TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 GRASSLAND-WIDE DIRECTION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains direction that applies grassland-wide. Its direction includes Regional goals, Grassland goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines. Additional direction can be found in other chapters and appendices, which reference National goals, policies, statutes, regulations, and agreements.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Land and resource management direction consists of goals, objectives, and management requirements (standards and guidelines) for the national grasslands and national forests. Goals and objectives provide broad, overall direction regarding the type and amount of goods and services the national grasslands and national forests provide and focus on achieving ecosystem health and ecological integrity. Management requirements set minimum standards that must be met or exceeded while achieving the goals and objectives. Administrative requirements also establish broad multiple-use management direction and generally apply to all areas of the national grasslands and national forests.

Goals are concise statements that describe desired conditions, and expected to be achieved sometime in the future. They are generally timeless and difficult to measure. Goals describe the ends to be achieved, rather than the means of doing so.

Objectives are concise, time-specific statements of measurable planned steps taken to accomplish a goal. They are generally achieved by implementing a project or activity. However, objectives are not targets. Targets are dependent upon budgets, which shall or shall not reflect management plan emphasis areas.

The reader will note that some resources, management programs, or responsibilities are only briefly mentioned or not mentioned at all in this chapter. Chapter 2 contains additional direction for the grassland and forest units. Forest Service personnel will strive to plan and implement projects that contribute to achieving the goals and objectives in a manner consistent with standards and guidelines and applicable legal requirements.

Many variables affect the achievement of goals and objectives. There are numerous legal mandates, congressional intent as directed by annual budgets, and political issues over which the national grasslands and national forests have little or no control. Given this situation, the USDA Forest Service leadership will determine what mix of activities is most appropriate in any given year and use every opportunity to move toward the overall management intent prescribed by the goals and objectives.

The goals and objectives presented here are tiered to the *USDA Forest Service Government Performance and Results Act Strategic Plan: 2000 Revision*. This strategic plan presents the goals, objectives and activities that reflect the Forest Service's commitment to a sustainable natural resource base for the American people. All goals and objectives fall under the overall mission of the Forest Service, which is to sustain the health, productivity, and diversity of the land to meet the needs of present and future generations. "Caring for the Land and Serving People" expresses the spirit of this mission. Implicit in this statement is the agency's

collaboration with people as partners in caring for the nation's forests and rangelands.

The Forest Service's mission, and strategic goals and objectives are derived from the laws defining and regulating the agency's activities. Goals and objectives describe tangible progress toward achieving the agency's mission through implementing land and resource management plans. These plans guide on-the-ground natural resource management to ensure sustainable ecosystems and to provide multiple benefits. The Forest Service is committed to achieving the following goals and objectives:

Goal 1: Ensure Sustainable Ecosystems

Promote ecosystem health and conservation using a collaborative approach to sustain the Nations forests, grasslands and watersheds.

Goal 1.a: Improve and protect watershed conditions to provide the water quality and quantity and soil productivity necessary to support ecological functions and intended beneficial water uses.

Objectives:

1. Within 10 years, identify watershed conditions to provide baseline data sufficient to meet the following objectives:

- Improve 20 percent of 6th Hydrologic Unit Code (sub-watershed) level watersheds from Class II to Class I, or from Class III to Class II. Maintenance of unimpaired watersheds and restoration of impaired watershed are high priorities.
- Achieve a 20 percent reduction in acres of eroded or disturbed soils by Forest Service permitted or management actions.
- Achieve a 20 percent reduction in the amount of degraded water bodies, such as dam impoundments by Forest Service permitted or management actions.

2. Implement management practices that will move at least 80 percent of riparian areas and woody draws toward self-perpetuating tree and shrub communities within site capability.

3. At least 80% of the perennial streams will meet or move toward Proper Functioning Condition (PFC).

4. Within 15 years, identify, maintain, and/or improve stream flows for at least 10 percent of stream segments having high resource values within watersheds.

5. Throughout the life of the Plan, ensure proper plugging of abandoned wells to prevent cross contamination of aquifers (e.g., seismograph holes, water wells, etc.).

Goal 1.b: Provide ecological conditions to sustain viable populations of native and desired non-native species and to achieve objectives for Management Indicator Species (MIS).

Objectives:

1. As scientific information becomes available, jointly develop with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies conservation and recovery strategies for plant and animal species, listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act, and implement established conservation or recovery strategies over the life of the Plan.

2. Within 15 years, demonstrate positive trends in population viability, habitat availability, habitat quality, population distribution throughout the species range within the planning area, and other factors affecting threatened, endangered, sensitive species and MIS.

3. Develop and implement conservation strategies for Forest Service sensitive species, as technical information becomes available.

4. Within 15 years, conserve populations of species at risk and rare communities by demonstrating positive trends in habitat availability and quality, or any other applicable factors affecting species at risk.

5. Identify rare plant and animal communities, inventory them, and develop associated management strategies to conserve them. Support the development and implementation of State and Regional Conservation Plans as they apply to the grassland or forest units.

6. Within 10 years, provide sufficient habitat for Management Indicator Species to reduce adverse impacts on populations during droughts.

7. Establish scientifically credible monitoring programs, develop survey methods, and initiate baseline and trend surveys for populations, habitats and/or ecological conditions to contribute to viability of threatened and endangered species, species at risk, and MIS.

8. Complete and initiate implementation of conservations strategies for globally rare plant species (G2-3 rankings) including Barr's milkvetch and other high priority species in cooperation with other conservation agencies and organizations. .

9. Conduct target surveys for globally rare plant species (Barr's milkvetch, smooth goosefoot, Ute ladies' tresses) and other rare plant species with viability concerns.

Goal 1.c: Increase the amount of forests and grasslands restored to or maintained in a healthy condition with reduced risk and damage from fires, insects and diseases, and invasive species.

Objectives:

1. Within 10 years, implement management practices, including prescribed fire, that will move all affected landscapes toward desired vegetation composition and structure as described in Geographic Area direction.

2. Over the next 15 years, retain only those range structures (fences and water developments) that achieve resource management (i.e., wildlife habitat, botanical, range management, visual quality, and recreation) goals and objectives.

3. Within 5 years, develop and implement cooperative noxious weeds and undesirable non-native or invasive species management plans in consultation with appropriate partners and agencies.

4. Within 3 years, develop and implement a certified noxious weed-free forage program in consultation with appropriate state agencies.

5. Within 10 years, limit further expansion of areas affected by noxious weeds.

6. Within 10 years, implement an integrated prevention and pest control management program for noxious weeds and undesirable non-native or invasive plant species.

7. Immediately initiate hazardous material cleanup on identified sites.

8. In a timely manner, review PSD permit applications, and make recommendations where needed to reduce impacts to those Congressionally-designated Class I areas specified in the federal Clean Air Act as subject to air quality related values.

Goal 2: Multiple Benefits to People

Provide a variety of uses, values, products, and services for present and future generations by managing within the capability of sustainable ecosystems.

Goal 2.a: Improve the capability of the Nation's forests and grasslands to provide diverse, high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities.

Objectives:

1. Annually maintain or reconstruct 20% of National Grassland trails to regional standards

2. Over the next 15 years, provide readily available information concerning recreation opportunities for developed, historic, and cultural sites.

3. Within 5 years, provide appropriate directional signing to key recreation sites and inform people about the public access routes to national grasslands and national forests.

4. Within 10 years, complete site and recreation plans, including rehabilitation and re-vegetation strategies. As demand warrants, increase recreational opportunities where compatible with resource objectives. These opportunities may include trails, campgrounds, and interpretation.

5. Within 5 years, draft and begin implementing a science and marketing based interpretive program strategy that uses a variety of communication media. The purpose of the strategy will be to effectively use communication principles and methods based in the field of interpretation to:

- Communicate with target audiences regarding management concerns or issues, changes in management direction, and specific projects
- Enhance visitor's recreation experiences by identifying and implementing interpretive projects that highlight national grassland and forest resources and management.

6. Provide nonmotorized and motorized trails for a wide variety of uses and experiences.

7. Manage trail systems to minimize conflicts among users.

8. When appropriate, authorize special use permits for outfitter-guide services on NFS lands.

9. Through partnerships, encourage, establish, and sustain a diverse range of recreational facilities and services on NFS lands. Encourage outfitters and guides who support interpretive and educational awareness of grassland ecosystems or who provide services to people with disabilities.

10. When appropriate, designate, and manage outfitted camp locations.

Goal 2.b: Improve the capability of wilderness and protected areas to sustain a desired range of benefits and values.

Wilderness

Objective

1. Within 5 years of Congressional designation, revise or develop wilderness plans to emphasize recreational, aesthetic, and educational experiences consistent with values of those areas.

Heritage Sites

Objectives:

1. Within 5 years, develop and implement a heritage inventory strategy and implementation schedule to survey and evaluate sites, in support of management actions and activities as agreed upon with the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO), Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPO) and to include compliance with laws Sec. 106 and Sec. 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

2. Within 5 years, assess identified sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in conjunction with SHPO and THPO and provide interpretation for National Register of Historic Places sites where appropriate and consistent with developed preservation plans.

3. Within 3 years, identify and protect traditional cultural properties in consultation with federally recognized American Indian tribes.

4. Within 10 years, update prehistoric, ethnographic, and historic overviews.

5. Educate, interpret, and promote partnerships to increase public awareness, protect heritage resources, and further the goals of research.

Special Areas

Objective:

1. Within 5 years, develop and implement a management and monitoring plan for each Research Natural Area.

2.c: Improve the capability of the Nation's forests and grasslands to provide a desired sustainable level of uses, values, products, and services.

Livestock Grazing

Objectives:

1. Annually, provide forage for livestock on suitable rangelands. Annual grazing levels will be adjusted, as needed, during periods of drought or for other conditions.

2. As needed, revise allotment management plans (AMP) to meet desired vegetative conditions described in Geographic Areas and to implement all appropriate management plan direction.

Geologic and Paleontologic Resources

Objectives:

1. Within 15 years, inventory and evaluate 20 percent of high potential paleontological formations.

2. Within 15 years, develop conservation plans for significant geological and paleontological sites.

3. Within 15 years, provide interpretation for at least 20 percent of important geological and paleontological sites, consistent with the conservation plans.

Mineral and Energy Resources

Objectives:

1. Ensure reclamation provisions of operating plans are completed to standard.

2. Honor all valid existing legal mineral rights.

Miscellaneous Products

Objective:

1. Provide appropriate opportunities to satisfy demand for miscellaneous products (special forest and grassland products, such as mushrooms, floral products and medicinal plants) through environmentally responsible harvest and collection methods on National Forest System Lands.

Scenery

Objective:

1. Implement practices that will meet, or move the landscape character toward scenic integrity objectives. Reference Geographic Area direction.

Special Uses

Objective:

1. Ensure all special use permits are meeting requirements for customer service and are in compliance with the terms of their permits or contracts.

Wildlife, Fish, and Plant Use

Objectives:

1. Within 10 years, identify, manage, develop, and interpret appropriate watchable wildlife and plant viewing sites.

2. Within 10 years, support native and desirable non-native plant, fish, and wildlife populations by meeting or making measurable progress towards desired vegetative composition and structure, as described in Geographic Area direction.

Goal 3: Scientific and Technical Assistance

Develop and use the best scientific information available to deliver technical and community assistance and to support ecological, economic, and social sustainability.

3.a: Improve the knowledge base provided through research, inventory, and monitoring to enhance scientific understanding of ecosystems, including humans, to support decision-making and sustainable management of the Nation's forests and grasslands.

Objectives:

1. Implement inventory and monitoring systems to provide scientific information and decision support across all land ownerships.

2. Provide research results and tools through technology transfer to support effective management, protection, and restoration of ecosystems.

3. Assess potential habitat capability at the local level for management indicator species by identifying existing or establishing new reference areas and implementing long-term monitoring. Some reference areas will need to be managed for multiple-year accumulation of vegetation and litter for those management indicator species of high structure grasslands and sagebrush habitats.

4. Assess the potential impacts of the construction of impoundments in upper watersheds on hydrologic flows and patterns on downstream habitat on the sturgeon chub and other sensitive native fish species.

5. Assess the condition of watersheds containing aquatic habitats of sensitive fish species that are found primarily in clear-water streams and rivers.

Goal 4: Effective Public Service

Ensure the acquisition and use of an appropriate corporate infrastructure to enable the efficient delivery of a variety of uses.

4.a: Improve the safety and economy of the USDA Forest Service roads, trails, facilities, and operations and provide greater security for the public and employees

Objectives:

1. Within 5 years, identify travel opportunities and restrictions, including designating motorized travel-ways and areas, to meet land management objectives. Provide reasonable access for use of the national grasslands and national forests.

2. Within 5 years, provide site-specific maps and information showing closures, restrictions, and opportunities for motorized and nonmotorized use using a science-based Roads Analysis process.

3. Within 5 years, identify the minimum Forest Service road system for administration, utilization, and protection of National Forest system lands and resources, while providing safe and efficient travel and minimizing adverse environmental effects.

4. Where appropriate, encourage and authorize recreation opportunities for people with disabilities.

4.b: Provide appropriate access to NFS lands and USDA Forest Service programs.

Land Ownership and Access

Objectives:

1. Within 3 years, develop and implement approved land ownership adjustment plan in response to resource management and public needs. The plan shall be coordinated, reviewed, and updated annually.

2. Within 3 years, develop and implement a 5-year Rights-of-Way Acquisition Program in response to resource management programs and access needs. This 5-year plan will be coordinated, reviewed, and updated annually.

Unauthorized Uses

Objective:

1. Take appropriate law enforcement or administrative actions on all unauthorized uses.

Public and Organizational Relations

Objectives:

1. Provide opportunities for federally recognized American Indian tribes to participate in planning and management of the national grasslands and national forests, especially where tribes have claimed special geographic, historical, or cultural interest.

2. Work in cooperation with federal, state, and county agencies, individuals, and non-government organizations for control of noxious weeds and invasive species and animal damage.

3. Create and foster partnerships with other agencies, accredited educational and research institutions, and other appropriate public and private sector organizations to further the goals of research, education, protection, and interpretation.

4. Cooperate with the appropriate state and federal agencies in balancing desired wildlife and fish population objectives with desired habitat conditions.

5. Identify opportunities for partnerships to provide new recreational fisheries and/or waterfowl and wetlands habitat.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

This direction applies across the National Grasslands and forests. Additional direction is found in other chapters and appendices, which include more detailed information, or national and regional policies.

Standards are actions that must be followed or are required limits to activities in order to achieve Grassland objectives. Site-specific deviations from standards must be analyzed and documented in management plan amendments.

Guidelines are advisable actions that should be followed to achieve Grassland or forest goals and objectives. Deviations from guidelines must be analyzed during project-level analysis and documented in a project decision document, but do not require management plan amendments.

PHYSICAL RESOURCES

A. Air

1. Meet state and federal air quality standards, and comply with local, state, and federal air quality regulations and requirements, either through original project design or through mitigation, for such activities as prescribed fire, mining, and oil and gas exploration and production. (See Appendix A) **Standard**

2. Meet requirements of the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD), State Implementation Plans (SIP), and applicable Smoke Management Plans. **Standard**

3. Reduce the impacts to air quality and loss of energy resources by only allowing flaring of gas from oil wells during production testing of wells. Connection to a pipeline or re-injection will be required once production is established. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. **Guideline**

4. Partner with local and state government, energy producers and other appropriate stakeholders to devise dust control plans for unpaved roads on the Thunder Basin National Grassland. **Guideline**

B. Water

1. Manage land treatments to conserve site moisture and to protect long-term stream health from damage by increased runoff. **Standard**

2. Manage land treatments to maintain enough organic ground cover in each land unit to prevent harmful increased runoff (exceptions shall occur in special habitat situations (e.g. prairie dog habitat)). **Standard**

3. In the water influence zone next to perennial and intermittent streams, lakes, and wetlands, allow only those actions that maintain or improve long-term health and riparian ecosystem condition. **Standard**

4. Design and construct all stream crossings and other instream structures to provide for passage of flow and sediment, withstand expected flood flows, and allow free movement of resident aquatic life. **Standard**

5. Conduct actions so that stream pattern, geometry, and habitats are maintained or improved

toward robust stream health. **Standard**

6. Maintain long-term ground cover, soil structure, water budgets, and flow patterns of wetland to sustain their ecological function, per 404 regulations. The 404 regulations are guidelines established by the Environmental Protection Agency. They constitute the substantive environmental criteria used in evaluating activities regulated under Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. The full text of these regulations can be found at 40 CFR 230. **Standard**

7. Return and/or maintain sufficient stream flows, under appropriate authorities, to minimize damage to scenic and aesthetic values, fish, and wildlife habitat, and to otherwise protect the environment. **Standard**

8. Manage water-use facilities to prevent gully erosion of slopes to prevent sediment and bank damage to streams. **Standard**

9. Construct roads and other disturbed sites to minimize sediment discharge into streams, lakes, and wetlands. **Standard**

10. Place new sources of chemicals and pathogenic pollutants where such pollutants will not reach surface or ground water. **Standard**

11. Apply runoff controls to disconnect new pollutant sources from surface and ground water. **Standard**

12. Apply chemicals using methods that minimize risk of entry to surface and ground water. **Standard**

13. Design activities to protect and manage the riparian ecosystem. Maintain the integrity of the ecosystem including quantity and quality of water. **Standard**

14. Locate activities and facilities away from the water's edge or outside the riparian areas, woody draws, wetlands, and floodplains unless alternatives have been assessed and determined to be more environmentally damaging. If necessary to locate activities or facilities in these areas, then:

- Deposit no waste material (silt, sand, gravel, soil, slash, debris, chemical, or other material) below high water lines, in riparian areas, in the areas immediately adjacent to riparian areas or in natural drainageways (draws, land surface depressions or other areas where overland flow concentrates and flows directly into streams or lakes).
- Prohibit deposition of soil material in natural drainageways.
- Locate the lower edge of disturbed or deposited soil banks outside the active floodplain.
- Prohibit stockpiling of topsoil or any other disturbed soil in the active floodplain.
- Locate drilling mud pits outside riparian areas, wetlands and floodplains. If location is unavoidable in these areas, seal and dike all pits to prevent leakage.
- Rehabilitate gravel pits, if located in riparian zones, to simulate a natural riparian/aquatic situation. **Guideline**

15. Do not allow new roads to parallel streams when road location must occur in riparian areas unless alternatives have been assessed and determined to be more environmentally damaging. Cross streams at right angles. Locate crossings at points of low bank slope and firm surfaces. **Standard**

(See the Geology and Minerals APPENDIX F for information on siting oil and gas facilities. Also see Water Conservation Practices Handbook, FSH 2509.25, for further information)

C. Soils

1. Limit roads and other disturbed sites to the minimum feasible number, width, and total length consistent with the purpose of specific operations, local topography, and climate. **Standard**

2. Stabilize and maintain roads and other disturbed sites during and after construction to control erosion. **Standard**

3. Reclaim roads and other disturbed sites when use ends, as needed, to prevent resource damage. **Standard**

4. Prohibit soil-disturbing activities (e.g., road construction, well pad construction) on slopes greater than 40 percent and on soils susceptible to mass failure. **Guideline**

(See the Geology and Minerals APPENDIX F for information on siting oil and gas facilities. Also see Water Conservation Practices Handbook, Forest Service Handbook 2509.25, for further information.)

D. Minerals and Energy Resources

General

1. Require operators to obtain water for mineral operations from private sources, except in the following instances: a) private sources are not available; b) water is available from National Forest System land ponds or wells; and such use would not conflict with established uses. **Standard**

2. Prohibit rig stacking and storage of equipment not being used. **Standard**

3. Obliterate and rehabilitate special use and single use roads associated with oil and gas lease development, within one year from the end of their use period, unless a documented decision is made to keep the road for other management needs. **Guideline**

(See the Invasive Plant Species section for direction regarding re-vegetation, and the Infrastructure section for direction on facilities. Also see Geology and Minerals Appendix F for further information)

Geophysical Operations

4. Where no suitable mitigation measures are possible, prohibit geophysical (seismic) operations that cause surface disturbance in Research Natural Areas, Special Interest Areas, American Indian traditional use area, and known National Register eligible sites. **Standard**

5. Minimize surface and other resource disturbance from geophysical operations. **Guideline**

6. Do not allow new road construction, unless alternatives have been assessed and determined to be more environmentally damaging. **Guideline**

7. Allow geophysical operations within developed recreation sites; however, restrictions (type, timing, seasonal, or location restrictions) will be applied to avoid conflicts with recreationists, and to maintain the recreational setting of the developed site. **Guideline**

Oil and Gas Operations

8. Honor valid existing legal and private property rights pertaining to the development, production, and transport of mineral resources. See Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants; Recreation; and Scenery Management sections for additional direction. **Standard**

9. Promote the use of closed circulation systems. Discourage the use of open reserve pits for oil and gas drilling operations. In cases where the use of pits for drilling operations is justified, analyze and monitor construction and use for minimal potential for leakage and structural failure (including pit solidification). **Guideline**

10. Prohibit the use of production pits. **Standard**

11. Do not allow field offices unless operators demonstrate they are essential to production operations. When need is justified, facilities will be limited in size and design to serve only those purposes necessary. **Guideline**

12. Provide on- and off-site information warning of the dangers of hydrogen sulfide fumes around developed oil production sites. **Standard**

13. Limit noise levels from oil and gas production facilities within ¼-mile of developed recreation sites to be no more than 70 decibels, as measured by the A-weighted Sound level (dBA) system of measurements, at the edge of the developed site. This standard applies only to constant, routine, day-to-day production noises. It doesn't apply to noise from drilling and testing of production nor temporary noises such as work-over rigs and maintenance or repair tasks. **Standard**

(See the Developed Recreation Sites section for other standards and guidelines that shall apply to mineral operations)

Energy and Mineral-Related Special Uses

14. Minimize disturbance by co-locating roads, pipelines, gathering lines, and power lines for energy resource development. **Guideline**

15. Authorize commercial water disposal wells with a special use permit with appropriate fees for surface use. **Standard**

(See the Special Uses section for other standards and guidelines that may apply to mineral operations)

E. Paleontological Resources

1. Protect key paleontological resources (Classes 3, 4, and 5 of the Fossil Potential Classification) from disturbance, or mitigate the effects of disturbance, to conserve scientific, interpretive, and legacy values. (See Paleontological Appendix J for details). **Standard**

2. Survey and post federal land boundaries where paleontological sites have Fossil Potential Classification sensitivity ranking of 3, 4, or 5, (See Paleontological Appendix J for details). **Guideline**

3. Prior to ground-disturbing activities, conduct paleontologic surveys in any area where there is a high potential to encounter these resources according to the process outlined in Appendix J. **Standard**

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

F. Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants

General

The following Directions (Standard or Guideline) are subject to the permitting processes of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the State wildlife agency. Where a specific wildlife agency permit has been issued, and it does not conflict with, or violate other laws, the Forest Service may waive the specific direction on a site-specific basis.

1. Consult state and regional Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plans for additional guidance on land bird habitat management. **Guideline**

2. Modify livestock grazing practices, as needed, to reduce adverse impacts of drought to threatened, endangered, and sensitive species and species at risk. **Standard**

3. When installing new livestock water tanks, install durable and effective escape ramps for birds and small mammals. During maintenance of existing tanks, replace ramps that are ineffective or missing. **Standard**

4. Design and build new structures, including fences, to reduce hazards to big game and to allow big game movement throughout the year. (Appendix B) This doesn't include fences designed to specifically exclude wildlife. **Guideline**

5. Do not authorize construction of new woven wire fences and barbed-wire fences with 5 or more strands. This doesn't include fences designed to specifically exclude wildlife. **Guideline**

6. Delay mowing of grasslands until July 15 or later to protect ground-nesting birds, including their nests and young broods. Project-level analyses will determine the earliest mowing date. **Guideline**

7. Manage vegetation so native forbs are periodically allowed to complete their full reproductive cycle. **Guideline**

8. Use the following criteria at the project level to help determine where to manage for rest and large blocks of high structure grasslands in upland areas for waterfowl, prairie grouse, and other ground-nesting birds:

- Presence of moderate to highly productive soils,
- Dominance of mid to tall grass species,
- Proximity to waterfowl pairing ponds and/or prairie grouse display grounds,
- Proximity to wetlands with well-developed emergent vegetation,
- Proximity to cooperative waterfowl/wetland development projects and other major wetland complexes. **Guideline**

9. Design new impoundments to provide new recreational fisheries and/or waterfowl and wetlands habitat. **Guideline**

10. During the AMP process or as other opportunities arise, design and implement livestock grazing strategies to provide well-developed emergent vegetation through the growing season on 30 to 50% of the wetlands (natural and constructed) distributed across watersheds and landscapes, contingent on local site potential. **Guideline**

11. During the AMP process or as other opportunities arise, design and implement livestock grazing strategies to provide for thick and brushy understories and multi-story and multi-age structure in riparian habitats, wooded draws and woody thickets, contingent on local site potential. **Guideline**

12. Provide access for bats and other cave-dependent species when closing mine shafts or caves. **Guideline**

13. Protect all known day roost areas and wintering sites used by bats. **Guideline**

14. To help reduce adverse impacts to breeding sharp-tailed grouse and their display grounds, prohibit construction of new facilities within 0.25 miles of active display grounds. A sharp-tailed grouse display ground is no longer considered active if it has been unoccupied during the last 2 breeding seasons. This does not apply to pipelines, fences, windmills, and underground utilities. **Standard**

15. To help reduce disturbances to breeding and nesting sharp-tailed grouse, do not authorize the following activities within 1.0 mile of active display grounds from March 1 to June 15:

- Construction (e.g., roads, water impoundments, pipelines, utilities, oil and gas facilities, fencing),
- Reclamation,
- Gravel mining operations,
- Seismic exploration,
- Oil and gas drilling,
- Drilling of water wells,
- Permitted recreation events,
- Training of bird hunting dogs. **Guideline**

16. Manage viewing activities on sharp-tailed grouse display grounds to reduce disturbances and adverse impacts to the birds. **Guideline**

17. During the AMP process or as other opportunities arise, design and implement livestock grazing strategies that provide quality nesting and brooding habitat on at least 25% of the grasslands (consistent with GA objectives) within 1.0 mile of active sharp-tailed grouse display grounds. Consult Appendix H for a description of quality habitat for sharp-tailed grouse. **Guideline**

Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Species

Black-footed Ferret

18. In prairie dog colonies known or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets, limit oil and gas development to one location per 80 acres to help maintain suitable ferret habitat. **Standard**

19. To help provide suitable habitat for black-footed ferrets and their young during the breeding and whelping seasons, prohibit the following activities within prairie dog colonies, or those portions of larger colonies, occupied or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets from March 1 through August 31:

- Construction (e.g., roads, water impoundments, oil and gas facilities),
- Reclamation,
- Gravel mining operations,
- Drilling of water wells,
- Oil and gas drilling. **Standard**

20. To help provide suitable habitat for black-footed ferrets and their young during the breeding and whelping seasons, do not authorize the following activities within prairie dog colonies, or those portions of larger colonies, occupied or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets from March 1 through August 31:

- Construction (e.g., pipelines, utilities, fencing),
- Seismic exploration,
- Permitted recreation events involving large groups of people. **Guideline**

21. Any net loss of suitable black-footed ferret habitat as a result of prairie dog poisoning or development of new facilities within colonies must be replaced with suitable ferret habitat. This is based on the amount of suitable habitat available when the poisoning or development is proposed to occur. **Standard**

22. For routine maintenance, access to oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies occupied or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets should be limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs. **Guideline**

Mountain Plover

23. Prescribe burn selected large flats (a section or more in size) to evaluate the effectiveness of burns in attracting and inventorying mountain plover. Prescribed burns should be timed to provide large blackened areas in the spring. **Standard**

24. In cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Wyoming Department of Game and Fish, evaluate the desirability and feasibility of trying to establish a nesting population with reintroduced birds. **Standard**

25. To help maintain suitable nesting habitat for mountain plover, prohibit development of new facilities within 0.25 miles of known mountain plover nests or nesting areas. This does not apply to pipelines, fences and underground utilities. **Standard**

26. To help maintain occupied nesting and brooding habitat on black-tailed prairie dog colonies, new oil and gas development will be limited to one well per 80 acres within occupied habitat. Cumulatively, structure and facility development will not occur on more than 2 percent of the occupied mountain plover nesting habitat in each prairie dog colony. **Standard**

27. Any net loss of suitable and occupied mountain plover habitat as a result of prairie dog poisoning or development of new facilities within prairie dog colonies will be replaced within the year by concurrent expansion of suitable plover habitat or in some cases, by enhanced management and protection of occupied plover habitat elsewhere on or near the national grassland. The amount of habitat loss is based on the amount of suitable and occupied habitat available prior to prairie dog dispersal in the year of the poisoning or development. **Guideline**

28. To help reduce disturbances and risks to nesting mountain plover, prohibit the following activities in plover nesting areas or within 0.25 miles of plover nests from March 15 through July 31:

- Construction (e.g., roads, water impoundments, oil and gas facilities),
- Reclamation,
- Seismic exploration,
- Gravel mining operations,
- Oil and gas drilling,
- Drilling of water wells,
- Prescribed burning. **Standard**

29. To help reduce disturbances and risks to nesting mountain plover, do not authorize the following activities in plover nesting areas or within 0.25 miles of plover nests from March 15 through July 31:

- Construction (e.g., pipelines, utilities, fencing),
- Workover operations for maintenance of oil and gas wells,
- Permitted recreation events involving large groups of people,
- Grasshopper spraying,
- Prairie dog shooting (in consultation with state wildlife agencies and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). **Guideline**

30. To help reduce risks to mountain plover, access to oil and gas facilities in occupied mountain plover habitat for routine maintenance should be limited to once per 24 hour period and occur between 9 am and 5 pm. Duration of maintenance activities should not extend beyond 1 hour when possible. This does not apply to travel for emergency repairs. **Guideline**

31. To help reduce risks to mountain plovers from traffic, limit vehicle speeds in occupied mountain plover habitat to 25 mph on resource roads and 35 mph on local roads. **Standard**

32. Vegetation management projects in suitable mountain plover habitat will be designed to maintain or improve mountain plover habitat. **Standard**

33. To avoid attracting avian predators, new structures and facilities in occupied mountain plover habitat will be designed with low profiles and/or perch-inhibitors. This does not apply to structures and facilities less than 4 feet in height or those not expected to be used as hunting perches by raptors. **Guideline**

34. Use the following criteria at the project level to help determine where to use prescribed burning and high livestock grazing intensities (Appendix I) to provide low grassland structure and enhanced mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat:

- Proximity to existing mountain plover nesting areas,
- Proximity to prairie dog colonies,
- Presence of expansive and flat grassland areas. **Guideline**

Sensitive Plant and Animal Species

35. Do not authorize new facilities, roads, trails, fences, salting and mineral areas, water developments in habitat occupied by sensitive plant species. **Guideline**

36 . During the AMP process or as other opportunities arise, design and implement livestock grazing strategies that allow sensitive plant species to complete their reproductive cycles at a frequency that maintains and enhances populations of those species occurring in the local area. **Standard**

37 . Identify sensitive plant habitats and rare plant communities as priorities for invasive plant monitoring and control. **Guideline**.

38. Avoid the use of invasive plant control methods that may negatively impact sensitive plants. **Guideline**

39. As opportunities arise, design timing, intensity, and frequency of mowing, burning, and livestock grazing to maintain and/or increase sensitive plant species populations and the health of rare plant communities. **Standard**

40. Do not authorize vegetation management and construction projects that would prevent recolonization of sensitive plant populations from adjacent populations. **Standard**

41. Do not develop any additional springs and seeps where associated habitat for sensitive plant species would be degraded or lost. **Standard**

42. Design vegetation management activities (e.g., prescribed burning, mowing, or grasshopper spraying, livestock grazing) and pesticide application projects in known habitats of sensitive butterfly species to reduce mortality of butterflies and to maintain or enhance nectar and larvae host plant species. **Guideline**

43. Design and construct new facilities to minimize the risk of accidental spills and discharge of petroleum and other toxic materials into waters occupied by sensitive fish species, and implement appropriate precautionary measures. **Guideline**

44. Do not authorize uses that would deplete instream flows below levels needed to protect the aquatic habitats of sturgeon chub and other sensitive native fish species. **Standard**

45. Design and implement vegetation management and construction projects so they do not degrade habitat for plains top minnow and other clear-water stream species by increasing sediment load and turbidity. **Standard**

Sage Grouse

46. To help reduce adverse impacts to breeding sage grouse and their display grounds, prohibit construction of new oil and gas facilities within 0.25 miles of active display grounds. A display ground is no longer considered active if it's known to have been unoccupied during the past 5 breeding seasons. This does not apply to pipelines and underground utilities. **Standard**

47. To help reduce disturbances to nesting sage grouse, prohibit the following activities within 2.0 miles of active display grounds from March 1 to June 15:

- Construction (e.g., roads, water impoundments, oil and gas facilities),
- Reclamation,
- Gravel mining operations,
- Drilling of water wells,
- Oil and gas drilling,
- Training of hunting dogs. **Standard**

48. To reduce disturbances to nesting sage grouse, do not authorize the following activities within 2.0 miles of active display grounds from March 1 to June 15:

- Construction (e.g., pipelines, utilities, fencing),
- Seismic exploration,
- Workover operations for maintenance of oil and gas wells,
- Permitted recreation events involving large groups of people. **Guideline**

49. To help prevent reproductive failure , limit noise on sage grouse display grounds from nearby facilities and activities to 49 decibels (10 dBA above background noise) from March 1 to June 15. **Guideline**

50. Pastures will be managed for sage grouse/big sagebrush only if they contain sagebrush stands with 10% or more canopy cover of big sagebrush. **Guideline**

51. When constructing facilities or structures within 2 miles of a sage grouse active display ground, design them to discourage raptor perching by maintaining a low profile or using perch inhibitors. **Guideline**

52. Prohibit development or operations of facilities within 2 miles of a sage grouse display ground if these activities would exceed a noise level of more than 10 decibels above the background noise level (39 db), at 800 feet from the noise source, from March 1 to June 15. **Guideline**.

53. Manage display ground viewing activities to reduce disturbances and adverse impacts to the birds on the display grounds. **Guideline**

54. During the AMP process or as other opportunities arise, design and implement livestock grazing strategies to provide quality nesting cover in all sagebrush stands (>15% canopy cover of big sagebrush, silver sagebrush, and greasewood) within at least 3.0 miles of active display grounds (consistent with GA vegetation objectives) where sagebrush is irregularly distributed around the display ground. This minimum distance can be reduced to 2.0 miles where sagebrush is uniformly distributed around display grounds. Consult Appendix H for a description of quality nesting habitat for sage grouse. **Standard**

55. In big sagebrush, silver sagebrush and greasewood wintering habitat, do not prescribe burn or treat with herbicides unless it can be demonstrated to be beneficial for local sage grouse populations. Treatments should not be conducted where shrub canopy cover averages less than 15%. Limit treatments to less than 80-acre patches and no more than 20% of the shrub stands in the wintering habitat. Shrub stands within 100 yards of meadows, riparian areas, and other foraging habitats should not be burned or sprayed. **Guideline**

56. During vegetation management practices, maintain or enhance wet and sub-irrigated meadows, seeps, riparian habitats, and other wetland areas that occur in or adjacent to sage grouse habitat as quality sage grouse foraging areas during the spring, summer, and fall. Consult Appendix H for a description of quality foraging habitat for sage grouse broods. **Standard**

57. During vegetation management projects, maintain or increase the size of big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis*) patches in sage grouse habitat. **Guideline**

58. When conducting vegetation management projects, maintain small openings within sagebrush and greasewood stands at a ratio of no more than 25% opening and at least 75% shrub canopy (e.g., 1 acre of opening for every 3 acres of shrub within the discrete stand). **Standard**

59. At the onset of drought, evaluate the need to adjust land uses to reduce impacts on sage grouse nesting and brooding habitat. **Guideline**

60. Manage for high vegetative structure in areas where it would enhance sage grouse nesting habitat. Emphasize areas characterized by:

- Presence of moderate to highly productive soils and range sites,
- Plant composition dominated by mid and/or tall grasses, with sagebrush canopy cover of 15-25%,
- Proximity to sage grouse display grounds. **Guideline**

Burrowing Owls

61. Do not spray grasshoppers within 0.25 mile of known burrowing owl nests. **Standard**

62. To optimize habitat for burrowing owls, manage for active prairie dog colonies that are larger than 80 acres. **Guideline**

Black-tailed Prairie Dog

63. Coordinate and consult with the appropriate wildlife management agencies and local landowners to prohibit prairie dog shooting in areas where significant risks have been identified for other wildlife species or where shooting is preventing or slowing a desired prairie dog population expansion. Restrictions shall be year-long or seasonal, and dates of seasonal restrictions shall vary depending on the species at risk. **Standard**

64. Prohibit activities that would alter water flow regimes and flood prairie dog burrows. **Standard**

65. Evaluate prairie dog management 3 years after management plan approval. Evaluate prairie dog management again when the total acres of active prairie dog colonies expand to 35,000 acres (approximately 7%) of suitable habitat on the Thunder Basin National Grassland. **Standard**

66. To reduce risks and habitat loss for prairie dogs and other wildlife species closely associated with prairie dog colonies, align new roads outside prairie dog colonies. If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, minimize the amount of road within the colony to the extent that soil, drainage, topographical and other physical factors will allow. **Guideline**

Swift Fox

67. To reduce disturbances to swift fox during the breeding and whelping seasons, prohibit the following activities within 0.25 miles of their dens from March 1 to August 31:

- Construction (e.g., roads, water impoundments, oil and gas facilities),
- Reclamation,
- Gravel mining operations,
- Drilling of water wells,
- Oil and gas drilling. **Standard**

68. To reduce disturbances to swift fox during the breeding and whelping seasons, do not authorize the following activities within 0.25 miles of their dens from March 1 to August 31:

- Construction (e.g., pipelines, utilities, fencing),
- Seismic exploration,
- Workover operations for maintenance of oil and gas wells,
- Permitted recreation events involving large groups of people. **Guideline**

69. Prohibit the use of M-44s (sodium cyanide) for predator control in occupied swift fox habitat on the national grasslands. **Standard**

70. During the AMP process or as other opportunities arise, design and implement livestock grazing strategies that provide a mosaic of low, moderate and high grassland structure in occupied swift fox habitat, consistent with vegetation objectives for the geographic area. **Guideline**

71. Pursuant to the Swift Fox Conservation Strategy, identify population monitoring and habitat inventory methods; identify key habitats on national grasslands; and develop appropriate population and habitat management strategies. **Guideline**

72. Pursuant to the Swift Fox Conservation Strategy, implement management activities for expanding the distribution of swift fox. **Guideline**

Raptors

73. To help prevent abandonment, reproductive failure or nest destruction, prohibit development of new facilities within the minimum distances (line of sight) of active raptor nests and winter roost sites as specified in the following table. For the bald eagle, golden eagle, merlin,

ferruginous hawk and Swainson's hawk, a nest is no longer considered active if it's known to have been unoccupied for the last 7 years. For the burrowing owl and other raptor species, a nest is no longer considered active if it's known to have been unoccupied during the current or most recent nesting season. This does not apply to pipelines, fences and underground utilities. **Standard**

Species and Habitat	Minimum Distance (miles)
Bald Eagle Nest	1.0
Bald Eagle Winter Roost Area	1.0
Golden Eagle Nest	0.25
Merlin Nest	0.25
Ferruginous Hawk Nest	0.25
Swainson's Hawk Nest	0.25
Burrowing Owl Nest	0.25
Nests of Other Raptors	0.125

74. To help reduce disturbances to nesting and wintering raptors, prohibit the following activities within the minimum distances (line of sight) of active raptor nests and winter roost areas during the dates specified in the table below:

- Construction (e.g., roads, water impoundments, oil and gas facilities),
- Reclamation,
- Gravel mining operations,
- Drilling of water wells,
- Oil and gas drilling,
- Timber harvest and fuel treatments
- Precommercial thinning. **Standard**

Species and Habitat	Minimum Distance (miles) and Dates
Bald Eagle Nest	1.0 from 2/1 to 7/31
Bald Eagle Winter Roost Area	1.0 from 11/1 to 3/31
Golden Eagle Nest	0.50 from 2/1 to 7/31
Merlin Nest	0.50 from 4/1 to 8/15
Ferruginous Hawk Nest	0.50 from 3/1 to 7/31
Swainson's Hawk Nest	0.50 from 3/1 to 7/31
Burrowing Owl Nest	0.25 from 4/15 to 8/31
Nests of Other Raptors	0.125 from 2/1 to 7/31[a]

[a] Dates may vary depending on the species

75. To help reduce disturbances to nesting and wintering raptors, do not authorize the following activities within the minimum distances (line of sight) of active raptor nests and winter roost areas during the dates specified in the previous table:

- Construction (e.g., pipelines, utilities, fencing),
- Seismic exploration,
- Workover operations for maintenance of oil and gas wells,
- Fuelwood cutting,
- Permitted recreation events involving large groups of people. **Guideline**

76. If a winter roost area or nest site is discovered, ensure that the necessary habitat components are maintained, including maintenance and regeneration of woodlands. **Standard**

G. Fire Suppression, Fuels Treatments, Prescribed Fire

Fire Suppression

1. Develop an Appropriate Management Response (AMR) for each management area outlined in the Fire Management Plan for the National Grasslands. Until an AMR for each given management area is completed, suppress all wildfires, natural and human-caused, using fire management strategies based on aggressive initial attack. Encourage the use of natural barriers and burning out when appropriate. **Guideline**

2. Minimize impacts to paleontological and heritage resources, streams, stream banks, shorelines, lakes and associated vegetation, and habitat for threatened, endangered, proposed, and sensitive species from wildfire suppression efforts in the following ways:

- Prohibit the use of earth-moving equipment on known paleontological or heritage sites.
- Discourage the application of fire-retardant chemicals over riparian areas, wetlands, and open water.
- Prior to using earth-moving equipment, consult appropriate specialists for guidance.
- Notify USFWS when TES habitat is threatened or impacted by fire. **Guideline**

3. In Backcountry Recreation Nonmotorized areas, and Research Natural Areas, encourage the use of wildland fire suppression strategies and tactics that minimize land and resource disturbance. **Guideline**

Fuel Treatment

4. Reduce the threat of wildfire to public and private developments by following guidelines in the National Fire Protection Association Publication 299, Protection of Life and Property from Wildfire, and reduce the fuel load to acceptable levels. **Guideline**

5. Participate in the "Firewise" community program. **Guideline**

Prescribed Fire

6. During project-level planning for prescribed burning, schedule prescribed fire activities at intervals designed to improve or maintain habitats of desired plant and animal species.

Guideline

H. Animal Damage Management

1. Restrict the use of rodenticides (grain baits) for reducing prairie dog populations to the following situations.

- Public health and safety risks occur in the immediate area,
- Damage to private and public facilities, such as cemeteries and residences. **Standard**

2. Consult state-wide prairie dog conservation strategies for additional guidance on the appropriate response to complaints of unwanted prairie dog colonization on adjoining agricultural lands (private, state, and tribal lands). **Guideline**

3. Reduce conflicts with adjacent landowners over prairie dog management through an active landownership adjustment program. **Guideline**

4. From January 1 through September 30, don't use rodenticides (above-ground baits) to reduce prairie dog populations. This is necessary to reduce risks to migratory birds. To reduce risk to other wildlife, don't use burrow fumigants in prairie dog colonies. **Standard**

I. Livestock Grazing

1. Allow bison grazing on the Grasslands by permit, and require amendments to grazing agreements and rules of management to allow a change of class of livestock to include bison. Evaluate bison grazing to include the following criteria: associated health issues; fence requirements; wildlife habitat needs; handling facilities; and human safety. **Standard**

2. Cooperate with states in ensuring healthy livestock (including bison), such as requiring permittees to test for diseases (e.g., Brucellosis) and vaccinate for other diseases prior to placement on public lands. **Standard**

3. As needed, or at a minimum annually, adjust management activities to account for the effects of natural processes (e.g., drought, fire, flood, grasshoppers) on forage availability. **Guideline**

4. Manage livestock grazing to maintain or improve riparian/woody draw areas. Implement the following practices:

- Avoid season-long grazing and activities, such as feeding, salting, herding, or water developments, which concentrate livestock in riparian/woody draw areas.
- Control the timing, duration, and intensity of grazing in riparian areas to promote establishment and development of woody species. **Guideline**

5. Meet rest objectives based on, but not limited to the following desired conditions:

- Where high structure is required for plant and animal communities (See Geographic Area), and Management Indicator Species;
- Where increased fuel loads are desired for prescribed burning;
- Where ungrazed areas are desired for monitoring vegetation structure or for research needs;
- Where desired to improve reproductive success of Management Indicator Species and threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, or

- Where ungrazed areas are desired for biological diversity. **Guideline**

6. When allotment management plans are revised, consider adjusting animal unit equivalents to account for the variations in liveweight of livestock to meet desired vegetative conditions. (See Appendix C). **Guideline**

7. Prohibit feed storage or regular and routine feeding of domestic livestock on National Forest System lands. **Standard**

8. Prohibit livestock grazing in developed recreation sites unless it can be accommodated before or after the recreation-use season, and unless it enhances the management of the site. **Guideline**

9. Prioritize for removal any fences or water developments that are not contributing in achieving desired conditions. **Guideline**

(See Infrastructure for standards and guidelines relating to capital investments on lands with moderate to high mineral development potential)

J. Insect and Disease Control, Noxious Weeds, Non-native, and Invasive Species

1. Manage invasive plant species using integrated management techniques, including mechanical, chemical, and biological control methods. **Guideline**

2. To prevent the spread of undesirable non-native and invasive plant species, include necessary provisions in contracts and permits for use of the National Grasslands and its resources. **Standard**

3. Allow haying only where noxious weeds are not present or are pre-treated to prevent seed set unless haying is needed as a method of noxious weed control. If used as such a control, ensure proper disposal of hay. **Guideline**

4. Contain and control established undesirable non-native and infestations based on the following:

- Rate of species spread;
- Invasions within special management areas, such as RNAs and Wildernesses, activity corridors, and high use areas
- Probability of successful treatment(s) in meeting desired conditions. **Guideline**

5. Allow only certified noxious weed seed-free products for animal feed or re-vegetation projects. This includes use of certified hay or straw, and heat-treated, or other appropriately processed products. **Standard**

6. Utilize all methods feasible, including livestock grazing strategies in the integrated pest management program. **Guideline**

7. Where technically and economically feasible, use genetically local (at the ecological sub-section level) native plant species in re-vegetation efforts. To prevent soil erosion, non-native annuals or sterile perennial species may be used while native perennials are becoming established. **Guideline**

8. Control insects and diseases using integrated pest management techniques. Treatment activities will be based on potential risks to human health and the value of and risks to wildlife habitat, adjacent lands, public lands, and other resources. Priority should be given to areas where

values to be protected exceed the cost of protection. **Guideline**

9. Where chronic hotspots cannot be corrected through livestock grazing strategies, allow grasshopper control through baiting of chronic hotspots. **Guideline**.

10. Restrict pesticide use where it would have adverse effects on species at risk. **Guideline**

11. Set priorities for controlling insects, disease, and invasive plant species based on the following:

- Prevent the introduction of new invasive species
- Treat new infestations. **Standard**

MANAGED RECREATION

K. Recreation

General

1. Protect instream flows at special recreation features. Use the following categories to rank streams and stream reaches based on the recreation features and values described:

- High priority features: scenic areas and overlooks, visitor centers, canoeing areas, scenic byways, native threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, Wilderness water resources under threat of degradation, and similar features where flowing water is critical to a quality recreational experience.
- Moderate priority features: recreation areas, including roads, trails, campgrounds and picnic grounds next to streams and reservoirs where flowing water contributes to a quality recreational experience and to aesthetic values. **Standard**

2. Refrain from building new recreation facilities in riparian areas unless a clear public need can be demonstrated, and no other reasonable alternative exists. **Guideline**

3. Implement a "pack-it-in/pack-it-out" solid waste/garbage removal policy where disposal facilities are not available. **Standard**

4. On sites where dispersed recreation activities have contributed to bare mineral soil and accelerated erosion, mitigate the impacts by redirecting the use, rehabilitating or hardening the site to minimize erosion and off-site movement of soil. **Standard**

Developed Recreation Sites

5. Harden sites to protect resources or accommodate user needs. **Guideline**

6. Close facilities if public safety or sanitation cannot be provided. **Standard**

7. Design recreational facilities to blend with the elements found in the natural landscape. **Guideline**

8. Make facilities at trailheads or along trails consistent with the Recreation Opportunity Setting Spectrum and provide for parking, trail information and appropriate sanitation facilities, as needed. **Guideline**

9. Allow oil and gas leasing within developed recreation sites, but do not permit ground-disturbing oil and gas activities. **Standard**

Outfitters and Guides

10. Consider the following criteria before making a decision to issue an outfitter and guide service permit:

- There will not be significant conflict with other permitted outfitters and guides, other permittees, or other users as a result of the activities associated with the permit.
- Other resource considerations, including the biological needs of wildlife, are considered and found compatible with the proposed activity.
- The permit furthers national grassland and forest goals. **Guideline**

11. Require all outfitter and guide permittees conducting activities with a relatively high risk or frequency of serious injury to have at least one guide on each trip who possesses current advanced first aid certification. Examples of high risk activities include, but are not limited to: horse, mule, or pack animal use, snow machine or all-terrain vehicle use, rock climbing, hang gliding, etc. **Standard**

12. Administer permits and pursue and prosecute illegal outfitters and guides. **Standard**

13. Prohibit permanent facilities or caches on NFS lands. **Standard**

L. Scenery Management

1. Manage activities to be consistent with the scenic integrity objective(s), as referenced by the Adopted Scenic Integrity Objective map in Chapter 2. **Guideline**

2. Rehabilitate areas that do not meet the scenic integrity objectives specified for the management area. Consider the following when setting priorities for rehabilitation:

- Relative importance of the area and the amount of deviation from the scenic integrity objectives.
- Length of time it will take natural processes to reduce the visual impacts so that they meet the scenic integrity objective;
- Length of time it will take rehabilitation measures to meet scenic integrity objectives;
- Benefits to other resource management objectives to accomplish rehabilitation. **Guideline**

(Also see the sections on Special Uses and Recreation)

ADMINISTRATION

M. Land Ownership

General

1. In general, base land acquisitions on the premise of a willing buyer and seller. **Guideline**

2. Honor existing rights, such as treaty rights, mineral rights, water rights, and private property access. **Standard**

3. Consider the following when opportunities to acquire lands occur (Reference 36 CFR 254):
    - Lands with important or unique resources, such as water frontage, wetlands, flood plains and associated riparian ecosystems, cave resources, crucial big-game winter range, threatened or endangered species habitat and habitats needed for recovery, Forest Service sensitive species habitat, important paleontological or geologic sites, important historical, heritage resources or traditional cultural properties, outstanding scenic values, or critical ecosystems when these resources are threatened by change of use, or when management may be enhanced by public ownership.
    - Lands that include prairie dog colonies or that present opportunities to allow expansion of colonies that already exist on nearby National Forest System lands are a high priority.
    - Important botanical, wildlife, and fishery management areas. This includes lands supporting rare plant communities.
    - Lands with important value for outdoor recreation purposes.
    - Lands needed to protect resource values by eliminating or reducing fire risks or soil erosion.
    - Non-federal lands in mineralized areas that have low potential for future mineralized patents, and where the minerals will be donated to the United States.
    - Lands that reduce Forest Service administrative costs and improvement of management efficiency. This includes: reducing miles of landline boundaries and number of corners, special uses, title claims, rights-of-way grants and easements, numbers of allotments and intermingled ownership livestock pastures, and other factors that decrease administrative costs and improve management efficiency.
    - Lands that would reduce conflicts between Forest Service, tribal lands, and private landownership objectives, especially when conflicts are adversely impacting National Forest System management. This includes reducing conflicts involving the management of prairie dog colonies along National Forest System lands.
    - Lands within or around existing blocks of public ownership of at least 2,000 acres.
    - Lands that would correct maladjustments of land use as described in the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act. **Guideline**

4. Consider the following to identify lands for possible disposal:
    - Lands suitable for development by the private sector, if developments, such as residential, agricultural, industrial, or recreational, are in the public interest.
    - Isolated parcels of any size, such as parcels having no legal public or administrative access and the effort to acquire such access is not cost-efficient or otherwise reasonable.
    - Lands less than 2,000 acres and not contiguous to larger blocks of public lands.
    - Existing reserved or acquired rights-of-way parcels that are no longer needed for rights-of-way purposes. **Guideline**

5. Consider the following before making land adjustments:

- Lands with important or unique resources may be disposed of, consider mitigation and compensation values gained in acquired lands. Discourage use of reservation or partial interests as mitigation measures.
- Avoid land adjustments that could result in a trend toward federal listing or loss of population viability for species of concern. Sensitive species habitat can be conveyed if conveyance would not result in a trend toward federal listing or adversely impact the population viability of the species, or if mitigation and compensation values gained in acquired lands are to be considered, or if effects could be mitigated. **Guideline**

6. Obtain reasonable public and administrative access to all National Grasslands in the following ways:

- Require reciprocal grants, where needed, when granting rights-of-way easements across the grassland.
- Reserve in land disposal actions, existing and designated inventoried rights-of-way that are needed for implementation of the management plan and to protect them for future construction and occupancy. **Guideline**

7. Acquire through purchase or donation rights-of-way to provide public access where needed. **Standard**

8. As part of the land acquisition process, determine management prescription allocation. **Guideline**

N. Heritage Resources

1. Consult with designated representatives of federally recognized American Indian tribes during design of projects with potential to affect cultural rights and practices to help ensure protection, preservation, and use of areas that are culturally important to them. **Standard**

2. Consider American Indian traditional cultural plant use, when designing vegetative management activities. **Guideline**

3. Leave human remains undisturbed. **Guideline**

4. In case of disturbance, take steps outlined in Appendix M. Follow state law regarding the discovery of human remains. **Standard**

5. Protect heritage resources from damage by activities or vandalism through project design, specified protection measures, monitoring, and coordination. **Guideline**

6. Enhance and interpret significant heritage sites for the education and enjoyment of the public, while protecting the integrity of the site. **Guideline**

7. Limit non-research oriented ground-disturbing activities on heritage districts and sites eligible for the National Register Historic Preservation (NRHP) that creates adverse impacts to the district or site.. **Guideline**

O. Special Forest or Grassland Products

1. Ensure plant collecting does not jeopardize the continued vigor or existence of a plant population or associated plant communities. **Standard**

2. Require permits to collect sensitive plants or parts of sensitive plants. **Standard**

3. Require permits to commercially collect special forest or grassland products. **Standard**

4. Protect the distribution and species viability of plants associated with medicinal and traditional cultural values. **Guideline**

5. Protect American Indian traditional collecting areas for religious purposes. **Guideline**

6. Allow non-commercial collection of paleontological resources with authorization (permit or area designation). The maximum amount of collected petrified wood person per day does not exceed 25 pounds, and that the total maximum weight in one calendar year per person does not exceed 250 pounds. Permits shall be issued, however, to museums, educational institutions, and similar groups for larger amounts. **Standard**

7. Allow rock hounding (hunting and collecting of non-fossil rocks and minerals) on the National Grasslands without a permit, providing the activity does not damage the resource and specimens are for personal, non-commercial uses (See 36 CFR 228.62[e]). Collected material should not exceed 25 pounds per person, per day, and 250 pounds per year. Permits may be issued for larger amounts. **Guideline**

8. Research oriented, noncommercial, and commercial collection of miscellaneous products may be allowed if, information exists to maintain sustainable quantities. **Guideline**

9. Allow non-commercial collections of desired miscellaneous products by federally recognized American Indian tribes, in accordance with treaty rights. **Standard**

P. Special Uses

1. Permit utility companies to construct new utility corridors, unless prohibited by management direction provided in Chapters 1, 2, and 3. **Guideline**

2. Consolidate utility lines within existing corridors or in areas adjacent to roads wherever possible. **Guideline**

3. Bury electrical utility lines of 33 KV or less and telephone lines (Refer to MA direction for more specific corridor direction). **Guideline**

4. Ensure utility corridors are consistent between adjoining National Forest System , regions, and other federal, tribal, and state land management agencies. **Guideline**

5. Place all new pipelines underground. **Guideline**

6. Route new roads, pipelines, gathering lines, and technically required overhead power lines in a manner as to minimize visual impacts and conform to approved corridors. When these facilities leave corridors, they should be subordinate to the landscape (see Scenic Integrity in Glossary). **Guideline**

7. Design and construct new power lines to minimize the risk of raptor electrocution by ensuring that an 80-inch distance between conductors and ground wire. Upon renewal of permits, retrofit to provide for 80-inch distance between conductors and ground wire or install perch-inhibitors. **Standard**

8. Design night lighting to minimize light pollution. Limit continuous or dusk-to-dawn lighting at facilities. Exceptions may be made for the lighting of towers or lines to facilitate flight safety,

and staffed, around-the-clock operations. **Guideline**.

9. Don't approve land-use authorizations identified for disposal if that occupancy will affect disposal action. **Standard**

10. Act on special-use applications according to the following priorities:

- Land and land-use activity requests relating to public safety, health and welfare, e.g., highways, power lines and public service improvements.
- Land and land-use activities contributing to increased economic activity associated with Grassland National Forest System resources, e.g., oil and gas and energy minerals.
- Land and land-use activities that benefit only private users, e.g., road permits, rights-of-way for power lines, telephones, waterlines, etc. **Guideline**

11. Require a special-use road permit for motorized access to private land where access for the general public is not available. **Guideline**

12. Don't approve any special-use applications that can reasonably be met on private or other federal lands unless it is clearly in the public interest. **Guideline**

(See Geology and Minerals, Energy and Minerals Related to Special Uses for standards and guidelines regarding mineral operations.)

Q. Infrastructure Use and Management

1. Prohibit all motorized cross-country travel off existing roads and trails, except for authorized emergency services (i.e., law enforcement, medical, search and rescue) and administrative use (i.e., fire control, grazing administration, noxious weed control, and wildlife surveys). **Standard**

2. Consider existing roads and trails open and allow motorized vehicle use on them unless the following occurs:

- A decision restricts motorized use.
- The area is designated nonmotorized.
- Motorized use is specifically prohibited in management area direction or existing orders. **Guideline**

3. Allow motorized wheelchair use in a nonmotorized area so long as that wheelchair meets the legal definition of Title V, Section 507(c) (2) of the Americans with Disabilities Act. **Standard**

4. Perform site-specific Roads Analysis, including public involvement, prior to making any decisions on road construction, reconstruction, and decommissioning. **Guideline**.

5. Do not invest in new facilities on lands meeting the criteria for disposal. **Guideline**

6. Build new and reconstructed fences to provide for access for other uses such as big game movement, recreation, fire protection, and mineral development. **Guideline**

7. As opportunities allow, install gates along all existing fences at intervals to facilitate recreation and other uses to provide reasonable access. **Guideline**

8. Install all gates so they are easily opened and closed by all users. **Guideline**

9. Install cattle guards or hinged metal gates on popular and designated travel routes. **Guideline**

10. Prioritize and reconstruct those fences that do not meet big game specifications. **Guideline**

11. Reference Appendix B for fence construction for livestock, including bison. **Guideline**

12. Restrict capital investments on lands with non-federal mineral estate ownership in areas of moderate to high mineral development potential if purpose of capital investment would conflict with mineral development. **Guideline**

13. Perform site-specific mineral evaluations prior to making substantial investments, such as recreation developments, on federal mineral estate in areas of moderate to high potential for valuable mineral deposits. Depending on conclusions from mineral evaluation and potential for mineral development, consider alternate location for capital investment, withdrawal of locatable minerals, or restrictions on surface occupancy for leasable minerals. **Guideline**