

Contract No. 002-033
"North Dakota Pollinator Partnership"
 Submitted by Pheasants Forever, Inc.
 Principal Investigator: Matt Olson
 Directives A, B & C

PARTICIPANTS

Sponsor	Cost Share	
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	<u>\$ 60,000</u>	
Subtotal Cash Cost Share		\$60,000
Landowners (in-kind)	\$ 20,000	
Pheasants Forever (in-kind/indirect expenses)	<u>\$ 39,129</u>	
Subtotal In-kind/indirect Cost Share		\$59,129
North Dakota Industrial Commission	<u>\$173,750</u>	
Total Project Cost	\$292,879	

Project Schedule – 24 months	Project Deliverables:
Contract Date – 10/6/14	Status Report: December 31, 2014 ✓
Start Date – 10/14/2014	Status Report: June 30, 2015 ✓
Completion Date – 12/31/16*	Status Report: December 31, 2015 ✓
	Final Report: December 31, 2016* ✓

OBJECTIVE/STATEMENT OF WORK:

This project will pay for the increased cost associated with customized and optimal seed mixes for pollinators on newly established 30-year Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) land and will also upgrade existing WRP contracts which are currently dominated by stands of monotypic cover. Tasks will include best practices of site preparation, seed, seeding and clipping in order to establish high diversity plantings. Approximately 1,250 acres of WRP acres will be impacted.

STATUS:

Contract 002-033 has been signed.

12/31/2014 - Status Report received. Report states: This grant is designed to increase plant diversity (most importantly flowering plants) on land enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) to increase both wildlife habitat and quality of locations for honeybee producers to place honeybee apiaries. Since the grant has been signed, our staff has been working to find landowners who are enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program that would like to participate in this cooperative program with the Outdoor Heritage Fund. As an organization we have put out a press release discussing the grant, we have had an article in the Journal newspaper in Crosby about the grant, created a fact sheet for local NRCS offices, and mailed out informational fliers to 74 landowners who are enrolled in PLOTS and the Wetlands Reserve Program to let people know that this opportunity is available. (Copies of the materials distributed are posted on the website.)

Through our outreach efforts we currently have nine landowners who are interested in enrolling in the program. Of those nine landowners, five of those projects are for enhancing the existing cover on WRP's and four of them are on new seeding WRP's. Our staff is currently working with these individuals and the NRCS State Office to determine how many acres of pollinator habitat could be implemented on

these contracts, what an appropriate seed mix of these locations would be, and best possible location on the WRP would be. With the timing of the grant contract taking affect, we have not been able to start any field work in the 2014 year. Field work is anticipated to start spring of 2015 with site preparation on new WRP's and WRP's that are going to be enhanced by the North Dakota Pollinator Partnership. As an organization we are excited for the upcoming spring to begin work in the field towards completing the grant.

6/30/2015 Status Report received. During the reporting period from January 1, 2015 - June 30, 2015 we were able to get two newly enrolled WRP's seeded down to pollinator friendly mixes that consisted of 35% of the mix containing pollinator friendly forbs/legumes. In both of the mixes, 29 species were used with at least 3 species of forbs/legumes flowering in the early, mid, and late blooming periods in accordance with NRCS specifications. The seed mix used was determined by using soils data to determine appropriate species for the site. The acreage of both of these sites combined equals 91.7 acres of new WRP lands that were seeded in this reporting period. Both of these sites were seeded in early June so it is too early at this point to speculate on the success of the mixture. Both of these projects are located within two miles of a designated apiary location and through this program one of the landowners enrolled his entire 80 acre WRP into the PLOTS program for the next 30 years.

The estimated seed cost for both of these seedings was originally \$16,506 but with seed costs being lower than anticipated this year the cost for seed for both of these seedings was \$10,634.10. As both of these were seeded earlier this month, cost-share documents are currently being finalized and processed. The following is an estimated cost breakdown for these projects: the NRCS match for cost - share on the grass seed cost will be \$6,877.50, the landowner cost into the grass seed will be \$2,292.50 and the funds that Pheasants Forever will be spending will be \$1,464.10. During this funding period, we did have two of our chapters donate towards the Pheasants Forever share of match for the Outdoor Heritage Fund. The James Valley chapter in Jamestown donated \$2,000 and the Sakakawea chapter in Garrison donated \$500 towards the grant in matching funds. Pheasants Forever did contract with the Urban Law Group to create a landowner contract for this grant. The total cost of their services equaled \$2,265. Of the \$2,265, Pheasants Forever is providing \$1,585.50 in match and \$679.50 in in-kind.

We also have signed contracts to work with two different landowners on enhancing their WRP's. The two projects are both located within two miles of a designated apiary location and one of the WRP's has 480 acres enrolled in the PLOTS program. Renovation of these stands will begin this summer with seeding to take place next spring and will cover another 20 acres.

As stated on the previous page, we do anticipate needing a grant extension at this point in the grant. We currently have several more interested WRP participants who are at various different stages in the WRP application/easement process including a 350 acre area that will be managed by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department as a Wildlife Management Area. We also will have some renovations that will start this year and will be seeded next year. Because we want these seedings to have the best chance of success possible, there is clipping built in to the cost tables after seeding is complete to give us the opportunity to clip weeds in the fall if needed. For these reasons we would like to ask for an extension to give us more time to deliver great habitat in this grant in the most successful way possible.

12/31/2015 - Status Report Received. It states: Over the past year we have enrolled 6 applicants into the North Dakota Pollinator Partnership (NDPP). This spring, seeding was completed on 91.7 acres on two of the new WRP's enrolled in the program. This fall we had herbicide applications applied to 20 acres on two of our enhancement WRP's to start preparing them for seeding next year. We also have 26.6 acres that were seeded late this fall on a new WRP tract. We have yet to receive all of the

documents required so we are not able to submit expenses for this tract at this time. We also just recently finalized an agreement for a WRP that will have 354.2 acres of seeding completed next year.

Of the total of 492.5 acres that we have agreements for, 472.5 acres are new plantings and 20 acres are on WRP's that are being enhanced. All of these acres are within 2 miles of a honeybee apiary providing an incredible boost of available foraging habitat for honeybees. In terms of public access, of the WRP's enrolled in this partnership, two of them are enrolled in PLOTS totaling 560 acres and one of them is 616 acres that will be managed as a Wildlife Management Area by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department which will allow public access as well. The two sites that are in the process of being renovated both were sprayed with glyphosate late this fall to maximize the effects to cool-season grasses like Kentucky bluegrass and smooth brome. One of the sites was also grazed in the fall to remove excess residue. Partners involved with our projects so far include 5 private landowners, the American Foundation for Wildlife, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, the Outdoor Heritage Fund, and Pheasants Forever. Right now there is no update on the success of completed plantings as they have not yet seen a full growing season to establish.

Throughout this year we have processed \$2,057.90 in grant payments for this year. We have paid \$1,464.10 to landowners for their grass seed cost share; as well as \$593.80 for glyphosate application on WRP's being renovated. Pheasants Forever did contract with the Urban Law Group to create a landowner contract for this grant. The total cost of their services equaled \$2,265. Of the \$2,265, Pheasants Forever is providing \$1,585.50 in match and \$679.50 in in-kind. We also paid \$793.42 to the sign company for signs to acknowledge the partnership on parcels enrolled in the program that Pheasants Forever is offering as match. As far as matching funds through the two completed plants, NRCS has provided \$6,877.50 in match through their cost-share for grass plantings on lands enrolled in WRP and landowners have provided \$2,292.50 in cost for their grass seed as outlined in the agreement. Pheasants Forever also provided \$700.20 in grant administration as in-kind for this grant as well.

I have attached copies of the improved grass seed sheet plans for all of the program participants. Three of these are finalized as they have already been seeded but for the three other plans there may be some substitution depending on availability of seed next spring. As you can see from the seed sheets, these are extremely diverse plantings with anywhere from 23-45 species in the mix. Also there are at least three species in each mix that will be in bloom in the early, middle and late blooming periods which will provide plentiful forage for both honeybee and native pollinator species (ie. Butterflies, bumblebees, etc.). As you can see from the seed sheets this is a statewide program that has/will impact lands in Slope, Adams, Stutsman, Benson, Barnes and Ransom Counties.

As stated in the status report filed in June, we will need an extension for this grant to go to December 31, 2016. The two WRP's that are signed up to be enhanced will be seeded next spring but have clipping as an available management practice and would not be able to be completed until the fall of next year.

A draft amendment granting the no-cost extension has been executed and forwarded to the applicant for their signature. The * indicates the change in the date for the final report.

The amendment has been fully executed.

The Final Report has been received. That report states:

Through the course of the North Dakota Pollinator Partnership grant (October 2014-December 2016), we have successfully delivered 6 pollinator plantings in 6 different counties across North Dakota on

lands enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program. We were able to deliver 509.4 acres of new pollinator habitat through this grant made possible by the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

We renovated 20 acres of low quality habitat to high diversity plantings on 2 contracts. One site was grazed in the fall, then sprayed with glyphosate later in the fall, then sprayed again with glyphosate in the spring and then planted. The other site was sprayed in the fall, then disked down in the spring, then sprayed again with glyphosate prior to planting. The other 4 contracts totaling 489.4 acres were all new plantings seeded into cropland stubble. These sites were sprayed with glyphosate prior to being planted. We had one site where additional acres were planted in the fall due to wet conditions but all the rest were seeded in the spring of the year.

Of all of the contracts serviced, 3 of them provide access to sportsmen. Two of the WRP contracts are enrolled in the North Dakota Game and Fish Department PLOTS program totaling 559.1 acres and the other contract has been turned into a Wildlife Management Area managed by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department and that one totals 616.9 acres. All together that equals 1,176 acres of habitat that will be open to hunting moving forward that contains high diversity, pollinator friendly species. All of these sites are also located within 2 miles of a honeybee apiary to help provide foraging habitat for honeybees; as well as providing forage for migratory species of pollinators like butterflies and bumblebees, as well as other species.

All of the seed mixes for the plantings were designed in coordination with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and meet their standards and specifications. The species chosen were designed to meet the soil suitability of each site. All of these mixes have at least three species in bloom throughout the year to meet the pollen needs of honeybees and other pollinator species. Partners in the North Dakota Pollinator Partnership include; Pheasants Forever, the North Dakota Industrial Commission and the Outdoor Heritage Fund, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, the American Foundation for Wildlife, and several private landowners enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program.

Throughout the time period of this grant we did run into some challenges in delivering this program. Seed availability became a difficult challenge to overcome as many of the local seed dealers ran low on various species during the spring planting season. This forced us to scale back the diversity of some of our plantings leading to an overall decrease in the cost of the seed mixes which lead to us using less Outdoor Heritage Fund grant funds than we had initially anticipated. We also went through a reduction in field staff during the grant time period. At the time when we applied for the grant we had 5 Farm Bill Biologists on staff in NRCS field offices across the state. Currently we no longer have any Farm Bill Biologists located in NRCS offices which has proven difficult to educating people on the program.

A one-page summary of the project is posted on the website along with the final report. The contractor used \$24,258.82 of the \$173,750 committed to this project. The amount of \$149,491.18 will be made available for future projects. This contract is now closed.

Updated 1/25/2017