers with program promotion and technical assistance. Audubon Dakota's Range Professionals will commit to assisting NDSU Extension staff with landowner enrollment and program outreach. Program administration will be the responsibility of Audubon Dakota's Executive Director, Conservation Programs Manager, Office Manager, Range Ecologists and Office Assistant (to be hired).

Evaluation - Describe your plan to document progress and results.

Please be specific on the methods you will utilize to measure success. Note that regular reporting, final evaluation and expenditure reports will be required for every grant awarded.

Landowner enrollment will be selected based upon a list of criteria addressing CRP status, soil health and grazing responsibilities. A prioritization rating system will include the following elements: acres are expiring CRP acres, acres are classified as Land Capacity classes 5 to 8 (SSURGO), landowners are grazing the acres themselves or have a long term (during the enrollment period) agreement with a grazing cooperator, landowners willing to sign a partner release form for PLOTS, and landowners currently enrolled in cost share programs such as EQIP, Working Lands Partnership, Partners For Wildlife, Regional Conservation Partners Program, and the Grand Forks/Stutsman County Prairie Management Toolboxes.

As part of enrollment commitment, landowners will attend soil health and holistic range management education courses hosted by their county's Extension agent. Courses will be held during the winter of 2018-2019 to prepare enrolled landowners on holistic management techniques to implement during the 2019-2022 growing seasons with the goal of improving soil health, forage productivity, and wildlife habitat quality. To quantify growth of producer knowledge, a knowledge assessment survey tool will be developed and performed before and after the soil health and holistic management landowner course offered by NDSU Extension. To quantify the effects of the holistic management techniques applied by the private landowners, soil health, vegetation communities, and wildlife responses will be measured on an annual basis by NDSU Extension Service staff and Audubon Dakota's Range Technician at each enrolled site. In addition, the program coordinator and NDSU Extension staff will collaborate with participating landowners to develop a holistic rotational grazing management plan with content such as stocking rates, dates for cattle rotation, pasture cell maps, and other identifiable soil health practices. This plan will be revisited annually between the NDSU Extension staff member and landowner to ensure that soil conservation practices are being effectively applied.

Financial Information

Project Budget - Use the table to provide an itemized list of project expenses and describe the matching funds being utilized for this project.

Indicate if the matching funds are in the form of cash, indirect costs or in-kind services. The budget should identify all other committed funding sources and the amount of funding from each source. **A minimum of 25% match funding is required.** An application will be scored higher the greater the amount of match funding provided. (See Scoring Form.)

Certain values have been identified for in-kind services as detailed under "Budget Information" at the back of this form. Refer to that section and utilize these values in identifying your matching funds. **NOTE: No indirect costs will be funded.**

Project Expense	OHF Request	Applicant's Match Share (Cash)	Applicant's Match Share (In-Kind)	Applicant's Match Share (Indirect)	Other Project Sponsor's Share	Total Each Project Expense
* Incentive Payments - 100,000	\$2,923,566.00	\$176,434.00				\$3,100,000.00
Project Administration/4 years delivery/tech assistance		\$233,694.00	\$307,400.00	\$75,805.00	\$160,000.00	\$776,899.00
Operation Expenses -		\$80,000.00				\$80,000.00
Travel, Per-diem 4 years						
Total Costs	\$2,923,566.00	\$490,128.00	\$307,400.00	\$75,805.00	\$160,000.00	\$3,956,899.00

Budget Narrative - Use the space below to provide additional detail regarding project expenses.
 Incentive payments were calculated by determining 30% of the avg. cash rent payment for pastures across ND (2017 ND Ag. Land Price and Cash Rent Survey Report, American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers). Actual incentive payments will reflect current county rent rates. Program goal is to enroll 100,000 acres, therefore expense total each year is calculated at \$775,000, and over the 4 year project period the incentive payment total is \$3,100,000. Administration and program delivery will be conducted by Audubon Dakota staff members over the project period, with a total in-kind and cash contribution of \$797,528, and indirect total of \$75,805. Program administration support has been provided by North Dakota Wildlife Federation, Brad Freeman, and other partners with a total of \$160,000.

Sustainability - Indicate how the project will be funded or sustained in future years.
 Include information on the sustainability of this project after OHF funds have been expended and whether the sustainability will be in the form of ongoing management or additional funding from a different source.
 If awarded, Audubon Dakota and partners would continue to pursue program funding through OHF in addition to exploring federal funding through the Farm Bill and NRCS in the future.

Partial Funding - Indicate how the project will be affected if less funding is available than that requested.
 If partial funding was awarded for the ND Soil Recovery Program, the extent of impact would be greatly reduced. However, Audubon Dakota would continue pursuing additional funding in order to secure full funding for this critical ND state based program.

Partnership Recognition - If you are a successful recipient of Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars, how would you recognize the Outdoor Heritage Fund partnership? * There must be signage at the location of the project acknowledging OHF funding when appropriate.
 When appropriate, signage will be installed recognizing the financial support provided by OHF and other project supporters at sites enrolled in the ND Soil Recover Program. Additionally, as the project becomes fully implemented through the project landscape and collaborations with landowners begin, Audubon Dakota and partners will place an emphasis on promoting the program and project supporters through newspaper articles and local news exposure.

Awarding of Grants - Review the appropriate sample contract for your organization on the website at <http://www.nd.gov/ndic/outdoor-info page.htm>.

Can you meet all the provisions of the sample contract? Yes No

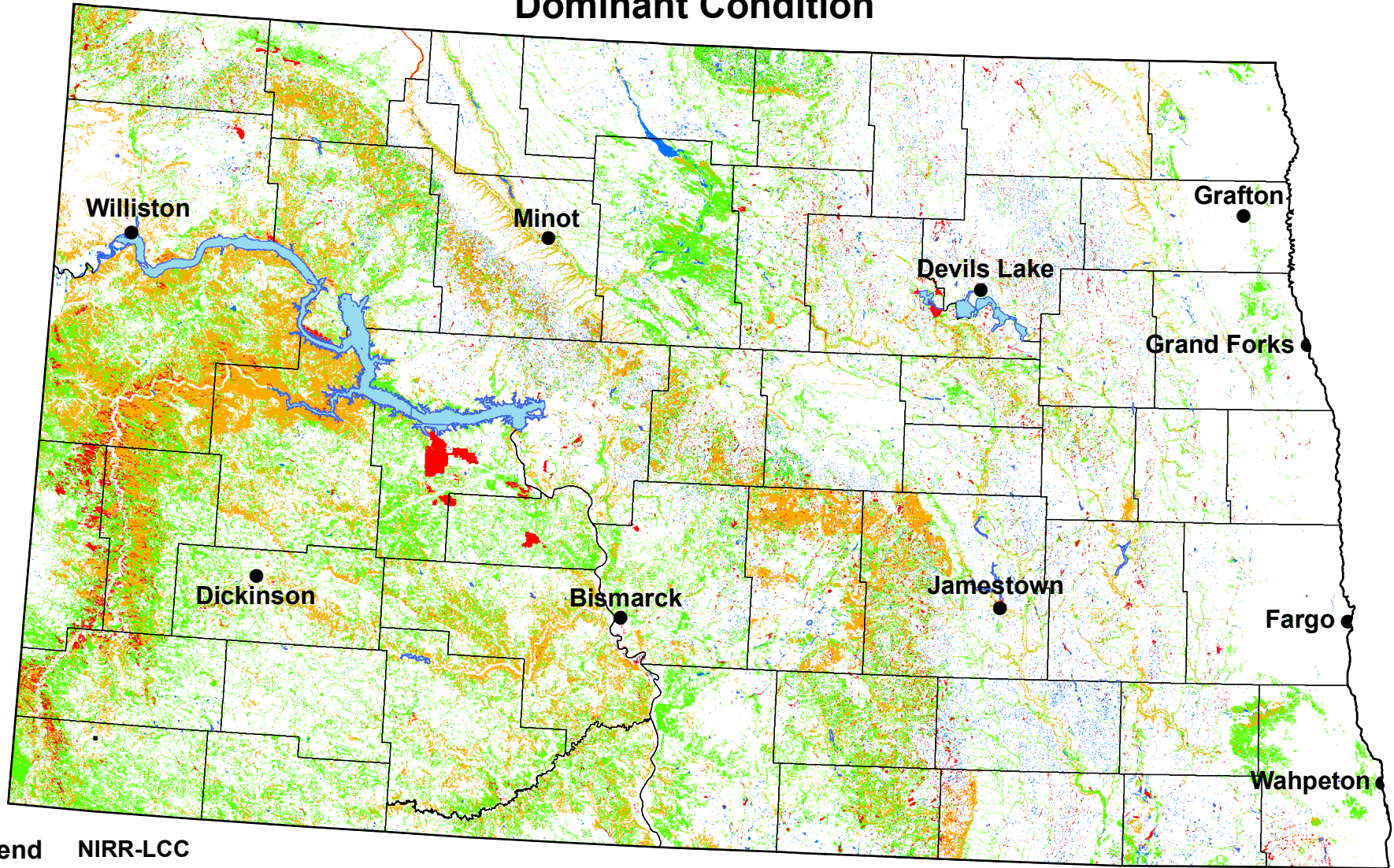
If there are provisions in that contract that your organization is unable to meet, please indicate below what those provisions would be:

*Incentive Payments - 100,000 acres @ estimated \$7.75/acre, based on ND avg. \$25.83



United States
Department of
Agriculture

North Dakota Non-irrigated Land Capability Class V - VIII Dominant Condition



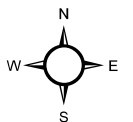
Legend NIRR-LCC

- City
- County
- State
- Water
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8



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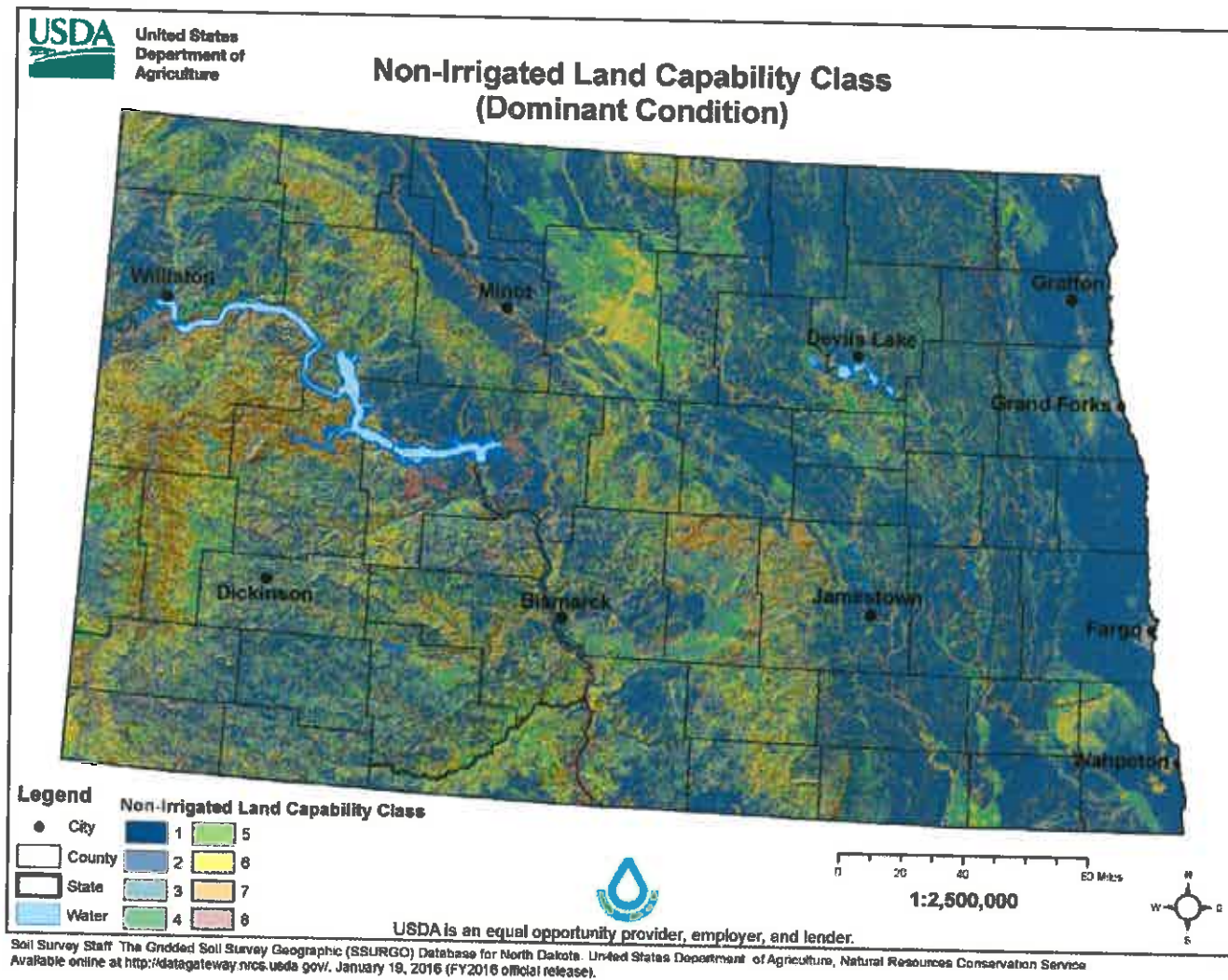
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

North Dakota Soil Recovery Program

Land Capability Classification

Class 5 to 8 Criteria

As part of the prioritization criteria for the ND Soil Recovery Program, priority will be placed on acres that are located within the Land Capability classes 5 to 8. Below illustrates the land capability class 5 to 8 areas that the ND Soil Recovery Program will focus acre enrollment.



**North Dakota Soil Recovery Program
Project Prioritization Scoresheet**

Landowner:

Address:

County:

Phone:

Acres:

Criteria	Score	Notes
Expiring CRP	0/15	
Land Capacity Class between classes 5 and 8 (W	0/15	
PLOTS Enrollment	0/5	
EQIP Eligible	0/5	
Landowner or long-term grazing agreement	0/10	Grazing agreement over project period (4 years)
TOTAL	0/50	

NDSU NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

July 6, 2018

Marshall Johnson
Audubon Society, ND Chapter
118 N Broadway Ste. 716
Fargo, ND 58102

Dear Marshall,

NDSU Extension has a history of developing learning partnerships with a variety of groups, which enhance and encourage transformational education for the citizens of North Dakota. We are excited to serve as the educational partner for your project entitled, 'North Dakota Soil Recovery Program (NDSRP)'.

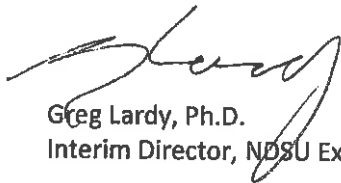
NDSU Extension has strong programs in the area of range management, natural resource management, and soil health. We believe this program, with its' strong educational and mentoring components, will help land managers and ranchers develop and implement management strategies which will enhance soil health, build more resilient grassland ecosystems, and provide enhanced productivity for their livestock operations. In addition, this program will provide enhanced wildlife habitat on the enrolled acres.

As the educational partner, NDSU Extension looks forward to partnering with Audubon Dakota for the Program Manager position. NDSU Extension will manage the educational program coordinator, provide office space, and provide technical direction for the educational program that involves ranchers and land managers across the state of North Dakota. Through the efforts of our specialists and agents participating in this project, NDSU Extension will provide the basis for the educational program management and the participant mentoring efforts for the four-year term of the grant project.

We look forward to working with your organization on this project and we anticipate a collaboration, which will better prepare land managers and ranchers to manage their grassland resources in a manner that improves productivity and enhances their resource base. We also anticipate that the involvement of local leaders will spur others to adopt improved management practices in the future.

Should you have any questions about our commitment or our interest in partnering with you, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Greg Lardy, Ph.D.
Interim Director, NDSU Extension

Cc: Charles Stoltenow, ANR Program Leader
Kevin Sedivec, Extension Rangeland Specialist



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources
Conservation Service

July 12, 2018

Bismarck State Office
PO Box 1458
Bismarck, ND
58502-1458

To Whom It May Concern:

Voice 701.530.2000
Fax 855-813-7556

I have reviewed the Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant proposal for the North Dakota Soil Recovery Program. It fits very closely with the goals of the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to assist private landowners and operators with voluntary conservation technical assistance and to address natural resource concerns for wildlife, soil health and plant diversity in North Dakota.

The proposal meets the conservation needs of producers on private lands. The project leverages resources through partners and participants to implement conservation technical and financial assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary E. Podoll". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MARY E. PODOLL
State Conservationist

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer, and Lender



NORTH DAKOTA
NATURAL RESOURCES
TRUST

Keith Trego
Executive Director

1605 East Capitol Avenue, Ste. 101

Bismarck, ND 58501-2102

(701) 223-8501

FAX: (701) 223-6937

July 13, 2018

Karlene Fine, Executive Director
North Dakota Industrial Commission
ATTN: Outdoor Heritage Fund Program
600 East Boulevard Ave., Dept. 405
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Ms. Fine:

The North Dakota Natural Resources Trust mission is to preserve, enhance, restore, and manage wetlands and associated wildlife habitat, grasslands, and riparian areas in the state of North Dakota. We are writing in support of the Audubon Dakota's Outdoor Heritage Funds grant proposal titled "North Dakota Soil Recovery Program."

From its inception, the Trust has played a role as facilitator between agricultural and conservation interests. In addition to facilitating and funding sound, on-the-ground conservation of natural resources, our goal is to identify common issues, create dialogue, and resolve conflicts. Along with its agricultural and conservation partners, the Trust advocates for recognition, appropriate development, and protection of North Dakota's unique natural resource values.

Consistent with the Trust mission, this grant proposal will be a critical component of providing technical and financial assistance to landowners of North Dakota. Landowners continue to show exceptionally strong interest in soil health conservation programs. This proposal will provide increased livestock production as well as increased wildlife conservation habitat creating a true win-win situation.

We are happy to provide our endorsement of the Audubon Dakota and partners' grant proposal and look forward to its accomplishments.

Sincerely,



Keith Trego
Executive Director

"Dedicated to the preservation, enhancement, restoration and management of wetlands and associated wildlife habitat, grasslands, and riparian areas in the state of North Dakota."

July 13, 2018

Dear North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Committee:

The North Dakota Stockmen's Association is an 89-year-old beef cattle trade organization representing more than 3,000 ranch families in the state. Its mission is to unite, protect, promote, educate and serve the state's beef industry.

I write on behalf of the North Dakota Stockmen's Association in support of the Audubon Dakota/ North Dakota Extension Service's Outdoor Heritage Fund grant application, "North Dakota Soil Recovery Program." This is a state-based incentive program that supports North Dakota ranchers who wish to voluntarily adopt adaptive holistic management for native or tame grasslands, cover crops and croplands.

Our board of directors reviewed this proposal at our recent meeting. They voted to support this grant application and its focus on providing private landowners the financial incentive and technical assistance to implement adaptive regenerative management on their operations in order to ensure the continued improvement of soil health and forage productivity. Our producers are innovative conservationists who readily adopt practices to benefit the range, water, soil, air and natural habitat for livestock and wildlife.

The North Dakota Stockmen's Association appreciates this effort to provide technical assistance and the financial incentive to North Dakota landowners interested in increasing forage productivity and providing high-quality habitat for area wildlife at the same time. We support the goals and commitments presented within this Outdoor Heritage Fund grant application and look forward to seeing these opportunities made available to North Dakota producers through the North Dakota Soil Recovery Program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Warren Zenker

Warren Zenker
North Dakota Stockmen's Association President