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## Cooperative Conservation: Increasing Capacity through Community Partnerships - Interagency Volunteer Program: Quarterly Progress Report, Period Ending June 30, 2006

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## QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
Period Ending June 30, 2006

Cooperative Agreement Number H8R07010001

Task Agreement Number J8R07040006

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

### Executive Summary

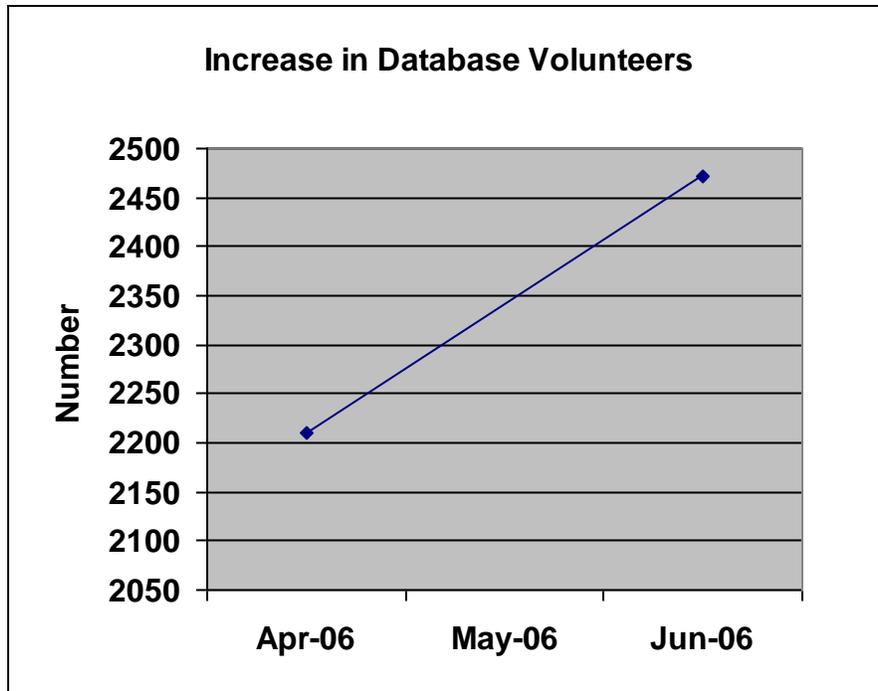
- Volunteer database increased 12% over last quarter. Database now contains 2,471 records.
- Website activity increased, recording an average of 52,987 hits per month, with an average of 4,596 pages viewed per month (28% increase in pages viewed).
- Spring training sessions were delivered to 180 community volunteers.
- 1,400 public lands volunteers were recognized during National Volunteer Week.
- Volunteer events were successfully executed in Red Rock Canyon NCA and the Spring Mountains NRA, with 189 community volunteers contributing more than 1,000 hours.

### **Collaboration with Interagency Team**

The Interagency Volunteer Team (IVP) met several times during the quarter (*see attached meeting notes*). Agenda items and topics of discussion included spring volunteer events, review of volunteer database, development of team charter, discussion of Rounds 6 and 7, and development of standard operating procedures for volunteer recruitment, recognition, and training. The team agreed to meet five times between June and July 2006 to complete an ambitious “to do” list.

### **Volunteer Database**

Database Coordinator Chuck Williams met with the IVP team to review database capabilities and answer any questions related to data management and reporting. The volunteer database is now populated with 2,471 records, an increase of 260 over last quarter (*see chart below*). The majority of new records include e-mail addresses, thus enhancing our ability to efficiently reach and recruit community volunteers.



### Public Relations and Outreach

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

#### General Outreach

IVP representatives participated in the following special events with table displays and program information.

- April 19, St. Rose Dominican Hospital Earth Day event.
- April 22, Summerlin Earth Faire.
- June 5, HSBC World Environment Day event.

#### Event Publicity

The following advertising, public relations and outreach activities supported two conservation (restoration and clean up) events.

1. Collaborated with Friends of Red Rock Canyon and the BLM to plan and implement the annual Red Rock Day event on May 13, 2006, in Red Rock Canyon NCA.
  - Promotional e-mail was sent to more than 1,000 database volunteers.
  - Promotional flyer was developed. Collaborated with Red Rock Interpretive Association to circulate as insert in Red Rock Canyon newsletter, the *Desert Trumpet* (see attached).

- Print ad was developed and published in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* on April 27 and in the *Summerlin View* on May 2 (*see attached*).
- News release was create and distributed to the general media and weekly newspapers (*see attached*).
- Media advisory was developed and distributed to daily/weekly newspapers and local TV affiliates (*see attached*).
- Radio spots were written and submitted to KNPR Radio. The 15-second spots promotional spots ran 90 times from May 1-12.
- Event results, including photos were posted to [www.getoutdoorsnevada.org](http://www.getoutdoorsnevada.org).

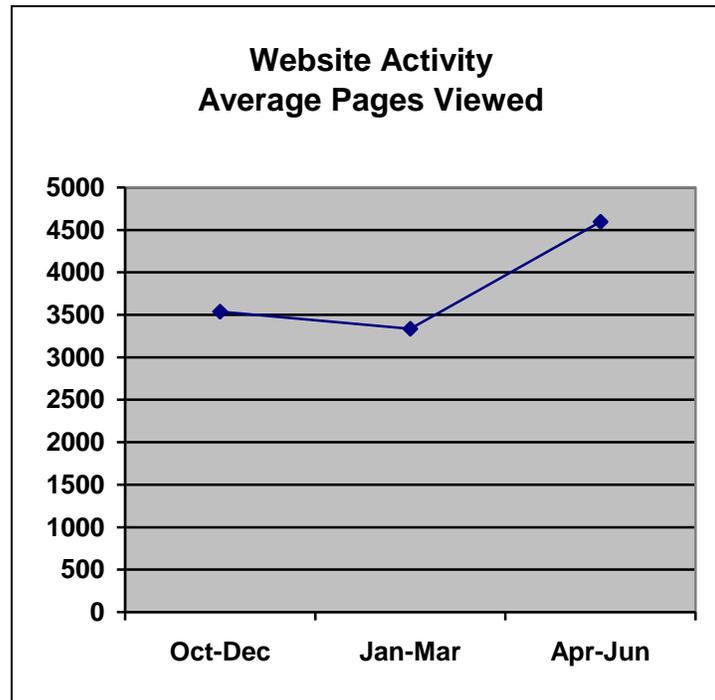
2. Collaborated with U. S. Forest Service representatives and the Spring Mountains Volunteer Association to plan and implement the annual National Trails Day event, held on June 3, 2006, in the Spring Mountains NRA.

- Promotional e-mail was sent to more than 1,000 database volunteers.
- Promotional flyer was created, posted, and distributed to prospective volunteers (*see attached*).
- Print ad was developed and published in the *Centennial View* on May 23 (*see attached*).
- News release was written and distributed to general media and weekly newspapers (*see attached*).
- Media advisory was written and distributed to daily/weekly newspapers and local TV affiliates (*see attached*).
- Radio spots were written and submitted to KUNV Radio. Eighteen 15-second spots (two spots per weekday and three spots per day on the weekend) were announced May 15-28.
- Radio spots were written and submitted to KNPR Radio. Ninety 15-second sponsorship spots were announced May 15-26.
- Senator Harry Reid's office and the national *Take Pride in America* organization were invited to participate in the National Trails Day event. Shannon Raborn, Southern Nevada Regional Deputy Director for Senator Harry Reid, read the senators' statement to the Congressional Record to staff and volunteers (*see attached*), and Lisa Young, Program Assistant, *Take Pride in America*, traveled to Las Vegas from Washington D.C. to participate in the event. Results, including photos were published on [www.takeprideinamerica.gov](http://www.takeprideinamerica.gov) website (*see attached*).
- Event results, including photos, were posted on [www.getoutdoorsnevada.org](http://www.getoutdoorsnevada.org).

### Website

Following four quarters of increased website activity, last quarter's report (January-March 2006) reflected an unexpected decrease. To attempt to identify trends and continue to draw community volunteers and sponsors to the website, monthly tracking was implemented in April 2006, and activity is now reviewed on a monthly basis.

Website activity for this reporting period increased significantly, recording an average of 52,987 hits per month, with an average of 4,596 pages viewed per month (*see chart below*). The increase may be attributed to successful publicity and outreach efforts, spurring volunteers to visit the website and register for one or both restoration and clean-up events (Red Rock Day and National Trails Day). A total of 234 volunteers visited the website to register on-line for these events.



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

#### *Recruitment*

The team is in the process of finalizing recruitment guidelines, which will be used to standardize and drive future recruitment efforts. The documents will address recruiting for both “operational” volunteers and “event” (also known as *episodic*) volunteers.

The IVP website, [www.getoutdoorsnevada.org](http://www.getoutdoorsnevada.org), in combination with the Volgistics volunteer database, continues to be a highly effective tool for recruiting volunteers needed for conservation events. Though we are effectively driving volunteers to the website to register in advance of an event, we have observed over time a trend related to no-shows. As a result, the university undertook an analysis of recent pre-registration lists. This review found an average no-show rate of 43% (*see attached report*), which primarily reflects volunteers who registered on the website, were given confirmation information, but did not check-in at the event. The project manager and database

coordinator have been and will continue to monitor this activity to identify trends and implement actions to increase retention rates.

### *Recognition*

Volunteer contributions on public lands were recognized during National Volunteer Week, April 23-29, with the theme “Together, we can accomplish anything!” Using the volunteer database to produce address labels, a letter and volunteer lapel pin were mailed or in some cases hand-delivered to 1,400 community members who contributed volunteer hours between April 1, 2005, and March 31, 2006.

Planning is underway for the annual Volunteer Recognition Awards Ceremony to be held on Saturday, November 4, from 9:00-11:00 a.m. The Interagency Volunteer Team is discussing all elements of the event, including evaluating and modifying last year’s award criteria.

### *Training*

- A spring training program was offered to interagency volunteers through the Get Outdoors Nevada website and delivered to 180 community volunteers. Sessions included Botany, Hydrology, Native American Culture, Map/Compass/CPR, Anthropology, Reptiles, Invasive Weeds, Geology and Birds. Participant evaluations are under review and will be used to guide development of the Fall 2006 training schedule.

## **Volunteer Events**

### Red Rock Day – May 13, 2006 – Red Rock Canyon NCA

A total of 147 volunteers contributed 837 hours on Red Rock Day 2006 and produced the following results:

- Added 25 tons of red stone on trails/walkways around the Visitor Center.
- Repaired over one mile of trail around scenic loop.
- Eradicated two unauthorized trails off the Scenic Loop.
- Covered all tortoise burrows at visitor center with 7 tons of dirt.
- Installed 6 check dams, built 4 water bars, repaired 4 previously installed check dams at Pine Creek trail.
- Removed graffiti from 10 signs and four restrooms around the Scenic Loop.
- Spread 12 tons of fine gravel along the main walkways at campground and painted 14 grills.
- Installed 48 posts and 400 feet of cable fencing at Red Spring to keep visitor traffic from abrading trails off the west sidewalk.
- Painted a 2-sided, 100-yard wall to remove graffiti at Dedication Overlook.
- Picked up 8 cubic yards of litter along several trails.

## National Trails Day – June 3, 2006 – Spring Mountains NRA

A total of 42 volunteers contributed 168 hours on National Trails Day in the Cathedral Rock area of Kyle Canyon, accomplishing the following:

- Restored 2.5 miles of unofficial trail.
- Installed three directional trail signs and two restoration area signs.
- Repaired two steps and naturalized a small bench area at the top of the Cathedral staircase.
- Planted 10 ponderosa pines.
- Collected litter and debris and painted 10 picnic tables.

A tentative event list has been developed for Year 3 (*see attached*), and planning is underway for multiple National Public Lands Day events in September 2006.

### **Summary**

The project manager and Interagency Volunteer Team continue to focus on evaluating and improving essential program elements, including volunteer recruiting, training, and recognition, and have made significant progress in developing and implementing standards that can be applied across all four agencies. The team meets twice each month to discuss issues and opportunities and to progress through work plan deliverables.

Program tools like the Get Outdoors Nevada website and the Volgistics volunteer database have proven over time to be extremely effective in recruiting volunteers and managing volunteer demographics, including data needed to recognize their individual and combined contributions. The website, with the exception of one quarter, reflects a consistent growth in activity, and the volunteer database has grown consistently since inception.

Community volunteers continue to demonstrate strong support for volunteer events, and website registration continues to be effective in recruiting and pre-registering volunteers, despite an average 43% no-show rate for pre-registrants (averaging seven events). Although over-recruiting and walk-ins typically compensate for no-shows, an ongoing evaluation of this statistic will continue.

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

Margaret N. Rees  
Principal Investigator

Date: June 30, 2006