

>> Announcer: The Bureau of Land Management presents live from the National Training Center in Phoenix, Arizona, and the M Street Office in Washington, D.C., M Street Live, a broadcast series focusing on BLM issues of interest.

Today's topic, the new wilderness policy.

And now, the host of your program, Don Charpio.

>> D. Charpio: Welcome to our M Street Live program.

Today we will be discussing inventory and wilderness characteristics and the new guidance.

In this telecast, we will be using our video conferencing system to hear from top BLM specialists and managers at our M Street headquarters office in Washington, D.C., and from the main interior building we will be joined by our director Bob Abbey.

This program will discuss the new guidance and how this policy will help the bureau meet our obligations under the Federal Land Policy Management Act or FLPMA.

It will develop a communication between the Washington office and the field.

So your participation is important to us.

After we hear from our panelists, you will have the opportunity to ask questions or make comments on the information they are presenting.

Now, to set the stage for our discussion today, we are being joined by BLM's director, Bob Abbey.

Good morning, Bob.

>> B. Abbey: Good morning, Don.

How are you?

>> D. Charpio: Welcome.

We appreciate you taking the time to be with us.

>> B. Abbey: Oh, you bet.

>> D. Charpio: Joined --

>> B. Abbey: Don, again -- I'm sorry.

Go ahead.

>> D. Charpio: Joining Bob is the national landscape conservation system assistant director, Carl Rountree.

>> C. Rountree: Thank you, Don.

>> D. Charpio: I know you have some ideas on how this should be implemented and some background that you would like to share with our viewers, please take it away.

>> B. Abbey: Hello, everyone and welcome to the latest edition of M Street Live.

As Don indicated, with me today is Carl Rountree, and community partnerships, I guess.

And we are here to discuss the recently released wilderness characteristics guidance, but before I get into the details of that guidance, I want to just take some time to express my personal appreciation to all of you for your patience.

It took perseverance, but I believe that the new guidance that we are introducing today and going into some details will set the bureau on firm and consistent footing as we manage lands with wilderness characteristics as part of our multiple use mission.

As you may recall, with 2011, continuing resolution that was passed by Congress, directed the Bureau of Land Management not to implement administer or enforce secretarial order 3310, which directed the bureau to characterize the protection of wilderness characteristics through the designation of wild lands.

We are adhering to this congressional direction with the help of guidance from the Department of Interior, and with recognition of our legal obligations under the federal land policy and management act. On June 1st, I received a memorandum from secretary Salazar providing direction on how we will move forward in addressing wilderness characteristics on BLM managed public lands.

The secretary memorandum emphasized that BLM guidance should be consistent with FLPMA which requires the Bureau of Land Management to maintain an inventory of lands with wilderness

characteristics and to consider this inventory when making land use and project level decisions. The BLM land use plans rely in part on accurate inventories of the public lands, their resources and other values.

Inventory lands with wilderness characteristics represent a resource that must be considered in the planning process along with other resource values.

When such lands are present, we will examine our full range of options for managing these lands and determine the most appropriate land use allocations for them.

To that end, I released an instruction memorandum 2011-154 on July 25th.

This instruction memorandum provides guidance that supports the bureau as we carry out our legal obligations under FLPMA and also it complies with congressional directions that we have received. I have heard from many of you over the past couple of years, who have expressed your desire for consistent written direction on carrying out our obligations as stewards of these lands and I believe that the instruction memorandum that we recently released will help to address your needs.

We all know that the wild variety of uses and values that lands with wilderness characteristics provide from such things as non-motorized and non-mechanized recreation, to wildlife habitat, clean water and significant opportunities for solitude.

So it's no secret that these lands are very important to the American people.

I recognize and appreciate your hard work and your dedication to being good stewards of our public lands.

In closing and before turning it over to Carl for a few words, I would also like to commend the Washington office planning and NLCS staffs for their work in completing this guidance, not once but twice.

As important as this policy is to us, and the department, I'm sure that you can appreciate the number of people that have been involved in helping us prepare this guidance and those that have reviewed this guidance before it's been released.

It's not been an easy job, but the planning and the NLCS staffs have done everything possible to complete this guidance as quickly and professionally as possible.

And for this, we owe them our greatest gratitude.

Also, thanks specifically to Dave Harmon, and Sam Gaugush, the panelists for today's broadcast for providing an overview of the new policy and answering your questions from the field.

With that, Carl, I will turn it over to you for a few words.

>> C. Rountree: Thank you, Bob.

Just a few clarifying remarks if I could before turning it back over to Don.

As all of you are probably aware, the secretary's memorandum of June 1st, 2011, dealt with several topics.

One was this position of 3310 and another one was BLM's FLPMA responsibilities and land use planning and project level decision.

It also dealt with two tasks to be performed by the deputy secretary, one was the determinations on the management of lands of wilderness characteristics in the future.

Another had to do with identifying BLM managed lands for possible consideration for protection by Congress under the wilderness act.

Just to be clear, this broadcast deals only with the guidance for conducting wilderness inventories and for the consideration of these lands in the land use policy decisions and considering specific projects. If you have questions regarding any of the tasks outlined in this memorandum, please write or call me and I will respond to your questions as quickly as I possibly can.

I also want to point out that the initial set of questions and answers that you will be hearing today were drawn or are what we feel are the best way of trying to explain the guidance to you.

These questions and answers that were developed were based on months of conversations with all of you, and are used once again to explain the best we can the implementation of the guidance.

You will, of course, have the opportunity to forward questions to our panel. We will do everything in our power to try to respond to your questions in this broadcast, however, because of some time limitations, and also simply because we may not have a specific response to your question, we may have to respond to these at a later date. If we do, the questions, as well as the answers, will be provided to you and we'll do our best to try to get those to you within the next week or two. Finally, I would like to point out that this broadcast is the start of training that we are intending to provide you as well as your managers and other specialists. The Washington office wilderness staff is working with each of our state offices to schedule training for you, and this schedule will be completed later this week. Of course, any time any of you have any questions, we would ask that you contact us and we will do our best to respond to those in as timely a manner as possible. With that, I would like to turn it back over to Don Charpio, director of the National Training Center who will help to conduct the broadcast.

Don?

>> D. Charpio: Thanks, Bob, thanks, Carl.

Those are great perspectives.

We appreciate all the hard work that has gone into getting us where we are today.

Thank you.

Moving along to M Street, joining us is Sam Gaugush, the planning and environmental analyst in the Washington office.

Sam will talk to us about the planning process and how it relates to the guidance.

Thanks, Sam, for being with us today.

We look forward to hearing your comments.

Hi, Sam.

>> S. Gaugush: Thanks, Don.

Pleasure to be here.

>> D. Charpio: And completing our presentation team today is Dave Harmon.

Dave is the senior wilderness specialist in the nlc office in Washington, D.C.

Dave will be presenting the details on the guidance relative to conducting wilderness inventories.

Hi, Dave, thanks for being with us today.

>> D. Harmon: Hi, Don.

Hi, everyone, glad you could all join us today.

>> D. Charpio: I like those matching shirts, guys, you look great.

>> D. Harmon: This is BLM RS.

>> D. Charpio: Before we start, I would like to mention that you should use the phone and the fax and the email address you see on your screen when we open our question-and-answer session.

If you think of a question during our presentation, feel free to call or send it in so we can address it as soon as possible.

We'll try to answer all the questions within the time available.

If we do run short of time, someone from the Washington office, as Carl has mentioned, will get back with you after the telecast or soon thereafter.

So please include your name and your office location along with your questions.

Okay.