

North Dakota Pollinator Partnership: Project Summary

Pheasants Forever built the North Dakota Pollinator Partnership program to create high diversity, pollinator friendly plantings on lands enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The Outdoor Heritage Fund grant allowed Pheasants Forever to increase the diversity of the plantings without increasing costs to private landowners. North Dakota is the #1 honey producing state in the nation, not to mention over 600,000 hives spend their summers here refueling and rebuilding after the vigorous pollination season. To maintain the health and vitality of commercial honey bee hives access to high quality foraging habitat is required. Native pollinators and a host of other wildlife species also benefit from habitat created to benefit commercial honey bees. Access for sportsmen and women was a priority as well. Pheasants Forever prioritized applications received that were open to public access.

The North Dakota Pollinator Partnership, created 509.4 acres of high diversity pollinator plantings that have a minimum of three species flowering throughout the growing season. Many of the seed mixes designed through this project contained 25 or more native species. Of the 509.4 directly impacted by the OHF grant, 489.4 acres were seeded on new WRP contracts that were previously cropland. An additional 20 acres were renovated from low diversity monocultures of tame grass like Kentucky bluegrass or smooth brome to a high diversity planting abundant with forbs and legumes. Three of the six projects provided access for sportsmen and women.

In the three cases where public access was allowed, there were more acres included in the WRP contact, and subsequent public access agreement, than were seeded by the North Dakota Pollinator Partnership. Two of the WRP's in the North Dakota Pollinator Partnership were enrolled in their entirety into the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's PLOTS program totaling 559.1 acres of public access. The largest project, while still privately owned, is being managed by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department as a Wildlife Management Area providing a total of 616.9 acres of public access. All total 1,176 acres of walk-in public access for sportsman and women were improved through the North Dakota Pollinator Partnership and the Outdoor Heritage Fund. Work was completed on six different sites in six counties across the state. The plantings have been deemed successful by NRCS office staff and will continue to be monitored. All projects are located within 2 miles of an apiary increasing the amount of available forage to commercial honey bees.

By working with lands enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program, a 30 year program, ensures these improvements will be on the landscape for future generations. Whether it be the 1,176 acres available for sportsmen and women to hunt for the next 30 years or the increased forage available to bees; this program was built to have long lasting benefits for North Dakotans. Through the partnership with the Outdoor Heritage Fund and USDA NRCS, Pheasants Forever was able to deliver high diversity habitat with private landowners for no additional cost.

Sincerely,



Matthew Olson