

Megan, do you have some final thoughts for people?

>> M. Conry: Sure, Cathy. I'm really excited to finally have an opportunity to implement the guidance that we worked so hard on as a handbook team. It's a lot of fun and I use the handbook every day in my job as a planner in Roseburg. I really appreciate the focus that the handbook brings to the NEPA process, focusing on true issues, on determining significance, in making a good decision. The handbook succeeds in doing that without providing us too many restrictions. It leaves us a lot of room for flexibility and creativity and in terms of how we actually get there. So it sets a good goal but it doesn't necessarily keep us in a particular box or hold our hand all the way through. I hope the new handbook and the web guide starts some dialogue across Field Offices and state office boundaries to get folks to share their NEPA experience and best practices around the BLM. So, I'm excited to see how the web guide works.

>> C. Humphrey: Along that same line, we've been talking about something that we might want to do to encourage that dialogue is if people would be interested, we were thinking about doing some more informal broadcasts discussing topics in the NEPA Handbook, some of the topics that you really can't capture in five or ten minutes. So when you get at the end of this broadcast, probably tomorrow you're going to get a metrics that matter evaluation form, a link with your e-mail, you might want to type a little comment in there if you would be willing to participate in something like that, if that's something you're interested in. We thought about maybe, I don't know, three, four times a year have some NEPA experts get together and just chat about some of these issues and then throw it out for some discussion. So tell us what you

think about that. That would start some of this dialogue and we could talk about some of the tougher topics. So, Richard, do you have some thoughts?

>> R. Hardt: Sure. We've said repeatedly through this we hoped for a process that would emphasize thinking and I think what we would like to see is NEPA documents in which we do more analysis but about fewer topics. And in that context, I think producing good NEPA documents is going to depend more on what field staff know and learn about the resources they manage than it will depend on anything we say or do from here.

>> C. Humphrey: Great. So deeper, not wider. Narrower, deeper. Ted, thoughts?

>> T. Milesnick: Well, I guess while I know that many in BLM view the NEPA process as an onerous, time-consuming process, I guess I don't necessarily disagree with that, and I don't think that there's always an easy answer, but I do think that the new NEPA Handbook is going to help you focus your analysis, help with that process, and lead to better decisions in the end. So hopefully this broadcast was helpful to you in that regard.

>> C. Humphrey: Better decisions is what it's about. So, peg, why don't you tell us a little bit about what you're working on with NEPA, what's going on, what's coming up.

>> P. Sorensen: Well, it's great to hear the exchange we've had so far today. There's been a lot of good questions and a lot of discussion on that. What's going on in the Washington Office, our first thing that we're trying to work on is to migrate the web guide to the next generation of the E-planning platform so that folks will actually be able to get in there and start using it and using it as an implementation piece or a supplement

to the handbook to help with examples and provide you access to some of the laws and regulations and those resource pieces. We consider E-planning a tool that will help us implement the NEPA and all of our policies and regulations. So E-planning should be a very useful tool in that respect. The next push that we're working on in addition to that is the effort by the Department of the Interior to codify the -- some of the -- the sum of the Departmental manual into the 43 CFR. The OEPC, Office of Environment Policy and Compliance is drafting the final regulations which should be available later on this year. They came out as draft. There were a bunch of comments on that. Now they're going through that final drafting process. As regulations and the policy change, the NEPA Handbook will be revised as necessary. It's not set in concrete and hopefully we won't wait another 20 years before we revise it or work on it and get it up to where it need to be, keep it active, keep it dynamic. In closing with today's thing, I do appreciate the time that folks in the field and here in the area have taken to learn about the new handbook by joining the broadcast today. The NEPA process is intended to help you and your managers make good decisions that are based on understanding the environmental consequences of the actions we take on our public lands and then to document that process. Ultimately, though, it's not better documents, but better decisions that count. NEPA's purpose is not to generate paper work, not even good paper work, but it's really to foster informed decisions. As a member of the planning and NEPA team in the Washington Office, I want to express our gratitude and appreciation for the effort that the NEPA Handbook team has poured into the revision of the NEPA Handbook. Based on my experience with them, it has been quite a process. So I want to thank each of you for your efforts, and back to you, Cathy.

>> C. Humphrey: Thanks, peg. I would like to say that although people keep saying ultimately it's not better decisions, I would like to see better documents. So we're trying to do some more technical writing courses to help that aspect of it.

>> P. Sorensen: Point taken.

>>C. Humphrey: Chuck, do you have any final words to the managers throughout or to anybody that's listening on the handbook?

>> C. Otto: Sure. I think one of the things that the BLM has always done a good job of is looking for new and better ways to do things. I don't think we're like other agencies oftentimes we're not stuck in a box. We do look at other alternatives out there. I think the new NEPA Handbook definitely fits that mold. It's a new and improved variety. It provides a lot of good advice and recommendations. I think once folks find the online users guide that's going to be a great asset for folks. I think one of the strengths, too, of the BLM is that, you know, if you're in the field you're not out there by yourself. There's a lot of folks out there you can call and ask. I think all the members on this panel would be more than willing to take your call and try and provide some advice. You know, we've done things a lot differently in a lot of different field offices and we can all learn that from. So if you call me and I don't know the answer, I'll always try to make something up. But actually, I will try and find the answer for folks, and I think everybody else here would do the same. So I think this is a document that's ready for prime time and hopefully all the field offices will take it and use it.

>> C. Humphrey: Thanks, Chuck. Well, thanks to everybody for taking your time to watch this

program. I hope it helped explain the NEPA Handbook a little bit more. I want to thank our panel for taking the time to come talk to everybody about it, and thanks to the folks back behind the scenes. It takes a lot of people to get one of these going. So thanks for being with us today and so long from Phoenix. We'll see you next time!