

Dakota Prairie Grasslands

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Promises made. Promises Kept.”

Dakota Prairie Grasslands Takes Positions on Scientific Review Team Recommendations

(Bismarck, ND----) As promised, the Dakota Prairie Grasslands initial positions on the recommendations made a month ago by the Scientific Review Team regarding livestock and wildlife issues surrounding the 2002 Grasslands Plan are available on-line at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/dakotaprairie/>.

“We promised to offer a position on each Scientific Review Team recommendation within a month,” Grasslands Supervisor Dave Pieper said from Bismarck. “We brought our specialists together and what you’ll read is our take on what the Scientific Review Team offered in their final report. We certainly appreciate their hard work and dedication to this process over the past 2-plus years. We look forward to working with our partners and cooperators to reduce the uncertainty expressed over the livestock grazing program, and to meet the Grasslands Plan’s goals and objectives.”

Another Record of Decision will be issued in the coming months implementing the livestock grazing portion of the Grasslands Plan.

On May 20th, the 8-person Scientific Review Team rolled out its findings regarding the science supporting the Land and Resource Management Plan of the Dakota Prairie Grasslands. The two year process came to an end with this rollout. The science, and perceived outcomes based on that science, had come under fire. Critics saw the science as lacking in the arenas of livestock management and wildlife issues.

The Scientific Review Team brought together scientists from the state, federal agencies and academia, all in an effort to address those concerns by providing outside independent review of the assumptions in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), the sample Allotment Management Plans baseline data, analysis procedures and predicted outcomes.

The Record of Decision for the Dakota Prairie Grasslands Land and Resource Management Plan (commonly referred to as the “Grasslands Plan”) was signed by the Regional Forester on July 31, 2002. The decision included a “phased” or “interim” decision on grazing management and established an independent Scientific Review Team to evaluate 64 sample Allotment Management Plans, analysis procedures and predicted outcomes.

The Scientific Review Team members, Dr. Rod Heitschmidt, Dr. Harvey Peterson, Dr. Douglas Johnson, Jeff Printz, Dr. Don Kirby, Dr. Kevin Sedivec, Kent Luttschwager and Karen Smith are to be commended for their work on this process and report. Their individual backgrounds and specialties are summarized in the on-line report at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/dakotaprairie>.

The Grasslands Plan, FEIS, Record of Decision and related documents can also be found on-line at <http://www.fs.fed.us/ngp/plan/feis.htm>.

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