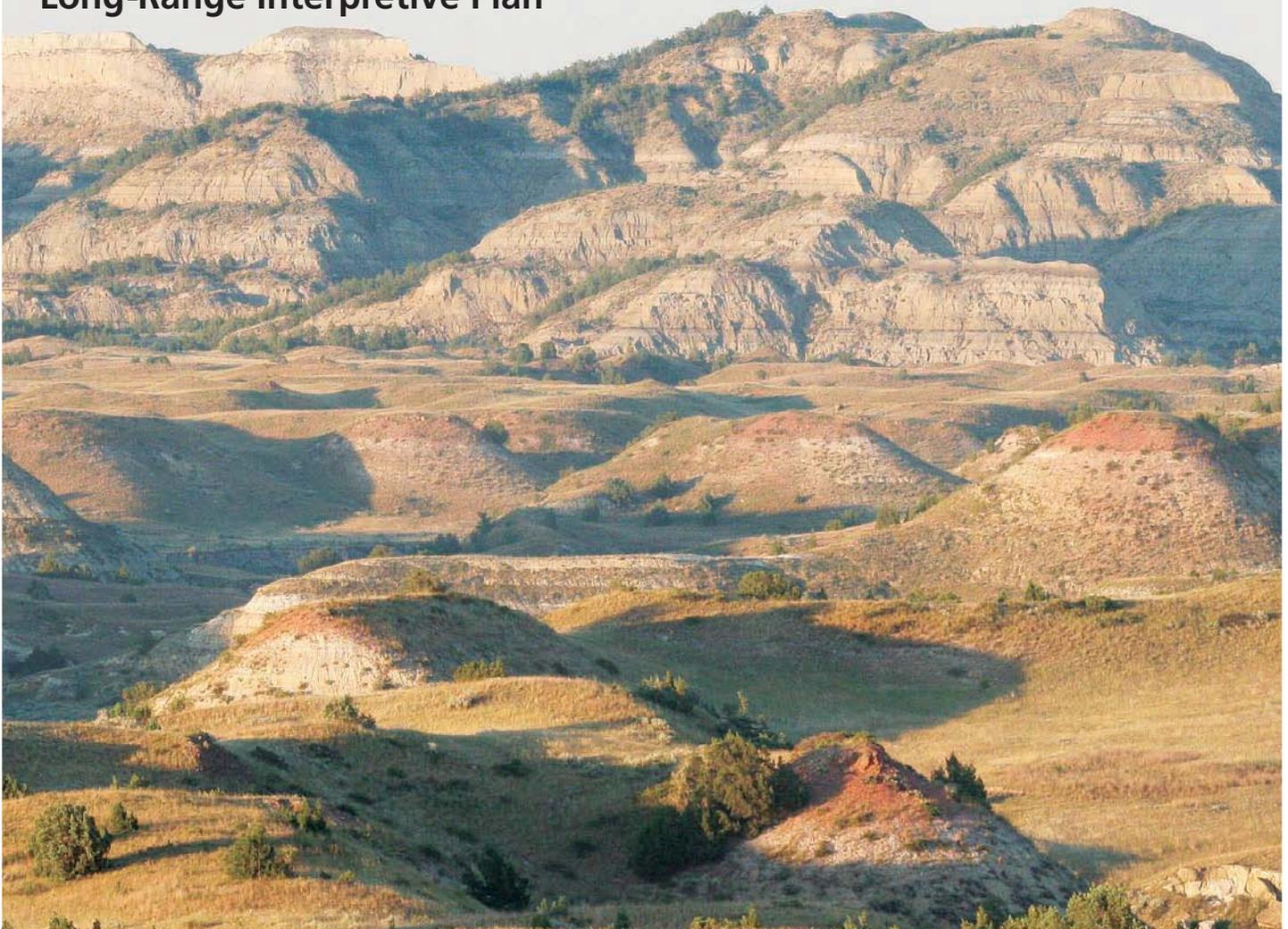


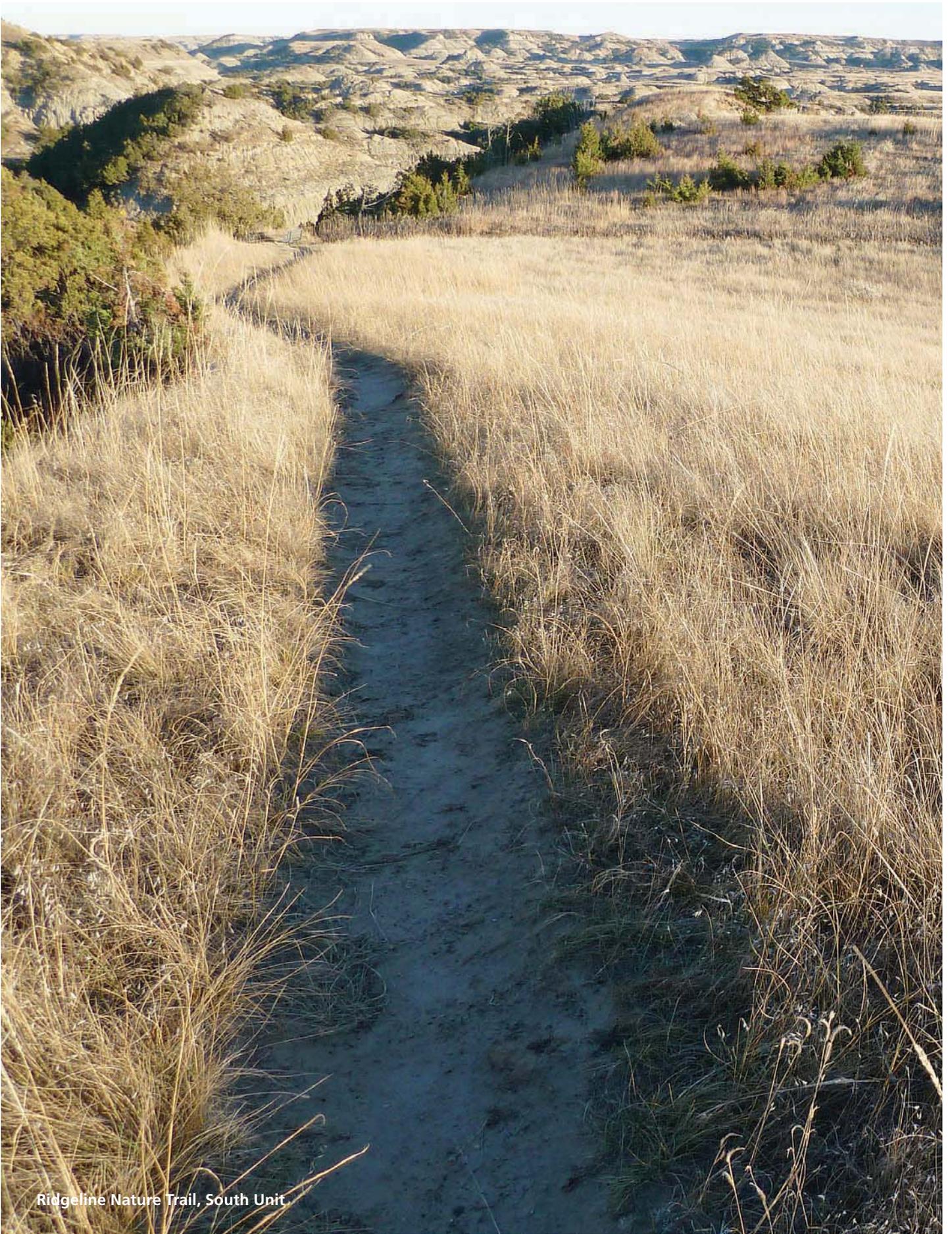


Theodore Roosevelt National Park Long-Range Interpretive Plan



AUGUST 2011





Ridgeline Nature Trail, South Unit



**Theodore Roosevelt
National Park**
Long-Range Interpretive Plan

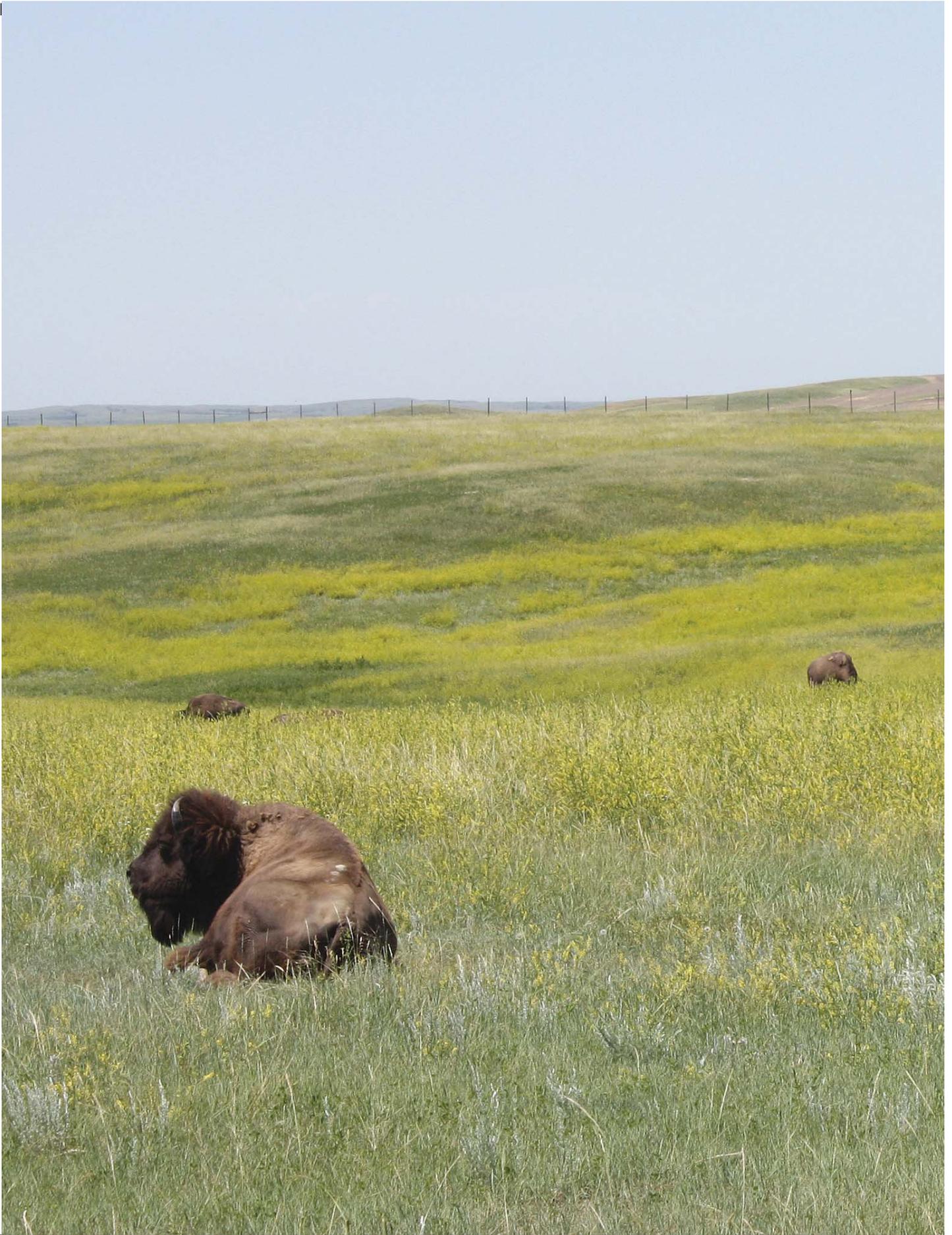
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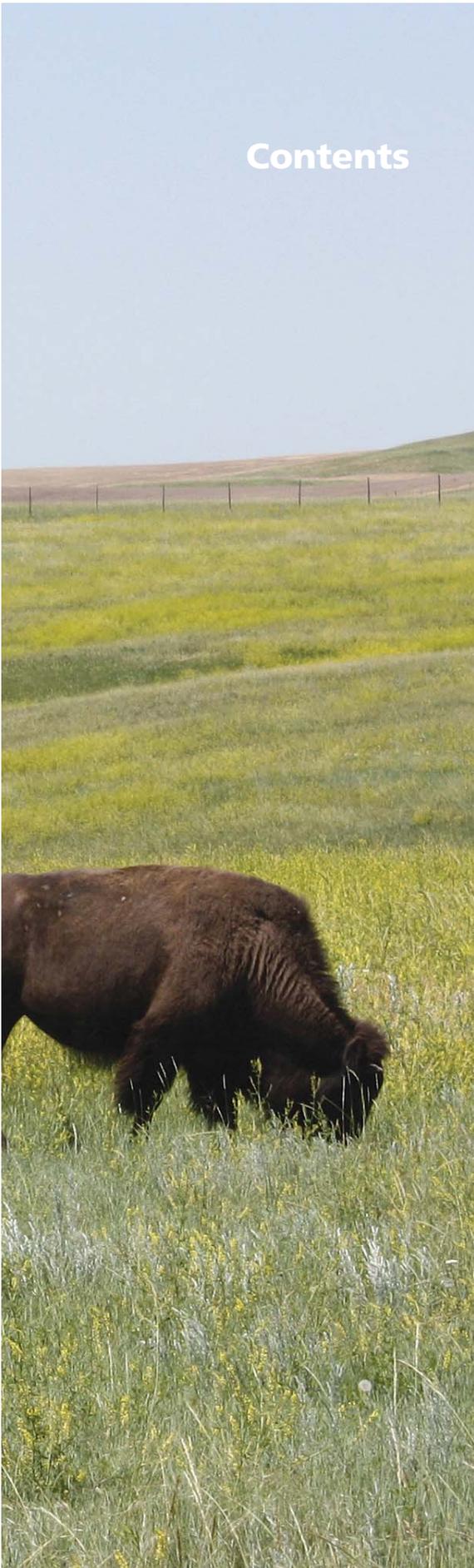
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North Unit vista

Comprehensive Interpretive Planning

The National Park Service (NPS) has adopted a unified planning approach for interpretation and education. This approach combines planning for interpretive media, personal interpretive services, and education programs. The Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP) is the basic planning document for interpretation and was formally adopted as part of NPS guidelines in 1995. Responsibility for creating the CIP lies with each park's superintendent.

What is a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan?

The CIP process helps parks make choices. It provides guidance to park staff by clarifying objectives, identifying audiences, and recommending the best mix of media and personal services to use to convey park themes.

Although the CIP as defined in Director's Order No. 6 is composed of specific elements, good planning is customized to meet each park's needs and situation. The CIP is not a recipe. Rather, it is a guide to effective, goal-driven planning. While it considers past interpretive programming, it is primarily a forward-looking document that concentrates on actions needed to create or sustain a vigorous and effective interpretive program for the future. All CIPs have three components: the Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP), a series of Annual Implementation Plans (AIP) and an Interpretive Database (ID).



Bison bull



What is a Long-Range Interpretive Plan?

The heart of the CIP is the Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP). The LRIP defines the overall vision and long-term (7-10 year) interpretive goals of the park. The process that develops the LRIP defines realistic strategies and actions that work toward achievement of the interpretive goals. The Long-Range Plan features two phases. One, the Foundation phase articulates significance, themes, and target audiences. The Foundation Document addresses those elements of the plan, and includes a review of existing conditions.

The second phase of the LRIP process involves recommendations for interpretive services, media, and partnerships for the site, looking ahead to the next seven to ten years. A Team Draft articulates those elements, and, after review, the Long-Range Interpretive Plan is finalized.

The Annual Implementation Plan and Interpretive Database

The completed LRIP is a critical part of the CIP, but it does not stand alone. Actions in the LRIP are divided into annual, achievable steps and reproduced in the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP), the second component of the CIP. The AIP simplifies the park's annual planning process by planning for implementation based on the actions outlined in the LRIP. The third component of the CIP is the Interpretive Database (ID), an ongoing compilation of information, reports, bibliographies, plans, and inventories

that document the park's history and the process of developing the LRIP.

Establishment of the Park

This section, from Theodore Roosevelt and the Dakota Badlands NPS Historical Handbook, describes how the park came to be.

Early in 1919, after Roosevelt's death, a movement was initiated to establish a Roosevelt National Park in the Little Missouri Badlands. In 1921, Carl Olsen, owner of the Peaceful Valley Dude Ranch, introduced a bill in the North Dakota Legislature that petitioned the Congress of the United States to establish Roosevelt Park, but Congress did not respond favorably at that time.

Attempts had been made to farm the region since it was first opened to settlement in the early 1900's. The drought and depression of the 1930's, however, proved that the Badlands were not suitable cropland. Through the Resettlement Administration, lands that had been classified as submarginal were retired from private ownership and later were utilized for grazing under the administration of the Soil Conservation Service and local grazing associations. In the mid-1930's, the Resettlement Administration began purchasing the lands now in the park. Under the technical direction and supervision of the National Park Service, and with the labor and materials supplied by various relief agencies, the park was first developed as Roosevelt Recreational Demonstration Area. In 1946, the area became Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge.

An Act of Congress on April 25, 1947, established Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park and returned its administration to the National Park Service. In 1978, Congress officially changed the park’s name to Theodore Roosevelt National Park and designated 29,920 acres of the park’s lands as wilderness.

Mission and Purpose

Mission and park purpose statements describe why a site was set aside and what specific purposes exist for it.

THE MISSION

of Theodore Roosevelt National Park is to preserve and protect the natural and cultural resources of the park for the benefit and enjoyment of this and future generations, and to honor Theodore Roosevelt’s conservation legacy.

THE PURPOSE of Theodore Roosevelt National Park is to:

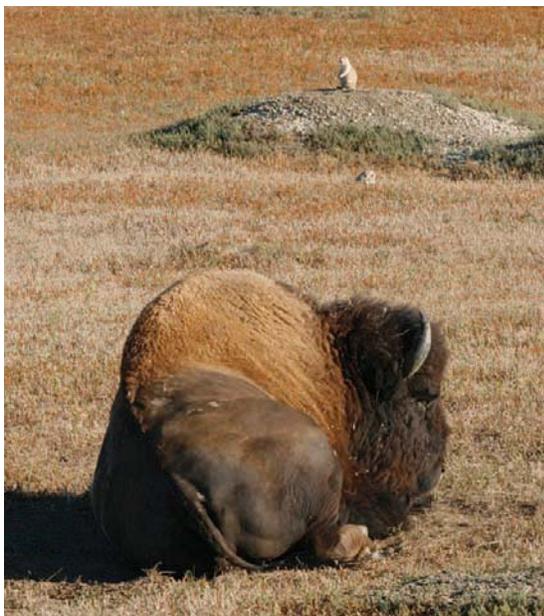
- Memorialize and pay tribute to Theodore Roosevelt for his enduring contributions to the conservation of our nation’s resources;
- Conserve unimpaired the scenery and the natural and cultural resources of the park, and to facilitate scientific interest and research in the park;
- Provide visitors with opportunities to use, appreciate, and enjoy the park;
- Manage the Theodore Roosevelt Wilderness as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Statements of Significance

Park significance statements describe what is distinctive about the combined resources of the park. The statements can reflect natural, cultural, scientific, recreational, and inspirational values, as well as other aspects. These statements summarize the importance of the park to the nation’s natural and cultural heritage.

1. The Little Missouri Badlands, a mysterious landscape of rugged, colorful geological formations, wide variety of habitats, and abundant wildlife, provide a strikingly dramatic contrast with the rolling, mixed-grass prairies that surround them.
2. In the midst of continuing significant economic development in western North Dakota, Theodore Roosevelt National Park retains a high degree of resource integrity and is a relatively unspoiled example of the Little Missouri Badlands environment.
3. Continuous erosion has created a visually distinctive, ever-changing landscape that exposes 65 million years of the earth’s past, dramatically illustrated by clearly visible geological strata, the third largest concentration of petrified wood in the National Park System, and fossils that are characteristic of the area.
4. Originally established to memorialize Theodore Roosevelt and his conservation legacy, Theodore Roosevelt National Park preserves the natural landscape that inspired Roosevelt to adopt a conservation ethic and set aside millions of acres of public land for future generations.

Wildlife is abundant in Theodore Roosevelt NP



5. Theodore Roosevelt National Park preserves cultural resources associated with some 11,000 years of human history.

6. Theodore Roosevelt National Park provides habitat for a wide variety of readily visible native wildlife species, including bison, pronghorn, elk, prairie dogs, bighorn sheep, mule deer, and white-tailed deer.

7. The beauty, solitude and silence of the park, most evident within its officially designated wilderness area, offer opportunities for personal growth, inspiration, and healing, just as they did for Theodore Roosevelt more than 125 years ago.

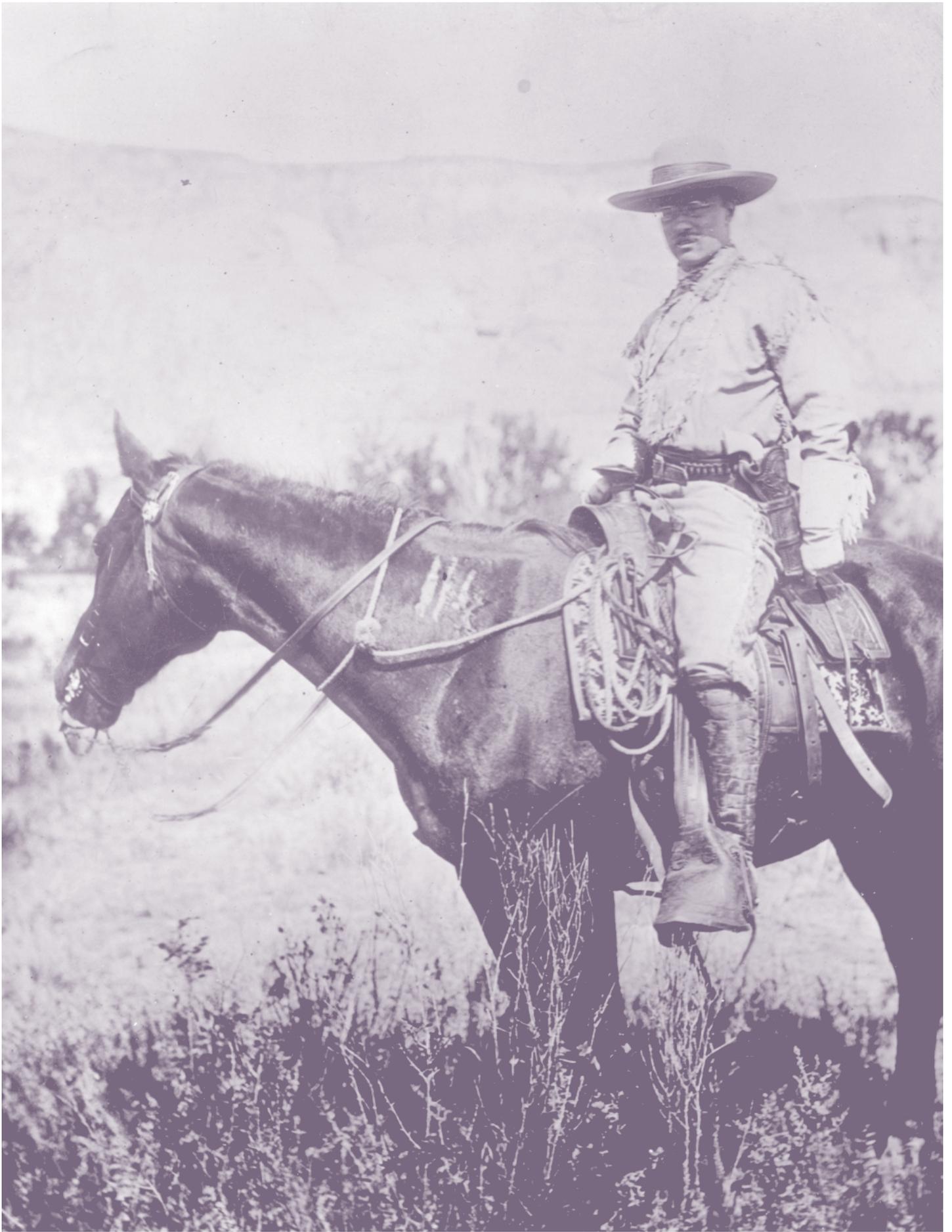
8. Theodore Roosevelt National Park's clear night skies offer exceptional opportunities for scientific observation as well as personal inspiration.

9. Theodore Roosevelt National Park's exceptional air quality is maintained by its designation as a Class I airshed, which provides the highest level of federal protection.

Primary Interpretive Themes

Primary interpretive themes embody the most important ideas or concepts communicated to the public about a park. They convey the significance of the resource, and highlight the links between tangible elements, intangible meanings, and universal concepts that are inherent in the park's resources. The themes connect resources to larger processes, systems, ideas, and values, and emphasize the relevance of park stories. They define the core content of the educational experiences the park offers, and serve as the building blocks upon which interpretive services and educational programs are based.

- Theodore Roosevelt's experiences in the Little Missouri Badlands inspired in him a strong conservation ethic, leading him to use his political power and influence to initiate national policies regarding natural resource protection and stewardship that continue to benefit us today.
- The dramatic, dissected landforms and spectacular vistas of Theodore Roosevelt National Park allow visitors to experience the continuous processes of erosion that have created the rugged landscape of the Little Missouri Badlands.
- Theodore Roosevelt National Park's array of Northern Great Plains wildlife invites reflection on the interconnectedness of all living beings, the importance of diversity and healthy ecosystems, and the value of conserving wildlife to uplift and inspire humanity.



Foundational Elements

- The spectacular vistas, natural beauty, clear air, and dark night skies of Theodore Roosevelt National Park provide opportunities for solitude, exploration, inspiration, reflection, and spiritual renewal that can fulfill the human need for self-discovery through connection to the land.
- The congressionally-designated Theodore Roosevelt Wilderness Area at Theodore Roosevelt National Park allows visitors to experience large areas of land with no “permanent improvements or human habitation,” a remnant of the wild and rugged land Theodore Roosevelt found so compelling.
- American Indian interaction with the Little Missouri Badlands reveals the cultural significance of the land through both ceremony and tradition.
- The stories of the people who traveled through or lived in the Little Missouri Badlands serve as powerful reminders of the human drive to survive and thrive in challenging environments.
- Provide the ability to adapt to changing audiences.
- Provide issues-based interpretation that includes addressing evolving management strategies.
- Integrate interpretation for all three park units.
- Improve information/orientation services and interpretive effectiveness of Painted Canyon Visitor Center.
- Provide guidance for a master wayside exhibit plan, which would include new exhibits for the North and South Units and incorporate the waysides at the Elkhorn Ranch Unit.
- Provide guidance for a new exhibit plan for the South Unit Visitor Center.
- Optimize the use of social and electronic media.
- Enhance the park’s ability to work with school children through educational outreach and curriculum links.
- Develop distance learning programs that will benefit multiple educational audiences.

Management Goals

These goals describe management’s intent in offering interpretive and educational programs and services. The goals include:

- Include stakeholders in the planning process.
- Provide high quality interpretive services to visitors.
- Create a range of interpretive opportunities for diverse audiences that reflect differing expectations, time, level of interest, ages, and physical abilities.
- Address interpretation of such topics as:
 - o Wilderness
 - o Encroachment by external threats to park resources
 - o Important resources like quiet, clean air, dark night sky, etc.
 - o Geology and paleontology
- In partnership with the Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University, provide national leadership in interpreting Theodore Roosevelt.

- Nurture connections with local American Indian Tribes and acknowledge their traditional connection with the lands included in the park.
- Work with the US Forest Service and private landowners to improve way-finding to the Elkhorn Ranch Unit.

Audience Segments

The basis for categorizing audience segments for the interpretation and education program lies in whether a particular audience requires communication in a way distinct from that of the general park audience. Factors to consider include the life experiences of the individual or group, level of education, learning styles, language, cultural traditions, time available for interaction, and others.

Audience segments at Theodore Roosevelt National Park are:

- General audience: includes all “typical” adult visitors to the park on an average day
- School groups, including home-schoolers
- Families with children
- Non-English speaking visitors (especially French and German), and visitors who speak English as a second language
- Virtual audience via park website and social media
- Visitors with disabilities
- Visitors coming to Medora as a destination

Desired Visitor Experience

Statements of desired visitor experiences describe how the park’s interpretation and education program facilitates intellectual, inspirational, emotional, and physical experiences for visitors. These statements describe what visitors to the park would like to learn, feel, do, or experience when visiting the park (either in person or remotely).

Park staff and stakeholders ranked the following statements as being most critical to the visitor experience:

- Visitors want park employees to be friendly, helpful, knowledgeable, caring, and accessible.
- Visitors want to see and photograph wildlife in their natural habitat.
- Visitors want to experience the natural world through solitude, peace, and quiet, away from the cares of everyday life.
- Visitors want to be able to choose from a variety of opportunities so as to experience the park in their own way.
- Visitors want to learn about Theodore Roosevelt and his experiences in North Dakota.
- Young visitors like and benefit most from exhibits with which they can interact.
- Visitors want to take home something that will help them remember their visit.