

# Resource Management Planning and Lessons Learned Survey



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## Survey Methods

- E-mailed survey to about 300 BLM staff and contractors
  - Survey period: 1/28/09 – 2/6/09
- 65 surveys completed (~22% response)
- 32 questions
  - 26 multiple choice questions (open-ended options)
  - 6 open-ended questions
- Voluntary and anonymous
- Informational survey
- Survey results: [www.empsi.com](http://www.empsi.com)



## Demographics

Role in the RMP process		RMP PM: Percentage of time allocated to the RMP?	
RMP project manager	25%	95 – 100%	50.0%
Other	23%	80 – 94%	31.3%
Reviewer e.g., SO/WO	25%	50 – 79%	12.5%
Resource specialist / IDT	19%	<50%	6.3%
Contractor	6%		
Writer/editor	1%		
District or Field Manager	1%		



## Survey Results

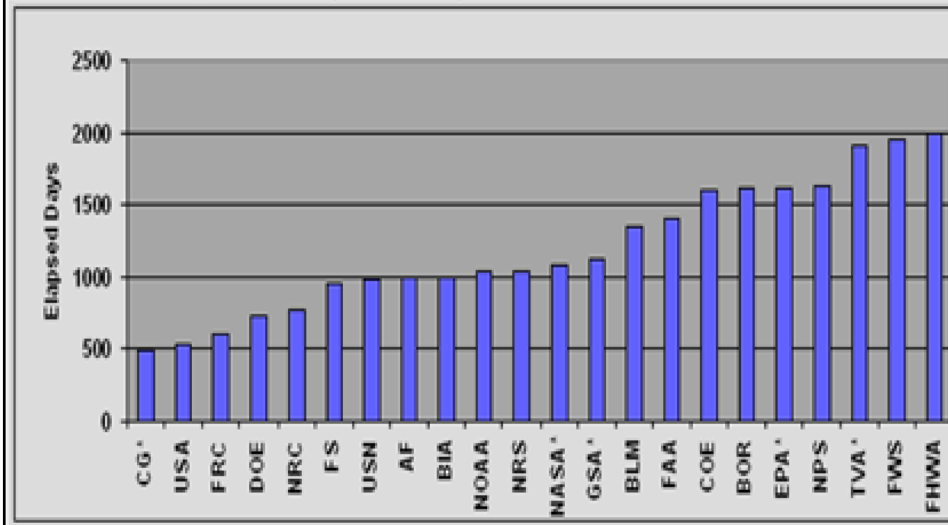
Survey focused on 5 elements of RMPs and RMP Amendments:

1. Schedule
2. Budget
3. Quality
4. Alternative Development
5. Lessons Learned – ways to improve the process



## Schedule EMPSi Research on EISs

NOI to FEIS Elapsed Time (2005-2006)



## EMPSi NEPA Surveys (2003,2004,2006)

- “What percent of your projects were delayed?”
  - BLM 42%
  - BOR 54%
  - FS 67%
  - NPS 52%
- Top Reasons?
  - Decision-makers changed project
  - Project was challenged in court
  - Poor document; needed to be re-done
  - Alternatives changed or added
  - Coordination with ESA & other natural resource regulations



## EMPSi NEPA Surveys (2003,2004,2006)

- Considering anything you deem relevant, which of the following is more likely to account for a delay in a project?

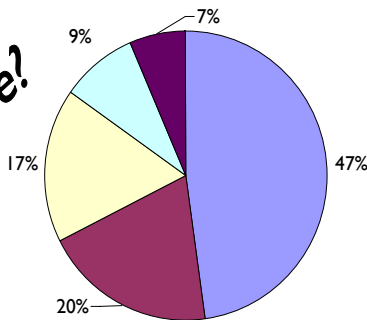
32% NEPA process

68% Factors outside of the NEPA process

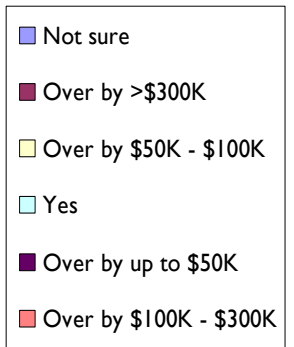
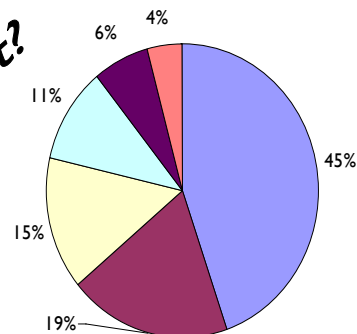
- Relevant solutions:
  - Dedicated project manager
  - Management support

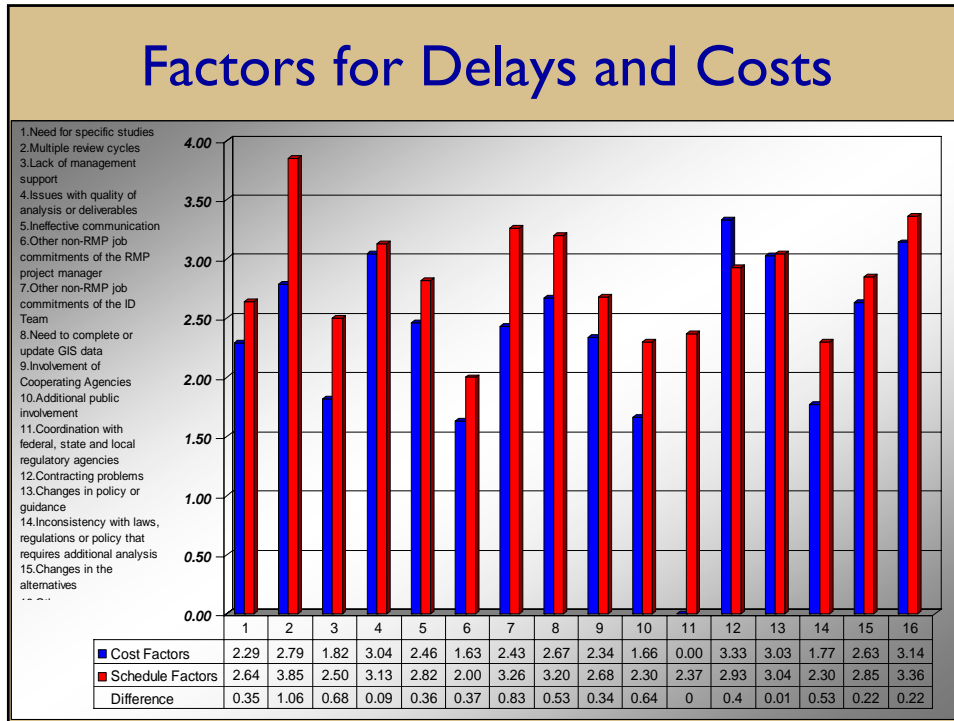


*On Schedule?*



*On Budget?*





Factors	Delay Rank	Cost Rank
Multiple review cycles (e.g., SO/WO/SOL)	1	4
Other non-RMP job commitments of IDT	2	15
Need to complete or update GIS data	3	5
Issues with quality of analysis/deliverables	4	2
Changes in policy or guidance	5	3
Contracting problems	6	1
Changes in the alternatives	7	6
Ineffective communication	8	7
Involvement of Cooperating Agencies	9	9
Need for specific studies or modeling *	10	10
Lack of management support	11	11
Coordination with federal, state and local regulatory agencies	12	14
Additional public involvement	13	13
Inconsistency: laws, regulations or policy	14	12
Non-RMP job commitments of RMP PM	15	8

## Studies that have resulted in delays or costs

	Delay	Cost
Air quality	20%	31%
Route inventory	20%	19%
Wilderness characteristics & other special designation	20%	19%
RFDs	10%	0%
Other studies*	30%	31%

\* Other studies: Vegetation modeling, VRM, cultural, socioeconomic report, sage grouse, and GIS related.



## Cost Recovery

About 21% found ways to save money or reduce costs

- Distribute CDs instead of paper copies of document
- Focus on principle issues and keep things simple
- Use ePlanning
- Have BLM conduct AMS
- Have BLM assume most of alternatives development work
- Reduce the number of people working on a project



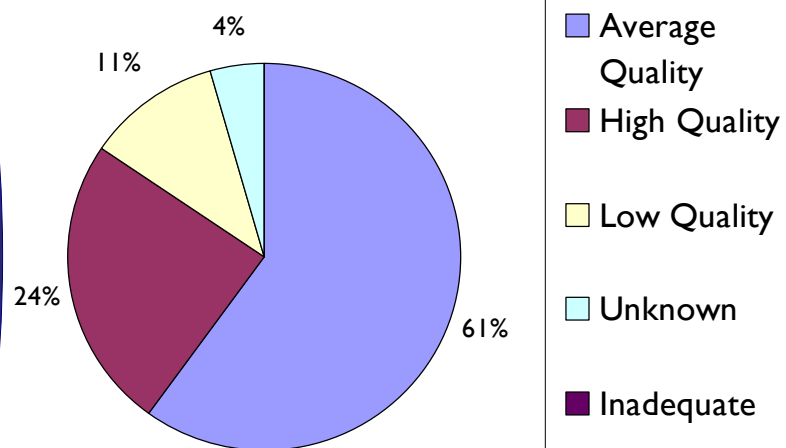
## Schedule Management

About 29% found ways to make up time or accelerate the schedule

- Coordinated protest resolution with WO
- Using active schedule management with critical paths
- Overlapping review of deliverables or components
- Produce CDs instead of hard-copies of document
- Compressing non-critical path tasks
- Bypass or streamline WO/SO review
- MOU with USFWS that included schedule so consultation stuck to schedule



## Findings - Quality



## Factors Impacting Quality

1. Changing direction
2. Time constraints
3. Expertise of contractor staff
4. Inadequate flow of information from SO or WO
5. Expertise of BLM staff
6. Budget constraints
7. Inaccurate information
8. Lack of SO or WO involvement
9. Low priority at the FO or SO



## Factors Impacting Quality

- FO Manager involvement is critical
  - 83% felt that FOM involvement directly or indirectly affected the timeline, quality, and progress of the RMP
- Flexibility – unforeseen challenges will occur
- Communication, communication, communication



## Alternative Development

### How long did alternatives development take for your RMP or RMP Amendment?

6 months to 1 year	33%
3 months to 6 months	30%
1 to 3 months	12%
1 year to 18 months	12%
18 months to 2 years	10%
More than 2 years	3%



## Alternative Development

### How Could Alternatives Development Process be Improved?

- Dedicating a block of time to focus only on alternative development
- Leadership (from RMP PM and Field Manager)
- Increased interdisciplinary team dedication
- Training/guidance
- Better communication
- Allow for more time
- Reduce review times
- Need for more direction for WO/SO or contractor



## Findings - Contracting

- 73% used a contractor
- Most important qualities of a contractor:
  - Quality of work product
  - Project manager's communication skills
  - A solid project manager with experience completing RMPs for the BLM
- Experience varied greatly



## Findings - Contracting

### Ways to improve contracting:

- Have appropriate expectations
- Improve SOWs
- Contract discrete pieces
- Use experienced contractors
- Staff size is irrelevant; but must be knowledgeable in BLM procedures and have a working knowledge of resource interactions and skills to meet some scarce or rare needs of the particular project.
- Hire people, not companies
- Communication, communication, communication



## Top 5 Keys for a Successful RMP

1. Effective communication
2. Effective, dedicated project manager
3. Management support
4. Fully engaged and dedicated core team
5. Updated and supported GIS



## Ways to improve the process: FO

- Update GIS (early on)
- Identify special studies early on and begin coordination process:
  - Community assessment, socioeconomic report, air quality modeling, wilderness characteristics assessment, ACEC evaluation, WSR eligibility and suitability analyses
- Identify BLM and contractor tasks
- Identify core team and engage them early on so they have a vested interest in the process.
- Field Manager should be engaged and active
- Communication! Weekly meetings with IDT, contractor, FO/SO, etc.
- Encourage use of electronic documents to public
- Issue driven documents



## Ways to improve the process....

- It would be positive to have an RMP team that moved around to facilitate planning.
- WO level contract to engage the expertise of a highly skilled contractor to work through key milestones/transition points in RMP development: mainly alternative development. This contractor could conduct "mini-transition" training sets on: impact analysis, direct/indirect impacts, etc.
- The up-front "Nuts/Bolts" - does not seem effective. Break out the training into components over time and bring in not only NTC trainers but a contractor who has successfully worked on BLM RMPs to provide hands-on examples.
- Tap the knowledge of experienced planners to help new starts.



## Key Questions

- Are there ways to better integrate the WO/SO into the process?
- How can communication be improved?
- How can we improve the working relationship between the BLM and contractors?
- Survey results: [www.empsi.com](http://www.empsi.com)

