

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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To: Field Managers, Nevada
Deputy State Director, Resources, Lands and Planning

From: State Director, Nevada

Subject: Implementing the National Fire Plan in Nevada: Cultural Resources

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Nevada's goal is to ensure the National Fire Plan (NFP) is implemented as efficiently and effectively as possible consistent with applicable laws and regulations. To meet our commitment to the NFP, we must ensure that our fuels management planning and implementation is as streamlined and effective as possible.

The cost of cultural resource compliance was an issue recently identified by some Nevada field offices. A key factor in ensuring that cultural resource compliance is as streamlined and cost-effective as possible, is early and continuing involvement by Cultural Resource Specialists in project planning. By involving Cultural Resource Specialists early in the planning process, the likely effect of the project on cultural resources can be determined and the appropriate level of inventory established. Moreover, the BLM field managers have an opportunity to determine whether or not to go forward with a project if it appears that significant adverse impacts to cultural resources would be likely or expensive mitigation/inventory would be required. Another component of this process is maintaining the positive relationship between the BLM and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and applying existing fire-related provisions in the State Protocol Agreement (SPA), which provide expedited and autonomous decision-making processes for prescribed fires, fire use areas, and fire rehabilitation projects. Early consultation with the SHPO may also provide the BLM with the opportunity to better manage potential costs.

In order to ensure that Nevada is as effective as possible in complying with cultural resource requirements as we move forward with implementing the NFP, the following actions should be implemented for fuels projects identified for planning or implementation in Fiscal Year 2004 and subsequent years.

Nevada State Office

- The Cultural Resource Program Lead will coordinate with other states to review protocol agreements and evaluate other approaches and adopt where appropriate.
- The Nevada Fuels Program Manager will coordinate with field offices and the National Office of Fire and Aviation to support adequate program funding for cultural resource work.
- The Cultural Resource Program Lead and the Nevada State Office Contracting Officer will continue to improve Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity, General Services Administration, and local contracts to reduce cost and improve the quality of contracted work.

Field Manager(s)

- Field Managers are encouraged to utilize existing exemptions under the Categorical No Adverse Effect Situations for Fire Management and Fire Rehabilitation Projects in the SPA to expedite review of projects. Field Managers shall actively participate in SHPO consultation for complex or controversial projects to evaluate a range of alternatives to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) when thresholds in the SPA are exceeded.
- Field Managers shall obtain a briefing from Cultural Resource Specialists (defined in BLM Manual 8100, Cultural Resource Management, Glossary) on complex projects and query them as to the potential for modeling, most appropriate level of inventory, and overall cost efficiency.
- Field Managers shall actively participate in evaluation and implementation of best practices.

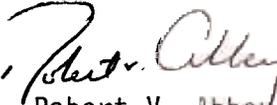
Project Manager

- Project Managers shall ensure that Cultural Resource Specialists are included at the conceptual stage of project development.
- Project Managers will ensure that Cultural Resource Specialists are included as an interactive staff element in all phases of project scoping and project design to determine the appropriate level of inventory.
- Project Managers will ensure complete and accurate project proposals (including accurate project maps) and Cultural Resources Inventory Needs Assessment forms are forwarded to Cultural Resource Specialists at least two years in advance of implementation date.
- Project Managers, where applicable and with assistance from Cultural Resource Specialists, will assess alternative treatment strategies with regard to their possible effects on cultural resources and will define specific locations within Areas of Potential Effect where treatment activities are most likely to occur.

Field Office Cultural Staff

- Field Office Cultural Resource Specialists will evaluate and recommend the most appropriate level of inventory to ensure NHPA compliance.
- Field Office Cultural Resource Specialists will participate actively in project design to avoid at-risk sites.
- Field Office Cultural Resource Specialists may utilize modeling to establish the most appropriate inventory measures to maximize cost efficiency. Cultural Resource Specialists should also take advantage of the evolving electronic archaeological database maintained by SHPO and funded by the BLM to explore applications of modeling.

Any questions or concerns should be referred to Sandy Gregory (775-861-6514) or Tom Burke (775-861-6415).



Robert V. Abbey