

Minutes of a Meeting of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Technical Committee

Held on October 17, 2023 at 9:00 a.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 Garman, ND Department of Parks & Recreation

Others Present: Reice Haase (NDIC), Brenna Jessen (NDIC)

Chairman Robert Kuylen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Mr. Reice Haase gave presented the Outdoor Heritage Fund Project Management and Financial Report. There have been 224 cumulative projects to date, with 88 of those projects still being active. There is currently \$39,367,281.39 committed and \$1,128,091.01 available to commit to new projects.

Mr. Kuylen facilitated the review of the Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Round 23 applications.

- i. **23-1:** North Dakota Prairie Management Toolbox, Audubon Great Plains – **OHF funding request: \$747,400**, Total Project Costs: \$1,206,512.26. This request is to Provide financial assistance to private landowners in eastern ND and collaborate to implement regenerative grassland management practices including invasive woody vegetation removal on 600 acres and grazing infrastructure on 4,400 acres.

Comments/Questions:

- There will be maintenance with brush management.
- They are hoping for a change in process as there was previous mismanagement on the landowner side.
- It is agreed that the woody vegetation shouldn't be out there, but should OHF be paying for the removal, or should the landowner?
- It may not have been mismanagement by the landowner, but there should be an emphasis on the maintenance aspect.

- ii. **23-2:** Mayville Dam #2 Reconstruction & Recreation Project, City of Mayville – **OHF funding request: \$396,595.48**, Total Project Costs: \$3,050,000. This request is to Remove the failed low head dam, reestablish the eroded riverbank, and construct a new dam in the form of rock riffle structures to facilitate fish passage, enable more natural sediment transport and reduce sediment buildup, develop fish habitat, and allow access within the Goose River.

Comments/Questions:

- Game and Fish is not involved in this project.
- The pictures and maps provided were appreciated.
- Riparian Restoration would be nice with some of these projects.

- Do projects like these go before FFMA & Water Commission as well?
- iii. **23-3:** Napoleon Recreation Trail, City of Napoleon – **OHF funding request: \$1,050,000**, Total Project Costs: \$1,400,000. This request is to develop a recreation trail to connect facilities and provide a safe route. The trail parallels a creek and wildlife educational plaques will be displayed along the trail.

Comments/Questions:

- There is a lot of traffic in that area, but connecting to a nursing home does not seem necessary.
- No photos, maps, or outline of trails were provided.

- iv. **23-4:** Japanese Gardens Revitalization at Sertoma Park, Grand Forks Park District – **OHF funding request: \$149,859**, Total Project Costs: \$199,813. This request is to revitalize the Japanese Gardens in Sertoma Park using principles of traditional Japanese landscape design and incorporating native plants to establish an immersive educational environment.

Comments/Questions:

- Lighting, security improvements, shingled roofing, etc. should not be part of OHF funding.
- They are interested in how the Board will receive this application.

- v. **23-5:** Lost Lake Dam Fish Passage, McLean County Water Resource District – **OHF funding request: \$66,735.53**, Total Project Costs: \$88,980.70. This request is to remove four barriers to fish migration in the lower portion of Painted Woods Creek with a 305-mile watershed.

Comments/Questions:

- They had a similar project previously.
- The photos that were attached were appreciated.
- It is a mixture of both private and public land.

- vi. **23-6:** Painted Woods Lake Flood Protection & Recreation Project McLean County Water Resource District – **OHF funding request: \$916,825**, Total Project Costs: \$4,900,000. This request is to construct a parking lot and kayak/canoe launch, build a new dam, and construct two box culverts to facilitate walk-in access across the creek channel and a gravel access path that leads to the dam within the Painted Woods Lake Wildlife Development Area (WDA).

Comments/Questions:

- There were no comments or questions.

- vii. **23-7:** Wildlife and Livestock Dams – Wetlands Creation, Restoration, and Enhancement II, North Dakota Natural Resources Trust – **OHF funding request: \$267,750**, Total Project Costs: \$520,500. This request is to assist landowners with approximately 20 wetland dam creations, dam repairs, and drain ditch plugs throughout the state impacting 112 surface acres of wetland habitat.

Comments/Questions:

- There were no comments or questions.

- viii. **23-8:** MonDak Pheasants Forever 619 NWND 2024-2026 Habitat Project, Pheasants Forever, Inc. – **OHF funding request: \$250,000**, Total Project Costs: \$400,000. This request is to incentivize 2,500 acres of new grass plantings and an additional 2,500 acres of new CRP enrollments with hunting access to increase new wildlife habitat development and hunting access in Williams and Divide counties.

Comments/Questions:

- It is nice to see a local chapter coming to get OHF funds.
- The access with this project is great.

- ix. **23-9:** Towner Youth Baseball Fundraising, Towner Youth Baseball – **OHF funding request: \$40,000**, Total Project Costs: \$75,270. This request is to upgrade the baseball complex by removing dead trees and rebuilding the structural fence and removing the fill dirt which contains rocks, glass, and metal.

Comments/Questions:

- This is not the intent of OHF.

It was moved by Rhonda Kelsch and seconded by Tom Clayes to not forward Applicant 23-9 “Towner Youth Baseball Fundraising” to the Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board. All Technical Committee members voted aye. The motion passed unanimously.

- x. **23-10:** TMBCI Fishing/Boat Access Project, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa – **OHF funding request: \$109,800**, Total Project Costs: \$146,400. This request is to purchase seven handicapped accessible fishing/boat access docks to be installed at five tribal lakes for the purpose of expanding recreational opportunities as well as providing lake access for water quality testing.

Comments/Questions:

- Are they sustainable fishing waters?
 - What is the accessibility of the lake? – Need tribal fishing license
 - It is not associated with Game and Fish.
 - The quoted costs of the docs are within reason.
- xi. **23-11:** Williston Water World, Williston Parks & Recreation District – **OHF funding request: \$500,000**, Total Project Costs: \$14,195,004. This request is to Assist with construction for the Williston Water World which will include zero depth entry, splash pad features, lazy river with wave mechanism, water slides, and a separate pool with a ninja course. The site will also include seating areas, locker rooms/showers, and concessions.

Comments/Questions:

- This request does not meet the intent of OHF.

It was moved by Rhonda Kelsch and seconded by Jeb Williams to not forward Applicant 23-11 “Williston Water World” to the Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board. All Technical Committee members voted aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Kuylen facilitated the review of the following amendments.

- i. OHF Grant 013-138: Crooked Crane Trail, City of Dickinson – OHF additional funding request: \$960,000. This amendment request is to add a new budget line item for a boardwalk feature. This will re-route the trail, freeing it from BNSF right-of-way, mitigate flood disturbances, and link existing fitness trail with the city-wide trail network.

Comments/Questions:

- This should really be a new grant request if there are this many modifications and they are requesting nearly \$1 million in addition.
- ii. OHF Grant 017-172: Red River Basin Wildlife and Water Quality Enhancement Pilot Program, Game and Fish Department – Request to decrease landowner cost-share from 50% to 40%. This will adjust match for Producer Management agreements – these are funded by NDGF and DEQ at 50% of the current rental rate. NDGF and DEQ will be paying these at 60% of the rental rate. Total match will not change, however the ratio will. This amendment will also allow landowners to request longer agreements from 5 years up to 10 years.

Comments/Questions:

- As long as the match is not changing it shouldn't be a problem.

- We want to make sure that the landowners have skin in the game.

Mr. Reice Haase shared the draft agenda for the October 25th, 2023 OHF Orientation/Policy Review Meeting and the October 26th, 2023 OHF Advisory Board Meeting.

Being no further business, Chairman Kuylen adjourned the meeting at 10:10 a.m.



Robert Kuylen, Chairman