

9-30-2004

Cooperative Conservation - Interagency Volunteer Program Quarterly Progress Report: Period Ending September 30, 2004

Margaret N. Rees

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, peg.rees@unlv.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/pli_outdoors_nevada



Part of the [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#), [Community-Based Learning Commons](#), [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#), [Environmental Health and Protection Commons](#), [Environmental Monitoring Commons](#), and the [Nature and Society Relations Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Rees, M. N. (2004). Cooperative Conservation - Interagency Volunteer Program Quarterly Progress Report: Period Ending September 30, 2004. 1-6.

Available at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/pli_outdoors_nevada/1

This Report is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Report in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Report has been accepted for inclusion in Get Outdoors Nevada by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.



QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Period Ending September 30, 2004

Cooperative Agreement Number H8R07010001

Task Agreement Number J8R07040006

Cooperative Conservation: Increasing Capacity through Community
Partnerships -- Interagency Volunteer Program &
Cooperative Conservation Program

Collaboration with Interagency Team

Although the task agreement formally commenced June 30, 2004, the agreement was not fully executed by both parties until July 29, 2004. In the first three months of this agreement, UNLV representatives have met with or communicated via email with the Interagency Volunteer Team on numerous occasions. At the first meeting on July 13, 2004, Government Technical Representative Bobbie Antonich and UNLV Public Lands Initiative Director Nancy Flagg met with the interagency team to discuss the overall goals for the Interagency Volunteer Program (IVP). The team was brought up-to-date on the status of the task agreement, UNLV's role in fulfilling the agreement, and provided with a draft position announcement for review and comment. Final feedback was received from the Interagency Team via e-mail prior to the posting of the announcement. At the July 13 meeting, team lead Nancy Bernard of the National Park Service noted that it would be ideal to have a new data system in place by the start of the October 1 fiscal year. Another goal noted was to have volunteer events planned on an annual basis. The team also discussed UNLV's proposal to hire an interim project coordinator while a search for a permanent project manager is ongoing. There were some concerns about the transition from an interim coordinator to a permanent manager, but ultimately the team gave UNLV the go-ahead to proceed in hiring long-time Southern Nevada volunteers Patricia and Charles Williams to start initial work on the project.

Numerous additional meetings were held individually and collectively with the interagency team member throughout the months of August and September, as documented in other sections of this report. The dialogue has been productive and collaborative, allowing the project to move forward at a very good pace.

Hiring

The advertisements for the IVP project manager positions were disseminated in print and Web outlets during the week of August 6, 2004. The initial review of applications began August 30, and the first meeting of the search committee was held September 10, 2004. Nancy Bernard from the National Park Service is representing the interagency team on the search committee. The full team will interview finalists identified by the team, with the final selection of a project manager to be provided to the federal managers for their review and endorsement. The second meeting of the search committee was held September 23, 2004. At this meeting the members discussed their rankings of the pool of applicants who met the minimum qualifications stated in the position announcement. Following that discussion, a determination was made as to bringing in four finalists for interviews on September 29 and October 4 (one candidate has since withdrawn). The interagency team will interview the finalists on October 6, 2004.

While that search is underway, Patricia Williams and Charles Williams were hired on August 1, 2004, as interim project coordinator and interim database coordinator, respectively, for the Interagency Volunteer Program for the three-month period ending October 31, 2004. Both Pat and Chuck have been involved in the local volunteer community and were, therefore, in a position to begin some of the initial work that could be accomplished prior to the hiring of a permanent project manager. In early August, UNLV Public Lands Initiative Director Nancy Flagg developed a scope of work for the Williamses to accomplish during this three-month period. The scope of work was designed as discrete pieces of the project deliverables that could be completed and in place prior to the hiring of a permanent project manager. These included:

- Standardization of volunteer forms / creation of “interagency” forms
- Research and recommendation on common database software
- Research on options for housing the database server
- Initial transition of records to an interagency database
- Initial development of a volunteer event calendar
- Inventory of existing volunteer recognition programs
- Initial development of the website

The Williamses developed a draft project timeline (*attached*) to serve as a tentative overview to assist with the transition to a permanent project manager.

Review of Existing Databases

The Williamses began by surveying the four agencies about the characteristics of their existing databases, the software used to maintain them, and the reports typically prepared from those databases. On July 26, 2004, they met with Jim Cribbs of the Bureau of Land Management and on July 30, 2004, with Amy Meketi of the U.S. Forest Service to determine what each agency wants and needs in several areas,

including database requirements and reports; networking capabilities; and volunteer recruitment and job matching. At these meetings, the Williamses also provided Jim and Amy with a matrix on which to document their current database file structure and the kinds of information their respective agencies gather from volunteer applications. The purpose of the matrix was to understand and document needed/required/optional information for interagency conformity. Similar meetings were held on August 5, 2004, with Callie Leia Courtright of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and on August 20, 2004, with Nancy Bernard of the National Park Service.

The completed matrixes were subsequently summarized and presented to the interagency team at a day-long meeting on September 1, 2004 (*agenda and handouts attached*). The interim project coordinators have also developed a list of software products which could meet the needs of the interagency program. The options are:

- VolunteerWorks (Red Ridge Software), a program specifically designed for volunteer tracking with remote access and multiple user capability. This program was demonstrated to the interagency Team on September 22, 2004, with positive reactions from the team.
- Volgistics – Web-based volunteer program, developed by Red Ridge, with remote access capability; no server needed. This product will be commercially available during the last quarter of 2004.

Volunteer Application Forms

As part of their initial review of current agency practices, Pat and Chuck Williams reviewed copies of each agency's volunteer application and waiver forms. The Williamses determined that there was more commonality among the application forms than differences, which allowed for fairly easy development of common interagency forms. Sample forms were presented to the team on September 1, 2004, for their comments (*examples attached*).

However, as the program develops, both the team and the university are discovering that there is no infrastructure or local authority currently in place to develop or approve interagency volunteer application forms, waiver forms, databases, etc. Jennifer Haley, National Park Service – Interagency Partnership Liaison, has proposed to Nevada's congressional delegation a pilot program that would allow limited local control over decisions needed to further interagency SNPLMA projects like the Interagency Volunteer Program. In addition, there may be other opportunities to have legislation drafted that will provide the needed flexibility. These options will continue to be pursued over the coming months.

Calendar of Interagency Volunteer Projects

Another purpose of the team meeting on September 1, 2004, was to have a dialogue with other agency personnel about volunteer needs they could foresee in the next year or two. This led to a very productive discussion and provided the team with a broad

overview of the many events that will ultimately benefit from the coordinated interagency volunteer program (*see attached meeting notes provided by Nancy Bernard*).

During the afternoon session of the team meeting on September 1, 2004, Pat Williams shared with the team a sample 12-month, printed calendar of volunteer events that Friends of Red Rock Canyon produces each year. The team was favorably inclined toward producing a similar calendar for interagency volunteer events (*see attached template*). This idea will be further developed over the coming months.

Volunteer Training Opportunities

The interim project coordinators have kept the interagency team apprised of several volunteer training opportunities as they become known. An e-mail was sent to the team on August 11, 2004, concerning First Aid/CPR training, and another e-mail regarding the opening of bi-annual volunteer training sessions was sent on August 26, 2004 (*see attached*).

Inventory of Agency Volunteer Recognition

The Williamses e-mailed matrix questionnaires to the Interagency Team on August 6, 2004, seeking preliminary information on agency recognition (*see attached*). This information will be collated and shared with the team at its next meeting.

Public Relations and Outreach

The university began a search in June 2004 to hire a contracted individual to provide public relations/marketing services for various SNPLMA initiatives, including the Interagency Volunteer Program. Public relations advisor Mary Peterson was hired as of September 1, 2004, to provide contracted PR and marketing services for several UNLV SNPLMA projects, including the Interagency Volunteer Program. At this point, it is premature for any formal publicity to be developed about the program. However, the university and the interagency team did agree that publicizing upcoming National Public Lands Day events would be to both parties' benefit. Thus, the university undertook the following:

- The UNLV Public Lands Initiative created a link on its website to advertise the agency volunteer events on September 18 and 25, 2004 (*see attached*). Additional events on public lands have since been added.
- Nancy Flagg arranged for NPLD events to be publicized to UNLV students through the university's Community Service Office, whose mission is to encourage college students and student organizations to volunteer for a variety of community service projects in Southern Nevada (*see attached e-mail from Jennifer Hladun to Nancy Flagg*).

- The university news bureau issued a press release concerning National Public Lands Day events, which was designed to supplement the press releases issued by individual federal agencies.
- The university created “Take Pride in America” banners for all four agencies’ use at Public Lands Day on September 18, 2004 (*see attached*).
- In cooperation with the Interagency Team, a draft of Interagency Volunteer Program letterhead was produced by the interim project coordinators (*see attached*).
- For Public Lands Day on September 18, 2004, the Williams attended the Sloan Canyon cleanup and Nancy Flagg participated in the Lake Mead clean-up. In addition to assisting with the Sloan event coordination and work date logistics, the interim project managers provided a detailed pre- and post-event analysis of the event with suggestions to improve future events (*see attached*).

As additional outreach, the interim project managers have begun to compile a list of other Southern Nevada and national organizations associated with volunteers and public lands protection. These include Friends of Red Rock Canyon; ArcheoNevada; Spring Mountain Volunteer Association; Southern Nevada Rock Art Foundation; Nevada Wildlife Federation, Nevada Rock Art Foundation and have strong affiliations with Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association and Southern Nevada Interpretive Association as well as a good working relationship with Friends of Sloan Canyon. The Williamses presented an IVP overview to the Friends of Sloan Canyon Board of Directors on September 7, 2004. This meeting was also attended by Jim Cribbs, Charlie Carroll, and Tim O’Brien (BLM). Other organizations that may prove important to the future development of the Interagency Volunteer Program include:

- Association of Partners for Public Lands (APPL)
- National Wild Horse and Burro Association
- Volunteer Center of Southern Nevada

No specific contacts have been made with these organizations, but the information about them should prove to be useful to the permanent project manager and to the interagency team.

Website Development

A full-time Web Communications Specialist, Megan Iudice, was hired by the university on August 1 to produce websites for various SNPLMA initiatives, including the Interagency Volunteer Program. The interim project coordinators have provided Megan with a matrix and text for preliminary content on the website, which includes:

- Program Mission Statement
- Agency Contact Information
- Volunteer Positions Available
- Calendar of Events

- Downloadable Application Form
- Photos of Past Events

Further development of the website will continue in close collaboration with the interagency team, interim project coordinators, and Ms. Iudice. In the interim, Ms. Iudice has secured a site on the university's supercomputer to house the interagency website, should that prove viable. The supercomputer center has the highest security level clearances from its work with the Department of Defense and should be able to provide the appropriate levels of security required for volunteer information. However, further research is continuing in this area.

The interim project coordinators have also spent considerable time researching the www.volunteer.gov website for useful information and potential models for the local website. On September 25, 2004, Pat Williams provided the interagency team with a preliminary listing of available interagency volunteer positions. Once finalized, this list will be posted on the website after it goes live.

Alternative Workforce Survey

One of the stated reasons for the National Park Service to enter into a partnership with UNLV was the faculty, staff, and student expertise the university could bring to the table. In looking at the deliverables related to the alternative workforce survey, this project seemed suited for UNLV's Center for Urban Partnerships. Nancy Flagg met with Center Director Susan Mears on June 15 to begin a dialogue about whether the center would be interested in completing this piece of the overall Cooperative Conservation project. Numerous discussions took place over the summer months, and as faculty returned to campus in mid-August, the Center provided the UNLV Public Lands Initiative with a written proposal in late August to complete this task. The university is currently seeking clarification from the Government Technical Representative about the scope and complexity desired for this survey.

Summary

Considerable progress has been made on the initial deliverables for this project. We are well on our way to finalizing common volunteer forms, migrating to a common database software, creating an interagency calendar of upcoming events, and developing the project website. Having these foundational pieces in place will allow the permanent project manager to more quickly build the program still further in collaboration with the interagency team.

Submitted by _____
Dr. Margaret Rees
Principal Investigator

September 30, 2004
Date