

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Issues and Planning Criteria Examples from BLM Plans

PRESENTER: Hello, everybody. Nice to see you here today. My role in this class is going to be to walk you through the social assessment process with a couple of -- well, actually with three plans we've been doing... one that I worked on and we'll kind of go through that, and the King Range, which you will review, and then another project I worked on that hasn't come out yet but will be available in a couple months, which I think is a really good example for a multiple use plan where you've got a lot of different issues and a lot of different publics that are interested in them.

So first of all, I'm going to talk about the planning issues generally and then I'm going to talk about them fairly specify nick terms of social and economic issues. I know most of you are already very aware of what planning issues are. Basically they're the building blocks of our Resource Management Plans, and without issues in an area, there wouldn't really be any reason to do a Resource Management Plan. So you can read the definition up here.

I think the key for planning issues is whether you can develop an alternative around that issue, and they need to be well defined, they need to be relevant, and they need to be within the agency's ability to deal with that issue. We can't have issues that we can't resolve.

Just a couple things about planning issues, how they're identified internally prior to scoping with our Resource Specialists, externally during scoping by coordinating with the general public, and this is a good way of getting the general public to review the

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Issues and Planning Criteria Examples from BLM Plans

issues that have been identified internally. There's a third way that issues are identified, and that's through like our planning handbook says that we've got to look at certain things with this go-around, such as travel management, ACEC's, Wild and Scenic Rivers. So there are some things we're required to look at in this go-around that may not be identified for a particular Field Office.

In terms of what we do with issues, we use them to craft the alternatives. They're included in the effects analysis. But I think one of the most important things for social is that that's where you get a feeling for what are the different groups in the area, what are the concerns of the local communities, what are the concerns of the groups you're going to be dealing with. So it's really aware of both the social and the economic analysts to get involved with the project, and I think one of the things, if you're having a project contracted out, you need to have the person that's going to do the social and economics involved at the beginning of the contract. Coming in and not hearing how issues are developed is going to put that person behind in doing their analysis. So I think that's one of the things that's really important.

Issues in interdisciplinary context. What we say is that all issues are really human issues, and I can't think of a plan I didn't work on where there wasn't a discussion for a couple of hours about some resource, non-socioeconomic resource, wildlife, and then people talk for a while. They talk with the public. And they all decide it's really a social issue and everybody looks at me like I've got the answer. So I think there's a lot of recognition within BLM that almost everything is a social issue.

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Issues and Planning Criteria Examples from BLM Plans

The resources have meaning to people. One of my favorite quotes came from the Montana Challenge, and it says: "Wolf management has nothing to do with wolves." And I think that's really true. It has to do with the different groups that are concerned about wolf management and how we resolve it in that sense.

Another thing that's really important is sorting out in advance which specialists will cover what conditions and effects. In terms of social, there's a lot of overlap with recreation. There's overlap with cultural. Like, who's doing the living culture as opposed to who's looking at archaeology and things like that? What's going on in terms of visual resource management? A lot of overlap with the different groups -- or the different resources that you need to be aware of.

And, again, one specialist's outputs are another's inputs. In economics they want to know the level of resource development or resource use in each of the different resources. In social, we really use -- it's not so much getting numbers but getting the write-ups or the descriptions of what different resource people, like, what does the recreation person say about what's going on with the different types of activities in that area. So the social and economic are very much dependent upon what other specialists develop.

What I said earlier is we're going to talk about the Dillon RMP and we're going to go through that, each of the stages of the planning process. Then we're going to do some exercises on the King Range, and I'm going to bring in some stuff from a third plan, the Upper Missouri River, because I feel like there's some new things that have happened

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Issues and Planning Criteria Examples from BLM Plans

in that plan that are good examples.

A project manager from the Upper Missouri River in talking to us was talking about how the level of planning that we have to do and the level of analysis we need to present, the bar is climbing every year. So the analysis that was adequate four or five years ago may not be adequate today. So we're trying to keep up with the changes and demands of what we need to do to meet that bar.

The Dillon RMP involves over a million acres in southwest Montana. It's fairly small tracts of land surrounded by large amounts of Forest Service land. It's got nationally recognized recreation, and I just wanted you to kind of see the list of what's going on here. A couple of things are really obviously very social and economically related, like the level of commercial and authorized uses and travel management, but really all of these things, all of these different issues, were very important to the public. There were over 70 ACEC's proposed in that area, including something that all of Beaverhead County, which is a huge area -- control of noxious weeds was the issue that got the most comment from the public. All of these, management of forests and woodlands, there was decline in the production of logging, and so they wanted to try some alternative types of development using forest products that would bring in some money to the area. Level of commercial uses in terms of the hunters, guides. There was a lot of conflict between hunting guides and recreationists that didn't -- or hunters that do not use guides. So each one of those had specific things that people were very concerned about.

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Issues and Planning Criteria Examples from BLM Plans

I wanted to back up for just a minute and talk about the use of collaboration in the Dillon RMP, because this was all being set up at the time that these steps were going on. It was interesting because the Montana Consensus Council was hired to see how the public wanted to be involved. The public was pretty burned out on planning things, so we couldn't engage them in the way we had thought we were going to initially. We thought we might have planning groups in the area that worked with particular subject matters. What we did end up doing was getting the RAC involved in that way. So the RAC developed some of the alternatives for, I think, the Wild and Scenic Rivers and for travel management. So we were able to get some community involvement that way, but the public was not willing to make that kind of commitment.

We had some additional scoping meetings that were hosted by the county that I don't think were particularly successful in terms of what scoping meetings are supposed to do. We ended up with a pretty volatile situation between the county and BLM and although the county were cooperators, they ended up suing us. So that didn't work out real well.

Moving onto the King Range, which is a monument that was developed -- it's in Northern California about 200 miles north of San Francisco. It goes along the coast. 60,000 acres of public land and about 8,000 acres of private land. And this was one of the few RMP's that actually had a social analysis in it. So this is the one we're using for our example and you're actually going to go through a review process on the social portion of an RMP to kind of get familiar with how you might do that when you end up with your own plan. The thing that's interesting about this plan is really all of their issues

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Issues and Planning Criteria Examples from BLM Plans

are very social in nature. So it was kind of ripe for having a social section.

Community involvement and support and education interpretation. The public had great willingness to be involved with this plan, but the thing that was interesting, it was very different publics that had that interest. It wasn't like it was a uniform group of people. Fire management is probably maybe even a bigger issue now than it was five or six years ago when this plan was done, and the issue there was how intensely to fight wildfire.

Recreation use was increasing, and that was an issue. Travel management was kind of the typical thing of how much off-road vehicle -- off-highway vehicle use do we allow.

Wanted to in terms of resource conservation and management maintain the native species in the area and maybe get rid of species that were not native to the area. So, anyway, this was very involved with the community and very involved with social issues. So this is the plan that we will work through. So I just wanted to give you an idea what the issues were.

And the last one we were' going to look at a little bit is the Upper Missouri River Riverbreaks National Monument. This ended up being an extremely contentious RMP, and in fact I would say the draft has been out for over a year, and they just decided this month that they weren't going to release the final until Christmas. And I wanted to use this as a new example, and they said, no way, we're not -- we don't want any copies of it out. So that's why we're still back with the Dillon.

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Issues and Planning Criteria Examples from BLM Plans

One of the things that was interesting about the issues that we received during scoping was that not having the monument there at all was a huge issue from people's perspective, but that's clearly outside the scope of this analysis. So you have to -- you know, in the social -- one of the things I did in the social write-up was to acknowledge that that was a major concern of peoples, but at the same time it was an issue not analyzed because there's really nothing we can do about that at this point.

One of the things that came up on transportation that was totally unexpected was an issue of seaplanes being able to land in the Missouri River, and we got probably over a thousand letters about that, and it was just, in my mind, just blown totally out of proportion, but these people say they follow the Missouri River, and if they want to land there in an emergency they have to be able to do that. So, anyway, sometimes you'll get something just kind of out of nowhere that's totally unexpected, and that happened in this RMP.

Okay. The last thing that I want to do in this section is talk about a cause and effect lab, and this is something that you can use throughout the process for little parts or for big parts of it, but it's one way to take the issues and drive them through to their social and their economic sides. You can do this -- work with this with the public and you can see where people are coming from and the links that they're making between different types of things that they're going to happen in response to what we might do, can help you decide the level of analysis that needs to be done, definitely helps to define effects to individuals and groups, but this is kind of a thinking process. So you're going to need to

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Issues and Planning Criteria Examples from BLM Plans

look at this information and you're going to need to verify it in other ways. You wouldn't just take this and say "Oh, this is what we know is going to happen." But it can give you some ideas of what might happen in particular situations.

So this is kind of my favorite matrix. I will try to use this. The driving action is the increase in deer population, and you can just see all the lines that are going around and around, and at the very bottom we have some improved schools, better tax base, better wildlife viewing, better public services. So you come around to some social impacts with this. So this is kind of just -- it's more complex, but it just kind of gives you an idea of what we're thinking about with an impact matrix, and basically I don't could use this with all the resources.

When I started doing RMP's a long time ago, we would sit down and we would take a big piece of paper that covered the whole wall and we would kind do have this with the different resources and that way all the different Resource Specialists would know where everybody else was coming from. So it really is a useful tool. It needs to be very fired, but I think kit really be helpful.

This is the more practical one that I put together. So over here you've got the concerns, and for this group it's for the ranchers. And over here you have the impacts to the ranchers. So you might say -- this is from the Missouri River. One of the things that we had control of in the Missouri River was whether motorboats were going to be allowed to use the river and when, and so from the ranchers' perspective, if there's a loss of ability to motor upstream for at least maintenance or recreation, for recreation, loss of

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Issues and Planning Criteria Examples from BLM Plans

family activity, decline in quality of life, and you can follow that through to increased expenses for the operation, have to get a job off ranch, loss of traditional ranch operation. And in this plan, we had -- I think we got over 60,000 letters in response to the draft. So we had a lot of information, and I felt pretty comfortable talking about what the ranchers were interested in in terms of their quality of life, and there's also a lot of literature in that subject area. So it made it easier -- this was an easy plan to work on because there was so much existing information on the plan.

PRESENTER: I just had to interject this when we started doing cause and effect webs, and I think they're pretty cool, too, and it's a nice way of working with the other interdisciplinary members of the I.D. team and consultants if you have them, too, because you can see we talked about the importance of having -- knowing whose outputs or whose inputs and who's going to cover what, and if you go through those webs, it's kind of a nice way for everybody to understand how they'll work together and also to understand the social and economic implications of some of the changes. They're right up there on the same page.

But this -- the issue with those is, well, do they model reality or is that just kind of our guess? You know, so they are useful in scoping and prep plan stuff but, you know, you find yourself wondering, well, what is the relationship between this variable and that variable and what proportion of the time does it occur, and is that a real relationship or just one that we kind of think makes sense? So this is an example of an analysis done by Richard Paul Knack at the University of Rhode Island who is a marine anthropologist, and it's kind of an example of how you can take this to a quantitative level, and we're

Social and Economic Aspects of Planning Issues and Planning Criteria Examples from BLM Plans

not necessarily suggesting that you always do this type of analysis. It's just kind of FYI so you know that it exists and can be done.

So this is predicting the biological success of marine protected areas at increasing biodiversity of fish populations. And that's that red -- that's your dependent variable there that we're measuring, the effectiveness, the success of marine protected areas in reaching their biological goal.

And these other variables are things or characteristics or conditions that affect whether an MPA, and in this case the MPA's were in the Philippines, are going to be successful or not. And so you can take a look at the relationships and those numbers are correlation coefficients, really. So measured across a number of different MPA's all in the Philippines. So you can start to develop kind of a quantitative sense about where some of the key relationships are and how they fit together. And you can study this a little in your workbook and ask questions about it later, but I just wanted to point out that you can use this when you have measurements out there in a little more quantitative fashion.