

2006

Red Rock Desert Learning Center & Wild Horse and Burro Facility: Historical Timeline

Red Rock Desert Learning Center

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RED ROCK DESERT LEARNING CENTER

Historical Timeline

Circa 1937

- Oliver family acquires 300-acre ranch on the west side of state route 159 outside Las Vegas, Nevada.

1990

- Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area is established by Congress to protect, preserve, and interpret nearly 197,000 acres of Mojave Desert habitat 10 miles west of Las Vegas, Nevada.

1993

- The Oliver Ranch parcel is acquired by the Bureau of Land Management in a two-phase land exchange. Olympic Management Inc. buys the ranch and trades it to the BLM for land along Cheyenne Avenue in Las Vegas. Following the exchange, the BLM incorporates the parcel into the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

1998

- The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) is passed by Congress and signed by the President. The Act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to dispose of approximately 27,000 acres of land within a specified boundary around Las Vegas (later modified in 2002 to include 22,900 additional acres). Proceeds are used for various purposes specified in the Act to include, but not limited to:
 - ✓ Development of parks, trails, and natural areas in Clark County.
 - ✓ Capital improvement projects at Lake Mead National Recreational Area. The Desert National Wildlife Refuge, the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.
 - ✓ Development of a multi-species habitat conservation plan in Clark County.

Subsequently, in 2002 the Congress passed and the President signed the County Conservation of Public Lands and Natural Resources Act, which included Conservation Initiatives among the purposes for which proceeds from SNPLMA land sales may be used.

1999

October:

- Las Vegas resident Blaine Benedict provides the BLM with an initial conceptual proposal for an environmental science school at Oliver Ranch in the Red Rock Canyon Conservation Area.

Fall:

- BLM hears public comments on the Red Rock Canyon Conservation Area draft General Management Plan, which includes a proposal to use the Oliver Ranch site as an environmental education center.

November:

- The first SNPLMA land auction is held by the BLM, with proceeds distributed through the provisions of the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act.

2000

January:

- The Outside Las Vegas Foundation holds its first meeting. The group embraces the concept of a residential environmental science school. Partners include the four federal land management agencies, the Red Rock Interpretive Association, the Friends of Red Rock Canyon, the National Wild Horse Association, the Clark County School District, University and Community College System of Nevada, and other community and government leaders.

April:

- The Outside Las Vegas Project Committee begins evaluating various prospective sites in the Las Vegas valley for an environmental field school. The committee tours the Oliver Ranch site with the Red Rock Canyon Conservation Area.

June:

- Round 1 Capital Improvements are approved by the Secretary of the Interior, which include \$100,000 for an Oliver Ranch Feasibility Study.

July:

- A small planning team of community members and federal land management staff begin establishing a vision for the Oliver Ranch Environmental Education School and start plans for a formal feasibility study.

2000

November:

- BLM signed an agreement with Outside Las Vegas Foundation to produce a feasibility study for putting a school at Oliver Ranch. The Outside Las Vegas Foundation invites the Yosemite National Institutes to conduct an informal evaluation of the Oliver Ranch site for its suitability for an environmental education field school.

December:

- The General Management Plan for Red Rock Canyon NCA is published and includes the Oliver Ranch educational concept.

2001

June:

- A formal Feasibility Study for Oliver Ranch Environmental Education School is initiated by Yosemite National Institutes and completed in June 2002. The study provided an education and program analysis, a financial analysis, a market analysis and a site analysis. Based on its study, the YNI recommended the establishment of a residential science school at Oliver Ranch. The school is proposed to include:
 - ✓ A residential science school for 5th grade students.
 - ✓ A field research station.
 - ✓ An astronomical observatory.
 - ✓ A wild horse and burro facility.

2002

April:

- The Las Vegas Astronomical Society and the Planetarium at Community College of Southern Nevada submit a proposal for including a public astronomical observatory at the Oliver Ranch site.

June:

- The Phase 1 Feasibility Study is completed by Yosemite National Institutes.

November:

- Round 3 Capital Improvements are approved by Secretary of the Interior, including \$100,000 for Phase 2 of the Oliver Ranch Feasibility Study.
- The Clark County Conservation of Public Lands and Natural Resources Act is passed by Congress, part of which amends the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act to earmark up to 10 percent of proceeds from Southern Nevada land sales toward Conservation Initiatives.

2002

November, continued:

- A Round 4 nomination for Oliver Ranch Science School capital improvements is submitted by the BLM for consideration.

2003

May:

- Line and Space Architects (Tucson, Arizona) is selected for an Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract for work in Nevada.

July:

- A Core Group of interested citizens is formed and begins meeting to share information on the development of the science school.
- Core Group subcommittees are formed in the following areas:
 - ✓ Operations
 - ✓ Construction/Layout/Design
 - ✓ NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act)
 - ✓ Wild Horses and Burros
 - ✓ Funding/Fund-Raising
 - ✓ Curriculum
 - ✓ Other Uses

October:

- Members of the Oliver Ranch Core Group visit Islandwood, Olympic Park Institute, and North Cascades Institutes to study the mission, philosophy, curricula, operations, and business models for each school.
- Round 4 Capital Improvements are approved by Secretary of the Interior, including \$18.9 million allocated to build the Oliver Ranch Science School Complex and Wild Horse & Burro Facility at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. The project will include:
 - ✓ Construction of the residential science facility, including classrooms, dormitory facilities, kitchen/dining areas, and campus infrastructure.
 - ✓ Construction of the wild horse & burro facility.

2004

January:

- A Round 5 Conservation Initiative nomination is submitted for Oliver Ranch:
 - ✓ \$2.35 million to deliver conservation education curriculum.
- A Round 5 Capital Improvement nomination is submitted for Oliver Ranch:
 - ✓ \$18.2 million to include the addition of alternative energy, facilities, and outdoor educational venues.

April:

- Line and Space conducts two-week public meetings and focus groups at the Oliver Ranch site and at UNLV to hear public input and to begin refining the programming of the facility.

June:

- BLM enters into a cooperative agreement with UNLV to coordinate major activities for the Oliver Ranch project, including curriculum and public outreach.

July:

- Line and Space Architects completes initial programming plan for the science school.
- BLM, UNLV, and Line and Space representatives visit wild horse and burro facilities in Ridgecrest, California; Hurricane, Utah; Palomino Valley, Nevada; and Susanville, California, to gather information on mission, operations and design.

August:

- BLM determines a name for the science school: Red Rock Desert Learning Center.
- The BLM forms a Building Committee to make decisions on construction and design questions.
- The Round 5 Oliver Ranch Capital Improvement and Conservation Initiative nominations are approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

September:

- The Red Rock Desert Learning Center website is established.
- NEPA progress report provided to Core Group.
- Core curriculum matrix and rationale provided to Core Group.

October:

- Eight common curricular experiences agreed upon by Core Group – Understanding Ecosystems, Sustaining Ecosystems, Geology, Green Building Technology, Night Sky, Wild Horse and Burro, Historical Figures, and Native American Influences.

December:

- Line and Space Architects completes schematic designs for Red Rock Desert Learning Center.
- Ecosystems science curriculum is completed and presented to Core Group.

January:

- Schematic designs undergo initial value analysis by BLM team.

February:

- Building Committee makes final recommendations on value analysis options.
- Line and Space Architects proceeds into design development phase.

March:

- Preliminary hydrology report is presented to Core Group.
- Sample daily curriculum schedules completed and provided to Core Group.

June:

- Otak, Inc. provides draft report of phase 1 environmental assessment study to BLM for review. 13 critical elements being examined.

July:

- Building Committee reviews initial design development drawings.

August:

- Wild horse and burro curriculum is completed and presented to Core Group.
- Line and Space Architects presents three-dimensional site-plan models to Core Group.
- Project overview presented by BLM to Clark County School District executive cabinet officers.
- Cultural treatment plan completed and under review by State Historic Preservation Office.

September:

- Preliminary design development plans reviewed by Building Committee and Core Group.
- Project overview presented by BLM to Clark County School District Board of Trustees.
- Historical curriculum is completed and presented to Core Group.

October:

- Phase II of environmental assessment study in progress.

December:

- Cultural Connections curriculum is completed and presented to Core Group.
- Night Sky curriculum and Green Building Technology curriculum work groups formed.
- Line and Space Architects completes design development drawings.

January:

- Design development plans undergo second value analysis by BLM team.
- Draft copy of operator Request for Proposals (RFP) circulated by BLM for comments.

March:

- Final Core Group meeting held.

March-May:

- Five teacher piloting workshops held to test RRDLC curriculum.

August:

- BLM held meeting with selected Core Group constituents to discuss suspension of RRDLC project.