

OHF FINAL REPORT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Project Number:	001-016
Recipient:	ND Parks and Recreation Department
Award Amount:	\$129,000.00
Total Project Costs:	\$287,376.34
Total OHF Funds Received	\$129,000.00

Goals of Project:

1. Conserve and enhance existing prairies, woodlands, tree and shrub plantings, within parklands, preserves and natural areas to maximize biodiversity of plant and animal species.
2. To provide direction, technical assistance and funding for natural resource activities that are integral to and integrated within parklands, preserves, and natural area uses.
3. Effective control and eradication of noxious weeds and invasive species on parklands, preserves, and natural areas.

Work Accomplished:



Native Prairie Restoration and Enhancements Strategies and Best Management Practices:

A multi-site, long term, collaborative project with specific goal to restore, enhance, and sustain a healthy, diverse and sustainable native prairie thus enhancing the biodiversity on parklands, preserves and natural areas.

Prairie Restoration and Enhancement Tasks Completed April 2014-June 2019

- Development and updating of prairie restoration plans conducted by department fulltime staff.
- Site preparation utilizing disking, tillage and chemical.
- Seeding accomplished through broadcasting and drill Seeding by fulltime and contracted staff.
- Post-seeding weed control accomplished through mechanical and chemical applications.
- Prairie Restoration Monitoring: Conducted by fulltime department staff.

Woodlands – Tree and Shrub Plantings Strategies and Best Management Practices:

A multi-site, long term, collaborative project with a specific goal to increase woodland and tree –shrub habitat acres and biodiversity on parklands, preserves and natural areas. The project purpose is to create and maintain a mosaic of woodland habitats through the planting of a diverse selection of native trees and shrubs.

The woodland creation and tree and shrub plantings strategies and best management practices included the use of a variety of practices ranging from site preparation, planting and monitoring.

Woodland and Tree and Shrub Planting Tasks Completed April 2014-June 2019

- Countless hours spent throughout the period planting, watering, weeding, taking, tubing and fencing by department hearts.



- Weed control via chemical and mechanical means took place at all state park, recreation and natural areas.
- Deer fencing was installed at many state parks including FALSP, CRSP, SCSP, LCSP, LMSP. The University of Mary assisted with installing deer fence at FALSP.
- Tree Planting and Tree Risk Assessments took place annually. Tree Risk assessments and removal of high risk trees is an ongoing task. Highest number of high tree risk removal occurred at FLSP, CRSP and FSSP,



Noxious Weed and Invasive Species Control Strategies and Best Management Practices:

A multi-site, long term, collaborative project with specific goals to control noxious weeds as required by state law; reduce nonnative invasive plants; continue the implementation an integrated pest management system to reduce the use of chemical controls. The noxious weeds of primary concern include leafy spurge, Canada thistle, wormwood and hounds tongue. To date, all noxious weeds within major parks have been inventoried and mapped.

Two seasonal biological technicians and one FTE biologist operate John Deere Gator UTV units. The two units are equipped with a 75-gallon boom-less sprayer with an

independent 15-gallon hand wand tank that is connected with 75 feet of hose. In addition, a truck mounted sprayer unit was also purchased through Department special funds. A GPS was used to map new infestations of weeds found in the field. The technicians are provided weed maps for each park and track spraying efforts on pesticide application forms. In areas that cannot be accessed easily with one of the units or on steep hillsides, backpack sprayers are used. Partners include ND Forest Service,

Noxious Weed Task Completed April 2014-June 2019

- Noxious weed spraying conducted at all state parks, natural and recreation areas.
- Very limited funding was utilized for noxious weed control; except for some chemical that was utilized for prairie restoration chemical.

Natural Areas Registry Strategies and Best Management Practices: A cooperative program with the *ND Geological Survey*. The Natural Areas Registry Program is citizen-based conservation program that currently has 54 landowners involved in voluntary protection of their significant natural areas. This project is a multi-site, long term, collaborative project with a specific goal to encourage conservation of important natural lands in private and public ownership.

Tasks Completed April 2014-June 2019

- No grant funded tasks completed during this timeframe.
- Partners include Nature Conservancy and Sargent County Water Resource Board,



Natural Heritage Inventory - A cooperative program with NatureServe, a non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to provide the scientific basis for effective conservation action. The North Dakota Natural Heritage Program identifies the state's most significant natural areas through a comprehensive inventory of rare plant and animal species, exemplary natural communities, special geological features, and significant natural areas.

Tasks Completed April 2014-June 2019

- No Outdoor Heritage Funds have been allocated for Natural Heritage Inventory.
- Partners included NatureServe and US Fish and Wildlife Service .

Project Results:

Native Prairie Restoration and Enhancement strategies restored and enhanced over **167 acres on 23** sites in **7 state parks, recreation and interpretive areas**. FRSP was planted this spring. No OHF were utilized at LCIC site.

PRAIRIE RESTORATION DASHBOARD DATA 2011-2019					
PARK	MANAGEMENT UNIT	Vegetation Habitat Classification	Seeded/ Inter-seeded Yr (s)	Acres	Active Assessments and Management
BLSP	Entrance Prairie Restoration Site	Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Mixedgrass Prairie	2017	0.3	2017-2019
CRSP	Cottonwood Meadow South Prairie Restoration Site	Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Mixedgrass Prairie	2012	0.7	2012-2019
CRSP	Cottonwood Meadow North Prairie Restoration Site	Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Mixedgrass Prairie	2012	0.8	2012-2019
DLSP	Grahams Island Prairie Restoration Site	Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Mixedgrass Prairie	2011	11	2011-2019
FALSP	Keller A Prairie Restoration Site	Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Mixedgrass Prairie	2016 & 2017	42	2016-2019
FALSP	Keller B Prairie Restoration Site	Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Mixedgrass Prairie	2016	2.5	2016-2019
FALSP	Stables Prairie Restoration Site	Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Mixedgrass Prairie	2010	1.33	2010-2019
FRSP	Entrance Prairie Restoration Site	Northern Cordgrass Wet Prairie	2019	13.8	2019
FSSP	North Prairie Restoration Site	Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Mixedgrass Prairie	2012	32	2017-2019
FSSP	South Prairie Restoration Site	Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Mixedgrass Prairie	2011	10	2017-2019
FSSP	Pollinator Plot Restoration Site	Needle-and-Thread-Western Wheatgrass Prairie	2017	0.56	2017-2019
FSSP	Visitor Center Prairie Restoration Site	Needle-and-Thread-Western Wheatgrass Prairie	2016	0.96	2016-2019
ISP	Visitor Center West Tract 1 Prairie Restoration Site	Sand Bluestem-Prairie Sandreed Sand Prairie Site	2011	10	2011-2019
ISP	Visitor Center North Tract 2 Prairie Restoration Site	Sand Bluestem-Prairie Sandreed Sand Prairie Site	2011	2.3	2011-2019
ISP	Visitor Center West Tract 3 Prairie Restoration Site	Sand Bluestem-Little Bluestem Sand Prairie	2011	6.2	2011-2019
LCIC	Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center Prairie Restoration Site	Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Mixedgrass Prairie	2016, 2017, 2018	1.5	2016-2018
LSSP	JT North Prairie Restoration Site	Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Mixedgrass Prairie	2011	11.9	2011-2019
TMRA	Turtle Mountain Recreational Area Prairie Restoration Site	Western Wheatgrass-Green Needlegrass Mixedgrass Prairie	2017	0.42	2017-2019
TRSP	Haul Road/Trail Rehabilitation Prairie Restoration Site	Big Bluestem Tallgrass Prairie	2014	0.57	2014-2019
TRSP	Heritage East Prairie Restoration Site	Big Bluestem Tallgrass Prairie	2015	12.7	2015-2019
TRSP	Heritage West Prairie Restoration Site	Big Bluestem Tallgrass Prairie	2015	5.4	2015-2019
TRSP	Loop Prairie Restoration Site	Big Bluestem Tallgrass Prairie	2011	1.4	2011-2019
				168.34	

Woodland the tree planting complex strategies occurred at every state park, recreational areas and 3 natural areas. Supplemental funding through Outdoor Heritage grant allowed for the planting and protection of over **30,000 trees and shrubs** across the state park system. These trees and shrubs stock heights ranged from 3-5 ' bareroot stock and 7- 20' foot containerized trees and shrubs. The grant supplemented existing tree and shrub planting budget, more importantly allowing for not only purchase of stock but tree and shrub protection materials for plantings to succeed. Tree protection costs included deer fence, rebar and posts, tree wraps and tubes and mulch.

Noxious weed control management strategies on state parks, preserves, recreational, and natural area are highly focused. Infestation are mapped to sub meter accuracy, density and species are documented. Biological Technicians and FTE staff utilize maps to accurately spray all department owned and managed areas. **Over 1700 acres are treated annually**. The grant allowed for additional funds for chemical specifically used on prairie restorations. Minimally, over 1200 man-hours annually are directly targeted to noxious weed control and eradication

Value to North Dakota:

During the 5-year grant period, North Dakota Parks and Recreation has had the wonderful opportunity of partnering up and strengthening business relationships with not only ND Industrial Commission, but with ND Game and Fish, ND Forest Service, North Dakota Department of Health, Pheasants Forever, ND and USDA Soils Conservation Districts. In addition we have worked closely with local nurseries, seed, chemical and equipment companies such as Cashmen Nursery, S & B Landscape and Nursery, Lowes', Plant Perfect, Baldwin Green House and Nursery, Agassiz Seed and Supply, Chesak Seed, Warne Chemical and local RDO Equipment. All of who made it possible for the department to reach native prairie restoration, woodland and tree planting complex creation, noxious weed control goals and objectives.

Partnerships have been the key to the success of installation of **native prairie restoration and enhancement** projects. In addition, to the natural beauty prairies offer, these restoration offer protection to the natural environment. Native wildflowers and grasses provide necessary habitat for bees and butterflies and a number of threatened pollinators. North Dakota Prairies was once a vast grassland. Today, very limited habitat is left. In restoring prairie, although acreage may seem small, ND Parks and Recreation is restoring a bit of our heritage and supporting an impressive and complicated habitat, that supports not only bees and butterflies but wildlife that can be enjoyed by all park and natural area visitors. Several of the projects were enhancement to existing prairie environment.

Planting and conservation of **trees and shrubs** within North Dakota parks, natural and recreational areas has always been a high priority. The department plants trees and shrubs for several reasons including windbreaks, buffers between campsites, landscaping, and wildlife habitat and food. Trees and shrubs provide tremendous diversity, beauty, and wildlife benefits that greatly enhance the already beautiful state parks, recreational and natural areas across North Dakota.

Above all the management strategies, **noxious weed control** is priority one. Controlling noxious weeds is important for the health in native grasslands, forests, riparian areas, prairie restorations and tree and shrub plantings.