

Meeting Minutes

RED ROCK DESERT LEARNING CENTER CORE GROUP UNLV Paradise Campus Tuesday, August 17, 2004

The meeting commenced at 8:32 a.m. with the following persons in attendance: Loretta Asay, Kathy August, Kim Blanc, Paul Buck, Bill Cates, Nancy Flagg, Pat Fleming, David Frommer, Laurie Howard, Megan Iudice, Angie Lara, Richard Leifried, Mark Morse, Helen Mortenson, Tim O'Brien, Alan O'Neill, Patrick Putnam, Jackson Ramsey, Michael Reiland, Henry Tom, Les Wallach, Billie Young.

1. Introductions

The group welcomed Richard Leifried from the Master Gardeners program.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the July 20, 2004, meeting were approved with no changes.

3. Line and Space Programming Document

Line and Space submitted its programming document to the BLM last month. The BLM has approved the document as final. Michael Reiland is working with Line and Space to format the document as a manageable pdf file so that it can be provided to the Core Group. Michael will send out an email when it is available and how it can be accessed. If anyone sees any glaring omissions or errors in the document, that feedback can be provided to the BLM.

4. Report on Tour of Wild Horse & Burro Facilities

Michael Reiland showed a video of a recent fact-finding tour of four wild horse and burro facilities in California, Utah, and Nevada: Ridgecrest, Hurricane, Palomino Valley, and Susanville. A copy of Michael's DVD can be made available to anyone interested in having a copy. The tour was attended by representatives from BLM, Line and Space, UNLV, and the National Wild Horse and Burro Association. The personnel at these facilities were asked about their operations and what they would have done differently. Billie Young pointed out that many specific operational and physical details were investigated – including the types of fencing and gates used, shades, post footings, chutes, veterinary equipment, etc. – and the findings are already influencing the potential design of the Oliver Ranch project and will be discussed in-depth with the Design Oversight Committee. Most of the facilities are much larger than what will be built at Red Rock. Hurricane is a public facility owned by Washington County that has faced issues with parking and a covered arena that are similar to Nevada's project. Billie noted that the Other Uses Committee may want to meet with the Hurricane manager about how he brings in other revenues. Angie Lara asked whether any of the other facilities have an educational component, and Billie responded no. There were educational events like 4-H occurring at the Hurricane facility, but nothing specifically sponsored by the facility.

5. Standing Reports

A. Line and Space Architects

Henry Tom and Les Wallach of Line and Space Architects provided an update on recent activities (*on file in UNLV Public Lands Initiative office and BLM office*). The firm visited the Oliver Ranch site on July 27-29. The focus of this visit was to look at where teaching venues and physical

structures should be sited for both the science school and the wild horse and burro facility. The pros and cons of various sites were discussed and will be presented to the Building Committee. Student activities related to water exploration, spring monitoring, camp-outs, hikes, topography mapping, archaeology, astronomy, and animal observations were discussed in related to potential teaching venues. The site visit was also used to study the visual impact of the school, especially from the existing cistern on the property. Angie Lara asked if the visual impact was studied from the perspective of private landowners in the area or the school participants. Les replied that both audiences were considered.

The architects also visited the water recycling plant at Ethel M Chocolates and met with representatives from Nevada Power Company and Southern Nevada Water Authority. In all three instances the discussion focused on conservation measures that could be incorporated into the design of the facilities, along with a possible buy-back program offered by Nevada Power. Nevada Power may also be interested in supporting scholarships at the science school.

Helen Mortenson emphasized the need to partner with local utilities and suggested looking at Nevada Power's partnership with Hyde Park School. Angie Lara pointed out that the BLM has an office that deals solely with Nevada Power projects, so there are established relationships in place that can be drawn upon. Alan O'Neill also suggested contacting Pat Shalmy through the Outside Las Vegas Foundation to look at structuring any agreement with Nevada Power as more of a partnership than a business deal. Angie Lara indicated that the Fund-raising and Partnership Committee should follow-up on the possibility of a Nevada Power scholarship.

Les Wallach reported that his staff also met on-site with Stan Helin, a trails specialist with the U.S. Forest Service who is a licensed landscape architect. Mr. Helin's insight into the logistics of student and employee access to all areas of the site were invaluable to the design team. Line and Space is working with the BLM and the Forest Service to see if Mr. Helin's time and expertise may be drawn upon in a more formal way on this project.

The design team also met with Jennifer Parrot of Bonnie Springs to discuss the size of the arena planned for the wild horse and burro facility. A tour of the Bonnie Springs arena provided important information on the size of the arena needed, consideration of prevailing winds, and dust and odor control. These discussions have led to some initial conclusions that the 13,000 square foot arena proposed in the original Oliver Ranch nomination may not be big enough.

Henry Tom updated the Core Group on the design timeline. The conceptual design is due September 29, followed by schematic design on December 10. On October 11-13, Line and Space will be hosting an alternative energy/resource workshop at its office in Tucson. The workshop will focus on narrowing down the alternative energy features to be built into the facilities.

B. *UNLV*

Nancy Flagg gave an update on UNLV's activities related to the project. She introduced the Public Land Initiative's new web coordinator, Megan Iudice. Megan will collaborate with Michael Reiland to design and develop the website for the Red Rock Desert Learning Center. She will also develop websites for other SNPLMA projects in which the university is involved.

Nancy will be interviewing finalists next week who have been solicited to provide publicity and marketing assistance to the university on SNPLMA projects, including the Red Rock Desert Learning Center. This person will be asked to develop a communications plan and assist with product development. Angie asked Nancy if she was aware of another initiative the BLM is

working on with Richard Lee of the Division of Educational Outreach. Nancy indicated that she was not.

Nancy queried the group as to whether they would like to be notified in advance of committee meeting dates. The consensus was to feature a calendar on the new website. However, committee chairs will need to keep either Michael or Nancy informed of any changes to meeting dates, times, or locations.

Nancy reported that the starting time for the October 19 Core Group meeting has been changed from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The location will remain at the BLM office on North Torrey Pines Drive. Nancy will send out a revised meeting schedule.

C. *Red Rock Canyon National Recreation Area*

Patrick Putnam provided an update on capital improvement projects underway at Red Rock Canyon. Work on the Red Springs project will be starting soon. The BLM is waiting for a cost estimate on a design/build concept. The project will be completed in two phases, including a parking lot just below Red Springs, which should help with traffic in Calico Basin, as well as removing an old road, creating a boardwalk, and creating an interpretive site.

Patrick also reported on the Cottonwood parking lot and the Red Rock campground projects. The plans are to move the parking lot approximately one mile south of its current location and then to reclaim and revegetate the old site. The campground project includes completing an environmental assessment to bring power and utilities to the campground and the fire station off Route 159. Phase 2 will be to install the utility lines.

The first core group meeting for the Red Rock Visitor Center was held last week. The next meeting is Sept. 14, noon-2, at the BLM offices. Michael Reiland added that he will add anyone to the e-mail list who wishes to be notified about future meetings.

Approved Round 5 nominations for Red Rock Canyon include \$2.5 million to repave the scenic loop road and money to pave critical parking areas, including Willow Springs and Oak Creek. Money was also allocated to acquire the Garland property at Calico Basin.

Round 5 Approvals

Michael Reiland reported on Round 5 nominations that were approved for the Oliver Ranch site, including alternative energy features, trails, curriculum, and scholarships. Loretta Asay asked Michael to provide a summary chart of each of the SNPLMA Rounds awarded to the Oliver Ranch project to help the Core Group understand each piece of the overall project.

6. Committee Reports

A. *Building Committee*

Chair Angie Lara reported that the second meeting of the committee will be held today, August 17, directly after the Core Group meeting. Alan O'Neill asked about the difference between the Building Committee and the Design Oversight Committee. Angie reported that the new committee has decision-making authority on construction and design questions; its membership is set by the BLM. The Design Oversight Committee is a public committee with a broader mission to provide input on the design of the project and its integration into the site.

B. *Design Oversight Committee*

Chair David Frommer stepped out of the meeting and was unavailable to provide a verbal report, but minutes of the committee's July 19 meeting were sent to the Core Group. Michael Reiland also reported that the committee had another meeting on August 16, and those minutes will be sent with the next Core Group agenda.

C. *Educational Programs Committee*

Chair Paul Buck reported that the committee has been meeting continuously over the summer to establish broad outlines and to examine the FOSS kits used by the Clark County School District. The committee has formed smaller working groups along two themes: Biology/Ecology and Physical Sciences/Earth Sciences. Each working group will include a research faculty member paired with 2-3 classroom teachers to produce a 2-page outline for 6-8 coherent themes. The outlines will include prerequisite experiences, how the activity links with CCSD standards and how they link with the FOSS kits, the kinds of activities envisioned, follow-up activities in the regular classroom, resources needed, linkages to history and culture, and linkages to Globe protocols. Globe is a National Science Foundation project in which schoolchildren are conducting uniform protocols around the country, and Paul hopes that by tying school activities to these protocols the students' work can serve as a data collection point for scientists. The overall committee won't meet until these working groups finish their work, which Paul hopes to have done in 6-8 weeks. If anyone from the Core Group wants to participate in the working groups, Paul will help make that happen.

Another related piece of work to be done on curriculum concerns the common elements the group would want all students to experience at the science school. Some examples include wild horses and burros, green building technology, culture and history, connections to Spring Mountain Ranch, archaeology, and the night sky. The group discussed how this work could be accomplished, because the Educational Programs Committee will not have time to do it. Michael Reiland said that Billie Young and Laurie Howard will work on the wild horse and burro piece. Nancy Flagg indicated that UNLV will be hiring a staff person to help with writing interrelated curriculum across several conservation initiatives, with the Oliver Ranch project being a natural extension of that work. This person can build upon the vision of the Educational Programs Committee and provide the connecting activities that Paul mentioned.

D. *Fund-Raising and Partnerships Committee*

Michael Reiland reported on behalf of Committee Chair Blaine Benedict that the committee has not met, but plans to set a new meeting soon.

E. *NEPA Committee*

The NEPA Committee will not meet again until the Environmental Assessment information comes in. Angie Lara asked about the wells and Michael Reiland reported that they have not yet been drilled. He has asked Bob Boyd if the work should be undertaken by someone else, since the U.S. Geological Survey has run into scheduling problems. Helen Mortenson noted that the Desert Research Institute has the capability to do the job and wondered why they couldn't be hired. Michael indicated that it might be a possibility, but there may be issues related to how BLM contracts out work. Les Wallach noted that the delay could provide an opportunity to investigate side issues like defining the extent of non-potable water. Patrick Putnam pointed out that the NEPA study cannot be completed without the water quality results. Pat Fleming said that taking the project past schematic design without the environmental assessment completed is a risk, because the design may have to be modified to eliminate or mitigate impacts. Michael indicated that getting the initial results from Otak should provide a pretty good idea of whether

the project can proceed, but Pat Fleming reiterated the potential for rework on the design. Angie Lara requested having Otak come to the next Core Group meeting to discuss these issues.

Helen Mortenson asked if the flood plain is being examined before a final site is selected for the school facilities. Les Wallach responded that his firm is taking the flood plain into account as it proceeds with design work.

F. *Operations Committee*

Chair Jackson Ramsey reported that the committee met on August 3 and talked about what would be expected from a potential school operator and what the operator could expect from BLM. The BLM plans to issue a request for proposals (RFP) in mid-September, with responses due by mid-December and a decision made by mid-February. Very detailed proposals will be requested. Potential bids will be helped by the \$700,000 in financial assistance that was just approved in Round 5. Paul Buck clarified that the Round 5 money will be provided to the students to attend the school and not to the operator. Angie concurred but pointed out that it is money the operator will not have to raise privately. Paul reiterated the need to keep the equity issue at the forefront with respect to how children are selected to attend the school. Angie stated that this would be a school district issue and that when the BLM met recently with Superintendent Carlos Garcia he indicated his desire for the district to be very involved in these kinds of details. Jackson said he does not expect the operator to set policy; rather the operator is told what the policy is. He also asked the Core Group to remember that all students will be subsidized in some way; what parents pay will not cover full costs, but some students would have their entire way paid. Angie noted that the BLM still intends to pursue SNPLMA funding to cover all students. Michael Reiland reminded the group that studies show that having students pay some nominal fee is best, even if it is 10 dollars. Les Wallach agreed and pointed out that the operators of the Campbell Creek School found that cancellations were reduced when they started charging a fee. Michael asked that the next Core Group agenda include a discussion of different options for forming a policy-making group for the school to oversee the mission.

G. *Other Uses Committee*

The committee will not meet until after schematic designs are provided.

H. *Wild Horse and Burro Committee*

Chair Billie Young informed the group about the Clark County Farm Festival to be held September 21-23 at Horseman's Park. The National Wild Horse Association is interested in hosting a booth at this event but will need help with information and volunteers. Last year, approximately 9,000 schoolchildren were reached over the 3 days, and Billie sees this as an opportunity to begin talking to students and their parents about the plans for the Red Rock Desert Learning Center. The Core Group discussed some materials that could be useful for teachers to take back to their classrooms. Michael Reiland will send out an email and schedule for people to volunteer to work specific timeslots.

7. New Business

Michael Reiland reported that the name for the school is currently Red Rock Desert Learning Center. The word "National" is out of the name for now, after the BLM looked into the implications of using this word in the title.

Paul Buck asked about the status of Desert Research Institute's proposal to install three monitoring wells at Oliver Ranch. Michael indicated that the BLM plans to look at doing this as they get closer to completion of schematic design, when the overall costs can be evaluated. Loretta Asay asked if monitoring wells affect the water allocation. Pat Fleming explained that the

proposed DRI monitoring wells would be approximately 2 inches in diameter and would be used solely to study the depth and quality of groundwater. The wells to be drilled and tested by the U.S. Geological Survey will be cased with a pipe approximately 8 inches in diameter, and it is expected that they will be equipped with pumps and piping to allow withdrawal and use of the groundwater they tap.

Michael Reiland reported that the August 19 meeting BLM had scheduled with representatives from other science schools has been postponed and will be rescheduled in the future.

Pat Putnam asked the architects to involve him in any trails work being contemplated at the Oliver Ranch site. He wants to be sure existing footprints are followed and that public access to existing trails, like Willow Springs, is not impeded.

Angie Lara stated that the Division of State Parks is interested in partnering on trails between Oliver Ranch and Spring Mountain Ranch. Helen Mortenson offered to facilitate a meeting between Spring Mountain Ranch personnel and Line and Space Architects. Michael Reiland will follow up with State Parks on having a representative attend future Core Group meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

REVISED 2004 CORE GROUP MEETING SCHEDULE

September 21, 2004	UNLV	8:30 A.M.	Paradise Campus – Bldg. 400, Rm. 401 <i>(Corner of Tropicana & Swenson)</i>
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NOTE TIME CHANGE

October 19, 2004	BLM	10:30 A.M.	4701 N. Torrey Pines Dr. <i>(Just north of Rancho & Craig Rd.)</i>
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