

**Request for Proposal – Artist/Creative Team  
Region 2, ND  
Living Waters, Painted Skies**

**ARTS ACROSS THE PRAIRIE:  
Placemaking in Rural North Dakota**

**PLACEMAKING IN REGION 2 – NORTH DAKOTA**

North Dakota has eight distinct regions. north central North Dakota's Region 2 is comprised of Bottineau, Burke, McHenry, Mountrail, Pierce, Renville, and Ward Counties. Regional and local leaders from business, arts, education and community were recruited to formulate a roadmap for the development of one site to be the artistic, historical, and cultural representation for the seven counties. These Stakeholders have met online since January 2022 to plan the third *Arts Across the Prairie* project.

*Arts Across the Prairie* is the first of its kind, statewide Creative Placemaking program, developed by North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA). This grew out of a presentation on art as a catalyst for community change at the 2019 Governor's Main Street Initiative in Bismarck. The statewide participants discussed the need for artistic and cultural enrichment and access to art within their rural communities. North Dakotans expressed a concerted desire for greater cross-community collaboration and to enhance the vitality of art throughout the state.

*Arts Across the Prairie* will create eight large-scale art installations – one in each geographic region in the state – that reflect the unique history, landscape, and cultural heritage as defined by Stakeholder Groups in these regions. All eight artworks will be placed in decidedly rural locations. (Rural = no buildings, no people!) The art installations should reference and represent the natural setting, as well as the cultural and economic history of the region as determined by each of the Stakeholder Groups.

NDCA is working with Lillian and Coleman Taube Museum of Art to facilitate the Region 2 project.

***Region 2 - LIVING WATERS, PAINTED SKIES***

*The vision is for a permanent large-scale art installation, and the finalist's proposals should reflect your affection for and attention to place. Rural communities/residents will be living with the artwork for a long time, perhaps generations. The finalist selection for this project will also require the ability to teach and share with others as we train future North Dakota artists in the outdoor installation process.*

## WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR in Region 2

An artist or creative team may apply; the total fee for the project will not alter. You must be an established artist, with experience in large-scale outdoor installations, public art, placemaking or placekeeping, community work, and teaching.

## APPLICATION TIMELINE for Region 2

- Monday, November 13th: 4-5pm CT: Informational Webinar; email [arts@nd.gov](mailto:arts@nd.gov) by November 12<sup>th</sup> to receive log-in information
- Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup>: 11:59pm CT: **PHASE ONE** Interested artists and collaborators submit initial artist application and materials
- Monday, December 18th: Notify three finalist candidates with detailed RFP for Phase Two
- Wednesday, January 31th: 11:59pm CT: **PHASE TWO** Three finalist candidates' proposals due
- Monday, February 5th: 4-6pm CT: Online interviews with three finalists
- Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup>: Final Artist Selection announced

## HOW TO APPLY – PHASE ONE

***DO NOT submit a project proposal or design at this time.***

*If you need a reasonable accommodation, please email [arts@nd.gov](mailto:arts@nd.gov). All requests must be made by November 10<sup>th</sup>. We cannot guarantee late requests.*

**It is recommended that all potential applicants join an Informational Webinar to be held November 13th, 2023, 4-5pm CT.**

Please email [arts@nd.gov](mailto:arts@nd.gov) by Friday, November 10th to receive Zoom link.

Provide the following in a single (one) PDF document. Please do not include supplemental materials beyond the requirements listed below. Work samples (JPEGs) can be sent as separate files. The single (one) PDF document should include the following:

- One-page of contact information for the lead artist, as well as creative team members. All applicants must live in the contiguous United States.
- One-page letter describing interest in the project and approach to art making; please include a statement addressing eligibility criteria, approach to research and stakeholder engagement, and integrating educational opportunities into the process.
- One-page bio or resume; if you have multiple team members, please keep biographical information for each team member to one (1) page.
- One-page list identifying each of up to seven work sample images, to include title, year, medium, dimensions.
- Work sample images: up to seven (7) digital images of recent projects. Individuals and teams are limited to seven (7) images maximum. All images must be in JPEG format, 1920 pixels

maximum on the longest side, 72 dpi, with compression settings resulting in the best image quality under 2MB file size. The image files should be named so that the list sorts in the order of the image listing. (If the work cannot be documented well with still images, please include video links.) Reminder, up to 7 work samples total.

**Again, DO NOT submit a project proposal or design at this time.**

## **Region 2 SELECTION PROCESS and DEADLINES**

### **PHASE ONE: Selection of finalists**

NDCA Staff will review all initial submissions to determine if basic qualifications are met. Applications will then be reviewed by a Selection Committee composed of stakeholders, artists, and community members.

Selection of three (3) finalists will be based on the following criteria:

- Quality of letter of interest directly related to the site; why do you want to be involved in this project?
- Quality of work samples
- Ability of artist(s) to complete project based on bio and prior work experience

**All PHASE ONE materials must be received by 11:59pm CST Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup>**

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### **PHASE TWO: Initial design concepts by three selected finalists**

Only *three* finalists will be asked to develop a design concept presentation to the Selection Committee. They will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Design concept's resonance with the project description
- The installation is presented as a community asset and creates a sense of welcome
- The artist/s mode of working and design process approach, including budget
- An ability to communicate and engage with diverse communities, including fabrication and construction professionals

**All PHASE TWO materials must be received by 11:59pm CST Wednesday, January 31<sup>st</sup>**

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**Please submit all RFP materials via email to [arts@nd.gov](mailto:arts@nd.gov)**

\* Subject Line – Arts Across the Prairie - Region 2

This is not a postmark deadline; no late materials will be accepted

No application materials will be returned

NDCA will not be responsible for applications delayed or lost in transit

*NDCA and the Selection Committee reserve the right to withhold the award of a commission or re-release the call for entries.*

NDCA is committed to providing opportunities to all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnic origin, religion, political belief, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, or ability.

The three finalist interviews for Region 2 will take place via Zoom on **Monday, February 5th 4-6pm CT**; the Selection Committee will announce the artist selected for the Region 4 *Arts Across the Prairie* project by **Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup>**.

### **BUDGET INFORMATION for Region 2**

Region 2 – The total project budget is \$150,000. Fabrication/construction and other expenses will be discussed with finalist/s for this remote build.

The artist/creative team budget is \$55,000 *of the total listed above*. The expenses covered include:

- design
- technical drawings
- 3D charette/model
- in-state transportation
- lodging
- per diem
- Two-three trips to North Dakota (dates TBD)

### **FULL PROJECT TIMELINE for Region 2**

- Late Spring/Summer 2024: Planning Process includes design, budgeting, community involvement and construction plans
- Late Summer 2024: Break Ground
- Summer/Fall 2024: construction work will be 'build' and weather dependent
- Subsequent training of North Dakota artists TBD. This will be a workshop situation, hopefully on-site, utilizing artist's specific installation materials
- Spring/Summer 2025: construction
- Late Summer/Fall 2025: public unveiling

### **Region 2 BACKGROUND/THEMES, LIVING WATERS, PAINTED SKIES**

Region 2 Stakeholders met over the course of almost two years and discussed the area's culture, history, and unique geographical formations. Numerous eye-catching locations were researched with several emerging from the rest. In seeking a location to best represent the cultural heritage and distinct landscapes of Region 2, eight sites were seriously considered. Ultimately, the Stakeholder group selected a swath of land at the Heartland Bison Ranch.

When reviewing potential sites, Region 2 Stakeholders were repeatedly drawn to sites highlighting water. Ultimately, it became the main theme representing the region and a site with two Prairie Potholes was selected. These potholes are a unique northern Midwest feature created by the shifting and moving glaciers that once covered the region. In north central North Dakota, the prairie potholes have become vital havens and habitats for a wide variety of freshwater and migratory life, supporting more than 50% of North America's waterfowl. These marshlands provide life sustaining water which became an important discussion point in the region.

A defining characteristic of water is its adaptability. Water is impartial, and as it ebbs and flows it continues to manipulate the landscape. Water is extremely important in the region, with the Souris River or Mouse River (*as it is alternatively known in the U.S., a calque of its French name*) in that it flows South out of Canada, through four counties in North Dakota, and then back North into Canada.

There are other waterways running through the seven counties. There are both positive and negative outcomes from the relationship with water, such as the many floods that change the landscape as well flourishing the farmlands. The population and animals adapt quickly to the ever-changing region.

Year to year as moisture levels vary in the region, the importance of this water cannot be understated. On the rare calm days, the vibrantly painted sky is reflected on the surface of the still waters, creating a dual world of sorts. On the nights when the Northern Lights dance across the sky, the open landscape and unique texture that the prairie potholes create an otherworldly feel that indigenous cultures have a deep connection to.

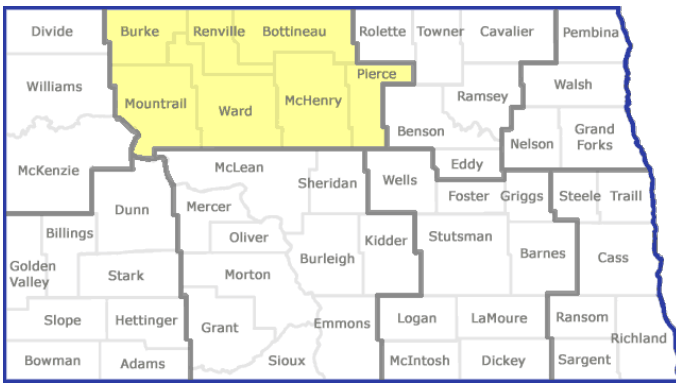
#### Additional concepts for consideration in your design: Living Waters, Painted Skies:

- Resilience - Referring to the peoples of this land adapting to climate and geography. In addition, all seven counties have experienced repeated periods of recovery after natural disasters (water-related).
- Movement of Native people and immigrant settlers - exploration, trade, and transportation (including Ox Cart trails and waterways) have always been an important aspect of the region.
  - Indigenous Cultures - Turtle Mountain Ojibwa, Assiniboine, Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nations, Metis, Sioux, etc
  - Including settler communities - Odessa (Black Sea area) Germans, Germans from Russia, Scandinavian, and French
- Transformation - Impact of the landscape on the lives of the residents
- Buffalo/Bison - Bison were prevalent across the Great Plains and were essential to Native Americans. They were used for food, shelter, clothing, and tools. Conservation efforts are being made to restore their populations, and today they are symbolic in our region.

**The design of the public work should be a symbolic reference of the natural setting and to the culture and economic history of Region 2. Stakeholders would like to see these themes represented in the art installation. *You are encouraged to investigate.***

### RESOURCES

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bottineau\\_County,\\_North\\_Dakota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bottineau_County,_North_Dakota); Bottineau population 6,379
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burke\\_County,\\_North\\_Dakota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burke_County,_North_Dakota); Burke population 2,201
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McHenry\\_County,\\_North\\_Dakota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McHenry_County,_North_Dakota); McHenry population 5,345
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountrail\\_County,\\_North\\_Dakota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountrail_County,_North_Dakota); Mountrail population 9,809
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierce\\_County,\\_North\\_Dakota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierce_County,_North_Dakota); Pierce population 3,990
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renville\\_County,\\_North\\_Dakota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renville_County,_North_Dakota); Renville population 2,282
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ward\\_County,\\_North\\_Dakota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ward_County,_North_Dakota); Ward population 69,919
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norwegian\\_Dakotan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norwegian_Dakotan)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prairie\\_Pothole\\_Region](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prairie_Pothole_Region)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Souris\\_River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Souris_River)
- <https://www.heartlandbison.com/>



## **Arts Across the Prairie ADDITIONAL PROGRAM BACKGROUND**

*Arts Across the Prairie: Placemaking in Rural North Dakota* was developed to:

- Celebrate the cultural heritage of rural areas
- Foster creative relationships across counties and regions
- Bolster NDCA's role as a rural development partner
- Spur economic development through tourism

*This program will create public-private partnerships throughout the state and provides a national model of this type of creative placemaking.*

**Website** and **Facebook** pages

**The goals of *Arts Across the Prairie* are to:**

- Strengthen cross-county networking and regional collaboration
- Promote tourism for in- and out-of-state visitors
- Stimulate economic activity and development in rural areas of North Dakota
- Build stronger arts communities across the state
- Invest in North Dakota artists by providing professional training and support
- Celebrate and leverage existing assets with an infusion of creative expression

**Transformation of Communities:**

Through this program, empowered groups will reach across their regions (and the state) for mutually beneficial partnerships. The culture of rural areas will be celebrated; and community-driven placemaking will create economic, tourism, and equity benefits.

**Transformation of Local Art:**

The artist(s) will offer training to North Dakota artists to take on projects of this nature. Local artists' capacity will increase with these enhanced skills, resulting in the creation of more art for local communities. This will also expand artists' eligibility for additional funding opportunities.

### **Transformation through partnerships:**

The program signals a shift in the way NDCA does business; instead of acting solely as a granting institution, the Council is actively collaborating with other state agencies and communities to better service their constituents.

- ND Tourism will elevate rural communities and the travel that connect the eight artworks.
- Main Street Initiative (Commerce) communities will use the economic development practices learned to fund new and ongoing projects.
- NDDOT/ND Guard will make meaningful investments that enhance the driving experience on rural byways with roads, pull outs and parking for all eight artworks.
- NDCA is creating multi-sector, multi-jurisdiction groups of statewide Stakeholders who will collaborate to maximize resources and expertise.

### **Transformation of Cultural Policy:**

The Legislature has gained a better understanding of the importance of art, creativity and culture in building and sustaining healthy vibrant communities around North Dakota. They recently gave support to the *Arts Across the Prairie* program with a \$1 million investment; the annual interest will provide resources to maintain all eight creative installations.

Following are the specific steps for the overall *Arts Across the Prairie* program. Timelines for each region will vary depending on resource availability and Stakeholder involvement.

1. Cultivate stakeholders: NDCA forms regional teams, encouraging residents to invest in the project together, across county lines.
2. Foster Learning & Consensus: NDCA hosts/facilitates community events in each region for peer learning, with hands-on activities and material support. NDCA will also sponsor professional development online with experienced specialists on topics such as planning, design, budgeting, project management, fundraising, partnerships, artist selection process, building, maintenance, and marketing.
3. Create Art: NDCA supports the process of site selection, and the development of regional approaches to create each installation. Broad definitions for creative installations will be used to draw inspiration from the authentic history, current reality, or future aspirations from each of the eight regions.
4. Market: NDCA markets the eight artworks in partnership with ND Commerce/Tourism, while also educating and engaging decision-makers to understand and support the work.
5. Document/Evaluate: NDCA continually documents the project (narrative, data, videotape) and measures/shares its local, regional, and statewide impact.

As a community-driven initiative, *Arts Across the Prairie* aims to promote civic pride, affirm uniqueness of place, and strengthen cultural identity. This program will create public-private partnerships throughout the state and will provide a national model of this type of creative placemaking, an important step forward for our state. The initiative will foster community innovation across North Dakota in a way that is equitable, scalable, and sustainable.