



Meeting Notes—Draft

Dunes Collaborative

Thursday, June 10th, 2010

9:00 am to Noon

Dunes Center

1055 Guadalupe Street, Guadalupe, CA 93434

Co-Chairs: Kaila Dettman, kailad@lcslo.org and

Rey Monge, rmong@parks.ca.gov

1. Introductions/Opening Remarks

John Jostes, Melissa Boggs, Kaila Dettman, Daniel Bohlman, Rey Monge, Mario Castellanos, Dan McElhinney, Christina Holenda, Tina Moore, Cailin O'Meara

2. Review of Meeting Notes from April 23rd, Dunes Collaborative Retreat

Action Item: The April 2010 & Dunes Collaborative Annual Retreat meeting notes were approved as drafted.

3. Review of Dunes Collaborative Annual Retreat Action Items

The group reviewed the action item list from the Annual Retreat and indicated that certain follow-up actions remained to be completed:.

- ☑ Tina Moore volunteered to follow up with Mike Anderson to determine how the National Resource Conservation Service might participate in the education programs associated with the Dunes Center.
- ☑ Melissa Boggs indicated that she would follow up with Corrine Huckaby to engage the Regional Board in better utilizing education tools and linkages to local water districts to address stormwater management issues.
- ☑ Tina Moore offered to follow up on contacting the Weed Management Area Group to obtain their documentation on best management practices.
- ☑ Mario Castellanos agreed to follow up with the Cachuma RCD and integrate their initiative regarding Oso Flaco water quality improvement into the 2011 DuneQuest.

4. Discussion of Dunes Collaborative Operating Procedures and Revised Work Plan

John Jostes reviewed revisions made to the Dunes Collaborative Work Plan which integrated comments made at the Retreat into the sections dealing with membership classifications and the intent to engage members of agencies and organizations in the work of the Collaborative. The revisions were

accepted by consensus of the full group as being representative of the direction the Group sought to take with regard to this issue.

On a related topic, the group also discussed revisions to the Operating Procedures (2004) to make it consistent with current practices and the Work Plan. The revisions included language edits, differentiation between Task Forces & Committees (pg 5), and the addition of the general communication policy. The group suggested several other additional changes including information regarding an annual report, changing the language for “deletions”, adding a subsection entitled “Administration” that focuses on the different subcommittees, and changing the language in “Roles & Responsibilities” to reflect the role of the Dunes Center as Administrator or that an agency operating in the collaborative will fulfill these responsibilities.

The group was generally satisfied with and supportive of the revisions but deferred a formal decision on the procedures subject to getting the requested revisions back for final review prior to the July meeting of the Collaborative. John Jostes committed to working with Mario Castellanos and Rey Monge to finalize the procedures in a way that reflected their expressed concerns. Approval of the revised Operating Procedures & Work Plan will be on the agenda for the July 2010 Collaborative meeting.

5. Update from Daniel Bohlman on Potential New Veldt Controls Developed by Dr. Francis Villablanca

Daniel Bohlman discussed recent research that is being conducted in the dunes by Dr. Francis Villablanca on a smut fungus. This is a black fungus found for the first time in the U.S. growing on veldt grass in the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex. The fungus is known to control veldt grass seed production and may prove to be a bio-control for veldt grass in the dunes. The Land Conservancy has found that veldt grass found in their control plot has been declining, possibly due to the presence of the smut fungus. However, veldt grass could have various responses to the fungus and may not be successful as a bio-control.

Dr. Villablanca of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo is testing a hypothesis that kangaroo rat populations will decline as veldt grass populations decline due to smut in a controlled setting; his research may provide further insight into the effects of smut. The Land Conservancy is serving in an advisory role to this project.

Daniel expressed cautious optimism about the potential for the smut fungus to serve as a bio-control and indicated he would report back to the Collaborative as Dr. Villablanca’s work progressed.

6. Invasive Species Report from the Land Conservancy

Kaila Dettman and Daniel Bohlman reported that the strong rainy season and winter storms increased veldt grass in the dunes this year but also extended the season for veldt treatment. Veldt grass removal projects continued throughout May. The Land Conservancy plans to continue veldt grass removal next year.

In addition, The Land Conservancy did 10 acres of seeding this winter. Restoration Specialists will now begin the seasonal removal of European beach grass from the dunes.

The Land Conservancy's restoration crew is being moved to a seasonal work model based on the seasonal variations of the work load and crew turnover. The crew will now consist of 3 permanent positions (crew leader, restoration ecologist & project coordinator) and seasonal restoration specialists. This year, the crew has observed a significantly higher percentage of snakes and rodents in the dunes system which requires significantly greater caution and vigilance on the part of work crews. Mario Castellanos indicated he would communicate these concerns to the 4th District County Supervisor's office and County Parks personnel in order to minimize the chances of incidents requiring emergency response.

As an aside, the Nipomo lupine has been thriving, rebounding from ~500 plants in 2009 total to an estimated ~1,000 plants this year.

7. Dune Quest 2010 Review

Dan McElhinney from the Dunes Center reported that this year's DuneQuest had a turn-out of ~65 people for the Guadalupe portion of the event and ~35 people for the Morro Bay portion. The event highlighted presentations on dune geology, invasive species removal & local Chumash tribes. The event was promoted through advertising & Ben Hayes morning radio show. An informal report highlighting the event, lessons learned & feedback from the attendees will be provided to the Collaborative at by July Collaborative meeting.

8. Subcommittee and Task Force Updates:

The Fundraising Subcommittee: The Subcommittee met last week and addressed next year's funding. The group focused on brainstorming ways to find grant funding to supplement endowment funding. Potential funding sources should include the Coastal Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Board. Mario Castellanos indicated that the Dunes Center has plans to submit a Proposition 84 proposal to fund a multi-purpose structure in the rear portion of the Dunes Center's property. Kaila Dettman indicated that

the Land Conservancy was working on grant applications for the Black Lake Canyon, as well as the Pulling Together program.

Action Item: Mario Castellanos will initiate a conference call regarding these items & schedule a meeting in July.

9. Other Information, Announcements, and Updates

- a. Suggestions for potential speakers at Dunes Collaborative meetings
 - i. Dr. Francis Villablanca.
 - ii. Tour of Unocal restoration site.
 - iii. Seminar highlighting new environmental education curriculum.
- b. Outline of 2010 Dunes Collaborative Annual Report, Mario Castellanos
The Annual Report will include:
 - i. A history of the Collaborative & highlight its advisory role to restoration subcommittee.
 - ii. A basic overview of operations.
 - iii. A narrative of current projects, namely restoration, invasive species, & education projects.
 - iv. Financial needs not covered by this year's endowment funds.
 - v. Partnerships & their respective missions.
 - vi. An appendix with a list of completed projects.

10. Adjourn

Next Meeting: Thursday, July 15th, 2010 from 9am-Noon at the Dunes Center.