SCRIPT

USE & MAINTENANCE, LESSON 3

<u>Slide 1</u>

Lorraine –

Hello and Welcome to Records Management, Lesson 3. My name is Lorraine Graves and I will be one of your instructors today. I am the Idaho State Records Administrator.

Debra –

My name is Debra Yeager and I will also be one of your instructors today. I am currently the Records Manager for the Farmington Field Office in Farmington, New Mexico. In the past, I have served as State Records Manager in the Wyoming and New Mexico State Offices.

Lynnell –

I am Lynnell Cellmer, Records Management Assistant, Montana State Office. Before we get started, you might be thinking about some records you use in your job. Are they records that might show up in court some day? BLM is continually involved in litigation. At any given time, we can have hundreds of lawsuits going. What is the most important resource for protecting us in lawsuits – our records! Records management is one of the most important responsibilities you have as an employee.

Lorraine –

I agree Lynnell. Every federal government employee is responsible for maintaining and properly using records that reflect our organizations functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and operations. By doing so, we help our organization serve the public, avoid litigation, and resolve issues and problems quickly. The following training will provide you the tools to help you accomplish your records management responsibilities.

Debra –

Now that you know why this lesson is important, let's review our objective.

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Debra –

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to: Determine, in a given scenario, if the record is being used, maintained, and safeguarded in accordance with BLM records guidelines and

regulations.

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Debra –

And, you should also be able to: Conduct a records inventory including filling in all 10 required fields for a variety of records on a blank records inventory spreadsheet. This is accomplished based on the information contained in each record and the Records Schedules. Now that you know what our objectives are, let's review what we will be covering to get you to those objectives.

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Lynnell –

In this lesson we will cover: General Maintenance & Use Information; next we will cover Guidelines for Using the Record, Guidelines for Maintaining the Record, Guidelines for Safeguarding the Record, and finally, we will discuss How to Conduct a Records Inventory. Now that you know what we will be covering, let's begin by going over some general maintenance and use information.

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Lorraine –

General maintenance and use information.

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Lorraine –

As the Code of Federal Regulations Title 36 states, we must make sure all of our records are organized, classified, and described sufficiently for all BLM employees to be able to access the records at any time.

The CFR also stipulates that the record should always be available for use during its retention period. The retention period is that period of time that BLM is mandated to maintain a specific record according to the NARA approved records schedule. NARA is the National Archives and Records Administration.

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Debra -

Our records contain the history of BLM as a Federal agency. The information contained in these records must be maintained to ensure it is available to support agency and public needs.

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Lorraine –

Debra what are some of the benefits of properly maintaining your records?

Debra –

An important benefit is being able to access the record when needed. This happens when we use a filing system that allows us to locate our records quickly as well as using a check-out system. In our field office, if a file is misplaced, it could take us days, weeks, or even months to locate it. We might have to go through 30,000 plus files to locate the file.

BLM is mandated to protect specific information contained in our records whether it is proprietary/confidential information, such as certain information contained in Oil & Gas Operational Lease and Well files or sensitive information addressed by the Privacy Act which we must protect such as social security numbers and credit card numbers. And finally, Chapter 44 of the US Code, Sec. 3301 mandates that we are to preserve our records as evidence of our activities or for the informational value of the record.

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Lynnell –

BLM records and the information they contain are used to accomplish BLM's mission "*to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations"* and to conduct the day-to-day administrative business tasks important to the operation of the Bureau and to provide information needed by the public.

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Lorraine –

Now let's talk about the appropriate ways to use records.

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Lorraine –

Debra, what are some ways we can maintain the integrity of our records?

Debra -

We can start by keeping the records and the information they contain in appropriate order. The majority of BLM's records are organized numerically, using either a serialized case file number or a 4-digit Subject Code number. The information our records contain are usually filed chronologically by date with the newest documents placed in the front of each file.

Lorraine –

Why are we so worried about putting personal comments in the record?

Debra -

It is extremely possible a taxpayer may view the record in the future. Also a judge may examine the record if it becomes a part of a litigation case. We also want to make sure that we never destroy any part of a record. There are criminal penalties for the willful and unlawful destruction, damage, or alienation of Federal records! There is a possible maximum of a $2,000 fine, 3 years in prison or both. In addition, the GRS/BLM Combined Records Schedule will provide direction as to whether a BLM record is to be destroyed and when.

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Lynnell –

It is extremely important for employees to provide specific information in records such as dates, case file numbers, or subject codes, so the record may be filed correctly. Along with this, employees need to file the information in the record as dictated by the program. This usually means chronologically and possibly by section. This will eliminate the extra time needed to locate this information. If dates or specific identifiers are missing on a document it should be returned to the originator for the correct information to be added. A records manager/liaison should never guess and add this information. It might be wrong! It is equally important for employees to make sure the record is as complete as possible. Make sure the entire transaction or project is reflected in the record.

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Lorraine –

Records custodians and records managers are also tasked to ensure check-out systems are established for use by anyone removing a record from its storage area. This can be as simple as a check-out sheet or folder filled out with the pertinent information by the borrower and placed on the shelf where the record normally resides.

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Lorraine –

Debra, can you summarize for us how we use our records in BLM?

Debra –

As stated on the previous slide, our records need to be as complete as possible. Designated records custodians within a BLM facility are tasked with maintaining the records used by their division or program on a daily basis. This includes: Storing records properly within their work areas; Filing updates to the record on a regular basis; Refiling records as soon as possible after they have been returned; Becoming familiar with the appropriate record schedule for each record series maintained and following the directions regarding retention for that series. It is a good idea for the records manager/liaison to print out the entire GRS/BLM Combined Record Schedule and add notes as needed to specific records series. This hard-copy version is a vital tool for records management.

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Lynnell –

In Lesson 2, we talked about the BLM Integrated Paperwork Management System. In addition to linking records together, we also use this system to locate records. A subject code is one of the identifiers we use to locate a record. The next slide will show additional identifiers used to locate records.

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Lorraine –

An identifier is some sort of alphanumeric system used to identify a specific record. An identifier is required to either file a document or locate a specific document. It is the responsibility of the originator of the document to provide the correct identifier. If this is not provided on the document or record, it must be returned to the originator for the correct identifier so the record may be filed appropriately. Can you think of some identifiers used on our records? Some examples are: Subject Codes; Serialized case files; Lease numbers; Contract numbers. Next we are going to define a record series.

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Debra –

A record series is a collection of records that have a well-defined internal relationship. A series consists of documents, regardless of media, arranged according to a filing system or kept together because they relate to a particular subject or function, result from the same activity, or document a specific kind of action. A series is handled as a unit for disposition purposes. Each record within a series has the same retention period and disposition action. *BLM Manual 1220, Appendix 2*, provides a complete list of record series descriptions. Next we are going to look at your records responsibilities.

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Lynnell –

These are the basic responsibilities of every BLM Records Manager/Liaison and every Designated Records Custodian. It is important to become very familiar with all of these responsibilities: File your records systematically according to your program's filing requirements; Maintain and retain official records within their prescribed retention periods; Safeguard the trustworthiness of BLM records by following established policies. Remember - You assume the responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and security of BLM records and information you create, maintain, or use.

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Lorraine –

For a better understanding of the records we use, here are some questions we can ask ourselves and our co-workers in regards to the records we maintain. What records are created and maintained? Why are the records created? Who creates and maintains the record? Where are they located?

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Debra –

Next we will talk about safeguarding our records. Safeguarding is ALL about the physical condition of records and securing records from unauthorized access. We must protect our vital records and sensitive records at ALL times.

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Lynnell –

All BLM records must be stored in appropriate equipment. Here are some tips to store your records appropriately. To start with, make sure the shelves in cabinets are wide and tall enough

for the files to comfortably fit. If a shelf is not deep enough, you risk having records end up on the floor. Storage equipment should provide plenty of space to store the records without being stuffed into a drawer or on a shelf. There should be at least 2-3 fingers wide space between files in order to retrieve the folders without struggling to remove them. Also it is extremely important that sensitive information is stored in lockable equipment. Form S-137, Access *to These Records Is Limited to Authorized Personnel,* is the red and yellow sticker which must be placed on any record storage equipment containing sensitive records protected by the Privacy Act.

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Lorraine –

Personally Identifiable Information commonly called PII is any piece of information that is linkable to you. It is information which can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, either alone or when combined with other personal or identifying information. Some PII is sensitive and some is considered non-sensitive. Why do you think your name, government email address, and government cell phone number is considered PII? It is linkable to you, however, many of us have our name, title, address, and phone numbers at the bottom of our e-mail messages. Even though it is PII, it is not sensitive.

So now let's look at sensitive PII. This list applies to everyone – BLM employees and the public. Notice the BLM employee name can be on both sides. It depends on the circumstances as to whether a BLM employee name is sensitive information. What if a BLM employee is a witness or even a suspect in a report – there name would be considered sensitive PII. The remaining examples are all sensitive PII.

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Debra –

Preservation of records is extremely important. We must preserve the informational value of the records we work with, regardless of the media. So how do we preserve them? We preserve them by storing records in appropriate storage equipment, as mentioned earlier. Special attention needs to be paid to the special needs of certain records such as sensitive records which are required to be stored under lock and key. We also preserve our records by periodically transferring them to long-term storage in the Federal Records Center (FRC) or permanently transferring specific records to the National Archives. Next we will talk about vital records.

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Lynnell –

Vital records are records containing information that is essential to the continued functioning of an organization during and after an emergency. Vital records must be duplicated and stored off-site and their location should be identified. There are two types of vital records: Emergency operating records – needed in the first 0-24 hours after an emergency; Rights and interests records – needed in the first 24-72 hours after an emergency. Let's look at some examples of records for each type.

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Lorraine –

Emergency Operating Records include: Continuity of Operations Plan; Telephone trees; Delegations of authority; Building plans; Media policy directives; Vital records inventory lists. Rights and Interests Records include: Social security and retirement records; Insurance records; Payroll records; Contracts; Titles, deeds, and leases; Accounts receivable records; The Records Series Description in BLM Manual 1220, Appendix 2 will state if a record is vital. Next we will take a look at how we can protect our records.

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Debra –

When protecting records, here are some things to be aware of:

Pests - Records and surface reclamation seeds should not be stored in the same area/room. The seed will attract rodents who will make nests in the records and leave spore in them as well. I have also come across rodents in storage closets while on record reviews – some dead, some alive. I don't like to find either!

Temperature - Extreme temperatures or direct sunlight cause media to fade and become brittle.

Binding devices - Should be avoided especially on **permanent** records. If a document becomes damaged, such as a tear, use acid-free tape to repair it as standard tape will become yellow and brittle with age.

Water damage - If records are stored in a warehouse or storage rooms, they should be at least 4 to 5 inches above the floor. In the event of flooding, this will help prevent them from getting wet. Pallets will work well for storing boxes if shelves are not available.

Hard use - Case files should not become too large. If necessary, divide large folders into parts

(e.g., Part 1of 2, Part 2 of 2). We also need to be prepared for the unexpected which we talk about next.

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Lynnell –

Emergencies and disasters can take many forms. In simpler times, we worried about the environmental impact of natural disasters to our nation's ecosystems including plant life, fish, and wildlife. Now our nation is no stranger to man-made destruction of Federal property. The destruction of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995 was the deliberate destruction of a U.S. Federal workplace in modern times. Within a few seconds, many lives were lost. Governmental operations housed in that building ceased to function and important information was lost. After 911, when staff was finally allowed back into the Pentagon mold had grown halfway up the wall.

But what about disasters that are not so graphic? Anthrax has been a major health concern in many Washington, DC buildings. The BLM Washington Office now irradiates all incoming postal mail which makes the information hard to read and slows down the dissemination of information substantially. There are silent disasters --historical or vital records sitting in basements or warehouses that are so hot that the print on the paper is disappearing. The NARA provides excellent training on records recovery and the development of a Records Emergency Action Plan (REAP). Check the NARA website for dates and locations of the class.

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Lorraine –

Another aspect of safeguarding records is providing them based on BLM's Record Access Categories. To facilitate responding to requests for information and to ensure the proper handling of records which must be protected by law, BLM has revised the records access categories. The new categories are streamlined into only two categories. However, Category 1, Public Information, has two subcategories.

Category 1A are records which do NOT require a Freedom of Information Act or (FOIA) request. These include records which may be viewed or inspected by the public without charge in our Public Rooms or Information Access Centers. but a cost recovery fee will be charged for any copies.

Category 1B are records which <u>may</u> contain information protected under the FOIA. They require a review and segregation within the file. This segregated information, if it exists, is removed from the file before the file is provided to the public.

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Debra –

Information that does not require a FOIA request includes information the BLM has voluntarily made available to the public because of public interest. It also includes those documents which Federal agencies are required to make available to the public either because of the FOIA, Administrative Procedures Act, or other public land statutes and regulations. If the requester seeks access to records which are public, a copy of the record may be released without a written FOIA request. However, a written FOIA request must be submitted for internal records that contain sensitive or proprietary information.

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Lynnell -

Here are some examples of records that may be viewed by the public without requesting them through the FOIA: Bureau annual reports; Master title plats and press releases to name a few. Categories for specific records series are listed in the GRS/BLM Combined Records Schedule. However, it is important to remember the schedules still reflect the old record access categories. If the record schedule description for the record series you are looking for states it is a Category 2 (discretionary) record, contact the State FOIA Coordinator, State Records Administrator, or State Records Manager for guidance.

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Lorraine –

Remember Subcategory 1(B), are records which **may** contain information protected under the FOIA**.** These examples of Subcategory 1(B) records **may** contain information protected under the FOIA: Internal Directives; Cadastral Survey Group Files; Grazing Allotment Files; Special Recreation Permits; Comment letters from the Public and Cultural Resource Use Permits.

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Debra –

Any record listed under Category 2 requires submission of a written FOIA request to BLM before they will be released. Requests may be made in hard copy or via email. Any requests for hard copy and digital outputs may be subject to fees through the FOIA.

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Lynnell –

These are examples of Category 2 records: Committee Management Files; Collections and Billings Systems Records; Records from the Customer Research Survey System; Routine Procurement files; Personnel Actions. Next we will talk about using check-out systems.

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Lorraine –

Another way to protect records is to use an effective check-out system. This is very important in order to keep track of all borrowed records. Every retrieved file must be identified on the check-out card or sheet – indicating who checked out the record, the date removed, the identifier information on the file, and where in the office the record may be found. Records are **NOT** to be removed from the local facility without specific permissions in place.

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Debra –

Now it is time to talk about the Records Inventory. The records inventory is a complete and accurate survey of BLM's business information which documents function, flow, and description.

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Lynnell –

That's right Debra. It is also an essential part of the Records Management Program. The basic reasons for a records inventory are - you have got to know what you have - and - you have to know what to do with it; for example, disposition of records.

Disposition is the action(s) taken regarding records no longer needed for current BLM business. This includes long-term or temporary transfers to a Federal Record Center, or records permanently transferred to the National Archives, or destruction.

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Lorraine –

We inventory our records to document each records series (group of like records) we have; to document the quantity of records such as how many cubic feet or how many megabytes. It also

gives us the ability to locate Vital and Important records to recover from the damaged building after an emergency. On occasion, we have even discovered records that do not have a NARA-approved records schedule. If you happen to come across an "unscheduled" record, please alert your Records Manager.

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Debra -

Inventories are also important because they can detect: Records that are not being maintained or stored properly; Duplication of the same record in several areas of the facility or within a BLM program; The GRS/BLM Combined Records Schedule is not being followed OR confidential or sensitive information is not being properly protected; Improper labeling or insufficient identifiers are being used; The record is not complete.

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Lynnell –

Let's look at the mandatory elements of a Records Inventory.

Location – Where are the records physically located within the BLM facility? In the event of an emergency, this is very important so records may be recovered quickly.

Record Series Description – Every record series is described in detail within the GRS/BLM Combined Records Schedule.

Citation Number – Consists of the number of the specific record schedule, the item number, and any subdivisions of that specific record.

Looking at the 3rd bullet, Schedule 4 is Property Use and Disposal Records; Item 27 is Oil and Gas Leasing Files; b is Oil and Gas Operations Lease and Well Files and (2) indicates they are Federal.

Cutoff Date – Is usually the End of the Fiscal Year (EOFY) or the End of the Calendar Year (EOCY). This date is when the record becomes inactive usually because of some action taken; for example, a lease is closed or well abandoned.

Inclusive Dates – The date of the first document in the file and the date of the most recent document within the file; for example, May 12, 1954 to October 25, 2012.

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Lorraine –

And here are some more mandatory elements:

Medium – Is the physical form the record was created in such as paper, electronic, film or photos.

Custodian – This is the designated individual who maintains specific records series as a part of the day-to-day business of a BLM facility, Division, or Program such as Records Management.

Access Restrictions – Security restrictions of specific records which dictates who may or may not view the records; for example, a need-to-know such as Personal Identifiable Information (PII) like social security or credit card numbers.

Vital Records – These records may represent legal financial rights and interests of individuals or companies or the records may be needed by the BLM for operations during an emergency. The records series descriptions in the Record Schedules will state if a record is Vital.

Record Status – States whether it is an official record or a reference copy, and if it is active or inactive.

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Debra –

So how do we conduct a records inventory? We start by making sure management is aware and supportive. This is usually accomplished by the State Records Administrator/Manager developing an Instruction Memorandum providing direction to do the annual records inventory. The process includes: Briefing management; Follow any directive(s); Conduct interviews with records custodians; Conduct a physical inspection of all the office record and non-record material; Enter the information into either the Records Inventory Database or onto a spreadsheet.

A large part of the records inventory is interviewing the designated records custodians or information specialists to determine exactly what records series are present within the facility and the pertinent information for each series.

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Lynnell –

The New Mexico State Office has developed a records inventory database which is available for

all of BLM's use. This database may be found on the NMSO records website. Records Management staff must register for access to the site and only records management staff will be able to enter information into the database. There are several reports which can be generated from this database such as: A general summary of the inventory; A complete summary of the inventory; A Vital Records report of all vital records identified; An Electronic Records report of all electronic records identified; It recommended but not mandatory to use the records inventory database.

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Lorraine –

Let's first summarize what we have learned in this module. Maintenance and use of BLM records and information is the second phase in the life cycle of Federal records. It covers the use, retrieval, storage, and preservation of BLM records and information. BLM records and information are to be used to accomplish BLM's mission and goals; to conduct administrative business for internal operations and to provide information to the public.

Debra -

BLM employees must assume the responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and security of records and information they create, maintain and use.

Lynnell -

Safeguarding the authenticity and integrity of BLM records and information makes BLM records trustworthy and admissible as evidence in courts.

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Debra –

With this information you will now be able to - Determine, in a given scenario, if the record is being used, maintained, and safeguarded in accordance with BLM records guidelines and regulations; Conduct a records inventory including filling in all 10 required fields for a variety of records on a blank records inventory spreadsheet. This is accomplished based on the information contained in each record and the Records Schedules.

Remember, records management is one of the most important responsibilities you have as an employee. Records are critical to our mission. We must use and maintain them properly to reflect our organizations functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and operations. By doing so, we help our organization serve the public, avoid litigation, and resolve issues and problems quickly. With the information provided to you in this lesson, you can now begin to accomplish

your records management responsibilities and to help other do so as well. You may now proceed to our next lesson on disposition.