

Testimony
HB 1215
Senate Energy & Natural Resources
March 12, 2021

Chairman Kreun, and members of the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee, I am Andrea Pfennig, Deputy Executive Director of the North Dakota Industrial Commission. I will not have formal neutral testimony. However, I am providing a handout with information on the Outdoor Heritage Fund for your convenience. I will be available to answer questions as needed.

Background

The Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) was created by the Legislature in 2013 to provide grants to state agencies, tribal governments, political subdivisions, and nonprofit organizations, with higher priority given to projects that enhance conservation practices in this state for the following purposes:

Directive A - Provide access to private and public lands for sportsmen, including projects that create fish and wildlife habitat and provide access for sportsmen;

Directive B - Improve, maintain, and restore water quality, soil conditions, plant diversity, animal systems and to support other practices of stewardship to enhance farming and ranching;

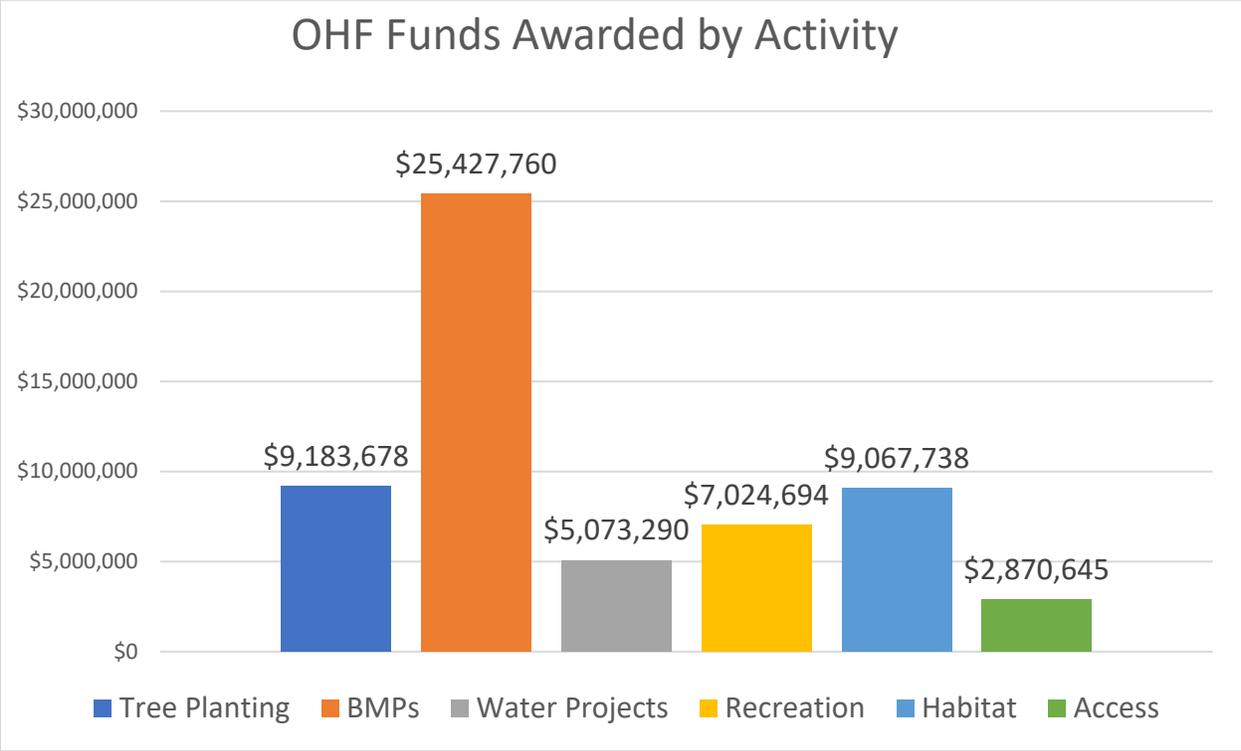
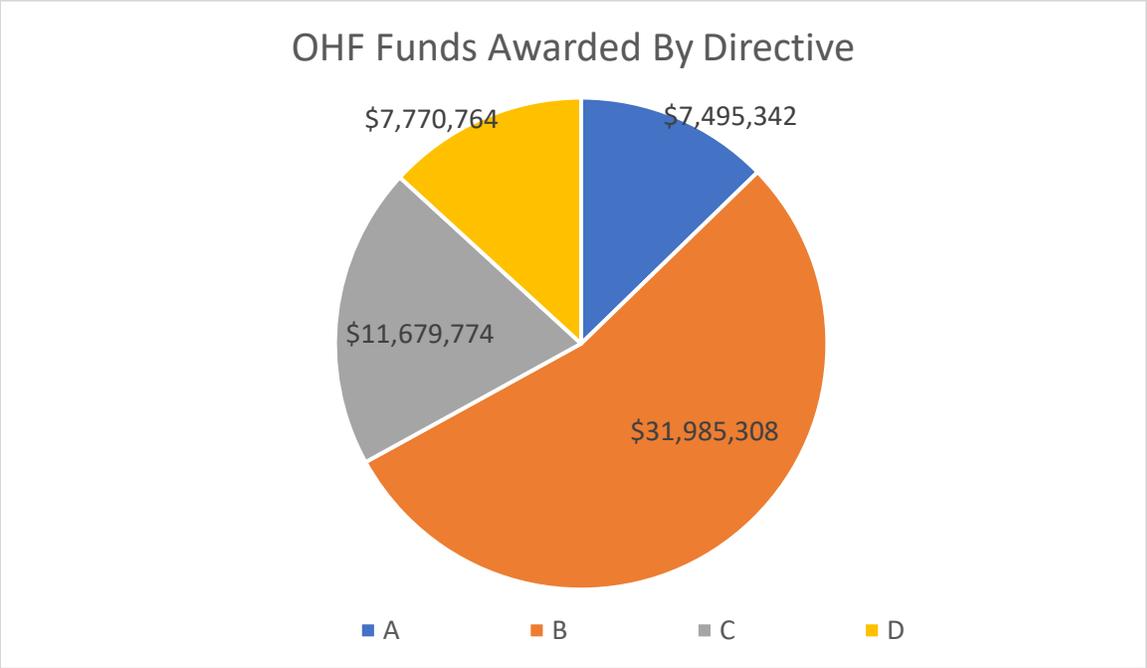
Directive C - Develop, enhance, conserve, and restore wildlife and fish habitat on private and public lands; and

Directive D - Conserve natural areas for recreation through the establishment and development of parks and other recreation areas.

During the 2019-2021 biennium, the OHF is capped at \$7.5 million per fiscal year. The Industrial Commission appropriations bill, SB 2014, as currently drafted would provide an appropriation of \$7.5 million per fiscal year for the upcoming biennium, after which it will be capped at \$40 million per biennium. To date, \$58.9 million has been approved for funding. It is governed by the Industrial Commission consisting of Governor Doug Burgum, Chairman, Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem and Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring. A 16-member advisory board (12 voting members) reviews applications from eligible organizations.

Funding Guidelines

A 25% match is required. Except for extenuating circumstances, the Commission cannot consider funding for projects already completed; feasibility or research studies; maintenance costs; paving projects for roads and parking lots; swimming pools or aquatic parks, and personal property that is not affixed to the land. Funding for playground equipment is limited to 25% of the cost of the equipment up to \$10,000 per project. Funding for staffing or outside consultants for the design and implementation of the project (based on documented need) may not exceed 5% of the grant if the grant exceeds \$250,000 and may not exceed 10% if the grant is \$250,000 or less. By policy, the Industrial Commission has stated that unless there is a finding of exceptional circumstances by the Industrial Commission, the following projects are not eligible: construction or refurbishment of indoor/outdoor ice rinks, construction or refurbishment of indoor/outdoor athletic courts and sports fields, and infrastructure that is not part of a comprehensive conservation plan. The goal of the Industrial Commission is that at a minimum, 15% of the funding received for a biennium will be given priority for recreation projects that meet Directive D.



**Projects that were approved and subsequently withdrawn by recipient are not included in the above charts. Tree planting occurs in small amounts in other activities. Examples of Best Management Practices (BMPs) include: perimeter fencing, cross fencing, wells, tanks, pipelines, cover crops, and grass planting.*

North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund

Awards by County, Grant Rounds 1-17

*Excludes Statewide Projects

