



Meeting Minutes
Dunes Restoration Task Force
Thursday, August 27, 2009
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm
The Land Conservancy
547 Marsh Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Restoration Task Force Members:

Dunes Center	Mario Castellanos, Dan McElhinney
Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo:	Mark Skinner, Ryan Ihm, Daniel Bohlman, Bob Hill, Kaila Dettman
California Department of State Parks:	Ronnie Glick, Nancy LaGrille
SAIC:	Lauren Brown
Melissa Boggs	OSPR

1. Introductions and Agenda Review (5 minutes)

- Daniel introduced The Land Conservancy's new crew leader Ryan Ihm.
- Daniel review the agenda.

2. Review of 1st and 2nd quarter management and monitoring schedule (25 Minutes)

- Mark Skinner reviewed the second quarter invasive species control program (see accompanying handouts), which included a look at the top 25 LMUs for treatment hours since 1999. A suggestion was made to include acreage in this chart. See attached.
- Mark Skinner reviewed the projected invasive species work for the third quarter which will focus on beach grass in the back dune areas surrounding Black Lake, ConocoPhillips, and State Parks Pismo Preserve (see accompanying handouts).

3. Discussion: Review proposed changes to the 2010 Dunes Invasive Species Treatment and Monitoring Program. (90 Minutes)

- Please see attached meeting minutes.

4. Round Table Discussion (time remaining)

5. Next RTF meeting July 16, 2009 3-5pm Location LCSLO office.

RTF Meeting Minutes August 27th, 2009

Discussion: Review proposed changes to the 2010 Dunes Invasive Species Treatment and Monitoring Program. (90 Minutes)

Treatment Scenarios (please refer to attached handout for scenarios)

- Daniel started this discussion by looking at current and proposed strategies with respect to ecological integrity (preserving the function and services provided to/by the dunes ecosystem). There is a need to identify a strategy which works in discreet manageable units while effectively preserving the integrity of the whole.
- Lauren had two questions:
 - Firewalls, aren't we already doing top down?

Daniel: Not really. We currently have a "northern" and "southern" firewall, but these areas are in fact NOT at the north and south bounds of the invasive species range. In areas that LCSLO does work an effort is made to treat from the "top-down" however these areas may be surrounded by upwind source materials.

- What is the difference between "best of best" and DPA?

Daniel: best -of-the-best areas identified areas with a high occurrence of rare floral species threatened by invasion by non-native plant species. DPAs, seek to identify a series of patches across the dunes landscape which taken together would preserve connectivity within the G-N Dunes Complex, and maintain ecological integrity. The identification of these areas NEEDS to be based on an expanded set of metrics to include faunal species and must be careful to consider minimum patch size. DPAs may be areas that currently do not require any restoration effort but should be identified and monitored to ensure stability. It is the thought of LCSLO that many current treatment areas could become DPAs to capture previous effort and investment.

- Ronnie: Is positive about DPA and does not like the "rare plants only" focus. Wants to focus on intact habitats, faunal species. May have to call major infestation a loss.
- Daniel: Top down may mean loss of many good habitats on the brink. DPA could create patchwork across dunes infill may passively fill in between active restoration (influence may influence outside of DPA).
- Mario: Need to keep contiguous habitat, corridors intact.
- Ronnie:

- Big issues- data gap related to faunal (mainly insects)
 - Should do landscape level review @ 5 years
 - Need to assess where we are treating and how they are performing
 - Remote sensing will be very useful, favors monitoring program that addresses landscape level changes, losses, etc.
- Daniel: Monitoring review
 - Lauren: Important to look at where are we seeing expansion, contraction, etc.
 - Ronnie: Need to look at how remote sensing might work- satellite imaging w/ground truthing. Estimate coverage, ability to look more broadly.
 - Lauren: Assess LMV survey from 1998. Should go back and revisit. Every 5 years spend 6 months revisiting?
 - Lauren: DPAs need to be defined. For example, minimum size, species, location? Effort to protect listed species must continue. Thistle and lupine cannot not be abandoned. A combination of approaches could be used as funding is available. In years of less funding need to have priority areas.
 - Daniel: During years of limited funding scenarios and of the alternatives could be scaled. Need to identify tools to establish DPAs. It is important to keep the momentum.
 - Mario: Scenarios 2 and 3 don't seem possible
 - Lauren agreed that they cannot be done right now, it is not possible to identify where or other specifics, but we can choose a conceptual approach. We need to show successes for funders & need to show our approach/plan to potential funders.
 - Daniel: DPA helps define projects for proposals to funders
 - Using place names and public opportunities looks attractive to funders
 - Mario: we need a landscape level baseline survey, we can't do scenarios 2 & 3 in 2010.
 - We need to do annual effectiveness monitoring and 5-year surveys/assessments.
 - Daniel pointed out that we need to take steps now and scenario 1 will operate in background. LCSLO foresees preserving treatment scenario 1 in 2010, while

performing the 5-year re-assessment of the whole complex. Following the re-assessment, a revised priorities list will inform where to focus treatment.

- Mario concerned about choosing scenarios, how do we choose?
- Lauren: need to move to something more sustainable, better for funding sources
- Mark stated that Scenario 2 provides best value for the money for veldt grass
- Lauren: wants to retain information from before
- Daniel: need informed decision for funding
- Ronnie: Reassessment is needed and the scenarios are not mutually exclusive
 - The 5-year assessment would be a guide for decision-making for 2011-2015, for 2010-funding we would continue to fund scenario 1
 - Ronnie's choice is a combination of scenarios 2 and 3 (i.e. a hybrid of the two)
- Lauren's #1 choice is established DPA's, and with more funding we would advance the fronts- see how assessment works.
- Mario's choice is that for the short term we would use Scenario 1, and we need more info for long term.
- Melissa's choice was Scenario 3, wants to broaden focus to include flora & fauna (not just rare plants).
- Everyone seems to be in agreement that Scenario 3 appears to be the strongest approach and that we need to move forward with gathering more info to help with identification, delineation, etc.
- Will DPA's remain static? No. Not exactly. Once an area is identified as a DPA it will (barring some unforeseen issue) remain a DPA. However, the 5-year reassessment will help inform whether we expand the size or number of DPAs. For example: if a DPA is staying pristine, we will build off of it to expand the DPA. Want to consider needs of the data in advance to help answer questions about how we define DPA's. There may be opportunities for graduate work.

Monitoring

- Daniel pointed out that it really was a pilot program and should be relayed upon to inform our future program but was not intended to BE the program forever.

- Basic question: Is treatment effective at reducing invasive species? Yes.
- Second Question: Were native/rare plants coming in? No.
- Brought up the question of passive vs. active restoration
- Change how? Ask different questions?
- John Chesnut – (via email) strongly reminded the group that the basis of science is hypothesis testing. Otherwise it is simply monitoring.
- No change scenario? Should we still be monitoring? Ronnie and Lauren: Leave the clipboards at home this year
 - Retain budget, the re-evaluation is still a form of monitoring.
- Glenn is in favor of DPA, thinks monitoring not needed this year, and preferred Monitoring Option D for long-term programmatic efforts.
- Ronnie-Can we do similar information gathering from one of the sites? And get large scale cover? More efficiently?
 - Can we perform 6 at 2 hours each instead of 9 at the current duration?
 - What do we want to know?
- Lauren: if we use Qualitative vs. quantitative the data will lose validity, so why bother?
- Mario: Already answered question
- Daniel: Assessment more helpful-
- Mario: assessment methods-referenced Environmental Management publication,
- Suggested using Subcontractors
- Statistician liked Scenario 3
 - Said existing monitoring should be terminated if no changes were made to the overall program.
 - Need to know the question to come up w/ new protocol. Hypothesis testing!

Recap

- RTF is strongly endorsing 5 year re-assessment
- Maintain treatments for 2010
- Scenario 3 attractive, but no decision
- Terminate current monitoring protocol
- DPA's include people component? Yes, some will.