

Planning Nuts and Bolts: Preparation Plan

Now we're going to talk about the preparation plan. The objectives, we're going to describe the role and the importance of the preparation plan, its key contents and the key steps in its preparation and we're going to talk about the important information sources when developing the preparation plan.

The importance of the preparation plan, it's the starting point for the present planning effort. It's going to give direction to our planning effort and it's going to initiate our collaborative cycle, our collaboration with our agencies. It's going to establish the foundation for the planning process, it's going to define information that's required to support the planning process, and it's going to identify particular skills needed to address these issues.

The key contents of the preparation plan include the scope of the planning effort, defines the boundaries of the planning effort. It's going to identify the issues and management concerns, the work priorities. It's also going to identify the planning team roles and responsibilities and it's also going to initiate our internal/external coordination with the involved agencies. Our preparation plan is going to include a public participation plan. It's also going to include a preliminary budget, a schedule, general steps in the process, and it's going to form the basis of a statement of work if the plan, or portions of the plan, or going to be contracted out.

Talk a minute about some of the key contents, the anticipated planning issues and management concerns. These are developed internally, by the BLM Field Office staff and the Field Office Manager. They're based on the field office staff's experience with the plan area resources, the resource uses, the needs and the trends. That also includes coordination with other regulatory agencies, other BLM field offices, other federal agencies, and any members of the interested public. It should be noted that this does not actually formally kick off the public participation as the public meetings; the public hearings will come later.

Management concerns, management concerns are often troubled over by the ID team and they shouldn't put too much effort into them now. Basically, they are internally generated and they relate to program's specific concerns that the field office may have.

A little bit about roles and responsibilities. So the preparation plan is going to outline and list each member of the team, the core team, the extended interdisciplinary team, the management team and their roles and responsibilities. And it's important to the process in that it actually ensures that each member fully understands their responsibility throughout the planning process.

The public participation plan. It's going to, itself, identify desired outcomes of the public participation process. It's going to identify the cooperating agencies. It's going to identify and describe the interested and affected public. It's going to try and describe and identify techniques used to ensure meaningful participation by the public and by cooperating agencies throughout the process. And it's going to describe how the public participation will be documented and how the BLM will use it in its decision making.

The budget. The preparation plan is going to include a budget. The budget's going to identify, as they're known, all the costs associated with acquisition of data with the BLM and contract staff labor. Any of the tribal costs associated with plan preparation. The public participation costs, including the federal register notice, the scoping notices, scoping meetings, hearings, websites, publication costs of the documents themselves, the draft and final EIS and supporting documents. It also should address the level of current program funding that's

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currently provided by the field office or the state office, as well as any anticipated increased funding needs.

A schedule in the planning process itself. So the participation plan's going to actually include a schedule and the general steps in the planning process. It's going to be an estimate from the beginning. It's going to include the general steps in the process and target completion dates. You're going to include both those components of the planning process themselves and any support actions, such as compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, Section 404, Section 106, and you're going to want to note whether these steps are going to be developed concurrently or consecutively with the plan itself. And you're going to want to allow for the internal interdisciplinary and management review of the documents. Don't forget to put that in your plan. And you are going to include the contractor selection and award dates if it's know and if it's applicable.

Preparation plan information sources. You're going to want to do a data and GIS needs analysis, which we'll talk about in a little bit. You're going to also take a look at your BLM interdisciplinary team knowledge and experience. They're going to inform the preparation plan. The land use plan evaluation reports, collaborative groups, the AMS itself, the Analysis of the Management Situation, and any existing laws, regulations or planning documents which make up the planning criteria. The data and GIS needs, you're basically going to create a list of existing data and data that you are going to be looking to acquire as part of the planning process. What you are going to include is also the realistic strategy for acquiring critical data that you need.

The land use planning evaluations, again, they are an assessment of the role of the existing plan decisions and achieving the current desired conditions. You're going to use those plan evaluation reports to identify which plan decisions that you can carry forward into your new plan.

The preliminary planning criteria. Basically, these are the functional side-boards to which all new plan decisions are going to conform. They are a compilations of portions or all of existing laws, regulations, and guidance which apply to your plan. Planning criteria generally developed by the BLM internal team as a means of essentially further developing during the public participation plan. Remember that the planning criteria, the preliminary planning criteria, are further refined as part of the public and agency scoping. These are just preliminary and their dynamic and they'll continue to be developed as part of the scoping process.

The preliminary planning criteria, as we mentioned before, the data collection; these are the basics for your data collection needs. They also help ensure that the development of the plan is addressing identified issues. Sources of the planning criteria. FLPMA itself, BLM planning regs, other federal laws, resource management laws. You could include, if it applies, cooperating agency or collaborating groups, planning criteria.

Something to remember, availability of BLM planning and technical staff, so when you develop your preparation plan, keep in mind the BLM IDT will also have other responsibilities. In addition, the cooperating agency's time and availability should be taken into consideration, given that they have other rules and responsibilities, they may not be able to fully participate in the plan as expected. Also consider the availability of funds for outsourcing. Either the plan itself or technical components to the plan or specific components to the plan such as the public outreach or some procedural.