

**United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Colorado State Office
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, Colorado 80215-7076**

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Instruction Memorandum No. CO-98-003
Expires: 09/30/98

To: District Managers and Area Managers, Colorado

From: Deputy State Director, Resource Services

Subject: Implementation of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Colorado Statewide Automated Environmental Assessment (EA) Monitoring System DD: 11/21/97

During this last fiscal year the BLM Colorado State Management Team (SMT) committed to a number of actions to help implement our Strategic Plan and individual Tactical Action Team reports.. One of those actions was in support of streamlining the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and documentation by automating our EAs and logs. Such a process will not only increase business efficiency by providing a standarized and automated EA decision matrix, but will also improve customer service by allowing the public to have ready access to our environmental documents and project status logs.

Moreover, the Electronic Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Amendments of 1996 require agencies to make such information available to the public in electronic format by November 1, 1997, (See the subject IM No. 97-46, dated 12/27/96). This requirement was reinforced in the current fiscal year (FY) 1998 Preliminary Annual Work Plan (PAWP) Directives for subactivity 1610 - Resource Management Planning; i.e., "Automate your NEPA process and arrange to make your EA Register available on the intra and inter nets. The State Team will meet early in the FY to complete the arrangements for this."

The State Team referred to consists of the Field Office NEPA Coordinators and Colorado State Office Planning and NEPA staffs, with technical support from the IRM staff. They include: Pete Zwaneveld, Canon City District; Roger Alexander, Montrose District; Dave Stevens, Grand Junction District; Jim Perry, Craig District; Rich Arnold, and Jim Sorenson, CSO IRM Staff; and Roberto Costales, Glenn

Wallace, and Dave Strunk, CSO Planning/NEPA Staff.

In FY97 the team met to review various automated NEPA approaches being used, and adopted one for statewide use pioneered by Canon City, which provides an updated EA project register on a continuing basis as well as an automated system of standardized NEPA guidelines and forms. A well illustrated NEPA handbook was also developed to provide instructions on which form to use, and includes various models such as: categorical exclusion record, administrative determination record, EA (short form), and EA (long form) record. The new system also provides each field office with the flexibility to do additional NEPA documentation as needed on their own Home Pages. This could include scoping notices, calls for input, notices of availability, due dates for comments and appeals, etc. For certain high profile NEPA documents, this could offer an additional opportunity to inform the public and provide increased space for more details about a particular project than the minimum requirements of the NEPA Home Page.

I want to express my appreciation to Roberto Costales for providing leadership on this project, and to each team member for their vision and commitment. In particular, I want to recognize Pete Zwaneveld for his initiative and dedication in providing the framework for the NEPA handbook and for conducting training on this new system in offices around Colorado. To date, training has been conducted in: Kremmling, Meeker, Glenwood Springs, Montrose, and Grand Junction. Canon City offices received training early on. The internal automated NEPA system for preparing EA's and providing a project register is being set-up through a BLM-Colorado *NEPA On-Line* site on our Home Page; Field Offices are linked to the Home Page through the WebPage server in the CSO. Web address is: [../nepa/nepahome.htm](http://nepa/nepahome.htm).

A second phase involves providing public access to the "NEPA Bulletin Board," or log, and EA's currently proposed. You will need to begin providing space and a PC in your public reception areas to allow access to the Colorado *NEPA On-Line* reports and logs, once the system is fully operational. IRM staff has been working with each field office to provide PC's in front office/entry areas that will be available for such public information. In the near future the IRM staff will be providing guidance on the capability of these dedicated terminals, their availability, and instructions for downloading the NEPA information for public access.

I also want to recognize local creativity by some Field Offices which have developed various automated NEPA logs and/or forms. These were reviewed by the team and found to meet local needs but did not offer the capability of the adopted system needed for statewide use.

In order for Colorado to have a standardized *NEPA On-Line* system, I ask your support in implementing the one selected. To facilitate this effort, each office involved with the NEPA process needs to submit a draft version of their Home Page NEPA logs to their State team member by November 21, 1997, so that they can then reconcile any differences with the statewide system.

If your office has not yet had a training session in Colorado's *NEPA On-Line* program, please call Pete Zwaneveld at (719) 269-8559 or Roberto Costales at (303) 239-3727 to schedule it. I understand that

these offices include: Craig, Durango and Gunnison. Also, please try and have this training completed by November 21, 1997. If you want to discuss the automated NEPA project in general, please call Dave Strunk at (303) 239-3731.

Signed by
Dave Strunk
Acting Deputy State
Director, Support Services

Authenticated by
Don Snow
EMS Operator