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SCOTTS BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT

General Management Plan

1998

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GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
for
SCOTTS BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Midwest Support Office
Omaha, Nebraska

RECOMMENDED:

Superintendent, Scotts Bluff National Monument and Agate Fossil Beds National Monument — Date: 8/13/98

APPROVED:

Director, Midwest Region — Date: 8/17/98

1998

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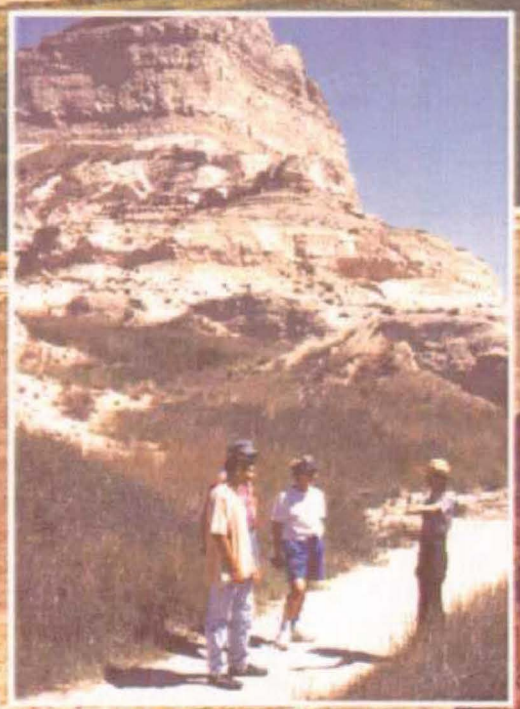
General Information



SECTION I

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
for
SCOTTS BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT

Section I

GENERAL INFORMATION

Purpose of this General Management Plan

The purpose of this *General Management Plan for Scotts Bluff National Monument (GMP)* is to provide the conceptual framework that will guide the management of Scotts Bluff National Monument (hereafter referred to as the "Monument") for the next 10 to 20 years. It replaces the outdated *Master Plan for Scotts Bluff National Monument* that was written in 1976.

This *GMP* presents practical, innovative, and cost-effective management prescriptions for the future management of the Monument. These prescriptions meet the needs of the Monument, its resources, and the visitors, and fully support **(1)** the purpose and mission of the Monument, as defined by the original Presidential Proclamation of 1919 that created the Monument, **(2)** the larger mission of the National Park Service (NPS), as defined in that agency's 1916 Organic Act, and **(3)** the established laws and policies of the United States. In addition, this plan embraces and promotes the concept of *sustainable design*, which is the philosophy that human development should exemplify the principles of conservation and encourage the application of those principles in our daily lives -- that is, to enhance the capability of natural and cultural systems to maintain themselves over time.

An *Environmental Assessment (EA)* was prepared in conjunction with the *Draft GMP*. Public and agency review of the *Draft GMP* has resulted in the preparation of a *Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)* (see Appendix C). These two documents fulfill compliance responsibilities required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as amended.

Reasons for Developing this General Management Plan

Since the 1976 *Master Plan* was developed, Monument functions have outgrown the available infrastructure and additional developments have occurred relative to the Monument's resources. As a result, Monument facilities as of 1998 are now inadequate for visitors and employees. The scope and direction provided by the 1976 *Master Plan* has been overwhelmed by these internal and external developments. By virtue of this inadequacy, any further implementation of the old *Master Plan* may have inadvertently caused adverse impacts to natural and cultural features within the Monument. This situation was beginning to jeopardize the NPS's ability to carry out its mission at the Monument, as directed by the 1919 Presidential Proclamation.

As of 1998, the following trends and conditions contributed to the need for this new *General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment* for Scotts Bluff National Monument.

- Ongoing urban expansion adjacent to the Monument's boundaries was significantly degrading the overall quality of the Monument visitors' experiences by altering the historic setting. This was especially true for visitors who approached the Monument on Highway 92 from the east and who viewed the surrounding countryside from the Monument's summit.

- Monument visitors were experiencing antiquated and/or severely undersized public facilities, such as the Monument's education and interpretive facilities and its public restrooms. This included the existing public information desk in the museum, which serves as the primary visitor contact point where information on the museum, the Monument, and the area was disseminated. This desk was too small and functionally inadequate to handle visitors even during routine days, let alone on busy days with tour buses.

- Visitor use of the auditorium was conflicting with their use of exhibit space in the museum. There was not enough space to handle both functions without conflict, especially since one of the museum's exhibit rooms had to be modified to function as a makeshift auditorium. Therefore, the exhibits in that room could not be viewed by visitors when an "auditorium" program is in progress.

- The existing maintenance facility was functionally overcrowded. This situation not only created difficult and inefficient working conditions but could also have resulted in potential safety concerns for employees.

- The existing public information desk in the museum also operated in conjunction with the nearby sales area for books and general Monument or Overland Trail-related educational and/or informational materials. This function conflicted with the adjacent exhibit areas in that there was inadequate space for these two functions in this locale. There were no other locations within the Museum where this function could have effectively taken place without conflicting with exhibits.

- Monument administrative offices were functionally inadequate and were not of a size to practically or effectively house the administrative function or its associated equipment.

- Although Robidoux Pass lies seven miles southwest of the Monument, it has strong associations with the primary theme of the Monument. This pass contains an early route of the Oregon-California Trail, which predates the Mitchell Pass (Scotts Bluff) route. It was believed that the pass would benefit from formalized protection of its cultural and historic values.

Robidoux Pass was already designated as a National Historic Landmark (listed 1984) with most of the approximately 1,000 acres of the pass existing in private ownership and used for grazing cattle. The private landowners were providing some degree of protection for the remnants of the Oregon-California Trail, and other associated historic resources, such as pioneer grave sites and the site of the first Robidoux Trading Post. A private, non-profit organization, the "Oregon-California Trails Association," had worked with these private landowners to place interpretive markers at some of these specific sites. Unfortunately, soil compaction and erosion from pedestrian traffic had degraded the sparsely vegetated soils at these locations. In addition, there were occasional instances of vandalism to gravestones and markers as well as trespass onto these private lands. Moreover, cattle were not excluded from the historic Oregon-California Trail remnant in the pass.

As of 1998 there were no strong developmental pressures directly on the pass and none were anticipated within the immediate future due to the lack of adequate groundwater sources within the pass. However, pressure from increased visitation due to ongoing interest in the history of the Overland Trail migrations was estimated to continue. In conclusion, there was no long-term assurance of formal or mandatory protection for the pass and the 1976 *Master Plan* did not address Robidoux Pass.

- Since 1976, four new national historic trails (NHTs) had been designated by Congress, all of them passing through or within site of the Monument, namely the Oregon NHT, the California NHT, the Mormon Pioneer NHT, and the Pony Express NHT. These designations broadened the context of the Monument to the emigrant trails and tied it to many other trail-related sites in the several states through which these trails passed.

- The cities of Scottsbluff and Gering were interested in implementing an inter-community trail network with *Monument Valley Pathways, Inc.* with the hope of connecting it to the Monument's trail system.

- Both Scotts Bluff N.M. and Agate Fossil Beds N.M. (which is administered by Scotts Bluff N.M.) had been included in the NPS's "cluster park approach" for natural resource funding to facilitate long-range inventory and monitoring of the flora and fauna of both Monuments.

- Planning agencies in western Nebraska had been aggressively marketing the region to promote increased tourism. Concurrently, the State of Nebraska was upgrading State Highway 71 between Kimball and Gering (which bisects the cities of Scottsbluff and Gering) to promote increased tourism and other development.

General Description of Scotts Bluff National Monument

Scotts Bluff National Monument contains 3,003.03 acres of prairie and bluff habitat, situated in the panhandle region of western Nebraska. The Monument abuts the North Platte River adjacent to Gering, Nebraska, and is also adjacent to the City of Scottsbluff in Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska. This massive 800-foot high promontory became a notable natural landmark and resting place along the Oregon/California/Mormon and Pony Express Trails **(henceforth collectively referred to in this document as the *Overland Trail*, except when only certain trails apply to a particular area)** during the early to middle Nineteenth Century. The Monument was established in 1919 by Presidential Proclamation. It is recognized primarily for its historical significance and unique geological features, the latter consisting of steep, rocky, siltstone and sandstone bluffs, ridges which extend from them, and areas of badland formations. The Monument also contains significant fossil deposits within its geological strata.

Scotts Bluff National Monument's visitor and support facilities are located approximately two miles west of Gering along State Highway 92. These facilities include a 6,700 square foot museum/visitor center, a 1,140 square foot administrative building, a ranger residence, a 4,000 square foot maintenance building, a maintenance yard, and a visitor parking lot. Originating from the visitor center are a bicycle path and a foot path to the Overland Trail remnant. Another footpath leads to the top of Scotts Bluff, and a 1.6-mile paved road allows visitors to drive to the crest of Scotts Bluff. The Summit Road passes through three tunnels and terminates at the Summit parking lot. Interpretive exhibits and signs are located along the trails as well as along the Overland Trail roadbed.

The Monument is highly representative of the NPS's "Settlement/Migration" theme of national significance. The notable resources located here include the physical landmark of Scotts Bluff itself, the Overland Trail wagon roadbed, a museum devoted to the interpretation of the Overland Trail experience, and a collection of Depression-era structures. Besides possibly having been an important natural and cultural feature to the American Indians prior to European migrations and settlement in the area, the Monument was a major psychological and natural landmark feature for travelers on the Overland Trail and during the construction of the first transcontinental telegraph.

In summary, the Monument's 1919 Presidential Proclamation defines the significance of Scotts Bluff as a landmark to emigrants and frontiersmen traveling the Overland Trail on their journey to the west, and recognizes the unique geology of the bluff and surrounding terrain. The purpose of its designation as a national monument is to preserve existing remains of the trails and trail experience; the natural resources, including associated flora and fauna; the scientific interest in the geology of the bluff, which also includes the fossils of the area; and the scenic views one has from the summit of Scotts Bluff. Copies of legislation pertinent to Scotts Bluff National Monument can be found in Appendix A.

Scotts Bluff National Monument
And the Oregon/California Trail

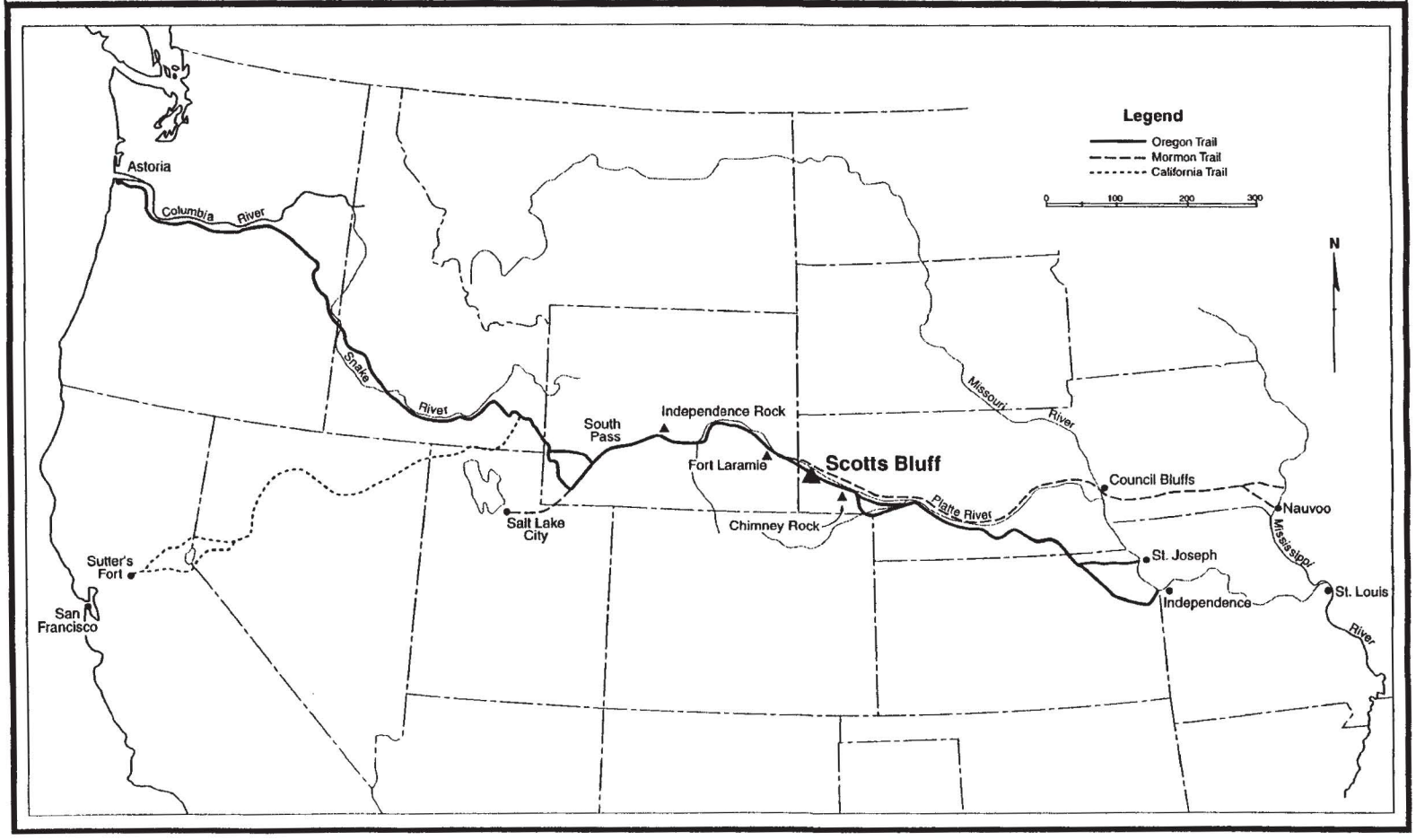


Figure 1. Map of the Scotts Bluff National Monument Region & Oregon Trail.

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Existing Conditions

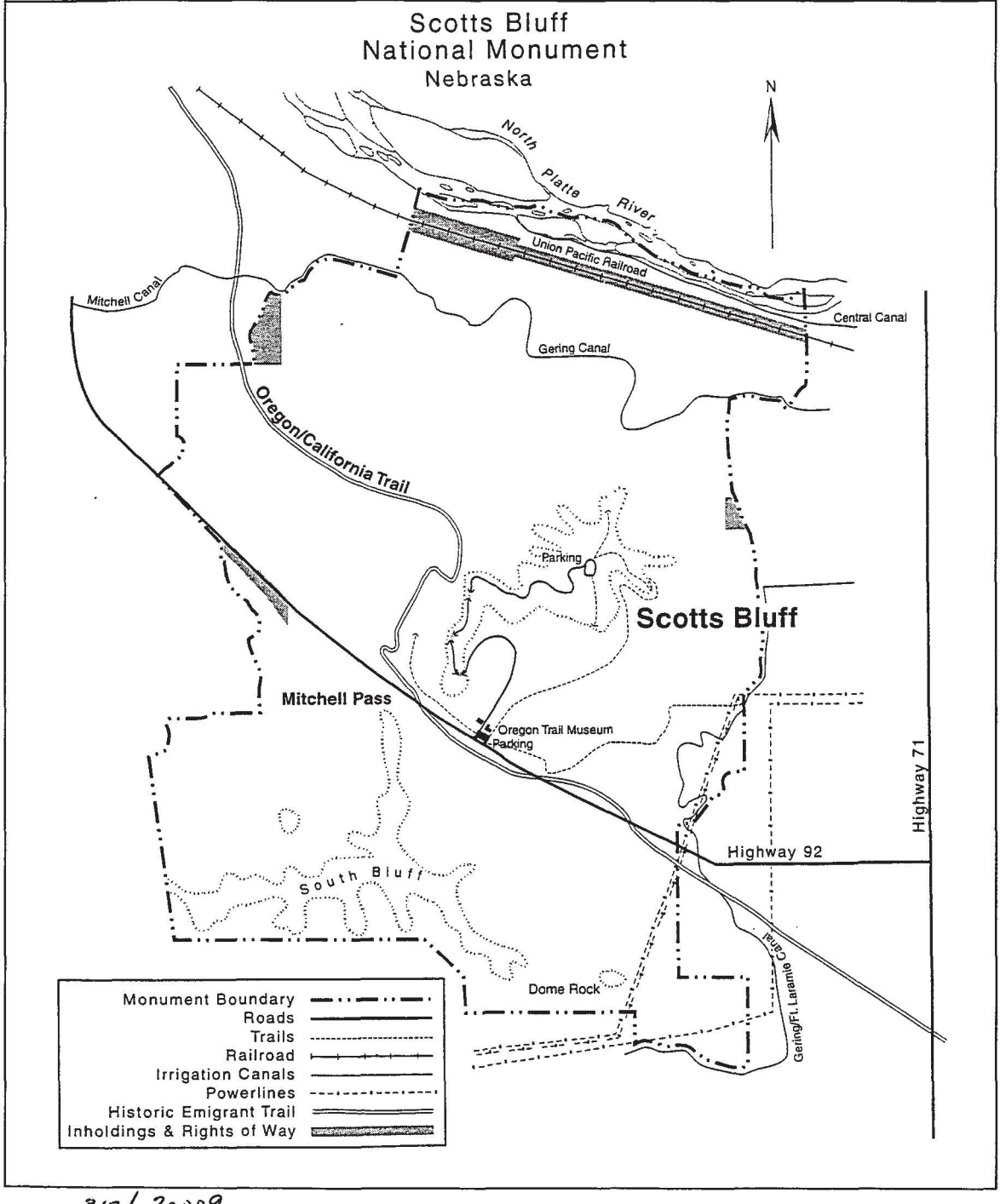

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Figure 2. Existing Conditions at Scotts Bluff National Monument.

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Purpose and Significance of Scotts Bluff National Monument

Scotts Bluff National Monument was established by Presidential Proclamation on December 12, 1919 (No. 1547-41 Stat. 1779). This proclamation defines the significance of the Monument:

> *"Whereas Scotts Bluff is the highest known point within the State of Nebraska, affording a view for miles over the surrounding country; Whereas Mitchell Pass, lying to the south of said bluff, was traversed by the old Oregon Trail and said bluff was used as a landmark and rendezvous to thousands of emigrants and frontiersmen travelling said trail enroute for new homes in the Northwest; and*
>
> *"Whereas, in view of these facts, as well as of the scientific interest the region possesses from a geological standpoint, it appears that the public interests will be promoted by reserving the lands on which the said bluff and the said pass are located as a national Monument."*
>
> *"Warning is hereby given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate or injure any natural feature of this Monument, or to occupy, exploit, settle or locate upon any of the lands reserved by this proclamation."*

Therefore, the 1919 Presidential Proclamation consists of the following specific elements:

Scotts Bluff - The bluff itself as the primary feature within the Monument;

Highest Point - At the time of the Presidential Proclamation, Scotts Bluff was thought to be the highest point in Nebraska. It has since been determined that the highest point in Nebraska is situated in the extreme southwestern corner of the state's Panhandle area. However, the recognition of the prominence of Scotts Bluff to the landscape is important.

View - The view, which goes hand-in-hand with the proclamation's statement that Scotts Bluff was the highest point in the state, can be interpreted in several ways: 1) The view of Scotts Bluff as the emigrants and frontiersmen approached from the east on their journey west; 2) The view from the summit which allows a person to see a great distance in all directions, although it is believed that few of the early emigrants actually saw the view from the top due to the lack of time and lack of an established path to ascend the bluff; and 3) The viewshed or scenic landscape stretching from Chimney Rock to the east and Laramie Peak to the west.

Mitchell Pass - Recognition of the charge to protect Mitchell Pass, which afforded emigrants a passage west without having to cross over Scotts Bluffs, as they were called at that time, or the adjacent North Platte River. The proclamation is specific in defining the Monument as the immediate area, not to include the range of hills stretching south to the present day Wildcat Hills.

Oregon Trail - The Monument is charged to protect the remnants of the Oregon Trail, which are still visible within the established boundaries of the Monument. This protection is extended, in practice, by the Monument today to include all Overland trail components within its jurisdiction.

Landmark - Scotts Bluff was a physical landmark to the emigrants and an indication that they had completed the first segment of their journey. It also served the emigrants as a psychological milestone, for upon reaching Scotts Bluff the weary travelers were often inspired, refreshed, and strengthened to continue. Similarly important Oregon Trail landmarks include Chimney Rock to the east, the view of Laramie Peak to the west, and further west, Independence Rock and South Pass.

Geological Features - The geology of the region also had a significant influence on the immigrants. The North Platte River carved a valley that aided travelers because of its flat, smooth topography and general east-west orientation. The badlands were impassable to wagons and forced travelers away from the river. The bluffs were only traversed after the route was physically modified to allow wagons to pass through them. Scotts Bluff is also one of several geological resources of scientific interest that exists at the Monument and requires preservation.

Public Enjoyment and Interpretation - The NPS's Organic Act charges the agency with the ongoing preservation and interpretation of the Monument and its related features for public enjoyment for generations to come.

Protection of the Monument and its Related Features - The Presidential Proclamation clearly warns all unauthorized persons not to appropriate or injure any natural feature of this Monument, or to occupy, exploit, settle or locate upon any of the lands reserved by this proclamation. This also includes the charge, as stated in the Boundary Revision Authorization Act of June 30, 1961 (75 Stat. 148): for the NPS *"...to preserve the scenic and historic integrity of Scotts Bluff and adjacent features..."*.

In addition to the language presented in the Presidential Proclamation that created Scotts Bluff National Monument, general preservation and management direction is provided by the Act of August 25, 1916, which established the NPS and which, by extension, states the overall mission for areas managed by the NPS:

> *"...promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations...by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."*

The Boundary Revision Authorization Act stated above also serves to adjust the boundaries of the Monument in order *"...to preserve the scenic and historic integrity of Scotts Bluff and adjacent features..."*.

After reviewing the 1919 Presidential Proclamation, along with applicable NPS laws and policies, the *GMP* planning team with input from an *ad hoc* citizen's group has determined the following purpose and significance statements for Scotts Bluff National Monument:

PURPOSE OF THE MONUMENT

- Preserve and interpret the history of the Platte River transportation corridor and the influence of Scotts Bluff on these routes.

- Provide access, to preserve, and interpret the view from the top of Scotts Bluff.

- Preserve and interpret the geological processes and features of Scotts Bluff and adjacent landforms.

- Preserve the prairie ecosystem around the bluffs as it was used by American Indians, emigrants, and frontier people.

- Preserve and interpret the Monument's cultural resources: archeological sites, Oregon Trail remnants, historic buildings, museum collections, and the cultural landscape.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MONUMENT

- Along this transportation corridor passed many different people including American Indians, fur traders/trappers, explorers, pathfinders, Oregon settlers, soldiers, fortune hunters bound for California, Mormon pioneers, freighters, road ranch operators, Pony Express riders, and telegraph construction workers.

- The summit of Scotts Bluff provides views for miles of the North Platte River transportation corridor. Resting travelers often mentioned the bluffs in their recollections. The area's badlands forced the trail to divert from the North Platte River through Robidoux and Mitchell Passes where trail remnants still exist.

- Scotts Bluff offers a unique setting for the study and appreciation of the many trails that have traversed the North Platte River Valley. These trails have evolved from the time of the earliest Plains inhabitants 8,000 to 10,000 years ago, through modern American Indian peoples, through the fur trade era, during the period of the various westward migration routes of the nineteenth century, and up to contemporary developments.

- The Monument's museum contains the largest single collection of paintings by photographer/artist William Henry Jackson, one of the great chroniclers of the Oregon Trail and the westward migration. These 65 paintings dramatically, but accurately, portray scenes of American frontier life seldom fully captured by written description or photography, including depictions of the Pony Express, the California Gold Rush and the Mormon Exodus.

- Scotts Bluff National Monument offers a nearly intact example of a Civilian Conservation Corps construction and development project.

- Scotts Bluff is one of several geological resources of scientific interest that exists at the Monument and requires preservation. Scotts Bluff is situated in a deeply eroded area of the central part of the High Plains section of the Great Plains geographic region. Such prominent erosional features as Scotts Bluff are uncommon within this region of the West and represent eroded remnants of the older, higher areas of the High Plains that were formed from the uplifting of the Rocky Mountains. Another significant aspect of the Scotts Bluff's geology is its badlands area with its fossil-bearing strata. Some of the richest fossil-bearing strata in Nebraska are found here. Scotts Bluff fossils have become type, or indicator, fossils for the Oligocene Epoch (40-25 million years before present) of the Cenozoic Era (65 million years to present). Many other fossils could still exist within the Monument, so further paleontological research within Monument boundaries could be productive.

Special Considerations During the Planning Process

Applicable Legislative and Administrative Requirements

In addition to the general planning information listed above, Scotts Bluff National Monument also has certain legislative and administrative considerations that directly affected the Monument's planning and operations.

- The Office of the Superintendent of Scotts Bluff National Monument also administers Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, located 50 miles to the north/northwest of Scotts Bluff in Nebraska.

- The Act of October 20, 1976, (P.L. 94-578) limits the Monument's total appropriations for the acquisition of additional lands and/or easements to $145,000, of which only a fraction remains.

- The Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, mandates consideration of the effects of federal undertakings on cultural resources that are listed or may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

- The cultural resources of the area are subject to the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 and the Antiquities Act of 1906.

- The Monument is under concurrent jurisdiction. Federal and State laws and regulations apply.

- The *Federal Register* of December 14, 1962 (F.R. Doc. 62-12403), formally established the boundaries of the Monument.

- The National Trails System Act of 1968, as amended (PL 90-5543), stipulates that significant Federally-owned sites along the national historic trails shall be considered "Federal protection components" of these trails.

- The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (PL 91-190), is the basic national charter for environmental protection.

- Executive Order 11593, "Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment," May 13, 1971, was codified as part of the 1980 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (P.L. 96-515).

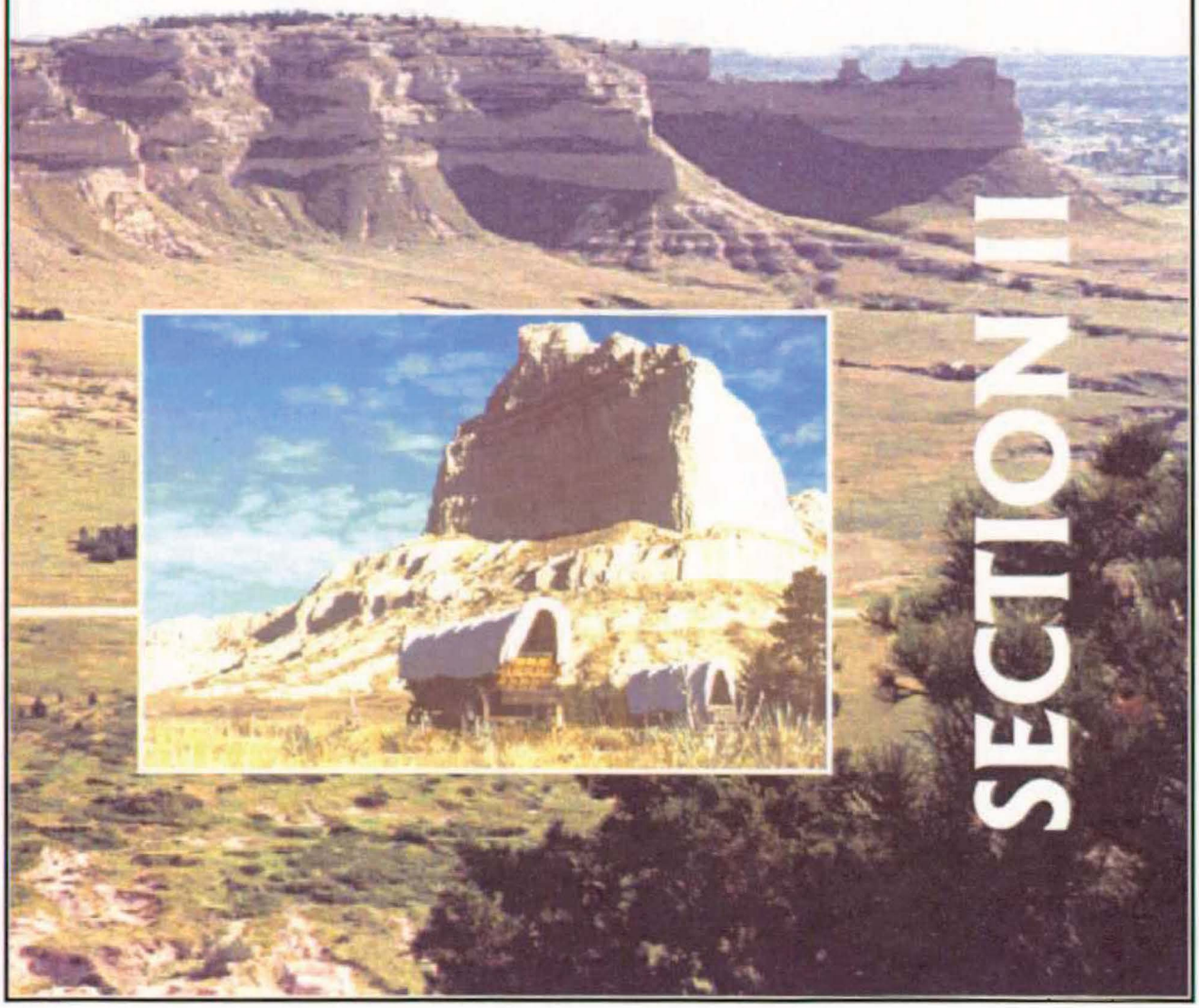
- The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-60), in part, assigns ownership or control of Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony that are excavated or discovered on federal land or tribal land after passage of the act to lineal descendants or culturally affiliated Native American groups. Federal agencies and museums that receive federal funding must inventory Native American human remains and associated funerary objects in their possession or control and identify their cultural and geographic affiliations.

Summary of *Boundary Study* Recommendations

A *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* was initiated in conjunction with this *General Management Plan* for the purpose of determining **(1)** if there are any other sites or features in the area that have significance pertaining to the story interpreted at Scotts Bluff National Monument, and **(2)** if there is a need to protect these sites and features for the future in some fashion or possibly add them to the Monument. The study concluded that the NPS should pursue a Congressionally-authorized adjustment of the Monument's boundaries to include the identified lands comprising a 20-acre tract located on the Monument's eastern boundary (already under federal ownership), the lands comprising the historic Robidoux Pass area (approximately 1,000 acres), as well as two identified tracts adjacent to Scotts Bluff National Monument (188 acres). The purpose of this action is to preserve the important natural and cultural resources of these tracts, as well as their inward and outward scenic vistas, relative to the overall preservation of the Scotts Bluff story.

It was also concluded that there are other high-priority tracts, totaling approximately 320 acres, that are located adjacent to the Monument. These tracts are important both to the future protection of the Monument's natural and cultural resources and to the ongoing preservation of the story of the Overland Trail migration as told through Scotts Bluff National Monument. Therefore, this study also recommends that the Superintendent of Scotts Bluff National Monument continue discussions with the neighboring landowners about possible future inclusion of their high-priority tracts within the Monument.

General Management Plan for Scotts Bluff National Monument



SECTION II

Section II

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Having completed an environmental assessment *(EA)* to determine its impacts to the human environment, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), and having completed thorough public and agency review, the following final *General Management Plan for Scotts Bluff National Monument* has been developed to provide the conceptual framework that will guide the management of the Monument for the next 10 to 20 years. Public and agency review of the *Draft GMP* and its *EA* has resulted in the preparation of a *Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)*, as found in Appendix C. These two documents fulfill compliance responsibilities required by the NEPA.

As stated above, this plan embraces and promotes the concept of *sustainable design*, which encourages human development to enhance the capability of natural and cultural systems to maintain themselves over time. To facilitate this, two types of strategies are incorporated in this *GMP:* **(1)** those required to properly manage the Monument's resources, and **(2)** those required to provide for appropriate visitor use and interpretation of those resources. Using these strategies, the *GMP* identifies programs, actions, and support facilities necessary for efficient Monument operation and visitor use. Throughout the planning effort, full consideration was given to the Monument's regional context and those related influences. This *GMP* incorporates up-to-date information and reflects current conditions at the Monument. It also sets forth the fundamental management philosophy for the Monument, based on the Monument's purpose and significance as defined by its authorizing 1919 Presidential Proclamation, and presents strategies for addressing identified management issues and achieving identified management objectives over a 10 to 20-year period.

The following management prescriptions were developed during the *Draft GMP* planning process to qualitatively describe desired resource conditions, appropriate kinds of visitor experiences and levels of use, management activities, and development actions that are needed for achieving the monument's legislated purpose. They reflect the selected *preferred alternative* that was presented in the *Draft GMP* and are written to address specific planning issues that were identified during the development of the *Draft GMP.*

Specific Management Prescriptions for Identified Issues

1. *Protection of Robidoux Pass*

Protection of Natural & Cultural Resource Values through NPS Acquisition

The NPS will pursue a Congressionally-authorized adjustment of the Monument's boundaries to include the identified lands comprising the historic Robidoux Pass area (approximately 1,000 acres) as concluded in the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* (see Figure 3). The purpose of this acquisition is to preserve the important natural and cultural resources of these tracts as they relate to the overall preservation and interpretation of the Scotts Bluff and Overland Trail story. These lands should be acquired through donation, exchange, or purchase in fee simple title. The NPS will also work with private landowners and appropriate agencies, groups, and organizations to encourage increased public awareness and protection of the pass and its resources. The NPS will develop a program to interpret the cultural resources and historic significance of the pass, such as through the provision of non-personal visitor services and low-impact visitor facilities.

2. *High-Voltage Lines*

Remove the Visual Intrusion of the High-Voltage Power Lines to Minimize Impacts on the Monument's Natural and Cultural Landscapes

The NPS will work with the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) and the Roosevelt Public Power District (RPPD) and any other appropriate party, along with local, regional, and state agencies, to reroute the lines to reduce the visual/aesthetic intrusion of these lines on the Monument's natural and cultural landscapes. The Monument will oppose any action that increases visual or physical intrusion from these lines. Removal of these lines from Monument property would end the need for further maintenance of these particular power lines by WAPA or RPPD on Monument property, end the need for these utilities to drive vehicles across Monument property to service these lines and poles, and greatly reduce or eliminate the need for annual flyovers by low-flying helicopters to check these lines near Monument property.

3. *Summit Road and Parking Area*

Provide Public Transportation System to Summit and Minimize Changes to the Historic Character of the Summit Road and Parking Area

The Summit Road and parking area will remain in their current alignment and location. The historic character of these features will be protected and future expansions or changes in alignment, width, or surface materials will be strictly minimized. Maintenance activities will be conducted based on current programs and needs. The Monument will establish a regularly scheduled public transportation system, such as a shuttle, from the primary interpretive facility to the Summit. The system should include an interpretive message to provide an additional means for the public to understand and appreciate the Monument. The use of this shuttle system will negate the need for any expansion of the Summit Road or parking facilities. The NPS will evaluate the cost-effectiveness of such a system. If it proves not to be cost effective, the NPS will have to reevaluate this area, with the possibility that improvements to the Summit Road system, expansion of its parking area, or visitor limitations may eventually be necessary.

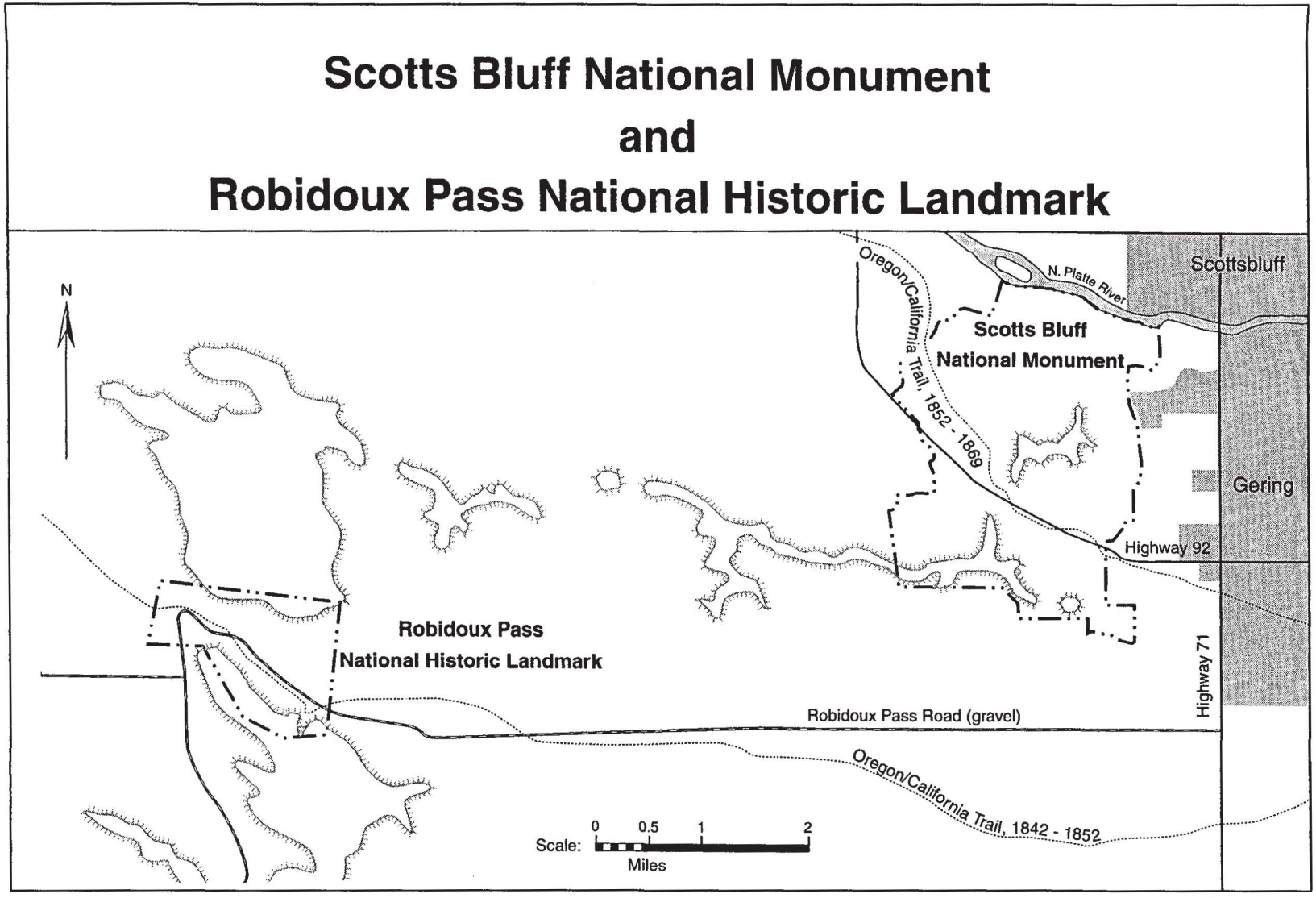


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Figure 3. Scotts Bluff N.M. & Robidoux Pass NHL.

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4. *Monument Facilities: Administrative, Maintenance, and Visitor Services*

Relocate Administrative and Maintenance Functions Off-Site; Retain Visitor Contact Services in CCC Structures

The Monument will relocate its administrative offices and maintenance functions from their present location in the CCC-era structures within the Monument to a site somewhere outside the Monument's boundaries. The NPS will lease or construct new office space, possibly in Gering or Scottsbluff, to provide adequate facilities. A leased or newly constructed facility would provide larger, improved office space, maintenance shop, and storage space. If construction of a new facility is selected, the Monument will work to identify a potential building site and seek that area's inclusion into the Monument's boundaries through a Congressionally-authorized boundary adjustment. The exact location and design of this facility would be guided by follow-up preconstruction planning. The Monument will use the space vacated by the administrative and maintenance operations to develop more thorough interpretation of the Overland Trails and related subjects. There should also be some interpretation of the CCC-era structures and landscape features that were constructed to commemorate this chapter of the Overland Trail and the westward migration saga. New and improved restroom facilities will be developed, as needs and conditions dictate, while retaining sensitivity to the complex's CCC-era design. These actions address the need for more space for all functions, and keep the more pertinent visitor services functions with the resources to be interpreted (Overland Trail, CCC-era work, etc.). Visitor services and the overall visitor experience will be improved. By retaining an active use of the CCC structures, these actions will help the NPS to remain in compliance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which, in part, directs federal agencies to use, to the maximum extent feasible, historic properties.

5. *Adjacent Recreation Trails*

Continue with Existing Commitments to Proposed Trails

The Monument will continue to honor its commitment to allow *Monument Valley Pathways* to link its trails to Monument lands. Trails are an appropriate recreational use of Monument lands, with due consideration and sensitivity for resource protection and public safety. The Monument will restrict the alignment of the *Pathways* trail to previously disturbed lands, such as along existing canal roads through the badlands, in order to minimize impacts to and risks of disturbing archeological sites, the Overland Trail remnants, and other natural (including paleontological) or cultural resources. The Monument will provide interpretive opportunities for the users of its segment of this trail by developing such interpretive media as wayside exhibits and trail guides to interpret the Monument's natural and cultural resources. This will provide a way for visitors to see the badlands on the northeast side of the Monument and will help them to fully comprehend why the Oregon-California Trails, in particular, passed through Robidoux Pass and Mitchell Pass. Instigation of this action would require NEPA compliance.

6. *Visual and Scenic Qualities*

NPS Works with All Parties to Maintain & Restore Integrity of the Surrounding Historically Significant Viewshed

The NPS will actively work with local, regional, and state agencies, as well as with private landowners, to maintain or restore the integrity of the viewshed that is of historic significance to Scotts Bluff. This cooperative effort will work to minimize the degradation of air quality at the Monument, as well as in the North Platte River Valley, and to protect the integrity of the area's geologic features and distant views of the surrounding area, as mandated by Presidential Proclamation.

7. *Adequacy of Monument Boundaries*

Implementation of *Boundary Study* Recommendations

Scotts Bluff National Monument will implement the recommendations presented in the *"Conclusions"* section of the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* (on file at the Monument). The study concluded that the NPS should pursue a Congressionally-authorized adjustment of the Monument's boundaries to include the identified lands comprising a 20-acre tract located on the Monument's eastern boundary (already under federal ownership), the lands comprising the historic Robidoux Pass area (approximately 1,000 acres, as stated under *Protection of Robidoux Pass*, above), as well as two identified tracts adjacent to Scotts Bluff National Monument (188 acres), followed by acquisition of these last three tracts. Acquisition of these lands should be through donation, exchange, or purchase in fee simple title. The purpose of this action is to preserve the important natural and cultural resources of these tracts, *as well as their inward and outward scenic vistas*, as they relate to the overall preservation and interpretation of the Scotts Bluff and Overland Trail story.

If authorized by Congress, the Secretary of the Interior may acquire the lands and interests therein described in the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange, provided that such lands or interests therein may only be acquired with the consent of the owner, unless proposed changes to the use or condition of these lands by the owner poses an eminent threat to the preservation of the natural, cultural, or scenic and viewshed resources and qualities of Scotts Bluff National Monument, as described in its enabling Presidential Proclamation of December 12, 1919, and subsequent addenda.

Additional consideration should be given to the fact that the *National Trails System Act of 1968, as amended* (PL 90-543) established a national system of scenic, recreation, historic, and side and connecting trails. Components of the national trails system include national scenic trails, national recreation trails, and connecting or side trails which provide access or link to the former two categories. A 1978 amendment added the category of national historic trails. The boundary adjustments recommended in this *GMP* propose actions involving existing segments of the four national historic trails (NHTs) associated with the Monument or Robidoux Pass (the Oregon NHT, the California NHT, the Mormon Pioneer NHT, and the Pony Express NHT). This act stipulates that significant Federally-owned sites along national historic trails shall be considered "Federal protection components" of these trails. This designation would apply to any lands that are eventually acquired for inclusion within Scotts Bluff National Monument.

The *Boundary Study* also identified other high priority tracts that are located around the Monument. These tracts are important both to the future protection of the Monument's natural and cultural resources and to the ongoing preservation of the story of the Overland Trail migration as told through Scotts Bluff National Monument. Therefore, this study also recommends that the Superintendent of Scotts Bluff National Monument continue discussions with the remaining landowners about possible future inclusion of their high-priority lands within the Monument. Any future modification of Monument boundaries also would require Congressional action.

Once a boundary change for the Monument has been authorized by Congress, as required, the process to acquire these lands can proceed according to, but not limited to, the following prioritization:

Priority One: Gering Tract, Approximately 20 acres

Significance of the Property

This parcel is in a critical viewshed for both visitors entering the Monument from the east and for those viewing the Overland Trail and Dome Rock from the summit of Scotts Bluff. The parcel contains native prairie and has not been cultivated.

Justification for Including this Parcel within the Monument Boundary

An approximately 20-acre parcel adjacent to the east boundary of the Monument and west of the City of Gering cemetery in the SW quarter of Section 3 was proposed for a housing development (see Figure 4). If these 20 acres were developed for housing, the development would have created another modern intrusion on the historic landscape resulting in a significant adverse impact to visitors entering the Monument from the east as well as for those looking toward Dome Rock from that direction. It would also render visitors to the Monument less able to appreciate the historic landscape and scenic views from Scotts Bluff as they were encountered by the emigrants. This proposed development would have been directly in the line-of-sight for visitors looking to the east and southeast toward Chimney Rock and at the Overland Trail remnants in the foreground. Fortunately, the owner allowed the NPS enough time to pursue acquisition of the property to help preserve this viewshed. The property was acquired by the federal government on November 3, 1994, but remains outside the Monument boundaries. Legislation is necessary to include the land within the Monument boundaries.

Management Options

The property has been acquired in order to help preserve the historic natural and cultural landscape of Scotts Bluff National Monument. The land will be managed to retain its natural condition.

Feasibility of Administration

The parcel is bordered on two sides by the Scotts Bluff National Monument boundary. The management of the Monument anticipates no difficulties in continuing to manage these additional 20 acres that would be contiguous with the rest of the Monument. Costs should be minimal for maintaining the land as it will be retained in its natural condition.

Land Owners

United States Government.

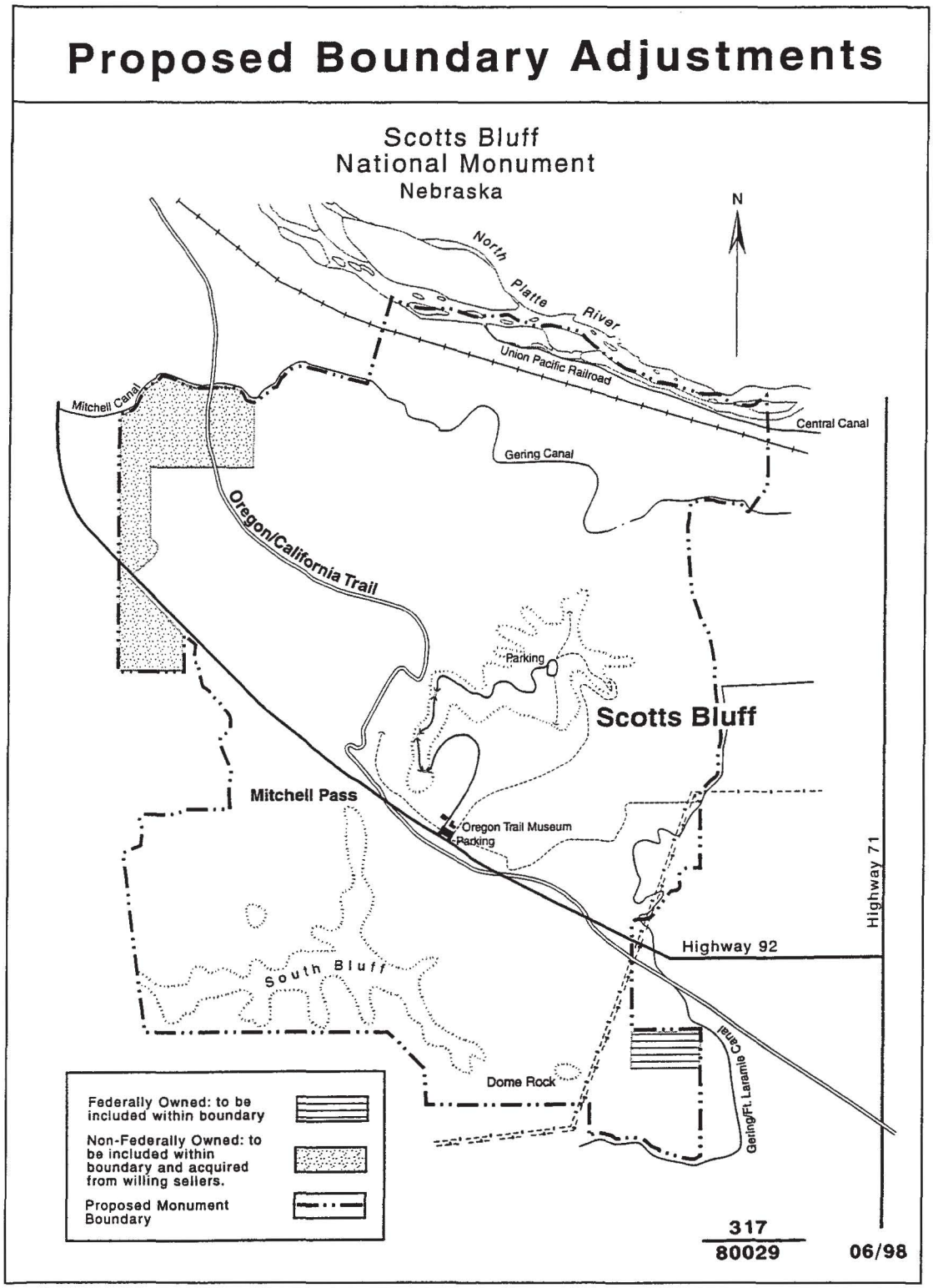

Figure 4. Proposed Boundary Adjustments for Scotts Bluff N.M.

ON MICROFILM

Priority Two: Robidoux Pass, approximately 1,000 acres

Significance of the Property

Robidoux Pass is on the National Register of Historic Places and is certified as a National Historic Landmark (see Figure 5). It is situated seven miles southwest from the Monument's headquarters. The earliest European travelers over Robidoux Pass were probably fur traders and missionaries, who worked in this area during the late 1820's. In 1830, the Smith-Jackson-Sublette trading caravan passed over this route and in 1832, Captain Bonneville camped in the area. The first emigrants over the pass were part of the Bidwell-Bartleson party, who were traveling with Father DeSmet. The great historian Francis Parkman also camped in this area in 1846. The period of greatest activity, however, came during the Oregon Migration and the California Gold Rush in the late 1840's. Between May and July of 1849, a steady stream of gold seekers crossed over Robidoux Pass on their way to the gold fields of California.

By 1849, emigrant journals reported the existence of a trading post and blacksmith shop at the pass, run by a man named Robidoux (the spelling greatly varied in journals of the period). The post may have been established in late 1848. All that is known about Robidoux comes from the journals and diaries of those who stopped at his trading post. Robidoux supplied the emigrants with a variety of services including goods such as whiskey at $5.00 a barrel, and needed supplies. A blacksmith forge was also available for repairs.

Robidoux Pass became the original route through the rugged bluffs of the area. It provided the easiest crossing of the geological formations in this area and avoided the impassible badlands terrain between the North Platte River and Scotts Bluff, which was the main route of the trail. Use of Robidoux Pass predated the use of Mitchell Pass at Scotts Bluff by several decades. It witnessed the passage of the fur traders and trappers, the earliest emigrants, and the hordes of "49ers". Mitchell Pass at Scotts Bluff did not come into use until 1852 when the route was sufficiently improved to allow the passage of wagons.

The Robidoux Pass area contains several miles of well-preserved wagon trail remnants. It provides a good example of emigrants crossing a major physical obstacle. The pass itself provided the emigrants with their first glimpse of Laramie Peak, which for them symbolized that they had almost reached the Rocky Mountains.

Robidoux Pass lies at the head of a grassy valley, rimmed with low steep hills to the south and more rolling, gently rising hills to the north. The valley runs east to west several miles south and west of Scotts Bluff National Monument. The gentle summit provides a magnificent view both of Laramie Peak to the west and to the east where the emigrants passed Chimney Rock the day before. The site is relatively undisturbed except for a major power line traversing the valley near the east side of the pass. The land has been used for grazing livestock and has not been converted to farming. Therefore, the native prairie appears much as it did 150 years ago. To a much greater degree than at Scotts Bluff National Monument, the lands around Robidoux Pass retain the wide open and uncluttered views reminiscent of what the emigrants would have witnessed.

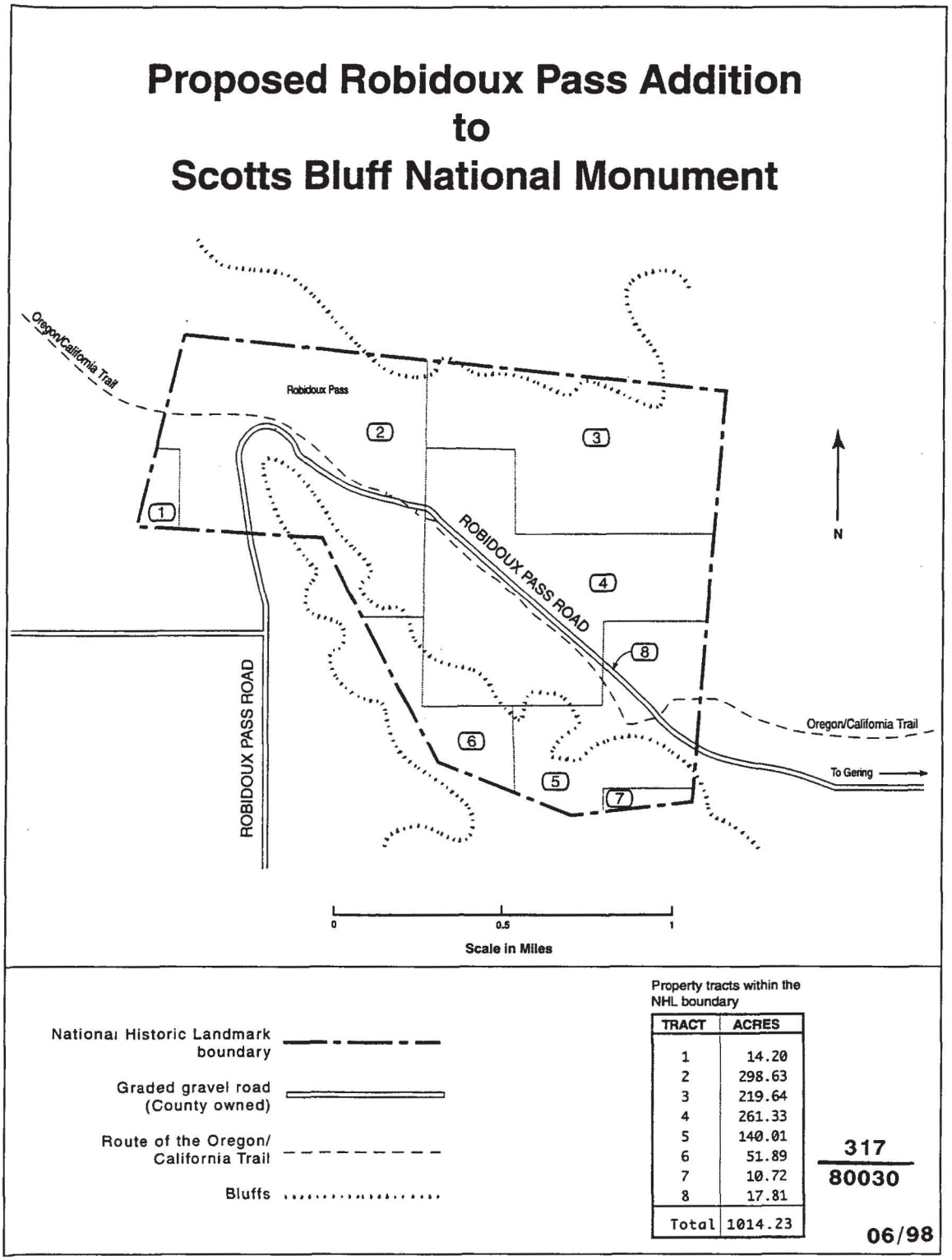

Figure 5. Robidoux Pass Addition.

ON MICROFILM

The site of a blacksmith shop and trading post within the Robidoux Pass area would provide visitors an opportunity to understand the importance of such support facilities along the Overland Trail. It would help dispel the myth that trail users passed through an untouched wilderness without any possibility of assistance. On the other hand, the lack of modern development in Robidoux Pass would provide the visitor with a vicarious feeling of following the trail through unspoiled territory, frequently over terrain unfamiliar to people from the east. The gentle slope of Robidoux Pass would illustrate to visitors how the trail's alignment sought out the path of least resistance through the local geography to ease the ordeal of stock pulling wagons and of people walking along side of their wagons as they made their way west.

Justification for Acquiring this Parcel

Land in the area continues to be removed from agricultural use and converted to housing, industry, or other uses associated with an urban area. Requests are routinely submitted to the local land controlling authorities to change the area's zoning to accommodate some type of development around Scotts Bluff National Monument. These actions form a trend that makes it clear that it would not be long before development pressures are brought to bear near or at Robidoux Pass. Each and every change to the land surrounding the Monument erodes away at the very essence of why the Monument was established in the first place: to preserve the history of the Overland Trail and "...afford a view for miles over the surrounding country." Inclusion of Robidoux Pass within the Monument's boundary is considered the only feasible means of protecting the natural and cultural resources of the pass over the long term as land uses change in the region.

Management Options

The most significant portion of Robidoux Pass, from the historic and scenic perspectives, and as delineated by the National Historic Landmark boundary, should be acquired. Additional easements should be purchased to protect the viewshed both to the east and west. Other possible actions to consider include a petition of the local planning commission to provide more restrictive zoning of land around the national landmark and/or encourage a voluntary restriction on surrounding land use, such as through deed restrictions or covenants. If the views are protected as they appear now, visitors 50 to 100 years from now would have a good idea of what it was like for the emigrants visually as they approached and crossed Robidoux Pass.

Feasibility of Administration

The management of the Monument anticipates no difficulties in managing the additional acres of Robidoux Pass along with the rest of the Monument. Potential development of the area by the NPS would be minimal. Public access to important features would be under controlled conditions, *e.g.,* via designated trails and/or by roadside pullouts that may be developed to allow non-invasive interpretation of the site. Identification of significant cultural features within the pass is likely for effective interpretation of the Robidoux Trading Post and out buildings. The *Oregon Trail Comprehensive Management and Use Plan* of 1981 recommends that if the area is acquired "...visitors should be invited to walk along the rut traces towards the summit." Costs associated with operating the site will relate to some light development such as trails, pullouts, interpretive signing, information dissemination, and marking, maintaining and protecting historic sites.

Land Ownership

Robidoux Pass includes approximately 984 acres of privately-owned land (comprising eight separate owners), approximately 10 acres owned by the State of Nebraska, and approximately 18 acres owned by Scotts Bluff County. Each of the owners or controlling parties for each tract of land has been informed by the Monument's Superintendent about this proposal.

Priority Three: West Side, approximately 188 acres

Significance of the Property

From Mitchell Pass and the Monument's summit, visitors can see essentially what the pioneers saw 150 years ago: open space and the great expanse that lay ahead of them to the west. Laramie Peak loomed in the distance more than 100 miles away, giving the pioneers their first glimpse of what they perceived to be the Rocky Mountains. Some of the area west of the present Monument boundary was within the Monument from 1932 to 1961 but was later deleted by Congress in favor of the present boundary. Overland Trail remnants are still visible in the foreground of these parcels and mark the route the emigrants took through Mitchell Pass as they headed back towards the North Platte River to the northwest.

The land to the west of the Monument is mostly in agricultural use (see Figure 4). As far as the eye can see, it is a sparsely populated area with only scattered farm houses in view. With increasing development on the eastern side of the bluff, the existing western view presents a landscape that resembles as closely as possible today the quality of the scene that the emigrants witnessed 150 years ago. Some of the hills of Scotts Bluff form a border to the south, and the North Platte River forms a natural border to the north.

Justification for Acquiring this Parcel

Land in the area continues to be removed from agricultural use and is being converted to housing, industry, or other uses associated with an urban area. Requests are routinely submitted to the land controlling authorities to change the zoning to accommodate some type of development west of the Monument. In 1996, the County Commissioners rejected a request for a zoning change that would have allowed higher density housing on approximately 60 acres near the Monument. As a result of their action the open landscape will remain in existence for a while longer. Therefore, the NPS considers these tracts to be of high priority for Monument resource protection.

Management Options

The area between the Monument and State Highway 92 to the west should be protected in some manner from further development that would impinge on the openness of the area. This would include portions of Sections 29 and 32 going from the bluffs on the south to two miles to the north, including much of what was in the Monument for nearly 30 years. The Monument should work with the landowners of these two tracts to acquire these high-priority lands or to obtain easements or cooperative agreements if acquisition is not possible.

Feasibility of Administration

These parcels are contiguous with the existing Monument boundary. The management of the Monument anticipates no difficulties in managing these additional acres with the rest of the Monument. The NPS would not develop the area. If possible, the NPS would restore the cultivated land to native prairie, in keeping with the historic landscape, and maintain the area as open space. Costs associated with these actions should be minimal.

Land Ownership

All of the approximately 188 acres are privately owned.

Critical Elements for the Future Management of Scotts Bluff National Monument

The following critical elements support and reinforce this *GMP* and provide broad guidance for the future management of a variety of resource topics for the Monument and its related resources as they were reflected in the *Draft GMP's EA*. The reader is referred to the Monument's *Resource Management Plan, Interpretive Plans,* or other more specific park planning or administration documents for more detailed information or guidelines on any particular topic.

Natural Resources

Physical Setting

The Monument lies within the western Great Plains in an area that was once almost continuous mixed and short grass prairie and that is now largely utilized for farming and ranching. The Monument lands encompass two large, cliff-rimmed bluffs -- Scotts Bluff and South Bluff. Most of the land within the boundary is in native mixed-grass prairie with some previously disturbed areas harboring a variety of non-native species. There is also an area of mostly barren badlands between the base of Scotts Bluff and the North Platte River.

The landscape at the beginning of the Overland Trail period was primarily "natural" and largely "undisturbed," by European habitation. Euro-American emigrants who arrived during the mid-nineteenth century found a landscape here that was richer in wildlife and more sparsely wooded than it is today; but the essential features of the scene -- the imposing bluffs rising from the plains -- remain unchanged. The effects these emigrants had on the landscape were certainly significant, but the landscape that evolved was still primarily "natural," overlaid with periodic and concentrated human-caused disturbance. The expansive plains, prominent bluffs, and dominant prairie vegetation made up the primary elements of this landscape. The plains and bluffs suffered immediate but relatively little long-term disturbance from the passing of the emigrants. Vegetation near the trail was probably heavily affected by the concentration of both human traffic and large numbers of livestock. This vegetation probably regenerated in a short time due to: 1) the extensive root systems of the native plants, 2) ready availability of nearby seed sources from surrounding undisturbed lands, and 3) because natural ecosystem processes remained intact.

Robidoux Pass, a nearby National Historic Landmark, has a highly significant association with the area's Oregon-California Trail and the Scotts Bluff story. It possesses a landscape consisting of a broad valley vegetated with high-quality native prairie (which has experienced more than a century of livestock grazing) spread between sparsely forested ridges. Aside from the presence of a few modern features, the landscape of Robidoux Pass offers perhaps the highest quality and most authentic natural landscape, or combination of natural floral, faunal, and geomorphic features, within the area that allows modern visitors to "step back in time" to the period of the region's great westward human migration of the middle nineteenth century.

Geology

The geology of Scotts Bluff is significant for historical reasons. Emigrants typically traveled within the Platte River Valley on both sides of the river; however, at Scotts Bluff the geology of the badlands forced the emigrants out of the valley. The badlands presented a barrier to travel because they stretched from the base of the bluff to the river itself. Once the emigrants moved out of the valley, the bluff formations forced the travelers to look for a pass to allow them to move through the bluffs and continue on their westward journey. The two closest passages were at Robidoux Pass and Mitchell Pass. Those traveling by wagon used Robidoux Pass in the early years because the pass at Scotts Bluff was not fit for wagons. It was described by travelers on horseback in 1834 as *"a large and deep ravine . . . very uneven and difficult, winding from amongst innumerable mounds six to eight feet in height, the space between them frequently so narrow as scarcely to admit our horses."* Unknown persons made improvements to the pass in the middle nineteenth century which allowed for safe passage by wagon. When all is considered, the geology of the Scotts Bluff region is historically significant for at least five reasons: 1) the bluff was a landmark to travelers, 2) the North Platte River created a broad valley that facilitated westward migration, 3) the badlands formation forced the immigrants out of the river valley, 4) the bluff formation presented another barrier to travel, and 5) Mitchell Pass and Robidoux Pass allowed passage through the bluff formations.

Paleontology

Another significant aspect of the geology of the badlands area is its fossils. The majority of fossils found at the Monument are located in the Monument's badlands. Here the Orella Member of the Brule Formation is exposed. It consists of interbedded sandstone and siltstone layers that represent floodplain and channel deposits of ancient streams that flowed eastward from the uplifting Rocky Mountains. This is the oldest rock outcrop at the Monument. Fossils of horses, oreodonts (extinct, sheep-sized, four-toed mammals), prairie dogs, foxes, turtles, rodents, beavers, and cats have been found in the badlands. Some of the richest fossil-bearing strata in Nebraska are found here. Scotts Bluff fossils have become type, or indicator, fossils for the Oligocene Epoch (40-25 million years before present) of the Cenozoic Era (65 million years to present). Most of these fossils were collected prior to the establishment of the Monument. Many other fossils could still exist within the Monument, so further paleontological research within Monument boundaries could be productive. There is no known similar study for Robidoux Pass.

Water Resources

Streams

Three irrigation canals -- the Central Irrigation District, Gering Irrigation District, and the Gering/Fort Laramie Irrigation District, traverse the Monument. They deliver irrigation water to farm fields in the adjacent North Platte River Valley. These canals mostly predate the establishment of the Monument and the federal government recognizes an easement for each one. Operating companies are allowed to continue with maintenance activities within fifty feet of the high water mark on either side of the canals.

Robidoux Pass contains the source and upper reach of a small, spring-fed creek and represents the upper portion of its watershed.

Floodplains

Approximately 102 acres of the Monument lie along the North Platte River and are considered to be part of the floodplain by the City of Scottsbluff. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (1975), only a portion of Monument land adjoining the North Platte River lies within the river's *Special Flood Hazard Area,* an area that has the statistical potential to be inundated by 100-year frequency floods. Before dams and reservoirs were completed upstream on the North Platte River, spring floods from melting snow in the Rocky Mountains were common. These floods produced a river that was much wider than today's with a more thoroughly scoured floodplain possessing a lower concentration of trees and other woody vegetation than what is now present.

Wetlands

In 1992 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identified three areas of wetlands within the Monument. All three areas are adjacent to the North Platte River on the Monument's north boundary. These three areas consist of approximately 27 acres. These areas are identified as marsh. The plants are classified as emergent in two areas and scrub in the other. These areas are seasonally flooded in the spring and temporarily flooded at other times due to rainfall events upstream.

Vegetation

The native vegetation of the Monument consists of three major plant associations: 1) the moderately dense mixed-grass prairie, 2) the ponderosa pine/Rocky Mountain juniper areas, and 3) the hardwood community along the floodplain of the North Platte River. Within these areas of the Monument can be found seven major habitat types: riverine woodland, coniferous woodland, mixed-grass prairie, riparian habitat associated with irrigation canals, pine-studded bluffs, shrub-dominated slopes, and badlands. Natural prairie is the predominant vegetative cover on the Monument's flatter areas. The mixed grass prairie is dominated by blackroot sedge (*Carex filifolia* var. Nutt.) and needle-and-thread grass (*Stipa comata*). Other native grasses, such as western wheatgrass (*Agropyron smithii*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), prairie sandreed (*Calamovilfa longifolia*), and sideoats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) are common. On the bluff summits, slopes, and sheltered ravines can be found native grasses, forbs, ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum* var. Sarg.). During the 1930s, eastern red cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*) were planted in the ravines to reduce soil erosion. These have become self-propagating. These latter three tree species have increased their numbers from the time of the early nineteenth century emigrants and settlers due to the reduction in fire intensity and frequency. The North Platte River floodplain contains mature eastern cottonwood trees (*Populus deltoides*), box elder (*Acer negundo L.* var. *interius* [Britt.] Sarg.), Siberian elms (*Ulmus pumila L.*) and Russian olive (*Elaeagnus augustifolia L.*). Poison ivy (*Toxicodendron rydbergii* [Small] Green) and other shrubs are common in this area. Non-native vegetation, including state-designated noxious weeds, have invaded the Monument and prefer the damp ravines and floodplain. A partial list of vegetative species is on file at the Monument. Robidoux Pass possesses generally similar vegetation.

Wildlife

Scotts Bluff National Monument is one of the few places in the Panhandle of Nebraska where wildlife is protected in a natural environment. There are resident populations of various species of reptiles, amphibians, birds, mammals and invertebrates. The Monument is surrounded by private land, approximately half of which is used for agriculture. A partial list of wildlife species present at the Monument is on file at the Monument (further species information is found in the Monument's current *Resource Management Plan*).

Biodiversity

Scotts Bluff National Monument was established to preserve and protect a famous landmark of the Overland Trail. The long-term goal of the Monument's natural resource management program is to maintain wildlife populations in harmony with healthy natural plant communities. This includes a primary responsibility for the restoration and management of the Monument's relatively small portion of High Plains native mixed-grass prairie to its historical appearance (based on the best available scientific and historical evidence). Primary methods for accomplishing this goal include, ***but are not limited to***, (1) seeding native grass and forb species, and (2) applying a prescribed fire program to simulate natural fire frequency, intensity and season. The Monument presently uses prescribed fire to perpetuate its grassland and sparse forest communities, especially on Scotts Bluff's summit and in its ravines. The use of prescribed fire helps to maintain the health of the ecosystem by reducing hazardous fuel accumulations and lessening the encroachment of alien plant species. This active resource management program should encourage the development of a stable and biologically diverse prairie ecosystem on Monument land that should, in turn, benefit biological diversity within the region.

Establishment of a ***Long Term Environmental Monitoring (LTEM)*** program is critical to the management of the Monument's natural resources. The Monument's vegetation needs to be monitored annually to evaluate its general "health," the effects of prescribed fire, and the effectiveness of prairie restoration activities. ***Inventorying and Monitoring (I&M)*** of all natural resources at the Monument, including its native and exotic flora and fauna, needs to be initiated and funded for the long term.

Cultural Resources

At present, an *Historic Resources Study*, which would holistically identify the cultural resources of Scotts Bluff National Monument, has not been written. However, several specialized resource studies and inventories have identified historic or prehistoric archeological, structural, and landscape resources.

A recent park-wide archeological survey of the Monument has resulted in a total of 55 archeological sites being located and identified. It is possible that other sites, particularly those that might be deeply buried under aeolian ("wind-blown") deposits, could still be discovered. Forty-nine of these sites have been classified as being prehistoric, and could represent one or more of the following periods of occupation:

a) **Prehistoric Period (circa 10,000 B.C. through circa A.D. 1750)**

Archeological studies have indicated human occupation of the Scotts Bluff region as early as circa 10,000 years B.C.. A period known as the Paleo-Indian Stage lasted from circa 10,000 to circa 6,000 years B.C. This was followed by the Plains Archaic Stage from circa 6,000 B.C. to circa A.D. 1, and the Plains Woodland Stage from circa A.D. 1 through circa A.D. 1000, and the Central Plains Tradition in the Plains Village Stage, circa A.D. 900 until circa A.D. 1450. The Coalescent Tradition of the Plains Village Stage, circa A.D. 1450 to circa A.D. 1750, overlapped somewhat with the Dismal River Aspect of circa A.D. 1650 to circa A.D. 1750. (*Clark, 1994*).

b) **Historic Period (post A.D. 1750)**

Since approximately A.D. 1750, the principle tribes known to have occupied the Scotts Bluff region are the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and most recently the Lakota (*Brand, 1934*). Also within this period, use and occupation of this region by Euro-Americans began, and continues, to the present day. Historic features pertinent to the Monument include:

1) ***The Oregon Trail:*** Remnants of a roadbed worn by thousands of emigrant wagons are still visible in Mitchell Pass at Scotts Bluff.

2) ***William Henry Jackson Campsite:*** During his last visit to Scotts Bluff in 1938, Jackson marked the site where he camped in 1866 when he was working as a bullwhacker for a freighting outfit. An interpretive sign now marks this site.

3) ***Trailhead Arch:*** Now in ruins, this brick archway once stood at the base of the now-abandoned "Zig-Zag Trail." Constructed with funds provided by the Daughters of the American Revolution and dedicated in 1930, a 1933 survey revealed that the arch had been built on private land.

4) ***Oregon Trail Museum:*** Dedicated in 1936, this museum was once the only museum devoted to telling the story of America's Westward Migration. Today the museum contains exhibits about the Overland Trail, area fossils and geology, the art of William Henry Jackson, and many other aspects of the American frontier experience.

5) ***The Summit Road:*** Constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the road to the summit of Scotts Bluff gives motorists the opportunity to view the North Platte Valley from the top of the bluff. The road was officially opened to the public on September 19, 1937.

6) ***The Summit Hiking Trail System:*** The first substantive development at the Monument came in the form of the "Scout Trail" (also called the "Zig-Zag Trail"), which was constructed in 1927. This trail replaced an informal foot trail that had been worn into the bluff and which had relied on a rickety ladder for access to the summit. Due to massive erosion, the "Scout Trail" was closed in 1953. In 1958, the "Scout Trail" was replaced by a new paved footpath that led from the visitor center all the way to the summit of the bluff.

Summary of Oregon-California Trail

The primary route used by the emigrants bound for California and Oregon prior to 1850-1851 was along an Oregon-California Trail on the south side of the Platte River (see Figure 6). Upon reaching the Scotts Bluff area, this traffic was routed through nearby Robidoux Pass. This diversion was necessitated by the fact that Mitchell Pass, adjacent to Scotts Bluff, contained too many deep cuts and ravines to make hauling wagons through it feasible.

All this changed in 1850-1851, however, when unknown persons made enough improvements in Mitchell Pass to allow for wagon traffic. There are two popular theories about who may have made these improvements. One theory holds that an Army detail from Fort Laramie may have done the leveling and digging that was needed in the otherwise impassable washouts. This theory is supported by a number of factors. First, the military would have had the resources and discipline that such a project would have required. Also, as most regular Army officers were trained as engineers, there would have been a ready pool of experienced engineers to see that the work was done properly. The motive for making such improvements may have been to reduce the time and expense of hauling supplies to Fort Laramie by one to two days. A second theory holds that a rival trading company may have done the work in Mitchell Pass in order to put the existing Antoine Robidoux trading post, situated in Robidoux Pass, out of business. Ultimately, as the traffic declined in Robidoux Pass, Robidoux relocated his business near Fort Laramie. Either theory is possible, and both allow for a pool of organized labor and motivation. Unfortunately, there is no known written record of who may have done the work that dramatically changed Oregon-California travel in this area.

Summary of Depression-Era Development

Although Scotts Bluff National Monument was established in 1919, there was little development of the Monument's resources until 1933. Prior to this time, the "Zig-Zag Trail" was cut into the east slope of Scotts Bluff and a small picnic area was built near the entrance to this trail, but plans to improve visitor access were not actively pursued until newly-established public works programs could be utilized.

Two major projects were initiated using labor provided by the Civilian Works Administration (CWA). The most ambitious of these projects was the construction of an auto road to the summit of Scotts Bluff. To serve those visitors using this Summit Road, a museum/administration complex was built at the base of the bluff and dedicated in 1936.

Along with several other small projects, the CCC also built a residence for the Superintendent, a maintenance shop area, a two-story tower with ranger quarters and offices, and an addition to the museum now known as the Landmark Room. A new picnic ground was also built at the base of the west side of South Bluff, but due to vandalism, overuse, and a small Monument staff, this site was closed to the public in 1939.

Currently eighteen structures have been identified as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places ("National Register") by a baseline resource inventory, the *List of Classified Structures (LCS)*. The *LCS* was completed in 1995, with concurrence by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). This report identifies the following 18 structures as contributing to a nationally significant National Register district (Scotts Bluff Historic District):

Figure 6. Oregon/California Trail Near Scotts Bluff.

317/20011

ON MICROFILM

1) The Oregon Trail
2) Oregon Trail Museum
3) Residence #1
4) Utility Building
5) Comfort Station
6) Sidewalk complex
7) Summit Road & parking lot
8) Summit Road tunnels
9) Saddle Rock Trail
10) Summit Trail signposts
11) North Overlook marker
12) North Overlook wall
13) Entrance markers
14) Hiram Scott plaque
15) Pony Express plaque
16) Gering irrigation canal
17) Hiram Scott Arch ruin
18) Scout Trail

Some additions to these structures, such as the amphitheater at the museum (#2) and an addition to the utility building (#4), were done as part of a 1958-59 NPS funding and design initiative called "Mission '66."

Another baseline study, the *Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI), Level II*, was completed in May, 1996. This inventory identifies two cultural landscapes which have been determined eligible (1/7/97) for the National Register. One landscape is identified as the entire Monument, a landscape which developed as a Depression-era public works design, including the natural landforms and the Oregon-California Trail remnants, to commemorate the historical significance of this landmark. The second landscape, the Oregon-California Trail remnants, is a "component landscape" (a landscape that is individually eligible, but also contributes to the larger Monument landscape). These landscapes include all of the structures identified by the *LCS*; but, they also include vegetation, views, spatial organization, archeological sites, and natural landforms that contribute to the landscape's historical significance.

The *CLI* was reviewed by Scotts Bluff National Monument staff, prior to review by the Nebraska SHPO, for concurrence on the eligibility of these two landscapes for listing on the National Register. In addition, a study to determine the Monument's compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) is currently underway.

An ethnohistorical study to identify traditional and cultural uses of the Monument is currently being conducted but has not been completed at this time. It is known that in the early 1800s the general region was apparently a favorite bison hunting ground for the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe.

Registration of cultural resources is an ongoing process. At present, some Monument properties are officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places while others have been determined to be eligible for listing on the Register. Properties at the Monument will systematically be evaluated through the NPS's efforts to periodically update the various cultural resource inventories. These inventories will continue to identify and include a variety of historic, archeological, ethnographic and landscape features that are significant to American history. They will also document the NPS's commemoration of that shared heritage. As a result of these inventory efforts, registration of resources will continue and existing nominations may be updated as necessary by the Monument's staff.

Property Listed on the National Register of Historic Places
Scotts Bluff National Monument (listed 10/15/66).

Property Eligible for Listing on the National Register of Historic Places
The landscape and contributing features of Scotts Bluff National Monument and the Oregon Trail ruts (1/7/97), and the Scotts Bluff National Monument Historic District containing the visitor center/museum Depression-era complex, along with the related Summit Road, tunnels, parking lot, and hiking trails (3/17/95). A determination of eligibility has not been requested on the irrigation canals.

Property Listed as a National Historic Landmark
Robidoux Pass (listed 7/1984-*NHL*; 1/20/61-*NRHP*).

Property Listed on the National Registry of National Natural Landmarks
None.

Cultural Resources of Robidoux Pass

Robidoux Pass contains a number of historically significant cultural resources. Remnants of the Oregon-California Trail are visible and generally undisturbed. This route of the trail was used from 1842 through 1852, when the primary route shifted to Mitchell Pass (located at Scotts Bluff National Monument). The remaining wagon trail remnants in Robidoux Pass extend for approximately two miles through the pass and just beyond. Archeological sites believed to be present include that of a trading post and blacksmith shop, established in 1848 or 1849, to service wagons on the trail by Antoine Robidoux, who was related to the French family that founded St. Joseph, Missouri. At least four emigrant graves have also been marked in the pass.

Robidoux Pass was designated as a National Historic Landmark (*NHL*) and listed in July, 1984. The *NHL* designation covers approximately 1,000 acres, all of which are currently in private ownership, except for the county-owned Robidoux Road and a small parcel of land owned by the State of Nebraska. A 1965 NPS study suggested that a total of 1,640 acres be purchased to encompass the viewshed of the pass.

Aesthetic Factors

Scenic Resources

The Monument's high steep bluffs, its prairie, and the eroding and deeply incised terrain of its badlands and gullies all contribute to dramatic and panoramic views of the surrounding regional landscape and add immeasurably to the scenic interest of the area. Scotts Bluff and the nearby Wildcat Hills are the major scenic attractions to visitors as they approach the Monument. Many nineteenth century emigrants recognized the natural beauty of the area and these promontories, but most saw them as a barrier in their efforts to travel west. The prairie in this area, which is technically known as mid-grass or mixed-grass prairie, is the perfect foreground setting for the 800-foot high bluffs. The badlands lying between the bluffs and the North Platte River are seldom seen up close by visitors, but are beautifully rugged and show plainly why the wagon trains detoured around them.

There are several major intrusions on the aesthetic, natural and cultural aspects of the Monument (although they do illustrate the consequences of the Overland Trails on area development). Sites visible from the summit of Scotts Bluff include the Union Pacific Railroad's parallel tracks through the Monument; three irrigation canals crossing the Monument; the City of Gering's sanitary landfill located 1/3-mile east of the Monument (clearly visible from the Summit); the City of Gering's expansion to the west; and a municipal golf course and residential area on the eastern boundary of the Monument. In the mid-1990s, a residential development that was proposed on the Monument's western boundary would also have been easily visible from the summit and is another indication of ongoing development pressures on the Monument's scenic resources from surrounding competing land uses. The necessary zoning change for this development was denied by the Scotts Bluff County Commission.

From both the summit and from the ground can be seen the Nebraska Public Power District's radio tower, located in the northeast corner of the Monument, as well as existing housing developments. All of these detract from the visitors' ability to experience the Monument as it may have appeared to the first emigrants more than 150 years ago.

Robidoux Pass, by contrast, appears superficially to be very much as it was during the westward migration period. Several aspects of the pass detract from this aboriginal landscape. They include: a few scattered ranch operations, Robidoux Pass Road extending through the pass, high-voltage power lines, occasional vehicular travel along this road, the view of modern cattle grazing operations, and a few physical indications of the historic westward migration through this area.

Visitor Use and Experience

Monument's Relationship to the Region

Today's visitors to Scotts Bluff tend to view the Monument in a narrow, site-specific context rather than see it as an important link in a series of features related to the region's history. Entering the North Platte River Valley at Ash Hollow near present-day Lewellen, Nebraska, emigrants passed and climbed Courthouse and Jail Rock, and further west were awed by Chimney Rock, just as modern travelers are today. They struggled through the passes at Scotts Bluff and nearby Robidoux Pass with the knowledge roughly one third of their westward trek had been completed, and that Fort Laramie and security were not far beyond. It is this series of landmarks (several of which have since been designated as state or federal national historic sites and cited in such documents as the 1981 NPS *Oregon Trail National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan*) connected by historic trails that distinguishes the Scotts Bluff region and offers unique tourism and opportunities for interpretation.

In a regional context, the Monument adjoins the south bank of the North Platte River three miles west of the City of Gering (1994 population, 8,158) and 20 miles east of Wyoming's border. North of the river, the City of Scottsbluff (1994 population, 14,070) is the major commercial, industrial, and agricultural center for the Nebraska Panhandle area. Regional population centers include Cheyenne, Wyoming, 95 miles southwest; Rapid City, South Dakota, 190 miles north; Denver, Colorado, 200 miles southwest; and Omaha, Nebraska, 450 miles east. Access to the Monument is via State Highway 92, which bisects the Monument from east to west. The Monument's main visitor facilities are located approximately one mile west of the city limits of Gering along State Highway 92. State Highway 71, the north-south link with Interstate 80 forty-five miles to the south, runs through Scottsbluff, Terrytown and Gering. Finally, U.S. Highway 26 traverses the City of Scottsbluff east to west. These three highways form the area's primary transportation network.

Population trends over the last ten years indicate an increase in the Scottsbluff/Gering/Terrytown urban complex adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Monument. There are also recent indications that suburban development may spread to the western side of the Monument in the near future. Overall, this urban complex is modern and well-organized and possesses a steadily expanding social and economic foundation. Key factors supporting the area's economy are its strong agricultural base, increasing tourist traffic, and a growing medical center complex. The Monument, which is probably the most significant historical site in Scotts Bluff County, is also a valuable economic resource to the county as it helps attract hundreds of thousands of tourist dollars to the area (*Panhandle Area Development District, 1995*).

Visitor Use, Experience and Visitation Trends

There are two main facets to the visitor experience at Scotts Bluff National Monument: **1)** the story of the westward migration on the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails, and **2)** the natural history and scenic beauty of the bluffs and surrounding prairie. Visitors to the Monument are able to experience a significant representation of the westward expansion era as it relates to the historic trails, Pony Express, and the first transcontinental telegraph. Today visitors can walk in wagon ruts through Mitchell Pass just as emigrants did over 150 years ago. Additional trails are open to hikers and bicyclists to enjoy and experience the Monument's mixed-grass prairie.

For many visitors Scotts Bluff National Monument is a brief stop on their vacation route, which frequently terminates at such destination areas as Yellowstone National Park or the Black Hills of South Dakota. For others, particularly those with a serious interest in the Oregon-California Trail and related history, it is a destination. Most visitors spend time in the Monument's museum and visitor center, and a majority go to the summit of the bluff. Many visitors hike one or more of the Monument's trails. For those visitors who hike or drive to the summit of the 800-foot high Scotts Bluff, a significant part of their experience is the panoramic view of the prairie, bluffs and badlands within the Monument and the more distant views of the North Platte River Valley and the historic landscape beyond.

The average visit to the Monument lasts approximately two hours and includes a tour of the Monument's Oregon Trail Museum and a brief look from the summit of Scotts Bluff. A significant number, however, further explore the Monument's resources and participate in living history or other interpretation programs. A 1991 *Visitor Services Project Report* (Madison, 1991), indicates that most visitors surveyed expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the facilities and services at the Monument.

Getting a true picture of the trends in visitation at the Monument is complicated by the fact that the method of counting visitors to the Monument has been changed at least twice -- in 1980 and 1992. Both of those years show significant declines in total visitation, some of which is probably accounted for by the change in counting methods. Visitation trends before and after this drastic change, especially within the last 10 years, show a relatively stable level of visitation (see Figure 7). A projection of future visitation from this data would probably indicate little variation from the present, but future trends would be influenced by many factors, including general economic conditions, regional travel patterns, and size of family groups.

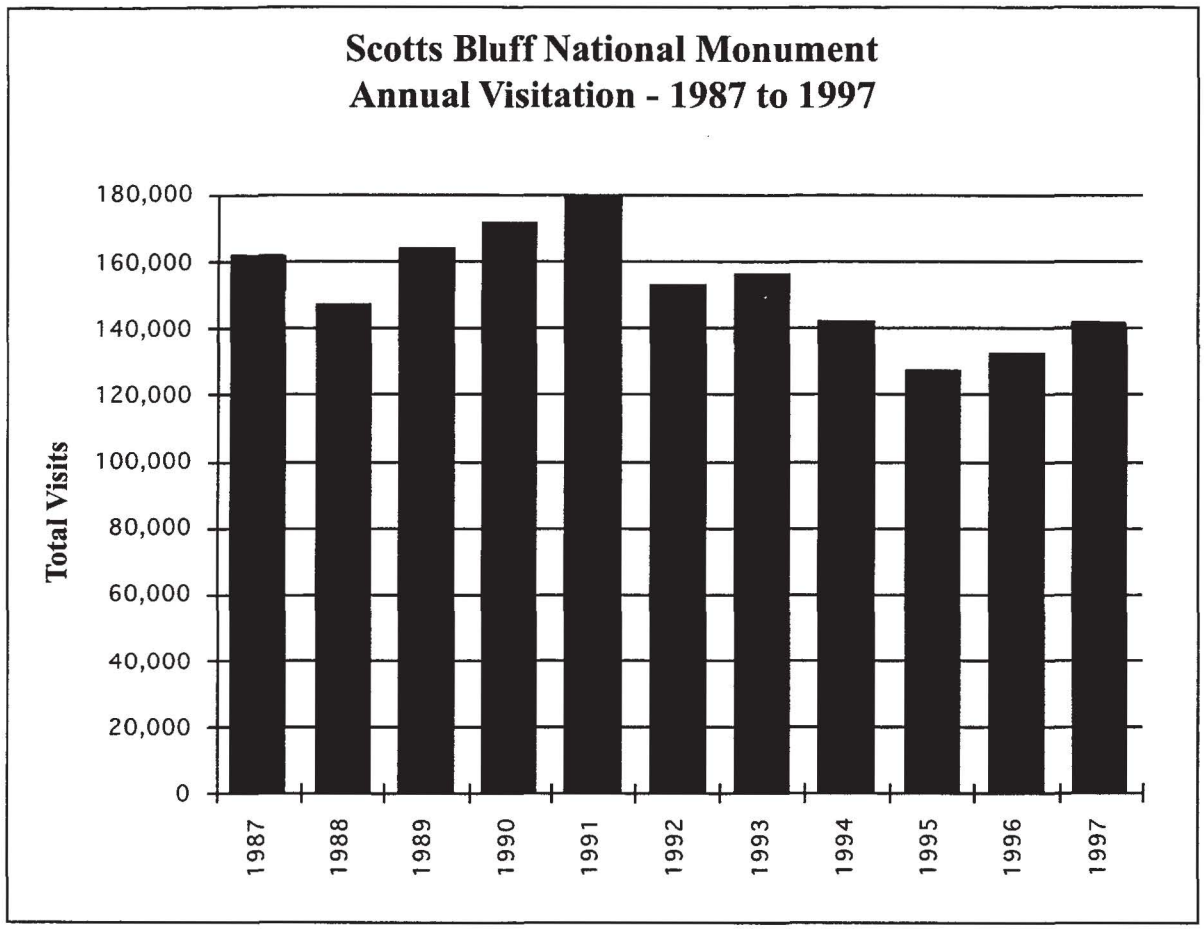

Figure 7. Ten-year Visitation Chart.

Carrying Capacity

As applied to outdoor recreation areas, carrying capacity is the maximum theoretical level of visitation that a parkland could support before natural, cultural, and experiential resources would begin to be damaged. The general lack of baseline data relative to Scotts Bluff National Monument makes it difficult to accurately determine the Monument's carrying capacity. However, if future visitation to the Monument continues to follow its existing trend of moderate levels of visitor use that result in a relatively stable yearly visitation, general impacts to Monument resources should remain much as they are now. At present, the Monument can accommodate 55 cars and 9 buses/recreational vehicles at the museum and 27 cars at the Summit. Using an NPS multiplier (determined from observations of Monument visitors) of 3.1 people per car and 45 people per bus, the presence of the vehicles in these numbers at the Monument results in approximately 659 people present. The present museum, which measures 2,217 square feet in size, and which is limited to providing 15 square feet of space per visitor according to the local fire ordinance, can safely accommodate 147 people at any one time. It is difficult to know exactly how many visitors are currently accommodated through uncontrolled access to the Monument. In light of the proposals in this *GMP*, future managers of the Monument may wish to establish a *Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP)* framework. *VERP* is a planning and management framework that focuses on visitor use impacts on the visitor experience and the park resources. These impacts are primarily attributable to visitor behavior, use levels, types of use, timing of use, and location of use.

Landownership, Land Use

There are 3,003.03 acres in Scotts Bluff National Monument with 2,935.95 acres in Federal ownership. Nearly 2,000 acres of this land has always been in the public domain. Since its establishment in 1919, several legislative boundary changes have taken place, each changing the acreage. In 1994, 20 acres adjacent to the Monument came into Federal ownership but remain outside the Monument boundaries (see Figure 2).

Adjacent Land Uses in Conflict with the Monument's Purpose and Mission

The following surrounding land uses are in conflict with the original intent of the 1919 Presidential Proclamation that created the Monument and, therefore may hinder the complete realization of the proclamation's intent for the Monument. Some of these uses can be addressed by the NPS while others cannot due to special conditions, provisions, or because the particular situation is outside the Monument boundaries and, therefore, outside the NPS's jurisdiction.

- Union Pacific Railroad maintains a 200-foot wide inholding along the Monument's northern edge.
- Three canals, The Central Irrigation District, Gering Irrigation District, and the Gering/Fort Laramie Irrigation District, maintain (unrecorded) easements through the Monument.
- State Highway 92 bisects the Monument by virtue of a special use permit.
- An approximately 3-acre tract on the Monument's eastern boundary that is the site of a radio transmission tower.
- The Western Area Power Administration and Roosevelt Public Power District has overhead transmission lines traversing the eastern edge of the Monument from north to south.
- Urban development continues to move toward and around the Monument from the east and may begin to threaten the historic and natural scenes to the west.

Interpretation Themes for the Monument

From the Presidential Proclamation, and the purpose and significance statements, the NPS has developed the following interpretive themes for Scotts Bluff National Monument:

- The wide diversity of humans who have used the North Platte River Valley transportation corridor through time shared a common bond in the challenges and opportunities they encountered with the area's natural resources.

- Ongoing human use and manipulation of the North Platte River Valley transportation corridor over time has permanently altered the area's natural resources and the way of life of its native inhabitants.

- Scotts Bluff illustrates the geological processes and features that have defined and constrained routes to the West.

- The eroding cliff faces of Scotts Bluff that fascinated travelers continue to provide a window into ancient environments.

- Oregon-California Trail emigrants viewed Scotts Bluff as a milestone of achievement and a transition from the flat, monotonous plains to the challenges of the Rocky Mountains and beyond.

- American Indians moved across the Plains through the Scotts Bluff area, establishing trade routes before the coming of Euro-Americans.

- The wide diversity of Euro-Americans who passed by Scotts Bluff mirrored the growing diversity of social, political, cultural, and economic forces within the young United States.

- Late 19th century military necessities and economic factors brought improvements to the transportation corridor just as the mid-20th century Interstate Highway System provided a more efficient transportation system in the event of a national emergency and a positive impact on the national economy.

- William Henry Jackson's art, based on his personal experiences, provided a contrast between the Oregon Trail of legend and reality.

- As one of the earliest photographers of the American West, Jackson revealed the beauty and grandeur of the land to the many people of his time who would never have an opportunity to see it with their own eyes.

- The majority of the Monument's existing administrative, maintenance and visitor service complex, which was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps, illustrates one response of the government to the Great Depression by putting young men to work building facilities and preserving, protecting, and explaining the nation's natural and cultural heritage.

Appendixes: Legislation, Preparers, FONSI and References

SECTION III

Appendix A

Legislation Relating to Scotts Bluff National Monument

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION[1]

[No. 1547—Dec. 12, 1919—41 Stat. 1779]

WHEREAS Scotts Bluff is the highest known point within the State of Nebraska, affording a view for miles over the surrounding country;

WHEREAS Mitchell Pass, lying to the south of said bluff, was traversed by the old Oregon Trail and said bluff was used as a landmark and rendezvous by thousands of immigrants and frontiersmen travelling said trail en route for new homes in the Northwest; and

WHEREAS, in view of these facts, as well as of the scientific interest the region possesses from a geological standpoint, it appears that the public interests will be promoted by reserving the lands upon which the said bluff and the said pass are located as a national monument:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the power and authority in me vested by section two of the Act of Congress entitled "An Act for the preservation of American antiquities," approved June 8, 1906 (34 Stat., 225), do proclaim that there are hereby reserved from all forms of appropriation under the public-land laws, and set apart as the Scotts Bluff National Monument, the following described lands, to-wit: the northwest quarter, north half of the southwest quarter, southeast quarter of the southwest quarter, southwest quarter of the northeast quarter and the west half of the southeast quarter of section four, township twenty-one north, range fifty-five west; lots one, two and three, south half of the northeast quarter, north half of the southeast quarter, southeast quarter of the northwest quarter and the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of section five, township twenty-one north, range fifty-five west; the northeast quarter of section nine, township twenty-one north, range fifty-five west; lots six and seven, section twenty-seven, township twenty-two north, range fifty-five west; lot four, southeast quarter, and south half of the southwest quarter of section twenty-eight, said township and range; the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of section twenty-nine, said township and range; the east half of the east half of section thirty-two, said township and range; and the north half, southwest quarter, north half of the southeast quarter and the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section thirty-three, township twenty-two north, range fifty-five, all west of the Sixth Principal Meridian in the State of Nebraska, and that the boundaries of the said Scotts Bluff National Monument are as shown on the diagram hereto attached and made a part hereof.

Warning is hereby given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate or injure any natural feature of this Monument, or to occupy, exploit, settle or locate upon any of the lands reserved by this proclamation.

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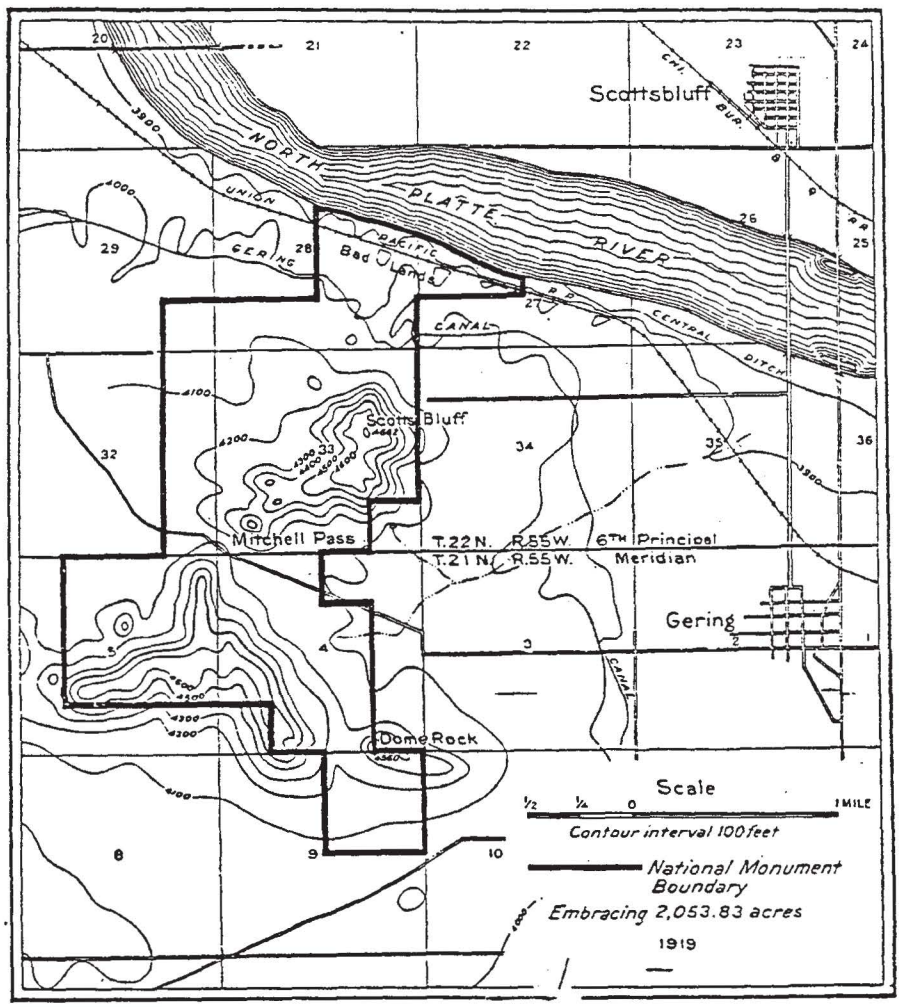
[1]Executive Order (No. 4008) of May 9, 1924, modified the monument boundaries by eliminating from the area the NE. ¼, sec. 9, T. 21 N., R. 55 W. of the sixth principal meridian, reducing area to 1,893.83 acres.

The Director of the National Park Service, under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, shall have the supervision, management and control of this Monument, as provided in the Act of Congress entitled "An Act to establish a National Park Service and for other purposes," approved August 25, 1916 (39 Stat., 535) .

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FRANKLIN K. LANE, SECRETARY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
STEPHEN T. MATHER, DIRECTOR

NEBRASKA
(SCOTTS BLUFF COUNTY)



SCOTTS BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.
Done in the District of Columbia this 12th day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and nineteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and forty-fourth.

[SEAL]

WOODROW WILSON.

By the President:
Robert Lansing,
Secretary of State.

EXECUTIVE ORDER

SCOTTS BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT

NEBRASKA

Proclamation of December 12, 1919 (No. 1547-41 Stat., 1779) reserving 2,053.83 acres in Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska, as the Scotts Bluff National Monument, is hereby modified by eliminating from said reservation the NE. 1/4, Section 9, Township 21 North, Range 55 West of the 6th Principal Meridian, thus reducing the area of the said National Monument to 1893.83 acres.

CALVIN COOLIDGE

THE WHITE HOUSE,

May 9, 1924.

[No. 4008]

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

[No. 1999—June 1, 1932—47 Stat. 2512]

WHEREAS it appears that the public interest would be promoted by adding to the Scotts Bluff National Monument, in the State of Nebraska, certain adjoining lands for administrative purposes and the protection of a certain approach highway and additional features of scenic and scientific interest:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Herbert Hoover, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the power in me vested by section 2 of the act of Congress entitled "AN ACT For the preservation of American antiquities," approved June 8, 1906 (34 Stat. 225), do proclaim that, subject to the rights of the owners of privately owned lands and subject to all valid existing rights, the following-described lands in Nebraska be, and the same are hereby, added to and made a part of the Scotts Bluff National Monument:

SIXTH PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN

T 21 N., R. 55 W.,	sec. 3, lot 4;
	sec. 4, lots 1 and 2, and SE. ¼ NE. ¼;
T 22 N., R. 55 W.,	sec. 27, SW. ¼ SW. ¼;
	sec. 28, lots 2 and 3, SW. ¼ NW. ¼, and N. ½ SW. ¼;
	sec. 29, lot 1, SE. ¼ NE. ¼, NE. ¼ SE. ¼, W. ½ E. ½, and E. ½ W. ½;
	sec. 32, E. ½ W. ½ and W. ½ E. ½;
	sec. 33, SE. ¼ SE. ¼;
	sec. 34, W. ½ W. ½.

Warning is hereby expressly given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of this monument and not to locate or settle upon any of the lands thereof.

The Director of the National Park Service, under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, shall have the supervision, management, and control of this monument as provided in the act of Congress entitled "AN ACT To establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes," approved August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535-536), and acts additional thereto or amendatory thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United Stated to be affixed.

DONE at the City of Washington this 1 day of June, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and thirty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and fifty-sixth.

[SEAL]

HERBERT HOOVER.

By the President:
Henry L. Stimson,
Secretary of State.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

[No. 2391—Mar. 29, 1940—54 Stat. 2690]

WHEREAS by Proclamation No. 1547 of December 12, 1919 (41 Stat. 1779), lots 6 and 7, sec. 27, and lot 4, sec. 28, T.22 N., R. 55 W., of the 6th P.M., bordering on the North Platte River, were reserved as part of the Scotts Bluff National Monument; and

WHEREAS certain islands in the said river and south of the main channel thereof in front of these lands which formed subsequent to the original survey are considered as being appurtenant to the shore lands referred to and as forming a part of the said monument; and

WHEREAS a certain public-land island adjacent to the said monument is necessary for the proper care and administration thereof; and

WHEREAS it appears that it would be in the public interest to reserve this island as an addition to the said Scotts Bluff National Monument:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, under and by virtue of the authority vested in me by section 2 of the act of June 8, 1906, c. 3060, 34 Stat. 225 (U.S.C., title 16, sec. 431), do proclaim as follows:

1. The above-mentioned proclamation of December 12, 1919, shall be construed in conformity with the plat of survey approved September 1, 1937, to embrace the following-described land:

SIXTH PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN—NEBRASKA

T. 22 N., R. 55 W., sec. 27, lot 9;
sec. 28, lots 6 and 7;

comprising 7.17 acres.

2. Subject to valid existing rights, the hereinafter-described lands are hereby reserved from all forms of appropriation under the public-land laws and added to and made a part of the Scotts Bluff National Monument:

T. 22 N., R. 55 W., sec. 20, lot 7;
sec. 21, lot 3;
sec. 28, lot 8;

comprising 46.17 acres.

Warning is hereby expressly given to any unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of this monument and not to locate or settle upon any of the lands thereof.

The Director of the National Park Service, under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, shall have the supervision, management, and control of this monument as provided in the act of Congress entitled "An Act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes," approved August 25, 1916, 39 Stat. 535 (U.S.C., title 16, secs. 1 and 2), and acts supplementary thereto or amendatory thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.
DONE at the City of Washington this 29th day of March in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and forty, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and sixty-fourth.

[SEAL]

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

By the President:
CORDELL HULL,
The Secretary of State.

Boundary Revision Authorized - - - - - Act of June 30, 1961

An Act To revise the boundaries of the Scotts Bluff National Monument, Nebraska, and for other purposes, approved June 30, 1961 (75 Stat. 148)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That in order to preserve the scenic and historic integrity of Scotts Bluff and adjacent features, the Secretary of the Interior may revise the boundaries of the Scotts Bluff National Monument so as to exclude from it certain private and Federal lands and substitute other private lands more essential to the purposes of the monument: *Provided,* That the revised boundaries shall encompass an area which is about three hundred and fifty acres less than the acreage of the monument as of the date of this Act. Notice of the designation of the revised boundaries pursuant to this section shall be given by publication in the Federal Register.

SEC. 2. The Secretary, in furtherance of the purposes of this Act, may procure, in such manner as he may deem to be in the public interest, lands and interests in lands within the revised boundaries designated pursuant to section 1 of this Act. To avoid the undesirable severance of parcels in private ownership which extend beyond the revised boundaries, the Secretary may, in his discretion and with the consent of the owners, acquire lands or interests in lands that are in private ownership but which lie outside the revised boundary. Property so acquired outside the revised boundary and federally owned lands excluded from the monument pursuant to section 1 of this Act may be exchanged by the Secretary of the Interior for any land of approximately equal value within the revised boundaries. Nothing in this section shall be construed as repealing or limiting the existing jurisdiction, power, or authority of the Secretary prescribed by the public land laws.

SEC. 3. There are authorized to be appropriated such sums, but not more than $15,000, as may be necessary for the acquisition of lands newly included within the boundaries of the monument as revised pursuant to this Act.

Appendix B

List of Preparers

Planning Team

NPS Midwest Support Office -- Omaha, Nebraska

John H. Sowl, Landscape Architect/Park Planner -- Team Captain
Tom Richter, Interpretation Planner
Mark Weekley, Landscape Architect
Sherda Williams, Historical Landscape Architect

Scotts Bluff National Monument

Larry D. Reed, Superintendent
Robert Hamann, Facility Manager
John Kacich, Administrative Officer
Jolene Kaufman, Business Manager, Oregon Trail Museum Association
Dean Knudsen, Historian
Robert Manasek, Resource Management Specialist
Glenn Sherrill, Former Chief Ranger

Special thanks to the following employees for their invaluable contributions and assistance:

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Appendix C

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

The National Park Service (NPS) prepared and made available for public review a *Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for Scotts Bluff National Monument (Draft GMP/EA).* The plan describes three approaches to managing Scotts Bluff National Monument (the Monument) over the next 10 to 20 years. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, (40 CFR 1508.9) a draft environmental assessment was prepared with the draft plan which analyzed the potential environmental and social impacts from implementing the three alternatives for managing the Monument. One of the management alternatives was identified as the NPS's preferred alternative. The *Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for Scotts Bluff National Monument* was distributed to the public in mid-March, 1998, and was on public/agency review for 45 days.

The purpose of this decision document is to affirm which course of action the NPS intends to follow and record a finding of no significant impact *(FONSI)* pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality's regulation's for implementing NEPA.

The Proposal

The preferred alternative (Alternative C in the *Draft GMP/EA*) is the proposal selected for long-term management of the Monument. Under this alternative, the NPS will take the following actions under the major *GMP/EA* planning issues:

1. *Protection of Robidoux Pass*: If a boundary adjustment is authorized by Congress, the NPS would acquire, through donation, exchange, or purchase in fee simple title, the lands comprising Robidoux Pass as referenced in the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* (on file at the Monument) for the purpose of preserving the important natural and cultural resources of these tracts as they relate to the overall preservation and interpretation of the Scotts Bluff and Overland Trail story. The NPS would also work with private landowners and appropriate agencies, groups, and organizations to encourage increased public awareness and protection of the pass and its resources. The NPS would develop a program to interpret the cultural resources and historic significance of the pass, such as through the provision of non-personal visitor services and low-impact visitor facilities.

2. *High-Voltage Lines*: The NPS would work with the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) and the Roosevelt Public Power District (RPPD) and any other appropriate party, along with local, regional, and state agencies, to reroute the lines to reduce the visual/aesthetic intrusion of these lines on the Monument's natural and cultural landscapes.

3. *Summit Road and Parking Area*: The Summit Road and parking area would remain in their current alignment and location. The historic character of these features would be protected and future expansions or changes in alignment, width, or surface materials would be strictly minimized. Maintenance activities would be conducted based on current programs and needs. The Monument would establish a regularly scheduled public transportation system, such as a shuttle, from the primary interpretive facility to the Summit. The system would include an interpretive message to provide an additional means for the public to understand and appreciate the Monument. The use of this shuttle system will negate the need for any expansion of the Summit Road or parking facilities. The NPS will evaluate the cost-effectiveness of such a system. If it proves not to be cost effective, the NPS will have to reevaluate this area, with the possibility that improvements to the Summit Road system, expansion of its parking area, or visitor limitations may eventually be necessary.

4. *Monument Facilities: Administrative, Maintenance, and Visitor Services*: The Monument would relocate its administrative offices and maintenance functions from their present location in the CCC-era structures within the Monument to a site somewhere outside the Monument's boundaries. The NPS would lease or construct new office space, possibly in Gering or Scottsbluff, to provide adequate facilities. If construction of a new facility is selected, the Monument will work to identify a potential building site and seek that area's inclusion into the Monument's boundaries through a boundary adjustment. The Monument would use the space vacated by the administrative and maintenance operations to develop more thorough interpretation of the Overland Trails and related subjects. There would also be some interpretation of the CCC-era structures and landscape features that were constructed to commemorate this chapter of the Overland Trails and the westward migration saga. New and improved restroom facilities would be developed, as needs and conditions dictate, while retaining sensitivity to the complex's CCC-era design.

5. *Adjacent Recreation Trails*: The Monument would continue to honor any commitment it has made to the *Monument Valley Pathways* project in the area, particularly as they affect Monument lands. The Monument would restrict the alignment of the *Pathways* trail to previously disturbed lands, such as along existing canal roads through the badlands, in order to minimize impacts to and risks of disturbing archeological sites, the Overland Trail remnants, and other natural (including paleontological) or cultural resources. The Monument would provide interpretive opportunities for the users of its segment of this trail by developing such interpretive media as wayside exhibits and trail guides to interpret the Monument's natural and cultural resources. Instigation of this action would require NEPA compliance.

6. *Visual and Scenic Qualities*: The NPS would actively work with local, regional, and state agencies, as well as with private landowners, to maintain or restore the integrity of the viewshed that is of historic significance to Scotts Bluff.

7. *Adequacy of Monument Boundaries*: If Congress authorizes a boundary adjustment, the Monument would implement the recommendations presented in the *"Conclusions"* section, located in the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* (on file at the Monument). The NPS would acquire, through donation, exchange, or purchase in fee simple title, those lands identified in the *Boundary Study* located adjacent to the Monument as well as the lands comprising Robidoux Pass.

Other Alternatives Considered

The *Draft GMP/EA* analyzed two other alternatives for the management of the Monument and its related resources. Alternative B stated that **1.** The NPS would acquire easements on land parcels that comprise Robidoux Pass for the purpose of preserving the natural and cultural resources of the pass; **2.** The NPS to work with the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) and the Roosevelt Public Power District (RPPD) and any other appropriate party, along with local, regional, and state agencies, to reroute the lines to reduce the visual/aesthetic intrusion of these lines on the Monument's natural and cultural landscapes; **3.** The Monument would establish a regularly scheduled public transportation system, such as a shuttle, from the visitor center/museum to the Summit; **4.** The Monument's administrative, maintenance and visitor service functions would continue in their present locations, visitor services facilities would be rehabilitated and expanded, and additions to the visitor center, administrative offices, and the maintenance buildings would be made; **5.** The Monument to not permit any new trail connections to outside trails while the Monument would withdraw support for the proposed *Monument Valley Pathways* project; **6.** The Monument to develop new scenic viewing areas on the summit of Scotts Bluff, along State Highway 92, and along its trails to expand the public's understanding and appreciation of the Monument's natural and cultural resources along with the simultaneous development of interpretive media as wayside exhibits, trail guides, and audio stations to further enrich the public's experience at those scenic viewing areas; and **7.** The Monument to implement the recommendations presented in the *"Conclusions"* section, of the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* (on file at the Monument), only as they relate to those lands immediately surrounding the Monument. For these lands, this means that the NPS would acquire, through donation, exchange, or purchase in fee simple title, those lands identified in the *Boundary Study* located adjacent to the Monument. These recommendations would not apply to the lands associated with the Robidoux Pass area

Under the "No Action" alternative (Alternative A), the NPS would continue to manage the Monument and its related resources as it has in the past, providing developments and services for Monument visitors by relying on the *1976 Master Plan* for guidance and direction. Under Alternative A: **1.** The land comprising Robidoux Pass National Historic Landmark would remain in private ownership with the acquisition of no fee title or easements; **2.** The NPS would take no action to remove, or call for the removal of, the existing Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) and the Roosevelt Public Power District (RPPD) high-voltage power lines that traverse the Monument; **3.** The Summit Road and parking area would remain in their current alignment and location; **4.** All Monument administrative, maintenance, and visitor services functions would continue to be located at their present facilities, with no expansion of Monument facilities; **5.** The Monument would continue to honor any commitment it has made to the *Monument Valley Pathways* project in the area, particularly as they affect Monument lands; **6.** The Monument would continue to follow a policy that takes appropriate intervention on the part of Monument management toward those human developments, features, or activities that are judged to be detrimental to the preservation of the visual and scenic qualities of the landscape surrounding the Monument; and **7.** No new actions would be taken by the Monument to amend the existing boundaries of the Monument with those boundary adjustments that are already taking place to be completed.

Public Involvement

Scoping sessions for revision of the new *General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for Scotts Bluff National Monument* were held February 7, 1995 at the Monument's visitor center with a follow-up session on October 31, 1995 at the Gering Civic Center. The participants consisted of the NPS planning team and an *ad hoc* citizen's group, formed from private individuals, local, regional, state, and federal government representatives, and various interested parties or organizations from the area. The purpose of the *ad hoc* citizen's group was to provide basic introductory information, suggestions, and viewpoints, from a non-NPS perspective, on the existing *Master Plan* and the Monument in order to help the planning process begin appropriately. The team and the other attendees jointly reviewed the language of the Monument's Presidential Proclamation.

A *Draft GMP/EA* was developed and placed on formal public and agency review from March 15 through April 30, 1998. Two "open house" meetings were held at the Monument on April 2 to allow for additional public and agency comment opportunities. The NPS received a total of 13 comment letters, six of which were from government agencies and seven from private individuals, organizations or interest groups.

Summary of Environmental Consequences

The potential environmental consequences of the three alternatives, including the preferred alternative, are described on pages 53-85 of the *Draft GMP/EA*.

Implementation of this alternative would provide for the future preservation and stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of Robidoux Pass. The protection and stewardship of these resources would leave the Monument more able to fulfill its designated purpose to preserve and interpret the history of the Platte River transportation corridor and the influences of Scotts Bluff on that corridor. It would also increase the Monument's ability to fully preserve and interpret the westward movement and the Overland Trails as they relate to the Monument and this area. By being incorporated within the Monument, the future integrity of the natural and cultural resources of the Robidoux Pass National Historic Landmark would be ensured. The public would also be ensured some form of access to this area that would be appropriate to the ongoing protection and complementary interpretation of these resources.

This alternative recommends the removal of the WAPA and RPPD high-voltage power transmission lines. Removal of these lines would improve the quality of the historic landscape and the visitor's experience. The Monument's ability to fulfill its charge to protect the view of the scenic and historic landscape of and surrounding Scotts Bluff in a condition similar to what the early travellers experienced would be significantly improved by this action.

Establishment of a public transportation system, such as a shuttle, should provide a small, albeit relatively insignificant, improvement to local air quality by reducing the number of vehicles travelling to and from the Summit. Its primary benefit would come from less traffic congestion on this route and at the Summit parking area, thus providing a somewhat more "natural" visitor experience. New or more extensive developments at the Summit would not be required; however, additional parking space near the museum may be necessary. The integrity of the original CCC-era design for the Summit Road and Summit area would be retained. In the end, this alternative would benefit the Monument since it would allow for visitor use of this area while simultaneously helping to protect the natural and cultural resources of the area.

Relocation of the existing administrative and maintenance facilities off of Monument lands, with the concurrent preservation and adaptive reuse of the CCC-era complex as an expanded visitor facility, would strike a compromise; it would meet the needs of the Monument's operations and visitor services facilities into the foreseeable future while preserving and protecting the existing CCC-era complex. This action would be compatible with the Monument's charge to protect its resources and its related (in this case, cultural/historical) features. The CCC-era complex is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Preservation due to age and other factors but has not, as yet, been nominated to the Register. This CCC-era complex was designed as part of an overall commemoration of the westward movement and the Overland Trails. Its preservation would reflect the spirit of the Monument's responsibilities and commitment to future generations regarding the ongoing preservation of cultural/historical resources while helping to ensure that the needs of visitors would continue to be met.

By continuing its existing commitments to proposed recreation trails, the Monument would expand on its efforts to fulfill part of the intent of the NPS's Organic Act, which, for the Monument, translates into providing ongoing preservation and interpretation of the Monument and its related features for public enjoyment for generations to come. Trails are an appropriate use of Monument lands, with due consideration and sensitivity for resource protection and public safety. Visitors using the pathways could have additional opportunities to see the interior and summit of the Monument. In addition, visitors could finally have a way of seeing the badlands on the northeast side of the Monument which would help them to fully comprehend why the Oregon-California Trail went through Robidoux Pass and Mitchell Pass. Increased public access to this heretofore relatively inaccessible area of the Monument also carries with it the potential for increased impacts to natural and cultural resources in these areas. This potential for impacts would be minimized by requiring these trails to be located on already disturbed lands, however. Thus, the Monument's efforts to maintain high standards of resource stewardship and protection should not be stressed or compromised in this area.

By implementing the recommendations from the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* and taking action to adjust the Monument's boundaries, the Monument should be more able to fulfill its charge to preserve the integrity of the natural and cultural resources entrusted to its care. These actions would also benefit the Monument's ability to fully interpret the story of the westward movement and the Overland Trails while permanently protecting some of the most significant or outstanding representative parcels that illustrate that story.

Findings

After reviewing the comments on the *Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for Scotts Bluff National Monument*, the NPS adopts the preferred alternative as the general management plan for Scotts Bluff National Monument. The NPS selected this alternative for several reasons. The alternative would provide for the future preservation and stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of Robidoux Pass (if that boundary adjustment is authorized by Congress), leaving the Monument more able to fulfill its designated purpose to preserve and interpret the history of the Platte River transportation corridor and the influences of Scotts Bluff on that corridor. It would increase the Monument's ability to fully preserve and interpret the westward movement and the Overland Trail as they relate to the Monument and this area. It would pursue the removal of the WAPA and RPPD high-voltage power transmission lines, thus improving the quality of the historic landscape and the visitor's experience and would help to fulfill the Monument's charge to protect the view of the scenic and historic landscape of and surrounding Scotts Bluff in a condition similar to what the early travellers experienced would be significantly improved by this action. This alternative would establish a public transportation system, such as a shuttle, to the Monument's summit, thus reducing traffic congestion on this route and at the Summit parking area and providing a somewhat more "natural" visitor experience. It would provide for the relocation of the existing administrative and maintenance facilities off of Monument lands, with the concurrent preservation and adaptive reuse of the CCC-era complex as an expanded visitor facility. This would meet the needs of the Monument's operations and visitor services facilities into the foreseeable future while preserving and protecting the existing CCC-era complex, thus reflecting the spirit of the Monument's responsibilities and commitment to future generations regarding the ongoing preservation of cultural/historical resources while helping to ensure that the needs of visitors would continue to be met. It would continue to honor the Monument's existing commitment to proposed recreation trails while allowing the Monument to expand on its efforts to fulfill part of the intent of the NPS's Organic Act, which, for the Monument, translates into providing ongoing preservation and interpretation of the Monument and its related features for public enjoyment for generations to come. Finally, this alternative will implement the recommendations from the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument*, if these adjustments are authorized by Congress, and take action to adjust the Monument's boundaries. This action will allow the Monument to be more able to fulfill its charge to preserve the integrity of the natural and cultural resources entrusted to its care and would also benefit the Monument's ability to fully interpret the story of the westward movement and the Overland Trail while permanently protecting some of the most significant or outstanding representative parcels that illustrate that story.

On the basis of the information contained in the environmental assessment as summarized in the *Draft GMP/EA*, it is the determination of the NPS that the preferred alternative does not constitute a major federal action that would significantly impact the quality of the human environment. Therefore, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9), an environmental impact statement *(EIS)* will not be prepared for this plan.

Because the environmental assessment was prepared for the general management plan, which normally requires an *EIS*, the NPS is required under regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1501.4(e)) to make this *FONSI* available for public review for 30 days. After this public review period expires, the NPS will begin implementing the preferred alternative.

Approved: David N Given 8/13/98
for **Director, Midwest Region** **Date**

Appendix D

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Supporting Documentation

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

* * * * *

General Management Plan for Scotts Bluff National Monument

1998

Appendix E

Environmental Assessment on the Draft *General Management Plan* (including Cost Estimates)

Appendix F

Consultation and Coordination

Appendix G

Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument

Appendix H

Visitor Service's Project Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument

Appendix I

Partial Species List for Scotts Bluff National Monument

Appendix E

Environmental Assessment on the Draft General Management Plan (Excerpted from the Draft General Management Plan, 1998)

Description of the Affected Environment

The following general description of the Monument and its related resources is intended to provide a broad overview of the subject of this *GMP/EA*. The reader is referred to the Monument's *Resource Management Plan, Interpretive Prospectus,* or other more specific park planning or administration documents for more detailed information on any particular topic.

Natural Resources

Physical Setting

Scotts Bluff National Monument was established in 1919 by Presidential Proclamation primarily for its historical significance and unique geological features. While human history is the dominant theme today at Scotts Bluff, the area's natural history provides the setting in which a multitude of significant human events have transpired. Its principal natural value is the topographically diverse landscape in which the main features of the historic landscape are still preserved.

The Monument lies within the western Great Plains in an area that was once almost continuous mixed and short grass prairie and that is now largely utilized for farming and ranching. The Monument lands encompass two large, cliff-rimmed bluffs, Scotts Bluff and South Bluff. Most of the land within the boundary is in native mixed-grass prairie with some previously disturbed areas harboring a variety of non-native species. There is also an area of mostly barren badlands between the base of Scotts Bluff and the North Platte River.

The landscape at the beginning of the Oregon-California Trail time period was primarily "natural" and largely "undisturbed," in a pre-European habitation sense. Euro-American emigrants arriving during the mid-nineteenth century found a landscape here that was richer in wildlife and more sparsely wooded than it is today, but the essential features of the scene -- the imposing bluffs rising from the plains -- are relatively unchanged. The effects these emigrants had on the landscape were certainly significant, but the landscape that evolved was still primarily "natural," overlain with periodic and concentrated human-caused disturbance. The expansive plains, prominent bluffs, and the dominant prairie vegetation made up the primary elements of the landscape. The plains and bluffs suffered immediate, but relatively little long term, disturbance from the passing of the emigrants. The vegetation near the trail was probably heavily affected by the concentration of both human traffic and large numbers of livestock. The vegetation probably regenerated in a short time due to the extensive root systems of the native plants, because of nearby seed sources available on the surrounding undisturbed lands, and because natural ecosystem processes remained intact.

The region's landscape and that of the Monument are very different than they were 150 years ago. The plains and bluffs remain, but now are dotted with buildings, roads, trails, canals, and trees. A large portion of the prairie vegetation has been disturbed, now resembling a "patch work" pattern of multiple disturbance events of various levels of intensity, size, and recovery. A significant portion of the lands surrounding the Monument have been converted to farmland or residential areas; therefore, nearby native seed sources are scarce. Many of the natural processes that helped shape the landscape, such as grazing by bison and other native fauna, and naturally ignited fires, are now gone or severely limited. Climatic influences and erosion still take place, but in some places the natural erosion rate may be accelerated by human-caused impacts.

Robidoux Pass, a nearby National Historic Landmark, has a highly significant association with the area's Oregon-California Trail and the Scotts Bluff story. It possesses a landscape consisting of a broad valley vegetated with high-quality native prairie (which has experienced more than a century of livestock grazing) spread between sparsely forested ridges. Aside from the presence of a few modern features, the landscape of Robidoux Pass offers perhaps the highest quality and most authentic natural landscape, that is to say it offers a combination of natural floral, faunal, and geomorphic features that allow modern visitors to "step back in time" to the period of the region's great westward human migration of the middle nineteenth century.

Geology

The Monument's Presidential Proclamation states that Scotts Bluff has "scientific interest. . .from a geologic standpoint." The scientific interest of this site has been apparent since the late 1890s when the U.S. Geological Survey made the first formal geologic investigation of the area. Geologic publications relating to the site number at least nine and the area continues to be the subject of investigation. Although it appears the geology of Scotts Bluff has been well studied, the statement in the proclamation helps focus on one of the primary resources of the Monument, its geology. There is no known similar study for Robidoux Pass.

Scotts Bluff is a topographic feature rising to 4,649 feet above sea level and 800 feet above the North Platte River. The geology of Scotts Bluff is significant from a natural resources standpoint because it affords a view of 740 feet of geologic strata that span a time period extending from 34 to 22 million years before present. Visitors can easily view this resource when walking the Saddle Rock Trail.

The bluff, like the adjoining Wildcat Hills and nearby Chimney Rock, Courthouse and Jail Rock, has been and continues to be weathered out of geologic deposits of marine and alluvial origin that made up the ancient high plains of the region prior to regional uplifting. Approximately 5 million years ago the rate of erosion increased in this region as the Rocky Mountains to the west were uplifted. Wind and stream deposits of sand and mud, wind deposits of volcanic ash, and supersaturated groundwater rich in lime formed the layers of sandstone, siltstone, volcanic ash and limestone that now comprise the bluff's steep elevation, ridges, and the broad alluvial fans at its base. The high plains that were formed at that time were gradually eroded away, except at certain locations that were protected by a "roof," or caprock, of hard limestone that was more resistant to erosion. These caprocks cover the tops of the bluffs in the area, slowing their rate of erosion relative to the unprotected surrounding (and eroded) countryside. This process resulted in the area's unique geologic features, such as Scotts Bluff. Badland formations are located between Scotts Bluff and the North Platte River, where deeply incised arroyos support little or no vegetation.

The geology of Scotts Bluff is also significant for historical reasons. Emigrants typically traveled within the Platte River Valley on both sides of the river; however, at Scotts Bluff the geology of the badlands forced the emigrants out of the valley. The badlands presented a barrier to travel because they stretched from the base of the bluff to the river itself. Once the emigrants moved out of the valley, the bluff formations forced the travelers to look for a pass to allow them to move through the bluffs and continue on their westward journey. The two closest passages were at Robidoux Pass and Mitchell Pass. Those traveling by wagon used Robidoux Pass in the early years because the pass at Scotts Bluff was not fit for wagons. It was described by travelers on horseback in 1834 as *"a large and deep ravine . . . very uneven and difficult, winding from amongst innumerable mounds six to eight feet in height, the space between them frequently so narrow as scarcely to admit our horses."* Unknown persons made improvements to the pass in the middle nineteenth century which allowed for safe passage by wagon. When all is considered, the geology of the Scotts Bluff region is historically significant for at least five reasons: 1) the bluff was a landmark to travelers, 2) the North Platte River created a broad valley that facilitated westward migration, 3) the badlands formation forced the immigrants out of the river valley, 4) the bluff formation presented another barrier to travel, and 5) Mitchell Pass and Robidoux Pass allowed passage through the bluff formations.

Paleontology

The geology of the badlands area is significant also because it contains fossils. The majority of fossils found at Scotts Bluff National Monument are located in the Monument's badlands. Here the Orella Member of the Brule Formation is exposed. It consists of interbedded sandstone and siltstone layers that represent floodplain and channel deposits of ancient streams that flowed eastward from the uplifting Rocky Mountains. This is the oldest rock outcrop at the Monument. Fossils of horses, oreodonts (extinct, sheep-sized, four-toed mammals), prairie dogs, foxes, turtles, rodents, beavers, and cats have been found in the badlands. Some of the richest fossil-bearing strata in Nebraska are found here. Scotts Bluff fossils have become type, or indicator, fossils for the Oligocene Epoch (40-25 million years before present) of the Cenozoic Era (65 million years to present). Most of these fossils were collected prior to the establishment of the Monument. Many other fossils could still exist within the Monument, so further paleontological research within Monument boundaries could be productive. There is no known similar study for Robidoux Pass.

Soils

According to the *Soil Survey for Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska*, there are three principle soil associations found at Scotts Bluff National Monument. The first one is the Tassel-Anselmo-Rock outcrop association, which consists of steep, rocky soils with sandy soils and outcrops of rock on uplands. The second is the Mitchell-Keith-Epping association, are generally very gently sloping to sloping and steep in places with loamy and sandy soils on uplands. The third is the Mitchell-Otero-Buffington association, which is predominantly level with occasional slight slopes with deep soils of silty, sandy, and clayey texture on valley floors. This association is cut by a network of irrigation canals, laterals, and drainage ditches with nearly all of the farmland in this association is irrigated and used for crops *(USDA-Soil Conservation Service, 1968)*. A more detailed soil survey was completed in 1992 especially for the Monument and should be referenced for more specific information on this area and Robidoux Pass.

Prime and Unique Farmlands

According to the Soil Survey for Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska, *(USDA-Soil Conservation Service, 1968)* there are no prime or unique farmlands within Scotts Bluff National Monument or Robidoux Pass.

Climate

Scotts Bluff National Monument and nearby Robidoux Pass are located in the middle of the North American continent within the temperate climatic zone. Annual precipitation averages fifteen inches. Typically the winters are cold and dry. Temperatures below zero on the Fahrenheit scale are not uncommon. Snow fall is usually of the dry, powdery type and blows easily. Blizzards are common. Most of the moisture comes in the spring with spring snows, which are wet and heavy. Summer rains are usually scattered or isolated with occasional thunderstorms. Lightning, hail and tornadoes can accompany these storms. Winds are common throughout the year and tend to be much stronger during seasonal changes in the fall and the spring. Humidity is usually low. The winds and low humidity facilitate rapid evaporation.

Air Quality

Wind-borne particulate matter is one reason for reduced air quality in the area. Because of the region's relatively low precipitation and the disturbance of the region's highly erodible soil from cultivation and other farm activities, there is frequently a considerable amount of particulate matter in the air. This is especially common in the fall during harvest, in winter when the region's fields of mostly beets, corn and beans have no cover, and in the spring during soil preparation and seeding. The light, sandy loam soil blows easily in the wind. Occasionally, during periods of extremely intense winds, the Monument is not visible from the city of Gering, only two miles away. Air quality is excellent at nearby Robidoux Pass.

Sugar beet refineries in the North Platte River Valley contribute a considerable amount of sulfur dioxide, organic compounds, and particulate matter to the local atmosphere, but these emissions are within acceptable limits as defined by the Clean Air Act (42 USC 7401 *et seq.*). The haze and odor from the processing and refinement of sugar beets detracts from the visitors' experience and, at times, interferes with their ability to enjoy the scenic views from the Monument's summit.

Water Resources

Scotts Bluff National Monument is not noteworthy for possessing extensive water resources within its boundaries. Monument lands are, for the most part, routinely dry with one notable spring (Scott Spring), a few localized wetlands along the adjacent North Platte River, and unknown quantity or quality of groundwater resources.

Streams

The only flowing stream associated with Scotts Bluff National Monument is the North Platte River; its floodplain adjoins a portion of the Monument's northern boundary. Historically, the North Platte River flooded in the spring, but today dams within its river basin control much of its flow, thus making flood events rare. Diverted water is now used for irrigation, flood control, and the generation of electricity.

There are no free-flowing streams within the Monument. However, several small drainageways, consisting of gullies and ravines, exist on Monument lands. These gullies and ravines, which are typically very small, are usually situated at the head of the drainage areas and usually contain water only after heavy precipitation events.

Three irrigation canals -- the Central Irrigation District, Gering Irrigation District, and the Gering/Fort Laramie Irrigation District, traverse the Monument. They deliver irrigation water to farm fields in the adjacent North Platte River Valley. These canals mostly predate the establishment of the Monument and the federal government recognizes an easement for each one. Operating companies are allowed to continue with maintenance activities within fifty feet of the high water mark on either side of the canals.

Robidoux Pass has one small, nameless creek flowing through it. The pass contains the spring-fed source of this creek and represents the upper portion of its watershed.

Floodplains

Approximately 102 acres of Scotts Bluff National Monument lie along the North Platte River and are considered to be part of the floodplain by the City of Scottsbluff. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (1975), only a portion of Monument land adjoining the North Platte River lies within the river's *Special Flood Hazard Area,* an area that has the statistical potential to be inundated by 100-year frequency floods. Before dams and reservoirs were completed upstream on the North Platte River, spring floods from melting snow in the Rocky Mountains were common. These floods produced a river that was much wider than today's and a more thoroughly scoured floodplain possessing a lower concentration of trees and other woody vegetation than what is now present. Today the floodplain of the North Platte River within the boundaries of Scotts Bluff National Monument is forested by large eastern cottonwood trees (*Populus deltoides*), other woody species, and many species of exotic herbaceous vegetation. The nameless creek in Robidoux Pass does not possess an established floodplain.

Wetlands

In 1992 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identified three areas of wetlands within Scotts Bluff National Monument. All three areas are adjacent to the North Platte River on the Monument's north boundary. These three areas consist of approximately 27 acres. These areas are identified as marsh. The plants are classified as emergent in two areas and scrub in the other. These areas are seasonally flooded in the spring and temporarily flooded at other times due to rainfall events upstream. There are no significant wetlands associated with the upper watershed of the nameless creek in Robidoux Pass.

Vegetation

The native vegetation of the Monument consists of three major plant associations: 1) the moderately dense mixed grass prairie, 2) the ponderosa pine/Rocky Mountain juniper areas, and 3) the hardwood community along the floodplain of the North Platte River. Within these areas of the Monument can be found seven major habitat types: riverine woodland, coniferous woodland, mixed-grass prairie, riparian habitat associated with irrigation canals, pine-studded bluffs, shrub-dominated slopes, and badlands. Natural prairie grasses are the predominant vegetative cover on the Monument's flatter areas. The mixed grass prairie is dominated by blackroot sedge (*Carex filifolia* var. Nutt.) and needle-and-thread grass (*Stipa comata*). Other native grasses, such as western wheatgrass (*Agropyron smithii*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), prairie sandreed (*Calamovilfa longifolia*), and sideoats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) are common. On the bluff summits, slopes, and sheltered ravines can be found native grasses, forbs, ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum* var. Sarg.). During the 1930s, eastern red cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*) were planted in the ravines to reduce soil erosion. These have become self-propagating. These latter three tree species have increased their numbers from the time of the early nineteenth century emigrants and settlers due to the reduction in fire intensity and frequency. The North Platte River floodplain contains mature eastern cottonwood trees (*Populus deltoides*), box elder (*Acer negundo L.* var. *interius* [Britt.] Sarg.), Siberian elms (*Ulmus pumila L.*) and Russian olive (*Elaeagnus augustifolia L.*). Poison ivy (*Toxicodendron rydbergii* [Small] Green) and other shrubs are common in this area. Non-native vegetation, including state-designated noxious weeds, have invaded the Monument and prefer the damp ravines and floodplain. A partial list of vegetative species for the Monument can be found in Appendix E. Robidoux Pass possesses generally similar vegetation.

Wildlife

Scotts Bluff National Monument is one of the few places in the Panhandle of Nebraska where wildlife is protected in a natural environment. There are resident populations of various species of reptiles, amphibians, birds, mammals and invertebrates. The Monument is surrounded by private land, approximately half of which is used for agriculture. See Appendix E for a partial species list for the Monument (further species information is found in the Monument's current *Resource Management Plan*).

Threatened or Endangered Species

Federally-listed **threatened** species are those plant or animal species for which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has sufficient information on their biological status and threats to their ongoing viability to allow them to be officially listed as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act. Federally-listed **endangered** species are those plant or animal species for which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has sufficient information on their biological status, threats to their ongoing viability, and severity of "threatened" status to allow them to be officially upgraded to the "endangered" category under the Endangered Species Act. Federally-listed **candidate** species are those plant or animal species for which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has sufficient information on their biological status and threats to their ongoing viability to allow them to officially *propose* them as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. There are only four known federally-listed endangered or threatened species of concern that have, or could have, any association with Scotts Bluff National Monument or the nearby Robidoux Pass.

Federally-listed Endangered or Threatened Species

The threatened northern bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) can be found in and around the Monument during the winter months. Loafing habitat exists for this raptor along the adjacent North Platte River. Whooping cranes (*Grus americana*), an endangered species, have been seen migrating through the Monument area. Some potential habitat exists for this species among the shallow braided channels of the adjacent North Platte River and associated with borrow pit lakes within the area. The endangered peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) migrates through the area; habitat is potentially available for this species among the steep eroded slopes of Scotts Bluff itself as well as other nearby bluffs. Since the Monument has a resident population of prairie dogs, it is theoretically possible that the endangered black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*) could be found on Monument lands, as prairie dogs and their burrows constitute its preferred prey and habitat.

State-listed Endangered or Threatened Species

Federally and Nebraska state-listed candidate species for the Scotts Bluff National Monument and Robidoux Pass areas include the mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*) and the swift fox (*Vulpes velox*). Habitat that could support either of these species potentially exists at the Monument or the pass areas. However, there have been no reported sightings or indications that either of these species exists in these areas. The State of Nebraska also lists the prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) as threatened, and this bird has been known to nest at the Monument. Nesting occurs from February to mid-June. The burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), which lives and breeds in the Monument's prairie dog town during the summer, is also a candidate species for the state list.

Biodiversity

Scotts Bluff National Monument was established to preserve and protect a famous landmark of the Oregon-California Trail. The long-term goal of the Monument's natural resource management program is to maintain wildlife populations in harmony with healthy natural plant communities. This includes a primary responsibility for the restoration and management of the Monument's relatively small portion of High Plains native mixed-grass prairie to its historical appearance (based on the best available scientific and historical evidence). Primary methods for accomplishing this goal include, but are not limited to, (1) seeding native grass and forb species, and (2) applying a prescribed fire program to simulate natural fire frequency, intensity and season. The Monument presently uses prescribed fire to perpetuate its grassland and sparse forest communities, especially on Scotts Bluff's summit and in its ravines. The use of prescribed fire helps to maintain the health of the ecosystem by reducing hazardous fuel accumulations and lessening the encroachment of alien plant species. This active resource management program should encourage the development of a stable and biologically diverse prairie ecosystem on Monument land that should, in turn, benefit biological diversity within the region.

Cultural Resources

A *Historic Resources Study*, which would holistically identify the cultural resources of Scotts Bluff National Monument, has not been written. However, several specialized resource studies and inventories have identified historic or prehistoric archeological, structural, and landscape resources.

A recent park-wide archeological survey of Scotts Bluff National Monument has resulted in a total of 55 archeological sites being located and identified. It is possible that other sites, particularly those that might be deeply buried under aeolian ("wind-blown") deposits, could still be discovered. Forty-nine of these sites have been classified as being prehistoric, and could represent one or more of the following periods of occupation;

a) **Prehistoric Period (circa 10,000 B.C. through circa A.D. 1750)**

Archeological studies have indicated human occupation of the Scotts Bluff region as early as circa 10,000 years B.C.. A period known as the Paleo-Indian Stage lasted from circa 10,000 to circa 6,000 years B.C. This was followed by the Plains Archaic Stage from circa 6,000 B.C. to circa A.D. 1, and the Plains Woodland Stage from circa A.D. 1 through circa A.D. 1000. The Central Plains Tradition in the Plains Village Stage, circa A.D. 900 until circa A.D. 1450. The Coalescent Tradition of the Plains Village Stage, circa A.D. 1450 to circa A.D. 1750, overlapped somewhat with the Dismal River Aspect of circa A.D. 1650 to circa A.D. 1750. (*U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Clark, 1994*).

b) **Historic Period (post A.D. 1750)**

Since approximately A.D. 1750, the principle tribes known to have occupied the Scotts Bluff region are the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and most recently the Lakota (*Brand, 1934*). Also within this period, use and occupation of this region by Euro-Americans began, and continues, to the present day. Historic features pertinent to the Monument include:

1) *The Oregon Trail:* Remnants of a roadbed worn by thousands of emigrant wagons are still visible in Mitchell Pass at Scotts Bluff.

2) *William Henry Jackson Campsite:* During his last visit to Scotts Bluff in 1938, Jackson marked the site where he camped in 1866 when he was working as a bullwhacker for a freighting outfit. An interpretive sign now marks this site.

3) *Trailhead Arch:* Now in ruins, this brick archway once stood at the base of the now-abandoned "Zig-Zag Trail." Constructed with funds provided by the Daughters of the American Revolution and dedicated in 1930, a 1933 survey revealed that the arch had been built on private land.

4) *Oregon Trail Museum:* Dedicated in 1936, this museum was once the only museum dedicated to telling the story of America's Westward Migration. Today the museum contains exhibits about the Oregon Trail, the Pony Express, area fossils and geology, the Mormon Trail, the art of William Henry Jackson, and many other aspects of the American frontier experience.

5) *The Summit Road:* Constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the road to the summit of Scotts Bluff gives motorists the opportunity to view the North Platte Valley from the top of the bluff. The road was officially opened to the public on September 19, 1937.

6) *The Summit Hiking Trail System:* The first substantive development at the Monument came in the form of the "Scout Trail" (also called the "Zig-Zag Trail"), which was constructed in 1927. This trail replaced an informal foot trail that had been worn into the bluff and which had relied on a rickety ladder to finally reach the summit. Due to massive erosion, the "Scout Trail" was closed in 1953. In 1958, the "Scout Trail" was replaced by a new paved footpath that led from the Visitor Center all the way to the summit of the bluff.

Summary of Oregon-California Trail

The primary route used by the emigrants bound for California and Oregon prior to 1850-1851 was along an Oregon-California trail on the south side of the Platte River (see Figure 1). Upon reaching the Scotts Bluff area, this traffic was routed through nearby Robidoux Pass. This diversion was necessitated by the fact that Mitchell Pass, adjacent to Scotts Bluff, contained too many deep cuts and ravines to make hauling wagons through it feasible.

All this changed in 1850-1851, however, when unknown persons made enough improvements in Mitchell Pass to allow for wagon traffic. There are two popular theories about who may have made these improvements. One theory holds that an Army detail from Fort Laramie may have done the leveling and digging that was needed in the otherwise impassable washouts. This theory is supported by a number of factors. First, the military would have had the resources and discipline that such a project would have required. Also, as most regular Army officers were trained as engineers, there would have been a ready pool of experienced engineers to see that the work was done properly. The motive for making such improvements may have been to reduce the time and expense of hauling supplies to Fort Laramie by one to two days. A second theory holds that a rival trading company may have done the work in Mitchell Pass in order to put the existing Antoine Robidoux trading post, situated in Robidoux Pass, out of business. Ultimately, as the traffic declined in Robidoux Pass, Robidoux relocated his business near Fort Laramie. Either theory is possible, and both allow for a pool of organized labor and motivation. Unfortunately, there is no known written record of who may have done the work that dramatically changed Oregon-California travel in this area.

Summary of Depression-Era Development

Although Scotts Bluff National Monument was established in 1919, there was little development of the Monument's resources until 1933. Prior to this time, the "Zig-Zag Trail" was cut into the east slope of Scotts Bluff and a small picnic area was built near the entrance to this trail, but plans to improve visitor access were not actively pursued until newly-established public works programs could be utilized.

Two major projects were initiated using labor provided by the Civilian Works Administration (CWA). The most ambitious of these projects was the construction of an auto road to the summit of Scotts Bluff. To serve those visitors using this Summit Road, a museum/administration complex was built at the base of the bluff and dedicated in 1936.

Construction progress was rather slow as virtually all labor was done by hand and shortages of funds occasionally brought the work to a standstill. Further complicating matters, there were technical difficulties in cutting three tunnels through the soft sedimentary deposits in the bluff, resulting in a number of rock slides. In 1935 the work on the road and museum complex was taken over and eventually completed by Company 762 of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

Along with several other small projects, the CCC also built a residence for the Superintendent, a maintenance shop area, a two-story tower with ranger quarters and offices, and an addition to the museum now known as the Landmark Room. A new picnic ground was also built at the base of the west side of South Bluff, but due to vandalism, overuse, and a small Monument staff, this site was closed to the public in 1939.

Eighteen structures have been identified as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places ("National Register") by a baseline resource inventory, the *List of Classified Structures (LCS)*. The *LCS* was completed in 1995, with concurrence by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). This report identifies the following 18 structures as contributing to a nationally significant National Register district (Scotts Bluff Historic District);

1) The Oregon Trail
2) Oregon Trail Museum
3) Residence #1
4) Utility Building
5) Comfort Station
6) Sidewalk complex
7) Summit Road & parking lot
8) Summit Road tunnels
9) Saddle Rock Trail
10) Summit Trail signposts
11) North Overlook marker
12) North Overlook wall
13) Entrance markers
14) Hiram Scott plaque
15) Pony Express plaque
16) Gering irrigation canal
17) Hiram Scott Arch ruin
18) Scout Trail

Some additions to these structures, such as the amphitheater at the museum (#2) and an addition to the utility building (#4), were done as part of a 1958-59 NPS funding and design initiative called "Mission '66."

Another baseline study, the *Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI), Level II*, was completed in May, 1996. This inventory identifies two cultural landscapes which have been determined eligible (1/7/97) for the National Register. One landscape is identified as the entire Monument, a landscape which developed as a Depression-era public works design, including the natural landforms and the Oregon-California Trail remnants, to commemorate the historical significance of this landmark. The second landscape, the Oregon-California Trail remnants, is a "component landscape" (a landscape that is individually eligible, but also contributes to the larger Monument landscape). These landscapes include all of the structures identified by the *LCS*; but, they also include vegetation, views, spatial organization, archeological sites, and natural landforms that contribute to the landscape's historical significance.

The *CLI* was reviewed by Scotts Bluff National Monument staff, prior to review by the Nebraska SHPO, for concurrence on the eligibility of these two landscapes for listing on the National Register. In addition, a study to determine the Monument's compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) is currently underway.

An ethnohistorical study to identify traditional and cultural uses of the Monument is currently being conducted. It is known that in the early 1800s the general region was apparently a favorite bison hunting ground for the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe (*NPS, 1991*).

Property Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Scotts Bluff National Monument (listed 10/15/66).

Property Eligible for Listing on the National Register of Historic Places

The landscape and contributing features of Scotts Bluff National Monument and the Oregon Trail ruts (1/7/97), and the Scotts Bluff National Monument Historic District containing the visitor center/museum Depression-era complex, along with the related Summit Road, tunnels, parking lot, and hiking trails (3/17/95). A determination of eligibility has not been requested on the irrigation canals.

Property Listed as a National Historic Landmark

Robidoux Pass (listed 7/1984-*NHL*; 1/20/61-*NRHP*).

Property Listed on the National Registry of National Natural Landmarks

None.

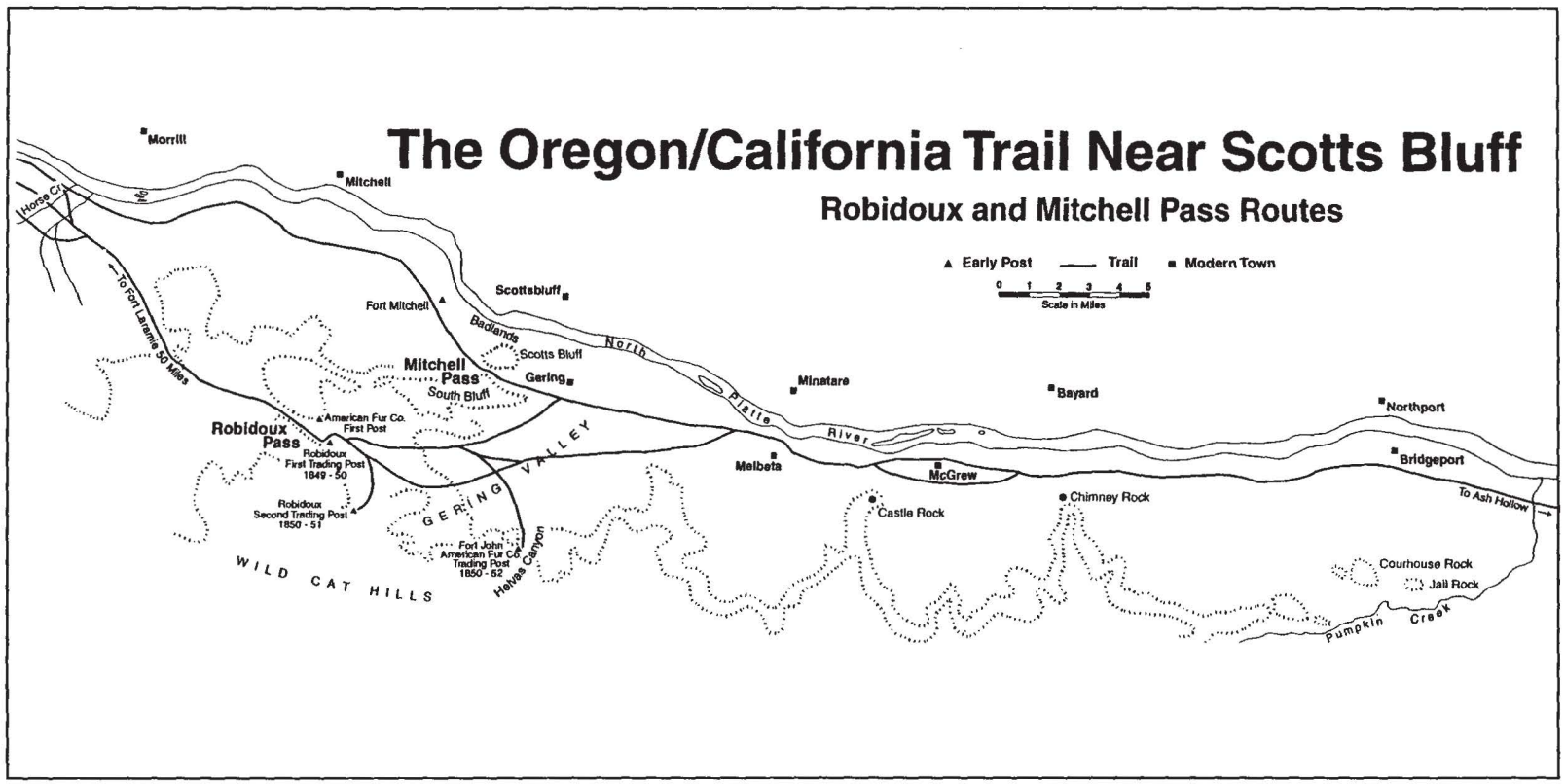

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Figure 1. Scotts Bluff's Orientation to the Oregon/California Trail.

ON MICROFILM

Cultural Resources of Robidoux Pass

Robidoux Pass (see Figure 2) contains a number of historically significant cultural resources. Remnants of the Oregon-California Trail are visible and generally undisturbed. This route of the trail was used from 1842 through 1852, when the primary route shifted to Mitchell Pass (located at Scotts Bluff National Monument). The remaining wagon trail remnants in Robidoux Pass extend for approximately two miles through the pass and just beyond. Archeological sites believed to be present include that of a trading post and blacksmith shop, established in 1848 or 1849, to service wagons on the trail by Antoine Robidoux, who was related to the French family that founded St. Joseph, Missouri. At least four emigrant graves have also been marked in the pass.

Robidoux Pass was designated as a National Historic Landmark (*NHL*) and listed in July, 1984. The *NHL* designation covers approximately 1,000 acres, all of which are currently in private ownership, except for the county-owned Robidoux Road and a small parcel of land owned by the State of Nebraska. A 1965 study (*USDI, NPS*) suggested that a total of 1,640 acres be purchased to encompass the viewshed of the pass.

This relatively broad pass narrows from 2.5 miles wide at its eastern approach (west of Section 10 -- not included in the *NHL* nomination), then narrows to 1.5 miles, and finally to just over 1 mile wide at the summit. Beyond that, the land immediately opens up to the west, presenting a broad panorama:

> *"...at the crest of Robidoux Pass one can see over a hundred miles west up the North Platte Valley, toward Fort Laramie and Laramie Peak, silhouetted against the Wyoming sky. The emigrants recorded this as their 'first view of the Rocky Mountains.'" (Mattes, 1987, p.436)*

The Oregon-California Trail remnants in Robidoux Pass climb from an elevation of approximately 4,275 feet to approximately 4,530 feet, a difference of 255 feet. The descent to the west is more gradual, where the former trail bent back to the northwest towards the North Platte River. Approximately two miles of trail remnants are visible through Robidoux Pass, of which one mile lies within the *NHL* boundary.

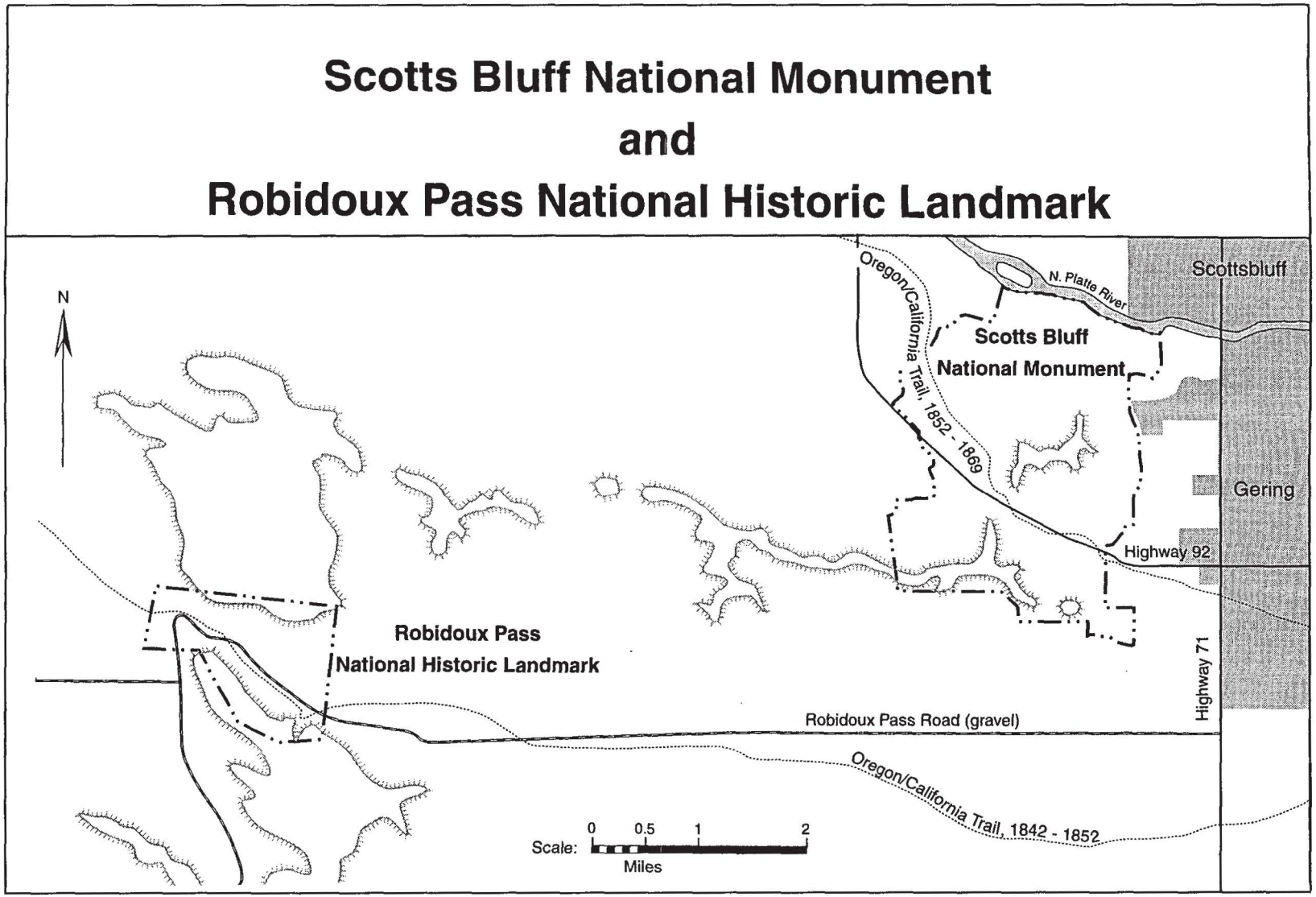

Figure 2. SCBL & Robidoux Pass NHL.

Aesthetic Factors

Natural Quiet

Since Scotts Bluff National Monument represents a relatively small area of land compared with surrounding developments, it is virtually impossible to escape the noises of the nearby urban areas. State Highway 92 traverses the Monument east to west, following the original route of the Oregon-California Trail, and extends through Mitchell Pass. Modern visitors often walk in the original wagon trail remnants of the Oregon-California Trail, imagining what it was like 150 years ago when emigrants passed through the area. The sound of cars and trucks traveling through the pass on the adjacent highway now intrudes on this experience. Noise from the cities of Gering and Scottsbluff can be heard within the Monument's boundaries. Vehicles from State Highway 92 add to this noise. Occasionally low flying aircraft, both private and commercial, fly over the bluff, adding to the ambient noise level. All detract from the Monument's natural quiet, as well as from the quality of the visitors' experience of the Monument.

The quality of natural quiet that exists at Robidoux Pass is excellent relative to that of the Monument. The pass is entirely pasture, sustains some distant noise from agricultural vehicles, and enjoys only an occasional vehicle traveling along the Robidoux Pass road.

Scenic Resources

The Monument's high steep bluffs, its prairie, and the eroding and deeply incised terrain of its badlands and gullies all contribute to dramatic and panoramic views of the surrounding regional landscape and add immeasurably to the scenic interest of the area. Scotts Bluff and the nearby Wildcat Hills are the major scenic attractions to visitors as they approach the Monument. Many nineteenth century emigrants recognized the natural beauty of the area and these promontories, but most saw them as a barrier in their efforts to travel west. The prairie in this area, which is technically known as mid-grass or mixed-grass prairie, is the perfect foreground setting for the 800-foot high bluffs. The badlands lying between the bluffs and the North Platte River are seldom seen up close by visitors, but are beautifully rugged and show plainly why the wagon trains detoured around them.

There are several major intrusions on the aesthetic, natural and cultural aspects of the Monument (although they do illustrate the consequences of the Oregon-California Trails on area development). Sites visible from the summit of Scotts Bluff include the Union Pacific Railroad's parallel tracks through the Monument; three irrigation canals crossing the Monument; the City of Gering's sanitary landfill located 1/3-mile east of the Monument (clearly visible from the Summit); the City of Gering's expansion to the west; and a municipal golf course and residential area on the eastern boundary of the Monument. A recently proposed residential development on the Monument's western boundary would also have been easily visible from the summit and is another indication of ongoing development pressures on the Monument's scenic resources from surrounding competing land uses. The necessary zoning change for this development was denied by the Scotts Bluff County Commission.

From both the summit and from the ground can be seen the Nebraska Public Power District's radio tower, located in the northeast corner of the Monument, as well as existing housing developments. All of these detract from the visitors' ability to experience the Monument as it may have appeared to the first emigrants more than 150 years ago.

Robidoux Pass, by contrast, appears superficially to be very much as it was during the westward migration period. Several aspects of the pass detract from this aboriginal landscape. They include: a few scattered ranch operations, Robidoux Pass Road extending through the pass, high-voltage power lines, occasional vehicular travel along this road, the view of modern cattle grazing operations, and a few physical indications of the historic westward migration through this area.

Visitor Use and Experience

Monument's Relationship to the Region

Today's visitors to Scotts Bluff tend to view the Monument in a narrow, site-specific context rather than see it as an important link in a series of features related to the region's history. Entering the North Platte River Valley at Ash Hollow near present-day Lewellen, Nebraska, emigrants passed and climbed Courthouse and Jail Rock, and further west were awed by Chimney Rock, just as modern travelers are today. They struggled through the passes at Scotts Bluff and nearby Robidoux Pass with the knowledge roughly one third of their westward trek had been completed, and that Fort Laramie and security were not far beyond. It is this series of landmarks (several of which have since been designated as state or federal national historic sites and cited in such documents as the 1981 NPS *Oregon Trail National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan*) connected by historic trails that distinguishes the Scotts Bluff region and offers unique tourism and opportunities for interpretation.

In a regional context, the Monument adjoins the south bank of the North Platte River three miles west of the City of Gering (1994 population, 8,158) and 20 miles east of Wyoming's border. North of the river, the City of Scottsbluff (1994 population, 14,070) is the major commercial, industrial, and agricultural center for the Nebraska Panhandle area. Regional population centers include Cheyenne, Wyoming, 95 miles southwest; Rapid City, South Dakota, 190 miles north; Denver, Colorado, 200 miles southwest; and Omaha, Nebraska, 450 miles east. Access to the Monument is via State Highway 92, which bisects the Monument from east to west. The Monument's main visitor facilities are located approximately one mile west of the city limits of Gering along State Highway 92. State Highway 71, the north-south link with Interstate 80 forty-five miles to the south, runs through Scottsbluff, Terrytown and Gering. Finally, U.S. Highway 26 traverses the City of Scottsbluff east to west. These three highways form the area's primary transportation network.

Population trends over the last ten years indicate an increase in the Scottsbluff/Gering/Terrytown urban complex adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Monument. There are also recent indications that suburban development may spread to the western side of the Monument in the near future. Overall, this urban complex is modern and well-organized and possesses a steadily expanding social and economic foundation. Key factors supporting the area's economy are its strong agricultural base, increasing tourist traffic, and a growing medical center complex. The Monument, which is probably the most significant historical site in Scotts Bluff County, is also a valuable economic resource to the county as it helps attract hundreds of thousands of tourist dollars to the area (*Panhandle Area Development District, 1995*).

Visitor Use, Experience and Visitation Trends

There are two main facets to the visitor experience at Scotts Bluff National Monument: **1)** the story of the westward migration on the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails, and **2)** the natural history and scenic beauty of the bluffs and surrounding prairie. Visitors to the Monument are able to experience a significant representation of the westward expansion era as it relates to the historic trails, Pony Express, and the first transcontinental telegraph. Today visitors can walk in wagon ruts through Mitchell Pass just as emigrants did over 150 years ago. Additional trails are open to hikers and bicyclists to enjoy and experience the Monument's mixed-grass prairie.

For many visitors Scotts Bluff National Monument is a brief stop on their vacation route, which frequently terminates at such destination areas as Yellowstone National Park or the Black Hills of South Dakota. For others, particularly those with a serious interest in the Oregon-California Trail and related history, it is a destination. Most visitors spend time in the Monument's museum and visitor center, and a majority go to the summit of the bluff. Many visitors hike one or more of the Monument's trails. For those visitors who hike or drive to the summit of the 800-foot high Scotts Bluff, a significant part of their experience is the panoramic view of the prairie, bluffs and badlands within the Monument and the more distant views of the North Platte River Valley and the historic landscape beyond.

In addition to the exhibits in the museum, the Monument staff provides interpretation of the Monument's themes, though these activities have been limited in recent years due to budget constraints. Living history demonstrations are conducted at a site near the visitor center. NPS rangers also provide information at the visitor center and on the summit and trails. Evening programs are given once a week by both staff and outside presenters in the Monument's amphitheater during the summer months.

The average visit to the Monument lasts approximately two hours and includes a tour of the Monument's Oregon Trail Museum and a brief look from the summit of Scotts Bluff. A significant number, however, further explore the Monument's resources and participate in living history or other interpretation programs. A 1991 *Visitor Services Project Report* (Madison, 1991), indicates that most visitors surveyed expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the facilities and services at the Monument.

Travel to the Monument is largely seasonal, peaking during July and August. Normally, the ten days having the heaviest visitation occur during the month of July. Approximately 21% of the Monument's annual visitation occurs in July, and approximately 57% of the visitors come to the Monument during the three month period from June through August. Average daily visitation in July is 1,100 persons. Total annual visitation during 1997 was 141,613 people. Seventy-five percent of that visitation came during the months of May through September.

Getting a true picture of the trends in visitation at the Monument is complicated by the fact that, within the last twenty years, the counting methods have been changed at least twice – in 1980 and 1992. Both of those years show significant declines in total visitation, some of which is probably accounted for by the change in counting methods. Visitation trends before and after this drastic change, especially within the last 10 years, show a relatively stable level of visitation (see Figure 3). A projection of future visitation from this data would probably indicate little variation from the present, but future trends would be influenced by many factors, including general economic conditions, regional travel patterns, and size of family groups.

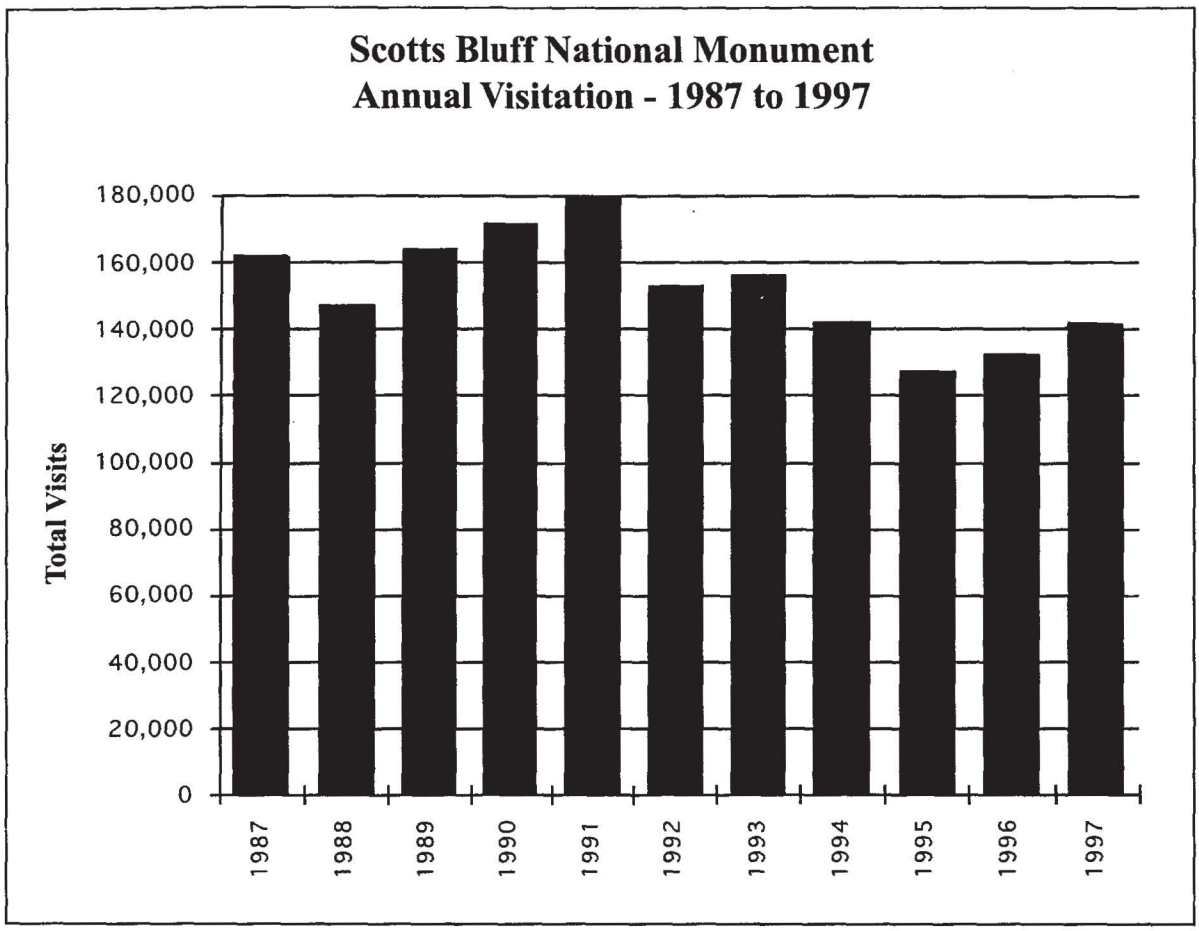

Figure 3. Ten-year Visitation Chart.

Carrying Capacity

As applied to outdoor recreation areas, carrying capacity is the maximum theoretical level of visitation that a parkland could support before natural, cultural, and experiential resources would begin to be damaged. The general lack of baseline data relative to Scotts Bluff National Monument makes it difficult to accurately determine the Monument's carrying capacity. However, if future visitation to the Monument continues to follow its existing trend of moderate levels of visitor use that result in a relatively stable yearly visitation, general impacts to Monument resources should remain much as they are now.

Socioeconomic Environment

Current Population and Population Trends

Western Nebraska is primarily a rural agricultural area. The towns of Scottsbluff and Gering, adjacent to the Monument, constitute the primary population and service centers for the local region. The population of Scotts Bluff County grew slowly between 1930 and 1990, from under 30,000 to slightly over 36,000. During this period the rural and non-urban parts of the county experienced a steady decline, while Scottsbluff and Gering grew in population. Extrapolating from current trends, it is projected that the county population will grow to 37,700 by 2000 (*Scotts Bluff County 1995 Comprehensive Plan*; by the *Panhandle Area Development District*).

From 1970 to 1990 the percentage of the population 65 years and older increased by 5.9% to 16% of the total population. This increase was due primarily to the number of retirement facilities constructed in the area. During this same period the number of school age children (5-17 years) decreased by 5.5%, to about 20% of the total population. Minority groups in Scotts Bluff County represent 16.9% of the population (versus 7.5% for the state overall). People of Hispanic origin constitute the largest minority group with 14.5% of the population.

Surrounding Land Use Trends

Agriculture is the primary land use activity in the region surrounding Scotts Bluff National Monument. Beyond this, the communities adjacent to the Monument exhibit a rather typical pattern of urban and suburban development, although commercial development outside of incorporated areas is fairly limited at this time. The largest concentration of this development is located along State Highway 26 to the east and west of the City of Scottsbluff's corporate boundary. Another major concentration of commercial uses exists east of the City of Gering along Rundell Road and State Highway 92. Subdivision homes are the fastest growing type of rural homes in Scotts Bluff County. The largest concentration of subdivisions lie to the northwest of Scottsbluff and extend to the northeast of Mitchell, Nebraska (*Panhandle Area Development District, 1995*). State Highway 71 is currently being upgraded as the *Heartland Express* from two lanes to four, extending from Interstate 80 south of Gering and Scottsbluff to these two cities. There has been some discussion of possibly extending these improvements north, to South Dakota's Black Hills sometime in the future, an action that could bring additional development pressure to bear in the urban and suburban areas adjacent to the Monument.

A significant amount of land area in the county outside of incorporated areas is made up of public land and water. Scotts Bluff National Monument is one of these public land areas. A trend to establish small subdivisions piecemeal at various locations around the Monument now exists and presents a challenge to the Monument's historic and scenic setting and viewsheds.

Local and Regional Economics

Agriculture is the primary economic base for Scotts Bluff County and the region. Services, light manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade also contribute to the local economy and are mostly based in the county's urban areas of Scottsbluff and Gering. In the North Platte River Valley, sugar beets, dry edible beans and corn represent the principle crops. On the uplands outside the valley, row crops can be grown only with center pivot irrigation. These areas are usually kept as pasture for cattle.

While Scotts Bluff County boasts a variety of manufacturing and service businesses, its economic base remains largely dependent upon agriculture, according to the *Panhandle Area Development District* (1995). Although the agricultural base and its supporting services and industries should, and will, remain an important sector of the economy, efforts are being made to diversify. Other base industries in the county, with the exception of the service sector, are not growing at a rate that exceeds inflation.

Landownership, Land Use

There are 3,003.03 acres in Scotts Bluff National Monument with 2,935.95 acres in Federal ownership. Nearly 2,000 acres of this land has always been in the public domain. Since its establishment in 1919, several legislative boundary changes have taken place, each changing the acreage. In 1994, 20 acres adjacent to the Monument came into Federal ownership but remain outside the Monument boundaries (see Appendix A, *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument*). All lands within Scotts Bluff National Monument have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Adjacent Land Uses in Conflict with the Monument's Purpose and Mission

The following surrounding land uses are in conflict with the original intent of the 1919 Presidential Proclamation that created Scotts Bluff National Monument and, therefore may hinder the complete realization of the proclamation's intent for the Monument. Some of these uses can be addressed by the NPS while others cannot due to special conditions, provisions, or because the particular situation is outside the Monument boundaries and, therefore, outside the Service's jurisdiction.

- Union Pacific Railroad maintains a 200-foot wide inholding along the Monument's northern edge.
- Three canals, The Central Irrigation District, Gering Irrigation District, and the Gering/Fort Laramie Irrigation District, maintain (unrecorded) easements through the Monument.
- State Highway 92 bisects the Monument by virtue of a special use permit.
- An approximately 3-acre tract on the Monument's eastern boundary that is the site of a radio transmission tower.
- The Western Area Power Administration and Roosevelt Public Power District has overhead transmission lines traversing the eastern edge of the Monument from north to south.
- Urban development continues to move toward and around the Monument from the east and may begin to threaten the historic and natural scenes to the west.

Discussion of Environmental Impacts for Each Alternative

The National Environmental Policy Act requires that environmental documents disclose the environmental impacts or consequences of a proposed federal action, reasonable alternatives to the action, and any adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided should the proposed action be implemented. In this instance, the proposed federal action involves the implementation of the *General Management Plan (GMP)* for Scotts Bluff National Monument. Through comparison of the impacts of each alternative on the environment, the relative merits and drawbacks of each can be effectively evaluated.

To compare the alternatives and focus the discussion of potential consequences of implementing the alternatives, specific impact topics were selected based on federal laws, regulations, executive orders, and *NPS Management Policies*. The "No Action" alternative (Alternative A) describes the impacts of continuing current conditions. The action alternatives (Alternatives B and C) describe new and different actions or directions to guide the general management of the Monument. The following table summarizes the impacts for each alternative:

SUMMARY OF MAJOR IMPACTS FROM ALTERNATIVES			
Impact Category	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C (NPS Preferred Actions)
Natural Resources Geology, Paleontology and Soils	Previously proposed trails limited to already disturbed lands, thus minimizing impacts.	Previously proposed trails limited to already disturbed lands. No significant impact to soils from other actions.	Same as B.
Prime and Unique Farmlands	Not affected.	Public acquisition of easements on 131 acres.	Public acquisition of 131 acres in fee ownership.
Climate	No significant impact.	No significant impact.	No significant impact.
Air Quality	No new special actions taken to improve air quality.	Monument initiates new public transportation system to & from Summit, reducing vehicle emissions.	Same as B.
Vegetation and Wildlife	Uncertain future resource conditions. No significant impact to Monument resources from new trails.	Robidoux Pass resources should be preserved through easements. Summit resources may experience some impacts from trail development.	Robidoux Pass resources would be preserved. New trails limited to previously disturbed lands, thus minimizing impacts.
Endangered or Threatened Species - Federal	No impacts.	No impacts.	No impacts.
- State	No impacts.	No impacts.	No impacts.
Water Resources - Streams	Future quality of Pumpkin Creek at Robidoux Pass uncertain.	Future quality of Pumpkin Creek at Robidoux Pass should be preserved within upper watershed.	Future quality of Pumpkin Creek at Robidoux Pass would be preserved within upper watershed.
- Floodplains	No established floodplain for Pumpkin Creek; no impacts can be determined.	Same as A.	Same as A.
- Wetlands	No adverse impacts.	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts.

Impact Category	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C (NPS Preferred Actions)
Cultural Resources Property Listed or Eligible for Listing on the National Register of Historic Places	Monument facilities will continue to be used to design limits; maintained on "as needed" basis.	Monument facilities would be preserved; expansion would alter original CCC design.	Monument facilities would be preserved. No significant impact from slight alteration to original CCC design.
Property Listed as a National Historic Site	Future quality of Robidoux Pass as NHL is uncertain.	Present quality of Robidoux Pass as NHL should be preserved.	Present quality of Robidoux Pass as NHL would be preserved or enhanced.
Aesthetic Factors Natural Quiet	Quality currently associated with Monument & Robidoux Pass not guaranteed.	Quality currently associated with Monument not guaranteed; Robidoux Pass uncertain.	Quality currently associated with Monument should be preserved; Robidoux Pass uncertain.
Scenic Resources	High-voltage lines degrading influence	High-voltage lines removed. Resulting in improved viewshed	Same as B.
Visitor Use and Experience Visitor Use/Trends	Possible modest increase in visitor use with no significant impact.	Some modest increase for Monument with possible significant increase beyond current visitation for Robidoux Pass.	Sustained modest increase for Monument, possible significant increase beyond current visitation for Robidoux Pass.
Socioeconomic Environment Local Economy	No significant change from present.	Modest, but positive, impact with no significant impact from Robidoux Pass.	Same as B.
Regional Economy	No significant change from present.	No significant impact.	No significant impact.
Landownership/Land Use	No significant impact to land ownership/land use.	Possible conversion of 188 acres of privately-owned land to public ownership around Monument. Robidoux Pass retained in private ownership with easements.	Possible conversion of approx. 1,200 acres of privately-owned land at Monument and Robidoux Pass to public ownership.

ALTERNATIVE A
(No Action)

Natural Resources

Geology, Paleontology and Soils

Additional hardened trails could be constructed as a result of the Monument's continued commitment to establish additional trails on Monument lands that would bring visitors close to the badlands area via the *Monument Valley Pathways* project. Trails are an appropriate use of Monument lands, with due consideration and sensitivity for resource protection and public safety. The provision for access to the badlands should significantly increase the public's understanding and appreciation of these natural formations. It could also result in some impacts to the Monument's geological, paleontological and soil features. These impacts would be related to the removal of natural materials due to grading and construction, and the increased potential for more widespread erosion or damage through increased visitor access. Visitors could leave the designated paths, thus adversely impacting the adjacent undisturbed natural materials. This could prove to be dangerous for visitors, given the relatively steep, loose geologic materials present. Visitors could also migrate away from designated paths for the purpose of fossil hunting in the badlands area. This action could pose a real threat to any existing publicly-owned paleontological resources remaining in place within the badlands area. Therefore, potentially valuable paleontological specimens could be damaged or lost. Many examples exist of visitors to federal lands leaving designated paths for the purpose of fossil hunting, especially in more remote areas.

Benefits resulting from the implementation of this alternative are that any new trails would be located on previously disturbed lands, thus significantly minimizing possible impacts to resources. In addition, this alternative would support the preservation of the current alignment and location of the Summit Road and parking area, which would protect the existing historic character of these features. Future maintenance or adjustments to these areas would be required to maintain these characteristics.

Prime and Unique Farmlands

Not Affected

Climate

Implementation of this alternative should result in *no significant impact* to the local or regional climate.

Air Quality

No new special actions would be taken by the Monument to help promote the improvement of ambient local air quality or to protect distant views of the surrounding area.

Vegetation and Wildlife

Under this alternative the future status of vegetation and wildlife resources associated with Robidoux Pass is uncertain. Private landowners could continue to manage the existing prairie/range well, thus benefitting or even improving its potential habitat value for native vegetation and wildlife, or fail to do so. Landowners could sell their parcels within the pass to other interests which could result in a situation of good resource management, degradation due to poor management, or a conversion to another type of land use.

Implementation of new recreational trails on Monument land through the *Monument Valley Pathways* project should result in *no significant impact* to native vegetation and wildlife resources since the Monument would restrict all new trail development to already disturbed areas.

Endangered or Threatened Species

Federally-Listed Species

There should be no impacts to Federally-listed endangered or threatened species that could be present on the Monument or in Robidoux Pass. Habitat exists in both areas that could support either the mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*) or the swift fox (*Vulpes velox*), both federal and state-listed species. There are no known sightings or indications that these species exist in these areas.

The threatened northern bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) can be found in and around the Monument during the winter months and should experience *no significant impact* from implementation of this alternative since its habitat would not experience change. Loafing habitat exists for this raptor along the adjacent North Platte River. Whooping cranes (*Grus americana*), an endangered species, have been seen migrating through the Monument area. Some potential habitat exists for this species among the shallow braided channels of the adjacent North Platte River and associated with borrow pit lakes within the area. This species should experience *no significant impact* from implementation of this alternative since its habitat would not experience change. The endangered peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) migrates through the area with habitat being potentially available for this species among the steep eroded slopes of Scotts Bluff itself as well as other nearby bluffs. This species should experience *no significant impact* from implementation of this alternative since its habitat would not experience change. Since the Monument has a resident population of prairie dogs, it is theoretically possible that the endangered black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*) could be found on Monument lands as its preferred habitat does exist here, though none have been sighted. This species should experience *no significant impact* from implementation of this alternative since its habitat would not change.

State-Listed Species

In addition to the mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*) and the swift fox (*Vulpes velox*), the State of Nebraska also lists the prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) as threatened, and this bird has been known to nest at Scotts Bluff National Monument, so it could be present in the Robidoux Pass area. Appropriate habitat for this raptor exists at Robidoux Pass. There is no appropriate habitat at Robidoux Pass for the burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), a species on the state's candidate species list, which lives and breeds in prairie dog towns within this region. Both of these species should experience *no significant impact* from implementation of this alternative since their habitats would not experience change.

Presently there is no assurance that these conditions will be maintained. Private landowners within the pass could continue to manage the prairie/range habitat and the area well, thus benefitting or even improving its potential habitat value for these species, or they could fail to do so. Landowners could sell their parcels within the pass to other interests which could result in a situation yielding continued good resource management, degradation due to poor management, or a conversion to another type of land use.

Water Resources

Streams

One small, nameless spring-fed creek flows through Robidoux Pass. It is presently used as a source of water for livestock that graze on the prairie grasses within the pass. Presently there is no assurance that these conditions will be maintained. Private landowners within the pass could continue to manage the prairie/range habitat and the area well, thus benefitting or even improving the quality of the creek's water and its associated watershed, or they could fail to do so. Landowners could sell their parcels within the pass to other interests which could result in continued good resource and watershed management, degradation due to poor management, or a conversion to another type of land use.

Floodplains

No established floodplain is associated with the nameless creek that flows through Robidoux Pass. Therefore, impacts to floodplains resulting from the implementation of this alternative cannot be determined.

Wetlands

There is only a very limited amount of aquatic vegetation associated with the nameless creek in the Robidoux Pass area. Therefore, there should be no adverse impact to these wetland species as a result of implementation of this alternative.

Cultural Resources

Property Listed or Eligible for Listing on the National Register of Historic Places

Under this alternative, all Scotts Bluff National Monument administrative, maintenance, and visitor service functions would continue to be located and operated in their present locations. This would continue to contribute to the already strained and overburdened use of these National Register-eligible structures and features. Maintenance of these structures and features would continue to be done on a routine and "as needed" basis, which may not be the most ideal form of maintenance. Implementation of this alternative could conceivably result in some degree of threat to the continued well-being of these resources, although overall the Monument's status on the National Register would remain intact.

Property Listed as a National Historic Landmark

The future quality of Robidoux Pass as a *National Historic Landmark* would be uncertain under this alternative. The physical pass itself and the fact that thousands of emigrants travelled through this area in the nineteenth century will remain. However, the continued existence of the surviving emigrant graves, the site of the first Robidoux trading post, and the surviving scar of the original Oregon Trail incised into the landscape of the pass could be threatened if the people owning land in the pass now, who have managed these resources well, eventually decide to sell to other interests. This could prove true especially if these interests change the land use from pasture to more intensive development.

General Recommendation

The association of American Indian people with what is today Scotts Bluff National Monument is a story that crosses millennia up through today. Details of this story are widespread, complex, and not completely known. Extensive research to address this situation is beyond the scope of a *General Management Plan.* To help mitigate for this shortcoming, it is recommended that an *Ethnographic Overview and Assessment (EO&A)*, a *Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedure (REAP)*, as appropriate, and an *Ethnographic Landscape Study (ELS)* be conducted by the NPS to help the Monument's administration better ascertain the true extent of American Indian and other ethnic group involvement and ethnographic relationships with the Monument.

Aesthetic Factors

Natural Quiet

The quality of natural quiet that currently exists at Scotts Bluff National Monument is not guaranteed under this alternative, since ambient noise levels from existing surrounding development cannot be controlled. Private landowners surrounding the Monument could continue to manage their primarily agricultural lands as they presently are, resulting in a continuation of the existing natural quiet conditions punctuated by the occasional noise of motorized vehicles, or they could fail to do so. Landowners could sell their parcels to other interests resulting in the continuation of conditions very similar to those that currently exist. Alternately, the area could experience a conversion to another type of land use that would be dramatically different from the existing land use, possibly resulting in elevated ambient noise levels higher than those under existing conditions. Strong development pressures continue to be exerted on the area and communities surrounding the Monument's boundaries.

Seven miles to the southwest, the quality of natural quiet that currently exists at Robidoux Pass under present private management should continue to exist for the foreseeable future under this alternative, but it is not guaranteed. An increase in human development in the area could result in dramatic changes in the area's land use from the existing pattern, possibly resulting in elevated ambient noise levels higher than those under existing conditions.

Scenic Resources

The quality of scenic resources that currently exists in and around Scotts Bluff National Monument is not guaranteed under this alternative. The visual impact of existing Monument developments, such as roads, trails and buildings, would remain as they now are. Private landowners surrounding the Monument could continue to manage their primarily agricultural lands and the related viewsheds as they presently are, resulting in a continuation of the existing scenic resource conditions, or they could fail to do so. Surrounding landowners could also sell their parcels to other interests, resulting in the continuation of conditions very similar to those that currently exist. Alternately, the area could experience a conversion to another type of land use that would be dramatically different from, and possibly incompatible with, the existing land use, resulting in further degradation of the Monument's ambient scenic resource quality. Strong development pressures continue to be exerted on the area and communities surrounding the Monument's boundaries; the latest challenge to the *status quo* came from a proposed housing development on the west side of the Monument during 1996 that could have degraded the existing more natural foreground view toward Laramie Peak 100 miles to the west. Presently there is no assurance that the area's existing scenic resources would be maintained.

The continued existence of the Western Area Power Administration's and the Roosevelt Public Power District's high-voltage power transmission lines across the Monument would continue to degrade the quality of the historic landscape for visitors and residents alike.

Seven miles to the southwest, the quality of scenic resources that currently exist at Robidoux Pass should continue to exist for the foreseeable future under this alternative, but it is not guaranteed. An increase in human development in the area could result in dramatic changes in the area's land use from the existing pattern, possibly resulting in greater incompatibility with the historic landscape and resource preservation. That could result in a loss of the existing extensive open viewsheds over agricultural lands. As a result, visitors to the area could have a reduced ability to comprehend the historic landscape of the Oregon-California Trail period.

Visitor Use and Experience

Visitor Use/Trends

Under this alternative, visitor uses of the Monument and its related resources, as well as the Robidoux Pass area, should remain much as they are now. The visitation trend for the Monument indicates that visitation could grow at a modest rate into the future. Overall, there should be *no significant impact* to visitation use or trends through implementation of this alternative.

Socioeconomic Environment

Local Economy

Impacts to the local economy and to local communities should remain mostly unchanged. However, if the visual and scenic qualities of the Monument's surrounding area continue to degrade slowly, due to increased air pollution levels and encroaching human development around historic features and landscapes, some adverse impacts to the local economy could occur through the related detrimental effects on tourism.

Regional Economy

Impacts to the regional economy should remain unchanged.

Landownership/Land Use

Implementation of this alternative should result in *no significant impact* to land ownership or land use locally or within the region beyond the existing situation.

General Conclusions

Implementation of *Alternative A* would cause the future preservation of the natural characteristics and cultural/historical resources of Robidoux Pass to remain uncertain. This uncertainty could conceivably jeopardize the future integrity of this national historic landmark's natural and cultural resources. Any losses to these resources would leave Scotts Bluff National Monument less able to fulfill its designated purpose to preserve and interpret the history of the Platte River transportation corridor and the influences of Scotts Bluff on these routes.

The high-voltage power transmission lines would remain, thus continuing to impair the quality of the historic landscape and, by extension, the visitor's experience. The current location of these lines also impairs the Monument's ability to fulfill its charge to protect the view of the scenic and historic landscape of Scotts Bluff and the surrounding area in a condition similar to what the early travellers experienced.

Maintenance of the current use patterns and the minimization of changes to the historic character of the Summit Road and parking area should help to preserve the integrity of the CCC-era design of this area. However, it would not effectively address the effects of visitation and the related resource damage to the area.

Continued use of the existing administrative, maintenance, and visitor service facilities would not effectively accommodate the Monument's administrative function, or the maintenance function. Visitors would continue to experience an antiquated, cramped, and less than ideal museum and interpretation facility. This will probably result in a situation where the Monument would be significantly less able to serve its visitors and effectively convey the story of Scotts Bluff, the westward movement, and the Oregon-California Trail.

By permitting new trail connections on previously disturbed Monument lands to outside trails, the Monument would honor its commitment to several cooperative effort agreements with neighboring communities. Trails are an appropriate recreational use of Monument lands, with due consideration and sensitivity for resource protection and public safety. This could help to fulfill part of the intent of the National Park Service's Organic Act, which, for the Monument, translates into providing ongoing preservation and interpretation of the Monument and its related features for public enjoyment for generations to come. Visitors would no longer be limited to experiencing just the existing trails to see the interior and summit of the Monument. In addition, visitors would have a way of seeing the badlands on the northeast side of the Monument to help them fully comprehend why the Oregon-California Trail went through Robidoux Pass and Mitchell Pass.

By not pursuing the adjustment of its boundaries (other than those that are presently underway) the Monument could be less able to fulfill its charge to preserve the integrity of the historic and natural resources entrusted to its care. Continued development of adjacent lands, particularly along the east and west approaches of State Highway 92, would further degrade what remains of the historic landscape and the views of that landscape that visitors presently get of the bluffs and Mitchell Pass. Without some means of influencing this ongoing development on adjacent lands (such as through increased public awareness of this situation), it would be difficult, if not impossible, to stem the degradation of the Monument's and the area's natural and cultural landscapes relative to the story of the westward movement and the Overland Trails.

ALTERNATIVE B

Natural Resources

Geology, Paleontology and Soils

The development of new scenic viewing areas on the summit of Scotts Bluff, along State Highway 92, and along the Monument's trails could result in some impacts to the geological, paleontological, and soil features of the Monument, especially to the thin soils at the summit of Scotts Bluff. Trails are an appropriate use of Monument lands, with due consideration and sensitivity for resource protection and public safety. These impacts would be related to the removal of natural materials due to grading and construction of new hardened trail segments and viewing areas. There could also be greater potential for more widespread erosion or damage to publicly-owned geological, paleontological and soil features since visitors would be able to explore a greater area, thus increasing the possibility that potentially valuable paleontological specimens could be damaged or lost. Many examples exist of visitors to federal lands leaving designated paths for the purpose of fossil hunting, especially in more remote areas. This could also be dangerous, given that there are relatively steep areas with loose materials present. It remains questionable, therefore, as to whether or not these new plans and the provision of even more development within the Monument would be adequate to control further visitor migrations from the designated paths and possible related paleontological resource damage.

Localized impacts to soils would result from **(1)** the expansion of the Monument's existing administrative, maintenance, and visitor service facilities, resulting in permanent disturbances to previously disturbed areas, but representing *no significant impact* to the overall soil resources of the Monument; **(2)** the removal of the WAPA and RPPD high-voltage power transmission lines, which would result in very localized soil disturbance resulting overall in *no significant impact*; and **(3)** the implementation of recommendations from the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument*, which should result in very localized disturbances to previously disturbed soils and overall *no significant impact.*

Prime and Unique Farmlands

Under this alternative approximately 131 acres of irrigated agricultural land that qualifies as "prime or unique farmland" would be converted to non-agricultural public use through incorporation within the Monument's boundary. This conversion of agricultural land would not destroy its capacity for agricultural production as a land resource, but rather it would permanently take the land out of production. This acreage should not translate into a significant loss to agricultural production, active or latent, in the area.

Climate

Implementation of this alternative should result in *no significant impact* to the local or regional climate.

Air Quality

The institution of a public transportation system, such as a shuttle, to the summit of Scotts Bluff should result in *no significant impact* to local air quality between the Monument's visitor center and the Summit. Any resulting benefits would come from **(1)** the reduction of vehicular traffic to and from these areas, and **(2)** the reduction, albeit modest, in agriculturally-related vehicle emissions and reduced wind erosion of agricultural soils resulting from federal acquisition of some local agricultural lands.

Vegetation and Wildlife

The use of easements to implement the recommendations from the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* (including Robidoux Pass) would allow the tracts in question to remain in private ownership. These easements would be written to ensure that the natural and vegetative resources (*i.e.,* potential wildlife habitat) within these tracts will be maintained in a desired condition or would experience preservation, enhancement and/or restoration/rehabilitation of native vegetation and habitats, as appropriate to the particular tracts in question. Presently, there is no assurance that the area's existing vegetation or wildlife resource quality would be maintained, let alone enhanced. Likewise, there is presently no reason to believe that the area's existing vegetation or wildlife resource quality would necessarily be degraded or destroyed.

The development of new scenic viewing areas on the summit of Scotts Bluff, along State Highway 92, and along the Monument's trails to expand the public's understanding and appreciation of the Monument's natural and cultural resources, could result in potential adverse impacts to some native vegetation (*i.e.,* potential wildlife habitat), especially to the relatively sparse native vegetation and wildlife habitat available at the summit of Scotts Bluff. This loss would be most critical on the geological formations where vegetation is more limited and fragile, compared with the more lush and robust conditions on the prairie below. These viewing areas would also represent new inroads to these areas bringing visitor impacts to otherwise remote or little used areas, thus potentially leading to some human disturbance of vegetation and wildlife in these areas. However, it is always possible that the addition of these developments could help to protect these areas from haphazard degradation by providing direction to and concentration of human use.

Vegetative and wildlife resources on the Monument would benefit if the existing WAPA and RPPD high-voltage power transmission lines that presently traverse the Monument are removed from Monument land. This action would result in no, or extremely little, further disturbance of the native vegetation through routine power line maintenance inspections. Similarly, wildlife resources on the Monument would probably neither lose nor benefit in a significant way if these existing power transmission lines are removed from Monument land.

Some native and non-native vegetation, along with its related potential wildlife habitat values, could also be lost, albeit in a small way, through the expansion of the existing administrative, maintenance and visitor service facilities. These areas have already experienced human disturbance, however, so the quality and quantity of vegetation loss would represent *no significant impact* to the Monument's overall wildlife resources.

Endangered or Threatened Species

Federally-Listed Species

There are no known federally-listed endangered or threatened species permanently residing on Monument lands or on any of the lands recommended by the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* (including Robidoux Pass) for inclusion into the Monument's boundary. Therefore, there should be *no impacts* to Federally-listed endangered or threatened species as a result of implementation of this alternative (please refer to this section under Alternative A for an extended description).

State-Listed Species

There are no known state-listed endangered or threatened species permanently residing on Monument lands or on any of the lands recommended by the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* (including Robidoux Pass) for inclusion into the Monument's boundary. Therefore, there should be *no impacts* to state-listed endangered or threatened species as a result of implementation of this alternative (please refer to this section under Alternative A for an extended description).

Water Quality and Resources

Streams

One small, nameless creek flows through Robidoux Pass. It is presently used as a source of water for livestock that graze on the prairie grasses within the pass. Under this alternative, easements would be used to protect the resources of Robidoux Pass, but would be written to ensure that the stream-related resources of this creek and its watershed within these tracts will be maintained in a desired condition or would experience enhancement and/or restoration/rehabilitation, as appropriate. Presently, there is no assurance that this creek's existing water or watershed quality would be maintained, let alone enhanced. Likewise, there is presently no reason to believe that the area's existing water or watershed quality would necessarily be degraded or destroyed.

Floodplains

No established floodplain is associated with the nameless creek that flows through Robidoux Pass. Therefore, impacts to floodplains resulting from the implementation of this alternative cannot be determined.

Wetlands

There is only a very limited amount of aquatic vegetation associated with the nameless creek in the Robidoux Pass area. Because of this situation, there should be no adverse impact to these wetland species as a result of implementation of this alternative.

Cultural Resources

Property Listed or Eligible for Listing on the National Register of Historic Places

Under this alternative, the administrative, maintenance and visitor service functions of the Monument would be expanded in their present location. This would preserve the National Register-eligible CCC-era complex of structures, thus contributing to the overall story of the Monument, and the commemoration of the westward migration via the Oregon-California Trail. Expansion of these facilities, as suggested under this alternative, would have an impact to the historic structures and landscape of this Depression-era complex since expansion would not preserve the facility's original design. However, this could be mitigated by designing additional structures to be sensitive to and compatible with the original CCC-era structures.

The use easements by the federal government for implementation of the recommendations from the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* (Appendix A) would allow the tracts in question to remain in private ownership. These easements would be written to ensure that the cultural and historical resources within these tracts (for Robidoux Pass, the Oregon-California Trail remnants, emigrant graves, and Robidoux trading post site) will be maintained in a desired condition. Presently, there is no assurance that the existing cultural and historical resources of these tracts would be maintained, let alone preserved. Likewise, there is presently no reason to believe that the area's existing cultural and historical resources would necessarily be degraded or destroyed.

The removal of the WAPA and RPPD high-voltage power transmission lines on the Monument would facilitate the high quality preservation of this National Register site by helping to maintain its integrity, as defined in its National Register nomination and in the original 1919 Presidential Proclamation that created the Monument.

Property Listed as a National Historic Landmark

The use of easements by the NPS should help to preserve the future integrity of Robidoux Pass as a *National Historic Landmark*, and to protect its primary cultural and historical resources, namely, the Oregon-California Trail remnants, emigrant graves, and Robidoux trading post site. The easement would be written to ensure that the cultural and historical resources within these tracts would be maintained in a desired condition, thereby helping to ensure their preservation. Presently, there is no assurance that Robidoux Pass's existing cultural and historical resources would be maintained, let alone preserved. There is a chance that such easement conditions may not be acceptable to local landowners. Without such binding assurance, the remaining evidence of a significant chapter of the area's human story could be lost forever.

General Recommendation

The association of American Indian people with what is today Scotts Bluff National Monument is a story that crosses millennia up through today. Details of this story are widespread, complex, and not completely known, if ever they can be. Extensive research to address this situation is beyond the scope of a *General Management Plan.* To help mitigate for this shortcoming, it is recommended that an *Ethnographic Overview and Assessment (EO&A)*, a *Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedure (REAP)*, as appropriate, and an *Ethnographic Landscape Study (ELS)* be conducted by the NPS to help the Monument's administration better ascertain the true extent of American Indian and other ethnic group involvement and ethnographic relationships with the Monument.

Aesthetic Factors

Natural Quiet

The quality of natural quiet that currently exists at Scotts Bluff National Monument is not guaranteed under this alternative, especially when ambient noise levels from existing surrounding development cannot be controlled. Although the proposed expansion of the Monument's administrative, maintenance and visitor services functions within the existing CCC-era complex should result in significant improvements in the ability of the NPS to accommodate visitors, it could also result in increased visitation over time, which could cause in a decrease in the Monument's natural quiet. Strong development pressures continue to be exerted on the area and communities surrounding the Monument's boundaries. Presently, there is no method to assure that the area's existing natural quiet would be maintained.

Seven miles to the southwest, the quality of natural quiet that currently exists at Robidoux Pass should continue to exist for the foreseeable future with the use of easements between the landowners and the NPS. If implementation of this alternative makes the pass more attractive to visitors who would seldom, if ever, have gone there before, then the area's natural quiet could experience some degradation due to increased vehicular traffic. If the pass is preserved primarily for the natural qualities of this historic area with very little visitor-related activity, then its existing natural quiet should be largely maintained.

The establishment of additional public trails through the Monument's badlands area would allow visitors access where presently there is little or no public access. These potential new trails would represent a new developmental inroad into this area bringing new visitor impacts, and possibly a slight degradation of the ambient natural quiet, to otherwise remote or little used areas. The same degradation of existing natural quiet levels would probably be true for the Summit area of Scotts Bluff once new and additional trails and scenic overlooks are developed within this finite space.

Scenic Resources

The quality of scenic resources that currently exists at Scotts Bluff National Monument is not guaranteed under this alternative. The expansion of the Monument's administrative, maintenance and visitor services functions within the existing CCC-era complex would result in significant improvements in the ability of the NPS to accommodate visitors. However, this expanded NPS development, which could result in an increase in visitation over time because of the improved facilities, could also result in a decrease in the Monument's scenic resource qualities because of an increased public perception of greater developmental (*i.e.,* visual) "mass" associated with the enlarged NPS development area.

The establishment of a public transportation system, such as a shuttle, to the Summit of Scotts Bluff by the Monument should significantly reduce the amount of visitor vehicular traffic to this area, thus helping to preserve the bluff's scenic natural qualities.

The removal of the WAPA and RPPD high-voltage power transmission lines that currently cross the Monument would significantly improve the quality of the Monument's scenic resources and should help visitors and residents alike to better comprehend what the Monument area was like during the time of the westward migrations.

Seven miles to the southwest, the quality of scenic resources that currently exist at Robidoux Pass should continue to exist for the foreseeable future with the use of easements. While the scenic qualities of the pass itself should largely remain intact with implementation of this alternative, there is no assurance that the private land surrounding the pass would retain its existing scenic qualities. Implementation of this alternative could make the pass more attractive to visitors, thus the area's scenic resources could experience some degradation due to sheer visitation pressures. If the pass is preserved primarily for its natural qualities with very little visitor-related activity, then its existing scenic qualities should be largely maintained.

Visitor Use and Experience

Visitor Use/Trends

Under this alternative, visitor use of the Monument and its related resources could grow, albeit modestly, over time. This would be primarily due to the expansion and upgrading of the Monument's facilities, particularly, the visitor service functions within the CCC-era complex. This growth in visitation should moderate after an initial period, as the attraction of a "new" (or revitalized) facility wears off. Another factor that may increase visitation would be the increased public access to the Monument via new trails to the badlands area. Visitor use of the Robidoux Pass area could rise significantly from what is now experienced, though visitation numbers would probably remain extremely modest over the number of years it would take to make people fully aware of the pass's existence, significance and public accessibility.

Socioeconomic Environment

Local Economy

Impacts to the local economy and to local communities should remain mostly unchanged. Actions described under this alternative should help to slow the degradation of visual and scenic qualities associated with the Monument, Robidoux Pass, and their historic features and landscapes. This should help forestall any possible detrimental affects on tourism to these features and any derived economic benefits to the area from this tourism. The possibility of a slight increase in tourism for the Monument and Robidoux Pass areas as a result of implementation of this alternative could yield a small, but proportional, benefit from visitor spending on goods and services for local communities. There should also be small, but proportional, benefits resulting from the payment of federal funds to local landowners for the lease of private facilities and the acquisition of easements. Overall, there should be *no significant impact* to the local economy from the described federal boundary changes.

Regional Economy

Impacts to the regional economy should remain mostly unchanged as a result of implementation of this alternative. Economic impacts resulting from NPS functions or visitor use at the Monument, along with actions from NPS acquisition of easements for Robidoux Pass, are probably too small to be significant at a regional scale. Actions described under this alternative should help to slow the degradation of visual and scenic qualities associated with the Monument and its surrounding area, thus helping to forestall any possible detrimental affects on tourism. The possibility of a slight increase in tourism for the Monument and Robidoux Pass areas under this alternative should have *no significant impact* on the regional economy. There should be *no significant impact* to the regional economy from the described federal acquisition of easements since no current landowners would be displaced and none should be rendered less economically functional by these actions.

Landownership/Land Use

Implementation of this alternative and its related *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* (Appendix A) could result in the conversion of 188 acres around the Monument from private ownership to public ownership. There would be no conversion of land from private to public ownership in Robidoux Pass; therefore, these lands would remain on the county's tax rolls, but possibly at a reduced value. In contrast, conversion of the 188 acres around the Monument would be done on a "willing seller" basis only. Sale and conversion of these lands through a "willing seller" agreement at fair market value is basically no different from the landowners in question selling their parcels to any other interested party, except that these lands would be taken off the county tax rolls. However, the Federal government would offer payments in-lieu of taxes to local governments for the ownership of identified lands and a one-time fee for acquisition of easements. This type of "willing seller" voluntary sale of these lands, with their potential subsequent conversion to non-agricultural uses, could have occurred at any time independent of whether or not the landowners in question received a federal offer to purchase. In addition, it should be noted that the actual land resource of these parcels, though converted to a non-agricultural federal use, would not be destroyed as a resource, but preserved in their "natural" form. The major overall benefit, in this case, is the fact that the presidentially proclaimed Scotts Bluff National Monument would experience enhanced protection of its historic lands and associated resources through these federal purchases. This would leave future visitors more able to enjoy these nationally significant features intact well into the future.

General Conclusions

Implementation of this alternative should facilitate the future preservation and stewardship of the natural characteristics and cultural/historical resources of Robidoux Pass into the future. This protection and stewardship of these resources should leave Scotts Bluff National Monument better able to fulfill its designated purpose to preserve and interpret the history of the Platte River transportation corridor and the influences of Scotts Bluff on these routes. It should also increase the Monument's ability to fully preserve and interpret the complete story of the westward movement and the Overland Trails as it relates to the Monument and this area. The Monument has the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring the ongoing status of these natural and cultural/historical resources of Robidoux Pass National Historic Landmark for the Secretary of the Interior and must report this status annually to the Secretary.

The WAPA and RPPD high-voltage power transmission lines would be removed, thus improving the quality of the historic landscape and, by extension, the visitor's experience. The Monument's ability to fulfill its charge to protect the view of the scenic and historic landscape of and surrounding Scotts Bluff would be significantly improved by this action.

Establishment of a public transportation system, such as a shuttle, should provide a small, albeit relatively insignificant, improvement to local air quality by reducing the number of vehicles travelling to and from the Summit. Its primary benefit should come from less traffic congestion on this route and at the Summit parking area, thus providing a somewhat more "natural" visitor experience. This action would be compatible with the National Park Service's mission to facilitate public enjoyment of its resources. This action would probably not require any new or more extensive developments at the Summit. It could require additional parking space near the visitor center, thus expanding that facility. Overall, the integrity of the original CCC-era design for the Summit Road and Summit area should be retained.

By not permitting any new trail connections to outside trails, the Monument would cancel several existing agreements for cooperative efforts with neighboring communities. Visitors would be limited to existing trails to see the interior and summit of the Monument. And without some way of seeing the badlands on the northeast side of the Monument, visitors could be less able to fully comprehend why the Oregon-California Trail went through Robidoux Pass and Mitchell Pass.

Expansion of the existing administrative, maintenance, and visitor service facilities would most likely improve the condition of the Monument's operations and visitor services facilities. Here, a balance would be struck between the preservation of the original CCC-era complex and the realistic future needs of the Monument's operations and visitor service facilities. This should not conflict with the Monument's charge to protect its natural and cultural resources and related features. It is probable that this action would result in some changes to the original CCC-era complex design, but would remain sensitive to this design overall. These buildings are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to their age and other factors but have not, as yet, been nominated to the Register. This CCC-era complex was designed as part of an overall commemoration of the westward movement and the Oregon-California Trail. With this alternative, the Monument's commitment to future generations regarding the ongoing preservation of its cultural/historical resources while accommodating the needs of its visitors should remain fulfilled and intact.

Development and interpretation of new scenic overlooks at the Summit of Scotts Bluff, along State Highway 92, and along its public trails could expand the public's understanding and appreciation of the Monument's cultural and natural resources. This increased public access to heretofore relatively inaccessible areas of the Monument also carries with it the potential for increased impacts to natural and cultural resources in these areas. Thus, the Monument's efforts to maintain high standards of resource stewardship could possibly be compromised in these areas.

By implementing the recommendations of the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* only as they relate to those lands immediately surrounding the Monument (and not to the Robidoux Pass area) and by taking action to adjust the Monument's boundaries (in addition to those that are presently underway), the Monument should be more able to fulfill it charge to preserve the integrity of the natural and cultural resources entrusted to its care. This action should also benefit the Monument's ability to fully interpret the story of the westward movement and the Overland Trails while permanently protecting some of the most significant or outstanding representative parcels that illustrate that story.

ALTERNATIVE C
(National Park Service's Preferred Actions)

Natural Resources

Geology, Paleontology and Soils

The construction of additional hard-surfaced trails on Monument lands that would bring visitors close to the badlands area via the *Monument Valley Pathways* project could result in some impacts to the geological, paleontological, and soil resources of these areas. Trails are an appropriate use of Monument lands, with due consideration and sensitivity for resource protection and public safety. These impacts would be related to the removal of natural materials due to grading and construction of new hardened trail segments. This could result in greater potential for more widespread erosion or damage to the publicly-owned geological, paleontological, and soil features by allowing visitors a greater area to explore. Potentially valuable paleontological specimens could be damaged or lost. Many examples exist of visitors to federal lands migrating away from designated paths for the purpose of fossil hunting, especially in more remote areas. Not only could this be personally dangerous, given the relative steep, loose materials present, but it could also pose a real threat to existing publicly owned paleontological resources. It remains questionable as to whether or not these new plans and the provision of even more development within the Monument area would be adequate to control further visitor migrations from the designated paths and possible related paleontological resource damage.

Other localized impacts to soils resulting from implementation of this alternative include **(1)** relocation of the Monument's administrative and maintenance functions off-site, resulting in permanent impacts to previously disturbed urban areas (if a new facility is constructed); this would represent *no significant impact* to the overall soil resources of the Monument or surrounding area; **(2)** removal of the WAPA and RPPD high-voltage power transmission lines, which would result in very localized soil disturbance; this would represent *no significant impact*; and **(3)** implementation of recommendations from the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument*, which should result in very localized disturbances to previously disturbed soils due to limited development of roads, trails, or small-scale construction related to interpretation; all resulting in *no significant impact* overall.

Benefits or mitigating measures resulting from the implementation of this alternative are that any new trails would be located on previously disturbed lands, thus significantly minimizing possible adverse impacts to resources. In addition, this alternative would support the preservation of the current alignment and location of the Summit Road and parking area, which would protect the existing historic character of these features. Any future maintenance or adjustments to these areas would be required to maintain these characteristics.

Prime and Unique Farmlands

Under this alternative approximately 131 acres of irrigated agricultural land that qualifies as "prime and unique farmland" would be converted to non-agricultural use through incorporation within the Monument's boundary. This conversion of agricultural land would not destroy its capacity for agricultural production *as a land resource*, but rather would take it out of production permanently. This acreage should not translate into a significant loss to agricultural production, active or latent, in the area.

Climate

Implementation of this alternative should result in *no significant impact* to the local or regional climate.

Air Quality

Institution of a public transportation system, such as a shuttle, to the Summit area of Scotts Bluff should yield small benefits to local air quality between the Monument's visitor center and the Summit. This would be attained primarily through the reduction of vehicular traffic to and from these areas. The Monument's administration would take a more active role than at present, through local, regional, and state agencies, as well as with local landowners, to minimize the degradation of air quality at the Monument and in the North Platte River Valley under this alternative. This initiative would help promote the improvement of ambient local and regional air quality in order to protect distant views of the surrounding area.

Vegetation and Wildlife

Under this alternative the existing vegetation and wildlife in Robidoux Pass could be managed under NPS ownership to improve the health and diversity of native grass and animal species. There probably would be a loss of some native vegetation along newly established trails, but this action should have relatively minor impacts to the overall vegetation of the area and *no significant impact* on overall wildlife populations or to their supportive habitat. This action would permit the NPS to inventory and monitor the natural resources within the pass and pursue appropriate action to correct any degradation of those resources. Presently there is no assurance that this could or would be done under existing private ownership, in spite of the good condition of the range resources. Under this alternative, lands within the pass would not be converted to another type of land use but would be preserved in their natural condition.

Vegetative and wildlife resources on the Monument would probably benefit in a small, but insignificant, way if the existing WAPA and RPPD high-voltage power transmission lines that presently traverse the Monument are removed from Monument land. With the removal of the power lines, routine power line maintenance inspections would be eliminated, resulting in no or extremely little further disturbance of the native vegetation.

The construction of additional hard-surfaced trails in the badlands area in the northeast corner of the Monument would result in the loss of some native vegetation (*i.e.,* potential wildlife habitat). This construction could also result in new developmental inroads into the badlands bringing new visitor impacts to otherwise remote or little used areas. These impacts would be related to the removal of natural soil materials due to grading and construction, and the greater potential for more widespread erosion or damage to the vegetation and potential wildlife resources due to greater access. It remains questionable as to whether or not these new plans and the provision of even more development within the Monument would be adequate to control further visitor migrations from the designated paths and the related vegetation resource damage. These losses should be tempered by the fact that vegetation and wildlife habitat are already being significantly impacted now by visitor wanderings from established trails at the Monument; it is possible that additional trails or defined paths could help to protect this area from further degradation.

Beneficial actions would result from a stated strict minimization of expansion plans for the Summit Road and parking area, which would act to protect the existing historic character of these features (and by default, adjacent vegetation and wildlife resources). Future expansions or changes in alignment, width, and surface materials would be closely monitored and limited due to implementation of a shuttle-type public transportation system.

Lastly, implementation of the recommendations from the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* should benefit the status of vegetative and wildlife resources through the preservation, enhancement, and/or restoration/rehabilitation of native vegetation (*i.e.,* potential wildlife habitat) on the parcels in question.

Endangered or Threatened Species

Federally-Listed Species

There are no known federally-listed endangered or threatened species permanently residing on the Monument or in Robidoux Pass. Habitat that could support either the mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*) or the swift fox (*Vulpes velox*), both federal and state-listed species, potentially exists in both areas. However, there are no known sightings or indications that these species exist in these areas. Under this alternative, the future potential of this area to support federally-listed endangered or threatened species in Robidoux Pass should remain as good as it is now or may even improve under NPS ownership. This action would permit the NPS to inventory and monitor the natural resources within the pass and pursue appropriate action to correct any degradation of those resources. Presently there is no assurance that this could or would be done under existing private ownership, in spite of the excellent condition of the range resources. There would be little chance for the lands within the pass to undergo a conversion to a more detrimental type of land use under this alternative.

Regarding other regional species, the threatened northern bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) can be found in and around the Monument during the winter months and should experience *no significant impact* from implementation of this alternative since this species or its habitat would not experience any change from the *status quo*. Loafing habitat exists for this raptor along the adjacent North Platte River. Whooping cranes (*Grus americana*), an endangered species, have been seen migrating through the Monument area. Some potential habitat exists for this species among the shallow braided channels of the adjacent North Platte River and the borrow pit lakes within the area. The endangered peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) migrates through the area; habitat is potentially available for this species among the steep eroded slopes of Scotts Bluff itself as well as other nearby bluffs. This species should experience *no significant impact* from implementation of this alternative since its habitat would not experience change. Since the Monument has a resident population of prairie dogs, it is theoretically possible that the endangered black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*) could be found on Monument lands as its preferred habitat does exist there, though none have been sighted. This species should experience *no significant impact* from implementation of this alternative since its habitat would not experience change.

State-listed Species

There are no known state-listed endangered or threatened species permanently residing on the Monument or in Robidoux Pass. Habitat that could support either the mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*) or the swift fox (*Vulpes velox*), both federal and state-listed species, potentially exists in both areas. Both of these species should experience *no significant impact* from implementation of this alternative since their habitats would not experience change. The State of Nebraska also lists the prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) as threatened, and this bird has been known to nest at the Monument, so it could be present in the Robidoux Pass area. Appropriate habitat for this raptor exists at Robidoux Pass. There is no appropriate habitat at Robidoux Pass for the burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), a species on the state's candidate species list, which lives and breeds in prairie dog towns. Both of these species should experience *no significant impact* from implementation of this alternative since their habitats would not experience change. Under this alternative the future potential of this area to support federally-listed endangered or threatened species in Robidoux Pass should remain as good as it is now or could even improve under NPS ownership. This action would permit the NPS to inventory and monitor the natural resources within the pass and pursue appropriate action to correct any degradation of those resources.

Water Quality and Resources

Streams

One small, nameless spring-fed creek flows through Robidoux Pass. It is presently used as a source of water for livestock that graze on the prairie grasses within the pass. Under this alternative the future potential for improvement of this stream and its associated headwaters area in Robidoux Pass should remain as good as it is now or could even improve under NPS ownership. This action would permit the NPS to inventory and monitor the stream and its related resources within the pass and pursue appropriate action to correct any degradation of those resources. Presently, there is no assurance that this creek's existing water or watershed quality would be maintained, let alone enhanced.

Floodplains

No established floodplain is associated with the nameless creek that flows through Robidoux Pass. Therefore, there would be *no impact* to floodplains as a result of implementation of this alternative.

Wetlands

There are no significant wetlands associated with the nameless creek in the Robidoux Pass area. Therefore, there should be *no significant impact* to this feature resulting from implementation of this alternative.

Cultural Resources

Property Listed or Eligible for Listing on the National Register of Historic Places

Under this alternative, the administrative and maintenance functions of the Monument would be relocated off-site in a new facility or within an existing structure. Meanwhile, the Monument's visitor services function would expand to fill the vacated space of the other two functions within the existing CCC-era structures. This would preserve the National Register-eligible CCC-era complex of structures, thus contributing to the overall story of the Monument, the commemoration of the westward migration via the Oregon-California Trail, and the preservation and interpretation of Depression-era federal public works projects. Along with this, the proposed future addition of new and improved public restroom facilities, designed to be sensitive to and complimentary of the original CCC complex design, may modify the overall appearance of the CCC complex somewhat, but would probably have *no significant impact* on the general appearance of the overall CCC-era complex.

The removal of the WAPA and RPPD high-voltage power transmission lines on the Monument would facilitate the high quality preservation of this National Register site by helping to maintain its integrity, as defined in its National Register nomination and in the original 1919 Presidential Proclamation that created the Monument.

Implementation of the recommendations from the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* would help to preserve the integrity of the Monument by protecting those land resources that make up or contribute to the purpose and mission of Scotts Bluff National Monument.

Property Listed as a National Historic Landmark

The future integrity of Robidoux Pass and its primary cultural and historical resources should be significantly improved by virtue of NPS ownership under this alternative. This acquisition would permit the NPS to inventory and monitor the natural and cultural resources of the pass and pursue appropriate courses of action to correct degradation of those resources. It is possible that, in the end, the protection of Robidoux Pass could be better supported by the appropriate staff and resources of the NPS than by any other agency. Presently, there is no assurance that Robidoux Pass's existing cultural and historical resources would be maintained, let alone enhanced.

General Recommendation

The association of American Indian people with what is today Scotts Bluff National Monument is a story that crosses millennia up through today. Details of this story are widespread, complex, and not completely known, if ever they can be. Extensive research to address this situation is beyond the scope of a *General Management Plan.* To help mitigate for this shortcoming, it is recommended that an *Ethnographic Overview and Assessment (EO&A)*, a *Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedure (REAP)*, as appropriate, and an *Ethnographic Landscape Study (ELS)* be conducted by the NPS to help the Monument's administration better ascertain the true extent of American Indian and other ethnic group involvement and ethnographic relationships with the Monument.

Aesthetic Factors

Natural Quiet

The quality of natural quiet that currently exists at Scotts Bluff National Monument should remain as good as it is now or become better under this alternative.

The establishment of additional public trails through the Monument's badlands area would allow visitors to access an area where presently there is little or no public access. These new trails would represent a new inroad into this area bringing new visitor impacts, and possibly a slight degradation of the ambient natural quiet, to otherwise remote or little used areas.

The quality of natural quiet that currently exists at Robidoux Pass may or may not experience degradation as a result of NPS ownership. If the pass is made more attractive to visitors who would seldom have gone there before, then the area's natural quiet could experience some degradation. If the pass is preserved primarily for the natural qualities of this historic area with very little related visitor activity, then its existing natural quiet should be largely maintained.

Lastly, implementation of the recommendations from the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* should result in *no significant impact* to the Monument's ambient natural quiet since the Monument's boundaries would simply be expanded in select places and the overall *potential* for improvement or degradation of future ambient levels of natural quiet would not be changed significantly.

Scenic Resources

The quality of scenic resources that currently exists at Scotts Bluff National Monument should remain the same or even improve under this alternative. The NPS would actively work with local, regional, and state agencies, as well as with private landowners, to maintain or restore the integrity of the viewshed that is of historic significance to Scotts Bluff. This cooperative effort would work to minimize the degradation of air quality at the Monument, as well as in the North Platte River Valley, and to protect the integrity of the area's geologic features and distant views of the surrounding area, as mandated by Presidential Proclamation.

Strong development pressures continue to be exerted on the area; the latest challenge to the *status quo* came from a proposed housing development on the west side of the Monument during 1996 that, if successful, could have degraded the existing foreground view toward Laramie Peak 100 miles to the west.

The establishment of additional public trails through the Monument's badlands area would allow visitors to access this area where presently there is little or no public access. These new trails would represent a new inroad into this area bringing new visitor impacts. The addition of trails to this otherwise remote or little used area should have *no significant impact* to the overall quality of the Monument's scenic resources.

The establishment of a public transportation system, such as a shuttle, to the Summit of Scotts Bluff should significantly reduce the amount of vehicular traffic to this area, thus helping to preserve the bluff's scenic natural qualities.

The removal of the WAPA and RPPD high-voltage power transmission lines would significantly improve the quality of the Monument's scenic resources and should help visitors and residents alike to better comprehend what the Monument area was like, from a scenic perspective, during the time of the westward migrations.

The quality of scenic resources that currently exists at Robidoux Pass should not experience degradation as a result of NPS ownership. The NPS would work with private landowners and appropriate agencies, groups, and organizations to encourage increased public awareness and protection of the pass and its resources. It is possible that implementation of this alternative could make the pass more attractive to visitors, thus increasing visitation to the area. This could conceivably result in the area's scenic resources experiencing some degradation from sheer visitation pressures. If the pass is preserved primarily for the natural qualities of this historic area with very little related visitor activity (although some low-impact visitor facilities and non-personal services could occur), then its existing scenic qualities should remain largely intact.

Implementation of recommendations from the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* should result in a *significant beneficial impact* to the existing qualities of the Monument's scenic resources since the Monument's boundaries would simply be expanded in select places and the overall *potential* for improvement or degradation of the area's scenic resources would not be changed significantly.

Visitor Use and Experience

Visitor Use/Trends

Under this alternative, visitor use of the Monument and its related resources may potentially increase, primarily as a result of the proposed rejuvenation and expansion of the primary visitor facility. A possible reduction in visitor vehicular traffic to and from the Summit of Scotts Bluff could also occur as a result of the establishment of a public transportation system, such as a shuttle, for this purpose. Potentially greater visitor use of the badlands area may result from the construction of a new trail to this area. The visitation trend for the Monument should show a modest but steady increase in visitation into the future. Visitor use of the Robidoux Pass area could rise, though these visitation numbers would probably remain modest over the number of years it would take to make people fully aware of its existence and accessibility.

Socioeconomic Environment

Local Economy

Impacts to the local economy should be modest, but positive. Some local economic benefits may result from the relocation of the Monument's administrative and maintenance functions to outside Monument boundaries via property leases, or through new construction (with possible site acquisition) if lease property cannot be found that is suitable to meet the Monument's needs. These benefits should be of relatively modest proportions (as with property leases) or of short duration (as with new construction). Therefore, long-term economic contribution to the local economy would be limited. More notable economic benefits could potentially be realized from the rejuvenation and expansion of the Monument's primary visitor. This improvement in visitor facilities could result in a long-term increase in the Monument's visitation which, by extension, could result in increased local tourist expenditures on goods and services. Increased visitation to Robidoux Pass could also result in a modest increase in local tourism and increased length of stay. Implementation of this alternative should help to slow the degradation of visual and scenic qualities associated with the Monument and its historic features and landscapes. This could help forestall any possible detrimental affects on tourism.

There should be *no significant impact* to the local economy from the adjustment of the Monument's boundary and the conversion of certain lands, both around the Monument and within the designated National Historic Landmark boundary of Robidoux Pass, to federal ownership; landowners would be compensated for interests acquired by the federal government. The County of Scotts Bluff would realize a loss in property taxes, as land presently designated for agricultural use would be converted to non-agricultural use. When the government purchases land, the need for services decreases. The Payment In-Lieu of Taxes Act, as amended, allows for partial compensation to county governments for land purchased by the federal government. During the first five years after purchase, the authorized payment is $ .75 per acre plus 1% of the fair market value at time of purchase, not to exceed annual tax payments at time of purchase. After five years the authorized payment is reduced to a flat rate of $ .75 per acre. During the first five years federal payment in-lieu of taxes might approximately equal previous county tax revenue on grassland. After five years the county might lose the difference between $ .75 per acre and the previous tax rate. However, the loss in tax revenue to the county and state should be minor and could be offset by possible increased sales taxes generated from small increases in area tourism and an increased length of visitor stay. The projection of a slight increase in tourism for the Monument and Robidoux Pass areas under this alternative could have a small, but beneficial, impact on the local economy.

Regional Economy

Impacts to the regional economy should remain mostly unchanged from what is now being experienced with implementation of this alternative. Economic impacts resulting from NPS actions at the Monument, and actions from NPS ownership of Robidoux Pass, would prove to be too small to be significant at a regional scale. Implementation of this alternative should help to slow the degradation of visual and scenic qualities associated with the Monument and its historic features and landscapes. This could help forestall any possible detrimental affects on tourism. There should be *no significant impact* to the regional economy from the described land conversions since no current landowners would be displaced or rendered less economically functional by these actions. The projection of a slight increase in tourism and length of stay for the Monument and Robidoux Pass areas under this alternative should yield a small, albeit positive, impact on the regional economy.

Landownership/Land Use

Implementation of this alternative could result in the conversion of approximately 188 acres of privately-owned land to federal ownership around the Monument. It could also result in the conversion of approximately 1,000 acres of privately owned land in Robidoux Pass to federal ownership. These conversions would be done on a "willing seller" basis only. The use of a "willing seller" agreement with the government paying fair market value for the parcels is basically no different from the landowners selling their parcels to any other interested party. This holds true from the perspective of the conversion of these lands to non-agricultural uses as well, in that the landowners in question would be free to carry out this type of "willing seller" conversion with or without federal or non-federal overtures for purchase. In addition, it should be noted that the actual land resource of these parcels, though converted to a non-agricultural use, would not be destroyed as a resource, but preserved in their "natural" form. The major overall benefit most likely resides in the fact that a presidentially-proclaimed National Monument (Scotts Bluff) and a Secretary of the Interior-designated National Historic Landmark (Robidoux Pass) would enjoy enhanced protection of their historic lands and associated resources through this alternative. This would leave future visitors more able to enjoy these intact nationally significant features in the future.

General Conclusions

Implementation of this alternative would provide for the future preservation and stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of Robidoux Pass. The protection and stewardship of these resources would leave Scotts Bluff National Monument better able to fulfill its designated purpose to preserve and interpret the history of the Platte River transportation corridor and the influences of Scotts Bluff on that corridor. It would also increase the Monument's ability to fully preserve and interpret the westward movement and the Overland Trails as they relate to the Monument and this area. By being incorporated within the Monument, the future integrity of the natural and cultural resources of the Robidoux Pass National Historic Landmark would be ensured. The public would also be ensured some form of access to this area that would be appropriate to the ongoing protection and complementary interpretation of these resources.

This alternative recommends the removal of the WAPA and RPPD high-voltage power transmission lines. If this was eventually accomplished, the quality of the historic landscape and, by extension, the visitor's experience, would be improved. The Monument's ability to fulfill its charge to protect the view of the scenic and historic landscape of and surrounding Scotts Bluff in a condition similar to what the early travellers experienced would be significantly improved by this action.

Establishment of a public transportation system, such as a shuttle, should provide a small, albeit relatively insignificant, improvement to local air quality by reducing the number of vehicles travelling to and from the Summit. Its primary benefit should come from less traffic congestion on this route and at the Summit parking area, thus providing a somewhat more "natural" visitor experience. New or more extensive developments at the Summit would probably not be required; however, additional parking space near the museum may be necessary. The integrity of the original CCC-era design for the Summit Road and Summit area should be retained. In the end, this alternative would benefit the Monument since it would allow for visitor use of this area while simultaneously helping to protect the natural and cultural resources of the area.

Relocation of the existing administrative and maintenance facilities off of Monument lands, with the concurrent preservation and adaptive reuse of the CCC-era complex as an expanded visitor facility, would strike a compromise; it should meet the needs of the Monument's operations and visitor services facilities into the foreseeable future while preserving and protecting the existing CCC-era complex. This action would be compatible with the Monument's charge to protect its resources and its related (in this case, cultural/historical) features. The CCC-era complex is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Preservation due to age and other factors but has not, as yet, been nominated to the Register. This CCC-era complex was designed as part of an overall commemoration of the westward movement and the Oregon-California Trail. Its preservation would reflect the spirit of the Monument's responsibilities and commitment to future generations regarding the ongoing preservation of cultural/historical resources while helping to ensure that the needs of visitors would continue to be met.

By continuing its existing commitments to proposed recreation trails, the Monument would expand on its efforts to fulfill part of the intent of the National Park Service's Organic Act, which, for the Monument, translates into providing ongoing preservation and interpretation of the Monument and its related features for public enjoyment for generations to come. Trails are an appropriate use of Monument lands, with due consideration and sensitivity for resource protection and public safety. Visitors using the pathways could have additional opportunities to see the interior and summit of the Monument. In addition, visitors could finally have a way of seeing the badlands on the northeast side of the Monument which would help them to fully comprehend why the Oregon-California Trail went through Robidoux Pass and Mitchell Pass. However, increased public access to this heretofore relatively inaccessible area of the Monument also carries with it the potential for increased impacts to natural and cultural resources in these areas. Thus, the Monument's efforts to maintain high standards of resource stewardship and protection could possibly be stressed or compromised in this area.

By implementing the recommendations from the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* and taking action to adjust the Monument's boundaries, the Monument should be more able to fulfill its charge to preserve the integrity of the natural and cultural resources entrusted to its care. These actions should also benefit the Monument's ability to fully interpret the story of the westward movement and the Overland Trails while permanently protecting some of the most significant or outstanding representative parcels that illustrate that story.

Compliance of Planning Alternatives with Applicable Laws

All aspects of this *Draft General Management Plan for Scotts Bluff National Monument* must comply with and be consistent with the letter and spirit of the applicable laws of the United States as well as with the policies of the National Park Service. The *Draft GMP* has been analyzed against several of the most pertinent laws and Executive Orders of this nation and has been found to be consistent with and in compliance of these laws, orders and policies.

American Indian Religious Freedom Act, August 11, 1978 (PL 95-341; 93 Stat. 312)

This act declared the policy of the United States to protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise their traditional religions, including but not limited to access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonial and traditional rights. This *Draft GMP* supports the existing policy of Scotts Bluff National Monument to allow American Indians open and reasonable access to Monument lands and opportunity to practice their religious beliefs and ceremonies on these lands.

Antiquities Act of 1906 (PL Chapter 3060; 34 Stat. 225; 16 USC 431-433)

This act authorizes the President to declare national monuments to protect sites and objects; authorizes federal departments to grant permits for survey and excavation and for gathering of "objects of antiquity" and to enforce protection of archeological sites and objects under their jurisdiction; and requires that materials excavated be permanently preserved in public museums. Actions in this plan are in compliance with this act regarding Scotts Bluff National Monument.

Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, as amended (PL 93-291; 88 Stat. 174)

This act provides for the preservation of significant scientific, prehistoric, historic, or archeological data (including relics and specimens) that might be lost or destroyed as a result of (1) the construction of dams, reservoirs, and attendant facilities and activities, or (2) any alteration of the terrain caused as a result of any federal construction project, activity or program. It also required that the Secretary of the Interior be notified of impending loss of such resources, and that the agency or the Secretary may survey and recover the data, then publish the results. Actions proposed in this plan are in compliance with the act.

Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (PL 96-95; Stat. 721; 16 USC 470aa-ll)

This was enacted to prevent the illegal excavations and possession of archeological resources located on federal public lands and Indian lands. In passing this act the Congress recognized that the only comparable statutory law, the 1906 Antiquities Act, was inadequate in terms of defining archeological resources and establishing appropriate penalty provisions. This *Draft GMP* supports the act as part of the policy and daily operations of Scotts Bluff National Monument, as well as of the National Park Service.

Clean Air Act, as amended (PL Chapter 360; 69 Stat. 322; 42 USC 7401 et seq.)

Section 118 of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 USC 7401 *et seq.*), requires all federal facilities to comply with federal, state, and local air pollution control laws and regulations. Under the Clean Air Act, federal actions must conform to all applicable state implementation plan requirements and purposes, and these actions must not cause or contribute to any violation. While construction associated with some elements of these alternatives may lead to a temporary increase in vehicular emissions from equipment, overall, implementation of any of the three planning alternatives presented in this *Draft GMP* would have no significant impact on air quality at either the local or regional levels.

Clean Water Act, as amended [Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972] (PL 92-500; PL 100-433; 86 Stat. 816; USC 9 sec. 1251 et seq. as amended; 33 USC sec. 1251-1376; and 1987 Federal Water Quality Act)

This act includes section 404 of the Clean Water Act, section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, and the 1987 Water Quality Act. The act establishes federal regulation of the nation's waters and contains provisions designed to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. Implementation of any of the three planning alternatives presented in this *Draft GMP* would not involve the placement of fill materials into a waterway or an adjacent wetland.

Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (PL 93-205; 87 Stat. 884; 7 USC 136, as amended)

The Endangered Species Act requires all federal agencies to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by the agency does not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or critical habitat. For this *Draft GMP*, the National Park Service has informally consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine what Federally-listed endangered or threatened species exist or could exist in the project areas. It is the National Park Service's policy to provide protection for federal candidate species and any state-listed species as well.

There should be no significant impacts to Federally-listed endangered or threatened species at either the Monument or Robidoux Pass and no violation of the Endangered Species Act from the implementation of any of the three planning alternatives presented in this *Draft GMP* since none of these species are present in these areas. Some appropriate habitat does exist to various degrees in these areas to support either the mountain plover *(Charadrius montanus)*, the swift fox *(Vulpes velox)*, the northern bald eagle *(Haliaeetus leucocephalus)* as an overwintering migrant, the whooping crane *(Grus americana)* as a migrant through the area, the peregrine falcon *(Falco peregrinus)* as a migrant through the area, and the black-footed ferret *(Mustela nigripes)*.

There should be no significant impacts to state-listed endangered or threatened species at either the Monument or Robidoux Pass from the implementation of any of the three planning alternatives presented in this *Draft GMP* since none of these species are present in these areas. Some appropriate habitat does exist to various degrees in these areas to support either the mountain plover *(Charadrius montanus)*, the burrowing owl *(Athene cunicularia)*, or the swift fox *(Vulpes velox)*.

Executive Order 11593, Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment, May 13, 1971 (36 FR 8921)

This Executive Order instructed all Federal agencies to provide national leadership in historic preservation, to ensure the preservation of cultural properties in Federal ownership, and to "institute procedures to assure that federal plans and programs contribute to the preservation and enhancement of nonfederally-owned sites, structures, and objects of historical, architectural, or archeological significance." The order specifically directed all federal agencies to "locate, inventory, and nominate to the Secretary of the Interior all sites, buildings, districts, and objects under their jurisdiction or control that appear to qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places." The 1980 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act contained similar mandates for survey and inventory and these guidelines have cited the act rather than the executive order, where appropriate. The alternatives presented in this document represent varying levels of compliance with this executive order. Alternative A would fail to aid in the preservation of the nationally significant Robidoux Pass, and Alternative B could also fall short of full compliance with this EO by not ensuring the ongoing protection of Robidoux Pass.

Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, 1977 (42 FR 26951; 3 CFR 121 [Supp 177])

The objective of this order is to avoid, to the extent possible, long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modifications of floodplains, and to avoid direct and indirect support of floodplain development whenever there is a practicable alternative. Scotts Bluff National Monument's northern border is contiguous with the North Platte River. The small upper watershed of the nameless creek that is situated within Robidoux Pass has no established floodplain in this location. Implementation of any of the three planning alternatives should have no direct or indirect significant impact to the continued existence or integrity of floodplains or the designated 100-year floodplain along the North Platte River at the Monument or along this creek within Robidoux Pass. No development is proposed by the *Draft GMP* for these areas that could encroach upon the floodplain zone. The future integrity of Robidoux Pass's nameless creek would remain uncertain under Alternatives A and B. There would also be no assurance that its present quality would be maintained, let alone enhanced, over time.

Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 1977 (42 FR 26961; 3 CFR 121 [Supp 177]; 42 USC 4321)

Scotts Bluff National Monument's northern border is contiguous with the North Platte River. Some minor wetlands exist along this reach of the river. The small upper watershed of the nameless creek that is situated within Robidoux Pass has no floodplain in this location or significant wetlands associated with it. Implementation of any of the three planning alternatives presented in this *Draft GMP* should have no direct or indirect significant impact to the continued existence or integrity of wetlands along the North Platte River at the Monument or along this creek within Robidoux Pass. The future integrity of Robidoux Pass's nameless creek would remain uncertain under Alternatives A and B. There would also be no assurance that its present quality would be maintained, let alone enhanced, over time.

Executive Order 12898, "Environmental Justice"

This executive order requires all federal agencies to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs and policies on minorities and low-income populations and communities. Actions proposed under all three of the planning alternatives were assessed relative to this order. It was determined by the *Draft GMP* planning team that none of the planning alternatives would result in significant direct or indirect effects on any minority (including American Indians) or low-income populations. This determination was based on information received from scoping meetings and as a result of planning team efforts to identify tribal concerns from the following potentially interested parties (listed by their official titles): Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Oglala Sioux Tribe, Crow Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Arapahoe Tribe, Blackfeet Nation, and Pawnee Tribe. No responses were received from these parties. Because of the general long term cultural affiliation of American Indian people with this region and the lack of responses from these parties, the NPS has continued its effort to identify potentially interested American Indian groups. This search has resulted in the identification of approximately 30 American Indian tribes or groups who potentially have interest in the Monument.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended (PL 85-624; 72 Stat. 563; 16 USC 661, et seq.)

This act requires federal agencies to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and with parallel state agencies whenever water resource development plans result in alteration of a body of water. Implementation of any of the three planning alternatives presented in this *Draft GMP* would not alter any body of water within the planning areas.

Historic Sites, Buildings and Antiquities Act of 1935 (PL 74-292; 49 Stat. 666; 16 USC 461-467)

This act authorized the programs that are known as the Historic American Buildings Survey, the Historic American Engineering Record, and the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings; authorized the establishment of National Historic Sites; authorized the preservation of properties "of national historic or archeological significance"; authorized the establishment of museums in connection therewith; authorized the designation of National Historic Landmarks (such as Robidoux Pass); established criminal sanctions for violations of regulations pursuant to the act; authorized interagency, intergovernmental, and interdisciplinary efforts for the preservation of cultural resources; and other provisions. This act establishes federal protection for designated historic sites, buildings, and antiquities associated with Scotts Bluff National Monument as well as for Robidoux Pass. This *Draft GMP* supports the act as part of the policy and daily operations of Scotts Bluff National Monument, as well as of the National Park Service.

National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA] (PL 91-190; 42 USC 4321 et seq.; 83 Stat. 852; 42 USC 4332, as amended)

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 declared a federal policy to preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and required federal agencies to use public involvement and a systematic, interdisciplinary approach that would ensure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences in planning and decision-making that would have an impact upon the human environment. It is the basic national charter for environmental protection. It contains an "action-forcing" provision to ensure that federal agencies act according to the letter and spirit of the law. NEPA directs that all practical means should be used to improve federal functions so that the nation may "...attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable or unintended consequences...". This *Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for Scotts Bluff National Monument* was prepared pursuant to the act and its implementing regulations and guidelines. Following public review of this draft, the National Park Service and this planning team will address comments and will revise the plan, in consultation with the appropriate agencies and parties, as necessary, into a *Final General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for Scotts Bluff National Monument*, including the final record of decision.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (PL 89-665; 80 Stat. 915-919; 16 USC 470 et seq.)

Section 106 of this act requires that federal agencies having direct or indirect jurisdiction over undertakings consider the effect of those undertakings on National Register of Historic Places properties and allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) an opportunity to comment. The 1980 amendment to this act places specific responsibilities on federal agencies in terms of historic preservation and the conducting of their own programs, planning, and projects (Section 110). The *Draft GMP* planning team has provided opportunities for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Nebraska SHPO to review and comment on the *Draft GMP*. In addition, a representative of the Nebraska SHPO is a member on the *Draft GMP ad hoc* citizen's group. It should be noted that the various alternatives presented in this document meet the provisions and intent of the *National Historic Preservation Act* to varying degrees.

National Park Service Organic Act of 1916 (PL Chapter 408; 39 Stat. 535 et seq.; 16 USC 1)

Through this act, Congress established the National Park Service and mandated that it "shall promote and regulate the use of the federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations...by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." The Organic Act authorizes the Secretary to promulgate rules and regulations necessary for management of the parks. The planning alternatives presented in this *Draft GMP* and their proposed actions related to or directly involving Scotts Bluff National Monument comply with all aspects of this act.

National Trails System Act of 1968 (PL 90-543; 88 Stat. 1603; 16 USC et seq.)

This act established a national system of scenic, recreation, historic, and side and connecting trails. Components of the national trails system include national scenic trails, national recreation trails, and connecting or side trails which provide access or link to the former two categories. A 1978 amendment added a category of national historic trails. The planning alternatives presented in this *Draft GMP* that propose actions involving existing segments of the four national historic trails (NHTs) associated with the Monument or Robidoux Pass (the Oregon NHT, the California NHT, the Mormon Pioneer NHT, and the Pony Express NHT) comply with all aspects of this act.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-60; 104 Stat. 3049)

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, in part, assigns ownership or control of Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony that are excavated or discovered on federal land or tribal land after passage of the act to lineal descendants or culturally affiliated Native American groups. It also provides that federal agencies and museums that receive federal funding must inventory Native American human remains and associated funerary objects in their possession or control and identify their cultural and geographic affiliations. This *Draft GMP* supports the act as part of the policy and daily operations of Scotts Bluff National Monument, as well as of the National Park Service. Any planning alternatives presented in this document that involve Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony that are excavated or discovered on federal land at Scotts Bluff National Monument as well as those Native American human remains and associated funerary objects in the possession or control of the Monument must comply with all aspects of this act.

Prime and Unique Farmland

Federal agencies are required to assess the effects of their actions on soils classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as prime or unique farmland. Prime farmland produces general crops such as common food, forage, fiber, and oil seed. Unique farmland produces specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables, and nuts. This policy was developed, in part, to minimize the effect of federal programs in converting these soils to nonagricultural uses.

With regard to the proposal, under Alternative C, to implement the recommendations of the *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument*, approximately 131 acres of irrigated agricultural land currently situated around the Monument, and qualifying as "prime or unique farmland," would be converted to non-agricultural use through incorporation within the Monument's boundary. This conversion of agricultural land would not destroy its capacity for agricultural production *as a land resource*, but rather it would take it out of production permanently. This acreage should not translate into a significant loss to agricultural production, active or latent, in the area.

Water Resources

State Water Rights

Nebraska recognizes both riparian and appropriative rights to surface water, and groundwater rights based upon ownership of overlying land. Permits are required from the State to withdraw groundwater in certain circumstances (including use on nonoverlying lands, large industrial and municipal uses, and uses in groundwater control and management areas). In times of shortage, Nebraska recognizes certain uses (for example, domestic) as having preference over others.

Federal Reserved Water Rights

Federal reserved water rights arise from the purposes for the reservation of land by the federal government. When the federal government reserves land from the public domain for a particular purpose, it also reserves, by implication, enough water unappropriated at the time of the reservation as is necessary to accomplish the purposes for which the land was reserved, without regard to the limitations of state law. The rights vest as of the date of the reservation, whether or not the water is actually put to use, and are superior to the rights of those who commence the use of water after the reservation date.

Adjudications and Other Actions

In a general adjudication, the federal government claims its water rights, including reserved water rights. The McCarran Amendment (66 Stat. 560, 43 U.S.C. 666, June 10, 1952) provides the mechanism by which the United States, when properly joined, consents to be a defendant in an adjudication.

Once adjudicated by the state, the water rights of the United States -- reserved, riparian, appropriative -- fit into the state administrative system along with those of all other water rights holders. In general, when it is brought into a general adjudication, the United States is given its only opportunity to assert its claim to water rights. Unless legally absent from the proceedings, it is generally understood that failure to assert a claim to water rights in such a proceeding may result in forfeiture of these rights.

Although the water right adjudication issue is legal or administrative in nature, field data, special studies, and literature searches may be required to support claims of the United States, when joined in a general water rights adjudication or involved in additional actions related to water rights.

Additional actions include responses to water right forfeiture proceedings and potentially damaging external water development proposals through state administrative procedures, and, in the case of the National Park Service, to out-of-park requests for use of water from within an NPS unit, in accordance with federal law and NPS policy.

The National Park Service, like other bureaus in the Department of the Interior, receives legal advice concerning water rights from the Department's Office of the Solicitor. In litigation, the NPS, like other federal agencies, is represented by the United States Department of Justice. The National Park Service's Water Resources Division, which is part of the Natural Resources Program Center, provides technical assistance to NPS units to protect and secure water rights and to coordinate with NPS's legal counsel. Scotts Bluff National Monument currently receives its water supply for primary visitor and administrative facility needs from the City of Gering.

Cost Estimates for Alternatives

The following tables present U.S. Government Class "C," or conceptual, cost estimates for the developments or actions proposed under each planning alternative. Where construction is proposed, the totals reflect net construction costs adjusted for potential inflation through the end of calendar year 1998. They do not include allowances for contingencies, planning, design, or project supervision, which are accounted for under the column "Advance and Project Planning." The figures listed are based on cost comparisons with like facilities in comparable areas of the region and are intended to show average costs for the listed items in that region. Class "C" costs may appear to be high; however, these figures have been compiled from historic contract data and have been adjusted to compensate for undefined related costs that will typically be needed by the time the project is fully designed and ready for contract solicitation.

ALTERNATIVE A
(NO ACTION)

There would be no additional project costs related to the implementation of Alternative A above current costs, normal operations and maintenance-related cost adjustments not withstanding. Construction of 3 miles of trail through the Monument's badlands area would be completed using non-federal money.

ESTIMATED COSTS ALTERNATIVE B				
Item	Units	Gross Construction Costs (1)	Advance and Project Planning Cost (2)	Total Project Costs
1. NPS Acquires Easements in Robidoux Pass	Approx. 1000 acres			(See #3 below)
- Develop Automobile Audio Interpretive Tape				$10,000
- Develop New Interpretive Folder				$30,000
2. Federal Assistance for Removal of High-Voltage Power Lines by Power Companies	1.75 miles			$1,500,000
3. Establish Public Transportation System to Summit	3 months			$13,000
4. Expand Administrative, Maintenance and Visitor Services at Present Site				
- Administrative	1,200sq.ft.	$168,000	$32,000	$200,000
- Maintenance	5,066sq.ft.	$787,310	$150,250	$937,560
- Visitor Services	2,716sq.ft.	$684,215	$130,575	$814,800
5. No New Trail Connections Permitted on Monument	0			$0

6. Develop and Interpret New Scenic Overlooks				
- Overlooks at Summit	2			$30,000
- Overlooks with Pullouts Along Hwy 92	2			$100,000
- Overlooks Along Monument Trails	2			$330,000
- Interpretive Signs Along All Monument Trails	14			$105,000
- Archaeological Inventory and Evaluation				$30,000
7. Implement Boundary Study Recommendations for Areas Adjacent to Monument Only	208 acres			(See #4 below)
- Develop Historic Structures Report for Monument				$150,000
- Develop Cultural Landscape Report for Monument				$95,000
Total Costs (See #5 below)				$4,345,360

1: *Gross Construction Costs* + Net Construction Costs + 16% for contingencies + 15% for supervision.
2: *Advance & Project Planning Costs* + 25% of Net Construction Costs.
3: A detailed cost estimate would be prepared prior to consideration of legislation to authorize acquisition of the lands in question. Costs for acquisition of easements for Robidoux Pass would probably be less than the cost of this area in fee title.
4: A detailed cost estimate would be prepared prior to consideration of legislation to authorize acquisition of the lands in question.
5: Implementation of this alternative could require an additional 1.5 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) of seasonal personnel which should not exceed $75,000 in salaries and support costs per annum. This amount is reflected in the Total Costs for this alternative.

ESTIMATED COSTS *ALTERNATIVE C (NPS PREFERRED ACTIONS)*				
Item	**Units**	**Gross Construction Costs (1)**	**Advance and Project Planning Cost (2)**	**Total Project Costs**
1. NPS Acquires Robidoux Pass in Fee Title	**Approx.1000 acres**			**(See #4 below)**
- Develop Automobile Audio Interpretive Tape				**$10,000**
- Develop New Interpretive Folder				**$30,000**
- Develop Trail	**1 mile**			**$100,000**
- Develop Waysides	**6**			**$45,000**
- Archaeological Inventory				**$75,000**
2. Federal Assistance for Removal of High-Voltage Power Lines by Power Companies	**1.75 miles**			**$1,500,000**
3. Establish Public Transportation System to Summit	**3 months**			**$13,000**

4. Relocate Administrative and Maintenance Functions Off-site; Expand and Upgrade Visitor Services into Vacated Space at Monument				
- *Lease* New Administrative/ Maintenance Facility @10.84/sq.ft. (GSA estimated cost)	**12,700sq.ft.**			**[$137,668/year]**
- *Construct* New Administrative/ Maintenance Facility	**12,700sq.ft.**	**$2,593,145**	**$49,488**	**$2,642,633**
Expand Visitor Services within Existing Facility	**2,716sq.ft.**	**$684,213**	**$130,575**	**$814,800**
- Purchase of Approved Land	**3 acres**			**(See #4 below)**
- Archaeological Inventory				**$25,000**
5. Continue with Existing Commitments to Monument Valley Pathways and Interpret Area				**(See #3 below)**
- Archaeological Inventory				**$75,000**
- Interpretive Signs	**5**			**$37,500**
6. Restore/Reseed Disturbed Monument Areas (Drilling, Reseeding, Debris Removed, Drift Fence Installed)	**Approx. 1000 acres**	**$496,490**	**$94,750**	**$591,240**
- Active NPS Involvement with Other Parties to Maintain Surrounding Historic Viewshed				**$10,000**

7. Implement Boundary Study Recommendations for Areas Adjacent to Monument and Robidoux Pass	Approx. 1,208 acres			(See #4 below)
- Develop Historic Structures Report for Monument				$150,000
- Develop Cultural Landscape Report for Monument				$95,000
- Develop Cultural Landscape Inventory				$10,000
- Archaeological Inventory				$125,000
Total Costs (See #5 and #6 below)				[$3,844,208] $6,349,173

1: *Gross Construction Costs* + Net Construction Costs + 16% for contingencies + 15% for supervision.
2: *Advance & Project Planning Costs* + 25% of Net Construction Costs.
3: Construction of 3 miles of trail through the Monument using non-federal money.
4: A detailed cost estimate would be prepared prior to consideration of legislation to authorize acquisition of the lands in question.
5: Implementation of this alternative could require an additional 1.5 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) of seasonal personnel which should not exceed $75,000 in salaries and support costs per annum. This amount is reflected in the Total Costs for this alternative.
6: Total Costs sum listed within brackets ([ ]) identifies the estimated cost of implementing alternative with Monument administrative and major maintenance functions moved out of the Monument into nearby *leased* facilities. Non-bracketed sum identifies estimated cost of implementing alternative with Monument administrative and major maintenance functions moved out of the Monument into nearby *newly constructed* facilities.

Appendix F

Consultation and Coordination

The following people have assisted as consultants or as members of an *ad hoc* citizen's group in the National Park Service's planning effort to develop this draft *General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for Scotts Bluff National Monument.*

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation -- Golden, Colorado
Howard and Mary Allison; Monument neighbors and landowners
Wally Baird; City Administrator, City of Gering
Patricia A. Baum; Scotts Bluff National Monument
Peggy Briggs, Former Director, Nebraska Travel and Tourism
The Reverend Joe Brown Thunder, Sr; Lakota Lutheran Center
Tom Buecker; Curator, Fort Robinson State Museum (Liaison for Nebraska SHPO)
Fernando Delgado; Scotts Bluff National Monument
Kim D. Deuring; Scotts Bluff National Monument
Tony Dwark; Development Consultant, Nebraska Department of Economic Development
Dennis Ernest, Program Director, KNEB Farm Radio, Scottsbluff
Joe Fairfield; Oregon-California Trails Association representative
William Gwaltney, Former Superintendent, Fort Laramie National Historic Site
Al Heuton, Executive Director, Panhandle Area Development District
J. Eric Haugland; Scotts Bluff National Monument
Darrell Ingwerson, Monument neighbor and rancher
Orvil Kirby, Former Chairman, Scotts Bluff County Planning Commission
Larry Malone; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service representative (Now retired)
Russell McKeehan; Nebraska Game and Parks Commission representative
Ron Moore; Coordinator, Panhandle Resource Conservation and Development Program
Donald E. Overman; Friends of Agate Fossil Beds, Inc. representative
Michael D. Plummer-Steen, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Robert Roeser; Nebraska Trails Foundation
Mary Jo Van Schuyver; Former Director, Tour and Travel, Scottsbluff County Convention and Visitors Bureau
Nadine Sieb; Executive Director, Gering New Horizons
Lawrence Sommers, Nebraska State Historic Preservation Officer
Jeanne E. Weber, Scotts Bluff National Monument
Dennis W. Wiedeman, Monument neighbor

In addition, the NPS has consulted with the following agencies and offices:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
State Historic Preservation Officer, Nebraska State Historical Society
Advisory Council for Historic Preservation

Appendix G

Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument

Background

Scotts Bluff National Monument was established near the cities of Scottsbluff and Gering, Nebraska, in 1919. Before World War II, agricultural lands separated the town from the Monument, providing over a mile of open space between the town's development and the Monument's native prairie. After the war, however, housing developments began filling in the area between the cities and the Monument. Now little open space remains between the two. As the area continues to develop, it is becoming more important to protect undeveloped land adjacent to the Monument in order to preserve uncluttered views of this historic landmark. Fortunately, some of the most critical parcels directly adjacent to the Monument's boundary are still undeveloped. Protection of these tracts of land is vital to maintaining the historic appearance of this nationally significant site.

Since the initial Presidential Proclamation of December 12, 1919, that established Scotts Bluff National Monument, there have been several subsequent boundary changes. By Executive Order of May 9, 1924, the Monument's size was reduced by 160 acres. On June 1, 1932, the Monument's acreage was increased by 1,346 acres. On March 29, 1940, a Presidential Proclamation added 53 acres to the Monument and on June 30, 1961, an act of Congress established the existing boundary, reducing the area by 350 acres. Many changes to the Monument and surrounding lands have occurred in the 35-plus years since then, resulting in the need for additional boundary adjustments. The existing boundary of the Monument is inadequate to protect the "...view for miles over the surrounding country", as directed in the establishing Presidential Proclamation of 1919, of the approach to Mitchell Pass and the Bluff itself, and the view to the west from Mitchell Pass. An increase in the Monument's acreage ceiling will be necessary to accommodate these boundary changes (see Figure 4).

Robidoux Pass, an area southwest of Scotts Bluff National Monument, is presently in private ownership and contains important resources that relate directly to the story of the westward migration to Oregon and California and to the region's historic fur trade era. The story of Robidoux Pass predates that of Scotts Bluff National Monument and Mitchell Pass by 20-30 years. Mitchell Pass, located at Scotts Bluff National Monument, began to be used in 1852 after improvements had been made that allowed the passage of wagons over the rough terrain. Prior to that time during the early years of the pioneer migrations to Oregon and California, and all during the years of the fur trade, Robidoux Pass was the route that travelers used to get through the bluffs and badlands of the Scotts Bluff area. It was also the site of an early trading post operated by the Robidoux family and contains remnant traces of the early trail, pioneer grave sites, and other historic resources. These are important historic resources, vital to the story of the Oregon-California Trail in this region, and deserving of preservation and protection.

A 20-acre parcel, adjacent to the Monument's eastern boundary and lying along the line of approach of the historic Oregon-California Trail, was acquired on November 3, 1994, from an individual that was threatening to develop the land. This parcel is critical to preserving the view that the emigrants had of Scotts Bluff when they approached it from the east. Though the NPS now owns the land, a boundary adjustment is needed to make it part of the Monument.

Other small parcels of land at both the east and west entrances to the Monument should be protected. These areas lie along the modern Nebraska State Highway 92 and near the historic Oregon-California Trail. The views that visitors get of the Monument as they approach from either the east or west are very similar to the views that the emigrants had a century and a half ago. Protecting these views and open space is vital to provide the visitor approaching the landmark with the feelings of desolation, vastness, and awe that were experienced by the people on the Oregon-California Trail. The approach to Scotts Bluff also had a profound impact upon trail users as it provided them with a sense of accomplishment in completing the first third of their journey. Scotts Bluff, and other formations as nearby Chimney Rock, also signified that the trail soon would enter harsher terrain than the flat prairies experienced along the Platte River. After completing a long, monotonous journey to this point, the trail users must have experienced both a sense of relief and apprehension about the coming experiences on the high plains and as they approach the Rocky Mountains. The overall visitor experience at Scotts Bluff National Monument is significantly diminished when this historic approach is viewed through a clutter of houses, roads, power lines, and other modern developments that make it much harder for the present-day visitor to appreciate the original experience of the emigrants.

Discussions with various landowners relevant to this boundary study have revealed a number of their concerns. Some landowners want to retain water rights or cattle trailing rights; some prefer to exchange land parcels rather than sell. It is the NPS's intention to work with the landowners regarding their concerns, eventually arriving at a mutually satisfactory solution for both the NPS and the landowner. If additional parcels of land are acquired by the NPS, associated water rights, if any, should be evaluated and a determination made as to whether or not to acquire the water rights with the lands.

Potential Boundary Changes

Priority One: Gering Tract, Approximately 20 acres

Significance of the Property

This parcel is in a critical viewshed for both visitors entering the Monument from the east and for those viewing the Oregon-California Trail and Dome Rock from the summit of Scotts Bluff. The parcel contains native prairie and has not been cultivated.

Justification for Including this Parcel within the Monument Boundary

An approximately 20-acre parcel adjacent to the east boundary of the Monument and west of the City of Gering cemetery in the SW quarter of Section 3 was proposed for a housing development. If these 20 acres were developed for housing, the development would have created another modern intrusion on the historic landscape resulting in a significant adverse impact to visitors entering the Monument from the east as well as for those looking toward Dome Rock from that direction. It would also render visitors to the Monument less able to appreciate the historic landscape and scenic views from Scotts Bluff as they were encountered by the emigrants. This proposed development would have been directly in the line-of-sight for visitors looking to the east and southeast toward Chimney Rock and at the Oregon-California Trail remnants in the foreground. Fortunately, the owner allowed the NPS enough time to pursue acquisition of the property to help preserve this viewshed. The property was acquired on November 3, 1994, but remains outside the Monument boundaries. Legislation is necessary to include the land within the Monument boundaries.

Management Options

The property has been acquired in order to help preserve the historic natural and cultural landscape of Scotts Bluff National Monument and needs to be included within the boundaries of the Monument. The land would be managed to retain its natural condition.

Feasibility of Administration

The parcel is bordered on two sides by the Scotts Bluff National Monument boundary. The management of the Monument anticipates no difficulties in continuing to manage these additional 20 acres that would be contiguous with the rest of the Monument. Costs should be minimal for maintaining the land as it will be retained in its natural condition.

Land Owners

United States Government.

Priority Two: Robidoux Pass, approximately 1,000 acres

Significance of the Property

Robidoux Pass is on the National Register of Historic Places and is certified as a National Historic Landmark (see Figure 5). It is situated seven miles southwest from the Monument's headquarters. The earliest European travelers over Robidoux Pass were probably fur traders and missionaries, who worked in this area during the late 1820's. In 1830, the Smith-Jackson-Sublette trading caravan passed over this route and in 1832, Captain Bonneville camped in the area. The first emigrants over the pass were part of the Bidwell-Bartleson party, who were traveling with Father DeSmet. The great historian Francis Parkman also camped in this area in 1846. The period of greatest activity, however, came during the Oregon Migration and the California Gold Rush in the late 1840's. Between May and July of 1849, a steady stream of gold seekers crossed over Robidoux Pass on their way to the gold fields of California.

By 1849, emigrant journals reported the existence of a trading post and blacksmith shop at the pass, run by a man named Robidoux (the spelling greatly varied in journals of the period). The post may have been established in late 1848. All that is known about Robidoux comes from the journals and diaries of those who stopped at his trading post. Robidoux supplied the emigrants with a variety of services including goods such as whiskey at $5.00 a barrel, and needed supplies. A blacksmith forge was also available for repairs.

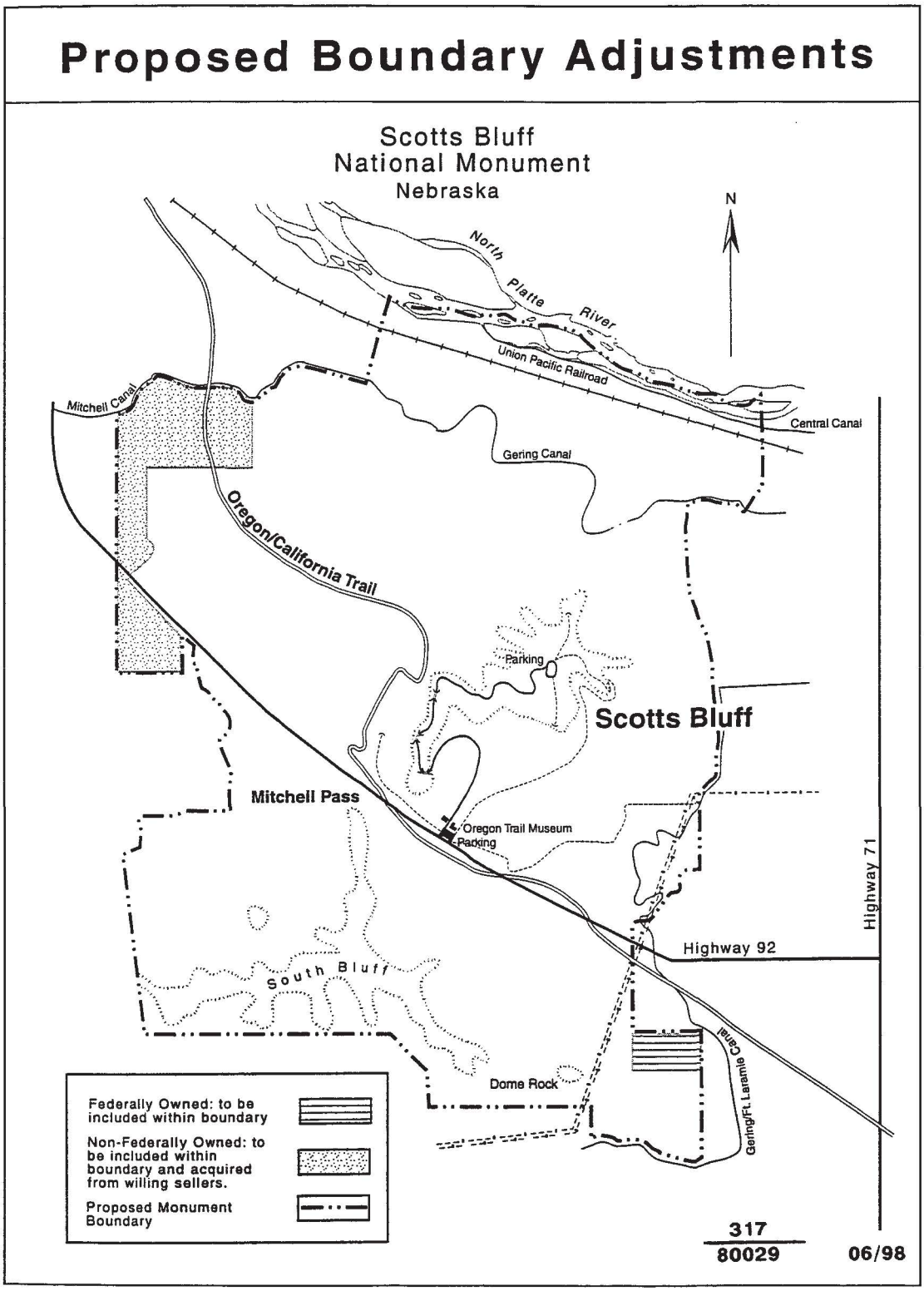

Figure 4. Proposed Boundary Adjustments for Scotts Bluff National Monument.

ON MICROFILM

Robidoux Pass became the original route through the rugged bluffs of the area. It provided the easiest crossing of the geological formations in this area and avoided the impassible badlands terrain between the North Platte River and Scotts Bluff, which was the main route of the trail. Use of Robidoux Pass predated the use of Mitchell Pass at Scotts Bluff by several decades. It witnessed the passage of the fur traders and trappers, the earliest emigrants, and the hordes of "49'ers". Mitchell Pass at Scotts Bluff did not come into use until 1852 when the route was sufficiently improved to allow the passage of wagons.

The Robidoux Pass area contains several miles of well-preserved wagon trail remnants. It provides a good example of emigrants crossing a major physical obstacle. The pass itself provided the emigrants with their first glimpse of Laramie Peak, which for them symbolized that they had almost reached the Rocky Mountains.

Robidoux Pass lies at the head of a grassy valley, rimmed with low steep hills to the south and more rolling, gently rising hills to the north. The valley runs east to west several miles south and west of Scotts Bluff National Monument. The gentle summit provides a magnificent view both of Laramie Peak to the west and to the east where the emigrants passed Chimney Rock the day before. The site is relatively undisturbed except for a major power line traversing the valley near the east side of the pass. The land has been used for grazing livestock and has not been converted to farming. Therefore, the native prairie appears much as it did 150 years ago. To a much greater degree than at Scotts Bluff National Monument, the lands around Robidoux Pass retain the wide open and uncluttered views reminiscent of what the emigrants would have witnessed.

The site of a blacksmith shop and trading post within the Robidoux Pass area would provide visitors an opportunity to understand the importance of such support facilities along the Oregon Trail. It would help dispel the myth that trail users passed through an untouched wilderness without any possibility of assistance. On the other hand, the lack of modern development in Robidoux Pass would provide the visitor with a vicarious feeling of following the trail through unspoiled territory, frequently over terrain unfamiliar to people from the east. The gentle slope of Robidoux Pass would illustrate to visitors how the trail's alignment sought out the path of least resistance through the local geography to ease the ordeal of stock pulling wagons and of people walking along side of their wagons as they made their way west.

Justification for Acquiring this Parcel

Land in the area continues to be removed from agricultural use and converted to housing, industry, or other uses associated with an urban area. Requests are routinely submitted to the local land controlling authorities to change the area's zoning to accommodate some type of development around Scotts Bluff National Monument. These actions form a trend that makes it clear that it would not be long before development pressures are brought to bear near or at Robidoux Pass. Each and every change to the land surrounding the Monument erodes away at the very essence of why the Monument was established in the first place: to preserve the history of the Oregon Trail and "...afford a view for miles over the surrounding country." Inclusion of Robidoux Pass within the Monument's boundary is considered the only feasible means of protecting the natural and cultural resources of the pass over the long term as land uses change in the region.

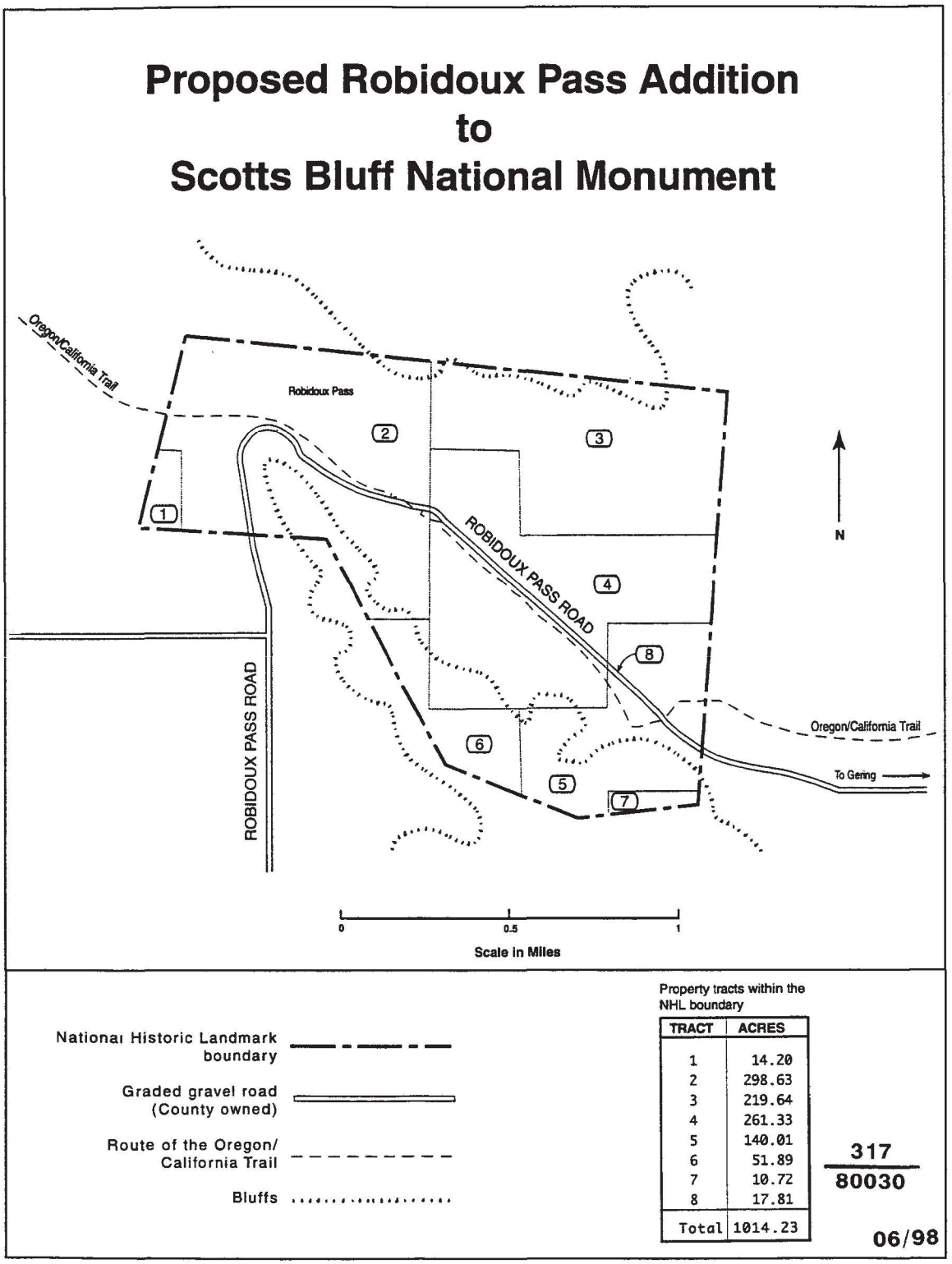

Figure 5. Proposed Robidoux Pass Addition.

ON MICROFILM

Management Options

The most significant portion of Robidoux Pass, from the historic and scenic perspectives, and as delineated by the National Historic Landmark boundary, should be acquired. Additional easements should be purchased to protect the viewshed both to the east and west. Other possible actions to consider include a petition of the local planning commission to provide more restrictive zoning of land around the national landmark and/or the encouragement of voluntary restrictions on surrounding land use, such as through deed restrictions or covenants. If the views are protected as they appear now, visitors 50 to 100 years from now would have a good visual idea of what it was like for the emigrants as they approached and crossed Robidoux Pass.

Feasibility of Administration

The management of Scotts Bluff National Monument anticipates no difficulties in managing the additional acres of Robidoux Pass along with the rest of the Monument. Potential development of the area by the NPS would be minimal. Public access to important features would be under controlled conditions, *e.g.,* via designated trails and/or by roadside pullouts that may be developed to allow non-invasive interpretation of the site. Identification of significant cultural features within the pass is likely for effective interpretation of the Robidoux Trading post and out buildings. The *Oregon Trail Comprehensive Management and Use Plan* of 1981 recommends that if the area is acquired "...visitors should be invited to walk along the rut traces towards the summit." Costs associated with operating the site will relate to some light development such as trails, pullouts, interpretive signing, information dissemination, and marking, maintaining and protecting historic sites.

Land Ownership

Robidoux Pass includes approximately 984 acres of privately-owned land (comprising eight separate owners), approximately 10 acres owned by the State of Nebraska, and approximately 18 acres owned by Scotts Bluff County. Each of the owners or controlling parties for each tract of land was contacted by the Monument's Superintendent and the possibility of adding the Robidoux Pass area to Scotts Bluff National Monument was discussed.

Priority Three: West Side, approximately 188 acres

Significance of the Property

From Mitchell Pass and the Summit of Scotts Bluff National Monument visitors can see essentially what the pioneers saw 150 years ago: open space and the great expanse that lay ahead of them to the west. Laramie Peak loomed in the distance more than 100 miles away, giving the pioneers their first glimpse of what they perceived to be the Rocky Mountains. Some of the area west of the present Monument boundary was within the Monument from 1932 to 1961 but was later deleted by Congress in favor of the present boundary. Remnants of the Oregon-California Trail are still visible in the foreground of these parcels and make evident the route the emigrants took through Mitchell Pass as they headed back towards the North Platte River to the northwest.

The land to the west of Scotts Bluff National Monument is mostly in agricultural use. As far as the eye can see, it is a sparsely populated area with only scattered farm houses in view. With increasing development on the eastern side of the bluff, the existing western view presents a landscape that resembles as closely as possible today the quality of the scene that the emigrants witnessed 150 years ago. Some of the hills of Scotts Bluff form a border to the south, and the North Platte River forms a natural border to the north.

Justification for Acquiring this Parcel

Land in the area continues to be removed from agricultural use and is being converted to housing, industry, or other uses associated with an urban area. Requests are routinely submitted to the land controlling authorities to change the zoning to accommodate some type of development west of Scotts Bluff National Monument. In 1996, the County Commissioners rejected a request for a zoning change that would have allowed higher density housing on approximately 60 acres near the Monument. As a result of their action the open landscape will remain in existence for a while longer. Therefore, the NPS considers these tracts to be of high priority for Monument resource protection.

Management Options

The area between Scotts Bluff National Monument and State Highway 92 to the west (see Figure 4) should be protected in some manner from further development that would impinge on the openness of the area. This would include portions of Sections 29 and 32 going from the bluffs on the south to two miles to the north, including much of what was in the Monument for nearly 30 years. The Monument should work with the landowners of these two tracts to acquire these high-priority lands or to obtain easements or cooperative agreements if acquisition is not possible.

Feasibility of Administration

These parcels are contiguous with the existing Monument boundary. The management of the Monument anticipates no difficulties in managing these additional acres with the rest of the Monument. The NPS would not develop the area. If possible, the NPS would restore the cultivated land to native prairie, in keeping with the historic landscape, and maintain the area as open space. Costs associated with these actions should be minimal.

Land Ownership

All of the approximately 188 acres are privately owned.

Priority Four: Area Adjacent to East Entrance

Significance of the Property

Emigrants approached Mitchell Pass and Scotts Bluff from the east, and today's State Highway 92 now roughly follows that original trail. As modern visitors approach the Monument along this route today they get much the same view of the bluff and the pass as the emigrants did 150 years ago. Aside from purely aesthetic concerns for having a scenic and uncluttered approach to the Monument, it is important that today's visitors are able to get a sense of what the emigrants saw and experienced. The visitors' approach to the pass, along with their view of the bluff and the pass, lay the groundwork for the rest of their experiences at the Monument. There probably is no more important view from outside the Monument than this one from the eastern approach. For this reason it is important to maintain as much open, undeveloped land as possible on this eastern approach to the Monument. Humans cannot recreate or feel the pain, sweat and heartache that the emigrants experienced, but we can maintain some semblance of the open, uncluttered appearance of the prairie that they saw in order to give modern-day visitors some feeling for the land as it was during the era of the westward migration.

Justification for NPS Interest in this Parcel

The communities of Scottsbluff and Gering continue their expansion towards the Monument. Very little of the eastern boundary of the Monument presently remains in agriculture. Land continues to be subdivided either by the City of Gering or by private developers. A portion of the eastern boundary area is being developed into a golf course, which has less impact on the Monument than some other forms of development. Given these situations, it seems inevitable that the land currently in agricultural use around the Monument would be developed in time if it is not acquired or protected in some manner. Therefore, the NPS considers these tracts to be of high priority for Monument resource protection.

Management Options

The NPS should purchase, acquire easements or cooperative agreements on those high-priority undeveloped parcels along the eastern boundary at the entrance to the Monument. Every effort should be made to minimize the impacts that ongoing development might have on the historic approach to the bluffs and Mitchell Pass. The NPS will cooperate with local entities with regard to zoning. Some form of protection for historic sites in the county is recommended in the *Scottsbluff County Comprehensive Plan.*

Feasibility of Administration

The area in question would most likely be contiguous with the existing Scotts Bluff National Monument boundary. The management of Scotts Bluff National Monument anticipates no difficulties in managing these additional acres along with the rest of the Monument. The NPS would not develop the area but would restore these cultivated lands to native prairie, in keeping with the historic landscape, and maintain them as open space. Costs should be minimal for maintaining the land as it would be restored to native prairie, as necessary, or retained in this natural condition, where appropriate.

Land Ownership

The area in question is presently under private ownership.

Conclusion

Authorization by Congress is necessary in order to implement the acquisitions and boundary changes presented in this study.

The study concluded that the National Park Service should pursue a Congressionally-authorized adjustment of the Monument's boundaries to include the identified lands comprising a 20-acre tract located on the Monument's eastern boundary (already under federal ownership), the lands comprising the historic Robidoux Pass area (approximately 1,000 acres), as well as two identified tracts adjacent to the Monument (188 acres), followed by acquisition of these last three tracts on a willing seller basis. The purpose of this action is to preserve the important natural and cultural resources of these tracts, as well as their inward and outward scenic vistas, relative to the overall preservation of the Scotts Bluff story.

The Secretary of the Interior may acquire the lands and interests therein described in Appendix A, *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument*, by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange: Provided that such lands or interests therein may only be acquired with the consent of the owner, unless proposed changes to the use or condition of these lands by the owner poses an eminent threat to the preservation of the natural, cultural, or scenic resources and qualities of the Monument, as described in its enabling Presidential Proclamation of December 12, 1919, and subsequent addenda. The *Boundary Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument* provides a prioritization of lands for acquisition and inclusion within the Monument.

The National Trails System Act of 1968, as amended (PL 90-543; 88 Stat. 1603; 16 USC *et seq.*) established a national system of scenic, recreation, historic, and side and connecting trails. Components of the national trails system include national scenic trails, national recreation trails, and connecting or side trails which provide access or link to the former two categories. A 1978 amendment added a category of national historic trails. The boundary adjustments recommended in this *Draft GMP* propose actions involving existing segments of the four national historic trails (NHTs) associated with the Monument or Robidoux Pass (the Oregon NHT, the California NHT, the Mormon Pioneer NHT, and the Pony Express NHT). This act stipulates that significant Federally-owned sites along national historic trails shall be considered "Federal protection components" of these trails. This designation would apply to any lands that are eventually acquired for inclusion within the Monument.

There are other high priority tracts that are located around the Monument. These tracts are important both to the future protection of the Monument's natural and cultural resources and to the ongoing preservation of the story of the Oregon-California Trail migration as told through the Monument. Therefore, this study also recommends that the Superintendent of the Monument continue discussions with the remaining landowners about possible future inclusion of their high-priority lands within the Monument.

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Appendix H

Visitor Service's Project Study for Scotts Bluff National Monument

(Summary)

A Visitor Services Project Study was conducted at Scotts Bluff National Monument by the National Park Service and the University of Idaho in 1990. The results of that study were presented in a report that provides information about visitor characteristics and visitors' evaluation of Monument facilities and programs (Visitor Services Project, Scotts Bluff National Monument, Report 36; 1991; Dwight L. Madison). Some of the findings of that report are summarized here:

- There were 410 questionnaires distributed for this survey and 340 were returned, an 83% response rate.

- Seventy-three percent of the visitors were in family groups. Seventy-one percent were in groups of two to four people. Sixty-seven percent were on their first visit to Scotts Bluff National Monument.

- Forty-two percent of visitors were 31 to 55 years old. Twenty-eight percent were 16 years and younger.

- Visitors from foreign countries comprised 4% of the visitation to Scotts Bluff National Monument. Fifty-one percent of U.S. visitors came from Nebraska, Illinois, California, and Kansas. Nebraska alone accounted for 35% of the visitation.

- Ninety-six percent of the visitors stayed three hours or less in the Monument. Fifty percent visited the Summit Road, 43% visited the Summit Trail and 23% visited the Oregon Trail.

- Eighty-five percent of visitors used the museum exhibits and 55% used the Monument brochure. All interpretive services received high usefulness ratings.

- Forty-four percent of visitors reported that they would likely use the proposed shuttle system from the visitor center to the summit of Scotts Bluff on a future visit.

More detailed information, along with visitor comments from the survey are available in the report and can be obtained by contacting Scotts Bluff National Monument.

Appendix I

Partial Species List for Scotts Bluff National Monument

MAMMALS

Common Name	Scientific Name
Coyote	*Canis latrans*
Mule Deer	*Odocoileus hemionus*
White-tailed Deer	*Odocoileus virginianus*
Black-tailed Prairie Dog	*Cynomys ludovicianus*
Red Fox	*Vulpes vulpes*
Eastern cottontail	*Sylvilagus floridanus*
Desert cottontail	*Sylvilagus audubonii*
Hispid pocket mouse	*Perognathus hispidus*
Western harvest mouse	*Reithrodontomys megalotis*
House mouse	*Mus musculus*
Deer mouse	*Peromyscus maniculatus*
Prairie vole	*Microtus ochrogaster*
Meadow vole	*Microtus pennsylvanicus*
Porcupine	*Erethizon dorsatum*
Raccoon	*Procyon lotor*
Badger	*Taxidea taxus*
Striped skunk	*Mephitis mephitis*
Plains pocket gopher	*Geomys bursarius*
Eastern mole	*Scalopus aquaticus*
Small-footed myotis	*Myotis leibii*

AMPHIBIANS

Woodhouse's toad	*Bufo woodhousii*
Great Plains toad	*Bufo cognatus*
Tiger salamander	*Ambystoma tigrinum*
Western striped chorus frog	*Pseudacris triscriata*

REPTILES

Prairie rattlesnake	*Crotalus viridis*
Bullsnake	*Pituophis catenifer*
Green racer	*Coluber constrictor*
Plains garter snake	*Thamnophis radix*
Common garter snake	*Thamnophis sirtalis*
Short-horned lizard	*Phrynosoma douglassi*
Ornate box turtle	*Terrapene ornata*
Spiny softshell turtle	*Trionyx spiniferus*
Painted turtle	*Chrysemys picta*

BIRDS

Common Name	Scientific Name
Great blue heron	*Ardea herodias*
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*
Turkey vulture	*Cathartes aura*
Northern harrier	*Circus cyaneus*
Red-tailed hawk	*Buteo jamaicensis*
Golden eagle	*Aquila chrysaetos*
Bald eagle	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
American kestrel	*Falco sparverius*
Prairie falcon	*Falco mexicanus*
Ringed-necked pheasant	*Phasianus colchicus*
Northern bobwhite quail	*Colinus virginianus*
Rock dove	*Columbba livia*
Mourning dove	*Zenaida macroura*
Great horned owl	*Bubo virginianus*
Burrowing owl	*Athene cuncularia*
Common nighthawk	*Chordeiles minor*
Northern flicker	*Colaptes auratus*
Downy woodpecker	*Picoides pubescens*
Say's phoebe	*Sayornis saya*
Eastern kingbird	*Tyrannus tyrannus*
Western kingbird	*Tyrannus verticalis*
Northern rough-winged swallow	*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*
Cliff swallow	*Hirundo pyrrhonota*
Barn swallow	*Hirundo rustica*
Black-billed magpie	*Pica pica*
Black-capped chickadee	*Parus atricapillus*
Rock wren	*Salpinctes obsoletus*
Townsend's solitaire	*Myadestes townsendi*
American robin	*Turdus migratorius*
Loggerhead shrike	*Lanius ludovicianus*
European starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*
Yellow warbler	*Dendroica petechia*
Common yellowthroat	*Geothlypis trichas*
Yellow-breasted chat	*Icteria virens*
Blue grosbeak	*Guiraca cacrulea*
Lazuli bunting	*Passerina amoena*
Indigo bunting	*Passerina cyanea*
Rufous-sided towhee	*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*
Chipping sparrow	*Spizella passerina*
Lark sparrow	*Chondestes grammacus*
Lark bunting	*Calamospiza melanocorys*
Grasshopper sparrow	*Ammodramus savannarum*
White-crowned sparrow	*Zonotrichia leucophrys*
Dark-eyed junco	*Junco hyemalis*
Red-winged blackbird	*Agelaius phoeniceus*

BIRDS (Continued)

Common Name	Scientific Name
Common crackle	*Quiscalus quiscula*
Brown-headed cowbird	*Molothrus ater*
Orchard oriole	*Icterus spurius*
House finch	*Carpodacus mexicanus*
American goldfinch	*Caruelis tristis*
House sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
Spotted towhee	*Pipilo erthrophthalmus*

NATIVE GRASSES & RELATED PLANTS

Needle-and-thread	*Stipa comata*
Little bluestem	*Andropogon scoparius*
Big bluestem	*Andropogon gerardii*
Switchgrass	*Panicum virgatum*
Sand bluestem	*Andropogon hallii*
Prairie sandreed	*Calamovilfa longifolia*
Sideoats grama	*Bouteloue curtipendula*
Western wheatgrass	*Agropyron smithii*
June grass	*Koelaeria macrantha*
Purple three awn	*Aristida purpurea*
Blue grama	*Bouleloue gracilis*
Threadleaf sedge	*Carex filifolia*
Common cattail	*Typha latifolia*

NATIVE FORBS & SHRUBS

Mountain mohogany	*Cercocarpus montanus*
Western snowberry	*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*
Small soapweed	*Yucca glauca*
Common sunflower	*Helianthus annus*
Skunkbush sumac	*Rhus aromatica*
Buffaloberry	*Shepherdia argentea*
Prickly poppy	*Argemone polyanthemos*
Showy milkweed	*Asclepias speciosa*
Scarlet globe mallow	*Sphaeralcea cocinea*
Fringed sagebush	*Artemisia frigida*
Sand sage	*Artemisia filifolia*
Curlycup gumweed	*Grindelia squarrosa*
Buffalo current	*Ribes odoratum*
Plains pricklypear	*Opuntia polyacantha*
Equisetum	*Equisetum hyemale*
Winterfat	*Krascheninnikovia lanata* (*Ceratoides lanata*)
Penstemon spp.	*Penstemon spp.*

NATIVE TREES

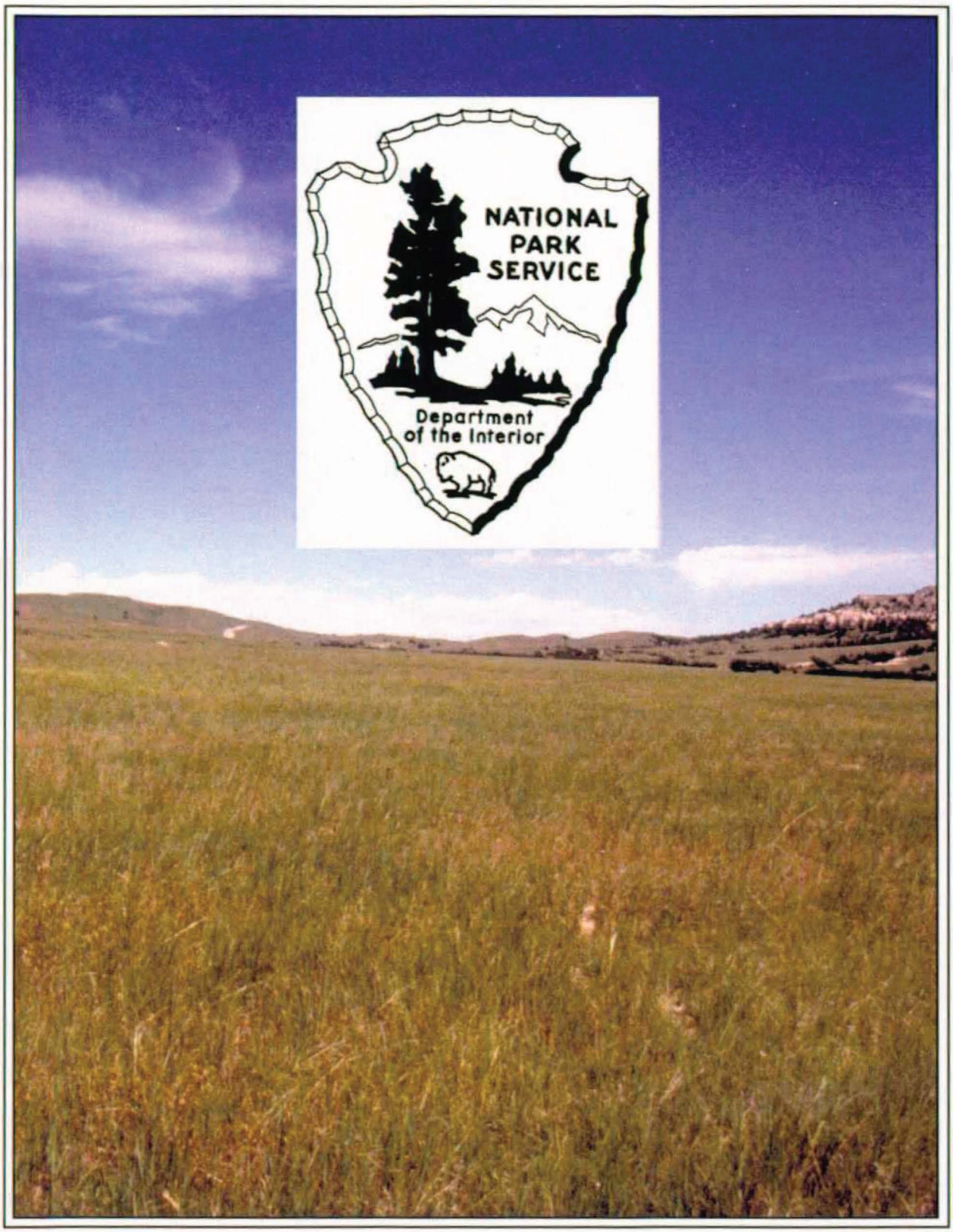
Common Name	Scientific Name
Ponderosa pine	*Pinus ponderosa*
Rocky Mountain juniper	*Juniperus virginiana*
Sandbar willow	*Salix exigua*

NON-NATIVE GRASSES

Downy brome	*Bromus tectorum*
Smooth brome	*Bromus inermis*
Japanese brome	*Bromus japonicus*
Kentucky bluegrass	*Poa pratensis*
Crested wheatgrass	*Agropyron cristatum*
Tall wheatgrass	*Elymus elongatum* (*Agropyron elongatum*)
Intermediate wheatgrass	*Elymus hispidus* (*Agropyron intermedium*)

NON-NATIVE FORBS

Musk thistle	*Carduus nutans*
Canada thistle	*Cirsium arvense*
Kochia	*Kochia scoparia*
Russian thistle	*Salsola kali*
Field bindweed	*Convolvulus arvensis*
Yellow sweetclover	*Melilotus officinalis*
White sweetclover	*Melilotus alba*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