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

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING PROCEEDINGS

PURSUANT TO NOTICE duly given to all parties in  
interest, this matter came on for hearing at 7:00 p.m. on  
the 8th day of December, 2005, at the Holiday Inn, South  
Fork Room, 204 West Fox Farm Road, Cheyenne, Wyoming, with  
Brian Amme and Gina Ramos of the BLM, and Stuart Paulus of  
ENSR International.

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (Hearing proceedings commenced

3 7:00 p.m., December 8, 2005.)

4 MR. AMME: We're going to go ahead and  
5 start our kind of presentation at this point. I see we  
6 have a couple of folks here. My name is Brian Amme. I'm  
7 the project manager for this project. I work out of the  
8 Nevada state office of BLM. I'm actually the planning and  
9 environmental coordinator for Nevada, with my co-team  
10 leader Gina Ramos, who is the senior weed specialist in the  
11 Washington office of BLM. We've put this project together  
12 for the last few years.

13 Stuart Paulus is our contractor for ENSR  
14 International. He's been helping us out getting this put  
15 together. And Stuart will give about a 20-minute  
16 presentation PowerPoint. Gina will open the hearing  
17 formally, and if anybody has any comments, we'll go from  
18 there. Thank you for your attention.

19 MR. PAULUS: Thank you, Brian. I want to  
20 thank you for coming to the public hearing tonight for the  
21 Bureau of Land Management's vegetation treatment  
22 programmatic EIS and Environmental Report or ER.

23 The purpose of the public hearing tonight is  
24 threefold. First of all, to help you, the public,  
25 understand what the BLM is proposing to do, which is

1 basically to treat up to 6 million acres annually in the  
2 western U.S. and Alaska.

3 The second objective tonight is to help you  
4 better understand the role of the Environmental Impact  
5 Statement and the Environmental Report.

6 And finally, I'm not sure we have any public  
7 tonight that will provide public testimony, but if we do,  
8 to obtain testimony from the public, especially on issues  
9 that you may feel that should have been better addressed in  
10 the EIS or to help us identify errors maybe we made or  
11 omissions we made or if you have an alternative suggestion  
12 for ways we can be treating vegetation perhaps better than  
13 the ones we evaluated in the EIS.

14 BLM was founded in 1946 with a goal of serving  
15 current and future publics and restoring and maintaining  
16 the health of the land. The agency administers nearly 262  
17 million surface acres, primarily in the western U.S. and  
18 Alaska, and about 700 million subsurface mineral acre  
19 lands, and more of those are back East than they are out  
20 here in the West.

21 This map shows where BLM lands are located. You  
22 can see there's quite a few acres here in Wyoming, also  
23 quite a few in Nevada and Utah. Although it's hard to tell  
24 based on the scale of this map, Alaska has about a third of  
25 the acres. 81 million acres are found in Alaska. So

1 Alaska is a very important state in the context of this  
2 EIS.

3           What is the BLM proposing to do and why? The  
4 overarching goal is to treat up to 6 million acres annually  
5 in the western U.S. including Alaska using five primary  
6 treatment methods. The five methods are the manual  
7 methods, mechanical, biological control methods, use of  
8 prescribed fire and the use of herbicides.

9           And you might ask how do we come up with the 6  
10 million acres? Right now the BLM treats about 2 million  
11 acres, but when we started this process, there was  
12 obviously a lot of interest in treating more land for  
13 hazardous fuels reduction, weeds and whatnot. And I'll  
14 cover that a little further on in the PowerPoint here.

15           We went out to the different field offices and  
16 asked them how many acres do you foresee treating in the  
17 next zero to three years and the next three to ten years.  
18 We also asked them what types of vegetation will be  
19 treated, where the vegetation will be treated, what types  
20 of methods will be used, what types of equipment, et  
21 cetera. This information came back to us, and based on  
22 that input we came up with a number of about 6 million  
23 acres.

24           Of that 6 million acres, one of the important  
25 objectives of this proposal is to reduce hazardous fuel

1 loads to reduce the risk of wildfires. As you well know in  
2 this state and certainly in the neighboring states,  
3 wildfires have become a real issue in the last couple  
4 decades, especially the last decade, some very large  
5 wildfires and very severe wildfires. So one of the  
6 objectives is to reduce that fuel load that supports these  
7 fires so that we hopefully have fewer wildfires and less  
8 severe wildfires.

9           Of the treatments -- and then the second major  
10 objective or purpose is to remove and control weeds. So of  
11 the 6 million acres, about 3.5 million acres are actually  
12 for treatments that are really targeted at those two  
13 things, reducing hazardous fuel loads and removing and  
14 controlling weeds.

15           Another reason for doing this proposal is to  
16 restore and rehabilitate damaged lands. Obviously with all  
17 of these fires and also the spread of weeds, the number of  
18 acres damaged has grown substantially in the last decade or  
19 two, so there's a need to restore and rehabilitate these  
20 damaged lands.

21           Out of the 6 million acres that are proposed for  
22 treatment, about 1.5 million acres will be treated to  
23 restore and rehabilitate damaged lands. And finally, the  
24 kind of overarching goal or purpose for this project is to  
25 just improve ecosystem health, which obviously would

1 benefit water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, visual  
2 resources, recreation, a whole gamut of types of natural  
3 and social resources that are associated with public lands.

4           Out of these 6 million acres, about 1 million  
5 acres are associated with the broader group of BLM  
6 programs, including fish and wildlife habitat, wetland  
7 protection, riparian restoration, cultural resources, wild  
8 horse and burros, et cetera. So 1 million covers all the  
9 treatments that the various programs that the BLM has, 1.5  
10 basically for restoring and rehabilitating damaged lands  
11 and about 3.5 million acres for reducing hazardous fuel  
12 loads and reducing the threat of weeds.

13           Just a quick few slides showing the different  
14 treatment methods. This is mechanical treatments, again  
15 using larger, heavier equipment to mow vegetation, prune,  
16 trim, cut, chop down vegetation.

17           Prescribed fire is the second most common. I  
18 guess I should have mentioned, I forget to do this every  
19 night, but the order of showing these different treatment  
20 methods is kind of the order of importance. Mechanical  
21 treatment methods would be the most important treatment  
22 methods on the western Alaskawide basis. It may not be  
23 true for this state, though.

24           Prescribed fire is the second most important  
25 method, again using prescribed fire to reduce hazardous

1 fuels, treat vegetation and especially in Alaska using  
2 natural fire to also treat vegetation, especially when we  
3 develop burn plans and then have natural fire sort of meet  
4 their burn plan objectives.

5           Third most common treatment method for the  
6 western U.S. and Alaska as a whole is the use of chemicals  
7 or herbicides. Here are a couple of different ways of  
8 applying herbicides through the use of helicopters and  
9 through the use of an ATV vehicle.

10           The fourth most common method is the use of  
11 biological control treatments. That can include using  
12 domestic livestock to contain vegetation, such as these  
13 goats are trying to do along this creek, or it might  
14 involve the use of insects or pathogens that feed upon  
15 vegetation and weaken it or kill it, and thus help to slow  
16 or stop the spread of the vegetations you're trying to  
17 treat.

18           And finally the least common method is the use of  
19 manual equipment, hand tools basically. Manual methods and  
20 also mechanical methods are especially important in areas  
21 where we have BLM lands in close proximity to areas that  
22 are occupied by people or have private property on them or  
23 you might be concerned about using herbicides or fire in  
24 close proximity where people and their dwellings may occur.  
25 In those situations obviously hand tools are good to use or

1 mechanical tools where you don't want to have the risk of  
2 fire or herbicides getting off the target area.

3           In addition to evaluating issues associated with  
4 treating 6 million acres, we also try to do a few other  
5 things in this EIS, and some of these are actually to help  
6 benefit the BLM not only for this EIS but in the future.  
7 What took up most of our time the last several years, this  
8 project actually began in late 2001, we had scoping in  
9 early 2002, so here we are almost four years later, and I  
10 would say probably two and a half to three years of that  
11 time was basically doing assessments, which we call risk  
12 assessments, to evaluate the risks of using different  
13 herbicides on plants and animals and humans.

14           Originally we were focusing on some new  
15 herbicides BLM wanted to use in the future. These four  
16 herbicides are diflufenzopyr, diquat, fluridone and  
17 imazapic. Diquat and fluridone are primarily aquatic  
18 herbicides while diflufenzopyr and imazapic are primarily  
19 used for terrestrial uses. So that was where a lot of the  
20 effort was in developing these risk assessments and also  
21 involved a lot of coordination with the Environmental  
22 Protection Agency, which obviously is involved in the  
23 registration of herbicides, and also the U.S. Fish and  
24 Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
25 Administration National Marine Fisheries or NOAA Fisheries

1 because they were especially concerned with what are the  
2 risks of using these herbicides to threatened and  
3 endangered species.

4           As we went through this process, it became  
5 evident that some of the ways that the BLM evaluated risk  
6 from the herbicides they currently use, which was done back  
7 in the late '80s and early '90s, is not necessarily  
8 adequate to meet today's protocols and today's requirements  
9 especially for fish and wildlife and threatened and  
10 endangered species. So it was decided to also look at  
11 another six chemicals BLM currently uses and also to review  
12 and consult with the Forest Service on a number of other  
13 chemicals that the BLM uses to make sure that they were, in  
14 fact, safe to use around threatened and endangered species  
15 and other fish and wildlife.

16           So again, about two and a half years were spent  
17 first doing risk assessments for these four chemicals and  
18 actually doing risk assessments for another six that the  
19 BLM did and bringing in some risk assessments that the  
20 Forest Service has done the last few years to really assess  
21 the risks for a number of chemicals used by the BLM.

22           In the process of developing our own risk  
23 assessments, reviewing the Forest Service risk assessments  
24 and looking at what was done in the past, we ended up  
25 developing a protocol that we all could agree on, that

1 being the BLM, EPA, Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA  
2 Fisheries, developed a protocol that everybody could agree  
3 adequately evaluated the risk to plants and animals and  
4 humans and in particular threatened and endangered species,  
5 protocol that you could use with different types of  
6 herbicides, not only using the ones that we looked at but  
7 something that could be used in the future because up to  
8 this point we really didn't have a protocol in place. They  
9 had looked at herbicides in the past, but nobody had really  
10 put together a protocol or a process that could be followed  
11 when doing a risk assessment. So we did that and that was  
12 done with the intent that this could be used in the future.

13           The BLM followed the protocol, theoretically, and  
14 it's certainly anticipated at this point the other major  
15 interested parties being EPA again, U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
16 Service and NOAA Fisheries, determined the findings we  
17 follow in that protocol, and we also felt it was necessary  
18 obviously to involve the public in the process. So as part  
19 of the protocol we also discussed the National  
20 Environmental Policy Act procedures that the BLM would have  
21 to follow to ensure that the public had adequate input into  
22 the whole process.

23           So again, evaluated 6 million acres, did risk  
24 assessments for actually what ended up being ten chemicals  
25 but four in particular new ones BLM wanted to look at,

1 developed a protocol and hopefully in the future use this  
2 protocol.

3           Federal agencies are required under the National  
4 Environmental Policy Act to prepare an EIS if a project or  
5 proposed action has the potential for significant  
6 environmental impacts. For most people when they think of  
7 the use of herbicides or chemicals, it conjures up the  
8 potential for significant environmental impacts. And in  
9 fact, the use of herbicides is a primary issue of  
10 controversy that was identified during the scoping process  
11 back in early 2002 and was also the central issue of  
12 analysis in earlier vegetation treatment EISs done by the  
13 BLM in the late '80s and early '90s.

14           So the EIS focuses on just the herbicide  
15 treatments because that's the main issue and specifically  
16 analyzes the effects on natural and social resources of  
17 herbicides currently available to the BLM and also before  
18 this they are proposing to use in the future, so again the  
19 EIS focuses on herbicides.

20           As part of development of the EIS and through the  
21 scoping process, five alternatives were identified that the  
22 BLM evaluated to determine kind of a range of herbicide  
23 uses that should be evaluated in this document, and again,  
24 most of these -- in fact, all of these basically came up  
25 during the scoping process what the public thought we

1 should be looking at in terms of alternatives.

2           The first one is a given for any EIS. You always  
3 analyze the no-action alternative or what would occur if  
4 you just continued as you're doing right now. Right now  
5 the BLM treats about 2 million acres in total. Of those  
6 2 million acres, about 300,000 acres are treated using  
7 herbicides. They currently are able to use herbicides in  
8 14 states. They also are able to use 20 different  
9 herbicides. Originally they evaluated 22. Two were thrown  
10 out. They are able to use 20 herbicides. So 20  
11 herbicides, 14 states, about 300,000 acres.

12           Alternative B is the proposed or preferred  
13 alternative that BLM would like to use through this EIS  
14 process but obviously may not be the case. And under this  
15 alternative, the BLM would expand its use of herbicides.  
16 As I mentioned earlier, over about 6 million acres will be  
17 treated overall. Of those 6 million acres, about 930,000  
18 acres will be treated using herbicides, so about a  
19 threefold increase in total acres, a threefold increase in  
20 herbicide-treated acres.

21           In addition, the BLM would be able to use  
22 herbicides now not only in the 14 original states but three  
23 new states, those being Texas, Nebraska and Alaska. I'm  
24 not certain why these states weren't ever in earlier EISs,  
25 but they weren't. Texas and Nebraska don't have a lot of

1 acres. That may have been one reason. And Alaska, maybe  
2 they weren't interested and right now they don't plan to  
3 use a lot of herbicides anyhow, but we include it in this  
4 document in case they would like to use herbicides in the  
5 future.

6 We also would be able to use the four new  
7 herbicides that were discussed earlier. However, the BLM  
8 under this alternative has decided to only use 14 of the  
9 currently used herbicides. At this time about six of the  
10 currently available herbicides are rarely, if ever, used by  
11 the BLM. A couple of these are atrazine and fosamine. So  
12 the feeling was let's go ahead and drop those out, focus on  
13 the 14 that the BLM really does use, then add in the four  
14 new ones bringing this back to a total of 18.

15 And part of the reason was again I mentioned that  
16 we had ended up through this process as having to look at  
17 all the herbicides because a lot of the work done in the  
18 late '80s and early '90s, especially when it came to  
19 threatened and endangered species of plants and animals,  
20 was deemed to be made deficient or certainly not at the  
21 level of analysis that's required today. So we were able  
22 to identify herbicides that the BLM could do an analysis  
23 for that they were using that made sense. A number of the  
24 herbicides had also been analyzed in the last four or five  
25 years by the Forest Service, so we were able to use their

1 analysis as part of our analysis in the EIS. But that left  
2 about six herbicides that the Forest Service didn't  
3 analyze, and the BLM felt that since they weren't using  
4 these herbicides, these risk assessments are very  
5 expensive, let's not worry about analyzing them at this  
6 time, let's don't include them in the EIS in the suite of  
7 chemicals that could be used, and should the need arise in  
8 the future, that might be a chemical that we'd say let's do  
9 a risk assessment for that, bring it back in. But right  
10 now those things are very rarely used, if at all. It just  
11 didn't make sense to take the time or spend the money to  
12 analyze it.

13           Alternative C was proposed obviously by many  
14 members of the public, and that is don't use herbicides at  
15 all. If you don't use herbicides, maybe use the other  
16 treatment methods, and what are the pros and cons of not  
17 using herbicides?

18           Alternative D addressed the concern of the public  
19 that oftentimes, especially when you treat by air,  
20 herbicides can drift from the target area to a nontarget  
21 area. So what would be the effects of not allowing aerial  
22 applications of herbicides?

23           And finally, alternative E was proposed by a  
24 coalition of environmental groups and has a number of  
25 components. It's an appendix in the EIS volume 2. It's

1 about 20 pages or so, and I would suggest if you want to  
2 learn more about it, you read the full text of the  
3 proposal. It not only addresses herbicide issues, but it  
4 addresses a whole range of issues, fire, passive  
5 restoration and whatnot.

6 But a couple key components that relate to  
7 herbicides is one thing that jumps out at you is they don't  
8 want the BLM to use acetolactate synthase-inhibiting  
9 herbicides, which the four that you currently use are  
10 chlorsulfuron, imazapyr, metsulfuron methyl and  
11 sulfometuron methyl. Those four you currently use they  
12 would not be allowed under alternative E, and the fifth one  
13 is imazapic, which is one of the four proposed. These  
14 herbicides the environmental coalition group feels can be  
15 very detrimental to nontarget vegetation if they somehow  
16 drift from a target area to a nontarget area, especially  
17 crop lands or agricultural crops. So that was one of them  
18 they don't want.

19 They also don't want the BLM to treat near  
20 wetlands and especially areas where amphibians may be  
21 found, to stay about 500 feet away from any threatened or  
22 endangered species and obviously don't treat very close to  
23 threatened and endangered plants the same.

24 And also to consult perhaps more extensively than  
25 maybe the BLM is doing now, that's kind of up for debate,

1 with native Americans and Alaska natives, primarily native  
2 Americans when doing herbicide treatments.

3           They also have much of their focus on passive  
4 restoration. Rather than using these five treatment  
5 methods, let Mother Nature, you know, take care of it,  
6 remove some of the potential causes for hazardous fuels,  
7 remove some of those causes and kind of let the land heal  
8 itself by not having to do a more active treatment.

9           Those of you that have been with the BLM for a  
10 number of years know the BLM has been treating vegetation  
11 for many years, and then I've also referred to a number of  
12 EISs that were actually done in the late '80s and early  
13 '90s in which the BLM evaluated vegetation treatments in  
14 the western U.S., similar to what we're doing now.  
15 However, there are some subtle differences and some not so  
16 subtle differences.

17           First of all, back when they did the earlier EISs  
18 there were actually four EISs done and they were somewhat  
19 more regionally focused. The one on the upper right, the  
20 13-state EIS actually covered 13 of the 14 states, so it  
21 covered quite a bit of acreage. The other three were  
22 pretty regionally focused. One was focused in the  
23 northwest U.S., one was focused in western Oregon, and the  
24 final one was just on California.

25           Under those four EISs, there was also limits

1 placed on the number of acres that could be treated. Under  
2 the EIS itself only about 500,000 acres could be treated  
3 annually. That's basically what the level of treatment  
4 was, I guess, back in those days and that's what they felt  
5 would be appropriate going into the future.

6           Since then there have been a number of BLM  
7 decisions and other legislative decisions that have allowed  
8 the BLM to treat up to 2 million acres annually, and a lot  
9 of these acres are associated with hazardous fuels  
10 reduction and also reclamation and rehabilitation of  
11 damaged lands, but essentially you're at about a 2 million  
12 acre cap.

13           However, we do know that hazardous fuels continue  
14 to build, weeds are growing, weed population has grown  
15 about fourfold in the last 13 years. So the sense is  
16 2 million acres is not getting the job done, and obviously  
17 our feedback from the field offices is they felt they  
18 needed about 6 million acres to get the job done.

19           So that's -- so basically this EIS obviously goes  
20 from 2 million to 6 million. The earlier EISs did not  
21 cover Alaska, Nebraska and Texas. I mentioned Alaska  
22 doesn't anticipate using herbicides at this point. There  
23 are actually other federal agencies that do plan to use  
24 herbicides up there, including the Park Service, and it  
25 would not, I guess, be that surprising in the future for

1 the BLM to use herbicides in Alaska in certain situations.

2 The earlier EISs also do not include the new  
3 herbicides, the four new herbicides, and they also did not  
4 prepare a protocol for evaluating herbicides in the future.

5 As I mentioned way back in the beginning, not  
6 only was an EIS prepared, but we also prepared a  
7 Programmatic Environmental Report, and this is a little  
8 different than what we normally do. Normally we just do an  
9 EIS or perhaps an environmental assessment, but we also  
10 prepared an Environmental Report. The Environmental Report  
11 basically focused on the nonherbicide treatment methods,  
12 EIS herbicides, Environmental Report, nonherbicides, so  
13 manual, mechanical, prescribed fire, biological control.

14 The reason we didn't include these in the EIS is  
15 because the BLM essentially is not making any decisions  
16 related to nonherbicide treatment methods. Decisions in  
17 the alternatives basically focus on herbicides. There  
18 weren't really any decisions of alternatives generated  
19 through scoping that were related to the other treatment  
20 methods. However, we felt we had to look at those  
21 treatment methods for two major reasons. One, as part of  
22 EIS we were required to do a cumulative effects analysis,  
23 and in that you kind of look at BLM's treatment activities  
24 in the context of other activities going on around public  
25 lands by the Forest Service or the Bureau of Reclamation,

1 National Park Service, et cetera, and also look at the  
2 effects of past, present and future actions.

3           One of our alternatives basically says you will  
4 not use herbicides, which basically put us in the situation  
5 if we're not using herbicides, that means we're using the  
6 other treatment methods. So that means that we need to  
7 somehow assess the impacts from the cumulative effects in  
8 the analysis of what would happen if we use the other  
9 treatment methods and didn't use herbicides.

10           Also, the Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA  
11 National Marine Fisheries Services also when they do their  
12 evaluation as part of the biological assessment that was  
13 prepared want to know how all of these treatment methods  
14 fit together because in some cases you may use two or three  
15 different treatment methods on the same piece of ground or  
16 certainly in very close proximity to each other. They want  
17 to know how these different treatment methods might affect  
18 threatened and endangered species. If we just focus on  
19 herbicides but we missed all the other methods, that could  
20 affect threatened and endangered species. So we had to  
21 look at that to do the effects analysis for the biological  
22 assessment. And actually if you look at the biological  
23 assessment, which is on one of the CDs out front, it  
24 basically covers all five treatment methods and gives them  
25 pretty equal weight.

1           So again, we looked at all the treatment methods  
2 to help us with our cumulative impacts assessment and also  
3 as part of the consultation process with the services.

4           This chart kind of gives you a breakdown on a  
5 percentage basis of how many acres we could treat using the  
6 different methods. Current is kind of where you're at  
7 right now. Preferred alternative is kind of what we  
8 project in the future, and you can see they are fairly  
9 similar in terms of the number of acres treated, although  
10 there are a few differences. Both prescribed fire and  
11 mechanical treatments in terms of percentage use increase  
12 under the preferred alternative. The use of herbicides  
13 holds pretty steady. All the other treatment methods,  
14 manual and biological control, actually would decline  
15 somewhat, again on a percentage basis. However, keep in  
16 mind again, we're going from 2 million acres to 6 million  
17 acres, so if you actually did it on an acre basis, all the  
18 different methods would increase somewhat and some of them  
19 substantially under the preferred alternative.

20           Now, that's again westernwide including Alaska.  
21 If you look at Wyoming in particular, a little different  
22 situation. Both under the current situation and what's  
23 projected in the future, Wyoming would treat about 65  
24 percent of their acres using prescribed fire. So that's  
25 not quite twice but almost twice as many acres using

1 prescribed fire than what the rest of the western U.S. is  
2 doing.

3           Mechanical treatments both under current and  
4 proposed treatments runs about 10 percent. So the West as  
5 a whole is running, oh, 30, 35 percent, you're down around  
6 10 percent. And the last one that's other major  
7 categories, the use of herbicides, again, pretty constant.  
8 You're sort of unusual among all the states because you  
9 stay pretty constant from what you're doing now to what you  
10 do in the future. Herbicide use is going to be around 25  
11 percent, so westernwide it's 16 percent, Wyomingwide it's  
12 about 25 percent.

13           The other thing that's kind of interesting in  
14 Wyoming is that earlier I mentioned that overall about a  
15 threefold increase in acres treated, Wyoming is going to  
16 actually bump theirs up about fivefold, so quite a bit more  
17 activity in this state than what is occurring westernwide.

18           So where do we go from here? As I mentioned,  
19 scoping was done way back in January to March of 2002. The  
20 draft EIS was made available to the public on November 10th  
21 of this year. We are currently having our public comment  
22 meetings right now. This is the eighth one. We have two  
23 on -- two next Tuesday, one in Las Vegas and one in  
24 Washington, D.C., and then that will be it for the public  
25 hearings.

1           The public comment period closes on January 9,  
2 2006, so if you have comments, get them in before then.  
3 Then the final EIS is projected to be available in late  
4 spring 2006. It will then go out for public review again  
5 at least for 30 days. That puts that occurring sometime in  
6 early 2006, and right now it's anticipated that the record  
7 of decision on one of the alternatives or perhaps a  
8 combination of components of alternatives will occur  
9 sometime in summer of 2006. Right now around July of 2006  
10 is what we're anticipating.

11           So what can you do to help? A number of things.  
12 I think our sense from talking to different folks in  
13 different towns is not too many people have looked at the  
14 document very carefully. It's kind of a daunting task.  
15 There are four volumes, and that's just kind of the tip of  
16 the iceberg. The four volumes include two volumes for the  
17 EIS, one volume for the Environmental Report, and actually  
18 one volume that most of you didn't get, which is a  
19 biological assessment. But that's also on these CDs.

20           If you actually go through these CDs, you'll find  
21 the reports of the EIS, which includes all of the risk  
22 assessments of the ten chemicals done by the BLM, which  
23 runs normally about 300 to 350 pages. So quite a bit  
24 there.

25           Also in support of the EIS and Environmental

1 Report, we did air quality modeling studies to look at the  
2 effects of herbicide treatments on air quality but also the  
3 effects of the other treatment methods, in particular  
4 prescribed burning, how is that going to affect air quality  
5 throughout the West.

6           There are a number of cultural resource reports  
7 that were done, a paleontological report, quite a few  
8 different reports. Those are the ones I can think of off  
9 the top of my head. But those are on here. And my  
10 suggestion is if you really want to get into it, this is  
11 the place to start and read the hard copy, but you have to  
12 get into these if you want to get down to the nitty-gritty.  
13 So you can look at the hard copies for portions of it. The  
14 CDs have all the documents that were prepared.

15           And keep in mind it's a two-volume CD set, so  
16 don't just grab one, grab both copies. They have a little  
17 slightly different covers and different titles, so that  
18 will help you figure out which CD is which. One is  
19 basically for the EIS, the other one -- and the  
20 Environmental Report and then the other one is the  
21 appendices and risk assessments and whatnot.

22           The other good area to look for all these  
23 documents is on the BLM Web site. And last time I checked  
24 if you went to [www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov), it was the highlighted link  
25 right on the front page of the new Web site now. Somebody

1 mentioned they didn't see it today, so you can check it  
2 out.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's dropped to  
4 number two.

5 MR. PAULUS: It's dropped to number two  
6 already. So that's bad. So anyhow, it's right there. It  
7 will take you in there. You might want to read the  
8 directions. There are comments from some BLM folks that  
9 have had trouble with it, and generally when you ask them  
10 to read the directions first, then it all makes sense, but  
11 some of them kind of skip that part. All the different  
12 reports are there. They are kind of laid out with the EIS  
13 materials, ER materials and supporting documents.

14 Brian has extra hard copies if you want them.  
15 Especially as we get closer to January 9th, we're going to  
16 be wanting to unload hard copies, so if you want some, let  
17 him know. And then the BLM offices also have hard copies  
18 and I understand you got yours and you're square there.

19 Once you've had a chance to look at them, you can  
20 provide your comments. There's a comment form out front  
21 you can use. It actually serves several purposes. You can  
22 write your comment on this form. You can be asked to put  
23 on the mailing list or you can ask to let us know if you'd  
24 like to make sure you get the final programmatic EIS or ER,  
25 and this document you can leave with us tonight or fax or

1 mail it back to Brian. That information is on here and  
2 I'll give that to you also in a minute.

3           Go ahead and provide your comment and what we'd  
4 like to know are basically what we did wrong in the  
5 document, errors we've made, things we left out, things we  
6 overlooked, mistakes, data that's incorrect, whatever you  
7 find in there that you think could be better, let us know.  
8 And also if you think there's an alternative treatment  
9 method proposal that we should consider, also let us know  
10 that. And then finally let us know if you'd like to be on  
11 the mailing list. We send out hard copies or CDs to all  
12 those folks that indicate they would like one. We've got a  
13 few people that thought they should have gotten one and so  
14 we're hoping they will let us know.

15           This is where you can send your comments. Mail  
16 them to Brian. That information again is on that comment  
17 sheet. Also you may have picked up a handout here that  
18 tells a little bit more about the project, and you can go  
19 to about eight to ten, several places with information.  
20 That provides the details on Brian's mailing address in  
21 Reno. Also you can fax it to Brian and that's also in this  
22 document. There's his fax number or for most people it's  
23 just probably the easiest way is to type up their comments  
24 in their word processors, attach it to an e-mail and  
25 there's an e-mail address, [vegeis@nv.blm.gov](mailto:vegeis@nv.blm.gov). So far I

1 would say almost all of the comments are coming via e-mail.

2           As I mentioned earlier, send your comments by  
3 January 9, 2006. Your comments are very important to us.  
4 For whatever reason they are made, they help us improve the  
5 document, and that's the whole purpose of the comments.  
6 And once we get to January 9th and have all the comments in  
7 or shortly thereafter as they trickle in in the mail, we'll  
8 start looking at them and see how we can better improve the  
9 document based on the comments, and that's all I have. Now  
10 I will turn it over to Gina who will conduct the public  
11 hearing.

12           MS. RAMOS: Good evening. My name is Gina  
13 Ramos and I am tonight's hearing officer. As stated  
14 earlier by Stuart, the purpose of tonight's hearing is to  
15 receive comments from the public on BLM's Environmental  
16 Impact Statement and Environmental Report. All of the  
17 comments that we receive either orally or written will be  
18 compiled, analyzed and considered by the BLM as we prepare  
19 our final EIS and final Environmental Report.

20           We asked anyone that attended tonight if they  
21 were interested in speaking to sign up. We didn't have  
22 anyone signed up, but I would like to give anyone the  
23 opportunity to stand up and provide comments to us. Do we  
24 have anyone in the audience that would like to provide  
25 comments?

1           Okay. Then in that case, then I will adjourn the  
2 hearing. We would also like to encourage you to take  
3 any -- take additional CDs in case you know of anyone that  
4 was unable to attend tonight and is interested in  
5 commenting on the EIS and the Environmental Report. Thank  
6 you very much for your time and have a safe trip home  
7 tonight.

8   (Hearing proceedings concluded  
9   7:34 p.m., December 8, 2005.)

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I, LORI ARNOLD, a Registered Merit Reporter, do hereby certify that I reported by machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings contained herein, constituting a full, true and correct transcript.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_.

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LORI ARNOLD  
Registered Merit Reporter