

Minutes of a Meeting of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Technical Committee

Held on June 9, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

Department of Agriculture Conference Room, State Capitol – 14th Floor

Present: Robert Kuylen, OHF Advisory Board Chairman
Rhonda Kelsch, ND Association of Soil Conservation Districts
Jeb Williams, ND Game and Fish Department
Cole Garmin, ND Department of Parks & Recreation

Others Present: This meeting was open on Microsoft Teams so not all attendees are known.

Chairman Robert Kuylen called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Mr. Reice Haase gave a 68th legislative session update relative to the Outdoor Heritage Fund. OHF was appropriated \$15 million for the 2023-2025 biennium (\$7.5 million/year). The Office of the Industrial Commission was approved for 2 new FTE's – one grant administrator and one office support staff. The Office was also appropriated \$1.25 million for grant management software and records digitization, up to \$250,000 of which is transferred as an administration expense from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. House Bill 1014, which included these provisions, was signed by the Governor on May 9th and becomes effective July 1, 2023.

Mr. Haase gave a project management financial report. Since the inception of the Outdoor Heritage Fund, the Industrial Commission has awarded funding for 213 projects for a total of \$76,383,949 and received \$79,683,562 in income. The current funding by directive is as follows: A- 10%, B-56%, C-22% and D-12%. Every county in North Dakota has received OHF funds. Some of the projects that were completed since last meeting are as follows:

- i. 018-18: MAPLE River Bank Stabilization Project – Enderlin Park Board
 - Installed erosion control at Enderlin Park
 - \$37,007 original commitment, \$0 returned
- ii. 005-074: Windbreak Renovation Initiative – ND Forest Service
 - Completed windbreak restorations, projecting 268 farmstead, 1,291.27 acres of cropland, and 4.9 miles of road
 - \$1.8 million original commitment, \$181,731.96 returned
- iii. 009-105: Kathryn Dam Repurposing Project – Barnes County Water Resource District
 - Removed over 10,000 mussels, removed old dam, replaced with rock weirs to allow fish movement
 - \$159,505 original commitment, \$0 returned
- iv. 001-017: Outdoor Heritage Habitat Initiative
 - 19 Save Our Lakes agreements totaling 1,101.4 acres
 - 11 PLOTS agreements totaling 3,000 acres
 - \$1.9 million original commitment, \$0 returned
- v. 018-186 Clear Lake Park – Mountrail County

- Installed new gazebos – repurposed from grain bins, planted 44 trees
- \$25,370 original commitment, \$17.25 returned

There are currently 74 active projects, and the cash available for commitment in the Outdoor Heritage Fund is at \$6.9 million.

Mr. Kuylen facilitated the review of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Round 22 applications.

- i. **22-1:** Napoleon Pedestrian Trail, City of Napoleon – **OHF funding request: \$1,050,000**, Total Project Cost: \$1,400,000. This request is for the construction of pedestrian trail to connect recreation facilities throughout the City of Napoleon.

Comments/Questions:

- A comment was made that there will likely be heavy discussion surrounding the decision of a concrete path
- It was noted that the fishery at West Lake is heavy, and the walleye fishery has really taken off
- It was mentioned that the maintenance of pavement is an issue and will have to be upkept every year
- Currently, people are walking/riding bike along the road to get out to the Lake so the need of a path for safety purposes is there
- Overall, the technical committee sees the project as favorable

- ii. **22-2:** Katz Dam Fish Passage, McLean County Water Resource District – **OHF funding request: \$112,573**, Total Project Cost: \$150,097. This request is for the construction of fish passage to bypass barrier created by Katz Dam on Painted Woods Creek. It would open 11 additional miles of the stream above the Missouri River. The 2021 project used Water Commission funds to address low-head dam issue, USACE 404 permit would need to be modified to allow construction of fish passage.

Comments/Questions:

- It was mentioned that there is not a direct connection to the Missouri River
- Good shore fishing opportunities for fishing
- It would not cause any more flooding as it is routed around the dam
- This is an area that has been stocked with fish previously as there is a lot of shore fishing
- The passage will not need a lot of upkeep
- Overall, the technical committee sees the project as favorable

- iii. **22-3:** Coyote Clay Target Range, Coyote Clay Target League – **OHF funding request: \$293,158**, Total Project Cost: \$517,849. This request is for Coyote Clay Target League to construct a new shooting range, including trap houses and a skeet range.

Comments/Questions:

- Concerns were raised about the skeet houses and clubhouse being considered buildings/structures

- It was mentioned that the equipment will not qualify as it can be moved and OHF does not inventory items
 - There is an immense growing interest of sporting clays and these types of recreational activities across the state
 - Overall, the technical committee sees the project as favorable
- iv. **23-4:** Turkeys Enhancing Water Quality and Wildlife Habitat, National Wild Turkey Federation – **OHF funding request: \$200,000**, Total Project Cost: \$356,913. This request is for the enhancement of 1,500 acres of habitat by providing financial assistance for both public and private land enhancement at no less than 3:1 match.

Comments/Questions:

- A comment was made that they would like to see conditions be added for the tree planting to follow NRCS guidelines
 - It was mentioned that they would like to see the smaller chapters come in and ask for the funding versus the National federation
- v. **22-5:** ND Statewide Tree Planting Initiative, North Dakota Conservation District Employees Association – **OHF funding request: \$2,550,000**, Total Project Cost: \$4,183,333. This request is for providing up to 75% cost-share to North Dakota landowners for the purpose of installing and maintaining trees.

Comments/Questions:

- It was mentioned that every district charges differently per tree and fabric, but the fabric has gotten a lot more expensive over the years
 - It is a minimum of \$2,500 grant dollars per grantee (applicants tend to range between 2,500 to 25,000 feet)
 - The plantings that took place in 2023 are using up the rest of the funds from their existing grant
- vi. **22-6:** TRPL Prairie Enhancement Land Management Phase I, Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Foundation – **OHF funding request: \$939,105**, Total Project Cost: \$1,345,185. This request includes collecting seed of local genetic origin for over 100 species of plants indigenous to the southwest North Dakota; seeds will be cleaned, tested and planted; healthy plugs will be planted at the library site; native seeds for the target species are not commercially available currently, the project will make these seeds available for the future.

Comments/Questions:

- A comment was made that a member was pleased to see a wildfire protection plan and an incorporated wildland urban interface landscaping
- This is a unique story to tell for North Dakota
- They are working with NDSU to develop the plants
- They listened to everything that was said and feedback from last grant round and have done well coming back

- vii. **22-7:** Pembina County Community Orchard, Pembina County Historical Society – **OHF funding request: \$11,000**, Total Project Cost: \$16,665. This request is for the installation of a water line from the Pembina County Museum to the Pembina County Community Orchard, a maintenance shed, wood mulch, and the installation of a shelter belt.

Comments/Questions:

- The only concern is the shed to store the machinery
- Planning to work with NDSU

- viii. **22-8:** The Conservation Capacity Program, North Dakota Wildlife Federation – **OHF funding request: \$30,000**, Total Project Cost: \$45,000. This request is for providing project funds as sub-grants to North Dakota conservation clubs for projects ranging from fencing, rotational grazing, pollinator plantings, and shooting range improvements.

Comments/Questions:

- A comment was made to ensure that projects from small organizations meet the intent of the Outdoor Heritage Fund and its directives and rules
- This would be a grant for the NDWF to allow their smaller clubs to complete their projects that fall under the OHF directives
- The smaller clubs don't have the capacity/staffing to help administer those grants for their communities

- ix. **22-9:** North Dakota Partners for Wildlife Project 3, North Dakota Natural Resources Trust – **OHF funding request: \$1,957,500**, Total Project Cost: \$3,387,000. This request involves a third phase of two previous OHF projects, and would include grazing system agreements, wetland restoration agreements, and cover crop agreements with North Dakota landowners.

Comments/Questions:

- A comment was made that these projects have been working well

- x. **22-10:** Howard Opegard Landing Improvements, American Foundation for Wildlife – **OHF funding request: \$53,300**, Total Project Cost: \$85,650. This request involves the construction of a boat ramp, an earthen fishing pier, a concrete picnic table, and native pollinator grass planting on a donated parcel of land adjacent to Eckelson Lake in Barnes County.

Comments/Questions:

- A comment was made that this is a good project as the current set up of boats docking from the highway is an accident waiting to happen
- It is a good lake that is fished frequently

- xi. **22-11:** Epping Springbrook Dam Algae Control, Williams County Parks – **OHF funding request: \$131,921.25**, Total Project Cost: \$175,895. This request involves the installation of

three algae control buoys to mitigate harmful algal blooms at Epping/Springbrook Dam in Williams County.

Comments/Questions:

- There are some unknowns with this technology, but it might be worth trying on an experimental basis
- Could have potential to be used in more lakes across North Dakota
- Some of the data it provides is the water temperature and different chemical levels in the water so you can access real time data through the computer which allows you to adjust sonic waves to keep the sun from reaching the bottom and allowing algae to grow and bloom
- They are anchored down- In the water before it freezes they would be moved into the storage facility until the spring
- They have GPS so you can see where it is 24/7 and battery backups
- IC staff will have access to see where they are at all times for inventory purposes
- A comment was made that the thinking outside of the box was appreciated

- xii. **22-12:** TMBCI Belcourt Lake Rejuvenation Phase II, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa – **OHF funding request: \$105,741**, Total Project Cost: \$147,741. This request involves the installation of two handicapped-accessible fishing piers, a restroom facility, and two picnic arbors at Belcourt Lake; the project would renovate a historic boy scout camp site to provide additional public access to the lake.

Comments/Questions

- A comment was made that it would have been nice to have the plant types documented in the application with a planting plan and/or bids and quotes
- Recommend adding a condition that the planting follows NRCS guidelines
- The projects these applicants have had in the past are closed out

- xiii. **22-13:** Dunseith Park Improvement Project, City of Dunseith – **OHF funding request: \$92,645**, Total Project Cost: \$125,145. This request would be to upgrade the City of Dunseith's park, and includes resurfacing basketball courts, installing a new restroom facility, replacing basketball and volleyball equipment, and installing new aluminum bleachers to provide local youth with outdoor recreation opportunities and to ensure the park is handicap accessible.

Comments/Questions

- This project does not follow the intent of the Outdoor Heritage Fund
- It is very similar to the previous project they had submitted two grant rounds previously that was denied
- It was discussed that OHF would love to help out the tribes more with their projects, and they would love to see more projects from them, but this particular project does not fit the directives of the Outdoor Heritage Fund

A motion was made by Mr. Williams and seconded by Ms. Kelsch to formally request Mr. Haase to reach out to the City of Dunseith and request they withdraw their application for the Dunseith Park Improvement Project, as it does not meet the intent of OHF. The motion carried.

The technical committee discussed the draft agenda for the upcoming Outdoor Heritage Advisory Board meeting in Beach, ND which consists of two pre-meeting tours and the advisory board meeting to follow at the Beach Community Center.

Chairman Kuylen adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.



Robert Kuylen, Chairman