

HOMESTEAD
NATIONAL MONUMENT
of
AMERICA



General Management Plan

1999

FINAL
GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
for
HOMESTEAD NATIONAL MONUMENT of AMERICA

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

RECOMMENDED:



Planning Team Captain



Date

CONCURRED:

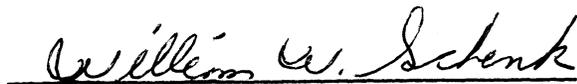


Superintendent, Homestead National Monument

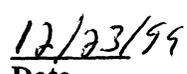


Date

APPROVED:



Director, Midwest Region



Date

1999

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**SECTION I:
Purpose and Need
for the General Management Plan**



FINAL
GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
for
HOMESTEAD NATIONAL MONUMENT of AMERICA

Section I

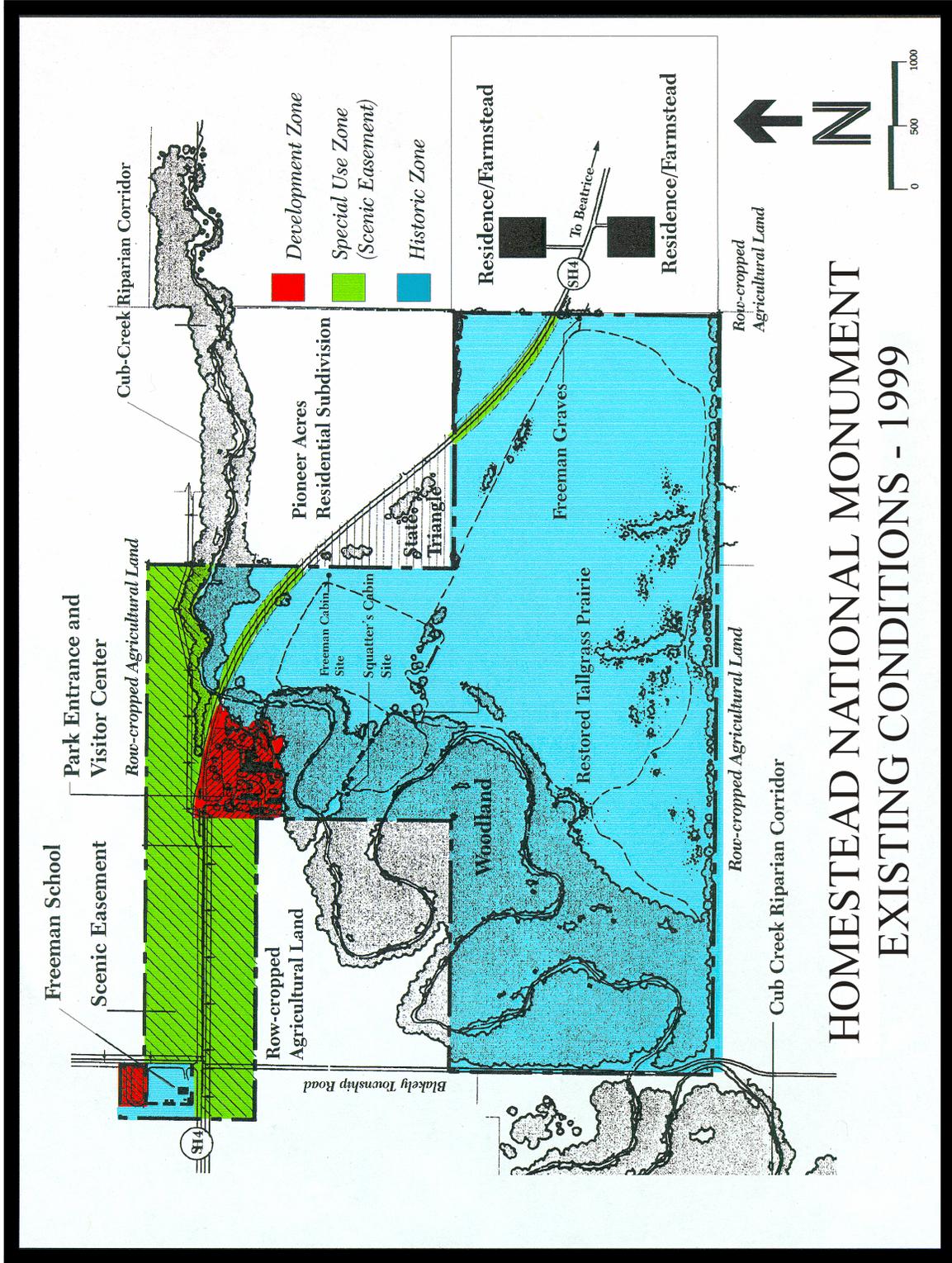
Purpose and Need for the General Management Plan

The purpose of this *Final General Management Plan for Homestead National Monument of America* (hereafter referred to as the “*GMP*”) is to provide the conceptual framework that will guide the management and stewardship of Homestead National Monument (hereafter referred to as the “Monument”) in meeting its legislative mandates for the next 10 to 20 years.

This *GMP* replaces the Monument’s existing outdated 1988 *GMP*. Since that *GMP* was developed, Monument functions have outgrown the available infrastructure. The Monument’s staff had come to experience significant limitations in the design of these facilities. For example, exhibits on the Homestead Act and homesteading are outdated; storage space for museum and archival collections is severely limited; and there is no facility solely dedicated for researchers to access the homestead collections and archives. Because of this situation, the Monument’s ability to fully carry out its legislated functions and mandates is significantly compromised. In addition, the present facilities lack adequate flexibility to address unforeseen future needs relative to the commemoration and interpretation of the Homestead Act and the mission of the Monument. As a result, most Monument facilities are inadequate for visitors and employees (Figure 1).

Moreover, the Monument’s existing visitor center complex is situated within the 100-year floodplain of nearby Cub Creek. The hydrologic characteristics of the creek’s watershed have been and probably will continue to change over time as the surrounding area undergoes greater human development. This could result in an increasing potential for possible flood damage to the Monument’s facilities. This represents a significant threat to the Monument’s primary visitor and employee facilities and to the artifacts and supporting materials contained within.

The Nebraska Department of Roads has informed the NPS that State Highway 4, which runs through the Monument, is scheduled for redesign and improvements by 2001 to bring it into compliance with current highway safety and design standards. Once completed, the volume and mix of traffic on State Highway 4 is likely to steadily increase over time. This development could affect the qualities of visitor safety and experience, and would also result in a greater physical intrusion into the Monument’s boundary.



HOMESTEAD NATIONAL MONUMENT EXISTING CONDITIONS - 1999

The scope and direction provided by the 1988 *GMP* is being overwhelmed by these developments. By virtue of this inadequacy, further implementation of the existing *GMP* may restrict the Monument's ability to convey the stories of the Homestead Act, and its consequences for the "Great West", the nation, and the international community. Because of this situation, continued implementation of the 1988 *GMP* could also inadvertently result in adverse impacts to cultural and natural features within the Monument. Overall, this situation would jeopardize the National Park Service's (NPS) ability to fully carry out its mission at the Monument, as directed by the Monument's enabling legislation (see Appendix A).

This *GMP* addresses the Monument's problematic, planning-related issues. In particular, they address such problems as the location of resource, exhibit, and operational facilities within a 100-year floodplain and safety and resource concerns associated with the state highway crossing the Monument. Moreover, present interpretation and exhibits on the Homestead story are outdated and suffer from a basic disconnection between the telling of the national homestead story and the management of the principle cultural resources of the Monument: the original 160-acre homestead tract, the Freeman School, and the museum collections.

Public Law 95-625 requires every unit of the national park system to have an up-to-date *GMP*. In light of the inadequacy of the Monument's existing *GMP*, Congress in 1996 specifically directed the NPS to prepare a new *GMP* to resolve these shortcomings and address related issues.

General Description of Homestead National Monument of America

In March 1936, Congress established the Homestead National Monument of America under the stewardship of the NPS to "*retain for posterity a proper memorial emblematical of the hardships and the pioneer life through which the early settlers passed in the settlement, cultivation and civilization of the Great West.*" On September 25, 1970, Congress added the Freeman School parcel to "*further the interpretation and commemoration of the pioneer life of early settlers of the West.*"

The Monument is located in Gage County, Nebraska, approximately 50 miles south of Lincoln, Nebraska. The Monument is situated 3.5 miles west of Beatrice, Nebraska with primary road access via State Highway 4. The Monument covers 194.57 acres.

The United States owns in fee the original 162.73-acre Freeman Homestead, which is the basis for the Monument, along with the adjacent 1.2-acre Freeman School parcel. The quitclaim deed, which conveyed the Freeman School to the United States, stipulates that if the school were to be removed from its original setting, land ownership would revert to Nebraska School District #21. The NPS visitor center and administrative complex occupy the northwestern corner of the Monument. The Freeman School occupies an area ¼ mile west along State Highway 4.

The Nebraska Department of Roads operates and maintains the right-of-way for State Highway 4, which passes along and through a portion of the Monument. Privately owned land currently used for row crop farming comprises the remaining 12.46 acres within the authorized boundary. The original homestead now consists of approximately 100 acres of reconstructed native tallgrass prairie; 60 acres of hardwood forest; this includes nearly 3 acres of buildings, roads, and trails.

The entire Monument is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Management emphasis in the Historic Zone preserves, protects, and interprets cultural resources and their settings. Developments at the Monument occur in a sub-zone of the historic zone. Non-zoned parklands fall in a special use sub-zone.

Approximately 60% of the Monument is situated within the 100-year floodplain of Cub Creek, which flows through the Monument, and of the nearby Big Blue River. In 1998, the NPS requested an updated 100-year floodplain identification study from the Big Blue Natural Resources District and the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission. The results of this study confirmed the extent of the 100-year floodplain in this area (Figure 2).

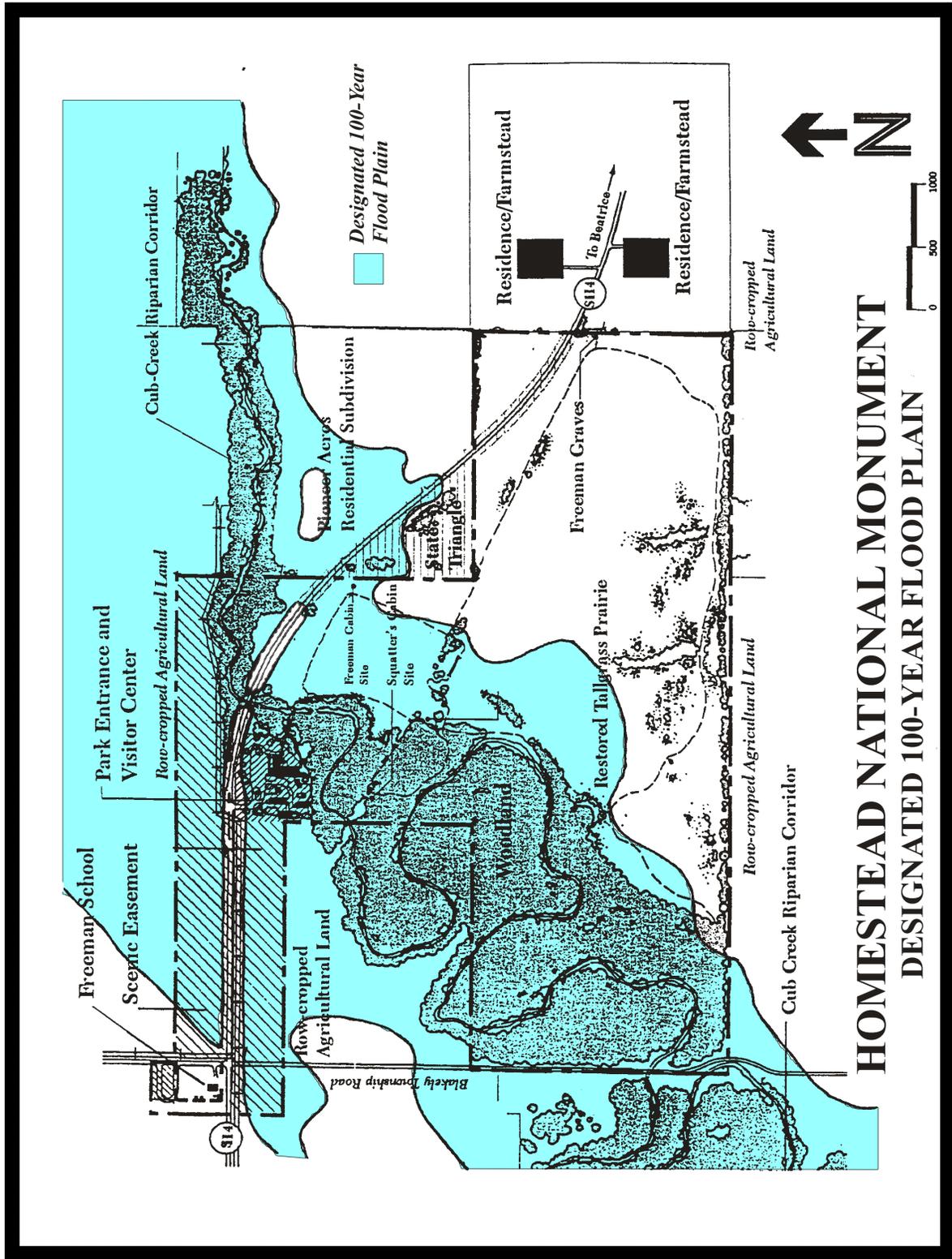
The Monument has averaged about 35,000-40,000 visitors per year over the last ten years. Visitation has declined over the years as the Monument's visibility as a center for homesteading culture and history has eroded due to the development of commercial historical ventures. Due to budget constraints, the Monument has found it difficult to upgrade facilities or keep pace with education and exhibit trends, resulting in an outdated appearance and static educational experience. Visitation is primarily during the summer months with dramatic increases during special programs.

The Homestead Story

The Homestead Act of 1862 accelerated the settlement of the American West beyond the Mississippi River. In the decades that followed, farmers and prospective farmers, United States citizens and foreign immigrants, by the tens of thousands, hurried westward to claim and develop farmsteads. Others, such as ranchers and miners, used the homestead laws to their benefit. For most Americans, homesteading quickly became a symbol of the growth and progress of the United States. Yet the consequences of the public land policies evolving from the Homestead Act resulted in failures as well as successes. Federal offerings of land in the more arid parts of the West led to economic bankruptcy for many families and widespread harm to the environment. Moreover, dividing and transferring the land into private property undermined the foundation of American Indian subsistence in the West. Plowshares proved more effective than guns in defeating American Indians, many of whom remained unvanquished in battle.

Passage of the Homestead Act of 1862 reflected the goals of land reformers who, for decades, supported the transfer of the public domain into small private farmsteads of independent farmers. Before the 1850s, the terms of purchasing land from the federal government were too expensive for most settlers. Farmers frequently squatted on unsurveyed land or bought land from private realtors, who often purchased large areas at a discount price or through trade in military scrip. The Graduation Act of 1854 offered reduced prices for public land on the market for ten years or more. The lower prices benefited farmers but also generated rabid speculation. The Homestead Law replaced the Graduation Act and offered citizens and non-citizens a land grant of 160 acres for the price of a filing fee and on condition that they develop a farm within five years (Robbins 1976; White 1991).

The Homestead Act did not replace all previous land laws. It became one of many methods the federal government enacted for transforming public land into private property. As provided in the original federal land legislation, buyers could still acquire newly offered land through public auction. The Preemption Act of 1841 remained in force and favored squatters who farmed land ahead of the public survey. It allowed squatters/farmers to purchase 160 acres, at the minimum \$1.25 per acre price, prior to public auction (White 1991; Opie 1987). The federal government also granted millions of acres to states, for public education and various internal improvements, and to railroads. The state and railroads, in turn, sold much of this land.



In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln and the Republicans in Congress sponsored the Homestead Act as the foundation of their land program for developing and integrating the West into the nation. That same year they passed the Pacific Railroad Act and the Morrill Act. The railroad legislation chartered private corporations and gave them land grants to build the first transcontinental railroad. The Republicans wanted the rails to link the Pacific Coast to the Union and to provide homesteaders access to markets. The Morrill Act authorized land grants to states of 30,000 acres for each senator and representative for the development of public universities. The states could sell the land to build land grant colleges. These institutions were to insure the rise of an educated citizenry and the application of knowledge to inspire agricultural and economic growth. As historian Richard White wrote, "A common vision of a prosperous, progressive, economically expansive, and harmonious West inspired all three acts" (White 1991).

Homesteading proved most successful in establishing viable 160-acre farms between 1863 and 1880 when settlement concentrated around the Great Lakes and west of the Mississippi River to the eastern Great Plains. Average rainfall was sufficient to nourish farming in these areas. During these years homesteaders entered 469,000 claims and, by 1885, 55 percent of the claims either had or were in the process of gaining their titles (Gates 1979). The railroad grants, in some cases, however, conflicted with the intent of homesteading. In total, Congress gave more than 131 million acres of land to the railroads. The politicians expected the companies to quickly sell their land to settlers as a means of creating business and in many places this happened. Yet some railroads were slow to identify their routes and slow to build. This delayed settlement at different times across about 30 percent of the public domain (Opie 1987; White 1991).

After 1880 and into the next century, the limitations of the act became more apparent as settlers failed in increasing numbers to replicate the homestead model in the more arid High Plains and the desert West (Gates 1979). The federal government responded with the Timber Culture Act of 1873 and the Desert Land Act of 1877. The timber law offered 160 acres to the head of a family with the stipulation that they plant and sustain 40 acres of trees for ten years. Congress based the law on the misguided popular scientific theory that trees stimulated rain. The law primarily benefited ranchers, who used their cowboys to file multiple claims along watercourses to block the immigration of settlers. Congress quickly saw the error of their reasoning and passed the Desert Land Act to adapt farming to the land. This allowed anyone to purchase 640 acres for \$1.25 per acre if they reclaimed an eighth of the tract by irrigation. Speculators took advantage of it and, throughout the West, large ranchers, lumber, and mining corporations accumulated large holdings with the legislation intended for small farmers (White 1991; Merk 1978; Gates 1979). Although such activities circumvented the intent of the law, they underscored a weakness in the federal land policy. Congress had not provided specific legislation for the sale of land for grazing, lumbering, or mining (Opie 1987).

A trend to remove federal land from public sale also emerged. Primary support for this came from persons wanting to stop the abuses of the laws and from reformers concerned about the depletion of the nation's natural resources. The establishment of Yellowstone in 1872 hinted at this. Yet the passage of the General Revision Act of 1891 had more immediate significance. It repealed the Preemption and the Timber Culture Acts, amended the Desert Land and Homestead Acts, and eliminated public auctions of land. One section also authorized the president to set aside forest reserves. Between 1872 and 1909, the federal government established 235 million acres of the public domain as national forests and parks (Robbins 1976; Opie 1987).*

* By 1956, the number of acres in reserves declined to 180 million.

During the early twentieth century, a series of laws tried to adjust the homestead idea to benefit individual farmers in the arid West. In 1904, Congress passed the Kinkaid Act as an experiment in applying an expanded homestead to the dry lands of western Nebraska. It basically enlarged the homestead land grant to 640 acres. Five years later the legislation authorized the enlarged homestead program, at a reduced grant of 320 acres, for the rest of the public domain. It stated specifically that no irrigable, timber, or mineral land should be entered and required that a quarter of the grant be farmed (Robbins 1976; Opie 1987).

The Great Depression and drought devastated farming in the arid West and hastened an end to agricultural homesteading. In 1934, the Taylor Grazing Act placed the remaining public lands into federal management. Since 1862, American farmers homesteaded 147 million acres (Robbins 1976; Opie 1987). Even as lawmakers finally came to realize their error in applying the law to dry lands of the High Plains and West, the Homestead Act remained a strong national symbol of the establishment of a free, independent citizenry and the advance of United States capitalism and democracy. In 1936, progressive Republican Senator George Norris of Nebraska sponsored legislation establishing the Homestead National Monument of America in his home state where, along with the railroads and land grant college, homesteading contributed significantly to settlement.

The Freeman Story

Congress chose for the national monument the homestead of the late Daniel Freeman, a colorful, self-promoter, who for decades courted public recognition of himself as the first homesteader. Freeman's story of the selection of his land near Beatrice, Nebraska, was full of mystery. Family accounts indicate he served in the Union Army in 1862 and apparently spotted the land he claimed along Cub Creek while gathering information on Indian raids in Nebraska Territory. Regardless of how Freeman selected his tract, public land records show that he entered the first homestead claim in the land office at Brownville, Nebraska. On January 1, 1863, the day the law went into effect, he signed the claim shortly after midnight.* On September 1, 1869, Freeman also became the first Nebraskan to prove up or patent his homestead. National politicians saw the obvious symbolism in a person named Freeman being the first homesteader and, through the decades, added credence to his title at political rallies and celebrations (Mattison 1962; Gibbs 1944; Arbogast 1975; Kaplan 1992).

Mission, Purpose, and Significance of the Monument

The following mission statement for Homestead National Monument of America is quoted from the Monument's *Strategic Plan* (1997c). The *Strategic Plan* also defined the purpose, significance, and mission goals (to the extent appropriate) of the Monument, in compliance with the *Government Performance and Results Act of 1993*. While some minor revisions to the Monument's *Strategic Plan* will probably be required as a result of this new *GMP*, the statements in the current *Strategic Plan*, quoted below, have helped to guide the overall development of this *GMP* and figured significantly during the formulation of the *GMP* planning alternatives.

* Thirty homesteads were entered across the country on January 1, 1863. Mahlon Core of Vermilion, South Dakota, also claimed to have entered the first claim around midnight.

The Monument's mission goals are inclusive of what this unit of the NPS achieves for the protection of resources and public enjoyment. They reflect and complement the service-wide mission goals of the NPS. The major goal categories I, II, and IV tier down from NPS agency-level goals to the specific areas that would be implemented and achieved at the Monument. Numbering of the Monument's goals is non-consecutive due to the selection of agency goals that directly relate to this site, its mission statement (desired future conditions for the Monument), purpose, and significance.

Mission of the Monument

The mission of Homestead National Monument of America is to maintain a memorial that commemorates and interprets the Homestead Act and its influence upon the country. The mission is to maintain the 160-acre original homestead and the Freeman School addition in a manner that provides visitors an appropriate perspective of the influences and impacts upon the land in its transition from its natural state to cultivation and agriculture.

Purpose of the Monument

The purpose of Homestead National Monument of America is to:

- Interpret the history of the country resulting in and from the Homestead Act.
- Preserve literature; preserve agricultural implements; and construct a suitable museum to interpret settlement, cultivation, and development of the "Great West".
- Commemorate the people whose lives were forever altered by the Homestead Act and settlement of the West.
- Protect the setting, provide access to the Freeman School, and maintain a visual relationship between the Freeman School and the rest of the Monument.

Significance of the Monument

Homestead National Monument of America is significant because:

- The Monument encompasses a 160-acre homestead claim established on the first day of the Homestead Act's implementation that is commemorative of all homesteads.
- The Freeman School is an original structure that represents the role of one-room schools through the Homestead Era.
- The Homestead Act had a profound influence on American migration, immigration, agricultural development, industrial development, federal land policy, native cultures, and the landscape of the West.
- Portions of the reconstructed tallgrass prairie offer historic and scientific research value.

Mission Goals

The following statements are taken from the Monument's *Strategic Plan* (1997c), as required under GPRA.

GOAL CATEGORY I: PRESERVE PARK RESOURCES

Mission Goal Ia: Natural, historic, and cultural resources and associated values at Homestead National Monument of America are protected, reconstructed, and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader historic and cultural context.

Mission Goal Ib: Homestead National Monument of America contributes to knowledge about natural and cultural resources and associated values; management decisions about resources and visitors are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.

GOAL CATEGORY II: PROVIDE FOR THE PUBLIC ENJOYMENT AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE OF PARKS

Mission Goal IIa: Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.

Mission Goal IIb: Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of Homestead National Monument of America and the National Park Service for this and future generations.

GOAL CATEGORY IV: ENSURE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Mission Goal IVa: To become more responsive, efficient, and accountable, the Monument must integrate its planning, management, accounting, reporting, and other informational resource systems. Integrating or interfacing these systems would provide better cross-communication during daily operations and help the Monument develop required annual performance plans in compliance with the *Government Performance and Results Act*. Modern electronic technology makes it possible to integrate or interface these systems among park units, central offices, and program centers. Improvements in the areas of workforce diversity, employee safety, employee housing, and employee performance standards would help the Monument accomplish its mission. Long-term goals pertaining to organizational responsiveness, efficiency, and accountability are related to this mission goal.

Planning Considerations

Applicable Legislative and Administrative Requirements

P.L. 95-625 identified four elements that must be included in a new *GMP* for the Monument:

1. Measures for the preservation of the area's resources.
2. Measures and facilities to accommodate visitor use.
3. Strategies for managing visitor use within carrying capacities.
4. Evaluation of the need for boundary changes.

In addition to these requirements above, the Monument is required to meet certain legislative requirements and administrative considerations. These requirements and considerations directly affect the Monument's planning and operations.

- 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. It also directs federal agencies to identify and to provide for the protection of historic properties under their ownership or control.
- The cultural resources of the area are subject to the Antiquities Act of 1906 and the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979.
- The National Environmental Protection Act [NEPA] of 1969 (P.L. 91-190, 42 USC 4321 *et seq.*; 83 Stat. 852, 42 USC 4332, as amended), is the basic national charter for environmental protection.
- According to the National Park Service's *Management Policies* (NPS, 1988b), "Facilities will not be located in areas where natural processes pose a threat unless no practicable alternative site exists and unless all safety and hazard probability factors have been considered. Hazardous areas include sites with unstable soils and geologic conditions, fault zones, thermal areas, floodplains, flash-flood zones, and coastal high-hazard areas. Where facilities must be located in such areas, their design and siting will consider the nature of the hazard and include appropriate mitigating measures to minimize risks to human life and property. Requirements for development in floodplains and wetlands are contained in Executive Order 11988, "Floodplain Management" (42 USC 4321), and Executive Order 11990, "Protection of Wetlands" (42 USC 4321), and their guidelines."
- 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; 94 Stat. 2997).
- The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-60; 104 Stat. 3049), in part, assigns ownership or control of American Indian 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 American Indian groups. Federal agencies and museums that receive federal funding must inventory American Indian human remains and associated funerary objects in their possession or control and identify their cultural and geographic affiliations.

Planning Constraints and Considerations

The *GMP* planning team had to operate under the following constraints or considerations during the development of this document.

- Approximately 60% of the Monument is situated within a designated 100-year floodplain. Federal policy prohibits federal development within designated floodplains unless there is no practicable alternative location for that development.
- According to the Nebraska Department of Roads, State Highway 4, which includes the portion that runs through the Monument, presently does not meet current standards for highway safety design. The Department is scheduled to implement safety design improvements to State Highway 4, including changes in the road's geometry and width to bring this highway up to modern standards and facilitate greater safety, in the near future. In addition, the segment of State Highway 4 that extends through the Monument and its related high-speed vehicular activity present significant safety concerns for Monument visitors who may wish to walk from the present visitor center to the Freeman School along an easement strip bordering the highway. Regular traffic through the Monument includes trucks loaded with liquid anhydrous ammonia and dry granules of ammonium nitrate. The highway also represents a significant intrusion on and disruption to the historic setting of the Monument, as well as to Monument visitors. The proposed improvements would further impact the existing Monument.
- The Nebraska Department of Roads owns 8.3 acres of land along State Highway 4 adjacent to the Monument. This parcel is referred to as the "State Triangle" in this *GMP*.
- The Monument's approximately 100 acres of reconstructed tallgrass prairie represents the second oldest prairie reconstruction project in the nation and the oldest within the national park system. This project, which began in 1939, has now achieved its own professionally recognized scientific value. Because of this, unnecessary disruption of this reconstruction is discouraged by both the scientific community and by NPS natural resources professionals.
- The United States owns in fee the original 162.73-acre Freeman Homestead, which is the basis for the Monument, along with the adjacent 1.2-acre Freeman School parcel. The original homestead parcel retains several features, such as archeological areas, the graves of the Freemans, and the living remnant of an Osage orange hedgerow that was planted by the Freemans, that are irreplaceable in the cultural context of the site. These cannot be disrupted or destroyed. The quitclaim deed, which conveyed the Freeman School to the United States, stipulates that if the school were to be removed from its original setting, land ownership would revert to Nebraska School District #21. The Freeman School also has associated with it an approximately one-acre remnant of native "virgin" (never broken) tallgrass prairie. Remnants of unbroken native tallgrass prairie are extremely rare; therefore this remnant cannot be destroyed.
- The Nebraska Department of Roads operates and maintains the right-of-way for State Highway 4, which passes along and through a portion of the Monument. This activity is authorized through a renewable federal special use permit that expires in July 31, 2001. This permitted right-of-way and its related vehicular activity on this segment of State Highway 4 represent a significant intrusion on and disruption to the historic setting of the Monument as well as to Monument visitors.

- Several neighbors to the Monument possess lands that have been in their families either before the Homestead Act facilitated the establishment of the Monument's Freeman Homestead, or have been established under the auspices of that act and are contemporary with the Freeman Homestead.
- The entire Monument is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- The NPS is constrained by jurisdictional limitations that affect the extent to which it can directly influence the character and density of adjacent urban developments, either existing or future, affecting the visual quality of the historic setting.

Summary of *Boundary Study* Recommendations

The *Boundary Study for Homestead National Monument of America* was initiated in conjunction with the development of a new *General Management Plan for Homestead National Monument of America*. Its purpose is to determine if there are any other sites, lands, or features surrounding the Monument that require formal long-term protection so that they can continue to support the preservation and interpretation of the homesteading story as it exists at the Monument. The study's recommendations would be incorporated into the design and features of this new *GMP*. The resulting new *GMP* will provide the conceptual framework that will guide the management and stewardship of the Monument in meeting its legislative mandates for the next 10 to 20 years. It replaces the Monument's outdated 1988 *GMP*.

Congressional authorization is required in order to implement the acquisitions and boundary adjustments that are recommended in this study.

This *Boundary Study* concludes that the NPS should pursue a congressionally-authorized adjustment of the Monument's existing boundaries to include the identified lands comprising (1) a 15.98-acre tract located on the Monument's eastern boundary, (2) a 0.4-mile segment of State Highway 4 adjacent to the Monument, (3) a three-acre tract comprised of an undeveloped "green" area within the adjacent Pioneer Acres residential subdivision, and (4) an 8.3-acre tract immediately adjacent to the Monument's northeast boundary and known in this study as the "State Triangle". The purpose of these actions is to provide for the ongoing preservation and protection of the cultural and natural resources of Homestead National Monument of America, and to preserve and protect the historic setting of the Monument. Implementation of these recommendations, along with the attendant changes to the Monument's operations resulting from these actions, is intended to significantly improve the Monument's ability to fulfill its legislated purpose to convey the story of homesteading, as directed by Congress. By fulfilling this legislated purpose, the Monument can then excel in meeting its mission to preserve and interpret the nationally significant story and legacy of the Homestead Act and homesteading for the American people.

According to *NPS Management Policies* (1988b), "The Secretary of the Interior may acquire these lands and interests through 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 legislation and subsequent addenda." This *Boundary Study for Homestead National Monument of America* provides a prioritization of lands for acquisition and inclusion within the Monument, or the acquisition of permanent scenic easements.

It is also recommended that the Superintendent of Homestead National Monument of America establish an ongoing relationship with the Gage County Zoning Board, as well as with Monument neighbors to secure the future and permanent protection of any surrounding tracts the Monument would deem critical to the permanent long-term preservation and protection of the Monument, its resources, and its legacy for future generations.

