

Contract No. 003-045
"Brown Ranch Habitat Enhancement through Prescribed Grazing"
Submitted by The Nature Conservancy
Principal Investigator: Eric Hoff
Directives: C, A & B

PARTICIPANTS

Sponsor	Revised Cost Share
The Nature Conservancy	<u>\$ 6,185</u>
Subtotal Cash Cost Share	\$6,185
North Dakota Industrial Commission	<u>\$16,000</u>
Total Project Cost	\$22,185

Project Schedule – 10 months	Project Deliverables:
Contract Date – 12/31/2014	Status Report: June 1, 2015 ✓
Start Date –	Pre Final Report: November 1, 2015 ✓
Completion Date – 11/1/2015	Final Report: January 31, 2016 (financial information) ✓

OBJECTIVE/STATEMENT OF WORK:

The objective of this project is to install shallow water wells and portable livestock tanks along with a solar powered pumping unit to improve the rotational grazing program with the goal of improving wildlife habitat over 1,500 acres.

STATUS:

The applicant initially requested \$16,889 in funding. The Commission awarded \$16,000 with the stipulation that the Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars cannot be used for the purchase of the trailer or portable solar pump. The Nature Conservancy will cover the difference between the requested funding and the awarded funding.

Contract has been executed.

June 1 Status Report received. Materials for the project were ordered in April and did not arrive until late May. Installation will take place in early June and the progress and results of the installation will be made in the final report.

July, 2015 - Applicant has indicated that they will be unable to provide detailed financial information until January of 2016 because of changes to their accounting system. No payments have been made on this project. Payment will be considered when the financial information is provided in January, 2016

October, 2015 - Final report on the work that was completed in 2015. Copies of the report with pictures are available on the website. The narrative of the final report states the following:

The purpose of this project was to bring reliable water sources to The Nature Conservancy's Brown Ranch for its grazing program with the ultimate goal of improving its grazing management in order to improve on the ground habitat for wildlife. In addition to habitat improvement this project was also aimed at providing a sustainable and reliable grazing source for local ranchers.

All materials (pump, solar panels, trailer and water tanks) were purchased in early spring and installed in late May and early June, as the grazing season got under way. A few modifications were made to the trailer to prevent cattle from destroying any components of the solar set up. These modifications included a metal panel welded to the trailer and screw-in spikes to prevent the trailer from being moved accidentally (see exhibit A photo). The same style of cattle panel was placed inside of each tank to provide a visual barrier to prevent cattle from jumping into the tank and destroying the tank liners (see exhibit B photo).

With tanks in place and functioning properly, portable cross fence was used to focus grazing on specific areas at predetermined times to achieve desired results of decreasing non-native cool season grasses and promoting a heterogeneous habitat structure. Pastures were carefully monitored and cattle were moved as often as every 3 days.

This project has been a success in its first year of implementation. Without the solar pumping unit and tanks, grazing would not have taken place in the fall due to a complete lack of surface water. Not being able to graze in the fall would have hampered management goals to create heterogeneous habitat and could have resulted in lost income for the local rancher who leases Brown Ranch. It was also successful by reaching the above stated goal of providing a sustainable and reliable water source for cattle. The biggest success of the project is providing better habitat for wildlife by better managing native prairie. Without water sources in place, targeting areas of non-native cool season grasses was nearly impossible. Now, with one or more water sources, a large pasture can be split into smaller units to focus management activities like grazing to better achieve goals of exotic cool season grass reduction and creating heterogeneous habitat structure.

The value of this project can be seen in several different ways. The most obvious of these values is the use of the land for production of cattle by a local rancher. Another value of this project will likely be seen in the long term as habitat improves and hunting opportunities improve. There is also the intrinsic value in the conservation of native tall grass prairie. It conserves a landscape that people can enjoy not just for hunting or ranching values, but for the sake of something beautiful and inspiring.

On behalf of The Nature Conservancy, thank you for your support of this project.

January 21, 2016 - The Nature Conservancy resubmitted their final report with the financial information and the status report has been reposted on the website. Total payment made was \$15,845.69. The remaining \$154.31 of the award is released to be used for other projects.

This contract is now closed.