



Meeting Notes
Dunes Collaborative
Thursday February 12, 2009
9:00 am to Noon

Dunes Center
1055 Guadalupe Street, Guadalupe, CA 93434
Co-Chairs: Bob Hill bobh@special-places.org and
Rey Monge RMONG@parks.ca.gov

1) Introductions/Opening Remarks Bob Hill Daniel Bohlman, Christina Holenda, Larry Vierheilig, Rey Monge, Melissa Boggs, Mario Castellanos, Dan McElhinney, Ronnie Glick, Ken Wolf (public citizen)

The meeting started off with a brief review of the documents that John Jostes distributed to the group in preparation of the upcoming, March 13th Dunes Collaborative retreat, led by Melissa and Bob. The list of documents reviewed was:

1. Memo regarding upcoming retreat
2. Guiding Principals
3. Core Assumptions
4. Work Plan

Melissa focused the discussion to the questions that are within the memo:

1. What are the implications of continued reductions in project level funding beyond 2009?
 - a. If project level funding is limited to approximately \$70,000 per year for the next two years, what will happen in the Collaborative as an alliance of land managers?
 - b. How do the productive working relationships built over the past eight years contribute to the “staying power” of the collaborative in difficult times?
 - c. How does the meaning of “stewardship” shift during hard times?
2. Where is the ‘tipping point’ for funding expenditures, given the overall needs of the dunes? Specifically, what is the smallest increment of funding directed toward what kind of project that can create the most noticeable (i.e., measurable) value over time?
3. What will be the positive messages that the Collaborative can convey once it rebounds from these challenges?

Melissa reviewed several items that the Dunes Collaborative should be pursuing but has not been pursuing recently. There was a brief discussion of collaboration with the Water Board (specific name?) and that we should be coordinating with them and vice versa. The issue that the Dunes Collaborative documents require a review/revision of the work plan every year was also raised. The group also discussed the Public Advisory Committee (PAC). DuneQuest had been serving

as our public forum, since this isn't occurring in 2009 the questions was raised about how to proceed.

There was a brief discussion about contact lists and refining and making changes where appropriate. We should draft a business contacts list (for Dunes Collaborative Business) and an announcements list.

Action Items:

1. Follow up with the Water Board to find out if they can send a representative.
2. Should we designate a representative to represent the Collaborative?
3. Refine the Contacts Lists.

The group then had a brief discussion about spending down principal vs. leaving principal in tact for 2009. The group agreed to check the status of funding with regard to the retreat agenda.

Question for follow-up:

1. Are there guidelines in the MOU from Fish & Game, the Coastal Conservancy, and NFWF regarding the endowments perpetuity?
 - o Melissa stated that the funds can all be spent with an amendment to the MOU and restoration plan.
- g) The group then discussed the endowment funds. Melissa and Bob spoke with Bank of America and NFWF and learned that many endowments have ending points where they have to spend them down. 3.5% spending is the nat'l average on endowments. It is a common practice to use principal to jumpstart funding. Christina Holenda stated this is a new perspective about the way an endowment has been organized. In her experience they are meant to last longer
- a. **What is needed?** A definition of terms, some perspective by finding out what other local folks are doing with their endowment issues. Are they growing, shrinking, being spent down, etcetera?

Action:

1. **Define endowment, define perpetuity**
2. **Perspective: Comm. Foundations, philanthropic organizations, Hutton Foundation, etcetera.**

2) Review of Meeting Notes from January 15th Meeting and Follow-up on Commitments/Next Steps

The group discussed the fact that last January 15 meeting notes reflected that the group had consensus to stay away from principal this year. The group did

not agree that the meeting's discussion was accurately reflected; many in the group had preferred which ever process was biologically best. The group agreed that this issue needs to be on the agenda for the March retreat in order to come to a conclusion.

3) Overview of Outputs from Task Force Meetings re: Needs Lists

The group discussed the VSTF meeting notes and the updates to the VSTF Needs List. VSTF members suggested a more focused approach is needed in addressing the lessons learned from past projects and how those are incorporated into the process. VSTF members discussed the Interpretive Master Plan, the Interpretive Brochure (GAIA Map), and other projects. Melissa asked the group if the Interpretive Master Plan being implemented or is it just gathering dust? The group stated it hasn't been referenced in a while.

Action:

1. Add a component/column to the needs list that refers to the master plan.

Bob H and Daniel B stated that the RTF Needs List has not changed substantially or at all. Invasives species removal and need to update existing land management units and priorities are still the main focus; additionally, there is the need to define LMU's south of SM River, update all Dunes Complex LMU's, the need for Faunal Surveys Project. These ideas are not officially on the needs list. Resurvey Dunes land. Currently there is only the botanical priority list with no reference to fauna. Endemic species are the insects and they have not been catalogued or surveyed and this may change the habitat restoration. We need to identify these new priority areas. Priority 1-8. Bob H: everything on the needs list is related and related. There are question marks in the priority column because input is needed from outside agencies.

Jamie King suggested that this might warrant stepping back a little bit to create priorities. We do not have all of the information to prioritize. Big picture needs to be undertaken. In order to really understand our needs we need to address the entire complex. The discussion led to the feasibility of refining LMU's south of the SM River. Bob Hill stated his concern that we don't really have access to all of the properties south of CNLM's property. Jamie King stated we most likely do have access to most of that property through requesting permission through our current network.

Bob H: this is really another discussion and there may be another project in the works which could create access to the entire area.

The group then discussed the issues regarding title and insurer of property/vehicles purchased by grants from the Dunes Collaborative. Melissa stated that she believed that Fish and Game and Coastal Conservancy would be the official owner of record. The trailer is the example used: esp. because it has a title associated with it, insurance, liability, title, etcetera. Bob H: Intellectual property is of the project sponsor. Rey Monge stated that two possibilities are outright grant or joint powers agreement.

Action:

- 1. Review the agreement for specifics regarding title and ownership.**

4) Status Report from Co-Chairs on 2009 Project Review by Restoration Subcommittee

Melissa: We are not sure on Elena's schedule. We are still awaiting review of Restoration Sub Com. It is our goal to have all of this finalized and set up to proceed by March 1st.

5) Discussion of Interim Funding for Invasives Removal

Bob H: Brief review of RTF Retreat. We now have the 5 years of data based on objectives from 2004 VSTF Retreat. We started 5 years ago not knowing how to do dunes restoration and we wanted to use adaptive management principals and experiment with removing invasives and hope that natives would naturally recruit. However, conclusions are that the goal of 85% reduction wasn't reached in all areas and that natives do not recruit as easily as we had hypothesized. Therefore, trials have started to help the native recruitment at the Mills Property Test Site. The discussion was about objectives, were they realistic, should we be moving away from passive and more towards active restoration. Think outside the box, cattle, bulldozers, boom sprayers, etcetera. Discussed the weather as well, impact of drought and freeze. Bob H: continues with summary (see notes from RTF retreat): we are working hard to reduce collateral damage and have set that as a high priority. The group discussed improving the monitoring protocol and networking with other agencies/organizations doing this kind of work in order to glean information and practices. The group also suggested including some science academics to help refine the scientific model and to.

Bob Hill recommended not waiting ten months to help the natives. This proposal has the minimal work proposed for basic maintenance plus some native planting and seeding.

This was followed by a brief discussion about the billable rates for staff people. Land Conservancy broke down their billable rate: the crew members make \$14, they cost the LC about \$25 and they add \$15 for overhead and other expenses. The Land Conservancy has made the decision to create economically viable and relevant jobs for professionals rather than having intermittent and high turnover positions. This saves money in retraining and efficiency. This also creates a sense of community buy in for the workers.

The group agreed that this rate is reasonable. It is important to understand that this type of justification is consistent from agency to agency

Ronnie Glick stated the reason he came was that he was surprised that the RTF got to this budget. We had started with a budget that was less than this and wanted to be sure the collaborative discussed this issue thoroughly. Ronnie expressed his concern that this is a departure because it doesn't reflect the

funding restraints for the current budget cycle. He sees everyone else is reducing; meanwhile, this project is increasing. Surprised that the dollar amount is higher and the time period is lower. Ronnie reiterates that we have to live within our means. The message has been consistent over time. Melissa suggested that we focus the conversation on the proposal.

Do we want to dip into the principal or not?

2009 Endowment Projects proposed budgets*		
Project Name	Project Sponsor	Project Budget
Invasive Species removal and monitoring	Land Conservancy	\$ 273,745.00
RTF Coord.	Land Conservancy	\$ 9,800.00
Interpretive Trailer	CNLM	\$ 5,224.00
Dunes Center Research Library	Dunes Center	\$ 6,600.00
Administration	Dunes Center	\$ 35,677.00
	Total	\$ 331,046.00

*Actual current project budgets as proposed as of today's (2/12/2009) meeting (this is added to the notes after the meeting by Dan McElhinney).

Melissa called a vote on dipping into principal to fund these prioritized projects:

- a) **Land Conservancy, yes,** Decision based upon doing the best biological work possible.
- b) **Dunes Center, yes,** reiterates that if we do not fund this project the opportunity cost will be too high not to fund this project. Restarting this project will likely cost a great deal more than keeping it at a minimum maintenance level.
- c) **State Parks, yes.**
- d) CNLM, no, we need to protect our resources the best we can. Jamie King states we are in a tight situation and therefore dissents, stating that if that means her proposal is off of the table that she would be ok with that stating that the endowment's future existence is more important from CNLM's perspective.

1. Mario responds: we are at the rainy day, and the losses of not doing this outweigh the losses of doing it. The opportunity costs are too great. We have reached the dire situation.
2. Bob: even in the good times our endowment will not cover these projects to the level they need to be funded. This proposal does not have all the matching funds that it needs. Other foundations and agencies are in similar situations.

e) **USF&WS Mario: who will talk with Glenn?**

1. Bob followed up with Glenn.

Comments from Glenn: "This morning I reviewed the LCSLO Proposal "Invasive Species Removal, Native Seeding, and Monitoring". At this time I would like to vote against supporting this project for the following reasons:

1. I feel that we should have a third party biostatistician/ecologist/biologist review the existing monitoring program before we proceed with any further funding.
2. The Dunes Collaborative should review the overhead actually needed by the LCSLO for payment of their staff. Perhaps this overhead could be reduced.
3. I feel that the \$150,000 Dunes Center endowment and the approximately \$7,000 library project should be shifted to the LCSLO invasives program."

6) Preparatory Planning for March 13, 2009 Collaborative Retreat

- a) John will be collecting comments and distribute them via email for discussion.
- b) Group should review attachments from previous Jostes email.
 - Summary of Follow-up from 2008 Retreat
 - Overview of Draft Retreat Agenda
 - Preparation and Prerequisites for Success

7) Information Items and Updates

- a) Fundraising and Science Subcoms are very important to moving forward.
 1. Science Subcom will be defining its scope at the next meeting.
- b) RG: no update on brochure.

1. There are substantive comments from Glenn which speak to a redesign.
 2. Mario: there is a quote for printing.
 - Updates should be minor at this point.
 - Ronnie has them and he is busy but will get to it.
 3. Melissa: why are there major comments?
 4. Ronnie will go forward with returning comments to Terre.
 - Month or so out.
- 8) Adjourned, 11:45am Next Meeting: Annual Retreat March 13, 2009, Sycamore Resort, Avila**