

# Preface

This guide is the result of efforts by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) Adaptive Management Working Group (AMWG) to develop protocols and information products for the application of adaptive management within DOI. Members of the AMWG included representatives from all the Department agencies, as well as the Solicitor's Office and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget (PMB). The Assistant Secretary – PMB chaired the group, which met periodically over 18 months.

The AMWG was tasked specifically with producing guidelines for adaptive management, initiating a web site to provide additional information and applications of adaptive management by DOI bureaus and offices, and developing a training program to acquaint executives, managers, and field practitioners with the practice and implications of adaptive management. In particular, the AMWG was to develop a document that would define adaptive management and describe conditions for its implementation. This technical guide is a direct result of efforts to meet these needs.

To produce the guide, writing teams consisting of AMWG members and other participants from DOI bureaus and offices addressed four basic questions: What is adaptive management? When should it be used? How should it be implemented? And how can its success be recognized? The documents produced by these teams were integrated into a draft technical guide, which was distributed throughout DOI for review. Over 300 comments were returned to the lead authors, who responded to each comment in producing a final draft.

The AMWG struggled throughout this process to describe adaptive management at an appropriate level of technical detail, while remaining focused on its definition, operational components, and conditions in which it applies. There is considerable ambiguity about all these issues within DOI, and a key challenge for the AMWG was to provide sufficient detail for clarification while limiting the length and complexity of the document. This challenge was made more difficult by the large range of expertise and experience within DOI, and the often strongly expressed recommendations by participants to craft a document that would focus on specific organizational needs. From the outset, it was clear to the writing team that no one document could be all things to all people. The hope is that each of the bureaus will find in this guide a useful framework on which to develop its own handbook, tailored more specifically to bureau resource responsibilities and institutional arrangements.

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