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## Cooperative Conservation: Increasing Capacity through Community Partnerships – Interagency Volunteer Program & Cooperative Conservation Program: Quarterly Progress Report, Period Ending December 31, 2005

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## **QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT**

University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
Period Ending December 31, 2005

Cooperative Agreement Number H8R07010001

Task Agreement Number J8R07040006

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

### **Executive Summary**

- Database now contains 1,807 records, a 15% increase over the last quarter.
- Website activity increased, recording an average of 38,399 hits per month, with an average of 3,537 pages viewed per month.
- Inaugural interagency volunteer recognition event held October 28, 2005.
- Interagency training program (phase 1) scheduled for February 2006 (four sessions).
- Alternative Workforce Survey completed and delivered to National Park Service.

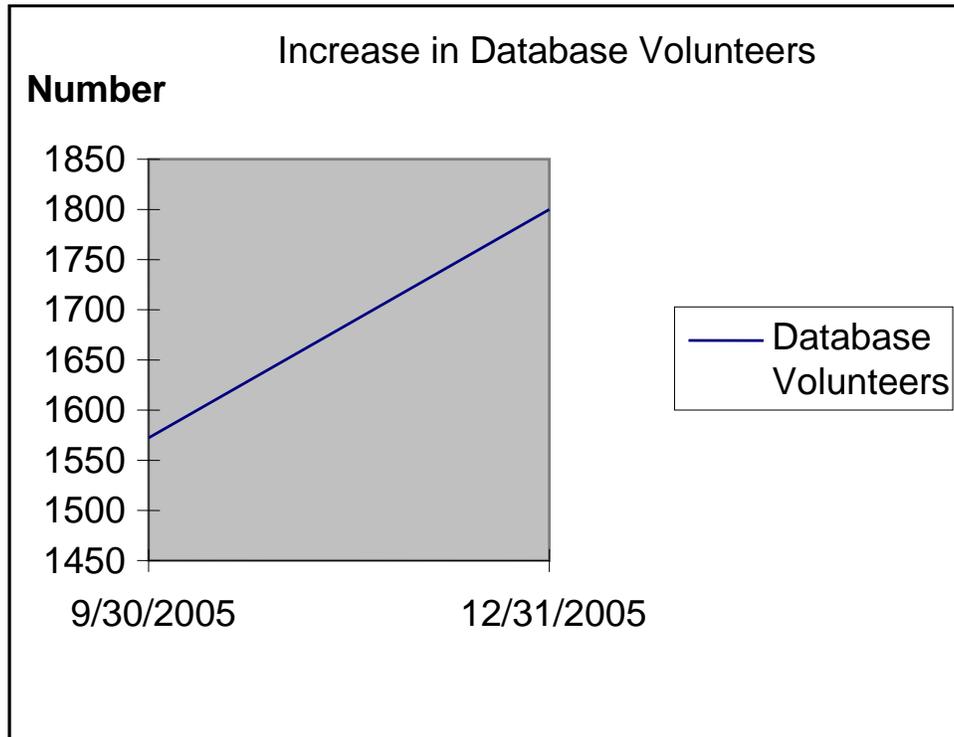
### **Collaboration with Interagency Team**

Project manager Donna Grady and the Interagency Volunteer Team (IVP) met several times during the quarter (*see attached meeting notes*). Agenda items and topics of discussion included the fall volunteer recognition event, 2006 volunteer conservation events, volunteer training program, and spring 2006 volunteer recognition. The team agreed to continue the current meeting schedule into 2006. Meetings are scheduled to be held the second and fourth Thursdays of each month, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and team members agreed to hold these dates whenever possible.

The planning and implementation of the interagency volunteer recognition luncheon and awards ceremony required flexibility and compromise from IVP team members. Each agency selected the respective volunteer who best met the award criteria developed by the team. From those nominations the team selected one person from each category to receive the award. Their success in this task is testament to their commitment to a successful interagency program. Ultimately, the team delivered a professional and successful event which highlighted the accomplishments of the interagency program while recognizing the accomplishments of the interagency volunteers.

## **Volunteer Database**

The Interagency Volunteer Program (IVP) Volgistics database is now populated with 1,807 records, an increase of 234 over last quarter (*see chart below*). This growth is a result of effective community outreach and IVP website recruitment efforts.



Database manager Chuck Williams met with the IVP team on December 6, 2005, to demonstrate a new feature that gives volunteer managers the option of allowing access to selected database records to specific individuals (i.e. supervisors or volunteers) for the purpose of updating or viewing records. This ongoing release of enhancements to Volgistics offers a more valuable tool to manage volunteer data and communications.

## **Public Relations and Outreach**

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

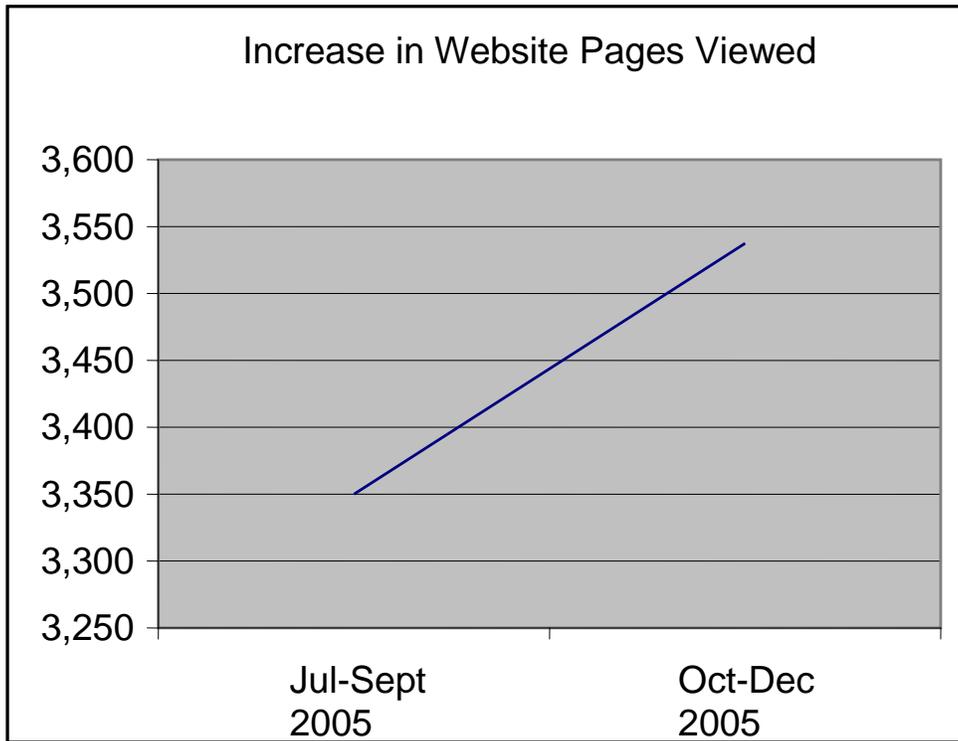
- UNLV's Public Lands Institute (PLI) participated in the October 22, 2005, National Trails Day event in Henderson, Nevada, where they recruited 96 new attendees to sign up for the interagency volunteer program.
- PLI Marketing Specialist LaNelda Rolley wrote an article highlighting the Southern Nevada Interagency Volunteer Program (Get Outdoors Nevada), which

was published in the December 2005 issue of *Inside UNLV*, a newsletter produced by UNLV and distributed to all staff and faculty (*see attached*).

- LaNelda Rolley wrote and released to the media a press release promoting the interagency volunteer recognition event (*see attached*).
- The Association of Partners for Public Lands included an article in its December 2005 newsletter highlighting volunteers and sponsors recognized by the Interagency Volunteer program for their contributions (*see attached*).
- Project Manager Donna Grady met with Katie O’Connell, community outreach representative for the *Andre Agassi Academy*. This Las Vegas charter school recently introduced a community service requirement to its students and discussion focused on opportunities for their students to volunteer on public lands.
- An article written by Donna Grady highlighting National Public Lands Day volunteer accomplishments was published in the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department volunteer newsletter, *All Points Bulletin* (*see attached*).
- Donna Grady met with Maria Ryan, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE) representative, regarding volunteer opportunities for participants in a new adult education program, the *Nevada Naturalist*, which will be delivered in Spring 2006.
- Donna Grady contacted Clark County School Partnership Programs representative to discuss and identify opportunities for recruiting students for volunteer positions and events. The school district does not currently impose a community service requirement for students but may work with us to reach schools and students. UNLV intern Deanna Morrell is researching opportunities for partnering and outreach in this area.
- Collaborated with Friends of Red Rock Canyon (FORRC) to publicize the Make a Difference Day event held on October 22, 2005. Provided lanyards for participating volunteers and promoted the event through mass e-mails to IVP database volunteers. Eighty-seven volunteers pre-registered through the website.
- Donna Grady met with Pat Williams, FORRC President, to discuss opportunities to collaborate on volunteer projects in 2006.

### Website

Website activity, as measured by a statistical program used by UNLV, recorded an average of 38,399 hits per month for the quarter, an increase of 3,399 over last quarter. A more realistic measurement, though, is the number of pages viewed and that averaged 3,537 for the quarter, up 187 from last quarter (*see chart below*).



This increased activity, during a period where promotional activity was lower than usual, is most likely reflective of effective program publicity and outreach efforts developed over the last 12 months. Volunteers are returning to the site to keep abreast of program events and activities.

**Volunteer Recruitment, Recognition, and Training**

*Recruitment*

Efforts to reach out to the community and create an awareness of the interagency program are ongoing, and the website has been an economical and highly effective medium for recruiting volunteers needed for conservation events. In 2006 the IVP team will evaluate the effectiveness of the process used to recruit “operational” volunteers and adjust as needed. Currently the website lists the same opportunities promoted through *volunteer.gov*. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management list their volunteer positions on both *volunteer.gov* and the interagency website; however the National Park Service does not list operational opportunities on either site, maintaining they are successful in filling available volunteer positions without an active outreach effort.

## *Training*

Training topics have been identified, and the team met on December 6, 2005, to further develop program content and schedule training dates and locations. The program is scheduled to be delivered in three phases, beginning with Phase I in February 2006.

### Training Dates and Locations

- Friday, February 3, 2006  
9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Water Safety Center, Lake Mead NRA
- Saturday, February 4, 2006  
9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Interagency Building, Las Vegas
- Evening sessions will be offered on Thursday, February 9 & 16, 2006  
6 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., Interagency Building, Las Vegas  
(*Volunteers will be asked to attend both sessions*)

### Phase I Program Agenda

- History and Mission (for each agency as well as interagency program)
- Volunteer Role
- Ethics and Harassment
- Customer Service
- Safety

## *Recognition*

The team met several times during the quarter to work through the details required to plan and deliver a successful recognition event. Nominations were reviewed and award selections made. Invitations and programs were developed (*see attached*), and award plaques produced. Event presentations, including PowerPoint and DVD, were developed.

On October 28, 2005, nearly 200 volunteers and agency staff gathered at the Tuscany Suites Hotel in Las Vegas for the inaugural interagency volunteer recognition event. Program supporters including volunteers, sponsors, and others enjoyed a luncheon, a well planned and executed awards ceremony, and the camaraderie of other volunteers. By all accounts the event was successful in both introducing the interagency partnership and recognizing volunteer contributions.

The schedule of events included a presentation of the history of the interagency program, information on the lands managed by each agency, and an uplifting video presentation reflecting volunteers in action. Auto sunshades were given to volunteers as a thank-you gift. The sunshades promote the interagency website ([www.getoutdoorsnevada.org](http://www.getoutdoorsnevada.org)), thereby serving a dual role as a volunteer recognition gift and program advertising.

Southern Nevada federal land managers Richard Birger, Stephanie Phillips, William Dickinson, and Angie Lara participated in the presentation of awards to volunteers, sponsors, and others. The following awards were presented:

- Founders Award - The Outside Las Vegas Foundation and Alan O'Neill.
- Special Recognition Award - Elizabeth Smith-Incer, Nevada Field Office for the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program.
- Volunteer Service Award - Earnestine Bronson, a volunteer at Lake Mead National Recreation Area for over 12 years. Ms. Bronson contributed 3,331 volunteer hours as a campsite host in FY '05.
- Lifetime Achievement Award - given posthumously to Walter "Pete" Roberts, who contributed 3,300 hours improving the visitor services for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge.
- Volunteer of the Year Award - U.S. Forest Service volunteer, Howard Balduc, who volunteers as a backcountry ranger and a GPS specialist for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area and the Bureau of Land Management.
- Sponsor Awards - HSBC, Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association, Southern Nevada Scuba Retailers Association, and the Spring Mountains Volunteer Association.

### **Conservation Initiative Events**

On December 6, 2005, a revised list of volunteer conservation events for 2006 was reviewed and agreed upon by team members. Two of the Spring Mountains NRA events will be transferred to the Anti-litter Team. The interagency website was updated to reflect the revised listing of events. (*see attached*).

### **Alternative Workforce Survey**

The task agreement called for the completion of a survey of workforce suppliers that would assist the federal land-management agencies in meeting their ongoing employment needs through the hiring of temporary or term employees.

Initial research for the survey began in December 2004 by the UNLV Center for Urban Partnerships in collaboration with the UNLV Center for Evaluation and Assessment. At that time, the researchers met with the Southern Nevada federal land managers and members of their staff to conduct a needs analysis with each agency. These data helped inform the survey questions that were subsequently developed in January 2005. From February to September 2005, the survey instrument was administered to a wide variety of agencies in Clark County, Nevada, and the responses were tabulated and analyzed. From September to December 2005, the university prepared a final report based on the survey findings, including an executive summary containing six major recommendations.

The complete study includes a 54-page report (*see attached*), a 3-inch binder with survey data from each supplier, and a compact disc containing the report and raw data in

electronic format. Also provided is a sample contract template that may assist the agencies in developing a universal format for contracting with alternative workforce providers. The final products were delivered to the government technical representative on December 9, 2005. The university is awaiting further instructions as to how the agencies would like the findings to be disseminated within their organizations.

## **Summary**

Interagency recruitment, recognition, and training programs are ongoing, and the team will continue to develop, evaluate, and modify these programs as required. The inaugural interagency volunteer recognition event was, by all accounts, successful in introducing the interagency volunteer program and recognizing volunteer contributions and accomplishments. Phase I of the interagency training program will be delivered in February 2006. The training includes the history and structure of each land agency and the interagency volunteer program. It also covers the volunteer role, customer service, ethics and harassment, and safety.

The volunteer database (Volgistics) has increased by 234 records over last quarter, now holding 1,807 volunteer records. The database continues to grow in response to program publicity and community outreach efforts. Website activity has also increased over last quarter. Volunteers are returning to the site to keep abreast of program events and activities.

Community interest in the Southern Nevada Interagency Volunteer Program continues to grow, evidenced by an increase in volunteers and website activity. The team is encouraged by community and sponsor support and continues to work cohesively to demonstrate, both regionally and nationally, the value and benefits of this partnership.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Margaret N. Rees, Principal Investigator

Date: December 31, 2005