

**“Collaboration from the Other Side
of the Fence”
COUNTIES**

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What is Cooperating Agency Status?

- Under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), federal agencies are required to work “in cooperation with State and local governments.”
- According to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing this NEPA mandate, state, local, tribal and other federal entities may serve as cooperating agencies as appropriate.
- On March 23, 2005, the BLM modified its planning regs (43 CFR 1600) to define managers’ responsibility to offer CAS to local, state, tribal & other federal government partners (DOI initiated similar requirements departmentwide on June 6, 2005)

Cooperating Agency Qualifications:

- Jurisdiction by Law (40 C.F.R. 1508.15) - A local government must have the authority to grant permits for implementing the action. (i.e. State DNR under authority of the Clean Water Act)
- Special Expertise (40 C.F.R. 1508.26) – A local government must have more than an interest in a proposed action and must have knowledge regarding the impacts that a proposed action will have on local, regional, or state land use plans, policies, and controls.

Cooperating Agency Relationships

Result in:

- Better, more defensible plans;
- Gain early and consistent involvement of CA partners;
- Incorporates local knowledge of economic, social, and environmental conditions, as well as state and local land use requirements;
- Addresses intergovernmental issues;
- Avoids duplication of effort;
- Enhances local credibility of the planning review process;
- Encourages CA support for planning decisions; and
- Builds relationships of trust and cooperation.