

“Best Practices” When Planning for Public Observation at Gatherings

1. Public Observation at WH&B Gatherings

- The COR, in consultation with the local public affairs specialist and the gather contractor, will determine the following logistics:
 - Where the public will be located to observe the gather safely (i.e., locations that would not interfere with the gather or jeopardize the safety of the animals or personnel).
 - Determine if, and when, observers may approach the pens or equipment (trucks) to view/photograph the animals during sorting and loading activities.
 - Schedule discussion opportunities with on-site staff during down times that will not interfere with on-the-ground activities (e.g., herding, sorting/loading animals, etc.)
 - Develop and provide ground rules (observation protocol) to observers in advance.
- BLM staff will escort the public at all times while they are at the gather site.

2. Other Considerations

- The internal communications plan should include a detailed outreach strategy (as necessary) to notify key local, county and state elected officials, members of the Legislature or the Congressional delegation, other agency representatives, and members of the public, interest groups, etc., about proposed (upcoming) or ongoing (if controversial) gather activities. The implementation strategy should specify who, how and when notification will be made.
- As early as possible during the advance planning process, a schedule outlining proposed observation days and locations should be developed. Early planning is needed to provide adequate lead time to ensure the appropriate BLM staff is available during scheduled public observation days.
- Plan and schedule public affairs support for ongoing gather activities (i.e., observation days, drafting, writing and disseminating gather and program-related information, photography, and video support, etc).
- Develop a web page specific to each gather and make all gather-related decision documents, news releases, photographs, etc., available on that page.
- Identify/create a standing bridge line for daily teleconference coordination calls with State, District and Field Office managers, staff and specialists, if needed.
- Schedule in-house photography and video resources to document daily gather operations, public days, etc.) to provide the most transparent report of daily gather activities to the observing and reading public, if needed.
- Prepare “WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO” information for the public (see example provided in Attachment 4).