

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
VEGETATION TREATMENTS PROGRAMMATIC EIS AND ER FOR THE
WESTERN U.S. AND ALASKA

PUBLIC HEARING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2005
7:00 P.M.

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COPY

1 MR. AMME: Welcome tonight. We don't have a lot
2 of public here. This is typical at some of our meetings
3 lately.

4 But my name is Brian Amme. I'm the project
5 manager for this National Vegetation Treatment EIS, and
6 this is the last meeting. We're having a public hearing
7 for gathering public comment. We've held nine previous
8 meetings starting in Portland around the west, Sacramento,
9 Salt Lake, Albuquerque, Grand Junction, Boise, Billings,
10 and Cheyenne, and today Washington, D.C., and now Las
11 Vegas this evening.

12 I welcome you here. Carl Gossard from --
13 Assistant Director of Fire Operations Oregon, Washington
14 has been part of the project since the inception. He's
15 here tonight.

16 Mr. Paulus our contractor for ENSR International
17 will give a brief presentation, and then we will entertain
18 any comments that anybody from the public would like to
19 gather, and we'll just take it from there. So, Stuart, go
20 ahead.

21 MR. PAULUS: Thank you.

22 I want to welcome you to tonight's public
23 hearing on the Bureau of Land Management's Vegetation
24 Treatments Programmatic EIS, or Environmental Impact
25 Statement, and also ER, Environmental Report for the

1 Western U.S. and Alaska.

2 The purpose of the meeting tonight is threefold.
3 First of all, to help you understand the BLM's proposal to
4 treat vegetation on up to 6 million acres annually in the
5 western U.S. including Alaska.

6 Second, we'd like to explain the role of the
7 programmatic EIS and also the programmatic ER. It's a
8 little different than some projects where you might have
9 an environmental assessment or environmental impact
10 statement. We also have an additional volume that
11 accompanies this project which is the environmental report
12 and we'll explain why we did that.

13 And finally the main -- probably the main reason
14 for the meeting tonight is to solicit comments from the
15 public on issues of concern that they feel should be
16 addressed in the EIS, in the final EIS, or maybe issues or
17 aspects of the -- issues that we perhaps missed in the
18 draft document that should be in the final ES or perhaps
19 alternatively we should have considered in the draft that
20 we probably should consider in the final.

21 The BLM was found in 1946 with the goal of
22 serving current and future publics and restoring and
23 maintaining the health of the land. The agency
24 administers nearly 262 million acres of surface lands and
25 about 700 million acres of subsurface mineral lands.

1 As shown in this figure, nearly all the surface
2 acres are in the western U.S. You can see a good chunk of
3 them are right here in Nevada. Also quite a few in Utah
4 and Wyoming.

5 Although Alaska is probably a little out of
6 proportion in relation to the rest of the western U.S., it
7 actually has quite a few acres up there. About 81 million
8 acres of BLM land are found in Alaska.

9 So what is the BLM proposing to do under this
10 proposed -- this project and why? Well, the overall goal
11 is to treat up to 6 million acres annually in the western
12 U.S. and Alaska using five primary treatment methods.
13 Those methods are prescribed fire, use of mechanical,
14 manual, and biological control methods, and finally the
15 use of herbicides.

16 The way we came up with this acreage number is
17 that way back -- this project actually began in the fall
18 of 2001. We kind of really got going in 2002 when we had
19 our scoping meeting.

20 And during the spring and summer of 2002 we
21 actually sent out a request to all the field offices
22 asking them to let us know what acres they foresaw
23 treating in the next zero to three years and three to ten
24 years out; where they saw acres being treated; how many;
25 what types of treatment methods; types of vegetation at

1 least in terms of general classes of vegetation that they
2 will treat; and several other variables that we asked them
3 to provide information on. We then took all of the
4 information and came up with a number of about 6 million
5 acres is what they felt they needed to do to meet the
6 following several goals.

7 The primary reasons for doing the project or the
8 primary goals for the treatments are, one, to reduce
9 hazardous fuel loads to reduce the risk of wildfires. As
10 you well know in this state due to fire exclusion
11 practices over the last several decades, probably the last
12 century or so, hazardous fuel levels have gone up as have
13 weeding population, which is also another important goal,
14 remove and control basic vegetation and weeds.

15 Due to the spread of weeds and the increase of
16 hazardous fuels, these factors have helped to lead to some
17 rather large and severe fires in this state and elsewhere
18 throughout the western U.S. and Alaska for several
19 decades. So obviously mandates from congress, president,
20 and other -- other mandates have sort of dictated that
21 hazardous fuel levels be reduced and the threats of
22 wildfire be reduced. As I mentioned, we also try to
23 remove and control weeds.

24 And the third major thing is to restore and
25 rehabilitate damaged lands. Obviously because of all the

1 fires a lot of land's been damaged in the last several
2 decades. An important goal is to restore and rehabilitate
3 these lands.

4 And finally the overarching goal is to basically
5 improve ecosystem health. If we do that we'll improve
6 water quality. We'll improve fish and wildlife habitat.
7 The land will be more visually appealing. It will provide
8 greater recreational values. It will provide perhaps
9 better resources for Native Americans and Alaskan natives,
10 so there's a lot of benefits in improving vegetation.

11 These are the five methods, just a quick summary
12 of the five methods in order of importance at least for
13 the western U.S. In a little bit I'll explain how
14 Nevada's treatment -- percentages by a treatment method
15 differ from the rest of the western U.S.

16 But the western U.S. as a whole, and this
17 includes Alaska, mechanical treatments are most important.
18 Generally they involve the use of large equipment such as
19 mowers, bush hogs, and other types of heavy equipment to
20 remove or control vegetation.

21 The second most common method to be used is the
22 use of prescribed fire. Here we're setting a couple fires
23 to perhaps control hazardous fuels or reduce some sort of
24 types -- some type of vegetation. In Alaska there's a lot
25 of use of natural fire to control vegetation. They will

1 actually have prescribed burn plans in place and use
2 natural fire to help manage vegetation up there.

3 The third most important treatment method is the
4 use of chemicals or herbicides. Here they're applying
5 them via helicopter or through an A T V.

6 Fourth most important method is the use of
7 biological control methods, and that can be involved -- or
8 can involve the use of domestic livestock to contain
9 vegetation, or it might involve the use of insects or
10 pathogens to help weaken or kill vegetation.

11 Quick question?

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The use of livestock to
13 control obnoxious weeds and stuff like that, are you
14 specifically gearing us in to control cheatgrass?

15 MR. PAULUS: I guess that's an option. I don't
16 remember it being discussed or being brought up by the
17 field office.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Certainly here in Nevada
19 we have a big problem with cheatgrass. When we have lands
20 like we do in Las Vegas where we don't have grazing per se
21 anymore, what other mechanisms are we gonna have?

22 We'd like to bring -- I would like to see
23 grazing be brought back in so at least control the
24 cheatgrass, or at least try to thin it down some so we
25 control some of these massive fires we've been having.

1 MR. PAULUS: That's an option, early season
2 grazing or something like that.

3 Okay. And then the next most important method
4 is the use of manual treatment techniques such as
5 chainsaws and hand implements.

6 In addition to looking at treating
7 6 million acres or up to 6 million acres, there were
8 several other things we tried to accomplish in this EIS.
9 One of the things we tried to do is look at the use of
10 several new herbicides to treat weeds, including
11 cheatgrass and the use of Imazapic.

12 Four new chemicals that we looked at were
13 Difluzopyr, Diquat, Fluridone, and Imazapic. Diquat and
14 Fluridone primarily being used in aquatic situations while
15 Difluzopyr and Imazapic are used primarily in
16 terrestrial and upward situations.

17 Basically what we have been doing since late
18 2001 and certainly for two to three years was doing
19 assessments to evaluate these chemicals, and also as it
20 turned out we also evaluated a number of the chemicals BLM
21 currently uses now. And I'll explain that a little more
22 later.

23 But, again, a lot of the time was working with
24 the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and
25 Wildlife Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

1 Administration, or NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service
2 to look at the risks of these new chemicals and also some
3 of the listed chemicals you use.

4 As part of that analysis we also want to develop
5 protocol for analyzing not only these herbicides but
6 herbicides that the BLM might like to use in the future.
7 As you can see, just to use these four new herbicides
8 there's about a -- it will be a good five-year process
9 probably when all is said and done.

10 We're hoping to come up with a procedure or a
11 method to speed this process up so you wouldn't go through
12 a rather lengthy EIS, go through some other hopefully more
13 streamline process to evaluate herbicides that might come
14 up in the future that you'd like to use.

15 So, again, if you look in the EIS, Volume 2, one
16 of the appendices is the protocol, and part of the
17 protocol is the risk assessment methodology which
18 basically you assess the risks to humans, plants, and
19 animals, including threatened endangered species.

20 But there's also a National Environmental Policy
21 Act process where you describe the procedures that will
22 also bring the public into the process to allow them to
23 see what you're doing, to understand the process of
24 evaluating these chemicals, and to have input into how
25 these chemicals might be used and the issues that should

1 be evaluated during the risk assessment process.

2 So we did that. We developed a protocol, and
3 that's in the EIS. And hopefully a different protocol
4 will be used in the future, and then instead of maybe
5 spending five years looking for new chemicals, it might
6 only take a year or two or less, or maybe a year or so.

7 The role of the Programmatic EIS. And again we
8 have an EIS and an ER. Federal agencies are required to
9 prepare an EIS if the proposed action has the potential
10 for significant environmental impact.

11 When you think of killing you think of
12 herbicides, you think of the potential for a significant
13 impact. And as it turned out, as we went through this
14 whole process, the use of herbicides really turned out to
15 be the main issue of concern. There was a main issue
16 brought up in scoping. Scoping was done back in early
17 2002, and that's where we ask the public to identify the
18 issues that should be covered in the EIS. Herbicides were
19 the primary issue of concern.

20 And they were also the main central issue of
21 analysis or the main issue back when the BLM did similar
22 type EIS's back in the late 80s and early 90s. Again,
23 we've gone through the process about 15 years ago.
24 Herbicides again were the same issue back then.

25 That's the Programmatic EIS which is a two

1 volume set, analyzes the effects on natural and social
2 resources for the use of herbicides currently available to
3 the BLM, as well as the four new herbicides proposed for
4 use by the BLM.

5 And the reason -- I mentioned we did look at the
6 currently available herbicides and the reason we ended up
7 doing that is when we, you know, labor analyzed back in
8 late 80s early 90s, but in the process of doing our risk
9 assessment and developing the protocol, it became fairly
10 evident early on -- especially in talking to EPA and Fish
11 and Wildlife, and NOAA Fisheries -- that really the
12 methodology used to analyze a risk back then for fish and
13 wildlife and plants and especially for an endangered
14 species and perhaps even more importantly to the
15 northwest, was not really state-of-the-art. And, in fact,
16 some of it really wasn't done that much back then.

17 So we basically decided to look at a number of
18 the currently available herbicides that you use and
19 reanalyze those and did a risk assessment for those for
20 plants and animals, and in some cases we used ones that
21 have been done by the Forest Service in the last few
22 years. So between the Forest Service and the BLM, we
23 ended up looking at a number of herbicides that you
24 currently use as well as ones that were proposed to be
25 used.

1 As part of the EIS we looked at five
2 alternatives. These five alternatives were brought --
3 basically submitted to us by the public. The first one is
4 Alternative A, and that's typically found in all EIS's in
5 which we basically look at the current situation or the no
6 action alternative. What would happen is we just kept
7 going as we are now.

8 Under Alternative A the BLM can currently use 20
9 herbicides. Back in the late 80s, early 90s, you looked
10 at 22 herbicides and decided that 20 were -- we can use
11 20; two of them we tossed out for their risk in one reason
12 or another. So you have 20 herbicides you can use.

13 Right now you're allowed to choose herbicides in
14 14 states. You also treat about 300,000 acres annually
15 using herbicides. Currently you treat about 200,000 acres
16 in total. About 300,000 are using herbicides. That's
17 what we do now.

18 Under Alternative B, which is what we're
19 proposing, or preferred alternative, we have a few
20 different things here. First of all, we're bumping the
21 number of acres up 6 million annually I mentioned. Of
22 those 6 million, about 935,000 will be treated using
23 herbicides. So a threefold increase from 2 million to 6
24 million of total acres, and about a threefold increase in
25 acres treated using herbicides.

1 We are also allowing for the use of herbicides
2 in 17 western states. The earlier EIS's did not cover
3 Alaska, Texas, and Nebraska. Texas and Nebraska don't
4 have a lot of acreage but certainly Alaska does. However,
5 at this point Alaska doesn't plan to use a lot of
6 herbicides if at all certainly in the next 10 years or so,
7 but we're actually seeing other federal agencies that are
8 interested in using herbicides up there so I guess there
9 is the potential that BLM may use in the future.

10 We also under this alternative are able to use
11 the four new herbicides.

12 Now, one thing that is different here under
13 Alternative A you have -- currently have 20 herbicides
14 that are available to use; however, of those 20 really
15 only about 14 are used quite a bit. Six of them you have
16 used or rarely have used in the last six or seven years.
17 Fosamine and Atrazine are a couple of them that you
18 haven't used in a number of years.

19 So we decided under Alternative B to basically
20 drop out those six that you haven't been using or using
21 sparingly in the last five, six, seven years. Two
22 reasons, one, you're not using them and the field offices
23 didn't show much interest to continue to use them. And,
24 second, as I mentioned, we ended up doing risk assessments
25 for all the currently available herbicides that we felt

1 were gonna likely be used in the future so we have 14.

2 Some of those we -- the BLM had to do the
3 analysis. Some of them the Forest Service has done as
4 part of their work. In the last several years we were
5 able to use the Forest Service herbicide risk assessment
6 and adapt them for BLM type range lands, forest land
7 provisions, and other different forest services and can
8 still adapt them to our needs.

9 Now, we had those 14 covered through other risk
10 assessments that we did. We have four new ones. Six ones
11 that we dropped out. We didn't feel we either had the
12 money to spend on new risk assessments or obviously the
13 interest by the field offices to use those herbicides. So
14 we felt let's drop those six out. If there ever is a need
15 in the future and somebody really feels strongly to use
16 those herbicides, then we can do risk assessment at that
17 time and see if they're suitable for use. But for right
18 now under Alternative B there are only 14 old herbicides
19 and then the four new herbicides.

20 Alternative C, probably brought up by the
21 public, and that's not using any herbicides at all. So
22 what are the issues with not treating with herbicides, and
23 that's something that the EIS looks at.

24 The fourth one, Alternative D, is no aerial use
25 of herbicides. There was concern that obviously that

1 sometimes we spread by air, the herbicides can drift from
2 the target area to the non-target area. So if we don't
3 spray by air, obviously that risk is a little less. So
4 what would be the pros and cons of not spraying by air.

5 And finally the last one is Alternative E. This
6 was submitted to us by a coalition of environmental
7 groups. And basically the number of components stemming
8 from the back of Volume 2 of the EIS, about 21 pages in
9 length, covers not only herbicide use but other treatment
10 methods.

11 Some of the things that they're interested in,
12 and one in particular, is that they don't want the BLM to
13 use Acetolactate Synthaseinhibiting herbicides of which
14 there are four. You currently use Chlorsulfuron,
15 Imazapyr, Metsulfuron Methyl, Sulfometuron Methyl, and the
16 one of the four we're proposing is Imazapic. Those five
17 would not be allowed under Alternative E.

18 These herbicides have been shown to damage crops
19 when they drift off from target to non-target areas, so
20 they would just assume the BLM not use them.

21 The other focus of this alternative is more on
22 passive restoration. Obviously what we're presenting here
23 has a very active component to it; burning, using
24 herbicides, manual, mechanical, biological control
25 methods.

1 Today we'd like to see a much stronger passive
2 restoration and removing the cause of the -- the need
3 to -- the increased fire or increased weeds such as
4 removing livestock, closing roads, restricting recreation.
5 Some of those types of things would somewhat conflict with
6 some of the other objectives for BLM in terms of multiple
7 use management, so that's one of them.

8 They also don't want to see herbicides used in
9 areas where amphibians might be found. So wetlands, no
10 closer than five hundred feet of an area that would
11 threaten endangered plants or animals.

12 And also they want a restriction to be increased
13 in areas with multiple sensitive materials or special use
14 vegetation that's used by an Alaska native or a Native
15 American.

16 Well, some of you that have been with the BLM
17 for a while or perhaps have done some reading know that
18 the BLM in fact has obviously been treating vegetation for
19 many years and also went through this process, as I
20 mentioned, back in the late 80s, early 90s. However, this
21 is a little different from what we've done back then to
22 what we are doing now.

23 First of all, back in the late 80s and 90s they
24 actually divided the western U.S. into sort of four EIS's.
25 One -- the upper right one was the 13 state EIS, and it

1 actually covered 13 of the 14 states that were evaluated
2 back then. There's another one done for the northwest
3 U.S., or northwestern area; one specifically for western
4 Oregon; and finally one just for California. So they did
5 14 states and four EIS's.

6 The other thing, in the old EIS's they're only
7 allowed actually within the EIS's themselves to treat
8 about 500,000 acres, and since then there have been agency
9 and congressional mandates to increase those numbers to
10 about 2 million acres, which pretty much they have a cap
11 of 2 million acres treated annually.

12 Those EIS's obviously did not cover Alaska,
13 Nebraska, and Texas. They did not include the new
14 herbicides we looked at, and they did not develop a
15 protocol for evaluating herbicides in the future. So,
16 again, what we're doing in the new one is 17 states,
17 picking up the three new states, new herbicides, and
18 developing a protocol and obviously 4 million extra acres,
19 too.

20 As I mentioned, we also did a Programmatic
21 Environmental Report. It's a one volume -- volume -- one
22 volume book. And the reason we did that -- well, first of
23 all, the Programmatic Environmental Report basically
24 focuses on the non-herbicide treatment method. So we have
25 a two volume set that's specific to herbicides, and we

1 have one volume that's specific to the other treatment
2 methods, so prescribed fire and the manual, mechanical,
3 and biological control.

4 The ER does not make any decisions, so thus it's
5 not an environmental impact statement. BLM is not making
6 any decisions as it relates to the other treatment
7 methods. However, there are two primary reasons we had to
8 do an enviromental report. We couldn't just ignore those
9 other treatment methods.

10 First of all, we needed to analyze the issues
11 associated with the other treatment method as far as a
12 cumulative effect analysis for the EIS. EIS looks again
13 at -- in looking at cumulative effect analysis, what are
14 the effects that the BLM had to at least in conjunction
15 with other activities accepted by the Forest Service,
16 other agencies, other private land owners in relation to
17 the BLM activities; and also how past, present, and future
18 activities sort of what happens over time, and what are
19 the issues and the effects of the impacts and actions that
20 occur over time, and also how they occur in conjunction
21 with other similar types of actions by other agencies for
22 example.

23 Thus when you look at, let's say, air quality,
24 you're burning, Forest Service is burning, there's
25 agricultural burning, how do all these things mix

1 together? Maybe the BLM by itself when they burn some
2 issues when you start throwing Forest Service burn in an
3 area, agricultural burn, and the BLM burning, you might
4 have a big problem. So we need to do that.

5 And also as part of one of our alternatives,
6 Alternative C did not have the use of herbicides as a
7 treatment method, so really to look at the effects of that
8 and special cumulative effects analysis we had to look at
9 the other treatment methods.

10 The other major reason is when we were doing the
11 biological assessment, which is another volume which you
12 might have seen out front, this is done with the U.S. Fish
13 and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fishery Service.
14 They were interested not only on what are the effects of
15 herbicides on currently endangered species, but what about
16 the other treatment methods. For a couple reasons, one,
17 sometimes you'll treat two or more treatment methods on a
18 piece of land. So if you just talk about the herbicides
19 you may ignore the prescribed fire that occurred before or
20 after, or some other method that occurred on the same
21 piece of land that may even affect down stream. Or, you
22 know, you may just be treating a piece of ground -- ground
23 using prescribed fire and you'd like to know how that
24 affects threatened endangered species.

25 Back in the late 80s and early 90s they did not

1 do a biological assessment, so I thought that was a more
2 important reason that we do this biological assessment and
3 cover the issues. In that document about 350 species are
4 covered. That's about the number of threatened and
5 endangered species you have in the western U.S. on BLM
6 land. So that was the other big reason was to meet the
7 needs of those two agencies.

8 So what is the importance of each treatment
9 method under the -- well, basically under the current
10 situation and also under the preferred alternative? The
11 chart on the left, on the left half shows kind of like the
12 percentage of acres treated using the different method.
13 Currently on the right the percentage of acres would be
14 treated under the preferred alternative.

15 Now, as you can see, the red is mechanical, the
16 blue is prescribed fire, and those both will increase
17 under the preferred alternative in terms of percentage of
18 acres treated. Use of herbicides which is black holds
19 pretty steady at about 16 percent. Again this is for the
20 western U.S. And biological control and manual control
21 methods actually decline.

22 However, keep in mind 2 million acres on the
23 left, 6 million acres on the right. So the actual number
24 of acres increases for all treatment methods under the
25 preferred alternative because we're treating so many more

1 acres.

2 Now, Nevada -- we have brought out the different
3 states and of course everyone's -- none of them match in
4 this, and Nevada is no exception. In Nevada right now
5 about 20 percent of your acres are treated using
6 prescribed fire, so that's about 10 percent less than the
7 western U.S. as a whole.

8 In the future you anticipate going up to about
9 30 percent, so you're getting closer to the western
10 average but still not quite up to the rest of the west.

11 What was really striking especially to me in a
12 state this big and very spread out, lots of open space,
13 about 70 percent of your acres right now are treated using
14 mechanical methods. That will drop to about 60 percent in
15 the preferred alternative. But compared to the rest of
16 the U.S. you're almost double what the rest of the U.S. is
17 doing in terms of mechanical treatment.

18 Manual and biological control methods are kind
19 of an afterthought in this state. Between the two of them
20 you treat about 11,000 acres right now. That will get up
21 to about 60 or 70,000 in the future, but that's only about
22 3 percent of your acres.

23 Herbicides are running at about 10 percent right
24 now. It will be about 10 percent in the future, so use of
25 herbicides is less than the rest of the western U.S.

1 Now, what especially jumps out at you right now
2 is you treat about 300,000 acres. You're gonna go up to
3 almost 2 million acres in Nevada, so sixfold increase
4 which is far greater than any other state.

5 So this is where the action is. Most of your
6 jobs should be pretty secure.

7 So where do we go from here? As I mentioned, we
8 had scoping meetings way back in January, March, through
9 March of 2002. Over the next two years or so we worked on
10 the risk assessments, initially just working on the four
11 chemicals. And then obviously we really had to go back
12 and look at some of the early used chemicals, so that
13 probably took a good couple years. Got up to probably
14 almost mid 2004 or so, late 2004. And then of course the
15 time it took to put together the draft EIS.

16 Draft EIS, if you look out there I know it's
17 somewhat impressive. It's four volumes. Two volumes for
18 the EIS, one volume for the ER, and then there's actually
19 a biological assessment out there of which the field
20 office didn't get a copy of that. We printed a limited
21 number, but that was also done.

22 But if you actually go on the CD you'll see
23 there's quite a bit more information. First of all, the
24 risk assessments are on the CD. There were five human
25 health risk assessments done. Ten ecological or land

1 animal risk assessments done. Each one of those is about
2 300, 350 pages. So one gentleman here said he was just
3 about done reading the EIS, so if you need a little bit
4 more to read.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, I'd appreciate
6 Volume 2.

7 MR. PAULUS: Print these out and this should get
8 you through the holidays probably.

9 There's a couple of air quality monitoring
10 reports. As part of the environmental report we need to
11 look at the risk from prescribed fire and how obviously
12 all the smoke emissions but also the emissions from use of
13 herbicides, where do they go, what are their impact. So
14 there's a couple different reports related to air quality
15 emissions.

16 There's also a three cultural resource report.
17 One Native American uses of different types of cultural
18 resources; one that really puts a focus on plants and
19 animal uses by Native Americans; and one on
20 paleontological resources. So those are on there also.

21 And I should mention this is probably the
22 easiest way to read the reports if you're into that kind
23 of thing, or if you're having trouble sleeping or what not
24 these are great. You know, hard copies of these will get
25 you right to sleep.

1 But all this stuff is also on your website,
2 www.blm.gov. It used to be the first link on the page. I
3 think we've now moved down to number two. The movie "King
4 Kong" has bumped us down to number two, but we're right
5 there at the top.

6 If you click on that it'll take you to a page.
7 Read the directions because that's important, and then all
8 the files are there and pretty well organized. It's done
9 by the folks in Denver office in Denver, and they did a
10 nice job on that.

11 But in terms of speed, this is probably faster
12 than trying to download all these files.

13 The draft EIS was available and enviromental
14 report were available on November 10th of this year.

15 We're finishing our last public hearing today.
16 Again as Brian mentioned, we had nine others over the last
17 few weeks.

18 The comment due date or final dates for comments
19 is January 9th, 2006, so you got a little less than a
20 month now.

21 The final EIS is projected to be available in
22 late spring 2006. The public will have at least a 30-day
23 review period. That puts us to early summer 2006. And
24 right now let's hope that the record in June will be out
25 around July 2006, so hopefully at that time you can start

1 doing some of the things that are discussed in these
2 documents.

3 So what can you do to help? Well, the first
4 thing is to review the documents. There's plenty to read.
5 Again, there's four volumes; three of which this office
6 probably has copies of, and everything is on the CD so the
7 CD's have everything that was prepared.

8 So look at the CD. Go to the website if you
9 want, if you want to download it and don't have the CD.
10 There are some paper copies floating around the state.
11 Brian can get you some more and I'll show you how to get
12 them from Brian in just a minute.

13 And again, the BLM office is -- once you've
14 looked at these documents if you have any comments that
15 you'd like to provide again on issues of concern, things
16 that we missed, incorrect data, whatever you think should
17 be in there but wasn't in the draft and should be in the
18 final, let us know. That includes both the EIS and ER.

19 And also if you have any alternative ideas as to
20 how we can better treat vegetation. We came up with five
21 that basically came from public input. Those aren't the
22 only five alternatives we could have come up with. If you
23 have a better one, let us know.

24 And then finally let us know if you'd like to be
25 placed on the mailing list. Probably the easiest way to

1 do that, you should have gotten a couple of handouts when
2 you came in which is a one-page sheet here, and on this
3 sheet you can ask or let us know if you want to have your
4 name put on the mailing list.

5 If you'd like to receive a copy of the final
6 EIS, let us know now also.

7 And then if you have a comment you can write it
8 here and then mail it to Brian or fax it to me.

9 The same information is also provided in this
10 handout. This gives you a little more of an overview of
11 what the project is all about. It also gives you contact
12 names and addresses when we're not here, and this is at
13 the front desk also.

14 Where can you send your comments? Again, if
15 you'd like to have comments, you want to mail them, mail
16 them to Brian at the Reno state office. Here's his
17 address. Again his address is on both of these handouts.
18 This single handout also has his mailing address or you
19 can fax your comments to Brian, or for you folks probably
20 easiest way is just to e-mail them. Probably 95 percent
21 of our comments have come via e-mail. Just write it up in
22 Word or in your word processor or on the e-mail your
23 comments, attach it to the e-mail, and just send it to
24 Brian. And we have a dedicated e-mail address,
25 VEGEIS@NV.BLM.GOV. That's dedicated for comments for this

1 project. They're slowly but surely trickling in.

2 And if you could please get the comments to us
3 by January 9th, 2006. I think that's the cutoff date.

4 And that's all I have so now I'll turn it over
5 to Brian.

6 MR. AMME: Fun part.

7 Again this lengthy public hearing -- hearings
8 officer, I'll be the hearing officer, and we'll do the
9 Reader's Digest condensed version.

10 This is a public hearing. We will open it for
11 any public comment that is -- wants to come forward on it.
12 We will not be entertaining questions at this point. This
13 is just to receive comments if anybody has any comments.

14 There is a sign-up sheet out front if nobody
15 signed up on it at this point.

16 I can open up the floor to anybody that wants to
17 come forward and have comments and it will be recorded by
18 the court reporter.

19 Is there anybody that would like to make any
20 oral comments on anything at this time?

21 You can also submit written comments of course
22 by January the 9th.

23 Okay. Well, if nobody wants to make any oral
24 comments then this hearing is now closed. Thank you very
25 much for your participation.

1 And take any CD's, handouts. Take some CD's to
2 other agency folks you know that might have missed this
3 meeting and would like the information. Please take some
4 extra CD's and distribute them. Again, I've got your
5 address so I can send you a hard copy. I'll get one in
6 the mail to you.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We got a big mailman so
8 he's okay.

9 MR. PAULUS: If you need more than one hard copy
10 let me know. We'll get them out.

11 So at this point we're done. Thank you very
12 much.

13 (The proceedings concluded at 7:34
14 p.m.)

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I, MARY E. HOWARD, CCR #762, RPR, do
hereby certify that I was present at the time and place
specified herein

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Mary E. Howard
Mary E. Howard, CCR #762, RPR