
**MADREAN ARCHIPELAGO
RAPID ECOREGIONAL ASSESSMENT**

COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION WORK PLAN FOR THE MADREAN ARCHIPELAGO ECOREGION

REA Communication and Collaboration Work Plan for:

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Rapid Ecoregional Assessments

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This communication and collaboration work plan is provided to BLM as a Phase I, Task 1 deliverable.

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1 Purpose

This communication and collaboration work plan outlines the steps that will be taken to communicate with partners and stakeholders through the Rapid Ecoregional Assessment (REA) for the Madrean Archipelago ecoregion. It is a companion document to the Pre-Assessment Work Plan for this REA. It serves as a guide for both the BLM and the contracting team; it outlines strategies, personnel, and responsibilities needed to ensure effective communication and outreach with both partners and stakeholders throughout the process.

1.1 Proactive Interagency Collaboration and Cooperation

This work plan establishes procedures, strategies, and mechanisms for proactive interagency collaboration, cooperation, and resource sharing between the BLM and other agencies/entities, including state, federal, and tribes.

1.2 Clarify the Partner and Stakeholder Communication and Outreach Strategy

For the purpose of this REA, partners are government agencies participating in the Assessment Management Team (AMT) and Technical Team. Stakeholders are all other interested parties who will have the opportunity to participate and stay informed throughout the Madrean Archipelago REA process via periodic update webinars and communication materials (brochures).

2 Partner and Stakeholder Identification and Tracking

2.1 Initial Assessment

A key first step is to conduct an initial assessment to identify partners and their needs to guide the REA process. Partner identification should be as inclusive as practicable (balanced with expediency and cost-efficiency) to develop appropriate process design elements, improve active participation and project buy-in, ensure effective and timely communications, and promote acceptance and support for assessment outcomes.

2.1.1 Partners and Other Stakeholders

Partners include individuals and agencies actively involved in the project and represented on the AMT and Technical Team. Other stakeholders include individuals and organizations that may have an interest in the products of the REA and are not represented on the AMT and Technical Team.

2.1.1.1 Methods

- Partners will be identified through calls and meetings with BLM and AMT members, with additional potential partners identified iteratively at the first few AMT workshops and Development Forums. Invitations and initial outreach will be conducted by the BLM.
- Stakeholders will be gathered through AMT, Technical Team, and other interested party nominations. Distributions of webinar invites and brochures (including release of the materials on the BLM website) will include COR contact information (to provide a

mechanism for interested parties to self-add themselves to the stakeholder distribution list).

- Contractor will maintain a partner and stakeholder database for communication and tracking.
- Partner and BLM needs will be assessed primarily through the meetings themselves (AMT Workshops, Development Forums, and Stakeholder Update Webinars). These partner events are designed to foster sharing of needs, discussion of key issues and agreement on recommendations.
- A new member survey will be conducted by the contractor to understand partner needs in order to better design the AMT workshops.
- Periodic check-in surveys, document review, interviews, analyses, and audits will also be utilized by the BLM and contractor (time permitting within the parameters of the contract).
- Prototyping or progressive elaboration may help identify needs since these needs may exist on a variety of levels, may be conflicting, and partners may not actually know their needs.
- With input from BLM, the contractor will create and maintain a partner database and distribution lists for all REA announcements and information sharing throughout the assessment process.

3 Communications, Collaboration, and Outreach

Communication, collaboration, and outreach with partners and stakeholders will be conducted throughout the REA through a series of workshops, webinars, and provision of key documents and update brochures.

The stakeholder involvement strategy will emphasize stakeholder update webinars and brochures as the core methods for communicating and engaging with stakeholders, as well as obtaining their input. A separate post-REA public education strategy may also need to be developed by BLM.

AMT workshops, thematic webinars (e.g., a webinar on methods for assessing status of aquatic ecological systems), and the series of Development Forums to be held early in the REA process are the primary approach for engaging and collaborating with partners and obtaining their input on the REA process. Communication and collaboration with the AMT and TT around these events is addressed within the team charters and also specified in the SOW.

A set of brochures will be developed and disseminated at the end of each REA task (see the Pre-Assessment Work Plan for summary of major REA tasks) to inform partners and stakeholders about key aspects of the REA throughout the process. The brochures will follow the template (submitted as a separate file for this task in the REA), which was adapted from the brochure used in the Northwestern Plains REA. The layout will be modified as needed to accommodate varied content for different brochures throughout the REA.

REA documents such as the Pre-Assessment Work Plan, Assessment Work Plan, and other key documents will be made available to partners, specifically the AMT and TT, for their review at particular points throughout the REA process as well. The brochures and various REA documents

will serve as the primary briefing documents for partners. Brochures and PDF copies of PowerPoint slides will be provided to the BLM with the expectation that these will be posted on the BLM public website for the Madrean Archipelago REA.

Table 3-1 summarizes the webinars and brochures, and other documents that are planned for this REA to meet these communication and outreach needs for the broader group of stakeholders, their overall timing within the REA Phases and Tasks, and the primary audience.

Table 3-1. List of REA products and scheduled workshops or events that form key components of communication, collaboration, and outreach efforts to the broader group of stakeholders for the REA. As in Appendix A of the Pre-Assessment Work Plan, events are highlighted in lime green; documents are not highlighted.

Phase/Task	Event or Product		Audience
Phase 1, Task 1	Brochure	Provide overview of REA and ecoregion	Partners, stakeholders
	Update Webinar	Introduce stakeholders to REA, update on completion of current task, describe plans for upcoming task, obtain input on upcoming task	Partners, stakeholders
Phase I, Task 2	Development Forums (3-5)	Obtain input on management issues from broad group to inform MQ, CE, CA selection	AMT, TT, partners, stakeholders
	Update Webinar	Update stakeholders on completion of current task, describe plans for upcoming task, obtain input on upcoming task	Partners, stakeholders

Phase/Task	Event or Product		Audience
	Brochures (3)	One on overall approach and selected MQs, CEs, CAs Two on conceptual models for a pair of CEs	Partners, stakeholders
Phase II, Task 1	Update Webinar	Update stakeholders on completion of current task, describe plans for upcoming task, obtain input on upcoming task	Partners, stakeholders
	Brochure	Intro to process for conducting assessment	Partners, stakeholders
Phase II, Task 2	Update Webinar	Update stakeholders on completion of current task, describe plans for upcoming task, obtain input on upcoming task	Partners, stakeholders
Phase II, Task 3	Update Webinar	Update stakeholders on completion of current task, describe plans for upcoming task, obtain input on upcoming task	Partners, stakeholders
Phase II, Task 4	Update Webinars (3-4)	Series of outreach and inreach webinars to summarize and highlight key processes and results of REA	Variable: BLM management staff and invited partners; broader group of BLM staff, partners, stakeholders

Phase/Task	Event or Product		Audience
	Final Brochures (3)	One on overall assessment approach Two on a pair of specific CEs	Partners, stakeholders

Although responsibilities for arranging and conducting various workshops and webinars and providing REA documents and brochures are generally specified in the SOW for this REA, additional detail is provided here.

Invitations: As noted in the SOW, the contractor is responsible for sending out invitations to all workshops, webinars, and similar events. (BLM may determine that participation may be improved if invitations come directly from BLM and has the discretion to send invitations in cases where it deems appropriate.) Southwest Decision Resources, a member of the contracting team, will send invitations to Development Forums, all AMT workshops, and Stakeholder (Partner) Update Webinars. NatureServe will send invitations to thematic webinars.

Presentations: In general, the contractor will both develop slides and give presentations for AMT workshops, stakeholder update webinars, thematic webinars, and any other presentations within the scope of this REA relating to work the contractor is performing. However, in order to develop and maintain good engagement with partners, it is assumed that BLM will prefer to make introductory remarks and in some cases present overview slides on BLM’s ecoregional direction for AMT workshops and Stakeholder (Partner) Update Webinars. The contractor is prepared to present all overview materials if BLM determines that is the best approach. The contractor will provide overview slides with input as needed from BLM.

Availability and dissemination of materials: Per the SOW, the contractor will make REA documents, presentations, workshop summaries, brochures, and any other materials available on its transfer site, with password protection for the duration of the REA. The contractor may also make these available to REA participants via BLM’s SharePoint site, to the extent that is practical and useful. Once major documents are finalized (primarily Pre-Assessment Report and Assessment Report, possibly work plans), it will be up to BLM to post them as appropriate on its public REA website or other locations.

4 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Process

4.1 Methods

The contractor will conduct meeting evaluations, debrief sessions, and periodic check-ins in order to ensure a continually improving process.

5 Talking Points

- This ecoregional assessment is an early step towards the BLM implementing our Landscape Approach in the Madrean Archipelago, whereby we hope to identify important ecological values and patterns of environmental change that may not be evident when managing smaller, local land areas.

- Our landscape approach informs and enhances local management. The BLM's field offices maintain their central role in managing public lands.
- The broader perspective provided through a landscape approach will help focus and integrate these local management efforts.
- Rapid ecoregional assessments have two goals: 1) to provide broad-scale information needed in developing conservation strategies for native plants, wildlife, and fish and aquatic species habitats; and 2) to inform subsequent land use planning, trade-off evaluation, environmental analyses, and decision-making for other interconnected public land uses and values.
- Assessments are targeted to examine regionally significant ecological values and resources and regionally significant agents that may cause changes to those values and resources.
- We want to engage BLM field and district offices as well as similar levels in partner organizations throughout the process to ensure the assessment is relevant to their day-to-day operations. The field offices should be invested in the process but have their workload minimized.
- The data and report will be available once the assessment is completed. Interim deliverables will be provided on BLM's Madrean Archipelago website.
- Regional (broad-scale) landscape trends and information provide a comprehensive basis for addressing resource management actions for various BLM administrative jurisdictions. REAs provide a regional geospatial framework and data sets which can be used by specialists and managers to help tailor RMP goals/objectives.
- The REAs provide data and framework to utilize as a tool for analyzing cumulative impacts beyond field and watershed boundaries.
- The Madrean Archipelago ecoregion is located in southeastern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico, and north central Mexico. All lands in the U.S. portion, regardless of ownership, will be spatially assessed in this REA.
- The REA team will assess the U.S. Madrean Archipelago ecoregion as well as a buffer defined by the 5th level watersheds intersecting the ecoregion boundary. This assessment area is 15.7 million acres or 24,600 square miles.
- Up to 20 Conservation Elements (CEs, or ecological values or resources) and at minimum, four broad categories of Change Agents – development, fire, invasive species, and climate change – will be assessed at a landscape scale in this ecoregion to provide information on natural resource issues that can be used to guide management decisions.
- The REA will address three time horizons: current, near-term (5-15 year time horizon) and longer-term (mid-century, 30-60 year time horizon), depending on data availability.
- NatureServe, in partnership with Sky Island Alliance, Sound Science, Southwest Decision Resources, and Natural Heritage New Mexico, is the contractor team conducting this REA.

- The contractor team conducts the REA under the guidance and direction of BLM, the Assessment Management Team (AMT), and the Technical Team.
 - The AMT is composed of managers or decision-makers within BLM and partner agencies and provides high-level overview, guidance, review, and direction
 - The Technical Team is composed of subject matter experts (e.g., ecologists, biologists, hydrologists, spatial analysts) within BLM and partner agencies and provides detailed content and methods review, guidance, and direction.
- The Madrean Archipelago REA is a two-year project; it was initiated 9/30/2012 and is scheduled for completion 9/30/2014.