Transcript – How to Use Geocommunicator

Welcome to the BLM's Geocommuicator also known as Geocomm for short. This is a web-based application that allows you to see all kinds of BLM information plotted on maps that you design rather than simply tables of text. You can specify the scale you want to see the information as well as the background to be displayed on.

While this video focuses on Wild Horse and Burro information, the principles demonstrated here can be used for any information within Geocomm, such as oil and gas lease boundaries, mining claims, rangeland allotments, etc. We encourage you to experiment with the system as we move into an era of openness and transparency. If there is BLM information that you would like to see in the system and is not there, feel free to let us know by clicking on Contact Us.

With this in mind, what follows is about a 5 minute video demonstrating how to make Wild Horse and Burro Herd Area and Herd Management Area maps for your use.

Herd Areas (HA) are geographic areas of the public lands identified as habitat used by wild horses and burros at the time the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 was passed.

Herd Management Areas (HMA) may be established in those HAs, within which wild horses and burros can be managed for the long-term. HMAs are designated through the Land Use Planning process for the maintenance of wild horse and burro herds.

To access Geocomm from the main menu simply click on Information Center, Online Services, Geocommunicator. The written instructions provide 2 other ways to access Geocomm directly, However, they all get to the same place here.

Now, once this is loaded, click on Interactive Maps, Rangeland, and eventually this map will load. The first step in making your map is telling Geocomm what information to display. On the right side of your screen, you will see a white are with checkboxes. Note that there are certain check boxes already checked. We will need to check certain boxes and uncheck others. So the first thing we want to do is to unselect or decheck Allotments.

For the purposes of this demonstration, we will do Herd Management Areas, so we will check that box and check Herd Management Area labels, which will be important in a minute.

Further we want to come down here to PLSS – PLSS stands for Public Land Survey System – Township and Range and uncheck that box.

We do not want to see Township and Range displayed on here so we will uncheck the box. This is how your data layers should display.

Notice that on the map now, there are all of a sudden little black blotches. These little black blotches are in fact the Herd Management Areas.

Obviously you can't get much information from a map at this scale. But, one of Geocomm's strengths is the ability to zoom into a specific area. Depending on the speed of your internet connection and amount of information to be displayed on your screen, this may take a few minutes.

Let's suppose that you wanted to see all of the HMAs in the west and don't want to see any other non-HMA areas. So the first thing we are going to do is place ourselves in what we call the Zoom mode. You will notice in the upper left corner of your screen, a button titled "Zoom In". Click on the Zoom In button and notice the background of the button changes to a red – brick red. This means you are ready to go.

So, let's come down here, and this next feature will probably take you several times to do correctly, called a drag operation. So let's make a map of the West with HMAs. Place your mouse cursor in the upper left corner of where you want your map to start (in this case over the "W" in Washington State).

Hold down the left mouse button, drag the box with your cursor over the area you are interested in.

Once we have done this box, we let go of the left mouse button and you will see the screen redraw with the information you are interested in. Notice that we now see the HMAs in much more detail.

However, we may want to zoom in on a specific area and this map is not detailed enough for our particular use. So let's go over to Wyoming and suppose we are interested in the Southwest corner of that State. So we do the same thing we did before – we are still in the zoom in mode, we now take the left mouse button and hold it down and zoom into the green river area. You will note that all of a sudden more information is available on the background, And if we wanted to see the information for this area we would now zoom in again, and you'll now see the names and ,other locational information is now displayed.

If you wanted to see the PLSS displayed – or Township and Range, simply click on PLSS in the lower right corner and you can see the extent and approximate legal description of the HMA. But we'll turn that off since it could be somewhat distracting.

One thing you might want to see is the entire screen as a map. If you look right here, the two right hand pointing symbols, if you click on that, it hides that, and then there is an Internet Explorer option that by pressing the F11 key, this is not a Geocomm function but an IE function, and if you will press your F11 key you will notice now that the menu for IE disappears and you now have a full screen.

But suppose now, that we really wanted to see the Divide Basin HMA. We can now drag or what is termed in Geocomm Pan the map by coming back up here and clicking on the little hand icon and then coming back down here and holding down your left mouse button, drag this to the center of your viewing area and you will notice you don't have to go through the previous steps – all you have to do is to drag your mouse cursor as described.

Now, suppose you wanted to change the background. You will notice down in the lower right corner, there are 4 buttons – an aerial base map, a topographic base map, a roads base map and just the regular base map layer. So let's go thru each one these quickly so you can see what they look like. Here is the

same map showing only an aerial base map or what we call an aerial ortho photo quad. And this has a tremendous amount of on-the-ground information. This maintains s resolution as you zoom in. Suppose we were curious about this are right here – we just have to zoom in like that and notice that the detail has been significantly enhanced and the scale increased dramatically.

Now after you have zoomed into an area, if you want to go back to where you were – whoops – every once in a while that will happen – and click on Last Extent which means what I want to see is what I had before. And here we are back to where we were.

Now you will notice way down at the bottom of the screen in the right hand corner, you can turn on roads and cities – there are two check boxes.

And here you have a very detailed map of the Divide Basin. Now if you wanted to go to Topo, here is what topo looks like. And, we recommend turning off roads and places for now so you can see what it looks like – it double overlays. Again if you wanted to zoom in to a specific area, make sure your zoom in button is checked and this is what it looks like plotted on a topographic quadrangle map. We'll now zoom to our last extend and check out what roads look like

And this is basically the same base map, the default, the one that automatically loads as you load Geocomm.

So what happens now? Now that you have your map constructed, you can now save it as what is called a PDF -- PDF is a file format copywrited by the Adobe Company –Adobe Acrobat and we come back up here to the button bar and click on PDF. We now can save it as a PDF – let's give it a title and caption – which will go below it, and a portrait which is a printing term – notice you have 4 choices – portrait, landscape, large, wall map. We wouldn't recommend that you try to do a wall map with a regular printer you will definitely need a plotter for that – portrait means that the map will be oriented this way, but in fact we want it oriented this way – wider than tall – so that would be landscape.

And we will include both the map and the legend and click on Generate. This may take a minute. And here is an example of what it looks like and then you can save it, and here is the legend and you what created a map you can print.

Feel free to experiment with Geocomm's capabilities. You can't hurt anything because as we say in the computer world this is read-only, and if you have any questions or what to have additional data we encourage you to let us know by clicking on Contact us.

Thank you and enjoy using Geocommunicator.