

# POLICY ANALYSIS OF OUTCOME-BASED APPROACHES TO MANAGING IDAHO'S RANGELANDS

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# CONTEXT: RANCHING & PUBLIC LANDS

- Ranchers often lease public lands for annual forage needs
- BLM permits include “terms and conditions”
  - Typically do not contain much flexibility to respond to seasonal variation, unexpected events
- “One-size-fits-all” difficult to adapt to local needs/challenges



# OUTCOME-BASED LAND MANAGEMENT (OBM)

- Emphasizes desired ecological, social, economic condition
  - Flexibility to respond to climatic variation, unexpected events
- In Idaho
  - Formally: Outcome-Based Grazing Authorizations (BLM demos)
  - Informally: collaborative planning processes oriented around mutually-beneficial desired outcomes



# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

(1) What facilitates or impedes outcome-based approaches on Idaho's rangelands?

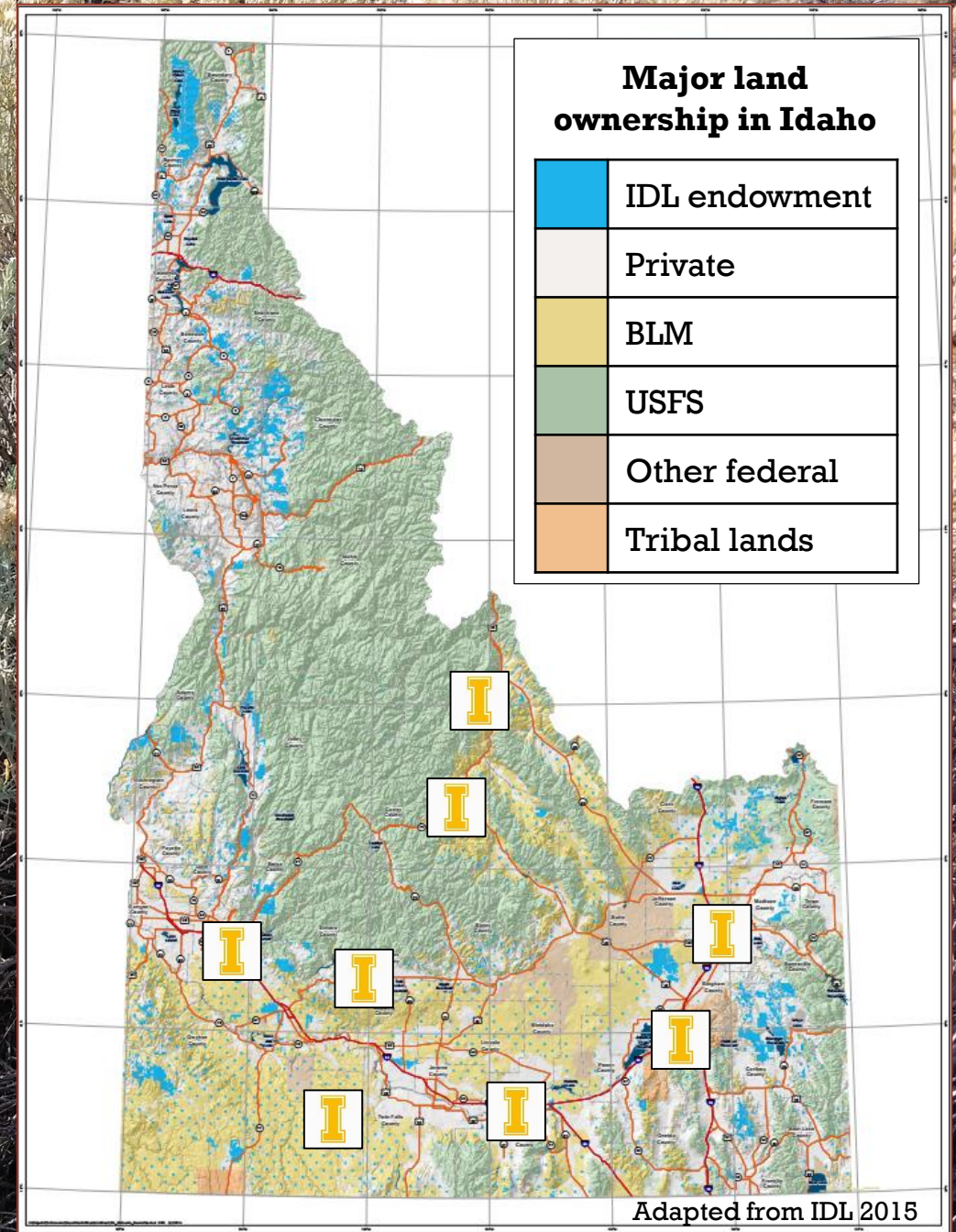
(2) What conditions enable BLM staff and permittees to navigate barriers to implementing outcome-based approaches?



# METHODS: DATA COLLECTION

- 30 interviews: BLM staff, permittees, other agency
- How have BLM staff and permittees undertaken OBM? What is important in the process? Challenging?

Interviewee category	Number of interviews	Number of participants
BLM State Office	2	2
BLM Field Offices	6	11
Other Agency	3	3
Permittee	19	25
Total	30	41



# METHODS: DATA ANALYSIS

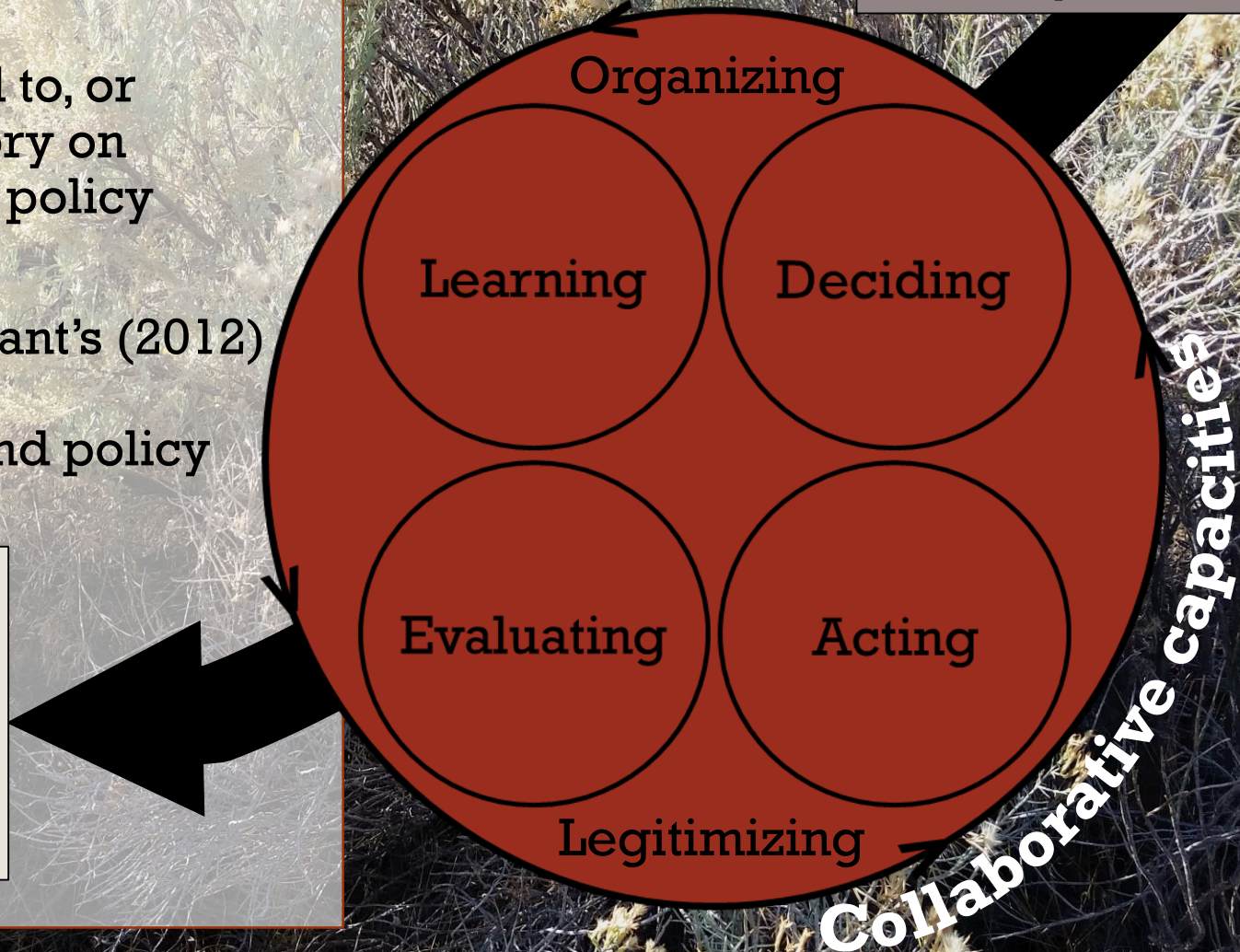
- How do data fit with, add to, or undermine existing theory on collaborative action and policy outcomes?
- Used Cheng and Sturtevant's (2012) framework for assessing collaborative capacity and policy outcomes

## Outcomes

- Ecological
- Social
- Economic
- Policy

## Conditions/Assets

- Ecological/natural
- Social/human
- Economic
- Policy



# FINDINGS: ORGANIZING

- Leadership, commitment to group success
- Regular communication: interactive permit review, sit-down meetings
- Human/financial resources to carry out tasks
  - Most-cited barrier to OBM
  - Additional flexibility sought through OBM would require more/different monitoring
  - BLM + permittees both believe BLM currently has capacity to take on additional monitoring, analysis



# FINDINGS: LEARNING & EVALUATING

- Integrating multiple forms of knowledge to define problems, potential options
- Actors having access to expertise, data
- Utilizing permittee knowledge in planning, decisions





**“I think it would be good to...compare notes on various range conditions you saw throughout the year [with the BLM]. Was there a fire? Was there excessive hunting or recreation in a certain area? Kind of debrief to get everything laid out in the record for that year. Because a lot of times you just let it slip by and next year you get either a permit modification or they’re telling you that...you missed a standard. And then it’s a little too late to understand why.”**

**-Permittee, Idaho Falls BLM District**



# FINDINGS: LEARNING & EVALUATING

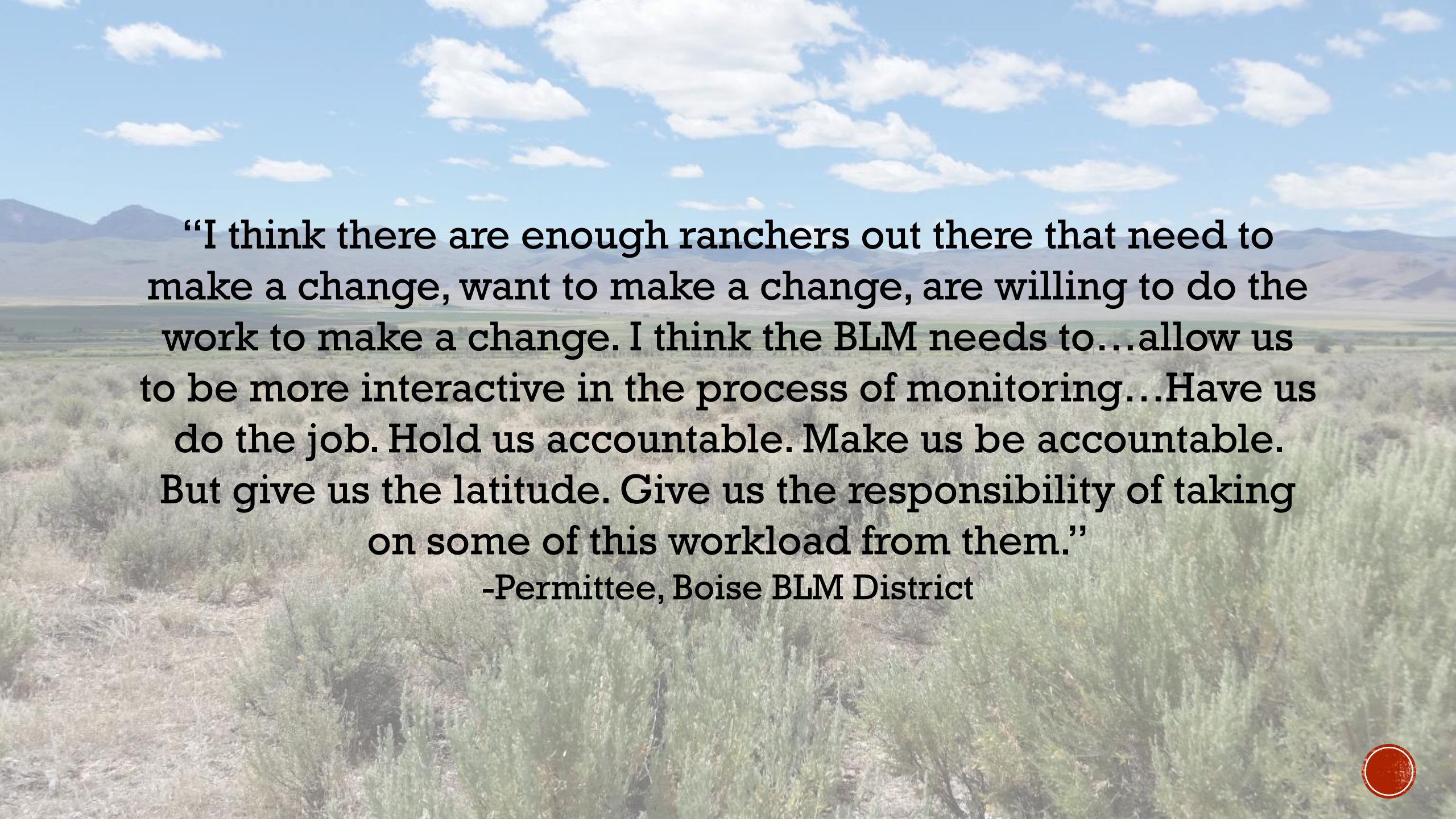
- Integrating multiple forms of knowledge to define problems, potential options
  - “Will it hold up in court?”
- Actors having access to expertise, data
- Utilizing permittee knowledge in planning



# FINDINGS: LEGITIMIZING

- Attracting political, financial support to sustain activities
  - Perceived to be largely lacking
- Advocate for institutional, policy changes that facilitate collaborative functioning, goals
  - E.g., peer-learning, monitoring
  - How to balance flexibility with accountability?





**“I think there are enough ranchers out there that need to make a change, want to make a change, are willing to do the work to make a change. I think the BLM needs to...allow us to be more interactive in the process of monitoring...Have us do the job. Hold us accountable. Make us be accountable. But give us the latitude. Give us the responsibility of taking on some of this workload from them.”**

**-Permittee, Boise BLM District**



# SUMMARY

- General agreement that outcome-based approaches may be undertaken through communication, shared learning, integrating permittee knowledge
- What could accountability look like...
  - On-the-ground?
  - Under legal scrutiny? (e.g., NEPA challenges)
- Clearer guidelines/measures of accountability would allow permittees to more fully participate, direct place-specific outcomes



# IMPLICATIONS

- **Assess existing capacities**
  - Where are gaps?
  - Strategically plan for how to acquire missing capacities
- **Understanding how collaborative capacities interact to produce outcomes may help permittees and BLM staff**
  - Meet local goals
  - Explore how to meet state/federal-level expectations



# THANK YOU

- Interviewees: BLM, permittees
- Funding: Fish, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Resource Management Grant (DOI-BLM)

