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general management plan
development concept plans
land protection plan
environmental assessment

NORTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY

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THEODORE ROOSEVELT



NATIONAL PARK / NORTH DAKOTA

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SUMMARY

This document was prepared to replace the 1973 Master Plan for Theodore Roosevelt National Park. That plan has become obsolete and no longer applicable for resolution of current issues involving the park. Two recently approved reports were instrumental in the preparation and understanding of this document; namely, the "Statement for Management" (1985) and the Natural Resources Management Plan and Environmental Assessment (1984).

There are three major elements within this document. The first element is the draft general management plan, which provides the necessary strategies to guide management, use, and development of the park for the next 10 years. Four feasible alternatives are presented: preferred (proposed action), continuation of existing conditions, minimum requirements, and other practicable. The development concept plans, which show proposals for specific park development areas, are included within the general management plan. Only the preferred alternative is illustrated on the maps. For comparison purposes, appendix C best describes all alternative actions and proposals by park unit (north, Elkhorn, and south).

The second element is the land protection plan, which addresses the private and other nonfederal lands and interests within the authorized park boundary and the protection of park resources from external influences.

The third element is the environmental assessment, which describes the natural, cultural, and socioeconomic environments of the park and surrounding region and assesses the environmental impacts that would result from implementation of the four alternatives.

This 10-year planning effort can best be summarized as addressing resource management, with particular attention devoted to flood protection, bison management, historic building preservation, and visitor use needs. This would be accomplished by expanding trails, upgrading sanitation facilities, developing facilities for horse users and the handicapped, and increasing visitor contact and interpretive opportunities. In addition, there would be a continuing awareness of and focus on oil and gas development and other industrial activities outside the park that could have far-reaching impacts on park resources. Private property within the park, addressed in the land protection plan, is recommended for either fee acquisition or scenic easement acquisition. No boundary changes are proposed.

Ten-year costs for each of the four alternatives are as follows: preferred--\$21,291,000; continuation of existing conditions--\$11,239,000; minimum requirements--\$19,375,000; and other practicable--\$28,906,000. These figures include total construction, staffing, and operations costs to run the park.

Annual operations costs and staffing for existing conditions are now about \$1,118,000 and 36 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. Assuming that the actions for each of the other three alternatives were completed, respective annual costs and staffing would be \$1,444,000 and 45 FTEs for the preferred alternative, \$1,367,000 and 43 FTEs for the minimum requirements alternative, and \$1,557,000 and 49 FTEs for the other practicable alternative.

Annual additional operations costs and personnel (FTEs) are as follows: \$5,900 and .1 FTE for the existing conditions, \$302,000 and 9 FTEs for the preferred, \$243,000 and 7 FTEs for the minimum requirements, and \$427,000 and 13 FTEs for the other practicable.

Development costs are \$54,000 for the existing conditions alternative, \$8,317,000 for the preferred alternative, \$6,987,000 for the minimum requirements alternative, and \$15,309,000 for the other practicable alternative. The major differences in development costs are primarily due to the varying degrees of flood protection from the Little Missouri River and two tributary streams that would be provided by each alternative. These range from \$48,000 for the existing conditions alternative, which would provide flood warnings, to \$7,678,000 for the other practicable alternative, which would relocate all threatened development above the 100-year floodplain except the historic ranch site in the Elkhorn unit, and in Medora where a flood control dike would be provided to protect most of this community where the park headquarters is located.

Implementation of the preferred alternative would result in adverse impacts on 78.5 acres of soils and vegetation for new development over existing use; construction of a permanent dike at Medora would have a minimum adverse impact on the natural moderation of floods, water quality maintenance, groundwater recharge, and living, cultural, and cultivated resource values. Impacts on wildlife, cultural, and socioeconomic resources and air and visual quality would be minimal.

The park had 368,615 visitors in 1984, and annual visitation is expected to remain about the same until 1996 when implementation of this plan is projected for completion.

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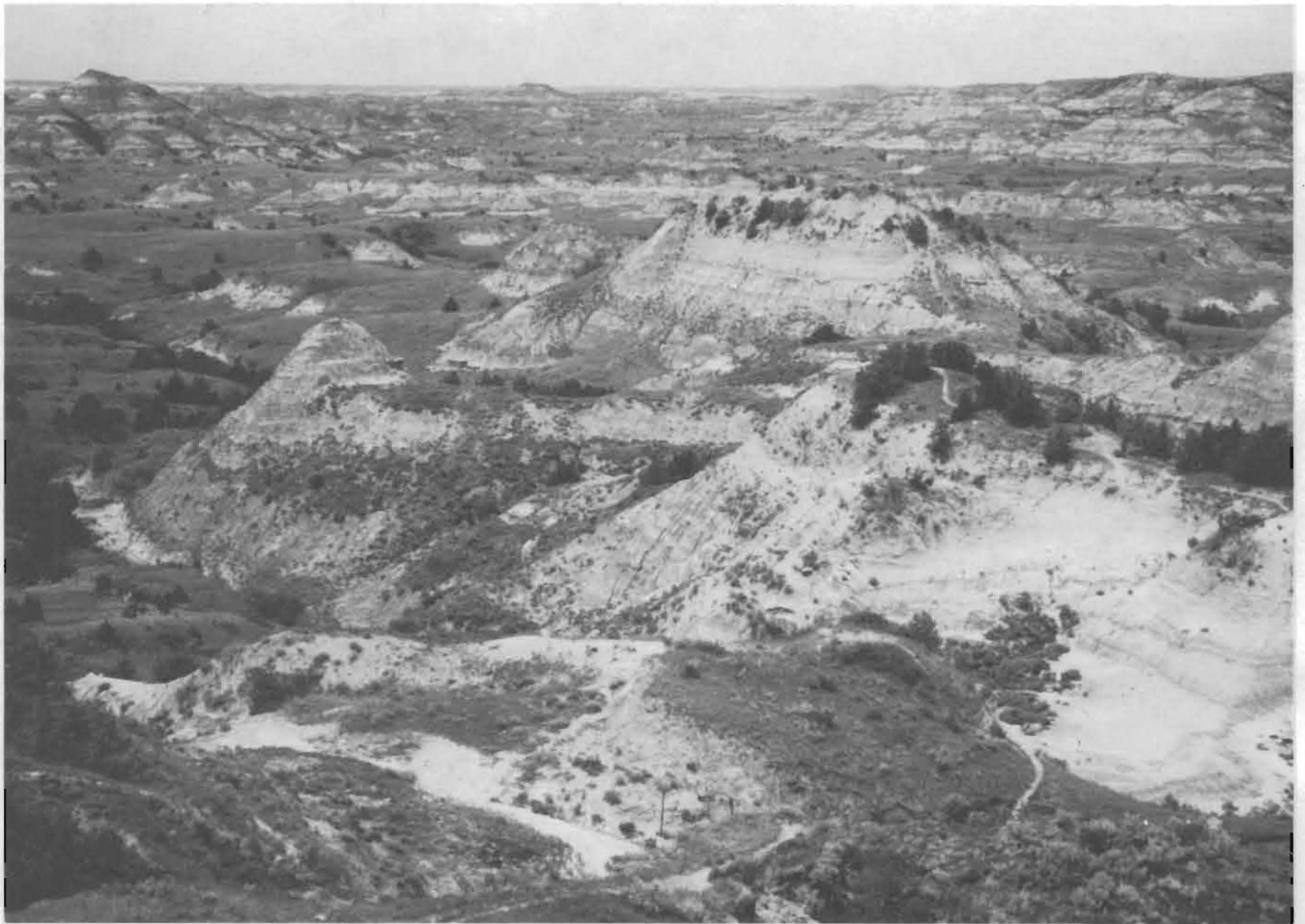
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Theodore Roosevelt National Park from Painted Canyon overlook