

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## ***Managing for Excellence*** **Concept Paper**

## **Functional Area: Relationships with Customers and Other Stakeholders**

*Executive Sponsor*

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## **Background/Drivers**

Reclamation has a long history of external outreach, particularly with its water and power customers. This has been indispensable to developing water and power resource projects that serve the varying needs and interests of the diverse communities of the West. Despite occasional disagreements, Reclamation enjoys a positive relationship with most of its constituencies. Increasing competition for the scarce water and power resources of the West, however, requires that Reclamation work hard to sustain its successful relationships, improve others, and develop new ones. In many instances, Reclamation is constrained by legal and policy requirements in making its decisions. Effective, forthright communication between Reclamation and its customers on these issues is therefore essential if the agency is to deliver optimum value and maintain strong, positive relationships with its customers and other stakeholders.

The action items in this functional area are intended to build upon Reclamation's current means of interacting with its customers and other stakeholders on issues of mutual interest and to ensure the effective communication of its policies.

## **Interactions with Customers and Other Stakeholders**

One of Reclamation's current means of interacting with customers and other stakeholders is attendance at meetings of national organizations representing these entities. In addition, Reclamation, at the Regional and the Area Office levels, often attends board meetings and other meetings of its customers and other stakeholders when Reclamation-related issues are discussed. The focus of the team responsible for Action Item 1 is to ensure that Reclamation takes full advantage of these and other opportunities to improve two-way communication with its customers and other stakeholders. The team will develop guiding principles and practices for Reclamation managers on accomplishing this objective. This guidance could include expanded use of Reclamation technical staff for informational briefings on issues of interest to customers and other stakeholders. For an outline of Team 1's objectives, tasks, and milestones, please see the attached Action Item Summary. It should be noted that this and all other Action Item Summaries are subject to refinement based on input from Reclamation managers, staff, customers, and other stakeholders.

## **Communication of Policies**

In making decisions, Reclamation managers and staff must act within their legal authority and the boundaries of Reclamation policy. Reclamation's legal authority can be found in various locations throughout the U.S. Code. Many of the legal requirements flowing from these statutes, including direction on their implementation, are discussed in Reclamation policy documents which are part of

the Reclamation Manual. Other *Managing for Excellence* teams, including 5,6, and 7, have been tasked with efforts to make the Reclamation Manual more comprehensive in documenting requirements for the administration of Reclamation projects and programs.

In its *Managing for Excellence* Action Plan, Reclamation committed to ensuring that these Reclamation Manual documents were readily accessible on the internet. While the Reclamation Manual had been on the internet for some time, Team 2 was responsible for a major reorganization and upgrade of the site to make the Reclamation Manual easier to access, use, and understand. This task was completed in May 2006, and the new website is available at <http://www.usbr.gov/recman/>. Memos announcing the new website and the significance of the Reclamation Manual were concurrently sent to Reclamation customers and other stakeholders.

The manner in which policy documents are developed and communicated both internally and externally is an important tool in ensuring that Reclamation's policies add value to its projects and programs on behalf of its managers, staff, customers and other stakeholders. This process is documented in a number of Reclamation Manual temporary releases developed by the team responsible for Action Item 3. Completed in June 2006, they are available at <http://www.usbr.gov/recman/temporaryreleases.html>. These temporary policy documents will be more thoroughly reviewed and discussed during their 12-month effective period as Reclamation continues with its *Managing for Excellence* initiative. Subject to any revisions decided upon during this review and discussion period, they will be re-issued as permanent releases in June 2007.

## **Relationship to other Functional Areas**

Action Items 2 and 3 ensure that the results of the Policy Formation Action Items in the Policies and Organization functional area, as well as policy documents resulting from the work of other Action Items are developed and communicated in such a way that Reclamation customers and stakeholders are aware of both the benefits and justification for these policies. Also, the lessons learned from outreach being conducted by teams for many other *Managing for Excellence* action items will be of benefit to the team responsible for Action Item 1 as it works to improve Reclamation's ongoing interaction with its customers and other stakeholders.

## **Action Item 1**

**Strengthen interaction with customers and other stakeholders at national, regional, and project levels to address Bureau-wide issues.**

**Team Lead:** Lorri Gray, Program Manager, Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, Lower Colorado Region

### **Team Members:**

- Bruce Brown, Partnerships Coordinator, Commissioner's Office
- Bob Walsh, External Affairs Officer, Lower Colorado Region
- Lilas Lindell, Manager, Program Support Services, Office of Program and Policy Services
- Gary Campbell, Deputy Regional Director, Great Plains Region
- Kerry McCalman Manager, Power Office, Upper Colorado Region
- Betsy Rieke, Area Manager, Lahontan Basin Area Office, Mid-Pacific Region

### **Objectives:**

- Strengthen communication and coordination with customers and other stakeholders at all organizational levels of Reclamation regarding Bureau-wide issues by:
  - Identifying and providing opportunities for stakeholders to become aware of proposed activities and effectively participate in the planning, policy and decision-making processes where appropriate.
  - Creating a more participative relationship with stakeholders while regularly providing information about Reclamation's programs.
  - Providing a process for hearing and incorporating feedback from customers.

### **Tasks:**

- Develop tools to assist employees in effectively communicating Bureau-wide topics with customers and other stakeholders.
- Develop standards outlining topics and frequency for minimum annual interaction with stakeholders.
- Identify mechanisms for regularly seeking customer feedback and how that feedback should be handled. This could include communication/training of Reclamation employees or updating Reclamation processes.

### **Milestones:**

- August 2006: Gather input from employees and stakeholders.
- November 2006: Principles and practices for customer communication drafted and presented for feedback at public meeting.

### **Products:**

- Principles and practices for communicating and coordinating with Customers and Other Stakeholders

## **Action Item 2**

**Ensure that the Reclamation Manual policies and directives and standards are readily available on the internet.**

**Team Lead:** Karl Stock, Economist, Contract Services Office, Office of Program and Policy Services

### **Team Members:**

- Roseann Gonzales, Director, Office of Program and Policy Services
- Randy Feuerstein, Chief Information Officer
- Miguel Rocha, Supervisory Project Specialist, Albuquerque Area Office, Upper Colorado Region
- Elizabeth Harrison, Director, Management Service Office

### **Objective:**

- Make the Reclamation Manual more readily accessible to Reclamation's employees, customers, and other stakeholders

### **Tasks:**

- Make organizational changes to the Reclamation Manual website that improve the ease of access to and use of the Reclamation Manual.
- Issue communication to internal and external groups which will increase awareness of the existence, significance, and availability of the Reclamation Manual.
- Provide opportunity for and solicit feedback regarding potential improvements to the contents and accessibility of the Reclamation Manual.

### **Current Status: Complete**

### **Milestones:**

- May 2006: Improved Reclamation Manual site launched.
- May 2006: Memorandum sent to all Reclamation employees regarding the significance of the Reclamation Manual and the changes to the website organization and access.
- June 2006: Letter sent to Reclamation stakeholders regarding the significance of the Reclamation Manual and the changes to the website organization and access.

### **Products:**

Reclamation Manual Website (<http://www.usbr.gov/recman/>)  
Reclamation Employees Memorandum  
Stakeholder Letter

### **Action Item 3**

**Revise Reclamation's centralized policy development process to require appropriate incorporation of the Secretary's 4C's, transparency, and value into Reclamation Manual (RM) policies, directives, and standards.**

**Team Leader:** Jim Kinney, Policy Analyst, Water and Environmental Resources Office, Office of Program and Policy Services

**Team members:**

- Trudy Harlow (retired June 2006, Chief, Public Affairs Office)
- Kip White, Public Affairs Specialist, Commissioner's Office
- Miguel Rocha, Supervisory Project Specialist, Albuquerque Area Office, Upper Colorado Region

**Objectives:**

- Officially incorporate the following principles and associated values into the collaborative development process for Reclamation policy:
  - Decentralized implementation.
  - Corporate requirements to be applied consistently throughout Reclamation.
  - Transparency in development and management of RM requirements.
  - Centrally-developed Reclamation-wide requirements developed collaboratively for appropriate and beneficial communication with those entities external to Reclamation who may be affected by RM requirements.
  - Clear and concise roles and responsibilities and well-defined decision making processes for both developing and applying RM requirements.
  - Identification of the value and benefits associated with each RM release.

**Tasks:**

- Revise existing RM Directives and Standards (D&S), RCD 03-01, Reclamation Directives Management System to incorporate specific principles and values.
- Develop an RM Policy to reaffirm the Commissioner's vision for establishing, managing and communicating mandatory Reclamation-wide requirements.
- Develop an RM D&S that establishes official processes to both request a waiver from an RM requirement, and approve/disapprove requests.
- Have the three documents described above reviewed by the Reclamation Leadership Team and revised as necessary.
- Have the Policy and D&S described above approved by the Commissioner and appropriate SES staff and officially released into the RM.

**Current Status: Complete**

**Milestones:**

- May 2006: In response to Team 3's final recommendations, the Acting Commissioner issued a memorandum on May 30, 2006, directing the Director of the Office of Program and Policy Services (OPPS) to:
  - “... issue the three following Reclamation Manual documents:
    - *Mandatory Reclamation-wide Requirements and the Directives System (the Reclamation Manual),*
    - *Managing the Reclamation Manual,*

**Action Item 3 (cont).**

- *Request for Waiver from a Reclamation Manual Requirement and Approval/Disapproval of the Request*’.
- June 2006: Released final, approved RM documents.

**Products:**

- RCD TRMR – 14 Mandatory Reclamation-wide Requirements and the Directives System
- RCD TRMR – 15 Managing the Reclamation Manual
- RCD TRMR – 16 Request for Waiver from a Reclamation Manual Requirement and Approval/Disapproval of the Request