

Planning/NEPA Forum: Purpose and Need
April 30, 2009
Pework Scenarios

Instructions: Read the following scenarios and answer the questions. You may either keep your answers to compare to those given during the broadcast, or you can email them to cathy_humphrey@blm.gov--don't worry, you won't be graded.

Scenario 1. Read the scenario and then answer the questions.

The operator of Zenith Zeolite Mine filed an SF299 form (request for right-of-way) to improve access along the Mount Ruby Trail leading to their patented mining site. The mine is in the 20th year of a 30-year SMARA plan governing its operation. The unimproved access they've been using is rutted and too narrow for their current use. The County requested the mine operator bring the trail up to county road standards because of complaints from downhill landowners along the trail. No existing right-of-way has been found for the road they are using. In this circumstance, under the applicable laws, the BLM is obligated to grant access.

- 1.1. The BLM's and the applicant's purpose and need is the same. T / F
- 1.2. You do not have to identify alternative routes to Mount Ruby trail for upgrade. T/ F
- 1.3. Why or Why Not?

Scenario 2. Read the scenario and then revise it as described below.

The purpose of the Special Status Species Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMPA/FEIS) is to propose specific management prescriptions to ensure the continued habitat protection of two special status species, the lesser prairie-chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) and the sand dune lizard (*Sceloporus arenicolus*), while allowing other resource uses and activities to continue within the planning area. The planning area includes public land surface and federal mineral estate on portions of the Carlsbad and Roswell Field Offices.

In order to protect the habitat for these two species, the FEIS evaluates the potential effects of different management prescriptions on resources and resource uses within the planning area, including, for example: oil and gas leasing and the subsequent development of oil and gas leases through the reclamation phase, livestock grazing, designation of interstate utility corridors, water resources, cultural resources, and off-highway vehicle use designations. The PRMPA/FEIS and Final Record of Decision would amend two existing BLM RMPs.

Three factors are driving the need for amending these two RMPs: federal regulations and policies that address special status species and public land use planning and management, related changing resource demands and conditions that may affect the special status species' habitat in the planning area, and a focus on expanding interagency coordination through the land use planning implementation process. Federal regulations and policies require the BLM to make its public land and resources available based on the principle of multiple-use. At the same time, it is BLM policy to conserve special status species and their habitats, and ensure that actions authorized by the BLM do not contribute to the need for the species to become listed as threatened or endangered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. (For additional information, refer to the BLM Special Status Species Management Manual 6840).

Given the complex relationship among the special status species and their habitats, the increasing numbers of species listed over the past several years, and the possibility of more species becoming listed, the scope of this PRMPA/FEIS has been broadened to an ecosystem or landscape level. An ecosystem approach provides a strategy to help arrest the decline of biodiversity, and eliminate or minimize the need for further listings of species.

The BLM will establish the 58,000-acre Lesser Prairie-Chicken Habitat Preservation Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The purpose of this ACEC is to maintain and enhance habitat for the lesser prairie-chicken and sand dune lizard.

- 2.1. Given what you know about purpose and need, rewrite the text below into the following:
 - a. Purpose statement (one sentence)
 - b. Need statement (one sentence)
 - c. Background (one paragraph)
- 2.2. You may also identify unnecessary text, if you like.

Scenario 3. Read the following scenario and select the correct answer to the questions.

XYZ Radio Station requested a permit to erect and operate a communications tower on private land in Section 16 on Mount Ruby. There are two primitive recreational trails on the mountain—the south access route, which is unnamed, and the north access route, which is called Mount Ruby Trail. Mount Ruby Trail is used primarily by casual recreationists and quail hunters. Their application requests improvement of the less-steep Mount Ruby Trail so they can access the communication site, put up the tower, and maintain the site for 30 years.

- 3.1. It would be appropriate to consider alternatives other than the Mount Ruby Trail and the south road access route. T / F
- 3.2. How would the purpose and need statement change if Mount Ruby was also known to have sensitive cultural resources and tribal values?
 - a. The purpose and/or need wouldn't change.
 - b. The purpose and/or need would be broader.

- c. The purpose and/or need would be narrower.
- d. The proposal would not be considered.

3.3. How would the purpose and need statement change if the south access trail was a designated open route, and Mount Ruby Trail had been designated closed to casual use to protect threatened desert tortoise habitat?

- a. The purpose and/or need wouldn't change.
- b. The purpose and/or need would be even broader.
- c. The purpose and/or need would be even narrower.
- d. The proposal would not be considered.