

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

# Navigating the Path to Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring (AIM) Financial Assistance







# Agenda

- Panelist Introductions
- AIM Mission and Goals
- Tentative Plan for Fiscal Year 2024
- Applying for Financial Assistance - Public Purpose and Substantial Involvement
- AIM Projects and Proposals
- Summary of SAM Requirements
- Questions





# Panelists

Webinar Host: Jason Lutterman, Public Affairs Specialist

Panelists:

Noël Miller, Grants Policy Analyst

Andrew Clark, Grants Policy Analyst

Emily Kachergis, AIM Coordinator

Nicole Cappuccio, Stream and River AIM Implementation Lead

Nicole Hupp, MT AIM Coordinator





# Mission and Goals

- BLM: sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations
- AIM: provide BLM and partners with information needed to understand resource conditions and changes and provide a basis for effective adaptive management
- Good, effective partnerships are essential to accomplishing our mission and meeting our goals.



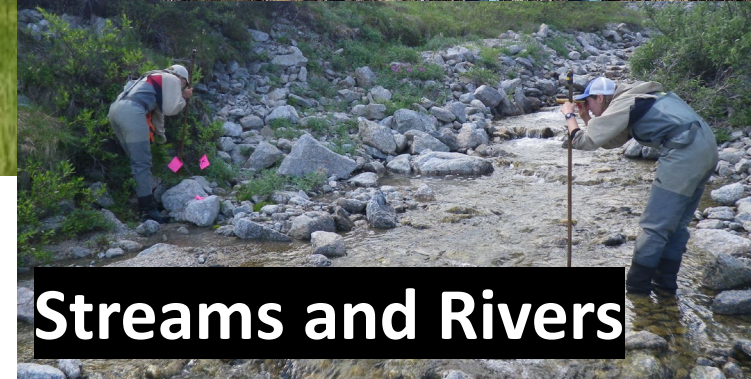
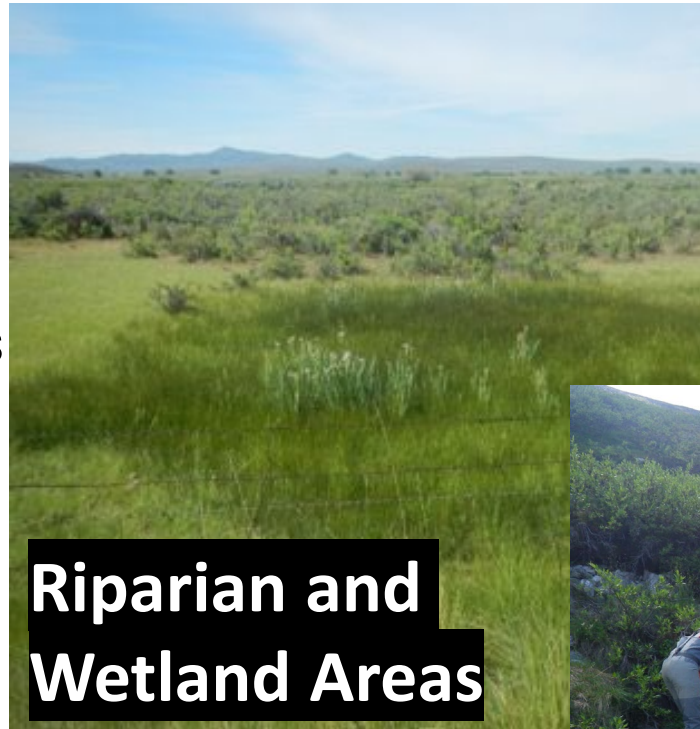




# AIM Provides Info about Land Health

Through:

- Structured implementation
- Standardized field measurements
- Appropriate sample designs
- Data management and stewardship
- Integration with satellite-derived mapping and modelling
- Data use for evidence-based decision-making



Learn more and access data: <https://www.blm.gov/aim>





# AIM Insights Inform Stewardship



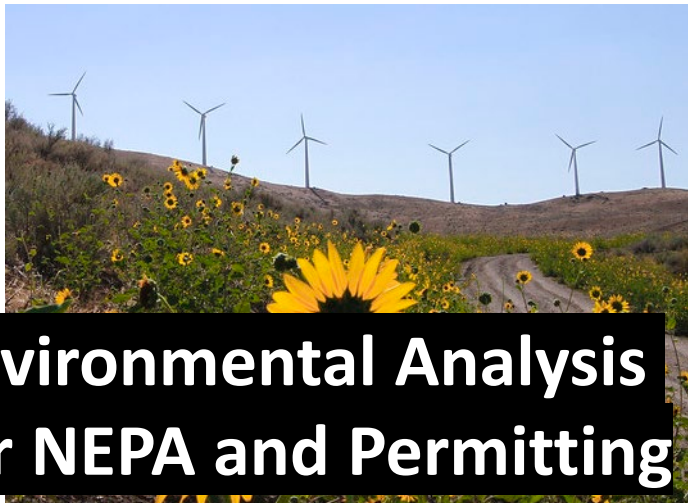
**Plant Invasions**



**Habitat**



**Wildfire Effects**



**Environmental Analysis  
for NEPA and Permitting**



**Fuel Reduction,  
Restoration and  
Reclamation  
Effects**





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# AIM Provides Training and Professional Development







# Tentative Plan for Fiscal Year 2024

The BLM anticipates releasing several **"Notice of Funding Opportunity"** throughout Fiscal Year 2024.

Most AIM funding opportunities will be at the state level in these three categories:

- Rangeland Resource Management – 15.237
  - Wildlife Resource Management – 15.247
  - Aquatic Resources Management – 15.244
- Read these Notices of Funding Opportunity to see where AIM proposals are expected.**

More information for opportunities in each category will be available when each notice is finalized and released to the public.

**Eligibility:** Similar to previous notices, these funding opportunities will be open to non-profit and government organizations, Tribes and universities.





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# Public Purpose and Substantial Involvement



Noël Miller, Grants Policy Analyst  
Andrew Clark, Grants Policy Analyst





# Principal Purpose Test

## Acquisition

Direct BLM Benefit

Purchase/Lease/Barter of  
property or services

## Financial Assistance

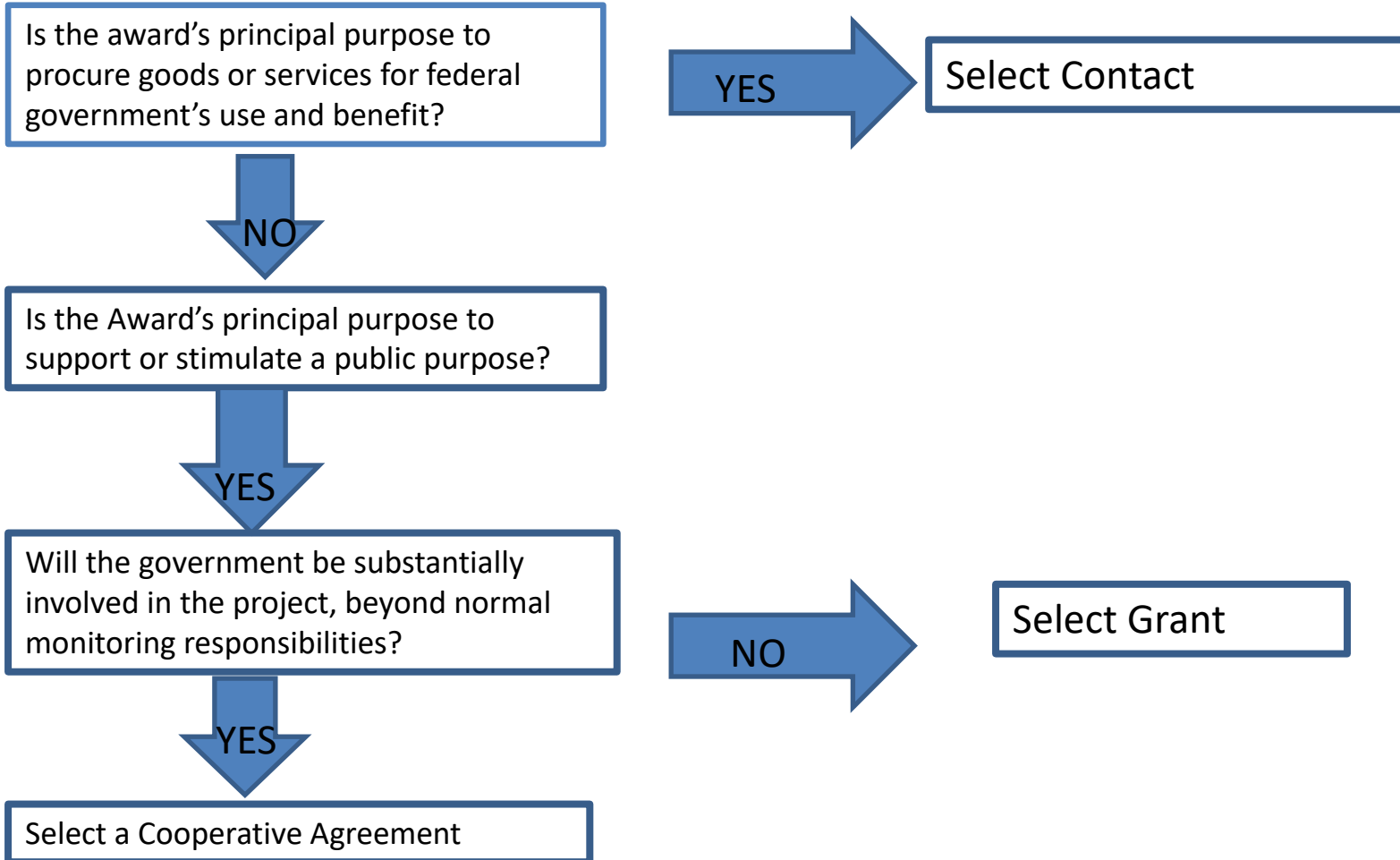
Direct Public Benefit

Transfer anything of value to  
a Recipient to accomplish a  
public purpose





# Award type decision tree







# Definition of Financial Assistance

## Public Purpose

- Support
- Stimulation

## Grants

- BLM does not have Grant Authority

## Cooperative Agreements

- BLM Substantial Involvement Required.





# What is Public Purpose?

## Direct Public Benefit

Provide sufficient explanation as to HOW the project accomplishes a Public Purpose

## Indirect Benefit

Primary goals and objectives of the project CANNOT be for the DIRECT benefit of BLM



# What does Direct Public Benefit mean?

Beyond BLM's Mission

New Scientific  
knowledge for scientific  
community outside  
BLM

Promotes greater  
public and private  
participation in  
environmental  
stewardship

Opportunities for youth  
to become involved  
and learn outside the  
classroom

Create/Increase the  
general public's  
understanding of  
resources on and off  
Public Lands





# What does Indirect BLM Benefit mean?

## BLM Indirect

- Improvement, an advantage, or an enhancement to BLM resource management/resource education/invasive species management/environmental education

## Best Effort

- Scientific report may not get completed or a range fence may not get finished
- If an attempted was made project successful
- BLM staff may have to complete any remaining tasks





# BLM/DOI Solicitor's approved Public Purpose Statements

1. The project engages recipients, partners communities, and/or visitors in shared environmental stewardship.
2. The project promotes greater public and private participation in historic preservation programs and activities. The project builds resource stewardship ethics in its participants.
3. The information, products and/or services identified or developed by this project will be shared through a variety of strategies to increase public awareness, knowledge and support for historic preservation and stewardship of the nation's cultural and historic heritage.
4. The principal purpose of the project is to support the Government's objective to provide opportunities for youth to learn about the environment by spending time working on the projects on BLM land. The BLM receives and indirect benefit of completing conservation projects.
5. The project motivates its youth participants to become involved in the natural, cultural and/or historic resource protection of their communities and beyond. Students gain "real world" or hands-on experience outside the classroom of natural, cultural and/or historic resource projects.
6. The scientific community and/or researchers external to BLM gains by new knowledge provided through research and related results dissemination of natural, cultural and/or historical resource information.
7. The project assists in the creation, promotion, facilitation, and/or improvement of the public's understanding of natural, cultural, historic, recreational, and other aspects of areas such as ecological conservation areas, and state and local parks.





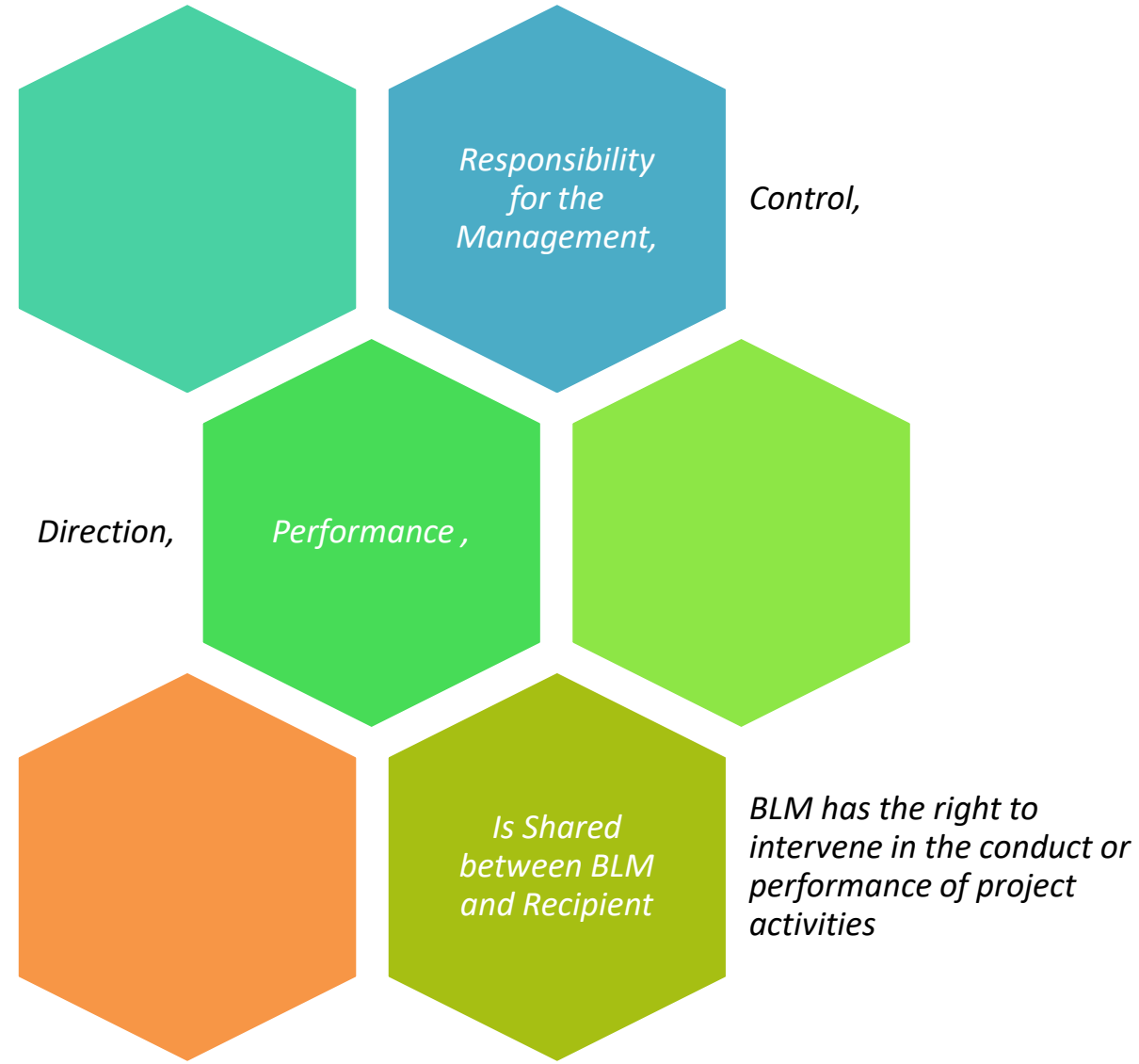
# Developing a Public Purpose Statement

Answer the following questions to help you develop a public purpose statement.

1. What improvement, advantage, enhancement will this project indirectly benefit a BLM program?
2. What benefits will the Public (Interns, the non-profit, the University) receive through this project with BLM?
3. How will this project benefit the general public health, education, enjoyment, and welfare?
4. How will this project help protect the public interests in ecosystem management?
5. How will the resulting published information (documents, data, maps, research reports, ect.) assist the public?
6. How will the project advance knowledge within the larger scientific and general public communities?



# Substantial Involvement Exists When







# Substantial Involvement does not include:

Suspension or termination of the award

Technical Assistance or guidance provided to a Recipient if the Recipient is not required to follow

Technical Assistance or guidance which pertains to the administrative requirements

Conducting Site Visits/Evaluating progress reports

Temporary intervention in unusual circumstances to correct administrative deficiencies

Ensuring compliance with legislative, regulatory, an administrative requirements

Reviewing Performance after completion

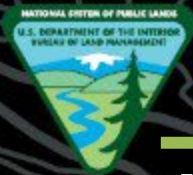


# Developing a Substantial Involvement Statement

Answer the following questions to help you develop a Substantial Involvement statement.

1. Will there be a BLM liaison? What specific duties are assigned to them?
2. Will BLM staff be completing a general orientation/safety briefing?
3. Will BLM staff be providing the participants any training/certifications?
4. How will BLM staff be participating in the scheduled activities?
5. Will BLM staff be providing data?
6. How will BLM work side by side with the Recipient to complete the activities listed in the agreement?





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# Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring (AIM) Projects and Proposals







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# AIM Field Data Collection



**Invasive  
Plants**

**Plant Height**

**Habitat Conditions**

**Plant Species**

**Soil Erosion**

**Water Quality**

**Soil Health**

**Core Indicators of the Health of Uplands, Wetlands, Streams and Rivers**





# AIM Field Data

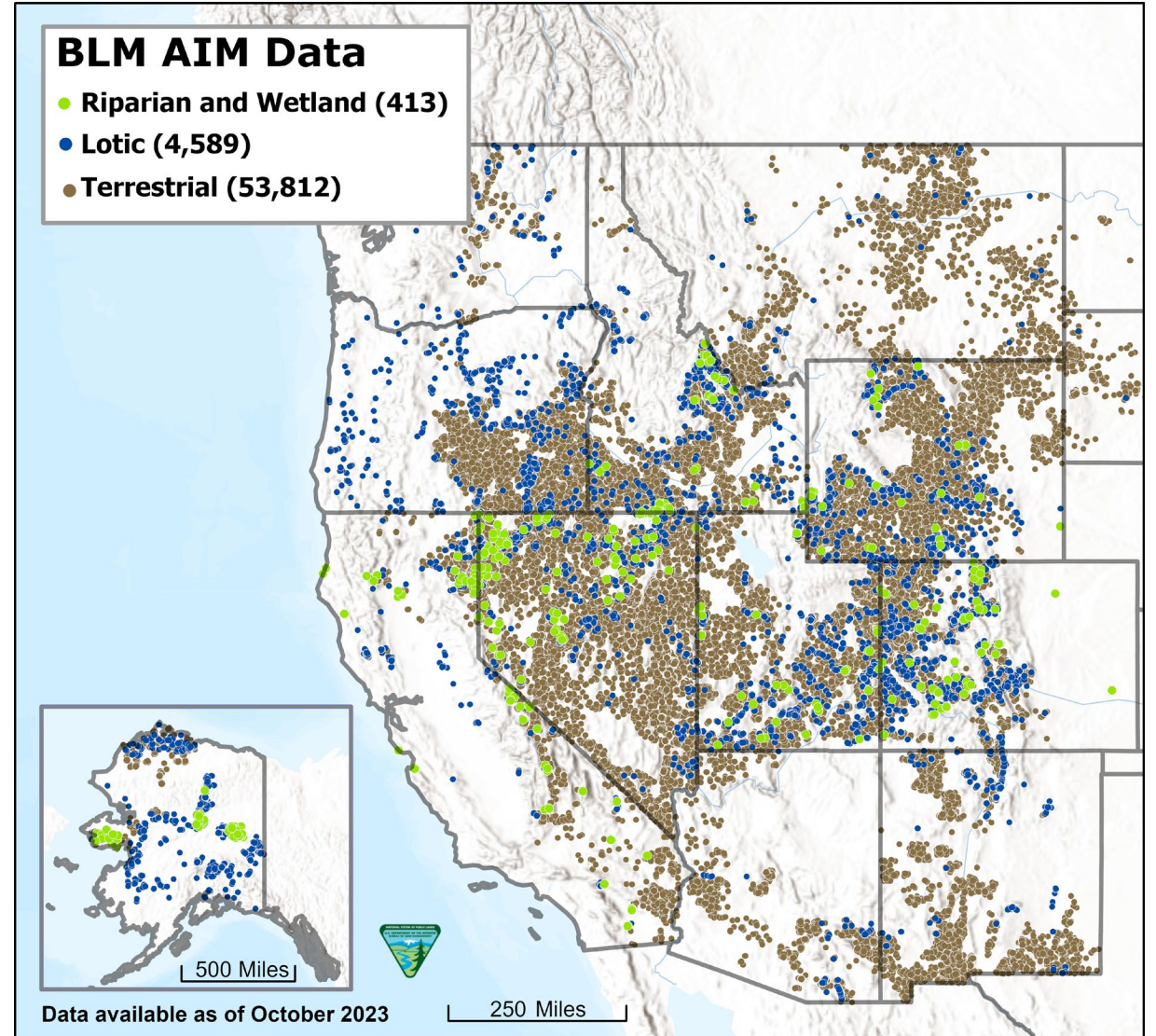
BLM-managed public lands,  
primarily western US and Alaska

Terrestrial (Uplands): ~8,000 pts/year

Lotic (stream/river): ~800 pts/year

Riparian/Wetland: ~500 pts/year

Field data are used to generate  
insights across landscapes, from  
individual states to western US to  
North America





# AIM Field Monitoring Efforts



## Example: BLM Vale District, Oregon

BLM coordinates and plans AIM efforts at BLM state level, sometimes district level

Monitoring plans organized around BLM field offices and/or districts

Combination of:

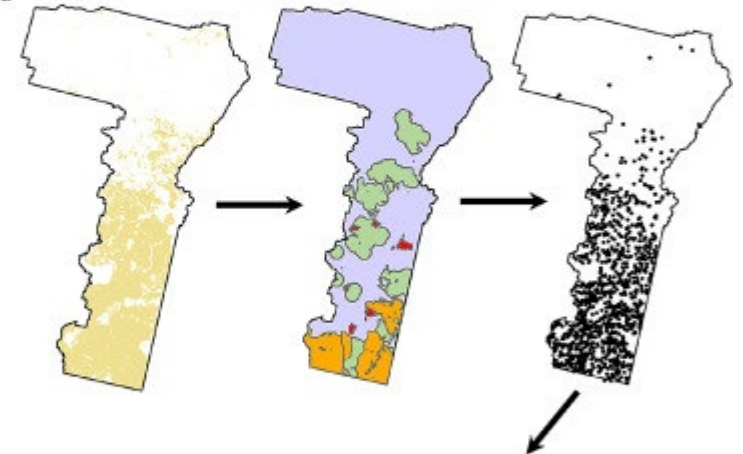
- Land use plan area monitoring
- Monitoring for specific resources or projects

Collect high-quality AIM data for public benefit

- Uplands (terrestrial)
- Streams/rivers (lotic)
- Riparian and wetland areas



- BLM public land
- Land use plan area
- Habitat
- Grazing allotments
- Fires & land treatments
- Monitoring locations







# Effective Engagement with AIM Partners

- **Qualified partners will support key aspects of AIM:**
  - Collecting standardized monitoring data
  - Data quality assurance and control
  - Data submission to BLM databases
  - Data analysis
- **BLM will provide:**
  - AIM training
  - AIM data collection protocols and workflows
  - AIM data management tools
  - AIM monitoring locations
  - Hands-on guidance





# Example Effective AIM Partner Personnel Structure and Responsibilities

## Agreement Principal Investigator or Lead

Supervision, budget, reporting

## Office Coordinator

Hiring, logistics, equipment, onboarding

## Field Coordinator and/or Crew Manager

Leads and oversees crew members  
Provides guidance to the crews on logistics, protocol questions, technology  
Plans monitoring trips/hitches  
Performs data quality control tasks  
Coordinates with BLM, private land owners and others  
Supports field season logistics

## Field Crew Lead and Crew Member(s)

Collects monitoring data  
Performs data quality assurance tasks  
Assists with other projects with local BLM approval, as appropriate





# Suggested AIM Skillsets

- Uplands and Riparian/Wetlands Crew Members:
  - Botanist/plant species identification
  - Field soil scientist
- Lotic Crew Members
  - Experience collecting data in streams/rivers
  - Riparian botanist if proposing Greenline data collection
- Crew Coordinator/Manager
  - Previous experience with methods to help with guidance
  - Data analysis experience
  - Land management experience





# Generalized AIM Project Stats

Disclaimer: This information is generalized; your proposals should consider how these items might differ for the state or area you are proposing.

## Crew-level stats

*Often 8 days on, 6 days off schedule*

Resource	Points/crew/season	Crew members	Time/sample (hours)
Upland	30-50	3 (2 in rare cases)	4-6
Streams & Rivers	30-35	2 (3 if Greenline methods)	4-8
Riparian/Wetland	30-35	2-3	6-8

## Seasons

Resource	Typical Season	Atypical Season	Notes
Upland	April- September	March-November	Varies by state, climatic factors, and vegetation
Streams & Riparian/Wetland	June-September	April-October	Dry/hot states start earlier, Wet/cool start later

## State-level stats

Resource	Points/Year/state
Upland	300-900
Streams & Rivers	60-100
Riparian/Wetland	30-120





# Where to Find AIM Info

BLM will provide trainings and guidance to ensure your ability to follow AIM protocols.

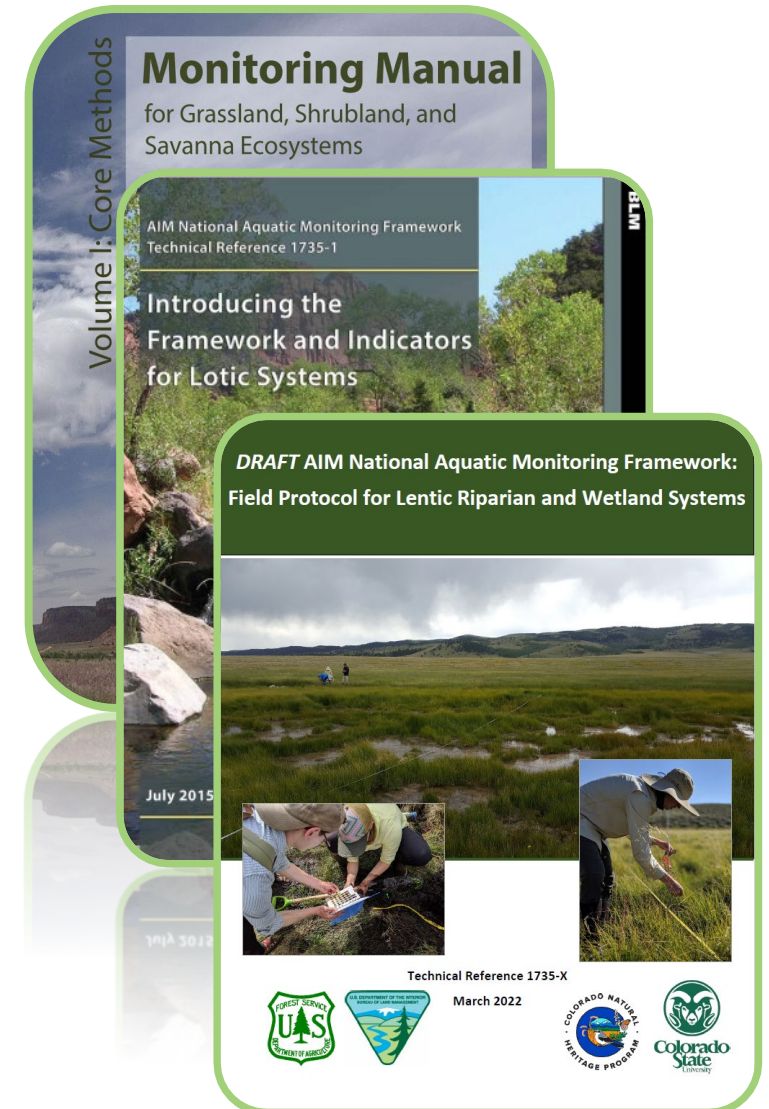
Protocols can all be found on [blm.gov/aim/resources](https://blm.gov/aim/resources)

- Field Methods
- Design Evaluation and Management
- Data Management
- Technology Manuals

Supplies and Equipment lists can be found on [blm.gov/aim/resources](https://blm.gov/aim/resources) (special attention to tablets)

AIM Training Information can be found on [blm.gov/aim/training](https://blm.gov/aim/training)

- High level AIM trainings
- Field Methods Training for each resource







# AIM Data Collection, Data Quality and Technology

- BLM creates data collection, management, and QA & QC tools to enable partners to collect AIM data
  - Survey123
  - Field Maps
  - Web maps
  - Dashboards
  - Microsoft Teams
- To be successful, partners will need to obtain the necessary tablets and be able to use the tools
- Specifics are outlined in each resource's protocols







# AIM Spans BLM-Managed Landscapes

- Logistics and planning
- Remoteness
- Field rejections







# Additional AIM Project-Specific Considerations

- Supplies and Equipment
  - Camping and personal gear
  - Vehicles
  - UTVs
  - Boat gear
  - Backpacking gear
- Trainings
  - Contingent and supplemental methods training (e.g., Multiple Indicator Monitoring, eDNA, Emergency Stabilization and Response, Pollinators)
  - Safety Training (e.g., Wilderness First Aid)
  - Specialized equipment training (e.g., UTV operation, Whitewater safety and boating)

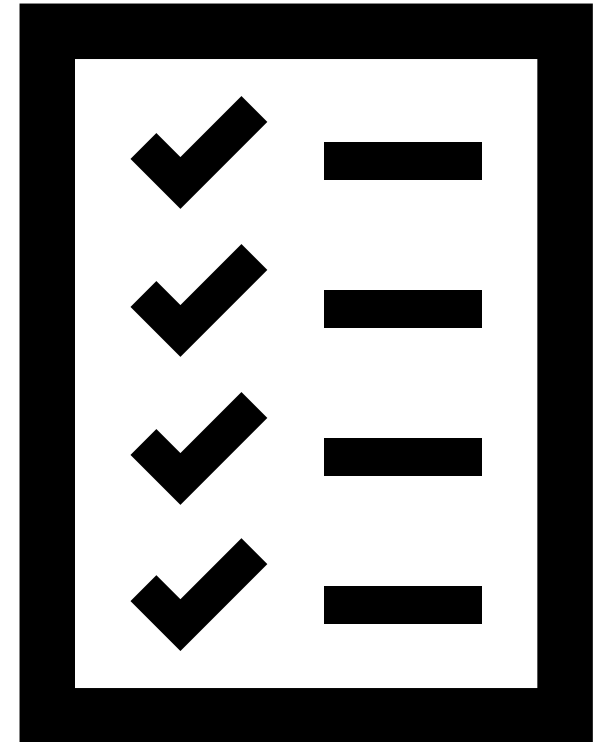






# Next Steps: AIM Project Proposals

- Make sure you are registered with SAM.gov
- Watch for state NOFO's that mention AIM
  - Rangeland Resource Management – 15.237
  - Wildlife Resource Management – 15.247
  - Aquatic Resources Management – 15.244
- Create and submit proposals using:
  - Financial Assistance resources
  - AIM info and protocols:  
<http://www.blm.gov/aim/strategy>
  - Info in the NOFO

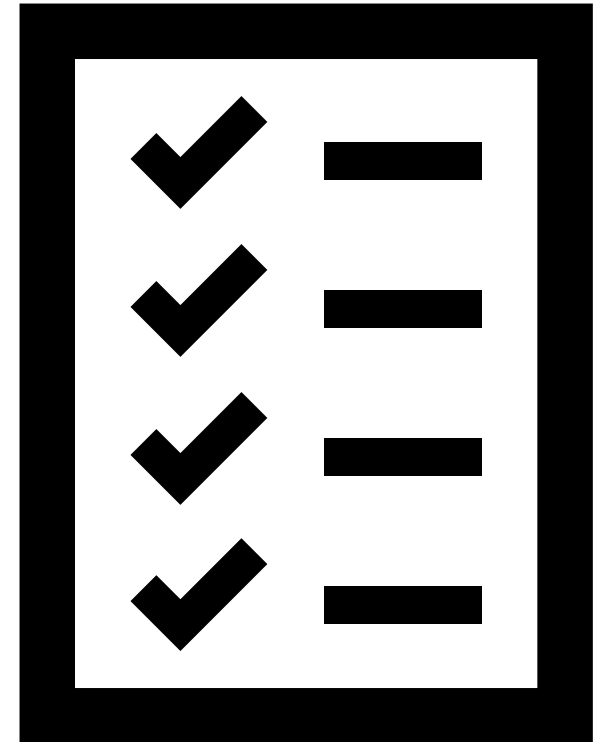




# Next Steps: AIM Project Proposals

Example of items to consider in budget proposals:

- **Personnel costs** – staff employed by your organization: PI, coordinator(s), admin, crew, etc
- **Fringe costs** – benefits associated with salaries and wages
- **Travel costs** – Training, field work hitches, site visits, etc
- **Supplies/Equipment** – field monitoring supplies, vehicles, camping supplies, etc
- **Contractual** – possible support outside of organization with a sub award
- **Other** – rented/leased vehicles, postage, hiring/onboarding costs, subscriptions for safety/tracking devices, etc
- **Indirect Costs** – refer to the BLM Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions and the 2 CFR 200







# Example AIM Public Purpose Statements

**Applicant proposals must be specific how they meet one or more of the following public purpose statements:**

1. The project engages recipients and partners in shared environmental stewardship by learning about a variety of ecological communities and potential resource pressures on public lands.
2. The project promotes greater public and private participation in environmental stewardship program and activities.
3. Activities under this project can increase the associated “green” values of healthy watersheds and upland habitats. A healthy watershed provides clean and increased volumes of water for recreation, supports thriving populations of wildlife valued by the public, and strengthens sensitive wildlife and plan species’ ability to survive.
4. The information, products and/or services identified or developed by this project will be shared through a variety of strategies to increase public awareness, knowledge, and support for environmental stewardship of the nation’s natural resources. AIM data is publicly available.
5. The scientific community and/or researcher’s external to the BLM gains by the new knowledge provided through studies and related results dissemination of natural resource information. AIM data and all analysis tools, calculations, etc. are made public and are used to validate remote sensing and conduct research by a multitude of governmental, non-profit, and university partners. In addition, the AIM methodologies are being adopted by some of these partners, which facilitates analysis across land borders, promoting understanding of landscape-scale ecosystem dynamics. As ecosystems change it is vitally important to leverage a variety of partners to better understand Public Land challenges.



# Example AIM Substantial Involvement

**The applicant's proposal *must describe in detail* at least two of the following and be transcribed in the AA Terms and Conditions document:**

- Kick-off meeting to discuss project expectations and points of contact.
- Providing of initial data collection training and calibration.
- Provide points/design and backups, office verification of plots.
- At least quarterly meetings.
- Assist with access to points and landowner outreach, provide official government business letter.
- Conduct clearances for archeology for soil pits as needed.
- Involvement in mid-season checks and ongoing review of QA & QC.
- Provide safety checks and assistance if needed.
- Site points and assistance with botany, soil, stream critical concepts, etc. as needed.
- Coordinate to redirect work if other priorities arise or field conditions don't allow for visits.
- Review of final data, QA & QC, and reports.
- Provide public access to final data and related reports.





# AIM Project Review Criteria

- Overall clear technical approach
- Hiring plan to recruit sufficient qualified individuals.
- Experience with running multi-crew projects
- Experience with the methods found in AIM protocols
- Past Performance
- Organizational reach back and plans to cover gaps in crews
- Ability to send crews to BLM AIM training
- Ability to share data insights that advance science and benefit stewardship





# State Lead/National Contacts – Uplands

Prior to submitting an application, applicants are encouraged to contact the AIM program lead at the BLM state, district or field office where the work is proposed to take place to discuss proposed projects to determine eligibility under the BLM priorities and criteria described in the NOFO.

Contacts for state leads are provided to the right.

State Office	Name	Contact
Alaska	Tina Boucher	<a href="mailto:tvboucher@blm.gov">tvboucher@blm.gov</a>
Arizona	Bill Wells	<a href="mailto:wewells@blm.gov">wewells@blm.gov</a>
California	Andrew Johnson	<a href="mailto:acjohnson@blm.gov">acjohnson@blm.gov</a>
Colorado	Ben Billings	<a href="mailto:bbillings@blm.gov">bbillings@blm.gov</a>
Eastern States	Rebecca Theodorakos	<a href="mailto:rtheodorakos@blm.gov">rtheodorakos@blm.gov</a>
Idaho	Karen Kraus	<a href="mailto:kkraus@blm.gov">kkraus@blm.gov</a>
Montana-Dakotas	Nicole Hupp	<a href="mailto:nhupp@blm.gov">nhupp@blm.gov</a>
Nevada	Brooks Munyer	<a href="mailto:bmunyer@blm.gov">bmunyer@blm.gov</a>
New Mexico (TX, OK, KS)	Lauren Price	<a href="mailto:lprice@blm.gov">lprice@blm.gov</a>
Oregon-Washington	Robert Pattison	<a href="mailto:rpattison@blm.gov">rpattison@blm.gov</a>
Utah	Jason Burgess-Conforti	<a href="mailto:jburgessconforti@blm.gov">jburgessconforti@blm.gov</a>
Wyoming	Chris Domschke	<a href="mailto:cdomschke@blm.gov">cdomschke@blm.gov</a>
National Office	Aleta Nafus	<a href="mailto:anafus@blm.gov">anafus@blm.gov</a>





# State Lead/National Contacts – Streams, Rivers, and Wetlands

Prior to submitting an application, applicants are encouraged to contact the AIM program lead at the BLM state, district or field office where the work is proposed to take place to discuss proposed projects to determine eligibility under the BLM priorities and criteria described in the NOFO.

Contacts for state leads are provided to the right.

State Office	Name	Contact
Alaska	Matt Varner	<a href="mailto:mvarner@blm.gov">mvarner@blm.gov</a>
Arizona	Bill Wells	<a href="mailto:wewells@blm.gov">wewells@blm.gov</a>
California	Nina Hemphill	<a href="mailto:nhemphill@blm.gov">nhemphill@blm.gov</a>
Colorado	Ed Rumbold	<a href="mailto:erumbold@blm.gov">erumbold@blm.gov</a>
Eastern States	Rebecca Theodorakos	<a href="mailto:rtheodorakos@blm.gov">rtheodorakos@blm.gov</a>
Idaho	Karen Kraus	<a href="mailto:kkraus@blm.gov">kkraus@blm.gov</a>
Montana-Dakotas	Nicole Hupp	<a href="mailto:nhupp@blm.gov">nhupp@blm.gov</a>
Nevada	Brooks Munyer	<a href="mailto:bmunyer@blm.gov">bmunyer@blm.gov</a>
New Mexico (TX, OK, KS)	Lauren Price	<a href="mailto:lprice@blm.gov">lprice@blm.gov</a>
Oregon-Washington	Mike Brown	<a href="mailto:mebrown@blm.gov">mebrown@blm.gov</a>
Utah	Cassie Mellon	<a href="mailto:cmellon@blm.gov">cmellon@blm.gov</a>
Wyoming	Chris Domschke	<a href="mailto:cmickschl@blm.gov">cmickschl@blm.gov</a>
National Operations Center	Nicole Cappuccio	<a href="mailto:ncappuccio@blm.gov">ncappuccio@blm.gov</a>
National Operations Center	Lindsay Reynolds	<a href="mailto:lreynolds@blm.gov">lreynolds@blm.gov</a>



# Registering with SAM

The System for Award Management (SAM) is a government-wide registry for vendors doing business with the Federal government, and SAM registration requires annual renewal. SAM centralizes information about grant recipients and provides a central location for grant recipients to change organizational information. Grants.gov uses SAM to establish roles and IDs for electronic grant applicants.

SAM registration is not completed on the Grants.gov website. Once the SAM Registration is complete, you must return to Grants.gov to continue registration.

## How to Register with SAM

- Visit the System for Award Management website at <http://www.sam.gov/>.
- Follow SAM's online instructions in their Help tab to create a user account and register or update your entity's SAM account.

*Note: Once your SAM registration is active, you can return to Grants.gov and complete registration. It takes 24 hours for SAM Registration to activate after SAM has received all required information from registrants. SAM registration must be renewed annually. If you are updating or renewing your registration, it takes approximately 24 hours to activate.*





# Live Q&A



## Panelists:

Noël Miller, Grants Policy Analyst  
Andrew Clark, Grants Policy Analyst  
Emily Kachergis, HQ AIM Coordinator  
Nicole Cappuccio, NOC Lotic AIM Lead  
Nicole Hupp, MT State AIM Coordinator

Additional programmatic questions can be submitted to [blm\\_oc\\_noc\\_aim\\_team@blm.gov](mailto:blm_oc_noc_aim_team@blm.gov) with the subject "Notice of Funding Opportunity Question"

**AIM Website:**  
<https://www.blm.gov/aim/strategy>