

>> 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 Air Quality Memorandum of Understanding.  
And now the host of your program, Chip Calamaio.

>> C. Calamaio: Welcome to our M Street Live! program on the New Air Quality Memorandum of Understanding.

In this telecast we're going to be using our videoconferencing system to hear from top BLM specialists and their interagency partners as our M Street headquarters office in Washington D.C. and from BLM's National Operations Center in Lakewood, Colorado.

This program is going to discuss the new MOU which covers air quality analysis and mitigation for Federal oil and gas decisions.

Your participation is really important to us.

After we hear from our panelists, you'll have the opportunity to ask some questions or comment on the information they present.

During our Q&A segment, we'll also have other specialists from BLM and the Forest Service on hand to answer your questions and join in our discussion.

All of our presenters today have served on the interagency negotiating team that developed this new MOU.

With us now from M Street is Kerry Rodgers, who is an air Resource Specialist with BLM's Division of Environmental Quality and Protection.

Welcome, Kerry.

>> K. Rodgers: Hi, Chip.

>> C. Calamaio: Glad that you're there.

Also on M Street is Jessica Trice, an environmental specialist with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Washington D.C.

Hey, Jessica, thanks for being on our program.

>> J. Trice: Thanks, Chip.

>> C. Calamaio: And with Kerry and Jessica is BLM's soil, water and air program lead Bob Boyd, who is also with our headquarters division of environmental quality and protection.

Hey, Bob, thanks for giving us a hand today.

>> B. Boyd: You bet, great to be here.

Hopefully this MOU people will view as great tool to use as we move forward in meeting our obligations to manage our resources.

>> C. Calamaio: There's a lot of good stuff coming up.

Thanks, Bob.

Now coming in from our National Operations Center in Lakewood, Colorado is Catherine Collins. With the Air Quality Branch of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in Lakewood, Colorado.

Hello, Catherine.

>> C. Collins: Hi, Chip.

I'm glad to be here today representing both the Fish & Wildlife Service and the Park Service.

>> C. Calamaio: We're glad you've taken the time to be on our show.

We would like to mention Kerry and Jessica in Washington and Catherine in Colorado are all currently serving on the Joint Agency Implementation Team that's developing the MOU implementation and the training plan.

Before we get started I would like to mention you should use the phone and fax numbers and the e-mail address you'll see on your screen when we open things up for our Q&A segment.

If you think of a question during our presentations, feel free to call or send those in ahead of time.

That way we can get to them as soon as possible during our Q&A segment.

We're going to try to answer all your questions within the time available.

If we do run out of time, run short, someone is going to get back to you after our telecast.

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

All right.

Now that the announcements are out of the way, we'd like to start things often with the management perspective.

Ed Roberson, BLM's Assistant Director for Renewable Resources and planning has prepared some remarks for us today.

Let's take a look.

>> E. Roberson: Hello.

Welcome to the BLM's broadcast on the New Air Quality Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department of Interior and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

I appreciate your taking the time to learn about this important agreement.

The MOU outlines a common framework that five agencies will use within the national environmental act process to analyze and mitigation adverse impacts of Federal oil and gas decisions to air quality and air quality-related values, also known as AQRV's.

It was developed through a facilitated collaborative process that began in 2009.

The MOU addresses long-standing differences among Federal agencies over the appropriate air quality analyses and mitigation measures for oil and gas decision on public lands.

The BLM and EPA have differed over the adequacy of NEPA air analyses sees, air quality analyses, the stage in the oil and gas activities when such analyses should occur and the adequacy of mitigation measures.

The BLM and other Federal land management agencies have differed over appropriate thresholds and resource conditions to use as the starting point for analyzing impacts to visibility and other air quality-related values, and over the levels at which impacts are considered adverse.

Resolving these differences on an ad hoc basis has delayed some planning and project decisions and caused tension as the BLM faced adverse EPA ratings for its NEPA analyses despite some project specific successes.

By memorializing a common framework, the MOU will help all Federal -- all five participating agencies to protect air quality and air quality-related values while continuing to provide opportunities for oil and gas development on Federal lands.

The MOU will increase certainty in the NEPA process for all agencies and project proponents and it will boost transparency for all involved.

The MOU also acknowledges our state, local and tribal partners, authorities and responsibilities regarding air quality.

We intend to work closely with them as we implement the MOU.

We are counting on all of you to help make implementation of the MOU a success.

We ask for your support and we in the BLM Washington Office and the national operations center are committing to -- committed to helping you at every turn.

In the coming weeks, please watch for information about the MOU implementation and training and do not hesitate to ask questions.

Also, please keep track of your challenges, your successes and your concerns under the MOU.

My counterparts at the other participating agencies and I will meet annually to evaluate MOU implementation and we will welcome your experiences.

Thank you in advance for your support and enjoy the broadcast.

>> C. Calamaio: We appreciate Ed taking the time to prepare those remarks and help set the background for us on this new MOU.