

## PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

This *Draft Environmental Impact Statement/General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan (EIS/GMP/DCP)* addresses overall management strategies and some specific actions for Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site. Although the park was established nearly 20 years ago, it is only within the last few years that fee land acquisition within its boundaries has been nearly completed. A number of actions need to be prescribed in order to manage park lands and recently acquired historic structures.

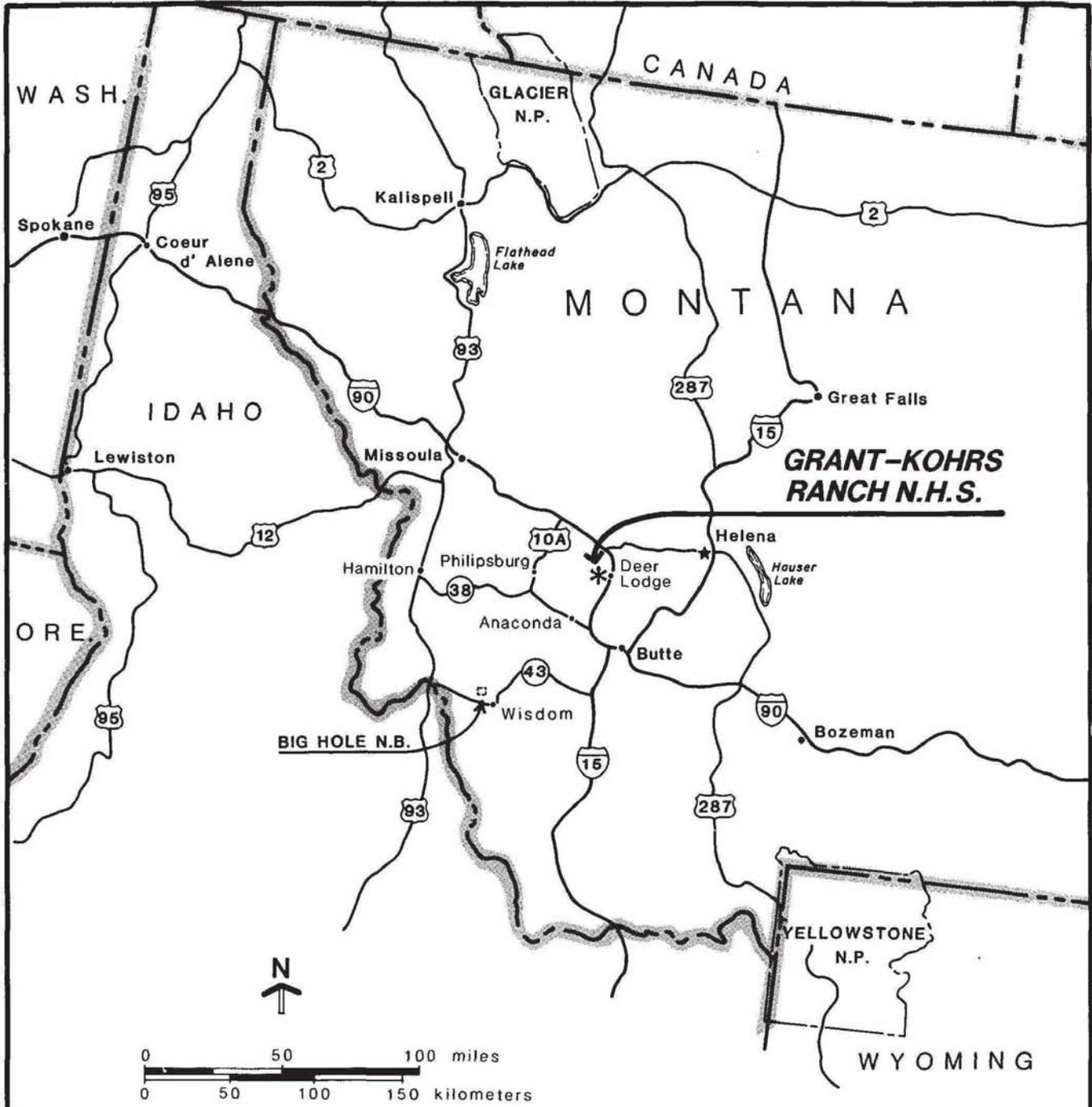
Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site is in the Northern Rockies of west-central Montana, Powell County, in the First Congressional District. The site lies adjacent to the city of Deer Lodge, with easy access to Interstate 90. Missoula is about 80 miles northwest and Butte is 40 miles south of the historic site.

In June 1988, the National Park Service purchased 1,059.85 acres of land in fee. This purchase included 120 acres outside the current park boundary. Most of the remaining lands had been covered by an inadequate scenic easement, and included on about 20 acres to the east of the home ranch complex, 31 historic buildings/structures and a cultural landscape that represent the mechanized feed lot operation of cattle ranching. In addition, the NPS acquired a house and 6 associated outbuildings on about 1 acre, for which Conrad Kohrs Warren retains a life estate. Use of these acquired structures for various park administrative and visitor purposes is being evaluated.

The 1980 *GMP* provided recommendations for adaptive use and rehabilitation of the buildings, structures, and grounds. The *GMP*, which does not recognize current trends or needs, recommended that a more detailed study be conducted to determine use and improvement actions, following fee purchase. In addition, no development concept plan (DCP) or resource management plan (RMP) exists for the park. The park's interim *Interpretive Prospectus (IP)* was approved in July 1975, but is outdated and no longer provides adequate direction. A resource management plan and a new interpretive prospectus are currently being prepared.

## PARK PURPOSE AND MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Grant-Kohrs Ranch was established by Public Law 92-406, 86 Stat. 632, August 25, 1972. The site's purpose as stated in the Act is ". . . to provide an understanding of the frontier cattle era of the Nation's history, to preserve the Grant-Kohrs Ranch, and to interpret the nationally significant values thereof for the benefit and inspiration of the present and future generations. . . ."



### Vicinity Map

Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site  
 U.S. Dept. of the Interior - National Park Service

451 | 80,017  
 Sept. '83 | RMRO

ON MICROFILM

The 1977 *Historic Resource Study* states, "The major historical theme concerns the range cattle industry in Western America. This is the focus of the entire site, and the reason for its inclusion into the National Park Service managed areas." Thus, the park's interpretive purpose centers on the cattle industry, from its beginnings in the frontier cattle era in the mid-1860s, through mechanized feed operations (that began in the 1930s and continued to the 1970s), with emphasis on the open-range era of the 1860s through the 1890s. All of these time periods have importance and validity. The livestock industry is not a single event or point in time, but a constantly changing process. In time, pioneering work in artificial insemination, selective breeding, and conservation could be seen as equally important as earlier historic ranching activities.

The following management objectives were developed as a basis for preparing planning documents, formulating alternatives, and analyzing potential impacts to park operations.

- To provide opportunities for the visitor to understand the cattle industry and its evolution from the open range of the mid-1860s, to mechanized feedlot operations that began in the 1930s and extended until establishment of the park in the 1970s.
- To maintain historic structures, buildings, objects, and landscapes in such a manner as to complement the ranch's primary purpose and enhance visitor understandings and appreciation of cattle ranch operations.
- To manage natural resources in such a manner as to complement the historic context of the ranch and cattle ranching operations.

## **LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONSTRAINTS**

Public Law 92-406, 86 Stat. 632, approved August 25, 1972, authorized the Secretary of the Interior to designate not more than 2,000 acres of the Deer Lodge Valley for establishment of Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site. The land acquisition ceiling was set at \$350,000 and the total development ceiling at \$1,800,000. On November 10, 1978, Public Law 95-625, 92 Stat. 3467, increased the land acquisition ceiling to \$752,000 and the development ceiling to \$2,075,000. Authorization was also given to acquire fee simple title to lands in which the United States had a less than fee interest inadequate to protect the land.

On December 28, 1980, Public Law 96-607, 94 Stat. 3539, further increased the land acquisition ceiling to \$1,100,000 and the development ceiling to \$7,818,000. It also changed the park boundary to exclude 25.66 acres of land owned by the city of Deer Lodge.

To date, 1,498.38 acres are included within the park boundary, leaving only 501.62 acres before reaching the 2,000-acre ceiling.

Grant-Kohrs Ranch is a National Historic Landmark and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Management and development decisions must be responsive to provisions of applicable laws and regulations.

## **PROBLEMS AND ISSUES**

**Cultural Resources - The use, rehabilitation, maintenance, interpretation, and management of historic structures, objects, and the historic landscape require evaluation.**

The park has a very large curatorial storage requirement that is not being met. Public display of objects is limited. Historic objects are scattered in repositories throughout the ranch, including historic buildings and the ranch house, most of which are structurally and environmentally unsuited for the housing of such items. Because facilities are scattered, curation activities are mixed with administrative and visitor-use functions, creating security problems and conflicts. Some historic buildings that house the objects are within the 100-year floodplain. In addition, there is a lack of work space for preparation, treatment, and conservation of artifacts. Facilities for study and research are not available. Since storage of historic objects does not meet NPS standards, alternatives for curatorial storage must be analyzed.

Preliminary analysis indicates that the thirty-one recently acquired historic structures are in need of immediate and long-range repair and maintenance. The degree of repair and maintenance required needs to be determined. Also, there is a need to determine how the park's other historic structures will be used and maintained.

Use of these historic buildings for maintenance and other operational functions adversely affects the historic scene and degrades the interpretive experience in the immediate vicinity of the ranch house. Management of the cultural landscape, including lands outside the park to the west and north, requires evaluation. This would include the identification of the cultural landscape (pasture, fencing, ditches, etc.) and the primary time period(s) it represents.

Old dump sites, found throughout the ranch, need to be identified and recognized in planning for future use and development.

**Visitor Use and Interpretation - The relationship of previous and recently acquired structures, and of the cultural landscape to visitor use of the site and park interpretive programs and facilities needs evaluation.**

Many visitors assume that the rustic visitor contact station and comfort station adjacent to the existing parking area constitute the "ranch" and leave before visiting the actual historic home ranch. In addition, the location of the visitor contact station does not provide a good view of the historic complex. The small visitor contact station, about 400 square feet, lacks sufficient exhibits, sales area, work and storage space, audiovisual capabilities, and access for the disabled. The park needs an interpretive facility that is located and designed to avoid visitor confusion and to effectively tell the story of the frontier cattle era and subsequent developments. It also needs improved interpretive media throughout the site to help visitors understand the various aspects of ranching operations. Access for the disabled also needs to be considered for all developments and programs at the ranch.

The park has an outdated interim *Interpretive Prospectus (IP)*, approved in 1975. A new IP is needed to guide interpretive media and facility development. Because interpretation focuses on a long time period (1860s to 1970s), many visitors are confused as to the story being told. In addition there is a lack of direction on how specific historic structures will be used and what time period will be interpreted.

Park visitor and employee access and parking can affect interpretation and preservation of the historic landscape. Present access from visitor parking requires visitors to travel a trail that passes under the Burlington Northern/Montana Western Railroad and the park-owned Milwaukee Road Railroad tracks. Changes in use and access could require an additional railroad crossing(s). Visitor-use facilities and access requirements should be evaluated in relationship to interpretation and retention of the historic landscape.

**Operations - Efficiency of park operations as it relates to fragmentation of various functions requires evaluation.**

The park is renting commercial space in the city of Deer Lodge for its headquarters. Park staff also work from the existing visitor contact station, the maintenance shop, and the curatorial work spaces on the ranch. There is a need to analyze consolidation of functions, including the potential to adaptively rehabilitate recently acquired structures. Analysis would focus on the long-range reduction of office space rental and the increased staff efficiency that could result from consolidation. In addition, the USDA-Forest Service and the National Park Service will create a joint administrative facility in or near Deer Lodge, which would include consideration of lands within the park.

On-site housing for a park ranger now exists in a mobile home in the historic ranch complex. The need for replacement or permanent on-site housing requires evaluation.

The NPS must have access to the historic complex during emergencies. Access for emergency equipment requires evaluation. The park, which owns a fire truck and maintains a fire cache, has a service contract with the city of Deer Lodge for fire protection. The need for NPS-provided fire protection should be evaluated. Should a need to replace or to supplement Deer Lodge services be determined, facilities for fire protection equipment would need to be provided, as would specialized training for fire suppression in historic structures.

**Natural Resources - The park is facing several natural resource issues that require resolution, including overall management philosophy -- managing natural resources as part of a ranch operation or management that stresses natural processes.**

Since Grant-Kohrs is a working cattle ranch, many ranchers and visitors feel that resource management should be oriented toward control of noxious weeds, pests, and rodents. Because the ranch is part of the National Park System, others believe that resource management should stress natural processes. Resource management philosophy must be determined for Grant-Kohrs.

Other natural resource issues include agricultural leasing and pollution of the Clark Fork River, caused by past upstream mining, milling, and smelting activities in Butte and Anaconda.

**External Influences/Lands - The influences of activities and uses of land surrounding the park need to be determined.**

The city of Deer Lodge abuts the park's southern and eastern boundaries. Development of these lands has occurred. Guidelines that can be used to work with local officials to minimize impacts of these and future developments need to be developed. The park's western boundary is contiguous with undeveloped grazing lands owned by the Rock Creek Cattle Company. These undeveloped lands are critical to park management and to quality visitor experiences, as illustrated in the park's 1987 *Cultural Landscape Report*. The plan will evaluate management options, such as boundary expansion, acquisition of scenic easements, and cooperative agreements.

Lands viewed from the ranch in the middleground and background are managed by the USDA-Forest Service and the Montana State Prison. These lands have been found to be

suitable for timber harvest. The plan needs to address actions that can be taken in cooperation with the USDA-Forest Service and state, to minimize visual impacts.

The Burlington Northern/Montana Western Railroad traverses the park and is in active use with a couple of trains each day. There is a 35.76-acre parcel owned by the railroad that needs to be acquired for the park.

There is a 120-acre parcel of land that has been purchased by the government, but which is outside of the park boundary. There is a need to evaluate this land to determine if it is necessary for management and protection of the park, and, if so, how it will be used.