

**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

**Forest Service R-6  
R-5**

**OR/WA  
CA**

**Bureau of Land Management**

**United States  
Department of  
Interior**

**Reply Refer To:** 1950(FS)/1736 PFP (BLM) (OR-935) P

**Date:** November 26, 2002

**FS-Memorandum**

**EMS TRANSMISSION 11/27/2002  
BLM-Information Bulletin No. OR-2003-037**

**To:** Bureau of Land Management District Managers: Coos Bay, Eugene, Lakeview, Medford, Roseburg, and Salem. BLM Field Managers: Klamath Falls and Tillamook, OR, and Arcata, Redding, and Ukiah, CA. Forest Service Forest Supervisors within the range of the northern spotted owl.

**Subject:** Update to the Data Stewardship Policy for the Interagency Species Management System

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service (FS) implemented a policy of data stewardship in 2000 (IB-OR-2000-199, May 16, 2000) for the Interagency Species Management System (ISMS). This policy has been updated to reflect current practices.

Data stewardship is a systematic mechanism for management of the data for ISMS. Individuals identified as Data Stewards have been assigned at each organizational level (e.g., FS Regional/BLM State Offices, Forest/District Offices, Ranger Districts/Field Offices [CA BLM Field Offices], Pacific Northwest Research Forest Sciences Laboratories) to work within the framework provided by the Regional ISMS Data Stewards and this policy.

Managers need to ensure that ISMS Data Stewards have a section on data stewardship added to their position description and/or their annual employee performance review when they are assigned data stewardship responsibilities (see [Attachment 1](#)).

Duties for Data Stewards have been formulated in a hierarchical fashion. Each Data Steward will use the data policies and standards developed by Data Stewards in the organizational level above them. The duties at the FS Forest-level/BLM District-level will focus on sponsorship, keeping management informed, data quality control, and funding issues. Data Steward positions are not intended to be full-time, but Data Stewards should be **active users** of the database to try to ensure that they make knowledgeable decisions, recommendations, and data quality control.

Data Stewards may fill more than one role at a time. For instance, an individual may be designated as a Data Steward for a FS Forest/BLM District Office *and* for a Ranger District/Field Office; FS Forests can share Forest-level stewardship. Some field units have identified one Data Steward for flora and one for fauna, whereas others have identified one for both.

Additional information on data stewardship can be found in [Attachment 2](#), "Data Stewardship, Data User Policy for the Interagency Species Management System (ISMS)."

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Please distribute this directive and attachments to personnel in the Survey and Manage Program, the local ISMS Data Stewards, ISMS Users, and to the Information Resources and Geographic Information System staff.

The Regional ISMS Data Stewards maintain a list of current BLM District and FS Forest Data Stewards (see [Attachment 3](#)), including an ISMS Data Stewards mailing list. It is the responsibility of each administrative unit to inform the Regional ISMS Data Stewards of local Data Steward and ISMS user personnel changes.

If you have any questions, please call Kelli Van Norman at 503-326-4325, Stephanie Sprague at 503-326-4327, or Janis VanWyhe at 503-808-6296.

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### 3 Attachments

- 1 - [Data Stewardship Role to Support Data Management](#) (1 p)
- 2 - [Data Stewardship, Data User Policy for the Interagency Species Management System \(ISMS\)](#) (7 pp)
- 3 - [Current List of ISMS Data Stewards](#) (4 pp)

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Paula Crumpton, Jan Ford, George Lottritz, David Diaz, Bob Mobley, Kathy Anderson, Anne Bradley, John Robinson, R5 Mailrooms

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# DATA STEWARDSHIP, DATA USER POLICY FOR THE INTERAGENCY SPECIES MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (ISMS)

September 4, 2002

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Data Stewardship

Effective resource management requires data that is current, accurate, and available for use. Each individual (data user) gathering data is responsible for entering it into an automated format accessible by others and for maintaining it with a high degree of accuracy. Communication about and management of this data can be facilitated by designating lead persons or Data Stewards within a unit. A data steward is a custodian of the data who is responsible for the welfare of the data resource. For a distributed database, assigning Data Stewards to coordinate the management of data at every organizational level is very successful because it promotes a shared data resource. We use this strategy for ISMS and assign Data Stewards who can coordinate use of the database by the data users and be leads for ISMS data management. (See the last page of this document for a list of organizational units that use ISMS for managing information on Survey and Manage [S&M] species.)

Both the Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have increasingly embraced the concept of data stewardship, like many other organizations and agencies. Data stewardship has always been part of a specialist's job when working with program information. Historically, data was stored in file drawers, and later, in personal databases. Agency databases, information sharing, and the use of automated information for management decisions increase the need for data accuracy and structured management of information. Designating FS and BLM Regional/State Office, Forest/District Office, Ranger District/Resource Area (CA BLM Field Office) Data Stewards assists with more effective use of ISMS and streamlines database maintenance.

### Data Stewards

Individuals identified as Stewards **need not always** be the senior technical experts on the S&M Program, the ISMS database, or on the information needed by all of the ISMS taxa groups. However, they should be active users of the database to try to ensure that they make knowledgeable decisions and recommendations.

Duties are hierarchical: each Data Steward will use the data policies and standards developed by Data Stewards in the organizational level above them. Data Stewards in field units will work within the framework provided by the Regional ISMS Data Stewards. Data management is most efficient when the responsibilities of Data Stewards are assigned at all levels, but Data Stewards may exist anywhere in the organization and can fill more than one role at a time. For instance, one individual may be designated as Data Steward for both the FS Forest/BLM District Offices and Ranger District/Resource Area levels, or Forests can share Forest-level stewardship. The FS Regional Offices, BLM State Offices, and Pacific Northwest (PNW) Research Forest Sciences Laboratories also have data stewardship roles.

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### Data Users

ISMS data users are responsible for converting data accurately from field forms into ISMS records and for retaining the field forms as records. The collector of the data is the custodian of this Federally owned data. The collector/custodian has responsibility for entering the data, has edit rights over the data, and is primarily responsible for data quality.

## DATA STEWARDSHIP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### ISMS Data Steward Hierarchy

The ISMS database has multiple users with varying needs, making stewardship both necessary and complex. Data Stewards are required at all levels of BLM and FS. Within the PNW Research Station, Data Stewards will be located at the two Sciences Laboratories, working directly with the Regional ISMS Data Stewards. The following roles are described for the long-term management of ISMS. During the time of active database development, the ISMS Project Manager will be responsible for policy and direction on data management and data requirements, working with the Stewards and groups (listed in item 1 below), and providing budget and other sponsorship for ISMS development and maintenance.

- 1 The Regional ISMS Data Steward(s) will be responsible for regional policy and direction on data management within ISMS, will keep management informed, and will work on application development. They will work at the regional level with various designated groups in the S&M Program, including the ISMS Oversight Committee, S&M Program staff, S&M Taxa Leads and Experts, Strategic Survey Group, and as needed, the Intermediate Management Group. (Note: These groups may change over time, but the intent is that the Regional Stewards work with the ISMS clients/management groups). The Regional ISMS Data Stewards will also be primary contacts for the Forest/District Office Data Stewards.
- 2 Data Stewards at the Forest/District Office level will ensure that regional policies are followed and will develop the additional policies/procedures needed within their offices.
- 3 Ranger District/Resource Area Data Stewards implement Regional/State Office and Forest/District Office policies. Data Stewards at this level are individuals knowledgeable about the S&M survey protocols, field conditions, data quality, and program needs.

### **Data Steward Coordination Responsibilities**

- 1 All data stewardship coordination needs to be at the appropriate organizational levels and consistent with agency culture and general role definitions for staff in each office.
- 2 All Data Stewards will coordinate with appropriate technical staff (e.g., Geographic Information System [GIS], Data Administration, Records Administration, Database Administration, System Administration) and will frequently be the initiators of the action.
- 3 The ISMS Regional Data Stewards will coordinate with other Data Stewards in BLM and FS for purposes of consistency across programs and sharing of data. This will include coordination with FS National Resources Information System (NRIS) databases and other FS and BLM national databases to help ensure that BLM

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(Oregon/Washington/California) and FS (Regions 5 and 6) ISMS data standards are consistent with those of other Federal, state, and non-government organizations. Field Unit ISMS Data Stewards will contribute to this effort as they work with their professional contacts.

### **ISMS Data Steward Responsibilities**

Following are three lists of typical Data Steward duties, broken down by hierarchy. These lists are somewhat repetitive to allow Stewards at all levels to easily see how their responsibilities compare to the Data Steward responsibilities at other levels. The duties are often similar to those at the other levels but are within a Steward's own sphere of influence, his/her own organization, or at another organization for which responsibility has been assigned. These duties should not be a full-time job, except for the Regional ISMS Data Steward(s). It would be unlikely, at any point in time, that a Data Steward would be involved in more than one or two of the following activities. Some of these activities would be conducted only once or, at most, periodically.

#### Regional ISMS Data Stewards

- 1 Develop policy, procedures, and quality levels to ensure timely adequate/accurate data in the database. This includes policy to promote data entry according to the published S&M Survey Protocols and Management Recommendations, to ensure that data is collected according to the published S&M protocols, and to ensure that the data collected are of sufficient quality to support the Northwest Forest Plan (NFP).
- 2 Develop, distribute, and maintain information via email, ISMS website, and Information Bulletins to users including data stewardship policy, data dictionary, User Guide, Training Guide, corporate shapefiles, spatial metadata, etc.
- 3 Determine the need for and provide/facilitate user training specific to the ISMS application.
- 4 With the ISMS Project Manager, serve as leads to develop and implement ISMS Data Standards according to national guidelines, published sources, and FGDC designations. Work with the ISMS Oversight Committee, the S&M Taxa Leads and Taxa Groups, and other ISMS Data Stewards and users to document/define data standards and work rules, including how they will be applied to the database and the S&M Program. This includes alphanumeric and spatial data standards and symbology.
- 5 Follow agency database development/project planning and configuration management procedures in the

continued development and refinement of ISMS.

- 6 Help ensure that database design and content continue to meet the needs of database users. Work with the rest of the ISMS Development Team to identify the need for and to implement ISMS updates which reflect current information and program needs.
- 7 Lead the development of Quality Assurance and Quality Control Plans/Procedures including developing audit plans and carrying out audits. Ensure that the plans are followed by Data Stewards in the field units. Provide quality assurance tools.
- 8 Ensure that applicable data access and security requirements unique to resource and program needs are implemented. Establish and maintain data documentation. This would include computer user handbooks, training packages, data dictionaries, and

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spatial metadata.

- 9 Help the ISMS Project Manager and/or the S&M Program staff with budget documents for ISMS maintenance and development.
- 10 Keep management informed on ISMS issues.
- 11 Work with Records personnel in both agencies to ensure that ISMS paper and electronic administrative record of the ISMS project are properly identified and managed according to regulations for records management and disposal. Develop policy for identification and management of paper records (field forms) at the local level.
- 12 Work with Records Administrators (using BLM Handbook [H-1270-1]) to develop and implement the Official Agency Record Documentation (OARD) for ISMS. OARD documents the legal trustworthiness of the automated system, including what practices/standards are in place to verify that the data in the system matches the data on the collection sheets [data integrity, audit trail, quality assurance (how do you catch input errors), etc.]; system security procedures; spatial data update procedures; individual authority to enter or change data, backup/disaster recovery procedures, etc.
- 13 Work with the ISMS Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Coordinator (Patty Brandt, FS Region 6) and Forest/BLM District Data Stewards to facilitate FOIA and other requests for ISMS data.
- 14 Respond to requests for data sharing from non-BLM/FS entities by initiating data sharing and exchange agreements as needed with Federal and state agencies, non-government organizations, and other entities (such as the private sector). Coordinate the development of such agreements with the BLM State Records Administrator and State Data Administrator, and the appropriate staff from FS Regions 5 and 6.

Forest/BLM District ISMS Data Stewards (including PNW Forest Science Laboratories <sup>[1]</sup>)

(Note: California BLM equivalents are Field Offices without further layers beneath.)

- 1 Serve as the primary point of contact on the Forest/BLM District/Forest Science Laboratory for all ISMS issues.
- 2 Ensure that ISMS regional policies are followed and develop any additional needed policies/procedures regarding ISMS use, regularly orient and educate. Educate Forest/BLM District users and Ranger District/Resource Area ISMS Data Stewards on policies and procedures (i.e., on ISMS paper records field forms, management, loc id standards, project name standards, etc.), responsibilities and other policies/procedures regarding ISMS use.
- 3 Sponsor the addition of new Forest/BLM District ISMS users to obtain ISMS user log-ons/passwords. Communicate new ISMS username requests to Regional Data Stewards. Assure that new users are aware of current ISMS policy and procedures. Notify Regional ISMS Data Stewards of departed ISMS users so that user log-ons/passwords can be removed.

- 4 Assure proper ISMS and ArcView training of all users within own administrative jurisdiction. Evaluate training needs on a regular basis. Coordinate such needs with the Regional ISMS Data Stewards to provide access to periodic training sessions. Provide interim ISMS training for all users within own administrative jurisdiction until formal ISMS training is available.
- 5 Review data within own administrative jurisdiction to check for data entry errors, data completion (based on survey protocol and field form requirements), spatial data accuracy, and ensure adherence to approved data standards for accuracy and completeness. Assure that appropriate corrections are made in a timely manner. Coordinate with the Regional ISMS Data Stewards to review and implement new ISMS Quality Assurance/Quality Control processes within one's own administrative jurisdiction.
- 6 Interact with Regional Data Stewards as needed to further develop and implement ISMS Data Standards and work rules, and to coordinate user requirements. As requested, participate with the ISMS Development Team, the S&M Taxa Leads and Taxa Groups, and other ISMS Data Stewards and users to document/define data standards and work rules, including how they will be applied to the database and the S&M Program. This includes alphanumeric and spatial data standards and symbology, functional business needs, and query-capability needs. It also includes keeping ISMS database fields and pick lists up-to-date in order to meet current information and program needs, which may change as program priorities change.
- 7 Coordinate data entry needs within assigned jurisdiction to meet deadlines and agency policies.
- 8 Develop formal filing systems for permanent retention of field data collection sheets used in the Survey and Manage program, including voucher verification letters. These documents are the legal records.
- 9 Assure that ISMS database querying expertise exists within own administrative jurisdiction. Serve the Forest/BLM District as a technical resource on ISMS, answering questions where possible and coordinating questions with the Regional ISMS Data Stewards where necessary.
- 10 Serve as the Coordinator on the Forest/BLM District for implementing ISMS new version releases, working with the Forest/BLM District Information Resources personnel.
- 11 Work with Regional Data Stewards and ISMS FOIA Coordinator (Patty Brandt, FS Region 6) to facilitate FOIA requests.
- 12 Coordinate with Regional ISMS Data Stewards to develop/implement data sharing and exchange agreements as needed with federal and state agencies, non-government organizations, and other entities (such as the private sector).

#### Ranger District/Resource Area ISMS Data Stewards

These individual's duties are the same as the above listed Forest/BLM District responsibilities, only within a smaller administrative unit. As always, Ranger District/Resource Area ISMS Data Stewards work with Data Stewards at the next level and with the database users in the unit for which they have been assigned responsibility.

## **DATA USER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

ISMS users are given "user permissions" according to their agency functions and the administrative units for which they are responsible. Data access is structured by "data source code." All S&M Program personnel designated as ISMS users in an administrative jurisdiction will be assigned the same data source code. They are primary users who will have the ability to create, update, and delete ISMS records, as well as query or read them. Some staff require more than one data source code. For example, a field technician entering flora and fauna records into ISMS needs both a flora and fauna data source code for their administrative jurisdiction.

The concept of data responsibility means that **the collector of the data is the custodian of this Federally-owned**

**data. The collector/custodian has responsibility for entering the data, has edit rights over the data, and is primarily responsible for data quality.** ISMS data users are responsible for converting field data collection sheets accurately into ISMS records and for retaining the collection sheets as official agency records.

All spatial data associated with a record must be entered at the same time as the tabular record. This includes general surveys. All fields required by the survey protocol are required to be entered into ISMS when the record is established.

Taxa Leads collect data regionally and will enter/edit their own data; they cannot edit data entered by field office data users. Field office data users can enter/edit only their data, not that which is collected by Taxa Leads within the field office jurisdiction.

All BLM and FS staff have query capability.

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**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND FOREST SERVICE ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS COVERED IN THE NORTHWEST FOREST PLAN WHO USE THE INTERAGENCY SPECIES MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**BLM OREGON**

STATE OFFICE  
 SALEM DISTRICT (all Field Units included unless otherwise indicated)  
 EUGENE DISTRICT  
 COOS BAY DISTRICT  
 ROSEBURG DISTRICT  
 MEDFORD DISTRICT  
 KLAMATH FALLS RESOURCE AREA OF THE LAKEVIEW DISTRICT

**BLM CALIFORNIA**

STATE OFFICE  
 ARCATA FIELD OFFICE  
 REDDING FIELD OFFICE  
 UKIAH FIELD OFFICE

**FOREST SERVICE, REGION 6**

REGIONAL OFFICE  
 DESCHUTES NATIONAL FOREST (all Field Units included unless otherwise indicated)  
 GIFFORD PINCHOT NATIONAL FOREST  
 MT. BAKER-SNOQUALMIE NATIONAL FOREST  
 MT. HOOD NATIONAL FOREST  
 OKANOGAN NATIONAL FOREST  
 OLYMPIC NATIONAL FOREST  
 ROGUE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST  
 SISKIYOU NATIONAL FOREST  
 SIUSLAW NATIONAL FOREST  
 UMPQUA NATIONAL FOREST  
 WENATCHEE NATIONAL FOREST  
 WILLAMETTE NATIONAL FOREST  
 WINEMA NATIONAL FOREST  
 COLUMBIA GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

**FOREST SERVICE, REGION 5**

REGIONAL OFFICE  
 KLAMATH NATIONAL FOREST  
 LASSEN NATIONAL FOREST  
 MENDOCINO NATIONAL FOREST  
 MODOC NATIONAL FOREST  
 SHASTA-TRINITY NATIONAL FOREST  
 SIX RIVERS NATIONAL FOREST

**FOREST SERVICE, PACIFIC NORTHWEST RESEARCH STATION**

CORVALLIS FORESTRY SCIENCES LABORATORY  
 OLYMPIA FORESTRY SCIENCES LABORATORY

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[\[1\]](#) Any time the term Forest/BLM District is used, read it as “Forest/BLM District/Forest Science Laboratory.”