

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

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Series: Departmental Management

Part 301: Major Program Issues and Decisions

Chapter 4: Land and Resource Management

Originating Office: Office of the Deputy Secretary

301 DM 4

4.1 Purpose. This chapter defines the structure, role, and principal activities of the Department of the Interior's (Department) Land and Resource Management Steering Committee (Committee), chartered by the Secretary on December 31, 1992, and adopts the principal recommendations of the Report of the Budget Formulation Task Force on Resource Management Planning, dated November 3, 1992 (Task Force Report).

4.2 Scope. The provisions of this chapter are applicable to offices and bureaus in the Department which are responsible for management of the Nation's public lands and natural resources, for carrying out trust responsibilities of the United States government with respect to lands and natural resources of Native Americans, and/or which conduct programmatic activities in support of land and resource management activities of the Department.

4.3 Background. In May 1992, the Secretary established the Fiscal Year 1994 Budget Formulation Task Force, and identified a number of crosscutting programmatic areas for review. The purpose of the review was to determine if efficiencies in carrying out these activities could be increased by improving coordination, sharing resources, and reducing duplication.

The review of one of these areas, resource management planning, found potential for reducing duplication of effort and increasing coordination. The Task Force Report recommended that a Land and Resource Management Steering Committee be established, and that the Committee be responsible for implementation of the other recommendations in the report.

4.4 Policy. It is the policy of the Department of the Interior to collaborate and coordinate to the maximum extent practicable to assure a more integrated, efficient and effective approach to the Department's land and resource management activities.

4.5 Responsibility and Activities of the Committee. The Committee is a working group of senior bureau managers who will carry out this policy, consistent with all applicable procedures as well as statutory and delegated authorities. Specifically, the Committee will:

A. Advise and assist the Secretary in developing and implementing policies and strategies to improve management of the lands and resources entrusted to the Department

through various statutes;

B. Identify specific, recurring and/or emerging land and resource management issues of mutual concern, and coordinate and reconcile conflicting viewpoints to formulate integrated positions and/or solutions. This activity assumes establishment of enhanced communication processes which provide early notification of potential issues;

C. Develop a Departmental Planning Strategy, consistent with statutory mandates and budget resources, which contains schedules for completion of resource management plans for lands and resources managed by the Department, and the cycle for periodic updates. The Strategy also should address ecosystem and regional planning approaches and the opportunities for preparing joint plans;

D. Coordinate land and resource management planning activities (including planning schedules and development of inventory data) on an annual basis to coincide with the budget formulation process;

E. Recommend annual work planning priorities to be used in program formulation for the decisions resulting from the coordination required in 301 DM 4.5B and D above;

F. Ensure that land and resource management planning processes and procedures are efficient and, to the greatest extent possible, consistent and complementary;

G. Ensure that appeal/protest processes are consistent with joint planning activities;

H. Develop a training program for the Department which (1) includes training in core planning activities as well as specialized training in mission specific areas, and (2) more efficiently utilizes existing facilities to centralize that training for all bureaus;

I. Coordinate with the Interior Geographic Data Committee on the development and implementation of surveying, mapping, and related spatial data activities in support of land and resource management programs;

J. Encourage the development of field level and headquarters personnel management procedures rewarding greater attention to coordination of activities outside the physical and organizational boundaries of the land and resource managing agencies;

K. Establish, in consultation with other appropriate organizations, such standards, procedures, interagency agreements, and other mechanisms as are necessary to carry out these responsibilities; and

L. Perform any additional tasks assigned by the Secretary.

4.6 Coordination. The Committee is encouraged to resolve issues among its members. However, program priority recommendations and major policy documents resulting from Committee deliberations shall be circulated to Bureau Directors and Assistant Secretaries for

concurrence, and forwarded to the Secretary through the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget.

4.7 Committee Structure and Representation.

A. The Committee will be chaired by land and resource management bureaus on an annually rotating basis in the order delineated in 302 DM 2.1A(3)-(5), i.e., the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), the National Park Service (NPS), and finally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Administrative support to the Committee will be provided by the bureau chairing the Committee in a given year.

B. Members of the Committee shall be senior career policy or management representatives from the land and resource managing bureaus who possess the authority to commit their organizations. These bureaus include the BLM, the BOR, the NPS, and the FWS. The Bureau of Mines and the U.S. Geological Survey will be represented to assure optimal coordination of activities conducted in support of programs of the land and resource management bureaus, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs will be represented to assure proper coordination of issues affecting Native American lands and resources. Land and resource managing agencies in other Executive Departments, such as the Departments of Agriculture and Defense, may be invited to provide permanent representatives to the Committee.

C. Other senior officials may be invited to attend meetings of the Committee as appropriate in light of the issues to be discussed.

D. The activities delineated in 301 DM 4.5 which are optimally addressed at the State or regional level, will be delegated to standing Regional Teams. Their permanent activities will be determined by the Committee at its first meeting.

E. Subcommittees and working groups may be convened to support specific needs identified by the Committee. The respective bureaus will provide temporary staff assistance to support these efforts.

4.8 Meetings. The Committee will meet four times per year, beginning the first quarter of calendar year 1993, or more frequently if needed as determined by the Chair. Formal agendas will be prepared for each meeting with input from each Committee representative. Written minutes summarizing the pertinent discussion and decisions made at each meeting will be prepared by the designated Chair and circulated to Committee members.

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