



## **Box 3, Folder 6: Speeches, ca. 1994-1997.**

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When was the last time a ~~sec~~ / ~~dist~~ / ~~sec~~

CA. 1994-1997

Talking Points: Mike Dombeck

What would I do if I were director

Courage

Enough talk. It is important for me to clearly state that everyone, from myself to the State Directors to the District Managers, serve the Resource Areas because that is where the core business of the BLM takes place. I will hold the State Directors accountable for inverting the pyramid and increasing the FTE and dollar allocations to the Resource Areas. Let me repeat that: I will hold the State Directors accountable for inverting the pyramid and increasing the FTE and dollar allocations to the Resource Areas.

Our commitment to collaboration must look beyond our traditional paradigms. Internal collaboration is just as critical to our success as external collaboration. State Management Teams must include the Area Managers. They are the voices of the field, they are the voices of the communities we serve, they are the voices of the lands we protect.

I don't want filters in the organization. I want to get out to the field and meet with Resource Area staffs. I want to talk to local publics. I want to feel the passion our people and our publics have over the lands we are entrusted to manage. I want to experience the creativity of local challenges and local solutions.

We must honor the diversity of the talents of our employees. We need to position them in the organization according to those talents, not to a preconceived notion of a career track. We must insure that career vitality is primary, that intellectual growth and change is constant while recognizing that mobility often compromises accountability. By the same token there is a reciprocal responsibility on the part of each employee to be accountable to this development and performance contract.

I want our managers to be evaluated by our new managerial competencies: communication, collaboration, serving the public, embracing change, consensus building. I want us as an organization to include our publics in our performance evaluations. I do not expect that our publics will universally agree with our decisions but I hold our managers accountable for the quality of our decision making process, our involvement with the community, our service to the public.

Take review layers out.

Reviewers will be part of the team  
you don't inspect quality into anything  
you build it in front.

Field Reps  
600-700  
W.O. Dept's  
Jr.

Bob will introduce Hasty &  
have some fun w/ him

Do you want to do chet?

Do the slide show  
called the "Spot light."

DATE UNKNOWN  
CA. 1994-1997

### Thinking Like a Mountain: BLM's Approach to Ecosystem Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is responsible for sustaining the health, diversity, and productivity of nearly 270 million acres of public land. BLM also manages an additional 300 million acres of subsurface mineral rights. Most of these lands are located in the western United States, including Alaska, and are dominated by extensive rangelands, forests, mountains, arctic tundra, and deserts. The varied terrain and landscape represents the most ecologically diverse land-base managed by any federal agency, supporting nearly 3,000 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, and amphibians.

Management issues associated with BLM lands are as diverse as the lands themselves. BLM-administered lands support activities ranging from energy and mineral development, to timber harvest, livestock grazing, wild horses and burro management and protection and restoration of fish and wildlife habitat and significant natural, cultural and recreational resources. Management of these activities is guided by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), 30 USC 1701 et seq., which, among its many provisions, establishes the concepts of "multiple-use" and "sustained yield."

The public's expectations of multiple use and sustained yield have changed over the years, making resource management more complex. In the American west, for example, a growing and increasingly urban population is placing new demands on the natural resources of this vast region. These changes in demand, taken together with growing public concerns over the health of waterways, grasslands, and forests; an increasingly complex set of legal mandates; greater knowledge of how to manage natural resources on a sustainable basis; and the technological opportunities provided by computers, are creating significant challenges for the BLM.

Faced with these challenges, the BLM is changing. New appreciation for the importance of biological integrity, ecological sustainability, and landscape productivity are fundamentally changing the way the BLM manages public land. Though still evolving, ecosystem approaches provide natural resource professionals with a new set of lenses from which to manage ecological systems. Instead of traditional species-by-species (sometimes crisis-by-crisis) or commodity production based approaches, we now focus on how to manage ecological systems *en toto*.

BLM's publication, *Ecosystem Management in the BLM: From Concept to Commitment* provides the principles and philosophical framework for ecosystem approaches. Whether you work for a federal land management agency, a state wildlife agency, the Chamber of Commerce, or manage private land, there are essentially nine "operating principles" to the ecosystem approach. BLM defines

them in the following way:

1. Sustain the productivity and diversity of ecological systems. Or simply put, keep the land healthy.
2. Gather and use the best available scientific information as the cornerstone for resource allocations and other land management decisions. Or, know the condition of the land.
3. Involve the public in the planning process and coordinate with other federal, state, and private land owners. Simply stated, communicate with and educate people.
4. Determine desired future ecosystem conditions based on historic, ecologic, economic, and social considerations. Or, develop common goals.
5. Minimize and repair impacts to the land. Or, fix what's wrong.
6. Adopt an interdisciplinary approach to land management. That is, invite all interests to the table.
7. Base planning and management on long-term horizons and goals. Or think ahead.
8. Reconnect isolated parts of the landscape. Or, look at the big picture.
9. Practice adaptive management. Be flexible and willing to change as new information becomes available.

Additionally, the BLM's "Blueprint for the Future" focuses the agency on

- becoming more aware of the status, trend, and overall health of the land;
- working across larger geographic areas and planning for longer timeframes; and
- maintaining a highly skilled and professional workforce.

BLM's "Blueprint for the Future" describes our commitment to public land users while emphasizing the responsibility of those users to adhere to an ethic sensitive to the land's health. Communities whose economies depend on public lands are often the most seriously affected by ecological degradation. As a result, the BLM is forming partnerships with federal, state, and local governments, interested private landowners, and other public land users to ensure local involvement in managing the public lands.

#### **Collaborative Stewardship**

Effective conservation and restoration strategies must recognize that ecological processes operate on temporal and geographic scales that likely do not coincide with agency appropriation bills or election cycles. Sustaining ecosystems requires that sound, long-term ecological objectives are defined before short-term commercial objectives can be identified.

Similarly, land ownership patterns rarely coincide with distinct topographic boundaries. Long-term conservation and restoration strategies cannot overlook the relationship among the health of federal lands and the condition of adjoining state and private lands. The ecosystem approach embraces the active participation of all who use, value, and influence the land's health.

Too often, natural resource agencies are positioned as foils for disagreements between multiple competing interests. For the past 25 years the ideal has been erroneously promoted that those with the loudest voice have the most influence on natural resource management. The result? Litigation; court ordered "solutions;" and one-size-fits-all decrees from Washington, D.C.

The only way to ensure socio-economic stability for all who use and care for natural resources is through open and accessible decisionmaking. Thus, a primary objective of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) new cooperative relations and grazing administration regulations (43 CFR 1780 and 4100) is allow all who use and care for the public lands to have a voice in their management. To that end on August 21, 1995, we established 24 citizen-based resource advisory councils to guide BLM's management of public lands.

These councils help to ensure that citizens who are most directly affected by public land management can share their knowledge with local BLM offices. The new grazing regulations bring people to the table to find common ground. No special forums for special interests, just diverse and balanced mix of people who

- hold grazing permits or leases; represent interests associated with transportation or rights-of-way; represent developed outdoor recreation, off-highway vehicle users, or commercial recreation activities; represent commercial timber industry; or represent energy and minerals development.
- work for nationally or regionally recognized environmental organizations; dispersed recreational activities; archeological and historical interest; or nationally or regionally recognized wild horse and burro interest groups.
- hold State, county or local elected office; are employed by a state agency responsible for management of natural resources, land, or water; represent Indian tribes within or adjacent to the area; are employed as academicians in natural sciences; or represent the public-at-large.

As the West continues to change, and more demands are placed on the lands, the diversity and balance of these councils will help to focus on those things that draw us together as a nation of communities.

Collaborative approaches to stewardship count on broad-based support from local communities and often require specialized local expertise. Thankfully, we have many examples to draw from. For example:

**The Pacific Northwest Forest Plan:** The forest plan is an ecosystem-based strategy for sustainable management of 25 million acres of federal land in the Pacific Northwest, and a blueprint for improving interagency coordination. Breaking the management gridlock caused by years of conflict was not easy. The forest plan, however, provides a blueprint for restoring degraded watersheds while allowing for the production of a sustainable level of wood products.

**PACFISH (Pacific Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Strategy):** In February 1995, the BLM, the U.S. Forest Service, developed a joint strategy to conserve and restore anadromous salmon habitat. The strategy, known as PACFISH, establishes conservation and restoration measures for watersheds used by Pacific salmon and steelhead on public lands in the west. PACFISH stresses the integration of sound scientific and research information with on-the-ground management. The PACFISH strategy forms the aquatic and riparian components of the Pacific Northwest Forest Plan.

**Owl Mountain Partnership:** In northwest Colorado, the BLM is working with other federal, state and county representatives, as well as private ranchers, to jointly manage 240,000 acres of mixed-ownership land. The partnership was formed to develop an integrated decision-making process. The intent of the partnership is to serve the economic, cultural, and social needs of the community while developing adaptive long-term landscape management programs, policies, and practices that ensure ecosystem sustainability. Initially a project to solve livestock/wildlife conflicts, the Owl Mountain Partnership has protected and improved resources across the watershed including habitat for waterfowl and upland wildlife, better big game hunting and fishing.

**The Canyon County Partnership:** The Partnership was created to coordinate planning and management actions in the canyon country of southeastern Utah and adjacent Colorado. The coalition consists of five federal agencies, Indian tribes, state agencies, county governments, and private landowners and was initiated by BLM to coordinate planning and management actions of all land and resource managing agencies and organizations in the area.

The goal of the partnership is to maintain the basic health and sustainability of ecosystems while meeting the social and economic needs of local people. The partnership extends beyond

land use planning to allow resource managers, interest groups, and the public to develop common solutions to common resource problems in the Colorado Plateau.

**Coos Watershed Association:** The Coos Watershed Association encompasses 587 square miles of western Oregon. The watershed is composed of Weyerhauser and Menasha timberlands, state and federal lands, private agricultural lands, and tribal and county government lands. Working together, this coalition raised nearly \$1/2 million dollars to conduct fisheries enhancement work to improve riparian and aquatic habitats and fish passage.

The Association was conceived by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's South Slew National Estuarine Research Reserve Association and Weyerhauser in an effort to protect dwindling populations of Columbia River coho salmon and Rogue River winter steelhead.

This partnership among the public and private sector emphasizes the importance of education, community involvement, and maintaining open lines communication. For example, local fishermen whose jobs were lost as a result of the declining fishery, were hired by the Association to visit with private landowners to discuss the importance of healthy watersheds. The Watershed Association offered these landowners free labor and materials if they agreed to fence off critically important riparian areas.

**Trout Creek Mountains:** In the high desert country of southeastern Oregon and northern Nevada, local ranchers are working with BLM managers, Oregon Trout, the Izaak Walton League, Fish and Wildlife Service, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and others to improve watershed health through better land stewardship. In 1991 grazing on 523,000 acres of public lands faced potential shut-down when the Lahontan cutthroat trout, a federally listed threatened species was discovered in Willow and Whitehorse creeks. But local ranchers, the conservation community, and resource managers were determined to find a solution without going to court.

The local working group began a dialogue and using a consensus-based process, searched for common goals and avoided costly litigation and potential shut-down. Through implementation of a deferred rest/rotation grazing program, woody vegetation is returning, native trout populations are rebounding, riparian areas are greener, and water quality is improving. And no ranchers were forced out of business. The process brought together potential adversaries to work together to restore and maintain the health of the land.

Today, trout populations are increasing and grazing plans developed by the working group have received four "no jeopardy" opinions from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The successes of Trout Creek and the other examples listed above demonstrate that ecosystem approaches are either unlikely to be initiated, or once accomplished, endure, if those that affect ecosystem health do not support both the work itself and the maintenance thereafter. All the technical expertise in the world cannot overcome public disinterest in or worse, distrust of conservation and restoration activities. Education and communication are perhaps the most critical tools available to resource managers.

### **Challenges for the Future**

BLM is faced with numerous obstacles that could hinder implementation of ecosystem management. Our ability to resolve these will directly affects our ability to manage healthy, diverse, and productive public lands.

**Management Incentives:** Historically, land use allocations and decisions often sought to maximize the production of commodities – be they timber supplies, pounds of forage, pounds of fish caught, etc. Since the production of such commodities is a function of ecosystem health, managers' overriding objective should be to maintain sustainable ecological systems. Under principles of ecosystem management, managers must be responsible for maintaining ecosystem health and for resource conditions and trends that contribute to ecosystem health.

**Administrative Boundaries:** Agency attempts to implement ecosystem approaches are complicated by administrative boundaries that typically do not correspond to ecological boundaries. Ecosystems also typically occur at various scales, and federal agencies are rarely the sole managers of large, self-contained ecological systems. The ability to recognize ecological boundaries helps resource managers to predict and assess the management activities on the land. The key to the success of ecosystem management will be the willingness of neighbors to work together to define and achieve a common vision for healthy ecological systems.

**Land Use Planning:** An ecosystem management approach requires that agencies conduct land use planning in a more flexible and interdisciplinary manner. Improving the land use planning process will require: (1) better coordination among federal, state, and local agencies; (2) better responsiveness to the public; (3) streamlined procedures; and (4) emphasis on interdisciplinary, ecosystem-based approaches to analysis and decisionmaking.

**Threatened and Endangered Species:** In many instances, public lands provide the last refuge for vanishing species. On BLM lands, over 230 federally proposed or listed threatened and endangered plant and animal species and over 800 candidate species occur. BLM lands provide habitat for at least 109 salmon and steelhead stocks that are at risk of extinction.

Conservation of threatened and endangered species may sometimes be legally complicated, costly, and controversial.

Ecosystem approaches provide resource professionals and resource users alike with the management tools and information to stabilize populations of rare species before they become endangered. It is insufficient to spend time and money fixing the effects of resource degradation without addressing their root causes. As stated earlier, it is more productive to work with people to manage an ecosystem *en toto* than to use a "piece meal" approach to "enhance" or "improve" it through structural improvements.

### **Summary**

The success of the ecosystem approach depends on how well we communicate the benefits of healthy, diverse, and productive watersheds and how well we apply the principles listed.

1. Keep the land healthy.
2. Know the condition of the land.
3. Communicate with and educate people.
4. Develop common goals.
5. Fix what's wrong.
6. Invite all interests to the table.
7. Think ahead.
8. Look at the big picture.
9. Be flexible and willing to change as new information becomes available.

An ecosystem approach to management may sometimes check short-term use and development of natural resources. But one thing is certain: long-term benefits secured by maintaining biologically diverse, healthy, and productive ecological systems will far surpass the short-term costs and sacrifices incurred by implementing ecosystem management.

**Acknowledgements** Mike, do you want them?

## Comments from Mike Dombeck at Employees Appreciation Day

Welcome to the first annual BLM Employees Appreciation Day. I hope this will be the first of many such events to recognize all the hard work you do throughout the year.

I could stay here at this podium and count the ways you should be thanked but I think standing in the heat and humidity of a Summer Day in Washington is something you don't want to really do a lot of. I know that the good food and good times planned for today are a stronger draw than my speechmaking. So I'll follow my own advice and keep this simple.

I think this has been one of the most challenging years in the history of the BLM. We've had to develop a Forest Management Plan for the Northwest, support the Range Reform effort, embark on a major reorganization of both headquarters and field BLM, prepare for new legislation on the Mining Law and begin to operate under the principles of ecosystem management.

These are just the really big ticket items. There's dozens more very important projects that we've also been involved in such as the Summit, the Trans Alaska Pipeline Review, RS 2477, PAC FISH, the buyouts and many, many more.

You've had to work with new people, implement new initiatives, develop new policies and reinvent everything. I know it hasn't been easy; rather it has probably been a monumental challenge. But through it all, you have performed like champions.

Please accept today's good food and fun as one small way of recognizing the many things you do for BLM every day. I and all the managers here do truly appreciate all your hard work. Thank you very much.

Now, I'd like to turn the podium over to Denise for some other important business.

(Denise offers her comments and introduces the ELT and members of BIG. Denise then turns the podium over to Mike and Nancy Hayes to present the awards from the ADs.)

# **Wilderness Management of Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management: Past, Present and Future**

**Michael Dombeck  
Acting Director, Bureau of Land Management**

Thank you for the opportunity to present this lecture. Those lectures which have preceded mine have certainly been interesting and I only hope mine continues this tradition. Lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have much to add to the National Wilderness Preservation System (System) and I hope my presentation will demonstrate their role both present and in the future.

The overall theme of the Distinguished Wilderness Resource Lectures, as I understand it, is to discuss the wilderness potential of the

public lands managed by their respective agencies and to present visions of how that potential can be realized. *I'm sure the lecture that preceded this one were distinguished. What is distinguished about this one is the audience*  
We are honored at BLM <sup>by</sup> being saved until the other wilderness agencies (National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Forest Service) have had their viewpoints and visions presented. By being last I can only conclude that the University of Idaho knew what it was doing and saved the "best for last". Further, while being last, I should be able to capitalize on the previous presentations that have gone before me. While currently having the smallest acreage of the public lands included in the System, we have what I feel is one of the best founded management programs of all of the Federal agencies in the System. As they say, "last but not least".

Having just concluded the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act the forthcoming Distinguished Lectureship

capstone presentation on the Vision For Wilderness in the Nation is indeed timely and I hope that my presentation on the BLM program will serve as an integral part of the vision for that Forecast of the Future.

## Background

*I want to talk about the past about the land.  
today 270 million acres remain.*

As hindsight is always easier than foresight let me start here. To make a long story short, BLM lands were not included in the provisions of the Wilderness Act when it was enacted in 1964. Why were these lands left out and/or excluded from the Wilderness Act? A review of the legislative history of the Act indicates an absence of discussion about including the BLM lands. Apparently in 1964 it was still an open issue whether the BLM lands should remain in Federal ownership or were to be disposed of and BLM was to go out of business. BLM lands were viewed as the lands nobody wanted, leftovers, remnants, or to quote some - forgotten legacy lands.

I might add at this point, this oversight of BLM lands being included, has since been remedied.

During the various debates leading up to passage of the so-called "BLM Organic Act" in 1976 (FLPMA), this oversight was corrected when numerous arguments surfaced for including a wilderness review provision in the Act to make BLM lands subject to the Wilderness Act.

Under the provisions of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) a clear statement of congressional objectives and mandates on retention and management of the public lands administered by BLM was made and the Congress decided that BLM was not going out of business. Included in the various provisions of FLPMA was a special directive for BLM to undertake the study of its public lands and to make recommendations to the President as to which

of the public lands administered by BLM were suitable for designation as wilderness and should be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System to be managed under the Wilderness Act. It was with the enactment of FLPMA then that BLM lands and BLM as a management agency joined the other System agencies as a full partner in management of the System. No longer are the BLM lands forgotten.

To give you the background perspective of how BLM got to where we are today I will give you a short history of the Wilderness Study Program undertaken by BLM under FLPMA to bring you up to date.

## Current Status

The FLPMA specified the various activities which were to be undertaken in the review and study of the public lands administered by the BLM. The FLPMA also set deadlines for reporting wilderness recommendations and

specified how the lands under wilderness review were to be managed and continue to be managed to the present time pending final Congressional action. The various phases involved in the BLM wilderness program were:

- 1) inventoried the public lands for wilderness characteristics;
- 2) protects areas undergoing wilderness review;
- 3) studied identified wilderness study areas (WSAs);
- 4) reported these recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior; and
- 5) manages all wilderness areas designated by Congress to preserve their natural character.

### Inventory

The FLPMA required the BLM to review all roadless public land areas of 5,000 acres or more and roadless islands to identify those

with the required wilderness characteristics. Areas less than 5,000 acres can also be considered in certain circumstances under the basic planning authority of the FLPMA.

To guide the inventory on the 174 million acres of BLM land in the lower 48 states (Alaska was not included in the original inventory), the BLM developed a Wilderness Inventory Handbook. The handbook called for a two-step inventory process. Both steps involved broad public involvement.

During the initial inventory conducted between 1978-1979, areas that were generally recognized by the BLM and the public as obviously having no wilderness characteristics were eliminated from further wilderness review. This initial evaluation reduced the acreage under consideration to about 50 million acres.

With this acreage then as the focus, the BLM

began the intensive inventory. During this phase, conducted between 1979-1980, BLM resource professionals conducted on-the-ground inspections of each area. These professionals looked at each area to determine the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics. Public participation was encouraged, both during the field inspections and the public review of the BLM's intensive inventory findings. The public was responsive; more than 10,000 comments were received from across the country. At the end of the intensive inventory, the BLM designated the areas possessing the basic characteristics as wilderness study areas or WSAs.

At the completion of the inventory phase, BLM determined that over 26,000,000 acres, comprising over 800 wilderness study areas, located in 11 Western States, qualified for further study to determine whether such areas should be recommended for wilderness

designation.

### Interim Protection and Management

These WSAs are managed differently than the rest of the public lands. Interim management applies until the time a final decision is made to Congress as to whether they become part of the National Wilderness Preservation System or are released for nonwilderness uses.

To help the public understand which activities could and could not be authorized in WSAs, the BLM developed, with the public's help, the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review.

The policy closely follows the congressional mandate and provides that new activities can be allowed in a WSA if they meet what is called the "nonimpairment" standard contained in the FLPMA. Congress said that lands under wilderness review were to be managed "so as not to impair the suitability of such areas

for preservation as wilderness." To meet this standard, activities must not cause any significant impacts. Depending on climate, soils, and topography, this standard can accommodate some types of activities, but any long-term development will depend on Congress' wilderness decision.

Congress also said certain mining and grazing uses already in existence when the FLPMA was passed could continue. Commonly called "grandfathered uses," the law says these activities can continue in the same "manner and degree" as when the FLPMA became law.

~~Valid existing rights, such as valid claims under the 1872 Mining Law and mineral leases issued before October 21, 1976, are eligible for full development. Like all activities on public lands, however, they must be conducted in a manner to prevent "undue or unnecessary degradation" as directed by the FLPMA.~~

Applying such complex legal criteria on the ground on a case by case basis is a challenge. The BLM works very closely with all interested parties to ensure that interim management fully meets the requirements of the law.

### Study

Once public land areas possessing the basic wilderness characteristics specified by Congress were identified, detailed wilderness studies began. To guide this effort, the BLM developed, again with the public's help, its Wilderness Study Policy.

The primary goal of the BLM wilderness study process is to analyze an area's suitability or nonsuitability for preservation as wilderness. This analysis is made through the BLM's established land use planning system based on the resource data, evaluations made by the BLM's resource professionals in the field, and public comments.

The wilderness values in the WSA are evaluated in the context of all the other multiple uses present in the area. The analysis is accompanied by an environmental impact statement and released for public review.

The central question in a wilderness study is: "Is this area more suitable for wilderness designation or more suitable for nonwilderness uses?" To answer this question, the study examines each WSA from three different standpoints--what are the area's wilderness values, what effect would wilderness designation have upon present and potential uses of the area, and what does the public think?

In analyzing wilderness values, the BLM considers the quality of the area's naturalness, its opportunities for solitude or for primitive unconfined recreation, and any special features such as geological, ecological, scientific, educational, scenic, or historical values.

The study also analyzes whether wilderness designation would have any beneficial effect upon other resource uses and whether designation of a particular WSA would contribute to expanding the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

In the wilderness study process, tradeoffs between wilderness and nonwilderness uses are examined closely. The BLM identifies all uses and potential uses of the WSA other than wilderness (such as energy and minerals or timber production) and analyzes how wilderness designation would affect these potential uses.

The BLM then evaluates how the land would be managed if the WSA is not designated as wilderness, and analyzes how this type of management would affect these wilderness values.

Studies also examined the local social and

economic effects of wilderness designation and considered whether designation would be consistent with existing land use plans of State and local <sup>tribal</sup> governments, Indian tribes, and other Federal agencies.

Once the BLM completed its field studies and the public reviewed the draft findings and recommendations, the Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines completed mineral studies on areas initially recommended by the BLM as suitable for wilderness designation.

### Reporting

The FLPMA required the Secretary of the Interior to complete the review of the public lands for wilderness potential and report the findings to the president within 15 years (i.e. by October 21, 1991). The Secretary's reports included the BLM's final suitability report, the final environmental impact statement including analyses of public comments, the public hearings records, and

the mineral evaluations conducted by the Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines on any area recommended as suitable for wilderness.

The final step of the reporting process is for the President to make recommendations to Congress. Only congress can designate an area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. However, sometimes Congress considers an area for wilderness preservation even if the studies are still ongoing and no Presidential recommendation has yet been made. When this occurs, the Department of the Interior testifies on the legislation using all information available at the time to give Congress an idea of the area's suitability for nonsuitability for wilderness preservation. This situation occurred with the BLM Arizona areas and Congress in November 1990, designated over 1 million acres as wilderness.

All phases of the BLM review and study process are essentially completed.

On June 21, 1991, the Secretary submitted recommendations to the President for California and on October 18, 1991, the States of Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming were similarly sent to the President.

The President, after evaluation of the recommendations, concurred in the recommendations, and transmitted the recommendations to the Congress over the period May 1992 - January 1993. All recommendations are currently pending before the U.S. Congress. Special legislation in 1993 and again in 1994 affected certain BLM lands in Colorado and California resulting in approximately 3,600,000 additional acres being designated affecting BLM lands.

At the present time, BLM manages 137

individual wilderness areas containing some 5,241,000 acres which comprises over 5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System which is now currently approaching 104,000,000 acres. While still the smallest acreage in the System, BLM is rapidly gaining on the other agencies and as our wilderness reporting packages and recommendations are enacted into law by the Congress, we will become a more major player in the management of the entire System under a full partner basis.

### Evolution of Wilderness Management Policy

As you can tell from the foregoing explanation, BLM spent most of the decade of the 1980's doing wilderness studies, and preparing reports and recommendations on BLM lands considered suitable for wilderness designation to the President and the Congress. However, BLM did not spend all of their time and effort on wilderness paperwork. With some luxury of time before large wilderness

*borrow  
other*

acreage designations started, BLM was able to get a head start on management policies in anticipation of designations. During the 1980's BLM wilderness program staff were able to put together wilderness management policies for the BLM lands. The approach taken was essentially a "beg, borrow, or steal" method of other wilderness agency materials and methods. By being selective, BLM was able to cannibalize what they considered the best from the other agencies while at the same time rejecting information considered inappropriate or not applicable to BLM lands or conditions. For the most part BLM borrowed heavily from the Forest Service management policies which are from a multiple use management agency as was the case with BLM versus those of the National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service which are more single or limited use lands agencies.

Additionally, during the 1980's BLM

participated in as many wilderness management workshops, seminars, and conferences as possible to obtain all the information they could. Participation by BLM personnel in training programs on wilderness offered by the other wilderness agencies was also encouraged. In short, BLM took every possible opportunity to buy time, gain lead time, get out ahead, etc. on wilderness management before it happened to them in a big way as it is starting to do today. Of particular importance was BLM participation in the First National Wilderness Management Workshop held here in October 1983, in Moscow, Idaho, under the auspices of the University of Idaho. Out of that workshop was developed a major policy document with respect to wilderness, entitled "A Five Year Action Program." This document served as a policy framework for all wilderness agencies and particularly for BLM served as our overview approach to wilderness during the 1980's. BLM made a major management

commitment to implement as many of the recommendations as possible, again with the goal of getting out ahead of the power curve on designation of BLM lands. What was particularly unique in the Action Program was that it represented a consensus approach to wilderness management by the affected System management agencies as well as a significant commitment by other interest groups and organizations to wilderness management objectives.

As evidence of the value the Action Program served it should be noted that the major product from the recent 6th National Wilderness Conference held in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in November 1994, was revisiting, updating, and expansion of the previous Action Program to serve as the wilderness management document for the next decade. It is the intent and the BLM objective to have the new Action Program serve again as our framework into the next century.

As an additional incentive to keep BLM going in the 1980s, Congress also saw fit to designate a small number of areas scattered in parts of the states of Oregon, California, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, and Arizona. With these areas BLM was able to "practice" wilderness management using the experience and materials developed early in the 1980s. This learning through doing approach was of great value to BLM when the first large increment of BLM lands to be designated as wilderness took place in November 1990, with passage of the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990 in which 38 areas totaling approximately 1,200,000 acres was added to the System. With this significant acreage BLM had indeed entered the big time in wilderness management. As BLM studies were packaged on a statewide basis and submitted to Congress on a similar total state basis it can be accurately predicted that future BLM wilderness designations and additions to the System will be by quantum amounts.

Recent (1994) evidence of this trend has been demonstrated in the California Desert Protection Act in which over 3,500,000 acres of BLM land were designated not including remaining BLM wilderness study lands in Central and Northern California.

### Near-Term Vision for BLM Wilderness Program

Visualizing the near-term status does not require clairvoyance on my part. The program essentially consists of continuing to provide effective management of those BLM areas which are currently designated as wilderness as part of the System, i.e., the current  $5,200,000 \pm$  acres, while concurrently continuing the legislative process of designation of additional BLM areas based on the will of the Congress.

*Working with Congress*

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BLM recommendations of some 9,000,000 acres, ~~not including Alaska~~, together with historical trend data from legislative history that Congress has designated one third more acreage than agencies have recommended, it would not be beyond reason to expect that BLM could be responsible for 10,000,000 - 15,000,000 acres or higher as part of the System. Clearly at these acreages BLM is a major player. Beyond the range of acreages previously noted I will not speculate as to System totals. Remember, only God and Congress can make a wilderness.

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## Long-Term Vision for BLM Wilderness Program

If I have to advance what single term or word best describes what BLM lands bring to the System it would have to be "diversity." But having said that I want to explain that diversity has both a good side and a bad side plus a lot of "medium" sides. There is no doubt that the BLM wilderness areas are different. Different than the rest of the System lands yet still integral components of that System. It is these differences which bring greater strength and weakness to the System.

An overview or generalization of the BLM wilderness areas follows:

### Physical Characteristics

The types of BLM wilderness lands represent different ecotypes. The BLM areas are low desert, high desert and basin land areas. They

typically are at lower elevations, are less rugged/mountainous, or are rolling to front range type topographic relief. Additionally, these areas are much smaller in size than most of the wilderness areas managed by the Forest Service, National Park Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service, where a number of their wilderness areas exceed one million acres and areas in the six figure acreage are quite common. Being located in the arid areas, the BLM areas tend to exhibit geomorphic and geologic land forms not normally found in the higher, wetter, and more tree covered parts of the System.

The location of the BLM areas also discloses that most of these areas are dry (no water), no fuel (no trees or limited brush), and no shade (no trees), and provide limited opportunities for overnight or longer term camping or hiking opportunities. Because of the lower elevation of these areas they tend to be in closer proximity to urban or community

centers than other agency wilderness areas which are typically located in more remote locations farther removed from population centers. Another factor for BLM wilderness areas that is closely connected to the elevation and proximity issue, and which is a key concern is that the vast majority of BLM wilderness areas have highway, road or trail access to them or along their exterior boundaries. This situation was prompted by the study process which in order to identify roadless areas used roads as the boundary delineator thus creating technical roadless areas with road access by the public. The BLM wilderness area situation with ready vehicle access, contrasts with those of the other wilderness agencies where remoteness from road networks necessitates public walking or hiking in over many miles to reach a given wilderness area.

## Socio-Economic Characteristics

As was the case for physical diversity of BLM areas a similar situation or contrast of BLM areas versus other agency areas also exists on the use side or socio-economic side of the equation. Most of the BLM wilderness areas had, and have, a history of previous use and authorizations for such activities as grazing of domestic livestock, hardrock mining, oil and gas leasing, off highway vehicle driving, hunting and fishing using motorized vehicles, snowmobiling, rockhounding, and numerous other multiple use activities which now, after wilderness designation are no longer allowed, with certain exceptions for grandfathered or valid existing rights uses.

In addition to the use history of the BLM wilderness areas, a large number of the areas are in geographic locations where climate, weather, and elevation enable virtually year-round or all season use of the areas. The BLM areas are "open all year" which is different than a lot of the other agency

wilderness areas which are only summer or early fall areas and close up early when the "snow flies." The BLM areas, also due to their smaller size, access by road, and being close to towns, are essentially day use areas or weekend only areas as opposed to a number of other agency wilderness areas where week long, expedition type hiking and camping, and outfitter/guides/packstrings may be the norm. Another unfortunate reality is that a large number of BLM wilderness areas are "noisy." That is, they are located in areas subject to overflights and lowflying military and civilian aircraft operations. The solitude and lack thereof as quiet refuges from machines do not exist in a number of BLM wilderness areas and may in the future intensify due to more constricted public land availability for such activities. The sound of quiet may no longer be available as an attribute of wilderness.

A last major fact of land ownership with respect to BLM wilderness areas, is that

within such areas thousands of acres of State and privately owned lands exist due to the land patterns and scattered ownerships throughout the Western United States. The legacy of the land settlement pattern in the West rests with BLM as the custodian of the remaining open public land areas. The ownership patterns are such that "inholders" in BLM wilderness areas will require transit across BLM wilderness area lands to reach these inholdings. By law, BLM must allow access to the inholders or in other cases acquire or exchange out the inholdings to block up BLM area ownership.

As you can see, the list of use situations, and conflicts with the stated objectives of the Wilderness Act, goes on and on. I have only touched on a few of the more obvious ones in this lecture. Most of you know full well the stories of wildfires, global warming, noxious weed invasions, air quality, water pollution, insect and disease intrusions, and a big list of

other issues which continues to grow in severity and magnitude affecting our System wilderness areas.

*BLM's role - Diversity & Education. Hold up. am Forest*

## Institutional and Management Characteristics

Lastly I want to conclude my remarks by discussing where I think the greatest opportunities to demonstrate the skills and abilities of BLM wilderness managers for the BLM wilderness lands in the System exist.

Continuing the diversity theme with which I started my presentation BLM has both the largest number of constraints within which to operate as well as the greatest number of opportunities within which to develop and implement creative and innovative management approaches. As I like to tell my colleagues in the Forest Service, National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service, anybody could manage their wilderness areas because they're so "easy." They don't have all of the "baggage" associated with them as is

the case with the BLM areas. They of course disagree with me but I still like to rub it in. The management challenges imposed by the de facto situations in the BLM wilderness areas are just that - challenges - they will test the abilities of our managers to cope and deal with the myriad of situations prevalent in our areas. We will have to find new methods of dealing with the public in our management practices. Direct, hands-on ranger type law enforcement methods will not work plus we don't have enough personnel to send to the field to deal with the masses. Indirect control methods like environmental education, brochures, visitor centers, bulletin boards, maps, and the like will have to be used in lieu of BLM staff. Greater use of volunteers, senior citizen guides, interest group docents, adopt-a-wilderness programs by conservation groups, and others, will all have to be fully utilized to cover the workload. More collaborative management options with adjacent land owners, State and local governments, Indian <sup>tribe</sup>

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tribes, and even private sector contractors will have to be considered. Less confrontation and more cooperation will have to be the order of the day to get the job done. Assistance to BLM managers from any source will be solicited.

The BLM area diversity situation will also generate the need for more creative approaches to wilderness research and development projects, such as are underway here at the Wilderness Research Center and at the newly established Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute in Montana; new training, education and information programs under the leadership of the interagency Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center; and, other such interagency and international information sharing opportunities on wilderness management such as the newly established International Journal of Wilderness also being aggressively developed here at the University

of Idaho Wilderness Research Center; and a wide range of other options will have to be fully explored.

My list of state-of-the-art changes in dealing with the BLM wilderness areas in the System could go on and on, but for your sake I will conclude my presentation at this point with an invitation to all of you in the audience and any others we can recruit to assist BLM in the management of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

## Conclusions

My ramblings on the role of the public lands administered by BLM in the System have led me to conclude that the BLM lands serve to round out the System. This rounding out is the diversity our lands bring to the System. I do not however mean to imply that the System will ever be "built out or finished". It probably never will be finished in that context but will continue to evolve, growing even

larger and ever more diverse in future years. My view of the System is based on that philosophical viewpoint contained in Zen Buddhism philosophy - the System glass is not half empty or half full but rather I see the National Wilderness Preservation System as a pitcher, and the BLM lands will add their diversity into the System.

Thank you for your interest in the wilderness program of the Bureau of Land Management.

Wilderness Management of Public Lands Administered  
by the Bureau of Land Management: Past, Present and Future

Michael Dombeck  
Acting Director, Bureau of Land Management

Thank you for the opportunity to present this lecture. Those lectures which have preceded mine have certainly been interesting and I only hope mine continues this tradition. Lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have much to add to the National Wilderness Preservation System (System) and I hope my presentation will demonstrate their role both present and in the future.

The overall theme of the Distinguished Wilderness Resource Lectures, as I understand it, is to discuss the wilderness potential of the public lands managed by their respective agencies and to present visions of how that potential can be realized.

We are honored at BLM being saved until the other Wilderness Agency (National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Forest Service) have had their viewpoints and visions presented. By being last I can only conclude that the University of Idaho knew what it was doing and saved the "best for last". Further while being last I should be able to capitalize on the previous presentations that have gone before me. While currently having the smallest acreage of the public lands included in the System, we have what I feel is one of the best founded management programs of all of the Federal agencies in the System. As they say "last but not least".

Having just concluded the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act the forthcoming Distinguished Lectureship capstone on the Vision For Wilderness in the Nation is indeed timely and I hope that my presentation on the BLM program will serve as an integral part of the vision for that Forecast of the Future.

Background

As hind sight is always easier than foresight let me start here. To make a long story short, BLM lands were not included in the provisions of the Wilderness Act when it was enacted in 1964. Why were these lands left out and/or excluded from the Wilderness Act? A review of the legislative history of the Act indicates an absence of discussion about including the BLM lands. Apparently in 1964 it was still an open issue whether the BLM lands should remain in Federal ownership or were to be disposed of and BLM was to go out of business. BLM lands were viewed as the lands nobody wanted, leftover, remnants, or to quote some - forgotten legacy lands.

I might add at this point, this oversight of BLM lands being included, has since been remedied.

During the various debates leading up to passage of the so-called "BLM Organic Act" in 1976 (FLPMA), this oversight was corrected when numerous arguments surfaced for including a wilderness review provision in the Act to make BLM lands subject to the Wilderness Act.

Under the provisions of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) a clear statement of congressional objectives and mandates on retention and management of the public lands administered by BLM was made and the Congress decided that BLM was not going out of business. Included in the various provisions of FLPMA was a special directive for BLM to undertake the study of its public lands and to make recommendations to the President as to which of the public lands administered by BLM were suitable for designation as wilderness and should be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System to be managed under the Wilderness Act. It was with the enactment of FLPMA then that BLM lands and BLM as a management agency joined the other System agencies as a full partner in management of the System. No longer are the BLM lands forgotten.

To give you the background perspective of how BLM got to where we are today I will give you a short history of the Wilderness Study Program undertaken by BLM under FLPMA to bring you up to date.

#### Current Status

The FLPMA specified the various activities which were to be undertaken in the review and study of the public lands administered by the BLM. The FLPMA also set deadlines for reporting wilderness recommendations and specified how the lands under wilderness review were to be managed and continue to be managed to the present time pending final Congressional action. The various phases involved in the BLM wilderness program were:

- 1) **inventoried** the public lands for wilderness characteristics;
- 2) **protects** areas undergoing wilderness review;
- 3) **studied** identified wilderness study areas (WSAs);
- 4) **reported** these recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior; and
- 5) **manages** all wilderness areas designated by Congress to preserve their natural character.

#### Inventory

The FLPMA required the BLM to review all roadless public land areas of 5,000 acres or more and roadless islands to identify those with the required wilderness characteristics. Areas less than 5,000 acres can also be considered in certain circumstances under the basic

planning authority of the FLPMA.

To guide the inventory on the 174 million acres of BLM land in the lower 48 states (Alaska was not included in the original inventory), the BLM developed a Wilderness Inventory Handbook. The handbook called for a two-step inventory process. Both steps involved broad public involvement.

During the initial inventory conducted between 1978-1979, areas that were generally recognized by the BLM and the public as obviously having no wilderness characteristics were eliminated from further wilderness review. This initial evaluation reduced the acreage under consideration to about 50 million acres.

With this acreage then as the focus, the BLM began the intensive inventory. During this phase, conducted between 1979-1980, BLM resource professionals conducted on-the-ground inspections of each area. These professionals looked at each area to determine the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics. Public participation was encouraged, both during the field inspections and the public review of the BLM's intensive inventory findings. The public was responsive; more than 10,000 comments were received from across the country. At the end of the intensive inventory, the BLM designated the areas possessing the basic characteristics as wilderness study areas or WSAs.

At the completion of the inventory phase, BLM determined that over 26,000,000 acres, comprising over 800 wilderness study areas, located in 11 Western States, qualified for further study to determine whether such areas should be recommended for wilderness designation.

#### Interim Protection and Management

These WSAs are managed differently than the rest of the public lands. This interim management applies until the time a final decision is made to Congress as to whether they become part of the National Wilderness Preservation System or are released for nonwilderness uses.

To help the public understand which activities could and could not be authorized in WSAs, the BLM developed, with the public's help, the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review.

The policy closely follows the congressional mandate and provides that new activities can be allowed in a WSA if they meet what is called the "nonimpairment" standard contained in the FLPMA. Congress said that lands under wilderness review were to be managed "so as not

to impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness." To meet this standard, activities must not cause any significant impacts. Depending on climate, soils, and topography, this standard can accommodate some types of activities, but any long-term development will depend on Congress' wilderness decision.

Congress also said certain mining and grazing uses already in existence when the FLPMA was passed could continue. Commonly called "grandfathered uses," the law says these activities can continue in the same "manner and degree" as when the FLPMA became law.

Valid existing rights, such as valid claims under the 1872 Mining Law and mineral leases issued before October 21, 1976, are eligible for full development. Like all activities on public lands, however, they must be conducted in a manner to prevent "undue or unnecessary degradation" as directed by the FLPMA.

Applying such complex legal criteria on the ground on a case by case basis is a challenge. The BLM works very closely with all interested parties to ensure the interim management fully meets the requirements of the law.

#### Study

Once public land areas possessing the basic wilderness characteristics specified by Congress were identified, detailed wilderness studies began. To guide this effort, the BLM developed, again with the public's help, its Wilderness Study Policy.

The primary goal of the BLM wilderness study process is to analyze an area's suitability or nonsuitability for preservation as wilderness. This analysis is made through the BLM's established land use planning system based on the resource data, evaluations made by the BLM's resource professionals in the field, and public comments.

The wilderness values in the WSA are evaluated in the context of all the other multiple uses present in the area. The analysis is accompanied by an environmental impact statement and released for public review.

The central question in a wilderness study is: "Is this area more suitable for wilderness designation or more suitable for nonwilderness uses? To answer this question, the study examines each WSA from three different standpoints--what are the area's wilderness values, what effect would wilderness designation have upon present and potential uses of the area, and what does the public think?

In analyzing wilderness values, the BLM considers the quality of the area's naturalness, its opportunities for solitude or for primitive unconfined recreation, and any special features such as geological, ecological, scientific, educational, scenic, or historical values.

The study also analyzes whether wilderness designation would have any beneficial effect upon other resource uses and whether designation of a particular WSA would contribute to expanding the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

In the wilderness study process, tradeoffs between wilderness and nonwilderness uses are examined closely. The BLM identifies all uses and potential uses of the WSA other than wilderness (such as energy and minerals or timber production) and analyzes how wilderness designation would affect these potential uses.

The BLM then evaluates how the land would be managed if the WSA is not designated as wilderness, and analyzes how this type of management would affect these wilderness values.

Studies also examined the local social and economic effects of wilderness designation and considered whether designation would be consistent with existing land use plans of State and local governments, Indian tribes, and other Federal agencies.

Once the BLM completed its field studies and the public reviewed the draft findings and recommendations, the Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines completed mineral studies on areas initially recommended by the BLM as suitable for wilderness designation.

#### Reporting

The FLPMA required the Secretary of the Interior to complete the review of the public lands for wilderness potential and report the findings to the president within 15 years (i.e. by October 21, 1991). The Secretary's reports included the BLM's final suitability report, the final environmental impact statement including analyses of public comments, the public hearing records, and the mineral evaluations conducted by the Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines on any area recommended as suitable for wilderness.

The final step of the reporting process is for the President to make recommendations to Congress. Only congress can designate an area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. However, sometimes Congress considers an area for wilderness preservation even if the studies are still ongoing and no Presidential recommendation has yet been made. When this occurs, the Department of the Interior testifies on the legislation using all information available at the time to give Congress an idea of the area's suitability for nonsuitability for wilderness preservation. This situation occurred with the BLM Arizona

areas and Congress in November 1990, designated over 1 million acres as wilderness.

All phases of the BLM review and study process are essentially completed.

On June 21, 1991, the Secretary submitted recommendations to the President for California and on October 18, 1991, the States of Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming were similarly sent to the President.

The President, after evaluation of the recommendations, concurred in the recommendations, and transmitted the recommendations to the Congress over the period May 1992 - January 1993. All recommendations are currently pending before the U.S. Congress. Special legislation in 1993 and again in 1994 affected certain BLM lands in Colorado and California resulting in approximately 3,600,000 additional acres being designated affecting BLM lands.

At the present time, BLM manages 137 individual wilderness areas containing some 5,241,000 acres which comprises over 5% of the National Wilderness Preservation System which is now currently approaching 104,000,000 acres. While still the smallest acreage in the System, BLM is rapidly gaining on the other agencies and as our wilderness reporting packages and recommendations are enacted into law by the Congress, we will become a more major player in the management of the entire System under a full partner basis.

#### Evolution of Wilderness Management Policy

As you can tell from the foregoing explanation, BLM spent most of the decade of the 1980's doing wilderness studies, and preparing reports and recommendations on BLM lands considered suitable for wilderness designation to the President and the Congress. However, BLM did not spend all of their time and effort on wilderness paperwork. With some luxury of time before large wilderness acreage designations started, BLM was able to get a head start on management policies in anticipation of designations. During the 1980's BLM wilderness program staff were able to put together wilderness management policies for the BLM lands. The approach taken was essentially a "beg, borrow, or steal" method of other wilderness agency materials and methods. By being selective, BLM was able to cannibalize what they considered the best from the other agencies while at the same time rejecting information considered inappropriate or not applicable to BLM lands or conditions. For the most part BLM borrowed heavily from the Forest Service management policies which were from a multiple use management agency as was the case with BLM versus those of the National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service which are more single or limited use lands agencies.

Additionally, during the 1980's BLM participated in as many wilderness management workshops, seminars, and conferences as possible to obtain all the information they could.

Participation by BLM personnel in training programs on wilderness offered by the other wilderness agencies was also encouraged. In short, BLM took every possible opportunity to buy time, gain lead time, get out ahead, etc. on wilderness management before it happened to them in a big way as it is starting to do today. Of particular importance was BLM participation in the First National Wilderness Management Workshop held here in October 1983, in Moscow, Idaho, under the auspices of the University of Idaho. Out of that workshop was developed a major policy document with respect to wilderness, entitled "A Five Year Action Program." This document served as a policy framework for all wilderness agencies and particularly for BLM served as our overview approach to wilderness during the 1980's. BLM made a major management commitment to implement as many of the recommendations as possible again with the goal of getting out ahead of the power curve on designation of BLM lands. What was particularly unique in the Action Program was that it represented a consensus approach to wilderness management by the affected System management agencies as well as a significant commitment by other system groups and organizations to wilderness management objectives.

As evidence of the value the Action Program served it should be noted that the major product from the recent 6th National Wilderness Conference held in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in November 1994, was revisiting, updating, and expansion of the previous Action Program to serve as the wilderness management document for the next decade. It is the intent and the BLM objective to have the new Action Program serve again as our framework into the next century.

As an additional incentive to keep BLM going in the 1980s, Congress also saw fit to designate a small number of areas scattered in parts of the states of Oregon, California, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, and Arizona. With these areas BLM was able to "practice" wilderness management using the experience and materials developed early in the 1980s. This learning through doing approach was of great value to BLM when the first large increment of BLM lands to be designated as wilderness took place in November 1990, with passage of the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990 in which 38 areas totaling approximately 1,200,000 acres was added to the System. With this significant acreage BLM had indeed entered the big time in wilderness management. As BLM studies were packaged on a statewide basis and submitted to Congress on a similar total state basis it can be accurately predicted that future BLM wilderness designations and additions to the System will be by quantum amounts. Recent (1994) evidence of this acreage trend has demonstrated in the California Desert Protection Act in which over 3,500,000 acres of BLM land were designated not including remaining BLM wilderness study lands in control and Northern California.

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As was the case for physical diversity of BLM areas as similar situation or contrast of BLM areas versus other agency areas also exists on the use side or socio-economic side of the equation. Most of the BLM wilderness areas had, and have, a history of previous use and authorizations for such activities as grazing of domestic livestock, hardrock mining, oil and gas leasing, off highway vehicle driving, hunting and fishing using motorized vehicles snowmobiling, rockhounding, and numerous other multiple use activities which now after wilderness designation are no longer allowed, with certain exceptions for grandfathered or valid existing rights uses.

In addition to the use history of the BLM wilderness areas, a large number of the areas are in geographic locations where climate, weather, and elevation enable virtually year-round or all season use of the areas. The BLM areas are "open all year" which is different than a lot of the other agency wilderness areas which are only summer or early fall areas and close up early when the "snow flies." The BLM areas also due to their smaller size, access by road, and being close to towns, are essentially day use areas or weekend only areas as opposed to a number of other agency wilderness areas as opposed to a number of other agency wilderness areas where week long, expedition type hiking and camping, and outfitter/guides/packstrings may be the norm. Another unfortunate reality is that a large number of BLM wilderness areas are "noisy." That is, they are located in areas subject to overflights and lowflying military and civilian aircraft operations. The solitude and lack thereof as quiet refuges from machines do not exist in a number of BLM wilderness areas and may in the future intensify due to more constricted public land availability for such activities. The sound of quiet may no longer be available as an attribute of wilderness.

A last major fact of land ownership with respect to BLM wilderness areas, is that within such areas thousands of acres of State and privately owned lands exist due to the land patterns and scattered ownerships throughout the Western United States. The legacy of the land settlement pattern in the West rests with BLM as the custodian of the remaining open public land areas. The ownership patterns are such that "inholders" in BLM wilderness areas will require transit across BLM wilderness area lands to reach these inholdings. By law, BLM must allow access to the inholders or in other case acquire or exchange out the inholdings to block up BLM area ownership.

As you can see, the list of use situations and conflicts with the stated objectives of the Wilderness Act goes on and on. I have only touched on a few of the more obvious ones in this lecture. Most of you know full well that stories of wildfires, global warming, noxious weed invasions, air quality, water pollution, insect and disease intrusions, and a list of other issues which continues to grow in severity and magnitude affecting our System wilderness areas.

### **Institutional and Management Characteristics**

Lastly I want to conclude my remarks by discussing where I think the greatest opportunities to demonstrate the skills and abilities of BLM wilderness managers for the BLM wilderness lands in the System exist. Continuing the diversity theme with which I started my presentation BLM has both the largest number of constraints within which to operate as well as the greatest number of opportunities within which to develop and implement creative and innovative management approaches. As I like to tell my colleagues in the Forest Service, National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service, anybody could manage their wilderness areas because they're so "easy." They don't have all of the "baggage" associated with them as is the case with the BLM areas. They of course disagree with my but I still like to rub it in. The management challenges imposed by the defacto situations in the BLM wilderness areas are just that - challenges - they will test the abilities of our managers to cope and deal

with the myriad of situations prevalent in our areas. We will have to find new methods of dealing with the public in our management practices. Direct, hands-on range type law enforcement methods will not work plus we don't have enough personnel to send to the field to deal with the masses. Indirect control methods like environmental education, brochures, visitor centers, bulletin boards, maps, and the like will have to be used in lieu of BLM staff. Greater use of volunteers, senior citizen guides, interest group docents, adopt-a-wilderness conservation groups, and others will all have to be fully utilized to cover the workload. More collaborative management options with adjacent land owners, State and local governments, Indian tribes, and even private sector contractors will have to be considered. Less confrontation and more cooperation will have to be order of the day to get the job done. Assistance to BLM managers from any source will be solicited.

The BLM area diversity situation will also generate the need for more creative approaches to wilderness research and development projects, such as are underway here at the Wilderness Research Center and at the newly established Also Leopold Wilderness Research Institute in Montana; new training, education and information programs under the leadership of the interagency Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center; and, other such interagency and international information sharing opportunities on wilderness management such as the newly established International Journal of Wilderness also being aggressively developed here at the University of Idaho Wilderness Research Center.

My list of state-of-the-art changes in dealing with the BLM wilderness areas in the System could go on and on but for your sake I will conclude my presentation at this point with an invitation to all of you in the advance and all others we can recruit to assist BLM in the management of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

### Conclusions

My ramblings on the role of the public lands administered by BLM in the System have led me to conclude that the BLM lands serve to round out the System. This rounding out is the diversity our lands bring to the System. I do not however meant to imply that the System will ever be built out or finished. It probably never will be finished in that context but will continue to evolve, growing even larger and ever more diverse in future years. My view of the System is based on that philosophical viewpoint contained in Zen Buddhism philosophy - the System glass is not half empty or half full but rather I see the National Wilderness preservation System as a pitcher and the BLM lands will keep pouring their diversity into the System.

Thank you for you interest in the wilderness program of the Bureau of Land Management.

## The Bureau of Land Management: Moving Resources to the Ground

Like corporate America frequently changes to produce goods and services that better meet the changing needs of the Nation's public, Federal agencies have also learned the value of adapting. What Americans wanted from their Federal agencies twenty years ago may not be wanted today. Or perhaps what was wanted yesterday cannot be afforded in today's tighter Federal budgets.

The Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is one agency that has not shied away from change. While the agency is the nation's largest land manager, with responsibilities for 270 million acres of surface land and 570 million acres of subsurface mineral estate, change has been a part of the BLM's corporate culture.

In fact, the changing needs of the public lands and the changing demands of the public with regard to how those lands are managed are the subjects of a recently completed BLM publication called *Blueprint for the Future*. The blueprint directs a retooling of the agency and identifies BLM's top priorities for the coming decades, which are:

- Maintain healthy ecosystems
- Serve current and future publics
- Promote collaborative leadership
- Improve business practices
- Improve human resources management practices

Accomplishing these goals requires moving more financial, technical and human resources to the field level of the organization. Organizational changes initiated over the last two years at Headquarters and in the Field are moving the BLM in this direction.

## **Where We Were**

When the BLM was created in 1946, one of the immediate problems it faced was to integrate into one organization, the centralized General Land Office with the decentralized Grazing Service. A three tiered organization was established: a headquarters office, seven regional offices, and a variety of district offices. At the time the BLM had about 1,200 employees.

As a result of Congressional action, Court decisions, and public needs the BLM's mandate has grown in scope and complexity over the last 50 years. The Bureau's workforce has grown in proportion to its increased responsibility. BLM's organizational structure also has evolved. State "Supervisors" (now called State Directors) appeared in 1954 with the Eisenhower Administration. "Division managers," forerunners of the Area Manager, first appeared in Idaho in 1957. Service Centers were established in Portland, Oregon, and Denver, Colorado, in 1963; the Great Basin Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, in 1965; and the Lands and Minerals Training School in Phoenix, Arizona, in 1969.

## **Where We Are**

Over the last several years, BLM has increased efficiency by reducing administrative overhead and focusing on program performance.

Personnel are being moved from Headquarters and the State Offices to the Field. According to agency data, we have reduced our total workforce by almost 900 positions since Fiscal Year 1993, an 8% reduction. During the same period, the number of positions at the Resource Area level increased from 3,130 to 3,580 positions, an increase of 450 positions. Taken together, these figures mean that we have achieved a reduction of some 1,350 positions - about 19% - in the organizational levels above the resource areas.

In Fiscal Year 1993, 57% of our employees were in Resource or District Offices. Today, the figure is 59%.

These shifts indicate that more people are doing on-the-ground work with less administrative oversight. In Fiscal Year 1993, about two-thirds of the BLM workforce was engaged in operational work and about one-third was doing what the National Performance Review defines as headquarters and administrative type work. Today, that ratio is 70 and 30 percent, respectively.

## **Where We Are Going**

In July, the BLM Leadership Team established the following organizational goals:

- (1) At least 75% of the BLM's total workforce will be devoted to operational work by 1999. No more than 25% of the total workforce will be devoted to headquarters and administrative type work.
- (2) Each State Organization will be held accountable for meeting the following Field Organization goals by 1999:
  - Reduce the number of grade 14/15 positions
  - Achieve a supervisor to employee ratio 1:15
  - Achieve a personnel servicing ratio of 1:100
  - Meet Departmental/Bureau established streamlining targets in personnel, procurement, finance and budget functions
  - Meet mandated personnel reduction targets
- (3) Each Field Office will be located to best meet customer service needs and to capitalize on opportunities to share resources with other agencies. Combining co-located offices will be encouraged.

(4) The Field Office will be the target organization for the location of operational personnel. Field Office staff should be multi-disciplinary and team based. All of the components of each Office do not have to be located in the same building and town. To meet specialized functional needs, State and Field Offices may have small operational units (e.g., project offices, field stations, and administrative support units) located elsewhere.

(5) At all levels of the organization review layers will be eliminated. Reviewers should be part of the team that produces the product.

(6) The State and Field levels will support national teams with members to provide operational and technical expertise for team work. Senior technical specialist positions can be located at any level of the BLM organization.

### **Making Goals a Reality**

With agency organizational goals identified, the next step is to provide some framework for how they will be achieved. Toward that end, the Leadership Team decided that:

- States will continue to work toward meeting the organizational goals and strategy objectives.
- Changes will be evolutionary and will be considerate of any potential impacts on employees.
- States will have flexibility in achieving these goals based on their unique situations and budget/personnel resources.
- The Leadership will report annually on their progress toward meeting their objectives including an analysis of Bureauwide progress toward meeting these objectives.
- The Leadership Team will address in the very near future, the organization and goals for the agency's National Centers and detached National Teams.

## **Summary**

The change BLM is experiencing and will continue to experience is not easy on employees or its constituents. Adjusting to new and better ways of doing business will take time and patience. While BLM is almost 50 years old, by some standards it is still a young agency. Much like a teenager adjusts to growth and changes to become a better person, so too will BLM improve to better serve its customers in a more efficient and timely fashion while at the same time striving to ensure the passage of a healthier, more productive public land heritage to the Americans of tomorrow.

## **SIDEBARS**

1. Bureauwide, we have re-directed 450 more positions to the frontline on the ground organization, the Resource Area Office, while reducing the Bureau by a total of 900 positions.
2. About 70 percent of the BLM workforce is engaged in direct program delivery and customer service work. About 60 percent of the BLM workforce is stationed at the field office level.
3. Our goal is to increase the proportion of our time spent doing operational work to 75 percent and decrease the share doing headquarters and administrative work to 25 percent.

I grew up with five sisters and brothers in the lake country of rural northern Wisconsin, where I worked for 11 summers as a fishing guide.

I also spent a couple of summers working in the woods cutting aspen for pulp wood.

I received degrees from the University of Wisconsin, the University of Minnesota and Iowa State University.

I have taught the sciences at the high school level and fisheries management and zoology at the university level.

I've also written quite a few scientific articles -- such as one published in 1987 titled "Artificial turf incubator for muskellunge eggs."

For some reason, I haven't yet received an offer for the movie rights to that one.

As for my professional background, I spent 12 years with the Forest Service, including a stint as National Fisheries Program Manager.

I came to the BLM in 1989 as special assistant to the Director and later served as the science advisor.

Now I'd like to talk to you about my goals as Acting Director.

My principal objective in this new position is to help Secretary Babbitt carry out his Rangeland Reform, mining law reform and other initiatives, which are aimed at improving the way our nation's public lands are used and managed.

This reform effort includes a new emphasis on good science as the Interior Department moves toward ecosystem management.

Another top priority of mine is to make the BLM a more effective and efficient agency, in fulfillment of the Administration's goal of "reinventing government."

To me, reinvention means cutting red tape, working smarter rather than harder, and becoming a user-friendly agency for our customers -- whether they be ranchers, environmentalists, recreationists, the media or the general public.

Another goal is to diversify the BLM's workforce so that it looks more like America.

As for my style of leadership, let me first say that I will, of course, do some things differently than my predecessor.

But I will make every effort to effect these changes in a smooth and orderly way.

Having served in various locations and at all levels of the Forest Service or the BLM, I know where the rubber meets the road and I appreciate the challenges you face.

Given that perspective, I intend to work very closely with the State Directors and their staffs, along with Deputy Director Denise Meridith and the Washington headquarters management team.

My management style is direct and open, meaning I will be straightforward with you and accessible.

In turn, I also expect you to be straightforward and provide me with timely, accurate and complete information and then give me your best advice.

I promise to listen very carefully and then together hopefully we will make the best decision.

Some of the decisions will not be popular so I will need your full support.

If you're briefing me on a controversial issue in your State, district or area, tell me who's for it, who's against it and why.

I think it is of the utmost importance to lead by example.

I can't expect the State Offices to be models of efficiency if my office isn't. So I will do my best to set an example worth following.

As a leader, I am also results-oriented rather than process-oriented. My philosophy is, "Don't tell me, show me."

By that I mean: show me what you're doing, don't tell me what you're going to do.

Now I'd like to say a word about the state of the BLM.

I am aware that many of you are experiencing frustration, anxiety and uncertainty about the BLM's future and your role in this organization.

I understand your feelings, because we've been restructuring the agency for three years and the process still isn't complete.

While I can't alleviate all of your concerns, please know that I am working hard to make sure that this reorganization makes sense.

It must make sense to the employees of BLM, to the customers we serve and to the taxpayers whose dollars we spend.

I believe we are at a critical juncture in the history of the BLM.

It's a time when we can try to hold on to the ways of the fast-fading past or seize the opportunities of the fast-breaking future.

Where I grew up in the frozen north, hockey is a big sport.

Some players skate to where the puck is. The best players skate to where the puck will be.

Likewise, by making the right moves, we can anticipate the future and move the BLM into the 21st century.

In doing this, we can preserve our public lands so that future generations of Americans can use and enjoy them.

Thank you.

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