

2004

Oliver Ranch Science School Complex & Wild Horse and Burro Facility: Quarterly Progress Report, Period Ending December 31, 2004

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QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Period Ending December 31, 2004

Assistance Agreement Number FAA010017

Task Order Number FAF040019

Oliver Ranch Science School Complex & Wild Horse and Burro Facility

Task 1: Project Coordination

Assist in project coordination between numerous stakeholders such as the Clark County School System, Desert Research Institute, Community College of Southern Nevada, UNR Cooperative Extension, Nevada State College, local museums, state parks, non-profit organizations, federal agencies, and the public to ensure appropriate educational curricular activities and venues are provided for in the conceptual design of the School and the Wild Horse and Burro facility where appropriate as well as assist in the NEPA process as needed. The activities will be conducted at least in part by university faculty, staff and students as part of the university's research, teaching, and service mission.

Deliverables: The project coordinator will meet regularly with the Oliver Ranch committees, the Line and Space design team and NEPA team to assure modifications in design or curriculum that are necessary and appropriate are incorporated throughout the process of developing the facility. These activities will be recorded and provided to BLM in quarterly reports.

PROGRESS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2004

Over the past quarter, the Red Rock Desert Learning Center Core Group has met two times: October 19 and November 16, 2004. For each of these meetings, the university assembled and distributed the agenda, committee reports, handouts, and minutes. For those persons who are unable to attend the Core Group meetings, electronic copies of the minutes and handouts are provided via e-mail.

In addition to the Core Group meetings, Public Lands Institute Director Nancy Flagg also attends the monthly meetings of the RRDLC Committee Chairs. At these meetings, which are typically held 5 days' prior to the Core Group, the participants share new information and prepare for the Core Group meeting. The Committee Chairs met on October 14 and November 10, 2004. In addition, on November 2, 2004, Nancy Flagg and Dr. Peg Rees of UNLV met with Angie Lara and Michael Reiland (BLM) and with Jennifer Haley, interagency liaison, to discuss and clarify the respective roles of the BLM and the university in this project.

Many of the core group committees – with the exception of the newly formed Building Committee and the Educational Programs Committee – are not actively meeting at this time

while schematic design continues. However, the Design Oversight Committee met on November 15, 2004, to hold an open discussion on issues related to the design. University representatives attended this three-hour meeting and provided substantial feedback to the architects and the BLM on various design-related concerns. That feedback, in turn, was forwarded to the Building Committee for further consideration.

The university has two representatives on the BLM's Building Committee for this project, Bill Cates (Special Projects Coordinator, Public Lands Institute) and David Frommer (UNLV Assistant Director of Planning and Construction), and they are actively participating in decisions about the physical siting of buildings on the property. The Building Committee met on October 19, November 16, and December 9. Each of these committee meetings has entailed a long and substantive review of the architects' work products to date.

Task 2: Educational Curricular Coordination

Provide educational thematic and curricular coordination between numerous stakeholders such as the Clark County School System, Desert Research Institute, Community College of Southern Nevada, UNR Cooperative Extension, Nevada State College, local museums, state parks, non-profit organizations, federal agencies, and the public and help develop a written curriculum that synthesizes the input of these stakeholders. In addition, suggest other compatible uses for the School including but not limited to science and educational research. The activities will be conducted at least in part by university faculty, staff and students as part of the university's research, teaching, and service mission.

Deliverables: The Educational Curricular Coordinator will provide educational themes and activities for 5th grade outdoor environmental curriculum appropriate for the School in quarterly progress reports. The coordinator will collate the curricular contributions of the stakeholders identified for this subtask and attempt to synthesize these into an overall curriculum for 5th grade environmental sciences to be based at the school. Visitation to other similar outdoor schools will be included and their curriculum incorporated into the reports as appropriate.

PROGRESS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2004

Core Curriculum

In our last quarterly report we noted the hiring of Dr. Jeanne Klockow to provide the overall coordination of the Red Rock Desert Learning Center's curriculum and the completion by Dr. Klockow of a curriculum matrix and curriculum rationale for the school. In the last three months, Dr. Klockow has focused her efforts on the core curriculum. After the September 2004 meeting of the core group, she invited members to provide her with their ideas for common experiences all students at the school should have. This resulted in a long list of topics which Dr. Klockow then categorized into two documents – one correlating the ideas to the BLM's mission for Conservation, Sustainability, Responsibility and Stewardship and a second grouping the ideas into eight major themes. After consulting with Michael Reiland at the BLM, the university presented the summarized list of common experiences at the October 19, 2004, core group meeting. The information was provided on a large poster, and the group was asked to then prioritize the topics by color-coding their first, second, and third priorities on the poster. This feedback was later summarized by Dr. Klockow into a new list, vetted in advance with the BLM and then provided to the core group at its November 16, 2004 meeting.

Dr. Klockow now intends to form working groups in January 2005 to begin writing lessons plans to further develop the Ecosystems portion of the core curriculum. In the interim, she has been

meeting with Mary Sowder, the science coordinator for Paradise Elementary School, to review, further develop, and correlate the common curricular experiences to local, state, and national standards.

Science Curriculum

The RRDLC Educational Programs Committee has been meeting for more than a year to devise science-related menu activities from which teachers will select prior to bringing their classes to the Red Rock Desert Learning Center. This curriculum will comprise approximately 30-40 percent of the overall daily activities at the school, but constitutes the heart of the mission for an outdoor environmental education facility.

Since our last quarterly report, the Educational Programs Committee has completed work on four Physical Science/Earth Science Strands and distributed drafts at the October 2004 core group meeting. The committee intended to present its Biology/Ecology Science Strands at the November core group meeting, but committee chairman Paul Buck requested to defer the presentation to the January 2005 meeting.

All told, we believe both the core curriculum and the science curriculum are moving forward at an appropriate pace. Both Dr. Klockow and Dr. Buck continue to be involved in the architects' design process, as the curricular plans figure heavily into the overall design of the school. The university plans in the near future to conduct a narrated video walk-through of the site to chronicle how a busload of students will enter the site and proceed through a typical day. This video will be helpful to the architects in testing their design assumptions, but it will also be useful to potential operators as well as for future use in publicizing the school to parents, local teachers, and school district administrators.

Task 3: Operational Analysis

Provide coordination for the business model with curriculum development to elucidate the potential operations and maintenance cost and projected revenues for the School as the design evolves and potential funding sources are more predictable. The activities will be conducted at least in part by university faculty, staff and students as part of the university's research, teaching, and service mission.

Deliverables: The tasked coordination will be developed as the curriculum and design evolves. These plans will include estimated operational and maintenance costs and projected revenues. Progress on these business plans will be submitted in quarterly reports to BLM and will be prepared at least in part by university faculty, staff and graduate and undergraduate students.

PROGRESS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2004

As reported in the third-quarter report, the university is taking no action on Task #3 at this time per the request of the BLM.

Task 4: Community Coordination

Provide community outreach coordination to the public and facilitate collaborative processes with the Oliver Ranch committees including but not limited to the core committee and its designated subcommittees as outlined in the current BLM Oliver Ranch minutes. This role

will include the calling of meetings, development of meeting agenda, recording and distribution of minutes, meeting facilitation, and other communication and coordination as needed for the smooth functioning of the Oliver Ranch committees. This service will be provided at least in part by university faculty, staff and students as part of the university's research and service mission.

Deliverables: Community outreach activities will be recorded and reported quarterly. These may include over the two years public Web page development, printed brochures, public forums, radio and television spots, school visitations, and establishing a mechanism for accepting donations.

PROGRESS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2004

Website Development

Since our last quarterly report, the RRDLC website has gone live on the Las Vegas BLM internet site. The site may be access through the BLM-Las Vegas website at www.nv.blm.gov/vegas. Refinements to the content and design of the website will continue over time in collaboration with the BLM.

Public Relations and Outreach

In September 2004 the university hired Mary Peterson to provide public relations and marketing services for UNLV public lands projects. On October 14, 2004, Ms. Peterson, Nancy Flagg, Michael Reiland, and Kirsten Cannon (BLM public information officer) met to discuss the parameters for moving forward with public outreach concerning the RRDLC. The university was given permission to commission a logo for the school and to devise a draft communications plan for BLM review. Both of these projects are in progress, with further developments to be reported in the next quarter.

In November 20004, Michael Reiland was interviewed about the RRDLC project for a potential article in *Architectural Digest*. There is no indication, to date, of when the article might be published. And on November 19, 2004, Nancy Flagg and Dr. Margaret Rees were interviewed for a taped segment on the UNLV-TV show *Academic Café*, which airs in the Southern Nevada metropolitan area on Cox Cable channel 70. Although the segment focused on a variety of Public Lands Institute cooperative projects, the status of the RRDLC was among those featured.

Summary

Although the majority of progress on the Oliver Ranch project this quarter has been focused on completion of the schematic design by Line and Space Architects, important groundwork has occurred on development of the core curriculum as well as setting the stage for future public outreach. We look forward to still more progress in these areas during the next quarter.

Submitted by: 

Margaret Rees, Ph.D., Principal Investigator