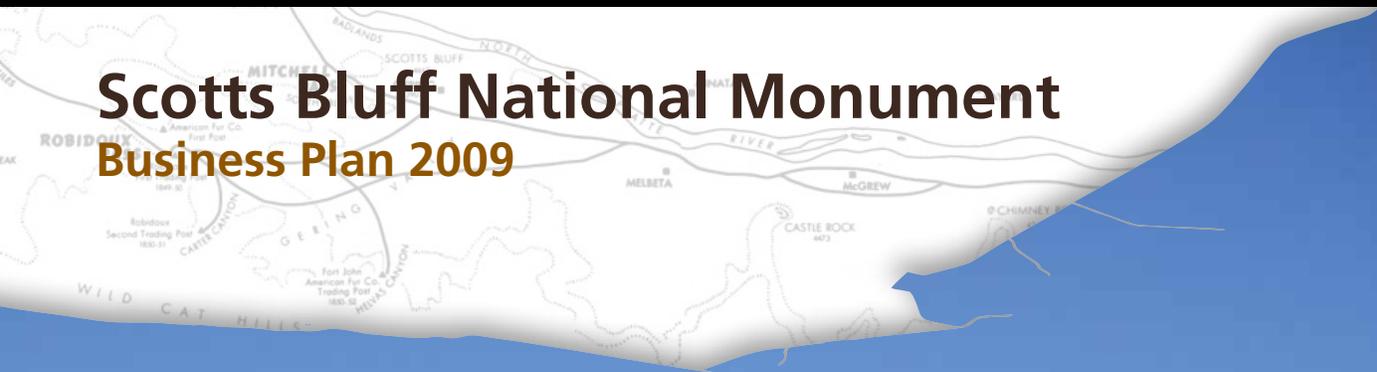
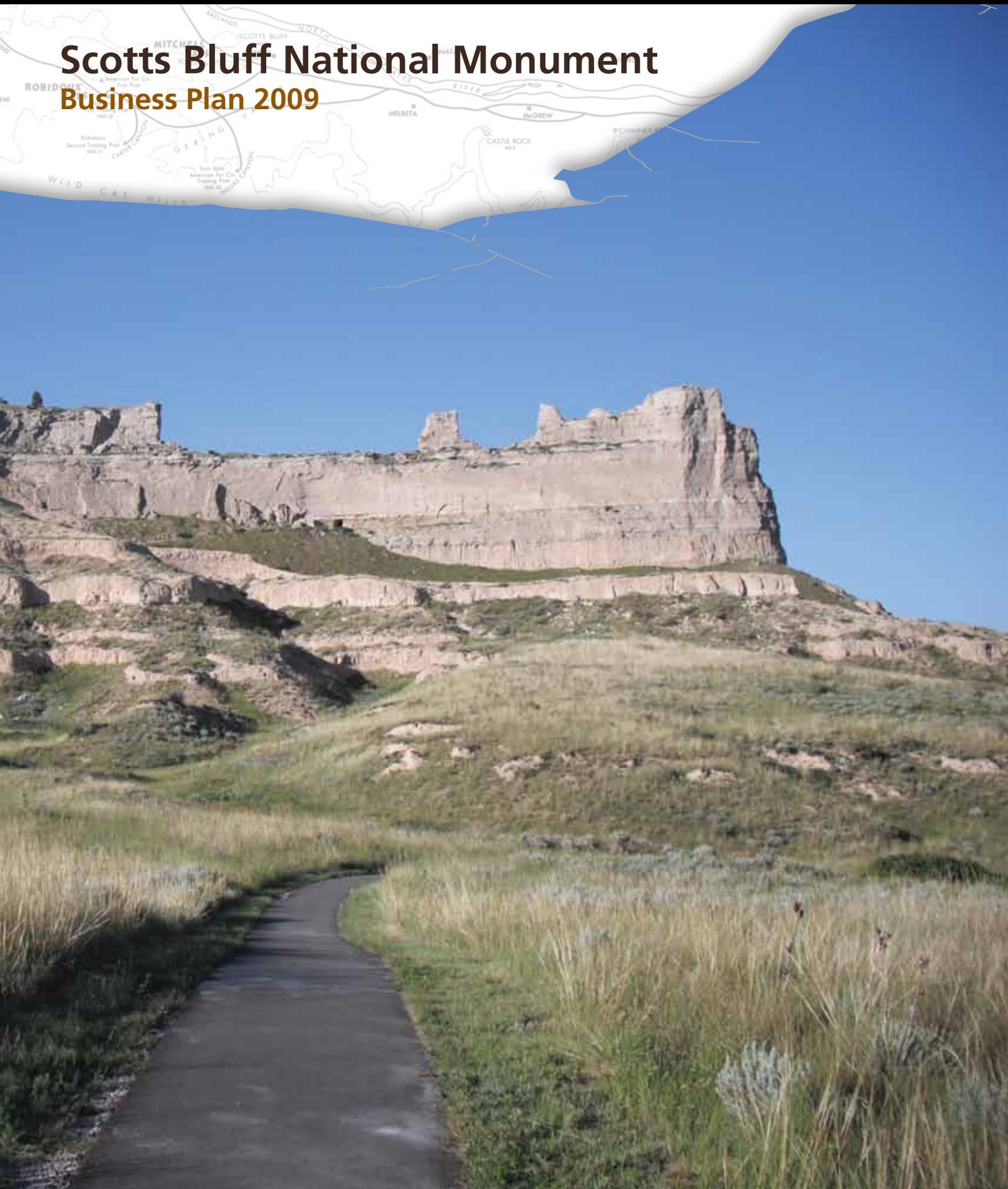




Scotts Bluff National Monument

Business Plan 2009





Above: Mitchell Pass, as seen from the base of South Bluff, *Amy Stasch*

Below: For the Monument's 90th anniversary, local riders re-enacted the hand-off of a mochilla (the true Pony Express saddle bag) associated with the Pony Express, *Emily Smith*





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Opposite (above):
Sunflowers in the foreground of Eagle Rock (Scotts Bluff), *Emily Smith*

(Below) Clusters of cacti are common at the Monument (seen here is *Opuntia polyacantha*—Plains prickly pear cactus), *Emily Smith*

Introduction

The purpose of business planning in the National Park Service is to improve the ability of parks to clearly communicate their status with principal stakeholders. A business plan answers such questions as:

- What is the business of this park unit?
- What are its priorities over the next five years?
- How will the park allocate its resources to achieve these goals?
- What can external stakeholders and partners do to support the park's programs and operations?

The National Park Service business planning process is undertaken to accomplish three main tasks. First, it provides the park with a synopsis of its funding history. Second, it presents a clear, detailed picture of the state of current park operations and funding. Finally, it outlines park priorities and funding strategies moving forward.

The framework of the business plan allows each park to highlight certain aspects of its operations deemed particularly important by the Park's management team. Park activities are organized into four program areas that describe all areas of business for which a park is responsible. This allows the park to move beyond the traditional National Park Service method of reporting expenditures in terms of fund sources and instead report expenditures in terms of activities. As a result, the park can communicate its financial situation more clearly with external audiences.

Completing the business plan process not only enables a park to produce a powerful communication tool, but also provides park management with financial and operational baseline knowledge for future decision-making.



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Superintendent's Forward

As we look forward to Scotts Bluff National Monument's 100th Anniversary in 2019 and the National Park System's Centennial in 2016, we need to meet the critical challenges of the second century with innovations suitable for new generations.

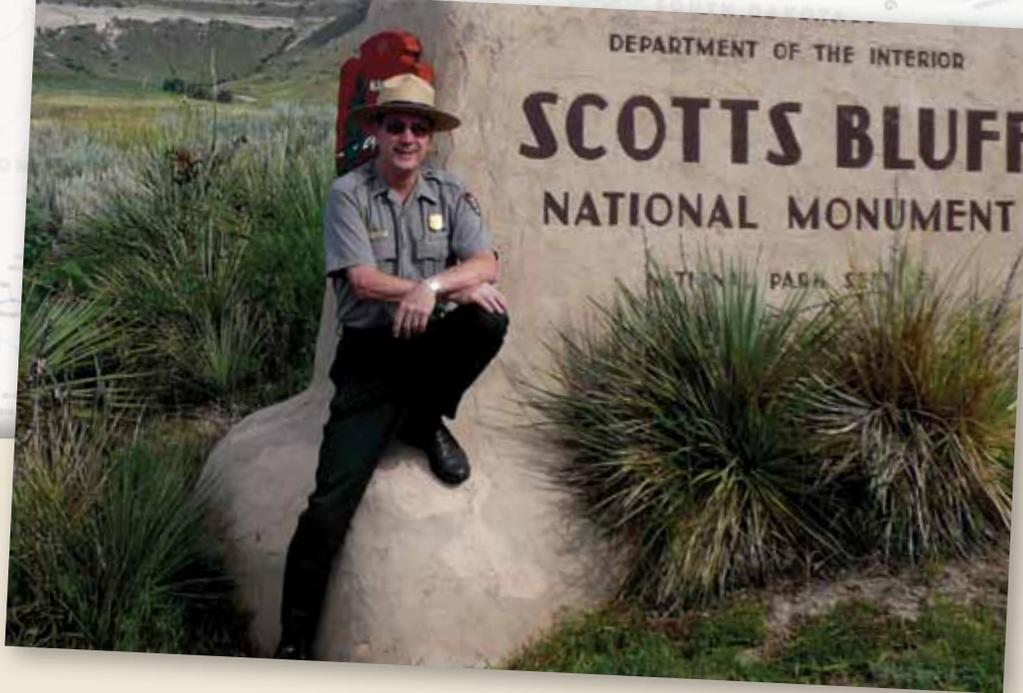
As one response, we have developed this strategic Business Plan. This is the first such document for this National Monument. It provides you with information about operational requirements of this National Park Service unit and our vision and goals for stewardship of the remnant prairie ecosystem and nationally important historic resources.

This National Monument has completed a solid foundation for this Business Plan: In 1998 a public process developed the *General Management Plan* for the National Monument, setting the 15 to 20 year goals and directions. In 2007 a special team of National Park Service managers took a close look at the staffing levels and disciplines employed at the Monument. The team evaluated staffing conditions against the mission and operational mandates of the National Park Service. The resulting *Core Operations Plan* provides the target staff required for proper future operation of this National Monument. In 2008-09 an independent organization, the National Parks Conservation Association, took a close look at the quality and vitality of the Monument's natural and cultural resources against national standards. Their *State of the Park* report (2009) provides a snapshot of the health of the park's resources.

These three documents combined provide the broad goals and direction, the required staffing to get us there, and a baseline assessment of the park's resources, with measurements for required improvements.

The above give us *what* we are dealing with (goals, current staff, and resource health). Next we needed to know *how* to achieve the business of operating this National Monument in tomorrow's world. As a part of that effort, the *Business Plan* that you hold in your hand is intended to better communicate the *business* of the National Monument to our stakeholders – the people who care about Scotts Bluff National Monument. This Business Plan discusses *how* to take this unit of the National Park System into its second century, what needs to be done to operate this National Monument at a professional level, the resources necessary to achieve those goals, and some strategies necessary to reduce operational costs and generate new sources of revenue.

National Park units are like any other publicly owned element. If we want them to continue to be vibrant, healthy, attractive places for people to enjoy and find their inner meaning, we must make the necessary investments. This means operating them in the short run, and enhancing



Above: Superintendent Ken Mabery at the East Entrance sign, Amy Stasch

them for future generations to enjoy. To achieve this long term goal, citizens that use and enjoy our nation's parks, and employees of the National Park Service need to be ever vigilant to search for, and adopt, the best modern practices. We need to apply the wisdom of Native Americans who know that we are only caretakers of this earth for future generations. They consider consequences of their choices for the next seven generations and beyond.

Going into the business planning process we knew that some aspects of the operation are close to the required funding levels, while others (maintenance, cultural resources and interpretation, in particular) lack full funding to operate at the level required by law, policy and good stewardship. The federal budget outlook to operate National Parks is not the greatest, despite annual increases and the best efforts of Congress and the Administration. We are several years behind where we should be in getting to our core operational funding level. Slightly offsetting the shortfall in operational funding, we have been fortunate to receive donated funds to modernize interpretation, renovate the interior of the Visitor Center, and provide quality environmental education programs. However, relying on donated funds for continuing operational needs is not prudent.

Scotts Bluff National Monument has many existing partnerships and opportunities to work collaboratively to achieve protection of the unique resources for future generations.

As we continue to engage partners and stakeholders, additional opportunities will emerge that will further the mission of the National Monument. I hope you will read this plan as one that has a vested interest in helping protect and interpret this great resource, and you will look for and foster opportunities that help achieve our common interests.

I encourage you to read with a notion of active participation in deciding how we can achieve what I hope is a common goal: America's oldest National Park unit to commemorate the westward overland migration will continue to be a proud centerpiece of western Nebraska, the tri-state region, and this Nation.

The staff and volunteers of the National Monument are dedicated to the mission of the National Park Service and will work hard to pursue the strategies outlined in this plan. If you are taking time to read this document, it is my assumption that you care enough about Scotts Bluff National Monument and are interested in helping us achieve our plans for the future.

Thank you for your interest and support.

Ken Mabery
Superintendent
Scotts Bluff National Monument



Executive Summary

This business plan describes the financial and operational conditions of Scotts Bluff National Monument in Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 and provides insight into the Monument's direction over the next five years. It is the result of an objective, in-depth look at Scotts Bluff's historical trends, current operations, projected financial outlook, and management priorities.

Overview and Financial History

The Monument Overview and Financial History sections examine trends in Scotts Bluff's annual visitation and funding.

The Monument's inflation-adjusted appropriated base funding has decreased 10.4 percent since FY 2004, at an average annual rate of -2.5 percent. Approximately 19 percent of the Monument's (FY 2008) total budget is derived from project and revenue funding.

In FY 2008, Scotts Bluff National Monument had 111,446 visitors. In the last decade, the Monument experienced peak visitation in 1999 with 141,453 visitors. Visitation has fluctuated over the years, but is expected to remain steady in the next 3 to 5 years.

Current Operations

In FY 2008, Scotts Bluff National Monument operated with 14.64 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, including seasonal employees. An FTE is equal to 2,080 hours of work per year. The Monument expended \$1.16 million during FY 2008 of which approximately \$801,635, or 69 percent, went toward personnel salaries and benefits. Scotts Bluff's expenditures are grouped into four main functional areas: Visitor Services, Facility Maintenance &

Operations, Resource Management, and Administration and Management.

Critical Themes

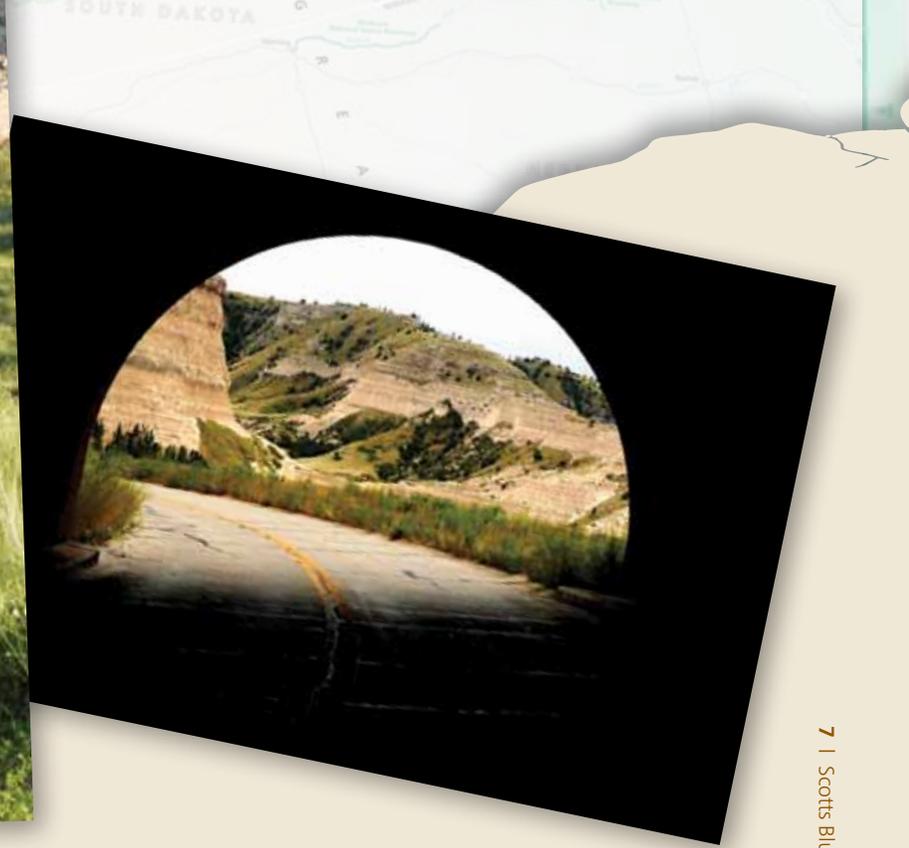
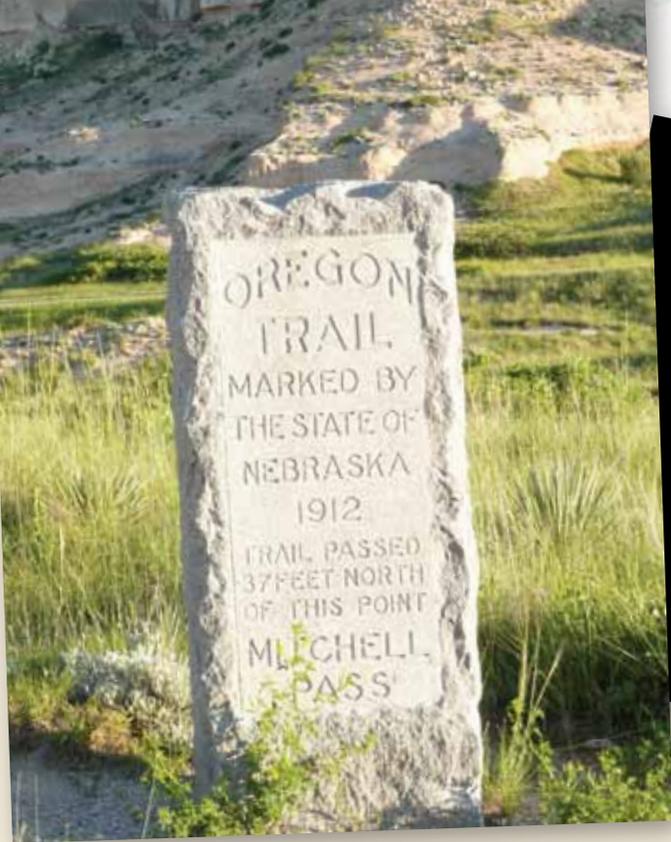
Throughout the business planning process, several key themes emerged:

Local residents identify strongly with Scotts Bluff National Monument; it is a source of community pride.

Community engagement and active partnerships have been central to redeveloping positive relations and resource stewardship with the local community. The park has worked with more than 40 partners in the area and works regularly with more than 15 community partners; sharing resources, linking projects, leading annual events, and providing environmental education to children. These partnerships have amplified the effectiveness of local organizations and Scotts Bluff NM tremendously.

The Northern Great Plains mixed-grass prairie is a sensitive and evolving landscape.

Scotts Bluff includes approximately 2,600 acres of mixed-grass prairie in a part of the country where prairies once expanded far beyond what the eye could see. Unaltered prairie landscapes are now relatively rare; in the prairies that



remain, development and agriculture have largely removed migratory grazing animals and fire from the prairie, altering ecosystem processes. The Monument offers a rare living laboratory for investigating and understanding the role of prescribed fire, black-tailed prairie dogs, and climate change in this ecosystem.

While the Monument was created to protect historical and cultural resources, these resources also present unique management challenges.

The Monument contains 18 structures that either are listed or have the potential to be listed on the National Register of Historic Structures. The Monument expends tremendous effort to maintain these structures in a manner that preserves their historic character. These preservation efforts depend on both the maintenance division, which conducts the up-keep, and the resource management division, which ensures that all activities comply with the National Historic Preservation Act.

Present challenges constrain staff, limiting their ability to bring operations and management practices into the 21st century.

The Monument's Visitor Center was constructed in the 1930s and its exhibits

were installed in the late 1950s; neither has been updated since. The exhibits are outdated and lack the interactivity that would fully convey the area's story to visitors. The Monument awaits funding to pay for a significant remodel that will modernize its Visitor Center and exhibits.

The Monument is also looking to expand its administrative space. Management level staff is currently working in separate buildings, making collaboration and teamwork challenging. More administrative space would provide staff members with sufficient work and storage space, create room to properly store valuable artifacts, and produce more living quarters for the Monument.

Staffing remains below the levels necessary to develop full interpretive or resource management programs, as determined in the Core Operations analysis conducted in 2007. The Monument is seeking additional base funding in order to be able to expand the staffing levels in these areas. In the meantime, the Monument is pursuing other strategies to be able to provide research, maintenance and other interpretive services.

Above (left): Plaque marking the Oregon Trail, near Mitchell Pass, *Emily Smith*

(Right) Scotts Bluff as seen through the second tunnel (as you go downhill), *Amy Stasch*

Opposite: These signs show where the Oregon, California, and Pony Express Trails passed through the present day Monument. Eagle Rock in the background, *Amy Stasch*

Monument Overview

Mission & History

Scotts Bluff National Monument was created to protect and preserve the historic Mitchell Pass portion of the Oregon Trail, as well as the unique geologic features of the bluffs themselves. The Monument encompasses 3,003.3 acres that contain the bluffs, mixed-grass prairie, badlands, significant paleontological resources and historically significant Civilian Conservation Era structures. In addition to these resources, the Monument manages a notable collection of archives and artifacts related to the Oregon Trail, including the world's largest collection of original William Henry Jackson sketches, paintings, and photographs.

Scotts Bluff is a cultural landmark; a statement of our nation's western emigration of the 1800s and the vast changes of the past two centuries. The 800-foot bluffs served as natural signposts, guiding the journeys of those on the Oregon, California, Mormon, and Pony Express Trails.

Enabling Legislation

On December 12, 1919, Woodrow Wilson created Scotts Bluff National Monument via proclamation. This enabling proclamation mandated the National Park Service to:¹

- Preserve Scotts Bluff, a prominent feature on the western Nebraska landscape.
- Preserve the view of and from Scotts Bluff.

- Protect Mitchell Pass, which afforded emigrants a passage west without having to cross over the nearby bluffs or the adjacent North Platte River.
- Protect the remnants of the Oregon Trail, which are still visible within the boundaries of the Monument.
- Preserve the geological features of the bluff, which are of scientific interest.
- Preserve and interpret the Monument's features for public enjoyment for generations to come.
- Preserve the scenic and historic integrity of Scotts Bluff and adjacent features.

The Oregon Trail

In the early 1800s, the idea of the "west" fascinated a generation of settlers. Initially, explorers and fur traders would make the journey: Lewis and Clark, John Jacob Astor of the American Fur Company, Hudson Bay Company, and others. Later, large numbers of Americans began the journey west drawn by the promise of better economic prospects. The exact number of migrants who went west on the Oregon Trail is unknown. Their journeys began at different locations along the banks of the Missouri River and converged at the Platte River in the vicinity of present day Kearney, Nebraska; a route of approximately 2,000 miles which would ultimately become known as the Oregon and California Trails.

¹ *Strategic Plan for Scotts Bluff National Monument October 1, 2004-September 30, 2008.*



For the many Americans who traveled the Oregon Trail, Scotts Bluff became a sentinel. The Bluff's promontory was visible from a long distance and both guided travelers and signaled to them that the easy but monotonous prairie was fading and the difficult Rocky Mountains lay shortly ahead. The first wagon trains heading west detoured away from the North Platte River and traveled through the pine-studded hills of Robidoux Pass. Later trains discovered the shorter, steeper route through Mitchell Pass, which is today a part of the national Monument.

The Monument is able to tell the stories of more than just the settlers who were headed to the Oregon Territory. Sections of the Oregon Trail were carved out by travelers heading to California on the California Trail, Mormons on the Mormon Pioneer Trail journeying to Utah, and riders on the Pony Express Trail. All of these trails traversed the Scotts Bluff area and their stories are told at the Monument.

Resources

Scotts Bluff is a topographic feature rising to 4,659 feet above sea level and 800 feet above the North Platte River. The bluffs reveal strata from 33 to 22 million years before present, offering a visible profile of geologic events of Western Nebraska. These strata include sandstone, siltstone, volcanic ash and limestone. Over time, the strata have eroded into unique formations such as Saddle Rock and the badlands at the northeastern base of Scotts Bluff. These bluffs provide a vast 360-degree view of the surrounding landscapes.

Scotts Bluff is primarily known for its role in the history of the Oregon Trail and the remnants of the trail that the site protects. However, the cultural resources expand far beyond the trail itself and include various artifacts, the historic Summit Road, several Civilian Conservation Corps trails and buildings, and a collection of the works of pioneer photographer and artist William Henry Jackson.

The Monument is rich in natural and cultural resources. It is home to 29 mammal, 123 bird, six amphibian, seven reptile, and 22 fish species. There are three endangered or threatened species (listed under the Endangered Species Act) which are known to be present, or may be expected to be present given ecological conditions. Western burrowing owls and black-tailed prairie dogs are present in the Monument; both of these species are under review to potentially be listed as threatened or endangered. The badlands, located within the Monument borders, contain tremendously rich fossil deposits of creatures that lived approximately 33 million years ago, including oreodonts (extinct, sheep-sized, four-toed mammals), prairie dogs, foxes, turtles, rodents, rhinoceros and beavers. These fossil strata are of unparalleled richness in Nebraska



Above: *Opuntia polyacantha*—Plains prickly pear cactus, Amy Stasch

Opposite: Crown Rock, Emily Smith

Visitation

In Fiscal Year 2008, 111,446 visitors came to Scotts Bluff National Monument. Visitors to Scotts Bluff National Monument often include the Monument as part of their travel to larger, nearby parks such as Yellowstone, Grand Teton, Rocky Mountain, Wind Cave or Badlands National Parks. The majority of the Monument's visitors come during the summer months: May through September. However, local residents utilize the Monument year-round for recreational activities and are active attendees at the Monument's evening programs and special events. The Monument hires seasonal interpretive rangers to assist staff in meeting visitor needs during this peak time period. These hires are typically unable to work for the full five to six months of the visitation peak, leaving a shoulder season when visitation remains relatively high but services are limited.

Visitation Trends

During the last decade, visitation at the Monument peaked in 1998 with 141,606 visitors and declined to its lowest in 2006 with 98,352 visitors. Since 2006, visitation has begun rebounding significantly. This pattern largely parallels trends in the Midwest region, where visitation has declined approximately 15 percent since 1998. Visitation is expected to remain steady over the next few years.

Recreation

Visitors most often drive to the summit of Scotts Bluff, where several overlooks provide vistas of the surrounding landscape. The four miles of trail within the Monument are also quite popular and include a connection of the

Monument's 1.2-mile "Bike Trail" with the 6.3-mile community trail system, known as Monument Valley Pathways. Although visitors from outside of the local area may not utilize this trail network, the Bike Trail and Monument Valley Pathway provide a link for community residents to have a convenient recreational route to access the Monument. Trails and infrastructure are limited to the Scotts Bluff area, while the South Bluff is limited to "off-trail" recreation.

Impact on the Local Economy

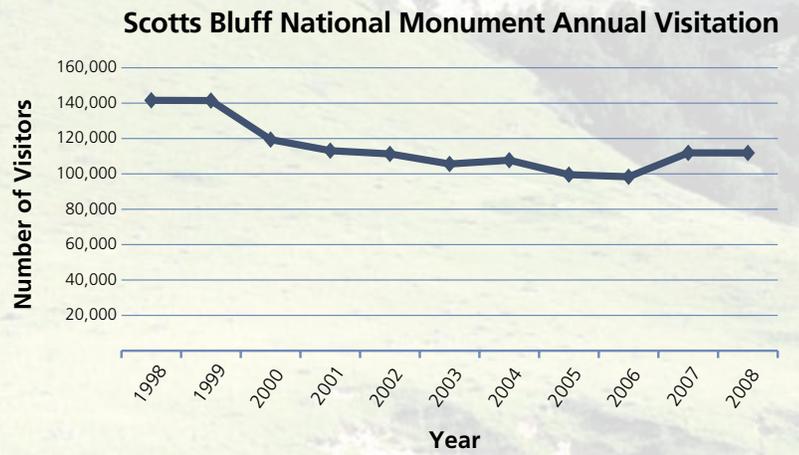
According to a recent study contracted by the Scottsbluff Visitor and Convention Bureau, more than half of visitors to the area are on vacation, and the Monument is their primary reason for coming to the area. Visitors are generally older and highly educated, with a keen interest in the historical features of western Nebraska.²

Tourism is the second largest industry in Western Nebraska. Scotts Bluff contributes to the local economy both as a draw for tourism dollars and as an employer. The most recent NPS study from 2005 reports that Scotts Bluff brings \$1.3 million to the local economy annually and supports 45 jobs in the area.

Map

The Monument presently contains 3,003.3 acres within its legislative boundaries. Railroad tracks, electrical lines, and three irrigation canals bisect it at various points. The Monument has purchased lands surrounding the boundary at different times, requiring presidential proclamations and Congressional Acts to legally adjust the boundaries.

² *Scotts Bluff County Visitor Profile Study. Davidson-Peterson Associates, December 2008.*





Monument Inventory

General

- 3,003.3 acres of total land area
- Scotts Bluff rises to an elevation of 4,659 feet, 800 feet above the North Platte River
- 26 employees, including permanent and temporary employees
- 1,835 volunteer hours in FY 2008
- 111,446 visitors in FY 2008
- 62,100 visitor contacts in FY 2008
- 1 visitor center and museum
- 10 buildings
- 1 employee housing unit
- 3 road tunnels
- 1 walking trail tunnel
- 4 miles of trails
- 2.9 miles of road
- 1 of only 8 parks to contain an active black-tailed prairie dog colony
- 123 bird species
- 6 amphibian species
- 7 reptile species
- 22 fish species
- Paleontological artifacts in the badlands area from 33 to 22 million years ago

Cultural Resources

- Oregon, California, and Pony Express National Historic Trails
- Extensive archives and museum collection: 15,854 objects
- The largest collection of original sketches, photographs, and paintings by William Henry Jackson
- Structures built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC):
 - Visitor Center/Museum
 - Administrative Building
 - Maintenance Building
 - Saddle Rock Trail
 - Summit and Visitor Center parking lots
 - Summit Road & tunnels
 - 18 historic structures
 - 62 known archeological sites

Natural Resources

- 2,600 acres of mixed-grass prairie
- 7 distinct habitat types: riverine, woodland, mixed-grass prairie, riparian, pine-studded bluff, shrub-dominated slopes, and badlands
- 29 mammal species





Current Operations

Introduction

In FY 2008, Scotts Bluff National Monument operated with 14.64 full time equivalent (FTE) employees. An FTE is equal to 2,080 hours of work per year. The Monument is able to increase their personnel resources, when needed, by sharing staff time with other small parks in the area (Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, and Fort Laramie National Historic Site). The Monument expended a total of \$1,160,448 in FY 2008, with \$801,635 going towards personnel salaries and benefits.

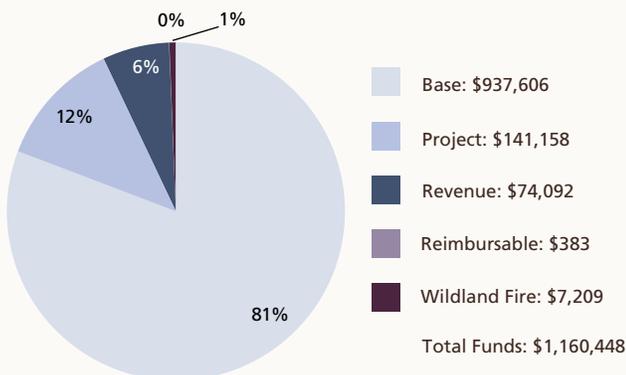
Scotts Bluff's funding comes from two main sources – appropriated funding and revenue collected by the park through fees, permits, and other sources. The primary source of funding is money appropriated from Congress. These funds support salaries and benefits for permanent staff, basic operations and one-time projects and investments. Appropriations from Congress come in two forms: base funding and non-base funding. Base funding generally remains stable year to year and is used to finance operations. Non-base, or

project, funding is awarded through a competitive process: it fluctuates annually and is used to fund one-time projects and capital expenses.

The Monument also relies on non-appropriated revenue sources, such as recreation fees and passes, permits and donations. These non-appropriated funds may be used for both operational and non-operational expenses. The Monument primarily uses non-appropriated revenue, such as entrance and park pass fees, to fund activities such as fee collection, the summit shuttle operations, and some deferred maintenance. This money cannot fund permanent staff. The Monument also receives a nominal amount of funding through reimbursable funds, such as rent paid to the Monument by staff living on-site. Finally, the Monument receives Wildland Fire funds that it uses to prevent, combat or monitor the effects of wildfires. In FY 2008, Scotts Bluff expended \$937,606 in base funds and \$222,842 in non-base funds.

On an operational level, Scotts Bluff has four departments or divisions. These include Facility Operations & Maintenance, Visitor Services, Administration & Management, and Resource Management.

Total Scotts Bluff Expenditures by Fund Source, FY 2008





Administration & Management

The Administration & Management team includes both the Superintendent and the Administration staff who provide behind-the-scenes support critical to the effective operation of the Monument. The Administration staff performs many of the functions found in any business or nonprofit operation: budgeting, bill payment, human resources, contracting, procurement, computer maintenance and troubleshooting, and property management. The superintendent coordinates planning and management activities for the Monument and oversees interagency communications and community affairs. The superintendent is responsible for developing collaborative efforts with outside partners and neighbors. These collaborative efforts have helped to link Scotts Bluff to other recreational lands and to community partners engaged in environmental and historical education.

In FY 2008, the Monument spent \$263,449 on activities in the Management and Administration Division, with the majority, \$217,196, used to pay for personnel salary and benefits. This division includes three permanent employees.

Administration is an area where Scotts Bluff shares resources with nearby parks in order to maximize their effectiveness. The administrative staffs of Scotts Bluff, Fort Laramie National Historic Site, and Agate Fossil Beds National Monument have similar resource constraints, which they ameliorate in part by sharing expertise, services, and training opportunities. For example, the

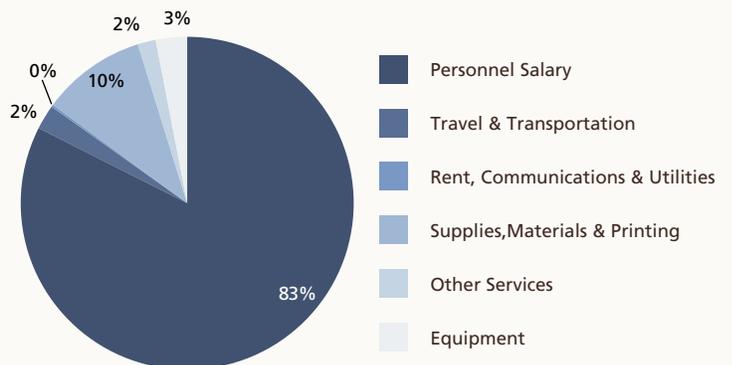
Administrative Officer position at Scotts Bluff also has responsibility for the administrative operations and budget of Agate Fossil Beds.

Administration & Management Priorities

Overall, the Administration & Management division aims to improve efficiencies and achieve goals set forth by the 2007 Core Operations report via the following targeted actions:

1. **Clarify roles of the Administrative Officer.** The Administrative Officer for Scotts Bluff also holds significant roles and responsibilities at Agate Fossil Beds National Monument. Moving forward, the superintendents of both monuments will meet on a periodic basis to define roles and responsibilities for the Administrative Officer. This simple process of defining responsibilities will provide clarity and allow the administrative officer to divide his time effectively between the two monuments.

Administration Expenditures , FY 2008





Sister City, Sister Park

Scotts Bluff National Monument is pursuing an informal Sister Park relationship with Bamiyan National Park in Bamiyan, Afghanistan to complement the existing Sister City arrangement between Scottsbluff-Gering, Nebraska and Bamiyan, Afghanistan. Bamiyan National Park and Scotts Bluff National Monument share many similarities:

- Located on important historic “trails” for their respective nations: Scotts Bluff is on the Emigrant Trails, while Bamiyan is on the Spice Trade Route
- Share geographic and climatic settings: eroded buttes along river valleys in semi-arid and high-altitude areas
- Contain historic buildings and cultural landscapes
- Concern for wildlife, including efforts to restore wildlife to highly impacted habitats
- Focus on highlighting area histories and encouraging historical research
- Located near important regional urban centers that take pride in the parks
- Desire to encourage tourism as part of economic development programs

Both parks exist to preserve historic and natural resources and are engaged in restoring native vegetation and wildlife habitats and implementing research, inventory, and monitoring programs necessary to achieve success in these preservation and restoration efforts. The “sister park” relationship is meant to promote international cooperation and support for the mutual benefit of both parks. The parks will benefit by sharing experiences and approaches to collaboration through the exchange of knowledge, information, and experience.

Both parks are striving to involve their surrounding communities in the development of services and facilities to foster tourism and economic development. The parks wish to increase their already substantial efforts toward environmental education of children and the public so that their countries’ people can become committed partners in conservation.

The National Park Service is often heralded as a model for resource conservation and stewardship and this “sister park” relationship represents an effort to link not only conservation, but also diverse landscapes and cultures. Scotts Bluff is not only developing local community partners, but is also bridging geographic, cultural, and linguistic barriers to further stewardship on a global level.



2. Streamline IT services.

The Administrative Officer spends significant time installing, troubleshooting, and maintaining IT systems at the two monuments. Moving forward, the monuments will investigate options for outsourcing much of these IT responsibilities and/or hiring an IT specialist to be shared among several parks. Deferring IT responsibilities to another individual would enable the Administrative Officer to dedicate additional time to budget related responsibilities, with the goal of increasing the effectiveness of budget requests and developing long term funding strategies.

3. Improve knowledge management.

The Administrative & Management Division is responsible for maintaining accurate records and files. The Monument has determined that additional effort must be made to both organize existing files and develop an active documentation process in regards to reoccurring events, partnerships, and resource management projects.

4. Relocate Administrative Building.

The Administrative Building at Scotts Bluff is inadequate for current needs. The management team, comprised of five members, is located in three separate buildings, hindering optimal levels of teamwork. This priority is discussed further in “Overall Monument Priorities” section.



Facility Operations & Maintenance

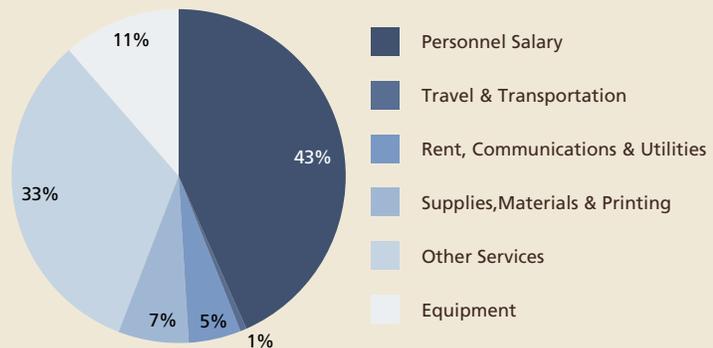
The Facility Operations and Maintenance Division (Facilities) is responsible for all activities necessary to operate and maintain Scotts Bluff National Monument's buildings, roads, trails, and utilities. This includes providing janitorial services, cyclic maintenance, and asset rehabilitation. In FY 2008, this division employed four seasonal and two permanent staff: a total of 3.75 FTE. In addition to operations and maintenance functions, the Supervisory Facilities Management Specialist (known as the Division Chief) is also the Park Safety Officer, ensuring compliance with NPS risk management policies and generally pursuing and overseeing employee safety within the Monument.

The Monument spent \$387,585 on operations and maintenance activities in FY2008, with \$168,003 going towards personnel salaries and benefits and \$127,000 going towards Other Services, which includes on-going service contracts and contracted trail repair.

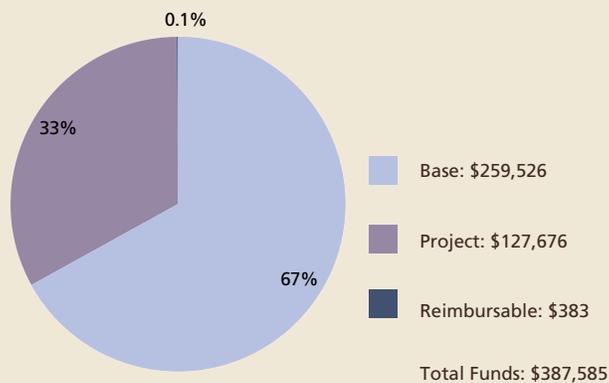
The Facilities division has been successful in applying for and receiving project funds, with \$128,058 of FY2008 expenditures funded by non-base fund sources. FY 2008 base funding amounted to \$259,526 for the division.

Approximately forty percent of Scotts Bluff's structures were constructed before 1951. The historic character of these structures requires more proactive maintenance and specialized techniques. The challenges of maintaining historic structures while sustaining daily operations with limited staff and constrained

Facility Operations & Management , FY 2008



Facility Operations & Maintenance Expenditures by Fund Source, FY 2008



Safety at Scotts Bluff

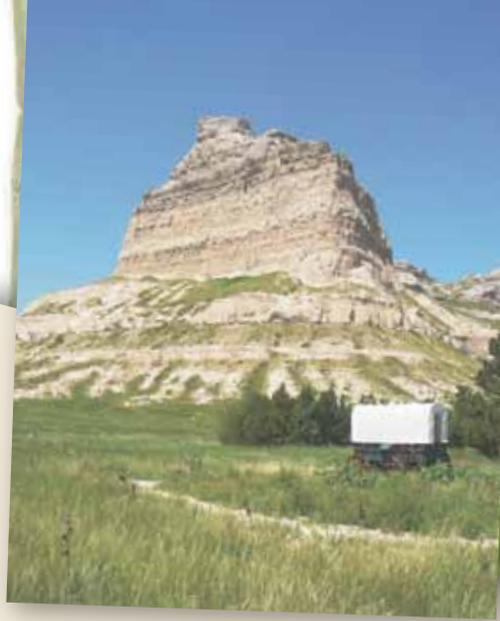
Scotts Bluff's safety program is notable for sustaining low rates of visitor and employee injury for many years. In fact, there has been no employee lost time injuries for at least six years.

Scotts Bluff National Monument has an active safety program. The Monument has formed a joint safety committee with Agate Fossil Beds composed of representatives from each division. The committee meets monthly to discuss pertinent issues, develop strategies, and communicate occupational hazards. In addition to this monthly meeting, the Scotts Bluff maintenance staff gathers on a bi-weekly basis to discuss proper handling of equipment and the hazards associated with their use.

Safety remains a prime concern for Scotts Bluff NM and the staff will continue to address proactively safety concerns and work to maintain an excellent safety record.







Above: Pioneer wagons in front of the Scotts Bluff Visitor Center, similar to those that would have been used by settlers on the Trail, *NPS Photo*



budgets has led to a deferred maintenance backlog of over \$1.2 million at Scotts Bluff, which the Monument is unable to address at its current levels of funding. The Monument has developed a 10-year strategic project plan to prioritize critical assets and systems while minimizing deterioration. To date, this plan has been effective, as Scotts Bluff's assets remain in relatively good condition, with an average Facility Condition Index (FCI) of 0.07 for high priority facilities (0.08 for the full portfolio of facilities). This is significantly better than the national NPS average of 0.14 (the closer a value is to 0, the "better" the condition of the facilities).

Buildings

Scotts Bluff National Monument includes 10 buildings, most of which were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Maintenance employees are responsible for painting the exteriors on a cyclic basis, repairing building damage, rehabilitating historic structures, maintaining utility services, cleaning restrooms and buildings, and caring for the grounds.

Roads & Trails

Scotts Bluff's O&M division is responsible for the 1.6-mile Summit Road which was completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1936 and is a National Historic Structure. It poses unique challenges as the oldest concrete road in Nebraska. The Summit Road also includes the only three automobile tunnels in Nebraska, for a cumulative tunnel length of 12,955 feet. Scotts Bluff does not have a designated road crew, but rather utilizes staff from Fort Laramie National Historic Site for particularly staff-intensive road projects.

Scotts Bluff has six trails (a total approximate length of four miles) concentrated in the Visitor Center and South Bluff summit areas. These are paved trails and require minimal maintenance. The Monument contracts out the cyclic resurfacing of these trails.

Facility Operations & Maintenance Priorities

Facility Operations and Maintenance strives to adapt efficiently to evolving management challenges via the following targeted actions:

1. **Hire an FMSS Specialist.** The database system used for reporting, tracking, prioritizing, and budgeting maintenance projects and park assets is complex and time intensive. Hiring a specialist to perform the data entry and routine management of this system would reduce much of the burden on the present Facility Operations Specialist (division chief) and improve efficiencies.
2. **Fully implement the Park Asset Management Plan (PAMP).** The PAMP provides a strategy and road map to allocate limited financial resources while maintaining facilities in good condition, addressing over time the \$1.2 million deferred maintenance backlog.



Resource Management

The Resource Management division protects the cultural and natural resources of the Monument through research, monitoring, and active management. Resource management at Scotts Bluff focuses on bluff geology, the bluff viewscape, prairie habitat and restoration, exotic plant management and eradication, fossil resources, and the remnants of the Oregon Trail itself. Additionally, the resource manager is responsible for managing the cultural resources collection by documenting, archiving, and maintaining the Monument's archives and artifacts, including the collection of sketches and paintings by pioneer photographer and artist William Henry Jackson. The Monuments Resource Management staff is also available on a consulting basis to assist Fort Laramie National Historic Site and Agate Fossil Beds National Monument.

In FY 2008, Scotts Bluff National Monument employed a total of 1.64 FTE in the Resource Management Division and expended a total of \$130,057 on the management of cultural and natural resources. Of that amount, \$96,512 came from the Monument's base funding, while the remaining \$33,545 stemmed from project, revenue or wildland fire funds.

Numerous regional Park Service teams assist the resources staff, including: the Northern Great Plains Network (NGPN) Inventory and Monitoring Network (I&M), Exotic Plant Management Team (NGPN EPMT), and the Fire Management Team (NGPN FMT)'s Fire Use Module and Fire Effects Monitors. These

Potential Future Trails

In the 1930s, a very popular dirt road led to a picnic area at the base of South Bluff. Local residents remember this picnic area fondly and express interest in creating a minimally developed trail in this location. Although four miles of paved trails already exist in the Monument, some visitors seek less structured opportunities for exploring the site. Monument staff is actively exploring options for developing additional trails, but must consider a multitude of factors, including cost, safety, resource degradation, compliance procedures, and public sentiment.

A pullout at the old trailhead, just past Mitchell Pass, is one of the few remaining pieces of evidence that a trail and picnic area once existed in this area. Due to visibility concerns, the Nebraska Department of Roads has indicated that this pullout cannot be safely used as a parking area. To remedy this, the Monument is considering mowing both a trail to the old picnic area, as well as one parallel to Old Oregon Trail Road, so visitors could park in the Visitor Center parking lot and walk from there to the picnic site. With this trail, pedestrians would first cross Old Oregon Trail Road and then walk parallel to the road. Although this is an alternative to the present use of the pullout, safety concerns remain.

As with any federal action, the Monument will have to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act and National Environmental Policy Act. The Monument will need to review potential degradation of resources that may result from the proposed trail creation and solicit public comment on it. At a low level of use, the resource impacts of the proposed trail should be nominal; a significant increase in trail use may result in erosion that would require maintenance intervention.

The Monument envisions this trail as minimally developed, with maintenance consisting solely of periodic mowing of the trail area. With this low-maintenance assumption, costs of the trail are low, as the Monument already possesses the equipment and staff necessary for such work. The Monument has not decided whether to build the trail. The Monument staff will continue to solicit community input as they explore developing additional recreational opportunities.

Black Tailed Prairie Dogs Highlight

In 1981, after disappearing from the Monument for 41 years, black-tailed prairie dogs re-established themselves in Scotts Bluff National Monument. Two colonies are currently present in the Monument. A third colony established itself in 2003, but then inexplicably died-off in late 2007 or early 2008. Since 1981, scientists have observed cyclic increases and decreases of prairie dog populations and town areas.

Named for their bark-like calls and black-tipped tail, black-tailed prairie dogs are small, short-tailed animals with eyes and small ears set far back on their heads. Their light-brown fur blends well with the dirt of their mounds. Prairie dogs average 14 to 17 inches in length and weigh one to three pounds. With short, muscular legs and long-nailed toes on their front and hind feet, they are well equipped for a burrowing lifestyle. An average burrow hole leads to 24 feet of passageways!

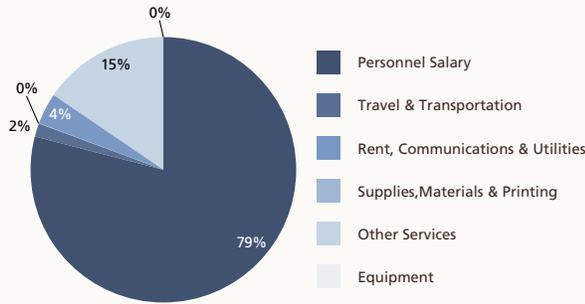
Black-tailed prairie dogs are keystone species, which other species depend upon, including the burrowing owl, black-footed ferret, ferruginous hawk, swift fox, and mountain plover. There are at least six burrowing owls living in close proximity to prairie dogs in Scotts Bluff National Monument. The owls use abandoned prairie dog burrows as roosting and nesting sites.

Black-tailed prairie dogs occupy approximately one percent of their one-time habitat of 100 million acres. The dramatic decline in black-tailed prairie dog habitat and numbers is the result of changing land use patterns, habitat fragmentation, disease, shooting, and poisoning. Like the bison, the prairie dog was once a major component of prairie life; vast prairie dog towns stretched for miles across the open plains. Today, scattered populations of prairie dogs are found mainly in protected areas such as state and national parks, monuments, grasslands, and wildlife refuges.

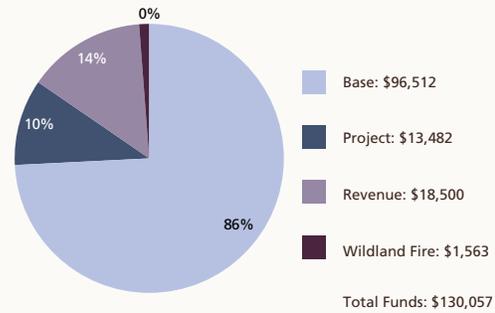
Scientists are eager to understand how weather, climate, vegetation, and park activities affect black-tailed prairie dog populations and behavior, particularly since there is little intact prairie habitat remaining. Scotts Bluff is participating in regional studies to understand how these factors interact to support or threaten prairie dog populations, and specifically how small park units can support and manage these populations in the long term.



Resource Management Expenditures , FY 2008



Resource Management Expenditures by Fund Source, FY 2008



teams conduct seasonal monitoring of prairie dog towns, vegetation, and vegetation changes directly related to fire. These teams also provide assistance during prescribed fires and wildfires.

Biological Resources

Prairie ecosystems have changed tremendously in the past two centuries with the expansion of urban areas and agricultural endeavors. The characteristics of the 2,600 acres of prairie in the Monument vary widely, with some areas reclaimed from prior uses as golf courses, feedlots, agricultural fields or trash dumps, while others remain relatively unaltered. Monument staff actively engages in improving the health of the prairie ecosystem, which includes managing invasive plants and applying prescribed fire.

Prescribed fire is utilized at the Monument to reduce fuel loads, eradicate invasive species, and restore historic ecological conditions with designated areas burned on a rotating basis. Additionally, Monument staff, scientists, and researchers have also conducted restoration efforts at 27 locations throughout the Monument. Staff members and fire effects personnel monitor the impacts and results of fire and restoration to study the relative success of various restoration strategies.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources duties at Scotts Bluff include inventory and monitoring, cataloging and maintaining the archives, guiding proactive maintenance work on the historic buildings and road, and facilitating public view of William Henry Jackson paintings and artworks. Artifacts and archives (including the William Henry

Jackson collection) are stored in a small vault in the Visitor Center. The Monument is moving towards significant remodeling and expansion of the current Visitor Center. Resource management is extensively involved in this project, developing sufficient storage spaces that meet museum standards and displays that are scientifically and historically accurate.

Resource Management Priorities

The following goals and priorities all link to one common challenge faced by the Resource Management program: limited staff. The following strategies and tactics will help guide managers in capitalizing on available resources while working towards the development of an exemplary resource management program.

1. Improve health of the prairie ecosystem.

- a. *Hire staff dedicated to exotic plant management.* Restoring mixed prairie ecosystems like that of Scotts Bluff requires active efforts to inventory, monitor, and control exotic plant species. The Monument will need to hire a full time seasonal biological technician to address the site's significant infestation of invasive plants. When funds permit, the Monument will also hire a permanent biological technician to treat exotic plants as well as conduct other natural resource management duties.
- b. *Fully implement the Fire Management Plan.* Prescribed fire reduces fuel loads (thereby reducing catastrophic wildfires), promotes healthy plant



Above: Prescribed fire is used to maintain the prairie landscape, *Emily Smith*

Opposite (inset): William Henry Jackson's iconic painting of Oregon Trail emigrants passing through Mitchell Pass, *William Henry Jackson*

(Background) A rainbow over Dome Rock after an afternoon thunderstorm, *Emily Smith*

growth, and inhibits invasive plant species. Scotts Bluff will continue to team with the Northern Great Plains Fire Management Team (NGPN FMT), following the Monument's 2002 Fire Management Plan.

c. *Continue to study the black-tailed prairie dog.* The black-tailed prairie dog is a keystone species in prairie habitat. Resource Management will continue to study this population, observing long-term population trends, and developing an understanding of ecological process. Further, as interpretation adds emphasis to natural resources features, resources staff will assist in developing appropriate interpretive materials.

2. *Develop a model cultural resource management and collections program.*

a. *Determine efficient personnel structure and needs and hire relevant staff.*

The Monument strives to catch-up on archiving, satisfy all applicable preservation standards, and increase capacity to develop and utilize rotating exhibits in the Visitor Center. The Monument's management team will determine a new position structure that will be the most effective and efficient.

b. *Determine space needs for potential future archive facilities.*

A new administrative building would likely house new archive facilities. Monument staff, in consultation with design experts and curatorial specialists, must determine the

structure, size, and amenities needed for such a facility.

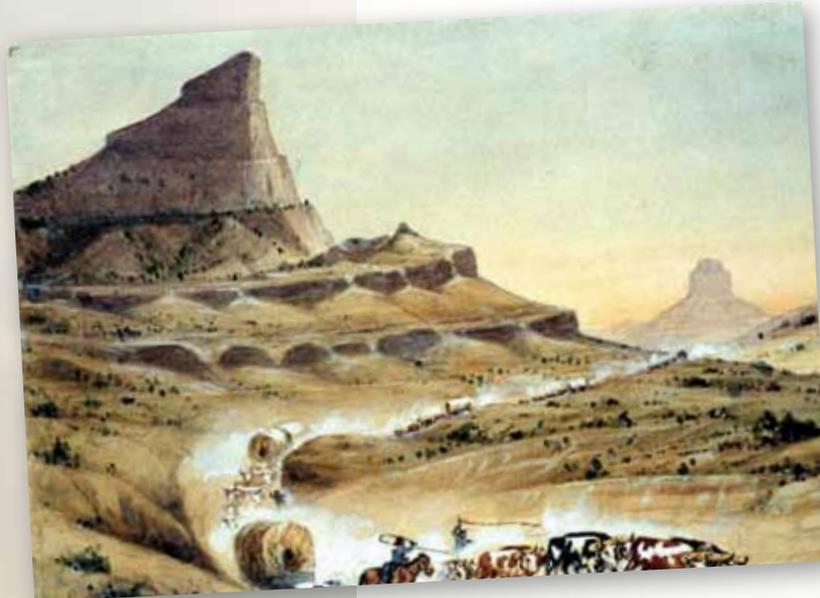
3. *Capitalize on partnership potential.*

c. *Maximize efficiencies of staff at Fort Laramie National Historic Site and Agate Fossil Beds National Monument.*

The lead resource manager at Scotts Bluff is available on a consulting basis to assist nearby park staff with specific tasks. Increased communication between park staffs will ensure this relationship continues to be mutually beneficial. Furthermore, Scotts Bluff's resource manager will be a valuable facilitator who can help to bring in outside assistance to complete projects as needed.

d. *Efficiently utilize volunteers and natural resource partners.*

Resource Management will actively seek volunteers who are interested in assisting with trash clean-ups and exotic plant removal. Volunteer assistance would help the division to achieve operational goals and build bridges with local community members. The Monument will work to advance partnerships, particularly with educational institutions such as the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, as well as other conservation organizations. These partners could assist with natural resource projects, lending expertise as well as volunteer time.



William Henry Jackson

William Henry Jackson was a pioneer photographer and painter who was among the first artists to document much of the west. Jackson first came to Scotts Bluff as a bullwhacker in 1866, when he camped near Mitchell Pass. He returned to the Monument in 1936 to dedicate the new Oregon Trail Museum and again in 1938 to drive a stake in the ground where he had camped 70 years earlier. While plaques remain where he camped, perhaps his most significant contribution to the Monument was 60 paintings, commissioned by the American Pioneers Trail Association and donated to the National Park Service.

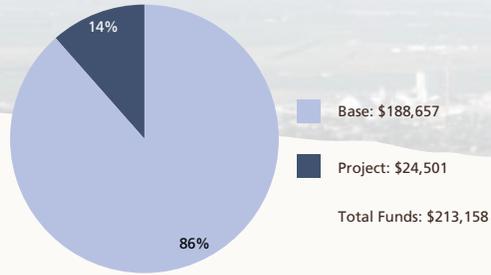
William Henry Jackson's contributions are not limited to Scotts Bluff history. In 1870 Dr. Ferdinand Hayden convinced photographer William Henry Jackson to join his U.S. Geological Survey of the territories. Jackson's retrospective declared, "And if any work that I have done should have value beyond my own lifetime, I believe it will be the happy labors of the decade 1869-1878." Jackson's portable darkroom and cameras included glass plate sizes up to 20' x 24,' which were carried by mules through wilderness terrain. Jackson's "happy labors" resulted in the first-ever photographs of some of the most significant resources of North America — the falls and geothermals of Yellowstone, the ruins of Mesa Verde, the mountains of Colorado, southwestern pueblos, and others. These pioneering photographs have been credited with convincing Congress to preserve many of the treasures of the west as national parks.

At age 92, Jackson came out of retirement to paint murals, oils, and watercolors depicting his early survey days for the National Park Service. For the national parks and preservationist movement, William was there—with all the skills, in all the right places—discovering and documenting the nation's heritage.³

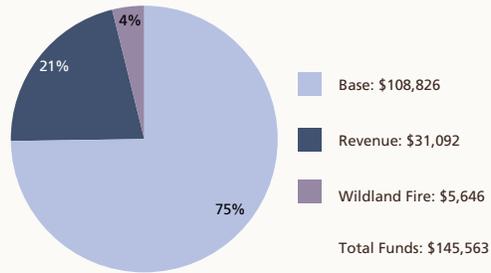
³ Adapted from: Sontag, William H., ed. *National Park Service: The First 75 Years 1916-1991*. Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1990.



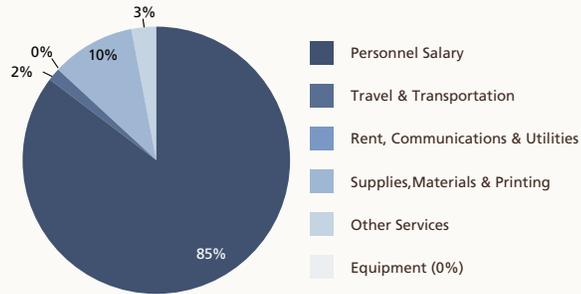
Interpretation Expenditures by Fund Source, FY 2008



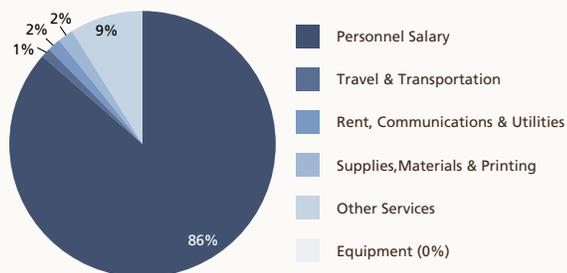
Protection Expenditures by Fund Source, FY 2008



Interpretation Expenditures, FY 2008



Protection, FY 2008





Visitor Services

Visitor Services staff are the most visible of the Monument employees; they collect fees, greet visitors and provide informational orientations in the Visitor Center, respond to emergencies, drive visitors to the summit in the shuttle, provide roving interpretation, present living history and evening programs, and offer programs in area schools.

In many larger National Park Service units, visitor services are branched into numerous divisions or departments. Scotts Bluff, due to its small size and staff, has combined the activities of interpretation, education, fee collection, protection, emergency services, and volunteer management into one division known as Visitor Services.

For the purposes of this plan, the Visitor Services analysis has been broken into two distinct functional areas: Protection and Interpretation. At the Monument, Protection includes law enforcement, visitor and resource protection, wildland and structural fire response, emergency medical services, search and rescue, and management of the fee collection and Volunteer-in-Parks programs. The Interpretation program provides information about the Monument's cultural and natural heritage to visitors and the community through a variety of services, including both personal and non-

personal visitor interaction. At Scotts Bluff, the Interpretation program also includes education and curriculum-based programs.

In FY 2008, Visitor Services expended \$358,721 on Divisional Activities with \$307,747 of that amount going towards personnel salaries and benefits. Approximately 15 percent of this funding came from non-base funds. Of the total funds expended on Visitor Services activities, \$213,158 went to Interpretive functions while \$145,563 was spent on Protection functions.

In FY 2008, visitor services employed 6.25 FTEs, including three permanent and eleven seasonal employees. This included visitor use assistants responsible for fee collection, interpretive rangers, and protection rangers. The Chief Ranger functions as both the division head and a functional protection ranger with a law enforcement commission.

Visitor Center Operations

The Civilian Conservation Corps built the Monuments Visitor Center (also called the Oregon Trail Museum Visitor Center) in 1936. The Visitor Center contains exhibit space, a small auditorium, a small sales area for the Monuments cooperating association, the Oregon Trail Museum Association, and staff office space. During FY 2008, 35,438 individuals visited the Visitor Center.



The Visitor Center has traditional wall and display case exhibits from the late 1950s that are largely outdated and lack engaging features for the 21st century audience. There is a newly renovated William Henry Jackson Room, which displays prints of his artwork and information about his life and role in National Park Service and Scotts Bluff history. A small indoor exhibit area with seating is used for the introductory slideshow and for evening programs when weather precludes outdoor amphitheatre use. The outdoor amphitheatre seats 280 people and is suitable for current needs.

Monument staff is aware of the difficulties presented by inadequate space and exhibits, and is taking steps towards expanding the present Visitor Center, updating interpretive methods and exhibits, and updating the historic building to satisfy ADA requirements. A remodeled Visitor Center would also greatly enhance the outdoor program experience through new audio/visual equipment, improved seating, and the repositioning of a loud HVAC unit. The Monument is currently working to secure project funding for design and development of this remodel.

Interpretation

Scotts Bluff's interpretive division is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Monument's exhibits, waysides and publications. The Division's staff offers in-person interpretation services to visitors through living history talks, evening programs, and informal contact.

During the summer months, interpretive rangers take turns driving visitors up the Summit Road in the Monument's biodiesel shuttle van. In FY 2008, the Monument offered 1,001 formal interpretive programs to visitors, with 11,389 individuals attending.

Despite antiquated exhibits, visitor satisfaction with visitor services (94%) is consistent with regional and national averages, while visitor understanding of the resources (92%) is significantly higher than the national average (87.6%).

Education

The Monument's interpretive rangers provide curriculum-based programming and materials for schools and youth in the community. Scotts Bluff does not have a formal education division, however, its interpretive staff visit schools, distribute relevant curriculum materials to teachers, and participate in local community events and youth summer camps. The Monument's education programs are greatly enhanced through their participation in a coalition, Children & Nature in Our Parks, which includes four environmental education specialists and representatives from other outdoor venues.

With 2,800 students enrolled in K-12 in Scotts Bluff County public schools, there is tremendous potential for Scotts Bluff to expand its educational role in the community. Oregon Trail history is within state educational



Left: Middle School Students visit the Badlands area of Scotts Bluff National Monument during the High Plains Science Adventures summer camp in 2008, NPS Photo

standards, and school districts have been highly receptive to Scotts Bluff's activities and related curriculum. Increasing Scotts Bluff's participation in the local school system promotes the Monument as a partner in the community while educating students about volunteer opportunities at the Monument and career opportunities in the NPS.

Resource Protection

Scotts Bluff National Monument employs two rangers with law enforcement commissions. They conduct a variety of resource management projects including monitoring known artifacts and resources, conducting patrols (by vehicle and foot), reporting and mitigating minor hazards, and managing trespass issues.

Fee Collection

The primary point of contact for most visitors is the fee collection booth at the entrance to the Visitor Center and Summit Road. Three seasonal visitor use assistants work at the fee station, assisted by seasonal interpretive rangers when needed.

Visitor Safety and Emergency Services

Scotts Bluff's major visitor safety and protection functions include Monument patrols, search and rescue, emergency medical services, wildland fire, and criminal investigation. The Monument partners with local police, fire departments and ambulance services to ensure rapid and effective response to any emergencies

Visitor Services Priorities

Visitor Services faces challenges while transitioning toward interactive 21st century interpretation with a limited staff. The following strategies aim to create efficiencies while building an exemplar interpretive program.

1. *Invigorate the Volunteers-In-Parks program.* Currently, interpreters are responsible for multiple collateral duties, tasks that are outside of their position description. Volunteers could drive the summit shuttle and staff the Visitor Center, allowing the interpretive rangers to develop additional interpretive programs to reach greater and more diverse audiences.
2. *Modernize interpretation.* In accordance with the 2008 Long Range Interpretive Plan, the Monument will pursue project funding to install new wayside exhibits and signage that more actively captures the attention and imagination of visitors.
3. *Pursue funding for Visitor Center remodel.* The Monument needs to remodel the Visitor Center in order to more effectively reach its 21st century audience. With a Visitor Center expansion, the Monument can develop interactive interpretive displays, host modernized evening programs, and designate sufficient space for bookstore sales.

Children & Nature in Our Parks

Scotts Bluff National Monument is an important contributor to Children & Nature in Our Parks, a cutting-edge organization of 20 partners that came together with a common desire to engage children in outdoor educational activities. The organization seizes opportunities for children to explore and discover nature in the magnificent array of parks and other natural settings in the Panhandle of Nebraska.

The partnership hosts engaging education activities for K-12 students throughout the year. One of the most popular events is the four-year rotational High Plains Science Adventures summer camp. The camp offers a different focus each year: water, geology, insects and vegetation, and wildlife. By rotating subjects, the camp allows students to attend for four summers and still learn something new each year. To date, the program has reached more than 100 students, many of whom were on scholarship from Children & Nature. Despite only being in its third year, Science Camp already has alumni coming back to serve as mentors at the Camp.

Through this coalition, students and families are able to experience hands-on science that was previously inaccessible. Children & Nature is continuing to develop progressive programs with a focus on increased teacher involvement.

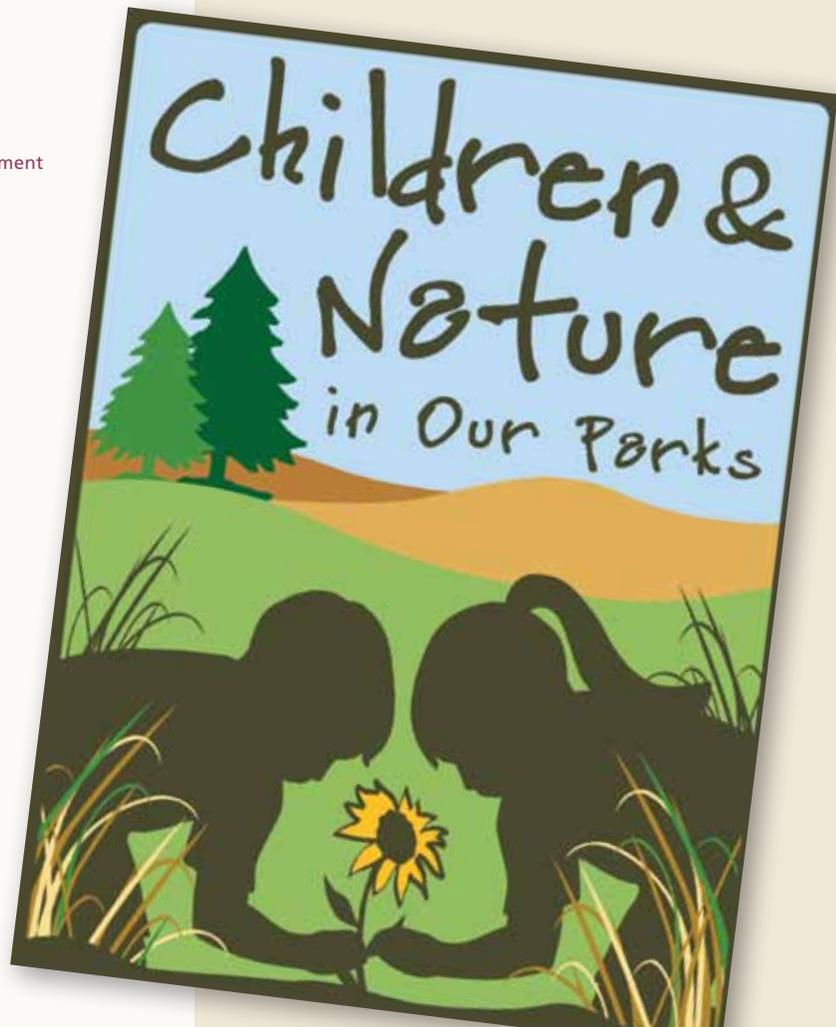
The valuable partners of Children & Nature in Our Parks include:

Local:

- Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
- City of Scottsbluff Parks & Recreation Department
- Community Evergreen House
- Educational Service Unit #13
- Gering Public Schools
- Farm And Ranch Museum
- Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
- Nebraska Prairie Partners
- North Platte Natural Resource District
- Pheasants Forever
- Platte River Basin Environments, Inc.
- Riverside Zoo
- Scotts Bluff National Monument
- Scottsbluff Public Schools
- Trails West YMCA Camp
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln Research & Extension Center

National:

- No Child Left Inside Coalition
- Nebraska Alliance for Conservation & Environment Education
- National Park Service
- Learn & Serve America





Overall Monument Priorities

In addition to the individual priorities for each division, there are three comprehensive priorities for the Monument.

Achieve “Core Operations”

In 2007, Scotts Bluff National Monument completed a Core Operations Analysis to determine the most efficient organizational structure and the staffing levels to operate the park in a safe and professional manner. This process identified gaps in current staffing. A priority for the Monument in the next several years will be to “fill in” this organizational chart by hiring approximately six staff members, while adjusting the organizational model as necessary to adapt to changing priorities.

Community Engagement

The Scotts Bluff National Monument staff considers partnerships and volunteerism to be two crucial aspects of their community engagement strategy. The Monument has a long and successful history of actively engaging with area municipalities, museums, educational groups and other park units. Through these partnerships, the Monument has been able to achieve educational, resource preservation, and development goals within and outside its physical boundaries that it could never have achieved on its own. Scotts Bluff NM and its partners benefit from the spirit of civic engagement and tradition of volunteerism of the residents of Scotts Bluff County, who are heavily involved and invested in their community and community organizations. The Monument staff has identified growing and deepening partnerships and volunteerism as a major operational priority.

Partnerships Priorities

The Monument’s stated goal is to create and actively maintain more than 15 partnerships throughout the panhandle (the western section of Nebraska), state, and region. In actuality, when considering all the partnerships the Monument maintains, it has at least double this number. These partner relationships create many valuable benefits for the Monument including:

Creating relationships with organizations with similar visitor groups and missions

- Attracting visitors to the Monument and the Scottsbluff area
- Providing economic value to the community
- Improving resource efficiencies
- Building community relationships
- Enhancing long-term conservation ethics and support for the National Park Service

The Monument’s partnerships have led to successful joint events, cross-promotion of recreational opportunities, and an ability to capitalize on shared talents that benefit the community. An example of one the benefits of a partnership is the Children & Nature event “Let’s Rock.” This is a two-day event hosted at the Monument in which 700 local middle school students study basic geologic structures, paleontology, the geologic time scale, and much more.

Above: A view of the badlands area of the monument, NPS Photo



Above: The outdoor amphitheatre, directly behind the Visitor Center, Emily Smith

Overall, Scotts Bluff National Monument is an active leader in its partnerships. However, there are always opportunities to deepen and expand relationships. The Monument will pursue these overarching strategies for advancing volunteerism and community engagement:

- *Formal documentation.* Mitigating knowledge and partner loss through documentation will help to keep valuable partnerships in place over time and will aid all parties during staff transitions. The Monument will electronically document partnerships, events, and strategies so that partnership details can be easily shared amongst staff.
- *Staff partnerships.* All Monument staff will proactively increase the number of active community partnerships that he/she maintains in areas that are relevant to his/her position.
- *Deep resource of volunteers.* The Monument will work to better utilize the many sources of volunteers that exist within its nearly 30 local partnerships and beyond.

The following list highlights some of the partner organizations that share a common mission with the Monument. Individual partners often have roles encompassing several of the categories listed below.

EDUCATIONAL:

Children & Nature In Our Parks

Under the umbrella name “Children & Nature,” 20 local and national partners organize more than 15 annual outdoor programs for students and families. These programs promote outdoor educational learning opportunities in natural settings of western Nebraska. The coalition also produces curriculum within Nebraska’s state educational standards that teachers can use in their classrooms. Scotts Bluff will continue to work with Children & Nature to better advertise funding for school groups, explore ways to supplement teacher’s curriculum, and find ways to draw students into the outdoors.

Fossil Freeways Coalition

Both Scotts Bluff and Agate Fossil Beds national monuments are stops along this seven-site fossil highway corridor between western Nebraska and South Dakota’s Black Hills. The Coalition exists to educate visitors on the area’s rich fossil history and encourage them to spend time in the area exploring these unique resources. This effort is the first time a group has sought to organize this area’s fossil sites in an engaging manner for visitors. In the future, the Coalition will develop interactive interpretation such as a media bus tour.

Powwow Committee

Scotts Bluff is an active member of the Powwow Committee, the host of the three-day *Circle the Bluffs Powwow* in Scottsbluff. The Monument provides in-kind support by serving on the



planning committee and managing pieces of the actual event. This event serves to educate non-Native Americans on Native American culture and encourage interest in cultural preservation among younger Native Americans. Over the long-term, the Monument hopes to reinvigorate the Native American community's ties to the land. Already the Powwow Committee has made tentative inquiries about using Monument lands for vision quests and other ceremonies, which the Monument hopes will lead to more opportunities for Tribal involvement and participation at the site.

PUBLIC LANDS:

Wildcat Hills Recreation Area

This nearly 1,000-acre wildlife reserve, a state park operated by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, features comprehensive educational programming, trails, and camping. Wildcat Hills and Scotts Bluff are close partners on community and educational initiatives through the Children & Nature partnership and Platte Valley Attractions Coalition. Scotts Bluff considers it a priority to continue collaborating with Wildcat Hills on activities that may encourage youth to explore the natural and cultural resources of the area.

VISITOR ATTRACTIONS:

Platte Valley Attractions Coalition

The Monument is a part of this innovative collaboration of about 30 place-based regional attractions, with a mission to create a broader awareness and enjoyment of the unique attractions found in the North Platte River valley area.

The Coalition continuously develops new programs that will encourage local residents to take advantage of the area's attractions and will entice greater numbers of tourists to make longer visits to the area. The group will continue to host trainings that teach front-line staff, business owners, residents and community stakeholders to promote regional attractions. This Coalition can work to fill volunteer needs in their organizations by hosting a joint "Clean-Up Day" or a "Get to Know Your Community" fair to invigorate interest.

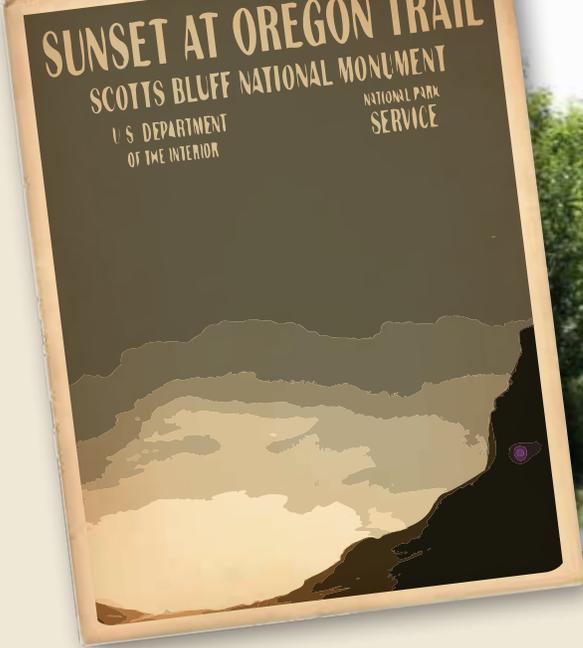
County Chamber of Commerce & Gering Convention and Visitor Bureau

These civic organizations have been long-time partners with the Monument. Through these partnerships, the Monument became a more active partner in the community, particularly in city planning areas such as the development of the riverfront park and new signage providing direction to attractions. Scotts Bluff will explore untapped opportunities, such as hosting large convention audiences for team building or unique Monument interpretive programs.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Panhandle Research & Extension Center

The Extension Center is an exciting, new partnership for Scotts Bluff. Given the Center's focus on agricultural operations and the management of research-based programs, the Monument will explore ways to utilize the Center's resources. Additionally, the Monument may tap into volunteers from the Center's educational gardening program.

Above: Dome Rock, as seen from near the summit of Sentinel Rock, *Emily Smith*



(Right): Fee Booth, as seen from the Administrative Building, *Emily Smith*

Opposite Page (inset): Evening quilting program held at the Scott's Bluff Visitor Center, *NPS Photo*

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

Friends of the Bluff

Like many national parks, Scotts Bluff has a friends group. The Friends of the Bluff was formed in 2007 with the purpose of supporting the Monument's mission, building support for modern facilities and programs, and developing funding and volunteer sources. If used effectively, this group could be the Monument's strongest partner. The friends group can be invaluable in attracting volunteers and serving as a non-partisan entity to facilitate biannual public meetings.

Oregon-California Trail Association

As the nation's largest organization dedicated to the preservation of overland emigrant trails, OCTA is a natural partner for the Monument. The Monument plans to strengthen this relationship by engaging with the Nebraska chapter to host joint events and attract evening program speakers and volunteers.

Western Nebraska Community College

Creating a stronger relationship between the Monument's and the Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC) could lead to exciting opportunities for both organizations. The College's student body is

comprised of very active volunteers, making it an ideal partner for the Monument's volunteer needs. Scotts Bluff NM will work to establish connections with WNCC student groups that have a history of active community volunteerism, such as the student government and student-athletes, to draw students to project-based volunteer opportunities at the Monument.

RESOURCE-SHARING:

Agate Fossil Bed National Monument and Fort Laramie National Historic Site

The three small local park units, Scotts Bluff, Agate, and Fort Laramie, have found that while each individual park might lack certain resources, the three parks combined have much of the staff skills sets and equipment resources they need. The Superintendents of these units have grown this partnership naturally and have been very successful in finding ways to share and leverage their staff and resources. In the past, they have collaborated to share maintenance items for projects and historic wagons for interpretative programs. Future opportunities for the sites to leverage their combined resources include the publication of a tri-park summer newspaper and development of a tri-park curatorial facility.



Scotts Bluff National Monument's Partnerships:

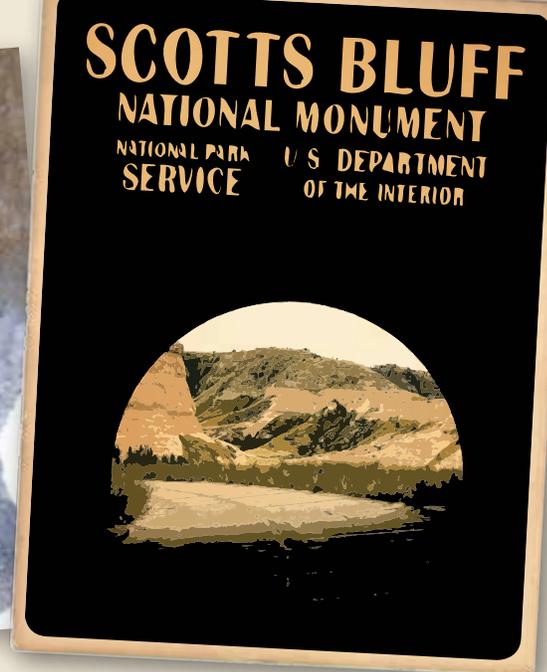
Children & Nature in Our Parks
Chimney Rock National Historic Site
Community Evergreen House
Farm And Ranch Museum
Fossil Freeways Coalition
Friends of the Bluff
Friends of the Midwest Theatre
Gering Convention & Visitors Bureau
Gering Volunteer Fire Department
Keep Scottsbluff/Gering Beautiful
KNEB Radio
Learn & Serve America
National Parks Conservation
Association, Midwest Region
Nebraska Educational Service #Unit 13
Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
Nebraska Prairie Partners
Nebraska State Historical Society
Nebraska State Patrol
North Platte Natural Resource District
North Platte Valley Museum
Oregon-California Trails Association
Oregon Trail Museum Association
Pheasants Forever
Platte River Basin Environments, Inc.
Platte Valley Attractions Coalition
Powwow Committee
Riverfront Development Committee
Riverside Zoo
Scotts Bluff County Sheriff
Scotts Bluff County Tourism Committee
Scottsbluff Family YMCA Trails West Camp
Scottsbluff/Gering United Chamber of Commerce
Scotts Bluff Rural Fire Department
Tri-Park Partnership: Agate Fossil Beds National
Monument/Fort Laramie National Historic Site
Twin Cities Development Association, Inc.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Panhandle
Research & Extension Center
University of Nebraska State Museum
Scotts Bluff County Volunteer Center
Western Nebraska Community College
Western Nebraska Tourism Coalition (20 counties)
Wildcat Hills Recreation Area
Wildlife World Natural History Museum



Volunteer-in-Parks Program Opportunities

- Driving the summit shuttle
- Staffing the Visitor Center Information Desk
- Updating and cataloguing the library
- Conducting informal interpretation on the trails
- Preparing summaries of materials (interpretive media)
- Providing living history demonstrations
- Sewing living history costumes and or/constructing props
- Assisting living history with carpentry or blacksmith services
- Promoting the Monument off-site, or offering off-site demonstrations
- Assisting with exotic weed control through hand pulling, shoveling, or mowing
- Conducting prairie restoration efforts (planting seeds, preparing soils, etc.)
- Cleaning up old dump sites





Volunteer-In-Parks Program

Volunteer-In-Parks (VIPs) are extremely important partners who fulfill tasks that are critical in helping Scotts Bluff National Monument achieve its mission. The National Park Service relies heavily on volunteers to help preserve and protect America's natural and cultural heritage, and volunteers are of particular importance at small park units like Scotts Bluff. In 2008, VIPs volunteered approximately 1,385 hours at the Monument, greeting visitors and assisting with annual events like Christmas on the Prairie, Fourth of July Fireworks, and the Spring Up the Bluff Relay Race. Using the NPS value of \$19.51 per hour of volunteer work during FY 2008, the estimated volunteer contribution to the Monument was \$27,021. The Monument has a considerable baseline to work from, but it needs more help from volunteers to accomplish its mission and goals. Its goal is to increase volunteer hours between 10 to 15 percent per year for the next three years. The following steps outline a strategy for the Monument to use to both attract new volunteers and to make the volunteering process easier and more enjoyable.

1. **Outline Project-Based Calendar Year Program.** One-time, project-based volunteer events appeal to volunteers since they easily fit into busy schedules. The Monument will outline a calendar year volunteer program in which it hosts projects like clean up days, "backcountry" monitoring, and prairie restoration activities that are suitable for

all ages. These will allow the Monument to reconnect with the community, increase their pool of interested volunteers, and create an avenue to encourage resource stewardship.

2. **Maintain a List of Ongoing Volunteer Needs.**

For individuals who are interested in ongoing volunteer work, park staff will actively maintain a wish list of needs so that an inventory of opportunities is immediately available. For example, the Monument can always use volunteers to drive its summit shuttle, restore the prairie, and work with interpretive rangers to tell the area's story.

3. **Inform the Public about Opportunities.**

The Monument will promote volunteer activities in regular newsletters and papers, record radio public service announcements, and participate in activities where staff can discuss volunteer opportunities.

4. **Build Relationships with Existing Volunteer Organizations.**

The Monument will build relationships with potential groups of volunteers in the area. These groups include:

- Friends of the Bluff
- Oregon-California Trails Association
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln Panhandle Research & Extension Center
- Scotts Bluff County Volunteer Center
- Western Nebraska Community College (Student organizations and athletes)

Above (left): A view through the Tunnel which connects the hiking trail through the hills, NPS Photo



Above: A view of Scott's Bluff, NPS Photo



5. *Improve Volunteer Records and Recognition.*

The Monument will determine the best process for recordkeeping and will move to electronic storage accessible by all park staff. These actions will ensure data accuracy and prevent knowledge loss when staff transition to other jobs. Improving documentation will help the Monument to track volunteer hours and improve recognition of volunteer contributions.

Administrative Building Strategy

Current Situation

Scotts Bluff National Monument's current administrative space is a 1,271 square foot adobe-style structure built in 1935 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. During the last 74 years, the building has gone through multiple iterations: built as a 2-bedroom residence for the park superintendent, it is now used as office space for up to six administrative staff members. Other Monument staff have offices in the Visitor Center (located across the Summit Road from the Administrative Building) and the maintenance buildings (behind the Administrative Building). The Monument's combined office space is not adequate for current staff and leaves little room for storage needs or staff expansion.

The Monument urgently needs additional space to accomplish three key goals: 1) consolidate its management team into a single building to

encourage team collaboration; 2) organize files in a more accessible fashion; and 3) manage artifacts according to museum processes and standards. Achieving these goals would greatly improve the efficiency of staff and Monument operations. Creating a new Administration Building would also benefit the Monument by allowing it to convert the current Administrative Building back to living quarters. The availability of living quarters would greatly assist the Monument's in seasonal hiring, as it has been difficult to recruit temporary staff due to a lack of both affordable area housing and on-site housing.

Regarding Monument facilities, the 1998 General Management Plan (GMP) states,

"The Monument will relocate its administrative offices and maintenance functions from their present location. . . within the Monument to a site somewhere outside the Monument boundaries. The NPS will lease or construct new office space, possibly in Gering or Scottsbluff, to provide adequate facilities. A leased or newly constructed facility would provide larger, improved office space, maintenance shop, and storage space. The Monument will use the space vacated by the administrative and maintenance operations to develop more thorough interpretation of the Overland Trails and related subjects."

Since 1998, it has been a declared goal of this National Monument to create adequate space for its staff and resources. This remains a significant priority for the Monument.



The Monument must comply with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), which, in part, directs federal agencies to use, to the maximum extent feasible, historic properties. Even if the Monument relocates offices, it will remain in compliance with NHPA by retaining active use of its historic CCC structures as office, storage, living quarters, and functional museum space.

Possible Options

There are two long-term options to improve the office space situation at the park:

1. **Relocate to an office in the city of Gering or Scottsbluff.** Efforts to find space in Gering or Scottsbluff have been unsuccessful, primarily for lack of adequate space and secure parking for government vehicles. Even if a suitable space became available, there is still the concern of moving Monument management off park property, minimizing day-to-day interactions with front-line park staff. The considerable restraint on staff collaboration which would result from this option makes it an unattractive solution.
2. **Construct new building on Farm And Ranch Museum property.** Scotts Bluff NM, Farm And Ranch Museum, North Platte Valley Museum, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the city of Gering are engaged in ongoing conversations about

relocating onto the Farm And Ranch Museum property, 1.2 miles from the current Scotts Bluff Administrative Building. The Visitor Center's proximity to this property and the ability to link to the Monument through a bike path will allow for easy staff interactions between the locations. Seasonal rangers will finally be able to use the Administrative Building as living quarters, which should increase interest in summer positions. Given the current options, this joint location is the preferred solution to the Monument's space issue.

Moving the Monument's management into one building will be tremendously beneficial in fostering teamwork, both within the Monument staff and site partners, creating opportunities for interaction and collaboration. The organizations also stand to benefit greatly from sharing costs related to items such as construction and curation.

While expanding current buildings on Monument property appears to be another option, doing so would contradict preservation of the historic landscape; therefore, expanding the footprint of the Monument's buildings is not ideal.

Moving Forward

The Monument will continue to work with interested organizations to develop and pursue plans for the joint location on the Farm And Ranch Museum property.

Above (left) Lynne Johns, seasonal ranger, demonstrates cooking on the prairie, as was done by Oregon Trail emigrants, *Emily Smith*

(Right): The footprint of the administrative buildings and Visitor Center is visible from the summit of South Bluff, *Emily Smith*



Financial Plan

Above: Fur trader Hiram Scott's body was found near the base of Scotts Bluff in 1828. The bluffs are thought to be named after Hiram Scott. This cut-out was on display at Scotts Spring, near where he died, during the Monument's 90th anniversary, *Emily Smith*

Appropriations and Revenues

Scotts Bluff National Monument's funding comes from two main sources – appropriated funding and revenue collected by the park through fees, permits, and other sources. The primary source of funding is money appropriated from Congress. These funds support salaries and benefits for permanent staff, basic operations and one-time projects and investments. Appropriations from Congress come in two forms: base funding and non-base funding. Base funding generally remains stable year to year and is used to finance operations. Non-base, or project, funding is awarded through a competitive process: it fluctuates annually and is used to fund one-time projects and capital expenses.

The Monument projects that non-appropriated revenue sources, such as recreation fees and passes, permits and donations, will remain flat over the next five years. This is a conservative projection since it is possible that grants and donations will increase. The Monument primarily uses non-appropriated revenue, such as entrance and park pass fees, to fund activities such as fee collection, the summit shuttle operations, and some deferred maintenance. This money cannot fund permanent staff.

National park units generally begin projecting their budgets twenty-two months in advance of the fiscal year. Like other park units, the Monument is able to project what they expect to receive and spend, but these

projected increases do not become reality until Congress passes the annual fiscal budget. If increases are lower than expected, the Monument will adjust expenses accordingly.

Obligations and Expenditures

The Monument's projected expenses reflect the cost to maintain the level of services needed at Scotts Bluff. The Monument's staff is its most important asset and its greatest expense. Staff salaries and benefits account for 67 percent of the budget in FY 2008, and are projected to fluctuate between 63 and 88 percent of the budget in the out years. This percentage fluctuates due to projected salary increases and base budget increases.

In FY 2010, the Monument will use the majority of any base budget increase to fill vacant and new positions. In particular, the Monument will focus on these positions: an Interpretation position graded as a GS-09, a new Historic Structures position graded as a WG-4749-07, a Biological Technician position that will be either a seasonal or permanent subject-to-furlough GS-05 position, a STEP (Student Temporary Employment Program) position in the Administrative division. The Monument plans to use any remaining funds for supplies and support.

Other significant expenses for the Monument include supplies and materials and contracted services. The Monument expects that labor and non-labor costs will rise at a rate between 2 and 3.5 percent per year.

(Amounts in thousands) FY 2009 FY 2010 FY 2011 FY 2012 FY 2013 FY 2014

Support and revenues

Support and revenues						
Appropriated	947,617					
Operating funds	778,017	883,717	910,117	923,587	937,256	951,127
Base budget increases	93,600	26,400	489,000			
Centennial funds	76,000	76,000	76,000	76,000	76,000	76,000
Agate Fossil Beds Assessment	38,000	28,500	28,500	28,500	28,500	28,500
Non-appropriated*						
Entrance Fees	68,000	68,000	68,000	68,000	68,000	68,000
Quarters	6,379	6,379	6,379	6,379	6,379	6,379
Misc Permit Fees	350	350	350	350	350	350
Total support and revenues	1,060,346	1,089,346	1,089,346	1,102,816	1,116,485	1,619,357

Expenses

Expenses						
Labor Costs						
Management and Administration	226,836	236,794	249,836	260,577	274,479	286,056
Resource Management	95,941	99,742	105,162	108,843	113,239	119,152
Visitor Services	322,719	338,549	351,932	367,912	382,304	399,342
Facility Operations	57,302	59,897	63,676	66,505	70,501	73,562
Facility Maintenance	120,604	126,322	131,564	137,393	143,001	149,316
Total program expenses	823,402	861,304	902,171	941,230	983,525	1,027,427
Non-Labor Costs						
Supplies, Travel, Equipment, Utilities	121,142	123,565	126,036	128,557	131,128	133,751
Contracts	24,000	24,480	24,970	25,469	25,978	26,498
Printing and Transportation	26,075	26,597	27,128	27,671	28,224	28,789
Total expenses	994,619	1,035,945	1,080,305	1,122,926	1,168,855	1,216,465
Projected surplus/(deficit)	65,728	53,401	9,041	(20,110)	(52,370)	402,892

Projected Balance

By law, the Monument must spend 100% of its appropriated operational funds each year, or those funds revert to the United States Treasury. The Monument must also operate without a budget deficit. The financial projection indicates the Monument will face Budget shortfalls in FY 2012 and FY 2013. Possible strategies for avoiding a deficit in those years include eliminating all non-urgent equipment purchases, reducing utility and other operational costs as much as possible, and seeking alternate sources of funding.

Non-Operational Expenses

In FY 2009, the Monument plans to spend approximately \$442,400 on major projects including upgraded lights for the lower parking lot, new boundary fencing, a Science Camp for middle school aged-children, and more. In FY 2010, the park plans to spend about \$110,000 on updating the outdoor amphitheatre and maintenance work on the Summit Road.

Right: *Yucca (Yucca glauca—Soapweed Yucca), with Scotts Bluff visible in the distance, Amy Stasch*

Appendix A: Glossary

Appropriated Non-Base (or Project)

Funding—Those funds authorized by Congress to support fixed-term projects for a variety of park activities (including, but not limited to, construction, research, and education).

Appropriation—Congress passes 13 appropriation bills (for each part of the administration) so that the government has the funding required to operate during a given fiscal year.

Base Funding—Those funds authorized by Congress to support basic and ongoing park operations. It does not include funds to support one-time or limited-horizon projects and investments.

Business Plan—Concise document that presents financial and strategic information for a business to its stakeholders, constituents, stockholders, and customers.

Fiscal Year (FY)—The year’s period over which the government keeps its financial records (FY 2005 spans October 2004 to September 2005). Only charges incurred during the 12 months are included in accounting.

Full Time Equivalent (FTE)—One FTE is calculated as the number of hours worked in a year by a full-time employee (i.e., 52 weeks x 40 hours per week = 2,080 hours). For example, a seasonal employee working full time for 3 months = 0.25 FTE.

Functional Area—The highest level of classification into which park operations are grouped. This includes Resource Management, Visitor Services, Facility

Operations and Maintenance, and Administration and Management.

Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)—GPRA was passed to mandate that all federal agencies develop a performance based management approach which includes a five-year strategic plan, annual performance plans, and annual performance reports.

Investments—One-time expenditures that include both physical improvements (e.g., a new bridge or wayside exhibit) as well as “informational” improvements (e.g., biological or archeological inventories).

Monument—Abbreviated term for Scotts Bluff National Monument.

Resource—a) physical resources, natural and cultural, for which the monument was established;
b) financial and personnel resources.

Revenue—This funding source includes all fee revenues, permit revenues, donated funds, services and items.

Scorecard—A consolidation of data from existing NPS databases, which is used to measure efficiency and performance for all units of the National Park Service. Results for a core set of financial, organizational and strategic measures are statistically adjusted so that individual park units can compare their results with other park units as well as regional and national averages.

Scotts Bluff NM—Abbreviated term for Scotts Bluff National Monument.





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Above: Mitchell Pass, as seen from the base of South Bluff, Amy Stasch

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Travis Boley, Oregon-California Trails Association
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