

The County Resource Management Plan Tool Kit

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION: Rural counties empowered with the information and tools to help them work more effectively with public land managers; and be better prepared to enhance their role in the new economy.

WHAT IS THE NEED?

The Resource Management Plans (RMPs) developed by the BLM and Forest Service are the basis for nearly all land management policy and decision making activities that affect federal lands. Because FLPMA mandates that these RMPs are to be consistent with state and local plans "to the maximum extent...consistent with federal law...", it is essential that counties develop their own resource management plans to reflect local perspectives and desires relative to the public lands.

To help counties develop effective local resource management plans, the State of Utah is building a County Resource Management Plan Tool Kit, which will be available to all Utah counties via the Internet.

HOW THIS WILL HELP?

The County Resource Management Plan Tool Kit is designed around the same *structure* that is used in federal resource management plans. By using this same structure, it will be easier to compare county RMPs with federal RMPs, and it will increase the usefulness and impact of county plans in federal planning processes.

This *structure* centers around three important planning elements:

- 1) Descriptions of the *Existing Condition*;
- 2) Descriptions of the *Desired Future Condition*, and;
- 3) Methods for *monitoring* progress in moving from the existing condition to the desired future condition.

This structure can be applied to numerous management issues and concerns, but it becomes especially useful when counties apply it to specific landscapes, specific resources, and specific uses on the public lands, such as a specific watershed, a specific gypsum deposit, or a specific recreation area.

For each specific landscape, resource, or issue, the Tool Kit will help counties describe the existing condition with appropriate data, assist the county in describing its vision for a desired future condition based on scientific analysis and the supporting legal framework, and will provide examples of how to monitor progress towards achieving the county's desired future condition.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

overview

For each topic (i.e. watersheds, wildlife, etc.) addressed in the Tool Kit, the following sections and information will be provided:

Section One: Issue Overview

The overview provides a description of the issue, and its scope and dimensions. It will cite and/or reference applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, as well as any other constraints or opportunities that pertain to the issue.

The objective of this section is to help local officials gain a solid understanding of the issue and the important facts and context relative to the issue, as well as to stimulate thinking and discussion about options or trade-offs that should be considered as in describing a desired future condition.

This section will also help counties identify and describe issues of potential conflict or concern related to the issue, including the nature of the concerns, and the forces driving the concerns, such as political interests, science, public opinion, etc.

Section Two: Defining the Existing Condition

This section will provide counties with any data, studies, reports, maps, photos and Web Sites that will help local officials describe the existing condition.

It will provide a list of kinds of things that local officials should consider addressing when describing the existing condition.

Section Three: Desired Future Condition

This section is critical to the value of the plan. It will provide examples of the kinds of improvements and changes that could be implemented in order to achieve the desired future condition. In many cases, it may provide a range of alternative future conditions for local consideration.

Section Four: Policy and Position Statements

Policy and position statements should support the desired future condition. This section will provide information that counties can use to help them develop their own policy and position statements.

Section Five: Goals, Objectives and/or Action Items

In this planning model, the "Goal" is the desired future condition. The "Objectives" are improvements or changes that need to be made in order to achieve the "Goal," or desired future condition. Action Items are specific actions that can be taken in order to achieve an objective (or to reach the goal).

The primary focus of this section will be to provide examples of the types of improvements or changes that typically would be needed to reach the desired future condition.

Section Six: Monitoring Methods and Mechanisms

Once the desired future condition and the improvements needed to achieve it are clearly stated, it becomes possible to monitor progress toward achieving the desired future condition.

This section will provide examples of the types of monitoring methods and/or mechanisms that could be used to monitor progress. These may be as simple as a regular meeting between the county and the land agency to review progress that is being made, or it may involve the installation of monitoring equipment or studies by scientists or other experts. This section will provide local officials with examples of monitoring methods they can use in order to effectively monitor and/or document progress.

Section Seven: Sources and Resources to Assist

This section will be a reference guide to help local officials locate any sources of assistance or other resources that might help them in addressing the issue at hand.

WHO CAN HELP?

In assembling this Tool Kit, the Governor's Office of Planning & Budget (GOPB) is coordinating the efforts of the various state agencies associated with planning for public lands. Each agency has provided technical assistance in the form of:

- sources and contacts – particularly those within the agencies,
- websites with relevant information, and
- access to selected databases and information sources.

GOPB will continue to provide assistance in the form of:

- coordination of local, state or regional expertise,
- grants or other funding sources,
- coordination between associations or institutes, and
- examples of other locales that have successfully addressed the issue.

HOW DOES IT ACTUALLY GET DONE?

Planning is a local responsibility. The State's role is to *assist* local planning. Therefore, the first step is to formally **decide to plan** because,

...vision without action is a daydream, but action without vision is a nightmare...