

2005

Oliver Ranch Science School Complex & Wild Horse and Burro Facility: Quarterly Progress Report, Period Ending March 31, 2005

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QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Period Ending March 31, 2005**

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 MARCH 31, 2005

Over the past quarter, the Red Rock Desert Learning Center Core Group has met two times: January 18, 2005 and March 15, 2005. For each of these meetings, the university assembled and distributed the agenda, 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. We are consistently getting solid attendance of approximately 25 people at Core Group meetings.

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 January 6 and March 10, 2005. In addition, on February 9, 2005, Nancy Flagg and Curriculum Coordinator Jeanne Klockow met with Michael Reiland (BLM) to review and discuss progress on the core curriculum. Nancy Flagg met with Michael Reiland and Kirsten Cannon (BLM) on March 29, 2005, to review a second draft of an RRDLC marketing and communications plan. BLM requested further revisions to this document, and a new draft will be provided in April 2005.

Many of the core group committees – with the exception of the Building Committee – are not actively meeting at this time while schematic design continues. However, each committee has been asked to meet prior to the May 17, 2005 Core Group meeting. Both Michael Reiland and Nancy Flagg will attend each of these committee meetings, and progress will be reported in the next quarterly report. The Building Committee has been active during this period and met on February 18, 2005.

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 MARCH 31, 2005

Core Curriculum

In our last quarterly report we noted that Curriculum Coordinator Jeanne Klockow had correlated core curriculum ideas to the BLM's mission for Conservation, Sustainability, Responsibility and Stewardship and grouped them into eight major themes. In the interim, the Educational Programs Committee completed work on eight science curriculum strands. With these materials at hand, Dr. Klockow began working with CCSD Science Curriculum Specialist Mary Sowder (a member of the Educational Programs Committee) to see how the science curriculum and core curriculum could fit into a reasonable student schedule. They have now devised two sample daily schedules – one for 4 days/3 nights and one for 3 days/2 nights, which were presented to the Core Group for feedback at the March 19 meeting. These schedules will now be further reviewed and refined with the assistance of the Educational Programs Committee, which will meet on April 8, 2005.

With the input of the Core Group, Dr. Klockow has now formed working groups, composed of agency personnel and community members, to begin developing core curriculums strands in 6 areas:

- Ecosystems
- Wild Horse & Burro
- Historical
- Cultural
- Night Sky
- Green Building Technology

A framework for the Wild Horse and Burro curriculum has already been developed at a meeting of that working group held on March 15, 2005. Further progress in this area will be reported in the next quarterly report.

Because of the number of education programs the university has underway across several SNPLMA Conservation Initiatives, we have formed a Curriculum Advisory Team of local teachers and agency personnel to review and advise us on the curriculum. Public Lands Institute staff are writing for various SNPLMA projects – including Forever Earth, Discover Mojave: Outdoor World, and others. UNLV's Curriculum Advisory Team has representatives from groups that are not currently represented on the RRDLC Educational Programs Committee, including home-school teachers, charter school teachers, private school teachers, and local museums – all of whom are important constituents for SNPLMA place-based education initiatives. The first meeting of this group was held March 28, 2005, and Dr. Klockow explained the mission and goals of the RRDLC project and shared the sample RRDLC schedules.

As Dr. Klockow produces curriculum with the RRDLC working groups, the UNLV Curriculum Advisory Team will be asked to provide feedback along with the RRDLC Educational Programs Committee. This should further ensure a broad spectrum of community input into the curriculum development.

Science Curriculum

Since our last quarterly report, the Educational Programs Committee – under the direction of Dr. Paul Buck from the Desert Research Institute – has completed work on four Physical Science/Earth Science Strands and four Biology/Ecology Science Strands. The completed drafts were presented at the January 2005 Core Group meeting and are developed according to key questions. As noted earlier, Dr. Klockow is now incorporating this work into an overall curriculum framework for the RRDLC.

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 MARCH 31, 2005

As reported in the last quarterly 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 MARCH 31, 2005

Website Development

The university has begun work on a template for a more refined and focused website for the RRDLC project. The current website provides technical information about Core Group meetings and official reports, but it does not address specific issues of interest to teachers, school children, parents, and the general public. We envision the revamped website to provide individual portals with information and activities targeted specifically to each of these groups. Further progress on this effort will be made in the next quarter.

Public Relations and Outreach

The university has provided two drafts of a marketing and communications plan for the RRDLC project to the BLM. The agency's public information officer has asked for additional refinements to the plan, which are in progress. Until the plan is approved, the university has been instructed not to produce any communication products. In the meantime, a logo is being developed and will be ready to share with BLM in early April 2005.

As the Public Lands Institute steps up its own public outreach through presentations to community groups, we continue to provide general information about the RRDLC project as we describe each of the SNPLMA projects in which we are engaged. We hope that with final approval of a communications plan, much more outreach specifically targeted to the project can commence in the near future.

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, significant work 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