

Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Application



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:

- A. Litigation;
- B. Lobbying activities;
- C. 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;
- D. The acquisition of land or to encumber any land for a term longer than twenty years; or
- E. 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.

NO CONSIDERATION:

In addition to those specific items in law that are ineligible for funding, in the absence of a finding of exceptional circumstances by the Industrial Commission, the following projects will NOT receive consideration for funding:

- 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 Budget Form 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 Budget Form 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 Budget Form 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.

Application Deadline

Applications for this grant round cycle are due on **October 1, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. CT**. All information, including attachments, must be submitted by that date. See instructions below for submission information.

Instructions

Please download this Word document (available on the Industrial Commission/Outdoor Heritage Fund Program website at <http://www.nd.gov/ndic/outdoor-infopage.htm>) to your computer and provide the information as requested. You are not limited to the spacing provided except in those instances where there is a limit on the number of words. After completing the application, save it and attach it to an e-mail and send it to outdoorheritage@nd.gov or print it and mail it to the address noted in the next paragraph.

Attachments in support of your application may be sent by mail to North Dakota Industrial Commission, ATTN: Outdoor Heritage Fund Program, State Capitol – Fourteenth Floor, 600 East Boulevard Ave. Dept. 405, Bismarck, ND 58505 or by e-mail to outdoorheritage@nd.gov. The application and all attachments must be received or postmarked by the application deadline. You will be sent a confirmation by e-mail of receipt of your application.

You may submit your application at any time prior to the application deadline. Early submission is appreciated and encouraged to allow adequate time to review your application and ensure that all required information has been included. Incomplete applications may not be considered for funding. Any item noted with an * is required.

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.

Name of Organization * North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts (NDASCD)

Federal Tax ID# * 45-0277476

Contact Person/Title * Brian Johnston – Chief Executive Officer

Address * 3310 University Avenue

City * Bismarck

State * ND

Zip Code * 58504

E-mail Address * ndascd@lincolnoakes.com

Web Site Address (Optional)

Phone * 701-223-8518

Fax # (if available)

List names of co-applicants if this is a joint proposal

MAJOR Directive: (select the Directive that best describes your grant request)*

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;

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

Additional Directive: (select the directives that also apply to the grant application purpose)*

Choose all that apply

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

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Type of organization: (select the category that describes your organization)*

State Agency

Political Subdivision

Tribal Entity

Tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation.

Project Name* North Dakota Statewide Conservation Tree Planting Initiative

Abstract/Executive Summary. An Executive Summary of the project stating its objectives, expected results, duration, total project costs and participants.* (no more than 500 words)

Conservation tree planting is an important component of agricultural systems and improves rural life in the northern plains. Field windbreaks reduce soil erosion during years of drought, reduce water evaporation from adjacent cropland and increase crop yields. Similarly, other conservation plantings are designed to stabilize streambanks, filter water runoff from adjacent agricultural lands, provide wildlife habitat, protect stretches of road from snow accumulation, provide winter protection for wildlife and livestock, or protect rural homes from snow and wind. These resources are critical for the present and future needs of residents that live on the rural landscape.

The NDSCTPI will engage stewards to embrace conservation practices that promote the ecological services trees provide. The initiative will focus on encouraging and providing financial assistance to implement agroforestry practices in North Dakota including farmstead, feedlot and field windbreaks; forestry, wildlife and riparian plantings, buffers, and living snow fences.

This application is being brought forward based on the additional funding needs that have exceeded the original submission on December 2nd, 2013 to the Outdoor Heritage Fund. Funding allocation will only encompass the remaining 2016 planting season instead of its original 2017 completion date.

The ND Statewide Tree Planting Initiative has grown based on the publicity of the ND Outdoor Heritage Fund exposure, working with our partners promoting tree plantings, Soil Conservation District promotion with landowners, public press releases, and visual landscape changes with tree and fabric installation in our ND counties.

The grant request is for \$2,050,000.00 million for a continued two year program funding appropriations, with total project costs expected to exceed \$4.1 million. The landowner's obligation will be 40% of the practice installation cost and maintenance outlined within a 10 year agreement.

Project Duration: * January 2016 till December 2018 (Planting Season 2017 and 2018)

Amount of Grant request \$ * 2,050,000.00 Million

Total Project Costs \$* 4,133,704.00 Million

(Note that in-kind and indirect costs can be used for matching funds)

A minimum of 25% Match Funding is required. Amount of Matching Funds

\$*2,083,704.00 Million

Please indicate if the matching funds will be in-kind, indirect or cash.

Cash Match: \$1,361,200.00 million paid directly by the producer for the remaining cost share on a basis of 60/40.

InKind Cost: \$722,504.00 will be contributed by the ND Soil Conservation Districts in 55 counties to implement these practices through technical labor.

Source(s) of Matching Funds*

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.

Landowners will be required to pay for a percentage (40% of Total Cost) of the practice they are implementing through the installation of a tree establishment practice.

Certifications *

X I certify that this application has been made with the support of the governing body and chief executive of my organization.

X I certify that if awarded grant funding none of the funding will be used for any of the exemptions noted on Page 1 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 Association of Soil Conservation Districts (NDASCD) have been encouraging farmers, ranchers, and other landowners and occupiers to adopt conservation practices on their land which would best provide for the control and prevention of wind and water erosion starting from 1937. NDASCD uses a delivery mechanism by facilitating programs on a locally led process within our 55 Soil Conservation District offices represented throughout the state.

The NDASCD Board of Directors is represented by two directors from each of the five areas elected by the Board of Supervisors representing the 55 Soil Conservation Districts. The NDASCD Board of Directors employs a Chief Executive Officer to facilitate the organization’s mission statement. The Board of Directors works in partnership with the North Dakota Conservation District Employees (NDCDEA) within the ND Soil Conservation Districts to provide technical assistance, educational outreach, and cost share base programs.

Our Mission Statement:

- To promote partnerships among Soil Conservation Districts to better enable them to carry out the duties of their position and to provide assistance in coordinating the efforts of the SCD Supervisors, Districts, NDCDEA, NDSU-SCC and USDA Agencies in achieving their conservation goals.
- A vehicle for communication for Conservation Districts to effectively exchange information and ideas resulting in better coordination and effectiveness of district programs on a local, state, regional, and national level.

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. Please 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. Please note that 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.

This is not a replacement program for current federal conservation tree planting programs including USDA NRCS - Environmental Quality Incentives Program or Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program or USDA Farm Service Agency's - CRP Continuous Sign-Up for trees. This program is oriented primarily to that growing number of landowners who do not qualify for other forms of cost-share or whose specific conservation practice does not attract funding due to federal priorities.

This would be additional funding being requested to continue with the unmet tree planting needs in the state of North Dakota. This cost share program has allowed a vast number of landowners to come forward for financial assistance to address their resource concerns. This increased awareness has brought forth a better working relationship within our partners by connecting the dots on how we can accomplish more when working together.

Directive ^B~~A~~: Field windbreaks reduce soil erosion during years of drought, reduce water evaporation from adjacent cropland and increase crop yields. Similarly, other conservation plantings are designed to stabilize streambanks, filter water runoff from adjacent agricultural lands, provide wildlife habitat, protect stretches of road from snow accumulation, provide winter protection for wildlife and livestock, or protect rural homes from snow and wind.

Directive C: Trees are vital for many different species of wildlife whether it be for providing shelter, winter thermal protection, travel corridors and shade in the summer. Wildlife tree plantings also provide a food source that is needed for survival.

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

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

The program's tree planting opportunities will be targeted at the entire State of North Dakota. Willing landowners, both public and private, will be encouraged to participate. A continued 2-year financial committed effort is required to attain the program's goals.

The NDASCD will continue coordinate the project at the state level with program partners utilizing the leadership of the Chief Executive Officer, President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and the Board of Directors consisting of two elected members from each of the five areas or regions. The NDASCD will work alongside with the Conservation District Employees to see implementation of cost share dollars are being utilized effectively within their county.

The NDASCD Chief Executive Officer will provide an effective tracking and reporting mechanism for project resource information, location and accounting. Conservation District Employees will be required to submit timely their payment applications along with monitoring producer implementation. The Board of Directors will be utilized to provide oversight and coordination for the program.

Partners will focus on developing a closer working relationship through a cooperative program to attain mutual goals. NDASCD has worked for years with federal and state conservation programs and they know what works and what doesn't. They will ensure grant funds are spent appropriately and with a high level of accountability. They will also develop a framework that is easy to understand and navigate for public and private landowners seeking cost-share assistance. The process should be duplicable for future state funded conservation efforts.

Funding for the program can be used to leverage other sources of federal, state, private and local funds. The cost for replacement trees and shrubs are not included in this program and will be the responsibility of the landowner, who will also be required to maintain the project through a signed 10 year agreement.

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

How will you tell if the project is successful? 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.

North Dakota's SCDs work collaboratively with a wide range of natural resource partners on a local, state regional and national level. The development of a NDSCTPI will help the NDASCD develop an even a closer working relationship between local, state and federal agencies and enable partners to pool resources to accomplish conservation tree planting needs, while demonstrating the efficiency of interagency cooperation.

Accomplishing strategic conservation needs in the state that will also result in continued protection of vital soil, water, air, and wildlife resources. Conservation of these natural resources benefits all citizens of North Dakota.

Increasing tree planting in North Dakota to enhance the quality of life in communities and in rural areas. Conservation tree planting records exist at the county and state level. An important measure of success is the increase in conservation tree planting practices and tree planting numbers to combat the accelerating amount of tree removal. The NDASCD does not promote indiscriminant tree planting, but follows NRCS practice specifications - national and state standards. SCDs recognize that conservation tree planting is not the answer for every problem and there are places where trees should not be planted, they also embrace the philosophy of the right tree, in the right place, for the right reasons.

We can evaluate success from our current appropriation with the ND Outdoor Heritage Fund. Since being awarded \$1,878,000.00 from the first round allocation on December 2nd, 2013 with a project duration till 2017. We will currently exhaust financial capacity to move into the 2017 planting season without a new funding allocation.

2015 Tree Planting Completed

- ❖ Two grant round deadlines in 2014 for landowners totaled 561 approved applications for spring of 2015 plantings. (October 31st, 2014 & January 30th, 2015)
- ❖ 1,948,679 linear feet of trees and fabric applied to the ND landscape to address wind erosion, water quality, farmstead, and wildlife habitat.
- ❖ Total cost to install 1,948,679 linear feet of trees and fabric in 2015
 - \$1,563,145.00 total cost
 - \$941,654.00 of Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars paid to landowners 60%
 - \$621,491.00 producer cost for 40% contribution
 - \$354,169.00 of InKind Cost contributed to labor paid directly by each county office for technical support to implement practices.

2016 Tree Planting Season Allocation

- ❖ 1 grant round for 2016 planting season for 275 approved applications (October 2015)
- ❖ 1,419,234 linear feet of trees and fabric to be applied in Spring 2016
- ❖ Total cost to install 1,419,234 linear feet of trees and fabric in 2016
 - \$1,174,938.00 total cost
 - \$704,962.80 Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars paid to landowners 60%
 - \$469,975.20 producer cost for 40% contribution
 - \$364,794.00 of InKind Cost contributed to labor paid directly by each county office for technical support to implement practices.

Financial Information

ATTACHMENT: Project Budget – Using the standard project budget format that is available on the website at <http://www.nd.gov/ndic/outdoor-infopage.htm> , please include a detailed total project budget that specifically outlines all the funds you are requesting. Note that a minimum of 25% match funding is required.*

The project budget should identify all matching funds, funding sources and indicate whether the matching funds are in the form of cash or in-kind services. Effective July 1, 2015 no State General Fund dollars can be used for a match unless funding was legislatively appropriated for that purpose. As noted on the standard project budget format, certain values have been identified for in-kind services. Please utilize these values in identifying your matching funds. **NOTE: No indirect costs will be funded.**

X I certify that a project budget will be sent to the Commission*

Sustainability – Indicate how the project will be funded or sustained in future years. *

Include information on the sustainability of this project after all the funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund has been expended and whether the sustainability will be in the form of ongoing management or additional funding from a different source.

Conservation tree planting is an important long-term land management tool. Trees provide opportunities to integrate productivity and profitability with environmental stewardship and result in healthy, sustainable agricultural systems that can be passed on to future generations. Trees help purify the air by absorbing pollutants; protect property and livestock from wind; enhance natural beauty; reduce soil erosion and improve crop yields; provide food and cover for wildlife; increase property values; reduce water evaporation; preserve winter moisture; and improve water quality. Trees control drifting snow; reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide; reduce heating and cooling costs; improve livestock weight, reduce calving losses; and increase our supply of renewable resources. Conservation tree plantings provide benefits for decades and make agricultural systems more sustainable by protecting crops and livestock, conserving natural resources, improving human environments, and providing sources of income.

Individual conservation tree plantings will be managed to ensure effectiveness by the landowner. Overall survival requirements will be outlined within the landowner agreements as well as unacceptable land management practices - burning, grazing or destructive tree removal. As the landowners will be 40% financially vested in their project, they have an incentive to ensure the practice is successful. Additional assistance by partnering agencies can help landowners identify potential insect and disease or long-term forest health issues. ND Conservation Districts Employees will be on site for contract reviews to ensure proper management of the tree plantings are being fulfilled within the contract requirements.

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
Heritage Funding	\$2,000,000.00	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$2,000,000.00
Landowner Obligation 60/40 (Financial)	\$	\$1,361,200.00	\$	\$	\$	\$1,361,200.00
District Employee Labor (Technical)	\$	\$	\$722,504.00	\$	\$	\$722,504.00
Administrative Staffing (.025%)	\$50,000.00	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$50,000.00
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total Costs	\$2,050,000.00	\$1,361,200.00	\$722,504.00	\$	\$	\$4,133,704.00

Administrative Staffing to cover the 55 Soil Conservation Districts that would encompass application reviews, state reporting, State Historical Preservation Office filing requirements, contract maintenance, daily correspondence with soil conservation staff, payment application processing and coordinating partnership efforts to promote grant. Administrative funding was calculated on a .25% instead of the allowed 5%.

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.

2015

Tree Planting Season

Enhancing the ND Landscape



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

A reduced level of funding would simply result in fewer landowners served and less overall tree planting accomplishment. The level of accomplishment can be moved up or down depending on available funds. To make this effective, successful statewide program, there must be enough grant funds available to encourage continuous participation and allow enough time for proper land preparation for adequate spring installation.

Partnership Recognition - If you are a successful recipient of Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars, how would you recognize the Outdoor Heritage Fund partnership? * Please note it is a requirement that there be signage at the location of the project acknowledging the funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund if appropriate for your project.

The Outdoor Heritage Fund would be listed as primary sponsor of this conservation initiative when working with producers. The Outdoor Heritage Fund will have visible recognition on advertisements, pamphlets, county newsletters, and statewide press releases. Producer contract agreements will have the Outdoor Heritage Fund logo displayed. Financial contribution statements will indicate financial allocation being awarded on behalf of the recipient from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. Soil Conservation Districts annually host a number of tours and meetings showcasing best management practices. The SCD's would utilize this time to highlight the accomplishment of our partnerships through technical and financial contributions.

Scoring of Grants

All applications will be scored by the Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board after your ten-minute oral presentation. The ranking sheet(s) 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. Please note the appropriate sample contract for your organization on the website at <http://www.nd.gov/ndic/outdoor-infopage.htm> that set forth the general provisions that will be included in any contract issued by the North Dakota Industrial Commission. Please indicate if you can meet all the provisions of the sample contract. If there are provisions in that contract that your organization is unable to meet, please indicate below what those provisions would be. *

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 or have trouble submitting the application, please contact Karlene Fine at 701-328-3722 or kfine@nd.gov

Revised: June 10, 2015