Bureau of Land Management

National Land Use Planning Conference

2009

Keeping Pace with Change

Portland, OR
March 2-6, 2009

CONFERENCE THEMES

Conference Themes

A. Focusing on Sustainable Resource Planning and Decision-Making
   Room: Broadway I & II

B. Incorporating Decision Support Tools
   Room: Broadway I & II

C. Addressing the Long-Term Strategy
   Room: Broadway III & IV

D. Collaborating with Cooperators and Forming Partnerships
   Room: Pavilion Ballroom West

E. Improving NEPA in Changing Environments
   Room: Pavilion Ballroom East

F. Closing the Gaps –Training Opportunities on How to Get There from Here
   Room: Various

THEME A:
FOCUSING ON SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING

Theme Lead: Mark Spencer, New Mexico State Office, Division of Resources, BLM

Overview and Theme Description

Congress began appropriating funds in 2001 to initiate a comprehensive effort to improve the quality and effectiveness of the BLM's resource management by revising its Resource Management Plans (RMPs). The BLM has made significant progress in revising or amending land use plans where necessary. Since 2001, *83% of its land use plans* have either been revised, amended or are in the revision process. This progress has been achieved in spite of numerous challenges such as litigation, quality collaboration, higher than anticipated costs, and conflicting priorities on-the-ground. As a result of overcoming challenges, the BLM has become increasingly more capable of effectively responding to emerging issues.

The BLM's current approach to land use planning is different than it was in the past few decades. The BLM has adopted a more holistic approach to land use planning, recognizing that over the long term, a sustainable 'infrastructure' for the program will allow the BLM to more effectively address emerging challenges and changing resource issues. This holistic and dynamic approach to land use planning represents a cycle that is initiated with plan development and continues through implementation, monitoring, evaluation of effectiveness, and assessment of emerging issues, with adjustments made through plan amendments. With such an infrastructure, the risk of facing another very costly and disruptive overhaul of all the BLM's land use plans is dramatically reduced.

The BLM relies heavily upon its Resource Management Planning Program to respond to the myriad of challenges throughout the West. The future continues to hold complex challenges for the BLM including climate change, rapid community growth in the West, the growing list of species under the Endangered Species Act, and increased demand for energy from both renewable and non-renewable sources.

The BLM has the opportunity to meet these challenges by focusing the out-year progress and strategy for the BLM's Resource Management Planning Program in the context of two critical program functions: (1) development and revision of land use plans, and (2) enhancement of a sustainable infrastructure for planning and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance that will support plan implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and assessment.

THEME B: INCORPORATING DECISION SUPPORT TOOLS

Theme Leads:
Duane Dippon, Oregon State Office, Planning, Science and Resource Information
Debra Dinville, National Operations Center, Division of Resource Services

Overview and Theme Description

The Decision Support Tools Track covers a wide range of topics, from programmatic-specific topics including Cultural, Forestry, Remote Sensing, Travel, and Wildland Fire to interrelated, cross-programmatic issues. The conference attendee has the opportunity to attend a variety of sessions. Some sessions are focused on applications of geospatial technologies in specific programs, while others focus on applications of geospatial technologies to support practical decision-making, NEPA, broad scale RMP decisions as well as the specifics for using the Bureau's ePlanning application.

A series of sessions will present Decision Support for three levels of NEPA. The Carlsbad Field Office presentations will explain their use of Information Needs Assessments to automate their geospatial data and develop a database that supports tracking all of their NEPA related workload. The Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR) sessions will focus on the processes used to manage both the geospatial data and work processes in support of theWOPR, a six District RMP/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) planning effort. Finally, the session on ePlanning will review the use of the application for managing document development for an EIS.

THEME C:
ADDRESSING THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY

Theme Lead: Joshua Hanson, Washington Office, Division of Decision Support, Planning & NEPA

Overview and Track Description

The BLM has been in the business of land use planning for more than thirty years. Over the past three decades, the agency has seen significant changes on the National System of Public Lands, including growing public participation in the planning process, increasing user conflicts, and changing conditions on the ground.

In the face of these adjustments, the BLM's 10-year goal is to sustain the critical planning and NEPA infrastructure needed to ensure that the agency is capable of addressing constantly transforming circumstances. Some of the most challenging circumstances on the horizon for the BLM are associated with community growth and climate change. Given these are other challenges, the BLM's long term strategy for addressing change must be one that promotes coordination across programs, across jurisdictions and at multiple stages from the local to the national level. This means that the BLM needs to transition toward a program management strategy that focuses on maintaining and managing public participation, as well as implementing, monitoring, and providing decision support for the land use plans that have been recently revised.

Specifically, the BLM intends to use the following tools to help effectively address the challenges that the agency expects to face in the future:

- Ecoregional Assessments
- Establishing Implementation Priorities for Resource Management Plans
- Land Use Plan Evaluations
- Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring Strategy
- ePlanning

Although the changes to the National System of Public Lands will continue to accelerate, the tools available to the BLM to address long-term strategy will be sufficient to fulfill our BLM mission

THEME D:
COLLABORATING WITH COOPERATORS AND FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

Theme Lead: John Cossa, Washington Office, Division of Decision Support, Planning & NEPA

Overview and Track Description

The BLM has a large and complex responsibility: managing nearly 260 million acres of America's public lands and roughly 700 million acres of its subsurface mineral estate. More than 140 Resource Management Plans (RMP) authorize and guide every action and approved use of these lands and resources. The BLM's plans encompass the most varied terrain, from Alaska's North Slope and California's Mojave Desert to the open space surrounding many rapidly growing western cities. The agency's challenge is to use the best information available to manage this enormously varied portfolio on behalf of all Americans, while recognizing the considerable local and regional consequences its decisions may have.

Thus, nowhere is the need for cooperation more critical than in the management of these public lands and resources.

Through collaboration with state and local governments, tribes, academic institutions, advocacy groups, and subject matter experts, the BLM attempts to ensure that its decisions benefit from the varied skills and expertise, including knowledge of local conditions and values, that these partners offer. By law, regulation, policy, and practice, the BLM works closely with, and utilizes the knowledge of these groups to address the needs of local communities, reduce the incidence and expense associated with resource-related disputes, engage in more informed decision-making, and produce more desirable outcomes overall.

This track will explore the latest collaboration efforts undertaken by the BLM to further improve its planning and decision-making capabilities. Major themes addressed include (1) integrating the involvement of multiple parties with competing interests and values in the decision making process; (2) removing obstacles to sharing and validating relevant information; (3) partnering with outside subject matter experts and organizations to guarantee the use of the best science in the planning process; and (4) resolving conflicts among institutions and policies.

THEME E: IMPROVING NEPA IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

Theme Lead: Meagan Conry, Roseburg Field Office, Planning

Overview and Track Description

The BLM has been undertaking efforts to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for nearly forty years. Much has changed over the decades, however; the public's involvement in federal land management and resource management has become more complicated in light of many increased and competing demands and broad-scale uncertainty. These external changes have brought about internal changes in our NEPA process. Our analyses are more robust than they were decades ago, our process more open, and our end product frequently subject to much scrutiny and challenge.

In the face of these changes, the BLM has taken a number of steps to improve its NEPA process and products, by trying new approaches and developing new guidance.

Currently, the BLM is engaged in many broad-scale planning efforts, ranging from comprehensive land use plan revision efforts to a number of programmatic analyses to address actions such as the west-wide energy corridor designation, geothermal leasing, and wind energy development. While working on these major undertakings, the BLM continues its daily work of developing projects through the NEPA process to manage the public lands.

In 2007 the 516 Department Manual 11 was revised, including a number of new categorical exclusions. In 2008, the NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1) was revised. In the same year, the Department of the Interior issued regulations for implementing NEPA; these regulations reflect and codify many of the Bureau's concepts regarding NEPA. Lastly, the BLM is engaged in the development and implementation of ePlanning, which will change the way we document our NEPA process and improve NEPA organization and storage.

These developments offer a unique opportunity to reflect on lessons learned and apply new ideas to: cumulative impact analysis; planning at different levels; climate change; decision-making; and developing a strong record.

While much is changing in public land management, the NEPA remains critical to informed decision-making and achieving the agency mission. The lessons of the past and innovative ideas are more essential than ever as we strive to improve efficiency and quality in our NEPA process.

ABSTRACTS & PRESENTERS

Theme A

Focusing on Sustainable Resource Planning and Decision-Making

Broadway I & II

Strengthening Future Resource Management Plans and Plan Amendments: A Historical Evaluation of Protest Issues

Presenters:

Andrew Strasfogel, Planning and Environmental Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM
Matthew Higdon, Planning and Environmental Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM
Shannon Stewart, Planning and Environmental Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM
Maggie Langlas, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Oregon State Office, BLM
Jolie Pollet, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Alaska State Office, BLM

Moderator:

Carol-Anne Murray, Planning and Environmental Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

Trends in RMP protests contain useful lessons that will aid the BLM in the preparation of land use plans and plan amendments going forward. The BLM's protest period serves as a final opportunity for anyone who has participated in the planning process to protest proposed planning decisions to the Director before the State Director signs the Record of Decision.

Since the start of the BLM;s comprehensive review and revision process of its RMPs, the BLM Washington Office and State, District, and Field Offices have worked collaboratively to resolve protests on more than 70 RMPs. With time, the number of protest letters has increased along with the complexity of issues raised. Panelists will explore how proposed decisions can be changed in response to valid protests that are upheld, and what has been learned from handling large volumes of protests which will enable us to prepare stronger and more defensible plans in the future.

Emerging Legal Trends for Land Use Planning

Presenters:

Brad Grenham, Attorney, DOI Office of the Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Region, Portland, OR
Erica L.B. Niebauer, Assistant Regional Solicitor, DOI Office of the Solicitor, Pacific Southwest Region, Sacramento, CA

Abstract:

There are a number of emerging trends as well as recurring issues in federal court litigation concerning BLM Resource Management Plans and supporting NEPA documents. The presenters will highlight several issues including a discussion of challenges and case law concerning:

- FLPMA inventory provisions
- identification and management of wilderness characteristics outside of Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas
- meaning of multiple use and its relation to the range of alternatives under NEPA,
- adaptive management
- site-specific decision-making in planning and its relation to NEPA analysis
- relationship between ESA section 7 consultation and land use planning, RS 2477 and planning documents
- climate change and case law developments
- adequacy of NEPA analysis under phased implementation programs
- adequacy of scientific methodology.

The panelists, who are attorneys in different regions of the Solicitor's Office, have advised and represented the BLM throughout several planning efforts and subsequent litigation. The panelists intend for this presentation to include considerable audience involvement in order to share learning and focus on questions of most importance to the attendees.

Amending Land Use Plans with Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements

Presenters:

Ihor Hlohowskyj, Ph.D., Natural Resource Systems and Integrated Assessments, Argonne National Laboratory
Bob Moore, Program Coordinator/Manager, Argonne National Laboratory
Kate Winthrop, Project Manager, Lands and Realty, Washington Office, BLM
Shannon Stewart, Planning and Environmental Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements (PEIS) are "broadly scoped analyses that assess the environmental impacts of federal actions across a span of conditions, such as facilities, geographic regions, or multi-project programs" (CEQ Draft NEPA Programmatic Guidance 2007).

The BLM's national PEIS efforts addressing wind and solar energy development, utility corridors, and geothermal and oil/shale leasing have proven to be an efficient and cost-effective strategy to amend multiple Resource Management Plans (RMPs) through one NEPA document. The coordination of these PEIS projects by BLM's state and field offices are challenging due to the need for extensive internal and external coordination with numerous Federal agencies, local, state, and tribal governments.

The BLM and Argonne project managers will provide an overview and purpose of these national PEIS initiatives and will discuss lessons learned from conducting and coordinating PEIS processes with multiple national and local players. The presenters will summarize the implications of implementing the completed PEISs, as well as facilitate a discussion with participants on the potential needs for developing additional PEISs to address other evolving issues on national or regional scales.

Program Guidance for Resource Management Plan Development
(3 Consecutive Sessions)

Presenters:

Panel 1: Fire; Fish, Wildlife, and Plants; and Wilderness

Ted Milesnick, Fire Specialist, Office of Fire and Aviation, National Interagency Fire Center, Boise, ID, BLM
Steve Hodapp, Endangered Species Program Manager, Division of Fish, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Washington Office, BLM
Dave Harmon, Senior Wilderness Specialist, National Landscape Conservation System, Washington Office, BLM

Panel 2: Recreation and Visitor Services

Bob Ratcliffe, Division Chief, Recreation and Visitor Services, Washington Office, BLM
John McCarty, Chief Landscape Architect, Recreation and Visitor Services, Washington Office, BLM
Terry Heslin, Trails & Travel Management Coordinator, Recreation & Visitor Services, Washington Office, BLM

Panel 3: Rangeland Resources, Fluid Minerals, and Air Resources

Richard Mayberry, Rangeland Management Specialist, Rangeland Resources, Washington Office, BLM
Bryce Barlan, Natural Resource Specialist, Fluid Minerals, Washington Office, BLM
Angela Zahniser, Air Resources Specialist, Rangeland Resources, Washington Office, BLM

(Continued)

Program Guidance for Resource Management Plan Development (Continued):

Abstract:
Since the BLM planning initiative began in 2001, the Land Use Planning Handbook and subsequent program policy direction have provided updates or are in the process of preparing additional guidance for what must be considered in plan development and implementation.

Appendices C and D in the Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) provide resource and resource use specific guidance on what is needed for plan and implementation decisions, such as those dealing with physical and biological resources and their uses including air, soils, water, vegetation, and minerals, as well as the social resource uses or "human habitat" considerations of recreation, visual resources, and public access, transportation, and travel management. In addition to the planning handbook, Instruction Memorandums have also been issued by BLM WO programs in the past six years which provide additional and clarifying resource guidance in response to evolving issues. There are also pending policy updates and draft manuals and handbooks that are being formulated to provide even greater clarification and guidance for planning. Examples include integrating comprehensive travel and transportation management planning into land use planning, incorporating fluid minerals stipulations and conditions of approval into RMPs, and using a checklist of recreation program considerations for inclusion in RMPs.

The resource topics for this session have been selected due to reoccurring challenges that planning leads and resource specialists have had in addressing these program areas during RMP development and implementation. Panelists will also highlight common resource program considerations that are sometimes overlooked during the plan development process. The session will also provide an opportunity for participants to identify needed changes, updates, or policy clarification that would help improve the quality and consistency of planning documents.

Overcoming Challenges in the RMP/NEPA Process: Moderated Forum

Presenters/Panelists:

David Batts, Environmental Management and Planning Solutions, Inc. (EMPSi)
Cathy Humphrey, NEPA/Planning/ADR Training Coordinator, National Training Center, BLM
Peg Sorensen, Senior NEPA Specialist, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM
Chris Horyza, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Arizona State Office, BLM
Sandra Meyers, Branch Chief, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM
Howard Parman, Planning/NEPA Coordinator, Roswell Field Office, NM, BLM

Moderator:

Shannon Stewart, Planning and Environmental Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

In January 2009, a survey was sent to BLM P&ECs, planners, ID Team members, managers, and contractors to document lessons learned and to assess potential ways to improve the RMP/NEPA process. Results from this survey will be presented to participants and will serve as the basis for a moderated discussion on how to address the tough project management and RMP/NEPA process issues faced by planning project leads, managers, contractors, and resource specialists. The intended outcome is a blueprint of key action items that could be implemented to facilitate on-going and future planning and NEPA efforts.

Strategies for Effective Socio-Economic Analysis in RMPs

Presenters:

John Thompson, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Montana State Office, BLM
Rob Winthrop, Senior Social Scientist, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM
John Cossa, Energy and Environmental Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

Several factors have increased BLM's need for well-focused and credible social and economic analysis in RMPs, including the rapid pace of renewable and nonrenewable energy development, urban growth – public lands interface issues, the changing economies of western communities, and the growing involvement of state and local governments as cooperating agencies. Comments and protests on BLM's Resource Management Plans (RMP) now commonly include criticisms of the analysis of social and economic effects. This session will offer practical advice on producing strong and defensible analyses of the human impacts of BLM's decisions in RMPs and NEPA documents. The panel presentation will include the following topics:

- Legal requirements for socio-economic analysis and the "hard look" doctrine
- Guiding principles for reasonable, practical, and defensible economic and social analyses, including scientific integrity, use of credible resource data and methodologies, comparative analysis of impacts by alternatives, and maintaining the administrative record (e.g. assumptions/ methodology)
- Incorporating social/economic analyses into the RMP process
- Conducting relevant community socio-economic workshops
- Anticipating factors that influence BLM land uses and resultant social and economic analyses
- Having a contingency plan
- Getting help: Interagency agreements and other sources of technical support

Managing Your RMP Project Successfully: BLM and Contractor Lessons Learned

Presenters:

Linda Slone, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Wyoming State Office, BLM
Robert J. Henke, Vice President, ICF International
Jim Murkin, Deputy Director, National Landscape Conservation System, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

The BLM Casper RMP was completed on-time and within budget. In 2003, the Casper Field Office issued a contract for consultant support of the Casper RMP revision. The contract statement of work (SOW) was prepared over an extended period of time with input from the BLM Washington Office, Wyoming State Office, and the Casper Field Office. Given the inherent uncertainty associated with the land use planning process, the performance-based, fixed-price contract posed special challenges for both the BLM and the consultant. Agency workload priorities, staff personalities, and changing circumstances all contributed to project challenges.

Despite project challenges, the Casper RMP revision succeeded due to a number of factors, which serve as lessons learned for future RMP revisions and amendments. Some of the lessons learned that will be discussed include: developing a sense of mutual dependency, garnering commitment to a project schedule, ensuring frequent and open communication between the Field Office and the consultant, as well as with the BLM Washington Office, following the planning stages in the Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), and establishing/adhering to agreed upon project protocols and procedures. Project success also relied upon a decisive Field Office Manager who was engaged throughout the process, an open minded BLM RMP project manager with extensive experience who lead (rather than follow) the Interdisciplinary Team, an experienced and flexible consultant, and a strong BLM-consultant relationship built on trust and teamwork.

RMP Budget and Project Schedule Development

Presenters:

Joe Blackmon, Project Manager, Rio Puerco Field Office, NM, BLM
Terry Smith, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Pocatello Field Office, ID, BLM
Angie Adams, Senior Environmental Manager, EMPSi

Abstract:

Appendix F-1 in the Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) provides guidance on what is required in the Preparation Plan for establishing the budget and schedule for a Resource Management Plan (RMP). Section G - Plan Preparation Schedule of H-1601-1, states that the schedule should provide "estimated timeframes for the completion of the required plan components." The schedule should identify all planning actions (43 CFR 1610.4), target completion dates for each action, and time periods for contacting tasks. Section I- Budget, in Appendix F-1 of H-1601-1 also briefly describes what the budget for the development of the plan should include. The budget includes all costs associated with the development of the plan. Plan costs include contracting costs, staff work months, data collection, public scoping meetings, training, and travel.

The panelists are composed of a contractor with extensive BLM planning experience, a BLM district office planner with experience in contracted and in-house plans, and a BLM RMP planner currently engaged with a predominantly in-house plan. Some of the challenges experienced by the panelists that have impacted schedule and budget include: the procurement process, personnel changes, the Continuing Resolution process, changes in funding, policy changes, motivating busy people, where contractors may be best utilized during the planning process, and management support. The panelists will also address lessons learned. The lessons learned portion of the panel presentation and discussion will include how schedule and budget affect each other, the importance of contingency planning and how we do that. Discussions will include scenarios such as: "I am over/under budget and/or schedule? What do I do?" as well as "How we will use the lessons learned." The session will also include time for questions and sharing of experience concerning budget and schedule from the attendees.

Theme B

Incorporating Decision Support Tools

Broadway III & IV

BLM's Data Quality Tool and Decision Support Tools for Forest Management
(*2 presentations*)

Presentation 1: BLM's Data Quality Tool

Presenter:
Theresa Alarid, Data Quality Tool Project Manager, National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM

Abstract:
BLM's Data Quality Tool is a COTS product used to discover the range of data really in our databases and spreadsheets (flat files). The software uses the actual data to find duplicate and/or redundant data, compares data between datasets, allows creation of business rules to monitor the data, helps in the standardization process, and validates name and addresses against the US Postal Service standard. These analysis tools can be of great value to many BLM individuals, including Planners, Project Managers, Program Leads, and Data Stewards by providing a clear understanding of the data in use or proposed for use within a plan or project. The better the data is understood, the better our data becomes and the better BLM decisions are made.

Presentation 2: Decision Support Tools for Forest Management

Presenter:
Tim Bottomley, Forest Vegetation Inventory System/Forest Ecology, National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM

Abstract:
The BLM Public Domain foresters use the Forest Vegetation Information System (FORVIS) to store and analyze forest resource data to support both project level and planning decisions. Users can view and analyze collected data in a tabular format on a Microsoft Access application and/or view and analyze the data in a spatial context data through a GIS extension. Existing and projected forest stand conditions can be determined and spatially displayed for both site-specific and landscape analysis. The example shown in this session will show conceptually how FORVIS can facilitate the analysis of alternative future forest structure conditions on a 69,000 acre landscape over a twenty year period. This information can support Forest Resource Decisions described in Appendix C in the Land User Planning Handbook.

Decision Support Tools for Wildland Fire Management
(2 presentations)

Presentation 1: Using LANDFIRE Products and Fire Regime Condition Class Methodologies

Presenter:
Doug Havlina, Fire Ecologist, Office of Fire and Aviation, National Interagency Fire Center, Boise, ID, BLM

Abstract:
LANDFIRE, also known as the Landscape Fire and Resource Management Planning Tools Project, is a multi-partner project producing consistent and comprehensive maps and data across the United States. LANDFIRE data products include layers of vegetation composition and structure, surface and canopy fuel characteristics, and historical fire regimes. LANDFIRE methodologies are science-based and include extensive field-referenced data. LANDFIRE data products are designed to facilitate national- and regional-level strategic planning and reporting of wildland fire management activities.

One of the products of LANDFIRE is Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC). FRCC is a discrete metric that quantifies the amount that current vegetation has departed from the simulated historical vegetation reference conditions. This departure is calculated based on changes to species composition, structural stage, and canopy closure. This workshop session will describe how LANDFIRE products can be used to classify vegetation and develop appropriate land use plan decisions. The session will also describe some of the limitations of the LANDFIRE FRCC products and alternative methods for developing FRCC data for land use plans (FRCC determinations are a land use planning requirement).

Presentation 2: Wildland Fire Decision Support Systems

Presenter:
Doug Havlina, Fire Ecologist, BLM Office of Fire and Aviation, National Interagency Fire Center, Boise, ID, BLM

Abstract:
The Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) is an interagency-scalable decision support system for agency administrators that utilize appropriate fire behavior modeling, economic principles, and information technology to support effective wildland fire decisions consistent with Resource and Fire Management Plans. It is scheduled for implementation by all fire management agencies in 2009.

The WFDSS process provides strategic decision documentation, decision support, and operational management plan preparation (either short- or long-term). The WFDSS process is:

- Linear, scalable, progressive, and responsive to fire complexity
- Spatially oriented, graphically displayed, and without reliance on large text input requirement
- Internet-based to provide risk and decision sharing simply and efficiently, both in display and data management
- Applicable to all wildland fires as a single process and replaces the multiple processes of Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA), Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP), and the Long-Term Incident Plan (LTIP)

The workshop session will discuss linkages between land use plan decisions and the WFDSS process.

Decision Support Tools for Paleontological Resource Management
(2 presentations)

Presentation 1: Paleontological Resource Management Consideration for Land Use Plans

Presenter:
Lucia Kuizon, National Paleontologist, Cultural, Paleontological Resources and Tribal Consultation, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:
In fiscal year 2008, the BLM officially rolled out the Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) system to provide a more uniform tool for assessing potential occurrences of paleontological resources, and to evaluate possible impacts as well as management risks. The PFYC uses geologic data as a basis for determining the potential for the occurrence of paleontological resources. These resources are closely associated with certain types of geologic formations, usually sedimentary rocks. Thus, potential for fossil occurrences can be linked to geologic formations that may be present at or near the ground surface, thereby allowing for greater management focus on geologic units with higher potential. Also, paleontological resources may be found in sedimentary features associated with non-sedimentary rock units. The PFYC takes all this into consideration in the assignment of one of five classes to a given unit, with Class 1 being Very Low Potential and Class 5 being Very High Potential. Classification of geologic formations is initially determined by the Regional Paleontologist, the State Office Paleontology Lead in collaboration with the Regional Paleontologist, or by knowledgeable individuals from a paleontology museum, university paleontology department, or a consulting firm working under a formal agreement. Several states have already completed an initial classification and are incorporating the PFYC into new land use planning efforts. The PFYC is also used to assess and mitigate impacts to paleontological resources impacted by federal actions.

Presentation 2: Potential fossil yield classification: A Tool for Land Use Planning

Presenters:
Patricia M. Hester, Regional Paleontologist, Albuquerque Field Office, NM, BLM
Dave Simons, State Archeologist, New Mexico State Office, BLM

Abstract:
The BLM planning handbook (1601-1) requires specific land use decisions for Paleontology. During planning, BLM must identify area wide criteria or site-specific use restrictions to ensure those areas containing, or likely to contain, vertebrate or noteworthy occurrences of invertebrate or plant fossils and evaluate them prior to authorizing surface-disturbing activities. Potential for a given geographic area to contain significant fossil resources can be assessed by classifying geologic formations based on Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC). The fundamental geologic mapping unit, the geologic formation, can be ranked, based on rock type, environment of deposition and known locality data into five classes, ranging from 1 (Very Low Potential) to 5 (Very High Potential). These classifications can be developed in text format initially then integrated into a GIS for effective application. The map and associated database can include formation descriptions, rationale for classification, and rank and range of rank within a formation all of which can help BLM meet planning and management requirements for paleontological resources. The map, coupled with other data, including resource specialist knowledge, digital orthophoto quads, project specific information, and locality information, can provide an effective tool for field personnel to assess impacts and develop effective resource strategies and decisions.

WOPR Decision Support Tools (Part 1)
(3 presentations)

Presentation 1A: *The Use of GIS in Support of Combined Regional Resource Management Plans and Environmental Impact Statements*
Presenter:
Duane Dippon, ARD/GIS Specialist, Oregon State Office, BLM

Abstract:
Resources Management Plans (RMPs) in the BLM require increasingly detailed Environmental Impact Assessments. Normally the Bureau builds RMPs one Field Office at a time. The Western Oregon Plan Revision represents a "regional" planning effort with five Districts and a Field Office combined into one EIS and resulting in six RMPs. A centralized planning geospatial database was created to support all of the requirements of the planning effort. A virtual team of GIS specialists was established to support all phases of the planning effort. The presentation will discuss the challenges, successes, and processes used to meet the planning requirements.

Presentation 1B: System Support and Technical Configuration of Virtual GIS Team Supporting Land Use Planning
Presenter:
Kiet Nguyen, IT Specialist, Oregon State Office, BLM

Abstract:
The Oregon/Washington State Office for the BLM has a first phase Enterprise GIS infrastructure. The infrastructure has the same configuration as described by the BLM's National eGIS Strategy. The infrastructure is currently in place, actively supporting the Western Oregon Plan Revision. The IT infrastructure is comprised of Windows Terminal Citrix/Servers, ArcSDE/Oracle Server, Direct Attached Storage and ArcIMS Web Services. A virtual team of GIS analysts and planning team members, scattered across 7 office sites, rely on the centralized processing and geodatabases. The IT infrastructure and maintenance will be the topic for this presentation.

Presentation 1C: Data Management and Quality Control Techniques
Presenter:
Jeanne Keyes, GIS Specialist, Oregon State Office, BLM

Abstract:
In order to manage a large quantity of data in a multi-year Resource Management Plan, communication among project team members, setting standards and utilizing a few simple tracking tools are absolutely essential. For the Western Oregon Plan Revision planning effort, standards for data directory structures, naming conventions, metadata, work plans and more were established. Adherence to these "rules" is crucial for meeting short deadlines and providing exemplary analyses, and data products. This paper explores steps the GIS team has taken to organize and utilize hundreds of datasets while providing managers with information for making decisions.

WOPR Decision Support Tools (Part 2)
(3 presentations)

Presentation 2A: Creating Published Maps in Support of Resource Management Plan's EIS.
Presenter:
Paul Fyfield, Cartographer, Oregon State Office, BLM

Abstract:
The Western Oregon Plan Revision's planning area covers a geographical extent with far greater complexity than typical planning efforts in Oregon's BLM offices. Clarity and communication are the goals of a successful map, but data requirements of GIS analysis, where greater detail will yield more reliable results, can run counter to cartographic needs. This level of detail creates challenges for the cartographer, who must often present this information on an 8.5x11 printed page limited to black and white. This presentation will discuss the approach used for the finished cartography in the Western Oregon Plan Revision's Draft EIS document as well as a general overview of the processes involved in creating a printed map using GIS data. The strengths and weaknesses of software environments and the method of transition from GIS into a publication format are important considerations in this constantly and rapidly changing field.

Presentation 2B: Writing Scripts and Models in a Centralized Citrix Environment for the Western Oregon Resource Management Plans
Presenter:
Jeff Nighbert, Geographer, Oregon State Office, BLM

Abstract:
In a large and potentially controversial project such as a Resource Management Plan, it is a certainty that the analysis and data used to support decisions will be scrutinized. Using models and scripts that draw on a centralized database is one sure way to provide consistent results and documented processes. The GIS processing for the Western Oregon Plan Revision utilized models and scripts, many of which were written to perform common tasks such as acreage and mileage calculations. This talk will present a firsthand look at writing scripts and models for a large project.

Presentation 2C: Using Grid-based, Focal Analyses to Support Cumulative Environmental Impact Assessments.
Presenter:
Craig Ducey, GIS/Remote Sensing Specialist, Oregon State Office, BLM

Abstract:
Focal analysis functions use a pixel neighborhood that moves along each row in a grid, pixel by pixel, to calculate statistics about the pixel values within the window. Output values at each position are assigned to the center pixel. Depending on the type of raster being analyzed, focal analyses can provide information on the spatial distribution of reflectance values, reveal patterns and textures, and act as input during image classification. Focal analyses are also useful for evaluating the abundance, distributions, or connectivity of rasterized biological information such as habitat preferences or forest conditions. This talk will discuss general methods for conducting and interpreting focal analyses, as well as their benefits and limitations.

WOPR Decision Support Tools (Part 3)
(2 presentations; panel discussion)

Presentation 3A: Using ModelBuilder and Crystal Reports for Land Use Planning Analysis, Reporting, and Documentation

Presenter:
Arthur Miller, Geographic Information Specialist, Oregon State Office, BLM

Abstract:
ModelBuilder and Crystal Reports are being used extensively by the BLM as a means to process and document data development and analysis for the Western Oregon Resource Management Plan Revision. This presentation will highlight some of the benefits of using these applications, particularly in communicating analytical processes between GIS professionals and resource specialists. It will also highlight some lessons learned and best practices.

Presentation 3B: Using ArcIMS to Support Internal Processes in Land Use Planning

Presenter:
Shelly Moore, Geographer, Oregon State Office, BLM

Abstract:
The web-based software, ArcIMS has been used as an effective tool in the Western Oregon Plan Revision. ArcIMS has provided scientists and planners with a medium for viewing available data layers, quality controlling both the input and output data used in analysis, and for editing SDE tables in review of proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. The print, mark-up, email, and save session tools have all helped facilitate communication between resource specialist team members. This presentation will provide a hands-on experience report on the process and successes using ArcIMS.

PANEL DISCUSSION AND QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD WITH WOPR STAFF WILL FOLLOW

GIS and ePlanning
(2 presentations)

Presentation 1: How and When to Use GIS within ePlanning

Presenters:
Mary Beth Stulz, ePlanning Project Manager, National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM
Victoria Smith, ePlanning Facilitator, National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM

Abstract:
This presentation will give an overview of how and when to use GIS within ePlanning. The presentation will also review GIS decision support tools developed for ePlanning. Local applications and processes typically are hard coded and tied to specific offices. Currently it takes re-coding and additional investment to try and port these tools to other offices. The BLM's National Operations Center is working with the Argonne National Laboratories using a Department of Energy grant to create ArcGIS tools with functionality identified through the field applications creating support tools for ePlanning

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Presentation 2: Geospatially Enabling Comments during the Planning Process

Presenters:
Mary Beth Stulz, ePlanning Project Manager, National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM
Victoria Smith, ePlanning Facilitator, National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM

Abstract:
This presentation will show the process from authoring a GeoPDF map to bringing that information into a summary statement for creating a response in CommentWorks. GeoPDFs can be created as a part of a document and made available to the public for comments using TerraGo software. Once a marked-up GeoPDF is received by the BLM it must be processed in order to be utilized. ePlanning has developed ArcGIS tools to incorporate the information received from the received GeoPDFs, import the data into an enterprise geodatabase, conduct analysis, and then bring that information into CommentWorks to create a summary statement and responses.

Remote Sensing as a Decision Support Tool
(2 presentations)

Presentation 1: From Pixels to Information: Remote Sensing Support for Natural Resource Planning

Presenters:
Matthew Bobo, Branch of Resource Technology, National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM

Abstract:
The volume and quality of remote sensing data available for BLM specialists, planners, and managers is rapidly growing. Trying to navigate the maze of options available can be overwhelming and lead to poor results if the proper choices are not made. Factors such as resolution of the data, timing of the acquisition, scale of the analysis, the questions to be asked, and expected results need to be carefully thought out prior to collecting any data. Once the raw data are collected, the user needs to transform it into meaningful information that will be used to support decisions on the ground. This talk will highlight some of the factors that should be considered to ensure any remote sensing acquisition generates the results needed to support resource planning activities, including establishing baseline data for setting plan priorities and monitoring plan effectiveness to support adaptive management. Examples from a variety of BLM projects will be presented to assist in putting remote sensing in its proper context.

Presentation 2: Picture This: Acquiring detailed data in support of resource management and planning

Presenters:
Neffra Matthews, Branch of Resource Technology, National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM
Tom Noble, Branch of Resource Technology, National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM
Matt Bobo, Branch of Resource Technology, National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM

Abstract:
Documenting, evaluating, and monitoring the condition of the land is a critical aspect of the Bureau's mission. Information pertaining to the past and current condition and health of the land can serve as a basis for decision making; provide a tool for accessing the effectiveness of present practices, and future planning. An effective tool for capturing both detailed imagery and digital terrain datasets of current, and in some cases, past condition is photogrammetry. High-resolution digital terrain data, acquired once or over a time sequence, provides valuable insight into the effects that surface disturbing activities can have across the landscape. Often this level of detail is not reached due to the perceived expense of data collection. Recent innovations in high-quality digital cameras and 3D measuring and modeling (3DMM) software have greatly streamlined the close-range photogrammetric process. The National Operations Center, Division of Resource Services has recently released a BLM Technical Note that provides resource specialists with an overview of photogrammetry and examples of projects to which these technologies have been applied. This presentation will provide an overview of the Technical Note and give the required for the initial field use of this technology.

Improving Business Practices and Decision Making: Automating the Workflow Processes
(4 presentations)

Presentation 1: The NEPA Database
Presenters:
Becky Hunt, Planning & Environmental Coordinator, Carlsbad Field Office, NM, BLM
Natalie Rhoads, GIS Specialist, Carlsbad Field Office, NM, BLM

Abstract:
Integrating automated processes has greatly influenced the productivity and efficiencies in the Carlsbad Field Office. Incorporating databases to replace analog tracking systems for the NEPA process originated in response to the Energy Policy Act of 2005. In 2006 after a review of the workflow process, it was determined that there was a need for a better method of managing the workflow, routing and reviewing projects, tracking due dates and monitoring processing times. A Microsoft Access database was then designed to accommodate the needs of the office and improve efficiencies. The database incorporates and automates several functions historically performed by a variety of specialists into one centralized location. Project reviews, tracking of accomplishments, due dates, processing times, reports and a host of other functions are streamlined through the new workflow process. The NEPA database is continually reevaluated and updated to meet the needs of the office and the specialists utilizing the databases.

Presentation 2: The Realty Database
Presenter:
Owen Lofton, Realty Specialist, Carlsbad Field Office, NM, BLM

Abstract:
The Carlsbad Field Office Realty Database in conjunction with the NEPA database and GIS technology has facilitated a more streamlined NEPA process. The realty workflow has improved tremendously as a direct result of the database implementation including: a decrease in processing times, improved target tracking, increased awareness of potential resource conflicts, and application of appropriate Conditions of Approval (COAs) along with numerous other improvements. Utilizing the databases, realty specialists can route their environmental documents to multiple specialists for electronic review. It also provides a central location for review and editing of project COAs that will be added to the approved permit(s). Interface between databases provides a nexus whereby databases can, in essence, “speak to each other”. Reports generated in the database allow project leads to quickly track received, pending, and approved projects to determine project status. Queries and filters built into the database provide users with the ability to extract out unnecessary data when searching for project specific information. In the future we anticipate other features being added to further enhance the functionality of the realty database, enabling even more NEPA process efficiencies and workflow improvements.

(Continued)

Improving Business Practices and Decision Making: Automating… (Continued)

Presentation 3: The Archaeology Database
Presenter:
James Smith, Archaeologist, Carlsbad Field Office, NM, BLM

Abstract:
Prior to implementing GIS and associated databases, archaeologists in the Carlsbad Field Office reacted cautiously to all land use proposals because we relied on analog site and survey information from 179 quadrangle maps (some with 8 copies, as old as 35 years, or a map missing entirely). With incomplete data we were forced to err on the side of caution resulting in redundant archaeological surveys, delaying the NEPA process. We conducted a "Needs Assessment" which identified the need to convert site location and survey data from paper maps into GIS and the need to populate report data into a database. We reviewed our work flow process to identify necessary changes and how to implement those changes. Converting our analog data into GIS and databases enabled the cultural staff to become proactive at the front end of the NEPA process. Using GIS has enabled the other BLM staff and industry to avoid known archaeological sites early in the planning process by providing accurate site and survey information available in GIS. We are now better equipped to protect significant resources from unnecessary damage from staking, re-staking and relocation of projects as well as requiring archaeological surveys only when necessary. The integration of technology into our daily work flow process has empowered the cultural staff to be more accurate, timely, and relevant in the NEPA process. Having accurate real-time data has enabled BLM to develop programmatic methods of compliance and to research and manage archaeology at a landscape level such as the Permian Basin MOA.

Presentation 4: The Vegetation Monitoring Database
Presenters:
Susan Britt, Range Conservationist, Carlsbad Field Office, NM, BLM
Natalie Rhoads, GIS Specialist, Carlsbad Field Office, NM, BLM

Abstract:
From an environmental planning perspective, all staff should have access to data to help all programs reach our vision, mission, office and individual program goals. The vegetation monitoring database allows staff to access information for site specific environmental documents but also for planning at a much larger watershed or programmatic level. For example, if a grazing permit analysis is needed, our biologist would have quick and easy access to range monitoring data in order to prepare a biological assessment for the US Fish and Wildlife Service in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. Our range staff would have access to all riparian monitoring data for compliance with Proper Functioning Condition and analysis for the permit renewals. Analysis could be at a site specific level or at a watershed level for conformance with the Standards and Guidelines of Rangeland Health and/or other program priorities. Through the database our interdisciplinary team has access to all data for permitting analysis and a better understanding of how all programs are connected. Field data gathering tools are also incorporated in order to bring monitoring data back to the office for downloading and data calculations to be completed through automation. The system is being designed to report units of accomplishments to our state office and WO and can be reported at a site specific level or watershed level. All programs can use this information as needed in order to accomplish their tasks, whether it is a resource, realty or an energy related action.

Lessons Learned from the Carlsbad Field Office
(*3 presentations*)

Presentation 1: Improving Employee Health and Making Sound Decisions through the Integration of Technology: A Field Office Manager's Perspective

Presenters:
Jim Stovall, Field Manager, Carlsbad Field Office, NM, BLM

Abstract:
Our employees are our greatest asset and healthy employees make for a healthy work environment and resources as well. Managing for a holistic approach through the use of technology and the integration of all programs not only provides for sound decisions but also brings health to our organization and our customers. Change is often talked about but having positive change in which our employees have "buy in" is an important key to moving forward. People can be reluctant to change unless the change can be shown to be beneficial to them. In the Carlsbad Field Office, the systems have been designed for the staff and by the staff through their needs assessments and workflow processes. This sharing of information builds strong relationships both internally and externally, allows individuals to be creative, innovative, respectful, trusting of each other, and empowered. It has allowed individuals to work with passion and enthusiasm and look for continual innovative ideas and changes for the future. integrated approach has improved our business efficiencies and decisions to a great extent allowing all programs to work positively in their resource fields they are passionate about. Many priorities need to be managed in an organization, but if the atmosphere is designed for the health of our organization, individuals and staff will have greater successes as we build future leaders for tomorrow.

Presentation 2: Preparation, Management & Use of GIS Planning within an Energy Pilot Office: Carlsbad, New Mexico

Presenters:
Marcos Molinar, GIS Specialist, Carlsbad Field Office, NM, BLM
Dario Lunardi, GIS Specialist, Carlsbad Field Office, NM, BLM

Abstract:
By analyzing the Carlsbad Field Office (CFO) by individual resources it is believed that specific resource information (maps, documents, databases, images) can be identified and used to create functionally integrated GIS that will aid resource specialists in resource management activities. Utilizing GIS planning techniques the office has established a five stage GIS planning strategy. It is believed that the strategy will identify baseline information needed to ensure a sustainable information system. The five stages are as follows: 1) Needs Assessments, 2) Analysis & Recommendation, 3) Implementation & Integration, 4) Review, and 5) Future Goals & Objectives. The needs assessment is a systematic look at how BLM programs *function* and the compilation of information needed to accomplish the mission of the organization. Baseline data gathered at this stage is then analyzed and compared to previously identified project success factors. Results of the analysis are used to design a formalized functional data management system for existing and incoming resource information. The system is then designed, implemented and integrated in a staged approach based on data availability and resource technical ability. Once the system has been fully implemented, formalized reviews are conducted to ensure project direction and objectives are on the same path. The combination of data types within a GIS environment creates a Decision Support system that is able to support multiple resources and office wide decisions.

(Continued)

Lessons Learned from the Carlsbad Field Office… (Continued)

Presentation 3: Utilizing Localized Decision Support Tools for Land Use Planning: Streamlining the Planning Process

Presenters:
Becky Hunt, Planning & Environmental Coordinator, Carlsbad Field Office, NM, BLM
Jim Stovall, Field Manager, Carlsbad Field Office, NM, BLM

Abstract:
Due to issues like rising political pressures, resource conservation and energy development conflicts and increased public awareness and involvement, the BLM is struggling to complete Resource Management Plan revisions and amendments on time and within budget. Offices are requesting schedule extensions and additional funding, and older plans waiting to start the revision process are being postponed in order to meet federal budget cuts. The Carlsbad Field Office's 1988 plan is currently on this waiting list. In the meantime, the office has been proceeding forward with documenting resource programs workflow processes, identifying needs through "Needs Assessments" workshops, transferring data and information into electronic and automated formats and integrating technology into the workforce. This has not only greatly improved and streamlined our daily business practices, but it is anticipated these assessments and tools will provide for a more effective land use planning process. Our goal would be to utilize these localized decision support tools to limit contracting needs, limit data collection during the planning process, reduce costs, increase efficiencies, enhance public interaction during the public scoping and comment periods, make better decisions and to complete the plan revision within the scheduled timeframe.

Panel Discussion:
Presenters from the Carlsbad Field Office will hold a question and answer period further discussing their lessons learned and the automation of their workflow process.

Theme C

Addressing the Long-Term Strategy

Pavilion Ballroom West

Ecoregional Assessments

Presenters:
Kit Muller, Strategic Planner, Washington Office, BLM
Jim Dryden, Healthy Lands Coordinator, Washington Office, BLM
Craig Mackinnon, Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring Project Manager, Washington Office, BLM
Daniel Lechefsky, Planning and Environmental Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM
Frank Quamen, Wildlife Biologist, Geospatial Program Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:
There are three major drivers of change in the American West:

- Population growth
- Conventional and renewable energy development
- Ecological changes associated with climate change, altered fire regimes, and invasive species

The BLM collectively will have limited resources to address these changes. It is critical that the BLM focuses available resources on conserving those plant and animal communities which are comparatively intact and on restoring those which are functioning at risk.

To accomplish this, we must do the following:

- Conduct assessments to identify focal areas for conservation and restoration and to design conservation and restoration strategies for these focal areas
- Review and, where appropriate, modify existing plans to incorporate the results of these assessments
- Pool available resources to fund project work in identified focal areas
- Design appropriate stipulations for subsequent use authorizations
- Implement site and landscape scale programs to monitor change in condition and evaluate effectiveness

This presentation will outline ecoregional assessments already completed in the West, including the Northern Great Basin Ecoregional Assessment coordinated through the Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring (AIM) Program, and others conducted through partnerships. Presenters will then describe how these, ongoing, and future assessments can be incorporated into the land use planning process. Input from land use planners on how best to incorporate ecoregional assessments into land use plans will be welcomed during this discussion.

Developing and Completing a Resource Management Plan Evaluation

Presenter:

Josh Hanson, Planning and Environmental Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM

Panel:

Brian Amme, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Nevada State Office, BLM
Darlene Horsey, Planning Coordinator, Farmington Field Office, BLM
Leslie Frewing-Runyon, Western Oregon Planner, Oregon State Office, BLM
James Pavey, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Spokane and Coeur d'Alene Districts, BLM

Abstract:

Evaluation is the process of reviewing a RMP to determine whether the decisions and NEPA analysis are still valid and whether the plan is being implemented. The BLM's RMP Program requires that evaluations be conducted on each plan every five years. These evaluations are conducted by an interdisciplinary team that can be made up of specialists from the BLM state and field offices, representatives from the BLM Washington Office and/or adjoining BLM state offices, representatives from Tribes, state and local governments, other Federal agencies, and members of the public.

Planning evaluations are critical because they reveal whether RMPs remain current in a constantly changing environment. While each state has a different formula for completing the process, the BLM's plans are generally evaluated to determine if decisions are relevant to current issues and effective in achieving or making progress toward achieving desired outcomes. These evaluations also reveal whether previous decisions need to be amended, revised or simply dropped from further consideration.

The BLM completed 148 evaluations in 2001-2003, to help the BLM prioritize project schedules. Since these evaluations were completed, the BLM has evaluated fewer plans annually, averaging eight per year since 2004. As a result of Program Assessment and Rating Tool review by the Office of Management and Budget, the BLM identified a need to evaluate 20% of plans annually over the course of the next 5 years; therefore it is important that the BLM begin to focus on evaluating RMPs as a critical component of the land use planning cycle. Additionally, the Washington Office is in the process of developing national guidance for conducting plan evaluations in order to provide for more consistency in the process. Participant feedback will be welcomed during the discussion.

Reading between the Lines: Exploring the Relationships between the BLM's Environmental Management Systems (EMS), NEPA, and FLPMA Requirements

Presenter:

Robert Jolley, PE, Senior Environmental Engineer, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

President Clinton mandated that all Federal agencies implement EMSs at the appropriate organizational units by December 31, 2005. President Bush reinforced the EMS requirement with Executive Order (E.O.) 13423 – Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management, which stated that "the head of each agency shall" ensure "use of EMS as the primary management approach for addressing environmental aspects of internal agency operations and activities, including environmental aspects of energy and transportation functions..."

EMS is a management process which analyzes an organization's activities that have the potential to impact the environment and then establishes reasonable objectives and targets to address the most significant aspects. EMS is not a one-time event or activity. EMS is a continual cycle of improvements in the environmental conditions of an organization. An active EMS uses principles of "plan-do-check-act" to grow and adjust as internal and external conditions change (e.g., transition, climate change, population pressures, or other phenomena.) The BLM has conducted two EMS pilot studies (Washington Office and Wyoming State Office) and we are prepared to move forward with EMS implementation in each State Office and Center Office. Results and lessons learned from the pilots will be discussed.

Adaptive Management

Presenters:

Ron Huntsinger, National Science Coordinator, Washington Office, BLM
Peg Sorensen, Senior Environmental Analyst for NEPA, Division of Decision Support, Planning, and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

Adaptive management (AM) is a systematic approach for improving resource management by learning from management outcomes. AM involves exploring alternative ways to meet management objectives, predicting the outcomes of alternatives based on the current state of knowledge, implementing one or more of these alternatives, monitoring to learn about the impacts of management actions, and then using the results to update knowledge and adjust management actions. This AM philosophy, existing and forthcoming guidance, and resources available will all be covered in the overview discussion of AM.

Adaptive Management is consistent with NEPA's goal of informed decision making. If management adaptations that could occur, in light of learning, are fully documented and analyzed at the beginning of a NEPA process in support of an AM approach for a proposed agency action, the need to supplement or prepare additional NEPA compliance documents may be reduced. When an AM approach is appropriate, the NEPA analysis must include the range of effects of any anticipated adaptive measures and alternatives to those measures. This presentation will provide some thought provoking discussions on where the BLM is headed in application of Adaptive Management, understanding that additional guidance from the department or CEQ may be forthcoming.

As the DOI Technical Guide notes, "Adaptive management as described here is infrequently implemented, even though many resource planning documents call for it and numerous resource managers refer to it." This session will be framed around the question of, "How does BLM intend to bring the theory of AM into its RMP development process and into implementation?"

Managing Geospatial Data for Resource Management Planning

Presenters:

Marguerite McKee, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Nevada State Office, BLM
Brian Amme, State Planning Lead, Nevada State Office, BLM

Abstract:

Between May and September 2008, at the request of the Associate State Director, the Nevada State Office undertook a GIS program review focusing on geospatial data management across all organizational levels of the state. The purpose of the Data Management Review was to determine the adequacy, and defensibility of BLM Corporate data, and determine where major data gaps in geospatial data sets may exist that could affect development of several RMPs slated for revision over the next five years.

In this presentation, the goals and objectives and review methodology are highlighted with key results and management recommendations presented. Products from this review include a master list of base data layers or themes to be considered in developing an RMP.

Improving Consistency Through ePlanning

Presenters:

Leah Baker, Planning & Environmental Analyst -- ePlanning Project, National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM
Carol-Anne Murray, Planning and Environmental Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

This presentation will focus on several long-term challenges the BLM faces with regard to land use planning and NEPA and how the ePlanning application has been designed to address those challenges. This presentation is designed for staff with both little and extensive knowledge of the ePlanning application and will focus mainly on the business needs of the BLM and how the ePlanning tool can reach those needs. Major topics to be discussed include:

Managing the Planning and NEPA workflow

Creating quality documents in the Planning and NEPA process is no small feat. Managing dozens/hundreds of versions of documents, the internal review process, and compiling a project's administrative record is time consuming but integral to successful planning and processes. How can ePlanning help streamline the Planning and NEPA workflow and protect the BLM's valuable information? How it can increase document quality and consistency through easy and efficient document sharing?

Information Management in the digital age

Information changes exponentially and managing those changes is key to successful decisions and communication of those decisions. Are there ways to make our information smarter? We'll discuss the concept of content reuse and how ePlanning's Asset Library can save time and improve consistency in planning and NEPA efforts with standard summary statements, glossary and acronym terms, and other reusable planning and NEPA content. Additionally, we'll talk about how ePlanning will help manage information in a multimedia age, ensuring that our professional documents are consistent, despite the format. We'll demonstrate how ePlanning is helping the Bureau promote a consistent look and feel for BLM documents by using flexible document templates.

Developing an Implementation Strategy for a Land Use Plan

Presenters:

Kit Muller, Strategic Planner, Washington Office, BLM
Joshua Hanson, Planning and Environmental Policy Analyst, DSPN, Washington Office, BLM

Panel:

Chris Horyza, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Arizona State Office, BLM
Margaret Langlas, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Oregon State Office, BLM
Robert Wick, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Arizona State Office, BLM
Megan Stouffer, Planning and Environmental Policy Analyst, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

The OMB's 2002 review of the BLM planning program using the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) found that (1) the planning process had no measure for annual or long-term output and failed to examine implementation effectiveness; (2) the BLM Land Use Planning program did not successfully link broader program goals or performance measures to the personnel appraisal system; and (3) identified a lack of efficiency measures in the planning process that focus on output and goal achievement either annually or over the life of an RMP.

In response to these findings, the BLM developed, piloted and refined the national implementation strategy, which consists of a four step process to identify and communicate RMP implementation priorities. Steps 1 &2 are completed in a facilitated implementation workshop, while steps 3&4 are completed later by the Field Office Staff. This systematic approach to identifying priorities provides a framework to track and monitor RMP implementation and to evaluate RMP effectiveness; and provide a user-friendly version of the RMP with clear links to the Bureau's management systems.

To date, approximately 35 implementation workshops have taken place across the BLM. The Land Use Planning Program has a goal of completing 10 or more workshops in the 2009 fiscal year. As these RMP implementation workshops are completed, the BLM Land Use Planning program will "roll-up" this data in order to create a comprehensive report on performance measures and goals set. These "roll-ups" will be completed on both a state and national level and will be used as part of the evaluative process.

Implementation Strategy Mock Workshop

Presenters:

Doug Herrema, Management and Program Analyst, National Landscape Conservation System, Washington Office, BLM
Josh Hanson, Planning and Environmental Policy Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM
Megan Stouffer, Planning and Environmental Policy Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

The Implementation Workshop is a 3-day facilitated workshop in which the interdisciplinary team involved in an RMP's development works together to complete Step 1 and 2 of the Implementation Strategy. The workshop is generally facilitated by a member of the Washington Office Planning program and held at the field, district or state office. Participants normally include the interdisciplinary team (planners and resource specialists) as well as one or more management representatives, but may also include cooperators or other members of the interested public.

Typically, the workshop address the identification and classification of workloads associated with RMP implementation as well as the setting of priorities for each workload identified. These tasks are accomplished as a group or in smaller groups identified by resource category. Also accomplished by the workshop is the basic outline of a communication strategy for the RMP, an aspect of Step 4.

The chief product of the workshop is an implementation framework, providing a user-friendly version of the RMP with clear links to the Bureau's management system and a mechanism for tracking & evaluating planning accomplishments. Following completion of the Implementation Strategy, this framework can be used to foster a shared understanding of RMP commitments and out-year priorities and demonstrate budget performance integration.

Theme D

Collaborating with Cooperators and Forming Partnerships

Pavilion Ballroom East

Using Collaborator Work Groups to Help Develop Alternatives

Presenters:

Angie Adams, Environmental Management and Planning Solutions, Inc. (EMPSi), Boulder, CO
Andy Windsor, Outdoor Recreation Manager, Kremmling Field Office, CO, BLM

Abstract:

Traditionally, it is often perceived by the public that federal agencies develop alternatives internally behind closed doors. Public comments received during early public scoping help direct alternatives but are inherently general in nature. Only when the draft land use plan/environmental impact statement (EIS) is published is the public finally invited to review and comment on alternatives. Yet, at that stage, the draft impact analysis has been completed and a preferred alternative selected. As such, public comments on the draft land use plan/EIS—whether made on the impact analysis or other sections—most often find their roots in the alternatives themselves.

In other words, if a reasonable range of alternatives were initially crafted with stakeholders, collaborators, and cooperators, then the draft land use plan, including impact analysis, would be more on target when initially published as the draft EIS. This would reduce the need to go 'back to the drawing board' when crafting the proposed land use plan/final EIS. This paper uses the joint Glenwood Springs and Kremmling Field Offices' resource management plans/EIS process to demonstrate effective ways of engaging key stakeholders during the alternatives development process to create a reasonable range of alternatives, in addition to becoming more vested in the outcome (land use plan). With this vestment, stakeholders and their counterparts are more likely to support the management decisions outlined in the land use plan. Topics addressed in the paper include collaboration with cooperators via hands-on working groups, alternatives development, and public vestment.

Partnerships within the Bureau: Identifying Priority Data Themes through Collaboration

Presenter:

Robert Bewley, Senior Geographer and Geospatial Program Manager, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

The WO Directorates, States and National Centers have developed a Geospatial Services Strategic Plan (GSSP) for the Bureau of Land Management. The plan establishes a governance model for the management of BLM's geospatial information and institutes a structure to coordinate the use of geospatial technology within BLM. The plan also addresses data management, data acquisitions, data standards and the establishment of corporate data themes. During FY 2008, several "cross cutting" data themes were identified by WO 400 and WO 200 Division Chiefs, Program Leads and Project Managers as high priority candidates for inclusion in the national data theme category. Ten (10) data themes are proposed for corporate data standard and database development during FY 2009; Land Use Planning Boundaries, Wild Horse and Burro Herd Units, Range Allotments (revision), Range Improvements, Vegetation Treatments, Fire Management Areas, Recreation Sites, National Landscape Conservation System Boundaries, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and Land Health Reporting. Individual action plans for development of the data standard and populating the data base are currently being developed by the Division of Decision Support, Planning, and NEPA (WO 210) and the National Operations Center Division of Resource Services/Data Management. The action plans will be reviewed by the MEDS Team early in the 2nd quarter of FY 2009. After review and approval by the MEDS (Managing for Excellence Data Management Subcommittee) Team, the action plans will be presented to the Field Committee for approval.

Collaboration on Decision Support Tools – PPSV & NatureServe VISTA

Presentation 1: Planning Priority Species and Vegetation

Presenters:
Barbara Hill, Special Status Species Biologist, Oregon State Office, BLM
Megan Kram, Public Lands Program Manager, The Nature Conservancy, Colorado

Abstract:

Overwhelmed with the vast array of resource information that must be considered in your RMP? Unsure how to prioritize planning and management needs for species and vegetation? Struggling to analyze resources consistently in your plan? Here is a tool that can help! Planning for Priority Species and Vegetation (PPSV) supports the ability of BLM planning teams to analyze biological information and develop alternatives for key species, vegetation, and habitats during the land use planning process. PPSV is accompanied by a concise, clearly formatted workbook for documenting data and analyses that feed into planning documents, such as RMPs, monitoring plans, and implementation plans. You will learn how this tool, which was developed by the BLM and The Nature Conservancy and is being used by the Grand Junction Field Office, can benefit you and your planning effort.

Presentation 2: NatureServe VISTA

Presenters:
Matt Anderson, Grand Junction Field Office, CO, BLM
Aaron Young, Grand Junction Field Office, CO, BLM

Abstract:

The Grand Junction Field Office will be a pilot site for the testing of VISTA, a decision support tool that functions as an extension in ArcGIS, which is developed by NatureServe through NASA funding. VISTA will be used in conjunction with other tools such as Planning for Priority Species and Vegetation (PPSV) and Energy by Design in the analysis of land use policy for the current RMP being undertaken. NatureServe developed the VISTA extension in close collaboration with TNC and CNHP, primarily to analyze the impacts of actions on biological elements; however it can be used to evaluate the impacts of multiple types of land uses on non biological elements such as cultural features and/or recreational activities. The BLM Grand Junction Field Office has submitted a list of land uses (such as livestock grazing or natural gas development) and policies (such as Wilderness Study Areas, or Areas of Critical Environmental Concern) to NatureServe, and they are working with CNHP to develop a list of biological elements suitable for analysis by the field office. In addition, NatureServe and CNHP will provide support for developing scenarios analyzing how the elements will respond to different current and future land uses and policies developed during the RMP process. A term GIS specialist will serve as the Vista coordinator and will be responsible for evaluating the tool.

Collaboration from the Other Side of the Fence: *Counties*

Presenters:

Cynthia Moses-Nedd, BLM National Program Liaison, Washington Office, BLM
John Martin, Commissioner, Garfield County, CO

Abstract:

In the American Political System different spheres of government – Federal, tribal, state, and local – have their respective areas of authority and expertise. Nowhere is the need for cooperation among these groups more critical than in the management of BLM public lands and resources. In recent years the BLM has been moving beyond mere consultation with government entities and has been instead forming partnerships to benefit from knowledge of local conditions and values in the formation of its plans. John Martin, County Commissioner of Garfield County, Colorado, will share his experience and insight from the county perspective regarding lessons learned from major BLM planning endeavors on the roan plateau. The presentation will explore ways in which the BLM can improve its planning process to accommodate local needs, laws, and values, while maximizing benefits to all Americans. Audience participation is encouraged and a question and answer portion is included.

Collaboration from the Other Side of the Fence: *States*

Presenters:

Cynthia Moses-Nedd, BLM National Program Liaison, Washington Office, BLM
TBD, Planning Staff for Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal, Cheyenne, WY

Abstract:

In the American Political System different spheres of government – Federal, tribal, state, and local – have their respective areas of authority and expertise. Nowhere is the need for cooperation among these groups more critical than in the management of BLM public lands and resources. In recent years the BLM has been moving beyond mere consultation with government entities and has been instead forming partnerships to benefit from knowledge of local conditions, values, laws, and policies in the formation of its plans. Mary Fladerka, Former State Planning Lead for Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal, will share her experience and insight from the State perspective regarding lessons learned from major BLM planning endeavors on the roan plateau. The presentation will explore ways in which the BLM can improve its planning process to accommodate the priorities of the states in which it operates while still maximizing benefits to all Americans. Audience participation is encouraged and a question and answer portion is included.

Collaboration from the Other Side of the Fence:
Tribes

Presenters:

Cynthia Moses-Nedd, BLM National Program Liaison, BLM, Washington, DC
Regis Pecos, Former Governor, Cochiti-Pueblo Tribe, Santa Fe, NM

Abstract:

In the American Political System different spheres of government – Federal, tribal, state, and local – have their respective areas of authority and expertise. Nowhere is the need for cooperation among these groups more critical than in the management of BLM public lands and resources. In recent years the BLM has been moving beyond mere consultation with government entities and has been instead forming partnerships to benefit from knowledge of local conditions and values in the formation of its plans. Regis Pecos, Former Governor of the Cochiti-Pueblo Tribe will share his experience and insight from the Tribal perspective regarding lessons learned from major BLM planning endeavors on the roan plateau. The presentation will explore ways in which the BLM can improve its planning process to accommodate Tribal needs, laws, and values, while maximizing benefits to all Americans. Particular attention will be paid to the BLM's Indian trust responsibilities and the issues of cultural and social resources specific to the management of Tribal lands. Audience participation is encouraged and a question and answer portion is included.

TEAMS Enterprise Unit – Partnering with BLM on NEPA support

Presenter:

Tom Mainwaring, Marketing & Sales Lead, TEAMS Enterprise Unit, USFS

Abstract:

Enterprise Units (EUs) are entrepreneurial units within Federal service that provide services and/or products for any level of government (Federal, State, or Local). EUs subsist entirely on clients purchasing their services and or/products, operating under a true business model and receiving no appropriated funding. By charter, all EUs must produce sufficient annual revenue to cover expenses. As in any successful business, in order to stay in business the units must satisfy their client base by providing quality services at an affordable cost. Proposals for new EUs are solicited periodically, and any individual and/or group can petition to become an EU leader. To start a unit, one needs a sponsor, enterprise business training, a marketable service/product, and the expertise to sell and implement the service/product.

The TEAMS EU is an example of a successful Forest Service EU. TEAMS' primary service/product in NEPA and individual resource specialist support, but the Unit also provides other types of statute-driven planning processes. The Unit is staffed by highly experienced Forest Service employees that provide virtually all types of resource expertise, including field services for timber sale crew work and resource field survey crew work including range, wildlife, botany, and archaeology. TEAMS currently has approximately 150 FTEs and 60 temporary employees and is structured to produce annual earned revenue of approximately $20 million, with expenses somewhat less. The EU sold a record of $30 million in services during FY 2007.

Alternative Dispute Resolution-based Negotiations: Strategies for Prevention or Early Resolution of Protests

Presenters:

Matthew Magee, Dispute Resolution Specialist, Washington Alternative Dispute Resolution Program, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

Often, formal or informal negotiations with stakeholders have opened new opportunities for the Bureau in preventing or resolving plan protests, appeals, and litigation. As prospective protesters, appellants, and plaintiffs, those individuals or groups having an interest in a land use planning process or in the plan itself have consistently shown a greater willingness to forego opportunities to formally file when given the opportunity to attempt to negotiate with the Bureau. Negotiations may be conducted informally without a mediator or facilitator, in a location of the parties choosing, or may be conducted in a more formal setting with the assistance of a third-party neutral. This session will address the array of strategies for prevention or early resolution of protests and litigation. Negotiation is a conflict prevention or conflict management strategy that has often resulted in significant savings of budget and other resources in the Bureau.

The Economic Profile System: The New Standard for Assessing Baseline Economic Conditions of Affected Communities

Presenters:

Ray Rasker, President and CEO, Headwaters Economics, Bozeman, MT
Rob Winthrop, Senior Social Scientist, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

This presentation will demonstrate the Economic Profile System (EPS). The BLM and Headwaters Economics have collaborated over the years to produce the EPS, which is a free software application that runs within Microsoft Excel. A comprehensive and graphically-driven tool for establishing socioeconomic baselines for any and every county in the country, the EPS was designed to constitute the backbone of plan- and implementation-level socioeconomic analyses at the BLM. It was also designed to be used by a wide variety of audiences, ranging from researchers and trained economists, to a lay audience with no experience with economic analysis. There are currently more than 15,000 EPS users nation-wide. The EPS will be implemented at the BLM in 2009.

EPS consist of eight Excel and Access files that can be downloaded from www.headwaterseconomics.org/eps. These files reside on a user's PC. The user first selects a geography, of which there are over 90,000 to pick from (including towns, counties, states, and custom aggregations). Once the appropriate geography is selected, a detailed, full-color and print-ready profile of the economies in that geographic region is automatically produced, utilizing more than 1,500 variables from the Bureau of the Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Economic Analysis, and other federal sources. The EPS is updated annually with the latest numbers.

A new version of EPS will also be released in 2009, called EPS Analyst. Designed for the more experienced user, it allows the analyst to produce detailed industry-level profiles for mining, travel and tourism, agriculture, timber, as well as a chapter on environmental justice factors. The EPS Analyst will also be demonstrated during this session.

Win-Win: The Diversity Executive Orders Program – Partnerships with Minority Serving Institutions

Presenters:

Steven Shafran, National Program Coordinator for Diversity Executive Orders Program, Washington Office, BLM
Carol-Anne Murray, Planning & Environmental Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

The Diversity Executive Orders Program is committed to advancing equal opportunity in higher education, access to Federal programs, and the development of partnerships with minority serving institutions (MSIs) such as Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. The Program works to meet requirements of the executive orders such as to establish and support partnerships that enhance faculty, curriculum and infrastructure at MSIs, expand educational opportunities for minority students, increase participation in Federal programs for minority businesses, and increase the opportunity for individuals with disabilities (IM 2008-057).

The first half of the session will include information for how to apply to the program, requirements for proposals, procurement's role in the process, main points of contact for your offices and states, and post-project reporting requirements. Two successful projects will be presented to illustrate the intent and processes for the Program:

- The Bering Glacier/Southern University research partnership, a joint effort between Alaska BLM and Southern University, a HBCU in Baton Rouge, LA.
- Finding History's Forgotten People: The Presence of African Americans in the Settlement of Colorado, c. 1534-1954, a joint research project with Coppin State University (a HBCU in Baltimore, MD) and the Washington Office Cultural Resources program.

The second half of the session will focus on ideas, suggestions, or types of projects as part of plan development and from implementation of planning decisions. The presenters will use one or more example projects to illustrate how the program can contribute to accomplishing an office's RMP goals and objectives.

Theme E

Improving NEPA in Changing Environments

Grand Ballroom II

Differences between Programmatic and Project Level NEPA

Presenters:

Ron Bass, J.D., AICP, Senior Regulatory Specialist, Jones & Stokes Associates, Inc., Ashland, OR
Richard Hardt, District Ecologist, Eugene District Office, OR, BLM

Abstract:

Most professionals within BLM are quite familiar with NEPA compliance for individual projects. At the project level, the components of a NEPA document, most of which are Environmental Assessments, (EA) are fairly straightforward. However, when faced with programmatic NEPA documents, such an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared for a Resources Management Plan (RMP), common approaches to impact assessment often do not meet analytical needs. Although the CEQ's NEPA regulations and the BLM's NEPA Handbook make few distinctions between programmatic and project- level documents, in practice, the differences are often substantial. Programmatic NEPA can cover vast geographic areas and may preclude a certain level of detail, while the scope of project level NEPA may be extremely narrow. Given these differences, the methods of analysis and documentation are often very different between the two levels of NEPA.

While most BLM specialists have considerable experience at the project level, many have little or no experience preparing programmatic NEPA documents. This conference session will focus on the differences between programmatic and project- level NEPA implementation. It will emphasize how to address the following aspects of NEPA documents at the programmatic level:

- Writing the Statement of Purpose and Need
- Defining and evaluating a range of programmatic alternatives
- Evaluating impacts: differences in scale and approach
- Incorporating mitigation into RMPs
- Determining what type of NEPA may be most appropriate

Environmental Protection Agency's Review of BLM EISs

Presenter:

Robert Hargrove, Director, NEPA Compliance Division, Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC

Abstract:

Under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, EPA is required to: 1) review all federal environmental impact statements (EISs), regulations proposed by other federal agencies, and legislation proposed by other federal agencies; 2) comment in writing; and 3) make its comments available to the public. EPA's Section 309 review responsibilities are considered an integral part of the NEPA process.

This presentation will address EPA's program for meeting its responsibilities under Section 309. In particular, the presentation will discuss the environmental issues EPA focuses on in its reviews of other agencies EISs and the system it uses to rate projects and EISs. In this regard, the presentation will outline the environmental issues that are regularly raised in EPA's review of EISs prepared by the BLM; specific positives and negatives that are raised during EPA's reviews of BLM EISs will also be discussed. Additionally, recent statistical trends that EPA uses to track the success of its review efforts will be presented.
The presentation will also discuss the process for pre-decisional referrals to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) of actions that an agency determines will result in unsatisfactory impacts to the human environment.

Lastly, under a long-standing arrangement between EPA and CEQ, EPA is the recipient of all federal EISs; the presentation will discuss EPA's EIS filing process.

Bureau Perspectives on Improving NEPA in a Changing Environment: A Moderated Forum

Panelists:

Richard Hardt, District Ecologist, Eugene District Office, OR, BLM
Meagan Conry, District Planner, Roseburd District Office, OR, BLM
Jolie Pollet, Planning & Environmental Coordinator, Alaska State Office, BLM
Peg Sorensen, Senior Environmental Analyst, NEPA, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM
Ted Milesnick, Fire Specialist, Office of Fire and Aviation, National Interagency Fire Center, Boise, ID, BLM

Abstract:

It has been almost a year since the BLM released the revised NEPA Handbook, providing new and more detailed guidance on how to implement NEPA. It is time to check in with the Bureau planners and managers regarding the new guidance – how is it working? What could be improved? While the BLM is not likely to do another wholesale revision of the Handbook soon, there are opportunities for updates and/or clarifications to the Handbook as well as opportunities for subsequent training sessions and conference calls. Bring your best questions, constructive criticism, and practical insight for an open discussion on the NEPA Handbook and implementation of NEPA during this changing time!

Integrating Implementation and Planning Decisions in One Programmatic Document

Presenters:

Jack G Peterson, National Program Manager, Programmatic EIS for Geothermal Leasing in the Western U.S., Idaho State Office, BLM
David Batts, Project Manager, Environmental Management and Planning Solutions Inc. (EMPSi), Boulder, CO

Abstract:

The BLM and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (FS) are preparing a joint Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) to analyze and expedite the leasing of BLM-and FS-administered lands with moderate to high potential for renewable geothermal resources in 11 western states and Alaska.

Geothermal is an important resources in the government's climate change policy. It is indirectly used to generate electric power and directly used for many purposes such as heating buildings and aquaculture. Energy markets are driving increased demand for renewable geothermal energy. Advances in the engineering, technology and economics of geothermal exploration and improvements in the design and development of energy generation facilities have resulted in increased interest in areas with geothermal potential. Several recent Federal and state actions also are driving the increase in renewable energy activity, including geothermal energy leasing.

The PEIS evaluates two federal actions: (1) making site-specific decisions on pending geothermal lease applications; and (2) amending land use plans through a programmatic analysis. Many federal agencies are using similar programmatic approaches to address many resource programs, especially related to energy development and transmission.

This session uses the geothermal leasing PEIS to evaluate the challenges and solutions for integrating "sites specific" implementation and planning level analysis into one NEPA document. Topics addressed will include: Scope, context, and decision space; importance of purpose and need; feasibly of multiple Records of Decisions.

Incorporating Climate Change into Planning and NEPA Documents

Presenters:

Angela Zahniser, Air Resource Specialist, Division of Environmental Quality and Protection, Washington Office, BLM
John Cossa, Energy and Environmental Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM
Shannon Stewart, Planning and Environmental Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM

Abstract:

This session will focus on when and how it is appropriate include climate change as part of the environmental analysis for Resource Management Plans and associated NEPA documents, including activity based EISs, EAs and Categorical Exclusions. We will then give guidance on how to develop the analysis; we will provide sideboards for the appropriate depth and width of a climate change analysis; we will discuss scientific uncertainty, the appropriate use of a qualitative versus a quantitative analysis, and provide guidance for the structure and format of the analysis in a document. We will discuss appropriate tools to use when conducting research. Finally, we will provide an update on upcoming departmental and bureau policy.

Everything you Need to Know to Write a Defensible Decision

Presenters:

Brad Grenham, Attorney, DOI Office of the Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Region, Portland, OR
Michael Schoessler, Attorney, DOI Office of the Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Region, Portland, OR

Abstract:

Tired of losing cases? Come to this panel and learn some of the fundamentals of producing an agency decision that can withstand the tribulations of administrative appeals and federal court review. The presenters will share practical advice on handling emerging issues and longstanding problems with BLM decisions. The presenters will include excerpts from critically-acclaimed prior trainings including "Top 5 Things to Check Before BLM Signs A Decision" and "Hot NEPA Topics That Have Not Changed in the Last 10 Years." The panel will address: drafting a good decision record; distinguishing NEPA documents from decisions; administrative remedies; programmatic NEPA documents; adaptive management; drafting better FONSIs; using categorical exclusions; and (just a bit) on preparing administrative records.

The panelists, who are attorneys in the Pacific Northwest Region the Solicitor's Office (Portland, Ore.) have advised and represented BLM throughout challenges to a variety of BLM decisions. The panelists intend for this presentation to include considerable audience involvement in order to share learning and focus on questions of most importance to the attendees.

Proximate Causation and the No Action Alternative Trajectory in Cumulative Effects Analysis

Presenters:

Jerry Magee, Wilderness & NLCS Program Lead, Oregon State Office, BLM
Roger Nesbit, Solicitor (retired), Office of the Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Regional Office, Portland, OR

Abstract:

From the time it appeared in the 1978 regulations implementing the United States' National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), agencies have struggled with the concept of cumulative impacts in their environmental analyses. Although the regulations touch on every aspect of environmental impact analysis, they merely define cumulative impacts and then refer to them only in other definitions in the Terminology section. Agencies have become fairly adept at analyzing direct and indirect effects, but cumulative impacts have posed more difficult methodological problems, giving rise to a host of legal challenges. The courts have attempted to sort out what is required for adequate cumulative impact analysis, causing agencies to reactively develop agency-specific, and often complex, methodologies.

This presentation, by the authors of an article of the same name published in the September 2008 issue of *Environmental Practice: the Journal of the National Association of Environmental Professionals*, relates the basic concepts of cumulative impact assessment to emerging case law, focusing on US federal land management issues. From this basis, it proposes a novel approach to cumulative effects analysis that (1) uses the doctrine of proximate cause from tort law to ensure that there is a reasonable probability that a proposal will affect a resource of concern before undertaking analysis of other effects on that resource, and (2) uses the No Action Alternative's trajectory of resource conditions (which incorporates the effects of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions) as the baseline for assessing an action's incremental effects. The proposed six-step process integrates effects analysis by describing the overall effects of the No Action Alternative, altered by an action's direct and indirect (or incremental) effects, as the cumulative effect on a particular resource of concern.

Change Management in ePlanning

Panelists:

Jeanie Cole, RMP Team Lead for Eastern Interior RMP/EIS, Northern Field Office, AK, BLM
Carol Anne Murray, Planning & Environmental Analyst, Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA, Washington Office, BLM
Jon Beck, Planning & Environmental Coordinator, Boise District Office, ID, BLM
Sky Murphy, Environmental Planning Specialist, Hollister Field Office, CA, BLM

Abstract:

ePlanning is going to change the way BLM does business, in more ways than just one. Experienced planners will host an open and progressive discussion about how ePlanning may change our planning and NEPA processes. Specifically discussed will be:

- ePlanning learning curve – what should I expect when we are learning ePlanning?
- ePlanning and the interdisciplinary team – how does ePlanning change communication?
- ePlanning and the planner position – does ePlanning change the role of planners in the office?
- ePlanning and the public – what type of benefits and challenges should we expect as we work with our publics in this new technology?
- ePlanning and workflow - how will this help me and my project?

Planners will also share lessons learned and tips for a smoother transition to ePlanning. Prepare for a great discussion and bring your best questions and concerns for peers with practical experience in ePlanning!

Building a Strong Record

Presenters:

Gregory Russell, Attorney/Advisor, Solicitor's Office, Division of Land and Water Resources, Branch of Public Lands, Washington, DC, DOI
Laura Damm, Attorney/Advisor, Solicitor's Office, Division of Land and Water Resources, Branch of Public Lands, Washington, DC, DOI

Abstract:

An Administrative Record should document the process the BLM used in reaching its final decision, demonstrate that the BLM followed the required procedures as provided by statute, regulation, and any applicable agency policies, and explain and rationally support the BLM's final decision. This presentation will address the following:

- What is an Administrative Record and why is it important
- Where to find documents that compose the Administrative Record
- What documents and materials should be included in the Administrative Record
- How to identify and handle privileged documents
- How to organize an Administrative Record
- What happens after the Administrative Record is organized

Theme F

Closing the Gaps –Training Opportunities on How to Get There from Here

Monday & Friday

Various Rooms

Arbortext Refresher

Instructors:

Mary Beth Stulz, Leah Baker, Justin Laboe, Victoria Smith, Ronald Cross, Division of Resource Services – National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM

Abstract:

This course will be held Monday, March 2, 2009, at 1:00pm – 3:00pm;
and again Friday, March 6, 2009, at 10:00am – noon.

The BLM is using a software application called ePlanning to support resource management and NEPA activities as part of an overall government-wide effort to incorporate information technologies into business practices. This commercially available software provides tools to author, publish, and manage the content of planning documents. Arbortext, the text editing component of ePlanning, is a consortium of several off-the-shelf software products. During the first hour, we will explain why the BLM is using Arbortext Editor, which is an XML editor, for BLM planning and NEPA documents. We'll demonstrate how the tool works by showing you how to create a simple document and how to filter it to multiple media outputs via the click of a button. During the second hour, you'll have time to use Arbortext yourself so you can see how easy it is!

Prerequisite: Prior ePlanning training is highly recommended.

BLM Data Standards Development and Documentation

Instructor:

Tom Chatfield, Geospatial Data Architect, National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM

Abstract:

This course will be held Friday, March 6, 2009, at 9:00am – 12:30pm

The BLM needs data standards to ensure consistency of data and improve data documentation. The BLM has a well defined process (aligned with the DOI process) for the development of data standards that can be applied to all data collected, developed, and maintained for BLM. The process provides a series of steps that produce specific products. Those products document the standard and help produce the required metadata. Both the processes and documentation will be covered and an example provided.

Utilizing data standards allows the Bureau to move from 'project-based' data files to 'enterprise' data files. In other words, the data becomes usable to more than just the project or person that built the data. When data is standardized and fully understood, it becomes a valuable tool in all BLM decision making.

Contracting for Land Use Plans

Instructor:

Donald B. Foote, Jr., Senior Contracting Officer, National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM

Abstract:

This course will be held Friday, March 6, 2009 from 9:00am – 10:00am.

It takes a village to raise a resource management plan (RMP). In an effort to facilitate contracting for land use planning efforts while minimizing impacts to ongoing work, many field offices have elected to contract out land use plans, NEPA analyses, and associated tasks.

This session presents general contracting concepts, including: preparing to contract for a RMP through the National Operations Center by writing a performance based statement of work, preparing a government estimate, writing and selecting evaluation criteria, selecting potential offerors from the 899-1 schedule, solicitation of offers process, the technical evaluation process and the final source selection process which leads to contract award. Other topics are: roles and responsibilities of BLM and contractor staff, quality control, and the importance of effective communications throughout project administration. A question/answer period at the conclusion of the presentation will further illustrate and clarify the contracting process.

Effective Stakeholder Engagement

Instructors:

Paul Aldretti, Senior Program Manager, CDR Associates, Boulder, CO
Jennifer Graham, Program Manager, CDR Associates, Boulder, CO

Abstract:

This interactive course will be held Monday, March 2, 2009 from 9:00am to 4:00pm.

Participants are welcome to come to the morning session, the afternoon session, or both. These sessions will help managers and staff proactively identify stakeholders and their issues, and manage differences in developing long-term sustainable partnerships to achieve better, more cost-efficient results.

Each session will present practical strategies for resolving differences and creating effective partnerships. Participants will practice these skills in small groups using real case studies, and explore the use of these strategies in situations they are currently facing.

The morning session focuses on working with external stakeholders (e.g. environmental groups, land-owners, resource industries, communities). ***The afternoon session focuses on creating effective relationships within and between agencies*** including project teams and work groups***.***

Paul Aldretti has worked with numerous federal agencies to develop, implement and manage stakeholder engagements programs. He also has worked with environmental advocacy groups, business organizations, and municipal governments to create partnerships with federal agencies on issues related to renewable energy, water resources, land management, and sustainable development.

Jennifer Graham has nearly ten years of experience facilitating stakeholder engagement efforts in the U.S. and overseas. Much of her work has focused on bringing together land managers and various interest groups in decision-making over controversial issues. She recently coordinated members of the Federal Leadership Forum, an inter-agency effort to increase collaboration between federal agencies including the BLM, the EPA, the NPS and the FWS.

ePlanning Refresher for RMP Team Leads

Instructors:

Mary Beth Stulz, Leah Baker, Justin Laboe, Victoria Smith, Ronald Cross, Division of Resource Services – National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM

Abstract:

This course will be held on Monday, March 2, 2009 from 10:00am - noon.

This session is designed for RMP team leads/project managers who have had ePlanning training in the past two years. It focuses on new software functionality released recently. Topics include a demonstration of how to publish documents to the Internet and an explanation of bugs/problems that have been fixed. The second hour of this course allows for hands-on interaction with the ePlanning application.

ePlanning Training and Support: Managing Expectations

Instructors:

Mary Beth Stulz, Leah Baker, Justin Laboe, Victoria Smith, Ronald Cross,
Division of Resource Services – National Operations Center, Denver, CO, BLM

Abstract:

This course will be held on Friday, March 6, 2009 from 8:30am – 9:30am.

The BLM is using a software application called ePlanning to support resource management and NEPA activities as part of an overall government-wide effort to incorporate information technologies into business practices. This commercially available software provides tools to author, publish, and manage the content of planning documents. This course provides an overview of what you can expect from ePlanning training and support in your office. We will discuss *who* needs ePlanning training, *what* training and support look like, *why* training is important, *where* training and support occur, and *how* it will be implemented for your office. We'll also discuss how to incorporate contractors and cooperators into ePlanning.

How to Effectively Manage Interdisciplinary Meetings

Instructor:

Tracylee Clarke, PhD, Professor of Communication, California State University Channel Islands
Special Consultant, Center for Collaborative Policy

Abstract:

This course will be held Monday, March 2, 2009 at 9:00am – 4:00pm.

This course focuses on effectively managing interdisciplinary team meetings. It touches on important aspects such as preparing for meetings, how to craft an agenda and reachable objectives, identifying roles and responsibilities of team members, information sharing protocols, facilitation and communication techniques, creating a sense of momentum and progress, making team decisions, documenting commitments, and following up on meeting outcomes. This course also addresses working though difficult meeting dynamics. Participant case studies are used as a basis for discussion and training exercises.

The instructor is a Professor of Communication at California State University Channel Islands. She is also a special consultant with the Center for Collaborative Policy, a joint program at California State University Sacramento and the McGeorge School of Law and is a member of US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, Morris K. Udall Foundation. She has more than 14 years experience in environmental conflict management and collaborative policy development and has managed and directed large, complex stakeholder processes and mediations for federal, state, local and tribal governments as well as private industry. She has also designed and conducted professional training workshops for governmental officials and environmental managers to enhance collaborative problem solving, negotiation skills and communication competency.

Introduction to CommentWorks

Instructor:

Gary Light, Senior Vice President, ICF International, Fairfax, VA

Abstract:

This course will be held Friday, March 6, 2009 from 9:00am – 10:30am.

The BLM is using ePlanning to support resource management and NEPA activities as part of an overall government-wide effort to incorporate information technologies into business practices. This commercially available software application provides tools to author, publish, and manage the content of planning documents. ICF CommentWorks is the component that allows the planning team to review, parse, code/categorize, group together, and write summary statements and responses for public comments, including managing form letters received by the public. This session includes a demonstration of CommentWorks to show what it does and how it works.

Introduction to Effective Writing

Instructors:

Ellen Unsworth, Technical Editor/Project Manager, ICF Jones & Stokes, Sacramento, CA
Ken Bogdan, Environmental Counsel, ICF Jones & Stokes, Sacramento, CA

Abstract:

This course will be held Monday, March 2, 2009 from 9:00am to 4:00pm.

It is a fast-paced course that provides a brief overview of setting up and managing the writing process, outlining documents and individual chapters, and writing logical paragraphs. Topics include: understanding your audience, determining document needs, planning your document, citing sources, topic sentences and paragraph development, style guides, managing multi-author documents, and using tools in Word.

Mastering Public Meeting Facilitation

Instructor:

Leslie E. Wildesen, Ph.D., President, Environmental Training & Consulting International, Inc.
Portland, Oregon

Abstract:

The course will be held Friday, March 6, 2009 from 8:30am – 11:30am.

Based on key concepts from modern communication theory, it will provide participants the opportunity to acquire and practice these skills:

- Manage your internal states and those of the meeting participants (e.g., confidence, presence, trust, curiosity, openness)
- Stay flexible in a sea of change (e.g., schedules, topics, mood in the room)
- Make sure meeting participants are heard, know they are heard, and feel heard (e.g., avoiding the deadly paraphrase)
- Manage the flow of a large public meeting non-verbally (e.g., positional anchoring, non-verbal timing cues)
- Learn skills for “checking in” with attendees (e.g., second position, full-body “yes”)

Participants will receive instructional handouts, including tips on how to practice these new skills in upcoming situations.

Mitigating Impacts through NEPA and Planning

Instructors:

Ron Bass, JD, AICP, Senior Regulatory Specialist, ICF Jones & Stokes, Ashland, Oregon
Bobby Tuttle, NEPA Planner, ICF Jones & Stokes, Salt Lake City, Utah

Abstract:

This course will be held Friday, March 6, 2009 from 8:30am to 11:30am.

Mitigating adverse environmental impacts is a key element of successful NEPA compliance and land use planning. Mitigation measures are supposed to represent solutions to environmental problems. Whether they are conditions of individual projects or built into land use plans as management actions, mitigation measures must be adequate, feasible, and effective to solve environmental problems. This course focuses on the framework governing mitigation under NEPA and FLPMA and explains how to write, develop, and implement adequate, feasible, and effective mitigation measures.

Topics include: mitigation under NEPA (definitions, requirements, application to individual and programmatic actions); mitigation under FLPMA (requirements and relationship to NEPA, incorporating mitigation into land use plans, relationship to objectives and management actions); ensuring adequacy, feasibility, and effectiveness; relationship to adaptive management; using mitigation to support a FONSI; recent NEPA mitigation case law; and monitoring.

Planning for Priority Species and Vegetation

Instructors:

Barbara Hill, Special Status Species Biologist, Oregon State Office, BLM
Megan Kram, Public Lands Program Manager, The Nature Conservancy, Colorado

Abstract:

This course will be held Monday, March 2, 2009 from 2:00pm – 3:30pm.

Overwhelmed with the vast array of resource information that must be considered in your RMP? Unsure how to prioritize planning and management needs for species and vegetation? Struggling to analyze resources consistently in your plan? **Here is a tool that can help!**

Planning for Priority Species and Vegetation (PPSV) supports the ability of BLM planning teams to analyze biological information and develop alternatives for key species, vegetation, and habitats during the land use planning process. PPSV is accompanied by a concise, clearly formatted workbook for documenting data and analyses that feed into planning documents, such as RMPs, monitoring plans, and implementation plans. You will learn how this tool, which was developed by the BLM and The Nature Conservancy and is being used by the Grand Junction Field Office, can benefit you and your planning effort.

Using Visual Resource Management as a Tool to Achieve Desirable Outcomes

Instructors:

John McCarty, Chief Landscape Architect, Division of Recreation and Visitor Services, Washington Office, BLM
Rob Sweeten, District Landscape Architect, Canyon Country District Office, UT, BLM

Abstract:

This course will be held Monday, March 2, 2009 from 9:00am – 4:00pm.

This session is intended to remove the mystery of managing for the visual environment and foster common understanding of VRM's role within the context of the BLM's multiple-use mission. This course describes how to systematically inventory scenic values, public sensitivities, and visibility leading to Visual Resource Inventory (VRI) Classifications. You'll learn how to use this information to designate VRM Classes in the RMP, as well as the fundamental difference between VRI and VRM classifications. We will review RMP examples, share observations, and provide advice on how to improve the RMP's VRM sections.

We will talk about implementation of the RMP's VRM decisions, and how VRM classifications and design considerations are used to mold the visual character of facilities to help projects meet the VRM classification requirements. We'll discuss the type of information the BLM should expect from permit applicants and lessees, and how to process that information to make informed decisions on conformance with the RMP's VRM objectives.

Writing the Perfect EA/FONSI or EIS

Instructor:

Owen L Schmidt, Principal, Owen L Schmidt LLC, Portland, OR

Abstract:

This course will be held on Monday, March 2, 2009 from 9:00am – 4:00pm.

The NEPA practitioner will learn a set of practical skills for preparing or reviewing an environmental assessment (EA) / finding of no significant impact (FONSI) or environmental impact statement (EIS) that includes all the required content, as well as skills for safely leaving out content that is not necessary. NEPA lessons learned from a sample BLM-prepared EA/FONSI/DR will be discussed. Information is provided by a handout that includes graphical models, cases that support the models, and a sample NEPA document. Major topics include: How to make the findings required by law; scoping a reasonable range of alternatives; and writing the "perfect" cumulative effects analysis.