

Contract No. 001-015
“Trail Restoration & Improvement Program”
 Submitted by ND Parks & Recreation Department
 Principal Investigator: Matthew Gardner
 Directives D, A & B

PARTICIPANTS

Sponsor	Cost Share
Federal funds	\$ 73,213
ND Parks & Recreation Dept.	\$ 20,456
Subtotal Cash Cost Share	\$93,669
ND Parks & Recreation Dept.	\$ 6,900
Volunteer Labor	<u>\$ 30,060</u> (in-kind)
Subtotal In-kind Cost Share	\$36,960
North Dakota Industrial Commission	<u>\$112,000</u>
Total Project Cost	\$242,629

Project Schedule – 24 months
 Contract Date – 3/24/2014
 Start Date – 3/25/2014
 Completion Date – 12/31/2016*

Project Deliverables:
 Status Report: August 31, 2014 ✓
 Status Report: November 30, 2014 ✓
 Status Report: June 30, 2015
 Status Report:* December 31, 2015 ✓
 Final Report: December 31, 2016* ✓

OBJECTIVE/STATEMENT OF WORK:

The goal of the project is to enhance recreational use and access through the construction of sustainable trails and easement acquisition in the Turtle Mountains and Sheyenne River Valley. The project represents a partnership between the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department, the North Dakota Forest Service, and the Sheyenne River Valley and Dakota Prairie Chapter of the North Country Trail Association. OHF dollars will be used primarily for easements and supplies and materials (Boardwalk, kiosks, signing materials and gravel).

The goal of the Turtle Mountains State Forest Trail project is to implement sustainable trail building and armoring techniques to improve access, user experience and resource protection. This will be accomplished by rerouting trails around sensitive wetlands, repairing resource damage areas and building connecting routes to expand access. Results include trail armoring, re-routing trails to more suitable areas, implement water mitigating techniques such as culverts, boardwalks and correct trail slopes to promote sheet water flow across the trail and limit the effects of erosion. Secondary goals would be to improve trailhead information centers, user access points and overall trail signage to accurately direct users to create a positive recreational experience.

The goal of the North Country National Scenic Trail project is to acquire private landowner easements to convert on-road routes to off-road trail segments to ensure a more enjoyable and safe recreational experience to users. In conjunction with easement acquisition, the North Country Trail Association will implement sustainable trail building and armoring techniques to restore and improve current and new sections of trail on private and public lands. As of now there are currently (222 miles) of trail off road with needs of acquiring (250 miles) to complete the North Dakota section. Within the last two years 29

miles of private easements have been secured which lead to volunteers building 29 miles of new trail. This project's focus area is on the section of trail that runs from Fort Abercrombie to Lake Ashtabula. Trail easements will greatly improve the connectivity of the trail furthering the big picture goal for the North Dakota section of the North Country National Scenic Trail.

STATUS:

The Original Request was for \$132,456. The awarded amount was \$112,000. As a result of the partial funding the trail identification and signage from Lake Ashtabula to the McCluskey Canal was removed. In addition there was a reduction in the purchase of signing, and building materials and less puncheons, boardwalks, fence stiles and kiosks. The Department is seeking additional funding from the Garrison Diversion Conservation District. If that funding is received then the project will be completed as originally submitted. Contract 001-015 has been executed

8/27/14 - The Sheyenne Valley and Dakota Prairie Grasslands Chapters of the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) have been working hard on their projects this summer. Even given the wet spring and late start into the work season, the volunteers logged over 1,000 working hours on the Outdoor Heritage Fund Project. These hours do not include trail mowing, general trail maintenance and the work being done by the Army Corps of Engineers and the US Forest Service on other sections of the trail in North Dakota. There is a diverse group of volunteers working on this project that include NCTA members from ND and other states, Doosan volunteers and Boy Scouts; including 52 volunteers in all. Their work activities even included two Eagle Scout projects. The Turtle Mountain Trail project is set to be bid out this winter with construction to start summer 2015. The North Dakota trail crew spent some time in the Turtle Mountains with a GPS finalizing the best sustainable routes around the wet areas to better develop the bid packet this winter. A detailed report is posted under the OHF updates.

11/26/14 - The Sheyenne Valley and Dakota Prairie Grasslands Chapters of the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) worked hard this fall to finish up some last minute projects before freeze up. Since the last report period at the end of July, the volunteers have logged 1,220 working hours on the Outdoor Heritage Fund Project. That brings the total volunteer hours by the NCTA to 2,406 hours. Keep in mind these hours do not include trail mowing, general trail maintenance and the work being done by the Army Corps of Engineers and US Forest Service on other sections of the trail in North Dakota. In regards to the Turtle Mountain Trail Project final layout of the trail reroutes around the wet areas is complete. Some rock armoring was done with the nice late fall weather and more will be done during the summer of 2015. A detailed report is posted under the OHF updates

12/23/15 - The Sheyenne Valley and Dakota Prairie Grasslands Chapters of the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) put in many volunteer hours in 2015 working on trails. Since the last reporting period the volunteers have logged 1,201 working hours on the Outdoor Heritage Fund Project. That brings their total volunteer hours to 3,612. These hours only include time spent working on the OHF project on general trail maintenance.

The Turtle Mountain Trail project construction part of the Outdoor Heritage Fund was completed in Fall, 2015. The addition of culverts, corduroys and bridge rebuilds through wet areas and re-routes to more sustainable locations opened up over 10 miles of multi-use trails in the Turtle Mountain State Forest.

North Country Trail

- Again in 2015 the NCT chapters trained and provided safety training to numerous volunteers which included NCT members, Doosan volunteers and Boy Scouts. The NCT chapters led these volunteers during several full- and part-time day work projects.

- Two easements were secured in the Sheyenne River Valley securing 4 more miles for the North Country Trail.
- 2 - 24' boardwalks were installed and 2 - 16' boardwalks were built to be installed in Spring 2016.
- Trailhead and trail signs were installed.
- Moved materials to remote construction sites and built 23 puncheon sections totaling 1,395 feet.
- 5,595 yards of rough trail surface were smoothed to appropriate tread standards.

Additional NCT Activities

- Working with US Forest Service to locate and construct connector trail in Sheyenne National Grasslands.
- Hosted National Public Lands Day Event and the North Dakota Trails Conference on the trail.

Turtle Mountain State Forest Trails

- Trail layout and design was completed in 2014.
- The construction phase of the project was completed in fall of 2015.
- 1 mile of new trail was constructed.
- Installed 20 structures which included corduroys, culverts and some existing bridge repair.
- Cleared, brushed out and swamped 9+ miles of the trail corridor.
- North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department and North Dakota Forest Service are planning a trail event in 2016 on the newly rebuilt and opened trail system.

A one-year no cost extension was requested and granted. Changes are noted with an *.

1/30/2017 - The Sheyenne Valley and Dakota Prairie Grasslands Chapters of the North Country Trail Association worked hard during the course of this Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) project improving the North Dakota section of the North Country Trail (NCT). Since spring 2014 they have logged 3,612 hours of volunteer labor for a value of over \$54,000. They exceeded their match requirements by 1,608 hours. This project would not have been successful without the work of their dedicated volunteers.

The Turtle Mountain trail improvements made significant improvements to the trail system in the area. The trails were inundated with water caused by raising water tables and beaver activity, but through this Outdoor Heritage Project the trails are open and usable again. \$107,447.86 of federal funds were brought into this project to match OHF dollars.

North Country Trails

- During the course of this project over 75 volunteers contributed their time. Volunteers included NCT members, Doosan volunteers and Boy Scouts. The NCT chapters led these volunteers during several full and part time day work projects (with no accidents).
- 5 easements were acquired which added 6.5 miles of new trail.
- 32 puncheons were added totaling 2,041 feet to get trails through wet low lying areas.
- Surfaced 5.5 miles of trails
- Installed 200+ Carsonite trail marker posts.
- 2 - 24' and 2 - 16' boardwalks were constructed and installed.
- Identified, marked, cleared, and signed 6.5 miles of new trail.

Turtle Mountain State Forest Trails

- Constructed 2+ miles of new trail.

- Installed 20 structures which included corduroys, culverts and turnpikes.
- Improved trail connection and trailhead kiosks to 4 trailheads.
- Signed 17 miles of trail.

Related Activities

- US Forest Service completed a crucial connector from new trail constructed with OHF funds to existing NCT trail in the Sheyenne National Grasslands.
- Held National Public Lands Day events on the NCT and Turtle Mountain trails.
- North Dakota Department of Transportation installed Trail Crossing signs on Highway 18 across from Ekre Grassland Preserve and trailhead wayfinding signs in southwest North Dakota.

This project is now completed. Because of the considerable volunteer support \$6,896.63 was not used and will be available for other projects. This contract file is now closed.

Updated 1/31/2017