

From: Cash, Marcia
To: [Randal Bowman](#)
Subject: After Actions report
Date: Thursday, October 05, 2017 6:34:39 PM
Attachments: [AfterActions.pdf](#)

Give me a call if you have questions.

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After Actions Report
Monument Review Notice – DOI-2017-0002
Analysis of Public Comments Received May 11 – July 10, 2017
2,839,046 Commenters represented in 783,340 records submitted

*Respectfully submitted by Marcia Cash, Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) Administrator
Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) October 5, 2017*

Background

Comments were managed and analyzed using DiscoverText from Texifter LLC, the comment analysis tool used by Fish and Wildlife Service for the past several years. Because of the sheer number of comments expected and the short timeframe allowed for analysis and reporting, Dr. Stuart Shulman was hired to manage the project. Being the owner of DiscoverText, his expertise eliminated the learning curve associated with training the DOI reviewers so they could immediately begin coding the comments. Public comments from Regulations.gov were provided electronically to Dr. Shulman by DOI personnel. He uploaded them into DiscoverText, ran the initial deduplication, managed access to DOI reviewers, and prepared the data sets for coding. Dr. Shulman assisted DOI personnel throughout the process.

Observations

1. Not all metadata fields are utilized in the DOI configuration in FDMS. Had more fields been available, we could have answered questions from Secretary's office, such as comment counts by State. *See Attachment A.*
2. Agency vs Public view. Metadata fields in FDMS can be individually set to be either publicly viewable or agency-only viewable. Information collected that isn't available to the public could be helpful to DOI staff. This was particularly problematic because we were required to use only public data.
3. FDMS metadata fields can be customized for agency use. This could have been helpful for review purposes.
4. All fields should be used when posting documents – i.e. Document Type, etc. This helps the search capability.
5. Mass mailings require special handling. There should be only one source for comment counts. When some totals are kept manually and some in DiscoverText, there will be discrepancies.
6. DiscoverText could be modified to provide additional analysis DOI needs beyond comment analysis:
 - a. Add field to capture number of submitters from comments for reporting capability. Use report to enter "Number Submitters" into FDMS. Feature not available in FDMS.
 - b. Run API from Regulations.gov against records in DiscoverText to ensure all comments were captured.
 - c. Combine all projects into one dataset for reporting purposes.

Actions Being Pursued by FWS

1. Submitted request to FDMS Change Control Board to add a feature to comment screen on Regulations.gov that allows submitter to indicate when a mass mailing is being entered. Every

comment record is defaulted to indicate one submitter represented. Mass mailing comment records must be manually edited to record the number of submitters represented by the organization. Currently there is no way to be alerted to a mass mailing other than opening every attachment received. There could be thousands of attachments. This change could identify those records that need attention and save time.

2. Submitted request to FDMS Change Control Board to provide an alternative to bulk extracts for receiving comment records. Currently, no efficient way to extract 100,000s of comments. Hundreds of .zip files. Can't consolidate Excel files from zip files. API would seamlessly update DiscoverText.

Final Thoughts

FWS is a power-user of FDMS and is no stranger to massive comment responses and short review deadlines. With the onset of eRulemaking, most of the comments are entered via Regulations.gov. We have to deal with FDMS to retrieve comment records.

FDMS is a government-wide program. Only a few agencies have the comment activity we experience. FDMS is designed to handle the needs of the majority of users – which is why it does not work well for FWS. We have relied on DiscoverText for many years to provide the tools we need.

FDMS was deployed on a limited basis almost 10 years ago by the Department of the Interior (DOI). The annual cost is shared among the Bureaus and Offices – FWS being the biggest contributor. But as DOI's recent Monuments Review Notice shows, others can experience high volume as well. There are ways DOI can be better prepared to handle comment management without reinventing the wheel each time.

Additionally, FDMS has capabilities not being fully utilized, which have been included in the annual cost every year. The question is to use or not to use?

- Full deployment – include Notices?
- All supporting material in one predictable place on Regulations.gov.
- Efficiencies for staff, i.e. permit applications being in the docket with the Notice cuts down on phone calls from the public.
- There is a benefit to the public – transparency. *See Attachment B.*
- Should DOI be consistent with FDMS deployment across Bureaus and Offices?
- Agency contract with DiscoverText?
 - Eliminate need to duplicate contracting efforts.
 - Have program files on DOI servers – no FEDRAMP.
 - One training source.
- Best practices for comment analysis.
- Data Call – how much is spent on consultants to analysis comments?

Attachment A – Fields on DOI Comment form on Regulations.gov vs Available Fields

1 Your Information 2 Your Information 3 Your Preview 4 Your Receipt

Information entered will be viewable on Regulations.gov [View Commenter's Checklist \(PDF\)](#)

Comment (Required) [?](#)

5000 characters remaining

Upload file(s) (Optional) [?](#)

Choose files

Drop files here

First Name Last Name

☒ I want to provide my contact information

ZIP/Postal Code

Email Address

☒ I am submitting on behalf of a third party

Submitter's Representative Organization Name

Government Agency Type Government Agency

Select an Agency Type... - Select an Agency Type first -

[Continue](#)

first_name	First Name	Submitter's first name	Custom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
mid_initial	Middle Name	Submitter's middle name	Custom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
last_name	Last Name	Submitter's last name	Custom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
address1	Mailing Address	Submitter's mailing address line 1	Default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
address2	Mailing Address 2	Submitter's mailing address line 2	Default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
city	City	Submitter's city	Default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
country	Country	Submitter's country	Default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
us_state	State or Province	Submitter's state	Default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
zip	ZIP/Postal Code	Submitter's ZIP/Postal Code	Default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
email	Email Address	Submitter's email address	Default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
phone	Phone Number	Submitter's telephone number	Default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
fax	Fax Number	Submitter's fax number	Default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
organization	Organization Name	Submitter's organization	Custom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
submitter_rep	Submitter's Representative	Submitter's representative	Custom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
submitter_rep_address	Representative's Address	Submitter representative's address	Default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
submitter_rep_city_state	Rep's City, State & Zip	Submitter representative's city, state & zip	Default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
gov_agency_type	Government Agency Type	The type of government agency that the submitter represents	Custom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
gov_agency	Government Agency	Name of the government agency that the submitter represents	Custom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Attachment B – Memo Requiring Supporting Material in Regulations.gov



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



In Reply Refer To:
FWS/AES/DCC/061994

MAY 09 2016

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors, 1-8

From: Deputy Director

Subject: Information Disclosure Policy

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is dedicated to making its implementation of the Endangered Species Act (Act) more transparent. To that end, we will make publicly available, to the extent allowable by law, the scientific data and analyses relied upon in our rulemakings.

The Service will post all cited literature that is used in rulemaking decisions under the Act, and that is not already publicly available, on Regulations.gov concurrent with the Federal Register publication. Rulemakings include proposed and final listings, critical habitat designations, delistings, reclassifications, section 4(d) and 4(e) rules under and section 10(j) rules. Where cited references or literature used in the rulemaking process are not published and readily available to the public, (such as with grey literature, information from States, or other unpublished resources), we will post those documents on Regulations.gov. Issues of intellectual property law, copyright, and open access will be considered, and every effort will be made to ensure maximum visibility of the information used to make rulemaking decisions. Open access may be restricted in accordance with government efforts to safeguard proprietary information.

Please distribute this Memorandum to all offices that prepare and review rulemakings under section 4 and 10 of the Act.

Thank you for your commitment to efficient and effective implementation of the Act. If you have questions, please contact Mr. Gary Frazer, the Service's Assistant Director - Ecological Services, at (202) 208-4646.