

## Introduction

CHumphrey: Hi, and welcome to Module 1 of the Plan Implementation Training. My name is Cathy Humphrey. I'm a planning/ NEPA training coordinator here at the National Training Center in Phoenix, Arizona.

Developing a strategy to implement your land use plan is a three-step process: 1 is Identify the Work. 2 is Prioritize it. And 3 is Schedule it. After this introduction, we're going to talk about the history, how the plan implementation has evolved through time, we'll give you an overview of the 3-step process, we'll introduce you to the Excel worksheet, we'll present Step 1, and then we'll talk a little bit about next steps. The primary focus of this module is how to complete Step 1, Identify the Work.

Now, the **course objectives**... There's a couple course objectives. The first one is to list the projects, management actions and tasks needed to implement your RMP over the next three to five years. The second is identify project element codes for each project, management action, or task. And the third is identify geographic location for each project, management action or task.

There's a few **materials** that you need to participate in this module: the first thing you need is the Participant Guide, and it's on the web page where you entered this course; you need the record of decision for your resource management plan; you need a few copies of the final resource management plan; and any other signed decisions for plans that aren't included in your record of decision. For example, maybe allotment management plans or plans for your areas of critical environmental concern.

Also you need to be sure that everybody can see the screen and hear the video and that you have plenty of room to work. And if you want some more tips on how to take an online course, check out your participant guide.

Later on, you're going to be breaking up into smaller groups and each group is going to have a computer, and that person will enter the data more efficiently into an Excel spreadsheet. We recommend that that person be the person with the best Excel skills, and you'll thank me for that later.

By the way, you may hear us refer to this worksheet as an Excel worksheet, a spreadsheet, a matrix. It's all the same thing.

Now, one way to attack this task is to watch the video all the way through and then go back to the pertinent pieces to review the instruction before you begin.

Developing an implementation strategy takes lots of concentration, so you might want to consider conducting the exercise away from the office, like maybe in a conference room of a local municipal building or in a library, whatever you can find in your town. The downside is you can't run to your desk to get reference materials or maps. So if you're off site, be sure that you've got everything you need, electronically or hard copy. If you stay in the office, you'll need to avoid distractions from e-mails, phone calls and other interruptions.

The **target audience** for this training is the interdisciplinary team who developed and/or will be implementing the land use plan. Of course, the decision-makers should be present because they can provide insights to you that you might not be aware of. And then although we advocate involving your partners in implementation planning, this first step may not be the best place to involve them. We feel

that their time would probably be best spent on Step 2 and maybe Step 3. They can help you prioritize and schedule the work. But that's the decision-maker's decision. It's up to you.

Developing an implementation strategy is part of the overall planning process. Ideally, you're in the final stages of completing your proposed plan, final environmental impact statement, perhaps you're resolving protests and writing your record of decision, or maybe your ROD has been released. Regardless of where you are, you'll soon be moving into the next phase of your plan, which is implementation. Developing an implementation strategy will help you itemize and prioritize your projects and tasks, and this will move you to the next phase, which is to monitor how the plan, goals and objectives are being met and to evaluate the need for a plan amendment or revision.

After watching this video, your interdisciplinary team will complete Step 1, which involves filling in Columns 3, 4 and 5 in the Excel spreadsheet; and typically the state planner, RMP team lead, district planner, maybe the field manager, they'll lead the team through the task with input and direction from the field or district manager.

The BLM manager is responsible for implementing the plan, so he or she will provide you with input and guidance if there are questions about things like what to include or how to represent it. Your state planning lead will be responsible for reviewing the completed Excel spreadsheet for completeness and consistency among the plans in his or her state. Your Washington Office liaison is also available for consultation.

Now that you know your responsibilities, let's hear from Joe Stout. He was the Branch Chief of Planning and NEPA in the Washington office (he's now the Division Chief of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA), and he'll be talking about accountability.

JStout: The implementation strategy was designed to meet the BLM's obligation to better implement, monitor, and evaluate our land use plans. Since the BLM received our increase in planning funding in the early 2000's, it is important that we have a systematic program in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our plans. This will help tell our story to the public and demonstrate our performance.

We spend an enormous amount of time and energy developing the plans and working with our partners. I know that for some of you this can feel like running a marathon or hiking a long, and at times, grueling trail, because it's felt like that for me. For others, it can feel like a good part of their career. Thus, once the plans are completed, many are just glad to be done. However, once the plans are completed and the record of decision signed, it is critical to develop an implementation plan which can help bring to life many of the desired outcomes and decisions in the plan.

The new implementation process was designed from the bottom up and based on lessons learned over the past 10 years. Ultimately, the process was simplified in the hopes of providing a more effective tool for planning and achieving the desired outcomes and implementing the decisions in our plan.

Within a year of signing the record of decision, your field office is required to complete the three-step implementation process. This is important and necessary for many reasons, as it will help demonstrate our commitment to the public and our partners on getting the work done. It also provides the foundation for evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of our plans and serves as a useful tool for your budget strategy.

In order for the implementation process to be successful, it requires district and field staff and management buy-in into the process, along with the approval by your state office Planning and Environmental Coordinator.

You should be able to fill out the matrix and complete the necessary steps without too much effort. However, the tools were designed to be living documents and provide field offices with an avenue to secure funding and support both internally and externally. Again, I just want to stress that without management support the full benefits of the implementation process will not be realized.

Throughout the planning process, we actively engage the public and partners and explain how there will be opportunities once the plan is completed to help implement and complete identified projects and plans. As you will see, the implementation process provides you that opportunity to bring your partners to the table and to help strategize and prioritize the work over the next three to five years. It follows through our commitment we made throughout the planning process and helps to build credibility and trust.

The Washington Office Decision Support, Planning and NEPA Division is working closely with the budget office and other resource programs in the Washington Office to highlight the importance of the implementation plan in the budget processes. As an example, we are working closely with the budget office to incorporate implementation plans into the BPS projects so that you can identify for a particular project whether or not it was identified in your RMP implementation plan. We are also engaging Washington Office programs on the importance of these plans so that they can factor this into their decision-making process when awarding funding to projects.

You also see the state offices playing a more active role in the new implementation process. We're asking for the state office Planning and Environmental Coordinators to work closely with the state office and field office interdisciplinary teams in creating and approving the implementation plan. Our hope is that by actively engaging state offices there will be more opportunities to integrate the implementation plans into each state's budget processes and provide greater accountability and consistency at the state level.

In the end, the process is what you make of it. Our hope is that it will help you put in motion all the great work your planning team has accomplished throughout the plan development process.

Again, thanks for your attention to this important implementation planning process and good luck in developing your strategies.

CHumphrey: Thanks, Joe.

Remember, if you have any questions, talk to your state lead, your Washington Office liaison, or any of us on the panel, who I will now introduce you to.

Megan Stouffer has been with the BLM since 2007 as a Planning and Environmental Coordinator at the Washington office and state office level. Currently, she is the Branch Chief for Planning and Assessment at the Colorado State Office. She's taught this implementation strategy training about 15 or 20 times.

Hi, Megan.

MStouffer: Hi. Thanks, Cathy. It's great to be here. I'm excited to see how this process is evolving and glad to have been a part of it throughout my career.

CHumphrey: Brad Higdon has been with the BLM since 1997. Since 2008 he has been the Planner in the New Mexico Taos Field Office. His office recently went through this new streamlined process, so we'll be hearing from him on how they did.

Hi, Brad. Nice to see you.

BHigdon: Hey, Cathy. It's nice to be here. I'm sure we learned a few valuable lessons.

CHumphrey: We also have two field managers who developed implementation strategies several years ago before we had the streamlined process, and they'll give their perspectives on how the process worked for them and they'll share some lessons learned from working under an implementation plan for a while.

Rem Hawes is currently the Field Manager of the Hassayampa Field Office here in the Phoenix District in Arizona. He was the Agua Fria Monument Manager when they developed the plan implementation strategy for the area in 2010. He's been with the BLM since 1992. Nice you could come over.

RHawes: Thanks, Cathy. It's going to be interesting and enjoyable to be here with you. We went through the RMP implementation planning process for both the Agua Fria National Monument and what we call the Bradshaw Harquahala Planning Area of the Hassayampa Field Office. So I was involved in both of those, and I'm an early convert and have found this process to be arduous to begin with but helpful now that we are into it and using it.

CHumphrey: Thanks. And finally, Joe Meyer. He has been the Field Manager of the Casper Field Office in the High Plains District in Wyoming since 2008. He's been in Casper since 1989. He was involved in developing and carrying out the plan implementation strategy for the 2007 Casper RMP as a staff specialist, Assistant Field Manager and assistant project manager.

JMeyer: Thanks, Cathy. As you mentioned, we're in our fifth year of plan implementation in Casper, and I think I found that many of our cooperators were more interested and excited about doing plan implementation than they were in actually developing the RMP in the first place. That probably goes for a lot of the people.

CHumphrey: And that's our panel. They will be in and out while we talk about Step 1, but we'll all be back together to close out the module.

Now, you're probably wondering why you have to develop a plan implementation strategy and what's in it for you. But before we answer that question specifically, Megan is going to talk a little bit about the history and background of the plan implementation and how the training has evolved. And then Megan, Joe and Rem will talk about the advantages of completing a plan implementation strategy both to the BLM and to the public, and that should answer those nagging questions about "why do I have to do this" and "what's in it for me" before you learn the three-step process.

Megan, why don't you explain a little bit about the history?

MStouffer: Sure, Cathy. In the 1990s, the BLM conducted a review of its internal budget process. The review concluded that the budget process wasn't effective in competing for funding and that Congress was not able to use our current process to understand what we were planning to spend funds on. So in order to address these shortcomings, the BLM began to redesign the budget process from a short-term annual process to one with an increased focus on planning and priority setting for the out years. Part of the strategy included revising BLM's existing land use plans. Congress approved a large increase in funding to initiate these revisions.

Congress rightfully wanted to see the results of this effort and not have those plans be developed only to sit on a shelf and collect dust, as has so often been the case with previous RMPs and management framework plans that we developed. So in order to respond to these requests, a group was formed to develop a strategy to facilitate implementation of these new plans.

So building off some previous efforts from the '70s, '80s and '90s, the team began to design a systematic process to identify land use planning priorities and connect them to the budget process. The process was based on meeting goals set in the DOI Strategic Plan and connecting planning and policy objectives to these objectives to improve our strategies and compete for funding. The team recognized that in order to convince Congress to increase funding to implement these new plans, the BLM had to show how they connected these to the larger goals of the department.

The first iterations of this process linked the DOI Strategic Goals with projects identified in the RMP to more effectively communicate these needs to Congress. It was piloted in three offices: La Cienegas NCA in Arizona; Lakeview, Oregon; and Farmington, New Mexico. These offices represented very different mixes of work, and if the process worked for them, the idea was it should work in any BLM office.

Four other offices were added to the pilot and findings were presented to the BLM and the department. The pilot showed that the staffs were able to develop shared priorities across the office and better communicate those priorities throughout the budget process.

Over the years, the process evolved from a seven-day, five-step process taught by a large cadre of Washington office staff to a three-day, two-step facilitated workshop followed by two steps done by the field office independently, and to now a three-step process taught online coupled with the state and local planners and managers who are responsible for helping the ID Team complete the process.

In 2006, as this process was evolving, the Office of Management and Budget issued a Performance Assessment Rating Tool, or also known as PART report, on BLM's planning efforts. It noted that the BLM did an excellent job of developing plans; but in terms of plan implementation, it scored a "Results Not Demonstrated," thereby highlighting the need to expand the use of this tool bureau-wide.

So the following year, Arizona became the first state to complete implementation strategies for the entire state and to roll up their priorities to the state office. They have since integrated their strategies into a budget database that is used to plan and track for budget development and execution. Later, you'll hear Rem talk a little bit about what they did in Arizona to tie the budget with plan implementation.

To date, more than 40 implementation strategy workshops have been completed covering every BLM state. A survey was completed in 2009 to address how these strategies were being issued and what benefits they were providing. The survey showed mixed results.

Some offices have continued to use and update their spreadsheets and have found ways to integrate that process into their budget system, but other offices struggled in finding ways to use the strategy since its development or wanted a little bit more direction on how to incorporate the strategy. On the whole, however, the survey showed that the process itself has had many benefits, both internally and externally. This iteration of the strategy has built on the lessons learned from the past and has hopefully improved the process and its effectiveness.

As far as the timing goes, the implementation strategy has been completed for Proposed RMPs and even for a few Draft RMPs. However, we have determined that the process adds the greatest value when the plan is solid and still fresh in everyone's mind. For some that it might be while working on the ROD, and for others it's after the protests are resolved and the ROD is signed.

CHumphrey: And now that you have a better understanding of why this training was developed and how it's evolved through time, Megan and our field managers, Joe and Rem, will now talk about what the benefits are to you and your office and to the public and to the BLM in general.

MStouffer: So there are quite a few advantages to the BLM of completing a plan implementation strategy.

- The implementation strategy enables field offices to develop a shared understanding of the work needed to implement an RMP.
- It also allows new employees and managers to get a solid view of the overall work done by the office.
- The strategy compels the field office to determine work priorities by considering the current workload as affected by the RMP and identifying budget strategies that are focused on out year priorities.
- Once complete, it provides tools to effectively negotiate with Washington and state offices for funds and labor by strategically outlining the work and clarifying office workload priorities.
- Finally, it gives offices a way to track successful implementation of the RMP and improves the ability to complete annual reviews and five-year evaluations.

JMeyer: I agree, Megan. Our implementation process has been a good tool in prioritizing our workload and staff. It's given us a clear strategic vision to the future and will be a helpful tool in long-term workforce planning in Casper. By looking further into the future, we can do a better job of preparing for budget submissions and determining resource needs.

RHawes: I agree, and nationally, we found that they have been very helpful for us. Clearly, the two plans that we have, one for the Agua Fria National Monument and one for the Bradshaw Harquahala area of the Phoenix District were two of those high priority plans that needed to be updated that Congress funded. So now it's imperative and important that we show results on them. BLM made a big commitment to get a bunch of those land use plans funded and completed, and this is a good way to show that we're making progress on that.

Now, for the Hassayampa Field Office in the Phoenix District and the Agua Fria National Monument, what we found is that it helps us to communicate internally and externally. It helps us within the agency to understand what our priorities are. It helps our partners and the public to understand how they can be engaged and see where their projects that they worked with us in planning have ended up and how they're actually going to be accomplished.

Lastly, we are using it as a budgeting tool. It sets those priorities for the work that we do, and so we can show that these are the steps that we're taking to accomplish those goals.

So we've found that RMP implementation is a good plan that's helpful for the BLM nationally as well as for our field office and for the Agua Fria National Monument.

MStouffer: The implementation strategy can also provide advantages to the public such as strengthening partnerships by building shared understanding of land management priorities and resource needs and showing potential partners where they can most effectively work with the BLM to meet their plan goals and objectives.

RHawes: The two biggest advantages for us, it was a way to communicate our accomplishments that we're making under the plan, which had so much public and partner involvement. In our case, it lets our partners engage in and support us in accomplishing those priorities.

We had partners in the public that worked with us, in our case, for seven years to develop our plan. We think it took a long time because of a really in-depth public process that we used to engage the public. But the important thing for them now is that through this RMP implementation plan, they can see how their pieces fit, the things that they were interested in during the planning stage, how they can see the BLM working with them or working to accomplish those goals.

JMeyer: Since our cooperators participated in priority setting in Casper, it helps assure BLM priorities align with our cooperators. We post our matrix on our RMP web site so any member of the public can go in and see our past accomplishments and what we have planned for the future. I think that helps to build a permanent record of how well we've met our obligations and commitments to the RMP.

CHumphrey: Okay. I hope that we have convinced you that creating an implementation strategy can increase the bureau's effectiveness in communicating and implementing our land use plans.

In addition to producing this online training, an instruction memo was developed. This IM briefly outlines this revised plan implementation process. We've included a copy of that in the participant guide and it's also on the web page where you entered the course.

Okay, so next we're going to give you an overview of the three-step process for developing an implementation strategy.