

Department of the Interior | Proposed Draft Unified Regional Boundaries

Background:

- The Trump Administration is exploring organizational efficiency and effectiveness through Executive Order 13781, which required the submission of reorganization plans to the President.
- DOI submitted reorganization proposals to the Office of Management and Budget in September of 2017.
- An element of the reorganizational proposal contemplates establishing 13 unified regional office boundaries across all DOI bureaus.
- DOI currently has 10 bureaus and 40 distinct regions, each operating with unique regional boundaries.
- This disparate geographic focus inhibits the sharing of resources and discourages a shared frame of geographic reference, resulting in operational and administrative inefficiencies.

Complexity of Managing Public Lands:

The complexity of administering DOI programs has expanded dramatically over time as Congress broadened DOI's statutory duties. As its mission and bureaus grew, so have competing interests and priorities between bureaus and offices. To fulfill DOI's diverse purpose, the Department manages:

- 530 Million Acres – Surface
- 700 Million Acres – Subsurface minerals
- 1.7 Billion Acres – Outer Continental Shelf
- 25 million Acre-Foot of water supply
- 2,400 operating locations
- 70,000 employees
- 610,000 volunteers

Unified Region Objectives:

- Reduce administrative redundancy;
- Clarify jurisdictional and organizational barriers to citizen service;
- Facilitate resource sharing, facilitate joint problem solving, and efficient decision-making;
- Devote a greater percentage of our budget to the field;
- Improve coordination among federal, state and local agencies;
- Delegate decision making authority to the regions.

Science-Based Rationale for New Unified Regions:

- The proposed unified regional boundaries are primarily based on a science-based approach to promote management efficiencies.
- A science-based approach to the boundaries will enable better management of watersheds, wildlife corridors, and trail systems. Indian reservations, national parks, and other significant DOI land management units that cross watersheds were kept wholly in same region to promote efficiency.
- We are consulting with DOI's career senior executive staff, Congress, and external stakeholders on the most useful way to adjust the final science-based boundaries for the unified regions to ensure the boundaries are also administratively practical.