

Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Application



Instructions

After completing the form, applications and supporting documentation may be submitted by e-mail to ndicgrants@nd.gov. It is preferred that only electronic copies are submitted.

You are not limited to the spacing provided, except in those instances where there is a limit on the number of words. If you need additional space, please indicate that on the application form, answer the question on a separate page, and include with your submission.

The application and all attachments must be received by the application deadline. You may submit your application at any time prior to the application deadline. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications prior to the deadline for staff review in order ensure that proposals will be complete when submitted on deadline date.** Incomplete applications may not be considered for funding.

Please review the back of this form to determine project eligibility, definitions, budget criteria, and statutory requirements.

Project Name: Bakken Development and Working Lands Program III

Name of Organization: North Dakota Natural Resources Trust

Federal Tax ID#: 36-3512179

Contact Person/Title: Jesse Beckers/Energy Program Manager

Address: 1605 East Capitol Ave., Ste. 101

City: Bismarck

State: North Dakota

Zip Code: 58501

E-mail Address: jesse@naturalresourcestrust.com

Web Site Address (If applicable): www.ndnrt.com

Phone: 701-223-8501

List names of co-applicants if this is a joint proposal

MAJOR Directive:

Choose only one response

X **Directive A**. Providing access to private and public lands for sportsmen, including projects that create fish and wildlife habitat and provide access for sportsmen;

Directive B. Improving, maintaining and restoring water quality, soil conditions, plant diversity, animal systems and by supporting other practices of stewardship to enhance farming and ranching;

Directive C. Developing, enhancing, conserving and restoring wildlife and fish habitat on private and public lands; and

Directive D. Conserving natural areas and creating other areas for recreation through the establishment and development of parks and other recreation areas.

Additional Directive:

Choose all that apply

Directive A.

Directive B.

Directive C.

Directive D.

Type of organization:

State Agency

Political Subdivision

Tribal Entity

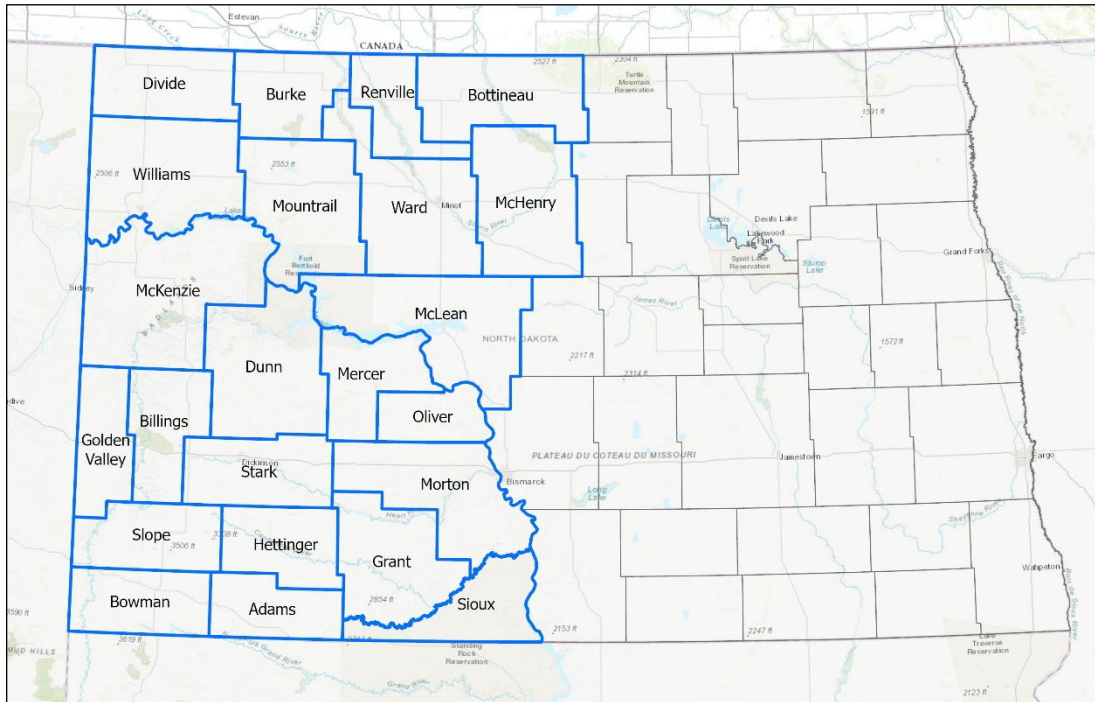
Tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation.

Abstract/Executive Summary.

Summarize the project, including its objectives, expected results, duration, total project costs and participants. (no more than 500 words)

Improvements to grazing operations, increased public access, and reclamation on public lands in western North Dakota continue to be in high demand. To address this, Bakken Development and Working Lands Program III (BDWLP III) provides innovative approaches along with high-demand practices to address these needs in west river and oil producing counties (see map below). BDWLP III will be limited in scope compared to previous iterations of the program because the Little Missouri National Grasslands (LMNG) projects have funding to complete their commitments, and other OHF-funded programs cover grass seeding and crop activities. BDWLP III projects will be designed to improve water quality and soil health on tillable and non-tillable lands, while reducing impacts to wildlife. To increase public access opportunities, Private Lands Open to Sportsmen (PLOTS) information will be provided to landowners interested in BDWLP III funds. Participation in PLOTS is not required to receive 75% cost share, but for those that are eligible and agree to a minimum five-year PLOTS contract, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF) will provide an additional 15% cost share on wildlife-friendly fencing and water development project-wide,

while the North Dakota Wildlife Federation (NDWF) will provide 25% cost share in Dunn and McKenzie counties. Cost share will never exceed 100% of costs.



BDWLP III Project Area

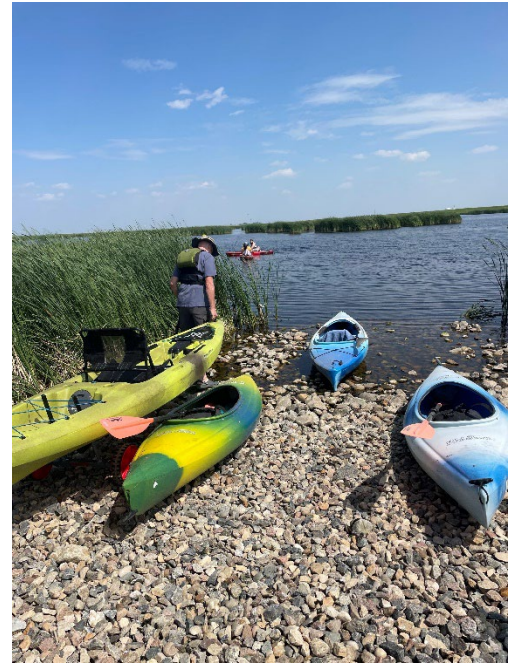
In western North Dakota, winter creates unique demands for animal survival. The winter of 2022-2023 was especially arduous for wildlife and livestock seeking shelter. Landowners witnessed livestock moving into riparian areas during storms and pushing out wildlife, creating extreme stress for big game in particular. By providing cost share on portable windbreaks, livestock will be sheltered from the elements while protecting sensitive winter habitat areas for wildlife.

A significant component of BDWLP III is the reclamation of public land where no responsible parties exist. Combining diverse partnerships leverages funding from the North Dakota Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) and provides opportunities for abandoned sites to be reclaimed, benefiting the producer through establishing additional livestock forage and providing public access for hunting, birding, or other recreational opportunities.

The first Bakken Development and Working Lands Program (BDWLP I) had all funding committed, with program completion in October 2023. A total of 64 agreements were signed for 32,513 acres of grassland improvement on private land. An additional 38,832 acres of grasslands were improved on the LMNG. Two community projects were completed (Watford City and Dunn Center). For reclamation work, contaminated sites were reclaimed on Beaver Lake Waterfowl Production Area in Burke County, which is now open to grazing and has improved public access.



Beaver Lake exposed pipeline and salt contamination



New Beaver Lake boat launch



Contaminated soil removed and newly established vegetation on wetland near Beaver Lake

BDWLP II funding has been fully committed. There are 84 signed agreements with landowners and work on the LMNG continues with Grazing Associations. All reclamation dollars provided by OHF and DMR have been committed, with BDWLP II program completion expected in 2025. The OHF has been critical in helping to achieve natural resource and associated farming/ranching improvements for these programs.

Project Duration: Five years

Indicate the intended schedule for drawing down OHF funds.

- 2024 – Landowner outreach with contractors, partners, and project planning. Begin preparing reclamation sites on Beaver Lake Waterfowl Production Area for work in 2025. Media outreach regarding projects and vital role of OHF. 30% of OHF funds spent.
- 2025 – Landowners complete projects and reclamation work (soil removal, re-grading, seeding, vegetation cover) underway. 45% of OHF funds spent.
- 2026 – Landowner projects completed or near completion. Heavy equipment work completed on reclamation projects. Vegetation monitoring on reclaimed lands. Media outreach regarding projects and vital role of OHF. 20% OHF funds spent.
- 2027 – 2029 – All projects and reporting requirements completed. Final 5% OHF funds spent.

Amount of Grant request: \$3,125,000.00

Total Project Costs: \$5,462,400.00

Note: in-kind and indirect costs can be used for matching funds.

Amount of Matching Funds: \$1,937,400.00

A minimum of 25% Match Funding is required. Indicate if the matching funds will be in-kind, indirect or cash. Please provide verification that these matching funds are available for your project. Note that effective as of July 1, 2015, no State General Fund dollars can be used for a match unless funding was legislatively appropriated for that purpose.

| Amount of Match | Funding Source | Type of Match (Cash, In-kind or Indirect) |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| \$50,000 | Natural Resources Trust | Cash |
| \$25,000 | Natural Resources Trust | In-Kind |
| \$200,000 | ND Wildlife Federation | Cash |
| \$1,287,400 | ND Dept. Of Mineral Resources | Cash |
| \$375,000 | Landowners | Cash |
| \$1,937,400 | Total Match | |

Certifications

X I certify that this application has been made with the support of the governing body and chief executive of my organization.

X I certify that if awarded grant funding none of the funding will be used for any of the exemptions noted in the back of this application.

Narrative

Organization Information – Briefly summarize your organization’s history, mission, current programs and activities.

Include an overview of your organizational structure, including board, staff and volunteer involvement. (no more than 300 words)

The North Dakota Natural Resources Trust was created in 1986 and was originally called the North Dakota Wetlands Trust. In 2000, with passage of the Dakota Water Resources Act, the Trust’s mission was broadened, and it was renamed the Natural Resources Trust. The Trust’s mission is to promote the retention, restoration, creation and wildlife friendly management of wetlands, grasslands, and riparian areas by presenting practical conservation opportunities throughout North Dakota. The Trust achieves this mission by partnering with agricultural and conservation organizations 1) to promote productive use of private agricultural lands that result in enhancement and protection of private lands, 2) to effectively use North Dakota’s public lands both for agriculture and recreation, 3) to promote good land use along urban river corridors, and 4) to enhance the state’s significant water resources.

The Trust is managed by a six-member board of directors. Three of the directors are appointed by the governor of North Dakota, one by the National Audubon Society, one by the National Wildlife Federation, and one by the North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department Director is an ex-officio member. The Trust has an Executive Director and six staff members.

From its inception, the Trust has played a role as a facilitator between agricultural and conservation interests. In addition to facilitating and funding sound, on-the-ground conservation of natural resources, its goal is to identify common issues, create dialogue, and resolve conflicts.

Purpose of Grant – Describe the proposed project identifying how the project will meet the specific directive(s) of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Program

Identify project goals, strategies and benefits and your timetable for implementation. Include information about the need for the project and whether there is urgency for funding. Indicate if this is a new project or if it is replacing funding that is no longer available to your organization. Identify any innovative features or processes of your project. Note: if your proposal provides funding to an individual, the names of the recipients must be reported to the Industrial Commission/Outdoor Heritage Fund. These names will be disclosed upon request.

For tree/shrub/grass plantings: provide a planting plan describing the site design, planting methods, number of trees/shrubs by species and stock size, grass species and future maintenance. A statement certifying that the applicant will adhere to USDA-NRCS tree/shrub/grass planting specifications along with the name of the governmental entity designing the planting may be substituted for a planting plan.

For projects including Section 319 funding: provide in detail the specific best management practices that will be implemented and the specific projects for which you are seeking funding.

For projects including fencing: A minimum cost share of 40% by the recipient is preferred. Include detailed information on the type of fencing to be installed, whether funding is requested for boundary fencing, new or replacement of existing fencing, and/or cross fencing.

Over the next five years, the goal of BDWLP III is to enhance private agricultural lands and public property through voluntary grazing and grassland conservation practices in the oil-producing counties of North Dakota. BDWLP III will provide landowners with a ten-year partnership agreement with buyback provisions, technical support, voluntary terms, and cost share.

Grazing Systems: BDWLP III will fund grazing system developments that include livestock water, fencing and wind break panels. The developments will be cost shared at a rate of 75% from the grant and 25% from landowners. Technical advice will be provided to applicants through the Trust and our contracted field representatives and developed in consultation with landowners. Landowners will select the fence type that will best meet their operation need. However, wildlife friendly fence must be used to receive additional cost share payments through PLOTS. Fencing cost share will be provided at a per foot rate and will be adjusted to accommodate the different fence types. The rate will be based on USDA Tech Guide Allowable costs with the full funding rate determined by current NRCS practice scenario amount. Boundary fence cost share will be provided if a landowner is currently a part of the PLOTS program or if they are willing to place that land in PLOTS and are accepted by NDGF. All associated PLOTS contracts must be for a minimum of five years. Water development cost sharing will be provided based on documented actual costs. Due to the nature of the geology in western North Dakota, we propose cost sharing wells at 75% up to 400 feet. If fresh water cannot be found in the first 400 feet, the rest of the cost would be the landowner's responsibility. On a case-by-case basis, the Trust will consider providing additional cost share for components of the grazing system that may not be considered under current OHF guidelines. The BDWLP III will give private landowners an opportunity to combine conservation practices in a way that helps them achieve their desired management outcomes. It will also provide an opportunity for landowners to receive additional cost share and/or access payments while providing recreational opportunities for the public through the PLOTS program.

Reclamation: BDWLP III includes a reclamation component to provide opportunities for sites to be restored and benefit the landowner, the renter, and habitat. The eligible non-general fund dollars provided through DMR and the partnership with OHF has been extraordinarily successful. As with previous iterations of BDWLP, this partnership has opened a large portion of Beaver Lake Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) in Burke County to grazing management, while reclaiming contaminated soils and materials. This also created a public access point for outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy the area. We propose to continue this work through establishing additional livestock forage and land management options, and grassland species habitat. Two additional project sites have been identified on Beaver Lake WPA and will be open to grazing as a management tool and provide livestock forage for participating landowners. Three additional private land sites have been identified and will provide additional grazing and wildlife habitat.

Because project practices will be selected by interested landowners, and certain practices may be more popular than others, funding may be moved between project expense categories, except Staffing. The OHF funds and match will remain at the same levels.

The BDWLP has created a network of individuals and agencies to promote the program to landowners. The program would be marketed to landowners through the Trust's contractors, the Meadowlark Initiative (MI), the North Dakota Soil Conservation District Employee Association's Dakota Legacy Initiative (DLI), and Soil Conservation Districts.

Is this project part of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan? Yes No

If yes, provide a copy with the application.

Note: Projects involving buildings and infrastructure will only be considered if part of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Please refer to the "Definitions" section at the back of the form for more details.

Management of Project – Provide a description of how you will manage and oversee the project to ensure it is carried out on schedule and in a manner that best ensures its objectives will be met.

Include a brief background and work experience for those managing the project.

The Trust will provide management, coordination, and administration to the BDWLP III grant and will work collectively with our partners and contractors to provide landowners with program information and to assist program participants.

The Trust will complete all program coordination from our office in Bismarck, ND. Jesse Beckers, Energy Program Manager, and Eric Rosenquist, Conservation Program Coordinator, will serve as the program coordinators. Additional Trust staff will assist as necessary. Trust staff have a combined 50 years of experience and a strong track record in delivering similar conservation projects. The Trust will provide tracking and reporting for all project agreements following grant guidelines.

Most direct contact with landowners will be made through the MI and DLI. Soil Conservation District staff, NDGF private lands biologists, USFWS Partners Program biologists and the ND Grazing Lands Coalition will also promote projects and work directly with landowners.

As these professionals' work with landowners and communities, agricultural infrastructure development options, grassland management, and PLOTS agreements will be promoted. All grant funds will be paid as agreements and development activities are completed and proper documentation is supplied to the Trust. BDWLP III funding will be provided through continuous enrollment, meaning there will be no batching period and funding stops when the funds are committed. Through our past work and existing partnerships, numerous projects have already been identified.

Evaluation – Describe your plan to document progress and results.

Please be specific on the methods you will utilize to measure success. Note that regular reporting, final evaluation and expenditure reports will be required for every grant awarded.

We worked diligently to create a diverse partnership for implementation and evaluation and correspond daily with producers. Our partners and contractors enable “boots on the ground” contact with landowners, and the focus on developing strong local relationships sets the tone for positive results in how the program can benefit their operation and wildlife habitat. Our contractor partners help with contract facilitation and the implementation aspects, verifying that fence and water resources are completed as prescribed and following up on grazing plans. Our administration ensures timely payments and support lines for both participating landowners and partners. More specifically, success will be measured on the level of agreements completed with landowners and the number of acres benefited by the lease and development activities resulting in increased conservation habitat for grassland birds, satisfied landowners, and increased access for public enjoyment.

Financial Information

Project Budget – Use the table below to provide an itemized list of project expenses and describe the matching funds being utilized for this project.

Indicate if the matching funds are in the form of cash, indirect costs or in-kind services. The budget should identify all other committed funding sources and the amount of funding from each source. **A minimum of 25% match funding is required.** An application will be scored higher the greater the amount of match funding provided. (See Scoring Form.)

Certain values have been identified for in-kind services as detailed under “Budget Information” at the back of this form. Refer to that section and utilize these values in identifying your matching funds. **NOTE: No indirect costs will be funded. Supporting documentation for project expenses, including bids, must be included or application will be considered incomplete.**

| Project Expense | OHF Request | Applicant’s Match Share (Cash and in-Kind) | NDGF (Non-Match) | Other Project Sponsor’s Share | Total Each Project Expense |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Grazing Systems | \$1,500,000 | \$20,000 | \$400,000 | \$575,000 | \$2,195,000 |
| Energy Site Reclamation | \$1,500,000 | | | \$1,287,400 | \$2,787,400 |
| Contracted Services | \$100,000 | \$30,000 | | | \$130,000 |
| Staffing | \$25,000 | \$25,000 | | | \$50,000 |
| Total Costs | \$3,125,000 | \$75,000 | \$400,000 | \$1,862,400 | \$5,462,400 |

Note: Costs for seeding, fencing, pipelines, wells, and cover crops cannot exceed NRCS Field Office Tech Guide without justification. Projects involving perimeter fencing must follow NRCS eligibility standards.

Budget Narrative – Use the space below to provide additional detail regarding project expenses. Working Lands Grazing Systems

- OHF will provide 75% cost-share for water developments, portable wind breaks and fencing (primarily cross fencing but will include boundary fence and wildlife friendly fence).

- Cost share will include:
 - \$200,000 from NDWF (Dunn and McKenzie counties only)
 - \$20,000 from the Trust
 - \$375,000 from Landowners
 - \$400,000 from NDGF for grazing infrastructure and access payments
 - Infrastructure cost-share will be available to landowners who choose not to participate in, or do not have land that qualifies for PLOTS

Energy Site Reclamation

- Reclamation will be completed following industry standards.
- \$1,500,000 OHF Funds for energy site reclamation
 - \$1,287,000 from DMR (eligible non-general fund dollars)
 - Total reclamation costs for five sites (two on Beaver Lake WPA) \$2,787,000

Contracted Services/Support – This grant proposal requests \$100,000 for required contracted services for items such as cultural resources, surveys, and for any additional delivery and/or program monitoring. If contracted services request is not utilized during the grant period for these services, the funds would be used for additional conservation practices identified in the proposal. The Trust will provide a cash match of \$30,000 to assist in landowner technical support.

Staffing – This grant proposal requests \$25,000 of staffing funding for the Trust from OHF. Additional staffing costs will be provided by the Trust (\$25,000) and be considered an in-kind match based on actual costs of Trust staff salary, benefits, and travel. Staffing activities includes Trust time to complete program promotion and outreach, meeting with landowners, providing technical assistance, completing landowner agreements, partnering with state, federal, local, and nongovernmental organizations, processing payments, providing agreement monitoring, and completing all grant administration.

With this grant proposal offering a suite of grazing system activities to interested landowners, we are asking that this grant provide the flexibility to adjust acreage goals and transfer funding to the activities based on practice demand. The OHF funds and match will remain at the same levels.

Sustainability – Indicate how the project will be funded or sustained in future years.

Include information on the sustainability of this project after OHF funds have been expended and whether the sustainability will be in the form of ongoing management or additional funding from a different source.

BDWLP III is an expansion of the previous BDWLP iterations, and the landowner interest in the program has continued to increase. We continue to seek innovative methods for delivering needed programs in western North Dakota by working with our contractors, participating landowners, and the OHF Board. Partnership levels from DMR, the NDWF, and the NDGF have increased as we take a strategic approach to delivering projects and implementing new ideas to already successful programs.

Partial Funding – Indicate how the project will be affected if less funding is available than that requested.

The Trust and Partners are very thankful for the OHF Advisory Board’s consideration of the BDWLP III proposal. The request of \$3,125,000 in OHF funds, with an additional \$1,937,400 in match and another \$400,000 as NDGF contribution, is important for reclamation improvements, public access, grazing management, and nutrient management for North Dakota. By partially funding the BDWLP III proposal, the full amount of match from DMR, landowners, partners, and Trust would not be utilized. If the OHF Advisory Board recommends a reduction in funding from the original proposal, this will result in a lower number of all aspects of the proposal.

Partnership Recognition - If you are a successful recipient of Outdoor Heritage Fund dollars, how would you recognize the Outdoor Heritage Fund partnership? * There must be signage at the location of the project acknowledging OHF funding when appropriate.

BDWLP II will provide OHF recognition where possible on all reclamation projects and landowner agreements, especially those enrolled in PLOTS. If any signs are placed at project locations, it will include the OHF logo. All BDWLP III distributed information for outreach and/or media will identify OHF as a funding source. Additionally, all presentations or discussions with partners and/or other organizations will acknowledge OHF as a funding source.



Outdoor Heritage Fund grant BDWLP #011-128 signage at Beaver Lake WPA where reclamation work was completed. OHF logo in bottom right corner. Similar signage and recognition will be placed as part of BDWLP III. Additionally, landowner agreements in PLOTS can have a small metal sign with OHF logo placed on same post as PLOTS sign.

Awarding of Grants - Review the appropriate sample contract for your organization on the website at <http://www.nd.gov/ndic/outdoor-infopage.htm>.

Can you meet all the provisions of the sample contract? Yes No

If there are provisions in that contract that your organization is unable to meet, please indicate below what those provisions would be: