

# Reclamation Manual

## Policy

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<b>Subject:</b>	Public Involvement in Bureau of Reclamation Activities
<b>Purpose:</b>	To ensure that whenever Reclamation actions may significantly affect individuals or groups, Reclamation will systematically provide opportunities for affected publics to be informed about the issues; as appropriate, participate in the definition of the problem, objectives, and possible solutions; and have their views documented and considered in Reclamation's decision-making processes. The benefit of this Policy is it provides for an open dialog and allows participation in Reclamation's decision-making process.
<b>Authority:</b>	Departmental Manual (DM) 301 Chapter 2 and supporting laws, regulations, and directives listed in tables 1 - 3 in the appendix of Reclamation Manual Directive and Standard, <i>Public Involvement in Reclamation Activities</i> (CMP 04-01)
<b>Approving Official:</b>	Commissioner
<b>Contact:</b>	Deputy Commissioner, External and Intergovernmental Affairs (92-00000)

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1. **Introduction.** Public involvement in the Reclamation decision-making process is important for the following reasons:
  - A. **Successful Missions.** Reclamation successfully serves the public if the publics' concerns are considered in implementing programs. Public involvement:
    - (1) improves opportunities for developing successful agreements and solutions;
    - (2) minimizes litigation and disputes;
    - (3) reduces program costs and time;
    - (4) enhances effectiveness;
    - (5) invites input from affected publics to ensure representation and consideration of differing perspectives and solutions; and
    - (6) discloses legal, physical, and institutional constraints which could preclude possible options.
  - B. **Credibility.** By consistently being open, fair, and honest, a public involvement process fosters both legitimacy and credibility. The public may not completely agree with the final decision, but they may more likely support the action as a result of being involved in the process.

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- C. **Accountability.** Public involvement ensures that Reclamation is accountable to its affected publics.
2. **Applicability.** This Policy applies to all Reclamation actions and decisions carried out by Reclamation or contractors and customers on behalf of Reclamation that may significantly affect individuals or groups.
3. **Definitions.**
- A. **Affected Publics.** Refers to individuals; customers; groups; organizations; communities; and officials of local, state, Federal, foreign, or tribal governmental entities that may be impacted by or interested in an action or decision. Factors which identify affected publics include: interests; jurisdiction; proximity; potential social, economic, and environmental impacts; resource use; and values.
- B. **Public Involvement.** The systematic provision for affected publics to be informed about and participate in Reclamation decision processes. It centers around effective, open exchange and communication among the partners, agencies, organizations, and all the various affected publics. Because public involvement means inviting publics to be actively involved before a decision is made, it differs from public relations, information, or education.
4. **Responsibilities.**
- A. **Managers.** Managers are responsible for soliciting and considering appropriate public input at all levels of the decision-making process. They will also ensure that training in public involvement is incorporated into their Reclamation activities.
- B. **Public Involvement Specialists.** Are responsible for carrying out public involvement and keeping abreast of the state-of-the-art approaches and tools, planning, executing, documenting, and keeping the publics and managers informed.
- C. **Employees.** Within the purview of their work, all Reclamation employees are responsible for public involvement when they interact with any publics.
5. **Policy.**
- A. It is the Policy of Reclamation to provide opportunities for affected publics to be informed about the issues; participate in the definition of the problem, objectives, and possible solutions as appropriate; and have their views documented and considered in Reclamation's decision-making processes whenever significant actions will impact groups or individuals.
- B. Decisions regarding specific strategies for public involvement need to be determined at the lowest applicable level of the organization.

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- C. Delegation of program responsibility carries with it accountability for public involvement.
  - D. Responsibility for public involvement and subsequent decision-making must be at the same level.
6. **Resources.** Adequate resources, including staff, training, and funding, to facilitate public involvement processes are to be maintained and available at appropriate levels throughout Reclamation.
7. **Further Requirements.** Table 1 in [Appendix A](#) of CMP 04-01 lists actions which trigger laws requiring public involvement. Table 2 describes the requirements under laws and regulations governing public involvement. In addition, most program- and project-specific enabling legislation carries with it authority for appropriate public involvement activities.

## RECLAMATION MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Release No. \_\_\_\_\_

Ensure all employees needing this information are provided a copy of this release.

### Reclamation Manual Release Number and Subject

### Summary of Changes

NOTE: This Reclamation Manual release applies to all Reclamation employees. When an exclusive bargaining unit exists, changes to this release may be subject to the provisions of collective bargaining agreements.

### Filing instructions

Remove Sheets

Insert Sheets

All Reclamation Manual releases are available at <http://www.usbr.gov/recman/>

Filed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_