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Current topics and issues affecting outdoor recreation in our State. Prepared by the North Dakota Chapter, The Wildlife Society, and the North Dakota Wildlife Federation.

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North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund

North Dakota citizens recognize and support quality outdoor recreation. Conservation minded voices in our state sent a strong message to legislators in the spring of 2013 that increased funding for conservation of our natural resources was needed. The Legislature acted by passing House Bill 1278 creating the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF). The OHF uses a portion of oil and gas tax revenues to fund voluntary conservation practices on public and private land to enhance and improve outdoor recreation opportunities for citizens. Over the past four years, the OHF has approved 102 grants totaling \$29.5 million dollars which has been matched by over \$60 million in matching funds. To date, 73% of OHF grants have gone to support projects with private landowners.

Support for the OHF and its positive impact on our natural resources continues to be very strong among state agencies, political subdivisions, tribal entities, nonprofit organizations, and citizens. But decreased tax revenues and increased competition for all tax dollars threatens the continued existence of the OHF.

With the close of the 65th session of the legislature, it is important that we continue to actively support the OHF during the legislative interim to ensure that state funding for our natural resources that enhances our quality of life continues.

For more information on this message or other conservation topics, contact: Mike McEnroe, Past President, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, (memcenroe@bis.midco.net) or Rick Nelson, President, North Dakota Chapter, The Wildlife Society, (bluebill@bis.midco.net).

