Question A: How can BLM reduce duplicative and disproportionate analyses?

1. Digitize existing location data on sites and previous surveys to allow for more rapid assessments of previous survey coverage. Develop and support predictive models that provide input on relative sensitivity of particular geographic areas.
2. Expand the use of programmatic agreements to allow for streamlined approaches based on specific types of activities being proposed. Front load agreements, don't complete them at the back end.
3. Seek early engagement with consulting parties to identify issues in advance of project development and get input on historic properties (and other resources) of value to those groups.
4. Complete archaeology and historic buildings inventories on BLM lands outside of the project development framework (i.e., not in response to a development project) to identify resource types and significance.
5. Develop a criteria matrix that allows for the level of analysis to better match the complexity of the proposal project that is triggering environmental review (could be part of a PA for specific activities, i.e., for transmission lines, we do X, for buried gas lines requiring trenching we do y).
6. Use the scoping process to identify issues of concern to stakeholders. Then use realistic criteria for eliminating resources from detailed analysis in an EA, and stick to it—don't add back in and have scope creep as the project moves forward.

Question B: User-friendly Planning: How can the BLM help state and local governments, tribal partners, and other stakeholders understand and participate in the planning process?

1. Seek early engagement and fully open consultation with consulting parties to identify issues in advance of project development and get input on historic properties (and other resources) of value to those groups.
2. Conduct consultation and outreach meetings on a regular basis (community forums), and not as part of a project-oriented or project-driving NEPA timeline (i.e., conduct meetings to get feedback without a project driver). Perhaps establish a cultural resource working group for a BLM district that regularly review projects and issues.
3. Initial scoping should identify preferred methods of communication so that "user-friendly" planning can be developed to fit each project.Consider using a wide spectrum of communications channels, including but not limited to social media, email, interactive GIS on a website, and hard copy materials. Consider "virtual meetings" for stakeholders who cannot travel.
4. Meet with tribes and other consulting parties at their venues and on their schedule when possible, and ensure decision makers (not just environmental analysts and subject matter experts) attend meetings.

Question C: Transparency: How can the BLM foster greater transparency in the NEPA process?

1. Provide more systematic and regular feedback on the results of consultation – create a more iterative process, not just submit comments and see it posted in the public record portion of the EIS.
2. Less focus on unlikely impacts or impractical alternatives and more energy into a robust, detailed, and complete administrative record.
3. Post all EAs and EIS and related documents and correspondence online in searchable formats.

Question D: D. Being Good Neighbors: How can the BLM build trust and better integrate the needs of state and local governments, tribal partners, and other stakeholders?

1. Support regularly scheduled working groups (e.g., cultural resource working group) that meet to discuss ongoing issues and new business outside the NEPA schedule for a specific project.
2. Consider more user-friendly deadlines and meeting schedules
3. Create new methods of consultation and stakeholder input. Move beyond sending out letters and awaiting responses – have online questionnaires, project dedicated websites, email/text prompts for pending deadlines, etc.

This is an often researched topic. Of related interest:

http://library.rpa.org/pdf/RPA-Getting-Infrastructure-Going.pdf -- this is a 2012 planning roundtable document. It has the usual lingo about speeding up timelines, but was developed by a very interesting list of contributors, and offers some sound case studies for best practices.