Public Involvement in the BLM NEPA Process

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Bureau of Land Management

- Manages the National System of Public Lands
  - 245+ million acres, primarily in 12 Western states
- Administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate across the U.S.
- To sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations, a “multiple-use” mission

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- Develops resource management plans (RMPs) in an interdisciplinary planning process

- Uses NEPA analysis to inform land use planning and project-level decisions

- Manages activities such as recreation, livestock grazing, energy production, and mineral development, and conserves natural, historic, and cultural resources on public lands

Opportunities for Participation in the NEPA Process

Focus Areas:

- Public Involvement
- Cooperation

Other Means:

- Coordination
- Consultation
- Collaboration

Public Involvement

- NEPA regulations provide for public involvement at several stages:
  - Scoping
  - Public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
  - Public meeting/hearing
  - Agency response to comments in the Final EIS
  - Comments on the Final EIS

***RMP process includes other opportunities and requirements.*

Scoping

- "…an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action…."
- Internal and external
- Extends to alternatives development

Cooperation

- NEPA emphasizes cooperation among governments & public & private organizations
- As a lead agency, BLM invites eligible Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies to serve as “cooperating agencies” for an EIS
- BLM also works with other partners
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conducts Clean Air Act “section 309” reviews

New BLM Desk Guide

- *BLM, A Desk Guide to Cooperating Agency Relationships and Coordination with Intergovernmental Partners (2012),* http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/nepa/cooperating_agencies.html

Other Means of Involvement

- **Coordination** – with governments, through the BLM planning and NEPA processes
- **Consultation** – formal efforts to obtain another agency's advice or opinion
  - Endangered Species Act
  - National Historic Preservation Act
  - Government-to-Government Tribal Consultation
- **Collaboration** – solution-driven, varying formality

ePlanning for the Public

- Brings BLM's NEPA and land use planning processes to home computers and libraries
- Locate and read NEPA documents, search for issues, and submit comments online
- Web-based training is available
- http://www.ntc.blm.gov/krc/viewresource.php?courseID=449

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