

BIGHORN NATIONAL FOREST

---

Land and Resource Management Plan - Draft

# Key National and Regional Policies

# Table of Contents

Biological Diversity .....	B-1
Facilities .....	B-1
Fire and Fuels.....	B-1
Geology.....	B-2
Heritage Resources .....	B-2
Integrated Pest Management.....	B-2
Lands.....	B-3
Minerals .....	B-4
Rangelands.....	B-6
Recreation .....	B-6
Research Natural Areas.....	B-6
Rights-of-way Acquisition.....	B-7
Scenery.....	B-7
Soils.....	B-7
Special Land Uses.....	B-8
Timber.....	B-8
Transportation and Travel.....	B-10
Water.....	B-11
Wildlife and Fish.....	B-12

## Biological Diversity

### Sensitive Species

1. Manage sensitive species habitat as directed in Region 2 Supplement 2600-2003-1, FSM 2670.

### Facilities

#### Dams

1. For administrative class A, B, C, and high hazard class D dams located on National Forest System (NFS) lands, annually update the national inventory of dams (P.L. 99-662) in accordance with data elements required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FSM 7514).
2. Maintain a record for all dams on NFS lands over 6 feet high (vertical difference between the lowest point on the crest of the dam and the lowest point in the original streambed). As a minimum, the record should include the dam identification, location, purpose, owner, administrative classification, hazard potential classification, height, and maximum storage.

### Fire and Fuels

#### Fire suppression

1. Fires are suppressed at minimum cost, considering firefighter and public safety, benefits, and values to be protected, consistent with resource objectives. (*The Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy: Implementation Procedures Reference Guide* and its January 2001 update).

#### Fuel Treatment

2. Identify, develop, and maintain fuel profiles that contribute to the most cost-efficient fire protection and use program in support of land and resource management direction in the forest plan (5150.2).
3. Integrate fuel management and fire management programs in support of resource management objectives (5150.3).

## KEY NATIONAL & REGIONAL POLICIES

### Fire Use

4. The objectives are to use fire from either management ignitions or natural ignitions in a safe, carefully planned, and cost-effective manner to benefit, protect, maintain, and enhance National Forest System resources; to reduce future fire suppression costs; and, to the extent possible, to restore natural ecological processes and achieve management objectives adopted in approved forest land and resource management plans (5410.2).

### Geology

1. Permit appropriate prospecting and collecting proposals for fossils and minerals by noncommercial, scientific, and/or educational institutions and provide appropriate opportunities for recreational collection of mineral and fossil materials, where consistent with forest plan goals and objectives (FSM2860.3).
2. Prevent unauthorized removal of fossil and mineral resources (FSM 5302).
3. Propose significant paleontologic sites for designation as Special Interest Areas or Geologic Areas (FSM 2360, 2372, 4063).
4. Identify special geologic hazards and problems that affect land and resource management and encourage research in those areas (FSM 2880, 2883, 2884).

### Heritage Resources

1. Locate, evaluate, protect, and foster public use and enjoyment of heritage resources.
  - ◆ Protect all heritage resources listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).
  - ◆ Nominate all eligible heritage resources to the NRHP.
  - ◆ All projects will be reviewed by a Forest Service heritage resource specialist.
    - ▶ Complete heritage resource inventories, evaluations, and mitigation measures for a project's area of potential effect prior to issuing environmental decision notices.
  - ◆ Avoid effects to heritage resources until evaluated by a Forest Service heritage resource specialist.
  - ◆ Implement appropriate mitigation measures in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and/or the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) when eligible heritage resources will be affected.
  - ◆ Maintain, stabilize, or enhance all eligible heritage resources.

### Integrated Pest Management

1. Use only chemicals registered with the Environmental Protection Agency, and follow label instructions.

## Lands

### Landownership Adjustments

1. Work with other federal agencies to consolidate ownership and propose jurisdictional transfers that achieve the following objectives:
  - ◆ Develop more effective and efficient work units.
  - ◆ Reduce administrative costs.
  - ◆ Improve, maintain, and simplify user access to public lands.
2. Adjust NFS lands and private land to create an ownership pattern that meets Forest Service and landowner objectives.
3. Manage NFS lands identified for exchange or sale consistent with surrounding management area goals and in accordance with the following:
  - ◆ Terminate special use permits on an opportunity basis and in compliance with applicable regulations and Forest Service policy.
  - ◆ Renew or extend special use permits on an annual basis only with specific notice of the potential sale or exchange included in the authorization.
  - ◆ Do not authorize construction of additional permanent facilities.
  - ◆ Do not adversely affect land values by management activities.
  - ◆ Do not adversely affect land values by issuing special use permits.
  - ◆ Acquire unrestricted rights-of-way whenever possible to maintain the value of the public land.
  - ◆ Ensure needed public rights-of-way retained across all lands conveyed out of public ownership (FSM5403.1).
4. Convey lands only if:
  - ◆ It doesn't increase flood hazards on and downstream from conveyed lands.
  - ◆ Natural and beneficial values of acquired wetlands equal or exceed those of the conveyed wetlands.
  - ◆ It doesn't disrupt natural water regimes in wetlands downstream from conveyed lands.
  - ◆ Lands have been evaluated for the presence of hazardous materials, and known hazardous materials have been removed.
  - ◆ Lands do not contain habitat identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as necessary for recovery of federally listed threatened and endangered species.
  - ◆ Lands do not contain unique resource characteristics (FSH 5409.13, Chapter 30).

## KEY NATIONAL & REGIONAL POLICIES

5. Effect jurisdictional transfers that achieve the following objectives:
  - ◆ Reduce duplication of efforts by users and agencies in terms of time, cost, and coordination.
  - ◆ Improve or maintain user access to the administrating agency.
  - ◆ Decrease travel, and enhance management.
  - ◆ Improve public understanding of applicable laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.
  - ◆ Develop more effective and efficient work units.

### Property Boundary Administration

6. Locate, mark, and post landlines according to the following priorities:
  - ◆ Lines needed to meet planned activities.
  - ◆ Lines needed to protect NFS lands from encroachment.
  - ◆ All other lines (FSM7152).

## Minerals

### General

1. Require an operating plan for each significant proposed mineral action that may disturb surface resources (FSM 2817, 2818, 2820).
2. In areas of actively producing sites or areas containing known reserves, consider only surface resource programs compatible with mining activity.
3. Provide reasonable access to outstanding and reserved mineral rights (FSM 2830.5).
4. In designated wilderness areas, provide for reasonable access to proposed operations and for restoration of disturbed lands as near as practical to their natural condition when they are no longer needed for operations.
5. Consider significant cave discoveries for mineral withdrawal and other protection measures (FSM 2761, 5302).
6. Deny drilling, mining, or production on withdrawn lands, with the exception of valid existing rights at the time of withdrawal (FSM 2811, 2818, 2822, 2823).
7. Resolve suspected abuse of the mining laws, such as occupancy of the land for purposes other than prospecting, mining, and related operations.
8. Avoid placing or proposing capital investments or other surface resource activities in areas where they would interfere with operating sites or known mineral resources (FSM 2761).
9. Request mineral leasing withdrawals in situations such as for classified lands.
10. Cover mining activity by an operating plan and performance bond of the appropriate amount.
11. Reclamation will return disturbed lands to the planned uses.

**Leasable minerals**

12. Approve Applications for Permit to Drill (APDs) in conformance with all stipulations included in the lease and necessary conditions of approval determined during review of the applications (FSM 2800).

**Geophysical operations**

13. Permit geophysical operations on withdrawn, classified lands where the operations do not interfere with purposes for which the lands were withdrawn. Do not permit such operations if significant adverse effects cannot be prevented (FSM 2860).

**Coal, Uranium, and Non-energy Common Materials**

14. In designated wilderness, congressionally designated wilderness study areas, and areas recommended for wilderness in RARE II upon which Congress had not taken final action:
  - ◆ Prospecting for and disposal of common mineral materials will not be authorized.
  - ◆ Coal mining in the National Wilderness Preservation System is prohibited by the Coal Leasing Amendments Act of 1975.
  - ◆ Unless there is statutory language to the contrary, in which case the statutory provisions control, recommend or consent to BLM for issuance of leases or permits where operations including surface-based access, product transportation, and other necessary ancillary facilities will not cause irreversible and irretrievable damage to surface resources and where the land disturbed can be restored as near as practicable to natural conditions.
15. In classified lands other than wilderness (wild and scenic river systems, RARE II further planning areas, National Recreation Areas, National Historic Sites, natural areas, special areas, and some other specific classifications):
  - ◆ Authorize common variety mineral exploration and disposals under terms and conditions to protect the purposes for which the lands were classified. The objective of the reclamation requirements will be to return lands to a condition suitable for the purposes for which they were classified.
  - ◆ For special areas classified under 36 CFR 294 and 251.23 for specific management purposes, the regulatory provisions permit no use or occupancy inconsistent with the classification.
  - ◆ Coal mining is prohibited by the Coal Leasing Amendment Act of 1975, within the national system of trails and the wild and scenic rivers system, including study rivers designated by the act.
  - ◆ Recommend or consent to BLM for issuance of leases, permits, or licenses only when terms and conditions can be applied that will protect the purposes for which the lands were classified.

## KEY NATIONAL & REGIONAL POLICIES

### Rangelands

1. Allotment management plans (AMPs) need to provide for threatened, endangered and sensitive species (FSM 2203, 2211, 2212).
2. When updating allotment management plans, display forage utilization factors by type of management, season of use, and the ecological type by condition and seral stage within the AMP (FSM 2210, 2211).
3. Construct structural improvements to maintain or improve rangeland conditions within classified wilderness areas, consistent with wilderness values.
4. Riparian utilization or stubble remaining standards are to be developed and included in allotment management plans. Consider season of use to minimize impacts on riparian zones (FSM 2211, 2212, 2526).
5. Give emphasis to developing livestock management strategies that are economic, environmentally sound, and compatible with other resources.
6. Structural and nonstructural improvements to maintain or improve rangeland conditions will be designed to benefit livestock and wildlife and minimize grazing impacts on wildlife and recreation users (FSH 2209.22, 2209.23, 2240).

### Recreation

#### Developed

1. Where terrain allows and demand exists, facilities will be considered for development to accommodate people with disabilities. Different challenge levels will be planned, depending on the nature of the improvement and the principal form of recreation being provided.
2. The customer will be recognized as a spectrum of our society interested in a wide array of dispersed, sedentary, adventure, developed, guided, self-determined, motorized, and nonmotorized activities in controlled and uncontrolled environments. Potential customers will be recognized as those who might use National Forest resources if appropriate services and resources were available (FSM 2330).
3. Sites will be managed and maintained according to the needs of our customers. Safety and cleanliness are of utmost importance. Remove hazardous and/or dead trees in developed sites (FSM 2331 R2 Supplement #70, FSM 2332).
4. The type and level of development sophistication in developed sites may vary, depending on the situation and need. They are developed by the Forest Service, concessionaires, or cooperators and may be managed by any or a mix of these (FSM 2303).

### Research Natural Areas

1. Discourage or prohibit any public use which contributes to impairment of research or natural values (FSM 4063.36).

2. Use special use permits or cooperative agreements to authorize and document scientific activity (FSM 4063.37).

### **Rights-of-way Acquisition**

1. Acquire rights-of-way on existing and proposed Forest system roads and trails that cross other ownership (non-NFS).
2. Acquire legal rights-of-way using the following criteria:
  - ♦ Legal access for existing roads and trails that provide general access to the National Forest.
  - ♦ Legal access to support planned projects and high priority activities at least 2 years prior to project implementation (FSM5461.2).

### **Scenery**

#### **Scenic quality**

1. Management activities must be consistent with the scenery management objectives (SMO) in the forest plan unless a decision is made to change the SMO. A decision to change the SMO will be documented in project NEPA decision documents (FSM 2382.21).
2. At the project implementation stage, the SMO should be refined to the project scale.
3. As new viewer platforms (roads, trails, recreation areas, or major housing developments outside national forests) are developed, the SMOs should be reassessed (FSM 2382.32).
4. For areas, which do not currently meet the SMO, use landscape rehabilitation as a short-term alternative to restore landscapes containing undesirable visual impacts to a desired visual quality (FSM 2382).

### **Soils**

1. Soil should not be displaced more than a continuous area of 100 square feet or more (FSH 2509.18 R2 Supplement).
2. Soil should not be compacted more than (FSM 2509.18 R2 Supplement) a 15% increase in bulk density from the average undisturbed density or bulk density values that exceed the following threshold values:
  - ♦ 1.25 g/cc silt, clay
  - ♦ 1.30 g/cc silty clay, silty clay loam, silt loam
  - ♦ 1.40 g/cc loam, clay loam
  - ♦ 1.50 g/cc sandy loam, sandy clay loam, sandy clay
  - ♦ 1.60 g/cc sand, loamy sand
3. Maintain adequate plant cover to protect the watershed and maintain plant health consistent with the soil type.

## KEY NATIONAL & REGIONAL POLICIES

4. Management practices will be designed and implemented to maintain or improve the long-term soil productivity potential of the National Forest (FSH 2509 R2 Supplement).
5. Soil quality monitoring will be conducted to determine if soil management goals, objectives, and standards are being achieved (FSH 2509 R2 Supplement).
6. Monitoring results will be used to adjust management activities and mitigating measures, where necessary, to prevent significant impairment of the long-term soil productivity (FSH 2509 R2 Supplement).

### Special Land Uses

1. Act on special use applications according to the following priorities:
  - ◆ Those required by law, regulation, or national in scope.
  - ◆ Those in the public interest, mainly local or regional.
  - ◆ All others.
2. Do not approve any special use applications that can be reasonably met on nonfederal or other federal lands unless it is clearly in the public interest.
3. Do not approve special use applications for areas adjacent to developed sites unless the proposed use is compatible with the purpose and use of the developed site.
4. Utilize existing approved electronic sites where feasible.
5. Do not approve applications for use of federal land which involve any hazardous materials as defined in U.S.C. 9601 et seq., 40 CFR 261.30, and 40 CFR 302.4. The hazardous materials listed are individual chemicals. These references do not relate to hazardous waste dumps.

### Timber

#### General

1. Manage forests to provide net public benefits. Many different philosophies and strategies are used to provide benefits desired in urban interface areas, those areas used for recreation and viewing, for wildlife habitat, watershed protection, water yield enhancement, and others, as well as for wood and fiber products. In most cases, these must be integrated. Managers are to develop and use a variety of prescriptions to meet these public priorities and to accept that traditional economic considerations must be supplanted with both empirical and subjective ones (FSM 2470.3).
2. Plan areas for timber harvest only if assured, based on existing technology and knowledge, that long-term soil productivity will not be degraded (FSH 2409.26, Chapter 10).
3. Provide for wildlife habitat improvement and enhancement of other renewable resources in sale area improvement plans.

**Tree stand improvements (Pre-commercial thinning)**

4. Provide for accelerated growth, create specific stocking, and improve quality and vigor of timber stands.

**Silvicultural prescriptions**

5. Silvicultural prescriptions for tree stand improvement, including thinning, should evaluate the tradeoff associated with alternative treatments in terms of increased timber yields, economic efficiency, enhanced wildlife habitat, increased wood products yield and quality, improved long-term forest health, increased species and structural diversity, and the desired future condition for the stand (FSH 2409.26c, 2409.17).
6. Silvicultural prescriptions will be prepared for all vegetation management activities proposing the management of forested vegetation to work towards achieving the desired future condition (FSH 2409).
7. Apply a variety of silvicultural systems and harvest methods that best meet resource management objectives.
8. Prepare individual silvicultural prescriptions for areas or site-specific practices.
9. Use thinning practices that consider genetic diversity and competition among trees for water, nutrients, and light. The frequency of thinning should depend on the tree species, financial efficiency, and the site growing conditions, commonly measured by site index (FSH 2409.17, Chapter 6).
10. Where appropriate, reduce competition between desired trees and other vegetation (FSH 2409.17, Chapter 6).
11. If the silvicultural system being applied to a particular area of the landscape is uneven-aged, harvest trees designated for commercial timber production based on the desired density, as determined by age class or size, and the objective for the area (FSH 2409.26).
12. In most circumstances, rely on or make primary use of those silvicultural systems that ensure regeneration of forest stands through natural seeding and suckering (FSH 2409.26b, Chapter 70).
13. Use artificial regeneration methods when we cannot rely on the natural sequence of events and/or environmental conditions to regenerate the forest within 5 years or earlier (FSH 2409.26b, Chapter 70).
14. Inventory improvement needs in sale areas during sale reconnaissance. Use KV funds as applicable after sale closure to accomplish needed improvements, including education and interpretation (FSH 2409.12, Chapter 10).

## Transportation and Travel

### Transportation System Management-7712.03

1. Address both the access benefits and ecological costs of road-associated effects.
2. Give priority to reconstructing and maintaining needed roads, or, where appropriate, converting them to less costly and more environmentally beneficial uses.
3. Use a roads analysis process (FSM 7712.1) to ensure that road management decisions are based on identification and consideration of social and ecological effects. See FSM 7712.13 for guidance on the scope and scale of roads analysis required.
4. Add new roads only where resource management objectives and benefits are clearly demonstrated and where long-term funding obligations have been carefully considered (FSM 7703.2).

### Transportation Atlas, Records, and Analysis-7712.03

Forest Service regulations implementing the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act, as amended by the National Forest Management Act, require integration of transportation planning into an interdisciplinary effort that produces Regional, Forest, and site-specific project plans. In planning for and analyzing the transportation system, perform the following:

1. Assess economic costs and benefits along with social, physical, and biological factors when identifying transportation facility options.
2. Assess effects of transportation facility options on ecological processes and ecosystem health, diversity, and productivity.
3. Consider the needs of all parties when developing transportation system opportunities in areas of intermingled ownership.
4. Consider long- and short-term uses, including possible mechanized, non-mechanized, and off-highway vehicle uses, when analyzing transportation facilities.
5. Actively engage the public in transportation analysis.
6. Use the Forest transportation atlas as a record of transportation facility decisions, including:
  - ◆ Documenting road management objectives,
  - ◆ Identifying all classified and unclassified roads,
  - ◆ Documenting the results of transportation analysis, and
  - ◆ Documenting road management project priorities.

## **Trails**

5. Provide for a wide variety of motorized and nonmotorized recreational opportunities. The trail system on each National Forest will:
  - ◆ Consider barrier-free opportunities for all new construction or rehabilitation proposals.
  - ◆ Not be dedicated to a single use unless clearly necessary to resolve conflicts or create unique opportunities.
  - ◆ Have documentation on the purpose and use of each trail (FSH 2309).
6. Integrate trail systems across administrative boundaries, including adjacent Forest Service units, other federal agencies, state, and municipal trails (FSM 2353).
7. Maintain each trail to the standard required for the intended user types.
8. The permanent Forest trail system will be determined and identified in the Forest trail development plan. This plan will include the existing and future trail system, trail use type, trail management objectives, and the ROS and visual quality constraints as they apply to trail experiences (FSM 2353).
9. National Historic, Scenic, or Recreation Trails will receive higher priority than other trails for reconstruction, operation, and maintenance (FSM 2353).
10. Maintain all trails to established Forest standards:
  - ◆ Maintain trails in accordance with standards in the Trail Handbook.
  - ◆ Schedule trail maintenance in accordance with Regional acceptable work standards.
11. Construct or reconstruct trails when needed as part of the transportation system.

## **Water**

### **Water quality**

1. Develop integrated soil-water-fishery improvement schedules for watersheds, coordinated with other resources. Coordinate with state wildlife agencies. Apply treatment and land use controls as needed to restore soil productivity, water quality, and aquatic habitat (FSM 2522.03, 2522.2).
2. Hydrologic Function: Conserve the ability of watersheds and riparian areas to absorb water, filter sediment, and sustain stream channel integrity.
3. Apply watershed conservation practices to sustain healthy soil, riparian, and aquatic systems. Adopt a stewardship ethic that treats land and resources as public assets for long-term benefits. Temper land and resource use to conserve limited resources for future generations.(FSH 2509.25-99-1, R2 Amendment)

## **KEY NATIONAL & REGIONAL POLICIES**

4. Design criteria outlined in the Watershed Conservation Practices handbook are specific means to meet water quality laws and regulations. They carry the same weight and must be followed to the same degree as Forest Plan guidelines. (FSH 2509.25-99-1, R2 Amendment)
5. Follow this Nonpoint Source Management Strategy to meet state water quality requirements. It is consistent with the 1985 agreement between the EPA and Forest Service. The strategy includes the application, monitoring, and adjustment of watershed conservation practices (WCPs). (FSH 2509.25-99-1, R2 Amendment)

### **Wildlife and Fish**

#### **General**

1. Manage animal damage in cooperation with the state wildlife agencies and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to prevent or reduce damage to other resources and direct control toward preventing damage or removing only the offending animal.
2. Provide forage for big game. Allocate forage to big game based on direction in Management Area prescriptions and FSM 2210, rangeland analysis, and allotment management planning.
3. Aquatic Systems: Sustain water quality and aquatic habitat in each aquatic ecosystem, unless excepted by law. (FSH 2509.25-99-1, R2 Amendment)

#### **Endangered or threatened species**

4. Provide habitat for federally listed or proposed endangered or threatened species on NFS lands (FSM 2672.24, 2676).
5. Complete biological evaluations on actions authorized through NEPA decision documents, funded or carried out by the Forest Service, to determine the effects on federally listed or proposed endangered or threatened species (FSM 2672.4).
6. Carry out informal or formal consultation, as appropriate, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service when biological assessments determine that Forest Service actions may effect federally listed or proposed endangered or threatened species (FSM 2671.45).
7. Carry out informal or formal consultation, as appropriate, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Platte River system water depletions less than 25 acre-feet, pursuant to the intra-Service biological opinion issued on June 13, 1996 (amended May 21, 1997; September 22, 1999, and March 4, 2002). Carry out informal or formal consultation, as appropriate, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Colorado River system water depletions.