

**NORTH DAKOTA NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST
2018-2019 OVERALL ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

ADMINISTRATION

Staffing

During the past year the Trust again found itself seeking an administrative/conservation professional to fill the position previously held by Kathy Kirschman. Kathy has been a valued member of the Trust team, a multi-talented colleague and friend who represented us with distinction in so many venues. We wish her well in her new life's adventures.

The position was advertised starting in late June, with the application period closing on July 5. We had over eighty applicants. We interviewed six individuals for the position. We ultimately selected Brenda Newton; she will start employment with the Trust on August 12, 2019.

We also continued our very successful partnership with the ND Game & Fish Department to provide NAWCA staffing services. Rick Warhurst continues in that position. Not only are his experience and expertise valuable to Director Steinwand, but having Rick at the Trust office to provide assistance, advice and perspective on so many issues remains a great benefit to Trust staff.

Rick received another special recognition from his colleagues again this year. On May 7, 2019, Delta Waterfowl held a staff/board event in Bismarck. As part of their event they recognized a number of individuals instrumental in the success of their Working Wetlands Program; Rick was one of those individuals. Rick was acknowledged for the success of the NAWCA work in bringing wetland protection dollars to the prairies.

Jesse Beckers continues to work on a variety of projects, with special emphasis on reducing the impacts of energy development, both oil & gas and wind. Current efforts are focused on delivery of the Bakken Working Lands and Development Project (BDWLP). Jesse also assists with virtually all Trust projects and continues to provide valuable GIS services in support of much of the Trust's work.

Terry continues to bring biological expertise to virtually every Trust project. He also handles all our business management as well as continuing to provide fiscal support for a number of partners. During the past year he also took on additional duties. Terry is assisting the ND Wildlife Federation (NDWF) with their secretary/treasurer duties, lending his financial expertise as the NDWF makes its transition from a poorly funded NGO with no staff to a well funded conservation partner with a full time executive director. In addition, Terry has been providing advice and expertise to the ND Grazing Lands Coalition (NDGLC) and their contract administrator Clearwater Communications. The NDGLC was the beneficiary of a funding package put together by a group of conservation partners, including the Trust. This fiscal stability helped the NDGLC qualify for a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Terry has helped NDGLC/Clearwater wind their way through the rigorous forms and reporting necessary to implement this grant.

Finances

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

- Another excellent annual audit report
- Continued positive work with the Trust's investment advisor SEI.

- Continued excellent coordination with Starion bank
- The Trust also continues to provide a valuable service to five (5) conservation groups by housing their funds and managing the fiscal aspect of their business.

General Administration

Kathy continued to support our basic administrative functions, including our critical technology sites, including:

- Updating website content and Board of Directors access information.
- Maintaining our Facebook page
- Assisting with OHF round submission deadline outreach and maintaining an OHF discussion board
- Conducting an analytic analysis of traffic on the NDNRT website and Facebook page

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

- I continue to have occasional discussions with agricultural groups, as well as energy groups, about possible involvement in a Consensus Building effort. All seem interested in the concept, but there has been no real progress on funding or a path forward.
- An effective Consensus Building process remains both an interest and a need. Work will continue to find the right mix of leadership, participants and funding.
- It is worth noting, however, that issues like conservation compliance in the 2018 farm bill, the no trespass legislation in the 2019 legislative session and controversy over wind farm siting recommendations by conservation interests, combine to add to the relationship stress, making consensus building more important but less likely.

Farm Bill

- The Trust continued to be involved in all aspects of 2018 farm bill discussions. I remain involved in national policy committees of AFWA and the NGPWG locally. Increased CRP acres were approved in the 2018 farm bill, along with increased funding for several popular farm bill programs, as well as the addition of several conservation “working lands” programs. Swampbuster, Sodsaver and Conservation Compliance were all retained.
- Last year I reported on progress within a CRP subcommittee established by the NRCS State Technical Committee examining the CRP emergency use criteria and process and advocating for consistency in both emergency use and mid-contract management across all CRP practices. I am happy to report that many of the suggestions made by our subcommittee were incorporated in the 2018 farm bill language, making CRP use and management easier and bringing agriculture and conservation groups together around common sense regulations.

Farm Bill Conservation Specialists

In past years I have covered this topic under the major farm bill heading. However, there have been enough changes and controversies around this issue it warrants a separate discussion in this year’s report.

ND Association of Soil Conservation Districts (NDASCD)

- The Trust remained a much-reduced partner with NDASCD and several other agricultural and conservation groups during the past year. Previously the Trust contributed \$56,000 per year. During this past fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2019 we committed \$7,500.
- This Farm Bill Specialist partnership is not going well under NDASCD leadership. Fiscal reporting and accountability is inadequate and partner communication is nonexistent. Partners play no role in how many farm bill specialists are employed or where they are located. Two major funding partners, ND Game & Fish and ND Soybean Council, no longer participate. The main reason for staying engaged at all is to remain in a position to monitor the results and try and avoid further controversy.

SCD Employees Association (SCDEA)

- Beginning Oct. 1, 2018 the SCDEA, the Trust, NDGF and NDSC entered into a one year partnership agreement utilizing NRCS Cooperative Conservation Grant funds to help provide farm bill delivery dollars directly to SCDs for delivery through the existing network of SCD employees. NDGF committed \$50,000, the Trust and NDSC committed \$25,000 each. This partnership is being explored as an option to either supplement or replace the NDASCD partnership.
- A second NRCS Cooperative Conservation Grant was submitted by the SCDEA in early 2018 covering a two year period from Oct. 1, 2019 to Sept. 30, 2021. The Trust has committed to being a partner at \$25,000 per year for a total of \$50,000.

North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC)

- In June 2019 the Trust and several other partners (NDGF, Delta and DU) were approached by ND Soybean Council (NDSC) to consider a third option for farm bill program delivery. NDSC is in discussions with NRCS about a Cooperative Conservation Grant that would be administered by NDSC and employ 3 – 4 farm bill specialists focusing on the eastern tier of ND counties. The Trust (and other partners) was asked about interest in participating and all indicated an interest. There was no specific dollar amount requested from the group. If this partnership materializes it would likely start Oct. 1, 2019.

The Trust was a Gold level sponsor of the NDASCD 2018 annual convention. In addition to highlighting the farm bill specialist partnership, the Leopold Award was also presented to Jeremy and Sarah Miller and family from Jamestown.

Other Partnership Agreements

In addition to the partnership efforts listed above, the Trust has a longstanding and somewhat special relationship with several partners that deliver on-the-ground conservation and/or play special public policy roles. These partners play an instrumental role in delivering Trust programs along with their own, as well as farm bill and other partner programs. It is fair to say that their work is an extension of our own staffing ability. As such, we provide some certainty and stability through the following agreements:

Pheasants Forever (PF)

The Trust renewed our funding agreement with PF for a two year period beginning Jan. 1, 2019 and ending Dec. 31, 2020. PF will provide statewide program coordination; assist landowners with conservation options through farm bill programs, other federal programs and NGO programs. In addition, PF will provide Precision Ag business planning to growers and retail agribusiness.

Ducks Unlimited (DU)

The Trust renewed our funding agreement with DU for a two year period beginning Jan. 1, 2019 and ending Dec. 31, 2020. DU will provide technical assistance to ND landowners for delivery of farm bill and the full range of private land conservation programs available from the Trust and other partners.

Audubon Dakota (AD)

The Trust renewed our funding agreement with AD for a two year period beginning Jan. 1, 2019 and ending Dec. 31, 2020. Audubon will provide private landowners assistance and habitat resources to implement bird friendly grazing protocols on grass-fed cattle operations in North Dakota.

North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition (NDGLC)

The NDGLC has existed since 1996 to promote the health and sustainability of North Dakota's grazing lands. During the past year the NDGLC went through a variety of staffing changes and other organizational challenges which forced a focus on future direction. New strategic and business plans were created.

The NDGLC promotes a land ethic entirely consistent with the mission and goals of the Trust and our conservation partners. As such, I organized a group of conservation partners to assemble a funding package that would assist the NDGLC in both day-to-day business and matching grant dollars. Approximately \$250,000 was committed by nine partner organizations to cover a period through 2020. The Trust contributed \$40,000 in cash and both Terry and I provide advice and assistance to both NDGLC and Clearwater Communications on an as needed basis.

As a direct result of the funding package and assistance, the NDGLC was successful in obtaining a \$250,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). A significant outcome of this assured funding (approximately \$500,000 in all) is the ability of the NDGLC to hire a Field Representative/Rangeland Management Specialist; that job is currently being advertised and should be filled soon.

The Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF)

- The Trust and partners worked continually to examine OHF funding opportunities (see below for a full list of successful grants and total OHF funding obtained).
- Kathy continued to work with Andrea from the NDIC during the past year on outreach to promote awareness and education of OHF availability, encouraging applications and maintained a "support page" for applicants tied to our website.

- Extensive governance challenges remain for the OHF. The OHF board continues to lack a strategic direction, priorities, a grant scoring system and a consistent approach to funding allocation. The Trust and partners will continue to work with the Governor's office, the Industrial Commission and directly with board members to improve OH governance.

ENERGY

Oil and Gas

Trust staff continues our efforts to improve public policy around oil and gas development, as well as avoid, minimize and mitigate landscape impacts. During the past year this included:

- Work with staff and partners on Energy Working Group and Elkhorn Coalition.
- Work with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and other partners on strategies for protection of the Elkhorn Ranch Lands.
- Delivery of the Bakken Development & Working Lands Program (BDWLP).
 - 17 contracts have been signed, with one being completed thus far and many in the process of completion. \$146,000 has been committed to the 17 projects, with two projects implementing native grasses (310 acres) on former cropland (these received the incentive payment). Three contracts include tame grass seeding (202 acres), and eight contracts implemented cover crops (524 acres). A key addition to project delivery has been contract employee Jed Rider, who is meeting with livestock producers and discussing program options with landowners. Dave Dewald has also been vital to NRCS/SCD relationship building through his many years of work with those offices.
 - The Trust was successful in our grant applications to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to support staffing work on the BDWLP project. A grant of \$250,000 was awarded and the contract signed in June 2019.
 - As part of the BDWLP, Trust staff is working with ND Health Dept. staff on habitat development and public access on or near a site in Billings County. Funding is available from White Rock Oil & Gas, the company operating the pipeline that leaked oil and salt water into Franks Creek northwest of Belfield.
- Completed delivery of private land conservation in Bottineau County, in concert with the USFWS Partners Program, funded by a \$30,000 voluntary conservation contribution from Petro Harvester.
- Coordination work with USFWS, BLM and Continental Resources to address Dakota skipper habitat destruction on a well pad in McKenzie County, ND
 - On December 17, 2017 Energy Transfer Partners, through Dakota Access LLC, provided the Trust a voluntary contribution letter and a check for \$449,500 to do work to enhance the status of the threatened Dakota skipper.
 - On two occasions the Trust and partners, including Dakota Access LLC and the ND Petroleum Council, made funding proposals to the Outdoor Heritage Fund for matching support; both proposals were turned down by the OHF board
 - As our first effort in Dakota skipper conservation, on June 14, 2019 I signed a contract with the Minnesota Zoo engaging their staff to capture Dakota skipper from a Continental Energy well pad site in McKenzie County and utilize them in a captive breeding operation at the MN Zoo, with hopes of reintroducing offspring on suitable habitat in North Dakota.

- ONEOK
 - On May 15, 2019 Trust staff joined USFWS and NDGF staff in a meeting with ONEOK Pipeline. ONEOK received PSC approval in spring 2019 to construct a 77 mile natural gas liquids pipeline from north east of Watford City to Richland County, Montana. The pipeline route will impact known Dakota skipper habitat and ONEOK is interested in contributing \$100,000 for Dakota skipper work and \$300,000 for grassland/wetland conservation work. Their intent is to convey voluntary conservation funds using a process very similar to that used by Dakota Access LLC. Following our meeting I forwarded the Dakota Access letter as an example. I have been in touch with ONEOK staff on two occasions since our May meeting but to date the company has not followed through on their expressed interest.

Renewable Energy

Renewable energy in North Dakota remains nearly all wind energy, although the state's first solar energy facility was approved by the Public Service Commission on a site in Cass County west of Fargo in February, 2019. 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 offsets unavoidable impacts to our land, air and water, as well as our agricultural and tourism industries. In that context, the year past has seen the Trust:

- Continue to work with agency, NGO and industry partners on habitat and species assessments to aid in siting decisions.
- Continue discussions with professional colleagues to review past work on science relative to wind farm siting and discuss strategy going forward to minimize wind farm impacts.
- Continue to work with NDGF and partners in their development of wind energy impact assessment tools and voluntary offset measures that address those impacts.
- A year ago the Trust received a check for \$50,000 from Novatus Energy for habitat work in the vicinity of their Sunflower wind project in Morton and Oliver Counties. We continue to look for an appropriate conservation opportunity for that voluntary contribution.
- The Trust was contacted by Tradewinds/Enel Green Energy regarding their interest in funding voluntary conservation measures associated with the Aurora wind farm near Tioga. The Aurora project has been approved by the PSC and is slated to begin construction in September 2019. Based on this schedule Tradewinds environmental staff have been authorized to finalize arrangements for voluntary offset delivery of conservation projects.
 - Tradewinds staff is working on a conveyance letter
 - We anticipate a voluntary contribution toward conservation of \$150,000 sometime in August or September, 2019.
- Staff with Southern Power, developers of the Ruso wind farm, have been in contact with the Trust to discuss potential delivery of voluntary conservation offsets. It is unclear yet whether a voluntary offset contribution will be forthcoming.
- The Trust and partners continue to examine North Dakota's regulatory structure at the state and political subdivision level to better understand and educate others on the process of approving and siting wind farms.
- We continue to work with our conservation colleagues on consistency and conservation relevance in responding to companies interested in placing offset dollars. It is critical that we all

use the same criteria and process for acceptable conservation measures and not enable companies to circumvent their responsibility for well thought out siting and maintenance.

TRUST SMALL GRANT PROGRAM

The Trust's small grant program was continued during the past year. Grant guidelines stayed similar to the prior year with emphasis on educational grants and \$75,000 available for the 2019-20 grant cycle.

For the 2019 grant round:

- 14 grant proposals were received by the March 29, 2019 deadline totaling \$99,753.72 in requests.
- Trust staff reviewed grants and made funding recommendations to the Board. At the April 2019 Board meeting:
 - 11 grant proposals were approved totaling \$75,616 (two were multi-year grants, so an additional \$13,500 was approved for 2019).
- Grant agreements now limit award timeline to 18 months unless approval for an extension 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 OHF project funding. All Trust staff members have contributed in various ways in writing and presenting OHF grant proposals and delivering OHF dollars. Trust staff has also helped multiple partners with OHF strategy and grant writing assistance.

The Trust has been an applicant or co-applicant on successful OHF grants totaling \$6,899,333. Since these are often fairly large, multi-year projects with payments continuing for 2-3 years I'll continue the summary of all Trust OHF grants that we began in last year's annual overview:

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 in 44 landowner agreements, signed in 19 different counties.
- Accomplished 104 wetland basins and 578.1 acres restored.
- The project was complete by the end of 2017.

Beginning Farmer Enhancement (Round 5 – Summer 2015)

- Total project \$257,442 – OHF approved \$132,884; Trust \$67,888 and Landowner \$55,144.
- 4 landowners in Mercer, Burleigh (2) and Dickey Counties. Project assisted with livestock grazing infrastructure.
- The project was complete by the end of 2017.

Working Grassland Partnership I (Round 6 – Fall 2015)

- Total project \$2,079,562 – OHF approved \$1,097,250; Trust \$200,000; Partners \$90,000; Landowners \$694,925.
- WGP agreements signed with 43 landowners representing over 18,343 acres.
- All Trust lease payments completed.
- Development cost-share payments \$792,797 of \$1,042,388 (\$249,591 remaining)
- Anticipate remaining development cost-share to be paid by the end of 2020.

Wetland and Grassland Restoration (Round 9 – Summer 2017)

- OH funded grass seeding but not wetland restorations.
- Total project \$140,000 – OHF approved \$67,500; Trust \$21,875 and Landowners \$50,625.
- 18 landowner agreements signed for 1,642.46 acres.
- All funds will be paid out by August 1, 2019.

Working Grassland Partnership II (Round 10 – Fall 2017)

- Additional funding for original WGP with addition of 4 counties in the southeast.
- Total project \$1,742,750 – OHF approved \$903,750; Trust \$175,000; and Landowners \$600,000.
- OH Advisory Board removed the \$30,000 staffing request.
- WGP agreements signed with 28 landowners representing over 11,866 acres.
- 9 additional agreements are out for signature or pending.
- Total of \$197,187 has been paid (\$706,563 remaining).
- A total of \$40,033.47 available for new landowner agreements.

Bakken Development and Working Lands Program (Round 11 – Spring 2018)

- Energy Impacted Counties – grazing systems, grass seeding, reclamation, and nature parks.
- Diverse partnership including – Dept. of Mineral Resources and ND Petroleum Council.
- Total project \$3,845,000 – OHF \$2,170,000; Trust \$200,000; DMR \$300,000; USFS \$215,000; and Landowners \$460,000.
- NDIC approved June 2018.

Working Grassland Partnership III (Round 11 – Spring 2018)

- Funding for WGP concept of expired/expiring CRP; this grant covering the remaining counties in the northeast.
- Total project \$743,250 – OHF \$396,850; Trust \$70,000; and Landowners \$256,400.
- WGP agreements signed with 17 landowners representing over 3,594 acres.
- 4 additional agreements are out for signature or pending.
- Total of \$170,110 paid (\$214,490 remaining).
- Total of \$45,007 available for new landowner agreements.

Livestock and Wildlife Dams – Wetland Creation and Enhancement (Round 12 – Summer 2018)

- Total project \$277,700 – OHF approved \$138,850; Trust \$76,350 and Landowners \$62,000.
- 4 landowner agreements signed for 57.4 acres.
- The remainder of the agreements will be signed in 2019.
- The construction work will continue in 2019/2020/2021.

North Dakota Grassland Restoration Project (Round 13 – Fall 2018)

- Total project \$255,000 – OHF approved \$104,500; Trust \$33,000, PFW \$27,500, and Landowners \$90,000.
- 4 landowner agreements have been signed for 434.1 acres and \$17,209.31 in OHF funding.
- The majority of agreements will be signed in 2019/2020.

Working Grassland Partnership 4 (Round 14 – Spring 2019)

- Total project \$2,235,000 – OHF approved \$1,225,000, Trust \$200,000, DU \$10,000, and Landowners \$800,000.
- The ND Industrial Commission approved grant on June 20, 2019.

CO –APPLICATION GRANTS

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; approved for \$230,000 from OHF with partners bringing \$122,832 in cost share.
- DU is coordinating all grant activities.

Grand Forks Prairie Management Toolbox (Round 9 – Summer 2017)

- OH funded grazing systems, prairie restoration, and woody removal.
- Total project \$250,420 – OHF approved \$121,220; Trust \$12,000; NDGFD \$200,000; and Landowners \$40,200.
- Dakota Audubon is coordinating all grant activities.

North Dakota Natural Resources Trust - OHF Grant submission history						
		Request	Match	Total Project	Funded \$	
Round 1	Working Lands Partnership	\$3,750,000	\$655,000	\$4,405,000	\$0	
Round 2	Water Storage Piggyback	\$300,000	\$100,000	\$400,000	\$300,000	
Round 3	Conservation Cover Pilot Project	\$3,525,000	\$1,175,000	\$4,950,000	\$0	
Round 4	No application	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Round 5	Beginning Farmer Enhancement	\$132,884	\$124,557	\$257,441	\$132,884	
Round 6	Working Grassland Partnership	\$1,097,250	\$370,000	\$1,467,250	\$1,097,250	
Round 7	No application	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Round 8	Grasslands Enhancement Pilot Project (Co Ap)	\$241,529	\$197,152	\$438,681	\$241,529	
Round 9	Grand Forks County Prairie Mgt Toolbox (Co Ap)	\$121,220	\$129,200	\$250,420	\$121,220	
Round 9	Water Storage and Grass Seeding	\$292,500	\$207,500	\$500,000	\$67,500	
Round 10	Working Grassland Partnership II	\$933,750	\$840,000	\$1,773,750	\$903,750	
Round 11	Working Grassland Partnership III	\$396,850	\$346,400	\$743,250	\$396,850	
Round 11	Bakken Development and Working Lands	\$2,170,000	\$1,675,000	\$3,845,000	\$2,170,000	
Round 11	Dakota Skipper Habitat Enhancement	\$897,250	\$950,000	\$1,847,250	\$0	
Round 12	Livestock and Wildlife Dams	\$138,850	\$138,500	\$277,350	\$138,850	
Round 13	ND Grassland Restoration Project	\$104,500	\$150,500	\$255,000	\$104,500	
Round 13	Dakota Skipper Habitat Enhancement	\$897,250	\$950,000	\$1,847,250	\$0	
Round 14	Working Grassland Partnership 4	\$1,225,000	\$1,010,000	\$2,235,000	\$1,225,000	
		\$16,223,833			\$6,899,333	

Trust Property

The Trust's 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.

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 provide 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.

Joint Ventures

Prairie Pothole Joint Venture (PPJV)

- I continue to serve on the management board and am currently the longest serving board member
 - The PPJV 2018 fall board meeting was held in Bismarck in August 2018 in conjunction with the ND Grasslands Policy Tour & Workshop. Kathy Kirschman provided the coordination point and arranged all the logistics for the tour; more about that later.
 - Both Rick and I attended North American conference and PPJV management board meeting in Denver, CO in March, 2018.
 - Sean Fields, previously coordinator of the PPJV Technical Committee, was hired as the PPJV Coordinator, replacing longtime PPJV coordinator Casey Stemler, who accepted a different position with the FWS.
- The Trust was able to offer the following NAWCA matching funds in the PPJV landscape during the past year:
 - Northern Prairie 5 - \$132,526
 - Chase Lake 14 - \$108,654
 - ND Pothole 1 - \$107,095
- Kathy Kirschman made the Trust and all our partners and colleagues proud with her coordination of the ND Grasslands Policy Tour & Workshop held on Aug 28-29 at the Oswald and Doan ranches. To be sure, she had assistance from a range of folks, including Trust board member Jerry Doan, but Kathy was the person who made it all work. In the end the tour accommodated approximately 150 people, including Governor Doug Burgum as well as congressional staffers, state elected and appointed officials and a host of landowners and others interested in learning about private land grassland conservation and management. The tour was a resounding success in both attendance and attendee impact.
- The Trust received the second installment of Conoco Phillips' two (2) year \$100,000 annual contribution to the PPJV. Terry continues to work with the PPJV coordinator handling administration of the funds for the PPJV.

Northern Great Plains Joint Venture (NGPJV)

Jesse Beckers is a member of the NGPJV management board. Our involvement continued during the past year:

- Jesse served on the Strategic Communication Plan subcommittee
- Jesse worked with the NGPJV board to secure a **\$15,000** funding commitment in support of the NDGLC.

PARTNERSHIPS / OTHER CONSERVATION SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

- I began discussions with NRCS about a possible ACEP/ALE (USDA farm bill) easement on land along the Missouri River in Morton County. This work was prompted by a ranching landowner exploring the possibility of purchasing agricultural property that would otherwise be converted into housing development. It appears North Dakota would be eligible for a fiscal allocation; the details of this possible land protection effort will play out over the next year.
- Grand Forks Prairie Partners – The Trust is a partner with UND on the Grand Forks County Prairie Project RCPP, and provides in-kind match for time spent on evaluating projects and assisting with guidance for activities. The Trust and other partners also signed an updated MOU that details the duties and commitments of all parties involved. The agreement will be active through 2023.
- The Trust remains a co-sponsor and funding partner for the Leopold Award. The 2018 award was presented to Jeremy and Sarah Wilson at the NDASCD annual meeting in December. The Trust was again a co-nominator with the ND Corn Growers Association for the 2019 Leopold Award.
- The Trust co-sponsored the 4th annual sporting clays event with the Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus in August of 2018.
- Rick is the past-president of NDCTWS and Jesse is the president-elect. Keeping this important professional group relevant and credible is important to the Trust's work and that of our conservation colleagues.
- Terry provided assistance to the annual audit committee.
- Trust staff continued work on a three year (2018, 2019 and 2020) contribution agreement with NRCS for monitoring Wetland Reserve Program easements in northeast ND.

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 now the Trust has been assisting Dick Monson, a retired farmer from Valley City, implement his private long-term conservation strategies. In addition to providing Dick conservation advice and options and arranging and covering the cost of appraisal services, we have arranged for Rod Backman's services to assist with estate and tax planning. The Trust covers the cost of Rod's time for this private landowner assistance. Dick has a particular interest in assisting the US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) with their work in southeast North Dakota. Dick has already purchased property in Barnes County, with the dollars for the grassland easement on the property donated to the Arrowwood Wetland Management District. The property was donated to FWS in fee title. Dick has also completed work on a second piece of property. The

Trust will continue to provide the same support services for this and any subsequent private conservation transactions and estate planning.

- During the past year the Trust was contacted by David and Jill Engelstad. The Engelstads own farm land in Barnes County, ND, and have been looking for a conservation partner to receive their land through their estate. After doing research they decided the Trust was the entity that best fit their needs and named the Trust in their will. David and Jill have a strong interest in a more active, progressive type of management for their land. While they are not opposed to hunting and traditional wildlife management scenarios, they are much more interested in concepts that involve demonstration agriculture, experimentation with new techniques in land use, promotion of soil health and overall educational opportunities. The Trust's role at present is to facilitate discussion with partners about possible outcomes. To date I have been in contact with the ND Game & Fish Department, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Barnes County Extension Service and colleagues at NDSU to explore possible agriculture/conservation partnerships. It may turn out that the Trust is not the best holder of the property. We will ultimately counsel the Engelstads on the best home for and use of their property long term.

IN SUMMARY

Grant proposals to the Outdoor Heritage Fund went well during the past year. As noted earlier, the Trust has received just short of \$7 million dollars on OH dollars since the fund's inception in 2013. During the past year the Trust also expanded our successful partnerships. We received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to assist with staffing our precedent setting Bakken Development and Working Lands Program (BDWLP).

The Trust's ever increasing involvement in energy issues is a highlight of the past year. Discussions with our regulatory conservation partners (i.e. NDGF and USFWS) occur often, with the goal of using science and common sense to affect sound public policy that minimizes natural resource impacts from energy development. We've had many meetings with energy companies; both oil & gas and wind, to discuss voluntary conservation offset contributions to the Trust for delivery of on-the-ground conservation practices on behalf of the companies. Some have resulted in contributions; others are still pending.

An additional high point for the Trust is the continued interest in donating land and/or fiscal resources for long term protection and management. The work being done by Dick and Karen Monson and David and Jill Engelstad to place millions of dollars of private land into conservation ownership and use is an exciting opportunity. Their trust in us as an organization to advise and assist their efforts once again exemplifies the Trust's ability to fill virtually any conservation role.

Looking back over the past year we find ourselves in the enviable position of having so many conservation opportunities that priority setting has become critical. We are moderating our involvement in some activities in order to ensure our time and expertise is used to best advantage. It would be fair to say that the Trust is at a bit of a crossroads in terms of staffing level and work load. We look at this as an opportunity and not a problem. Despite the challenge of doing conservation work in North Dakota from a public policy perspective, our dedicated partners and conservation minded farmers and ranchers make private land conservation delivery a growth business with no sign of recession on the horizon.