

# BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN, NEWSLETTER 1

SUMMER 2000

Dear Friends,

Badlands National Park needs your help in planning for the future. We are preparing a general management plan for the park. When completed, the plan will guide the management of the park for the next 15 to 20 years. Your input into the plan's development is very important.

The park does not have a current comprehensive plan. A master plan covering the North Unit of the park was completed in 1982. A general management plan revision was finalized for the South Unit in 1985. Both plans are more than 15 years old. Think of all that has occurred since 1985. Among other things, patterns and types of visitor use have changed and additional information on park resources has been gathered. These changes have major implications for Badlands National Park — how visitors access and use the park and the facilities needed to support those uses, how resources are managed, and how the park staff manages its operations. A new management plan is needed.

Legislation establishing the National Park Service as an agency provides the fundamental direction for the administration of national park system sites, including Badlands National Park. The new general management plan will build on these laws and the establishing legislation for Badlands National Park to provide goals and a vision for the park's future. The general management plan will also provide practical guidance in resource protection and management that will help achieve that vision. The plan will also identify how park managers may best provide for visitor enjoyment while protecting important resources. A well-developed plan will yield a realistic framework for making future management and development decisions.

On behalf of the National Park Service, I invite all of those who care for Badlands National Park to join us as we work together to plan for the future. We estimate the planning process for Badlands will take a little more than two years. This newsletter provides information about the process and how you can get involved. The hallmark of our approach to good public land management is openness and collaboration. Does that mean that everyone will agree with every aspect of the plan? No. But hopefully it does mean that we can continue our record of conservation and collaborative stewardship based on mutual understanding and common ground. Your participation will ensure a strong public voice as the future direction of the park is determined.

William R. Supernauth  
Superintendent

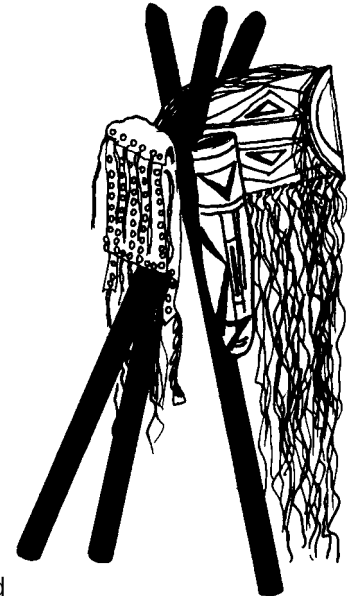


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## Park History

Badlands National Monument was authorized in 1929 “for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.” An accompanying report reveals congressional intent to preserve the scenic and scientific values of a portion of the White River Badlands and make them accessible to the public for enjoyment and inspiration. Additional language discussed the “vast beds of vertebrate fossil remains. The whole area is a storehouse of biological past and since 1847 it has been the scene of scientific expeditions from all parts of the world.”

This 1929 act required the state of South Dakota to meet certain conditions before the area would be established as a unit of the national park system. The state met the required conditions, and on January 25, 1939, Badlands National Monument was established. The original monument boundary encompassed approximately 110,000 acres of the “the Badlands.” On August 8, 1968, Congress passed an act expanding the boundaries of the monument “to include lands of outstanding scenic and scientific character.” The 134,000 additional acres added to the monument, known as the South Unit, are within the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. This addition expanded the monument to approximately 244,000 acres. In 1976 Congress designated approximately 64,000 acres of the monument as wilderness. On November 10, 1978, the monument officially was redesignated as Badlands National Park.



Since its authorization, management and development of the park has been focused on (1) preserving the scientific, scenic, and historic features of the badlands and (2) providing opportunities for public recreation, education, enjoyment, and inspiration.



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## General Management Planning

National Park Service (NPS) general management planning guidelines focus on three questions:

**WHY** was this park established (what is the park's purpose and significance)?

**WHAT** is the vision for its future (what kind of place do we want the park to be)?

**HOW** do we accomplish our vision (what actions are needed to create this desired future)?

### What Does a General Management Plan Do?

A general management plan

- provides general direction and basic management philosophy
- identifies resources, management, and visitor use strategies and actions
- can identify park infrastructure requirements, functions, and locations
- satisfies statutory and policy requirements
- identifies funding and staffing requirements
- does not guarantee funding
- will not solve all problems

These questions will focus the planning effort and provide guidance in the preparation of the management plan. The plan will then guide overall future park management, resource protection, visitor use, and facility development. The plan will *not* include specific facility designs, resolve all issues, or guarantee funding for the park.

Statements of the park's purpose and significance help provide answers to the WHY questions and establish the foundation for the general management plan. All concepts and actions in the plan must be consistent with this foundation. Also, park managers will use these statements to help make operational decisions long after the plan has been completed.

Developing a vision for the park's future (answering the WHAT question) is the primary role of the general management plan. Comments from park visitors and the general public are very important in the identification of issues and the development of possible management strategies (called alternatives) for managing the park in the future. For example, one alternative might focus on opening new areas of the park for visitor use. Another alternative might be to close certain areas of the park to the public to protect resources. Evaluating a set of alternatives enables us to compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of one course of action over another and provides a sound approach to decision making required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Most HOW questions will be answered in new or revised implementation plans, such as resource management plans, interpretive plans, and others that come after the general management plan.

## The Planning Team

A multidisciplinary team will lead this planning effort. The team will include park staff as well as natural and cultural resource specialists, planners, and landscape architects from the National Park Service's Denver Service Center. Geographic information specialists, editors, graphic staff, and others will support the planning team.

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## How You Can Participate

Public involvement is critical to the success of the planning effort. We encourage you to be involved through a variety of methods.

You can begin this feedback process by completing the enclosed comment form. Please let us know your thoughts, comments, and suggestions on what should be addressed in the general management plan. After you have finished filling out the postage-paid form, just fold and tape it and drop it in a mailbox.

You can also log on to the National Park Service planning web page at <http://www.nps.gov/planning> or go directly to the park's home page at <http://www.nps.gov/badl>. All newsletters will be posted on the web sites, along with an electronic response form if you would like to participate electronically.

During each planning phase you will have the opportunity to participate in public open houses where you can learn about the process and planning products and talk to members of the planning team.

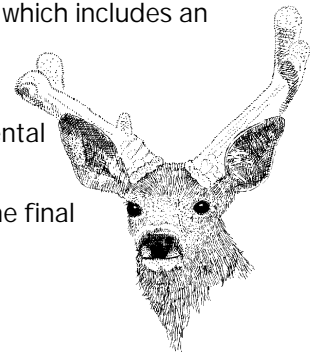
For more information about the planning process and park issues, contact William Supernaugh, Superintendent, at 605/433-5280 or by e-mail at [BADL\\_Planning@nps.gov](mailto:BADL_Planning@nps.gov).

## Keeping You Informed

The park staff will distribute newsletters such as this one at each stage of the planning process. The newsletters will explain what has occurred to date, explain the next steps to be taken and supply information on how you can be involved in public open houses. The "General Management Plan Steps" chart summarizes when and how you can help in this process. A similar chart will be included in each newsletter with the current step highlighted.

## The Planning Process

There are typically three broad phases to producing a general management plan, with each phase consisting of several steps. During the first phase the planning team sets goals, identifies issues, and collects data related to these issues. Efforts during the second phase focus on defining alternate ways to achieve goals and resolve issues. Typically, three to five different management alternatives will be identified and one alternative will be chosen as the National Park Service's preferred action, which is the alternative the National Park Service believes best fulfills our statutory mission and responsibilities. The planning team then compiles this information in a document known as a draft general management plan / environmental impact statement, which includes an analysis of the impacts of implementing each of the alternative ways of achieving the goals and resolving the issues. After public review, the team considers and incorporates appropriate public comments and prepares a final general management plan / environmental impact statement. A record of decision, which is the official approval of one of the alternatives for managing the park, is issued no less than 30 days after distribution of the final plan. When funding becomes available, park managers implement the approved general management plan. Public involvement is critical throughout the process.



General Management Plan Steps			
PHASE	STEP	PLANNING ACTIVITY	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES
I Current Phase	1	<b>Initiate Project:</b> The planning team is formed, and the team begins to identify the project's scope and issues, and sets goals.	Read this newsletter and comment on the response form. Make sure you are on the mailing list.
	2	<b>Identify Planning Context:</b> The team examines WHY Congress established the park and reaffirms the park's significance, purpose, and mission. Team members collect and analyze relevant data and public input.	Participate in public open houses.
II	3	<b>Develop and Evaluate Alternatives:</b> The planning team explores WHAT the park's future should look like, and proposes and assesses a range of reasonable alternatives for achieving goals and resolving issues.	Read newsletters and send in your comments. Participate in public open houses.
	4	<b>Prepare a Draft Document:</b> Based on the impacts identified in the environmental impact statement and public comment, the team identifies a preferred alternative. The team produces and publishes a draft general management plan / environmental impact statement (GMP/EIS) that discusses the planning context, HOW each of the management alternatives would attain desired future conditions, and the impacts of implementing each of the alternatives.	Read the draft plan and send in your comments. Participate in public open houses.
III	5	<b>Publish Final Document:</b> Based on public comment, environmental analysis, and other information, the team revises the draft general management plan / environmental impact statement and distributes it to the public.	Read the final plan.
	6	<b>Implement the Approved Plan:</b> After the record of decision is issued, when funding is available, implementing the approved management plan.	

## Where We Are

This planning effort is just beginning, and we are trying to identify the issues this plan will address. Many factors guide and direct park planning. The most important of these are the legislation that created the park and the National Park Service's 1916 organic act. Additionally, the National Park Service must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the Wilderness Act, and other legislation and regulations. These legal mandates provide the broad management and development guidance, the "sideboards" so to speak, for the park as well as context for the planning effort.

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### Informal Public Scoping Open Houses

Please plan to attend one of the open houses to talk with members of the planning team about your ideas and concerns for Badlands National Park.

Monday October 2

7 P.M. to 9 P.M.

South Dakota School of Mines

Curbeck Student Union Center, Bump Lounge

Rapid City, South Dakota

Wednesday October 4

7 P.M. to 9 P.M.

Best Western Ramkota

2400 North Lousie

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Tuesday October 3

1 P.M. to 3 P.M.

Oglala Lakota College

Kyle, South Dakota

Tuesday October 3

7 P.M. to 9 P.M.

Wall Community Center

501 Main Street

Wall, South Dakota





We encourage you to write us if you have thoughts or comments about what you have read in this newsletter. We especially would like to have you share your thoughts, comments, and suggestions on what should be addressed in the general management plan. Use additional sheets if necessary.

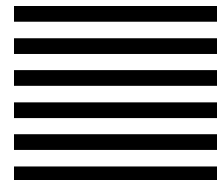
Information gathered from your comments will be considered in developing the alternative management strategies for the park.

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National Park Service  
Badlands National Park  
P.O. Box 6  
Interior, South Dakota 57750-0006



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DENVER COLORADO 80225-9901



Please print your name and address in the space provided below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Please help us keep the mailing list for the plan current.

- ☐ The name or address is incorrect
- ☐ Add me to the mailing list
- ☐ Remove my name from the mailing list

Please fold this form in half, enclose any additional sheets if necessary, tape it closed (no staples please), and mail it to the preprinted address. Should you have any questions on the planning process, please call Jan Harris at 303/969-2435 or e-mail her at [jan\\_harris@nps.gov](mailto:jan_harris@nps.gov).

Thank you for your interest in Badlands National Park!

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