

Contract No. 003-048

“Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative”

Submitted by Audubon Dakota

Principal Investigators: Ben Williams & Marshall Johnson

Directives: C, D

PARTICIPANTS

Sponsor	Cost Share	
National Audubon Society, Inc./Audubon Dakota	<u>\$ 22,500</u>	
Subtotal Cash Cost Share		\$22,500
Fargo Parks District	\$ 34,071	
Audubon Dakota	<u>\$ 10,000</u>	
Subtotal In-kind Cost Share		\$44,071
North Dakota Industrial Commission	<u>\$ 82,218</u>	
Total Project Cost	\$148,789	

Project Schedule – 12 months
Contract Date – 3/1/2015
Start Date – 3/13/2015
Completion Date – 11/1/2015

Project Deliverables:
Status Report: May 1, 2015 ✓
Status Report: September 1, 2015 ✓
Final Report: November 1, 2015 ✓
Report on Bird & Vegetation Surveys: November 1, 2016
Report on Bird & Vegetation Surveys: November 1, 2017
Report on Bird & Vegetation Surveys: November 1, 2018

OBJECTIVE/STATEMENT OF WORK:

This Initiative is to create, restore and enhance wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities for the City of Fargo. The 142.25 acre project area is spread over 5 sites. This will include conversion from exotic turf grass into native prairie grasses and wildflowers as well as more intensive woodland management.

STATUS:

Contract has been executed.

May 1, 2015 Status Report received and states in part: In March and April of 2015 the Urban Woods and Prairies initiative has been focused on project administration and site preparation as well as planning for seeding and enhancements. Initially the project included 6 sites owned and managed by the Fargo Park District and City of Fargo. A 7th site was added after consultation with the City of Fargo and the site (a former site for snow-dumping in the winter) was determined to fit in with the goals and objectives of the project.

In terms of site preparation, the Industrial Commission and the Outdoor Heritage Fund distributed funding for the establishment of 5 sites. To date, site preparation has begun on 2 of those sites, with anticipated prep beginning on the other 3 soon as well. The Fargo Park District has done the site prep work on Unicorn Park and Pontes Prairie. Their site prep methods (in accordance with the guidelines

described by Prairie Restorations) included mowing, herbicide application, and ground work where it was realistic (on land that was flat and at small risk of erosion, full disking of the land was done; on areas that were sloped or at risk for erosion, a light harrow was used to scratch the surface and stimulate weed growth). The next step for these sites will be to wait for the flush of new weeds and then apply one more application of herbicide. This will conclude the site prep and these sites will then be ready for seeding.

In February and March, Audubon Dakota met with experts and professionals from North Dakota State University, the University of Minnesota Crookston, the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, Prairie Restorations Inc., and other leading botanists to create a diverse mix of prairie vegetation native to the area that will succeed in our distinct Red River Valley soil structure. These mixes include varying species and amounts of grasses, forbs, and wildflowers, based on the different conditions at each site, will be dispersed in specific quantities at each site by Prairie Restorations Management. This is the next phase of the project, which is being funded by the Industrial Commission through the Outdoor Heritage Fund and will begin as weather and site prep allow here in the upcoming weeks/months.

July 30, 2015 - Audubon Dakota sent in Status and Final Report noting the following:

In May, June and July 2015 the Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative has been focused on project implementation, site preparation, and seeding and establishment.

The scope of the project continues to grow as more sites are deemed appropriate for restoration work. What started as a 6 site project in Fargo has expanded to be nearing 25 different sites within the Fargo-Moorhead area. Encompassing nearly 1,000 acres of wetlands, grasslands, and woodlands, the Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative has worked with city governments and park districts, counties and watershed districts, and local groups and organizations to find ideal sites to restore to natural vegetation. OHF's partnership has been a real catalyst for this project growth.

In terms of seeding and establishment, the Industrial Commission and the Outdoor Heritage Fund distributed funding for the establishment of 5 sites. To date, site preparation, seeding, and establishment have occurred on all 5 of those sites. The Fargo Park District has done the site prep work. Their site prep methods (in accordance with the guidelines described by Prairie Restorations) included mowing, herbicide application, and ground work where it was realistic (on land that was flat and at small risk of erosion, full disking of the land was done; on areas that were sloped or at risk for erosion, a light harrow was used to scratch the surface and stimulate weed growth). The next step for these sites was to wait for the flush of new weeds and then apply one more application of herbicide. The herbicide was applied and after those weeds died, Prairie Restorations was able to come in and seed directly into the prepared seedbed. All seeding was done with a Truax seed drill and mowing and maintenance activities were done in accordance to management plans.

9/1/2015 - Audubon Dakota provided the following update on work done during the month of August, 2015:

In August of 2015 the Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative has been focused on progressing project implementation, management of weed species, and observing the establishment of native species.

In terms of seeding and establishment, the Industrial Commission and the Outdoor Heritage Fund distributed funding for the establishment of 5 sites. To date, site preparation, seeding, and

establishment have occurred on all 5 of those sites. The Fargo Park District has completed the site prep work for these 5 sites. Their site prep methods (in accordance with the guidelines described by Prairie Restorations) included mowing, herbicide application, and ground work where it was realistic (on land that was flat and at small risk of erosion, full disking of the land was done; on areas that were sloped or at risk for erosion, a light harrow was used to scratch the surface and stimulate weed growth). Before seeding could commence, weed management was essential which led to a final application of herbicide. After the weeds died, Prairie Restorations utilized a Truax seed drill to seed directly into the prepared seedbed. Within the last month, management of recovering weed species has been performed by mowing the 5 sites. A sign of successful preparation and management has come from the emergence of the native grass species at all 5 sites (pictures are posted on the website.)

The next phase of this project, in terms of the Outdoor Heritage Fund, is to continue to monitor avian and vegetation at the sites and retain valuable data and records about each. This will be done as an in-kind match through Audubon Dakota. Continued maintenance and management is required on the sites to ensure that the seeding and establishment properly takes to the soil. Audubon Dakota will continue to provide avian and vegetation reports to the Industrial Commission in accordance to the grant contract.

Updated 9/4/2015