

CHAPTER 3

MANAGEMENT AREA

DIRECTION

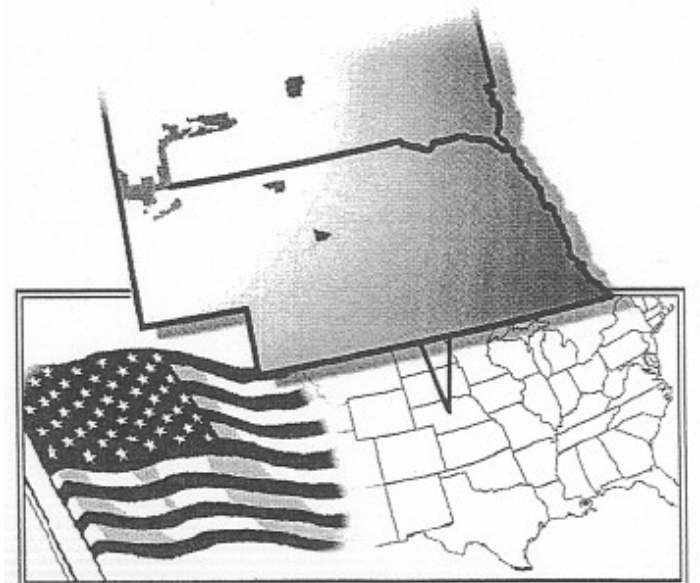


TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 3 : MANAGEMENT AREA DIRECTION (INCLUDES AMENDMENT 2).. 3-1

INTRODUCTION	3-1
1.1 WILDERNESS: SOLDIER CREEK	3-4
1.2 RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS	3-6
1.31 NONMOTORIZED BACKCOUNTRY RECREATION.....	3-8
1.31A BACKCOUNTRY RECREATION NONMOTORIZED:.....	3-10
2.1 SPECIAL INTEREST AREAS.....	3-12
2.2 RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS	3-18
3.51 BIGHORN SHEEP HABITAT.....	3-22
3.63 BLACK-FOOTED FERRET REINTRODUCTION HABITAT	3-24
3.64 SPECIAL PLANT AND WILDLIFE HABITAT	3-26
4.32 DISPERSED RECREATION: HIGH USE	3-28
5.12 GENERAL FOREST AND RANGELANDS: RANGE VEGETATION EMPHASIS	3-30
6.1 RANGELAND WITH BROAD RESOURCE EMPHASIS	3-32
7.1 RESIDENTIAL/FOREST INTERMIX.....	3-34
8.5 NURSERY (CHARLES E. BESSEY).....	3-35
8.6 ADMINISTRATIVE SITES	3-37

CHAPTER 3 : MANAGEMENT AREA DIRECTION (INCLUDES AMENDMENT 2)

INTRODUCTION

Management areas are defined as parts of the grassland that are managed for a particular emphasis or theme. Each management area has a prescription that outlines the Theme, the Desired Conditions, and the Standards and Guidelines that apply to it (in addition to the Grassland-wide Standards and Guidelines).

Prescriptions have been broken into eight major categories based on the amount of human-made facilities and land use restrictions. For example, Proposed Wilderness (MA 1.2) would have the least amount of facilities and Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis (MA 6.1) would show the greatest evidence of facilities, including things like roads, oil wells, pipelines, and water developments.

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5	Category 6	Category 7	Category 8
Least facilities<-----> Most facilities More land use restrictions<----->Fewer land use restrictions							

For this revision, linear, point, and small management areas were combined into other management areas, or are handled through discrete standards and guidelines. This includes campgrounds and picnic grounds (developed recreation sites), utility corridors, woody draws and riparian areas. Management areas devoted to a particular wildlife species were consolidated into “special wildlife areas.”

The eight categories of management prescriptions are described below:

Prescription Category 1

Category 1 includes Wilderness Areas and the various prescriptions used within them, and the backcountry recreation settings. Ecological processes, such as fire, insects, and disease, are essentially allowed to operate relatively free from the influence of humans. Diversity resulting from natural succession and disturbances predominates, and non-native vegetation is rare. Users must be self-reliant and should expect little contact with other people. Few, if any, human-made facilities are present. With rare exceptions, travel is nonmotorized.

Prescription Category 2

Category 2 areas are intended to conserve representative (or particularly rare and narrowly distributed) ecological settings or components. They help protect ecosystems or ecosystem components that may have important functions, ensuring the overall sustainability of larger landscapes.

Human influences on ecological processes are limited as much as possible, but are sometimes evident. Types of human use vary, but generally are not intensive. Travel is generally nonmotorized. They help play an important role under an adaptive-management philosophy by serving as a "natural" reference for areas that are intensively managed for a particular objective. These areas are formally designated Research Natural Areas (RNAs).

Prescription Category 3

Ecological values in Category 3 areas are in balance with human occupancy, and consideration is given to both. Resource management activities may occur, but natural ecological processes and resulting patterns normally predominate. Although these areas are characterized by predominately natural-appearing landscapes, an array of management tools may be used to restore or maintain relatively natural patterns of ecological process. This results in some evidence of human activities. Users expect to experience some isolation from the sights and sounds of people, in a setting that offers some challenge and risk.

Prescription Category 4

The ecological values in Category 4 areas are managed to be compatible with recreation use, but are maintained well within the levels necessary to maintain overall ecological systems. Resource use for other values is not emphasized and has little impact on ecological structure, function, or composition. Sights and sounds of people are expected, and may even be desired. Motorized transportation is common.

Prescription Category 5

Category 5 areas are forested areas managed for a mix of forest products, forage, and wildlife habitat, while protecting scenery and offering recreation opportunities. Ecological sustainability is protected, while selected biological structures and compositions that consider the range of natural variability are emphasized. These lands often display high levels of investment, use, and activity; density of facilities; and evidence of vegetative treatment. Users expect to see other people and evidence of human activities. Facilities supporting the various resource uses are common. Motorized transportation is common.

Prescription Category 6

Category 6 areas are primarily non-forested ecosystems that are managed to meet a variety of ecological and human needs. Ecological conditions will be maintained while emphasizing selected biological (grasses and other vegetation) structures and compositions that consider the range of natural variability. These lands often display high levels of investment, use, and activity; density of facilities; and evidence of vegetative manipulation. Users expect to see other people and evidence of human activities. Facilities supporting the various resource uses are common. Motorized transportation is common.

Prescription Category 7

Category 7 areas are public lands intermingled with private land to such an extent that ecosystem management objectives for National Forest System lands must be tempered by other landowners' uses and objectives. Human activities have altered the natural appearance of these landscapes in most area on both the public and private lands. Sights and sounds of people predominate. Private land uses is often residential. Resource use is not planned on a sustainable basis, but many occur in concert with surrounding private land values. Motorized transportation is common.

Prescription Category 8

Ecological conditions, including processes, within Category 8 areas are likely to be permanently altered by human activities, beyond the level needed to maintain natural-appearing landscapes and ecological processes. These areas are generally small. Ecological values are protected where they affect the health and welfare of humans. Human activities are generally commercial in nature, directly or indirectly providing jobs and income. Motorized transportation is common.

1.1 WILDERNESS: SOLDIER CREEK

Theme

Wildernesses are managed to protect and perpetuate their natural conditions, while providing opportunities for solitude and self-reliance.

Desired Conditions

The area is managed to perpetuate natural conditions, including native plant and animal species and communities. Desired vegetation composition and structure are controlled primarily by natural processes, such as fire, insects and disease. Livestock grazing strategies and intensities are managed to achieve or maintain native plant and animal species and communities. Prescribed fire is used to reduce fire risk within the Wilderness and to adjoining lands and to meet desired vegetation composition and structure.

The area provides moderate opportunities for solitude in an environment that offers a low to moderate level of challenge and risk. Evidence of present human activity is limited to that necessary to protect Wilderness resources, to continue grazing, or is a result of a prior existing rights. Evidence of past human activity is considered integral to maintenance of the wilderness resource. Travel is primarily along a well-defined trail system, although some cross-country opportunities exist.

Both directional and resource protection signs may be present. Bridges or other structures may be present if needed for resource protection or where no safe opportunity exists to cross a stream during periods of normal water flow.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. Limit motorized use to administrative purposes (e.g., grazing administration, noxious weed control, and fire suppression). **Standard**

Fire

1. Until a comprehensive program for managing the Wilderness is established, suppress all wildfires using the appropriate suppression action. **Standard**

2. Prohibit use of heavy ground-disturbing equipment for fire suppression unless authorized by the regional forester. The Forest Supervisor may authorize use of other mechanical equipment, such as chain saws or motorized vehicles. **Standard**

Livestock Grazing

1. See Forest Service Manual 2323.22 for direction on livestock grazing activities. **Standard**

Invasive Plant Species

1. Control noxious and invasive plant species with mechanical, chemical or biological control means. Recreational or permitted livestock must use certified noxious weed seed free forage. **Standard**

Recreation

1. Limit maximum party size in Wilderness to 25 heartbeats (any combination of people and recreational stock), except as permitted. Smaller party-size limits for people and stock will be established where biological and physical resource capability cannot support that level of use. **Standard.**

Standard.

2. Prohibit recreational livestock within 100 feet of streambanks except for watering and through travel. **Standard.**

3. Initiate a permit system and limit use when the established capacity level is exceeded.

Guideline

4. Reduce the incidence of contact with other groups or individuals by applying the following guidelines:

- Not more than 2 other parties encountered during cross-country travel or 4 other parties encountered on a Forest development trail per day on 80% of the days during the summer and fall use seasons.
- No more than one other party within sight or sound of campsites on 80% of the days during the summer and fall use seasons. **Guideline**

5. Manage according to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum class of semi-primitive nonmotorized. **Guideline**

Scenery Management

1. Manage according to the Scenic Integrity Objective of Very High. **Guideline**

Special Uses

1. Restrict outfitter/guide permits to day-use only. **Standard**

Infrastructure

1. Allow permanent electric fences. **Standard**

2. New fences shall be placed to promote visual integrity and overall cost efficiency in construction and long-term maintenance. **Guideline**

3. As fences are reconstructed, allow only wood fence posts in the Wilderness. **Guideline**

1.2 RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

Theme

These are areas that the Forest Service will recommend to Congress for inclusion in the Wilderness System. These areas are managed to protect Wilderness characteristics until Congressional action is taken. Non-conforming activities may be limited or restricted.

Desired Conditions

These areas are managed to protect wilderness characteristics. Natural processes, such as fire, insects, disease, rest, and grazing control vegetation composition and structure. Large pasture size and unobtrusive structural developments promote an open, natural-appearing landscape. Generally, opportunities for primitive recreation are provided, with a moderate degree of solitude available.

There is some evidence of past and present human use, such as fences, trails, water developments and primitive roads. Existing two-track roads and old roads may be evident but through nonuse should diminish. Some of these may become designated trails. Bridges or other structures may exist to protect resources or provide safe stream crossings during normal water flow.

Use of mechanized equipment for administrative purposes will continue. Opportunities to remove or relocate structural range improvements (fences and water developments), to achieve resource management goals and objectives, will be pursued. Both directional and resource protection signs may be present.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. Allow uses and activities only if they do not degrade wilderness characteristics. **Standard**
2. Reclaim disturbed lands to meet wilderness characteristics.. **Standard**
3. Limit all motorized use, including snowmobiles, to authorized administrative purposes, law enforcement, emergency and search and rescue. **Standard**
4. Control natural insect and disease outbreaks only when they threaten resource values outside of the wilderness boundary. **Guideline**
5. Do not allow new road construction or reconstruction.

Mineral and Energy Resources

1. Prohibit mineral material removal. **Standard.**
2. Allow oil and gas leasing; however, prohibit ground-disturbing oil and gas activities. **Standard**

Fire

1. Prohibit use of heavy ground-disturbing equipment for fire suppression unless authorized by the Forest Supervisor. **Standard**
2. Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics, MIST, (see glossary) will be used to control fire within wilderness. **Standard**
3. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section G, for fire suppression direction.

Livestock Grazing

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section I, (Livestock Grazing); and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Descriptions.

Invasive Plant Species

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Goal 1.c

Recreation

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide, Section K

Heritage Resource

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section N, for additional heritage resource direction.

Scenery Management

1. Manage area to meet a Scenic Integrity Objective of High (see Appendix G). **Guideline**

Special Uses

1. No new utility corridors or, additional development within existing corridors will be permitted. Existing corridors may be maintained until abandoned. **Standard**
2. Prohibit new special-use facilities. **Guideline**

Infrastructure

1. Allow construction of facilities and structures that are subordinate to the landscape or in keeping with the semi-primitive/primitive character of the area. **Standard**
2. Utilize natural materials in the construction or reconstruction of livestock facilities. **Standard**
3. For additional information refer to Chapter 1, Grassland wide Direction, Section Q Infrastructure and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Direction.

1.31 NONMOTORIZED BACKCOUNTRY RECREATION

Theme

Backcountry, nonmotorized recreation areas are managed to provide recreation opportunities in a natural-appearing landscape.

Desired Conditions

A variety of un-crowded, nonmotorized, recreation opportunities are provided in a natural or natural-appearing setting. There will usually be less than 15 encounters with other parties per day. These areas may offer unique hunting opportunities away from motorized vehicles.

Improvements such as trailheads, trails, signs, bridges, fences, primitive shelters, and water developments, may be present. Existing two-track roads and old roads may be evident but will diminish over time or may become designated trails.

The number of structures and facilities to support management activities is limited. Large pasture size and unobtrusive developments promote an open, natural-appearing landscape.

Vegetation is moving toward the range of natural variability. Natural processes, such as fire, insects, diseases, rest, and grazing control vegetative composition and structure.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. Allow uses and activities only if they do not degrade semi-primitive character of the area.

Standard

2. Reclaim disturbed lands to a condition suitable for the purposes for which the area was identified. **Standard**

3. Limit all motorized, including snowmobile use, to authorized administrative, law enforcement, search and rescue, fire suppression, and emergency purposes. **Standard**

4. Prohibit new road construction or reconstruction. **Standard**

Mineral and Energy Resources

1. If access for geophysical surveys is not feasible by off-road travel, use of portable techniques is required. **Guideline**

2. Allow oil and gas leasing; however, no ground-disturbing oil and gas activities are permitted. **Standard**

3. Prohibit mineral material removal. **Standard**

4. Honor all valid existing Oil and Gas leases. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section D, Oil and Gas. **Standard**

Fire

1. Prohibit use of heavy ground-disturbing equipment for fire suppression unless authorized by the district ranger. **Guideline**

2. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section G, for fire suppression direction.

Silviculture

1. Trees may be cut or removed under the following circumstances; however, new road construction is prohibited:

- To reduce fuel loads and fire risk, especially to adjoining private land.
- To curtail imminent threat of epidemic insect attack.
- To improve aesthetics, such as enhancing a scenic view from a prominent overlook.
- To enhance growth of rare plant species and community types.
- To enhance wildlife habitat diversity. **Guideline**

Livestock Grazing

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland wide Direction, Section I, Livestock Grazing; and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Descriptions.

Invasive Plant Species

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Goal 1.c and Section J, Invasive Plant Species

Recreation

1. Develop necessary trailhead facilities on public land to provide adequate public parking in these areas, provide for sanitation facilities and to reduce conflicts with private landowners.
2. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section K.

Heritage Resource

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section N, for additional heritage resource direction.

Scenery Management

1. Manage area to meet a Scenic Integrity Objective of High. **Guideline** (see Appendix G)

Special Uses

1. No new utility corridors or additional development within existing corridors will be permitted. Existing corridors may be maintained until they are abandoned. Valid existing rights will be honored. **Standard**
2. Prohibit new special-use facilities except for valid existing rights **Guideline**

Infrastructure

1. Prohibit construction of facilities and structures that are not visually subordinate to the landscape. **Guideline**
2. Utilize natural materials in the construction/reconstruction of facilities. **Standard**
3. For additional information refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section Q Infrastructure and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Direction.

1.31A BACKCOUNTRY RECREATION NONMOTORIZED: PINE RIDGE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Theme

Backcountry, nonmotorized recreation areas are managed to provide recreation opportunities in a natural-appearing landscape.

Desired Conditions

A variety of uncrowded, year-around, nonmotorized, recreation opportunities are provided in a natural or natural-appearing setting. There will usually be less than 15 encounters with other parties per day. These areas may offer unique hunting opportunities away from motorized vehicles.

Improvements, such as trailheads, trails, signs, bridges, fences, primitive shelters, and water developments, may be present. Existing two-track roads and old roads may be evident but will diminish over time or may become designated trails.

The number of structures and facilities to support livestock grazing, such as fences and water tanks, is limited (no net gain). Large pasture size and less intrusive developments promote an open, natural-appearing landscape.

Vegetative composition and structure are controlled by natural processes, such as fire, insects, diseases, and grazing. Vegetation is moving toward the range of natural variability.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. Allow uses and activities (e.g. recreation, grazing, mineral leasing) only if they do not degrade the characteristics for which the area was identified. **Standard**
2. Reclaim disturbed lands to a condition suitable for the purposes for which the area was identified. **Standard**
3. Limit motorized use to administrative purposes (e.g., fire suppression, grazing administration, noxious weed control). **Standard**

Mineral and Energy Resources

1. Prohibit road construction for geophysical seismic projects. If access is not feasible by off-road travel, use of portable techniques is required. **Standard**
2. Allow oil and gas leasing; however, no ground-disturbing oil and gas activities are permitted. **Standard**
3. Prohibit mineral material removal. **Standard**

Fire

1. Prohibit use of heavy ground-disturbing equipment for fire suppression unless authorized by the district ranger. **Standard**
2. Use control as the wildland fire management strategy. **Guideline**

Silviculture

1. Trees may be cut or removed under the following circumstances; however, new road construction is prohibited:
 - To reduce fuel loads and fire risk, especially to adjoining private land.
 - To curtail imminent threat of epidemic insect attack.
 - To improve aesthetics, such as enhancing a scenic view from a prominent overlook.
 - To enhance growth of unique plant species and community types.
 - To enhance wildlife habitat diversity. **Guideline**

Livestock Grazing

1. Allow livestock facilities that do not detract from the semi-primitive character of the area. **Standard**

Invasive Plant Species

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Goal 1.c and Section J, Invasive Plant Species

Recreation

1. Limit recreation development to trails, sanitation, horse holding and handling facilities, directional and resource signing, and primitive shelters. **Guideline**

Heritage Resource

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section N, for additional heritage resource direction.

Scenery Management

1. Manage according to the scenic integrity objective of high. **Guideline**

Infrastructure

1. Prohibit construction of facilities and structures that are not subordinate to the landscape. **Guideline**
2. Allow no net gain of fences and water developments. **Standard**

Special Uses

1. Prohibit new utility corridors. **Standard**
2. Prohibit new special-use facilities. **Guideline**

2.1 SPECIAL INTEREST AREAS

Theme

Special Interest Areas (SIA) are managed to protect or enhance and, where appropriate, develop and interpret for public education and recreation, areas with unusual characteristics.

Desired Conditions

Evidence of human activities is consistent with the characteristics for which each SIA was established. Encounters between individuals or parties depend on the objectives for each SIA.

Vegetation, terrestrial, and aquatic habitats will usually, but not always, appear natural. Vegetation manipulation may be used to maintain or restore natural conditions; to protect threatened, endangered, and sensitive species; or enhance other values for which the SIA was designated.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. Allow uses and activities that maintain and enhance the characteristics for which the SIA was designated. **Standard**
2. Reclaim disturbed lands to a condition suitable for the purposes for which the SIA was identified. **Standard**

Mineral and Energy Resources

1. When withdrawal is necessary to protect the values for which the area was designated, request withdrawal from mineral entry in conformance with Section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (PL 94-576). **Standard**
2. Unless allowed in the specific direction for the individual Special Interest Area, no ground-disturbing activities are permitted. However, existing valid rights will be honored. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Directions, Section D, Oil and Gas. **Standard**
3. Prohibit mineral material removal. **Standard**
4. Refer to the Preface and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Direction.

Fire

1. Refer to Grassland-wide Direction, Section G, for fire suppression direction.

Livestock Grazing

1. Reference Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, section I, Livestock Grazing, and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Descriptions.

Invasive Plant Species

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Goal 1.c and Section J, Invasive Plant Species.

Recreation

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section K Recreation

Heritage Resources

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section N, for additional heritage resource direction

Scenery Management

1. Manage to meet a Scenic Integrity Objective of High. **Guideline**

Special Use

1. No new utility corridors or additional development within existing corridors will be permitted. Existing corridors may be maintained until they are abandoned. Valid existing rights will be honored (Refer to Preface, Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section D, Oil and Gas, and Appendix G) **Standard**
2. Prohibit new special-use facilities except for valid existing rights (Refer to Preface, Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section D and Appendix G) **Guideline**

Infrastructure

1. For additional information refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section Q Infrastructure and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Direction

SIA Descriptions

Note: The following SIAs are numbered from 2.1a to 2.1f and from 2.1h to 2.1m. SIA 2.1g Indian Creek appeared in the Draft plan. In the Final plan, that acreage is now under Management Area 1.2 Recommended for Wilderness.

Bessey Unit (including the Samuel R. McKelvie National Forest)

2.1a - Bessey/McKelvie Tree Plantations SIA: The 21,710 acres of these accumulated sites are spread out between the Bessey unit and S.R. McKelvie unit, both of which are located in the Sandhills of Nebraska. These areas contain tree plantations of ponderosa pine, jack pine and Eastern red cedar. These plantations were planted between about 1909 and 1945. Some of these stands were planted by Civilian Conservation Corps crews during the Great Depression as "demonstration projects" for area residents. These plantations create the largest hand-planted forests in the United States. Management emphasis is on recreation, scenery, and wildlife.

Additional Direction:

- Allow the use of prescribed fire to accomplish resource objectives such as reducing fuel load buildup, wildlife habitat improvement, preparing seedbeds for natural and/or artificial regeneration and reduction of insect and disease problems. **Standard**
- Silvicultural prescriptions for tree-stand improvement, including thinning and harvest will recognize and evaluate the trade-offs associated with recreation, scenery and wildlife needs and alternative treatments to maintain forest health. The emphasis will be to maintain or improve forest health and structural diversity of the stands. Ponderosa pine is the preferred species. Apply a variety of silvicultural systems and harvest methods that best meet resource management objectives. Optimum economic efficiency and growth of individual stands for timber production is not an objective. There are no scheduled harvest quantities. **Guideline**

2.1b - Mallard Exclosure SIA: This 680-acre exclosure site features a sandhills wetland complex with green ash, cottonwood, and several willow species. Management emphasis is on protecting the unique botanical community.

Buffalo Gap National Grassland (Fall River Ranger District)

2.1c - Edgemont Shark Locality SIA: This 940-acre site features a former picnic area that is continually impacted by fossil collectors. An enormous number of shark and fish teeth, as well as ammonites, are found at the site. The earliest known records of plesiosaurs and mosasaurs in North America have been found at the site. The geologic rock unit exposed in the area is identified as Late Cretaceous Carlile Shale. Management emphasis is on interpretation, education and research of geology and paleontology.

Additional Direction:

- Only allow collection of the paleontological resource through a permit for the purposes of research, mitigation, protection of important specimens, and other official agency responsibilities. **Standard**
- Require monitoring by a professional paleontologist during all soil disturbances. **Standard**
- Allow oil and gas leasing with surface use limitations that will preserve the special values of the area. **Standard**

2.1 d - Marietta South SIA: This 260-acre geologic site features the Belle Fourche, Greenhorn Limestone and Mowry Shale units of the Late Cretaceous Marine Sequence. This site has produced a wide variety of vertebrates, including plesiosaurs and pterosaurs, both rare in the fossil record. Other fossils located at this site include fishes, sharks, turtles and invertebrates, like ammonites and clams. Management emphasis is on interpretation, research and education of geology and paleontology.

Additional Direction:

- Only allow collection of the paleontological resource through a permit for the purposes of research, mitigation, protection of important specimens, and other official agency responsibilities. **Standard**
- Require monitoring by a professional paleontologist during all soil disturbances. **Standard**
- Allow oil and gas leasing with surface use limitations that will preserve the special values of the area. **Standard**

2.1e - One-Mile Hill SIA: This 630-acre site features Late Cretaceous Belle Fourche Shale and Greenhorn Limestone. The site contains a wide variety of fossils, including fish, turtles, sharks, ammonites and clams. It is fairly scenic, with a good deal of big sage and highly erosive soils and exposed shales clearly visible. Management emphasis is on interpretation, research and education of geology and paleontology.

Additional Direction:

- Only allow collection of the paleontological resource through a permit for the purposes of research, mitigation, protection of important specimens, and other official agency responsibilities. **Standard**
- Require monitoring by a professional paleontologist during all soil disturbances. **Standard**
- Allow oil and gas leasing with surface use limitations that will preserve the special values of the area. **Standard**

2.1f - Wallace Ranch Localities SIA: This 420-acre paleontological site is representative of the Late Cretaceous Pierre Shale marine unit, and has produced such fossils as fish, sharks, pterosaurs, mosasaurs, turtles, bacculites and ammonites. A shark specimen found on the site is scientifically significant because it displays preserved cranial elements that in life were of cartilage material, not bone. Management emphasis is on interpretation, research and education of geology and paleontology.

Additional Direction:

- Only allow collection of the paleontological resource through a permit for the purposes of research, mitigation, protection of important specimens, and other official agency responsibilities. **Standard**
- Require monitoring by a professional paleontologist during all soil disturbances. **Standard**
- Allow oil and gas leasing with surface use limitations that will preserve the special values of the area. **Standard**

Pine Ridge Unit (including the Oglala National Grassland)

2.1h - Bur Oak Enclosure SIA: This three-acre site contains a large stand of bur oak that is thought to be native to the area. It is the only known population of bur oak on the Pine Ridge unit. Management emphasis is on protecting the unique botanical community.

Additional Direction:

- This area is unsuitable for livestock grazing. **Standard**
- Limit motorized travel to authorized use. **Standard**

2.1i - Hudson Meng Bison Bonebed SIA: This 40-acre site located on the Oglala National Grassland contains 600 to 1,000 skeletons of an extinct, prehistoric bison species. The skeletons are approximately 10,000 years old. The site is undergoing intense scientific study, and a modern, interpretive visitor center has been built alongside a climate-controlled bonebed enclosure. Thousands of visitors visit the site each year. Management emphasis is on archeology interpretation, research, and visitor satisfaction.

Additional Direction:

- Allow oil and gas leasing; however, prohibit ground-disturbing oil and gas activities. **Standard**
- This area is unsuitable for livestock grazing. **Standard**
- Limit motorized travel to authorized use. **Standard**

2.1j - Mountain Mahogany Stand SIA: This 90-acre site features a mature stand of mountain mahogany, which extends onto adjacent private land. The stand is thought to have become more dominant after a fire in the 1950s reduced competition from ponderosa pine. Management emphasis is on protecting the unique botanical community, and on regeneration and maintenance of species by reducing canopy cover through various treatment methods, such as understory cutting and prescribed burning of ponderosa pine.

2.1k - Quaking Aspen Stand SIA: This 8-acre site, located on the Oglala National Grassland, features a stand of quaking aspen and three beaver ponds. The site provides for the only known quaking aspen on the national grassland. Smaller aspen stands are found along the Pine Ridge of the Nebraska National Forest. Management emphasis is on protecting the unique botanical community, providing a recreational fishery, and natural resource interpretive site.

- Limit motorized travel to authorized use. **Standard**

2.11 - Toadstool Park SIA: This 2,000-acre site, located on the Oglala National Grassland, features badlands terrain of the Tertiary White River Group. The site contains the longest recorded fossil mammal trackway in the world from the Oligocene Epoch. The site has produced mammalian fossils representing the rise of modern mammalian families in North America and contains the geologic type sections of the geologic units from the Eocene and Oligocene epochs. A developed campground and replica sod house are located nearby. Fossil theft and destruction of the trackway by vandals are considerable concerns. Management emphasis is on interpretation, research and education of geology and paleontology. Recreation facilities will enhance public interpretation and visitor satisfaction, and complement the scenic beauty.

Additional Direction:

- Only allow collection of the paleontological resource through a permit for the purposes of research, mitigation, protection of important specimens, and other official agency responsibilities. **Standard**
- Allow oil and gas leasing; however, prohibit ground-disturbing oil and gas activities. **Standard**
- This area is unsuitable for livestock grazing, with the exception of Pasture 33D. **Standard**
- Limit motorized travel to authorized use. **Standard**
- Allow no new road construction. **Standard**

2.1m - Warbonnet/Yellowhand SIA: This 30-acre site features the location of a skirmish between the Fifth Cavalry led by Wesley Merritt and a band of Cheyenne Indians led by Chief Yellowhand. The band was attempting to escape forced confinement at Fort Robinson on July 17, 1876. During this skirmish, Buffalo Bill Cody is reputed to have killed Chief Yellowhand, the only casualty from the battle. Management emphasis is on historical interpretation and visitor satisfaction.

Additional Direction:

- Allow oil and gas leasing; however, prohibit ground-disturbing oil and gas activities. **Standard**

2.2 RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS

Theme

Research Natural Areas (RNA) form a network of ecological reserves designated for non-manipulative research, education, and the maintenance of biodiversity. This prescription is applicable to both designated existing Research Natural Areas and areas proposed for Research Natural Area designation.

Desired Conditions

Maintain natural (relatively pristine/pre-European settlement) conditions by maintaining or restoring natural ecological processes. Vegetation, habitat, soil productivity, water quality, and ecological processes are in a natural condition (within the range of natural variability). Vegetation manipulation may be used to maintain the ecosystem or unique features for which the Research Natural Area was established or to reestablish natural ecological processes, such as fire, rest and herbivory.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. Until formal establishment, manage proposed RNAs to maintain and enhance the character and ecological values for which the areas have been identified. **Standard**
2. Reclaim disturbed lands to a condition suitable for the purposes for which the RNA was identified. **Standard**
3. Close or obliterate existing roads, except where they provide necessary access for administrative or scientific purposes, or valid private access, as funding allows. **Guideline**
4. Allow uses that maintain or improve the ecological characteristics for which the RNA was designated. **Standard**
5. Require a permit for collection of all products. **Standard**

Mineral and Energy Resources

1. When withdrawal is necessary to protect the values for which the area was designated, request withdrawal from mineral entry in conformance with Section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (PL 94-576). **Standard**
2. Allow oil and gas leasing; however, no ground-disturbing activities are permitted. **Standard**
3. Prohibit mineral material removal. **Standard**

Fire

1. Refer to Grassland-wide direction, Section G, for fire suppression direction.

Livestock Grazing

1. Do not increase animal unit months (AUMs) or developments unless determined necessary in

the Research Natural Area management plan. Grazing suitability and desired vegetative conditions will be determined by the Research Natural Area management plan. **Standard**

2. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section I, Livestock Grazing; and Chapter 2, Geographic Area descriptions

Invasive Plant Species

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Goal 1.c and Section J Invasive Plant Species

Recreation

1. Restrict recreational use if it hinders achievement of the desired condition for the Research Natural Area. **Standard**

2. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section K.

Heritage Resource

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section N, for additional heritage resource direction.

Scenery Management

1. Manage area to meet a Scenic Integrity Objective of High (see Appendix G). **Guideline**

Special Uses

1. No new utility corridors or, additional development within existing corridors will be permitted. Existing corridors may be maintained until abandoned. **Standard**

Infrastructure

1. Prohibit the construction of new roads and trails, except when necessary to correct resource damage occurring from existing trails. **Standard**

2. For additional information refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section Q Infrastructure and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Direction.

Research Natural Area Descriptions

Samuel R. McKelvie National Forest

Steer Creek RNA: The 2,500-acre Steer Creek area is located approximately 13 miles northeast of the Niobrara Ranger Station on the Samuel R. McKelvie National Forest. The site is within in the Sandhills ecosystem of central Nebraska. The area is represented by dune prairies, dry valleys and wetland communities. Elevation ranges from 2,863 to 2,993 feet above sea level.

The dunes are formed from eolian material. Established hummocks typically give way to sparsely vegetated and shifting depressions of unstable sandy soils, commonly called blow-outs. These blow-outs serve as colonization sites for many specially adapted plant species. Between the sandy dunes lie broad valleys dominated by short grasses and sedges. Blow-outs may occur in these valleys, too. Wetland communities in the area exhibit diverse species associated with wet meadows, freshwater marshes, and aquatic associations of submerged pondweed.

An attractive feature of Steer Creek is that surrounding lands are completely managed by the U.S. Forest Service, which reduces the possibility of conflicts with adjacent landowners. The area is not, however, in pristine condition. Two-track roads do enter the area. In addition, during the grazing period, large reductions in plant leaves and shoots are observed, as well as trampling of creek banks and substantial presence of manure in waterways. Substantial recovery of riparian areas has been observed after the grazing period. Less observable negative and positive effects from grazing likely occur in the area.

Bessey Unit, Nebraska National Forest

Signal Hill: The 700-acre Signal Hill RNA is located about 12 miles south and west of Halsey, Nebraska, in section 3 and 4, T. 21N., R. 27W. and was established in May of 1950. This tract represents vegetative community types of the Nebraska Sandhills, which consists of about 20,000 square miles, making up about one quarter of Nebraska's land area. The terrain is that of choppy hills or sand dunes now supporting a good vegetative cover. The soil is practically pure silica, and contains less than 1 percent of organic matter. The dunes in the vicinity of the RNA are described by geologists as being the youngest of the hills and still are affected by the wind, although it is generally agreed that they have become a good deal more stable. Elevation varies from 2,820 to 2,900 feet. There are no lakes or streams on the area, being an intermingled composition of dunes and small valleys without drainage. The rainfall varies from 15 inches to 26 inches per annum. The rainfall is well distributed throughout the season, although heavier in May, June and July. September, October and November are regarded as the "dry months." The mean annual temperature is 49 degrees Fahrenheit. The mean annual humidity averages about 67 percent.

Sandhill lovegrass is characteristic of the north slopes and in some swales. Sandhill bluestem is a common pioneer in blowouts and on steep south slopes. Sand reedgrass is abundant over a wide range. Other community types include Indian grass, switchgrass, sandhill muhly, needle-and-thread and sedge. Important mixed grass species include western wheatgrass, blue grama, hairy grama, green needlegrass, and red three-awn.

Additional Direction:

- This area is unsuitable for livestock grazing. Grazing suitability, stocking rates, and grazing management systems may be amended by the Research Natural Area management plan. **Standard**

Buffalo Gap National Grassland (Fall River Ranger District)

South Pasture (777 Allotment): The 1,570-acre South Pasture is located about 18 miles west of Fairburn, South Dakota. It is situated in the Tertiary Table Lands and the Pierre Hills Divisions of the Great Plains. The area is characterized by nearly level to rolling hills to very steep badlands formations and gently sloping alluvial fans. Drainages flow into French Creek, which drains into the Cheyenne River. Elevation ranges from 2,950 to 3,250 feet above sea level.

South Pasture contains a wide variety of habitats. In the badlands portions, natural erosion has sculpted mounds, pinnacles, escarpments, overflows and steep drainage banks. Dominant vegetation includes western wheatgrass and needle-and-thread. Nonvegetated badlands outcrops also occur, as do juniper breaks, shrub patches and about one-quarter-mile of deciduous riparian woodland along French Creek. Plant and animal health and diversity are considered quite high,

although some exotic grass species, including smooth and Japanese brome, cheatgrass, and Kentucky bluegrass, can be found in isolated patches.

Current use includes holistic grazing management with a herd of more than 1,000 bison. This herd remains in the area for between six and eleven days per year. This grazing system is an attempt to mimic historic, natural grazing patterns of bison on short- and mixed-grass prairies. Some hunting and hiking also occur in the area.

Buffalo Gap National Grassland (Wall Ranger District)

West Wall RNA: The 1,040-acre area is located about nine miles southwest of Wall, South Dakota. The Cheyenne River drains most of the area. The area is situated in the Tertiary Table Lands and the Pierre Hills Divisions of the Great Plains. Topography varies considerably, from gently rolling uplands to rugged valleys and ravines to the flat Sage Creek floodplain and its terraces. Elevation ranges from 2,456 to 2,963 feet above sea level.

The West Wall area is divided into three pastures containing a wide variety of plant communities. Mixed-grass prairie species dominate, including thick stands of sod-forming grasses and taller native bunch grasses. Woody vegetation is limited to more mesic sites, including the largest area of juniper break habitat on the Buffalo Gap National Grassland. Woody vegetation is common in flat lowlands surrounding Sage Creek and in shallow depressions.

Impacts from past and present livestock grazing are evident. Currently, the stocking level of livestock in the area is considered moderate. Plant community health ranges from fair to good. Some encroachment by exotic grasses can be observed. Hiking and hunting do occur.

Fort Pierre National Grassland

Mallard South RNA: The 1030-acre Mallard South area is located approximately 19 miles south-southeast of Pierre, South Dakota. The landscape is characterized by level to rolling grasslands rising from unglaciated, Cretaceous-aged clay soils, dissected by entrenched intermittent streams. The southern branch of Cedar Creek, an intermittent tributary of the Missouri River, drains the area. Elevation ranges from 1,800 to 2,020 feet above sea level.

Three general types of vegetation dominate the site: mixed-grass prairie hillsides with such grasses as big and little bluestem and porcupine grass, uplands and footslopes of western wheatgrass, and riparian zones supporting a mosaic of grassland, shrub thickets, temporary wetland habitat, and a stringer of widely scattered deciduous trees. Unlike the surrounding landscape, Mallard South contains a relatively diverse, well-vegetated riparian zone. The abundance and vitality of plum, chokecherry and buffaloberry thickets in the area is also a rare feature within the Fort Pierre National Grassland. At least four Forest Service sensitive species occur in the area: regal fritillary butterflies, Northern leopard frogs, greater prairie chickens and upland sandpipers.

The relatively good condition of the riparian zones and high condition of several grassland types suggest that livestock stocking rates have not been excessive in the past few decades. Two exotic plant species, if not actively managed, may pose serious impacts: yellow sweet clover and smooth brome. A lack of natural firebreaks may impede using prescribed fire as an effective management tool.

3.51 BIGHORN SHEEP HABITAT

Theme

These areas are managed to provide adequate amounts of quality forage, cover, escape terrain, and solitude for bighorn sheep and other species.

Desired Conditions

Habitats capable of supporting bighorn sheep are managed to provide an abundant supply of food and cover. Other resource management activities are modified as needed to maintain high habitat suitability levels and desired levels of solitude. To achieve population objectives, the integrity of lambing, breeding and other important habitat features (e.g. escape cover) in occupied and unoccupied habitat will be protected.

Coordinate with other federal and state agencies and private landowners to manage habitat and monitor herd size of existing bands of bighorn sheep. In conjunction with other state game and fish agencies, consider augmenting existing populations with additional sheep introductions.

Consider increasing existing bighorn sheep populations on National Forest System land and other public lands. The integrity of bighorn sheep habitat will be maintained on potential habitats that are currently unoccupied. Activities on these habitats will be limited to those that do not compromise their suitability for future habitation by bighorn sheep. These areas are high priority for introducing bighorn sheep, as necessary, to maintain meta-populations and genetic diversity.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. Resolve conflicts that cannot be mitigated in favor of maintaining bighorn sheep habitat.

Guideline

2. As funding allows, implement habitat enhancement projects that improve sheep foraging habitat and provide connectivity of foraging areas to escape cover. **Guideline**

Minerals and Energy Resources

1. Allow oil and gas leasing; however, no ground-disturbing activities are permitted. **Standard**
2. As funding allows, identify and implement surface and minerals estate land exchanges that contribute to bighorn sheep management objectives. **Guideline**

Fire

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section G, for fire suppression direction.

Livestock Grazing

1. Do not convert existing livestock allotments to domestic sheep allotments in or adjoining this management area. **Standard**
2. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section I, Livestock Grazing; and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Descriptions.

Invasive Plant Species

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Goal 1.c and Section J, Invasive Plant Species

Recreation

1. Limit recreational activity if it would disturb bighorn sheep breeding and lambing. **Guideline**
2. Restrict motorized travel, as needed, to protect sheep concentrations during lambing, breeding, and winter use, except as authorized and permitted. **Guideline**
3. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section K and Q.

Heritage Resources

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section N, for additional heritage resource direction.

Scenery Management

1. Manage area to encompass the spectrum of Scenic Integrity Objectives. **Guideline** (see Appendix G and Scenic Integrity Objective maps located in Chapter 2)

Special Uses

1. Allow construction of new utility corridors only if they do not degrade the big horn sheep habitat characteristics for which the area was designated. **Standard**
2. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section P, Special Uses

Infrastructure

1. Prohibit new road construction across bighorn sheep habitat, however, honor valid existing rights such as oil and gas leases. **Guideline**
2. For additional information refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section Q Infrastructure and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Direction.

3.63 BLACK-FOOTED FERRET REINTRODUCTION HABITAT

Theme

Black-tailed prairie dog colony complexes are actively and intensively managed as reintroduction habitat for black-footed ferrets.

Desired Conditions

Large prairie dog colony complexes are established and maintained as suitable habitat for black-footed ferret reintroductions. Land uses and resource management activities are conducted in a manner that is compatible with maintaining suitable ferret habitat.

The Forest Service works with other agencies and organizations to pursue conservation agreements or easements with adjoining land jurisdictions to achieve black-footed ferret recovery objectives. Where landownership patterns are not conducive to effective and successful prairie dog and black-footed ferret management, landownership adjustments with willing landowners may also be used to help resolve management issues.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the regulatory agency that determines many of the conditions including when and where black-footed ferrets, an endangered species, may be released.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. Authorize only those uses and activities in the Conata Basin reintroduction area that do not reduce habitat below the level needed to support a long-term sustainable black-footed ferret population. Until habitat is available to support a long-term sustainable black-footed ferret population in the Smithwick reintroduction habitat, do not authorize uses and activities that would prevent annual increases in the prairie dog population. When ferrets are eventually released by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, follow the same direction for the Conata Basin area described in the first sentence (Amendment 2). **Standard**

~~2. Manage all prairie dog colonies within this Management Area as though they were occupied by black-footed ferrets, and apply all Standards and Guidelines as though black-footed ferrets occupy all colonies. Standard (Amendment 2).~~

Mineral and Energy Resources

1. Oil and gas stipulations for black-footed ferrets (Appendix D) apply to all prairie dog colonies within this management area. **Standard**

Livestock Grazing

1. Prior to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service authorizing a black-footed ferret release, the Forest Service will coordinate and consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the state wildlife agency and other agencies that conduct, authorize or fund predator control to help ensure that predator control activities on the national grassland to reduce livestock losses do not pose significant risks to black-footed ferrets. **Standard**

Fish and Wildlife

1. Use of rodenticides in a colony to reduce prairie dog populations may occur only after consultation and concurrence of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. ~~The conditions when prairie dog poisoning may be authorized are presented in Chapter 1.~~ (Amendment 2) **Standard**
2. Relocation of prairie dogs to establish new colonies and accelerate growth of prairie dog populations in selected areas may occur only after consultation with appropriate state and Federal wildlife agencies. **Standard**

Recreation

1. To help expand and maintain suitable and secure black-footed ferret habitat in the Conata Basin reintroduction area, prohibit recreational prairie dog shooting. However, regulated shooting may be allowed in selected areas along property boundaries to help reduce unwanted colonization of adjoining agricultural lands. Apply this same direction to the Smithwick reintroduction habitat once progress has been made in initiating a cooperative black-footed ferret recovery plan for the area. Coordination with the state wildlife agency will occur prior to any Forest Service actions regarding prairie dog shooting closures. **Standard** (Amendment 2)

3.64 SPECIAL PLANT AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

Theme

These areas are managed to maintain and enhance specific plant and wildlife species at risk and plant and wildlife communities. Habitat enhancement through improved management and close coordination with other resource uses is encouraged.

Desired Conditions

Suitable habitat will be maintained or enhanced for specific plant and wildlife species, guilds, and communities (reference Geographic Area direction for specific desired conditions for individual areas). Riparian areas (streams, seeps, springs, fens) are managed so they maintain their hydrologic regimes. Hardwood draws and woodlands are characterized by broadleaf deciduous trees. Prairie landscapes will have a diversity of warm season and cool season grasses and forbs. Plant communities of high species diversity will act as a seed source for other areas within the landscape where diversity may be reduced.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. Wetlands habitat will be protected to maintain the hydrology regimes for species viability. **Standard**
2. Maintain disturbance processes (fire, grazing) if required for habitat enhancement, restoration or species viability. **Standard**
3. Allow no new road or trail construction except when necessary to correct resource damage occurring from existing sites. **Guideline**
4. Conflicts that cannot be mitigated are resolved in favor of specific plant and wildlife species and communities. **Guideline**
5. See Chapter 2, Geographic Area for specific direction.

Mineral and Energy Resources

1. Prohibit mineral material removal. **Standard**

Fire

1. Refer to Grassland-wide Direction, section G, for fire suppression direction

Livestock Grazing

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section I, Livestock Grazing; and Chapter 2, Geographic Area descriptions.

Invasive Plant Species

1. Prioritize invasive plant control activities in habitats supporting sensitive species. **Guideline**
2. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Goal 1.c and Section J Invasive Plant Species

Recreation

1. Recreation trails within these areas will be located to prevent habitat damage caused by dispersed use. **Standard**
2. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, section K.

Heritage Resource

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section N, for additional heritage resource direction.

Scenery Management

1. Manage area to encompass the spectrum of Scenic Integrity Objectives. **Guideline** (see Appendix G- and Scenic Integrity Objective maps)

Special Uses

1. No new utility corridors or additional development within existing corridors will be permitted. Existing corridors may be maintained until they are abandoned. Valid existing rights will be honored. Refer to Preface, Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section D. **Guideline**
2. Prohibit new special-use facilities except for valid existing rights. Refer to Preface, Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section D and Appendix G. **Guideline**
3. For direction on plant collecting refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section O.

Infrastructure

1. New structural range improvements (fences and water developments) may be constructed as needed to achieve desired future conditions objectives. **Guideline**
2. For additional information refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section Q Infrastructure and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Direction.

4.32 DISPERSED RECREATION: HIGH USE

Theme

These areas are managed for recreational opportunities and scenic qualities and are usually adjacent to high use developed recreation sites and bodies of water.

Desired Conditions

Visitors recreate in a relatively natural environment, while pursuing a variety of activities, such as camping, picnicking, hiking, fishing, and motorized vehicle use where allowed. Because of the amount and types of use, these areas offer a more social type of recreational experience. Management activities are evaluated in terms of their impact on the recreational opportunities of the area. Motorized travel may be restricted during certain times of the year.

The areas offer few conveniences for users but may have picnic tables, toilets, trashcans, fire grills, and vehicle barriers if needed to protect resources. Existing improvements, such as roads, trails, bridges, fences, oil and gas wells, and water developments, blend into the landscape where feasible.

The potential for contact with other users is moderate to high. Solitude or isolation is less important than the opportunity to participate in desired recreational activities.

Generally, these areas appear as a natural-appearing landscape over large areas, but modifications on a small scale are acceptable and blend with the area's natural features. Biological communities complement the recreational values.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. Allow uses and activities only if they do not degrade the recreational characteristics, scenic qualities or the environment. **Guideline**

Minerals and Energy Resources

1. Allow mineral leasing and development. **Guideline**
2. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction; Air, Water, Soils Geology and Minerals, Recreation, Scenery Management and Special Uses, Sections A, B, C, D, K, L, P respectively, for direction.

Fire

1. Refer to Grassland-wide Direction, section G, for fire suppression direction.

Livestock Grazing

1. Do not salt or supplement feed within ¼ mile of existing roads. **Guideline**
2. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland Wide Direction, Section I, Livestock Grazing; and Chapter 2, Geographic Area descriptions.

Invasive Plant Species

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Goal 1.c and Section J, Invasive Plant Species

Recreation

1. Allow new OHV trail construction where resource values can be protected. **Guideline**
2. Provide developed facilities at areas of concentrated use to protect adjacent resources
Guideline
3. Refer to Recreation Grassland-wide direction Chapter 1, Section K.

Heritage Resource

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section N, for additional heritage resource direction.

Scenery Management

1. Manage area to meet a Scenic Integrity Objective of Moderate (see Appendix G). **Guideline**

Special Uses

1. Allow construction of new utility corridors only if they do not degrade the characteristics for which the area is managed or was designated. **Standard**
2. Locate new utilities along road corridors or within other areas already disturbed. **Guideline**

Infrastructure

1. For additional information refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section Q Infrastructure and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Direction.

5.12 GENERAL FOREST AND RANGELANDS: RANGE VEGETATION EMPHASIS

Theme

These areas are managed for the sustainability of physical, biological and scenic values associated with woody vegetation and open grassland.

Desired Conditions

These areas are dominated by open meadows, grasslands, shrublands and areas of woody vegetation. Diversity is achieved by maintaining or enhancing hardwood and coniferous trees, shrub inclusions and other beneficial plant communities and openings. Tree densities vary within stands to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire is used to promote open, park-like timber stands. Late-successional vegetation may be found in the area.

Management emphasis is on a balance of resource uses and opportunities, such as livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, dispersed recreation, minerals management and timber harvest. Some areas produce substantial forage for livestock and wildlife. Though some areas are forested, they usually do not produce commercial wood fiber because of poor site potential.

Recreation facilities may be present. Range and other management activities are coordinated with recreation so they do not conflict with the managed use season. Signs of motorized travel, hunting, hiking, timber harvest, mining and livestock grazing may be evident. Recreation use is moderate throughout the summer and increases during hunting seasons.

See geographic area for further direction.

Standards and Guidelines

Minerals and Energy Resources

1. Allow oil and gas leasing and development. **Guideline**
2. Allow removal of mineral materials. **Guideline**
3. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Geology and Minerals, Air, Water, Soils, Recreation, Scenery Management and Special Uses sections.

Fire

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section G, for fire suppression direction.

Livestock Grazing

1. Reference Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section I, Livestock Grazing; and Chapter 2, Geographic Area descriptions.

Invasive Plant Species

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Goal 1.c and Section J, Invasive Plant Species

Recreation

1. Refer to Recreation Grassland-wide direction Chapter 1, Section K.

Heritage Resource

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section N, for additional heritage resource direction.

Scenery Management

1. Manage area to encompass the spectrum of scenery integrity objectives. (see Scenic Integrity Objective maps in Chapter 2 and Glossary, page G-) **Guideline**.

Special Uses

1. Locate new utilities along road corridors or within other areas already disturbed. **Guideline**
2. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section P, Special Uses

Infrastructure

1. When reconstructing water impoundments, consider opportunities to enhance native wildlife and plant species habitat and restoration of natural drainage patterns. **Guideline**
2. For additional information refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section Q Infrastructure and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Direction.

6.1 RANGELAND WITH BROAD RESOURCE EMPHASIS

Theme

This area is primarily a rangeland ecosystem managed to meet a variety of ecological conditions and human needs. Ecological conditions will be maintained while emphasizing selected biological (grasses and other vegetation) structure and composition that consider the range of natural variability. These lands often display high levels of development, commodity uses, and activity; density of facilities; and evidence of vegetative manipulation. Users expect to see other people and evidence of human activities. Facilities supporting the various resource uses are common. Motorized transportation is common on designated roads and two-tracks.

Desired Conditions

This management area will display low to high levels of livestock grazing developments (such as fences and water developments), oil and gas facilities, and roads.

Livestock will graze most areas annually, but a spectrum of vegetation structure and a high degree of biodiversity will be present. Livestock grazing intensity will vary, however moderate use will prevail over most of the MA. Natural disturbance processes, including grazing and fire, will be used to emulate the natural range of variability of vegetation structure and composition (see objectives in Geographic Area direction). Rest and prescribed fire will be incorporated into the landscape.

Prairie dog colonies will increase in some areas of the MA.

When no substantial threat to high-value resources occurs, natural outbreaks of native insects and disease will be allowed to proceed without intervention.

Standards and Guidelines

Minerals and Energy Resources

1. Allow oil and gas leasing and development. **Guideline**
2. Allow removal of mineral materials. **Guideline**
3. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction; Air, Water, Soils Geology and Minerals, , Recreation, Scenery Management and Special Uses, Sections A, B, C, D, K, L, and P. respectively, for direction.

Fire

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section G, for fire suppression direction.

Livestock Grazing

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section I, Livestock Grazing; and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Descriptions.

Invasive Plant Species

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Goal 1.c and Section J, Invasive Plant Species

Recreation

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section K

Heritage Resource

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section N, for additional heritage resource direction.

Scenery Management

1. Manage area to meet scenic integrity objectives at a minimum of Moderate and Low (see Scenic Integrity Objective maps in Chapter 2 and Glossary, page G). **Guideline**

Special Uses

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section P, Special Uses

Infrastructure

1. Refer to Chapter 1, Grassland-wide Direction, Section Q, Infrastructure and Chapter 2, Geographic Area Direction.

7.1 RESIDENTIAL/FOREST INTERMIX

Theme

Intermingled private and National Forest System lands are managed to build and maintain cooperative relationships between the landowners and other governments with jurisdiction.

Desired Conditions

A variety of plant communities, structural stages and associated wildlife habitats are provided through vegetative manipulation and natural processes. Natural openings, meadows, and other plant communities are maintained to protect soil and water resources, and key wildlife habitat areas. Timber harvest, livestock grazing, and prescribed fire may be used to attain a natural-appearing landscape, and to minimize the risks of catastrophic fires and epidemic levels of insects and diseases.

In high-use recreation areas, human disturbance may limit wildlife viewing to those species that are common or accustomed to the presence of people. Recreational use of these areas may be restricted to the extent necessary to reduce conflicts between landowners and visitors. Firearm use or open fires are restricted, when conditions warrant. Property boundaries are well marked. Trails link other management areas, developed sites, and other nearby trails.

Visitors expect to encounter residential developments on intermingled private land. Residents encounter visitors and management activities. Landscape modifications and facilities may be visible; however, they are mitigated to blend and harmonize with natural features as much as is reasonable.

State and local governments and fire protection districts are consulted in developing fire-hazard reduction plans and ordinances.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. Allow developments that complement natural features in the foreground. Developments in middle ground and background must be subordinate to the landscape and not obvious to the casual observer. **Guideline**

Fire

1. Treat management activity fuels to the required fireline intensity level within three years after management activities cease. **Guideline**

2. When conducting fuel treatments along property boundaries, use methods that can be controlled with direct attack. **Guideline**

3. Prioritize fuel treatment based on the following conditions:

- Where there is an organization desiring to cooperate in fire-hazard reduction along mutual boundaries.
- National Forest System and adjacent lands having high values that are vulnerable to fire. **Guideline.**

8.5 NURSERY (CHARLES E. BESSEY)

Theme

This area emphasizes production of planting stock and seed storage, while maintaining the historical value and context of the site.

Desired Conditions

The nursery serves as the Forest Service's and other clients' seed extractory and storage facility and provides transfer of technology to federal, state, tribal, private, and international governments, agencies and groups. Native vegetation seed and quality bare root and containerized seedlings are produced to support Forest Service, tribal and cooperating states' seedling requirements.

Nursery operation features may include administrative buildings, storage facilities, greenhouses, seedbeds, refrigerator units, and seed and seedling processing facilities. Historical components of the nursery are enhanced through visitor information, interpretation, restoration, and stabilization. Visitors can expect frequent encounters with people, heavy equipment and noise. Few, if any, restrictions are placed on public use except to ensure public safety and to avoid unreasonable interference with nursery operations. Nonmotorized dispersed recreation is allowed to the extent that it will not interfere with nursery operations.

Insects and diseases are managed to protect vegetation on the nursery site. Trees that are not nursery stock are managed to provide wind protection around buildings and seedbeds, aesthetics and shade. Trees will be removed if they pose a hazard to public health and safety.

Goals and Objectives

The Charles E. Bessey Nursery is a unique area on the Nebraska National Forest. The following goals and objectives are specific to this area and not found in geographic area or grassland-wide direction.

Goals

1. Provide desired quality and quantities of bare-root and container tree seedlings, shrubs, and other vegetative materials to meet the needs of National Forest System, state, American Indian tribes and other customers.
2. Provide seed extraction, testing, and storage services to customers.
3. Provide technical assistance to national forests and grasslands, international visitors, states, American Indian tribes, other federal agencies, and Natural Resource or Conservation Districts in the areas of cone and seed collection, seed and seedling storage and handling, site preparation, and planting

Objectives

1. Annually, provide the desired quantity and quality of tree and shrub seedlings and vegetative materials to meet customer expectations.
2. Annually, maintain accurate records on the quantity and quality of tree seed in the regional seedbank.
3. Annually, provide field trips to local school districts and others to discuss nursery operations, reforestation, seed handling, and storage.
4. Regularly consult with entomologists, pathologists, soil scientists, and hydrologists to identify problems and to evaluate the effectiveness of cultural practices and implement changes if necessary.
5. Over any 5-year period, WCF accounts for trees and tree seed will balance (costs will equal expenditures).
6. Preserve the integrity of historic nursery structures.
7. Protect the water quality in the Middle Loup River.
8. Within 10 years, combine and construct new office facilities with the Bessey Ranger District.
9. As additional funding becomes available, add an additional greenhouse to meet requests for container seedlings.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. Annually, complete seedling inventories by October 1, and provide reports to customers.
2. Conduct root growth potential tests on all seedlots at the time of lifting. Reports from these tests will be provided to customers.
3. Charge customers equitably for extra materials and services provided to them.

Mineral and Energy Resources

1. Prohibit removal of mineral materials. **Standard**
2. Allow oil and gas leasing; however, no ground-disturbing oil and gas activities are permitted. **Standard**
3. Withdraw the area from locatable mineral activity. **Standard**

Livestock Grazing

1. Prohibit domestic livestock grazing. **Standard**

8.6 ADMINISTRATIVE SITES

Theme

This prescription emphasizes management of administrative sites.

Desired Condition

Site features may include office buildings, parking lots, work centers and storage facilities. Facilities provide adequate improvements to protect the health and safety of workers and visitors.

Landscape modifications and facilities may be visible, but are reasonably mitigated to blend and harmonize with natural features. Vegetation is managed to provide a pleasing appearance for visitors.

Standards and Guidelines

Mineral and Energy Resources

1. Allow oil and gas leasing; however, no ground-disturbing oil and gas activities are permitted.

Standard