

Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Application



Instructions

After completing the form, applications and supporting documentation may be submitted by e-mail to ndicgrants@nd.gov. It is preferred that only electronic copies are submitted.

You are not limited to the spacing provided, except in those instances where there is a limit on the number of words. If you need additional space, please indicate that on the application form, answer the question on a separate page, and include with your submission.

The application and all attachments must be received by the application deadline. You may submit your application at any time prior to the application deadline. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications prior to the deadline for staff review in order ensure that proposals will be complete when submitted on deadline date.** Incomplete applications may not be considered for funding.

Please review the back of this form to determine project eligibility, definitions, budget criteria, and statutory requirements.

Project Name: Planting for the Future

Name of Organization: North Dakota Petroleum Foundation

Federal Tax ID#: 83-1389235

Contact Person/Title: Tessa Sandstrom, Executive Director

Address: 100 W Broadway Avenue, Suite 200

City: Bismarck

State: ND

Zip Code: 58501

E-mail Address: tsandstrom@ndoil.org

Web Site Address (If applicable): www.ndpetroleumfoundation.org

Phone: 701-557-3972

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 organization:

- 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)

In 2017, the North Dakota Petroleum Council (NDPC) founded the Planting for the Future program (the Program) with the goal of leveraging industry and landowner support for large-scale tree plantings for habitat. The Program was transferred to the North Dakota Petroleum Foundation (NDPF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, in the fall of 2018. The NDPF has continued to operate the Program since. To date, the program has completed more than 141 projects and planted over a half a million trees in 26 counties in North Dakota.

This Program continues to grow in support among both landowners and industry. It has continued to evolve, and in 2025, the NDPF will partner with county Soil Conservation

Districts in addition to hiring contractors. The NDPF will offer a 75-25% cost-share, similar to other federal and state programs. This will allow more projects to be completed and enable Planting for the Future to reach more areas within the state.

With these new partnerships and continued interest from landowners, the NDPF estimates it will plant an additional 340,000 trees over the next two years. The NDPF has averaged 30 projects/participants in the past three years and anticipates it will continue to see this level of interest continue or grow over the next two years, creating even more opportunities to help establish meaningful habitat throughout North Dakota.

Project Duration: January 2025-December 2028

Indicate the intended schedule for drawing down OHF funds.

This grant request is for projects that will be planted in 2025 and 2026. A majority of the funding will be drawn down in May and/or June of each year when planting takes place. Additional requests for funds may be made in 2027 and 2028 for replacement trees.

Amount of Grant request: \$ 660,530.00

Total Project Costs: \$1,847,740.00

Note: in-kind and indirect costs can be used for matching funds.

Amount of Matching Funds: \$1,061,210.00

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 (Cash, In-kind or Indirect)
\$ 750,500.00	NDPF	Cash
\$ 153,460.00	Landowners	Cash
\$ 17,000.00	ND Petroleum Council	In-Kind
\$ 140,250.00	Landowners	In-Kind

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 noted in the back of this application.

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)

The North Dakota Petroleum Foundation (NDPF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, was founded by the North Dakota Petroleum Council in 2018 to support our state and the communities in which we operate. Its mission is to provide and support education and outreach opportunities related to the petroleum industry, develop and advance quality of life initiatives, promote and enhance the conservation heritage of North Dakota, and advocate for the industry and its communities to ensure their voice is heard and respected. The NDPF works to achieve this mission through outreach programs, scholarships and education opportunities, and environmental stewardship programs.

The NDPF is governed by a seven-member board of directors and is managed by an executive director and CEO. Volunteers from NDPC member companies, partner organizations, and area communities also help support the NDPF’s various programs and initiatives throughout the year.

The NDPF is supported by revenues from the Williston Basin Petroleum Conference, as well as donations from the North Dakota Petroleum Council, the Foundation’s Board of Directors, industry companies and employees, and grants from the Oil and Gas Research Council and Outdoor Heritage Fund.

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.

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.

Trees and forests are an important resource, providing watershed protection, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and protection for crops, soil and livestock. Currently about 815,000 acres – or 1.8 percent – of North Dakota’s total land area is forested,¹ but annual mortality is on the rise. Inclement weather, flooding, invasive species and insects, lack of species diversity, and over-maturity of trees have impacted and continue to threaten existing forests and conservation plantings.

About 70 percent of North Dakota’s forest land is privately owned, which emphasizes the importance of private landowners in the management of North Dakota’s forest resources. Through Planting for the Future, the NDPF and its partners will build and leverage relationships with landowners to aid in the planting of 340,000 trees on private land over the next two years. More than 30 landowners are currently on the list for trees for 2025 and we anticipate this interest will continue to grow in 2026 and beyond.

Although there are several tree planting initiatives in existence, this program will be unique in that it will leverage the North Dakota Public Service Commission’s Tree and Shrub Mitigation Program’s requirements for companies to replace trees and shrubs removed in the construction of infrastructure while involving landowners in the installation process. In previous years the NDPF relied on independent contractors to assist with the planning and oversight of all projects while landowners provided the laborers (either through volunteers or hired help) to plant trees.

There have been instances, however, where landowners have been unable to solicit volunteers or hire laborers, and last year, the NDPF partnered with a local Soil Conservation District to complete a project in Northwest North Dakota. The NDPF agreed to cover the cost of the trees and 75 percent of the fabric and the landowner would be responsible for the remainder of the invoice, which worked out to be a 75-25% cost-share similar to what is offered through other programs.

This was a positive experience, and in 2025, the NDPF will partner with other SCDs to plant more projects through a 75-25% cost-share with landowners. This partnership will be beneficial as it will increase accessibility and affordability for landowners. While there are many excellent habitat projects coming through the SCDs, some of these are not eligible for assistance through the NRSC due to some of the stricter requirements, such as row spacing, size of project and allowable species. While the NDPF works to adhere to USDA guidelines whenever possible, there are instances that should allow for flexibility and innovation in project design, as well as landowner preference. The NDPF can step in to help fill this gap, ensuring that these valuable projects receive the support they need to succeed.

Because the projects will be implemented in several counties, the specific trees, shrubs and planting methods used will be decided on a case-by-case basis with consideration to USDA guidelines for suitable species, each area’s unique geological and geographical attributes, as well as landowner preference. The species most commonly planted include ponderosa pine,

¹ According to the North Dakota Forest Services’s “North Dakota Forest Action Plan”, which is the most recent data available: <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/ndfs/documents/2020-north-dakota-forest-action-plan-final.pdf>

scotch pine, cedar, lilac, buffaloberry, juniper, caragana, silverberry and willow because of their survivability and because they provide tremendous cover for wildlife.

Trees will be planted using either the knifing and fabric method or the scalping method, which is a mechanical process whereby the soil is peeled back in a wide, shallow furrow. Scalping preparation is more cost-effective and has proven beneficial on agricultural areas because it reduces competition with other vegetation, improves moisture, and reduces insect predation on roots. A chemical additive for weed control will be applied the first year with additional applications contingent on necessity in following years. The planting method is determined by the landowner's preference and climate and soil conditions. The scalping method has been successful in areas that typically experience more moisture, such as the central pothole region of the state, but fabric is often recommended in the western, more arid parts of the state.

As in previous grant rounds, all projects will be monitored for up to two years after the planting year to ensure the survival and success of plantings. The Program will strive to meet (but preferably exceed) an overall 50 percent survival rate, which, according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office Technical Guide, is considered a successful tree planting for wetland and upland wildlife habitat. The Foundation will provide replacement trees to any landowner who is below the 50 percent survival rate or if they request more to achieve an even higher success rate.

The Foundation will provide funds to support habitat contractors, the NDPC will contribute in-kind support from its staff to manage the program, and landowners interested in participating in the project are expected to contribute both in-kind support and monetary funds for supplies, including, but not limited to, 25 percent of the cost of weed barrier.

Is this project part of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan? Yes No

If yes, provide a copy with the application.

Note: Projects involving buildings and infrastructure 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.

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.

Because the NDPF does not have any paid staff, the Program will be overseen and managed by NDPC staff, including Ron Ness, President of the NDPC and CEO of the Foundation, and Tessa Sandstrom, Executive Director for the Foundation. This support will be provided in-kind to the Foundation and the Program.²

Both Ness and Sandstrom have a long history of responsibly managing and executing other grant proposals through the Oil and Gas Research Council and the Outdoor Heritage Fund. As the program has grown, the NDPF has also retained Ron Day to assist in the administration

² In-kind support from NDPC staff will be calculated at a rate of \$50 per hour salary equivalent.

of the Program, including the collection of applications, project approvals, ordering of trees and materials, scheduling of projects, and project monitoring, among other tasks. Ron Day spent more than 30 years in the oil industry, with the last 20 years at the Mandan Refinery. His career was focused mainly in the area for environmental, health and safety, so he brings relevant experience and expertise to the program.

The Program will again retain outside contractors to provide consultation and planting services, including:

David Shockman will serve as a lead habitat consultant for projects deploying the scalping method. David is a farmer from Burleigh County and has served as an advisor and leader for several conservation groups. An avid conservationist, he began planting trees more than 25 years ago for habitat and has planted more than 200,000 trees for the NDPF since 2018.

Ryan Odenbach is the environmental division manager for Baker Energy Services based out of Watford City, ND. Ryan has a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Geology and Technology from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks. From 1998 to 2002 Ryan worked as the Water Quality Coordinator for the Red Lake Watershed District (RLWD) in Thief River Falls, MN. Primary accomplishments included completing several grant-funded environmental projects focusing on surface water quality. Ryan also wrote an EPA reviewed set of Standard Operating Procedures for water quality data collection for the RLWD. From 2002 to 2018, he worked as the Watershed Coordinator/Projects Manager for the Stutsman County Soil Conservation District in Jamestown, ND. In 2018, he entered the oil and gas industry focusing on meeting the environmental needs in the Bakken.

Nathan Jensen is the owner and operator of All American Tree Movers & Nursery, LLC, which was established in 2015 in Bismarck, ND. In addition to his commitment to educating people about proper planting, care, and maintenance of every tree he offers, he is also an avid outdoorsman and conservationist who has dedicated much time and resources to planting trees for habitat prior to joining the NDPF's program.

The NDPF will also retain the assistance of **Dave Nehring** and **Jody Sommer** as needed. Nehring is the owner of Habitat Unlimited in Bismarck, a company that specializes in custom planting strategies geared toward enhancing wildlife habitat on private land. Habitat Unlimited has been doing tree projects since 2005. Sommer is an active conservationist who has volunteered for and served on the board of the Dakota Chapter of Pheasants Forever, which has completed several tree planting projects, and he also serves on the North Dakota Game and Fish Advisory Board.

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.

To remain consistent with requirements entailed in the North Dakota Public Service Commission's Tree and Shrub Mitigation Program, all tree plantings will be monitored for two

years after being planted. Per the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide, projects must meet the 50% survivability rate to be considered a successful wildlife habitat project. Contractors and landowners will be asked to provide status reports and photos and/or videos of their projects for two years following the planting year and filed in their Project Folder. An annual report will be filed with the NDPSC for projects under the auspices of the Tree and Shrub Mitigation Program and all projects' reports will also be provided within grant reports submitted to the Outdoor Heritage Fund for the Planting for the Future program. Reports will include the number of trees planted, observations/survivability updates for each monitoring year and steps taken to improve projects when applicable.

Financial Information

Project Budget – Use the table below 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. Supporting documentation for project expenses, including bids, must be included or application will be considered incomplete.

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
Trees (1)	\$ 443,700.00					\$ 443,700.00
Fabric (2)	\$ 216,830.00				\$ 72,280.00	\$ 289,110.00
Operating Costs (3)		\$ 678,500.00			\$ 221,430.00	\$ 1,025,930.00
Admin Costs (4)		\$ 72,000.00	\$ 17,000.00			\$ 89,000.00
Total Costs	\$ 660,530.00	\$ 750,500.00	\$ 17,000.00		\$ 293,710.00	\$ 1,847,740.00

Note: Costs for seeding, fencing, pipelines, wells, and cover crops cannot exceed NRCS Field Office Tech Guide without justification. Projects involving perimeter fencing must follow NRCS eligibility standards.

Budget Narrative – Use the space below to provide additional detail regarding project expenses.

- 1) \$443,700 is requested in OHF funds for the purchase of trees over two years.
- 2) \$216,830 is requested for the purchase of weed barrier and staples. Participating landowners will provide 25% of the cost of fabric and pins.
- 3) The NDPF will hire contractors and SCDs to design and implement each project, including site preparation for the planting of trees and monitoring throughout the duration of this grant period. SCDs will charge their usual rate and contractors will be paid per tree planted and per lineal foot of fabric laid. Other Project Sponsor's Share

accounts for expenses incurred by the landowner in land preparation and planting, including, but not limited to, use of personal equipment, gasoline, spray, flags, spray paint or other materials. It also includes the in-kind volunteer labor on behalf of the landowner to prepare land, plant trees and install weed barrier.

- 4) Since the NDPF does not have staff, the NDPC has provide staff to operate the program at an estimated wage equivalent of \$50 per hour as well as hire a contractor to assist with the administration of the project. This support will include the collection, filing and approval process of applications for trees; ordering of trees and materials; correspondence with contractors and applicants; and management of budget and grant, among other duties.

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.

This Program has continued to grow both in size and popularity with industry and landowners. Even without advertising or major publicity, the Program receives more applications for trees each year from both returning and new landowners than it can usually accommodate. Oil and gas companies have also been extremely supportive of the program because it aligns with their own stewardship goals and ESG policies and procedures. Because of this success, Planting for the Future has become one of the NDPF’s hallmark programs, and it is expected to remain an important component of the NDPF’s goals and priorities for many years to come.

In terms of funding, the Program continues to see participation from industry companies seeking projects to meet PSC Tree and Shrub Mitigation requirements. In addition, the NDPF raises funds to support the program from its fishing derby and Birds & Birdies events. Furthermore, NDPC member companies have foundations or budgets for philanthropy and are often looking for environmental projects that they can support. The Planting for the Future initiative meets many of their requirements, enabling the continued implementation of the program.

Partial Funding – Indicate how the project will be affected if less funding is available than that requested.

The NDPF is prepared to continue building this program even if it does not secure grant funds, albeit at a smaller scale, and our ability to grow into an impactful, long-lasting program may be hindered without the OHF funding.

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.*

The NDPF has and will continue to recognize the Outdoor Heritage Fund through photos and videos shared on the Foundation’s website and social media channels. Currently, the Outdoor Heritage Fund logo is displayed on the NDPF website, Planting for the Future brochures and

in any other promotional or educational materials distributed and shared. Because these projects are on private land, the Program does not plan to install signage.

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