

# BLM issues controversial new land-planning rule



Courtesy of Public Lands Council  
Cattle and greater sage grouse share public land in Idaho. Grazing advocates are concerned about the ramifications of changes to the Bureau of Land Management planning process, which were released in final form Dec. 1.

By JOHN O'CONNELL  
Capital Press

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Bureau of Land Management issued a final rule Dec. 1 updating its planning process, touting the changes as improving efficiency, public access and agency responsiveness to changing conditions on public lands.

Rural county leaders throughout the West and public lands grazing advocates, however, say they'll fight for the repeal of the final Planning 2.0 rule, which they believe threatens multiple uses of public lands and reduces the influence of local governments.

The final rule is available at

[www.blm.gov/plan2](http://www.blm.gov/plan2).

BLM, which manages 10 percent of the nation's land and 30 percent of its minerals, is required to develop land-use plans to balance competing interests for public lands.

"Under the current system, it takes an average of eight years for the BLM to develop a land-use plan," BLM Director Neil Kornze said in a press release. "Too often, by the time we've completed a plan, community priorities have evolved and conditions on the ground have changed, as well."

Kornze said in the press release the update should increase collaboration and transparency of planning.

Several Western counties

submitted public comments on the draft version of the rule criticizing the removal of language requiring an assessment of policy impacts on local economies, and removing requirements for BLM to make land-use decisions with "meaningful involvement" from state and local governments.

Officials with the Public Lands Council, which represents ranchers with public lands grazing permits, oppose the revisions of BLM's goals away from managing for "multiple use and sustained yield" in favor of prioritizing impacts on "resource, environmental, ecological, social and environmental conditions."

The council also opposes shortened public comment periods included in the final rule, noting BLM plans take years to prepare, and the public should have more than 45 to 60 days to respond.

Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, believes the rule was hastily developed.

"Congressman Simpson is still reviewing the final rule, specifically how BLM addressed the concerns pertaining to local input," said Simpson's spokeswoman, Nikki Wallace. "However, the concern remains that many Westerners at state and local levels were left out of the process on a rule that has far-reaching implications."

## Far West to address Trump optimism

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

Fertilizer and ag chemical representatives will hear what President-elect Donald Trump could do for farmers from an ag leader next week.

Chuck Conner, president and CEO of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, is the keynote speaker at the Far West Agribusiness Association's annual meeting Dec. 13-14 in Kennewick, Wash.

Far West executive director Jim Fitzgerald said Conner serves on the agricultural advisory board for Trump and has held key positions, including former USDA deputy secretary and acting secretary during discussions about the 2008 Farm Bill.

"I think we'll get some terrific insight into what we might expect," Fitzgerald said.

Roughly 80 percent of farmers voted for Trump, Conner told the Capital Press.

"Most of the producers I have interacted with are looking forward to the regulatory relief they are expecting," Conner said. "Certainly for issues like Waters of the United States, we do anticipate that happening, in the very early days of the Trump administration."

Conner sees reason for optimism.

"Farmers across the heartland and the people of rural America are really responsible for Donald Trump being president, because they turned out for him in very large numbers in key swing states," he said. "We are in a position relative to regulatory reform and the farm bill where we have a person in the Oval Office who is looking to help the very people who helped put him in office."

Conner will "be up to speed," as the new farm bill comes into focus, Fitzgerald said.

"Farmers just want to make sure we're working on this early, so hopefully we get this new farm bill delivered on time," Conner said. "For most of the commodities we grow, we have gone from riches to a very down-turned farm economy, so this new farm bill has taken on great importance."

The conference includes tracks on irrigated and dryland agronomics and new technology, including unmanned tractors and biotechnology.

The conference added a dairy nutrient management plan track, as more certified crop advisers want to expand in that area, Fitzgerald said.

One presentation is about bridging the generation gap between seasoned veteran workers and younger employees.

Fitzgerald doesn't see much difference when pulling a workforce from a rural area, but urban-area workers are not used to the long work hours required in agriculture.

The association represents the fertilizer and agricultural chemical industry in the region. Fitzgerald said the goal is to maintain a favorable business environment for members.

## In farming, sustainability can mean loving it, sticking with it

By ERIC MORTENSON  
Capital Press

PORTLAND — Beginning farmers attending the Women in Sustainable Agriculture conference here Nov. 30-Dec. 2 got an earful from a panel of "trailblazers" who learned the hard way: Collaborate, don't quit, share what you've learned and keep falling in love with what you do.

Idaho organic produce grower Diane Green, Oregon wool producer Jeanne Carver and Southern Oregon cut flower grower Joan Ewer Thorndike shared their advice on the second day of the conference, which was attended by about 400 women from across the country.

Green, who has grown and sold greens and other vegetables for nearly 30 years, said having a mentor would have saved her a lot of time and money. "Sustainability" can mean taking care of yourself in addition to taking care of the land, she said. Early in her career, Green said she ran around trying to do everything. She's since realized that slow and steady



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

From left, "trailblazer" panelists Jeanne Carver, Diane Green and Joan Ewer Thorndike spoke Dec. 1 at the Women in Sustainable Agriculture conference in Portland.

is a better course.

"As I've aged I've become one with the turtle," Green quipped.

In a separate interview, Green said she learned by trial and error, and later wrote a grower's guide to selling to restaurants.

Green, who said she turns 65 soon, said she's cheered by the sight of so many relatively young women entering farming.

"I think it's fantastic," she said. "To me it's the future of the food system."

She said small acreage farms, often established or revived by women, are providing food "closer to home."

"It's the young women who are going back and saving the family farm," she said. "It's really something to see the face of agriculture turning to such rosy cheeks."

Carver, whose rustic ranch has become the darling of clothing designers — wool from her sheep was used by Ralph Lauren to make the uniforms U.S. athletes wore during the opening ceremony

of the 2012 Winter Olympics in Russia — said producers should look for partners everywhere.

Everyone from the local yarn store to regulatory agencies can provide a connection that leads to business success, Carver said.

"We would not be partners with Ralph Lauren without USDA," she said. "That's how you do it, you make everybody a partner."

"My greatest characteristic is that I'm damn stubborn, I just refuse to quit," she said.

Thorndike, who began growing and selling flowers 25 years ago, said she ignored the doubts of family members and others who didn't think the business would succeed. But she said she fell in love with growing flowers and enjoys that romance to this day.

To her, sustainability means "sticking with it" and continuing to love what she does. "For all of you, that's what I hope — that you will stick to it," she said during the panel session.

She said her daughter recently decided to work with

her in flowers.

"If you can teach someone to do what you love, and they run with it, that's also sustainability," she said.

The panelists had other thoughts on the various partnerships that are necessary for success.

Thorndike said mentorship is "tricky." You learn by teaching, she said, but people seeking out experienced farmers for advice "shouldn't expect them to give away trade secrets."

Green said she enjoys working with Extension researchers, but they often expect farmers to volunteer their time. She suggested grant writers should include compensation for farmers who provide land and time for research projects.

Advice was available elsewhere at the conference as well.

Julia Shanks, of Cambridge, Mass., was at a booth selling her books: "The Farmers Market Cookbook," in which she describes how to cook fresh produce, and a business primer titled, "The Farmer's Office."



### W235 and W100 Series Windrowers



Cutting canola at the right time and creating consistently even windrows are key to a profitable canola harvest. That's why John Deere has three windrower options to help you do exactly that.

The W235 Windrowers are designed to meet your demanding productivity requirements. Integrated AutoTrac™ enables faster cutting speeds while maintaining crop and cut quality. Built around 6-cylinder, 6.8L John Deere engines, the 235-hp W235 Windrowers have the power to get through tall, heavy canola stands.

The 110-hp W110 and the 148-hp W150 Windrowers offer you versatile and efficient cutting. With interchangeable draper and auger heads, you get a draper machine that can be used in hay applications as well.

In addition to a full line of commercial hay tools, your John Deere dealer delivers trained service technicians and a second-to-none parts network, so when it's time to cut, you and your equipment will be ready. That's **PERFORMANCE THAT PAYS**. See your local John Deere dealer to learn more.

[JohnDeere.com/Windrowers](http://JohnDeere.com/Windrowers)