

NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS MANAGEMENT PLANS REVISION

Dakota Prairie Grasslands Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest Nebraska National Forest

What's the Northern Great Plains Management Plans Revision process about?

It's about complying with the National Forest Management Act in an ecologically sound, cost-efficient manner.

The Northern Great Plains Management Plans Revision is a combined planning effort of the Dakota Prairie Grasslands, and the Medicine Bow-Routt, and Nebraska National Forests. This effort will revise the **THREE LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS** (hereafter referred to as

Management Plans) for the Dakota Prairie Grasslands (national grasslands previously managed by the Custer National Forest Plan) and Thunder Basin National Grassland managed by the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests, and the Nebraska National Forest and associated units (see box on this page for more detail).

DAKOTA PRAIRIE GRASSLANDS

- Cedar River National Grassland
- Grand River National Grassland
- Little Missouri National Grassland
- Sheyenne National Grassland

MEDICINE BOW-ROUTT NATIONAL FOREST UNIT

- Thunder Basin National Grassland

NEBRASKA NATIONAL FOREST UNITS

- Charles E. Bessey Tree Nursery
- Buffalo Gap National Grassland
- Fort Pierre National Grassland
- Nebraska National Forest (Pine Ridge and Bessey)
- Oglala National Grassland
- Samuel R. McKelvie National Forest

Congress passed the National Forest Management Act for several reasons. The Act encourages “a systematic interdisciplinary approach to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic, and other sciences.” It also provides for “public participation in the development, review, and revision of land management plans...”

The **THREE MANAGEMENT PLANS** describe the desired conditions for these public lands and set direction to maintain or move toward those conditions.

Why revise the three Management Plans?

Conditions have changed since the existing Management Plans were written. We have also learned from our experiences as we've implemented these Management Plans. Our experiences, monitoring, and public comments have helped identify needed changes. The changed conditions are summarized as Revision Topics in this publication.

The first Management Plans were written in the 1980s. The National Forest Management Act requires that National Forests and Grasslands review and, in most cases, revise their Management Plans to adapt to changed conditions and emerging issues. These revisions are required every 10 to 15 years. All **THREE MANAGEMENT PLANS** are approaching their revision timeframes.

Who's included in this planning effort?

The National Forest units included in the revision of Northern Great Plains Management Plans are made National Forest System lands, spread over 4 states—an area covering nearly 250 million acres (see enclosed map).

These planning units comprise roughly 2.9 million acres, which share many physical, biological, and social elements. They are more alike than different.

Because ecosystems cross land ownerships, jurisdictions, and administrative boundaries, the National Forest and Grassland managers will be looking beyond their own administrative boundaries. This “big-picture” look will help them understand how these public lands fit within the context of the larger area.

Planning will be coordinated with other landowners, other federal agencies, and state, local, and tribal governments in a manner that respects private property rights and the jurisdictions of other government entities. However, **THE THREE MANAGEMENT PLANS WILL APPLY ONLY TO THE NATIONAL FOREST AND GRASSLAND UNITS DESCRIBED HERE.**

Why are the three National Forests participating in a combined planning effort?

This combined revision effort will enable the planning units to share ecological assessments, plan-related analyses, and resource expertise. Only one environmental impact statement will be prepared and provide the basis for revising each National Forest's Management Plan. **SEPARATE MANAGEMENT PLANS WILL BE PREPARED FOR EACH NATIONAL FOREST.**

Who's revising the three Management Plans?

A planning team has been assembled in Chadron, Nebraska, at the Nebraska National Forest Supervisor's Office. The team will coordinate the assessments and analyses to provide decision makers and the public sufficient information to evaluate alternative management strategies.

The team is funded by all three National Forests on a prorated basis, dependent on the land area involved. The team is working for all three National Forests.

Dale Bosworth, Regional Forester for Region 1, based in Missoula, Montana, will decide on the Management Plan for the Dakota Prairie Grasslands units, based on advice from Larry Dawson, Grassland Supervisor.

Similarly, Lyle Lafferty, Regional Forester for Region 2, based in Denver, Colorado, will make decisions for the Medicine Bow-Routt and Nebraska National Forests' units. He will consider recommendations from Jerry Schmidt, Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest Supervisor, and Mary Peterson, Nebraska National Forest Supervisor. Of course, public comments will be important considerations in the decisions.

Management Plan Revision Charter

The Supervisors of the Dakota Prairie Grasslands, and the Medicine Bow-Routt and Nebraska National Forests have agreed to jointly revise the **THREE MANAGEMENT PLANS**. Here are some key elements of their charter:

- Form one interdisciplinary team to conduct the various assessments and analyses needed to complete one environmental impact statement to support revision of **THREE MANAGEMENT PLANS**.
- Collaborate with other agencies and organizations to understand how these public land units fit within Northern Great Plains ecosystems.
- Develop **THREE MANAGEMENT PLANS** that local communities and communities of interest can support.
- Look for better, cost-efficient ways of doing business.
- Produce **THREE MANAGEMENT PLANS** with appropriate consistency.
- Coordinate with research to prepare monitoring plans to determine project effectiveness and achievement of goals and objectives.

From the Supervisors

“The revised management plan should taken the national grasslands into the 21st centure by meeting the needs, desires, and values of people who care about the national grasslands and who depend on them for their livelihood.”

Larry Dawson, Dakota Prairie Grasslands Supervisor

“Using teamwork and boundaryless behavior to deal with issues in an even-handed manner and to accomplish our work efficiently is what we, in government, ought to be doing everywhere.”

Jerry Schmidt, Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest Supervisor

“While the planning team is stationed in Chadron, the District Rangers, State Legislative Coordinators, and Forest Supervisors will ensure there is much local input in the process. The two Regional Foresters will make their decisions only after considering all public input.”

Mary Peterson, Nebraska National Forest Supervisor

The Road to Revision (the timeline)

Here’s the road we’ll follow and some major points on our journey as we revise the **THREE MANAGEMENT PLANS**:

March 1995 - March 1996 Form planning team; Complete monitoring reports; Refine revision topics; Initiate, continue, or complete needed inventories.

March - December 1996 Verify preliminary planning issues with public; Prepare purpose and need document; Write draft Analysis of the Management Situation (a document that describes existing conditions).

February 1997 Publish in the Federal Register the Notice of Intent to Revise the Management Plans. Begin formal public involvement to identify/verify issues to be addressed.

June 1998 Finalize Analysis of the Management Situation.

June 1998 - February 1999 Write draft environmental impact statement and proposed Management Plans.

February 1999 Issue draft environmental impact statement and proposed Management Plans.

February - June 1999 Public review and comment period on draft environmental impact statement and proposed Management Plans.

June - September 1999 Review and respond to public comments. Make changes to environmental impact statement and proposed Management Plans.

September 1999 Issue final environmental impact statement and revised Management Plans, and Records of Decision.

The Planning Team

The planning team is the core group of people whose time is dedicated to completing the analyses and preparing the environmental impact statement on which each National Forest will base decisions to be included in respective revised Management Plans. Team members include:

Dave Cawrse, team leader
Tom Domek, writer/editor
Pam Gardner, public affairs officer
Carla Loop, planning assistant
Liz Ohlrogge, resource coordinator
Greg Schenbeck, wildlife coordinator
Tony Smith, database manager
Bob Sprentall, rangeland ecosystem coordinator
Jeff Ulrich, analyst

There are also many other people at the 10 District offices, the 3 Supervisor's offices, and the 2 Regional offices who are important contributors to this planning effort. All are committed to producing Management Plans that are responsive to public issues and environmental concerns and workable on the ground.

How to reach us...

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