

The ***Natural Areas Journal*** (Vol. 10 (2), 1990) features an article dealing with "A Synthesis Approach to Research and Management Planning: The Conceptual Development and Implementation," by Allen Steuter and Carolyn E. Grygiel of The Nature Conservancy and Mario Biondini of the North Dakota State University's Animal and Range Sciences Department. Starting from the premise that natural area management at the landscape level implies an understanding of the interactions among ecological forces, and that these interactions can be better understood by an a priori synthesis approach during the development of a management plan, the authors describe a stewardship strategy for mixed prairie preservation. The synthesis approach is used to restore the fire/bison grazing/pocket gopher disturbance interactions to a grassland ecosystem, starting with a conceptual model of a natural area, and proceeding through a hypothesis that the patch dynamics of grassland ecosystems is a hierarchical process organized at different spatial and temporal scales. Findings led to the conclusion that management actions that are independent of landscape context will limit the structure and function of the native communities these actions strive to preserve.