

Contract No. 002-024

“Prairie Project”

Submitted by United Prairie Foundation, Inc.

Principal Investigator: John DeVries

Directives: A, B & C

PARTICIPANTS

Sponsor	Cost Share	
United Prairie Foundation, Inc.	<u>\$ 5,000</u>	
Subtotal Cash Cost Share		\$5,000
United Prairie Foundation, Inc. (In-kind)	<u>\$ 31,420</u>	
Subtotal In-kind Cost Share		\$31,420
North Dakota Industrial Commission	<u>\$300,000</u>	
Total Project Cost		\$336,420

Project Schedule – 9 years

Contract Date – 7/23/2014

Start Date – 7/23/2014

Completion Date – 10/1/2023

Project Deliverables:

Status Report: October 1, 2014 ✓

Status Report: October 1, 2015 ✓

Status Report: October 1, 2016 ✓

Status Report: October 1, 2017 ✓

Status Report: October 1, 2018 ✓

Status Report: October 1, 2019 ✓

Status Report: October 1, 2020 ✓

Status Report: October 1, 2021 ✓

Status Report: October 1, 2022

Final Report: October 1, 2023

OBJECTIVE/STATEMENT OF WORK:

This project will secure 300 PLOTS acres on which local origin native prairie plants will be grown for seed that will be harvested and used to restore other prairie land. Seeds cultivated from these plots will be made available at no charge to a wide range of end users: Private Landowners in the PLOTS Program; ND Counties; ND Cities; ND Game and Fish Department; ND Department of Transportation. The number of acres is reduced to 150 acres as only a portion of the requested funding was awarded.

STATUS:

The original request was for \$640,300. The amount awarded was \$300,000 with the stipulation that the funding cannot be used for administration. Contract 002-024 - Executed

12/29/2014 - Status report was received. The report states: 64 acres of land have been secured for seeding in spring of 2015, with all acres being enrolled in the NDGF PLOTS program. A diverse seed mix has been harvested from a mix of remnant prairies to be used in the Prairie Project seeding. Seed tests have been submitted and results are expected soon, which will determine the value and quality of seed harvested.

7/11/2015 & 2/28/2016 - Status report was received. The report states: A high quality seed mix was assembled and seeded on to 55 acres which was enrolled into the NDGF PLOTS program and part of the ND OHF Prairie Project. Nine of the enrolled acres are having seed bed preparation prior to seeding in 2016. The remainder of the grant acres has been found and some landowners will be denied into the Prairie Project because of the limited funding provided to the grant. All but 14 acres will be in Cass and Traill Counties located

within the Red River Valley and will max enrolled acres at 150 and all 150 acres will be NDGF PLOTS acres. Some of the seeded acres re-establish naïve extirpated tallgrass prairie plants back into North Dakota!

4/5/2016 - Status Report received. The report states: All properties have been secured and enrolled into the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's PLOTS program. The final seed mix has also been secured and far exceeded our best hope as the mix contained over 120 local eco-type red river basin plant species! (A copy of the list of seed tests that were planted on the project acres is available in the Commission files.)

2/9/2017 - Status Report received. The report states: A total of 168.76 acres have been enrolled into the Prairie Project, with 100% of the acres enrolled in the NDGF PLOTS Program. Over 100 native local ecotype prairie species were planted this year. (A copy of the list of the species planted is available in the Commission files.)

3/31/2017 - Status Report received. The report states: All units are planted and actively growing. 64 acres will have prescribed fire in spring of 2018.

5/1/2018 – Status Report received. The report states: Weed management was executed in 2017 on approximately 8 acres and centered on removing Canada thistle. The last planted 30 acre plot seed in spring 2017 was mowed twice during the 2017 growing season. The landlord provided the tractor and mower for the weed management with United Prairie Foundation providing the fuel and labor. Prescribed fire is scheduled for May 2018 and will be completed by a United Prairie Foundation habitat fire crew. The project will get ramped up weed management on the initial 50 acre planting that will allow for seed harvest during 2018.

Grant funds spent in this period are for land rent with a 154.76 acres located in Traill County and 14 acres located in Ransom County. All project acres are enrolled in the NDGF PLOTS program.

4/28/19 – Status report received. The report states: The first prescribed fire management was executed on ½ the project acres during the spring of 2018 which represents the in-kind contribution. Some herbicide management was included to control noxious weeds.

- 168.76 acres are enrolled in the ND PLOTS program
- 0 Acres of seed harvest during 2018 - Seed harvest will commence in 2019.
- The prescribed fire on 100 acres during 2018 advanced the development of the tallgrass prairie and eliminated many weeds. Fire will be expanded in 2019 onto over 140 acres.

Pictures are available in the full report.

5/18/20 – Status report received. The report states in part: 2019 was very wet which limited access to the field for harvest. Even with the challenging conditions combine harvest did occur. Conditions limited harvest on one field and herbicide drift rendered another field useless.

The project has two field locations. The southern field located in Ransom County had prescribed fire on April 24, 2019. The fire went as planned. The field was growing great, setting up for a diverse prairie harvest until herbicide drifted. The field got tested by South Dakota Agricultural Laboratories in Brookings. The results of the test showed a lethal dose of 2, 4-D. It is unknown if it just took the bloom away or permanently killed the perennial wildflowers. In addition to the prescribed fire, the field had post fire management to level pocket gopher mounds. In addition, 100-200 volunteer cottonwood trees got basal bark treatment.

The northern field was harvested in 2019. The amount of prairie harvested was limited due to wet conditions. Even in these challenging conditions 20 acres were combined resulting in 1400 pounds with a value of \$56,000. Pictures available in the full report.

4/7/21 – Status report received. The report states: Mowed fire lines for RX fires on both enrolled properties. Burned 50 acres and planted 30 acres with seed harvested previous year. Developed program for private land grassland grazing reclamation using seed harvested from project acres.

4/7/22 – Status report received. The report states: Burned all enrolled acres on Motl and Grieger properties. Combine harvested 40 acres. Developed program for private land grassland grazing reclamation using seed harvested from project areas. Pictures are available in the full report.

Updated 4/22/2022