Ben Sturm: Hello everyone. Thank you for joining today's session. We are just going to wait a couple more minutes for participants to log on before we start the presentation. Please hang on, and we will begin shortly.

Ben Sturm: Hello, and good afternoon everyone. Thank you for joining us for today's webinar on the HEROS – How to use HEROS for Part 58 Partners. My name is Ben Sterm, and I work with the Collaboris Group. We are joined today by Lauren McNamara, Lauren Hayes, Liz Sapada, and Shawn Joiner of HUD's Office of Environment and Energy.

Before we get started, I would like to share a couple of housekeeping notes regarding today's session. This webinar is scheduled for 90 minutes. However, there is a chance that the session could run longer if needed. We are also experiencing a large number of you in attendance, so all lines are muted. This session will be recorded. The recording and Power Point slides will be made available on HUD Exchange within the following week.

If you look at your WebEx control panel on either the righthand side of your screen or at the top of your screen, please take note of the following. Computer audio. If you would like to change your audio settings from phone to computer, please be sure to click on the quick start menu on top left of your WebEx screen. Then go to the audio conference section. Switch the selection from phone to computer audio. The chat pod by default is set to host. Please use the dropdown arrow to select presenter, panelist, host option.

In addition, the Q&A pod is by default not selected. Please locate this icon. It has a question mark and says Q&A. It will be either at the top of your screen or on the top right corner of your screen. If you click that icon, the pod will populate underneath the chat pod. All questions should be submitted through the question pod. Questions will be answered verbally. Any questions that we cannot get to today, please submit those questions through HUD Exchange Ask a Question for Environmental Reviews.

In addition, we will be stopping throughout today's session to answer questions that are submitted through the Q&A pod. Please submit your questions as you are thinking about them, and we will respond to them when appropriate.

If you are having technical issues related to audio, screen sharing, or anything regarding WebEx, please also submit those questions through the Q&A pod on the control panel. I would now like to turn today's presentation over to Lauren McNamara.

Lauren McNamara: Great, thank you Ben. First, welcome everyone. We are going to be covering how partner users work with responsible entities for Part 58 reviews and HEROS. To kick it off, I just want to ask you guys two quick poll questions to get an understanding of your experience with HEROS and what type of program user you are. I am going to open a poll question, and hopefully this works.

Our first question is have you worked on the review in HEROS? All right. We will give people a few more seconds to answer this. Okay. It looks like based on the responses, most of you have not yet worked on review in HEROS. About a third of you have already worked on reviews in this system. Okay, let me close this question and I will open up our next question. I am sorry. It is just taking a second to close this poll question. Okay, I think I closed that. Now in one more second, I will open up the second poll question. I am sorry. I thought this would be a little quicker. Thank you. Okay, all right.

Now we are going to open up our second poll question. This question is what kind of partner are you? Are you a partner who has been hired by a grantee to work on environmental reviews? Or are you a partner who is a non-RE recipient such as a public housing authority or shop grantee? I am going to open that poll question now. Okay, so based on the responses that we have in, it looks like it is almost a 50/50 split between a consultant hired by a grantee to work on a Part 58 environment review or a PHA or shop grantee honoree recipient.

Let me close this poll, and we will get underway with the presentation. Give me a second for this to close. I am sorry. On my end, I just see a blue spinning circle when I try and close this. Just bear with me. Luckily, we do not have any more polling questions. We will just be going through the presentation. All right. It should close in about 15 seconds. Thank you for all of you who responded to the poll question. I am sorry that that was a little bit slower than anticipated, but it does give me a general idea of you guys as an audience with your experience with the system as well as the type of partner user that you are. All right.

As I mentioned before, this webinar will cover how partner users work with responsible entities or REs under Part 58 in HEROS. Partner users, welcome to the party. Today, we will be covering the following. We will be giving an overview of HEROS, and we will discuss the partner user role in more detail. Then we will have a demonstration of some HEROS screens, and specifically some laws and authority screens. We will walk through how a partner user would complete those. Finally, we will talk about the resources we have for HEROS users, and we will open the webinar up for questions at the end.

Okay, first we are jumping into the HEROS overview. HEROS is an enterprise system that walks users through the entire environment review from beginning to end. It replaces the old paper-based system and moves the environment review process into the 21st century.

Why in the world would you want to use HEROS? It makes complying with environmental review easier because it includes guidance and prompts on what is needed throughout the system. It facilitates communication. There is no more need to email large documents or use Drop Box to transfer files. Documents can be uploaded directly into HEROS and share it between parties. HEROS also streamlines the process by generating an electronic environment to review records that you could see locally. The 7015.15 and 7015.16 process can be completed via HEROS. There is no more waiting for the mail to reach the HUD office or the mail from the HUD office to reach your office. Finally, HEROS will be required eventually. We are looking at sometime in late 2019.

Who uses HEROS? HEROS opened for use in 2014 to responsible entity staff for voluntary use and for HUD staff for mandatory use. We made some changes to the system in late 2017 that allow for partners. Partners would be non-responsible entity recipients and consultants who work with REs and HUD to work in the system. We started rolling out to partner users regionally in August 2018.

Here is our general timeline. Regions eight, nine, and three had their initial push. Region four will be starting soon most likely after the holidays and go into January. If you work with a responsible entity, you will have to wait for the region that the RE is located in to roll out. We are doing a roll out regionally just to make sure we can handle all the user access requests that we have coming in. We can process them as we see fit and in our time restraints.

How does the roll out process work? HUD will invite REs regionally to sign up. At the same time we invite REs to sign up, we are inviting their partners to sign up. A partner user can only sign up if the RE has registered users in HEROS. If you are working with a RE, that RE needs to have access to the system. You can both sign up at the same time, but you need to coordinate and make sure that if you are signing up, your RE already has access. Partners can sign up to work with multiple REs. We know that some consultants do not just work with one RE. They work with multiple REs. If you are signing up for multiple REs, you can let us know. When you are signing up, we have a Google Access form.

When we do send the push to sign up, you will receive an online access form link. This will prompt you to provide information and contact information. It is basic information that we need to set up your profile and to understand who you will be working with in this system. If there is any missing information, we will contact you via email to follow up on information that we need or if something is not clear. Once your access has been processed, you will receive a welcome email.

Something to note here is that with any roll out, there is a big increase in the number of access requests that we are receiving. This can take several weeks. Once you submit your request in the online forum, you will not have access to HEROS until you receive the welcome email.

Partner users who work for consultants are tied to their organization. They are an individual user, and they are under their partner organization. They can work with multiple responsible entities. For example, this partner user is tied to Fairfax County and the city of Alexandria. They can also be tied for HUD if they work on Part 58 reviews. When partner users work with multiple responsible entities or HUD, when they log into the system, they will have to select who they are working with when they are in HEROS. If you are working on a review for Fairfax County, when you log in you will have to select Fairfax County. Then if you are logging in to work on a review that is under the city of Alexandria, you will have to log in and select that you are working on Alexandria.

For partner users who are non-RE recipients such as PHAs or shop grantees, you can sign up and be associated with the responsible entity or HUD. Like the consultant, if you are assigned to more than one RE, if you are working with a state, if you are working for a city, a county, or HUD; you can select the responsible entity that you are working on the review for.

Let us say we have an example where a consultant is hired by a non-RE recipient such as a PHA to help prepare the environmental review. Consultant, partner, and a non-RE recipient partner can work together on this review under the umbrella of the responsible entity. Both users will have to be associated with the responsible entity, and they will be able to share the review between themselves and the responsible entity.

For Part 58, there are generally three user roles. There is a partner who assists with the preparation of the review for the RE. There is a responsible entity who performs the Part 58 review and completes the analysis and final determination. Finally there is HUD. HUD is involved with the approving of the authority to use grant funds – the 7015.16.

Throughout this webinar, anything that can be completed by a partner user I will highlight in navy blue. Whatever can be completed by the responsible entity user I will highlight in green. Anything that can be completed by HUD will be highlighted in yellow.

Here is the example process with a partner and responsible entity. The first two boxes are navy, so this is a partner user. The partner user can initiate the review, enter project information, and conduct initial analysis. They can upload maps and other documents to the system. Then the next step would be that the partner user submits the review to the responsible entity. The next step is the RE user completes the compliance requirements, makes findings, and determinations. At this step, if there is any information or something needs to be sent back to the partner user, the RE can always send the review back to the partner user using the assign review feature which I will discuss in a little bit. The RE user finalizes everything and submits the request to release the funds to HUD. Then HUD completes the authority to use the grant funds.

Now we are just going to go through a general demonstration. This will be the largest chunk of our presentation. If you have any questions that come up for any specific laws and authority, definitely type them into the Q&A pod as we are working through this. We will try to answer them at the end.

Here is a high-level representation of the environmental review process. You start with defining a project. Then you determine your level of review. You perform the analysis. This is compliant with the laws and authorities and environmental specimen analysis. You finalize the review. This includes public notification and a 7015.15 and 7015.16 process. Then you have post review considerations. If you have identified any mitigation measures that need to be addressed as part of the analysis, you can follow up with the completed mitigation measures in HEROS once the review is complete. Everything is maintained in the environmental review record that is generated from HEROS.

Here is the HEROS login. As a partner user, you will receive a B or C User ID and an initial password in your welcome email. If you have any issues logging in, you can contact the help desk. Their phone number is on the bottom of this screen. One thing to note is you will need to remember the five-digit pin that you gave us when you registered for access. It is a strange number of numbers to ask for but be sure that you know your five-digit pin when calling for a password reset. If you forget your pin, you can always reach out to us via Ask a Question. If you have any issues logging in that cannot be addressed by the help desk, you can submit a question using Ask a Question on the HUD Exchange. When you do that, please be sure to provide your user ID so that we can make sure that you are in the system and try to address your issue.

Before we jump into working on a review, I am just going to show you some tips for working in HEROS. Tip one is save your work often. Due to HUD's security system requirements, we have inactivity timeouts. If you are inactive in HEROS for 20 minutes, you will receive a popup letting you know that you are going to be logged out. One thing to note is that if you are typing on a screen, that is not considered being active. You need to actually hit the save buttons or move between screens to save the information and be active in the system.

Next, we have text tips. Any time you see a tiny little blue circle with a white "I" in it, that is a text tip. If you click on the text tip, you will receive a popup with some more information to explain what we are trying to get to in the environmental review. Here for project name, if you click the text tip, it just says choose a name for your project that will allow you and others involved to identify easily. Try to choose a name that is unique to this project. Note there is a 60-character limit. These are just kind of prompts that we have throughout the system to help you answer questions.

Next, we have our side menu. After completing the initial screen, a side menu will appear on the left side of your screen. This side menu will expand during the whole environmental review process. After you determine your level of review, the side menu will expand to show all the screens that you will be able to access as part of that environmental review.

When you log in, you are going to be taken to the HEROS dashboard. While on the HEROS dashboard, you will see reviews that are currently assigned to you, or reviews that you have started, or are currently working on. From here if you were working on a tiered review, which is a little different than a standard review, you would click on go to tiered review. This would take you to a separate tiered review dashboard. This tiered review dashboard is a little different because it does allow you to upload site specific reviews to your tiered review. If you are working on a tiered review, be sure to go to the tiered review dashboard. We have more information on tiered reviews on our HUD Exchange website. We do have a webinar that goes into more detail about tiered reviews in HEROS.

To start a review, you are just going to click start a new environmental review. Then the next thing you will come up to is the review type. Since you are completing a review under Part 58, you will select Part 58. If you were working under Part 50, you would be able to select Part 50.

This is the initial screen in HEROS. This is where a partner user will enter basic project information. As I mentioned before, as we walk through these slides anything that can be completed by the partner will be highlighted in navy. Anything that can be completed by the RE will be highlighted in green.

For the initial screen, you will need to complete this screen and save it to initiate the review in the system. If there is any information that a partner user is unsure of, you can enter a placeholder and notify the responsible entity. Anything on this screen with a red asterisk is required to be entered to save this review. Here on the partner screen, you will enter the project name. You will enter the grant information. This might not be something you have readily available. But you can enter a placeholder and let the responsible entity user know that they need to update that information. You will also enter the total HUD funded amount and estimated project cost. It is the total cost of the project.

Then you will answer a yes or no question about if the project anticipates the user of other funds or assistance from another federal agency in assistance to HUD. Once the partner user completes this information, the responsible entity user will go back through this information, make sure it is correct, and work through the review.

A little further down on the initial scree, we have responsible entity information. This auto populates from the system. Here we have Alexandria. A partner user will enter their RE prepare information and certifying officer name. Under grant recipient or consultant information, they will be able to enter a dropdown box and select the type of partner that they are. If they are non-RE recipient, they will be able under grant recipient information to find their name and select it. Then enter their name. Or if they are a consultant, they will be able to search for their consulting firm name and then enter it. These are based on the organizations that are tied to the responsible entity. Then the partner user will click save and continue. Once again, the RE user will come through the screen and do the final check to make sure everything is correct as part of their analysis.

All right. Now we are on the project summary screen. On the project summary screen, a partner user can enter their project descriptions and project location information. After submitting this information, RE will go through and make sure this is correct and make any edits as necessary.

A little further down on the project summary screen there are questions about the project activities. There is what type of activities are involved in this project. Will the project require a change in land use? What is the plan's final use of the project? You will respond to these questions as a partner user and save the screen. Then the responsible entity user can come back and make sure this is correct. Note that if any of these selections are changed on this screen and you use the level of review determination assistant that I will discuss in a few minutes, your level of review might change. Just be sure to go through the level review determination assistant again if you are changing any of these activities on this screen.

Here is the level of review. As a partner user, you will be able to select an advisory level review. The Army will confirm that this the correct level of review. You should be talking outside of the system to make sure you are both on the same page as to what is required if it is a categorically excluded subject to review or an environmental assessment. The partner user makes an advisory level of review.

Then as you scroll down the level of review screen, you have all the options. If you are doing a categorically excluded subject, you would select by patients that are involved. If you are unsure of the level of review, you can click not sure at the bottom of the screen and continue to the level of review determination assistant, also known as the LORDA.

Here is LORDA. Based on the activities that you selected on the project summary screen. You will be prompted with anywhere from one to four questions about your project activities. Then HEROS will recommend a level of review based on your selection. Here a partner user will be asked to confirm the level of review. Once the level of review is determined, you will get to kind of the nuts and bolts of HEROS. It is the related laws on authorities and how to walk through compliance with all of them.

As a partner user, you cannot legally complete the full analysis and compliance steps for laws and authorities. You can make suggestions and initial analysis to the RE to make their final determination. To ensure that a RE reviews each of the loan authority screens, partner users may not reply to the final question on each screen. It is are formal compliance steps or mitigation required?

There is a special note with the last bullet. If HUD were to come and monitor the responsible entity leader and saw that none of the yes or no questions were answered, it would be kind of a red flag to let HUD know that the RE has not reviewed the information submitted by the partner.

With the yes and no questions, partners do need to walk through the screens to upload information to provide to the responsible entity. You do need to kind of answer the initial questions and some of the analysis, but you should be working with the responsible entities and making suggestions. Any text boxes that come up or compliance determinations you need to explain what is going on and be explicit that these are advisory responses. The RE will complete the screen using the partner user's feedback.

One thing to note is if you want to familiarize yourself with the process flow of the laws and authority screens. We have our partner worksheets on the HUD Exchange that walk through the same logic as HEROS. If you do not have access to HEROS yet and you kind of want to see how things are working in the system, you can look at these Word documents that mimic the HEROS screen.

Based on the level of review, you will be taken to the laws and authorities screen. Depending on your level of review, this screen will have either three laws and authorities or 16 laws and authorities. As partner users, you will be able to populate the compliance determination on the laws and authorities screen. However, you will not be able to answer the middle column which is are formal compliance steps or mitigation required? Only a RE user can answer that question. I am going to walk through a few of the trickier laws and authorities and show you as a partner user how you can prep this screen, and how a RE user will come in and finalize the screen.

First, we are going to cover flood plain management. Partner users can create the flood insurance rate maps. Be sure to mark the site on the maps. Make preliminary suggestions as to if the project meets any of the exceptions of 55.12. If an eight step or five step process is required, you will need to work with the responsible entity. There is an alternative analysis as part of that. Public notification is required. Anything that you are working on in flood plains if you are going to impact a flood plain, definitely involve your RE early. You should be talking about these and working these out outside of the system. Then once things are finalized working through the system, ask a partner user to pass off to the responsible entity user to finalize.

Here is what the flood plain management screen looks like. For the first question, for this example we are going to select that this project does not meet any of the exceptions. The second question prompts users to upload a flood insurance rate map and respond to the question of is this project located in a flood plain, yes or no? If yes, what type of flood plain is it located in?

Next will be the eight-step process. For this one we are going to say an eight-step process is required. The partner user is definitely going to be working with the responsible entity because they are going to be impacting a flood plain, and they do need to work on an eight-step analysis. Partner user can complete the mitigation portion of this screen. They can select the type of mitigation measures that have been identified in an eight-step process. They can also add notes for the partner based on conversations that they have had with the eight-step process on their recommendation. The responsible entity user will come in and finalize this information.

Finally, at this screen summary, HEROS generates compliance determination. The partner user can edit the compliance determination and include notes for the RE user. The partner user can also upload supporting documentation onto the screen. Then the RE user will have to come in and finalize the compliance determination, and finally answer the yes or no question at the bottom. Are formal compliance steps or mitigation required?

Next, we are going to walk through wetlands. For wetland protection, if a project involves ground disturbance and it is determined that there is a wetland on site, the partner will have to work with the RE to determine if consultation with vision model service is needed for wetland delineation. Then if the eight-step is required, coordinate with the RE just like you would coordinate with the RE for the eight-step process for flood plain.

Here is the wetland screen. Under the first question, we are selecting yes that the project does involve new construction, expansion of the building's footprint, or ground disturbance. Then under the second question, we are going to select that there is a wetland that might be impacted.

For question three, the partner can provide notes to the RE on mitigation measures that will be taken to limit the impact on wetlands and make selections to the type of mitigation measures that can be completed. After submitting the review to the RE, the RE will finalize the analysis on this screen. Finally, at the screen summary, the partner user will edit the compliance determination, provide notes to the RE user, and upload documentation. The RE user will finalize the compliance determination and answer the final question on the screen. Are formal compliance steps or mitigation required?

Endangered species. A general note about endangered species is partner users should not contact the Fish and Wildlife Service or Fishery. They should coordinate with the responsible entity for any consultation for endangered species. Here is the endangered species screen. As a walk-through on this screen, on the first question, does the project involve any activities that have the potential to affect species or habitat? We are going to select yes. That will take us to question two. As you notice, question two has two text tips to define critical habitat and action areas.

Under question two, we will select yes. There are federally listed species or critical habitat present in the action areas. Under question three we are going to respond that there is no effect based on the specifics above the project and any federally listed species in the action area.

Under question six, the partner is going to recommend that mitigation is not necessary and why. This is based on coordination with a responsible entity outside the system. Finally, when the responsible entity user enters the system, they can finalize this information and analysis. On the screen summary for endangered species, the partner user will provide the initial compliance determinations and upload supporting documentation. The partner user will come in and finalize the analysis, the compliance determination, and answer our formal steps or mitigation required question at the bottom of the screen.

For historic preservation or section 106, partners should not contact the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. This should only be done by the responsible entity. Partners can make preliminary determinations, describe their conclusions, and coordinate with the responsible entity. But they should not be initiating consultation.

Here is the historic preservation screen. On this screen, under the first question we are going to say that the section 106 process is required for this project. This will open up steps one of the section 106 process, which is initiate consultation. The partner user should be working with the RE outside of the system to work on consultation that the responsible entity will be undertaking. The partner can work with the RE I guess to find who to contact, how to put together letters and consultation documentation for the SHPO and interested party. Here the partner can enter. They can provide a summary of how the consulting parties were selected. Then when the RE user comes in to finalize the analysis, they can update the information in the text box.

Under step two, identify and evaluate historic properties. The partner user will work with RE to identify these properties which they can then provide additional notes to the partners in the system. They should be talking outside of the system to make sure everything is on the same page. When the RE user enters the system, they will finalize the analysis.

Under step three, assess the affects of the project on historic properties. The partner user here will select no adverse effect and enter information for documenting that finding. They should be on the same page as the responsible entity at this point since consultation has been going on. Finally, when the RE user enters the system, they will finalize any of this analysis. Now at the screen summary for historic preservation, a partner user can edit the compliance determination and upload documents. With all the laws and authorities, the RE user will finalize the analysis, edit the compliance determination, and answer the final question on the bottom of the screen. Are formal compliance steps or mitigation required?

Next is the environmental assessment analysis. This is basically how the environmental assessment kind of chart works. It is in the system. Partner users will be able to select the impact code in the second column, and then enter their impact evaluation in the third column. If any mitigation is required, they can enter it there. As with the other screens, the RE user will come into this screen and finalize any analysis before making their final determinations.

Here is just some general guidance that we have throughout HEROS. All HEROS screens for laws and authorities link back to the HUD Exchange where you can find more information and resources on a specific loan authority. This includes links to the agency that would have a mapping system that could help with the analysis. For farmland, you would be working with the USDA. We have links to where you can get source documentation and how to work through the process. We also have guidance for environmental substance where we walk through guidance on how to meet the environmental assessment factors.

Okay, now I am just going to talk quickly about mitigation measures. Mitigation measures are recorded on the laws and authority screen as the user is prompted to add mitigation measures and text summaries in text pockets. Once on the screen, if any information needs to be edited, a user can click on the name of the loan authority in the left-hand column and be taken back to the screen to make edits. If you need to add a mitigation measure, you can click add a mitigation measure. It will add to the chart. Partner users make the initial mitigation measure suggestions. Then once the analysis is completed by the RE user, they will update the mitigation measure. Then they will also add information about the mitigation plan.

Once a partner user kind of finishes their initial analysis and provides documentation to the RE in the review, they will hit kind of their final endpoint. They will have to pass the review on to the responsible entity to finalize. On the prepare notification screen, a partner user can generate an environmental review record from the system. They can also assign the review to their person that they are working with at the RE to finalize. I am going to show you how the assign review feature works. But first I am going to quickly show you what the environmental review record generated from HEROS looks like.

Here is the ERR document. This includes all the text that has been entered in text boxes, questions that have been answered, and documents that have been uploaded are hyperlinked here. The first few pages mimic the initial and project summary screen. Then we have the laws and authority chart. Finally, we have the appendix. The appendix shows how the questions and text boxes were responded to on each of the laws and authority screens. It also includes hyperlinks to the documentation that was uploaded. When you generate this, you might just want to save a local copy for yourself. If you want to email it to the RE so they can see everything in the Word document, then click through HEROS to answer their end and finish their analysis.

Assigning the review. On the assign review screen, you will select the name of the person at the RE who will work on the review next. You can use the search at the top of the screen. You will only be able to assign a review to users associated with the responsible entity. If you were a consultant and you were working with a PHA, you would be able to assign it to the person that is a PHA. Or if you need to assign it to the RE, you can assign it to the RE. Or if you need to assign it back to each other, you can also do that.

At the very top of the screen, you will be able to search. Then under the first box you will see the search results. Be sure to highlight the person's name in gray before you click assign. One thing to note is that once a user has been assigned a review, they will show in the second kind of search result box as being a person who has previously worked on the review. That makes it a little easier to assign it to a person that has already worked on the review. You need to make sure the person's name is highlighted in gray before you click assign. One thing to note is you can enter comments into the text box. The text entered into this text box will only appear in the system generated email. As I mentioned before, this just highlights the areas where people who have previously been assigned a review will appear.

Here is the confirmation email. Both the user who assigned the review and the person who is getting assigned the review will receive a copy of this email from HEROS-no-reply@HUD.gov. The system generated email will include the project name and the name of the person who assigned you the review. Once the review is assigned to the second user, the second user can use the hyperlink dashboard to log into HEROS. When they log into HEROS, the review will show in their dashboard. Just to make a special note, if it is a tiered review you will have to go to the tiered review dashboard to see the review that is assigned to you that is a tiered review.

For finalizing a review, the RE submits the request releases on some certification. Here is a quick screenshot of the screen. A paper signed copy of the 7015.15 can be uploaded by a RE user. When there is a Part 3 signature on the RROF, the RE user can enter the date that it was signed and upload the document.

In order to submit the request releases onto HUD, the review needs to be assigned to a person of the local HUD field office to finalize the processing. On the HUD end, this is yellow because HUD is going to do it. After the objection period, HUD approves the 7015.16 so they will respond to questions on the screen. Then they will finalize the question all objection to perceived have they considered. They will enter their name and state. Once the review is finalized, HUD will assign the review to the last person at the responsible entity who assigned the review to HUD. That user will receive a system generated email.

What does this look like? This is the same as the environmental review record that I showed you before. One thing that I want to note is that the 7015.15 and the 7015.16 show as dates on the environmental review record. The uploaded RROF and publication will be hyperlinked here. There will no longer be an authority to use grant funds form issued by HUD. The HEROS screen mimics the form, but the date is entered into the environmental review record. Here is where that is on the environmental review record. It usually shows up on the second or third page depending on the length of the project description. Then once again, here are the laws and authorities. Finally is the appendix, which shows the laws and authorities and how they were responded to within the system.

Reviews are posted on the HUD Exchange during their public comment periods. They are also archived on the HUD Exchange. If you are a doing a review that is not a tiered review, it will be archived on the HUD Exchange for one year. If you are a working on a tiered review, it will be archived on the HUD Exchange for five years. Reviews will remain in the system indefinitely, but reviews will be public facing for that period of time.

Now we are just going to go into the resources we have available. Here are our training materials, tools, and resources. We have a user guide. We are currently working on updating our user guide to incorporate the partner user role. That is in progress, so stay tuned. We have how-to videos. More specifically, we have a how-to video on using HEROS as a partner user. We also have a how-to video on how to assign a review. We have how-to videos that show specific snippets of the environmental review process in the system. We also have frequently asked questions. We try to update these twice a year. We will probably take some questions that have been asked during this webinar and incorporate that into our FAQs.

We also have Ask a Question. If you run into any system issues, whether it be logging into the system or you are working in the system and you receive an error message or something strange is not working. You can use Ask a Question. This can get you in contact with our contractors to try and sort out the system issue as soon as possible. One thing that is very helpful when using Ask a Question is to include screenshots. Sometimes these things happen, and we are unable to replicate them. If you have a screenshot, it definitely helps us kind of narrow down what the issue might be.

Finally, we have our Q&A webinar. This webinar has been mentioned. It will be posted on the HUD Exchange in the upcoming or so. All of these materials are available on the HUD Exchange. I guess now we will open it up for questions.

Lauren Hayes: Okay, we have had a couple questions come in. But as a reminder, if you have any, please type them in the question pod now. Our first question is will there be a link on the HUD Exchange for potential partners to sign up for HEROS after the rollout month?

Lauren McNamara: Sure. If you are in a region that passed, let me just go back to the timing. Hold on a second. If you are in a reason where you are working with a responsible entity and the period has passed, you can reach out to HUD to get a link to the access form. Once we finalize this rollout in May 2019, we will post this link on the HUD Exchange. As we are rolling this out regionally, you will be invited to do it regionally. If you are working in a region that has already gone through the process, you can reach out to HUD to get the link. But if you are in a region that is a little further down the line, you will have to wait until it opens to sign up.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question is can funding information, including total cost and HUD funded amount, be changed once the project definition is completed?

Lauren McNamara: As a partner user, you can enter kind of a placeholder if you are not sure of what the exact project amount is. The responsible entity user can edit that as they are working on their review and finalizing it. If something did happen where an error was made in the funding amount, you could go back and edit it.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question is does HEROS allow two or more REs to work together on a review of the same project? County, state, and local REs may all be involved in the same project needing review.

Lauren McNamara: Okay. That is a little trickier. If one of the entities was taking kind of a lead agency to be the RE and the other responsible entities were just providing information to that responsible entity, they could work as partners with that already in the system. That could be done. If multiple REs were working on the same review, if a RE was ahead of another RE – one RE was going to finish sooner than the others – the first responsible entity could finish the review. Then the other two responsible entities could essentially work in the system as a cooperating agency, put that review in, and then go through their public notification. This is a good question. If you do run into this situation, definitely contact your field environmental officer and we can kind of help walk you through it. Just because it is a little tricky and we would want to make sure it was working correctly. This has come up as a question. Then we have tried to work this out. If this does come up, definitely reach out to your FEO and we can sort it out kind of with the system outside of this webinar. It is not really an easy answer.

Lauren Hayes: Okay, next question. Will the environmental review records still need to be made available at a location that is near the proposed project location? Or will the public notice direct interested parties to the HUD Exchange to view the ERR?

Lauren McNamara: The public notice being posted on the HUD Exchange does not change the public notification requirements in Part 58. You will still have to publish or post your notification. You can reference the HUD Exchange as a link for someone to view the environmental review record, but the publisher posted is still part of Part 58. HEROS does not replace that.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Next is how does a partner user that begins a new environmental review give access to or share with additional partners or members of a firm to work on concurrently?

Lauren McNamara: You cannot work on a review concurrently at the same time. The review can only be worked on by the person who the review is assigned to. This is to make sure that someone. If multiple people are working on the review at the same time, multiple people are not working on the project description at the exact same moment. Then nothing saves. Only one person at a time can edit the review. Once the person is working on a review and editing a review, they can work on it. But if someone in their office needs to work on a different part of the review, the review would have to be assigned to that person to work on it.

One thing to note that I did not mention under the assign review feature is if you accidentally send the review to a person who is out of the office and it needs to be reassigned back to someone to work on, you can use the HUD Exchange to get in contact with us. We can reassign the review for you. Only one person at a time can work on a review.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. I am going to combine a couple questions. First is will state programs be using HEROS? Can CoC grantees use HEROS?

Lauren McNamara: Okay. Can state programs use HEROS? If the state is acting as the responsible entity and submitting the request for release of funds to HUD, they can use the system now. If the state is acting as HUD and processing the 7015.15 that is submitted by a responsible entity, they are not using the system at this time. We have a separate kind of work that we need to do with those state programs. If you are a state and you are a RE, you can use the system. But if you are a state acting as HUD, you are not using the system right now.

Then I believe the next question was for CoCs. If you are a CoC and you are working with a responsible entity, yes you can use the system. If you are a CoC and you are working with HUD, you can also use the system.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question is should large documents such as Phase I asbestos and lead inspections, et cetera, be uploaded as part of the ERR?

Lauren McNamara: Yes. HEROS system is designed to handle very large documents. It was part of our design and system creation to make sure that this system could handle large Phase Is. It is currently handling large Phase Is, so please upload them into the system. If you run into an issue where you are unable to upload a really large document, definitely let us know using Ask a Question. Since 2014, we have not run into any issues with a Phase I or document being too large.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Next is on the historic preservation screen, you say that the RE was supposed to contact Shippo. Are consultants not supposed to be completing the Section 106 screen?

Lauren McNamara: If the partner wants to kind of provide documentation on the Section 106 screen, they can provide it. But the responsible entity is doing a consultation. If the RE and its partner talk outside the system and the RE says just do not complete that screen, I will do it all; they can do it all. But if they want the partner user to upload documentation to the screen, the partner user can initiate the screen. Then the responsible entity user can finalize it. With Section 106, the full consultation is on the responsible entity.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Next is when assigning reviews, can a consultant assign to a fellow colleague first before assigning to PHA or RE?

Lauren McNamara: Yes. As long as you are under the same organization and tied to the same responsible entity, you can assign the reviews to each other within the system.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Then this is related to the rollout for partners. This says is June 2019 the time period in which Region 6 must be using HEROS? I assume this is the date when it is rolled out to partners. Is that mandatory for everybody then also?

Lauren McNamara: This is not. This rollout for partner users is not going to be set in stone. It is not going to say once Region 8 is done, it is mandatory for Region 8. This is just the process of us getting users into the system in these regions. HEROS will not be mandatory until most likely late 2019. There are several months after this rollout that we will be open for people to sign up. As we introduce the system to the regions, this is kind of your big push to sign up for this system.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question is will a hard copy be required for the RE to maintain on site?

Lauren McNamara: You are not required to maintain a hard copy. You should save an environmental review record generated from HEROS on your local drive. You can save the electronic copy. That will have hyperlinks to your documentation. Just make sure that you have your electronic copy and then copies of the documents that you upload into the system. The hyperlinks will be live as long as the document is posted on HUD Exchange. Or if you are a HEROS user, when you click the hyperlink it will open the document. No hard copy is needed. It will keep it electronically.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Next question is do REs doing shared reviews continue to conduct their site-specific review offline and then submit to HEROS? I think that is the question.

Lauren McNamara: Okay. Yeah, with tiering, tiering is a little bit more bare-boned than the standard environmental review process in HEROS. For tiered reviews, you develop your tiered review after doing a CEST tiered review. You can kind of build your tier one and your kind of written strategy in the system. Your site-specific reviews are completed outside of the system in the format that you develop. Then if you are doing a tiered review that is an EA, you are just going to complete the tiered EA outside the system, upload it into HEROS, and your site-specific reviews will be done outside the system. Then they will be attached to the completed tier one as you move along.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question is can the consultant or partner initiate a new project? Or does the RE need to initiate the project?

Lauren McNamara: A consultant or project – I am sorry. A consultant or partner can initiate a new environmental review. You definitely should be talking to the RE before you start review to make sure that they actually need the review. But a consultant and partner can initiate the environmental review before passing it on to the RE. The RE does not have to initiate the review.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Then we have had a couple questions about the registration process both for partners and REs. Can you go over that?

Lauren McNamara: Sure. When HEROS opens up to your region; if you are in a region that has already been covered, definitely reach out to your regional environmental officer to get this linked. When we are introducing the system to the region through the rollout, responsible entities will receive emails letting them know that this is our second push for you guys to sign up for this system. At this time, you can sign up with your partners. Responsible entities will share this with their partners to sign up. As I said before, the responsible entity needs to have access to HEROS in order for the partner to sign up for HEROS. You will receive this link from your contact at the responsible entity. Then you will be able to sign up as well as them.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Next question is the grant number or loan number needed to begin an environmental review?

Lauren McNamara: It is a required field, but you can enter a placeholder. You can enter the number one. Then when the responsible entity who has more familiarity with their grants that they are working with come in and edit the screen, they can update that information.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Next question is what if the project description changes during the process? Can the partner make the change?

Lauren McNamara: If you are still working on the analysis and no final determinations have been made, a partner can work with the RE just to figure out what the project description is. They can edit the project description on the screen. If you are kind of working on something that is totally going to change the scope and you have already completed everything, just keep in mind that your project description is how you work through the laws and authorities of the level review. If you are changing the project description, keep in mind the impact that it could have on the analysis.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. This next question is not directly related to partner users, but it is a decent question. They say if I have an environmental record that started in early 2017 that has stalled, how long do they have to complete the review and submit the request release of funds?

Lauren McNamara: If the review is in the system and you are kind of working on a project that is multi-faceted and multi-funding sources with kind of a lot of different players, it has stalled and stopped. You are kind of at a point where you are picking it up again. You could work on that review. You could continue to use that review. One thing to note is you want to keep in mind what you have worked on in 2017. There might be changes like flood insurance rate maps change. Species lists can change. Be sure if you are going to update this project that you do take a look at the analysis again. Then you can work through it and move it forward.

Lauren Hayes: Okay, then similarly is there an option for project re-evaluation through HEROS?

Lauren McNamara: Yes. There is an option. Once the review is complete, the side menu will show re-evaluation. I am sorry I did not show that in the side menu before. If a project needs to be re-evaluated, that can be worked through HEROS. Basically, you are going to take into consideration if the scale or scope or anything has changed. Then document how that has been done.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question is is there a feature in HEROS to post a comment so that the PHA or RE review can consider? For example, a note is to tell them they need to input the grant number.

Lauren McNamara: You can enter in the text box. You can do an asterisk, dollar signs, or something that kind of calls attention to like you need to take a look at this. For grant number, I think you just make sure that you tell them that they need to update that. You can enter multiple zeroes. That would kind of alert someone. You should just kind of talk to them to make sure that they know. There is no way to add a note in that one. But in these specific text boxes where you are walking, you are entering kind of free form text. You could enter like “do not forget this” into a text box for the partner to be prompted. In the grant number, you might be able to enter words. I am not sure. You could probably just say update here. I actually have not tested that out. That might be doable. I probably should have tested that before this.

Yeah. I guess I would add just in general if you want to add notes in the compliance determination text box, there is always space for that. If you want to add notes if you are assigning it to someone else, there is a comment box on the assign screen. The next person that is assigned can see the comments.

Lauren Hayes: Great, thanks Lauren. The next question is if a RE is working under a programmatic agreement for Section 106, how will that work within HEROS?

Lauren McNamara: For Section 106, if you are working under programmatic agreement you will be able to make that selection on the screen and provide a link to your programmatic agreement, and specifically where in the programmatic agreement you are pointing to for that project.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. I feel like we have addressed most of these. Let me see if there are other questions that I have missed. I know we asked if you need to maintain a paper copy of the review. There is also a question. Since the ERR states on the HUD Exchange what record retention requirements there are for REs to maintain a copy, again that is what Lauren said. You do not need a paper copy, but you should retain an electronic copy of the environmental review record at least.

Lauren McNamara: Yeah. It looks like we have addressed all the comments so far – or most of them. We have some questions about access if you have requested access and how long it takes. At this point, it might be a little behind just because we have gotten a lot of new requests in. We typically say two weeks. I think it has been running a little longer in some cases. But if you have a question about your access or you have not received an email notification yet, you can email HEROSinfo@hud.gov to follow up. Also, keep in mind that it has been running a little longer lately.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. I do see a question. We are working as a partner with our local PHA. Our understanding is the RE is the local political jurisdiction where the project occurs. Is this correct? Or is the PHA the RE? It is the jurisdiction. It is the local government. It is not a PHA that is an RE. A PHA would be a partner in HEROS. A responsible entity is the local government.

Okay, I am still looking for other questions. We just got a question. We submitted a 7015.15 in October. The 7015.16 still is not showing up in the environmental review records. Maybe the question about what if you do not get your 7015.16 back after the comment period?

Lauren McNamara Okay. If you are waiting on a 7015.16 and you have not received it back from HUD, definitely follow up with them on the phone to see what the issue is. If you want to let us know using Ask a Question, the name of that review and who the review is currently assigned to; we can look into that to see what the issue might be. If you are waiting for an outstanding 7015.16 from HUD, definitely pick up the phone and make sure that they are aware that it is in their queue. We do send out weekly reminder reports to the CPD field offices to let them know that there are kind of open 7015.15s on their end. But in case something has not shown up, definitely call your local contact to see what the issue might be.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. It looks like there are a couple questions about aggregation and tiered reviews. Someone says do we upload our site-specific reviews to HEROS. Then another question is about can you aggregate projects in multiple locations? How do you enter multiple locations?

Lauren McNamara: Okay. For the tiered review question, you can upload your site-specific reviews and attach them to your broad level tiered one review in the system. You would do that on the tiered reviews dashboard. There is a special button on there to add site-specific reviews. When you are in the review, you can do it via decide venue. You would just enter the project address and then upload the completed tier two or site-specific review. As for aggregation, that is very project specific. You should probably check with your field environmental officer about that.

Lauren Hayes: I would add if you have multiple addresses for instance, you can just enter one representative address on the project description screen. Then enter the others in the text box there if you do end up aggregating. But I would agree to talk to your field environmental officer. There is a question that says can the RE assign someone on his or her staff to review the environmental review record. I imagine that is a HEROS privileges question.

Lauren McNamara: Yes, as long as they have access to the system and they are working under your responsible entity. They can review the review in the system.

Lauren Hayes: Here is the funny question that I like. What do you do if the partner user has no idea of the environmental review process?

Lauren McNamara: Okay. If it is a partner user that you are working with, you definitely need to work very closely with them to make sure they understand the requirements of HUD environmental reviews. HEROS will help them. It is supposed to help them. It is supposed to prompt them with questions and prompts with the type of documentation that is required. It might take you sitting down with them, explaining the process, and how it works.

One thing that I would recommend is that you point them to our HUD Exchange website. We have our WISER system, which is the web-based instructional system for environmental reviews. In that learning management system, we walk through getting started Part 58. We also have kind of modules on specific laws and authorities that include videos on how to make a flood insurance rate map, how to determine compliance with different laws and authorities, and different tools that can be used. If you have a partner who needs a lot of help, you are going to have to help them. We also have resources on our website. You can also kind of see if it is possible for them to attend a Part 58 training that is made available by our field staff.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question is how do you show the review is complete without the authority to use grant funds?

Lauren McNamara: If you are working on a review, for example, that does not require an authority to use grant funds -- if you are doing a categorically excluded not subject to review or a categorically included subject to review that converts to exempt; once you kind of work through the process, you can get to a certain point. You will be prompted with you are done. When you get to that point, you just select finish. You will receive a popup that says the review is marked complete. Then you can archive it. If you are working on a review that does require an authority to use grant funds, that review cannot be marked complete until you receive the authority to use grant funds.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. We have another question about for existing clearance that runs for five years and how this works in HEROS.

Lauren McNamara: I guess I would need a little bit more information. You have an existing clearance that runs for five years. If that is a tiered review – if you have a tiered review that you completed outside of the system, you do not need to do the tiered review in the system. You can keep doing the site-specific reviews outside the system. But the next time you do a tiered review, you can do it in HEROS and then add the site-specific reviews to the review. Hopefully that is where that question was going.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question is regarding downloading the electronic review record from HEROS. Does that ERR include the supporting documentation that was uploaded with the review?

Lauren McNamara: The electronic ERR generated in the system does include hyperlinks to the documentation. When you have that, if you are a HEROS user, you click that link, and you are logged into HEROS; it will open the document in a new window. It is very fancy. If you are kind of outside the system and the review is posted on our website, you are looking at that review. If you click on the hyperlink, that will open the supporting documentation in Internet Explorer. Your electronic copy does include the links to the uploaded documentation in the review.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question is how long are completed reviews valid? At what point do you need to do a new review?

Lauren McNamara: For that, the general rule of thumb we say is five years. But you need to talk to your field environmental officer to understand the whole type of project that you are working with.

Lauren Hayes: We have had a couple I think follow-up questions about the AUGF. Do developers need an AUGF to show the review is complete for tax credit applications, for example? How do we show that using HEROS? The review is complete, and you have an AUGF.

Lauren McNamara: All right, hold on. I am going to pull up the screenshot. Let me just escape. Hold on. I am scrolling to that screen. The AUGF is now the date that shows on the environmental review record generated from the system. In this example, what is shown in the teal box is you have the approval documents that have been uploaded. You have the date that the certifying officer certifies the 7015.15. Then you have the date the authorizing official approves the 7015.16. This is what you can provide.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. The next question is what happens if the review is marked completed, but not archived?

Lauren McNamara: You can always go back and archive it.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Next is can regulatory agencies providing comments access HEROS to provide those comments?

Lauren McNamara: No. It is not at this time. If you are kind of working with a regulatory agency, if they are going to provide comments on a specific loan authority while you are working on the review, he will have to kind of do that outside the system. If you are talking about sharing the environmental review record with them during the public notification process, you can direct them to the HUD Exchange where the environmental review record is posted.

Lauren Hayes: Another question is about tiered reviews. Are REs doing tiered reviews required to submit a request release of funds?

Lauren McNamara: If you have worked on the tiered review outside of HEROS; if you completed your broad level outside of HEROS and you have your request for release of funds, keep doing that outside the system. If you are working on a tier review in the system; if you are tier one you do need to get your request for release of funds through HEROS.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. I am not sure I fully understand this one, but I think it is a good question to still talk about. It is kind of your user role as you log in and are completing environmental reviews. The question says if your complete reviews as a RE, we also work as a partner. Will we need a separate HEROS account for each role? For example, we are a RE for CDBG but work as a partner with our local PHA?

Lauren McNamara: I guess I am a little confused by that question. If you are a RE, but you are a partner with the PHA, the PHA would be your partner. You would still be the RE. The partner would be the PHA.

Lauren Hayes: I think just to talk about users, I do not know if there would be a situation where you are both a RE and a partner. I think there are situations where you are a partner and you do work for multiple REs. You would not necessarily be tied just to one RE. It is important when you log in to select your partner organization, and then make sure you select the correct RE that you are tied to. I know Lauren showed that login screen, so it is just as a reminder.

Lauren McNamara: All right. We have about five more minutes. Are there any more questions, Lauren?

Lauren Hayes: Let me see. We did get a question about the HEROS practice system and how to use that.

Lauren McNamara: Okay. When you do sign up for access to HEROS, you will receive a link to the HEROS production site where you can work on actual reviews that are in progress and that you are going to finalize in the system. We also will send you a link for access to our practice environment where you can use the same login credentials and use that environment to kind of poke through the system. You can see what bells and whistles there are.

Lauren Hayes: Okay. Then there is a question about the request to release funds. After you complete your review and have met the comment period, at what point can you submit the request to release the funds? Or are you prompted by HEROS when to submit the request to release the funds?

Lauren McNamara: You would still be working under Part 58. You would submit the request for release of funds when your comment period ends. You have to wait a day, and then you can submit to the request to release the funds to HUD. You are still working under the umbrella of Part 58. HEROS is not going to prompt you and say the next step is do this now. You still need to make sure you are doing that within the policies and procedures in Part 58.

Lauren Hayes: Okay, I think that is all I am seeing for now.

Lauren McNamara: Okay, thank you everyone for attending. We will kind of take some of your Q&As that you have asked, and kind of work on fleshing out our FAQs. This webinar will be archived on the HUD Exchange. If you have any questions, you can use the HUD Exchange Ask a Question environmental review. Then, Ben, I do not know if you have any signing off words of wisdom.

Ben Sturm: No. I think you basically summed it up. Thank you all for joining today's session. Within the next week, most likely probably early next week, we will have the Power Point presentation and a recording of today's webinar available. We will send those items out to all participants via email. They will also be uploaded to the HUD Exchange, to the HEROS webinar training page. We will provide a link to that page in next week's email as well. As Lauren indicated, if you have any follow-up questions that pertain to environmental reviews or using HEROS, please submit those questions to the HUD Exchange Ask a Question portal for environmental reviews. The HEROS webinar email should only be used for questions pertaining to logging into webinars. You should not be submitting any HEROS or environmental review questions to that email address. Again, thank you all for joining today's session.