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# BLM's Ecosystem Approach to Management

**Mike Dombeck, Acting Director**

Bureau of Land Management  
U.S. Department of Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## Abstract

*Ecosystem management is about maintaining the health, diversity, and productivity of the land, i.e., clean water, abundant native perennial grasses, sustainable fish populations, healthy watersheds. We will use the ecosystem approach to streamline administrative processes and improve fiscal and environmental accountability. It involves coordinated planning at the local level, forming partnerships, and using good information to manage the land. Education is key. The principles of ecosystem management form the philosophic underpinning of a new land ethic with roots in the philosophies of Roosevelt, Pinchot, Leopold, and others.*

## INTRODUCTION

My crusade in the BLM is to get a bureaucracy back to basics, to cut process and keep things simple. The ecosystem approach is often greeted with skepticism, outright distrust, or confusion. People don't trust things we don't understand. Ecosystem management is a good case in point.

What we have to do is not complicated. It's not mystical. It's plain common sense. It's doing what's good for the land. One of the greatest challenges facing land-management agencies today is achieving and keeping a clear focus and vision of where we want to go from here.

I'd like to take this opportunity to discuss four issues related to ecosystem management with you today. First, I'll talk about what it is. Second, how the concept evolved. Third, how it will translate to on-the-ground decision-making. Fourth, and most important, what you, our customers, can expect from the public lands under an ecosystem approach.

We need to work very closely with people. To me ecosystem management means healthy, functioning watersheds or landscapes that provide social and economic stability to local communities.

## ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT: WHAT IS IT?

We tend to be our own worst enemy by making definitions of ecosystem management more complicated than they need to be. But when you cut through the verbiage and fodder, there is nothing mysterious or uncertain about it.

Put ten biologists, ranchers, and conservationists in a room and they'll come up with ten different definitions. It's not the definitions or lines on a map that are important. What matters is how we treat the land.

I always like to start discussions from common points of agreement. And I guarantee you when the smoke clears from that room of biologists, ranchers, and conservationists, they'd

all agree on at least one point: We have to maintain the health and productivity of the land. That's what ecosystem management is really about—maintaining the health, diversity, and productivity of the land. If we can all agree on that, and I think we do, the ecosystem approach provides common ground from which to develop consensus-based decision-making.

“Protecting ecological sustainability,” “conserving biological diversity,” and “preserving ecologic integrity” are all fancy ways of talking about lands with clean water, an abundance of perennial native grasses, sustainable populations of extraordinary fish like salmon, and healthy watersheds. All Americans recognize the value of these things.

A century ago, Theodore Roosevelt put it nicely when he said:

If we of this generation destroy the resources from which our children would otherwise derive their livelihood, we reduce the capacity of our land to support a population, and so either degrade the standard of living or deprive the coming generations of their right to life on this continent.

And that's what it's all about, isn't it? Maintaining healthy, diverse, and productive watersheds so that present and future generations may continue to derive benefits from the land. Simply said, ecosystem management is the application of common sense to common problems for the common good.

## ON-THE-GROUND DECISION-MAKING

Here we stand today, two years shy of the BLM's 50th anniversary, rapidly approaching the year 2000. The West has changed dramatically since the early days of the General Land Office. In the 19th century, we thought we had limitless supplies of fish and wildlife, wood fiber, forage, and minerals. Historical land use policies helped to settle and develop a growing country.

## CONCLUSION

The state of Utah is committed to become a leader in the area of ecosystem management. Personally, I see it as a major opportunity for those of us who have stewardship over natural resources to do our jobs better with less conflict and greater rewards.

Thank you.

No frontiers remain in the American West. And development has not come without cost to the health and sustainability of the land. We may never know the true extent of incremental and cumulative changes to the landscape. But their effects are real and visible.

Today the West faces the explosive spread of noxious weeds, threatened, endangered, and extinct species, stream courses and rangelands in need of repair, impaired water quality, and fundamental changes in the way we view and administer the land. But we are not starting from ground zero. I believe the catalyst of change is ecosystem management. To me there are nine operating principles to guide implementation of the ecosystem approach. They are:

Sustain the productivity and diversity of ecological systems. Or simply put, keep the land healthy. Know the condition of the land. Communicate with and involve all interested publics. Have common goals. Fix what's wrong. Use and have available information and the best science. Base planning and management on long-term horizons and goals. Or, think ahead. Reconnect isolated parts of the landscape. Or, look at the big picture. Practice adaptive management. That is, be flexible.

Albert Einstein once noted that "the significant problems we face today cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them." I think that's the right attitude from which to approach our task.

Our laws direct us to manage natural resources without impairing the long-term health of the land. I think we all agree that's an appropriate goal. Is our approach to land management based on yesterday's demands of a society whose values and needs have changed? We now know that overemphasizing commodity production, commercial use, and intensive development can compromise, and ultimately jeopardize, the land's health.

The agencies have created excessive and often conflicting policies, rules, and regulations. We will use the ecosystem approach to streamline administrative processes and improve fiscal and environmental accountability. I envision a BLM that can effectively serve our customers while efficiently accounting for taxpayer money spent. We will measure our effectiveness by the condition and health of the land. It is high time that the Bureau begins to uncomplicate our bureaucratic process. I believe what we need to do is not complicated or abstract. It's straight-forward common sense.

#### WHAT THE PUBLIC CAN EXPECT FROM THE PUBLIC LANDS

Charles Wilkinson believes that "it should not be so hard to mesh the needs of the lands and waters and the people. They ought to be the same."

We must always consider the health of the land. How much forage is available to wildlife or cows from rangelands infested by leafy spurge or cheatgrass? What good to a community is a watershed contaminated by runoff from an abandoned mine? Or a fishery ruined by excessive sedimentation from erosion?

We must respect the limits of the land. We must acknowledge that we don't know everything and be adaptable to new information and changing circumstances. An ecosystem approach will not eliminate the need to make difficult decisions to accomplish social and economic goals. We must have the information to make these decisions—and know they are not likely to impair the health of the land.

Here's what we should expect: Clear, cool streams filled with fish. Stable soils that help prevent erosion. Riparian areas that keep streams clean and provide habitat for wildlife and birds. A healthy mix of native grasses and heavier calves. In short, productive, diverse, and healthy lands that maintain sustainable levels of forest products, minerals' development, forage use, and provide a wide variety of educational and recreational opportunities. Education is key.

Simply put, ecosystem management is a way of doing business. It involves coordinated planning at the local level, forming partnerships, and using good information to manage the land.

We must lead by example. We must sit down with other federal, state, and interested private land owners to develop a consensus vision for the land. A vision based on maintaining healthy watersheds and diverse and productive ecosystems. I'm asking for your help. We need the active participation of stakeholders and other interested parties.

If we do our job right, local communities will be in the lead. People will recognize and appreciate the social and economic benefits of maintaining healthy and diverse ecological systems.

We must know the condition of our lands, and work together to achieve their health.

#### CONCLUSION

The principles of ecosystem management form the philosophic underpinning of a new land ethic. An ethic with roots in the philosophies of Roosevelt, Pinchot, Aldo Leopold, and many others. An ethic designed to maintain ecosystem health so that future generations may continue to enjoy benefits from the land. Remember the old proverb: "We have not inherited the world from our forefathers—we have borrowed it from our children."

Thanks for being here today. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

# HORIZONTAL SYNTHESSES OF SPEAKERS' COMMENTS ON THE FOUR THEMES

## THEME 1

## WHAT IS ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT?

## THEME 2

## WHAT ARE THE TECHNICAL, NATURAL-SCIENTIFIC PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTING ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT ON THE GROUND?

### THEME 3

## WHAT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MECHANISMS WILL BRING DISPARATE GROUPS TOGETHER IN AGREEMENT ON MANAGEMENT GOALS?

## THEME 4

## WHAT ARE THE LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS SURROUNDING THE ISSUES OF MULTIPLE LAND OWNERSHIP, FEDERAL, STATE, AND PRIVATE?

# BLM'S ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT

Remarks of Mike Dombeck  
Ecosystem Management of Natural  
Resources in the Intermountain West

## Introduction

My crusade in the BLM is to get back to basics; to cut process and keep things simple. The ecosystem approach is often greeted with skepticism, outright distrust, or confusion.

What we have to do is not complicated. It's not mystical. It's plain common sense. It's doing what's good for the land

*People*

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*Rep. if you  
one from the  
West*

*Product of  
occydum  
mgmt*

One of the greatest challenges facing land management agencies today, is achieving and keeping a clear focus and vision of where we want to go from here.

I'd like to take this opportunity to discuss four issues related to ecosystem management with you today. First, I'll talk about what it is. Second, how the concept evolved. Third, how it will translate to on-the-ground decisionmaking. Fourth, and most important, what you, our customers, can expect from the public lands under an ecosystem approach.

We need to work very closely with people. To me ecosystem management means healthy, functioning watersheds or landscapes that provide social and economic stability to local communities.

## Ecosystem Management: What is it?

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I always like to start discussions from common points of agreement. And I guarantee you when the smoke clears from that room of biologists, ranchers, and conservationists; they'd all agree on at least one point...

We have to maintain the health and productivity of the land. That's what ecosystem management is really about - maintaining the health, diversity, and productivity of the land. If we can all agree on that, and I think we do, the ecosystem approach provides common ground from which to develop consensus-based decisionmaking.

"Protecting ecological sustainability", "conserving biological diversity", and "preserving ecologic integrity" are all fancy ways of talking about lands with clean water, an abundance of perennial native grasses, sustainable populations of extraordinary fish like salmon, and healthy watersheds. All Americans recognize the value of these things.

*a century ago*  
Theodore Roosevelt put it nicely nearly a century ago, when he said:

If we of this generation destroy the resources from which our children would otherwise derive their livelihood, we reduce the capacity of our land to support a population, and so either degrade the standard of living or deprive the coming generations of their right to life on this continent.

And that's what it's all about, isn't it? Maintaining healthy, diverse, and productive watersheds so that present and future generations may continue to derive benefits from the land. Simply said, ecosystem management is the application of common sense to common problems for the common good.

So, before I get into the particulars of this translates to the public land - let's talk about how we arrived at this point today. I'd like to take a few minutes to put this all in a historical context.

## Historical Context

At one time, the public lands extended from the Appalachian Mountains westward to the Pacific Ocean. Of this 1.8 billion acres, about 2/3 was acquired by individuals, corporations, or states. Of what remained, some was set aside as National Forests, Wildlife Refuges, National Parks or Monuments, Military Bases, and for other public purposes.

Land policy has always been controversial

- Homesteading
- Railroad grants;
- Land Grant Colleges
- Timber Culture Act of 1873

We all know the condition of the vast western rangelands by 1900.

- Taylor Grazing Act of 1934

The next wave of real concern for the health of the land came with Silent Spring in the 1960's.

- Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act
- National Environmental Policy Act
  - interdisciplinary studies
- FLPMA - 1976
- NFMA - 1976
  - required planning
  - setting goals
  - public involvement

This is how the concepts of ecosystem management began to evolve.

## On-the-Ground Decision-making

So here we stand today. Two years shy of BLM's 50th anniversary, rapidly approaching the year 2000. The West has changed dramatically since the early days of the General Land Office. In the nineteenth century, we thought we had limitless supplies of fish and wildlife, wood fiber, forage, and minerals. Historical land use policies helped to settle and develop a growing country.

No frontiers remain in the American West. And development has not come without cost to the health and sustainability of the land.

We may never know the true extent of incremental and cumulative changes to the landscape. But their effects are real and visible.

 Today the West faces the explosive spread of noxious weeds... Threatened, endangered,

and extinct species... Stream courses and rangelands in need of repair... Impaired water quality. And forest health problems. All these indicate the need for fundamental changes in the way we view and administer the land. But we are not starting from ground zero.

I believe the catalyst of change is ecosystem management. To me there are nine operating principles to guide implementation of the ecosystem approach. They are:

- 1● Sustain the productivity and diversity of ecological systems. Or simply put, keep the land healthy.
- 2● Know the condition of the land.
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- 4● Have common goals.
- 5● Fix what's wrong.
- 6● Use and have available information and the best science.
- 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. And,
- 9● Practice adaptive management. That is, be flexible.

Albert Einstein once noted that "the significant problems we face today cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them." I think that's the right attitude from which to approach our task.

Our laws direct us to manage natural resources without impairing the long-term health of the land.... I think we all agree that's an appropriate goal.

Is our approach to land management based on yesterday's demands of a society whose values and needs had changed?

We now know that overemphasizing commodity production, commercial use, and intensive development can compromise, and ultimately jeopardize the land's health.

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## What the Public Can Expect From the Public Lands

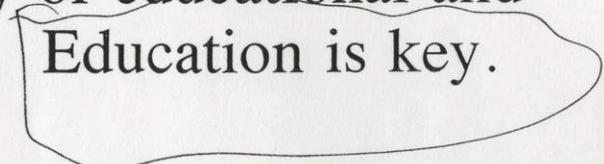
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In short, productive, diverse, and healthy lands that maintain sustainable levels of forest products, minerals' development, forage use, and provide a wide variety of educational and recreational opportunities.  Education is key.

Simply put, ecosystem management is a way of doing business. It involves coordinated planning at the local level, forming partnerships, and using good information to manage the land.

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## Conclusion

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Remarks of BLM Director  
**MIKE DOMBECK**

At the BLM All-Employees Meeting in St. George, Utah  
May 11, 1995

- It's great to be with you today.
- This is a great place to be, not only because of the people who live and work here but also because of the beauty of the land.
- Three major ecosystems meet here -- the Colorado Plateau, the Great Basin and the Sonoran Deserts.
- Another feature of this area is the rapidly growing human population of St. George and the surrounding communities. In fact, I'm told that this is not only one of the fastest-growing areas in Utah, but in the nation.

- Demands on the land and natural resources here are intense -- the Dixie Resource Area has a backlog of over 100 realty actions with only one person to process them.
- These demands challenge our agency's ability to manage for the health of the land while accommodating a wide variety of often-conflicting uses of that land.
- The new interagency office in St. George is one means of meeting this challenge. As you know, the office accommodates two Arizona Resource Areas, one Utah Resource Area, a National Biological Service office and a Forest Service Ranger District office.
- In particular, I want to take note of the visitor contact-reception area.

- Not only do you get the services normally provided at a BLM or Forest Service office -- such as wood permits, mining claim information, maps and advice from knowledgeable agency personnel.
- But you also get an abundance of other information as a result of an interagency partnership with the Arizona Strip and Dixie Interpretive Associations. That includes a large selection of books, posters, exhibits and other materials.
- Let me just say that you're doing an outstanding job in meeting the challenges facing our agency, and I want to thank you all for your hard work.
- Particularly at a time when it can be difficult for a Federal employee to do his or her job. This is a subject I'll be returning to in a few minutes.

~~scribble~~

- By the way, I want to welcome Jim Crisp as the new Area Manager for the Dixie Resource Area. Jim's most recent assignment was Chief of Fluid Minerals in the Colorado State Office.

**BLM Reauthorization**

- Next I would like to express my thanks to Congressman Jim Hansen of Utah, the chairman of the House National Parks, Forests and Lands Subcommittee. Congressman Hansen is sponsoring H.R. 1077, a bill that would reauthorize the BLM for six years.
- As most of you know, the BLM is the only Federal land-management agency without a permanent authorization. Extended authorization is important, because it would allow us to carry out long-term planning and make strategic decisions that are necessary for proper management of the public lands.

- For H.R. 1077 to pass, it needs strong bipartisan support. And it needs to be a straightforward reauthorization, not a "Christmas tree" bill that is decorated with highly-contentious amendments.
- In the past, lawmakers have added both environmental and pro-development amendments to the reauthorization legislation, dooming any chances for passage by both houses of Congress.
- And, unfortunately, we face that risk again this year.
- While Congressman Hansen's subcommittee rejected amendments to H.R. 1077 during its consideration of the bill, there is no guarantee that amendments won't be added in the full House Resources Committee, on the House floor, or in the Senate.

- I have assured Congressman Hansen I will work with him to win broad, bipartisan support for H.R. 1077, and that I will do what I can to discourage amendments to the bill.
- Other issues dealing with the management of public lands, as important as they are, can be dealt with on their own merits in their own time.
- So I am appealing to our customers, stakeholders and members of Congress to stand with us in support of H.R. 1077.

#### Utah Wilderness Legislation

- Next I'd like to comment on the long-standing Utah wilderness issue.
- To say the least, the issue of how much BLM land in Utah should be designated as wilderness remains controversial.

- To their credit, Governor Leavitt and the Utah congressional delegation have been holding hearings throughout Utah on this issue.
- And now that Utah's counties have weighed in with their recommendations about wilderness designation, the Governor and the congressional delegation must try to craft legislation for introduction in June.
- Let me say that the BLM stands ready to offer our expertise and any advice that the Governor or congressional delegation want as they write this legislation.
- I wish the Governor and the delegation good luck in their endeavor.
- They'll definitely need it, especially since the Utah wilderness bill is being watched as a potential model for other States' BLM wilderness bills.

- Much legislative work lies ahead, since Congress has thus far passed only two BLM wilderness bills -- one for Arizona and one for California.

BLM's Vision for the 21st Century

- Let me talk with you for a moment about where the BLM is headed as we approach the next century and the next millennium.
- The automotive engineer Charles Franklin Kettering once said: "**We should all be concerned about the future because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there.**"
- Like Kettering, the Bureau of Land Management is concerned about the future, and that's why we're charting a new course as we move -- perhaps I should say hurdle -- toward the 21st century.

- This new course is designed to meet the changing needs of the public lands and the changing demands of the American people who own these lands.

### Corporate Agenda

- As you know, the BLM's new course is laid out in our "Blueprint for the Future," which we published last fall.
- The blueprint sets forth the BLM's top five goals. Although I'm sure you could recite them from heart by now, let me just remind you that those goals are:
  - First, to restore and maintain the health of the land;
  - Second, to improve service to our customers;

-- Third, to promote greater involvement of BLM employees and the public in our decisionmaking process;

-- Fourth, to become more effective and efficient in the way we do business;

-- And fifth, to recruit, develop and retain a quality and diversified workforce.

#### Headquarters Reorganization

- As part of our effort to move into the 21st century, we've been reorganizing the Headquarters Office, as you know. This past December we completed the paperwork that converted us into a new organizational structure.
- Right now we're in a transitional phase during which we are continuing to move from a traditional program structure to a new interdisciplinary team approach.

- Headquarters employees are working within their newly assigned teams, which have charters for how they will operate.
- This reorganization and interdisciplinary team approach is an evolving process, so it will still be some time before we get to where we want to be.

#### Reinventing BLM

- Before briefly commenting on some other BLM issues, I think it's important to note that the November 8th congressional elections dramatically changed the political landscape on Capitol Hill. All Federal agencies, including the BLM, are affected by this change.
- We certainly expect that the 104th Congress will look closely at how well the BLM is doing its job and how wisely our agency is spending the taxpayers' dollars.

- And we believe that the BLM will stand up well under that scrutiny, because we are committed to reinventing our agency.
- Reinvention means working smarter and getting more bang for the taxpayers' buck.
- So I urge each of you to find ways to do your job more effectively and efficiently. Remember, those who live by red tape become entangled by red tape. I've said it before and I'll say it again: Simplify or die!
- Now I'd like to discuss a few other key issues with you.

#### BLM FY '96 Budget

- First I'd like to talk briefly about the BLM's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 1996, which I testified on last month [April 6] before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior.

- The President has requested \$1.157 billion for the BLM in 1996, which represents an increase of \$55 million over Fiscal Year 1995.
- The number of full-time BLM employees would remain steady in 1996 -- at 11,046 -- due to a 266-person increase in seasonal workers. But the BLM's permanent workforce would actually decline by 2.4 percent in 1996.
- The President's Forest Plan is a key item in the BLM's 1996 budget request. We are requesting a \$20 million increase in forest-related funding, half of which would be used to protect old-growth forests, with the other half going for the "Jobs in the Woods" initiative.

- For the entire Interior Department budget, the President is requesting \$30 million for "Jobs in the Woods," which is aimed at diversifying rural economies and creating full-time jobs in the private sector.
- The Interior Department is requesting \$8 million to increase recreational fishing opportunities, of which \$4 million would go to the BLM. The additional money would be used to restore the health of native fishes' stream habitat. This would increase fishing opportunities, attracting more tourist dollars to local communities.
- The BLM has requested an additional \$5 million in fiscal '96 for boundary surveys, mapping and management in connection with congressional passage of the California Desert Protection Act of 1994. This new law designated 69 new wilderness areas under BLM management.

- Except for funding requests related to the rangeland and firefighting programs, those are the highlights of the proposed BLM budget for fiscal '96. I'll be talking about those two programs in a moment.

#### Healthy Rangelands

- Let me turn to the subject of the BLM's management of the public rangelands.
- As you know, the Interior Department and the BLM are making changes in how we manage the 170 million acres of public rangelands under our jurisdiction.
- The goal of these changes is to improve the health and productivity of the public rangelands for the benefit of all Americans.
- In accordance with this emphasis on rangeland health, the BLM is requesting a \$6.5 million increase in public land resource management in fiscal '96.

- This will enable our agency to improve the condition of riparian or streamside areas and of related uplands on the public rangelands.
- On February 22, the Department and the BLM published forward-looking changes in grazing regulations.
- These administrative changes, which appeared in the Federal Register in the form of a "final rule," are scheduled to take effect this coming August.
- Overall, the final rule is intended to:
  - Improve rangeland health to provide benefits for current and future users of the public lands.
  - Promote the sustainable use of public land resources for the economic benefit of Western rural communities.

-- And ensure that public land users and all interested parties have a meaningful say in the management of those lands.

- The final rule was written after extensive input from the public, which submitted tens of thousands of comments.
- The rule would, over a 20-year period, restore to health about 100,000 acres of streamside habitat and some 20 million acres of upland habitat.
- Besides improving water quality and enhancing wildlife habitats, the new rule would increase opportunities for and generate economic benefits from tourism and recreational activities -- such as hunting, fishing and hiking.
- As you know, the revised grazing regulations do *not* change the grazing fee formula that Congress put in the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978.

- Noting that a consensus had not developed on the fee issue, Secretary Babbitt decided to leave any decision on revising the grazing fee formula to Congress.
- The new rule will also enhance public participation in public land management by establishing Resource Advisory Councils, known as RACs. The RACs, which will have 10 to 15 members, will include ranchers, environmentalists, recreationists, local officials and others.
- The diversity of membership on the Resource Advisory Councils will ensure that the BLM hears a broad array of views in making its land-management decisions. *And that's the way it should be -- because the public lands belong to all Americans.*

- The RACs will advise the BLM on land-management issues and will play an important role in designing the State or regional standards and guidelines that relate to rangeland health. Under the final rule, members of the councils must reside in the State in which a particular council functions.
- The field is now focusing on the RACs as it gets ready to implement the new rule. The rule will take effect on August 21, 1995, barring any action by Congress to the contrary.
- The new grazing rule complements the Department's and the BLM's focus on managing entire landscapes rather than only compartments of those landscapes.
- This Big Picture or ecosystem approach to management will enable managers to do a better job of restoring and maintaining the health of the public lands.

- What Theodore Roosevelt said in 1909 about the need for protecting resources also describes the rationale for this Big Picture approach to land management.

- Roosevelt said:

"If we of this generation destroy the resources from which our children would otherwise derive their livelihood, we reduce the capacity of our land to support a population, and so either degrade the standard of living or deprive the coming generations of their right to life on this continent...."

- And a proverb from India makes the same point:

"We have not inherited the world from our forefathers -- we have borrowed it from our children."

- By implementing a public rangeland program that leads us into the 21st century, the BLM will succeed in ensuring the health and productivity of the land for current and future generations of Americans.

### Fire Management

- Now let me turn to the subject of fire management.
- As you may know, the Department's fire programs are funded through the BLM and then reallocated to the principal firefighting agencies.
- The Department has requested a \$10.5 million increase in fiscal '96 for emergency Department firefighting -- making a total firefighting budget request of \$131 million.

- The 1994 fire season was not only a very busy one for Federal fire managers and firefighters, but also one that was marked by the South Canyon fire tragedy.
- At the end of 1994 fire season, the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) had received reports of more than 79,000 wildfires that burned more than 4 million acres. The Federal Government's fire-suppression efforts, which involved more than 25,000 civilian and military personnel, cost about \$925 million.
- Federal and State firefighters suppressed 97.8 percent of the season's wildfires with their initial attack, while only 2.2 percent escaped initial attack.
- Of course, the South Canyon fire tragedy -- which took the lives of 14 Federal firefighters on Colorado's Storm King Mountain last July 6th -- overshadowed the past fire season.

- In addition, 20 other brave men and women lost their lives in fighting fires or supporting fire-suppression efforts in 1994.
- The loss of these individuals has been painful for their families, friends and co-workers, and there are no words that can compensate for this loss.
- The BLM and the Forest Service believe the best way to honor the heroism and memory of these firefighters is to prevent future tragedies. And both agencies are committed to doing that.
- This past February the Occupational Safety and Health Administration -- OSHA -- released the results of its investigation into the South Canyon fire and issued two citations each to the BLM and Forest Service.

- The citations, which the agencies are not challenging, were for one "willful" violation and one "serious" violation of workplace safety regulations.
- While issuing the citations, OSHA commended the BLM-Forest Service team that investigated the South Canyon fire, calling its work "professional and thorough." OSHA also commended the work of an Interagency Management Review Team and said the findings of the investigative and review teams were consistent with OSHA's conclusions.
- In March, officials of the Department, BLM and the Forest Service had an informal conference with OSHA in Denver to discuss issues arising out of the OSHA investigation.
- OSHA officials felt it was important for the two agencies to understand the basis for the citations.

- The meeting also gave BLM and the Forest Service a chance to ask OSHA officials who they meant by "management" in the citations.
- OSHA responded by saying that management included the incident management team, the BLM's Grand Junction District, the Western Slope Fire Coordination Center, and both the State and national levels of the BLM and Forest Service.
- OSHA officials also said the citations were not based solely on the South Canyon fire. They said they had reviewed past accidents and determined that there was a dangerous trend that paralleled the findings relating to the South Canyon fire. Based on their interviews, OSHA officials said they felt similar conditions existed around the country.

- Let me repeat what I said when OSHA issued the citations on February 8th: the BLM and Forest Service are committed to learning everything we can from the South Canyon fire so we can prevent future accidents.
- To do that, we must instill -- and are working to instill -- a passion for safety among all agency personnel who oversee and are involved in our firefighting efforts.
- While I'm on the subject of fire, I'd also like to say we need to raise congressional and public awareness about the necessary role that fire plays in nature.
- It's obvious that wildfires can and do cause enormous damage and harm. And for that reason, Federal, State and local governments have worked hard to suppress wildland fires.

- But this emphasis on suppression has resulted in a buildup of vegetative fuel in many areas, putting our firefighters at greater risk.
- Fire reduces this buildup of fuels, and given this critical ecological function, it's important for land and resource managers not only to *suppress* fire, but also to *manage* it by using prescribed fire.
- So we need to tell the public about fire's natural role and the value of prescribed fire as a fire-reduction and property-protection tool.

#### County Supremacy Movement

- Now I'd like to talk briefly about the County Supremacy or States' Rights Movement, or, as it is sometimes called, Sagebrush Rebellion II.

- Over the past four years, some 70 counties in Nevada, California, Idaho, New Mexico and Oregon have either adopted or are considering measures that claim State or County ownership of or management authority over Federal land.
- On March 8th, the Justice Department filed a lawsuit in connection with this movement.
- The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Nevada, seeks a definitive ruling on Federal ownership of the public lands and an injunction barring Nye County, Nevada, officials from taking actions against Federal employees for carrying out their duties.
- Nye County passed a resolution in 1993 that asserts that the State of Nevada, not the United States, owns the national forests and other Federal lands in Nevada, and that Nye County therefore has the authority to manage these lands.

- Another Nye County resolution claims ownership of virtually every road on Federal lands within county boundaries.
- Based on these claims, Nye County has bulldozed national forest lands, opened national forest roads that have been closed by the Forest Service, and threatened Federal employees with criminal prosecution for implementing Federal laws.
- The purpose of the Justice Department's lawsuit, besides settling the ownership issue, is to protect BLM and other Federal employees from local prosecution for simply doing their jobs.
- Some County Supremacy supporters have said they welcome the lawsuit because they want the public land ownership issue to be addressed in Federal court.

- With the safety of our employees at stake, the Federal land-management agencies want this issue to be settled peaceably and definitively, and we hope the lawsuit will achieve that end.

**Employee Safety**

- In this connection, Headquarters has printed cards for distribution to the field that explain what you should do if you are arrested for carrying out your job. The card makes clear that BLM will do everything necessary to ensure your safety and protect your rights.
- While I'm on the subject of employee rights and safety, I know that many of you have become concerned about your personal security since the Oklahoma City bombing on April 19.

- Actually, some of you had concerns prior to this tragedy, in light of the March bombing of the Forest Service's Carson City office and the 1993 bombing of the BLM's Nevada State Office.
- Let me assure you that Headquarters takes very seriously any and all threats or actions against BLM employees. We are working with the law enforcement folks at NIFC to make sure that we take all appropriate and necessary measures to ensure your safety.
- Before leaving this subject, I want to say that my heart goes out, as I know yours does, to the victims of the Oklahoma City bombing and to their families.

### **Conclusion**

- I began my remarks by saying that the BLM is concerned about the future. As we chart this new course into the 21st century, please feel free to give us any advice that you think will help us get from here to there.
- Thanks so much for giving me this opportunity to talk with you. And now I'd be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

\*\*\*

about my background

Downs 25 miles from town of 1500 → live in a country no stoplights

Remarks of Mike Dombeck  
National Association of  
County Commissions  
May, 1995

Big woods.

shock of D.C. <sup>us</sup> World Record Carp  
Fishing guide, working woods.

I'm pleased to be here to talk with you about BLM's ecosystem-approach to management. First, though, I want to extend our sympathy to the families of the dedicated men and women of Oklahoma City.

President Clinton spoke for all of us in asking that God's grace is with the people who lost their lives, the families and the friends of the dead and the injured, and the people of Oklahoma City.

We are particularly touched by this tragedy because BLM employees are on the front line serving the public. This isn't always easy. The federal government isn't winning many popularity contests these days. But working for BLM has never been about popularity; it's about caring for the land and serving people.

just like being an elected county official isn't always about popularity

In keeping with that, I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about three related issues:

- our mission and commitment to ecosystem management;
- how ecosystem-approaches translate to ~~land~~ ~~wildlife and fisheries~~ management; and
- how we can work together to ensure that we pass on healthy, diverse, and productive lands to our children.

*rise  
curse  
my goals  
in moments  
time*

You know, these are ~~strange~~ <sup>interesting times</sup> times to be a federal employee. <sup>one</sup> Twenty years ago, I hired on with ~~the~~ <sup>resource management agency</sup> federal government because I enjoyed working with people. I became a fisheries biologist because I loved the outdoors and I wanted to share the wonder of nature with others.

*leaders  
cause*

Times have changed. Today, many BLM employees ~~will only travel in pairs and in~~ <sup>are concerned about their safety and their families</sup>

*The Fed Bld in Salt Lake is closed today because of a hurr. sea.* 3

*in this job for 14 months*  
personal vehicles. They tell me they are harassed if they drive agency trucks.

It seems nowadays, we spend more time shouting at each other in courts than we do leaning over pickups figuring out how to solve a problem.

*I've now been in this job for 15 months: I'm on a crusade*

My crusade in the BLM is to make the bureaucracy more user-friendly and less process-oriented. I firmly believe if we got back to basics — moved beyond the differences and worked ~~to~~ to achieve our common interests — that we'd better serve the people and more effectively, care for the land. *The need to work on unifying issues, rather than squaring off on things we disagree on.*

I'm on a crusade to improve the health of the land and improve the way we do business. To keep things as simple as possible and deliver scarce resources where they are most needed — on-the-ground.

3 things to increase efficiency

1. Write simpler — each employee

2. Cut org. process — like personnel

3. Stop doing things 4 ADC M&U.

Sometimes I just shake my head. Twenty-five years ago, laws such as the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Clean Air Act passed through Congress with bipartisan support. As a result, today, our air is cleaner. More rivers are swimmable and fishable. Hunting is better. *Cyahoa River doesn't burn any more  
Great Lakes have fantastic fish*

~~As people of good will, you'd think we could step back and appreciate the results of our good work. Not undo the whole ball of wax.~~

*most  
Co,WI  
window on  
cabin*

~~But change is difficult; and the West is clearly changing. The Western states are growing faster than any other part of the country. People are moving to new areas. Expecting more from the government; more from the land. Society's needs and expectations are far different than just a few years ago.~~

*challenge we all have as public servants & elected officials is to work for change.*

Nowhere in government is that change more evident and challenging than at BLM. Our constituents are as diverse as the American people. Miners, fishermen, ranchers, environmentalists, recreation users, timber companies, Native American's, miners, hunters, and so on. We manage a more diverse set of resources, interests, and values than any other agency in the federal government.

If we have learned anything from the past, it's that natural resources, and the people who depend on them, are better served when agency resources are spent on-the-ground and not in court.

We have many challenges:

- Noxious weeds are spreading on public lands at 2-3,000 acres per day;
- *We have* over 215 threatened and endangered species occur on public lands;

We still have soil erosion

- stream courses and riparian areas are in desperate need of repair; and
- poor forest health and degraded water quality compromise the land's productivity.

Our watersheds are not producing their full range of benefits. Our challenge is to break the gridlock and restore the land's health. We must work together to focus on the benefits of healthy public lands — benefits the American people appreciate and support. Things like:

- cleaner water;
- more song-birds;
- better forage for cows;
- habitats that support diverse animal populations, better hunting, and better fishing;

- riparian areas that help recharge precious groundwater; and
- ~~less soil erosion~~
- uplands that hold soil in place and prevent erosion.

That's really what ecosystem management is all about. Working with others to manage watersheds that do three very basic things: ~~hold~~ ~~catch~~ water; store water; and release water.

To get that message across to my employees, the first step I took as BLM's Director was to simplify BLM's mission statement. Today all BLM employees have a single charge. That is:

- To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

My line managers and all BLM employees have two standing orders:

- Maintain and restore the health of the land and
- Improve customer service and the way we do business.

*hold it  
up.*

Our approach is spelled out in BLM's *Blueprint For the Future* - copies of which are available here today.

When you shake it all up in a bag; and look beyond the harsh rhetoric, we would all agree that our task is to:

- protect the natural diversity, productivity, and integrity of the land and

This is our guiding principle — the most basic distillation of ecosystem management that I know.

For too long, we have spent scarce resources responding to the *effects* of resource degradation without addressing their root *causes*. In the past, we waited until a species reached the brink of extinction before invoking the Endangered Species Act to "recover" them. It is a thankless and nearly impossible task.

Although the ESA must remain a critical tool to prevent extinction, managing ecological systems in their entirety, rather than focussing on their parts, is the essence of good stewardship. As John Muir said, "when we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe."

We must move forward into the next generation of land and resource stewardship. Whether we call it ecosystem management, watershed approaches, or holistic resource management is unimportant.

Don't worry about definitions look to the land, its health and productivity.

Don't worry about lines on the map - work with the people who live there, people who have a stake in the land ~~and~~ people who care.

The important point is that efforts such as PACFISH, the President's Forest Plan for the Pacific Northwest, and our efforts to improve rangeland health are unprecedented opportunities to protect and conserve watershed function and health.

*Let me mention the goals of our*  
~~For example, changes in our rangeland management program will help us to:~~

- restore the health of 100,000 acres of riparian areas;
- bring 20 million acres of upland habitat into properly functioning condition;
- improve water quality and watershed health by reducing erosion, increasing water quality, ground water recharge, and streamflow;
- benefit most plant, animal, and fish species;

- enhance recreational opportunities such as fishing, hunting, hiking, tourism, and wildlife viewing; and
- *improve forage production & have a healthy mix of native grasses*
- ensure that all the full range of public land users and interested citizens have a say in management of shared resources.

In a few weeks, we will ask for nominations to serve on our Resource Advisory Councils. Participate in the process. Work with us to assist local communities to develop a common vision for maintaining the health of the public lands.

*I believe that we must work for people at land level*

If we do our job right, local communities will be with us. The days of command and control approaches to resource management are over. People must recognize and appreciate the social and economic benefits of maintaining healthy and diverse ecological systems.

We have many examples to guide us.

- In Arizona, we exchanged land in the Phoenix metropolitan area for land on the San Pedro River. From this land we created the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area. Bird watchers and others are drawn to the area from all over the world.
- We are looking at our pricing policies to ensure that the American taxpayer gets a fair deal. As part of Vice President Gore's Reinventing Government Initiative, we want to ensure that if you extract minerals from public lands, you pay your fair share of the administrative costs.
- Along the Marys River in Nevada, we acquired critical streamside habitat for Lahontan cutthroat trout and eased Endangered Species Act compliance issues for private landowners.

- The Seeking Common Ground initiative, developed by the National Cattleman's Association, has helped resolve tensions between the demands of big game and livestock. We brought opposing groups together to develop solutions. Solutions which have worked. We've improved rangeland health, as well as promoted elk habitat.
- We are working with the State Trust Administration in Utah to transfer State lands that possess critical habitat for the Desert Tortoise with public lands that would enhance Utah's future urban development needs.
- New Mexico and BLM recently agreed to exchange automated land resources data. This will enable the State and BLM to avoid duplicative efforts, improve coordination, save taxpayer money, and allow for more effective resource management.
- Trout Creek Mts. Working Group.<sup>14</sup>  
There are examples in every state

These are the sorts of collaborative efforts that bring people of good will together in ways that protect the natural resources entrusted to our care and benefit the people we serve. *that protect  
the health of the land.*

As people of good we will should enjoy the bounty of the public lands and work to ease tension at local levels. Collaboration and consensus building are the answer. Notice I didn't say, capitulation — but fair and reasoned debate. We must look deeper to find the real meaning of what is important to us as Americans. *Open space. Will Rogers said they buy land they ain't making it any more.*

We must never forget that the actions we take today shape the future of tomorrow's children.  
*Open space 100 - 200 years from now.*

Thanks for letting me be here. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

*lets work together*

Remarks of Mike Dombeck  
National Association of  
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May, 1995

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- our mission and commitment to ecosystem management;
- how ecosystem-approaches translate to wildlife and fisheries management; and
- how we can work together to ensure that we pass on healthy, diverse, and productive lands to our children.

**[Pause]**

You know, these are strange times to be a federal employee. Twenty years ago, I hired on with the federal government because I enjoyed working with people. I became a fisheries biologist because I loved the outdoors and wanted to share the wonder of nature with others.

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**Mission and Vision**

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But change is difficult; and the West is clearly changing. The Western states are growing faster than any other part of the country. People are moving to new areas. Expecting more from the government; more from the land. Society's needs and expectations are far different than just a few years ago.

Nowhere in government is that change more evident and challenging than at BLM. Our constituents are as diverse as the American people. Miners, fishermen, ranchers, environmentalists, recreation users, timber companies, Native American's, miners, hunters, and so on. We manage a more diverse set of resources, interests, and values than any other agency in the federal government.

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In short, our watersheds are not producing their full range of benefits. Our challenge is to break the gridlock and restore the land's health. We must work together to focus on the benefits of healthy public lands — benefits the American people appreciate and support. Things like:

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### **Ecosystem Approaches to Wildlife Management**

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- benefit most plant, animal, and fish species;
- enhance recreational opportunities such as fishing, hunting, hiking, tourism, and wildlife viewing; and
- ensure that all the full range of public land users and interested citizens have a say in management of shared resources.

In a few weeks, we will ask for nominations to serve on our Resource Advisory Councils. Participate in the process. Work with us to assist local communities to develop a common vision for maintaining the health of the public lands.

### **Collaboration**

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We must never forget that the actions we take today shape the future of tomorrow's children.

Thanks for letting me be here. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

## KEY POINTS:

- Make the bureaucracy more user-friendly and less process-oriented. If we got back to basics — moved beyond the differences and worked to achieve our common interests — we'd better serve the people and more effectively, care for the land.
- The West is clearly changing; and change is difficult. The Western states are growing faster than any other part of the country. People are moving to new areas. Expecting more from the government; more from the land. Society's needs and expectations are far different than just a few years ago.

If we have learned anything from the past, it's that natural resources, and the people who depend on them, are better served when agency resources are spent on-the-ground and not in court.

- Our watersheds are not producing their full range of benefits. Our challenge is to break the gridlock and restore the land's health. We must work together to focus on the benefits of healthy public lands — benefits the American people appreciate and support. Things like: ...
- Changes in our rangeland management program will help us to:
  - restore the health of 100,000 acres of riparian areas;
  - bring 20 million acres of upland habitat into properly functioning condition;
  - improve water quality and watershed health by reducing erosion, increasing water quality, ground water recharge, and streamflow;
  - benefit most plant, animal, and fish species;
  - enhance recreational opportunities such as fishing, hunting, hiking, tourism, and wildlife viewing; and
  - ensure that all the full range of public land users and interested citizens have a say in management of shared resources.

In a few weeks, we will ask for nominations to serve on our Resource Advisory Councils. Participate in the process. Work with us to assist local communities to develop a common vision for maintaining the health of the public lands.

- If we do our job right, local communities will be in the lead. The days of command and control approaches to resource management are over. People must recognize and appreciate the social and economic benefits of maintaining healthy and diverse ecological systems. Examples ....

MIKE DOMBECK  
ACTING DIRECTOR  
REMARKS  
RECREATIONAL FISHERIES SUMMIT  
FEDERAL ROLE IN RECREATIONAL FISHING  
THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 1995  
9:45 A.M.  
2168 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING (GOLD ROOM)  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

I'd like to thank the American Sportfishing Association for inviting me to speak with you today. I'm most pleased to be able to talk to you about one of my favorite subjects - recreational fishing.

Recreational fishing is an avocation as well as my vocation. And since I am an avid angler, I am lucky to manage a virtual fisherman's paradise.

With BLM's 270 million acres of public lands encompassing 156,000 miles of fishable streams and rivers, 2.4 million acres of lakes, and 167,000 acres of reservoirs, anglers will find a lifetime of fun and adventure on the public lands.

The public lands that BLM manages belong to all Americans. Through effective partnerships among State and Federal agencies, interest groups, and private industry, we can ensure that the publics' aquatic resources remain healthy, diverse, and productive. The Recreational Fisheries Initiative is one such partnership.

So let's spend a few minutes visiting on BLM's plans to manage the public's vast and priceless aquatic resources.

Remember that line from the movie, and I'm dating myself here, "The Graduate?" The husband of Mrs. Robinson puts his arm around Dustin Hoffman and says, "The future is plastics!"

I sort of feel that way when I talk about natural resource management. Except it's not plastics — it's watersheds. The future is watersheds.

Whether you work for a State Department of Fish and Game, a conservation organization, or the fishing industry — all of our bottom lines are reflected in the health of watersheds.

It all begins with water and soil. Watershed health is inextricably linked to the:

- amount, timing, and duration of streamflows;
- soil that captures, stores, and safely releases water;
- water that recharges aquifers, supports perennial streamflows, and nourishes diverse and productive plant growth.

Now many of you know that I'm a certified fisheries scientist and an American Fisheries Society Life Member. But before any of that, I was a fishing guide in Wisconsin.

As a guide, when I wasn't chasing walleye or dodging the small birds they call mosquitoes up there, I learned a simple truth:

- Healthy watersheds = good fishing.
- Good fishing = healthy watersheds.

Now, if you'll allow, I'll show off my Ph.D. training and extrapolate further:

- Healthy watersheds = good fishing = more profits for tackle manufacturers.

It's not a very complicated theorem. Here's the bottom line. In 1990 people spent over \$563 million on recreational fishing on BLM public lands.

So understanding that often the simplest truths are the most effective, the first step I took as BLM's Director was to change BLM's mission statement. Today, all BLM employees have a single charge:

“To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.”

I have given two very basic instruction to my line managers:

- Maintain and restore the health of the land; and
- Improve the way we do business.

These strategic goals are spelled out in BLM's Blueprint For The Future. Copies of our strategic agenda are available from our Public Affairs Office.

Although our objectives may differ slightly, we would all agree that we must:

- Protect the natural diversity, productivity, and integrity of the land; and,
- Never compromise the ability of future generations to draw social, economic, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits from the land.

These will be our guiding principles — as we implement the Recreational Fisheries Initiative.

Stable fish, plant, and wildlife populations are the ultimate indicators of healthy ecosystems. As Secretary Babbitt has said, “Fish are the most extraordinary, sensitive, environmental indicators” and ecosystem health.

One need look no further than the declining timber and fisheries industries of the Pacific Northwest to see the link among the health of fish and wildlife habitats to economic stability and prosperity.

When I was the Fish Program manager for the Forest Service, I helped to develop the Recreational Fisheries Initiative. Other programs such as Bring Back The Natives, and Fish & Wildlife 2000 have worked so well only because the State agencies and national organizations such as Trout Unlimited and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation have made it possible.

In an era of shrinking Federal budgets, we will lean more heavily than ever before on partnerships and challenge cost share agreements. I think we're up to the task, thanks to the efforts of many in this room. For example, over the past 9 years, we have leveraged over \$80 million to improve fish, wildlife, and plant habitat.

When I look at the quality of the people who helped to develop the Recreational Fisheries Initiative, I'm not surprised that 4-5 of the goals are nearly identical to those BLM has established to manage healthy rangelands.

We need your continued support and assistance to see our range proposal through to implementation. The payoffs are high. Implementation of range management rule will:

- Restore the health of 100,000 acres of riparian areas;
- Bring 20 million acres of upland habitat into properly functioning condition;
- Improve water quality and watershed health by reducing erosion, increasing water quality, ground water recharge, and streamflow;
- Benefit plant, animal, and fish species; and,
- Enhance recreational opportunities such as fishing, hunting, hiking, tourism, and wildlife viewing.

Over the years, it's become apparent that we cannot avoid controversy without bringing all of the players to the table. Our Resource Advisory Councils are structured to ensure that fisheries interests will always influence how the public's lands and waters are managed.

We simply cannot meet the needs of the people without first securing the health of the land.

Our focus and responsibility is to work together to ensure that your children and mine can enjoy the benefits of healthy, diverse, and productive public lands. Through expanded partnerships and mutual support, programs such as our range reform and the Recreational Fisheries Initiative will help to make that happen.

If we do our job right, local communities will be in the lead. We will work with our partners, States, and other agencies to implement ecosystem approaches. People will recognize and appreciate the social and economic benefits of maintaining healthy and diverse ecological systems.

With healthy and diverse ecological systems, recreational fishing opportunities will increase and provide a much needed boost to local communities.

We will implement the Initiative by focusing on:

- recreational fishery resources and aquatic habitat in those areas where there are Federal interests;
- where partnerships among States, Tribes, the private sector, and local communities can be developed;
- and where riparian improvements can restore declining recreational fish species.

In anticipation of receiving the \$4 million increase for recreational fishing in the President's Fiscal Year 1996 budget, BLM State Offices — Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming — have proposed important recreational fishing projects. Some of these highlights include:

- Reclaiming fish habitat in Montana's Blackfoot River Ecosystem with Federal agencies and local land owners working to restore the watershed to its original pristine condition.
- Completing 10 to 15 recreational fishing projects on the Arkansas River in Colorado with the cooperation of the Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Colorado Division of Wildlife, and Trout Unlimited to improve fishing access, protect and improve riparian areas, and restore habitat for native species.

- Working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska State Parks, USDA Forest Service, Alaska Fly Fishers, Anchorage School District, and the Boy Scouts to stabilize streambanks, restore channels, construct fishing decks, and restore vegetation for Alaska's Campbell Creek and Little Susitna River.

Our task is to work with nature, not against it.

Please allow me to close with a relevant quote. The late writer Leonard Hall said, "We live in an age of material things — of techniques and processes, of goods and gadgets. It is easy to forget in such a world that we still live only because of the resources of the land."

We stand on the cusp of change :

- with unprecedented challenges and opportunities to conserve watershed health;
- to achieve healthy rangelands;
- and to secure, and leave, a better place for our children.

Let that be the context for our conversation today and for our actions tomorrow.

•

Remarks of BLM Acting Director  
**MIKE DOMBECK**

Before Club 20  
Grand Junction, Colorado  
Sept. 9, 1995

It's good to be with you. Some of you may recall that I spoke with Club 20 just two months ago.

Today, like in June, I'd like to talk with you about the future -- more specifically, the future of the Bureau of Land Management. Earlier, I focused on budget and the BLM future. Today, I want to talk about getting more of our resources on the ground as well as a few other topics that relate to the future of BLM and the public lands.

As public land users, I know you are concerned about the future of public lands. As the managers of those lands, we are as well. That's why we are charting a new course as we approach the 21st century.

*on the West Slope*

This new course is designed to meet the changing needs of the public lands and the changing demands of the American people who own these lands.

We laid out this new course in a document titled "Blueprint for the Future," which we issued last fall. The blueprint set forth the BLM's top priorities as we approach the next millennium. Those goals are: (SEE ~~OVERHEAD 1~~)

First, to restore and maintain the health of the land;

Second, to improve service to our customers, including groups like Club 20;  
*taxpayers*

Third, to promote collaborative decisionmaking so that interested parties have a greater say at the local level;

Fourth, to improve our business practices;

And fifth, to recruit, develop and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce.

In setting these goals, we knew we could accomplish them only by moving more people and more funds to the field level. And that's exactly what we've been doing.

Before giving you the details on this move, let me give you a bit of a historical perspective about the BLM.

## Where the BLM Has Been

The BLM was created in 1946 by a Presidential Executive Order that directed the combining of two agencies -- a centralized General Land Office and a decentralized U.S. Grazing Service. This resulted in a new, three-tiered structure composed of a headquarters office, seven regional offices and a variety of district offices.

Public Domain 1.8 Billion  
270 million acres  
8.3 in Colorado  
Send Nogady  
wanted

*new laws*

- As a result of congressional actions and court decisions over the past 50 years, the BLM's land-management mission has expanded in scope and complexity. During this time, the BLM has reorganized its Washington Office at least six times and its field structure at least four times.

Other developments since 1946 include the establishment of Service Centers in Portland and Denver in 1963; the Great Basin Fire Center in Boise in 1965; and the Land and Minerals Training School in Phoenix in 1969. (The BLM's Service Center is now based in Denver; the Great Basin Fire Center is now the National Interagency Fire Center; and the Land and Minerals Training School is now the National Training Center.)

## **Moving More People and Money to the Ground**

So where is the BLM today, organizationally speaking? Over the last several years we have been working hard to reduce administrative overhead and cut red tape while delivering better service to our customers.

Toward that end, we have been reducing the number of Headquarters and State Office personnel while moving more positions to our District and Resource Area Offices. In the case of our Headquarters Office, the number of staffers has declined by one-third since 1991 -- from 515 to 348 positions.

Since fiscal year 1993, the BLM has reduced its total workforce by nearly 900 positions -- an eight percent cut.

Yet during this same period the number of positions at our Resource Area Offices has grown from 3,130 to 3,580 -- an increase of 450 positions at that level [Chart 1 -- ~~Resource Area Positions~~].

The net result of these moves is that the BLM has pared the number of positions above the Resource Area level by 1,350 positions -- a 19 percent reduction.

~~Looking at Chart 2 [Position Location, By Number], you can see that the number of positions in the national offices (Washington, the Service Center in Denver and the National Training Center in Phoenix) has decreased since 1993 from 1,351 to 1,144. Ultimately, the number of these positions will decline to 1,000.~~

The chart also shows a substantial decline in the number of State Office personnel.

The BLM has been moving more people and money to our Resource Area level for one simple, but important reason: that's where the BLM is closest to its customers and to the natural resources we manage. That's why we describe our Resource Area Offices as being "on-the-ground" -- in comparison with our more cloud-like headquarters office in Washington, D.C.

In fiscal year 1993, 28 percent of our employees worked in Resource Area Offices, while today the figure has risen to 35 percent. During the same period, the percentage of employees working in Resource Area or District Offices rose from 57 percent to 59 percent [Chart 3 -- Position Location, by Percent of Total].

Here in Colorado, the number of BLM staffers working outside of Denver has risen from 417 to 458 since fiscal year 1993. During that same period, we have reduced our Denver staff from 251 to 175 and have pared down the number of supervisors from 87 to 57 -- a 23 percent reduction.

To achieve greater efficiency, BLM Colorado has also been sharing facilities and staffs with other agencies. Among other things, the State Office is sharing office space at six interagency fire dispatch centers; it's also sharing an employee with the Forest Service who serves as San Juan Resource Area Manager and as the Associate Forest Supervisor in Durango.

### **Chart 3 AGAIN [Position Location, by Percent of Total] shows where the BLM's positions are now and will be located.**

As you can see, the chart shows a trend that is consistent with our efforts to move resources to the ground. Specifically, the chart shows that the percentage of field positions at the District and Resource Area levels was 57 percent of the total workforce in 1993 -- a figure that has risen to 59 percent today. Our goal is that 70 percent of the BLM's positions will eventually be located in ~~District or Resource Area~~ Offices.

*Field*

*Field Offices*

Shifting more people and money to the District and Resource Area Offices has meant the BLM is doing more operational and less administrative work.

In 1993, about two-thirds of the BLM's workforce was engaged in what we call operational work while one-third was doing headquarters or administrative work.

**[Chart 4 -- Administrative vs. On-the-Ground Work, By Percent of Total]** We have improved that ratio so that now 70 percent are doing operational work while 30 percent are doing headquarters and administrative work. Our goal is to reach a 75 to 25 percent ratio by 1999.

## Where the BLM is Going

At a meeting of the BLM's Leadership Team in July, we reviewed the progress we've made to date in streamlining the organization. While we discussed the possible elimination of one of our field levels, we decided that getting more resources to the ground is far more important than the number of organizational tiers.

The Leadership Team then committed the BLM to several key goals, including the one I just mentioned about getting at least 75 percent of the BLM's workforce doing operational work.

The team also wants each State organization to meet several key objectives by 1999, including achieving a supervisor-to-employee ratio of 1:15 over the current ratio of 1:7 [**Chart 5 -- Supervisor to Employee Ratio**]. Another goal is to reduce the number of high-grade positions (GS-14, GS-15 and Senior Executive Service) from 340 to 302 [**Chart 6 -- Reductions in High Grade Positions**].

The Leadership Team also wants each field office located in a place where it can best meets customers' needs. The BLM will also take advantage of opportunities to share personnel or facilities with other Federal agencies, such as the Forest Service.

While the BLM will maintain its presence in all existing locations, the agency may change office buildings within those locations. Putting separate field offices in one building may occur, but the BLM will work towards a "one roof, one manager" goal for all field offices.

Another goal of the Leadership Team is to eliminate as many review layers as possible at each level of the BLM's structure. Our view is that quality is built into a product, not inspected into it, and therefore reviewers should be part of any team that produces a product.

While I'm on the subject of cutting layers of bureaucracy and red tape, I'd like to point out that the Administration has been working hard to do that since September 1993, when it released a blueprint to reinvent government.

The blueprint, a report of Vice President Gore's National Performance Review, called for reducing the Federal workforce by more than 250,000 jobs over five years -- a 12 percent cut.

Exactly how many Federal jobs are cut depends on the yearly appropriations bills passed by Congress, and I'll be talking about the Fiscal Year '96 budget for the BLM in a few minutes.

While there is a definite need to cut the size of the Federal Government, it's important to keep the issue of "Big Government" -- meaning big Federal Government -- in perspective.

The fact is that based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau, the Federal Government is actually smaller today, in relative terms, than it was 50 years ago.

The Federal Government today employs 1 of every 90 Americans, compared with 1 of every 62 in 1946. In absolute terms, of course, the number of Federal workers has risen -- from 2.2 million in 1946 to 2.8 million today. But over that period the nation's population has grown from 140 million to 250 million, meaning the ratio of Federal workers to the general population has declined.

While the Federal workforce has been shrinking, in relative terms, since World War II, State and local governments have grown dramatically during this period. As noted in a recent Los Angeles Times article, the ratio of State and local government workers was 1 for every 42 Americans in 1946, whereas it is 1 for every 16 today. In absolute terms, the number of employees of State and local governments rose from 3.3 million in 1946 to 16.5 million now.

Needless to say, there are many good reasons why State and local governments have grown over the past five decades -- among other things, many more schools have been built, requiring more teachers and administrators, and more prisons have been constructed, requiring more personnel to run them.

My point in citing this data is simply to make sure that when the issue of Big Government -- meaning big Federal Government -- comes up for discussion, it's important to realize that in relative terms, the size of the Federal Government has been shrinking and continues to shrink.

## **Moving Decisionmaking to the Ground**

The BLM has not only been moving more employees and money to the ground, as I noted earlier, but has also been shifting more decisionmaking away from Washington to the field.

By doing this, we are moving away from Washington's "one-size-fits-all" approach to hands-on management that addresses local needs and conditions.

Probably the best example of this shift in decisionmaking is the formation of the Resource Advisory Councils, which are part of the BLM's new grazing and public participation rules. These new rules, known as our Healthy Rangelands strategy, took effect August 21.

As you know, last month Secretary Babbitt, Governor Romer and BLM Colorado State Director Don Glaser announced the appointment of 45 citizens to serve on three Resource Advisory Councils for BLM-managed lands in Colorado.

Ferrington  
Carpenter  
9/27/34 - Sand Junction

Hayden  
Henders

All three councils met for the first time on August 22, and by all accounts, their gathering in Grand Junction was an unqualified success.

Don Glaser chaired the meeting and Governor Romer and Secretary Babbitt were on hand to speak with council members about the importance of the job they'll be doing.

The diverse membership of these councils will ensure that the various users of the public lands have a voice in the BLM's decisionmaking process. *And that's the way it should be, because the public lands belong to all Americans.*

Secretary Babbitt considered the Grand Junction meeting to be so positive that he's hoping to attend one or more of the council meetings in other States.

The three Colorado councils will next meet on September 21 -- in Grand Junction, Montrose and Colorado Springs. That same day, the Resource Advisory Councils of the other public land states will hold their first round of meetings. Larry Hamilton, the BLM's Montana State Director, is overseeing the planning of these meetings.

Larry, with the backing of the BLM's National Training Center in Phoenix, has developed workshops for BLM personnel from each of the States that will be hosting council meetings. These workshops are aimed at getting each of the councils off to a productive start.

empower local managers  
decisions close to the land

include all players.

3 prong approach to increase efficiency

1. We can't do everything
2. Cut administrative process.
3. Simplify

## The Purpose of the Healthy Rangelands Strategy

Let me take a moment to restate the purpose of the new rules that comprise our Healthy Rangelands strategy. These rules are intended to achieve three primary objectives:

- First, to improve rangeland health to provide benefits for current and future users of the public lands;
- Second, to promote the sustainable use of public land resources for the economic benefit of Western rural communities;
- And third, to ensure that public land users have a meaningful say in the management of those lands.

As you know, Senator Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) and Congressman Wes Cooley (R-Ore.) have introduced legislation that would supersede the Healthy Rangelands strategy.

The Department of Interior and the BLM strongly oppose this legislation, which we believe would set back public rangeland management by 50 years.

The legislation would do this by focusing rangeland management on a single, although important, use of the land -- that of livestock grazing -- to the detriment of other legitimate uses of the land, such as mining, hunting and camping.

To put it another way, the legislation would take the "multiple" out of multiple-use management, which is the BLM's mandate under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

In contrast, the Healthy Rangelands strategy focuses on maintaining the health and productivity of the land -- for all uses, resources and values.

The Domenici and Cooley bills would also severely limit the ability of non-ranchers to have a say in public rangeland management.

Denying citizens a voice at the discussion table is not only unfair, it's unwise.

Unwise, because cutting recreationists and others out of the advisory process will only lead to more litigation over land-management decisions. And while this litigation may be a dream-come-true for lawyers, it will be a nightmare for land managers and taxpayers.

In contrast, the Healthy Rangelands strategy establishes Resource Advisory Councils with diverse and balanced memberships.

These councils will address the needs of all those who use and appreciate the public lands -- be they ranchers, anglers, oil and gas developers, or families on outings.

The pending grazing legislation would also impose a top-down approach to public rangeland management. In contrast, the Healthy Rangelands strategy will give local land managers the management tools they need to solve on-the-ground problems.

The legislation would also effectively prevent land managers from taking immediate actions needed to stop resource degradation. In fact, the legislation could result in 23 years of land monitoring, administrative appeals and other delays before a land manager could implement a decision aimed at protecting rangeland resources.

In contrast, the Healthy Rangelands strategy will, over time, restore the productivity of 100,000 acres of riparian areas; will bring 20 million acres of uplands into proper functioning condition; will benefit most plant, fish and animal species, including livestock; and will enhance a variety of recreational opportunities, such as fishing, hunting, hiking, and wildlife viewing.

Let me update you on developments on Capitol Hill on the grazing issue. Senator Domenici's bill (S. 852) has been approved by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee; Congressman Cooley's bill (H.R. 1713) is pending before the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands.

Although Senator Domenici's bill has been approved at the committee level, the senator has already said publicly that he must revise his measure because it cannot pass the Senate as written.

Senator Domenici has said he will respond to concerns voiced by hunters, fishermen and hikers that his bill would limit their access to the public lands. We share that concern, and we hope that the senator will address this and other concerns we have raised about his bill.

You may be aware that last month the Senate passed a three-month moratorium on the Healthy Rangelands regulations. But this moratorium -- included as part of the Senate's version of the fiscal 1996 Interior appropriations bill -- has not been approved by the House. And so the moratorium has not gone into effect and, in fact, may never become law.

Congress has returned from its August recess, and the Senate and House must now resolve differences between their versions of the Interior appropriations bill (H.R. 1977).

It's too early to tell what the results of those negotiations might be. While we hope that the House does not pass a moratorium, we will, of course, fully comply with any moratorium that is part of legislation approved by both houses of Congress and signed into law by the President.

For now, we are proceeding to implement our Healthy Rangelands strategy.

We developed these new rules after receiving and reviewing 20,000 pieces of correspondence that contained 38,000 individual comments. This input also included 49 public hearings on June 8, 1994, and 22 meetings across the West involving Western governors and others during a three-month period that began in November 1993.

In addition, Secretary Babbitt and Departmental officials participated in nine public meetings in Colorado that were organized by Governor Romer, who played an immensely constructive role in this rulemaking effort.

The Interior Department and the BLM published the Healthy Rangelands strategy in the Federal Register last February. We then postponed implementation for six months -- meaning, in effect, that we unilaterally imposed a six-month moratorium so that Congress would have time to review the new rules.

We have long felt, and still feel, that this new management strategy is the best way to ensure the health and productivity of the public rangelands for current and future generations of Americans.

I hope you share our view about the merits of our Healthy Rangelands strategy. But if you're not convinced now, then I hope you will be as time goes by.

## Budget

The BLM is watching what's happening on Capitol Hill very closely, particularly our fiscal 1996 appropriation. Based on House and Senate actions thus far, we expect our Management of Lands and Resources Account -- BLM's main account -- to be a little more than 5 percent below the 1995 level.

If the House version prevails, there will be a significant slowdown or even stoppage of some of our agency's key initiatives.

Under both the House and Senate versions of the appropriations legislation, our Recreational Fisheries initiative will not be funded. That means the BLM will not be able to do a variety of projects that directly benefit local economies.

That's a particularly untimely development, given that President Clinton signed an Executive Order on Recreational Fishing on June 7 that was supported by the American Sportfishing Association. The association represents 60 million American anglers, who spend about \$69 million a year on recreational fishing.

In addition, the BLM's efforts to improve the health of the land will be hurt by cuts in:

-- the Soil, Water and Air program, which provides our basic data for watershed management;

- the Riparian-Wetland Initiative, which is working to get more riparian-wetland areas into proper functioning condition;
- the General Wildlife Habitat program, which improves habitat for game and non-game species; and
- and the Threatened and Endangered Species program, which helps recover these species.

Overall, the House and Senate budget cuts will stall or reverse the substantial progress that BLM has been making to improve the health and productivity of the public lands.

No doubt some of you have read or heard about the possibility of a Federal Government shutdown, which could come about if the various 1996 appropriations bills are not passed and signed into law by Oct. 1, when the new fiscal year starts.

Congress could avoid a shutdown by passing a stopgap spending measure, known as a continuing resolution, to keep Federal departments and agencies funded on a temporary basis, but it is not certain this would happen.

Another way that a Federal shutdown might occur is if Congress should fail to raise the Federal debt ceiling by late October or early November.

All I can say at this point is that the Administration will work with Congress to avoid such a scenario, which would be hard on Federal workers and on the people and resources that depend on Federal services. If a shutdown occurs, only those activities considered to be essential -- such as firefighting and law enforcement -- would continue.

## Public Lands Transfer Proposals

Now I'd like to turn to the issue of transferring BLM-managed public lands to the States.

As strongly as the Interior Department and the BLM oppose the legislation that seeks to undo our Healthy Rangelands strategy, we object even more vigorously to legislation that would transfer public lands ownership from the United States to the individual States.

Legislation along this lines has been introduced by Senator Craig Thomas (R-Wyo.; S. 1031) and Congressman Jim Hansen (R-Utah; H.R. 2032).

The fundamental flaw of this legislation is that it would give away a precious national legacy that belongs to all Americans -- that is, the lands that remain from the original 1.8 billion acres of America's public domain.

The Thomas and Hansen bills would give away these public domain lands to any and all States that want them. The States, in turn, could do whatever they wanted with the land, including selling it to private interests. That this could happen is not a far-fetched scenario, especially when you consider the legal or political pressures on these States to balance their budgets.

And what would the American people get for the transfer of the public lands that now belong to them?

The answer is -- not a thing. The American taxpayer would not be compensated for the loss of revenue from the various commercial activities on the public lands, or for the loss of assets on these lands, or for the loss of the land itself.

As Congress considers this public lands transfer legislation, we hope that lawmakers will come to the conclusion, as we have, that the public lands are a precious legacy that future generations of Americans deserve to inherit.

## **Conclusion**

I began my remarks by saying that the BLM is concerned about the future. And our agency needs input from Club 20 and other groups as we chart a new course that will take us into the 21st century.

So please give me any advice that you think will help the BLM become a more effective and efficient agency.

It's been a pleasure talking with you. And now I'd be happy to respond to any questions or concerns you may have.

###

Introduce  
BL M employees

west w/ P

Jeff GL - small show

Drew up 25 miles from a town of 1,500 in northern Wis.  
loggers and guides - west of minnesota  
red river - Rockies &

I always enjoy seeing the beauty of the West Slope  
and I get here often. Boundary ent. sh. w/

Fire - Storm King Mountain

last year numerous trips assoc. w/ fire

June - Health of the Land Awards.

Axial Basin - Moffett County Tom Kourlis

Mesa slopes -

Criteria

Locally based

Partnerships

Visible improvement on the land

Set the wood  
out. Things are  
going well

Strong Partnership w/ BLM

Club 20 West Slope trails project

Kokopelli's trail - 140 miles to Moab

Tobeguache trail - 144 " to Montrose.

I complement Club 20 for consensus based  
approach to issues affecting the region.

Earlier  
this year

Weeds Conf.

Don Glaser

envelope  
envelope  
10/18

Mark Morse - 12. ft

Mark Miles - Montrose ~~over 25' gunwale~~

Catherine Robertson - 1d ft ~~long apparel~~

John Millhoff - Marker

Allan Belt - Montrose ~~alt green pine spools &~~

Mike Motte - Glenwood Springs ~~red type~~ ~~long~~  
~~nestor~~ ~~just now~~ - in 7

ripper ~~was~~ agent overwater says tool

should knot at bottom - enuf

silver knot ~~strong~~ ~~thick~~ - need line

- ~~seal~~ ~~seal~~

~~silver knot~~ ~~strong~~ ~~thick~~ ~~line~~ ~~bottom~~ ~~center~~

~~silver knot~~ ~~strong~~ ~~thick~~ ~~line~~ ~~bottom~~ ~~center~~

~~silver knot~~ ~~strong~~ ~~thick~~ ~~line~~ ~~bottom~~ ~~center~~

M-18 ~~per~~ ~~gathered~~ ~~parts~~

keeping ~~dict~~ ~~eggs~~ ~~tail~~ of ~~bul~~

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Remarks of BLM Acting Director  
**MIKE DOMBECK**

Before the Public Lands Council  
Rapid City, South Dakota  
Friday, October 6, 1995

It's good to be with you.

Today I'd like to talk with you about the  
cattle prices BLM's new rangeland management  
strategy, as well as the Bureau's direction as  
a land-management agency.

**The BLM's New Direction:**  
**Moving Resources to the Ground**

As the 21st century approaches, the BLM  
has been charting a new course in how it  
does its job. This course is designed to  
promote the health of the public lands and  
to meet the needs of the people who own  
and use these lands.

We laid out this new course in a document  
titled "Blueprint for the Future," which we  
issued last fall. The blueprint sets forth the  
BLM's top priorities as we head toward the  
next millennium.

The top three priorities are:

- To restore and maintain the health and productivity of the land;
- To improve *the way we do business* service to our customers, including public land ranchers;
- And to promote collaborative decisionmaking so that local, interested parties have a greater say in how the public lands are managed.

In setting these goals, we knew we could accomplish them only by moving more people and more funds to the field level. And that's exactly what we've been doing.

These are challenging times for mgmt.  
budgets ↘  
# of employees ↘

reinvention  
streamlining  
cut process.

Specifically, we have been reducing the number of Headquarters and State Office personnel while moving more positions to our District and Resource Area offices. In the case of our Headquarters Office, the number of staffers has declined by one-third since 1991 -- from 515 to 348 positions.

Interestingly, the BLM has *reduced* its total <sup>buyout 922</sup> workforce by nearly 900 positions -- that's an eight percent cut -- since 1993, yet we have actually *increased* the number of positions at our Resource Area Offices by 450 since that time.

The BLM has been moving more people and money to the field level for one simple, but important reason: that's where the BLM is closest to its customers and to the natural resources we manage. That's why we describe our field offices as being "on-the-ground" -- in comparison with our headquarters office in Washington, D.C. *or*

*our State Offices.*

Reform what HQ does

Reduced budget line items from 49 to 27 - will save \$  
Reduce admin. & operational costs  
Less technical & program mgmt from HQ.  
States need to share or be technical experts & not replicate  
every program everywhere.

Page 4

## Moving More Decisionmaking to the Ground

*Get res. mgts. back into field out of the office*  
The BLM has not only been moving more employees and money to the ground, but has also been shifting more decisionmaking away from Washington to the field.

*Agencies are full of good employees.*  
By doing this, we are moving away from Washington's "one-size-fits-all" approach to hands-on management that addresses local needs and conditions.

*dear friend example*  
Probably the best example of this move in decisionmaking is the formation of the Resource Advisory Councils, which are a key component of the BLM's new grazing and public participation strategy. As you know, this new approach, which the BLM collectively calls its Healthy Rangelands strategy, took effect on August 21. By ensuring meaningful local input, this strategy will strike a balance between local needs and the national interest.

Timber - OR  
Coal - WY  
oil & gas - WY & NM  
wild horses NV

Change personnel approaches

reward employees in field & keep 'em there

Wayne Elmore

Slow transfr of employees

change is hard  
- steel industry  
- auto industry

FS / BLM

sharing agencies working together at the local level

All 24 Resource Advisory Councils, or RACs, met on September 21, and Secretary Babbitt and I were able to participate in these meetings by means of a video teleconference.

I feel confident in saying these initial RAC meetings were a great success. The council members got to know each other better and started laying the groundwork for working together at the local level on public land issues.

The RACs will give ranchers, recreationists, environmentalists and local officials an opportunity to find common ground on public land issues of local concern. We realize, of course, that building consensus won't be easy. But it's well worth the effort, because the public lands belong to all Americans.

Getting the RACs up and running is the first phase of implementing our Healthy Rangelands strategy. Over the next 18 months, the councils will help the BLM develop State or regional standards and guidelines on rangeland health.

The standards will set forth the ~~criteria~~ for rangeland health, while the guidelines will identify *management practices* that will achieve these standards.

Let me emphasize that these are State or regional standards and guidelines. No national standards will be developed or imposed by Washington.

*performance measures*

*New Mexico  
is different from  
Montana*

And grazing permittees have nothing to fear from these locally developed standards and guidelines, because the overwhelming majority of public lands ranchers are good stewards of the land.

## **The Purpose Of the Healthy Rangelands Strategy**

As we implement the Healthy Rangelands strategy, let me briefly restate its overriding purposes. Those are:

- To improve rangeland health for the benefit of current and future users of the public lands;
- To promote the sustainable use of public land resources for the economic benefit of Western rural communities;
- And to ensure that public land users have a meaningful say in the management of those lands.

I know you have concerns about the Healthy Rangelands strategy, and we take these concerns seriously. Let me address some of them.

Some of you have asked: "Why are new rules needed when the public rangelands are in the best shape they've been in since the turn of the century?"

There is no question that the public rangelands are in better shape today than they were before Congress passed the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934. But given the shape of the rangelands earlier this century, rangeland conditions had almost nowhere to go but up.

The fact is that rangeland conditions are not what they ought to be today. Based on our agency's inventories, about 52 percent of BLM-managed rangeland is in poor or only fair condition.

Also, let's consider riparian-wetland areas, which account for more than eight percent of the 270 million acres managed by the BLM. According to our agency's 1994 riparian-wetland report, many of these areas are either functioning at risk or are non-functional.

So, in our view, it's not enough to say that the public rangelands are in the best shape they've been in since the turn of the century. The issue is: What shape should and could these rangelands be in with better management? And what benefits are we missing because our watersheds are not functioning at their full potential?

Some of you fear that under the Healthy Rangelands strategy the BLM will arbitrarily reduce authorized use of animal unit months (AUMs). But our new approach doesn't mandate a reduction in AUMs. In fact, the new regulations will help stabilize the livestock industry by allowing us to deal with those relatively few operators whose actions compromise the land's long-term productivity.

There are a lot of ways to manage besides reducing tools.

On another matter, some of you are concerned about how our new strategy deals with range improvements. Under the new regulations, the BLM will hold title to new, permanent improvements built on or made to the public lands, while existing range improvements will not be affected.

Some ranchers have said that this provision will discourage ranchers from making new, needed improvements since they won't hold title to them.

But the BLM will keep a record of public land ranchers' contributions to range improvements and will recognize the monetary value of those investments.

Some of you have expressed concern about the right to appeal the BLM's land-management decisions. Let me note that the new regulations keep the right to appeal. Ranchers will receive the same consideration that applies to all other users of the public lands.

Let me address one more concern for now. Some of you have been troubled that our new strategy allows for conservation use of grazing allotments. What's important to note here is that conservation use is something that a rancher must request. The BLM will never impose conservation use on any rancher.

Now I don't expect to convince all of you today about the merits of our Healthy Rangelands strategy. But I would point out that the sky didn't fall on ranchers on August 21, when the new regulations took effect. And I'm confident that these new regulations will never cause the sky to fall on public land ranchers -- or anyone else, for that matter.

What this new rangeland management strategy *will* do, I am convinced, is improve the health and productivity of the land -- for ranchers and everyone else who uses and cares about our public lands.

### **Conclusion**

I began my remarks by noting that the BLM is charting a new course as the 21st century approaches.

This course is aimed at meeting the needs of the public lands and the needs of the people who own these lands, including the ranchers who graze their livestock on them.

The BLM wants to manage the public lands more effectively and efficiently for ranchers and all other users of the public lands. And we believe the Resource Advisory Councils are a crucial part of achieving that end.

President Theodore Roosevelt spoke of finding "common solutions to common problems for the common good." We believe the Resource Advisory Councils will provide a forum for local, diverse interests to find those solutions, which is why your participation on these councils is so important.

It's been a pleasure talking with you. And now I'd be happy to respond to any questions or comments you may have.

###

I know there is concern about lobbying

We are cooperating w/ Sen. Thomas who is looking into the issue

Admin was strongly opposed to the Livestock Grazing Act  
Even the sponsors agreed that changes were needed.

Points I made were all made 1<sup>st</sup> in open public Congressional testimony.

Our dialog was not

~~Our dialog was against the legislation not against you personally or against ranching.~~

In responding to the Livestock Grazing Act. at DOI & BLM  
in preparation for the Congressional Hearing we followed  
a normal course.

1. Analyze the Bill

2. Adopted a position

3. Developed Congressional testimony

We think we did what we were supposed to do

Analyzed the bill - how it would change existing law  
and regulations

- analyzed how its many provisions would work together
- compared it to the new Regs. - pg 21

We responded to questions from members of Congress

- the media
- from citizens & interest groups

We ~~had~~ made our analysis available to everyone.

You may not have agreed with our analysis

But democratic process on information and the

Congressional process is designed to get different points of view out in the open, as legislation moves forward.

State Directors were asked to do 2 things re communications of the graying issues

1. To present the facts and analyses in open public forums such as newspapers & meetings w/ interest groups.
2. To correct misunderstandings of the Department's graying rule.

We followed the direction established by the Dept. of Justice under the Bush Admin. provided by the Office of the Solicitor.

We found out that not everyone views the laws pertaining to lobbying in the same light.

We are cooperating w/ Senator Thomas

The dialog was never directed at you personally

you have directed your concerns at me. I believe that is appropriate. ~~& I accept it.~~

As acting director that my job and I accept

It gets warm sitting on the stove.

Your beef shouldn't be with BLM field employees.

· maintain strong working relationships

Even good friends have differences

Talking is part of the solution - hopefully we can get beyond differences

That's why I'm here today instead of Deer Hunting in Platte Co.

We won't agree on everything - even my wife & I don't

I believe when the dust settles we are a lot closer together than we realize.

And there are a lot of issues we are totally together on.

Restore & maintain the health of the land.

Get the grazing issues behind us and out of Wash.

Improve efficiency and service to taxpayers

- Move the decision making process out of Washington to the local level. - that's what RAC is all about.
- Maintain the family ranch.
- maintain tract size - Id. wilderness lectures

lot of progress has been made

local groups working together

Seeking common ground → Shoring common ground.

Fire

Weeds.

Riparian

long term solutions at the local level.

## **DIRECTOR'S TALKING POINTS**

**NATIONAL MINING ASSOCIATION/ELT  
SALT LAKE CITY - OCTOBER 11,  
1995**

- ✿ Welcome and thanks for joining us today. I'm Mike Dombeck, Acting Director of BLM.  
**[SUGGEST YOU GIVE A SHORT BACKGROUND OF YOURSELF -- GREW UP 25 MILES FROM A TOWN OF 1500, IN CENTRAL WISCONSIN. NOT MANY MINERS OR OIL PATCH FOLKS THERE, BUT A LOT OF LOGGERS AND GUIDES.]**
- ✿ **HAVE EVERYONE INTRODUCE THEMSELVES.**
- ✿ There are many items that we will discuss today, and not much time. So I won't take up too much of the agenda. I would like to talk briefly about our vision of the future of the BLM.

I know the mining industry is concerned about the health and productivity of the public lands. The BLM shares that concern, and that's why we are charting a new course as we approach the 21st century. *we hope you will join us as partners in this effort.*

This new course is designed to meet the needs of the public lands and those of the American people, who use and own these lands.

We laid out this new course in a document titled "Blueprint for the Future," which we issued last fall. The blueprint sets forth the BLM's top goals as we approach the next millennium. These goals are:

First and foremost, to restore and maintain the health and productivity of the land;

Second, to improve service to our customers, including taxpayers;

Third, to promote collaborative decisionmaking so that interested parties have a greater say at the local level;

Fourth, to improve our business practices;

And fifth, to recruit, develop and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce.

In setting these priorities, we knew that we could accomplish them only by moving more people and more funds to the field level. And that's exactly what we've been doing.

## Moving More People and Money to the Ground

As a result of legislation passed and court rulings handed down over the past 50 years, the BLM's land-management mission has expanded in scope and complexity. During this period, the BLM has reorganized its Washington Office at least six times and its field structure at least four times.

In recent years, the BLM has been working hard to reduce administrative overhead and cut red tape while delivering better service to our customers.

Toward that end, we have been reducing the number of Headquarters and State Office personnel while moving more positions to the field -- meaning our District and Resource Area Offices. In the case of our Headquarters Office, the number of staffers has declined by one-third since 1991 -- from 515 to 348 positions.

Since fiscal year 1993, the BLM has reduced its total workforce by nearly 900 positions -- an eight percent cut.

Yet during this same period the number of positions at our Resource Area Offices has grown from 3,130 to 3,580 -- an increase of 450 positions at that level.

The net result of these moves is that the BLM has pared the number of positions above the Resource Area level by 1,350 positions -- a 19 percent reduction.

The BLM has been moving more people and money to the field for one simple, but important reason: that's where the BLM is closest to its customers and to the natural resources we manage.

In fiscal year 1993, 28 percent of our employees worked in Resource Area Offices; that figure has risen to 35 percent today.

During the same period, the percentage of employees working in Resource Area or District Offices rose from 57 percent to 59 percent. Our long-range goal is to place 70 percent of the BLM's positions in the field.

Shifting more people and money to the District and Resource Area Offices has meant the BLM is doing more operational or on-the-ground work and less administrative work.

In 1993, about two-thirds of the BLM's workforce was engaged in operational work while one-third was doing headquarters or administrative work.

We have improved that ratio so that now 70 percent are doing on-the-ground work while 30 percent are doing headquarters and administrative work. Our goal is to reach a 75 to 25 percent ratio by 1999.

## Where the BLM is Going

At a meeting of the BLM's Leadership Team this past July, we reviewed the progress we've made to date in streamlining our organization.

The Leadership Team committed the BLM to several key goals, including the one I just mentioned about the ratio of on-the-ground to administrative work. The team also wants each State organization to meet several key objectives by 1999, including achieving a supervisor-to-employee ratio of 1:15 over the current ratio of 1:7.

Another goal is to reduce the number of high-grade positions (GS-14, GS-15 and Senior Executive Service) from 340 to 302.

The Leadership Team wants each field office to be in a place where it can best meet customers' needs. The BLM will maintain its presence in all existing locations, but may change office buildings within those locations.

## **Moving Decisionmaking to the Ground**

The BLM has not only been moving more employees and money to the ground, as I noted earlier, but has also been shifting more decisionmaking away from Washington to the field.

By doing this, we are moving away from Washington's "one-size-fits-all" approach to hands-on management that addresses local needs and conditions.

Probably the best example of this shift in decisionmaking is the formation of the Resource Advisory Councils, which are part of the BLM's new grazing and public participation rules. These new rules, known as our Healthy Rangelands strategy, took effect August 21.

## CONCLUSION

We have our blueprint to help us meet the needs of the land and the American people -- now and into the 21st century.

Our overriding goal is to restore and maintain the health of the land. This is in everyone's best interest. To help accomplish this:

We want to move decisionmaking close to the land. We will empower local managers. When an operator shakes hands with an Area Manager - it should be a done deal.

We want to include all the players up front and during the process.

We need to improve our efficiency:

1. We can't do everything. We should do what is really important to the land and our customers.
2. We need to cut our administrative process. And,
3. We need to simplify.

So please help us by giving any guidance or advice you think would help us to be more responsive and efficient.

Again, it's a pleasure to be here. Now I will turn it over to Hord Tipton to begin the discussion on some specific issues that are of interest to you.

Michael P. Dombeck

*FROM COMMODITY  
TO COMMUNITY:  
A COMMON SENSE APPROACH  
TO UNDERSTANDING  
ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT*

*October 17, 1995*

*Distinguished Lecture Series III*

*The Pennsylvania State University  
College of Agricultural Sciences  
School of Forest Resources*

*Sponsored by  
The Glatfelter Pulp Wood Company  
Spring Grove, Pennsylvania*



## Biographical Sketch Michael P. Dombeck

Michael Dombeck serves the people of the United States as acting director of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior. He has held this position since February 1994, following a varied career in the federal service.

Mike began working for the federal government in 1978, as a fisheries management and research biologist for the U.S. Forest Service in Michigan and Wisconsin. In 1985, he moved to California to become the regional fisheries program manager for the Forest Service's Pacific Southwest. He was promoted to National Fisheries Program Manager for the Forest Service in 1987, bringing him to Washington, D.C. He transferred to the BLM in 1989, as science advisor and special assistant to the director. Beginning in January 1993, he spent 13 months on the staff of the Secretary of the Interior, serving first as the acting/deputy assistant secretary for Land and Minerals Management and then as chief of staff to the assistant secretary.

Mike brought a different background, that of a fisheries biologist, to the leadership of the BLM. He holds degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (B.S. in Biology; M.S. in Teaching of Biology), the University of Minnesota (M.S. in Zoology), and Iowa State University (Ph.D. in Fisheries Biology).

As leader of the BLM, Mike is our nation's largest public landlord. BLM oversees 270 million acres of our nation's surface land and the mineral estate on more than 570 million acres. The surface land alone is equal to an area nine times the size of Pennsylvania, or about equal to the land area of all the U.S. states that border the Atlantic Ocean. He manages a budget of more than \$1 billion and about 8,000 employees.

And he is appropriately serious about his agency's need to serve the U.S. public effectively and efficiently. He has streamlined the agency's cumbersome budget process, achieving a 78% reduction in the number of monitored accounts and reducing the Washington staff by 28%. Because of his efforts, Mike and the BLM have received two Gold Hammer Awards from Vice President Gore. He also believes that responsible leadership of BLM means assuring that the land remains healthy and productive, serving the needs of rural and urban people in both the short and long terms.

## INTRODUCTION

*Ecosystem management.* Few words have engendered so much anxiety, skepticism, and confusion among the general public, academia, government officials, and even resource professionals. John Stuart Mills once said, "Each great movement must experience three phases: ridicule, discussion, and adoption." Hopefully, we are now at least in the discussion phase of ecosystem management. And whenever people come together in forums like this one, we move that much closer to understanding the common sense, on-the-ground approach embraced by ecosystem management.

Simply put, ecosystem management is a way of doing business. It involves

- coordinated resource planning at the local level;
- forming partnerships;
- communicating benefits and educating people; and
- using the best scientific and technical information to manage the land.

In a paper named "Ecosystem Management: What Is It?", Edward Grumbine (1994) defined ecosystem management in the following manner: The "integration of scientific knowledge of ecological relationships within a complex sociopolitical and values framework toward the general goal of protecting native ecosystem integrity over the long term."

Put ten people or ten Ph.D.s in a room and they'll come up with ten different definitions of ecosystem management. But the definitions matter less than how we treat the land. We tend to be our own worst enemies by making definitions of ecosystem management more complicated than they need be. When you cut through the verbiage there is nothing mysterious or uncertain about it. Our job is to clearly communicate the concepts to people.

The best way to measure the effectiveness of resource management (or of the resource professional in charge) is by the condition and health of the land. Don't look for "performance measures" in dusty, unused manuals. Effectiveness should be plainly visible across the landscape, and in ways

that taxpayers support, appreciate, and understand. Don't choke the system with technical data that are never used. Emphasize tangible benefits such as:

- Greener riparian areas that buffer floods
- Healthy, disease free forests
- More song birds
- Stable stream-banks that prevent erosion
- Replenished ground-water reserves
- Better grazing
- Unique and priceless cultural sites
- Better hunting and fishing
- More wildlife viewing opportunities
- Increased flow in ephemeral streams
- High quality domestic water supplies
- A resilient mix of native grasses and
- Better recreation opportunities.

We have to maintain the long-term health and productivity of the land for current and future generations. That's our first priority—what ecosystem management is really about. Once we agree on that, the ecosystem approach provides common ground from which to develop consensus-based decision-making.

## PRINCIPLES

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. The agency that I work for, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), defines them in the following way (USDI, BLM 1994):

- (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 long-term social considerations. Or, *develop common goals*.
- (5) Minimize and repair impacts to the land. Or, *fix what's wrong*.
- (6) Adopt an inclusive interpersonal and 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. Or, *be flexible and willing to change as new information becomes available*.

It is increasingly clear that society cannot protect individual resources, be they endangered species or sustainable timber and forage supplies, without managing them in the context of larger ecosystems. As John Muir (1869) noted in his journals, “Whenever we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.” In the well-

known words of Aldo Leopold (1947), he explicitly recognized the hitch with socioeconomic systems:

The practice of conservation must spring from a conviction of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right only when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the community, and the community includes the soil, waters, fauna, and flora, as well as people.

Leopold (1949) recognized that humans are “members of a biotic team . . . plain members and citizens of one humming biotic community.” We shape and are in turn shaped by the land and its resources. And experience has proven that we cannot meet the long-term needs of people if we do not maintain the health, diversity, and productivity of the land. As Callicott (1991) also aptly notes, “Human beings are not specifically created as uniquely valuable demigods any more than nature itself is a vast emporium of goods and services. We are, rather, very much a part of nature.”

This recognition that sustainable management of natural resources depends on maintaining and restoring the natural processes that occur within ecological systems prompted the Forest Service, BLM, and other resource agencies to adopt ecosystem approaches to management.

At its root, ecosystem management involves providing values, products, and services from the land in a manner that safeguards long-term ecological sustainability (Wood 1994). No-one likes to talk about limits, yet, virtually everything has limits. The simplest distillation of the concept is that *ecosystem management entails working within the limits of the land in order to maintain ecological sustainability.*

As good stewards, we need to recognize the limits of the land and manage in ways that maintain ecosystem health. If we do this, everyone wins—people, wildlife, commercial users who depend on natural resources, and most important, future generations. Implementing ecosystem management will not alleviate the need for managers to make occasional local “trade-offs” in order to accomplish social or economic goals, but these trade-offs should represent the exception, not the rule.

## **EVOLUTION OF A BASIC IDEA**

I've always felt that ecosystem management isn't a "new" philosophy so much as a necessary evolution in our understanding of natural systems and how they are affected by human uses. For example,

- the Forest Preserves (which later became National Forests) were withdrawn from the Public Domain in 1894 to provide the nation with a steady supply of timber and water;
- the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 recognized the value of forage and healthy rangelands and sought to bring "order" to the unregulated severely degraded western public rangelands;
- the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) called for public disclosure and citizen involvement in federal land management; and
- the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) and the National Forest Management Act of 1976 called for the development of land-use plans developed in an interdisciplinary manner with extensive public involvement.

Many states have passed similar legislation pertaining to state managed lands. The basic concepts of ecosystem management have been evolving for a long time and will continue to evolve.

Ecosystem approaches to natural resource management link the technical "know-how" of resource professionals with critically important community understanding and support. Ecosystem approaches, and all of the natural and societal benefits that accrue from healthy watersheds, must be community-based and community-driven. Partnerships among state and federal land and resource management agencies, user groups, environmental coalitions, and local communities are essential.

## **COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP**

Effective conservation and restoration strategies must protect watershed function, form, and processes at different geographic and temporal scales while recognizing that different land ownership patterns rarely coincide with distinct topographic boundaries (FEMAT 1993). Long-term conservation and restoration strategies cannot overlook the relationship among the health of any particular land area and the condition of adjoining lands be they federal, state, or 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 among 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.

Over time we have learned that the only way to ensure stability for all who use and care for natural resources is through open and accessible dialogue and decision-making. Thus, a primary objective of the BLM's new co-operative relations and grazing administration regulations (43 CFR 1780 and 4100) was to provide the opportunity for 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 a 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; represent dispersed recreational activities; represent archeological and historical interest; or represent 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 ecosystem-based experiences as examples of success. I'll touch on two:

*Trout Creek Mountains Partnership.* In the high desert country of southeastern Oregon and northern Nevada, local ranchers are working with BLM managers, Oregon Trout, the Izaak Walton League, U.S. 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 that 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. It was not a quick process. Nor was it easy. But 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.

*Coos Watershed Association.* The Coos Watershed Association encompasses 587 square miles of western Oregon. The watershed is encompassed by Weyerhauser and Menasha timberlands, state and federal lands, private

non-industrial forest land, agricultural lands, and tribal and county government lands. Working together, this coalition raised nearly \$500,000 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 sectors emphasizes the importance of education, community involvement, and maintaining open lines of 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.

The successes on Trout Creek and the work of the Coos Watershed Association demonstrate that ecosystem management is likely to be initiated, and once accomplished, endure, only if those who affect ecosystem health support both the work itself and the maintenance thereafter (Cairns, in press). All the technical expertise in the world cannot overcome public disinterest in, or worse, distrust of conservation and restoration activities.

The lesson here is that resource professionals should spend more time on the land with local interests, community leaders, user and conservation groups, state officials, and school children, building community understanding for ecosystem approaches.

And here's the lesson for all of us: communicate in ways that everyday people can understand. Speak the language of the listener and not in specialized technical terms. Keep it simple. As Senator Hiakawa said "I got my Ph.D. and it took me 3 years to get over it." The problem is that we technical folks spend too much time talking to each other and not enough speaking to the public in clear English.

## BUILDING A SOUND, CONCEPTUAL AND KNOWLEDGE BASE

Since natural events and human activities affect and shape watershed health, land use decisions should be based on an understanding of the condition of the land and its response to human activities.

All watersheds possess specific characteristics that can be measured to determine the health of riverine systems. The watershed analysis process under development by federal agencies, states, and others in the Pacific Northwest can help to provide such an information framework (Regional Interagency Executive Committee 1995).

A comprehensive watershed analysis will help resource managers, user and conservation groups, and local communities to:

- assess the status and trends of a given watershed or ecosystem;
- identify and achieve common watershed or ecosystem health goals;
- define measurable objectives for ecological sustainability;
- assist in creating management direction to accomplish objectives that lead to healthy and productive watersheds; and
- assist in development of a comprehensive monitoring program to evaluate achievement of ecosystem health objectives.

Federal agencies are developing watershed analysis procedures for use on public lands west of the Cascade Mountains within the range of the northern spotted owl and for other public lands in Idaho, Oregon, California, and Washington that contain habitat for anadromous salmonids. These analyses will provide the technical and scientific underpinnings of efforts to recover rare species such as the northern spotted owl and salmon or to offset the need to list them for protection under the Endangered Species Act. But, such actions are only part of the solution.

If society is to reap the full social, economic, and aesthetic benefits of healthy watersheds, states, local communities and private land owners should be provided with the incentive and impetus to participate. The watershed analysis process offers federal and state agencies and private land owners a unique opportunity to identify and correct the sources of watershed degradation for the long-term benefit of all.

## MAINTAINING BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

As watershed health declines, lands become less productive; less resilient to natural events such as floods, drought, and fire; and prone to invasions of exotic species. For example, on BLM managed lands, noxious weeds are spreading at a rate of 14% annually, infesting an incredible 2,300 acres per day (USDI, BLM 1995). In newly infested areas, yellow star-thistle can increase 60% per year (Frather and Callihan 1989). These exotic plant species often out-compete native flora, making the land susceptible to devastating fires and soil loss, providing less forage for wildlife and livestock, and limiting recreation opportunities.

Countless similar invasions of exotic species in aquatic ecosystems occur annually, although they are hidden from our view and therefore less obvious (Courtenay and Moyle 1992). Management options in degraded watersheds become progressively restricted and their uses more limited.

On the other hand, healthy watersheds provide habitat complexity and diversity, which helps to maintain species diversity. The relationship among healthy watersheds, biological diversity, and productivity is not always apparent. Tilman and Downing (1994) measured drought resistance of grasslands containing different levels of plant species richness. Those grasslands with the highest levels of plant diversity were found to be more productive during droughts than the less diverse plots. The lesson is deceptively simple but of immense importance to society. Higher diversity results in greater stability and resiliency. In other words, biological diversity can beget stability and productivity which in turn provides society with sustainable levels of goods and services from the land.

## **REFUGIA**

Watershed areas of high biological diversity are often called refugia. These undisturbed areas are typically found in headwater tributaries and can contribute to high-quality water and downstream-channel conditions necessary for native fish and wildlife species, soil stability, and vegetation—in other words, the entire stream-based food web and human uses.

Through the Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team report (FEMAT 1993) and the interim PACFISH (USDA, Forest Service 1994 and USDI, BLM 1994) strategy, the U.S. Forest Service and BLM identified a series of key watersheds that provide refugia, or are capable of providing healthy habitat, for salmon, steelhead, and sea-run cutthroat trout.

This system of key watersheds will be managed to maintain and recover habitat for “at risk” stocks of salmon. Because of the ecologic, and, ultimately, social importance of these key watersheds, watershed analysis will be conducted on them prior to future resource development activities.

Key watersheds in good condition will serve as “anchors” for recovery of imperilled salmon stocks and maintenance of high water quality. Even those key watersheds in poorer quality have a high potential for recovery and will be the focus of future restoration efforts. Identifying refugia and watersheds with the best chance for recovery is an essential first step in successful conservation and restoration strategies.

It is insufficient to spend time and money fixing the effects of watershed degradation without addressing their root causes; therein lies the promise of ecosystem management. It is far more productive to work with people to manage an ecosystem as a whole than using a “piece meal” approach to try to “enhance” it, for example, through introductions of exotic species or to physically alter it with gabions or rip-rap (Dombeck and Williams 1995).

**SUMMARY**

The measure of success of the resource professional is the long-term health of the land. If the lands and waters entrusted to our care are not healthy, we have failed as stewards of the public trust. Ultimately, the success of the ecosystem approach depends on how well we apply ecosystem management principles on-the-ground and how well we communicate to all citizens the benefits of healthy, diverse, and productive watersheds (Dombeck et al., in press).

Remember, ecosystem management means that we must

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.

In closing let me share with you the old Kashmiri proverb:

*We have not inherited the land from our forefathers, we have borrowed it from our children.*

An ecosystem approach to management may check short-term use and development of natural resources in some areas. 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.

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MAIN TEXT  
Talking Points for BLM Acting Director  
**MIKE DOMBECK**  
for BLM Colorado All-Employees Meeting  
December 12, 1995

## Introduction

- I'm here today to answer as many of your questions as I can. But before doing that, let me cover some of the recent developments around the Bureau and maybe answer some of your concerns along the way.
- I know budget matters are on your mind. I'll get to those soon, but first, let's talk about some things we're doing that deal with our core mission -- *to improve the health and productivity of the land.*

Five

## Implementation of the Healthy Rangelands Strategy

- One of our top priorities right now, of course, is our Healthy Rangelands strategy. We're off to a great start now that all of the Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) are up and running. Colorado has been the BLM's leader in the RAC process, and I commend you for the excellent role model you've been for the Bureau.
- The next step is for the RACs to help the BLM develop State or regional standards and guidelines on rangeland health, a process that will take about a year and a half.

- Although some key members of Congress are trying to pass legislation that would supersede our Healthy Rangelands strategy, we don't expect this legislation to become law.

On November 30, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee approved a revised version of Senator Domenici's original grazing bill (S. 852), but the new version -- which we oppose -- is still a long way away from being passed by the Senate. And it's still a longer way from being passed by the House. *Senate Floor* *House* And it's an even longer way from becoming law, which requires the President's signature.

The House counterpart (H.R. 1713) to Senator Domenici's bill has been approved by the House public lands subcommittee, but no further action has been scheduled.

- In short, we expect our Healthy Rangelands rules to remain intact. And ranchers should know that they have nothing to fear from that. You might recall that some ranchers seemed to feel the sky was going to fall on them on August 21, when the new rules took effect. But the sky *didn't* fall; the doomsday scenarios didn't pan out; the process is moving forward. The sceptics are beginning to understand that our goal is not to stop grazing on public lands.

*Importance of open space.*  
*trust*  
*collaborative stewardship*

These rules will not only improve the health and productivity of the public rangelands, but will also ensure that all public land users have a meaningful say in the management of those lands.

## Riparian Management Proposal

OR/WA-Review  
FS/BLM

- Closely related to the Healthy Rangeland Initiative is a new riparian management proposal we're developing as a joint effort with the Forest Service. This proposal calls for the establishment of an interagency Riparian Service Team that would focus on achieving on-the-ground results.
- This initiative is very important to me and to Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas. We're enthusiastic about it because riparian areas, though small in size, provide big benefits to the public lands and to the people who use these lands.
- Riparian areas purify water; support a variety of wildlife and plant species; create opportunities for recreationists to fish, hunt, picnic and camp.
- The problem is that many riparian areas on the public rangelands are either not functioning well or are simply not functioning. So this initiative would definitely complement our Healthy Rangelands strategy.

abey  
B

## Public Lands Transfer Issue

- On the public lands transfer issue, legislation pending in Congress to transfer BLM-managed lands to the States (H.R. 2032 and S. 1831) has not advanced beyond a House public lands subcommittee hearing held on August 1.

We strongly oppose these bills. And for that matter, there's been no groundswell of support in Congress for them either. In her testimony before the House subcommittee, Assistant Secretary Bonnie Cohen put it well when she said:

**"We must ask ourselves if the public lands constitute a national treasure to preserve for our children and grandchildren, or simply a bonanza for speculators."**

- On a related issue, we are encouraged that Nevada Attorney General Frankie Sue Del Papa has sided with the Federal Government in its lawsuit against Nye County over the issue of who owns the public lands within Nevada. Attorney General Del Papa has said the State of Nevada does not have an enforceable claim to title over Federal lands within Nevada. We expect a ruling in the Nye County case by U.S. District Judge Lloyd George later this month or early next year, and we feel confident that he will rule in our favor.

*See CO Fact Sheet  
Collections \$79 million  
Transfer to State \$141  
Investments \$137  
Rebates \$98*

## Moving Resources to the Ground [optional]

- I'd like to talk now about our ongoing effort to move more resources -- people and money -- as well as more decision making to the field. This is a phenomenon that most people outside the Bureau are unaware of, even though it comes at a time when many Westerners say the people who run the Federal Government are out of touch with the real concerns and needs of those who live outside Washington, D.C.
- The fact is, the Bureau has been reducing the number of Headquarters and State Office personnel while moving more positions to our District and Resource Area offices. In our **Headquarters Office, the number of staffers has declined by one-third -- from 515 to 348 positions -- since 1991.**
- Interestingly, the Bureau has reduced its total workforce by nearly 900 positions -- an eight percent cut -- since 1993. Yet we've actually increased the number of positions at our Resource Area Offices by 450 since that time.
- We're moving people and money to the field level for one simple, but important reason: that's where the BLM is closest to its customers and to the natural resources we manage.
- We're also shifting more decision making to the field. One example is the formation of Resource Advisory Councils, which will give ranchers, recreationists, environmentalists and local officials an opportunity to find common ground on local public land issues.

## The Issue of "Big Government" [optional]

- Having noted how the BLM is moving more resources and decisionmaking to the field, I'd like to put in perspective the issue of "Big Government," which is one of the key issues raised by the Sagebrush Rebellion/County Supremacy movement.
- Most Americans agree that the Federal Government needs to be reduced in size. But it's important to realize that based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau, **the Federal Government is actually smaller today, in relative terms, than it was 50 years ago.**
- **The Federal Government today employs 1 of every 90 Americans, compared with 1 of every 62 in 1946.** In absolute terms, of course, the number of Federal workers has risen -- from 2.2 million in 1946 to 2.8 million today. But over that period the nation's population has grown from 140 million to 250 million, meaning the ratio of Federal workers to the general population has declined.
- While the Federal workforce has been shrinking, in relative terms, since World War II, State and local governments have grown dramatically during this period. As noted in a recent Los Angeles Times article, **the ratio of State and local government workers was 1 for every 42 Americans in 1946. It is 1 for every 16 today.** In absolute terms, the number of employees of State and local governments rose from 3.3 million in 1946 to 16.5 million now.

- Of course, there are many good reasons why State and local governments have grown over the past five decades -- among other things, many more schools have been built, requiring more teachers and administrators, and more prisons have been constructed, requiring more personnel to run them.
- My point in citing this data is simply to make sure that when the issue of "big government" -- meaning the big Federal Government -- comes up for discussion, it should be kept in mind that in relative terms, the size of the Federal Government has been shrinking and continues to shrink.

## Budget and RIF Situation

- I know that budget issues are probably foremost on your mind, so I'd like to talk about those now. Keep in mind that some of the things for which you and I would like answers are not answerable at the present time. One can always speculate, but, as Yogi Berra said, it's difficult to make predictions, especially about the future.
- Let's start with what's at hand. Because of disagreements between the White House and Congress over such issues as Mining Law Reform and the California Desert, the Fiscal Year '96 Interior appropriations bill has still not been enacted into law. Which means the BLM budget is still hung up. Under the House-Senate compromise version of the bill, the Bureau would get \$49 million less than it received in 1995 -- a 4.5 percent cut.

Our biggest appropriation, the Management of Land and Resources (MLR) account, would get \$29 million less -- a 5 percent cut from 1995.

- Colorado's preliminary MLR budget for FY '96 of \$26.5 million is 9 percent less than the '95 level of \$28.9 million. The largest declines, percentagewise, are in Realty and Ownership Management.
- In the appropriations bill, Congress is authorizing an expanded use of recreation fees, and the BLM will be selecting demonstration projects for three-year trials. Under these projects, 80 percent of the fees will stay where they are collected. This will help the Bureau meet the public's demand for recreation on public lands while requiring users to cover more of the BLM's cost of administering these activities.
- Turning to the subject of RIFs -- the three most hated initials in government -- let me first accentuate the positive. On the plus side, the Bureau has not had to resort to RIFs in FY '96, unlike several of our sister agencies in the Department, such as the soon-to-be extinct Bureau of Mines.
- As for what will happen after 1996, we are facing an uncertain situation. For FY '97, the outcome of the White House-congressional negotiations over the "reconciliation" deficit-reduction bill will affect future BLM budget decisions. If we get another 5 percent cut in funding for 1997, we won't be able to carry our current workforce Under that scenario, we may have to resort to a limited number of RIFs.

BOR  
OSM

Importance  
of time to  
plan ahead

## Consequences of a Government Shutdown

- We hope, of course, that the White House and congressional negotiators will be able to reach a compromise on the reconciliation bill to avoid another government shutdown. The last shutdown cost taxpayers **\$750 million**. That's a lot of money, if you ask me! Of that, \$450 million went for retroactive pay to employees who were furloughed and thus could not do the jobs for which they were eventually paid.
- During the November shutdown, more than **9,000 BLM employees were involuntarily sent home**, which meant our day-to-day work came to a screeching halt. And just what does our agency do on an average day? We:
  - Collect about **\$750,000** each day from timber and mineral sales, grazing fees and other uses of the public lands. Some of these revenues go into the U.S. Treasury while up to half goes back to the communities in which these revenue-generating activities take place.
  - Administer mineral leases that generate **\$4.4 million** each day, up to half going to the states.
  - Issue an average of **100 permits** each day for recreational activities on the public lands, such as boating and off-highway vehicle races. And we issue hundreds of **permits every day** that allow people to **gather wood, cut Christmas trees or harvest seeds on the public lands**.

*Retreat w/  
Bob O.  
list of accomplishments  
need to get the  
word out*

-- Assist and educate visitors about historical and cultural matters at 56 interpretive sites and visitors centers throughout the West. And, aid an average of 180,000 people every day at camp sites on the public lands.

-- Issue an average of 12 rights-of-way applications each day for telephone lines, power lines and pipelines across public lands. Rights-of-way also provide access to private lands where timber harvesting, mining and other commercial activities are taking place.

-- Inspect oil and gas operations on 300 leases each day to ensure public health safety. These inspections also serve to ensure that operators are paying proper rents and royalties.

- And there's much more that we do on a daily basis, such as improving fish and wildlife habitats, conducting surveys, distributing maps and other informational materials to the public, and arranging wild horse and burro adoptions.
- We want to give the taxpayers their money's worth, but another government shutdown will prevent us from doing that. So we hope that White House and Congress will be able to resolve their differences and let us do our job.

## Conclusion

Let me just close by telling you thanks for the great job you're doing. Now I'd like to respond to your questions.

**ADDENDUM**  
Q's and A's for BLM Acting Director  
**MIKE DOMBECK**  
for Colorado All-Employees Meeting  
December 12, 1995

**Budget, Mission, Structure and Customers**

**Q. In the current deficit-reduction/budget-cutting environment, how will the BLM deal with the kinds of cumulative reductions we're facing? What is BLM's plan?**

A. At this point, White House and congressional budget negotiators have not reached agreement on the massive 7-year deficit reduction "reconciliation" bill. The outcome of these negotiations will shape the BLM's budget for 1997 and beyond. It appears that we are facing a 3%-5% reduction per year for 1997, '98 and '99. When inflation is taken into account, the cut will really amount to 5% -- perhaps as much as 7% -- per year for three years. To absorb that reduction, we've got to do very careful personnel management -- especially when it comes to hiring. I should note that the Bureau of Mines folks who are now working for the BLM have been hired on a temporary basis, which gives us flexibility in dealing with budget cuts.

**Q. Where will BLM be in five years? What will we look like? What will we be doing?**

A. In five years, the BLM will still be carrying out its basic mission -- managing the nation's public lands for multiple uses, and doing that in a way that improves the health and productivity of the land for current and future generations of Americans. We intend to be a more effective and efficient agency by finding better, less costly ways of doing our job, as called for by Vice President Gore in his Reinventing Government initiative.

**Q. What will BLM's staffing levels be?**

A. Given the realities of the Federal budget, we will have fewer people on the BLM's staff in the upcoming years.

**Q. At the summit, BLM leadership committed to maintain capability and customer service on the ground. Is that still a priority.**

A. It's still a priority. One of the ways we're trying to improve customer service is by moving more resources -- people and money -- to the field. (See Main Text of Talking Points, section titled "Moving Resources to the Ground.") At the Field Committee meeting on Dec. 13-15, BLMers will hear a presentation on and will be discussing ways to re-set work priorities, ways to re-align funding and staffing, and ways to maximize our resources so we can provide good products and better service to the public. All levels of the organization will be asked to participate in a similar brainstorming exercise early next year.

**Q. Will BLM consider regionalization as other organizations have in order to manage major budget cuts while still keeping capability on the ground?**

A. Regionalization is not under consideration. Even if it were, it is virtually certain that Western members of Congress would oppose any attempt to reorganize the BLM State Office structure into a regional one.

**Q. Do you have plans to evaluate the funding being taken off the top of BLM's budget for Headquarters and National Center costs, as well as special emphasis initiatives like HBCU?**

A. The BLM's leadership is committed to moving more people and money to the field, because that's where our agency is closest to our customers and to the natural resources we manage. Our goal is to place 70 percent of the Bureau's positions in our District and Resource Area Offices. We also are working towards a goal of devoting 75 percent of our workforce to on-the-ground work, with only 25 percent doing Headquarters or administrative work.

Right now the ratio is 70 percent to 30 percent. That's up from 1993, when about two-thirds of the agency's workforce was engaged in on-the-ground work and one-third was doing Headquarters and administrative work. So we're definitely making progress.

We are committed to achieving our goal of recruiting, developing and retaining a qualified and diversified workforce, as we laid out in our *Blueprint for the Future*. So we remain committed to our productive relationships with HBCU and other minority organizations.

**Q. What is your vision or expectation of how we will take care of the health of the land?**

A. Our Healthy Rangelands strategy, our new riparian service team proposal, the Riparian-Wetland Initiative for the 1990s, and the President's Forest Plan are key components of our overall effort to improve the health and productivity of the land.

**Q. How do you want us to balance the health of the land with service to the many who expect to use it?**

A. Very carefully. That sounds facetious, but it's not. The BLM's mission -- which is to manage the public lands for multiple uses -- is an inherently difficult one. But that's the mission we've been given by Congress in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and other laws that define our mandate. So long as certain land uses conflict -- or appear to conflict -- with other land uses, our job will never be easy. But we're working hard to reduce those conflicts, and the newly formed Resource Advisory Councils will help us build consensus among the competing users of the public lands.

**Q. What things would you recommend we do to develop an organization that is more efficient than before, that focuses on continuous improvement and customer service, and has fewer (and fewer and fewer) people than before?**

A. What this question boils down to is: How do we do more with less? The short answer is we must work smarter, not harder. That means cutting red tape, finding ways to simplify, empowering people to do their jobs. It means improving our coordination with other agencies and forming or maintaining partnerships with our constituent groups. And it means making use of the best technology we can afford.

**Employees**

**Q. What is your vision for BLM employees, in terms of the workplace environment? What should employees expect in areas like jobs, opportunities, training, etc.?**

A. At a time when the Federal budget is being tightened, there may not be quite as many opportunities as there used to be for job mobility and training. But the Bureau will do everything possible within our budget constraints to make sure that everyone gets the training he or she needs for the job that person is in or is seeking.

**Q. What is being done to effect a Bureauwide cultural shift? Is the Headquarters Team committed to the BLM vision and this same goal?**

A. The shift of the Headquarters Office to a team structure is probably the best example of our commitment to an organizational structure that recognizes the need for an interdisciplinary approach to resource issues. I should note, however, that this reorganization is an evolving process, so the way the Washington Office is configured today may not necessarily be the way it looks in six months.

**Q. Do you expect we'll get another buyout authority?**

A. We're closely monitoring developments on Capitol Hill for the fine print of the massive deficit-reduction package that will eventually emerge from the White House and congressional budget negotiations. Seeking buyout authority is one of the options we may consider, particularly if we are facing budget cuts that might require RIFs.

**Q. Will there be a RIF or RIFs in BLM?**

A. (See Main Text of Talking Points, section titled "Budget and RIF Situation.")

**Programs**

**Q. Are we still committed to abandoned mine remediation?**

A. Definitely. The Bureau has responsibility for dealing with sites that pose public safety hazards or cause environmental degradation. Right now we're conducting an inventory to locate abandoned mine sites. As funds become available, we will mitigate those sites that pose public or environmental hazards. While it does not look like Mining Law Reform will generate immediate funds to clean up abandoned mines, we are looking at alternatives. For example, the BLM's Nevada State Office has an agreement with the State of Nevada under which the State fences open shafts and pits that have been identified by the BLM. The Clean Water Act's Stormwater program appears to be a potential source of funding for cleanups. Both Colorado and Montana are addressing watershed inventory and remediation issues, with technical assistance from the U.S. Geological Service, under a Stormwater pilot program.

**Q. There are lots of educational outreach programs and partnerships. HQ Staff seem enthusiastic about them, but some funds come off the top and there never seems to be money at the Resource Area level to implement them. Can you help the field actually implement all these initiatives?**

A. First I would note that we are moving more resources to the ground, as I discussed earlier. The issue, of course, is not whether our agency needs a Washington Office, but how much of an office. And, as I mentioned earlier, we're working hard to move more resources to the ground and to get 75 percent of our workforce doing on-the-ground work. As for our educational outreach effort, this remains important, and one of the ways we need to maximize this effort is by expanding our use of volunteers. Volunteers can carry our educational messages to their friends, families and others in their communities.

**Q. What will our strategy be on Domenici's Bill #2?**

A. We oppose the new version of the Domenici bill, and we will continue to express our views on this bill, as we did on the original version. We do not expect this new version to become law. (See Main Text of Talking Points, section titled "Implementation of the Healthy Rangelands Strategy.")

**Mike Dombeck**  
RMOGA Meeting  
Denver, CO 12/12/95

## **BLM and the National Performance Review: Where we are and How we got There**

- o the National Performance Review began on March 3, 1993, when Pres. Clinton announced a 6 mo. review of the Federal government
- o the Review was to focus primarily on how government should work not on what it should do
- o all cabinet members were asked to create Reinvention Teams to lead transformations at their Departments
- o in late 1993, the BLM initiated an agency-wide performance review of its oil and gas programs
  - the review culminated in the est. of issue resolution teams and process review teams comprised of both BLM and other agency staff
  - the teams were asked to develop innovative changes to better BLM's ability to **sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands**
- o Seven teams were formed:
  - 4 were "issue resolution teams" (NEPA/planning, Incentives, Bonding/unfunded liability and Regulatory review)
  - 2 were "process review" teams (Outreach and Interagency Coordination and Leasing Efficiencies)

- the seventh was the Four Corners Initiative established to resolve Native American issues
- o All teams were provided with the comments and concerns identified through the initial scoping efforts. **I know that many of you here today contributed to that effort.**
- o This outreach effort, begun in 1993, continued as the teams progressed in their efforts and continues even today
- o 4 teams have completed their original charters : NEPA/Planning, Bonding/Unfunded Liability, Incentives and Outreach
  - the issues identified for the Leasing Efficiencies Team were regulatory in nature and were rolled into the Regulatory Review team effort (still on-going)
  - the Four Corners Project was elevated by the White House to a NPR project
- o the completed team reports were summarized in the BLM Onshore Oil and Gas Performance Review, published and distributed to over 800 individuals and groups in April of this year
- o Since that time, the BLM has been actively pursuing the recommendations contained in that report with over 18 separate efforts currently underway or completed and with as many more scheduled for the next several years
- o Some of the more noteworthy current efforts include:
  1. Streamlining the unitization process. The goal is to streamline and simplify the process while increasing the flexibility through negotiation of key parts of the agreement

Current status: Secretarial Order has been signed and should be published soon

2. Developing a BLM Bioremediation Policy. This policy will encourage the use, where possible, of biological treatments to reduce clean-up costs and cause less surface disturbance

Current status: Final report is completed and plans are underway to establish a pilot area in Colorado

3. Royalty relief for heavy oil. This is one of a number of areas in which the BLM is examining the possibility of granting royalty relief in order to increase recoverable reserves and extend well and field lives

Current status: Rule has been signed by the Secretary and is currently in OMB

4. Eliminate duplicate bonding. It is the BLM's goal to eliminate, or at least minimize, duplicate bonding by state or other federal agencies on BLM- and Forest Service-managed lands

Current status: The IOGCC completed an inventory of states with duplicate bonding and the BLM is preparing an IM to our field offices directing them to take the necessary steps to rectify the situation

- o two other projects that I might mention are the Lease Stipulations Team and the White River Study area. BUT since the leaders of those teams are present here today, I'll let them address these efforts for themselves
- o The preceding list is certainly not exhaustive, but I hope it serves to illustrate the wide-range of reforms and policy changes currently being undertaken by the BLM as part of its Bureau Performance Review

**DR. MIKE DOMBECK - ACTING DIRECTOR**  
**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**  
**Remarks at the**  
**ECOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP WORKSHOP**

**TUCSON, ARIZONA**  
**DECEMBER 13, 1995**

I was pleased to be able to join the Ecological Stewardship Workshop on Wednesday morning, December 13 and stay for the rest of this workshop. We are both pleased and honored to be major part of this momentous workshop. And thank you to all who worked hard to ensure its flawless operation.

I have been apprised of your progress and am pleased to see the continuation this second week of the emerging themes from last week -- (1) harmony of humans with the environment, (2) consensus building, (3) community involvement, (4) partnerships with commitment, (5) applied science for meaningful change in attitudes and stewardship of Federal lands and waters, (6) the integration of science and management for social, economic, and cultural benefits, and (7) the sustainability of the resources.

My good friend and colleague Jim Kennedy and I collaborated on Science Topic 24, "The Evolution of Public Agency Beliefs and Behavior Toward Ecosystem-based Stewardship." In this presentation, we expressed our own beliefs and hopes for an ecosystem-based stewardship on public lands and waters.

Our paper ended with this message:

"Open, inclusive, adaptive management and organization culture...is the only viable path we see for public natural resource agencies in the next century."

Like many of you, my agency and the public ecosystems it manages are in the middle of socio-economic cross-currents of change. To succeed in the next century, we professionals, public servants, and agencies must become more open, inclusive, and adaptive. Yet, we must also recognize and respect the rip-tides of concern, fear, and contrasting global views toward an ecosystem-based stewardship both within our agencies and externally.

There are some intimidating walls between different types of professionals, agencies, users, cultures, and communities. Daily we must continue on this historic journey and build bridges of mutual respect, bridges of shared governance, and bridges of trust. We must be open to change and grow together. We must be adaptable, flexible, and resilient.

As a public ecosystem steward and professional ecologist, I embrace the principles and ethic of an ecosystem-based stewardship. It is the culmination of my beliefs and core values for which I have dreamed and worked for decades.

This is the management direction we want to pursue. Nevertheless, as an American, a public servant, and an agency colleague, I tried to adopt a practical, empathetic, and patient perspective to achieve the health and vitality of the Nation's public lands and waters.

I caution you, as well as myself, that we cannot become insensitive or impatient true-believers about an ecosystem management perspective. We must be patient educators, and practitioners.

Many Americans, for example, do not relate to public lands as healthy, diverse ecosystems. They tend to identify the public lands with the cherished goods and services the lands provide, be it mountain biking opportunities, a timber job, or a traditional family elk hunt. We have to relate ecosystem management to their needs and their perspectives.

Some people fear and mistrust public land agencies. As I travel around the country, I am reminded by some of our customers that they have no reason to trust us, based on our past performance. We have to relate ecosystem management to their needs and livelihoods.

In addition, some of our colleagues - scientists and/or technicians - have developed their own ego and focused career on cherished outputs. We have to relate ecosystem management to their needs and their perspectives, as well as their self-identify, which can be as important as a paycheck.

In our own zeal and enthusiasm from this workshop, we must be empathetic, skilled, and patient as we define, develop, and apply ecosystem-based stewardship cooperatively with our colleagues and our publics. Let's be patient educators. Let's be thoughtful and skilled communicators. Let's put our scientific, technical language aside and talk to people in plain English. Let's keep it clear and simple!!

Let's be champions of this emerging ecosystem-based stewardship philosophy, but have empathy to balance our passion -- express grace and patience along with our eagerness of conviction. We must integrate and adapt an ecosystem-based stewardship into the culture and context of our Nation's diverse stakeholders, just as we did for the conservation movement over 100 years ago.

We need a coming together of all the agencies represented here, as well as those not represented, who have a role to play in the management of Federal lands and waters. I invite all of you to vigorously tear down the bureaucratic walls that separate our agencies. We must work as one. We must build bridges. We must learn and develop ourselves and ecosystem-based stewardship principles together.

The **HEALTH OF THE LAND** and the American people are depending on us. I accept the challenge.