

# PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

## INTRODUCTION

The South Dakota Resource Management Plan (RMP) describes general management direction for the short term (5 years) to the long term (15 years) for two specific issues and other activities in the South Dakota Resource Area and analyzes the environmental effects of implementing such direction. It has been prepared in response to Section 202 and 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of October 21, 1976. This law directs the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to develop, maintain and, when appropriate, revise plans for the use of public lands. This document meets the requirements of FLPMA, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and land use planning regulations in 43 CFR Part 1600. Also, it is responsive to litigation against the BLM requiring the BLM to prepare Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) which address the impacts of grazing livestock on the public lands, (Natural Resources Defense Council et al vs. Rogers C. B. Morton et al vs. U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, ref. Case No. 1983-73).

The purpose of the RMP is to guide management actions on public lands based on current information, sound criteria and public input. The RMP provides the basis for resource utilization and defines and guides management decisions. The objective of land use planning is to guide the future use of public resources for the maximum public benefit through the concepts of multiple-use management and sustained yield.

The alternatives in this plan apply only to public lands and minerals administered by the BLM.

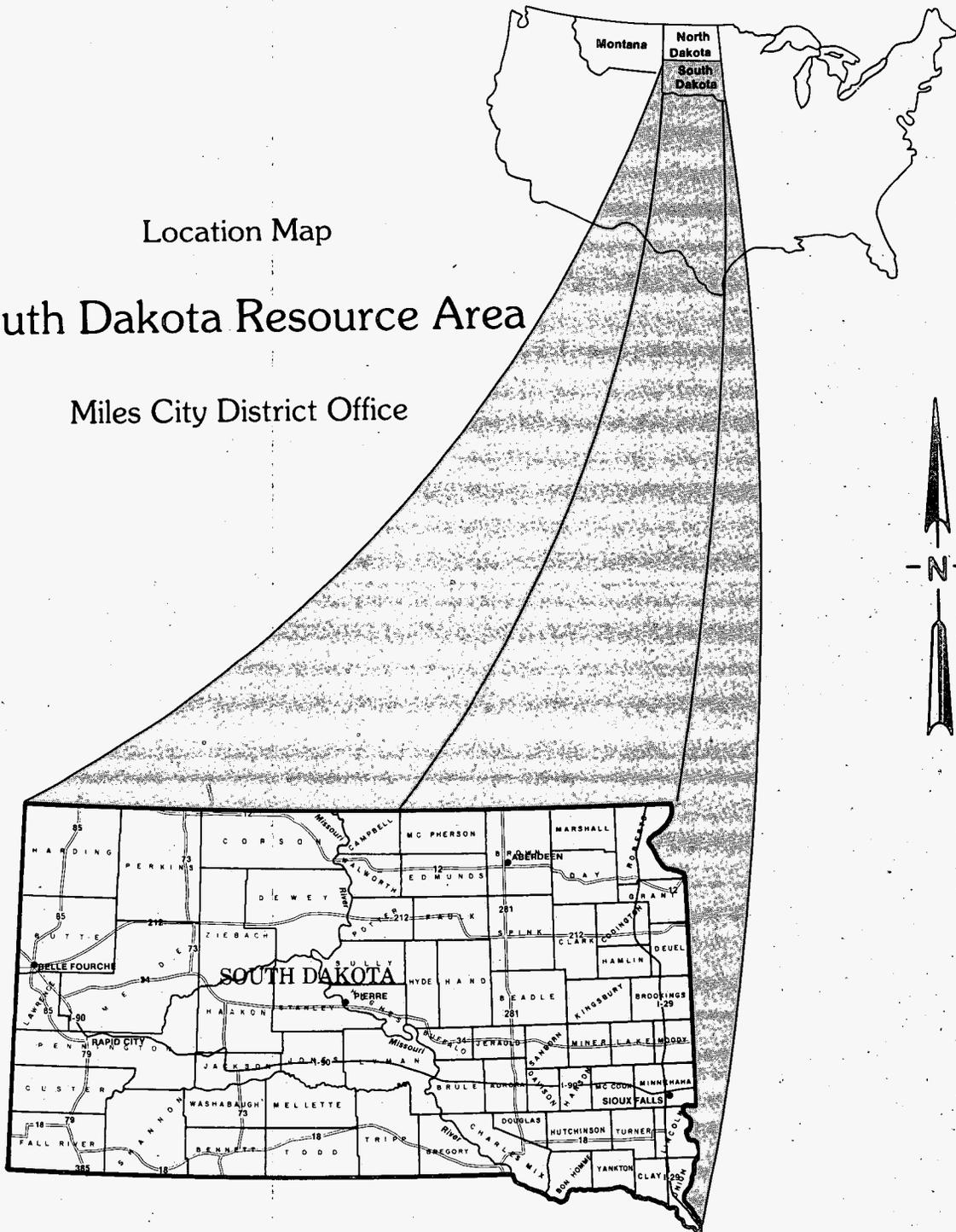
## SETTING

The South Dakota Resource Area encompasses 280,672 surface acres within the entire State of South Dakota. This BLM-administered public land accounts for only 0.5 percent of the surface acres in the state. Most of the public domain surface estate (278,673 acres) is located in the western half of the state in the counties



Location Map  
South Dakota Resource Area

Miles City District Office



of: Brule, Butte, Custer, Fall River, Haakon, Harding, Jackson, Lawrence, Lyman, Meade, Pennington, Perkins, and Stanley counties (Map 1-1). In addition, BLM has management responsibilities for 5,294,122 acres of subsurface minerals (including minerals in the Black Hills National Forest, the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands, the Custer National Forest, the Ft. Pierre National Grasslands and the Grand River National Grasslands). Surface and subsurface ownership is generally in a fragmented pattern due to a complex history of homestead grants. (See Resource Management Plan Map in map pocket.) The situation where coal is the only federal mineral reserved was as a result of patenting under the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909. Lands where all minerals are federally owned are either public domain or lands whose surface was patented under the Stock Raising Homestead Act of 1916.

The primary economic use of public domain surface estate in the Resource Area is rangeland. Other significant land uses include wildlife habitat, watershed and recreation.

The major trade center in the western counties is Rapid City, with a 1980 census of 50,882 people. Other population centers include Belle Fourche, Spearfish, Sturgis, Buffalo, Hot Springs, Deadwood-Lead, Custer, Bison, Phillip, Kadoka, and Pierre.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The oldest records are preserved in the geologic formations of the Resource Area (see Table 1-1). South Dakota was dominated by a series of inland marine seas, which deposited thousands of feet of sediment and in age range from 70 to 500 million years. The Black Hills were uplifted along with the Rocky Mountains 55 to 60 million years ago. Formation of the mountains allowed erosional forces to take over as the marine seas subsided and streams carved valleys, washing away sedimentary layers to expose the basement granites and other bedrocks in the Black Hills. The present features in western South Dakota consist of the sedimentary formations exposed in the valleys and benches and remnants being exposed along the major rivers and streams.

The Resource Area was first inhabited by nomadic hunters about 11,000 years ago. Throughout most of prehistory, the area supported band-level societies oriented toward hunting bison and other herbivores. As American populations expanded westward, some

Indian groups living in the midwest were pushed onto the plains, where they adopted a nomadic lifestyle and displaced resident peoples. These late immigrant peoples were the historic tribes known to have lived in the area, including the Kiowas, Shoshone, Arapahoe, Cheyenne and Sioux.

Exploration of the Resource Area began as traders contacted the Missouri River village tribes in the last half of the 18th century and eventually took their trade west. Military expeditions for Indian control and scientific purposes were conducted from the 1830's through the 1870's. The 1874 exploration of the Black Hills region, led by Col. George A. Custer, sparked a gold rush and subsequent settlement.

Since the Black Hills and surrounding plains region was home for these Indian tribes, the invasion by prospectors, settlers, and travelers led to serious disputes, including the Sioux Indian War of 1876. Some events of the war took place in the Resource Area. In 1878, Fort Meade was selected as a military post to protect the roads leading to the Black Hills. Fort Meade was closed as a military post and jurisdiction was transferred to the Veterans Administration in 1947. Since 1954, all but 1,159 acres of the original 7,730 acres of the Fort Meade military post were transferred to BLM jurisdiction.

## PLANNING OVERVIEW

Several years ago, the BLM instituted a planning process centered around development of Resource Management Plans (RMPs) to guide management decisions affecting public resources. Prior to this, BLM prepared the Fort Meade Management Framework Plan (1973), Fort Meade Recreation Area Plan (1981) and the Exemption Area Management Framework Plan (1976). These plans are hereby incorporated by reference into this document and summarized in Appendix G.

During 1979, as mandated by Section 603(a) of FLPMA, all BLM administered lands were inventoried for wilderness characteristics. Based on this review, no wilderness study areas were identified in the Resource Area. Therefore, wilderness review processes will not be addressed in this plan.

An environmental assessment of the potential impacts associated with land management proposals is a major portion of this plan. The planning process described in the BLM planning regulations 43 CFR Part 1600 consists of the following nine steps:

Based on current information the allotments have been categorized as to the type of management they should receive. Categorization criteria were those shown in BLM Manual 1621 and 4100; e.g. resource potential, resource use conflicts or controversy, opportunity for positive economic return, the present management situation, and other criteria as appropriate (USDI-BLM 1984, USDI-BLM 1983).

Three management categories have been developed by the BLM. They are:

- (1) Maintenance category (M)—objective is to maintain current resource condition.
- (2) Improve category (I)—objective is to improve the current resource condition.
- (3) Custodial category (C)—objective is to custodially manage the existing resource values.

#### *Planning Questions*

What should be the apportionment of vegetation resources to livestock grazing, watershed, and wildlife forage and cover?

#### *Criteria*

Vegetation is to be apportioned to livestock, watershed, and wildlife in a manner that will improve or maintain the condition of the vegetation and soil resources.

#### *Issue Number 2—Lands*

Many parcels of land administered by the BLM

in South Dakota are small, isolated tracts which result in a fragmented ownership pattern. Lack of legal access and small size present an inefficient resource to manage.

Some land ownership adjustment is necessary to enhance the objectives of multiple use and sustained yield of renewable resources on public lands.

#### *Planning Questions*

What opportunities are available to reposition public lands and increase public access to them?

What opportunities are available to acquire lands with high public value?

#### *Criteria*

Consideration will be given to the public values in repositioning public lands. This includes consideration of:

- Ownership patterns
- Existing and potential uses of surrounding land;
- Existing and potential access to lands;
- Existing possibilities;
- Priority to gain access which will be given to those lands having significant existing or potential public values; and
- Incorporation of the principles of land pattern adjustment developed in Montana State Director guidance.