

NORTH DAKOTA NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST

2016-2017 OVERALL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ADMINISTRATION

Staffing

After so many years of stable staffing, the past year saw more changes to the Trust team. With Linda Roeder's retirement in early 2016 the Trust embarked on a recruitment effort. Reflecting the changes in administrative needs enabled by new technology, the previous administrative assistant position was modified a bit to include some biological technician duties. After receiving over thirty (30) applications for the position, staff reviewed applicants and interviewed seven (7) very qualified candidates. The position was ultimately offered to Mary Bandle. Mary accepted and began work on September 1, 2016. Unfortunately, in the early summer of 2017 Mary was approached by a private dental business in Bismarck about an employment opportunity. She ultimately decided to accept that opportunity, so left Trust employment at the end of June, 2016. The administrative assistant/biological technician position has been advertised and will likely be filled sometime in August, 2017.

The Trust also extended its contract relationship with the ND Game & Fish Department to provide staffing for Director Terry Steinwand in his role as Chair of the North American Wetlands Conservation Council. During the past year Director Steinwand's tenure at the Department was uncertain due to the 2016 Gubernatorial election. That situation has stabilized due to his reappointment to the Director's position. In June 2017 the Trust and the Department signed a full two (2) year agreement (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2019) to provide NAWCA staffing services, with Rick Warhurst agreeing to stay on in that capacity.

Jesse Beckers is completing his second year as the Trust's Conservation Program Coordinator. In that role Jesse works extensively on all energy development issues, collecting and examining data and information to bring a fact based perspective to the many ways energy development affects our land, air and water. One of the goals of the Trust and our many partners is conservation through elimination of energy development practices that damage the landscape and, where possible, to identify proactive strategies to improve natural resource management. Jesse also works on development and delivery of many of the Trust's projects. He is also our GIS resource, bringing valuable mapping and data analysis tools to our work that enhances our ability to carry out our mission.

Our staffing update would not be complete without noting a high point for existing staff. Terry Allbee, long time Trust Business Manager/Sr. Biologist, was honored by the ND Chapter of the Wildlife Society in February with the Habitat Award at the Chapter's annual meeting. Terry is well known and high regarded by his peers for his excellent work in so many areas. The well-deserved award was both an honor to Terry personally as well as to the Trust as an organization and to all of us as Terry's colleagues.

Finances

Trust financial operations were stable and positive under Terry's guidance. Annual highlights include:

- An excellent annual audit report
- Continued positive work with the Trust's investment advisor SEI.
 - During the past year our long-time investment advisor Mark Norcini took a different position within SEI and was replaced on our account by John Hagan.
- Trust staff and board members, especially the Finance Committee, worked to complete the five (5) year update to salary surveys for all Trust positions. Based on data collected, the necessary adjustments to salary ranges and the Trust salary plan were completed.
- The Trust also took on an additional, and important, partnership to handle money for the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture (PPJV) – more about that later.

General Administration

- During 2016 the Trust marked its thirtieth (30) year of establishment by Congressional Act in 1986. A special 30th anniversary article was published in the December ND Water Magazine, with a slightly modified version published in the February 2017 issue of North Dakota Outdoors.
- Transition and upgrading of Trust technology continued during the past year:
 - Mary has done an excellent job maintaining and updating the Trust's web site

- Remote access to all Trust shared data files is now available to staff from any location where internet access exists
- Based on Mary's advice, we transitioned our technology support from Fireside Office Systems to Blue Moon Technology. Blue Moon owner Joe Vadnais is an excellent communicator as well technician.
- Trust staff and board reviewed and updated the Trust's strategic plan. A partner outreach effort has also been initiated to receive input about Trust performance from an external perspective.

PUBLIC POLICY AND CONSERVATION FUNDING

As in years past, the Trust often acts as a facilitator among partners and various stakeholder groups to encourage support and funding for conservation efforts. The past year included the following:

Consensus Building

- The Trust hosted a partner meeting with Governor Burgum's natural resource staff person, Cassandra Torstenson. The purpose of the gathering was to identify important conservation issues needing ongoing attention and establish sound communications and a strong working relationship. Periodic meetings will be held with Cassandra and other members of the Burgum administration.
- In a broader public policy context, I met with partners to discuss ND conservation strategy overall, explore the best ways to inform and interact with the Burgum administration and continue to build the partnership between agriculture, energy and conservation interests.
- Specific to building the partnership between agriculture, energy and conservation interests, the Trust is taking the lead in a broader Consensus building effort. The Trust, DU and TNC submitted a Bush Foundation grant proposal two years ago that was unsuccessful. We were then successful in obtaining a small grant from the ND Consensus Council (Bush Foundation dollars) to begin gather data from ND citizens regarding their attitudes on conservation and natural resource management. We are currently in the process of preparing a second Bush Foundation proposal (likely in the \$100,000 range) that will be submitted with the Trust as applicant that, if successful, would engage a broad public constituency in exploring a collaborative community discussion around public policy and funding for conservation.

Farm Bill

- The Trust continues to be involved in all aspects of 2018 farm bill discussions. I remain involved in national policy committees of AFWA and the NGPWG locally. We are collectively advocating for increased acres for CRP and maintaining or expanding other conservation programs. We are strongly advocating a more "working lands" focused approach. Retention of Swampbuster, Sodsaver and Conservation Compliance remain top priorities.
- The Trust remains a major partner with NDASCD and a broad range of agricultural and conservation partners in the Farm Bill Specialist Program:
 - Under the current agreement (which runs through Sept. 30, 2017) the Trust has a funding commitment of \$7,000 per employee for up to 8 positions, with 15% of funds available for administrative costs. Next to NRCS and NDGF, the Trust and the ND Soybean Association are the major funding partners.
 - I serve on NDASCD farm bill specialist advisory board
 - Worked with partners on review and selection process for additional farm bill specialists
 - During the year I did two interviews for farm publication articles on farm bill specialist partnership
 - The Trust was a Gold level sponsor of the NDASCD annual convention. In addition to highlighting the farm bill specialist partnership, the Leopold Award was also presented to the Trust's nominee, the Doan family and Black Leg Ranch. I had the opportunity to follow Senator Heitkamp in speaking to the convention's lunch gathering of 250 or so attendees to talk about conservation partnerships.
- The Trust continued our funding agreement with PF, providing flexibility to PF staff in the following areas:
 - Their innovative Precision Ag project
 - We published a Precision Ag article in the October 2016 issue of ND Water Magazine
 - Their State Coordinator position
 - Their Women in Conservation Program and recently hired state coordinator
- The Trust continued our funding agreement with DU for delivery of both farm bill and the full range of private land conservation programs available from partners.
- The Trust worked with array of partners on strategy to deal with OIG (Office of Inspector General) report on wetland delineations by NRCS in ND. OIG confirmed that NRCS has used some discredited

data and standards to do wetland delineations in a number of counties, primarily in the south east part of the state. In trying to respond to strong political pressure regarding the backlog of wetland delineation requests (many in regard to tile drainage), we believe that NRCS has used an approach that resulted in the loss of wetland acres that were protected under provisions of the farm bill.

- The Trust, in partnership with Carlson-McCain Associates, submitted a proposal to NRCS in response to an RFP for a Wetland Mitigation Banking Pilot Project. This bank would have provided mitigation options to producers already in violation of farm bill provisions for wetland alterations as well as those planning, in a more responsible manner, for wetland manipulations allowed under the farm bill. For political reasons somewhat difficult to determine, the pilot project for ND was awarded to a SD firm. To date, ND does not have an active wetland mitigation banking pilot project.

The Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF)

Even though Measure 5 failed in the public vote, it did result in creation of the OHF and some fiscal resources for statewide conservation and outdoor recreation efforts.

- Terry and I worked with Milt Rue at DU to wrap up outstanding bills from the ballot work and close the measures account
- The Trust and partners worked diligently during the 2017 Legislative session to ensure the OH Fund was not discontinued and to keep an adequate funding level during very difficult budget times for the State. In the end, approximately \$19 million was secured for the remainder of the 2015-17 biennium and the 2017-19 biennium. This is less than would have been provided by the funding formula but a far smaller reduction than we might have gotten; the efforts to sustain the OHF were considered successful.
 - Terry did an excellent job of assembling OHF statistics to be used during legislative discussions. The data shows that 75% of funds from OH grants (OH and applicant funds) have gone to agricultural producers for some type of on-the-ground conservation/habitat work
 - We participated in the Outdoor Day celebration at the state capitol during the legislative session, where all partners promoted their programs and advocated for continued strong OH funding
- The Trust submitted OH board nominations for Pat Stockdill, Carolyn Godfread, Rob Vollrath, Randy Kreil and Annie Carlson to the Governor's office
 - Two of the Trust's nominees, Pat Stockdill and Carolyn Godfread, were reappointed to the OH board
- Some pretty extensive governance challenges remain for the OH process. The OH board continues to lack a strategic direction, priorities, a grant scoring system and a consistent approach to fund allocation. The Trust and partners will continue to work with the Governor's office and directly with board members to improve OH governance

North Dakota Corporate Farming Law

The state's corporate farming law is unique in that it contains restrictions on conservation activities allowed by private landowners. Two events regarding the law occurred during the past year that are of interest to our conservation work:

- A private landowner wishing to sell his or her land for conservation purposes must go through a long, arduous public hearing process and ultimately obtain Governor's approval. The ND Farm Bureau has legal action pending against the state to declare the Corporate Farming Statute unconstitutional. The Trust and conservation partners are not in any way directly involved in the legal action, but are watching closely to see if the outcome of the legal action might in any way change the rules for conservation related land acquisitions.
- During the long and unfortunate Dakota Access Pipeline protest the pipeline developer, Energy Transfer Partners (ETP), purchased a large ranch from a private seller, which on the surface seemed a clear violation of the corporate farming restriction. The Attorney General ultimately ruled the purchase was not in violation of the statute since the energy company needed the property for business purposes. The Trust and conservation partners are watching and closely examining the details of this activity and ruling to determine how, or if, the exception made for ETP has any relevance for conservation activities in the state.

ENERGY

Oil and Gas

Despite the slowdown in activities in the Bakken, efforts to improve public policy around oil and gas development, as well as avoid, minimize and mitigate landscape impacts continue unabated:

- Continued work with staff and partners on Energy Working Group and Elkhorn Coalition

- Worked with staff, legal counsel and USFWS on MOU for Dakota skipper voluntary conservation project on a segment of the Dakota Access Pipeline. To date Energy Transfer Partners has not elected to provide funds for voluntary conservation measures. We remain hopeful that will change in the future.
- Helped fund and worked closely with Covenant Consulting and Badlands Advisory Group (BAG) on energy study. At the request of the BAG, the Trust prepared a “habitat plan” for dealing with surface impacts. Our material appeared in the final project report. We continue to work with Covenant, the BAG, the Governor’s office and an array of partners to implement the plan.
- Worked with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and other partners on strategies for protection of the Elkhorn Ranch Lands.
- Based on a contact provided by Lynn Helms, Director of the Department of Mineral Resources, Trust staff had a very good discussion with Doug Bannerman, Statoil’s Social Responsibility & Stakeholder Relations director. Statoil has a great interest in the Covenant Consulting energy study and is engaging in our Energy Work Group discussions.
- I reviewed work I did in 1994 on funding natural resource mitigation and enhancement on public lands by reallocating oil and gas revenues. The concept was forwarded to the President’s Blue Ribbon panel on conservation funding and will be discussed further with in-state partners. A sizeable portion of energy taxes from public land now go to unrelated uses and it would be extremely valuable to ND to have even a small portion of that revenue remain with the land which experienced the extraction impact for both mitigation and proactive conservation purposes.
- Met again with Attorney General Stenehjem to discuss the potential to revisit/strengthen provisions of the Extraordinary Places policy for oil/gas development.

Renewable Energy

At present renewable energy in North Dakota is nearly all wind energy. Federal tax credits combined with an open and somewhat confusing state regulatory structure, have resulted in an explosion of wind energy development in recent years. As with fossil fuel based energy extraction, the Trust’s role is to help industry, our partners and the State develop policy and process that avoids, minimizes and then mitigates unavoidable impacts to our land, air and water, as well as our agricultural and tourism industries. In the context, the year past has seen the Trust:

- Work diligently with agency, NGO and industry partners on habitat and species assessments to aid in siting decisions.
- Meet with professional colleagues to review past work on science relative to wind farm siting and discuss strategy going forward to minimize wind farm impacts.
- Review and share excellent World Wildlife Fund position statement on wind energy.
- Work closely with partners and local landowners on the Burly Wind Farm.
- Examine North Dakota’s regulatory structure to better understand, and educate others, on the process of siting wind farms in the state.
- Coordinate with USFWS and KLJ on discussions regarding the Lyndahl wind farm north of Tioga. Developer Enel Green Power has been considering a voluntary conservation donation and the Trust has been helping advise and guide the process.

TRUST SMALL GRANT PROGRAM

The Trust’s small grant program was continued during the past year. Grant guidelines stayed similar to the past year, with emphasis on small educational grants.

- 14 grant proposals were received totaling \$215,076 in requests
- Trust staff reviewed grants and made funding recommendations to the Board
- At the May 2017 Board meeting Trust staff recommendations were approved:
 - Six (6) grants were approved
 - \$50,000 in grant dollars were committed
- Trust staff committed to following up quarterly with recipients to shorten invoice time
- Grant agreements now limit award timeline to two years unless approval is received from the Trust

LAND AND HABITAT

Outdoor Heritage Fund Proposals

I discussed the status and funding strategies related to OHF above. This discussion focuses on the actual projects funded and on-the-ground work achieved through OHF partnerships

The Trust has been very successful in utilizing OH project funding. Terry has often taken the lead and done an excellent job preparing grant proposals, giving presentations to the OH board and carrying out funded projects. Over the past several years all Trust staff have contributed in various ways to writing and presenting

OH grant proposals and delivering OH dollars. Trust staff has also helped multiple partners with OH strategy and grant writing assistance.

Since these are often fairly large, multi-year projects with payments continuing for 2-3 years I'll provide a summary of all Trust OH grants:

Water Storage Piggyback Program (Round 2 – Spring 2014)

- Wetland restoration incentives – OHF approved \$300,000 Trust \$100,000 (\$75,000 WSP and \$25,000 in-kind) Trust actual WSP match was \$84,200.55 plus \$25,000 in-kind
- All funds were obligated by spring 2016. 44 landowner agreements were signed in 19 different counties
- Accomplished 104 wetland basins and 578.1 acres restored
- \$31,829.90 in funds left to be paid. High likelihood they will all be paid out by end of 2017

Beginning Farmer Enhancement (Round 5 – Summer 2015)

- Total project \$257,442 (OHF \$132,884, Trust \$67,888 and Landowner \$55,144)
- 4 landowners in Mercer, Burleigh (2) and Dickey Counties. Project assisted with livestock grazing infrastructure
- Three agreements completed and the final agreement will be done by September 2017

Working Grassland Partnership (Round 6 – Fall 2015)

- Total project \$2,079,562 (OHF 1,097,250, Trust \$200,000, Partners \$90,000, Landowners \$694,925)
- WGP agreements with 19 landowners for over 8,400 acres
- Approximately \$500,000 in OHF funds obligated.
- WGP lease dollars for expiring CRP have been obligated and Trust has over \$200,000 in pending WGP agreements
- Anticipated that all funds will be obligated by end of 2017

Grasslands Enhancement Project (Round 8 – Fall 2016)

- Ducks Unlimited was applicant, with the Trust as a co-applicant
- Requested \$241,529.40 in funding from OHF; granted \$230,000 from OHF with partners bringing \$122,832 in cost share
- The first of two projects have been completed on a WPA in McLean County

Wetland and Grassland Restoration (Round 9 – Summer 2017)

- OH funded grass seeding but not wetland restorations
- Total project \$140,000 (OHF \$67,500, Trust \$21,875 and Landowners \$50,625)
- Approved by NDIC, but no agreement signed yet

Painted Woods Project

Trust staff was privileged to be part of another successful partnership project, with critical aspects of the Painted Woods Project completed during the past year

- Final state government approvals for the acquisition were obtained.
- The acquisition culminated in a closing on July 19, 2016
- The property was transferred to ND Game & Fish Department in late fall of 2016.
- The Trust and partners planned and carried out another successful project dedication at the Painted Woods site in May 2017. State officials including Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring and Lieutenant Governor Brent Sanford joined McLean County officials, landowner Bob Landgren and project partners in celebrating this successful project.
- The Trust continues to work with McLean County officials, NDGF and adjacent landowners to reduce water management problems and improve wildlife habitat.
 - Attended field tour to review Falgren Trust land grazing system
 - Attended field tour with ND State Water Commission and other partners
 - The Trust assisted McLean County officials prepare an OH grant proposal to fund water management activities that would reduce private land flooding. While the proposal was unsuccessful, we will continue to work with partners to identify funding and complete the recommended action to reduce flooding on adjacent private agricultural lands.

Grand Forks County Prairie Partnership (GFCPP)

The Trust continues to be an active partner, promoting grassland retention and management in this unique landscape

- Trust staff assisted partners with an OH grant submission in May 2017 for over \$121,000 in OH funds (over \$250,000 in total project cost) to enhance grassland management using woody vegetation removal and other grassland management practices in the project area; the grant proposal was successful.

Trust Property

Trust Kenner Marsh property in Ramsey County continues to be managed under long term agreement with the North Dakota Game & Fish Department. CRP contract acres have been seeded to tall grass native species

Rural Leadership North Dakota (RLND)

- Following completion of my Council term at the end of June 2016 I continued work on RLND fund raising committee
- As I looked at marketing material for the fund raising effort I suggested to the Council that the term “natural resources” might be added to the RLND program “tagline” to more fully express the issues the program exposes the participants to. I have been asked to attend a future Council meeting to further explain my rationale for the suggested language addition.

Audubon Grass Feed Beef

The Trust has made a sizeable commitment to help support the innovative, market based approach embarked on by Audubon and a diverse number of partners. During the past year Jesse attended the Audubon Grass Fed Beef Program Conference in Rapid City, SD.

North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA)

The Trust plays a unique and active role in the NAWCA process both in North Dakota and nationally. We are involved in governance issues, funding and project development. We provide Council staffing and are active board members on two (2) joint ventures.

Staff Support

The Trust continues to play the unique and valuable role of providing staffing for Game & Fish director Terry Steinwand as Central Flyway representative on the NAWCA council and the current Council chair. Rick Warhurst does an excellent job of assisting Terry with his Council duties as well as representing the prairies as a staff member scoring and advocating for projects.

- We submitted a new sponsorship application for staffing support, which was approved by Game & Fish and signed by Director Steinwand and myself in June 2017. The new partnership agreement for Rick’s position will run from July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2019.

Joint Ventures

Prairie Pothole Joint Venture (PPJV)

- I continue to serve on the PPJV management board; I am currently the longest serving board member
 - Attended PPJV board meeting in Worthington, MN.
 - Attended NA conference and PPJV management board meeting in Spokane, WA.
 - I am also a member of the management board’s newly established policy committee
- The Trust was able to offer the following in matching funds:
 - Chase Lake 13 - \$129,913
 - At Risk Wetlands - \$10,000.
- The Trust worked closely with the PPJV, the ND Grazing Coalition and other partners planning for 2017 grazing tour at Black Leg Ranch and Oswald ranch. For multiple reasons the tour has been postponed until 2018; the Trust will remain an active partner
- A unique funding and partnership opportunity developed within the PPJV during the past year that the Trust was able to bring to fruition in a manner other partners could not. The PPJV coordinator was approached by Conoco Phillips with an offer of \$300,000 over three (3) years to inventory and create a long term strategy for grassland protection in the Northern Great Plains. The Trust received the first \$100,000 annual contribution in March of 2017. Terry and I worked with the PPJV coordinator to set up the accounting and governance details. The Trust will handle administration of the funds for the PPJV and I will contribute to strategy behind the work as a member of PPJV management board.

Northern Great Plains Joint Venture (NGPJV)

Due to time and staffing constraints, the Trust has not been an active member of the NGPJV, despite the fact that their North Dakota landscape is one of our priority work areas. During the past year we were able to alter that situation:

- Jesse began regular attendance at NGPJV board meetings. The Trust requested a board position, which was granted at the meeting in Billings, Montana, in September 2016.
- Jesse also attended the April 2017 spring board meeting in Douglas, Wyoming.

PARTNERSHIPS / OTHER CONSERVATION SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

- I attended agreed to serve on the advisory committee for the NDSU Natural Resources Program; attended the first committee meeting at NDSU in February.
- I continue to work with Trust partners relative to concerns about public land transfers on Lakes Sakakawea and Oahe. There have been both state (Reps. Jim Schmidt and Mike Brandenburg) and federal versions (Congressman Cramer) of legislation addressing this issue. Depending upon which version and interpretation you consult, the purpose would be anything between returning public land to the state for management (at a time when the state could not afford to take on additional cost burden) to returning it to former private owners. In any scenario it would involve removing valuable, highly used public land from access and management; neither scenario is a good outcome for the state, the public or the resource.
- The Trust was one of the sponsors of the North Dakota Institute for Journalism and Natural Resources tour done in the summer of 2016. The tour group was comprised of journalists from some of the top publications in the country. They headquartered at the Doan's Black Leg Ranch and toured agriculture and natural resource sites to get a broader understanding of issues facing the prairies. A number of outstanding articles have been written about natural resources issues relevant to the Trust's mission.
- For the first time ever, the Leopold Award was sponsored in North Dakota by the ND Grazing Lands Coalition and the ND Stockmen's Association. The Trust is a co-sponsor, funding partner and also made the successful nomination of the state's first recipient, the Doan family and Black Leg Ranch. The award was presented at the NDASCD annual meeting in December.
- The Trust was a co-sponsor and I attended the 2nd annual PR sporting clays event with the Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus in August of 2016.
- Prompted by citizen inquiries, I had several discussions with Bismarck City officials, Burleigh County officials, Game and Fish Department Director Steinwand and State Land Commissioner Gaebe regarding the future of school land up for sale adjacent to Bismarck and just north east of the Game & Fish headquarters. The public interest was retaining wetland and native grassland habitat and open space for outdoor education and nature based recreation within the city. The logistics and cost of the project appear to make it prohibitive at present, but it remains on the list of things to check back on occasionally.
- I and other Trust staff have had several discussions with Scott Rising and Phil Murphy of the ND Soybean Growers Assn. to discuss 2018 farm bill, OH strategy, farm bill conservation specialists, tile drainage legislation and other issues of mutual interest. I have also had preliminary discussions with Dale Ihry of the ND Corn Growers on some of the same topics. It appears these Commodity groups, exposed to some very progressive conservation activities by their counterparts in other state and their national associations, are much more interested in collaboration and partnerships than most of our other agricultural groups. We will continue to explore and expand those relationships.

Private Citizen/Partner Conservation

Among the more interesting and rewarding aspects of the Trust's work is the opportunity to assist both private citizens and partners (agencies and NGOs), with unique aspects of land protection and conservation. There were both new and ongoing activities in this area during the past year:

- For some time Terry has been assisting our long-time partner, the American Foundation for Wildlife (AFW), with management options for the Olson Brothers WMA in Barnes County (the Trust board toured this property during our 2016 summer field trip). This property was donated to AFW and is under a long term management agreement with the ND Game & Fish Department. During the past year all WRP habitat restoration was completed and Terry assisted AFW and the Barnes County NRCS office in finalizing the WRP cost share.
- About one year ago I received a land protection referral from NRCS. A lady named Iris Simon, born and raised in north east Burleigh county but residing in Maine for the past 40 years, wanted assistance in planning the future of some family land. Her nephew farmed the land but after his retirement she had an interest in putting the land in some type of conservation use, possibly even selling or donating it. I visited the property, conferred with partners and Trust staff, and ultimately suggested the best option would be for the land to end up with ND Game & Fish as a WMA. Iris was

interested in putting the land's disposition in her will, so was planning for the long term. Unfortunately, her nephew passed away unexpectedly, changing her situation quickly. She has our options to consider, but has not made a decision on the final disposition of the property.

- For some time now the Trust has been assisting Dick Monson, a retired farmer from Valley City, with estate planning and long term conservation strategies. In addition to providing Dick conservation advice and options, I put him in touch with Rod Backman for estate and tax planning purposes; the Trust covers the cost of Rod's time for this private landowner assistance. Dick and his wife Karen do not have children and intend their assets to BE split among their church, community projects and conservation. Dick has a particular interest in assisting the US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) with their work in south east North Dakota. Dick has already purchased a piece of property that will be donated to FWS later this summer and is looking at other properties. He is also working with at least one neighbor to try and facilitate strategically located land between two existing WPAs to end up with the FWS. Dick's dedication to conservation is admirable as well as inspirational. It is extremely gratifying and productive to assist him in any way we can.
- Both Terry and I have worked closely with Marshall Johnson and Audubon to explore options for a piece of property adjacent to the Audubon Sanctuary. Another private conservationist, Bob Bates, has been exploring options to purchase the property, install conservation practices and, in some manner, convey the property to Audubon to become part of the existing sanctuary. Trust staff have explored options with Marshall and Bob and have facilitated discussions with other partners looking for ways to make the transaction work for all parties. Because of the location and precise nature of the property it has been a challenge to find cost effective conservation options.
- In October 2016 I participated in a field tour and social evening with a group of potential Audubon donors arranged by Marshall Johnson. I was one of several persons who provided transportation and spoke to the group. In early June Marshall informed us of some amazing success; Brad Freeman, one of the tour guests, has made a \$1 million dollar gift to Audubon Dakota by launching the Freeman Waterfowl Conservation Fund. The credit for this wonderful success story has to go to Marshall, Audubon Dakota and the other event participants. It was a privilege for the Trust to play a small role in facilitating committed private citizens to engage in strategic, long term conservation.
- The North Dakota Chapter of the Wildlife Society (Chapter) was approached by a private landowner interested in making a donation of land to a conservation entity. This is not the type of activity the Chapter has any experience with, nor does it fit their organizational mission; the dialog between the parties languished a bit. The Chapter ultimately contacted the Trust for assistance/advice, but the opportunity appears to have passed. The Trust has a good deal of experience with these types of unusual conservation opportunities and it was gratifying the Chapter recognized that expertise and contacted us. We could only encourage the Chapter to contact us immediately if an opportunity like this arises in the future.
- The North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF) was also offered a donation of private land in Stark County. NDGF staff, more versed in these types of transactions, took full advantage of the offer; the property is now a Wildlife Management Area. The property is in the landscape covered by the Northern Great Plains Joint Venture (NGPJV); I noted earlier that Jesse now represents the Trust on their management board. The NGPJV has a difficult time finding good projects with sufficient matching dollars to be competitive in the NAWCA scoring process. In order to capture this rare opportunity the Trust stepped in, arranged and paid for an appraisal on the property, and in so doing captured over a million dollars in matching funds that the NGPJV can use in a future NAWCA grant application. The hope is that they will attain a two for one match on an upcoming grant submission, which will significantly enhance their funding prospects. As happens quite often, the Trust recognized and captured this funding opportunity quickly, with little fanfare, but it will result in funding for on-the-ground conservation that would not have otherwise happened.