Evaluation of Resource Management Plans in Nevada Using Seven Questions to Sustainability

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Dirk van Zyl
Mining Life-Cycle Center, University of Nevada, Reno

Jerome L. Lohry
Department of Geography, University of Nevada, Reno

Reginald Reid
U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Reno, Nevada
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Outline

• Setting the stage – Resource Management Planning on public lands
• Seven questions to sustainability
• Review process
• Results of review
• Conclusions and recommendations
Setting the Stage

- Public lands in USA – managed by the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Much of the public land is in the western USA
  - Nevada 76.4 percent
  - Idaho 60.9 percent
  - Utah 58.7 percent
- BLM organized by State Office plus Regional Offices
- A Resource Management Plans (RMP) is prepared by each Regional Office
- RMPs are prepared every 10 to 15 years with regular updates
- The development of the RMP follows essentially an Environmental Impact Statement process and the outcome is a Record of Decision (ROD)
Seven Questions to Sustainability

• Developed during the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development project*
• Objectives:
  – To develop a set of practical principles, criteria, and/or indicators that could be used to guide or test the exploration for, design, operation, closure, post-closure and performance monitoring of individual operations, existing or proposed, in terms of their compatibility with concepts of sustainability; and
  – To suggest approaches or strategies for effectively implementing such a test/guideline.

Seven Questions to Sustainability

- **Engagement.** Are engagement processes in place and working effectively? Note that engagement is used to describe a process of active listening and participation in discussions and decisions by both the mining company and the communities that are impacted.

- **People (human well-being).** Will people’s well-being be maintained or improved during and after the project or operation?

- **Environment (ecological well-being).** Will the integrity of the environment be maintained or improved during and after the projects?
Seven Questions to Sustainability

- **Economy (market economy).** Is the economic viability of the company assured; is the community and regional economy better off, not only during operation, but into post-closure?

- **Traditional and Non-Market Activities (non-market economy).** Is the viability of traditional and non-market activities in the community and surrounding area maintained or improved with the project or operation?
Seven Questions to Sustainability

• **Institutional Arrangements and Governance.** Are the rules, incentives, and capacities in place now and as long as required to address project or operational consequences?

• **Synthesis and Continuous Learning (Continuous Learning and Adaptive Management).** Does a synthesis show the project to be net positive or negative for people and ecosystems; is the system in place to repeat the assessment from time to time? A synthesis is required to combine answers from all six previous questions in making the determination of the contributions of the project to people and ecosystem well-being. This question is directly tied to continuous improvement.
The Seven Questions to Sustainability

- Human Well-being
- Ecological Well-being
- Engagement
- Governance
- Market Economy
- Non-Market Economy
- Continuous Learning and Adaptive Management
Review Process

- Review based on the Seven Themes that corresponds to the Seven Questions
- Review was made of all the ROD’s issued for plans prepared by BLM Regional Offices in Nevada
- The documents dated from 1982 to 1998
- The ROD is broken down into management issues, e.g. recreation, wildlife, grazing and minerals
- Decisions are typically listed by issue
Definitions for Seven Themes

- **Engagement**: This quality describes the interactions with stakeholders listed in the management decisions.

- **Well-being of people**: This quality describes the contributions of the management decisions to the social well-being of people. These types of management actions work to make people’s lives more enjoyable, or reduce the amount of work necessary to accomplish a goal.

- **Well-being of the environment**: These are management decisions that will result in the maintenance or improvement of the natural environment.
Definitions for Seven Themes

• **Market Economy:** These are decisions designed to maintain or improve the economic conditions of the region affected by the plan

• **Non-market Activities:** These management decisions make accommodations for traditional activities to occur on public lands

• **Governance:** This section illustrates management decisions that refer to specific acts, laws, or guidelines that will determine how the resource is to be managed

• **Continuous Improvement and Adaptive Management:** These are management decisions that call for future decisions and revisions to be based on data collected at a future time
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<th>Planning Area</th>
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Number of planning management actions in accordance with the tenets of Sustainable Development:

- **Green** = two or more
- **Yellow** = one
- **Red** = none

**Districts:**
- Battle Mountain District
- Carson City District
- Elko District
- Ely District
- Las Vegas District
- Winnemucca District
Conclusions and Recommendations

• The review was based on the management decisions and not the process to accomplish that – review of future RMPs should also include a review of the process
• Regular review of RODs will help develop a better appreciation of sustainability throughout the BLM
• The outcome of this study shows that the older RMPs included a number of the sustainability themes although prepared under different guidelines
• More active engagement should become part of the culture in Resource Management Plans; the process can start during the development of the plans