

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

3rd International Conference on Sustainable Development Indicators in the Minerals Industry
Milos, Greece, June 19, 2007

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Acknowledgment

- This research was sponsored by the BLM under the Great Basin Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CESU) that is in place with the University of Nevada, Reno and other institutions in the Great Basin.



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.

* <http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?id=456>



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

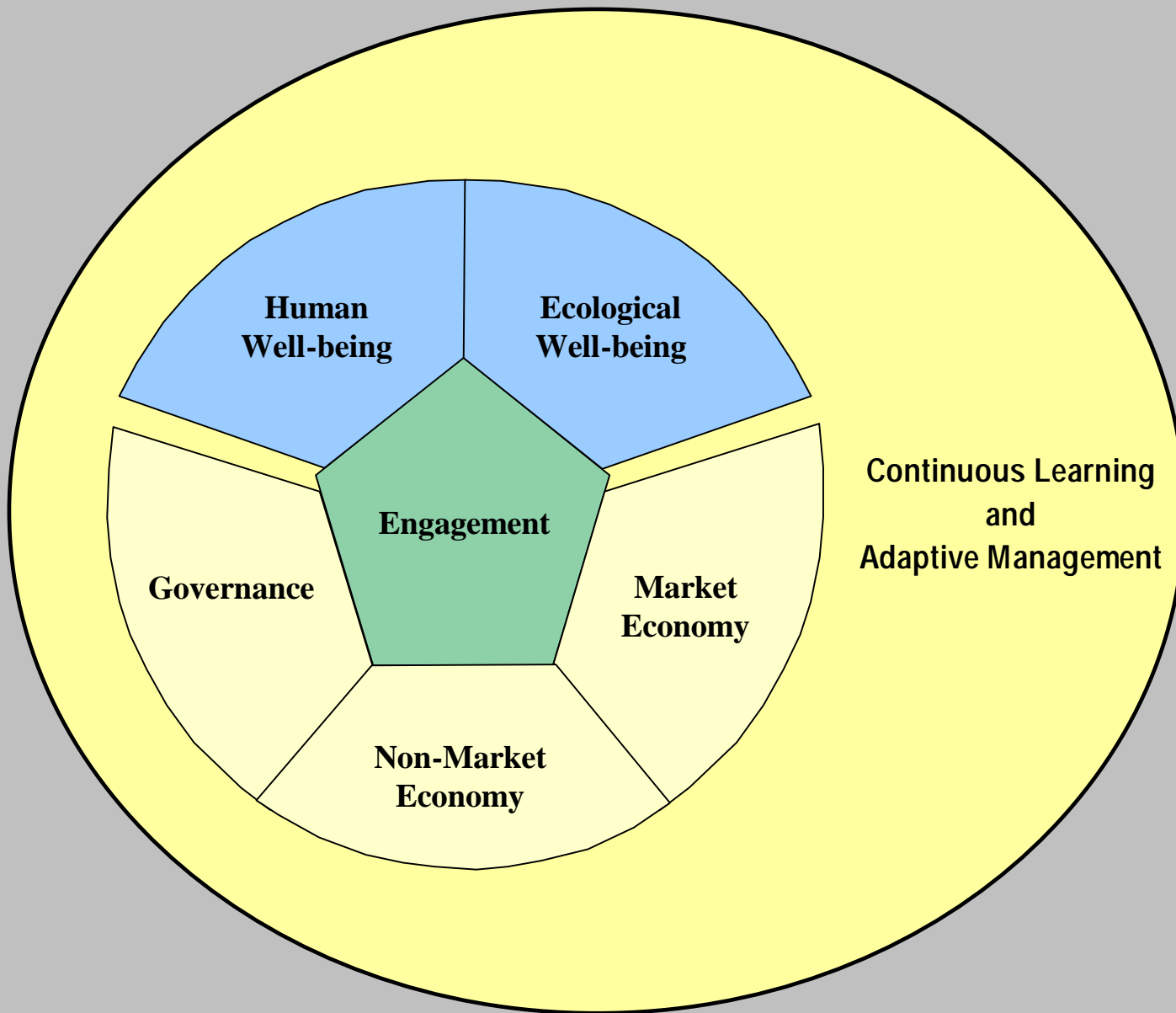
- **Economy (market economy).** Is the economic viability of the company assured; is the community and regional economy better off, not only during operation, but into post-closure?
- **Traditional and Non-Market Activities (non-market economy).** Is the viability of traditional and non-market activities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



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





Number of planning management actions in accordance with the tenets of Sustainable Development

Planning Area

- = two or more
- = one
- = none

	Esmeralda-Southern Nye Planning Area 'A'	Esmeralda-Southern Nye Planning Area 'B'	Shoshone-Eureka	Tonopah	Lahontan	Reno	Walker	Elko	Wells	Caliente	Egan	Schell	Las Vegas	Paradise-Denio	Sonoma-Gerlach
Engagement	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Well-being of people	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Well-being of the environment	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Market economy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Non-market activities	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Governance	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Continuous improvement & adaptive management	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	<i>Battle Mountain District</i>				<i>Carson City District</i>			<i>Elko District</i>		<i>Ely District</i>			<i>Las Vegas District</i>	<i>Winnemucca District</i>	



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

