

SNPLMA Conservation Initiative Round 4 Nomination

Title: Cooperative Conservation; Finding New Avenues for the Road to Success

Nominating Organization(s): Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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Executive Summary:

Within two years, the federal land-management agencies in Southern Nevada (Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) propose develop four new avenues to guide them on the road to success including the Interagency Volunteer Management Program, Interagency Student Intake Program, Cooperative Conservation Program and the Site Stewardship Program of Southern Nevada. These will:

- **Combine recruitment, training and recognition of volunteers and site stewards to better serve the public (facility and trail maintenance, outdoor educators, etc.) and the resource (graffiti removal, habitat restoration, litter clean-up, etc.).**
- **Establish and maintain a communication network between natural and cultural resource managers and the community, resulting in an understanding and appreciation of the resources, increased ownership, responsibility and stewardship of their public lands.**
- **Develop community-driven partnerships that will utilize existing resources and develop new avenues to provide a more economic and efficient method of land management.**
- **Provide better recreational experiences and visitor services as well as protecting sensitive natural and cultural resources as a result of increased hands-on support (student interns, volunteers, site stewards, etc.) from activities such as litter and graffiti removal, trail maintenance, habitat restoration and site monitoring.**
- **Monitor effectiveness and efficiency of each program through participant evaluation and completion of detailed deliverables to ensure continued community involvement.**
- **Create local job opportunities for the community through contracts and increase accessibility for career development for all students.**

Project Description:

I. Background and Need

Four federal agencies, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) manage over seven million acres of public land in southern Nevada, including eight congressionally designated units. Together the agencies have 320 employees hosting 16 million visitors annually. As agency staff capabilities continue to decline, visitation increases. Visitors needs are unmet with minimal facilities and staff to meet their needs. As a result, illegal uses such as habitat damage, litter, desert dumping and vandalism are on the rise. Increases in federal staff are not anticipated and, as a result, the agencies recognize the need to develop mechanisms for cooperating with community individuals, groups and other local agencies to help conserve the federal lands around Las Vegas.

II. Proposal

The four federal land management agencies (BLM, NPS, USFS, and USFWS) propose the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) funds be used to develop the following four avenues to guide them on their road to success:

1. Interagency Volunteer Management Program (IVMP);

Develop the Interagency Volunteer Program for joint recruitment, training and recognition of volunteers and site stewards to better serve the public and the resource.

2. Cooperative Conservation Program (CCP);

Assess and evaluate existing support resources within the local community such as prison labor, Student Conservation Associates and Youth Conservation Corps. Strengthen community and interagency collaboration to best utilize these resources for more efficient and economic land management practices.

3. Interagency Student Intake Program;

Develop a partnership between the four federal land management agencies and the local educational institutions to create a student internship program for ethnically diverse students. Interns will have the opportunity for on-the-job training and conservation career development as part of their educational experience.

4. Site Stewardship Program of Southern Nevada.

Join together with local community organizations, tribes and cultural resource specialists to recruit and train specialized volunteers to monitor and protect sensitive recreational, cultural and natural resources.

III. Project Implementation Process

1. Interagency Volunteer Management Program (IVMP)

Currently, the four federal land managing agencies (BLM, NPS, USFS, and USFWS) individually support volunteer programs that are inefficient and do not take advantage of the large volunteer pool in southern Nevada. Each of the agencies has identified the need to develop an interagency volunteer strategy and an Interagency Volunteer Management Program (IVMP).

An interagency team was established in 2002 to develop the IVMP. It is envisioned that through the IVMP, the four agencies will “work collectively in recruiting, training, managing, supporting, recognizing and promoting the long-term involvement of volunteers in southern Nevada.” The team anticipates that the IVMP will reduce competition between agencies for volunteer groups, reduce the time commitment of agency staff to volunteer management, and increase the effectiveness and number of volunteers on the federal lands. The team has decided that the most efficient oversight of volunteers will occur through a central clearinghouse. This program will not replace existing volunteer programs in the various agencies. Rather it will augment and expand existing programs.

Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) funds will be used to complete the following tasks over the next five years:

- Hire an Interagency Volunteer Coordinator (employed by a partner organization);
- Formally establish an Interagency Volunteer Steering Committee consisting of the four federal agencies, the Outside Las Vegas Foundation and others as identified;
- Coordinate communications between agency volunteer coordinators and managers;
- Identify and apply for grants to continue individual and collective volunteer activities;
- Develop a joint volunteer recruitment process including volunteer database, outreach, website, and interagency volunteer application forms;
- Develop joint volunteer training program;
- Connect volunteer groups and individuals with specific land management projects;
- Train volunteers as project leaders to reduce burden on agency staff;
- Develop coordinated volunteer recognition programs as appropriate; and
- Develop stewardship agreements as necessary.

2. Cooperative Conservation Program (CCP)

Each of the four federal agencies currently uses a variety of alternative workforce suppliers to meet their management responsibilities. However, each agency recognizes that a broad alternative workforce exists that may be enlisted to assist in land management activities. It is proposed that SNPLMA funds be used to contract a survey of the various alternative workforce suppliers available to the federal agencies for land management activities. These will be listed in a report describing each supplier, types of work each can supply, costs and reimbursement requirements, and an identification of required agreements and contracts. The report will also identify adjustments needed in agency staffing to support and manage alternative workforce capabilities. The Alternative Workforce Coordinator will coordinate the achievement of this goal.

3. Interagency Student Intake Program (ISIP)

The federal managers of southern Nevada's public lands (BLM, NPS, USFS, USFWS) established an Interagency Diversity Team in 2002. The Interagency Diversity Team proposed the development of an Interagency Student Intake program, which would not only provide the four agencies with an alternative and novel source of manpower – but would also lead to a future job-applicant pool of qualified, ethnically diverse individuals. It is proposed that SNPLMA funds be used to fund the prototype Interagency Student Intake Program (ISIP).

In the initial year of the proposed program, ISIP will provide employment to six high school juniors of diverse ethnic backgrounds. The Alternative Workforce Coordinator and a GS-5/7 Team Lead/Driver will coordinate and supervise the activities of the students. The students will perform interagency program work at a GS-1 level in the area of natural and cultural resource management for the four federal land managing agencies. Students will be partnered with mentors while participating in ISIP. Educational assistance may be offered to students if they meet the federal requirements to participate in the program.

Each year at least two juniors will join ISIP at the GS-1 level, and the initial groups will be promoted to the GS-2 level. As the students progress to higher education levels they may be promoted to the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) with the opportunity to compete for Student Career Employment Program (SCEP) positions. The SCEP positions will require that the students work towards a college degree in a science-related field. SCEP participants will again receive on-the-job training and provide alternative work support to the agencies. Students that compete for and are successfully hired in a SCEP position have the benefit of competitiveness for federal jobs up to one year after completing their college degree. Permanent positions with the federal government after completion of ISIP are not guaranteed.

4. Site Stewardship Program of Southern Nevada

Due to the lack of required personnel many sensitive sites are currently being lost to vandalism and looting. Therefore, a site stewardship program is critically needed to

preserve southern Nevada's recreational, cultural and natural resources for future conservation, scientific study, interpretation and enjoyment. The initial program, to be modeled after the highly successful 'Arizona's Site Steward Program,' would hire a Site Stewardship Coordinator to manage the overall program and cover costs of volunteer training, fuel, equipment, and supplies needed by the docents in accomplishing the monitoring work and initial training. This program will be guided by an Interagency Site Stewardship Committee which may consist of natural and cultural resource specialists, .

IV. Results and Products of the Project

Over the next five years the following products will result from the proposed Alternative Workforce Program:

- Interagency Volunteer Coordinator hired as a member of a partner organization;
- Establishment of an Interagency Volunteer Steering Committee consisting of the four federal agencies, the Outside Las Vegas Foundation and others as appropriate;
- Development and implementation of a joint volunteer recruitment process including volunteer database, outreach, website, and interagency volunteer application forms as appropriate;
- Development and implementation of joint volunteer training program as appropriate;
- Establishment of a volunteer website which connects volunteer groups and individuals with specific land management projects;
- Development and implementation of coordinated volunteer recognition programs as appropriate;
- Submittal of volunteer program grants;
- Recruitment and training of volunteers to be project leaders;
- Report identifying alternative workforce suppliers, types of work each can supply, costs and reimbursement requirements, required agreements and contracts, and suggested adjustments needed in agency staffing to support alternative workforce capabilities;
- Development and implementation of agreements and contracts in support of alternative workforce opportunities;
- Alternative Workforce Coordinator and GS-5/7 ISIP Team Supervisors hired;

- Establishment of an ISIP web site that connects students with internship and job opportunities available through ISIP.
- Development and implementation of coordinated student recruitment, application and interview process for ISIP.
- Development of ISIP recruitment through outreach, publications, displays, etc.
- Employment of diverse ethnic students annually for five years in a manner that benefits the agencies and the students.
- Establishment of a cultural resource site stewardship program in southern Nevada, modeled after the highly successful ‘Arizona’s Site Steward Program.’
- Establishment of an Interagency Cultural Resources Steering Committee.

*V. Annual Budget***Project Title: Alternative Workforce Programs**

Expense	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Personnel					
Program Oversight	15,800	16,600	17,400	18,200	19,000
Volunteer Program Coordinator	47,300	49,700	52,200	54,800	57,500
Administration Support	13,500	13,900	14,300	14,900	15,400
Alternative Workforce Coordinator	47,300	49,700	52,200	54,800	57,500
Site Stewardship Coordinator	47,300	49,700	52,200	54,800	57,500
Interagency Contracts and Agreements	13,500	13,900	14,300	14,900	15,400
GS 5/7 Team Supervisor	28,100	29,600	21,100	32,600	34,300
GS 1 Student Intern (see budget note)	49,587	16,529	16,529	19,140	20,100
GS 2 Student Intern (see budget note)		55,723	18,574	21,504	22,584
GS 2 Student Intern (see budget note)			57,726	23,484	24,660
GS 4 Student Intern (see budget note)				81,858	114,612
Benefits (25%)	65,596.8	73,838.0	79,132.3	97,746.5	109,639.0
Materials/Supplies	50,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
computer, office supplies, field equipment					
Public Relations Web Site	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Publications/Outreach	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Recognition	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Travel/Training					
Volunteer	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
ISIP	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
AWF	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Site Stewardship	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Office Space	18,000	18,900	19,800	20,800	21,800
Vehicles					
Passenger Cars (rental, fuel, insurance)	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
GSA Van Rental (fuel 6 months)	4,100	4,100	4,100	9,600	10,000
Telephones					
8 phones at \$100 per month	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
Contracts					
Miscellaneous					
Special Events	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
ISIP Education Assistance			30,000	10,000	10,000
Total/Year	645,084	657,190	714,561	794,133	854,995

Grand Total**3,665,963**

Budget Note:

The Team Supervisor position is based on a GS 5/7 salary. In Year 1 there are six GS-1 students. In Year 2, there are six GS-2 students and two GS-1 students. In Year 3, there are six GS-3 students, two GS-2 students and two GS-1 students. In Year 4, there are six GS-4 students, two GS-3 students, two GS-2 students and two GS-1 students. In Year 5, there are eight GS-4 students, two GS-3 students, two GS-2 students and two GS-1 students. These are estimates if all students remain active in program. Benefits for these employees were estimated at 35% because it is anticipated they will be federal positions.

*Ranking Criteria:***1. Provide opportunities to inform and educate the public about the environment and responsible use on federal lands.**

Through active volunteerism and participation in the Interagency Student Intake Program (ISIP) and the other cooperative conservation options, the participating public will become directly informed about and involved in the management activities and conservation issues of the federal management agencies. Hands-on involvement and extensive training are inherent elements of these positions. The intent of this program is to foster both an understanding of and a sense of responsibility for public lands and the natural and cultural resources they support. Working with the issues will encourage an individual's sense of 'ownership' of the resource and its stewardship. It is envisioned that the citizens, groups, and organizations that become involved with these programs will be placed in areas of environmental education, resource management and conservation (including, habitat restoration, trail building, historic and cultural preservation, etc.). Interaction between program participants and federal staff will broaden the perspective on the issues facing the federal land management agencies and potentially lead to new approaches in the development of environmental education and resource management strategies.

2. Results in the improved quality and/or management of federal lands.

Combining volunteer recruitment, training and recognition will result in a more highly trained and diverse volunteer workforce. Developing an active Interagency Volunteer Program will increase the number of work hours dedicated to conservation activities. Public lands will be litter and graffiti free, with beautifully restored landscapes, well-maintained trails and visitor facilities, resulting in a better visitor experience. Training and active participation in conservation activities will result in an increased understanding of the natural and cultural resources on the federal lands and the complexities of the issues that the federal land management agencies face. Management of these areas will be greatly improved by this understanding and through collaboration and communication with the community. Evaluation of cooperative conservation opportunities and the eventual integration of these options into the existing organizations will result in a more economical and efficient delivery of management programs.

3. Enhances interagency and other partnerships in the promotion of conservation initiatives

All four avenues (Interagency Volunteer Management Program, Cooperative Conservation Program, Interagency Student Intake Program and the Site Stewardship Program) address the needs of the four federal land managing agencies by increasing staff support and creating new ways to efficiently, effectively and economically manage the public's resources.

Each program involves a large number of non-federal partners. The Interagency Volunteer Program will build on existing relationships and develop new partnerships with groups such as the Volunteer Center of Southern NV, Directors of Volunteers In Agencies (DOVIA), Bureau of Reclamation, Nevada Naturalists, State of Nevada,

Clark County and more. The Cooperative Conservation Program will access what support the community individual, businesses, organizations and local governments can provide with new opportunities such as prison crews, Youth Conservation Corps, etc. The Student Intake Program will involve a close partnership with the Clark County School District as well as with other institutions of higher education. Site Stewards will work closely with an interagency team of cultural resource specialists, community interest groups and local tribes that will guide and train them.

Within these programs, the agencies will work seamlessly across the landscape in joint recruitment, project development, training, management, evaluation, support and recognition efforts.

4. Project evaluation processes are built in.

Project success will be determined by delivery of the products listed in Section IV (above). Each of the proposed alternative workforce programs incorporates regular and systematic efficiency and effectiveness monitoring through participant evaluations conducted by supervisors and through an assessment of the number of participants and continued participation of individuals, groups and organizations in the various programs.