

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

July 28, 2003

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EMS TRANSMISSION 07/29/2003
Instruction Memorandum No. 2003-227
Expires: 09/30/2004

To: State Directors and Field and District Office Managers

From: Assistant Director, Minerals, Realty and Resource Protection

Subject: Public Road Nominations for the Reauthorization of the Transportation
Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) **DD: 09/15/2003**

Program Area: Transportation

Purpose: This memorandum is a request for the State Offices, Field and District Offices to submit proposed public road nominations of candidate roads for the Bureau to be eligible to receive potential funds through the reauthorization of TEA-21 that is scheduled to be enacted this fiscal year.

Background: Last year, Director Kathlene Clarke sent a letter (dated July 30, 2002) to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) advising that the BLM is now a public roads agency, and that BLM's intent is to participate in the reauthorization of TEA-21 through designation of 8,000 miles of BLM public roads on BLM administered lands.

To participate in the reauthorization of TEA-21, agencies were required to submit a "Resource Paper" to the FHWA describing their transportation programs and funding requirements. The Bureau submitted its Resource Paper to the FHWA in August 2002 and this document (1) describes the conditions of BLM's roads, bridges and trails; (2) identifies future funding needs; and (3) reinforces the Bureau's efforts in working towards a comprehensive approach of travel management that recognizes roads as connections to communities, recreation, and other public land uses.

To be eligible for funding under the reauthorization of TEA-21, the BLM is required to designate a portion of its administrative roads as public roads. With the expectation that the transportation bill will be enacted this fiscal year, **it is critical to have some of the BLM roads selected as potential public roads in September 2003.** The strategy is for BLM to solicit reauthorized

TEA-21 funds from the FHWA as soon as possible in early FY 2004 to commence planning, design, and reconstruction/repair to address safety and recreation needs.

The BLM Roads, Bridges and Trails Resource Paper states that we would need \$32 million per year for each of the six years of the reauthorization to rehabilitate, reconstruct or repair 8,000 mile of roads, and bridges and trails. However, specific language in the bill at present is not included to fully fund the BLM. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Recreation Roads and Safety sections of the bill would provide \$11 million per year which is about 33 percent of what we requested.

We are also obliged to meet the Department's goal of having 25% of roads in good condition and 95% of bridges in good condition by FY 2009. Use of TEA-21 funding will allow the Bureau to make health and safety improvements to BLM public roads and bridges for the visiting public.

Action: The State Offices are asked to submit their proposals for public road nominations using the criteria and format of submission documents found at Attachments 1 and 2. This IM supplements IM-2003-145.

Process: State Offices are advised to work with field and district offices to nominate potential public roads. **Public road nominations should be consistent with current land use plans and expected land use planning efforts, and must be approved by the respective State Directors.** Nominations for public roads do not guarantee funding under the reauthorization. A Washington Office review panel will evaluate the proposed public road nominations for priority ranking. We will match funding with our highest priorities. Proposed public road nominations that are deemed appropriate by the review panel will be prioritized and placed in a 6-year plan that is updated annually (similar to the 5-Year Plan for Deferred Maintenance).

Timeframes: We are requesting that you submit your proposed public road nominations by September 15, 2003.

Budget Impact: Although the proposed transportation bill (developed by the Administration and now under review by the Congress) has not yet been reauthorized, the BLM has the potential to receive funding under some of its provisions as currently written. Use of this source of funding will help the BLM better address its \$1.5 billion backlog in road rehabilitation, and address critical health and safety issues for the visiting public and local communities traversing the BLM lands.

Submission Requirements: Please see the Attachment for details on criteria and format requirements for public road nominations. We prefer that you **overnight mail** your submittals because of potential delays in mail service at the Main Interior Building. Submittals should be sent to:

Linda Force, Senior Engineer
Bureau of Land Management, WO-360,
1620 L-Street, N.W. (Room 1075)
Washington, D.C., 20036

Coordination: The BLM State Directors were briefed on the processes and various facets of the reauthorization of TEA-21 and the need to designate BLM public roads to qualify for funding. The BLM Field Committee received information packets containing material on the public road issues. The BLM Engineering Advisory Team has been briefed on TEA-21 on several occasions. Discussions on BLM's road conditions and needs with external groups (such as the Western Governor's Association, National Association of Counties, and the State Land Commissioners) have occurred.

Contact: If you have any questions regarding this request, please call Linda Force at (202) 452-5067 or email Linda_Force@blm.gov.

Signed by:
Bob Anderson
Acting Assistant Director
Minerals, Realty and Resource Protection

Authenticated by:
Barbara J. Brown
Policy & Records Group, WO-560

2 Attachments

- 1 - Criteria and Format for Public Road Nominations (4 pp)
- 2 - Examples of Submission Documents (4 pp)

CRITERIA AND FORMAT FOR PUBLIC ROAD NOMINATIONS

1. CRITERIA

Nominations of public roads should be evaluated through an interdisciplinary process and be consistent with current land use plans and expected land use planning efforts. In addition, for roads to qualify as potential public road designations, the proposed candidate roads **must meet** the following:

- a. The road must be in BLM jurisdiction.
- b. The road must have full easement rights.
- c. The road must be open for public use except when (1) safety conditions on the road are such that the public could or will be endangered; (2) wash-outs or destruction of the road occur due to natural disasters; (3) weather conditions, such as snow, prevent traversing the road; and/or (4) wildlife migrations occur.
- d. There must be a “compelling” public need for a road to qualify as a designated public road (e.g., a vital corridor to important recreation or visitor sites; ties in with the Department’s mission goals and the BLM Director’s four strategic mission goals of recreation, resource protection, serving communities, and resource use).
- e. The intended use and management of nominated public roads must be consistent with road maintenance levels 3, 4 or 5.
- f. Any road upgrades, as a result of designation, must be in conformance with the management objectives established in the Resource Management Plan.
- g. Locations for nominated public roads must fall into one of the following five categories and be identified on the submission document (see Part 2 below). Access to the following types of areas would be appropriate for consideration:

Location Category 1 Roads: Congressionally designated conservation units, such as National Conservation Areas.

Location Category 2 Roads: Presidential conservation designations, such as National Monuments.

Location Category 3 Roads: Administrative conservation designations by the Secretary of the Interior or BLM Director, such as Back Country Byways.

Location Category 4 Roads: Recreation or conservation sites designated by a State Director in an RMP, such as Special Recreation Management Areas.

Location Category 5 Roads: Other roads having sufficient public interest for consideration as identified by Field Offices, State Offices or the BLM Director.

2. FORMAT OF SUBMISSION DOCUMENTS

The following should be submitted in proposing candidate public road nominations:

- a. Use a 1:100,000 (or 1:500,000 in Alaska) map and highlight your proposed public road nomination(s) with a colored marker. On the map specify the name and road number to identify it. This will facilitate the process for cases where more than one road is being nominated from the same map.
- b. On a separate sheet of paper, include specific information on each of the identified public road nominations as follows under the caption **Basic Information:**

State
Name of Field Office or District Office where Road is located.
Road Name and BLM Road Number
State Office Public Road Priority
Easement Rights
Road Material
Road Length
Road Width
Road Condition
Current Maintenance Level
Ranking Points
Cost Estimate
Location Category

c. Ranking Points

Projects are to be ranked using a weighting process based on the percentage of the work (total project \$). The weighting factors to be applied are:

Proposed public road nominations will be prioritized by the Ranking Points established for each candidate public road. Using the Departments Budget Guidelines Attachment G as a template, the following weighting factors to be applied are:

Critical Health and Safety (CHS)	10
Critical Resource Protection (CRP)	7
Critical Mission (CM)	4
Compliance (C)	3

Critical Health and Safety: A road, bridge or trail that poses a serious threat to public or employee safety or health.

Critical Resource Protection: A road, bridge or trail that poses a serious threat to natural or cultural resources.

Critical Mission: A road, bridge or trail that poses a serious threat to the Bureau's ability to carry out its assigned mission.

Compliance: A road, bridge or trail need that will improve public or employee safety, health, or accessibility; compliance with codes, standards, laws, complete unmet programmatic needs and mandated programs; protection of natural or cultural resources or to the Bureau's ability to carry out its assigned mission.

Based on these weight factors, projects are to be ranked using the following calculation:

$$\text{Total Score} = (\%CHS \times 10) + (\%CRP \times 7) + (\%CM \times 4) + (\%C \times 3)$$

NOTE: The total of the percentages for a project must equal 100% and not exceed it.

This ranking formula may appear to be complex. However, it is designed to accommodate all types and sizes of projects, from the simple to the complex. It can be easily adapted to personal computer spreadsheet software for ease of computation. It places the highest priority on facility-related Critical Health and Safety and Critical Resource Protection needs in that order.

d. It is suggested that the documentation be limited to approximately one and a half pages, as illustrated by the examples. Please include a short **Introduction** that describes the road, the area it leads to, and other interesting facts. Include a paragraph on **Current Road Conditions and Justification** – this part goes into detail on specific road problems, historical information on accidents, and/or other information that is pertinent to having a given road be considered for public road status. The third and last part (**Nomination**) is your recommendation that the road nomination be accepted for TEA-21 funding.

e. Two examples for submission of a proposed public road nomination are provided at Attachment 2 to assist you in preparing your justifications for road nominations. **Facts and places in the examples are fictitious and are simply meant to provide the writer with a guideline to facilitate preparation of the supporting documentation.**

f. Please keep in mind that an interdisciplinary BLM review panel will be evaluating each public road nomination, and ranking them based on several factors (e.g., health, safety). Criteria for the factors are currently being developed.

EXAMPLES OF SUBMISSION DOCUMENTS

Two **EXAMPLES** are provided for your use. Please use the format shown when making your submissions of nominated BLM public roads. The names, locations and other information in the **examples are fictitious** and are used to illustrate the type of material needed.

EXAMPLE #1

BLM PUBLIC ROAD NOMINATION FOR HURRICANE MOUNTAIN ROAD

Basic Information

State	XY
Name of Field Office or District Office where Road is located.	Hurricane Field Office
Road Name and BLM Road Number	Hurricane Mountain Road – BLM #6036
State Office Public Road Priority	This project is State Priority 3
Easement Rights	Road has full easement rights
Road Material	Gravel
Road Length	39 Miles
Road Width	This is a two-lane road
Road Condition	Poor
Current Maintenance Level	4
Ranking Points	850
Cost Estimate	\$300,000
Location Category	Road meets Location Category 1 and leads to the Hurricane Recreation Center, an important recreation site.

Introduction

The Hurricane Mountain (BLM) Road leads to BLM's Hurricane Mountain Recreation Center located by the famous and historic Fandango River. Over the past four years, the visitation to this popular recreation spot has tripled from 1,000 visitors per day to 3,000 visitors per day during the spring, summer, and fall months. Visitors enjoy hiking on Hurricane Mountain and boating on the Fandango River. The general public also uses this road for commuting to jobs, homes, schools, businesses and other places in the area.

Current Road Conditions and Justification

Recent condition assessments of this road show that serious and dangerous deficiencies exist along numerous portions of the road. For example, the road developed serious ruts and potholes as the result of severe snow and ice storms during the past two winter seasons. These dangerous conditions pose potentially serious safety hazards to the visiting public and local vehicular traffic. We have attempted to fix the deficiencies using a “band-aid” approach; however, due to limited funds, we are unable at this time to reconstruct the road to appropriate design standards. In addition, much of the gravel has blown off the road from the high wind during the winter season. Lack of gravel facilitates further propagation of ruts and potholes which creates dangerous driving conditions. It is essential to reconstruct this road as soon as possible.

Nomination

We nominate the Hurricane Mountain Road as a potential BLM public road. Having TEA-21 funds to design and reconstruct this road to appropriate standards (such as American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO)) will enable the visiting public and local community to have a safe and pleasant experience on their trip to (or past) the Hurricane Recreation Center. We strongly recommend that this road nomination be accepted for TEA-21 funding.

EXAMPLE #2
BLM PUBLIC ROAD NOMINATION FOR SUGARCANE ROAD

State	QZ
Name of Field Office or District Office where Road is located.	Sugarcane Field Office
Road Name and BLM Road Number	Sugarcane Road – BLM #7027
State Office Public Road Priority	This project is State Priority 1
Easement Rights	The road has full easement rights
Road Material	Dirt
Road Length	43 miles
Road Width	This a two-lane road
Road Condition	Fair but borderline Poor
Current Maintenance Level	3
Ranking Points	1000
Cost Estimate	\$400,000
Location Category	Road meets Location Category 3 and leads to the Sugarcane Monument, an Administratively Recognized Special Management Area.

Introduction

The Sugarcane Road leading to the Sugarcane Monument, and the Sugarcane Visitor Center, has had increased usage over the past three years. The BLM Public Land Statistics indicate a steady increase in visitors by 35% per year for the past five years. In 2002, 4,500 visitors came to the Monument. Visitors are intrigued by the mystique and folklore surrounding the Sugarcane Monument. The Monument’s unique shape of an inverted candy cane continues to fascinate the visitors, and especially the children. It is said that the buffalo (hundreds of thousands) once frequented this area for water from natural springs surrounding Monument. Some visitors have claimed to see night time shadows of buffalos bouncing off the surface of the Monument. The Sugarcane Visitor Center provides information about the area, its history, and unique features of the Monument, and hosts interpretive displays at the souvenir shop.

Current Road Conditions

Although the road has been rated in the “fair condition” category, it does display some serious problems of such an extent that the road will undoubtedly be rated as “poor condition” during the next cycle of condition assessments. The area experienced heaving flooding during the storms of early 2001. Much work has already been accomplished to keep the road functional. However, heavy erosion and washing away of the surface has left the road vulnerable to further deterioration of the exposed soil. This underlying soil is composed of clay and bentonite, and the road becomes extremely slick, slippery and hazardous when wet, creating dangerous driving conditions for the public. Cars have slid off the road or become stuck in the mud. Deep ravines along portions of the roadway make the situation extremely perilous for vehicles. It is critical to reconstruct and repair this road as soon as possible.

Nomination

We nominate the Sugarcane Road as a potential BLM public road. Having TEA-21 funds to design and reconstruct/repair this road to appropriate standards (such as AASHTO) will enable the visiting public and local community to have a safe and pleasant experience on their trip to (or past) the Sugarcane Monument. We strongly recommend that this road nomination be accepted for TEA-21 funding.