

# Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Application

## Instructions



After completing the form, applications and supporting documentation may be submitted by e-mail to [ndicgrants@nd.gov](mailto: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: **Grazing Management and Habitat Enhancement**

Name of Organization: **The Nature Conservancy**

Federal Tax ID#: 53-0242652

Contact Person/Title: Rachel Bush, Grassland Strategy Director

Address: 1401 River Road

City: Center

State: North Dakota

Zip Code: 58530

E-mail Address: [rachel.bush@tnc.org](mailto:rachel.bush@tnc.org)

Web Site Address (If applicable): <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/north-dakota/>

Phone: 701-660-0868

List names of co-applicants if this is a joint proposal: N/A

**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)

North Dakota is home to some of the last remaining expanses of native prairie and intact wetlands within the Northern Great Plains. These wetland and grassland complexes support a wide array of wildlife and plant species, are integral to our livestock industry, and support a multitude of outdoor recreation activities. The Nature Conservancy maintains several tracts of native prairie and intact wetlands across North Dakota that are managed for biodiversity and resilience. Working cooperatively with neighboring ranchers to implement grazing on these lands in one of the tools TNC's utilizes to manage our grassland and wetland resources. The Nature Conservancy is seeking \$72,679.50 in funds from The Outdoor Heritage Fund to install additional grazing infrastructure at the Brown Ranch (Ransom County) and John E. Williams Preserves (McLean County). We anticipate completing this work within 3 years. These practices will create fresh water sources for livestock, improve habitat for wildlife species, protect sensitive areas, and create flexibility in the grazing intensity and periods of rest

our cooperating ranchers can employ. The properties where these practices are planned are unique in that they provide critical habitat for two of North Dakota's threatened species, the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid at Brown Ranch and the Piping Plover at John E. Williams preserve. Along with benefiting threatened species, we anticipate having a positive impact on approximately 3,600 acres of grassland and wetland habitat through this proposal as well as improve the quality of habitat hunters encounter during hunting seasons.

**Project Duration:** Three Years

**Indicate the intended schedule for drawing down OHF funds.**

The following schedule is an estimated projection. The actual drawdown schedule may differ.

- 2025 – Research available vendors for the work to be completed by contractors (well decommissioning). Plan 2026 practices to be completed.
- 2026 – Estimate 75% of funding will have been used.
- 2027 – Complete planned practices, estimate 100% of funding utilized, submit final report and close out grant.

**Amount of Grant request: \$ 72,679.50**

**Total Project Costs: \$ 119,098.78**

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

**Amount of Matching Funds: \$ 46,419.28 (39%)**

**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)
\$25,353.50	TNC	In-Kind
\$15,290.78	TNC	Indirect
\$5,775.00	TNC	Cash

**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**

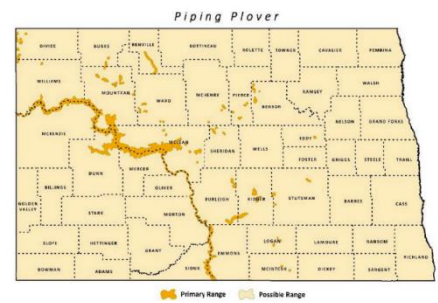
**Organization Information – Briefly summarize your organization’s history, mission, current programs and activities.**

Include an overview of your organizational structure, including board, staff and volunteer involvement. (no more than 300 words)

The Nature Conservancy is a nationally recognized conservation organization that has been active in ND for over 40 years with a mission to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. In North Dakota, The Nature Conservancy works with diverse partners to conserve land and water, provide food and water sustainably and address a changing climate. We are also working and organizing with local communities to leverage nature as a tool to build a brighter future for all North Dakotans. The Nature Conservancy maintains full-time staff at our Cross Ranch Preserve near Center, ND and in Bismarck, ND. These staff manage TNC properties with the cooperation of private landowners across North Dakota and with a diverse array of partners on voluntary conservation. The Nature Conservancy’s goal is to manage native habitats to improve the diversity of plants and animals as well as to maintain and improve the livelihoods of our local communities. The Nature Conservancy uses a variety of methods to maintain grassland health, support biodiversity, and support local communities. All TNC’s properties in North Dakota are open to the public for activities such as hiking and bird watching and many of TNC’s preserves have open hunting access.

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

The Nature Conservancy manages just over 16,000 acres in North Dakota across five preserves. Our John E. Williams Preserve encompasses just over 2,100 acres of alkaline wetlands and adjacent grasslands in McLean County, just east of Turtle Lake. This property is an important nesting area for Piping Plovers in North Dakota, supporting some of the highest breeding concentrations of this species in the world. Piping Plovers are a small migratory shorebird that nest on sandy or gravelly beaches, sandbars or along the shores of alkaline wetlands.



The Nature Conservancy works cooperatively with a neighboring rancher to manage the grasslands at John E. Williams. One of the management recommendations for Piping Plovers in North Dakota (<https://gf.nd.gov/wildlife/id/shorebirds/piping-plover>), includes providing alternate water sources for cattle to reduce the use of shorelines. This proposal and the practices we are requesting funds for will allow for more flexible grazing by our cooperating rancher, provide a fresh water source for cattle, and protect the sensitive shoreline, where Piping Plovers nest May through July. This component of the project addresses 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 will also be addressed by developing, enhancing, conserving and restoring wildlife and fish habitat on private and public lands. Since John E. Williams is open to public hunting this proposal also addresses Directive A; by providing access to private and public lands for sportsmen, including projects that create fish and wildlife habitat and provide access for sportsmen and women.

The Nature Conservancy’s Brown Ranch located in Ransom County, North Dakota encompasses approximately 1,500 acres, adjacent to the Sheyenne National Grasslands. Brown Ranch is within the Sheyenne Delta, one of the most important native prairie landscapes remaining, and one of the few large blocks of remaining tall grass prairie. TNC has built strong partnerships in this area with neighboring landowners, the grazing association, and the U.S. Forest Service and works within this



partnership to promote sustainable grazing practices to improve native species diversity, livestock production, and habitat for grassland birds. TNC works within the Sheyenne Delta to maintain biodiversity and protect critical habitat for the Federally threatened Western Prairie Fringed Orchid. The Sheyenne Delta is one of the few remaining places in the northern Great Plains where Greater Prairie Chickens remain.

Prior to TNC's ownership several artesian wells were developed on Brown Ranch. These wells are not utilized, creating saturated soils and salinity concerns through the continuous output of saline water. We are proposing to decommission three unutilized and problematic wells to protect water quality, reduce soil salinity and prevent inundation of the surrounding areas. However, TNC is interested in maintaining quality water sources for grazing livestock and proposes developing a new watering facility that provides for greater flexibility in grazing rotations. We are requesting funds for a solar pumping plant and watering facility. The proposed practices address Directive B by improving, maintaining and restoring water quality, soil conditions, plant diversity, animal systems and by supporting other practices of stewardship to enhance farming and ranching, as well as Directive C by developing, enhancing, conserving and restoring wildlife and fish habitat on private and public lands. Since Brown Ranch is open to hunting, this portion of the proposal also addresses Directive A by providing access to private and public lands for sportsmen and women, including projects that create fish and wildlife habitat and provide access for sportsmen.

TNC anticipates completing all proposed practices within a three-year timeframe, improving an estimated 3,600 acres, and will be responsible for maintaining these practices after the OHF agreement is completed.

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.**

The Nature Conservancy will provide management, coordination, and administration of this grant. Rachel Bush, Grassland Strategy Director, will manage reporting and administration while Chris Gordon, Cross Ranch Preserve Manager and Eric Hoff, Sheyenne Delta Land Steward will lead and oversee on-the-ground delivery and implementation of the proposed practices.

Rachel Bush, has worked within the conservation field in North Dakota for over 20 years, with much of that work happening in cooperation with farmers and ranchers. She has a long history of delivering, administering, and developing voluntary conservation programs that expand and enhance wildlife habitat, and provide benefits to farmers and ranchers. Rachel has successfully managed state and federal grants as well as OHF grants in a previous role. Rachel is familiar with reporting requirements and timeliness regarding both progress and financial reports.

Annual management of the project area and maintenance of the installed practices will be completed by The Nature Conservancy.

**Evaluation – Describe your plan to document progress and results.**

This project will be considered successful if TNC is able to complete all planned practices within the allotted time frame. TNC conducts annual monitoring of Piping Plovers on John E. Williams Preserve and will be able to document the number of pairs, changes in cattle use, and improved habitat conditions. TNC also conducts annual grassland monitoring, documenting plant species composition on all TNC preserves. From this annual monitoring, overtime, TNC will be able to determine improvements in vegetative composition, percentage of invasive species, and presence absence of species of conservation concern.

**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	Applicants' Match Share (Cash)	Applicant's Match Share (In-Kind)	Applicant's Match Share (Indirect)	Total Each Project Expense
Internal Cross Fence	\$20,790.00	\$0	\$6,930.00	\$0	\$ 27,720.00
Well Decommission	\$17,325.00	\$5,775.00	\$0	\$0	\$ 23,100.00
Solar Pumping Plant	\$14,509.50	\$0	\$4,836.50	\$0	\$ 19,346.00
Water Storage Tank	\$7,125.00	\$0	\$2,375.00	\$0	\$ 9,500.00
Watering Facility	\$9,930.00	\$0	\$3,310.00	\$0	\$ 13,240.00
Project Signs	\$500.00	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$ 500.00
Contracted Services	\$2,500.00	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$ 2,500.00
Project Management & Coordination	\$0	\$0	\$7,902.00	\$0	\$ 7,902.00
Indirect (19.49%)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,290.78	\$15,290.78
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$72,679.50</b>	<b>\$5,775.00</b>	<b>\$25,353.50</b>	<b>\$15,290.78</b>	<b>\$119,098.78</b>

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.**

Practice costs and the budget were developed using [ND NRCS's FY2025 Practice Scenario](#) document.

Cross-Fencing – This OHF proposal requests \$20,790.00 in funds to complete 3.5 miles of internal cross-fence. TNC will provide \$6,930.00 as match. Fencing will follow the NRCS Office Tech Guide Allowable Cost; the full funding rate will be determined by NRCS's practice scenario amount. The grant will provide 75% cost-share payment on fencing. All fencing cost-share will be paid based on a rate per foot of fence and type of fence installed. TNC will provide the remaining 25% cost-share through labor, mileage, and equipment usage.

Well Decommission - This OHF proposal requests \$17,325.00 to decommission three wells. TNC will provide \$5,775.00 as match. TNC will follow the NRCS Office Tech Guide Allowable Cost; the full funding rate will be determined by NRCS's practice scenario amount. The grant will provide 75% cost-share, while TNC will provide the remaining 25% of match.

Solar Pumping Plant - This OHF proposal requests \$14,509.50 to install two solar pumping plants. TNC will provide \$4,836.50 as match. TNC will follow the NRCS Office Tech Guide Allowable Cost; the full funding rate will be determined by NRCS's practice scenario amount. The grant will provide 75% cost-share, while TNC will provide the remaining 25% of match through labor, mileage, and equipment usage.

Water Storage Tank – This OHF proposal requests \$7,125.00 for a 5,000-gallon bulk storage tank to be used with the solar pump at John E. Williams. TNC will provide \$2,375.00 as match. TNC will follow the NRCS Office Tech Guide Allowable Cost; the full funding rate will be determined by NRCS's practice scenario amount. The grant will provide 75% cost-share, while TNC will provide the remaining 25% of match through labor, mileage, and equipment usage.

Watering Facility - This OHF proposal requests \$9,930.00 to install two 2,000-gallon fiberglass water tanks. TNC will provide \$3,310.00 as match. TNC will follow the NRCS Office Tech Guide Allowable Cost; the full funding rate will be determined by NRCS's practice scenario amount. The grant will provide 75% cost-share, while TNC will provide the remaining 25% of match through labor, mileage, and equipment usage.

Project Signs – TNC is requesting \$500.00 in OHF funds for project signage, acknowledging OHF as a project sponsor. Signs will be placed in public parking areas on near access points that are visible to the public.

Contracted Services - This grant proposal is requesting \$2,500.00 for any contracted services required for items such as cultural resources or other specialized services.

Project Management & Coordination- TNC is providing \$7,920.00 in staffing costs as match to cover the administration, management, and coordination of this grant. Costs are estimates of actual staff costs and will be documented through timesheet records.

Indirect Costs – TNC is offering \$15,290.78 as Indirect match. Indirect was calculated using TNC's negotiated indirect rate of 19.49% on requested funds and cash-match.

**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.

Annual maintenance of the installed practices will be completed by The Nature Conservancy. Any maintenance costs associated with the upkeep of these practices will be provided by TNC.

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

Since many of the practices we are requesting funds for are co-dependent (i.e. pump, water tanks) we would be unable to complete the practices as planned if funding was reduced. The proposed practices are part of an existing grazing system and improvements to that system cannot be completed on a partial basis.

**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 Nature Conservancy will acknowledge the Outdoor Heritage Fund through signs placed near public parking areas or near access points that are visible to the public.

**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:

## **ABOUT OHF:**

The purpose of the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund is to provide funding to state agencies, tribal governments, political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, with higher priority given to projects that enhance **conservation** practices in this state by:

**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.

## **EXEMPTIONS**

Outdoor Heritage Fund grants may not be used to finance the following:

- Litigation;
- Lobbying activities;
- Any activity that would interfere, disrupt, or prevent activities associated with surface coal mining operations; sand, gravel, or scoria extraction activities; oil and gas operations; or other energy facility or infrastructure development;
- The acquisition of land or to encumber any land for a term longer than twenty years; or
- Projects outside this state or projects that are beyond the scope of defined activities that fulfill the purposes of Chapter 54-17.8 of the North Dakota Century Code.

OHF funds may not be used, except after a finding of exceptional circumstances by the Industrial Commission, to finance:

- A completed project or project commenced before the grant application is submitted;
- A feasibility or research study;
- Maintenance costs;
- A paving project for a road or parking lot;
- A swimming pool or aquatic park;
- Personal property that is not affixed to the land;
- Playground equipment, except that grant funds may be provided for up to 25% of the cost of the equipment not exceeding \$10,000 per project and all playground equipment grants may not exceed 5% of the total grants per year (see Definitions/Clarifications for how this will be calculated);
- Staffing or outside consultants except for costs for staffing or an outside consultant to design and implement an approved project based on the documented need of the applicant and the expenditures may not exceed 5% of the grant to a grantee if the grant exceeds \$250,000 and expenditures may not exceed 10% of the grant to a grantee if the grant is \$250,000 or less (see Definitions/Clarifications for how this will be calculated);

- A building except for a building that is included as part of a comprehensive conservation plan for a new or expanded recreational project (see Definitions/Clarifications for definition of comprehensive conservation plan and new or expanded recreational project); or
- A project in which the applicant is not directly involved in the execution and completion of the project.

The goal of the Industrial Commission is that at a minimum 15% of the funding received for a biennium will be given priority for recreation projects that meet Directive D.

The following projects are not eligible for funding, unless there is a finding of exceptional circumstances by the Industrial Commission include:

- Construction or refurbishment of indoor/outdoor ice rinks,
- Construction or refurbishment of indoor/outdoor athletic courts and sports fields,
- Other substantially similar facilities.
- Infrastructure that is not part of a comprehensive conservation plan.
- Projects not meeting a minimum funding request of \$2,500.

## **Budget Information**

In-kind services used to match the request for Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars shall be valued as follows:

- Labor costs \$15.00 an hour
- Land costs Average rent costs for the county as shown in the most recent publication of the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Services, North Dakota Field Office
- Permanent Equipment Any equipment purchased must be listed separately with documentation showing actual cost. (For example: playground equipment)
- Equipment usage Actual documentation
- Seed & Seedlings Actual documentation
- Transportation Mileage at federal rate
- Supplies & materials Actual documentation

More categories will be added as we better understand the types of applications that will be submitted. We will use as our basis for these standards other State and Federal programs that have established rates. For example, the North Dakota Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Program has established rates. If your project includes work that has an established rate under another State Program, please use those rates and note your source.

## **Definitions/Clarifications:**

Building - Defined as "A structure with a roof either with walls or without walls and is attached to the ground in a permanent nature."

Comprehensive Conservation Plan - Defined as "A detailed plan that has been formally adopted by the governing board which includes goals and objectives--both short and long term, must show how this building will enhance the overall conservation goals of the project and the protection or preservation of wildlife and fish habitat or natural areas." This does not need to be a complex multi-page document. It could be included as a part of the application or be an attachment.

New and Expanded Recreational Project means that the proposed building cannot be a replacement of a current building. The proposed building must also be related to either a new or expanded

recreational project--either an expansion in land or an expansion of an existing building or in the opportunities for recreation at the project site.

Playground equipment calculation - Only the actual costs of the playground equipment (a bid or invoice showing the amount of the equipment costs must be provided) - cannot include freight or installation or surface materials or removal of old equipment, etc.

Staffing/Outside Consultants Costs - If you are requesting OHF funding for staffing or for an outside consultant, you must provide information in your application on the need for OHF funding to cover these costs. For example, if you are an entity that has engineering staff you must explain why you don't have sufficient staff to do the work or if specific expertise is needed or whatever the reason is for your entity to retain an outside consultant. If it is a request for reimbursement for staff time then a written explanation is required in the application of why OHF funding is needed to pay for the costs of that staff member(s)' time. **The budget form must reflect on a separate line item the specific amount that is being requested for staffing and/or the hiring of an outside consultant.** This separate line item will then be used to make the calculation of 5% or 10% as outlined in the law. Note that the calculation will be made on the grant less the costs for the consultant or staff.

Maintenance – Activities that preserve or keep infrastructure in a given existing condition, including repairs. Repair means to restore to sound condition after damage, to renew or refresh; except repairs due to damage caused by Acts of God.

## Scoring of Grants

**Oral Presentation.** Please note that you will be given an opportunity to make a ten-minute Oral Presentation at a meeting of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board. These presentations are strongly encouraged.

**Open Record.** Please note that your application and any attachments will be open records as defined by law and will be posted on the Industrial Commission/Outdoor Heritage Fund website.

All applications will be scored by the Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board after your ten-minute oral presentation. The ranking form that will be used by the Board is available on the website at <http://www.nd.gov/ndic/outdoor-infopage.htm> .

## Awarding of Grants

All decisions on requests will be reported to applicants no later than 30 days after Industrial Commission consideration. The Commission can set a limit on duration of an offer on each application or if there isn't a specific date indicated in the application for implementation of the project, then the applicant has until the next Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board regular meeting to sign the contract and get the project underway or the commitment for funding will be terminated and the applicant may resubmit for funding. Applicants whose proposals have been approved will receive a contract outlining the terms and conditions of the grant.

## Responsibility of Recipient

The recipient of any grant from the Industrial Commission must use the funds awarded for the specific purpose described in the grant application and in accordance with the contract. The

recipient cannot use any of the funds for the purposes stated under Exemptions on the first page of this application.

If you have any questions about the application, the Commission can be reached at 701-328-3722 or [ndicgrants@nd.gov](mailto:ndicgrants@nd.gov).

Revised: November 4, 2019, April 12, 2023