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[BLM Top 10 Priorities with KM edits.html](#)  
[BLM Top 10 Priorities - WO-100 Approved 7.27.2017 \(1\).docx](#)

Mike and Tim,

Per my conversation with Mike, attached please find a Word copy of BLM's Top 10 Priorities document as submitted to Jim Cason by this office on July 31. David Bernhardt asked each of the Acting Assistant Secretaries to review the submissions, particularly in light of established Administration/Secretary priorities to determine whether any changes need to be made. Attached are Kate's edits/questions on a PDF version of the document. May I ask you to review Kate's edits and make the necessary changes to revise the document. Should you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch with me. Thanks.

Rich

## **Priority #1: Rescind the Hydraulic Fracturing on Federal and Indian Lands (80 Fed. Reg. 16128) regulation.**

On March 28, 2017, President Trump issued Executive Order (E.O.) 13783, which directed the Secretary of the Interior to review the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) 2015 final rule entitled, "Oil and Gas; Hydraulic Fracturing on Federal and Indian Lands," (2015 HF Rule) for consistency with the Order's objective "to promote clean and safe development of our Nation's vast energy resources, while at the same time avoiding regulatory burdens that unnecessarily encumber energy production, constrain economic growth and prevent job creation" and, as appropriate, take action to lawfully suspend, revise, or rescind those rules that are inconsistent with the policies set forth in the Order. Secretarial Order 3349 was issued on March 29, 2017, which directs the BLM to proceed expeditiously in proposing to rescind the 2015 HF Rule. In accordance with E.O. 13783 and Secretarial Order 3349, the BLM is now proposing a rule that would rescind, in its entirety, the 2015 HF Rule.

### **Key Decisions and Milestones:**

A proposed rule to rescind the 2015 HF Rule was published in the Federal Register on July 25, 2017. The publishing of the proposed rule initiated a 60-day public review and comment period. After the public comment period closes, the BLM will review the comments received, prepare responses and take any other actions determined appropriate in order to address the substantive comments received. In addition, the BLM will be sending letters in early to mid-August to initiate tribal consultation for the proposed rule with interested Indian tribes. Publication of a final rule in the Federal Register is tentatively expected in December 2017 or January 2018. Key milestones are summarized below:

- **July 25, 2017** – Proposed rule is published in the Federal Register;
- **July 25 to September 25, 2018** – Public review and comment period for the proposed rule; and
- **December 2017/January 2018 (tentative)** – Final rule is published in the Federal Register.

### **Key Personnel and Staff:**

The BLM has formed an interdisciplinary team comprised of the following key staff for the project: project lead/policy analyst, solicitor (DOI), economist, regulatory affairs specialist, petroleum engineer, and a subject matter expert from the BLM Fluid Minerals Division. Assistance from various BLM state and field office personnel, including petroleum engineers and natural resource specialists, has also been provided and will likely continue to be needed. The Department of the Interior Office of the Executive Secretariat will also play a critical role in completing this priority.

**Start Date:** March 2017

**Anticipated Completion Date:** December 2017/January 2018

## **Priority #2: Revise the Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation (81 Fed. Reg. 83008) regulation.**

The BLM is reviewing its Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation rule (or “Waste Prevention rule”) published on November 18, 2016, to ensure that it is consistent with the policy articulated in Executive Order 13783, namely that “it is in the national interest to promote clean and safe development of our Nation’s vast energy resources, while at the same time avoiding regulatory burdens that unnecessarily encumber energy production, constrain economic growth, and prevent job creation.” Secretarial Order 3349 also directs the BLM to conduct this review to determine whether the rule is fully consistent with Executive Order 13783.

### **Key Decisions and Milestones:**

The BLM will draft policy options for revising the Waste Prevention rule and is awaiting the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management (ASLM) and the Counselor to the Secretary for Energy Policy decision about which policies to propose (between October and mid-November, 2017). After the public comment period, the BLM will summarize the key comments received and draft policy options, and consult with the ASLM and the Counselor to the Secretary for Energy Policy to make key decisions about which policies to finalize (between November and mid-December, 2018). Finally, representatives of BLM, ASLM, or DOI may need to engage with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) during its review. Key milestones are summarized below:

- **October 1, 2017 – November 15, 2017.** BLM and ASLM decision on proposed policy; WO-100, ASLM, and Exec Sec surname of proposed rule;
- **November 16, 2017 – February 16, 2018.** OMB review of proposed rule (90 day minimum);
- **March 2, 2018.** Proposed rule published in Federal Register;
- **March 2, 2018 – May 2, 2018.** Public comment period;
- **May 2, 2018 – August 2, 2018.** WO-100 and ASLM decision on final policy, surname final rule package;
- **August 3, 2018 – November 3, 2018.** OMB review of final rule (90 day minimum); and
- **December 3, 2018.** Publish final rule in Federal Register.

### **Key Personnel and Staff:**

The BLM has formed an interdisciplinary team comprised of the following key staff: project manager, solicitor (DOI), policy analyst, economist, natural resource specialist, regulatory analyst, Washington Office petroleum engineer, and 3 field petroleum engineers. The Department of the Interior Office of the Executive Secretariat will also play a critical role in completing this priority.

**Start Date:** August 2017

**Anticipated Completion Date:** December 2018

### **Priority #3: Finalize coal recommendations report and begin implementation.**

As part of the Department of the Interior's "Make America Great Again through Energy Independence" objective, the BLM, with the Office of Surface Mining, Exploration and Enforcement, is examining the federal coal program and is developing recommendations to streamline the leasing and permitting process. A multidisciplinary/multiagency team of experts has identified a number of recommended program revisions and enhancements that could be carried out through changes to policy, promulgation of regulations, or new legislation that will decrease the processing times for leasing and permitting federal coal and coal mines as well as to remove some of the administrative burdens to the industry. These recommendations have been outlined in a draft report to the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals (ASLM) and will be presented to the Secretary upon ASLM approval.

#### **Key Decisions and Milestones:**

The draft coal recommendations report is currently with ASLM for review and comment. Once comments are received (expected in August 2017), a final draft will be prepared and sent through the BLM surnaming process for finalization (including the Office of the Solicitor, the BLM Assistant Director for Energy, Minerals and Realty Management and the BLM Director's Office). After the report is finalized (expected by late August), ASLM will present the report to the Secretary. Upon the Secretary's approval and identification of issues to address, the BLM will create an implementation team that will then begin the process of implementing those recommendations approved by the Secretary.

- **Early August 2017.** ASLM provides comments on draft coal report.
- **Middle-Late August 2017.** BLM prepares final report and submits for surnaming.
- **Late August 2017.** ASLM presents report to the Secretary.
- **Fall 2017.** The Secretary identifies which issues to address & BLM creates implementation team.
- **October 2017 – September 2020.** BLM implements recommendations.

#### **Key Personnel and Staff:**

A multidisciplinary/multiagency team comprised of key staff from the BLM, Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement, Office of Valuation Services, and the DOI Office of the Solicitor was formed to develop the coal recommendations report. The team includes the Washington Office Solid Minerals Division Chief and Deputy Division Chief, mining engineers, NEPA specialists, economists, leasing specialists, air quality specialist, and solicitor (DOI).

Since this is a national effort recommending Bureau-wide changes to the BLM coal program, implementation of the recommendations will be managed from the BLM Washington Office, Division of Solid Minerals. It is anticipated that a Project Manager will direct the effort.

**Start Date:** Complete report by the end of August 2017 and start implementation of recommendations beginning in Fiscal Year 2018.

**Anticipated Completion Date:** End of Fiscal Year 2017 for report. Depending on which recommendations will be pursued, implementation of recommendations is anticipated to range from less than one year to 3-4 years (i.e., those requiring legislation).

## **Priority #4:** Streamline business processes, with an emphasis on those related to NEPA, Planning, mining, and oil and gas.

Earlier this year, the Department of the Interior identified five priority themes in line with the Administration's Priorities. Streamlining business processes supports the following Departmental themes: Getting America Back to Work, Serving the American People, and Making America Safe through Energy Independence. This priority will identify and implement actionable solutions to streamline BLM's planning and NEPA processes particularly those involving mining, oil and gas development, and associated functions to make them faster and less expensive to complete while engaging state, local, and tribal government partners, the public, and other key stakeholders in the process so that BLM makes well-informed and well-supported decisions.

### **Key Decisions and Milestones:**

- **March 27, 2017:** Secretary Zinke tasked the BLM with developing recommendations to: partner with states; reduce duplicate analysis; improve stakeholder involvement; increase NEPA transparency; reduce delays from litigation; better integrate needs of state, local and tribal governments; and "right size" environmental documents.
- **April 2017:** BLM formed project management, advisory, and oversight teams.
- **May 2017:** BLM work groups met to develop preliminary recommendations. Initial meetings with county governments.
- **June 2017 - July 2017:** BLM held multiple meetings with State and local governments. A 21-day public input period closed on July 24, 2017.
- **July 2017 – August 2017:** BLM will review and consolidate feedback from the public, States, local governments, and tribes. BLM will hold briefings on the preliminary recommendations for the Oversight Team, Field Committee, Executive Leadership Team, Director, and ASLM. BLM will prepare a draft report for the Secretary.
- **August 2017 – September 2017:** BLM will circulate draft report for review within BLM, DOI, CEQ, and other appropriate agency officials.
- **September 24, 2017:** Final BLM report due to Secretary Zinke.
- **Fall 2017:** The Secretary will determine which streamlining recommendations to move forward.
- **Fall 2017 – Ongoing:** BLM will implement identified solutions, including administrative changes (IM, handbook, manual, etc.) and any recommendations for legislative proposals.

### **Key Personnel and Staff:**

This priority will be supported by the following key personnel:

- Assistant Director, Resources and Planning and key support staff – will oversee development of report and recommendations to the Secretary, and implementation of solutions.
- Assistant Director, Energy, Minerals and Realty Management and key support staff – provides recommendations related to expediting energy and minerals development through the NEPA and Planning process, and will help oversee implementation of solutions related to energy and minerals development.
- State Directors and key support staff – provide recommendations for expediting the NEPA and Planning process, and will help oversee implementation of solutions at the State Office and Field level.

**Start Date:** 3/2017

**Anticipated Completion Date:** January 2020

## **Priority #5:** Implement the Secretary's reform initiative by focusing on Administration priorities and emphasizing a capable workforce at the field level.

The overall goal is to realign the BLM organization to meet the objectives of the President's Fiscal Year 2018 budget and accomplish the administration's priorities. This goal supports the President's Executive Order 13781: Presidential Executive Order on a Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch and subsequent direction issued by OMB Memorandum M-17-22.

### **Key Decisions and Milestones:**

DOI hiring controls are currently in place at the direction of Associate Deputy Secretary Jim Cason. BLM-specific hiring controls are currently in place at the direction of Acting Deputy Director John Ruhs. The BLM has initiated efforts to assess all work performed by the BLM and to determine which is most in line with the President's priorities. All other lower priority work is subject to being reduced or eliminated. Workforce reduction efforts will focus on that segment of the workforce associated with work that is being reduced or eliminated. Reductions will be achieved using a combination of normal attrition, voluntary incentives to leave federal service (VERA/VSIP), and voluntary lateral reassignments. The BLM's workforce reduction strategies will remain agile to adjust to circumstances. Note that the DOI submitted a Reform Proposal to OMB in July 2017; BLM has not yet seen a copy of this report.

- **Ongoing:** Continue current hiring controls to limit the incoming flow of new employees.
- **May 2017:** BLM Acting Director established the BLM "Reform Team" to review BLM functions, structure, and workforce.
- **July 2017 – August 2017:** BLM requested VERA/VSIP authority; anticipated approval from OPM for VERA/VSIP authority.
- **June 2017 – August 2017:** BLM Acting Director leads workload prioritization process with input from the BLM's Executive Leadership Team.
- **July 2017 – September 2017:** BLM Reform Team submits ideas/recommendations to the BLM Executive Leadership Team.
- **September 2017:** Develop workforce plans and Table of Organizations (TOs) that reflect the planned size and composition of the workforce in consideration of the President's FY 2018 budget and the priority work.
- **August 2017 – December 2017:** BLM implements and completes VERA/VSIP (if approved).
- **FY 2019 and beyond:** Based on Departmental guidance implement organizational realignment; Continue to develop workforce plans and TOs in line with future budgets.
- **TBD:** BLM will assess human capital impacts and develop appropriate implementation strategies once DOI Reform Proposal is shared.

### **Key Personnel and Staff:**

The BLM's Executive Leadership Team, comprised of the Bureau's Senior Executives, and key support staff.

**Start Date:** May 2017

**Anticipated Completion Date:** Certain milestones will be completed by the end of FY 2017, and in early FY 2018. Work in support of this priority is expected to be ongoing between now and September 2020.

**Priority #6:** Update key regulations, manuals and handbooks consistent with Administration priorities, with an emphasis on: 1) grazing regulations, 2) good neighbor authority, 3) recreation, 4) leasing reform, 5) mining and 6) energy.

Pursuant to Executive Order 13783 and Secretarial Order 3349, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has identified actions that may burden the development or use of domestically produced energy resources and has made recommendations for alleviating such impediments. Also, BLM has identified regulatory, policy and legislative actions that could provide additional opportunities for grazing, recreation, and timber production on BLM lands. Also note that earlier this year the Department of the Interior identified five priority themes in line with the Administration's Priorities. These actions align with the following Departmental themes: Getting America Back to Work, Serving the American Family, and Making America Safe through Energy Independence.

#### **Key Decisions and Milestones:**

Key decisions and milestones will differ depending on the recommendation. For example, rule rescissions will require public review and tribal consultation as well as input on key decisions by BLM leadership, the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management (ASLM), the Office of the Counselor to the Secretary for Energy Policy, the Office of Management and Budget, and others. Reviews and changes to BLM policy such as Instruction Memoranda do not require public review and tribal consultation and input on key decisions will be needed by BLM leadership and the ASLM.

- **July 2017 – September 2019: Grazing** – BLM has identified a number of policy, regulatory and legislative actions outlined below that support the priority of Serving the American Family by eliminating confusion to partners and neighbors created by the disconnect between the public land grazing management rules as currently published and the agency's on-the-ground administration of public land grazing.

Grazing Regulations (December 2017 – September 2019): complete a rulemaking to reinstate the BLM grazing administration regulations at 43 CFR part 4100 that were in effect immediately before the adoption of the 2006 Rule - except for the conservation use permit provisions. The two most recent revisions to BLM's grazing regulations occurred in 1995 and 2006. The 1995 Rule was challenged and upheld except for the provision regarding the issuance of conservation use permits. The 2006 Rule was challenged and enjoined in 2007. Although the agency's current on-the-ground management of public land grazing does not incorporate the 2006 Rule, the Code of Federal Regulations still includes its provisions more than ten years after it was invalidated.

Grazing Handbooks (concurrent, with completion expected September 2019): revise the Grazing Handbooks H-4110 (Qualifications and Preference), H-4120 (Grazing Management), H-4130 (Authorizing Grazing Use), H-4150 (Unauthorized Grazing), and H-4160 (Administrative Remedies). The BLM last revised these handbooks in the 1980s and they pre-date the current BLM grazing regulations that are in effect.

- **January 2017 – October 2017: Good Neighbor Authority** – The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 PL 113-76 and the Agricultural Act of 2014 PL 113-79 authorized the use of “Good Neighbor Authority.” BLM is in the process of developing guidance to the field on how to work with state partners to use that authority to treat insect and disease infected trees, implement hazardous fuels reduction, or any other activities to restore or improve forest, rangeland, and watersheds health, including fish and wildlife habitat.

Use of this authority could help BLM increase timber production on the public lands, and reduce the risk of wildfire to rural western communities, and will thus help BLM meet the Administration priority of Serving the American Family.

- **July 2017 – September 2019: Recreation** – BLM will has identified a number of policy, regulatory and legislative actions outlined below that support the priority of Serving the American Family by increasing access and opportunities for recreation on public lands.

Visual Resource Management (VRM) Manual and National Dataset – To support the theme of Making America Safe through Energy Independence the VRM manual and dataset will streamline analysis and allow the BLM to minimize opposition to infrastructure projects such as electrical power grid and mineral development.

Travel and Transportation Management Handbook – In alignment with Serving the America Family and Secretarial Order 3347, Conservation Stewardship and Outdoor Recreation, complete the revision of the Travel and Transportation Management Planning Handbook. Software tools to streamline public and stakeholder input into planning for travel and transportation on public lands for resources users will be developed to implement handbook procedures. Public access for hunting, fishing, and motorized and non-motorized recreational opportunities will be enhanced.

Legislation – BLM plans to submit the following legislative proposals to the Department for consideration as part of the FY 2019 Budget process.

- **Recreation Permits and Fees.** To reauthorize the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA), the BLM will work with other federal recreation agencies to provide Congress with suggestions for improving the REA for the long term. For the short term, the BLM supports a one year extension of REA authority to the end of FY19.
  - **Recreation Concessions.** The BLM seeks explicit concessions authority in order to manage long term operations of facilities in a manner consistent with other Department of the Interior agencies and ensure fair compensation is received for activities authorized on BLM lands. The BLM Resources and Planning Directorate will work with the BLM Communications Directorate, legislative affairs office, to draft proposed legislation for BLM to submit to DOI and then OMB.
- **March 2017 – September 2018: Leasing Reform, Mining and Energy** - The BLM is working on implementing actions (as detailed in the BLM’s E.O. 13783 Energy Report) that address leasing reform, mining, and other energy programs. These actions represent a combination of rule rescissions, reviews of existing policy, promulgation of new policy or guidance, or similar actions, all



of which aim to reduce burdens on energy producers. The BLM will continue to pursue these recommendations, which cover a range of categories that include, but are not limited to:

- **Climate Change:** (e.g., rescission of a BLM memo that transmits Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) guidance on consideration of greenhouse gas emissions and the effects of climate change in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews);
- **Mitigation:** (e.g., BLM is reviewing and revising the Bureau's manual section and handbook related to Mitigation, which provide direction on the use of mitigation, including compensatory mitigation, to support the BLM's multiple-use and sustained-yield mandates);
- **Coal:** (e.g., BLM is reviewing three coal-related instruction memos (IM 2014-156, IM 2017-035, and IM 2017-037), with the goal of updating or rescinding them); and
- **Oil and Gas:** (e.g., the BLM is moving forward with rescinding the Hydraulic Fracturing regulation and is reviewing leasing policies (IM 2010-117, 2013-101, and 2013-177), with the goal of updating or rescinding them).

#### **Key Personnel and Staff:**

This priority will be supported by the following key personnel:

- Assistant Director, Resources and Planning
- Assistant Director and Deputy Assistant Director, Energy, Minerals, and Realty Management
- Deputy Assistant Director, Resources and Planning
- Division Chief, Recreation and Visitor Services
- Division Chief, Forest, Rangeland and Plant Conservation
- Division Chief, Fluid Minerals
- Division Chief, Solid Minerals
- Division Chief, Regulatory Affairs
- State Directors – Will oversee implementation of any changes to guidance or regulations.

**Start Date:** Various, beginning January 2017 for Good Neighbor Authority, March 2017 for Leasing Reform, Mining and Energy, and 9/2017 for grazing.

**Anticipated Completion Date:** Various, ending October 2017 for Good Neighbor Authority, ending in fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2018 for Leasing Reform, Mining and Energy, and September 2019 for grazing regulations and grazing handbooks.

**Priority #7:** Complete priority land use plans – in particular, those related to updating the sage grouse plans, recreation, grazing, and energy independence.

Earlier this year the Department of the Interior identified five priority themes in line with the Administration's Priorities. This priority aligns with the following Departmental themes: Making America Safe through Energy Independence, Getting America Back to Work, and Serving the American Family. Completing priority land use plans will support these themes by maximizing lands available for energy and minerals development and providing for robust grazing development and recreation access and opportunities. In completing these priority plans, BLM will engage with State, tribal, and local governments, and allow for meaningful public and stakeholder comment to restore trust in local communities.

#### **Key Decisions and Milestones:**

The BLM Resources and Planning Directorate and the BLM Energy, Minerals, and Realty Management Directorate will compile a list of priority RMPs, which will be approved by the BLM Director and Assistant Secretary for Lands and Minerals to track completion toward this goal. State Directors will oversee the completion of priority plans in their states and the Washington Office will expedite review and approval of those RMPs. The most important milestones in the development of an RMP are 1) Scoping; 2) Completion of the Draft RMP (DRMP), 3) Completion of the Proposed RMP (PRMP), and 4) Signing of the Record of Decision (ROD). On average, RMP revisions take 4 to 6 years to complete.

- **September 2017:** WO-200 and WO-300 Directorates develop a list of priority resource management plans.
- **Fall 2017 – September 2020:** Update the sage grouse resource management plans.
- **Rolling 2017-2020:** States submit RMP Documents for Washington Office review.
- **Rolling 2017-2020:** Washington Office completes expedited review of priority RMPs.

#### **Key Personnel and Staff:**

This priority will be supported by the following key personnel:

- Assistant Director, Resources and Planning and key support staff.
- Acting Assistant Director, Energy, Minerals and Realty Management and key support staff.
- State Directors and key support staff – Each BLM State Director is likely to have one or more plans, which he/she will oversee to completion.

**Start Date:** 3/2017

**Anticipated Completion Date:** Summer 2017 – January 2021 – For signed Records of Decision for Identified Priority Plans.

## **Priority #8: Increase timber harvest in Western Oregon and in the Public Domain.**

The priority goal is to serve the American family and rebuild BLM's relationship with the counties in western Oregon and across the West by increasing the annual timber harvest so that those local communities benefit from additional economic activity from increased timber production and from an increase in the share of timber receipts their local governments receive. Western Oregon BLM lands have offered an average volume of 215 MMBF of timber per year over the last decade. Under the 2016 Resource Management Plans, the projected annual harvest is 278 MMBF of timber per year. On public domain forest lands, an average of 25 to 35 MMBF of timber is offered annually. Of the 58 million acres of public domain forest and woodlands, an estimated 20-25 percent are at increased risk due to insect infestation, disease, drought, and catastrophic wildfire. The BLM treats 5,000 – 10,000 acres of forests annually through timber sale and stewardship contracts. Increasing the volume of timber harvested on BLM lands would require additional program capacity and funding from annual appropriations. On average, 13 jobs are created for every 1 MMBF of timber harvested. The approximately 230 to 240 MMBF of timber BLM has offered for sale each year is worth \$40 to \$50 million dollars, and in FY 2015 timber harvested on BLM lands generated \$88 million in economic activity and supported 380 jobs.

### **Key Decisions and Milestones:**

- **Each Fiscal Year:** Secure additional program funding through Annual Appropriations – Increasing timber volume to 278 MMBF of timber offered per year in Western Oregon would require approximately \$6 million in additional funding each year (compared to FY 2017 funding) through FY 2021. Also, at the Department's request, BLM submitted an over target request for \$5 million dollars to the Department for FY 2019 to increase timber harvests on Public Domain Lands.
- **January 2018:** Issue Good Neighbor Authority Manual to provide BLM field offices with additional management tools.
- **Ongoing:** Work with Congress on new authorities to increase timber production – BLM plans to submit several legislative proposals to the Department for consideration as part of the FY 2019 Budget process, which would give BLM additional management flexibility to conduct timber harvests on BLM lands. These requested authorities include:
  - Reauthorize the Forest Ecosystem Health and Recovery Fund.
  - Give BLM Categorical Exclusion authority for up to 3,000 acres when implementing forest resiliency treatments on lands identified by the Governors or designated by the Secretary to be high risk due to wildfire. The Forest Service already has this authority.
  - Give BLM Categorical Exclusion authority for certain vegetation management activities in sagebrush rangeland conservation and restoration that does not exceed 10,000 acres or conducted in response to a natural disturbance but does not exceed the extent of the disturbance.

### **Key Personnel and Staff:**

This priority will be supported by the following key personnel:

- Assistant Director, Resources and Planning and key support staff.
- Oregon State Director and key support staff.
- Assistant Director, Communications and key support staff.
- Assistant Director, Business, Fiscal, and Information Resources Management and key support staff.

**Start Date:** 7/2017

**Anticipated Completion Date:** 1/2021 – for full volume increase to 278 MMBF in western Oregon.

**Priority #9:** Develop and begin implementing a wild horse and burro plan for all herd management areas to hit appropriate management levels by 2027.

BLM will “Make America Great through Shared Conservation Stewardship” by moving the Wild Horse and Burro program onto a sustainable trajectory that will be on track to meet an appropriate management level (AML) of 27,000 on-range horses and burros by 2027. The current on-range population is 73,000, and continues to grow. Achieving this goal will involve working with Congress to restore legislative flexibility that would allow the BLM to use all management tools Congress provided for in the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. It would also involve strengthening partnerships and targeting available program capacity not dedicated to managing off-range populations to reduce herd sizes by removing excess animals, implementing fertility control, conducting research to improve fertility control methods, and adopting or selling animals in order to improve the health of public rangelands. At present, BLM maintains 46,000 wild horses and burros (WHB) in corrals and pastures that cost \$49 M in 2016, over 60% of the program’s budget. By 2027, the BLM will reduce off-range population to approximately 7,500 animals through sales and adoptions.

**Key Decisions and Milestones:**

- **TBD:** Congress provides management authority, especially removal of the rider prohibiting the destruction of healthy animals and sale without limitation
- **Ongoing:** Large scale removals of wild horses and burros from public lands to attain AML, beginning with 6,250 in FY18 (about \$6.5 million) and 18,500 annually (\$20 million each year adjusted for inflation) thereafter until AML is reached in 2027.
- **Ongoing:** Implement large-scale fertility control applications to maintain target numbers with fewer removals, beginning with 500 animals (\$1.5 million) in FY18 and 2,000 annually thereafter (\$5.8 million each year adjusted for inflation) until AML is reached and adjusted to reduce the number of removals necessary to maintain AML thereafter.
- **Fiscal Year 2018 – Ongoing:** Sell unadopted animals without restrictions, beginning with 9,000 animals in FY18, 24,000 annually thereafter until off-range population has been reduced to about 7,500 animals in 2025. Sales would equal all removed and upadoptable animals thereafter. Unit costs for selling animals would vary widely depending on many factors (shipping, destination, sale site location, etc).
- **Ongoing:** Through research, develop longer acting fertility control methods than those currently available. This would help reduce the cost of not only achieving AML, but also maintaining it into the future.
- **Ongoing:** Reduce holding costs through sales and adoptions from the current 46,000 (approximately \$50 million) to approximately 7,500 in 2022 (approximately \$15 million).

**Key Personnel and Staff:**

This priority will be supported by the following key personnel:

- Assistant Director, Resources and Planning and key support staff.

- Assistant Director, Business, Fiscal, and Information Resources and key support staff – will work with Congress to secure the necessary funding for the program to reach AML.
- Assistant Director, Communications and key support staff – will work with Congress to secure the necessary management flexibility to reach AML.
- State Directors and key support staff – in States with Wild Horse and Burro populations, they oversee fertility control, gather, and adoption activities.

**Start Date:** 10/2017

**Anticipated Completion Date:** 9/2027 for AML of on-range horses. Large scale removal of 6,250 animals in FY 2018, and 18,500 annually thereafter. Treat 500 animals with fertility control applications in FY 2018 and 2,000 annually thereafter. Sell 9,000 animals in FY 2018 and appropriate numbers based on population size thereafter.

**Priority #10:** Improve rangeland health by addressing invasive plants and focusing on appropriate fire management strategies to include fire suppression, reducing hazardous fuels, establishing fuel breaks, and rehabilitation.

Earlier this year the Department of the Interior identified five priority themes in line with the Administration's Priorities. Improving rangeland health supports of the following Departmental themes: Making America Great through Shared Conservation Stewardship, and Serving the American Family. The BLM has identified the following focus areas for improving rangeland health:

1. Fire Suppression
2. Managing Fuels and Establishing Fuel Breaks
3. Rehabilitation of Fire Damaged Landscapes

This priority will further the Administration's goals of being a good neighbor, supporting traditional land uses such as grazing, and promoting multiple-uses on public lands. To carry out this priority, the BLM will emphasize partnering with Federal, State, and local governments, and work cooperatively across the west to support the Administration's priorities.

**Key Decisions and Milestones:**

**Focus Area #1: Fire Suppression.** The BLM will support this effort by: 1) Enhancing wildfire response in areas more likely to experience large, unwanted wildfires that threaten critical rangeland resources, homes, communities and community interests; 2) Investing in the wildland fire firefighting workforce at all levels (federal, state, tribal, and local) to meet the increasing complexities and demands of firefighting inside and outside the wildland urban interface; 3) Extending federal firefighting capability by getting federal excess firefighting and communication equipment into the hands of our rural, rangeland partners; 4) Emphasizing wildfire prevention at the community level to enhance the effectiveness of initial response; and 5) Emphasizing programs and activities that prevent human-caused ignitions, whether accidental or incendiary, where these ignitions, combined with high levels of area burned, suggest the greatest need.

**Focus Area #2: Managing Fuels & Establishing Fuel Breaks.** The BLM will support this effort by: 1) Designing and prioritizing fuel treatments (prescribed fire, and mechanical, biological and chemical treatments) where wildfires threaten critical rangeland resources, homes, communities and community interests to reduce fire intensity, structure ignition and wildfire extent; 2) Implementing strategically placed fuel treatments, where feasible, to interrupt fire spread across landscapes; 3) Promoting landscape scale fuels management activities that address creation and maintenance of resilient landscapes.

**Focus Area #3: Rehabilitation of Fire Damaged Landscapes.** Successful implementation of a restoration program would result in landscapes across all jurisdictions that are resilient to fire-related disturbances in accordance with management objectives. The BLM will support this effort by prioritizing restoration activities across all ownerships to create resilient landscapes in areas facing high wildfire risk, significant watershed health issues, wildlife and fish habitat degradation, or

wildfire-damaged landscapes, especially areas identified in state wildfire risk assessments, state forest action plans, and community wildfire protection plans. The BLM will work to establish site appropriate vegetative communities that resist dominance of invasive species and restore resiliency to meet wildlife and user needs.

**Milestones:**

- **Ongoing – year round:** Support fire suppression, address hazardous fuels and restore burned areas to improve rangeland health.
- **Ongoing – year round:** Prevent the spread and dominance of invasive and noxious plants by partnering with counties and State governments to treat new and existing disturbances.
- **Ongoing - each fiscal year:** BLM will establish site appropriate vegetative communities and restore burned and degraded landscapes by prioritizing funding to high risk and high value areas through integrated cross program coordination.
- **Ongoing – each fiscal year:** BLM Fire and Aviation and Budget staff will work with the Department (PMB and OWF) to establish sufficient budgetary authority to maintain a professional fire management workforce to support preparedness efforts at the local level.
- **Fiscal Year 2018:** BLM will work with the Department (PMB and OWF) to suggest language for the 2019 Appropriations bill that would give the Department the authority to transfer excess federal firefighting and communication equipment to rural partners.
- **Fiscal Year 2019:** BLM finalizes NEPA streamlining efforts to allow BLM to employ C-EX authority to Fuels Management and Rehabilitation activities, allowing landscape level treatments in necessary timeframes;

**Key Personnel and Staff:**

The BLM Fire and Aviation Directorate divisions of Fire Planning and Fuels Management, Operations, and Aviation are primarily responsible for supporting this priority. The BLM Resources and Planning Directorate division of Forest, Rangeland Riparian and Plant Conservation also has an important role. Many of the milestones within this priority will need support from the Department of Interior Office of Policy, Management and Budget, and the Department of Interior Office of Wildland Fire.

**Start Date:** August 2017

**Anticipated Completion Date:** Overall goals have no end date, as wildland fire response is a permanent program. Depending on the milestones, completion dates will be between 2017 and 2021.