

# 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: Dakota Prairie Walking Trail

Name of Organization: Ellendale Park District

Federal Tax ID#:

Contact Person/Title: Landrie Schmidt, Deputy Auditor (City of Ellendale) & Park Board Clerk

Address: 55 3rd Ave S – PO Box 602

City: Ellendale

State: North Dakota

Zip Code: 58436

E-mail Address:

Web Site Address (If applicable): <https://www.ellendaleparks.org/>

Phone: (701) 349-3252

List names of co-applicants if this is a joint proposal: City of Ellendale and Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee

**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)

*The Dakota Prairie Walking Trail is a community-driven initiative designed to create a safe, accessible, and scenic recreation corridor in the City of Ellendale, North Dakota. Developed collaboratively by the Ellendale Park District, the City of Ellendale, and the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee, this project will enhance public safety, expand outdoor recreation opportunities, and conserve natural areas consistent with Directive D of the Outdoor Heritage Fund.*

*The project originated from a grassroots effort more than two decades ago, following the tragic death of a local resident who was struck by a vehicle while walking in town. Motivated by a shared desire to improve pedestrian safety and community wellness, local volunteers organized under the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee and have since contributed hundreds of hours toward design*

development, fundraising, and public engagement. Their vision has become a defining community priority.

*The proposed project includes the construction of approximately 0.55 miles of paved and aggregate trail, three pedestrian bridges, a trailhead plaza, and native revegetation and tree plantings designed in accordance with USDA-NRCS standards. Additional amenities will include benches, picnic shelters, and fitness stations to encourage multi-generational use and physical activity. The trail will also feature a railroad heritage-themed plaza honoring Ellendale’s history through interpretive signage and public art.*

*Interstate Engineering, the City of Ellendale’s retained engineering firm, has completed the schematic design and cost opinion for the project (Project No. EC2404128, December 2024). The total estimated project cost is between \$2.5 million and \$3.5 million, with construction expected to begin in spring 2026 and conclude by fall 2027. The Ellendale Park District will serve as the fiscal agent and project manager, while the City of Ellendale will provide permitting, infrastructure coordination, and technical oversight. Contractors will be selected through a competitive RFP process to ensure quality and cost efficiency.*

*Upon completion, the Ellendale Park District will assume long-term ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail. The Park District will work with the local USDA-NRCS office to ensure the health of vegetation and pollinator plantings, while the City will provide infrastructure support and the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee will continue to coordinate volunteer engagement, cleanup events, and community programming.*

*The expected outcomes of the project include improved pedestrian safety, expanded outdoor recreation opportunities, restoration of native habitat, and strengthened community pride and connectivity. The trail will serve as both a practical recreation route and a symbol of resilience—illustrating how local collaboration can transform tragedy into renewal.*

*Through this project, the Ellendale Park District, City of Ellendale, and Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee aim to create a lasting community asset that enhances the natural landscape, supports healthy lifestyles, and contributes to the long-term vitality of Ellendale and its surrounding region.*

**Project Duration:**

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

*The funds for this project will be drawn down beginning in February 2026 through September 2027.*

**Amount of Grant request: \$2,059,810 (MATCH: \$633,425.56)**

**Total Project Costs: \$2,683,235.56**

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

**Amount of Matching Funds: \$**

**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)
\$80,000	Community Fundraisers through the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee	Cash
\$100,000	ND State Legislature (2025) for Paving (Cite Bill No.)	Cash
\$100,000	City of Ellendale – 5-Year Pledge	Cash
\$50,000	Applied Digital	Cash
\$5,000	Ellendale Lions Club	Cash
\$5,000	Invenergy Wind Towers	Cash
\$10,000	City of Ellendale – Purchase Price of County Land for Walking Trail	In-Kind
\$70,800	City of Ellendale – Donated Property Value for Walking Trail	In-Kind
\$18,385.56	City of Ellendale & Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee – Engineering & Schematic Costs	In-Kind
\$84,240	4,212 Hours of Volunteer Labor Provided to the Walking Trail to Date. Volunteer Hours Conservatively Valued at \$20/Hour.	In-Kind
\$100,000	Pledged Private Donation from Community Member	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 Dakota Prairie Walking Trail is the result of a community-led, volunteer-driven effort to create a safe and accessible walking path in Ellendale, North Dakota, following the tragic death of a local resident who was struck by a vehicle while walking in town. In response, a group of dedicated volunteers, led by Lana Schlecht, launched an all-volunteer fundraising and design campaign to make the vision of a community walking trail a reality. Together, volunteers have contributed hundreds of hours toward planning, fundraising, and public engagement to ensure the project reflects the community’s values of safety, wellness, and connection.*

*From the beginning, the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee has worked closely with the Ellendale Park District and the City of Ellendale to advance the project. The City’s long-standing engineering partner, Interstate Engineering, has provided professional support by completing the trail’s site plan, design concepts, and cost estimates. The proposed trail will connect neighborhoods, enhance natural areas, and provide safe access to outdoor recreation for residents and visitors alike.*

*The Ellendale Park District will own and manage the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail upon completion, in coordination with the City of Ellendale and the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee. The Park District is governed by a five-member elected board and supported by community volunteers who assist with maintenance, programming, and beautification. The Park District works collaboratively with the City, local organizations, and residents to ensure long-term stewardship of Ellendale’s parks and outdoor spaces.*

*This project represents the best of small-town North Dakota; neighbors coming together to transform loss into legacy. By combining local leadership, volunteer commitment, and professional expertise, the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail will provide a lasting, safe, and beautiful space that promotes health, healing, and community pride for generations to come.*

### **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.

*The **Ellendale Park District** seeks Outdoor Heritage Fund support to construct the **Dakota Prairie Walking Trail**, a multi-use recreation corridor designed to connect residents and visitors to natural areas, promote community wellness, and preserve native prairie habitat. The project fulfills **Directive D** by creating and conserving natural areas through the development of a walking trail, pollinator plantings, and outdoor recreation spaces that promote stewardship, safety, and healthy living.*

*The Dakota Prairie Walking Trail represents more than two decades of local commitment and collaboration. Community members began advocating for a walking trail over 20 years ago after a local resident was tragically killed by a vehicle while walking in town. This loss galvanized residents to take action to make Ellendale safer and more connected. Since then, an all-volunteer group, now formally organized as the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee, has dedicated hundreds of hours to planning, fundraising, and public engagement to make the project a reality.*

*The Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee, Ellendale Park Board, and City of Ellendale have worked in partnership throughout every phase of development. The City's long-standing engineering partner, Interstate Engineering, has provided professional planning and cost analysis, including the official site plan and opinion of probable cost (Project No. EC2404128, December 2024, attached). These partners have designed a project that reflects both community input and Ellendale's broader vision for sustainable growth and livability.*

*The proposed design includes approximately 0.55 miles of paved and aggregate trail, three pedestrian bridges, a trailhead plaza, and native revegetation and tree plantings designed in accordance with USDA-NRCS specifications. Additional amenities, such as benches, picnic shelters, and fitness stations, will encourage multi-generational use and outdoor activity. The design integrates an existing pollinator garden, and the trailhead plaza will feature a railroad heritage theme celebrating Ellendale's history through public art, interpretive signage, and community storytelling.*

*This is a new construction project, reflecting two decades of community design, fundraising, and planning efforts. The total project cost is estimated to be \$2.5 million for a quality walking trail, with Phase I construction focused on the main trail corridor, trailhead plaza, and revegetation, scheduled for 2026–2027. Funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund will be combined with city dollars, private donations, and local fundraising to begin construction and leverage further investment.*

*Upon completion, the Ellendale Park District will own and manage the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail, working closely with the City of Ellendale and the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee to ensure long-term maintenance and community programming.*

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.

*The Ellendale Park District will serve as the fiscal agent and lead project manager for the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail, working closely with the City of Ellendale to ensure the project is implemented efficiently, on schedule, and in accordance with all Outdoor Heritage Fund requirements. The Park District's five-member elected board will provide governance, financial oversight, and regular progress review throughout the construction period.*

*The City of Ellendale will serve as a co-managing partner, providing logistical, permitting, and infrastructure coordination. The City has retained Interstate Engineering as its official City Engineering firm, and their team will provide all technical services related to the project, including construction administration, quality control, and compliance with state and federal standards. Interstate Engineering brings extensive experience in outdoor recreation and infrastructure design, including numerous park and trail projects across North Dakota that align with Outdoor Heritage Fund objectives. Their prior work on this project includes the schematic site plan and cost opinion completed in December 2024.*

*If Outdoor Heritage Fund support is awarded, construction will begin in the spring of 2026, with an anticipated completion date in the fall of 2027. The Ellendale Park District and City of Ellendale will jointly finalize a construction schedule and work plan prior to ground-breaking, ensuring that milestones and budget targets are clearly defined and met. Contractors will be selected through a competitive request for proposals (RFP) process, consistent with local and state procurement policies, to ensure fairness and cost efficiency.*

*Throughout the project, the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee, which has been instrumental in community engagement, design input, and fundraising, will remain actively involved to ensure the project's original intent and community vision are upheld. Regular coordination meetings between the Park District, City, Interstate Engineering, and the Committee will track progress, address emerging needs, and ensure transparency with residents and donors.*

*Upon completion, the Ellendale Park District will assume long-term ownership and maintenance of the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail, incorporating routine trail upkeep, vegetation management, and signage repair into its annual operational plan. This cooperative structure, leveraging the Park District's oversight, the City's technical capacity, and community volunteerism, will ensure that the project is successfully delivered and sustainably maintained for generations to come.*

**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.

*The Ellendale Park District and the City of Ellendale will jointly evaluate the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail project to ensure accountability, transparency, and measurable outcomes that align with Outdoor Heritage Fund objectives. Both entities will coordinate data collection, documentation, and reporting throughout construction and during the trail's initial years of operation.*

*Project evaluation will combine quantitative and qualitative measures to track progress and long-term community impact. During construction, the Park District and City will monitor work completed against*

*established milestones, including trail and bridge installation, vegetation and tree survival rates, and completion of plaza and amenity features. Progress will be reviewed at regularly scheduled coordination meetings, and outcomes will be documented through annual progress reports and a final report submitted at project completion, which will include detailed expenditure tracking and performance summaries.*

*Key quantitative indicators of success will include:*

- Linear feet of accessible trail constructed, including paved and aggregate surfaces.*
- Acreage of natural areas restored through native plantings and revegetation.*
- Number of trees and shrubs established and maintained in compliance with USDA-NRCS specifications.*
- Volunteer participation hours contributed to planting, clean-up, and maintenance.*
- Community utilization rates, measured through trail counters, event attendance, and observational studies.*

*The qualitative evaluation will focus on user experience, community perception, and the trail's broader impact on safety, recreation, and quality of life. The Park District and City will gather feedback through community surveys, public engagement sessions, and informal interviews conducted during and after the project's completion. These insights will help guide future enhancements and ensure that the trail remains responsive to local needs.*

*Following construction, the Ellendale Park District will maintain annual maintenance and vegetation logs, documenting upkeep activities, trail condition, and habitat health. These records will be reviewed jointly with the City of Ellendale each year to ensure ongoing compliance with NRCS standards and the sustainability of plantings and infrastructure.*

*Through this structured evaluation framework, the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail will be continually assessed for both performance and public benefit. Regular reporting, combined with local engagement and environmental monitoring, will ensure that Outdoor Heritage Fund investments produce lasting, measurable outcomes for the Ellendale community and surrounding natural environment.*

## **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
Land Acquisition	\$	\$10,000	\$	\$	\$	\$10,000
Donated Land	\$	\$	\$70,800	\$	\$	\$70,800
Engineering & Schematic Costs	\$	\$18,385.56	\$	\$	\$	\$18,385.56
Volunteer Planning & Fundraising Support	\$	\$	\$84,240	\$	\$	\$84,240
Main Stem Trail	\$3,669	\$100,000	\$	\$	\$	\$103,669
South Loop Trail	\$59,780	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$59,780
Gravel Trail	\$22,360	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$22,360
Parking Lot	\$71,995	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$71,995
Entry Plaza	\$262,006	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$262,006
Pump Track	\$50,000	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$50,000
Playground – Themed	\$160,000	\$140,000	\$	\$	\$	\$300,000
General Site Furnishings	\$48,750	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$48,750
Small Picnic Shelter	\$42,719	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$42,719
Large Picnic Shelter	\$68,020	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$68,020
Pedestrian Bridges	\$180,000	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$180,000
Fitness Stations	\$53,900	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$53,900
Public Art	\$0	\$200,000	\$	\$	\$	\$200,000
Entry Sign/Monument	\$150,000	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$150,000
Revegetation & Plantings	\$26,023	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$26,023
General Conditions	\$204,902	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$204,902
Professional Design & Engineering Services	\$245,883	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$245,883
Owner's Contingency	\$409,805	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$409,805
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$2,059,812</b>	<b>\$468,385.56</b>	<b>\$155,040</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$2,683,237.56</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.**

**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.

*The long-term sustainability of the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail will be ensured through a partnership between the Ellendale Park District and the City of Ellendale, with continuing community involvement from the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee. After construction, the Ellendale Park District will assume full ownership and responsibility for the operation, maintenance, and management of the trail as part of its parks system.*

*The Park District's annual operating budget, supported by local tax revenues and periodic community fundraising, will cover routine needs such as vegetation care, surface repairs, snow removal, signage, benches, and shelters. The City of Ellendale will remain an active partner by assisting with infrastructure-related items (e.g., drainage, right-of-way, and access improvements) and coordinating work that aligns with municipal maintenance cycles, creating efficiencies and cost savings.*

*To support long-term habitat health, the Ellendale Park District will work with the local USDA-NRCS office to ensure trail vegetation and plantings remain healthy. This collaboration will include technical assistance for site preparation, species selection, and establishment; periodic inspections; reseeding or overseeding when needed; and adaptive management to sustain native grasses, trees, and pollinator plantings over time. Local volunteers, coordinated through the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee, will assist with planting days, clean-up events, and public programming to keep community engagement strong.*

*For enhancements beyond routine maintenance, the Park District and City will seek supplemental funding from sources such as the North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department, the North Dakota Forest Service (for tree replacement and community forestry support), and private or corporate foundations interested in health, conservation, and outdoor recreation. Modest revenue from community events (e.g., trail days, fun runs) may also be used to augment the maintenance reserve.*

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

*If the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail project were to receive partial funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, the Ellendale Park District and the City of Ellendale would proceed with the project using a right-sized approach to ensure that available dollars are used efficiently while still achieving the project's core objectives of safety, accessibility, and community benefit.*

*In this scenario, project partners would prioritize the most essential components, such as the main trail corridor, pedestrian bridges, and native revegetation areas, to establish a functional and high-quality walking route that connects key destinations and restores natural habitat. Secondary elements, such as expanded plaza features, additional fitness stations, or enhanced art installations, could be deferred to later phases once further funding is secured.*

*Alternatively, if right-sizing the project scope does not adequately preserve the integrity or long-term usability of the trail, the Park District and City would initiate additional community fundraising to close the funding gap. The Dakota Prairie Walking Trail Committee, which has a strong history of successful*

local fundraising and volunteer engagement, would lead these efforts through donor campaigns, sponsorships, and local events aimed at completing the project as originally envisioned.

Regardless of the funding level awarded, the Ellendale Park District and City of Ellendale are fully committed to constructing a quality, durable, and community-centered walking trail that meets engineering standards and environmental best practices. The partners have demonstrated strong collaboration, prudent fiscal management, and the flexibility necessary to adapt the project scope or timeline to available resources, ensuring that the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail is completed in a way that honors community effort and achieves lasting impact.

**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 Ellendale Park District and the City of Ellendale will proudly recognize the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) as a key partner in the development of the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail through multiple forms of public acknowledgment.

A permanent sign will be installed at the trailhead plaza and parking area prominently displaying the Outdoor Heritage Fund logo and language acknowledging the North Dakota Industrial Commission's contribution to the project. The sign will be designed to complement the overall trail aesthetics and remain in place for the life of the project as a visible and lasting acknowledgment of OHF's support.

In addition to signage, the Park District and City will host a public ribbon-cutting ceremony upon completion of the trail. Members of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board and Industrial Commission will be formally invited to attend and participate in the event, which will include recognition remarks, a guided trail walk, and local media coverage. The event will serve as both a celebration of the project's completion and a demonstration of gratitude for the Fund's investment in Ellendale's outdoor recreation and conservation infrastructure.

The Outdoor Heritage Fund will also be recognized across all public communications, including press releases, newspaper articles, social media posts, and the City and Park District websites. All digital and printed materials related to the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail will include the OHF logo and acknowledgment of its partnership.

Through these efforts, the Ellendale Park District and City of Ellendale will ensure that the Outdoor Heritage Fund's contribution is honored, highly visible, and associated with the enduring success of the Dakota Prairie Walking Trail.

**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:

N/A

## **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