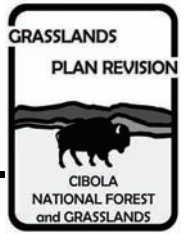


# National Grasslands Plan Revision

July 2007



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## Recent History & Current Status of Plan Revision

Plan Revision is underway on these four

**Kiowa, Rita Blanca, Black Kettle and McClellan Creek National Grasslands**

areas which are under the management of the Cibola National Forest and Grasslands, based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This plan revision newsletter will serve to update you on where we are in the process and invite you to upcoming meetings to help us revise the Management Plan.

how well current plan direction is working, and evaluate the need to change or clarify plan direction.

In January 2007, we distributed and posted an updated CER that incorporated many suggestions we received. After the January CER mailing, the plan revision team collected more public comments and continued work on revising the CER.

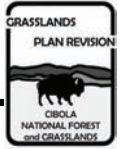
On March 30, 2007 the US District Court for the Northern District of California issued an injunction that ordered the

Forest Service to discontinue use of the 2005 planning rule. We are complying with the court order and further planning actions will be in compliance with existing laws and rulings. Since the CER was a specific requirement of the 2005 planning rule we are no longer working on its completion. However, much of the information and public comments gathered will still be useful as we move forward.





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## Recent History & Current Status of Plan Revision Continued



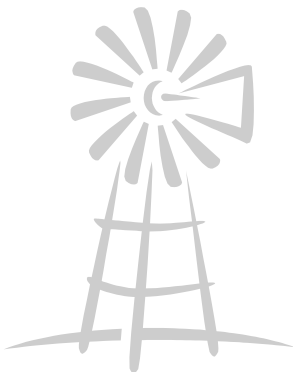
The Black Kettle, McClellan Creek, Kiowa, and Rita Blanca National Grasslands districts are moving forward with grassland plan revision under the guidance of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976. The NFMA established the concept of a management program based on multiple-use, sustained yield principles and the requirement of developing an integrated resource management plan for each unit of the National Forest System. Planning rules are aligned with those in the National Forest Management Act but are more specific and provide more depth and interpretation of the Act. This strategy gives us the flexibility to move forward with the forest plan revision process and continue working during this transitional period between enjoyment of the 2005 Planning Rule and development of a new planning rule.

We will, therefore, continue to work using the information we've gathered from meetings held in Grasslands communities in September 2006. (see "What we're up to Now").



## What we're up to Now

Though we have discontinued use of the 2005 Planning Rule, we are still busy working on the Grasslands' plan revision. Our work will include completing an Integrated Need for Change (INC) report. This report will document the results of our evaluation of how well existing plan direction is contributing to the sustainable use/sustained yield of the Grasslands resources (ecological/social/economic), and where existing plan direction "needs to change".

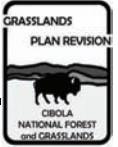


The Integrated Need for Change report will be completed by September 2007 and will be available on our website.

The plan revision team will begin developing a proposed action as a starting point for revising the Grassland plan, based on the Need For Change Report. The revision team is planning a second round of public meetings in Grasslands communities, to begin



# National Grasslands Plan Revision



## What we're up to Now Continued

development of  
components of a

proposed action. These meetings will include small working group discussions on "need for change" topics that will be addressed in a revised Grasslands plan. Need for change topic areas (primarily topic areas that need clarification in a revised grasslands plan) include livestock grazing, energy development, hunting and fishing, recreation, and fire suppression. We are planning to hold these meetings in mid-October (more to come on this!). Look for further updates to the plan revision progress, by mail or email, in November.

If you'd like to have a copy of the Integrated Need for Change report (available in September) please check the Grasslands Plan Revision website or contact us for a hard copy (see "Contact Us" section).

## Summary of Public Involvement and Comments

### Public Involvement:

Since our last set of public meetings in September, we continued to talk with interested parties by telephone, e-mail and regular mail. Our last newsletter was December 2006.

Our website contains a Summary of Public Involvement and a Summary of Public Comments, which are also available by request.

### Public Comments:

Our last newsletter described the comments received on the last CER. Since January, we reviewed and categorized the comments received from approximately 10 comment letters, emails, or phone comments. As we described in our last newsletter, we considered comments non-relevant to plan revision if they were:

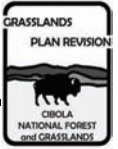
- 1) project or site specific;
- 2) already described in law, regulation, and policy;
- 3) administrative procedures such as Forest Service staffing or budgets;
- 4) outside of Forest Service authority;
- 5) overly general statements such as "we like how the Grasslands are being managed" (although we appreciate those comments).

The minor editorial suggestions and plan relevant comments are being used in development of the INC report. Comments not relevant to the CER will be considered during development of the revised plan.





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## Summary of Public Involvement and Comments Continued

Comments about monitoring will be considered when we develop the monitoring program, which follows development of the revised plan. Most relevant comments were about ecosystems, habitat and species. Others were about recreation, grazing and research areas. Most comments supported the current management of ecosystems and wildlife habitats including the increased use of prescribed burning. Plan relevant comments received on the CER were about the topics listed below:

- Providing for livestock grazing in certain ecosystems;
- Providing habitat for reintroducing lesser prairie chickens;
- Protecting habitat for ground-nesting birds;
- Accurately describing certain ecosystems in the CER, like shinnery oak;
- Increasing cooperative efforts with landowners and agencies to restore ecosystems and control invasive plants across private and public lands;
- Describing problems with planted windbreaks/shelterbelt trees;
- Increasing inventory and monitoring for invasive plants;
- Managing Off-Highway-Vehicle travel and addressing resource impacts;
- Eliminating motorized travel in most of Mills Canyon;
- Avoiding increases in livestock grazing capacity and permitted use;
- Designating Research Natural Areas for the shortgrass and sandsage ecosystems.

## Contact Us!

Please feel free to contact us with questions or suggestions regarding plan revision or to be added or removed from our mailing list. Please also let us know if we should update or correct your mailing information. Here is how we can be reached:

### Website:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/cibola/plan-revision/national\\_grasslands/index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/cibola/plan-revision/national_grasslands/index.shtml)

### Comment form:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/cibola/plan-revision/national\\_grasslands/contactus.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/cibola/plan-revision/national_grasslands/contactus.shtml)

**Email:** [comments-grasslandsplan@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-grasslandsplan@fs.fed.us)

**Mail:** Cibola National Forest  
Attn: Plan Revision Team  
2113 Osuna Rd NE,  
Albuquerque, NM 87113

**Phone:** (505) 346-3900  
fax (505) 346-3901