

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Inventory Data Automated Data Bases

PRESENTER: Before I start this session, I wanted to back up to something Kelly said and maybe others when they asked John about these other values. I don't know if you remember, Kelly, but you said, "How do you get these other values," right? And the logical conclusion to that is if there's a way to get them, why don't we have them? So I wanted to mention just a couple of things.

John and I were working on the Green Mountain Common Allotment out of Lander. This has been several years ago, and it's around 550,000 acres, and you have a number of operators all running in this allotment, running their cows and sheep in this allotment, and at that point in time -- and this is -- I'm digressing here for just a moment, but even now it's an issue. The upland riparian areas have been beaten out and management was trying to figure out, and the staff and the Lander Field Office, trying to figure out how they could get an improvement in those upland riparian areas. And an obvious answer to that was a reduction in livestock use. Maybe a change in season of use and change in numbers.

The operators -- I went to a dinner in Hudson, Wyoming, where we had the operators there, and they were concerned that if we reduced their grazing there would be an impact to their bottom line, to their cash flow, and then, "If you're willing to go out and make a decision would that reduce our cash flow, and you're doing it to improve riparian habitat or you're doing it to improve wildlife habitat or you're doing it to provide open space, if you're doing it to protect the Sweetwater Canyon Wilderness Study Area, we know what the impact will be on us. But

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Inventory Data Automated Data Bases

what about these nonmarket issues?" They didn't call it nonmarket issues, but they said, "You're willing to do to that our business and you have no idea what the impact would be associated -- the positive impact, let's say -- associated with making these adjustments to our grazing."

And so they were essentially saying you can't be making these decisions when you know that there's going to be a negative impact to our cash flow. They didn't actually realize that there was a whole body of economic theory that allowed you to quantify those nonmarket impacts. And so John got involved. We issued the contract. Put together the survey. Started the focus groups in Lander. The first focus group was -- it was a fairly quiet meeting. We had folks that came in and we were trying to refine the survey. The word got out. The next day we had the folks that were invited to the meeting along with maybe triple that showed up at the meeting. They were very angry that we were looking at some of these nonmarket issues. They didn't realize that you could actually develop a survey and quantify them.

The bottom line is that they went back to Washington with their delegation and in the middle of the study we shut it down. So I don't know if that helps at all, Kelly, but that's what happened in that instance, is these nonmarket values oftentimes are even bigger than the market values themselves, and so we shut that study down.

The other thing that came out that struck me in John's earlier discussion was

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Inventory Data Automated Data Bases

quantifying the impacts, let's say, for recreation. What I found is that before you can quantify those impacts you've got to have the resource folks actually come up with a quantifiable change, and I've seen studies -- in fact, I had a planner call me and say, "Why aren't you showing an economic change? We see all these people in town, we see all this activity, we have all these issues. Why isn't the economics section quantifying that?" But if you look through the resource sections, no impact to wildlife, no impact to recreation...

So all I'm doing is I'm saying that before the economist or the sociologist can quantify these changes, they have to come from the Resource Specialist. So if you're looking at recreation, for example, what you want to be able to do is get information from that Rec. Specialist that talks about the change in visitor use by activity, by year, by alternative. If you're looking at range, the change in AUM's by year, by alternative. The same with all of these activities. Once you have that information, you have the basis to build your analysis. So, a quick digression.

Automated databases... we'll be talking about the Economic Profile System and I'll also mention the Regional Economic Information System that's a Bureau of Economic Analysis System that's available to you.

How many people have actually seen the EPS or used it? So, a few.

The Economic Profile System was originally developed by Ray Rasker and the Sonoran Institute. Ray Rasker is with Headwaters Economics now. I'll talk about

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Inventory Data Automated Data Bases

how you can get access to these systems and we'll be using them in our class exercise. But what it is is it provides an automated way to look at a number of indicators, and you can use it for determining the relative importance of the economic sectors. You can examine income and employment by sector. And it provides a consistent data set so that it's not a BLM product. It's not something that we're developing for a particular project. I mean, this is all based on data that most analysts use.

Now, what would be a problem, do you think, in using, let's say, an automated system like that? Well, one problem is that it's dated, right? Like a lot of the EPS information comes from the Regional Economic Information System, which is derived from the Bureau of Economic Analysis Data, and the latest data they have now is what? 2005. So if you're in an area that's rapidly changing, the data is outdated before you get it. So just a word of caution on using these automated data systems. They need to be augmented with local data and they also need to be augmented with state-collected data. Like the state of Wyoming has their own website and you can get a lot of information from them that will augment the data you get from EPS.

Economic Profile System... it was originally, as I mentioned, developed by the Sonoran Institute. That's their website. Ray Rasker is now with Headwaters Economics. You can go to their site, e-mail Ray. There's information on his site. And you can download the files. They're eventually going to have all of this information running on a web-based basis because some of the files are large

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Inventory Data Automated Data Bases

and if you're in an area that you don't have good connection, it's difficult to download some of these files. But they're neat. You can pick practically any community in the U.S. and you'll get a profile just like that once you get the data. So neat system. And we'll be looking at those.

This was developed as a partnership between the Bureau of Land Management and the Sonoran Institute, and this just gives you a little background on the development of EPS.

Economic Profile System continued... what does it do? It automatically produces profiles and those are in your book and I'll direct you to those in a moment.

EPSC produces community profiles, and there's examples of those. And what I did is I ran those profiles -- I looked through the roster and there were quite a few folks that were from Oregon, so I picked Oregon examples, but, you know, I just picked them because I thought there would be folks here that would be familiar with the area.

CLASS PARTICIPANT: [inaudible]

PRESENTER: Sure.

CLASS PARTICIPANT: [inaudible]

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Inventory Data Automated Data Bases

PRESENTER: What we have been doing is -- in Wyoming, at least -- is we'll meet with the cooperators in advance of the RMP, and we'll actual -- actually I'll take them through, I don't know -- it takes a couple hours, maybe, two-and-a-half hours or something like that, and take them through the profile and describe the data that's in it, and we'll have a little exercise similar to with a we have -- what we're going to do here, and just get them onboard with regard to the availability of EPS, how we use it, how they can get access to it for the local planners and the county commissioners and mayors and that kind of thing.

Yes?

CLASS PARTICIPANT: We have a contract with somebody that comes down to do that?

PRESENTER: You know, I don't know where that stands. Ray Rasker and Ben, they're both with the Headwaters, and they put on a presentation, they've done it throughout the West, Grand Junction, the Staircase -- what is that, Escalante Staircase, and you've had them come in in Montana and put on these presentations on EPS.

PRESENTER: I think the latest is that IM2003-169 requires some kind of a workshop.

CLASS PARTICIPANT: [inaudible] we are working on a workshop but now I'm

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Inventory Data Automated Data Bases

just wondering --

PRESENTER: How you're going to do that. You have options. You have options. The Sonoran Institute will run those. Headwaters will run those. Or you can do it internally. Or you can hire somebody else to do it. It really isn't a requirement as to who runs the workshop, but I think the Sonoran Institute charges about \$10,000 a day. I think Headwaters is more expensive than that. And you can do it internally for considerably less if you find somebody that can do that.

CLASS PARTICIPANT: [inaudible]

PRESENTER: We can talk about options, but what Roy is going to go through this afternoon is similar to what will take place at those workshops.

PRESENTER: But it is a requirement.

CLASS PARTICIPANT: Right now [inaudible] contact we had with them
[inaudible]

CLASS PARTICIPANT: Okay. Thank you.

PRESENTER: Before we get into the profiles, sometimes folks think that these profiles will actually do the economic impact analysis, and they're not designed to

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Inventory Data Automated Data Bases

economic impact analysis. They're just simply a database. They give you a good historical perspective of the area being studied, but they're certainly not a replacement for impact analysis. So this is Chapter 3 stuff.

Just to mention the differences between EPS and REIS, EPS was originally as I mentioned developed by the Sonoran Institute. REIS, that's the Regional Economic Information System, and much of the data you'll find in EPS comes from the REIS database. I use the REIS database as much as I do EPS. The only thing is when you're using the -- and it's free of charge, by the way, and we know it's going to be updated annually. You can just pick up the phone, give the Bureau of Economic Analysis a call and they'll ship you a DVD. It used to come on a CD. Now it's on a DVD. And it has every county in the United States. You can take that data, export the data to a spreadsheet. Once you have it in a spreadsheet, you can do anything you want with the data.

The EPS is neat because it actually produces a document, but it's a canned document. Every profile is the same. But when it produces a document -- or the profile, it will have the information in a tabular form, in a graphical -- sometimes a graphical form, and then also a little narrative to the side that describes what's going on.

They're both available free of charge. They include data for communities and counties in the -- I'm just comparing the EPS and REIS database. What's one -- one thing I wanted to point out here is the nice thing about the REIS database is

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Inventory Data Automated Data Bases

you know it's always going to be updated. EPS is funded in part, I think, now by the Forest Service -- is that right, John, the Forest Service and BLM? Okay. I'm not sure if the Forest Service -- okay.

So the REIS database is always available to you, it will be updated annually, it's usual lay couple years old, just as EPS is a couple years old.

The EPS profile data gives you census data, population, county business patterns, Bureau of Economic Analysis data, employment by industry, income by industry, earnings, nonlabor income, transfer payments, and unemployment.

The EPSC -- the difference between EPS and EPSC, when you look at those in the back, you'll see that I ran the EPSC. That's the community profiles. The format on those are different. They're also produced automatically. They're very easy to produce. The difference between EPS and EPSC is I ran EPS on a county basis. You can take EPS -- one neat feature they've just added is you can take a collection of counties and put them together. So if your study region includes a set of counties you can put them all together. That's something you can't do in REIS. And this is the data you'll find in the EPSC profile data. That's the community data.

What I did here is I -- is I just took some REIS data and thank you couple of graphs together to show you how you could use the data, for example, out of REIS, and the question is, How important is ranching to Owahe (phonetic)

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Inventory Data Automated Data Bases

County, and do you think the BLM manager has the information in hand to quantify the importance of the various economic sectors within the Field Office's boundaries?

So what I did is I took Owahe County data from REIS and I just put a bar chart together, and you can immediately get a sense of the relative importance of the various sectors. And so what I did is I started out with the REIS data, dropped into it a spreadsheet and just produced a graph with it.

I did the same thing from Fremont County, and you can see that you'll get a major distribution change in those sectors as you go from one community to the other. Oftentimes it's something that you didn't necessarily anticipate.

So, this is a handy tool. It's quick and easy to use. It certainly doesn't give you an entire picture, but you can get a lot of information out of that for writing Chapter 3.