

June 9, 2017 Email

Mary Camp, President
Deer Creek Valley Natural Resources Conservation Association

Serena Barry, Vice President
Deer Creek Valley Natural Resources Conservation Association

Subj: NEPA Table Talk: BLM NEPA Handbook, Section 6.8.1.2 Must Describe Analyzing Effects Methodology, & BLM Methodology and Analysis to Determine Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) Targets in the Purpose and Need

Dear Mary & Serena:

Great telephone conference call on NEPA Table Talk: June 7, 2017, 10:00 a.m. - noon plus.

My most important point for our NEPA compliance issue considerations are from the BLM NEPA Handbook and the CEQ NEPA regulations (i.e., code of federal regulations - CFR).

Most important is the BLM's must analyzing effects methodologies implementing regulations identified in the 2008 BLM NEPA Handbook, Chapter 6 "NEPA Analysis" (pages 33 - 68). *"Chapter 6 identifies the essential analytical elements that are common to NEPA analysis, regardless of whether you are preparing an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement."* (BLM. 2008, p. ix). The handbook's Section 6.8.1.2 Analyzing Effects provides *"A NEPA document must describe the analytical methodology sufficiently so that the reader can understand how the analysis was conducted and why the particular methodology was used."*

The BLM's EAs and EISs must describe the analytical methodologies to determine effects and significantly sufficiently so that the reader, including the public, can understand how the analysis was conducted (BLM. 2008, p. 55). Understanding by the public is key to meeting the public involvement (PI) test: ***"Agencies shall: (a) Make diligent efforts to involve the public in preparing and implementing their NEPA procedures."*** (40 CFR1506.6 Public Involvement), and the BLM's PI test so that the reader, including the public, can understand.

Section 6.8.1.2 Analyzing Effects "Methodology": A NEPA document must describe (emphasis added) the analytical methodology sufficiently so that the reader can understand how the analysis was conducted and why the particular methodology was used (40 CFR 1502.24). This explanation **must include** (emphasis added) a description of any limitations inherent in the methodology (emphasis added). If there is substantial dispute over models, methodology, or data, **you must recognize** (emphasis added) the opposing viewpoint(s) **and explain the rationale for your choice of analysis** (emphasis added) (Chapter 6, Section 6.8.1.2 "Analyzing Effects" BLM NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1) (BLM. 2008, p. 55).

The CEQ's CFRs describing the relationship of PI understanding and the "must describe" analyzing effects methodologies for determining significant or non-significance are in Appendix A. The important CFRs supporting Section 6.8.1.2 Analyzing Effects applies to both EAs and EISs follow (BLM. 2008, p. ix; Appendix A).

- **40 CFR 1502.22 Incomplete or Unavailable Information** When an agency is evaluating reasonably foreseeable significant adverse effects on the human environment in an environmental impact statement and there is incomplete or unavailable information, **the agency shall always make clear that such information is lacking** (emphasis added).
- **40 CFR 1502.24. Methodology and Scientific Accuracy.** Agencies shall insure the professional integrity, including scientific integrity, of the discussions and analyses in environmental impact statements. They shall identify any methodologies used and shall make explicit reference by footnote to the scientific and other sources relied upon for conclusions in the statement. An agency may place discussion of methodology in an appendix.
- **40 CFR 1507.3 Agency Procedures.** (a) . . . each agency shall as necessary adopt procedures to supplement these regulations. When the agency is a department, major subunits are encouraged (with the consent of the department) to adopt their own procedures.

On a different topic, I am very sorry about my NEPA table talk rambling on the ASQ purpose and need, and what I think I eventually called unit inventories and silvicultural prescriptions. I am still looking for my inventory examples, but at least I now know the terms I should have been using (i.e., forest operations inventory, operations inventory (OI) units, timber capability production classification, and silvicultural prescriptions). Now I know I was talking about the OI and the silvicultural prescriptions (Appendix B).

1. Operations Inventory (OI) (also Forest Operations Inventory-FOI) A site-specific forest inventory containing information such as forest stand location, size, age, stocking levels, major species present, size classes and treatment history.
2. Operations Inventory (OI) Unit An aggregation of trees occupying an area that is sufficiently uniform in composition, age, arrangement and condition to be distinguishable from vegetation on adjoining areas, a forest stand.
3. Timber Capability Production Classification (TPCC) The TPCC is a classification of BLM lands based on the physical and biological capability of the site to support and produce commercial forest products on a sustained yield basis. Much of the classification is based on the ability to reforest the site.
4. Silvicultural Prescription Silvicultural prescriptions are a set of treatments designed to manage stand vegetation and development so that land use allocations and other management objectives can be met.

What I was trying to share was that when I worked for BLM I knew of no BLM methodology to assess timber EA alternatives as to their "reasonableness" for meeting "Purpose and Need" fiscal year "ASQ" targets (i.e., goals). The purpose and need statement dictates the range of EA and EIS alternatives, because alternatives are not "reasonable" if they do not respond to the purpose and need for the action (Appendix C). However, the problem is the definition of "respond" and its methodologies, and the required equal "respond" analysis for all considered alternatives, included and rejected.

Often, the "purpose" can be presented as the solution to the problem described in the "need" for the action (Appendix C). The only "need" problem statement I could find in the draft chapter one's "Purpose and Need for the Action", of the BLM's October 2016 *Pickett West Forest Management Project EA*, was Section 6 (MDO GPFO. 2016. ¶ 6).

“The inability to proceed with a given sale in the Medford District Sale plan for any particular fiscal year has the potential to prevent the district from meeting Allowable Sale Quantity targets, as directed in the O&C Act and the 1995 ROD/RMP.” (MDO GPFO. 2016. ¶ 6).

I understand the Natural Selection Alternative (NSA) was considered by BLM, but rejected because it did not reasonably “respond” to the purpose and need for the action by not meeting fiscal year ASQ targets.

As I understand it, the ASQ is the quantity of timber that may be sold from the area of suitable land covered by the BLM RMP for a time period specified by the RMP. This quantity is usually expressed on an annual basis as the “average annual allowable sale quantity.” It sounds like each alternative considered for inclusion in the EA would have a significance “purpose and need” test for whether it “responded” to BLM meeting the fiscal year ASQ target, even though a target or goal is not a standard that has to be met; it is a “may” criteria.

I assume that the EA describes the Section 6.8.1.2 Analyzing Effects “Methodology” (40 CFR 1502.24) in order to provide a scientific alternative comparison analysis that all the EA’s considered alternatives, included and rejected, satisfy the purpose and need as a solution to the ASQ problem. If not, the EA is not in compliance with Section 6.8.1.2 (40 CFR 1502.24), including the “Incomplete or Unavailable Information” standard (40 CFR 1502.22), and it is not in compliance with the CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1507.3) and NEPA.

The bottom line, how can the NSA be rejected for not “responding” to BLM meeting the fiscal year ASQ “may” target/goal without a Section 6.8.1.2 analysis determination? I suspect there is no equal analysis of both the accepted proposed action and the rejected NSA to determine if they responded to the ASQ need problem. Is there? If not, the EA is also not in compliance with NEPA’s PI test that “*Agencies shall: (a) Make diligent efforts to involve the public in preparing and implementing their NEPA procedures.*” (40 CFR 1506.6), nor the BLM’s NEPA standard that the EA must describe the analytical methodologies to determine effects and significantly sufficiently, so that the reader, including the public, can understand how the analysis was conducted (BLM. 2008, p. 55; 40 CFR 1500.1(b), 1500.1(c), 1500.2, 1500.2(b), and 1500.2(d)).

Sincerely,

Mike :)

Mike Walker, Chair
Hugo JS&PSS Exploratory Committee
Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

Appendices

- Appendix A. BLM NEPA Handbook: Analyzing Effects Methodologies
- Appendix B. BLM “Copper Queen Grove” Forest Inventory
- Appendix C. May 15, 2017 Email From Walker to Deer Creek Valley Natural Resources Conservation Association Representatives; Subject: National Environmental Procedures Act’s (NEPA) Procedural Requirements For “Purpose and Need”

Appendices

Appendix A.	BLM NEPA Handbook: Analyzing Effects Methodologies
Appendix B.	BLM “Copper Queen Grove” Forest Inventory
Appendix C.	May 15, 2017 Email From Walker to Deer Creek Valley Natural Resources Conservation Association Representatives; Subject: National Environmental Procedures Act’s (NEPA) Procedural Requirements For “Purpose and Need

Appendix A. BLM NEPA Handbook: Analyzing Effects Methodologies

The BLM’s must Analyzing Effects “Methodology” implementing regulations is identified in the BLM NEPA Handbook, Chapter 6 “NEPA Analysis” (pages 33 - 68). *“Chapter 6 identifies the essential analytical elements that are common to NEPA analysis, regardless of whether you are preparing an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement.”* (BLM. 2008, p. ix). The handbook’s Section 6.8.1.2 Analyzing Effects “Methodology” provides *“A NEPA document must describe the analytical methodology sufficiently so that the reader can understand how the analysis was conducted and why the particular methodology was used.*

The EA and EIS document **must describe** the analytical methodologies to determine effects and significantly sufficiently so that the reader can understand how the analysis was conducted and why the particular methodology was used (BLM. 2008, p. 55). Understanding by the public (i.e., reader) is key to meeting the public involvement test: *“**Agencies shall:** (a) Make diligent efforts to involve the public in preparing and implementing their NEPA procedures.”* (40 CFR 1506.6 Public Involvement).

Section 6.8.1.2 Analyzing Effects “Methodology”: A NEPA document **must describe** (emphasis added) the analytical methodology sufficiently so that the reader can understand how the analysis was conducted and why the particular methodology was used (40 CFR 1502.24). This explanation **must include** (emphasis added) a description of any limitations inherent in the methodology (emphasis added). If there is substantial dispute over models, methodology, or data, **you must recognize** (emphasis added) the opposing viewpoint(s) **and explain the rationale for your choice of analysis** (emphasis added) (Chapter 6, Section 6.8.1.2 “Analyzing Effects” BLM NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1) (BLM. 2008, p. 55).

The CEQ’s important applicable CFRs to Section 6.8.1.2 Analyzing Effects “Methodology” follow.

- **40 CFR 1502.22 Incomplete or Unavailable Information** When an agency is evaluating reasonably foreseeable significant adverse effects on the human environment in an environmental impact statement and there is incomplete or unavailable information, **the agency shall always make clear that such information is lacking** (emphasis added).
- **40 CFR 1502.24. Methodology and Scientific Accuracy.** Agencies shall insure the professional integrity, including scientific integrity, of the discussions and analyses in environmental impact statements. They shall identify any methodologies used and shall make explicit reference by footnote to the scientific and other sources relied upon for conclusions in the statement. An agency may place discussion of methodology in an appendix.
- **40 CFR 1507.3 Agency Procedures.** (a) . . . each agency shall as necessary adopt procedures to supplement these regulations. When the agency is a department, major subunits are encouraged (with the consent of the department) to adopt their own procedures.

Diligent Efforts to Involve the Public The federal agency's public involvement purpose of NEPA's "shall" requirement (i.e., "must" requirement) responsibility follows (NEPA, Section 102(2)(B); 40 CFR 1502.24; BLM. 2008, p. 55). The BLM NEPA Handbook (40 CFR 1507.3 Agency Procedures) provides the specific rules for developing EAs and EISs, and how the public can become involved.

- 40 CFR 1506.6 Public Involvement: *"Agencies shall: (a) Make diligent efforts to involve the public in preparing and implementing their NEPA procedures."* (BLM. 2008, p. 2).
- This Handbook contains direction for use by BLM employees from all levels of our organization, including decision-makers, program managers, specialists, interdisciplinary team members, and any BLM contractors involved in the NEPA process. *"We" (BLM) believe it will help "you" (the reader) help us in meeting the legal requirements of the NEPA* (BLM. 2008, p. 2).

In 2005 the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, published a report for the U.S. Congress, *The National Environmental Policy Act: Background and Implementation*. The report identified four purposes of the NEPA process, two of which address public involvement (CRS. 2005, p. 11).

- **Ensure that the environmental information made available to public officials and citizens is of high quality (i.e., includes accurate scientific analysis, expert agency comments, and public scrutiny);**
- **Facilitate public involvement in the federal decision-making process.**

The theme of the following CEQ regulations is the relationship of public involvement (PI) in NEPA, "must describe" analyzing effects methodologies (Section 6.8.1.2 "Analyzing Effects" methodologies for documenting significant or non-significance (40 CFR 1502.24; 40 CFR 1502.22; BLM. 2008, p. 55).

- 40 CFR 1500.1 Purpose
 - 40 CFR 1500.1(a) inform federal agencies of what they must do to comply with the procedures and achieve the goals of NEPA;
 - 40 CFR 1500.1(b) **ensure that the environmental information made available to public officials and citizens is of high quality (i.e., includes accurate scientific analysis, expert agency comments, and public scrutiny)** (emphasis added);
 - 40 CFR 1500.1(c) foster better decision making by helping public officials make decisions based on an understanding of the environmental consequences of their actions;
- 40 CFR 1500.2 Policy. Federal agencies shall to the fullest extent possible:
 - 40 CFR 1500.2(b) **Implement procedures to make the NEPA process more useful to decisionmakers and the public** (emphasis added); to reduce paperwork and the accumulation of extraneous background data; and to emphasize real environmental issues and alternatives.
 - 40 CFR 1500.2(d) **Encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions** (emphasis added) which affect the quality of the human environment.
- 40 CFR 1501.4(b). If the proposed action is not covered by paragraph (a) of this section, prepare an environmental assessment (§1508.9). The agency shall involve environmental agencies, applicants, and the public, to the extent practicable, in preparing assessments required by §1508.9(a)(1).
- 40 CFR 1501.7 Scoping. [Allow the public to help shape the content of the EA and EIS by participating in scoping.] (40 CFR 1501.7(a)(1)).
- 40 CFR 1500.3 Mandate Parts 1500 through 1508 of this title provide regulations applicable to and **binding on all federal agencies** (emphasis added) for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.
- 40 CFR 1500.6 Agency authority. Each agency shall interpret the provisions of the Act as a supplement to its existing authority and as a mandate to view traditional policies and missions in the light of the Act's

national environmental objectives. Agencies shall review their policies, procedures, and regulations accordingly and revise them as necessary to insure full compliance with the purposes and provisions of the Act. **The phrase “to the fullest extent possible” in section 102 means that each agency of the federal government shall comply** (emphasis added) with that section unless existing law applicable to the agency’s operations expressly prohibits or makes compliance impossible.

- 40 CFR 1500.6(b). Provide public notice of NEPA-related hearings, public meetings, and the availability of environmental documents **so as to inform those persons and agencies who may be interested or affected** (emphasis added).
- 40 CFR 1502.10(h). [EIS] List of preparers.
- 40 CFR 1502.14. Alternatives Including the Proposed Action
 - 40 CFR 1502.14(a). (a) Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated.
 - 40 CFR 1502.14(c). (c) Include reasonable alternatives not within the jurisdiction of the lead agency.
 - 40 CFR 1502.14(d). (d) Include the alternative of no action.
- 40 CFR 1502.22 Incomplete or unavailable information. When an agency is evaluating reasonably foreseeable significant adverse effects on the human environment in an environmental impact statement and there is incomplete or unavailable information, **the agency shall always make clear that such information is lacking** (emphasis added).
- 40 CFR 1502.24. Methodology and Scientific Accuracy. Agencies shall insure the professional integrity, including scientific integrity, of the discussions and analyses in environmental impact statements. **They shall identify any methodologies used and shall make explicit reference by footnote to the scientific and other sources relied upon for conclusions in the statement** (emphasis added) [BLM. 2008, p. 70]. An agency may place discussion of methodology in an appendix.
- 40 CFR 1503.1 Inviting Comments. [Give the public an opportunity to review the analysis and any underlying documents.] (40 CFR 1503.1(a)(4)).
- 40 CFR 1503.4 Response to Comments. [Require the agency to respond to public comments and make these comments available to the public in a final document.] (40 CFR 1503.4).
- 40 CFR 1506.6 Public involvement. Agencies shall: **(a) Make diligent efforts to involve the public in preparing and implementing their NEPA procedures**.
- 40 CFR 1507.3 Agency Procedures. (a) . . . each agency shall as necessary adopt procedures to supplement these regulations. When the agency is a department, major subunits are encouraged (with the consent of the department) to adopt their own procedures.
- 40 CFR 1508.7 Cumulative impact. “Cumulative impact” is the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions **regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions** (emphasis added). Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.
- 40 CFR 1508.9(b). “Environmental assessment”: (b) Shall include brief discussions of the need for the proposal, of alternatives as required by section 102(2)(E), of the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives, and a listing of agencies and persons consulted.
- 40 CFR 1508.27 Significantly. “Significantly” as used in NEPA requires considerations of both context and intensity: (a) *Context*. This means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short and long-term effects are relevant.
(b) *Intensity*. This refers to the severity of impact. Responsible officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action. . . . [see original for 10 intensity standards].

Appendix B. BLM “Copper Queen Grove” Forest Inventory

October 31, 2011

BLM Land Use Allocation (LUA): Under the NW Forest Plan, lands (BLM and USFS) within the range of the Northern Spotted Owl were divided into a set of seven land use allocations. Some lands were designated as Late-Successional Reserves where the focus of management activities would be to maintain and enhance late-successional and old-growth forests ecosystems. Other lands were designated as Matrix where the primary focus of management activities would be timber production and harvest to provide jobs and contribute to community stability. On the Medford District, BLM further divided Matrix lands. The Copper Queen Grove, while in the general Matrix – Southern General Forest Management Area (SGFMA) has been designated as an Owl Core Area. Under the current plan the stand is to be managed as a Late-Successional Reserve.

BLM Forest Inventory:

1. **Operations Inventory (OI)(also Forest Operations Inventory-FOI):** A site-specific forest inventory containing information such as forest stand location, size, age, stocking levels, major species present, size classes and treatment history. Some information such as treatment history is recorded in the Micro*Storms database. The amount of information on specific units varies depending on the number of projects occurring in the area and when those projects occurred.
2. **Operations Inventory (OI) Unit:** An aggregation of trees occupying an area that is sufficiently uniform in composition, age, arrangement and condition to be distinguishable from vegetation on adjoining areas, a forest stand. The Copper Queen Grove consists of two OI Units, #133713 and #110317. Information within the system for these units is minimal. Unit birth dates were estimated to be 1870. Under definitions in the Medford District RMP, the grove would be classified as mature.
3. **Timber Capability Production Classification (TPCC):** The TPCC is a classification of BLM lands based on the physical and biological capability of the site to support and produce commercial forest products on a sustained yield basis. Much of the classification is based on the ability to reforest the site. The Copper Queen Grove site is under two categories, RTR and FGR/RMR. RTR- These are sites where high solar radiation along with low available soil moisture and competing vegetation limits conifer seedling survival. These sites will generally meet or exceed minimum stock levels of commercial species within five years of harvest using operational practices. FGR – These are sites that are subject to unacceptable soil losses that can result from forest management practices unless mitigation measures are used to protect the soil and growing site. RMR- These sites are similar to RTR sites in that seedling survival is reduced by low growing season precipitation in addition to low available soil moisture in combination with competing vegetation.
4. **Silvicultural Prescription:** Silvicultural prescriptions are a set of treatments designed to manage stand vegetation and development so that Land Use Allocation and other management objectives can be met. Silvicultural prescriptions vary from site to site and are based on factors that include stand condition and vigor, plant species present, habitat requirements of rare or endangered species, economics, physical conditions of the site as well as management direction and objectives at that time. At the present time (10/2011), the Copper Queen Grove is not a part of any proposed project. No site specific silvicultural prescription has been developed. When active management is appropriate, prescriptions for Owl Core Areas, such as the Copper Queen Grove, would be very similar to those of Late-Successional Reserves.

Appendix C. May 15, 2017 Email From Walker to Deer Creek Valley Natural Resources Conservation Association Representatives; Subj: National Environmental Procedures Act's (NEPA) Procedural Requirements "Purpose and Need"

This email communication follow-up is on "purpose and need" for some action of BLM, in compliance with the 2008 BLM National Environmental Policy Act Handbook H-1790-1. The purpose and need also relates to scoping and issues.

"Purpose and Need for the Action" Statement For NEPA Compliance Evaluation

The BLM October 2016 **Purpose and Need for the Action** identified in the *Pickett West Forest Management Project EA* (draft chapter 1 of EA). For my purposes in the May 15, 2017 email I identified seven sections, or paragraphs, to the Purpose and Need for the Action. Is the purpose and need for the action in compliance with BLM NEPA Handbook (BLM, 2008, Section 6.2.1)?

Section 6 (MDO GPFO, 2016, ¶ 6) was the only statement I could find for the problem: Often, the "purpose" can be presented as the solution to the problem described in the "need" for the action.

The inability to proceed with a given sale in the Medford District Sale plan for any particular fiscal year has the potential to prevent the district from meeting Allowable Sale Quantity targets, as directed in the O&C Act and the 1995 ROD/RMP. [MDO GPFO, 2016, ¶ 6.]

Section 6.2 PURPOSE AND NEED of BLM NEPA Handbook (BLM, 2008, p.35)

The CEQ regulations direct that an EIS "...**shall** (emphasis added) briefly specify the underlying purpose and need to which the agency is responding in proposing the alternatives including the proposed action" (40 CFR 1502.13). The CEQ regulations also direct that EAs "...**shall** (emphasis added) include brief discussions of the need for the proposal..." (40 CFR 1508.9(b)).

The CEQ regulations do not differentiate the "purpose" of the action from the "need" for the action. However, distinguishing the "purpose" and the "need" as two separate aspects of the purpose and need statement may help clarify why the BLM is proposing an action. For many types of actions, **the "need" for the action can be described as the underlying problem or opportunity to which the BLM is responding with the action. The "purpose" can be described as a goal or objective that we are trying to reach. Often, the "purpose" can be presented as the solution to the problem described in the "need" for the action** (emphasis added). *For example, the "need" for a culvert replacement project might describe how the existing culvert blocks fish passage; the "purpose" might be to replace the culvert with one that allows fish passage.*

Regardless of whether the "purpose" and the "need" are treated as distinct or synonymous, **the purpose and need statement as a whole describes the problem or opportunity to which the BLM is responding and what the BLM hopes to accomplish by the action** (emphasis added).

We recommend that the purpose and need statement be brief, unambiguous, and as specific as possible. Although the purpose and need statement cannot be arbitrarily narrow, you have considerable flexibility in defining the purpose and need for action. To the extent possible, construct the purpose and need statement to conform to existing decisions, policies, regulation, or law. The purpose and need for the action is usually related to achieving goals and objectives of the LUP (emphasis added); reflect this in your purpose and need statement.

The purpose and need statement for an externally generated action **must describe** (emphasis added) the BLM purpose and need, not an applicant's or external proponent's purpose and need (40 CFR 1502.13). The applicant's purpose and need may provide useful background information, but this description must not be confused with the BLM purpose and need for action. The BLM action triggers the NEPA analysis. It is the BLM purpose and need for action that will dictate the range of alternatives and provide a basis for the rationale for eventual selection of an alternative in a decision. See the Web Guide for examples of purpose and need statements.

Text Box: **The purpose and need statement should explain why the BLM is proposing action** (emphasis added). Note that you must describe the purpose and need for the action, not the purpose and need for the document

Section 6.2.1 The Role of the Purpose and Need Statement of BLM NEPA Handbook (BLM. 2008. p. 36)

We recommend that you draft your purpose and need statement early in the NEPA process. Including a draft purpose and need statement with scoping materials will help focus internal and external scoping comments. **Reexamine and update your purpose and need statement as appropriate throughout the NEPA process, especially when refining the proposed action and developing alternatives** (emphasis added).

A carefully crafted purpose and need statement can be an effective tool in controlling the scope of the analysis and thereby increasing efficiencies by eliminating unnecessary analysis and reducing delays in the process. **The purpose and need statement dictates the range of alternatives, because action alternatives are not "reasonable" if they do not respond to the purpose and need for the action** (emphasis added) (see section 6.6.1, *Reasonable Alternatives*). **The broader the purpose and need statement, the broader the range of alternatives that must be analyzed** (emphasis added). The purpose and need statement will provide a framework for issue identification and will form the basis for the eventual rationale for selection of an alternative. **Generally[?], the action alternatives will respond to the problem or opportunity described in the purpose and need statement** (emphasis added), providing a basis for eventual selection of an alternative in a decision.

My Section 6 "Brainstorming Observations On "Purpose and Need for the Action" Statement" follow (i.e., "Brainstorming Observation on MDO GPFO. 2016. ¶ 6").

Question ¶ 6.1. ¶ 6.] is odd. What does it mean?

Question ¶ 6.2. Is this Allowable Sale Quantity question the "problem or opportunity" defined in Section 6.2.1 The Role of the Purpose and Need Statement (BLM. 2008. p. 36)

Section 6.2.1. The purpose and need statement dictates the range of alternatives, because action alternatives are not "reasonable" if they do not respond to the purpose and need for the action (see section 6.6.1, *Reasonable Alternatives*). The broader the purpose and need statement, the broader the range of alternatives that must be analyzed . The purpose and need statement will provide a framework for issue identification and will form the basis for the eventual rationale for selection of an alternative. Generally[?], the action alternatives will respond to the problem or opportunity described in the purpose and need statement, providing a basis for eventual selection of an alternative in a decision.

Question ¶ 6.3. Does only the first draft of "proposed action alternative" meet the ASQs? If true, what does CEQ Question 1b mean?

CEQ Question 1b. How many alternatives have to be discussed when there is an infinite number of possible alternatives?

A. For some proposals there may exist a very large or even an infinite number of possible reasonable alternatives. For example, a proposal to designate wilderness areas within a National Forest could be said to involve an infinite number of alternatives from **0 to 100 percent of the forest** (emphasis added). When there

are potentially a very large number of alternatives, only a reasonable number of examples, covering the full spectrum of alternatives, must be analyzed and compared in the EIS. An appropriate series of alternatives might include dedicating 0, 10, 30, 50, 70, 90, or 100 percent of the Forest to wilderness. What constitutes a reasonable range of alternatives depends on the nature of the proposal and the facts in each case.

Question ¶ 6.4. Doesn't the answer to CEQ's Question 1b mean that when dealing with geography and/or ASQ that reasonable alternatives could "involve an infinite number of alternatives from **0 to 100 percent of the forest** (EA analysis area)"?

Question ¶ 6.5. Does the "potential" in "potential to prevent the district from meeting Allowable Sale Quantity targets" mean the probability of a significant impacts (i.e., 40 CRF Sec. 1508.27 Significantly. Significantly" as used in NEPA requires considerations of both context and intensity).

Sec. 1508.27(a) Context. This means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant.

Sec. 1508.27(b) Intensity. This refers to the severity of impact. Responsible officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action. The following three of 10 intensity criteria should be considered in evaluating intensity:

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.
5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.

Question ¶ 6.6. What does the following mean: ". . . meeting Allowable Sale Quantity targets, as directed in the O&C Act and the 1995 ROD/RMP"?

Question ¶ 6.7. What are the relationships of the two BLM identified reasonable alternatives to meeting ASQ targets?

Question ¶ 6.7. How will implementation monitoring determine if the "Alternative 2 - Proposed Action Alternative" meet the Allowable Sale Quantity targets, as directed in the O&C Act and the 1995 ROD/RMP?

Question ¶ 6.8. How will monitoring funding be guaranteed for administration and enforcement? My experience as a BLM Planner/Environmental Specialist is that RMPs are updated, in part, because of failing or inadequate inventories needed, monitoring administration and enforcement, and public concerns and controversy (might include court decisions).