Lesson 2 Creation Script

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Hi, my name is Brian Smith, I am the Nevada State Records Manager. I’m Ilse Harrison, Nevada State Records Specialist. We will be going over Lesson 2: Records Creation. In this lesson you will learn your role in the preservation of BLM’s memory. Central to this is your ability to determine what is and is not a record, who creates records, and how to categorize them. Now that you know why this lesson is important, let’s take a look at our objective for this lesson.

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By the end of this lesson each student should be able to: Given a scenario involving records creation, determine if the BLM followed the records creation process in accordance with established BLM policies, guidelines, and disposition authority approved by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Now that you know what our objective is, let’s review what we will be covering to accomplish this objective.

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In this lesson we are going to cover some general records information, how records are created, and finally, the BLM Integrated Management System and Subject Codes. Now that you know what we will be covering, let’s begin by going over some general records creation information.

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General Information.

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Records Creation - why it’s important. As the old adage goes if it isn’t written down, it didn’t happen – BLM’s records are its institutional memory. For that memory to work efficiently, we have to be able to protect and retrieve information when it’s needed, whether for day-to-day operations, legal proceedings, paying bills, historical research, etc. Creating records correctly, using consistent procedures, ensures that we will be able to retrieve those records when needed and/or dispose of them when no longer needed. Now that you know why Records Creation is important, let’s move on and provide you with an overview of Records Creation.

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Records Creation is the first phase in the Life Cycle of Records. Records can be created or received by the BLM, and should only be created when necessary. The value records is based on their use and what story they tell about the BLM.
The BLM must be able to justify the creation or collection of information based upon its statutory functions to ensure information is only created for the proper performance of its mission. As found in Chapter 44 of the US Code, section 3504. Additionally, the Paperwork Reduction Act states that information created must have *practical utility*. As a BLM employee, you automatically become a “trusted steward” of Federal records. Now that we have covered some general records creation information, let’s discuss how records are created.

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How records are created.

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A record is produced by an employee as part of their duties for the government. For example, a letter is written to a grazing permittee to advise them of closures due to fire or drought. However, a record may also be something that is received by the government. For example, a grazing permittee sends a grazing schedule to the BLM.

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Ilse, you have received a letter from a member of the public complaining about a wild horse in the street. Is this a record?

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Yes, Brian, it is a record. The record was created the moment the BLM received the letter. According to the BLM 1220 manual, creation of a record in the BLM would also include receiving information via the postal service, a courier service, an Email service, importing of an external electronic record, FAX, electronic forms via electronic network system, and so forth.

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A BLM geologist makes a copy of a mining file to keep at his desk for reference. Is this a record?

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No, this is not a record. Non-records, as defined by the Federal Records Act, 44 U.S. Code 3301, include “extra copies of documents preserved only for convenience of reference”.

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Due to a FOIA request, copies of records were created as part of the response to the requester. Are these copies records?
Yes, these are records. Although copied from other types of files, these records are now, per 44 U.S. Code 3301, FOIA records and are governed by the retention rules pertaining to FOIA documents.

During the creation phase, records should be reviewed for Retention Values, Authorized disposition authority approved by NARA, and Maintenance and Use Requirements.

As we discussed in Lesson one, the value of a record is determined primarily by analyzing the Administrative, Fiscal, Legal, and Historical nature of the record.

An example of an administrative record is an index you use to look up CFRs as part of your weekly duties. Other examples of administrative records are sign-in logs and tracking information created by the BLM such as MOU, FOIA, or Directives log.

An example of a fiscal record is a credit card statement or a receipt.

Records have legal value if they contain evidence of legally enforceable rights or obligations. An example of records with legal value are patent records showing ownership of land transferring to another party or contracts which have obligations defined.

Records have historical value when they provide valuable information about the past. Oftentimes, these records document the development of the government programs and policies. Examples of historical records include policy documents, which can tell the story of how the BLM manages itself over time. Another example might be a map showing original herd areas created in response to the 1974 Wild Horse Protection Act. Now that you know how records are created, let’s discuss how BLM’s Integrated Management System and subject codes play into records creation.
Now let’s talk about the BLM Integrated Management System. This system is a records management tool that effectively links records and related material to specific Subject Codes.

Why is the BLM Integrated Paperwork Management System so important? The BLM manages hundreds of thousands of records. Without a logical system, it would be impossible to locate a document. The BLM has a system that works! It is clean and simple and considered one of the best in government.

Think of this system as a group of subsystems. These subsystems are linked together by a 4 digit subject code.

Subject Codes tie together different types of records that relate to the same subject. Examples of these different types of records include BLM Directives such as IMs and IBs and Manuals & Handbooks, Program General Correspondence, BLM Forms, and Library collections.

The basic Subject Codes between 1000 – 9000 represents specific BLM Programs, for example, 3000 is for Minerals Management and 8000 represents the Recreation Programs. These subject codes are broken down even further within each program. Which Subject Codes apply to your job? Well, we’re just about done with this lesson.

In conclusion…

The objective for this lesson was for each student to be able to… Given a scenario involving records creation, determine if the BLM followed the records creation process in accordance with established BLM policies, guidelines, and disposition authority approved by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

We covered the following topics. First, we went over the importance of Records Creation; remember, BLM’s records are its institutional memory. Next, we provided you with an overview of Records Creation; remember, this is the first phase in the Life Cycle of Records. We also went over your responsibilities in Records Creation; as a BLM employee, you automatically become
a trusted “steward” of Federal records. Next we discussed how a record is created; remember, a BLM employee can produce and receive records as a function of the government. We reviewed the values records provide to the government. Specifically, they offer Administrative, Fiscal, Legal, and Historical value. The value is determined by analyzing the nature of the record. Finally, we discussed how records are organized through the BLM Integrated Management System.

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Don’t forget - Creation is the first phase in the Life Cycle of Records. Records can be created or received by you, the employee, and the BLM. Records should only be created when necessary, and records have a value based on their use and what story they tell about the BLM.

Now that you have completed this lesson, you should now understand the first phase of the Records Life Cycle – the creation phase. This is knowledge you will use in your day-to-day duties to ensure that the BLM’s memory, it’s records, are preserved and categorized for use on the job and so that, in the future, they will accurately tell the story of the BLM. In the next lesson, you will learn about records maintenance and use.