

Exercise 6 – Planning Issues

Purpose:

The purposes of this exercise are to familiarize yourself with the definition of an issue, differentiate between issues and attitudes/positions/interests, and practice writing clear, concise issue statements.

RMPs are issue-driven. An issue is analyzed only if it's necessary to make a reasoned choice among the alternatives. If there are no unresolved conflicts about how to manage a resource, resource condition, or potential effect, then there is no reason to raise it as an issue to be analyzed.

At the end of this exercise, everyone on the RMP team, whether a BLM employee, contractor, or partner/stakeholder, should be able to write an issue statement.

Instructions:

Individually...

1. Review the guidance for issues.
 - BLM NEPA Handbook, section 6.4 (this is the best definition of an issue).
 - BLM Planning Handbook, section III.A.3
 - BLM Planning Regulations, 43 CFR 1610.4-1

As an interdisciplinary team...

1. Gather *copies* of the scoping comments you have received for your land use plan—never use the original! If you aren't at this step in your planning process, then you can gather public comment letters for a site-specific project or another plan.
2. Keeping in mind the guidance and definitions, as well as what you just learned in the lesson on Issue Identification, work in groups of 2 or 3 to identify the attitudes, positions, and interests in each letter. Highlight the attitudes in one color, positions in another, and interests in a third.
3. Determine the action required for each highlighted phrase, sentence, or group of sentences:
 - a. No action required (specify why not)
 - b. Combine with similar comments or ideas
 - c. Seek more information or clarification
 - d. Rewrite into a planning issue
4. Rewrite the comments you've identified in the last category into a question format that meets the criteria for being an issue. For example, rather than just listing "Recreation" as an issue, be specific, "How should we balance the needs for motorized and non-motorized recreation in the XYZ area?"

Approximate Time:

Individual tasks – 15 minutes

ID Team tasks – 1-2 hours