

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The decisions presented in this chapter include all of the decisions analyzed under the Preferred and Proposed Alternatives in the draft and final EIS. The decisions have been reorganized here to allow quick reference. The wording of some plan decisions has been changed from the draft and final RMPs/EISs. Also included in this chapter are discussions of key public input used in developing the RMP, identification of resource monitoring goals and targets, and identification of anticipated support or coordination/consultation needs during the implementation of the plan.

Many of the decisions presented in the plan interact. Interactions occur where two or more resource concerns drive a decision or where one resource affects the management of another. The decisions are generally ordered by resource programs, however, due to interactions, there may be similar decisions presented under more than one program. Also, some decisions that guide overall management of natural resources within North Dakota and decisions not necessarily tied to any specific program (e.g., riparian area management) are presented under the title interdisciplinary resources.

The RMP and associated EIS process represent only the start of the interdisciplinary effort required for effective resource management. Interdisciplinary development of site-specific management proposals and environmental analyses will continue throughout implementation of the RMP. Identification of decisions that interact is key to successful use of the interdisciplinary concept. Prior to implementation of any decision, there should be a review of other related or affected plan decisions. A chart representing the interactions between the plan decisions is presented in Appendix G.

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

Maintenance and operation (M&O) activities are defined here as:

- (1) The minimum commitment required to protect investments in physical improvements and plans,
- (2) The minimum commitment required to preserve future resource options, and
- (3) The capability to provide public service in priority areas or programs.

M&O activities are established by the Montana BLM State Office (MSO) for all BLM management in Montana and the Dakotas. M&O is a policy statement that may be redefined outside of the planning process. The North Dakota RMP includes M&O as a decision for the management of all resources and programs. M&O activities will be given top priority in all budget decisions. In some cases M&O activities have also been included as separate plan decisions to give special emphasis to specific M&O actions through the planning process.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

The North Dakota RMP was developed under the assumption that all on-the-ground management and projects would be consistent with standard operating and design procedures. Standard operating procedures are not defined in this document but are presented in Department, BLM, and Montana BLM manuals, handbooks, and other policy statements. Some decisions presented below may, however, partially overlap with standard operating procedures.

PLAN DECISIONS

The decisions presented below are ordered by resource programs or areas of emphasis. Programs and resources not listed will be managed according to standard operating procedures.

The decisions are broken into three separate categories: (1) objectives for resource condition and use, (2) allocation of resources or land use, and (3) management actions. Management actions are ordered by general priority for implementation unless stated otherwise. RMP decisions for the management of surface resources are directed toward manageable public lands.

Soil, Water and Air

Objectives for Resource Condition and Use

- (1) To maintain, restore, and/or enhance the quantity of water on all public lands.
- (2) To maintain or restore water quality to levels equal to or above legal standards.
- (3) To maintain soil productivity and promote sustained yields while keeping erosion at minimal acceptable levels and preventing physical or chemical degradation.
- (4) To reduce the risk of floodloss of buildings, soils and other resources and minimize the risk to human safety, health, and welfare by floodwaters.
- (5) To preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains.
- (6) To maintain or enhance drainage stability.
- (7) To manage ground water to maintain the quantity and quality of aquifers.
- (8) To maintain air quality at a level equal to or better than national or state air quality standards.

Allocations of Resources or Land Use

- (1) Allow no surface coal mining activities through a multiple-use tradeoff screen on up to 79,478 acres of land with steep slopes (greater than 30 percent) over federal coal to protect it from excessive erosion.

- (2) Limit ORV use on 22,164 acres in Big Gumbo area to periods of the year generally characterized by dry and stable soils (June 2 — February 28).
- (3) Allow No Surface Occupancy (NSO) on up to 57,355 acres by oil and gas surface disturbing activities within 200 feet of wetlands, lakes and ponds to protect surface water and related vegetation.
- (4) Allow NSO on up to 694.41 acres by oil and gas surface disturbing activities to protect the floodplain of the Missouri River from possible pollution.

Management Actions

- (1) Complete all M&O activities established for the management of soil, water, and air resources in the Montana BLM system. These activities include:
 - (a) water, air quality, and climate monitoring,
 - (b) provision of air quality monitoring support to other M&O activities, and
 - (c) maintenance of existing management developments.
- (2) Assess potential impacts to air quality during the environmental analysis of specific management proposals such as coal activity planning and oil and gas permitting.
- (3) Advise the proper regulatory agency, North Dakota State Department of Health (NDS DH), or the Three Affiliated Tribes if on the Fort Berthold Reservation, should analysis show the potential for any BLM-authorized action to exceed the Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS) and the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) standards.
- (4) Include requirements for gas analyses, safety measures to be employed when H₂S is present, and gas flaring and/or venting restrictions as conditions of approval for all APDs for oil and gas.
- (5) Review newly completed oil and gas wells to determine the feasibility of hook-up to a gas gathering system should air quality data from research projects, specific environmental documents, or ongoing monitoring indicate unacceptable air quality resulting from flaring.
- (6) Review for compliance with the AAQS's new oil and gas wells that cannot be included in a gas gathering system and must, therefore, continue to flare.
- (7) Require air pollution control devices or other mitigation and notify NDS DH if air quality standards are being exceeded by oil and gas wells that must flare.
- (8) Analyze proposed surface-disturbing projects to determine suitability of soils to support or sustain such projects. Design projects to minimize soil loss. Management actions will be consistent with soil resource capabilities.
- (9) Develop new sources of water on public lands, focusing on the Big Gumbo Area. Methods that will be used include snow management, pothole blasting, and/or reservoir excavation.
- (10) Implement Best Management Practices to the extent practical under the National Nonpoint Source Policy.
- (11) Participate with state and federal agencies in water quality planning (Section 208, of the Clean Water Act of 1977) to prevent degradation of water quality.
- (12) Apply oil and gas lease stipulations on up to 151,957 acres of riparian habitat so that no disturbance of riparian areas of wetlands, intermittent, ephemeral, or perennial streams and rivers will be allowed except for essential road and utility crossings.
- (13) Apply special coal lease stipulations during site-specific analysis on up to 12,318 areas of buried valley aquifers to protect their integrity.
- (14) Adjust land patterns on up to 34,454 acres to improve manageability, allowing control of water yields, improvement in water quality, and a decrease in erosion and sedimentation.
- (15) Give high relative weight to retaining or acquiring lands where the potential exists for intensive management through activity planning (e.g., AMP, HMP, Watershed Management Plans.)
- (16) Give high relative weight to disposing of lands that lack management opportunities due to movement of river channels and periodic flooding.
- (17) Give high relative weight to retaining or acquiring lands that are located along the Little Missouri River, Missouri River, or major tributaries but are not threatened by channel movement.
- (18) Give moderate relative weight to retaining or acquiring lands containing wetlands that serve as ground water recharge areas and have potential to be drained if disposed.
- (19) Give moderate relative weight to retaining lands that possess value for reduction of sediment or other pollutants that could be lost if disposed.
- (20) Give moderate relative weight to retaining or acquiring lands located in 100-year floodplains where management opportunities exist.
- (21) Give low relative weight to disposing of lands inundated by water.

Oil and Gas

Objectives for Resource Condition and Use

- (1) To encourage development of the Federal oil and gas resource while avoiding unnecessary impacts to other resources and land uses.
- (2) To maintain the integrity of federal oil and gas reserves to facilitate efficient and reasonable development.

Allocation of Resources or Land Use

- (1) Make available for leasing, under Montana BLM Standard Stipulations, 253,583 acres of Federal oil and gas.
- (2) Make available for leasing, under necessary special stipulations and Montana BLM Standard Stipulations, 206,811 acres of Federal oil and gas.

Management Actions

- (1) Manage the oil and gas program to at least the minimum acceptable levels addressed in the "Maintenance

and Operations” as established for the Montana Organization. These include a number of items relating to the timely processing of various leases, permits, and applications and the inspection of facilities.

The following management actions will be implemented in no particular priority order:

- (2) Review all lands (206,811 acres) that fall within identified resource concern areas (Map 4) and attach necessary oil and gas stipulations.
- (3) Process APDs and Sundry Notices according to the terms and stipulations of the lease. Attach additional stipulations to protect sensitive resources or human health.
- (4) Fulfill the responsibilities established by interagency and other cooperative agreements such as the 1984 BLM/USFS MOU for oil and gas operations within the administrative boundaries of the Little Missouri National Grasslands.
- (5) Assess impacts to air quality in an environmental analysis for specific management proposals, e.g., permitting or oil and gas development.
- (6) Include specific conditions of approval for APDs for the protection of air quality.
- (7) Review newly completed wells to determine feasibility of hook-up to a gas gathering system if research, analyses, and monitoring indicate unacceptable air quality results from their flaring.
- (8) Require mitigating measures on oil and gas wells that cannot be included in a gas gathering system and notify the NDS DH.
- (9) Assign priority for inspections of wells by using levels of production, past compliance records, and health and safety requirements, environmental protection, and possible royalty loss.
- (10) Exchange the mineral estate with the surface estate if the land does not contain known minerals.
- (11) Consider exchange of other minerals (leasable and salable) on a case-by-case basis.
- (12) Manage lands and minerals returned to BLM administration through withdrawal revocation and R&PP patent reversion or acquired through gifts or exchanges by the objectives, resource allocations, and decisions given in this plan.
- (13) Construct new roads and reconstruct all or portions of existing roads in a manner minimizing surface disturbance with limit of one main road to each facility, using the guidelines and stipulations given in leases and other authorizations, “Surface Operating Standards for Oil and Gas Exploration and Development”, and Handbook H-2801-1.

Coal

Objectives For Resource Condition and Use

- (1) To encourage orderly development of the federal coal resource while avoiding unnecessary impacts to other resources and land uses.

Allocation of Resources or Land Use

- (1) Make 573,868 acres available for further consideration for coal leasing for surface mining.
 - (a) A total of 1,009,648 acres located in 24 CSAs were identified as having coal development potential.
 - (b) Application of the unsuitability criteria eliminated 193,382 acres from further study.
 - (c) An additional 154,555 acres were dropped from further consideration under the application of the multiple-use tradeoff screens (25,305 acres under wildlife threshold).
 - (d) The surface owner consultation screen eliminated 87,843 acres from further consideration due to significant surface owner opposition to mining.

Management Actions

- (1) Complete all M&O activities established for coal management in the Montana BLM system. These activities include:
 - (a) Activity planning for lease by application, including emergency lease applications,
 - (b) Exploration licenses and plans,
 - (c) Readjustments,
 - (d) Relinquishments, and
 - (e) Mine plan reviews.
- (2) Fully assess resources such as air quality, threatened and endangered species, and cultural resources, that could not be analyzed in detail during land use planning, at the time of site-specific analysis.
- (3) Complete NEPA compliance for all coal tracts prior to leasing through site-specific analyses.
- (4) Review, in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS), federal coal tracts identified within the viewshed of NPS units (36,225 acres) to determine mitigation measures necessary for protection of visual qualities of the NPS units.
- (5) Review up to 12,318 acres of buried valley aquifers during site-specific analysis to determine where special coal lease stipulations are necessary and justified to protect their integrity.
- (6) Review up to 150,380 acres of federal coal lands during site-specific analysis to determine whether special vegetative reclamation stipulations are necessary on any or all of these lands to ensure restoration of important habitat.

Mineral Materials and Locatable Minerals

Objectives for Resource Condition and Use

- (1) To maintain the availability of federally-reserved locatable, salable, and non-energy leasable minerals for authorized uses.
- (2) To maintain the integrity of federally-reserved locatable, salable, and non-energy leasable minerals for future authorized uses.

Allocation of Resources or Land Use

- (1) All the federally-reserved saleable and non-energy leasable mineral deposits are available for application.
- (2) All the federally-reserved locatable mineral deposits, excluding acquired minerals and minerals that are withdrawn to protect resource values and uses, are open to mineral entry.

Management Actions

- (1) Manage the locatable, salable, and non-energy leasable minerals program to at least the minimum acceptable levels addressed in the M&O as established for the Montana BLM organization. M&O activities include:
 - (a) receiving and processing mineral material and mineral patent applications, and
 - (b) conducting necessary appraisals.
- (2) Manage lands and minerals returned to BLM administration through withdrawal revocation and R&PP patent reversion or acquired through gifts or exchanges by the objectives, resource allocations, and decisions given in this plan.
- (3) Monitor mineral development activities.
- (4) Resolve unauthorized use.

Grazing Management

Objectives for Resource Condition and Use

- (1) To maintain or improve range conditions on all manageable allotments.
 - (a) Improve unsatisfactory range condition on (I) category allotments.
 - (b) Maintain satisfactory range condition on (M) and (C) category allotments. (Satisfactory condition is defined as approaching or exceeding 75 percent of site potential in productivity.)
- (2) To control noxious weed invasions where feasible.
- (3) To manage livestock grazing in a way that will complement multiple resource use.

Allocation of Resources or Land Use

- (1) Grazing will continue on the AMP allotments during activity plan revision.
- (2) Grazing will be allowed on all lands identified as suitable (approximately 56,400 acres).
- (3) Allocate up to an estimated 11,172 AUMs to livestock in the long term. (Livestock use is set at 25 percent of average annual forage production.)
- (4) Present livestock use levels will continue unless monitoring provides evidence for necessary adjustments.
- (5) Unleased lands identified as suitable for grazing will be leased.
- (6) Lands identified for disposal or exchange and not presently leased for grazing will be made available for grazing using nonrenewable leases.

Management Actions

- (1) Complete all M&O activities defined for the Montana BLM system. These activities include:
 - (a) revision of I category AMPs as required,
 - (b) monitoring of allotments,
 - (c) administration of leases and cooperative agreements,
 - (d) supervision of use, and
 - (e) prevention of spread or introduction of noxious weeds.
- (2) Place range improvement budget priority on Category M and I allotments and control of leafy spurge.
- (3) Prepare or participate in the preparation of activity plans. Activity plans will be prepared for or revised where necessary based on:
 - (a) monitoring results indicating need for adjustments in class, season, and extent of use,
 - (b) need for protection of riparian areas,
 - (c) need for control of noxious weed infestations where control efforts are taking place on adjacent lands,
 - (d) need for and opportunities for land treatments or range developments to facilitate range management, and
 - (e) acquisition of manageable blocks of public land through the land pattern adjustment program.
- (4) Implement grazing systems where necessary as determined from monitoring results.
- (5) Water sources will be developed where needed (as indicated by monitoring) to improve livestock distribution and wildlife habitat. Development of range improvements on erodible soils will be avoided during the period April through June.
- (6) Waters necessary for wildlife and adversely affected by uncontrolled livestock use will be fenced. Gaps will be provided for livestock use. Development of range improvements on erodible soils will be avoided during the period April through June.
- (7) Management fences will be constructed where necessary to support grazing systems or treatments. All fences will be designed to protect and/or benefit wildlife. Development of range improvements on erodible soils will be avoided during the period April through June.
- (8) Modify existing fences that adversely affect big game populations by restricting movements. (Twelve miles of fence were identified for modification in NDGEIS.)
- (9) Control noxious weed infestations where feasible as determined by extent of infestation, control on adjacent lands, and lessee cooperation. Biological control methods, including livestock management, will be considered if proven effective. (Leafy spurge was identified as primary concern in NDGEIS.)

(10) Monitoring will be conducted to assess actual use, utilization, climate, range condition, trend, and unauthorized use.

(11) Review land exchange and disposal actions for effect on range management activities. High relative weight will be placed on acquiring or retaining parcels suitable for effective range management. Low relative weight will be placed on reducing the number grazing leases through land pattern consolidation.

(12) Existing leases on lands identified for disposal or retention will be renewed for two-year terms.

(13) Review allotment categorizations (Improve, Maintenance, Custodial) as circumstances change and new data become available. Categorizations may be changed consistent with BLM range management policy.

(14) C category allotments will normally be managed under deferred or seasonal systems. Management of small parcels will be coordinated with private landowner's (lessee's) management.

(15) Conduct land treatments where outlined in activity plans as necessary for effective range management. (600 acres were tentatively identified for treatments in NDGEIS.)

Wildlife Habitat Management

Objectives for Resource Condition and Use

(1) To maintain or improve breeding habitat and/or nest sites for Threatened or Endangered Species and migratory birds of high federal interest.

(2) To protect sites with rare plant and animal populations, exemplary natural communities, and areas designated under the state natural area registry program from adverse impacts.

(3) To improve nesting and winter habitat for sage grouse.

(4) To maintain or improve habitat for big game, especially pronghorn, elk, and bighorn sheep.

Allocation of Resources or Land Use

(1) About 148,045 acres will be excluded from further consideration for the leasing or exchange of coal due to wildlife unsuitability criteria 11, 13, 14, and 15.

(2) About 25,305 acres of important wildlife habitat will be excluded from coal mining under the Wildlife Threshold concept pending joint review by USFWS, NDGFD, and BLM.

Management Actions

(1) Complete all M&O activities established for wildlife management in the Montana BLM system. These activities include:

(a) Identification and monitoring of Threatened and Endangered Species habitats,

(b) Maintenance of existing data bases necessary to complete other M&O work,

(c) Monitoring of wildlife habitat values impacted by other activities,

(d) Support of range improvement projects that contribute to habitat improvement and maintenance, and

(e) Maintenance of wildlife projects to protect investments.

(2) Develop specific habitat improvement projects as necessary for key wildlife species and habitats.

(3) Establish monitoring studies to evaluate progress toward specific resource objectives established in activity plans.

(4) Evaluate lands for possible disposal or exchange giving high relative weight for retention to lands that have threatened or endangered species or habitats, contain high quality riparian habitat, or contain plant and animal populations or exemplary natural communities of high interest to the state.

(5) Evaluate lands for possible disposal giving moderate relative weight for retention to lands that have high quality woody vegetation or native prairie that could be lost, or serve as high value habitat because of surrounding agriculturally-disturbed lands.

(6) Develop activity plans where necessary to improve habitat management for populations of important wildlife species.

(7) Include wildlife management prescriptions in activity plans initiated by other resources.

(8) Arrange cooperative management agreements with resource management agencies or special interest groups concerned with habitat management when high importance habitats cannot be intensively managed or fully protected by BLM.

(9) Identify the need for emergency ORV limitations where necessary to minimize short- and long-term impacts to wildlife habitats and populations.

The following management actions are in no particular order of priority:

(10) Apply Montana BLM Standard Stipulations to new oil and gas leases on up to 253,583 acres to protect threatened and endangered species and their habitats and certain key wildlife habitats.

(11) Stipulate No Surface Occupancy on federally-designated natural areas, state-dedicated nature preserves, or state-managed natural areas on oil and gas leases.

(12) Review the need for special stipulations on up to 206,811 acres of on new oil and gas leases to protect key wildlife species and habitats.

(13) Revise special stipulations for new oil and gas leases if they are not effective in providing the desired degree of resource protection.

(14) About 178,125 acres will be subject to the special vegetation reclamation stipulation that an acreage equivalent to that disturbed by coal mining will be reclaimed to approximately its former condition. Performance standards for native grassland, woodland, and fish and wildlife habitat revegetation will be applied to these sites Public Service Commission (PSC), State of North Dakota, Rules governing the Reclamation of Surface-mined Land, 1987: sections 69-05.2-22-02 and 69-05.2-22-07).

(15) Review all wildlife-related management actions for conformance with the North Dakota Resource Management Plan.

Lands and Realty

Objectives for Resource Condition and Use

- (1) To pursue a long-term program of repositioning public lands toward improved manageability and increased public benefits.
- (2) To maintain the availability of public land for authorized uses.
- (3) To maintain the integrity of public lands by resolving trespass.
- (4) To complete title resolutions cases.
- (5) To accommodate right-of-way and other use demands while minimizing adverse impacts to natural resources.

Allocation of Resources or Land Use

- (1) 22,739 acres of public land surface are available for exchange or disposal (including transfer to other federal agencies and R&PP patents).
- (2) 11,715 acres of public land surface are available in the Big Gumbo and Lost Bridge consolidation areas for exchange only (Maps C-1 and C-2).
- (3) 67,571 acres of public land surface are open for consideration for authorized uses, including permits and leases.
- (4) 67,571 acres of public land surface are open for consideration of rights-of-way. Rights-of-way on the following areas will be avoided unless there is no reasonable alternative:
 - (a) areas having potential for recreational development,
 - (b) environmental sensitive areas such as crucial wildlife habitats, wetlands, slump areas, and extensive wooded areas,
 - (c) areas containing significant archaeological, historical, or paleontological values,
 - (d) areas with specific visual objectives (e.g., adjacent to established parks, adjacent to the Little Missouri Scenic River), and
 - (e) areas with high potential for coal mining.
- (5) Rights-of-Way will be placed within or adjacent to existing rights-of-way whenever possible given engineering and environmental constraints.

Management Actions

- (1) Manage the lands and realty program to at least the minimum acceptable levels addressed in the "Maintenance Operations" as established for the Montana Organization.

The following management actions are equally high in priority:

- (2) Issue a permit/lease or other instrument to resolve unauthorized agricultural use of public lands in the following situations:

- (a) until disposition or reclamation of the land has occurred,
- (b) where the acreage is small, causes low impact, and is incidental to similar uses on adjacent land, and
- (c) where agricultural use will benefit public values.

- (3) Resolve unauthorized use of public lands through termination, cooperative agreement authorized by the Sikes Act, authorization by lease or permit, issuance of a right-of-way, exchange, or sale. Priorities are:

- (a) cases of new unauthorized activities or uses where prompt action can minimize damage to public resources and associated costs,
- (b) cases where delay may be detrimental to authorized users,
- (c) cases involving special areas, sensitive ecosystems, and resources of national significance,
- (d) cases involving malicious or criminal activities, and
- (e) cases of unauthorized landfills and dump sites where there is a potential for hazardous material/waste dumping.

- (4) Construct new roads and reconstruct all or portions of existing roads in a manner minimizing surface disturbance with a limit of one main road to each facility, using the guidelines and stipulations given in leases and other authorizations, "Surface Operating Standards for Oil and Gas Exploration and Development", and Handbook H-2801-1.

- (5) Accommodate and designate right-of-way corridors in accordance with the North Dakota Energy Conversion Siting Act and in consideration of other resources and uses important to the public as the need is presented.

The following management actions are in the medium priority category. The actions are presented in priority order within this category:

- (6) Manage lands and minerals returned to BLM administration through withdrawal revocation and R&PP patent reversion or acquired through gifts or exchanges in accordance with the objectives, resource allocations, and decisions presented in the RMP/EIS.
- (7) Evaluate all exchange or acquisition proposals according to the criteria listed in the State Director's Guidance for Land Pattern Review and Land Adjustments and site-specific criteria presented herein.
- (8) Take disposal actions on lands previously classified under the C&MU Act (Appendix J of the Draft RMP/EIS) as parcels identified for disposal in Appendix B.
- (9) Use the following order of preference in adjusting the land ownership pattern:

- (a) exchange (including the mineral estate with the surface estate if the land does not contain known mineral deposits) for lands that would provide equal or greater public benefits,
- (b) transfer to other federal agencies better able to manage the land for public benefits,

- (c) disposal to state agencies or private groups better able to manage the land for public benefits,
- (d) R&PP patent, or
- (e) sales.

(10) Use exchanges as the only means to adjust land patterns within the Big Gumbo or Lost Bridge consolidation areas or lands contiguous to tracts retained for manageable resource values.

(11) Consider identifying private groups or state agencies, better able to manage and preserve special resource values, as designated bidders in circumstances where unmanageable tracts contain high resource values and private groups have expressed interest.

(12) Pursue the sale of sanitary landfill sites to present lessees.

(13) Consider and make available public land, on a case-by-case bases, for sale or exchange for solid and hazardous material/waste disposal/transfer.

(14) Consider only coal determined to be acceptable for future consideration for leasing, for coal exchanges.

(15) Consider exchange of other minerals (leasable and salable) on a case-by-case basis.

The following management actions are presented in no particular order of priority:

(16) Obtain/reserve easements to preserve important resources determined to be in the public interest on public and private lands, e.g., archaeological sites, historical sites, scenic areas, or habitat for wildlife species.

(17) Include protective covenants in patents (least desirable method of preserving resource values) if they are consistent with county zoning or state law.

(18) Reserve easements in patents, if needed to insure public access to other public land.

(19) Acquire access easements where legal/physical access is lengthy or arduous and a need has been demonstrated.

(20) Develop and maintain a transportation plan to include legal access, addressing consolidated areas, illustrating ORV designations, and identifying the disposition of main and spur roads in oil and gas areas as development diminishes in intensity and size.

(21) Use rights-of-way or cooperative agreements instead of withdrawals whenever workable.

(22) Review withdrawals to determine whether, and for how long, the withdrawal would be consistent with the objectives of the programs for which the lands were withdrawn and for consistency with other relevant programs. Revoke those not needed.

(23) Present concerns addressing potential impacts of siting for energy conversion facilities and major transportation lines on important public land and mineral resources to the North Dakota PSC.

(24) Present concerns caused by proposed railroad abandonments to North Dakota PSC.

Recreation and Visual Resources

Objectives for Resource Condition and Use

- (1) To provide opportunities for dispersed, non-developed recreational use of all public lands in North Dakota.
- (2) To accommodate future demand for primitive recreational developments.
- (3) To maintain visual qualities wherever possible.

Allocation of Resources or Land Use

- (1) ORV use will be allowed with seasonal restrictions on 22,164 acres of public surface.
- (2) Unrestricted ORV use will be allowed on all remaining public surface.

Management Actions

- (1) Carry out M&O activities. These include the following:
 - (a) Approve or deny use authorizations as requested by the public for all competitive recreational and commercial uses, and as required for private and group uses,
 - (b) Provide special designations as needed to preserve future options.

The following are not presented in any particular order of priority:

- (2) Recreation management in the Big Gumbo area will be given budget priority.
- (3) Sign sizeable blocks of public land to identify public access.
- (4) Prepare activity plans for the development of recreational facilities, such as campgrounds, when necessary to meet public demand.
- (5) Acquire access easements where legal/physical access is lengthy or arduous and a need has been demonstrated.
- (6) Avoid or otherwise mitigate actions that potentially affect the present character of stream segments listed on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory.
- (7) Identify potential recreational opportunities on public lands and protect those opportunities when feasible.
- (8) Consider impacts to the visible landscape during all phases of land use planning.
- (9) Ensure that the high visual qualities of National Park Service (NPS) Units are considered in cooperation with the NPS when a specific mineral lease or development action is proposed that potentially affects existing visual qualities.
- (10) Mitigate visual impacts from oil and gas development within a 3.5-mile radius of Fort Union Historic Site. If visual impacts cannot be adequately mitigated within the 3.5-mile radius oil and gas development will not be permitted.
- (11) Consider measures to protect the visual resources of NPS Units during coal activity planning.

Cultural Resources

Objectives for Resource Condition and Use

- (1) To protect and preserve a representative sample of the full array of cultural resources to the benefit of scientific and socio-cultural use by present and future generations.
- (2) To ensure that cultural resources are given full consideration in all land use planning and management decisions.
- (3) To manage cultural resources so scientific and socio-cultural values are not diminished, but rather maintained and enhanced.
- (4) To ensure the Bureau's undertakings avoid inadvertent damage to cultural resources both federal and non-federal.

Allocation of Resources or Land Use

- (1) Under multiple-use tradeoff 3,961 acres of federal coal from two locations were eliminated from further consideration for coal leasing. The two areas eliminated from further consideration include the eligible Knife River Flint Historic District and Writing Rock Historic Site.

Management Actions

- (1) Carry out all M&O activities for the cultural resource management program. These include the following:
 - (a) Complete Section 106 process on all federal undertakings unless those undertakings are identified as categorical exclusions in the District's Programmatic Agreement with the ACHP and the SHPO.
 - (b) Conduct archaeological and historical investigations as requested from and in support of the appropriate benefiting activity.
 - (c) Manage and protect unusually significant cultural resources on public land for future scientific research opportunities and for the general public.
 - (d) Systematically maintain cultural resource records and data.

The following are presented in no particular order of priority:

- (2) Mitigate the effect of sale or exchange of public land on cultural resources eligible to the National Register of Historic Places caused by the sale or exchange of public land.
- (3) Develop Activity plans consistent with M&O elements for specific research projects on unique and significant cultural resources located on public lands.
- (4) Consider cultural resources in all other activity plans.

Paleontological Resources

Objectives for Resource Condition and Use

- (1) To ensure the protection and wise use of significant paleontological resources located on public land.
- (2) To consider on a case-by-case basis the effect of the Bureau's undertakings on paleontological resources.

Management Actions

- (1) Carry out M&O activities for paleontology. These activities include:
 - (a) provide protection and maintain integrity of significant paleontological resources, and
 - (b) maintain a complete list of known paleontological resources.

The following are presented in no particular order of priority:

- (2) Prepare Activity Plans consistent with M&O elements and for specific paleontological research, preservation, stabilization, and protection projects.
- (3) Paleontological resources will be considered during preparation of all activity plans.

Fire Management

Objectives for Resource Condition and Use

- (1) Allow fire to play a natural role in the ecology of vegetation communities on public lands insofar as life, property, or private resources are not threatened.

Management Actions

- (1) Control wildfires on public lands.
- (2) Establish cooperative agreements with county governments where necessary for the control of fires on public lands.
- (3) Require permittees, lessees, and contractors to control fires on any public lands included in their operations.
- (4) Prepare prescribed burn plans for vegetative manipulation where appropriate.
- (5) Ensure that prescribed burn plans are reviewed by county governments, permittees, and adjacent landowners.

Interdisciplinary Resources

Objectives for Resource Condition and Use

- (1) To protect all critical resource values not categorized above.
- (2) To maintain or improve all manageable wetland or riparian habitats presently in satisfactory condition.
- (3) To improve all manageable wetland or riparian habitat presently in unsatisfactory condition.

Management Actions

- (1) Make ACEC designations where critical resource values cannot be protected through other management actions.
- (2) Rank riparian tracts and evaluate for ecological condition, potential, and suitability for management by 1995.
- (3) Implement management plans on all manageable riparian areas by the year 2001.
- (4) Ensure that adequate quantifiable riparian objectives are included in all pertinent activity plans.

- (5) Make unmanageable riparian areas available for:
 - (a) exchange for similar, more manageable habitat,
 - (b) transfer to another federal agency or state agency,
 - (c) management by a federal or state agency under a cooperative agreement, or
 - (d) sale.
- (6) Place a special stipulation on all rights-of-way, leases, and permits, where applicable, to protect riparian habitats.
- (7) Give high relative weight to retaining or acquiring lands that contain high quality riparian vegetation that could be destroyed if transferred from public ownership.

MONITORING GOALS AND TARGETS

Monitoring goals and targets have been established for all resources. They represent the resource conditions that must be assessed to measure the effectiveness of prescribed management actions. Monitoring goals and targets are tied directly to the objectives for resource conditions and use. They are not intended to substitute for the district monitoring plan but instead establish the subjects and purposes of future monitoring efforts. Specific monitoring activities and techniques will be developed outside of the RMP process.

Soil, Water and Air

The following resource conditions will be monitored:

- (1) Water quality and related watershed conditions,
- (2) Ground water in relation to surface disturbance and pesticide application,
- (3) Soil surface factors on rangelands,
- (4) Active erosion (especially headcuts), and
- (5) Air quality, particularly H₂S and SO₂, in relation to energy mineral development in areas of concern.

Oil and Gas

The following resource conditions and stipulations will be monitored:

- (1) Lease information,
- (2) Affect of special stipulations on oil and gas development,
- (3) Fulfillment of responsibilities established by inter-agency and other cooperative agreements,
- (4) Impacts to air quality from flaring and other operations,
- (5) Compliance with specific conditions of approval for APDs and Sundry notices for the protection of air quality,
- (6) Need and feasibility of hook-ups to gas gathering systems where unacceptable impacts to air quality are occurring, and

- (7) Compliance with mitigating measures designed to protect air quality.

Coal

The following resource conditions will be monitored:

- (1) Lease information (tonnages and total acreages, threshold acreages, extent of development), and
- (2) Surface resource impacts in relation to reclamation and effectiveness of lease stipulations.

Mineral Materials and Locatable Minerals

The following resource conditions and situations will be monitored:

- (1) Location and availability of locatable and saleable minerals,
- (2) Authorized use of locatable and saleable minerals, and
- (3) Federal saleable minerals adjacent to population actions or construction areas that indicate potential for unauthorized use.

Grazing Management

The following resource conditions and situations will be monitored:

- (1) Actual use,
- (2) Utilization,
- (3) Climate,
- (4) Range condition,
- (5) Trend, and
- (6) Unauthorized use.

Wildlife Habitat Management

Monitoring will include an evaluation of quality and trend of:

- (1) Breeding habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species,
- (2) Key breeding habitat for migratory birds of high federal interest,
- (3) Sites with rare plant and animal populations or exemplary natural communities,
- (4) Key nesting and winter habitat for sage grouse,
- (5) Key habitat for pronghorn, elk, and bighorn sheep,
- (6) Habitat created or improved through project work, and
- (7) Key habitat impacted by other activities.

Lands and Realty

The following resource conditions and situations will be monitored:

- (1) All oil and gas fields on public surface for unauthorized use or occupancy,
- (2) All public lands adjacent to agricultural development for unauthorized use or occupancy, and
- (3) Compliance of authorized uses with required mitigation.

Recreation and Visual Resources

The following resource conditions will be monitored:

- (1) Public lands in relation to developments that may adversely affect recreational and visual resources, and
- (2) Demand for recreational use of public land in North Dakota.

Cultural Resources

The following resource conditions and situations will be monitored:

- (1) A representative sample of all fieldwork conducted on public lands or on lands that the BLM has an interest in, and
- (2) Cultural resources located on public surface in relation to possible adverse impacts from resource uses, erosion, or vandalism.

Paleontological Resources

The following resource conditions and situations will be monitored:

- (1) A representative sample of all fieldwork conducted on public lands or on lands that the BLM has an interest in, and
- (2) Paleontological resources located on public surface in relation to possible adverse impacts from other resource uses, erosion, or vandalism.

Fire Management

The following resource situations will be monitored:

- (1) Effectiveness of, and compliance with, terms of any cooperative agreements established for the control of wildfire on public land.

Interdisciplinary Resources

The following resource conditions and situations will be monitored:

- (1) Condition and trend of riparian vegetation on all manageable sites.

COORDINATION, CONSULTATION AND SUPPORT NEEDS

Coordination, consultation and support needs include contacts with both internal (BLM) and external (e.g., state

agencies, Indian tribes) groups. Support efforts include assistance in the planning or design of projects, technical review or input, coordinated management efforts, and mandated consultation.

Identification of major support needs here is intended to highlight some of the coordination and consultation needs identified during the planning process and allow advance programming of support personnel. Day-to-day support needs are not listed.

Soil, Water and Air (4341)

Internal

- (1) Archaeological survey and clearance for surface-disturbing projects,
- (2) Range conservationist input into watershed projects and coordination with range conservationist and wildlife biologist when planning riparian area management and related projects,
- (3) Data from geologist for soil and groundwater monitoring and management,
- (4) MSO, Denver Service Center, and Wyoming State Office (air quality only) assistance and review of monitoring, studies, and project proposals.

External

- (1) Cooperative monitoring of groundwater in relation to pesticide application with the North Dakota Geological Survey (NDGS) and the NDS DH,
- (2) Cooperative monitoring and study of air quality in relation to energy mineral development with the NDS DH,
- (3) Coordination with the North Dakota PSC in identifying and protecting buried valley aquifers,
- (4) Coordination with the North Dakota State Water Commission (SWC) in water quality planning (Section 208 of the Clean Water Act),
- (5) Coordination with NDS DH and/or the Three Affiliated Tribes when the potential for authorized actions to exceed air quality standards is identified,

Oil and Gas (4111, 4112)

Internal

- (1) District staff review of lease offerings for need to apply special lease stipulations,
- (2) Coordination with soil, water, and air program leader for planning and programming air quality monitoring and study in relation to oil and gas development, and
- (3) Coordination with realty specialist for ensuring proper use authorization of oil and gas development ancillary facilities.

External

- (1) Coordination with the NDS DH and Three Affiliated Tribes in monitoring and managing air quality in relation to oil and gas development, and
- (2) Coordination with the NDGFD and USFWS when reviewing controversial mitigation requirements or proposed development in crucial fish and wildlife habitats.

Coal (4121)

Internal

- (1) Interdisciplinary district preparation and review of plans and environmental analyses for actions such as lease readjustments, exploration licenses and permits, and mine plan review, and
- (2) Interdisciplinary district staff preparation of environmental analyses for coal lease offerings.

External

- (1) Coordination with North Dakota PSC during review of mine permits,
- (2) Cooperative review of surface mine permits involving Federal coal with the Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement,
- (3) Coordination with NDS DH for assessment of potential air quality impacts resulting from development of Federal coal,
- (4) Coordination and/or consultation with the NDGFD and USFWS when analyzing coal lease proposals, and
- (5) Consultation with North Dakota PSC to identify and protect alluvial valley floors and buried-valley aquifers.

Mineral Materials and Locatable Minerals (4131, 4132, 4133)

Internal

- (1) Coordination between Division of Minerals and Division of Lands and Renewable Resources in identifying potential unauthorized uses.

Grazing Management (4322, 8100)

Internal

- (1) Archaeological survey and clearance prior to surface-disturbing projects,
- (2) Interdisciplinary development of activity plans and project proposals,
- (3) Realty program and specialist support in identifying and processing realty actions for the benefit of range management, and
- (4) Automated data processing support of grazing record data storage and retrieval and use of geographical information systems.

External

- (1) Review of grazing management activity plans by state agencies such as the NDGFD and State Department of Lands, and
- (2) Coordination with the SCS when public lands are included or could be included in farm or ranch management plans.

Wildlife Habitat Management (4351, 4352)

Internal

- (1) Archaeological survey and clearance prior to surface-disturbing projects,

- (2) Status of grazing on tracts where inventory, monitoring, or project work is involved,
- (3) Soil evaluations for seedings and plantings,
- (4) Status of land disposal or exchange where inventory, monitoring, or project work is involved, and
- (5) Information on likelihood of oil and gas development or seismic exploration in certain areas where artificial nest sites for raptors are contemplated.

External

- (1) North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department information on location of registered Natural Areas during review of potential oil and gas leases,
- (2) NDGFD inventory and monitoring of piping plovers, least terns, black-footed ferrets and other threatened or endangered species to properly plan and coordinate management activities,
- (3) NDGFD inventory of rare plants,
- (4) Consultation with USFWS where projects potentially affect habitats of threatened or endangered species, and
- (5) Consultation with NDGFD and USFWS when reviewing coal leases exceeding wildlife thresholds within a given coal study area.

Lands and Realty (4211, 4212, 4220)

Internal

- (1) District L&RR staff for evaluating potential exchanges, sales, rights-of-way, unauthorized use resolution, permits and leases, and R&PP patents.
- (2) District Geologist for mineral reports,
- (3) MSO appraisal staff,
- (4) MSO lands staff for patent work,
- (5) Solicitor for title insurance review,
- (6) MSO Cadastral Survey,
- (7) DSC for rental billings,
- (8) MSO Special Agent for guidance in criminal actions,
- (9) MSO lands staff for review of compromise offers and bad-debt write-off,
- (10) Solicitor for review of compromise offers and bad-debt write-off,
- (11) MSO records section.

External

- (1) Realtors to provide information concerning available land and to act as proponents in pooling-exchanges, as needed. Realtors and banks provide escrow services,
- (2) County Commissioners and Advisory Board to support lands and realty programs, including exchanges and trespass resolution,
- (3) County and state officials to support the recordation of all RS2477 roads,
- (4) County officials and USFS to coordinate and provide information in mapping access to public land,
- (5) County officials to make courthouse records available,

- (6) Governor's office, NDGFD, and North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department to review and provide comments on exchange and sales proposals,
- (7) North Dakota PSC to provide notification of proposed new rights-of-way and proposed railroad abandonments,
- (8) ASCS to make records available to research suspected trespass cases,
- (9) USFWS, USFS, and BIA to cooperate in possible land ownership/administration adjustments,
- (10) BR and USFWS to cooperate in the review of withdrawals,
- (11) Utilities cooperatives and energy companies to coordinate and provide technical information on specific land uses.

Recreation and Visual Resources (4333)

Internal

- (1) Program guidance from the MSO program lead for recreation for preparation of PAWP and AWP, for the development of program objectives and goals, and for technical assistance on implementing operation activities on public land.

External

- (1) Coordination and consultation with North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department on program goals and recreational needs of the public.
- (2) Coordination with other state and federal agencies regarding Bureau operations which affect the landscape e.g., placement of signs, campgrounds, and less developed recreational facilities.

Cultural Resources (4331)

Internal

- (1) Program guidance from the MSO staff archaeologist for preparation of PAWP and AWP, for the development of program objectives and goals, for preparation of Annual Report of Cultural Resources, and for the coordination of Cultural Resource Use Permits.
- (2) Interdisciplinary input from soil scientist on field identification of soil types, soil development processes, and Holocene-age geomorphology.
- (3) Staff input on the status of land adjustment program, range improvement proposals, oil and gas activities, and the coal program so that archaeologist can assess the impacts of such activities and programs on cultural resources.
- (4) Technical support of archaeological data base by computer scientist and data entry personnel.

External

- (1) Procedural guidance on the Section 106 process from the SHPO and the ACHP.

- (2) Professional guidance and expertise from anthropology faculty at the University of North Dakota on prehistoric technologies, prehistoric settlement and subsistence patterns and current research questions and concerns.

- (3) Coordination with Indian tribes on Bureau actions that potentially disturb currently used and formerly used sacred areas and/or sites.

Paleontological Resources (4331)

Internal

- (1) MSO support from staff archaeologist for preparation of PAWP and AWP, program goals and objectives, current developments in paleontology and coordination of Cultural Resource Use Permits.
- (2) Technical support from district geologists on the geology of public lands and on lands in which the Bureau has an interest.
- (3) Staff input on the status of land adjustment program, range improvement proposals, oil and gas activities, and the coal program so that archaeologist can assess the impacts of such activities and programs on paleontological resources.

External

- (1) Information from the North Dakota Geological Survey on the location and significance of paleontological resources on public land and on lands in which the Bureau has an interest.

Fire Management

External

- (1) Coordination with county governments for fire suppression cooperative agreements,
- (2) Coordination with county governments, permittees, and adjacent landowners on prescribed burn plans and analyses.

Interdisciplinary Resources

Internal

- (1) Staff coordination on identification of critical resources that may require ACEC designation to manage adequately.
- (2) Staff coordination in occurrence of, or problems with, wetland or riparian habitats.
- (3) Coordinate with MSO to ensure proper implementation of the Montana riparian management strategy.

External

- (1) Information from NDGFD and USFWS on critical resources that may warrant ACEC designation.
- (2) Information from above agencies in occurrence of, or problems with, wetland or riparian habitat on public land.