

U.S. Department of the Interior

BLM

Time Sensitive Plans News

Issue 1 November 2002

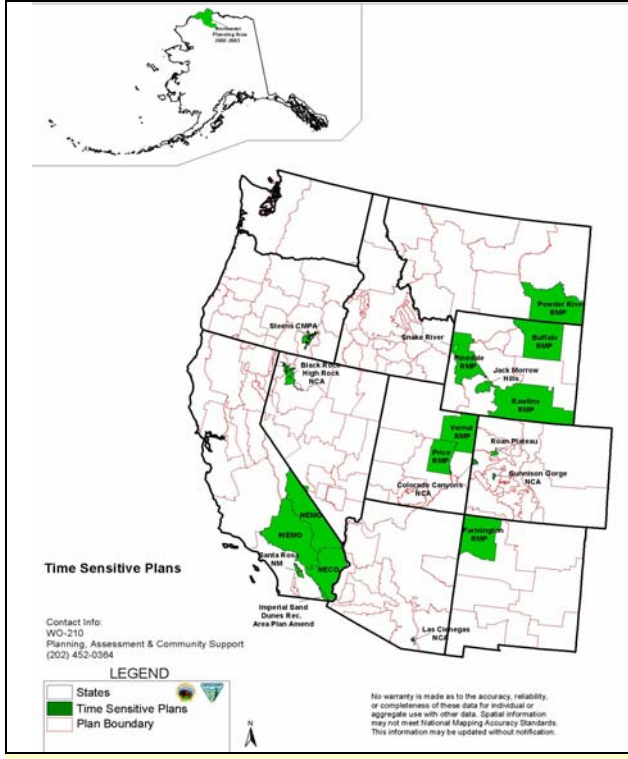
Bureau of Land Management

Looking back at FY 2002 and our challenge in the next year

In FY 2002, BLM initiated eleven and completed twenty-five land use planning efforts, in addition to the fifty ongoing planning activities. The Bureau also completed thirty scoping reports and eight draft EIS-level amendments. This represents considerable progress towards updating BLM's land use planning base. As a new Fiscal Year begins, it is time for the Bureau to evaluate its progress towards completing the highest priority land use plans, collectively referred to as Time Sensitive Plans. At the close of the Fiscal Year 2002, the National Planning Support Team (NPST) reported that 90% of the TSPs are on schedule. Though several plans have had their schedules extended based on unique and compelling circumstances, this success rates represents a reasonable level of accomplishment for the TSPs for the fiscal year. Regarding our targets, the original goal of schedule completion for TSPs was 100%, and 75% for non-TSPs.

On the other hand, BLM's success at completing workload measures for land use planning, including TSPs, is a matter of concern. The end-of-the-year bureau-wide planning and workload measures report, which provide a snapshot of our level of success in meeting targeted accomplishments for the fiscal year, shows several areas of concern. Collectively, planning has only accomplished 38% of targeted FY 2002 EA-level Resource Management Plan (RMP) amendments and associated Decision Record, 50% of the draft RMP/draft EIS targets, and 0% of the final RMP/Record of Decision targets (chart, page 3).

The BLM continues to be challenged to complete quality, collaborative plans on schedule. Problems with contractors, competing high priority workloads, tremendous public interest and controversy, interest of cooperators, and the fire season are regularly mentioned as contributing to delays. The BLM Director and the Department continue to show a high level of interest in both our challenges as well as our accomplishments.



The map above shows the locations of TSPs, which are shaded in green.

What are "Time Sensitive Plans?"

Starting in FY 2001, BLM began its largest and most concentrated effort in land use planning in more than 15 years, with National, regional, and local expectations. Over the next 10 years, BLM plans to update its entire planning base, consisting of more than 160 land use plans. Establishing clear priorities is key to managing increasing workload demands and vital to the overall success of the planning initiative. Accordingly, the BLM has identified 21 high priority land use plans as TSPs. These plans are the most critical of the more than 70 land use planning efforts on-going in FY 2002. The TSPs were selected because they are related to development of energy resources, respond to nationally significant lawsuits or have legislatively mandated time frames.

Support for TSPs

To provide assistance to the State Directors, BLM has established a National Planning Support Team (NPST) to facilitate accomplishment of high priority land use plans. The NPST facilitates the completion of tasks laid out in the TSP Action Plan (originally created in October 2001 and updated as new tasks are identified). A Planning Board of Directors, comprised of State Directors, Assistant Directors, Office Directors, an Associate State Director, and a Group Manager, provides oversight to the NPST. Plan liaisons from WO-210 have been assigned to each state, with specific duties related to supporting TSPs. Responsibilities assigned to each of the parties mentioned are as follows:

Responsibilities of NPST:

- Facilitate completion of tasks in TSP Action Plan
- Provide on-going support to the states and planning teams during the 2-3 year period as requested by the State Directors
- Prepare national level program and policy guidance
- Resolve national level policy conflicts
- Conduct coordinated policy reviews
- Provide assistance with data and information gathering as needed
- Facilitate timely approval of Federal Register Notices

Responsibilities of Board of Directors:

- Provide necessary leadership and guidance to the National Planning Support Team (NPST)
- Facilitate tactical, programmatic implementation of the BLM Planning Initiative
- Share information and practices that will result in improvement and consistency across the Bureau
- Advise on budget matters related to planning, especially related to the Time Sensitive Plans (TSP)
- Investigate planning related policy issues and develop and implement decisions
- Serve as a communication link between the Bureau's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and the NPST.

Action Plan for TSPs

Working with the Headquarters Office and representatives of the state and field offices, the NPST has developed an action plan which describes specific tasks designed to remove barriers and support timely completion of the TSPs (*cont. on page 4*).

Responsibilities of the Plan Liaisons:

- Serve as a focal point for the state's support needs
- Update the progress log for each plan and provide regular updates to the TSP tracking table
- Facilitate problem resolution on policy, technical issues
- Coordinate necessary reviews
- Help the state identify and overcome barriers

Purpose of this newsletter

Welcome to the first issue of the Time Sensitive Plans Newsletter! Our aim in creating a Time Sensitive Plans newsletter is to report on the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) progress towards completing time sensitive plans, as well as the activities of the National Planning Support Team. Future issues of the newsletter will provide an update on the progress of TSPs and report on lessons learned, anecdotes from particular plans, and useful information for planners involved with TSPs.

The TSP Newsletter is designed to complement the Planning and NEPA Bulletin, also prepared by the Planning, Assessment and Community Support Group, but will focus mostly on the TSPs rather than general planning and NEPA information.

If you have a request for specific information you would like to see in the newsletter, ideas for future articles or would like to share stories or lessons learned, please contact:
Katherine_Harness@blm.gov.

TSP Time Extension Requests and the Bureau Perspective

Changes to plan schedules, especially those for Time Sensitive Plans, have many implications. The public and many public land users expect us to make diligent progress in the completion of land use plans. In many cases, the dates for plan completion have been established by legislation.

Plan budget and completion dates are also part of our annual appropriations bill. Congress has appropriated millions of dollars based on our commitment to completing these plans on time.

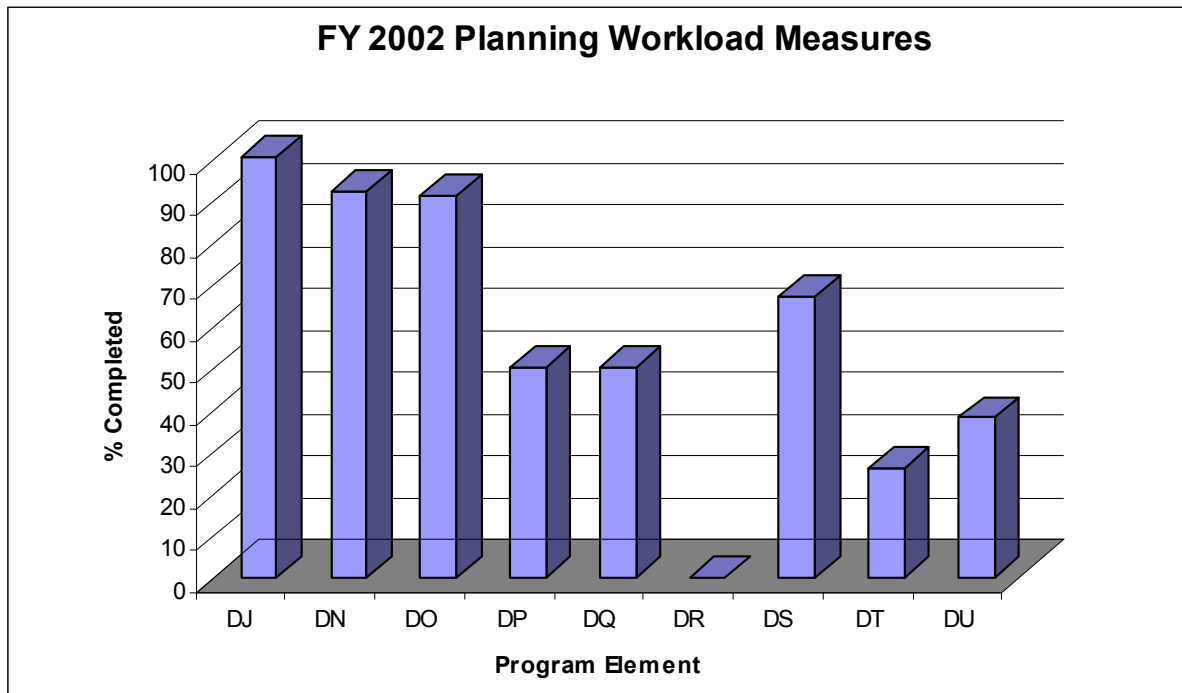
The Washington Office (WO) is ready to work with state and field offices at the early stages of the planning process to actively assist them in meeting schedules.

To best enable the WO to provide useful assistance, state and field offices should communicate regularly with WO plan liaisons and identify at the earliest possible time potential issues that may cause challenges to meeting schedules.

As described in IM 2002-256, all requests for extensions of the time frames for TSPs and other plans are discussed with key contacts at the local, state and national level and must be approved by the Assistant Director (AD), Renewable Resources and Planning.

BLM leadership continues to stress the high priority and critical nature of the Bureau's land use planning initiative. The BLM Director regularly discusses the importance of completing plans on schedule, stressing accountability to the public and the U.S. Congress.

As mentioned previously, numerous factors influence BLM's ability to complete land use plans on schedule, such as the needs and schedules of cooperating agencies, competing internal BLM workloads and performance of contractors. BLM's commitment to collaborative solutions often requires more time than afforded by current schedules. BLM will make reasonable accommodations to ensure plans are completed both collaboratively within a reasonable schedule.



Program Elements/planning workload measures for fiscal year 2002. Percentages indicate level of target reached for each program element (DJ=plan evaluations; DN=preparation plans; DO=scoping; DP=Draft Plan/EIS; DQ=Proposed Plan/Final EIS; DR=Final Plan/ROD; DS=Amendment/Draft EIS; DT=Amendment/Final EIS/ROD; DU=Amendment/EA Decision Record).

Action Plan for TSPs (cont. from page 2)

The action plan includes:

- Providing direct support to field office planning teams as requested, especially for plans behind schedule or “at risk” or missing projected completion dates;
- Providing guidance on national-level policy and legal requirements and to ensure the incorporation of the President’s National Energy Policy, National Fire Plan, and BLM’s Strategic Plan into land use plans;
- Pursuing contracts and software to analyze public comments;

- Assembling a web-based library of planning information, models, guidance, and information updates to support the state/field office planning teams;
- Providing outreach and interagency coordination to involve and engage other Federal agencies and national level stakeholder groups;
- Maintaining the current status of individual TSPs via an automated database and developing performance measures for inclusion on the Director’s Tracking System.

What has the NPST accomplished so far?

- ✓ Established NPST and Planning Board of Directors
- ✓ Developed a Communications Plan for use by WO, State Offices, and Field Offices
- ✓ Conducted several public outreach meetings on the planning initiative and TSPs
- ✓ Prepared a tracking system for the status of TSPs
- ✓ Assigned WO liaisons to each TSP

Current and ongoing activities:

Direct support to field offices on individual plans

Logistical support to states for briefings and related issue papers

Facilitating timely approval of Federal Register Notices for all TSPs

Identifying a formal “extended team” of WO personnel for each TSP to work as needed to assist the states on individual plans

Continuing to work with Group Managers on needed policy development

Preparing a Memorandum of Understanding with the USGS regarding science in support of land use planning

Prepared and/or participated with Group Managers in the development of planning/NEPA and program policy guidance in the following areas:

- Guidance for Developing the No Action Alternative for NCA, National Monuments and Cooperative Management and Protective Area Resource Management Plans (IM 2002-082)
- Review Requirements for Land Use Planning Efforts (IM 2002-100)
- Guidance to Address Environmental Justice in Land Use Plans (IM 2002-164)
- Social and Economic Analysis for Land Use Planning (IM 2002-167)
- Right-of-Way (ROW) Management - Land Use Planning (IM 2002-196)
- Plan Schedule Changes (IM 2002-256)
- Recommended Formats for Land Use Plans, Records of Decision and Their Supporting Environmental Impact Statements (IB 2002-056)
- Use of Comment Content Analysis Contractors (IM 2002-080)
- IT in Support of Land Use Planning (IB 2002-054)
- Cultural Resource Considerations in Resource Management Plans (IB 2002-101)

What is the status of the TSPs?

(1) Alaska: National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPRA)

The Northern Alaska Field Office is currently developing a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which is scheduled to be published in January 2003, with a final RMP/signed Record of Decision (ROD) scheduled for November 2003.

Plan Contact: Mike Kleven, 907-474-2317

(2) Arizona: Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (NCA)

The Tucson Field Office has completed the proposed RMP/ final EIS for Las Cienegas NCA, and is currently in the protest resolution phase.

Plan Contact: Karen Simms, 520-258-7210

3,4,5) California: NECO, NEMO, and WEMO Amendments

The California Desert District Field Office / Barstow Field Office published and distributed the proposed RMP/final EIS for NECO and NEMO in August 2002; RODs are expected in December 2002. The Barstow Field Office is in the process of developing a draft EIS for the WEMO Amendment, with an expected date for the completed plan in June 2003.

Plan contacts: Dick Crowe (NECO; California Desert), 909-697-5216; Edyth Seehafer (NEMO; Barstow), 760-252-6021; Bill Haigh (WEMO; Barstow), 760-252-6080

6) California: Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Plan

The El Centro Field Office has finished developing the proposed RMP/Final EIS. The NOA for the RMP/final EIS is currently awaiting printing in the *Federal Register*.

Plan contact: Roxie Trost, 760-337-4420

(7) California: Santa Rosa / San Jacinto National Monument (NM)

The scoping period for this plan ended in October 2002. The Palm Springs Field Office is currently preparing a scoping report and planning criteria, and expects to have alternatives formulated by November 2002.

Plan contact: Connell Dunning, 760-251-4817



Native Alaskan dependent on subsistence hunting in NPRA

(8) Colorado: Colorado Canyons NCA

The Grand Junction Field Office is currently in the scoping period, which ends in November 2002. The office expects to have alternatives formulated by February 2003.

Plan contact: Jane Ross, 970-244-3000

(9) Colorado: Roan Plateau

The Glenwood Springs Field Office is currently developing a draft RMP/EIS for the Roan Plateau RMP for publication in March 2003. The draft alternatives for this plan are currently under review.

Plan contact: Greg Goodenow, 970-947-2900

(10) Colorado: Gunnison Gorge

The Uncompahgre Field Office has recently formulated alternatives for the Gunnison Gorge RMP and will release a draft RMP/EIS in February 2003.

Plan contact: Bill Bottomly, 970-240-5337

(11) Montana: Billings / Powder River Amendment

The Miles City Field Office is preparing the proposed RMP/Final EIS, with a ROD expected in February 2003.

Plan contact: Mary Bloom, 406-233-3649

(12) New Mexico: Farmington RMP Revision

The Farmington Field Office released a draft RMP/EIS in July 2002. The public comment period closed on September 26 and the office is currently working to prepare a final EIS.

Plan contact: *Jim Ramakka, 505-599-6307*

(13) Nevada: Black Rock/High Rock NCA

The Winnemucca Field Office recently selected the preferred alternative for the NCA and is currently developing a draft RMP/EIS to be published in December 2002.

Plan contact: *Ester Hutchison, 775-623-1500*

(14) Oregon: Steens Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA)

The Andrews Field Office completed the formulation of alternatives in June 2002, with an expected draft RMP/EIS publication date in August 2003.

Plan contact: *Gary Foulkes, 541-573-4541*

(15) Utah: Price RMP Revision

The Price Field Office is currently working on the draft RMP/EIS. The Washington Office is considering a request for modification to the current schedule.

Plan contact: *Floyd Johnson, 435-636-3600*



Boar's Tusk, Jack Morrow Hills, Wyoming

(16) Utah: Vernal RMP Revision

The Vernal Field Office is currently developing a draft RMP/EIS for the Vernal RMP Revision. The Washington Office is considering a request for modification to the current schedule.

Plan contact: *Dave W. Moore, 435-781-4467*

(17) Wyoming: Buffalo/Powder River Amendment

The public comment period for the Buffalo/Powder River Amendment ended in May 2002. The Buffalo Field Office is currently developing a final EIS, with a ROD expected in February 2003.

Plan contact: *Paul Beels, 307-684-1168*

(18) Wyoming: Jack Morrow Hills CAP

The Jack Morrow Hills Coordinated Activity Plan is currently developing a draft EIS/RMP for publication in late 2002.

Plan contact: *Renee Dana, 307-352-0227*

(19) Wyoming: Snake River RMP

The Pinedale Field Office continues to work on the Draft EIS/RMP. The ROD date is scheduled for June 2003.

Plan contact: *Kellie Roadifer, 307-367-5309*

(20) Wyoming: Pinedale RMP Revision

The Pinedale Field Office is currently in a scoping period for the RMP revision and expects to have alternatives formed by January 2003.

Plan contact: *Kellie Roadifer, 307-367-5309*

(21) Wyoming: Great Divide/Rawlins RMP Revision

The scoping period for the Great Divide/Rawlins RMP Revision ends in January 2003. The field office expects to publish the draft RMP/EIS in October 2003.

Plan contact: *John Spehar, 307-328-4264*