

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Montana State Office

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January 31, 2013

EMAIL TRANSMISSION – 02/01/2013

Instruction Memorandum No. MT-2013-045

Expires: 9/30/2014

To: Montana Dakotas Leadership

Attn: Field Office Range, Botanical, Invasive Species and Riparian Staff

From: State Director

Subject: Request for Review of Draft Montana State Office Handbook 1735-01—Use of Digital Photography for Botany, Rangeland, Riparian, and Invasive Species Monitoring

DD: 04/01/2013

Program Area: Rangeland, Botany, Invasive Species, Riparian

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum (IM) formally transmits a draft handbook and requests comments prior to the final handbook being issued. The purpose of the final handbook will be to provide guidance when using digital photography for monitoring, and to standardize metadata and filing requirements of electronic photo monitoring records in the Montana/Dakotas organization.

Policy/Action: The draft handbook offers guidance concerning the use of digital photography for monitoring range, botany, invasive species, and riparian resources and uses. Additionally the draft handbook proposes metadata requirements and directory structures for storing digital photograph records.

The Field Offices (FO) are encouraged to review the draft handbook and to use the attached comment form to provide comments to the State Office (Attachment 2). Please note the questions and concerns in the preface. Input from FO staff on these questions is essential for incorporation into the final handbook. After reviewing input, a conference call or webinar may be held to resolve any issues before completing the final handbook.

Timeframe: Please provide any comments to Floyd Thompson, Montana/Dakotas Range program Lead (MT923), via email, by close of business April 1, 2013.

Budget Impact: Effect on budget is expected to be minimal, although additional staff time may be required to learn and adopt the processes once the handbook becomes final.

Background: Several manuals and technical references address the application and use of various monitoring methods on BLM lands. Most of these manuals and handbooks were written in the 1980s and 1990s before the advent of digital photography. Digital photography presents a number of issues and opportunities which must be considered and managed when using the technology for monitoring. Consequently, guidance is needed for FOs as they incorporate digital photography into monitoring efforts.

Additionally an analysis completed by the BLM's Information Technology staff estimated there are as many as 25 million electronic photos stored on Bureau computers with no accompanying metadata. The objective of this handbook is to start addressing this problem, at least for range, botany, invasive species, and riparian monitoring photo records.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: None.

Coordination: Preliminary coordination and review with select field office and MSO Branch of Planning and Biological Resource staff.

Contact: If there are any questions regarding this IM, please contact Floyd Thompson, State Range Program Lead, at 406-896-5025.

Signed by:
Katherine P. Kitchell
For Jamie E. Connell
State Director

Authenticated by:
Cindy Woody
Staff Assistant (MT923)

2 Attachments

- 1-[Draft Montana State Office Handbook 1735-01—Use of Digital Photography for Botany, Rangeland, Riparian, and Invasive Species Monitoring \(31 pp in its entirety\)](#)
- 2-[Comment Form \(1 p\)](#)