

NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS MANAGEMENT PLANS REVISION

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DECISIONS TO BE MADE

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I. SIX TYPES OF FOREST PLAN DECISIONS

There are six types of decisions made at the Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) level:

- 1) Multiple Use Goals and Objectives
- 2) Management Area Direction
- 3) Forestwide and Management Area Standards and Guidelines
- 4) Lands Suited/Not Suited for Resource Use and Protection
 - a) Timber Suitability (“lands not suited for timber production shall be identified:” 36 CFR 219.14)
 - b) Livestock Grazing Suitability and Management Indicator Species Suitability (“the suitability and potential capability of NFS lands for producing forage for grazing animals and providing habitat for management indicator species shall be determined:” 36 CFR 219.20)
- 5) Monitoring and Evaluation Requirements
- 6) Recommendations for Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers

II. REVISION TOPICS

Decisions for each revision topic will be expressed as one of the six types of Forest Plan decisions discussed above.

Rangeland and Forest Health

- * What is the desired plant species composition, structure and pattern of

- all major plant communities (this includes riparian, woody draws, wetland, forested, and upland plant communities)? How do we manage and/or recover rare plant communities? How do we manage exotic and noxious plants? How do we manage tree plantations? How do we maintain native vegetation, especially on disturbed sites, including reclamation sites?
- * How do we manage for game animals? How do we recover and/or conserve rare or unique native animals and native plants and their habitats (including Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species, zoological special-interest areas and reintroduction/transplant areas)?
 - * What habitats are suitable for management indicator species, endemic species, game species and other selected species or guilds (relative to site potential)? How do we manage these habitats?
 - * What direction is needed for fuels management?
 - * What processes (fire, herbivory, rest) are needed to ensure watershed, wetland and riparian function (includes hydrologic-cycle infiltration, evaporation, etc.), soil stability, water quality, nutrient cycling, energy flow (trophic levels, disturbances, herbivory, etc.)?
 - * How do we respond to weather changes (drought, floods, etc.) to ensure watershed, wetland and riparian function (includes hydrologic-cycle infiltration, evaporation, etc.), soil stability, water quality, nutrient cycling, energy flow (trophic levels, disturbances, herbivory, etc.)?
 - * What are the monitoring needs for plant, animal and ecosystem processes and functions?
 - * What are the research needs for plant, animal and ecosystem processes and functions?

Community and Lifestyle Relationships

These will be decision criteria but not Forest Plan decisions:

- * How can we provide multiple benefits to people while maintaining sustainable ecosystems?
- * How can we maintain community relationships?
- * How can we maintain consultation and cooperation with American Indian tribes?
- * How do we monitor community relationships and whether multiple benefits have been achieved?

Livestock Grazing

- * How can grazing be used to achieve the desired vegetative conditions to meet resource objectives? How can different animals (livestock, bison, etc.) be used as vegetative management tools?
- * What flexibility is needed to respond to resource objectives when disturbances occur (drought, loss of forage to hail and fire, floods)?

- * How much area is primary range and how much is secondary range? (Primary range is “rangelands that have existing water sources and are accessible to livestock.” Secondary range is “rangelands that are accessible to livestock but do not have water.”) Should new water developments occur in currently unwatered areas to support livestock grazing?
- * What areas have suitable forage for grazing animals? What areas are unsuitable for livestock grazing?
- * How can structural developments be used to meet resource objectives?
- * Should structural developments be limited to meet resource objectives? If so, where and when?
- * What monitoring needs can be identified for livestock grazing?
- * What are the research needs pertaining to livestock grazing?

Oil and Gas

- * What lands are administratively available for oil and gas leasing

Plant and Animal Control

- * What are acceptable levels of exotic and noxious plants? How should they be controlled (insects, etc.) or prevented (certified hay, etc.)?
- * What are acceptable levels of prairie dog populations? How should they be controlled? How should the Forest Service coordinate with adjacent landowners to meet concerns on prairie dog populations?
- * What are the acceptable levels of insects and diseases and how should they be controlled?
- * What are the monitoring needs for exotic and noxious plants, prairie dogs, and methods of control?
- * What are the research needs relating to plant and animal control and pesticide efficacy?
- * As it relates to predator control, what actions are needed to ensure public safety? What mitigation measures are needed for sensitive wildlife species? Under what conditions will we authorize pesticides for predator control?

Recreation and Travel Management

- * What types of recreational special-use activities are appropriate by Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classifications?
- * What areas are designated as primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized, roaded natural appearing, and rural settings by ROS and how should they be managed?
- * How should the planning area be managed for dispersed recreation opportunities (including vegetation management for hunting opportunities, recreational fishing, recreational gathering of rocks and invertebrate fossils)?

- * How should the planning area be managed to meet scenery management concerns (Scenery Management System Designations)?
- * How will current recreation facilities be managed? What criteria will be used to determine recreation facility appropriateness, level of development and priority (facilities include trails, trailheads, gates, campgrounds, picnic areas, interpretive facilities, etc.) including Meaningful Measures?

Special Area Designations

- * What areas, if any, should be recommended for Wilderness, and how should they be managed?
- * How should existing Wilderness be managed?
- * What areas, if any, should be recommended for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System, and how should they be managed?
- * What areas, if any, should be designated as Special Interest Areas (including recreational, geological, paleontological, archeological, botanical, and zoological areas), and how should they be managed?
- * What areas, if any, should be designated as Research Natural Areas, and how should they be managed?

III. OTHER REVISION TOPICS

Fossils

- * How should fossil inventories be conducted (timing and type)?
- * How should fossils be protected?
- * What types of collection techniques should be allowed and how should they be permitted?
- * What types of research opportunities should be provided?
- * What are the required curatorial arrangements?
- * What are the strategies for fossil interpretation?

Landownership Status and Land Use

- * What areas should be designated as utility corridors?
- * What opportunities exist for rights-of-way acquisitions through private land to access public land?
- * How should isolated tracts administered by the Forest Service be managed?
- * How can the Forest Service identify opportunities to encourage more land access?

Minerals Other than Oil and Gas

- * What areas are suitable for coal development?
- * What areas are suitable for uranium development?

- * How should common variety minerals managed?
- * What areas should be recommended to the Department of Interior-Bureau of Land Management for mineral withdrawal?

Timber Suitability

- * What areas are suitable for timber management?

Air Quality, Heritage Resources, and Land Adjustment criteria are addressed with directives.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Goal: A concise statement that describes a desired condition to be achieved some time in the future. It is normally expressed in broad, general terms that are timeless in that there is no specific date by which the goal is to be achieved (36 CFR 219.3).

According to the Region 2 Desk Guide, “Desired conditions and processes are measurable, have a timeless nature, and describe a resource condition or ecological process.

In the first round of planning, these statements were often termed ‘goals.’ They describe the conditions or processes we expect to achieve through resource management. Complete accomplishment of desired conditions is not mandatory during the current planning phase, but it is the agency’s ultimate intent.”

Objective: A concise, time-specific statement of measurable, planned results that respond to pre-established goals. An objective forms the basis for further planning to define the precise steps to be taken and resources to be used in achieving identified goals (36 CFR 219.3).

Standard: According to the Region 2 Desk Guide, a standard is a mandatory requirement. Mandatory adherence to standards is the most important feature distinguishing standards from desired condition statements. (The board is suggesting careful use of standards, and only for such things as Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species requirements.)

Guideline: Desirable, though not mandatory, requirements. Requirements found in guidelines must be met, unless documentation exists to indicate a reasoned decision not to meet them.

Direction that does not belong in the Forest Plans:

Direction that belongs in the Directive System: If the direction is generic in nature and applicable to many Forest units, display it in the Directives System. If the direction prescribes how a specific, identifiable land area will be managed, display it in the Forest Plan. If the direction provides information about the analysis procedures, coordination requirements, inventory methods, or other processes or procedures, display it in the Directives System. If the direction is limited to on-the-ground resource management, display it in the

Forest Plan.

Direction that does not address resource management: Generally, it is inappropriate to address law enforcement, human resource programs, visitor information services, and public involvement programs in the Forest Plan. Management of non-resource programs is most appropriately addressed in the Directives System because the Directives System is designed to include both resource and non-resource program direction.