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Instruction Memorandum No. 2007
Expires: 09/30/2008

To: All Washington Office and Field Officials

From: Deputy Director

Subject: A Unified Strategy to Implement “*BLM’s Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services*” Workplan (Purple Book)

Program Area: Recreation and Visitor Services

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum (IM) transmits the “Unified Strategy” describing how best to implement the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services Workplan (Purple Book) as outlined in IM No. 2006-060. It also contains recreation planning information and recommended processes that augment Section II, C and D, of Appendix C to the Land Use Planning Handbook H-1601-1. The Unified Strategy describes considerations for how and in what priority the objectives and actions contained in the Workplan should be implemented. It aligns the seven Workplan program objectives in a customer-oriented hierarchy with the primary objective of managing public lands and related waters for enhanced recreation experiences and quality-of-life outcomes. The Unified Strategy incorporates the principles of Benefits-based Management (BBM), a results-based framework for planning and managing recreation resources to facilitate and maximize benefits to individuals, communities, economies, and the environment. It encourages partnerships, promotes leveraging of resources, requires community and regional landscape-level coordination, and planning and management of recreation settings, services, and facilities. The Unified Strategy is attached in Adobe pdf format (Attachment 1), but will be printed later as a stand-alone document.

Policy/Action: This IM affirms the BLM’s corporate commitment to implementing a Unified Strategy that delivers a collaborative recreation and visitor services planning and management framework. The Unified Strategy provides overall guidance implementing the seven Workplan program objectives and institutionalizes them into the BLM’s recreation programs, policies, guidance, and budget formulation. This IM is critical to ongoing and future land use planning efforts because it provides a logical, structured framework for analyzing recreation-

tourism market demand for recreational activities, experiences, and benefit opportunities. It also provides long-term sustainability of the character of recreation settings and services and the infrastructure that support them. In addition, both resource management planning and activity planning should incorporate the concepts outlined in the Unified Strategy. This approach is essential for effectively and adequately assessing and evaluating the effects that proposed land use allocations and individual resource projects or uses have on recreation activities, experiences, outcomes, and recreation settings, especially in designated Special Recreation Management Areas.

Timeframe: This IM is effective immediately. Further direction will be provided through Manual Sections, Handbooks, and training.

Budget Impact: No budget impact is anticipated. Staff time involved in communicating this request is accounted for within existing program responsibilities.

Background: In 1989, the Recreation 2000 Strategy increased the BLM's corporate commitment to recreation initiatives. These initiatives were popular, garnered new funding, developed new facilities, and expanded the BLM's recreation infrastructure. However, this broad program focus led the BLM recreation program, management, and staff down a path of trying to be all things to all people. This strategy was not sustainable and, on occasion, emphasized facility development over maintaining the specific setting characteristics that contribute to quality recreation experiences and sustain long-term benefits from recreation participation.

In 1995, the BLM published an update of this strategy to encourage field offices to manage recreation in a regional or local context using a bottom-up approach to better fit customer needs and focus on implementing only those national initiatives that best matched their particular resource settings and capability. Despite this niche-based policy, random activity-specific initiatives, development proposals, and projects still tended to drive organizational structure, funding, planning, policy direction, and facility development. This overemphasis on individual projects, activities, and facilities often was detrimental to dispersed recreation settings and associated visitor experiences, and generally did not analyze or consider long-term effects to benefits.

Constituent and community concern about changing open space character, loss of the BLM's dispersed recreation opportunities, and the erosion of recreation experiences and quality-of-life outcomes was identified through extensive public outreach during the development of the Department of the Interior's Strategic Plan and the BLM's Workplan (Purple Book). While this Workplan provided a contemporary and responsive blueprint, it did not integrate the seven program objectives or prioritize actions, nor did it define the necessary planning and management considerations and tools for its unified implementation. The Unified Strategy addresses these concerns and provides a collaborative framework for successfully implementing the Workplan. Additional information on the Unified Strategy and BBM is available on the Recreation and Visitor Services Advisory Team web site (<http://web.blm.gov/internal/wo-200/wo-250/RVSAT/index.htm>). Recommended training is available through BLM's National Training Center (Course 8300-11).

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: BLM Manual Sections 8300 and 8310.

Coordination: Renewable Resources and Planning Directorate (AD-200), Office of National Landscape Conservation System (WO-170), Division of Engineering and Environmental Services (WO-360), and Division of Public Affairs (WO-610).

Contact: Bob Ratcliffe, Division Chief, Recreation and Visitor Services (WO-250) at (202) 452-5040, or Gary G. Marsh, Deputy Division Chief, at (202) 452-7795.

1 Attachment:

- 1 – A Unified Strategy to Implement “The BLM’s Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services” Workplan (Purple Book) (31 pp)