

SUMMARY

The South Dakota Resource Management Plan (RMP) addresses future management for approximately 280,672 surface acres and 5,294,122 acres of federal mineral estate administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) through its South Dakota Resource Area Office in Belle Fourche, South Dakota. The emphasis of the plan centers around 13 counties which includes 278,673 surface acres in Brule, Butte, Custer, Fall River, Haakon, Harding, Jackson, Lawrence, Lyman, Meade, Pennington, Perkins, and Stanley counties. All the counties, except Brule County, are west of the Missouri River.

This document consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 is a summarization of the planning process and the major issues identified through the public involvement process and by BLM resource specialists. Chapter 1 also discusses ongoing resource programs that will not be affected and are not examined elsewhere in this document as well as the management responsibilities common to all alternatives.

Chapter 2 presents the five alternatives involving two issues. The issues discussed in this chapter are vegetation apportionment and lands actions. The chapter ends with a summary of the cumulative environmental impacts.

Chapter 3 is a description of the physical setting of the South Dakota Resource Area and those resources present which could be affected by decisions made in this resource management plan.

Chapter 4 is a detailed discussion of the potential environmental impacts resulting from implementing each of the alternatives. The chapter begins with the resources for which impacts would not vary by alternative. This is followed by a discussion of the potential resource impacts by alternative.

Chapter 5 summarizes the public involvement process and gives a listing of the agencies, organizations and individuals consulted during the planning process.

The five alternatives and the environmental impacts are briefly summarized below.

Preferred Alternative

Changes in grazing management, range improvements, and mechanical treatment would result in 31,783 acres of fair condition range on "M" or "I" allotments improving to good or better condition. A total of 7,372 acres, regardless of condition, has the potential to be converted to tame pasture. Exclusion of livestock from 1,331 acres of riparian areas and def-

erment of grazing on 6,082 acres of fragile soils would accelerate improvements in range condition.

There would be insignificant windborne soil losses of 245 acre feet associated with project construction and mechanical treatments. However, soil conditions would improve and sediment loads would decrease as range condition improves. These beneficial effects would be accelerated on the areas of mechanical treatment, tame pasture conversion, riparian areas, and fragile soils.

Subject to monitoring, there would be 31 "M" and "I" category allotments receiving increases and 21 "M" and "I" category allotments receiving decreases in authorized use. The net result would be an 11.2 percent increase in livestock use of 5,062 AUMs from the current level of 45,305. There would be no change in 376 "C" category allotments.

Forage available for wildlife would increase 11,705 AUMs or 10.1 percent.

Of the 280,672 surface acres of public land in South Dakota, 85,000 acres or 30 percent would be categorized with potential for disposal. Disposal would include 5 percent sales and 95 percent exchanges. Land categorized for disposal are primarily small, scattered isolated tracts unusable by the public and inefficient to manage as part of the public land system. Most lands would be considered for exchange to consolidate larger tracts, gain public access to other tracts and acquire lands with greater public resource value such as lands along major river drainages and reservoirs. Sales would be used to a lesser extent to reduce administrative costs and improve the land ownership pattern. Cumulatively, exchanges would result in beneficial impacts while sales at a low level would result in a small reduction of the public land resource.

Alternative A

Grazing management would result in 31,783 acres of fair condition range on "M" or "I" allotments improving to good or better condition.

There would be insignificant windborne soil losses of 9 acre feet associated with water project replacement or repair. However, soil conditions would improve and sediment loads would decrease as range condition improves.

There would be no change in the allotments. Forage available for wildlife would increase 12,184 AUMs or 10.5 percent.

Of the 280,672 surface acres of public land in South Dakota, 20,000 acres or 7 percent would be categorized with potential for disposal. Disposal would include 25 percent sales and 75 percent exchanges. Land categorized for disposal are primarily small, scattered isolated tracts unusable by the public and inefficient to manage as part of the public land system. Most lands would be considered for exchange to consolidate larger tracts, gain public access to other tracts and acquire lands with greater public resource value such as lands along major river drainages and reservoirs. Sales would be used to a lesser extent to reduce administrative costs and improve the land ownership pattern. Cumulatively, exchanges would result in beneficial impacts while sales at a low level would result in a small reduction of the public land resource.

Alternative B

Changes in grazing management, range improvements, and mechanical treatment would result in 31,783 acres of fair condition range on "M" or "I" allotments improving to good or better condition.

There would be insignificant windborne soil losses of 59 acre feet associated with project construction and mechanical treatments. However, soil conditions would improve and sediment loads would decrease as range condition improves. These beneficial effects would be accelerated on the areas of mechanical treatment.

Subject to monitoring, there would be 30 "M" and "I" category allotments receiving increases and 37 "M" and "I" category allotments receiving decreases in authorized use. The net result would be a 5.2 percent decrease in livestock use of 2,371 AUMs from the current level of 45,305. There would be no change in 376 "C" category allotments.

Forage available for wildlife would increase 12,699 AUMs or 10.9 percent.

Of the 280,672 surface acres of public land in South Dakota, 85,000 acres or 30 percent would be categorized with potential for disposal. Disposal would include 5 percent sales and 95 percent exchanges. Land categorized for disposal are primarily small, scattered isolated tracts unusable by the public and inefficient to manage as part of the public land system. Most lands would be considered for exchange to consolidate larger tracts, gain public access to other tracts and acquire lands with greater public resource value such as lands along major river

drainages and reservoirs. Sales would be used to a lesser extent to reduce administrative costs and improve the land ownership pattern. Cumulatively, exchanges would result in beneficial impacts while sales at a low level would result in a small reduction of the public land resource.



Yellow Sweetclover

Alternative C

Changes in grazing management, range improvements, and mechanical treatment would result in 31,783 acres of fair condition range on "M" or "I" allotments improving to good or better condition. A total of 8,115 acres, regardless of condition, has the potential to be converted to tame pasture.

There would be insignificant windborne soil losses of 261 acre feet associated with project construction and mechanical treatments. However, soil conditions would improve and sediment loads would decrease as range condition improves. These beneficial effects would be accelerated on the areas of mechanical treatment and tame pasture conversion.

Subject to monitoring, there would be 45 "M" and "I" category allotments receiving increases and 23 "M" and "I" category allotments receiving decreases in authorized use. The net result would be a 26 percent increase in livestock use of 12,207 AUMs from the current level of 45,305. There would be no change in 376 "C" category allotments.

Forage available for wildlife would increase 14,154 AUMs or 12 percent.

Of the 280,672 surface acres of public land in South Dakota, 85,000 acres or 30 percent would be categorized with potential for disposal. Disposal would include 5 percent sales and 95 percent exchanges. Land categorized for disposal are primarily small, scattered isolated tracts unusable by the public and inefficient to manage as part of the public land system. Most lands would be considered for exchange to consolidate larger tracts, gain public access to other tracts and acquire lands with greater public resource value such as lands along major river drainages and reservoirs. Sales would be used to a lesser extent to reduce administrative costs and improve the land ownership pattern. Cumulatively, exchanges would result in beneficial impacts while sales at a low level would result in a small reduction of the public land resource.

Alternative D

Changes in grazing management, range improvements, and mechanical treatment would result in 31,783 acres of fair condition range on "M" or "I" allotments improving to good or better condition. A total of 6,725 acres, regardless of condition, has the potential to be converted to tame pasture. Exclusion of livestock from 1,560 acres of riparian areas and deferment of grazing on 29,306 acres of fragile soils would accelerate improvements in range condition.

There would be insignificant windborne soil losses of 227 acre feet associated with project construction and mechanical treatments. However, soil conditions would improve and sediment loads would decrease as range condition improves. These beneficial effects would be accelerated on the areas of mechanical treatment, tame pasture conversion, riparian areas, and fragile soils.

Subject to monitoring, there would be 38 "M" and "I" category allotments receiving increases and 30 "M" and "I" category allotments receiving decreases in authorized use. The net result would be an 18.1 percent increase in livestock use of 8,188 AUMs from the current level of 45,305. There would be no change in 376 "C" category allotments.

Forage available for wildlife would increase 21,357 AUMs or 18.4 percent.

Of the 280,672 surface acres all would be identified for retention. There would be a lack of opportunity to consolidate scattered tracts, to improve public benefits, and increase management efficiency.