10-19-2004

Red Rock Desert Learning Center Core Group Meeting: October 19, 2004

Red Rock Desert Learning Center

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/pli_red_rock_learning_center_reports

Part of the Desert Ecology Commons, Environmental Sciences Commons, and the Science and Mathematics Education Commons

Repository Citation
Available at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/pli_red_rock_learning_center_reports/7

This Meeting Minutes is brought to you for free and open access by the Red Rock Desert Learning Center at Digital Scholarship@UNLV. It has been accepted for inclusion in Reports (RRLC) by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.
AGENDA

1. Introductions (5 min.)

2. Approval of Minutes from September 21 Meeting (5 minutes)

3. Review & Discussion of Suggested Core Curriculum Themes – Jeanne Klockow/Michael Reiland (20 min.)

4. Update from Line and Space Architects – Les Wallach/Henry Tom (20 min.)

5. Standing Reports (20 minutes)
   A. UNLV/CESU Update – Nancy Flagg
   C. BLM Update – Michael Reiland

6. Committee Reports (10 min.)
   A. Building – Angie Lara
   B. Design Oversight – David Frommer
   C. Educational Programs – Paul Buck
   D. Fund-Raising & Partnerships – Blaine Benedict
   E. NEPA – Charles Carroll
   F. Operations – Jack Ramsey
   G. Other Uses – Pat Williams
   H. Wild Horse & Burro – Billie Young

7. Open Discussion / New Business (5 min.)
   A. Future Meeting Calendar

Oliver Ranch Core Group meetings are open to any interested member of the public. Attendance by new individuals is always welcomed. Reasonable efforts will be made to assist and accommodate physically handicapped persons attending the meeting. Please call the UNLV Public Lands Initiative Office (702-895-5148) in advance so that arrangements may be made.

NEXT MEETING
Tuesday, November 16, 2004
10:30 a.m.
Bureau of Land Management / Interagency Office
The meeting commenced at 10:45 a.m. with the following persons in attendance:

1. **Introductions**
The group welcomed David Bullaro and Bob Clements from Line and Space Architects.

2. **Approval of Minutes**
The minutes of the September 21, 2004, meeting were approved with no changes.

3. **Core Curriculum**
Michael Reiland reminded the group that at the September meeting Jeanne Klockow presented an overall matrix for the Red Rock Desert Learning Center (RRDLC) curriculum, which included not only the science strands being developed by the Educational Programs Committee but also a core curriculum that all students at the center would be provided. Following the last meeting, Jeanne invited the core group to provide ideas for the activities that might comprise the core curriculum. All of the ideas that were received were then correlated to the BLM mission in 4 areas – conservation, sustainability, responsibility, stewardship – as well as grouped into “big ideas” by common themes. The results were distributed to the attendees, and Jeanne and Michael asked each person to prioritize their top three activities on a large chart. The feedback will now be used by the university to prioritize the task of writing lesson plans for the most highly agreed-upon areas of the core curriculum over the next several months.

4. **Architectural Update**
Henry Tom and Les Wallach of Line and Space Architects provided an update on recent activities, which included written reports for several meetings they reported on verbally at the last core group meeting. The final design concept presentation on the RRDLC and the Wild Horse and Burro Facility (WHB) was made to the BLM on September 29. Les Wallach presented the diagram of the site, which originally was viewed as three concepts that were described at the last core group meeting. The preferred location has now been narrowed to the “view” site, but it has been modified to move housing out of the flood plain while leaving the flex labs in the flood plain. This concept represents a more dispersed campus and allows historic remnants of the original ranch to be salvaged. All parking is congregated near the main entrance and service roads are located on the perimeters to minimize cross-circulation. The schoolchildren will go through a desert experience as they first arrive and will be met and greeted at a friendship circle. At this location the students will be assembled into 3 smaller groups. From there they go to the dining facility for general orientation before getting situated in their dormitories. Les pointed out that the new location for the housing allows good orientation for passive solar technology.
Les pointed out the flood plain area on the diagram. The architects met with the Clark County Regional Flood Control District to discuss the building requirements within a flood plain. These include not changing the flow of the water and being 18 inches above the level of water anticipated during a 100-year flood. The flex labs will be out in the flood plain on concrete and steel columns, with the finished floor approximately 7 feet above the desert. The labs will be connected by an elevated walkway, wide enough for service carts to use. Les also pointed out the location of the maintenance facility and staff housing. He indicated that the business model will ultimately determine if the staff housing is built, but the design will accommodate housing for 10 instructors and an on-site maintenance person.

Les also reported on a three-day energy workshop Line and Space held during the week of October 11. The invited participants talked about energy systems at the RRDLC/WHB facility as a whole, including desired comfort levels and passive technologies. A lot of useful information was gathered, and Line and Space will now build those ideas into the design. It appears likely that there will be a central plant for heating and cooling, with some mechanical systems dispersed around the campus. Alan O'Neill asked what buildings will be visible from the road. Les replied the flex labs will be visible but are surrounded by a lot of vegetation; the maintenance building will most likely be totally bermed to reduce visual impact. Blaine Benedict asked how many acres the school covers. Les said the building footprints are approximately 40,000 s.f.; he was not certain of the acreage but estimated it could be as many as 20 acres. Alan asked if each flex lab is different. Les said all have common elements but are ultimately defined by what is stocked in each. The general design is rectangular, with a demonstration table and set-ups for 12 students, resource materials in the back, and sinks along the perimeter. The architects have been asked to keep the labs flexible since it is not yet known what the curriculum will demand.

Pat Fleming asked about the art room. Les said the exact location has not yet been determined, but it will be somewhere out in the area of Mormon Springs. The room is being designed as an 800 s.f. inspirational space, with solar lighting, a composting toilet, and all sides open to the outside. Wherever it is placed, Les noted the need to mitigate disturbance of the land. The architects may go with a prefabricated structure that is placed on site. Alan asked how many learning venues are on site. Les said there are 14 shade structures – 2 for the WHB facility and 12 in various locations around the RRDLC. Shade structures are loosely defined; in some areas existing trees are used while in other areas an actual structure might be used. Angie Lara pointed out the trails and learning venues must be included in the NEPA analysis. Paul Buck said the teachers on his committee felt the 2 outdoor labs near the maintenance structure were too close together and they asked that the architects move them apart.

Les talked about incorporating the historic remnants into the curriculum, which Angie noted is important to honoring the original ranch. Helen Mortenson said she and local historian Liz Warren were most concerned that students learn how settlers adapted to the desert environment by building thick stone walls and using transoms that allowed heat to move through the ranch house. Helen asked about the water treatment plant and Les indicated where the central plants will be located. Kathy August asked if there is a way to reuse treated water. Les said all grey water will be reused and effluent water will be made from blackwater. The plan is to use reclaimed water for irrigation and to flush all toilets in the dining hall. The usage goal is 50 gallons of water per day. Les noted a need to document all the built-in green technologies to help teachers and the operator understand why things are being built in a particular way.

Bob Clements of Line and Space gave an update on the design of the WHB facility. Two concepts were devised over 4 different locations. The best location has been determined to be a
disturbed area with Joshua trees, which has less visibility to Highway 159. The selected concept reduces visual impact by cutting the whole facility into the ground, with entrance off Bonnie Springs Road to discourage public access. Bob noted the pasture is 2 acres and the entire facility is 6-10 acres. Plans call for a retaining wall to shield view of facility, and it is anticipated that multiple uses can be made of the wall, including using it as a catwalk that allows students to interact with the horses on different visual levels without actually entering the facility. Laurie Howard asked about access to the catwalk by disabled students. Bob said they will design it with a gradual incline conforming to Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards. Helen Mortenson asked about water and restroom facilities. Bob said there will be a public restroom in the administration building which opens onto an outdoor gathering space. There will be access from the arena during big events. As to parking, Bob noted if an agreement can be reached to use Bonnie Springs Ranch for parking, the on-site demand could be dramatically reduced. The design currently shows no parking except for staff and trailers. Nancy Flagg asked where parking would go if Bonnie Springs doesn’t agree to provide parking. Bob responded that contact with Bonnie Springs needs to occur before alternatives are considered. Pat Fleming asked about a trail from the WHB to the RRDLC. Bob said an existing dirt road will serve as the trail. Helen asked about plans for a communications uplink. Bob said it should be considered. Michael Reiland pointed out that those considerations are more operational than design-related. Kathy August asked how the excess soil will be used once the facility is dug into the site. Bob said some could possibly be used at the RRDLC site and the retaining wall could be built out of rammed earth, but most of the soil will likely need to be trucked off-site.

5. **Standing Reports**

A. **UNLV**

Nancy Flagg provided an update on UNLV’s activities related to Oliver Ranch. She introduced Mary Peterson, who has been hired as a Public Relations Advisor for this project as well as other SNPLMA initiatives. Mary has met with Michael Reiland and Kirsten Cannon of the BLM to discuss the logistics of RRDLC outreach. Mary will develop a communications plan for the BLM’s review prior to any specific initiative being undertaken. Nancy pointed out that specific work products probably won’t be developed until after the first of the year, as the schematic design and the curriculum get further along. Angie Lara thought it would be good to introduce Mary to the federal land managers, who meet the 1st and 3rd Friday of each month.

Nancy also reported that refinements continue to be made to the RRDLC website in collaboration with the BLM. Michael invited core group members to provide suggestions for future changes to the web content.

6. **Committee Reports**

A. **Building Committee**

Angie Lara provided a report on the Building Committee’s activities. She reiterated the RRDLC budget situation and concerns about ongoing operations and maintenance costs. There currently is no approval to use SNPLMA funds for these purposes nor will the BLM use appropriated dollars. She expressed hope that the Fund-raising and Partnership Committee makes progress on private support. Michael Reiland noted the operator will be responsible for operating and maintaining these facilities. Alan O’Neill said the fundraising effort is difficult at this point because many organizations want more specifics than can currently be provided. He asked that a list of needs be developed as the BLM formulates what can’t be provided by federal money. Michael said the committee’s focus should be on where the funding opportunities are so that the list can match needed items to particular sources, which will help the operator. Blaine Benedict
said it will be easier to move forward with confidence after the NEPA analysis is completed. Michael reiterated the need to identify funding sources as a first step.

B. Educational Programs Committee
Paul Buck distributed 4 curriculum modules for science activities at the school. Paul noted these represent the first products of the Physical Science/Earth Science work group, which was formed out of the broader Educational Programs Committee. The general idea is to use an inquiry approach, with instructors guiding the students through the outdoor venues by asking key questions that the students then answer with their own solutions. The goal is to make the science curriculum meaningful and useful but also fun for the students. All of the modules are tied to local, state, and national standards and also integrate full use of the facilities. Another 5 modules are under development by the Life Science group and will be presented at the November core group meeting. Paul emphasized that the curriculum could not have been developed without the help of classroom teachers.

7. New Business
The BLM has set the next Core Group meeting for Tuesday, November 16, beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the BLM Interagency Office. There will be no December core group meeting. A schedule of 2005 meetings will be provided at a later date.

Preliminary results from the well tests will be ready in December. Michael will have Bob Boyd provide an update at the January meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.