

Now that the announcements are out of the way, we'll turn to Dave Harmon for some specifics on the wilderness inventory process.

Dave, it's all yours and let's start with the first question I have here.

Could you please describe what exactly is a wilderness characteristics inventory?

Test question.

>> D. Harmon: Okay.

Well, a wilderness characteristics inventory, Don, is the process by which the BLM determines the presence or the absence of lands and wilderness characteristics.

We go to the wilderness act Section 2c to get a definition of what wilderness characteristics are.

Essentially we are talking about a roadless area of a large size, sufficient size in a natural condition with outstanding opportunities for solitude and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined type of recreation or non-motorized type of recreation.

There may also be supplemental values.

Now, finding that wilderness characteristics are present does not dictate how those will be managed.

That's -- the management of lands of wilderness characteristics as determined through our land use planning process, where those decisions will be made.

>> D. Charpio: Thanks, Dave.

I threw you off there a little bit.

I want to go back and ask, how does the new guidance released from the new IM-154 how does it differ from the wild lands policy that we have been hearing about?

>> D. Harmon: Okay.

I think that's easiest to explain by telling you a few of the actions that we're not going to be doing, that were a component of the wild lands policy.

First and foremost, of course, we are not going to be implementing secretarial order 3310 and we will not be using manual 6301 and 6202, and 6203.

Those were issued in support of that secretarial order.

And, of course, we are not going to be designated wild lands through the land use planning process or any other process.

We won't be placing a priority on the protection of lands and wilderness characteristics over and above other BLM resources.

That was -- that prioritization was specific to the wild lands policy.

We won't be doing plan conformance reviews to determine if the lands are compatible and conforming with the wild lands policy and there will be no special project reviews being conducted for selected projects that might impair wilderness characteristics by either the state director or the director.

Finally, we won't be preparing a national database to track lands and wilderness characteristics.

All of those things I mentioned were specific to the wild lands policy.

>> D. Charpio: Thanks, Dave.

And I appreciate what we are not going to do.

Now, Sam, can you help us by telling us what we are going to do under the new guidance?

>> S. Gaugush: Sure, Don.

So even in the absence of the secretarial order, the BLM still has certain duties with regard to management of lands with wilderness characteristics.

FLPMA Section 201 requires the BLM to maintain up-to-date inventories of lands with wilderness characteristics.

As Dave mentioned, they don't make a change in the management.

They are just confirmation on the presence or the absence of the resource.

FLPMA Section 202 gives the BLM the duty to consider this inventory information when it's undertaking land use planning.

And so through the land use planning process, we will examine our options for managing lands with

wilderness characteristics.

In that way, lands with wilderness characteristics should be treated the same as any other sensitive resource when we are engaging in planning.

That includes a full range of alternatives in the NEPA process, as well as identifying these areas on a map with a clear boundary, and then once it comes to project analysis, analyzing the potential effects of a proposed action and its alternatives on lands with wilderness characteristics.

>> D. Charpio: Thanks, Sam.

I think I understand.

There's a guidance on the inventory, but it's got to be related to the whole planning process and how it stands up in that analysis.

Now, Dave this policy has gone through more than one iteration over the past eight months or so.

Do you expect the new guidance to be in place for a long time or are we looking for something new to come out soon?

>> D. Harmon: Well, Don, I think that we'll be using this guidance for the foreseeable future.

I'm looking forward to -- to working with the states and field offices in implementing the guidance.

>> D. Charpio: Thanks, Dave.

Okay.

So we are going to talk about the inventory process now.

We have a number of questions for Dave.

He already explained what an inventory is, an inventory wilderness characteristics.

Now, Dave, when you are conducting an inventory, should you take the manageability into consideration as you are doing that inventory?

>> D. Harmon: Well, no, Don, manageability is a consideration later on in the planning process.

In the inventory, we're solely concerned with determining whether or not lands with wilderness characteristics are present that reflects the presence of the wilderness resource.

Manageability is -- and manageability refers to our ability to protect identified lands with wilderness characteristics under our management actions and that is specific -- one of the specific considerations that will be made later on in the land use planning process.

>> D. Charpio: Okay.

So we separate the two.

Looking at the characteristics and then we'll talk about manageability as we look at the land use planning process.

>> D. Harmon: Correct.

>> D. Charpio: Why do we inventory wilderness characteristics?

Why do we do this?

>> D. Harmon: Well, we do this because of FLPMA.

FLPMA Section 201 is the section of the law that requires the bureau to conduct and maintain inventories for its resources so they can be considered into our planning process to help us manage, make the right decisions on how we want to manage the public lands.

So Section 201 of FLPMA requires recording lands and wilderness characteristics which is a resource to also be -- we need to conduct the inventories and we need to maintain them and we need to be sure that we have current information when we enter into our land use planning process as our NEPA analysis for projects.

A lot of our inventory information is 30 years old and older when we conducted our original baseline inventory back in the late '70s.

So that's certainly not current.

And, in fact, some of our lands were not subject to inventory at all, because they weren't -- they were not BLM lands at the time.

So we have areas that were never inventoried.

So to make sure that we are covered in our project and NEPA work, we need to -- and planning work, we need to make sure that we have current inventories.

>> D. Charpio: So, Dave, this inventory requirement really has been around since FLPMA which has been around since our organic act.

We always had this requirement.

The guidance is just telling us how to do it now?

>> D. Harmon: That's correct.

We finally have some consistent guidance that everyone can use in writing that should help us a great deal throughout the country.

>> D. Charpio: Now, Dave, we are really busy out.

There people have got lots of stuff to do and I'm sure they are hearing, oh, you have to do more inventories.

Do all inventories require on-the-ground survey work or is there another way to get it accomplished?

>> D. Harmon: No.

Sometimes an inventory can be as simple as sitting in the office with a good set of maps, looking at identifying inventory units that are less than 5,000 acres and clearly don't have wilderness characteristics, and such as a chunk of checkerboard lands that don't have a contiguous block of land anywhere near 5,000 acres and documenting that the size is not met on the proper forms and end of story.

Quite often, it will be a more detailed inventory where our field work is necessary, narratives need to be filled out on the forms provided and the guidance describing the boundaries of the area, the size of the area, the natural qualities that may exist or the lack of natural qualities, outstanding opportunities for solitude, outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation or the lack thereof, and sometimes supplemental values.

So those -- and photographic documentation sometimes.

So it can be the full range from very simple inventory work to more complex and detailed work.

>> D. Charpio: Okay, Dave.

Now we have done the inventory.

How should that inventory be documented?

I know the guidance gives us some forms and so forth.

What is the requirements for documentation?

>> D. Harmon: Okay.

Well, attachment one of the instruction memo that we are discussing has inventory forms.

There's a form 1 and a form 2 and then there's a route analysis form in there, but form 1 and form 2 are critical to documenting your inventory work and I might -- I will say right up front that if you don't document your work on these forms, you didn't do the work as far as our record keeping goes and you won't have an ability -- it doesn't matter how much time you spent talking about it, thinking about it, visiting the field, photographing the area, if it's not documented on form 2 specifically, you didn't do the inventory.

So we always start with form 1.

Form 1 is simply a summary of existing wilderness inventory information that we collected in the past. Very simple.

It's a starting point.

We're updating and maintaining existing inventory information.

So we want to document what that information is.

Form 2 is a critical one because that's where we document the current conditions of wilderness characteristics on the inventory unit that we are looking at.

So that's essential to fill out the descriptions of size, solitude, et cetera, and don't feel bound to the three or four lines that are on the form.

Those are just place holders.

You may need a page or more to describe some of these criteria.

So that -- it's important to document and I can't emphasize that enough.

Thanks, Don.

>> D. Charpio: Thanks, Dave.

More forms to fill out but very important forms and that form 2 is very critical I understand.

Thanks.