

C. Humphrey: Welcome to Module 2 of the Cumulative Effects Analysis training presented by the Bureau of Land Management's National Training Center. My name is Cathy Humphrey; I'm a training coordinator for planning and NEPA-related courses. It's my pleasure to bring you the second module of our three-module series of courses on how to analyze cumulative effects. As you know, that's one of the more intimidating concepts in NEPA.

Module 1 provides an overview of cumulative effects analysis, it's based on the Council on Environment Quality's guidance and the BLM's NEPA Handbook, Section 6.8.3. If you have not completed Module 1 yet, we recommended that you stop this video, go back to the National Training Center's Knowledge Resource Center, enter "cumulative effects" in the search box, and complete Module 1 before continuing with this module.

Module 2 presents four BLM actions: A timber sale, a grazing permit renewal, a right-of-way application, and an oil and gas plan of development, to illustrate each step of the cumulative effects analysis process that you learned about in Module 1.

In the third module in the series, it's an on-site workshop; it's taught by BLM employees and/or experienced contractors who will help your BLM interdisciplinary team work through a cumulative effects analysis for an actual project that you're struggling with. You'll need to complete Modules 1 and 2 before we'll schedule a cumulative effects workshop in your office.

Now if you'd like a refresher on how to make your online learning experience better, we've got some tips for you. If you want to look them over, go to the Resources button on your screen. Under that button you can also find the names and contact information for me and the other instructors here, as well as relevant cumulative effects guidance from the BLM and CEQ, among others.

Now the overall goal of this module is to illustrate the 7-step cumulative effects analysis method that's presented in the BLM NEPA Handbook, and we're going to show you those with four examples. When you complete the module, you should be able to do a couple things: One of them is to consider the cumulative effects throughout the NEPA process including scoping, alternatives and environmental consequences; and also complete a cumulative effects analysis that is consistent with BLM and CEQ guidance, and that will provide the basis for a good decision, and that will also stand up to legal challenge.

You can review any or all of the four examples by selecting the action that you're interested in, and for each step the instructors are going to provide a brief introduction and then the example will be shown on the screen for you to read and think about. The introduction video for each step is the same for all four examples, so if you look at more than one example, you can go ahead and skip the video unless you want to watch it again.

In this course we're only presenting the analytical conclusions, but of course your NEPA document and/or your project file should also include any assumptions or methodology or other useful information that went into your analytical conclusions.

When you read the examples, you'll notice that we've italicized the text that would go into the NEPA document, and then the non-italicized text just provides context or explanation for you, but it wouldn't go into the document. And then there's a Next Steps button and under that button you'll find each cumulative effects example in its entirety, instead of piece by piece, like you'll see at first. And just remember that these are hypothetical examples, they should only be used as a learning tool, not a word-for-word plug-and-play template. At the end of the module, you will even have a chance to write your own cumulative effects analysis and then you can send it to a NEPA expert to review and give you feedback. Of course, this is an optional exercise and it's available to BLM employees only.

Now I'd like to take a minute to introduce our instructors. Richard Hardt is from Eugene, Oregon. He's an ecologist and he's been with the BLM working on various aspects of NEPA since 1994. He helped develop the BLM's 2008 NEPA Handbook and you probably would recognize him from some of our other online NEPA courses. Hi, Richard.

R. Hardt: Hi Cathy, it's great to be back.

C. Humphrey: Ken Bogdan is Environmental Counsel from ICF International. He's been working with NEPA since the late 1980s, he teaches planning and NEPA classes for the BLM and other federal agencies. In fact, he was one of our instructors for the Planning Nuts and Bolts class; we recorded him doing the Planning Nuts and Bolts Class online. Nice to see you again, Ken.

K. Bogdan: Hi Cathy, thank you for having me.

C. Humphrey: While we were developing this course, I asked some of the NEPA practitioners in the BLM if they had any questions that they'd like us to answer. Most of them we've incorporated throughout the module, but there were a few questions that we thought we needed to answer up front.

We got a bunch of questions regarding whose responsibility it is to write the cumulative effects analysis. Is it the team lead? Is it the resource specialist? Does each person do it individually, or does the interdisciplinary team do it as a group? Well, the answer depends on the type and the size of the project, or it depends on whether it's an EIS or a categorical exclusion. It depends on how your team is organized—it depends on the makeup of your team. It really depends on many factors. For most projects, the resource specialist is responsible for writing the cumulative effects analysis for their resource, and then for some projects—some of the bigger projects—it might be appropriate to have the entire team work together through the analysis in an interdisciplinary fashion. Now I'd say the most important thing to do would be establish your responsibilities up front, put it in writing, and then it should be pretty clear.

And another question we got was how to handle greenhouse gas emissions in cumulative effects analysis. There are special considerations for this and the guidance is evolving, so we can't really address it here. The best thing to do would be for you to work closely with your state planning and environmental coordinator, and they'll make sure that you're using the latest guidance.