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During the past three-months, the focus of the university’s efforts has been 1) making progress on the hiring of permanent project managers for the Education in the Environment Strategy and the Forever Earth / Wonderful Outdoor World on the Water (WOW) projects; 2) completing legal review of the cooperative agreement and standard operating procedures required for the university to assume operations of the Forever Earth vessel; and 3) writing curriculum for the WOW and Forever Earth projects.

**Hiring**

Dr. Jennell Miller was hired as an interim project manager for the Forever Earth/WOW program through December 31, 2004. Dr. Miller has been critically involved in the development of this program prior to the execution of the task agreement and was, therefore, in a position to begin some of the initial groundwork that could be accomplished prior to the hiring of a permanent project manager.

The search for a permanent project manager for both the Forever Earth/WOW program and for the Environmental Education Strategy commenced in August 2004. In the initial review of applications, the search committees for each position determined that there was not a sufficient pool of qualified applicants, and the position announcements were re-worked and re-advertised in early September 2004. In the following month, the search committees evaluated the new applications and reconvened to discuss their rankings on November 4, 2004. A good pool of qualified finalists for each position has been identified and interviews were held on November 30, December 1, and December 6, 2004, with four out-of-state candidates. An offer will be made to the top candidate in each search as soon as the interviews and reference checks are completed. The interagency environmental education team has participated in the interviews and will provide the university with a summary of its observations prior to employment offers being made.

**Curriculum Development**

Effective September 1, 2004, the university hired an educational curriculum specialist, Dr. Jeanne Klockow, to write coordinated curricula for several SNPLMA task agreements, including Forever Earth, WOW on the Water, Oliver Ranch Science School (now titled the Red Rock Desert Learning Center), and the Environmental Education Strategy. By having one person develop
interrelated curricula for these various programs, we believe the university will best meet the core educational goals of the conservation initiatives throughout Southern Nevada in an integrated fashion.

Throughout September, October and November, Dr. Klockow conducted research on age-appropriate curriculum for the target audiences and reviewed the national WOW curriculum prepared by the American Recreation Coalition. At the same time, Dr. Klockow began meeting on a regular basis with Dr. Miller and with Kay Rohde of the National Park Service to develop the initial event plans for WOW on the Water events.

As a result of discussions with National Park Service/Lake Mead NRA personnel on October 18, 2004, we collectively determined that the best way to proceed with the Forever Earth/WOW project is to pursue a locally-based curriculum at first rather than adopt the national WOW on the Water curriculum. Because “Wonderful Outdoor World on the Water” is a trademarked name that requires formal application and authorization for its use, we are considering using another program name for the initial Southern Nevada events with a goal of moving toward national sponsorship during the second year of the task agreement. The rationale for this approach is that neither the university nor Lake Mead NRA staff wish to see any legal or procedural delays in starting the local WOW programming, and the university was having difficulty in securing information from the national WOW office on the legal documentation required to seek national endorsement.

With this approach settled between the university and the NPS, Dr. Klockow proceeded to develop the general framework and typical schedule for five WOW modules with the assistance of Dr. Miller and Ms. Rohde:

- Wetlands Bird Safari
- Fun with Fishing
- Krazy Kayaking
- Adventures in Art
- Cool Canoeing

Each module has been designed as a half-day activity, but two modules can also be combined into a full-day curriculum. Two of the events (Fun with Fishing and Adventures in Art) are designed to be held on the Forever Earth vessel, but are also flexible enough to be held on shore. Each module features an awareness session, a set of hands-on activities at a local outdoor venue, and a debriefing/assessment session. The curriculum is designed to ensure that participants have a successful, positive experience as they are exposed to outdoor activities to which they have access but are unlikely to participate in otherwise. We have articulated a rationale guiding the development of each of these modules as follows:

“Few adults participate in recreational activities that they did not enjoy as children. Participation in activities in natural settings impacts children in several ways: (1) provides a positive outlet for the alleviation of stress, (2) promotes physical exercise and activity, (3) stimulates an appreciation of and connection to nature, and (4) encourages the responsible use of recreational areas. Providing recreational activities for children who lack such opportunities promotes equitable access and utilization of public recreational venues.”
Additionally, each module is intended to correlate with one or more of the theme statements created by the Outside Las Vegas Environmental Education Committee in a way that is appropriate for a fun, recreational activity for children. The Committee’s six themes are “big picture” ideas which set how interagency educational tools and products will encourage audiences to consider resource meanings and come to understand and appreciate resources within southern Nevada public lands. These modules uphold the committee’s thematic objectives. The WOW modules are also correlated with Nevada Content Standards.

In order to encourage repeated and continued outdoor experiences by the participants, each activity will provide a small piece of activity-related equipment to each child to take home. For example, Wetlands Bird Safari participants will be provided with a set of mini-binoculars and a birding journal that they will be able to keep to watch birds in their own neighborhood after the WOW event is completed. A sense of achievement will be tangibly reinforced by providing each participant with evidence of module completion, such as a certificate.

It is the university’s intention to pilot these events between February and June 2005. We anticipate holding each event at least twice in order to evaluate what succeeds and what needs to be changed. At the same time, additional curriculum modules will be developed on a continuing basis.

Community Partnerships

A good deal of the success of Forever Earth and WOW events will be dependent on the development of effective partnerships with local schools, Boys and Girls Clubs, and city and county parks and recreation departments. Although most of this work will be the responsibility of the new project manager – possibly with the assistance of a community-based steering committee – university personnel recently met with Paradise Elementary School principal Wanda Oden on November 22, 2004, to begin exploring possibilities for partnering with her school on Forever Earth and WOW events. UNLV has a special relationship with Paradise Elementary, which is located on the university campus and is a demonstration school for teacher-education students. In addition, the school serves a very ethnically diverse/low socio-economic population and has adopted a science focus, making it a natural match for both the WOW and Forever Earth programs. Ms. Oden saw great potential for her school’s clientele with these programs and has made available her science coordinator to work with Dr. Klockow. Further discussions will continue as the new project manager comes on board, but the partnership looks very promising.

Another significant partnership involves the university’s relationship with the Outside Las Vegas Foundation (OLVF). Bobbie Antonich of the National Park Service and Nancy Flagg of UNLV met with Alan O’Neill, executive director of OLVF, on November 15, 2004. A formal memorandum of understanding between UNLV and the Outside Las Vegas Foundation has been drafted and verbally agreed upon by both parties (see attached). The primary intention of this document is to establish each party’s responsibilities with respect to fund-raising, friend-raising, and publicity. As an example of how we foresee the MOU working, when Forever Earth and WOW curriculum is developed, Dr. Klockow will establish a list of supplies needed for each event. This “event kit” list will be provided to Outside Las Vegas to assist them in focusing fund-raising efforts for specific items needed to carry out the activities. In this way, both parties can work toward the mutual accomplishment of Education in the Environment initiatives.
Forever Earth Cooperative Agreement

Since early August 2004, a draft cooperative agreement governing the use and operation of the Forever Earth vessel has been under review by university system attorneys and risk management specialists. This agreement is critical to the commencement of the program and must be carefully drafted to adequately address the interests of both parties. There have been several unforeseen delays in arriving at language that adequately addresses admiralty law and the complexities of a public university operating a vessel on an interstate waterway that will have children of all ages, adults, and employees on board. Because of the delays, we provided a written update on October 21, 2004, to John Schoppman of Fun Country Marine Industries (FCMI) and to Lake Mead NRA personnel to keep them informed of the status of the cooperative agreement.

Since our last quarterly report, the chancellor of the University and Community College System has completely reorganized the legal staff that serves the eight institutions of higher education in Nevada, including UNLV. This led to the loss of an attorney specifically assigned to UNLV, whom we had started working with in August. In the interim, we had a staff attorney research case law related to bareboat charters, which governs the proposed arrangement between FCMI and UNLV. We also learned since our last report that the university must comply with provisions of the federal Jones Act regarding special workers compensation rights for employees on vessels. Additional research has been conducted to understand the parameters of the Jones Act and how it must be applied to this situation. As a result of this research, a new, more detailed version of the cooperative agreement was completed in late November and sent to Fun Country Marine on November 29, 2004, for review by its attorneys (see attached draft).

Other delays involved insurance coverage. In order for the university system to request an accurate quote from its insurance broker, it must have detailed information on the anticipated payroll of every person working on the vessel. Because we do not yet know how many employees might be on board during each trip, nor their average payroll, we have not been able to proceed with securing a firm insurance quote. Despite the lack of this data, insurance costs have been estimated by our risk manager to be in the five-figure range, and these costs were not included in the budget of the task agreement. We intend to keep working to secure a firm insurance quote and hope to have this issue settled by the end of the calendar year.

Forever Earth Standard Operating Procedures

Dr. Miller has prepared a draft of the Standard Operating Procedures document (SOP) that will govern the use of Forever Earth (see enclosed draft). Since our last quarterly report, university risk management staff and environmental health and safety staff reviewed the draft and suggested several changes and additions. These changes were made by Dr. Miller, and a revised copy of the draft SOP was forwarded to Fun Country Marine Industries on November 29, 2004, for its review and comment. This document will be further refined with FCMI’s comments and as the program is further developed and defined by the 3-year program manager.

Fund-Raising

Since our last quarterly report, Dr. Miller submitted a proposal to Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI), at the request of OLVF, seeking funds in the form of a pre-paid credit card/gift card in the amount of $3,000 for the purchase of REI-brand merchandise to be used in WOW events. This donation was received in September 2004 and will be used toward initial equipment purchases to support the aforementioned curriculum modules. OLVF is working to continue and extend the relationship with REI.
As noted previously, a memorandum of agreement has been written between UNLV and OLVF regarding mutual roles and responsibilities for the Forever Earth and WOW project, with particular attention to fund-raising and friend-raising. We believe this agreement will effectively set the stage for additional fund-raising to support both programs.

**Interagency Team Involvement**

The university has continued to provide regular updates to the Outside Las Vegas Environmental Education Committee on September 8 and November 10, 2004 (the October meeting was cancelled by the committee chair). At the November meeting, Dr. Klockow made a presentation on the curriculum development and Nancy Flagg provided a general update on hiring and the status of the Forever Earth legal and insurance issues.

As noted previously, the federal environmental education team has participated in the interviews with candidates for project manager positions. As the two project managers come on board, they will be expected to facilitate regular meetings with the interagency environmental education team to keep the team involved and informed about the progress of both the Forever Earth/WOW project and the Outdoor Environmental Education Strategy.

**Website / Public Relations**

Mary Peterson was hired by UNLV at the beginning of September 2004 to provide public relations expertise across several SNPLMA initiatives. She is currently developing a communications plan for each SNPLMA project and will work closely with both Education in the Environment project managers once they are hired. Ms. Peterson meets regularly with Dr. Miller and Dr. Klockow and has been kept apprised of the work done thus far. Regarding the Forever Earth website, Dr. Miller has developed a draft organizational framework for the website that includes information for students, teachers, researchers and general vessel information. Further work on the website and other public outreach for the Education in the Environment initiatives will await meetings with the permanent project managers. In the interim, Dr. Miller and Ms. Peterson have made revisions to the Forever Earth information posted on the National Park Service Partnership website, to bring it up-to-date and reflect the university’s new role in the project.

Submitted by:

____________________  November 30, 2004
Margaret Rees, Principal Investigator  Date