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**Cibola
National
Forest and
National
Grasslands**



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Heritage Resources Specialist Report

Kiowa, Rita Blanca, Black Kettle and McClellan Creek National Grasslands Plan Revision

Environmental Impact Statement Analysis

Submitted by:

/s/ _____

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Executive Summary

The Heritage Resources program serves to protect significant heritage resources, to share their values with the American people, and to contribute relevant information and perspectives to natural resource management. In doing this, the program will:

- ensure that future generations will have an opportunity to discover the human story etched on the landscapes of our national forests and grasslands;
- make the past come alive as a vibrant part of our recreational experiences and community life; and
- connect people to the land in a way that will help us better understand and manage forest ecosystems.

The Forest Service is responsible for the management of hundreds of recorded cultural resources on the grasslands. That responsibility includes developing sites for public use, enjoyment, and education as well as protecting sites from vandalism, theft, and effects of federally authorized activities.

The Heritage Resources program is also a facilitator of government to government consultation between the Forest Service and all Indian tribes with interests in the undertakings on and future development of their ancestral lands. The Cibola National Forest currently consults with seven Indian tribes with interests on the Kiowa-Rita Blanca and Black Kettle and McClellan Creek National Grasslands.

The 1985 Plan recognized that future development and other resource area projects had the potential to effect cultural resources and that they would be managed as equal in importance to other uses. Guided by the National Historic Preservation Act 1966 (as amended) and 36 CFR 800, emphasis was on avoidance and protection, and site-specific projects to rehabilitate and preserve the most significant historic properties known on the forest at that time. The desired condition increases emphasis on rehabilitation and preservation where resources can be most effective. Interpretation and volunteer projects will add to the economic potential of the surrounding communities through heritage tourism. There will be no change in the regulations, laws, or policies that guide the overall Heritage Resource program. Other grassland resource areas will not, as a rule, adversely impact heritage resources, as all undertakings require a cultural clearance to proceed.

Overview of the Affected Environment

Archaeological resources are generally defined as the nonrenewable evidence of human occupation or activity as indicated by sites, buildings, structures, artifacts, ruins, objects, rock art, dendroglyphs, architecture, or natural features. Site types are diverse across the area and include, but are not limited to, artifact scatters, rock shelters, temporary camp sites, resource procurement sites, historic homesteads, and range improvements. Some of these have the potential to possess buried cultural deposits.

Archaeologically, the prehistoric and historic record of indigenous peoples in the grasslands is sparse; both by the nature of the nomadic lifestyle of Plains Indian tribes and by later populations

destroying or collecting what material remains were left behind. The most common cultural remains of prehistoric and historic Indian groups are lithic scatters. The Anglo-European historic period is most visible through homestead remains, which include stone and wood structures, windmills, artifact scatters of metal, glass, and ceramics, and landscape features such as water catchment systems, terraced agricultural plots, fence lines, and primitive roads.

Summary of Environmental Consequences

There are no negative environmental consequences to heritage resources from the plan components of other resource areas. Augmenting the in-place compliance, preservation and interpretive emphasis of Alternative A with the updates provided in Alternatives B and C would result in a benefit for the overall grasslands heritage program.

Specialist Report

Introduction

This report discloses and evaluates the potential environmental consequences on heritage resources that may result with the adoption of a revised land management plan. It examines, in detail, three different alternatives for revising the management direction from the 1985 Cibola National Forest Land Management Plan (only that which is relevant to the National Grasslands).

Relevant Laws, Regulations, and Policy that Apply

The National Historic Preservation Act 1966, as amended, and its implementing regulations of Section 106 (36 CFR 800), require that federal agencies take into account the effects of their undertaking on historic properties and provide the State Historic Preservation Officer and, when applicable, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, an opportunity to comment on those undertakings. Section 110 of the NHPA ensures that historic preservation is fully integrated into the ongoing programs of all Federal agencies and that the purposes of the NHPA are furthered through affirmative agency action.

The Southwestern Region (R3) of the Forest Service, in consultation with the New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, has developed the *First Amended Programmatic Agreement Regarding Historic Property Protection and Responsibilities*. Under this agreement the Forest Service will afford the SHPO, Advisory Council, Indian tribes, and interested organizations and individuals, as appropriate, an opportunity to provide input concerning undertakings with the potential to affect historic properties and/or traditional cultural properties. As the land management resource plan (LMRP) will not list site-specific projects on the grasslands, the Forest Service will carry out the Section 106 review process, as described in 36 CFR 800, on all classes of undertakings resulting from the plan that have the potential to affect historic properties and are not specifically

exempted from SHPO consultation under the *Programmatic Agreement*. The minimum management standard is to achieve a “no adverse effect” on heritage resources.

The Santa Fe National Historic Trail occupies 2.4 miles of the Kiowa National Grassland north of Clayton, NM. As well as being a national landmark, the Trail is a heritage resource of the Kiowa National Grassland. Under the statutory authority of the National Trails System Act the Secretary of the Interior is responsible for administering the Trail on federally owned lands, in cooperation with the Secretary of Agriculture. Pursuant to the Act, a Comprehensive Management and Use Plan outlines objectives and practices to be observed in the management of the Trail. There is also a General Agreement between the National Park Service and the Forest Service that outlines the responsibilities of each agency in regards to the marking, administration and management of the Trail.

Other laws and policy include:

- FSM 2360 - Heritage Program Management
- National Environmental Policy Act 1969
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act 1978
- Archaeological Resources Protection Act 1979
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act 1990
- Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (The Farm Bill)
- Executive Orders 13287, 13175, 13007, 11593
- Executive Memo November 5, 2009
- U.S. Forest Service Tribal Relations Strategic Plan

Methodology and Analysis Process

The plan components (ie., objectives, suitability, guidelines, standards, and monitoring elements) and management approaches of other resource areas were evaluated against the desired conditions for heritage resources to determine if achieving the desired conditions was affected positively, negatively, or not at all.

Assumptions

In the analysis for this resource, the following assumptions have been made:

- The land management plan provides a programmatic framework for future site-specific actions.
- Land management plans do not have direct effects. They do not authorize or mandate any site-specific projects or activities (including ground-disturbing actions).
- Land management plans may have implications, or environmental consequences, of managing the forests under a programmatic framework.
- The plan decisions (desired conditions, objectives, standards, guidelines, management areas, monitoring) will be followed when planning or implementing site-specific projects and activities.

- Law, policy, and regulations will be followed when planning or implementing site-specific projects and activities.
- Monitoring will occur and the land management plan will be amended, as needed.
- We will be funded similar to past budget levels (past 5 years).
- The planning timeframe is 15 years; other timeframes may be analyzed depending on the resource (usually a discussion of anticipated trends into the future).

Revision Topics Addressed in this Analysis

Human Influences on the Grasslands – Cultural Properties

Existing laws, regulations, and policies provide the legal direction for the management of heritage resources. Because of these heritage resources on the Grasslands have been protected from the management activities of other resources and the interests of external proponents. Heritage resources have also been identified, documented, and evaluated in a manner consistent with the policies of the State Historic Preservation Offices of New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The management of heritage resources will continue to be treated equal in importance to the management of the natural resources as specified by all the laws and policies of the United States, the Forest Service and the individual states.

Heritage resources on the Grasslands would most benefit from the continued improvement in rehabilitation and conservation measures on the historical properties that have been identified as providing the best opportunities for protection, interpretation and involvement of the public. This change would include annual outreach and education, a volunteer site steward program to monitor particularly sensitive and vandalized sites, and the stabilization and interpretation of additional historical properties for the benefit of the resource and the public.

Heritage tourism is a viable area of growth for the small and rural populations within the Grasslands. Preserving and maintaining heritage resources by partnering with the public, and other interested parties, potentially provides economic opportunity for the surrounding rural communities.

Summary of Alternatives

Alternative A provides heritage resources with protection from other management activities, directs heritage resources to be in line with federal statutes and state authorities, and calls for proactive preservation, interpretation, and monitoring measures.

Alternative B augments the federal statutes and state authorities and preservation and interpretation practices with additional grasslands-wide preservation projects, public outreach, interpretation, and a site steward program.

Alternative C does not differ from Alternative B with respect to heritage resources.

Description of Affected Environment (Existing Condition)

Kiowa and Rita Blanca National Grasslands

Heritage resource survey is extremely limited on the KRB National Grasslands. Most surveys have been for range improvements, fence lines, utility corridors, and small wildlife projects. These are typically less than ten acres and are often linear. Some block surveys with substantial acreage have been conducted for fuels projects. Surveyed acres on the KRB total 15,087. This represents only 6% of total grasslands acreage. Two hundred and twenty seven (227) heritage resources have been documented on the KRB. The majority of recorded sites are Anglo-European in nature, consisting of ranching and farming homestead features and artifacts. The other site type consists of prehistoric and historic Native American artifact scatters.

The area around the KRB has small and widely distributed rural populations and lacks a presence of commercial development infrastructure (wind farms, oil and gas wells, cell phone towers, etc.). With cattle grazing as the largest going concern on the KRB, the majority of the ground-disturbing undertakings are for grazing infrastructure such as wells, stock tanks, water lines, and fences. Damage done to Native American heritage resources largely came about in the historic era through farming, ranching, collecting of artifacts, and the environmental degradation of the Dust Bowl. The homestead sites range in condition from foundations only to standing walls with a large number of artifacts.

Five heritage resources have been designated as Priority Heritage Assets and as such receive frequent monitoring for changes in condition and need for maintenance. These sites include two homestead complexes and three prehistoric rock shelters. Many preservation and interpretation opportunities still exist on the Kiowa-Rita Blanca National Grasslands.

Black Kettle and McClellan Creek National Grasslands

There has been much more survey on the BKMC National Grasslands; 18,900 acres have been surveyed for heritage resources, or 57%. Four hundred and thirty (430) sites have been recorded. The most numerous recorded site type on these lands is the Native American lithic scatter, with historic remains a distant second.

Areas around the BKMC have higher and denser population levels and more development infrastructure such as natural gas wells and pipelines. Heritage resources were historically damaged by farming and ranching activities, as well as by environmental circumstances. The homestead sites have much less integrity than those on the KRB, with few retaining standing walls.

Currently there is one Priority Heritage Asset on the BKMC, a prehistoric Native American site. The visitor's interpretive trail located adjacent to the District office holds the best opportunity for a heritage resources project on the BKMC.

Environmental Consequences

The land management plan provides a programmatic framework that guides site-specific actions but does not authorize, fund, or carryout any project or activity. Because the land management plan does not authorize or mandate any site-specific activities or ground-disturbing actions there can be no direct effects. However, there may be implications, or longer term environmental consequences, of managing the forests under this programmatic framework.

There would be no environmental consequences to heritage resources on the Grasslands from Alternative A. Alternative A set standards and guidelines for agency compliance, and preservation, stabilization, and interpretation for the education and enjoyment of the public. The program would continue to be managed to standard based on the laws, regulations, and policies set forth in the 1985 plan, as well as by all laws, regulations, and policies that have transpired since.

There would be no environmental consequences to heritage resources on the Grasslands from Alternative B or C. These alternatives would still mandate agency compliance of heritage resource protection, as well as accomplish goals that enhance the overall stewardship standards of the program, add to the publics' enjoyment and education, and promote the economic potential of the surrounding communities.

Cumulative Environmental Consequences

There should be no cumulative environmental consequences to heritage resources.

Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

The land management plan provides a programmatic framework that guides site-specific actions but does not authorize, fund, or carryout any project or activity. Before any ground-disturbing actions take place, they must be authorized in a subsequent environmental analysis. Therefore none of the alternatives cause unavoidable adverse impacts.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

The land management plan provides a programmatic framework that guides site-specific actions but does not authorize, fund, or carryout any project or activity. Because the land management plan does not authorize or mandate any ground-disturbing actions, none of the alternatives cause an irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources.

Adaptive Management

All alternatives assume the use of adaptive management principles. Forest Service decisions are made as part of an on-going process, including planning, implementing projects, and monitoring and evaluation. The land management plan identifies a monitoring program. Monitoring the results of actions will provide a flow of information that may indicate the need to change a course of action or the land management plan. Scientific findings and the needs of society may also indicate the need to adapt resource management to new information. The Forest Supervisor annually evaluates the monitoring information displayed in the evaluation reports through a

management review and determines if any changes are needed in management actions or the plan itself. In general, annual evaluations of the monitoring information consider the following questions:

- What are the effects of resource management activities on the productivity of the land?
- To what degree are resource management activities maintaining or making progress toward the desired conditions and objectives for the plan?
- What changes are needed to account for unanticipated changes in conditions?

In addition to annual monitoring and evaluation, the Forest Supervisor reviews the conditions on the land covered by the plan at least every 5 years to determine whether conditions or demands of the public have changed significantly. The forest plan is ordinarily revised on a 10-year cycle and the Forest Supervisor may amend the plan at any time.

Consistency with Law, Regulation, and Policy

All alternatives are designed to guide the Kiowa, Rita Blanca, Black Kettle and McClellan Creek National Grasslands' management activities in meeting federal law, regulations, and policy.

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