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## Cooperative Conservation: Increasing Capacity through Community Partnerships – Interagency Volunteer Program & Cooperative Conservation Program: Quarterly Progress Report, Period Ending June 30, 2005

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## **QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT**

University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
Period Ending June 30, 2005

Cooperative Agreement Number H8R07010001

Task Agreement Number J8R07040006

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

### **Executive Summary**

- 1,289+ records are now loaded into volunteer database.
- 150 volunteers registered for events on the interagency website.
- Three interagency events were successfully completed: April 2 – Red Rock Day at Red Rock Canyon Conservation Area; April 15 – Stewardship Saturday at Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge; June 4 – National Trails Day at Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.
- 25 interagency volunteer events are identified for year-two.
- Volunteer recognition program is underway.
- Volunteer training program syllabus is under development.
- Potential funding sources are identified (grants).

### **Collaboration with Interagency Team**

Project manager Donna Grady and the Interagency Volunteer Team met several times during the quarter (*see attached meeting notes*). Numerous individual meetings were held as well. Agenda items and topics of discussion included volunteer event planning, Volgistics volunteer database training, year two volunteer events, joint volunteer recruitment, recognition and training programs, Round 6 proposal resubmission, and Take Pride nomination.

The team worked effectively to brainstorm ideas and share best practices. That teamwork is evidenced through the implementation of four successful volunteer-staffed events between March and June 2005. The respective Federal Manager at each event has shared positive comments, both orally and in writing, on the event organization and obvious teamwork displayed (*see attached sample*).

## **Program Development**

### **Volunteer Database**

The Interagency Volunteer Program (IVP) database (Volgistics) is now populated with 1,289 volunteer records. This is an increase of 489 over last quarter and is attributed to community outreach and IVP website recruitment efforts. Over 100,000 volunteer hours were recorded for the period July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005.

IVP database manager, Chuck Williams, supported IVP team coordinators by providing a half-day Volgistics refresher training session, developing written documentation on how to use Volgistics, and entering volunteer data for all special events as requested by coordinators. Chuck also received, reviewed, and forwarded volunteer applications to respective agency coordinator(s). Volunteer coordinators have requested that UNLV/PLI manage the screening of interagency volunteers, and the team will meet to develop a process that ensures a smooth transition of that responsibility.

Volgistics data were used to e-mail volunteer opportunities to over 400 volunteers and to print demographic data needed to pre-register volunteers for events. This capability provides accurate, legible data and greatly expedites the event registration process.

### **Public Relations and Outreach**

Public relations and outreach activities for the quarter include the following:

- Project Manager Donna Grady worked with each agency's Public Affairs department as well as UNLV Public Affairs to coordinate public relations initiatives, including press releases, PSAs, flyers, and print ads (*see attached*).
- The interagency volunteer program was promoted at two community events in April including the Summerlin Earth Day Fair and an Earth Day event held at HSBC, a major community employer. At these events, over 150 individuals signed-up to volunteer and/or receive information on upcoming volunteer opportunities and events.
- Advertisements in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* Nevada and Neon sections were purchased to recruit volunteers for Red Rock Day in Red Rock Canyon NCA, and National Trails Day in the Spring Mountains NRA (*see attached*).
- Mass e-mails were used to reach the UNLV campus community and other interested organizations and individuals.
- Letters promoting upcoming opportunities and events were mailed and e-mailed to database volunteers.
- The *Get Outdoors Nevada* website includes a listing of upcoming events along with a summary of completed events. It also includes photo galleries from each event, thereby visually highlighting volunteer participation (*see attached*).
- Interagency events were registered on the Take Pride in America website and event results were provided.

- Business-sized cards listing upcoming interagency events were distributed at community events and meetings.
- Post-event thank you notes were mailed to volunteers participating in special events.
- IVP project manager nominated the IVP for a *Take Pride in America* Award. Presented annually, the National *Take Pride in America*® Awards recognize individuals and public and private groups for outstanding stewardship projects or awareness efforts involving federal, state, local and Indian lands, waters and cultural resources (*see attached*).

### *Event Publicity*

- KNPR radio reporter Ky Plaskon covered the Moapa Valley NWR event and conducted interviews to be included in a story on invasive plants scheduled to air June 18, 2005. He also planned to use some of the sound he recorded at Moapa on the NPR program "Living on Earth."
- KNPR radio promoted National Trails Day on the air.
- Broadcast e-mail was sent to the UNLV community and an ad ran for several days on two large plasma screen televisions in the student union prior to the each volunteer event.
- Display ads promoting events ran in the *Review-Journal's* Nevada section and Neon section (*see attached*).
- Events were posted on the Take Pride in America website.
- Event flyers were distributed by e-mail and posted throughout the community.
- The *Las Vegas Sun* printed a blurb promoting National Trails Day.

### **Website**

The interagency website, [www.getoutdoorsnevada.org](http://www.getoutdoorsnevada.org), launched in February 2005 has been a very effective tool for recruiting and registering community volunteers. The website promotes upcoming events, automates the registration process, and posts event results along with photographs. It also allows volunteers to update their contact information.

Public relations initiatives are driving community members to the website to learn more about volunteer events and opportunities. We have been very successful with on-line recruiting, exceeding the number of volunteers needed to staff the last three events. More than 150 volunteers have registered for events on-line this quarter, and another 18 volunteers have completed applications for volunteer positions.

A statistical program used by PLI to measure website activity recorded an average of 40,000 hits per month for the quarter. A more realistic measurement, though, is the number of pages viewed and that averaged 3,000 per month for the quarter.

## **Volunteer Recruitment, Recognition and Training**

### ***Recruitment***

Each agency recruits for specific volunteer positions (generally long-term) and for volunteer-staffed events (short-term). Although there is some overlap between the two, the methods for recruiting can be very different.

- A. Event Recruiting (generally 4-8 hour group volunteer events involving habitat restoration or clean-up) – Events listed on Get Outdoors Nevada website, select media paid advertising (including PSAs), e-mail list notification to current volunteers and lists maintained by other individuals/organizations, listing on related websites like Southern Nevada Volunteer Association, Take Pride in America, and others.
- B. Targeted Recruiting (project/position specific) – Positions listed on *Get Outdoors Nevada* website and *volunteer.gov*. Recruiting process used will depend on requirements of specific position.

Public relations and outreach efforts, combined with website on-line registration, have been highly effective in recruiting the numbers of community volunteers needed to implement interagency conservation initiatives (i.e., volunteer events). The Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service post their regular (non-event) volunteer opportunities on *volunteer.gov* and this is an effective method for reaching a national audience. The National Park Service continues to draw a surplus of qualified non-event volunteers without advertising.

Agency volunteer positions are posted on the interagency website along with the volunteer application 301B (available for download and faxing or mailing). The Interagency Volunteer Team developed interagency forms, including an interagency application that is more suitable for gathering volunteer information to assist agency coordinators in identifying qualified individuals, but has not yet obtained government approval to use these forms. The IVP team will continue its efforts to obtain approval for this and other IVP developed forms that better meet the need of the interagency partnership.

### ***Training***

The team has made progress in developing an interagency volunteer training program. The interim solution was to open the BLM training program to interagency volunteers. The IVP team met with the Interagency Environmental Education (EE) team to discuss and share visions for an interagency training program. Prospective topics of training, including mandatory and optional courses, were documented and with input from the EE team the IVP team will begin developing syllabus content and identifying delivery methods for the following:

Mandatory for all – Orientation (5 hours)

- Ethics (30 mins)
- Volunteer Role (45 mins)  
(i.e. how they represent gov't., how they wear the uniform, position descriptions)
- Harassment Policy (30 mins)
- Customer Service – (30 mins)
- History/mission of interagency and each agency (90 mins) – All  
(include conservation initiative – how funding fits in – partnership)
- Safety – (30 mins)

Job-Specific Training – 3x per year

- Map & Compass/GPS – (4 hours)
- Desert/Wilderness Survival – (7 hours)
- Personal Safety (situational) – (2 hours)
- First Aid & CPR – (3 hrs and 5 hrs)
- Bloodborne Pathogens – (1 hour)
- Safety (more detailed than orientation – tools, equip/animal/plant safety, desert safety, explosive) – (4 hrs)
- Wilderness (difference between wilderness and other lands) – (20 mins)
- Computer Security (internet based)
- Defensive Driving
- Off Road Driving
- ATV and motorcycle (8 hrs for ATV)

Optional Training (on-line/disc/other) – 3x per year

- |                             |         |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| • Astronomy                 | 3 hrs   |
| • Bats                      | 90 mins |
| • Birds                     | 90 mins |
| • Tortoises                 | 90 mins |
| • Reptiles                  | 90 mins |
| • Plants                    | 3 hours |
| • Geology                   | 3 hours |
| • Cultural                  | 3 hours |
| • Mammals                   | 90 mins |
| • Bugs/spiders              | 90 mins |
| • Threatened and endangered | 90 mins |
| • Hydrology                 | 90 mins |
| • Invasive species          | 90 mins |
| • Weather                   | 90 mins |

## ***Recognition***

The IVP team has implemented an effective process for recognizing event volunteers, both during and after their participation. Lunch is provided on event day, either a cookout or box lunch (depending on location and sponsors) is provided and door prizes are awarded. This has successfully created a festive, social atmosphere where volunteers get to know each other and their volunteer coordinators. Following the event, thank you notes, including event results, are mailed to volunteers along with a note directing them to the website to view event photos.

On National Trails Day (our last interagency event of the Spring 2005 season), the IVP publicly recognized two volunteers who had participated in four consecutive interagency initiatives. They were awarded a special packet of prizes including a *Get Outdoors Nevada* t-shirt.

The team plans to recognize eligible volunteers at two annual volunteer recognition events, one in the first part of November 2005 and one in March 2006. We are seeking funding and in-kind donations from community sponsors should IVP “food” funds not be available. The Outside Las Vegas Foundation is partnering with the university in this effort.

A) Fall event will be a more structured event including key speakers and recognition awards (include lunch or dinner). Invite all volunteers with 15 hours minimum volunteer time documented in prior government fiscal year (October – September). Includes both regular and event-only volunteers. Excludes court appointed volunteers. Final list to be determined by IVP team. Invitation to volunteer plus one guest.

B) Spring event would be more informal. Possibly an outdoor cookout at Sunset Park or other outdoor location. Eligibility criteria is the same as “A” except only 4 hour minimum volunteer time required for invitation. Final list to be determined by IVP team. Invitation to volunteer plus family.

## **Conservation Initiatives**

The following interagency volunteer events were successfully planned and implemented during the quarter.

### April 2            Red Rock Day – Red Rock Canyon NCA

Two hundred (200) volunteers and staff worked together on Red Rock Day, April 2, 2005, to repair over 4,100 feet of trail. Volunteers also removed brush pile next to the staff parking lot at the Visitor Center, painted and refurbished nine bulletin boards, applied wood preservative to the recycled enclosure at the campground, placed stones inside the recycled enclosure and driveway at the campground, removed Russian thistle at the campground, filled in ruts caused by rain run-off along campground roads,

removed trash along all scenic loop trails and State Route 159 overlook, and installed interpretive signs.

#### April 16 Saturday Stewardship – Moapa Valley NWR

In the last decade, populations of the endangered Moapa dace have declined due to habitat destruction, modification and competition with introduced species. On April 16, 2005, thirty volunteers cleared over 500 linear feet of stream in the Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge to help restore habitat for the endangered Moapa dace and other native species.

#### June 4 National Trails Day – Spring Mountains NRA

One hundred-four (104) volunteers contributed over 500 hours to restore 1.08 miles of road and help camouflage unauthorized motorized trails running through sensitive areas in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. Volunteers planted over 300 grasses and shrubs on three trails, pulled logs and other downed material from surrounding area into trails, and placed land restoration signage at heads of each trail.

#### **Conservation Initiatives planned for 2005-2006**

Twenty-five (25) conservation initiatives were identified by the Interagency team for 2005-2006 (*see attached*). The Moapa and Pahrangat National Wildlife Refuge events cannot be supported through the interagency partnership because they are outside of Clark County and therefore do not fall under the Conservation Initiatives category of the SNPLMA legislation. The team has worked closely together in the planning and implementation of four interagency events this year and a standard of expectation has begun to evolve. As part of the planning stage for these events, the team will discuss and document expectations for an interagency event.

#### **Program Funding and In-Kind Support**

Our objective is to identify community organizations that will provide an ongoing commitment to providing cash or in-kind funds to sponsor/support volunteer recognition and conservation events. We have begun to develop a partnership with Starbucks Corporate group in Las Vegas, and it has supported interagency events with staff and/or coffee and pastries. We have also had several local organizations provide door prizes and/or food for volunteer events, but this ad hoc approach is less conducive to developing strong community partnerships. Outside Las Vegas Foundation provided funds for lunches on National Trails Day; we expect that the organization will continue to support those needs as it is able.

We have conducted an internet search to identify corporations and foundations that may support the IVP program and are in the process of summarizing these data while continuing to research additional funding sources.

## Summary

IVP recruitment, recognition and training program development and implementation are underway and the team will continue to develop, evaluate, and modify these programs as needed.

An additional 150 volunteers were recruited through the interagency website, and we successfully recruited the numbers of volunteers needed for the last two IVP events. It is apparent that on-line posting of events and ongoing volunteer positions is proving to be a valuable recruiting tool.

The volunteer database has increased by nearly one-third, from 800 to over 1,200 entries and enhanced our ability to communicate volunteer events and opportunities electronically.

Volunteer-staffed conservation initiatives have been successfully implemented, and – in line with the program’s original goals – we have begun to see “interagency” volunteers emerge. Two volunteers were recognized for participating in four interagency events held on different agency-managed lands.

The Interagency Volunteer Team has worked well together to brainstorm ideas and share resources and best practices. The program continues to develop and nurture partnerships key to its long-term success and has gained support from the Spring Mountains Volunteer Association, the Southern Nevada Regional Trails Partnership, Friends of Red Rock Canyon, and the Red Rock Interpretive Association in event planning, sponsorship, and participation.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Margaret N. Rees  
Principal Investigator

Date: June 30, 2005

