

## Final Project Report – April 2007

### Virgin River Conservation Partnership 2005-OLVF-611-P-2005-01

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#### **PROJECT REVIEW:**

**What measurable goals did you set for this project and what indicators did you use to measure your performance?**

The contract to the Outside Las Vegas Foundation for the *funded position* which insures the goals and objectives of the VRCP Partnership of which the Clark County DAQEM and DCP are major participants are outlined below:

#### **PROJECT TASKS AND MILESTONES:**

CONSULTANT shall perform the following tasks to support and complete the PROJECT:

- Work with the COUNTY and other agencies involved in the Virgin River Conservation Partnership to plan for effective and efficient monthly meetings. This includes maintaining phone or e-mail communication with Partnership members as necessary, preparing and distributing meeting agendas, collecting and distributing meeting materials in advance or at the meetings, consulting with Partnership members on meeting logistics, and preparing and distributing meeting notes.
- Facilitate all meetings as an advocate of fair and equitable participation and avoid advocating for an interest, party, or project outcome.
- Identify opportunities for resolving issues and avoiding barriers to consensus.
- Maintain an atmosphere that encourages trust and credibility during the meetings.
- Ensure that during the meetings the focus is on fostering meaningful discussion that works toward facilitating consensus among the group.
- Assist the Partnership in developing strategic direction and understanding critical success factors as related to the goals and roles of the Partnership.
- Represent the Partnership and its interests in coordinating with other groups sharing an interest in information input for the Partnership website hosted by Entrix Corporation.

CONSULTANT shall perform the following milestones to support and complete the PROJECT:

1. Within ten (10) business days prior to meetings of the Partnership, prepare and distribute meeting agendas, including meeting materials.
2. Prior to meetings of the Partnership, review meeting materials and gather input from appropriate individuals, coordinate with Partnership members to have meeting logistics in place, and coordinate with meeting participants regarding their roles and responsibilities during the meetings.

3. Within ten (10) ten business days after the Partnership meetings, prepare and distribute meeting notes and updated Partnership materials.
4. Coordinate with the Partnership to develop web content for the Partnership website hosted by Entrix Corporation. Provide progress reports at Partnership meetings and include in the meeting notes and County quarterly reports.

**To what extent has your project achieved these goals and levels of performance?**

The major ongoing activity and stated value by Virgin River Conservation Partnership members (the key indicator of relevance and meeting of goals) is that Partners share pertinent information related to plans and programs on the Virgin River Corridor at monthly meetings, through e-mails, and continued conversations outside of VRCP meetings.

Monthly meetings feature “Partner Updates”, special presentations and/or field trips which allowed members (individuals and agencies) to discuss plans and activities in the Virgin River corridor with several coordinating agencies at the ‘same time’ – a networking and information sharing activity that resulted in increased attendance at monthly meetings and increased open dialogue and collaborative behaviors outside of meetings with agency staff responsible for carrying out the work in the lower Virgin River Corridor.

The Virgin River Conservation Partnership primarily functions as an internal information sharing group. However; in 2006 the group took its first step toward preparing for public outreach as the Virgin River HCP is being developed to plan for growth projections in the Virgin River Corridor over the next decade.

A Virgin River Conservation Partnership brochure was designed, produced and distributed through public and governmental agencies throughout the area and greater Clark County. It is available through the VRCP Coordinator at [dcampbell54@cox.net](mailto:dcampbell54@cox.net) or by calling 702.845.4393.

In addition, a VRCP web page <http://dev.fargeo.com/vrhcp/> was designed and is being hosted on the Entrix website, which through 2006 remained an internal resource for agencies working in the Virgin River area. Plans include opening the web site and VRCP web page and VRHCP website to the public as the VRHCP draft plan is completed and public input is sought.

2006 quarterly reports can be accessed through the Clark County Desert Conservation Program complete with meeting agendas, notes and meeting presentations.

**Did the project encounter internal or external challenges?**

No

**How were they addressed?**

N/A

**Was there something Clark County could have done to assist you?**

N/A

**What lessons did you learn from undertaking this project?**

The key to the success of bringing stakeholders together is consistency, transparency and commitment to meetings of maximum value to the participants. The fact the VRCP group is coordinated and facilitated by an experienced facilitator who is not an employee of any of the

stakeholder groups ensured a level playing field at meetings. All members were encouraged to participate in meetings by presenting, sharing, developing or seeking input at each meeting.

**What impact do you think the project has had to date?**

The major impact of the VRCP meetings has been described by individual members with the following key points shared at VRCP meetings:

- Attendance has grown from an average of 8 participants to 15 meeting participants
- Participants express that this is the meeting to obtain input on collaborative projects, share research and white papers, coordinate efforts, and meet with colleagues they normally would not have the opportunity to see in person due to busy schedules and commitments to various meetings that rarely include interagency coordination and planning.

**Is there additional research or efforts that would complement or add to your project that could be conducted?**

- Additional recommended efforts moving forward include:
  - active participation in anticipated public input meetings on the VR HCP in 2008
  - presentations in schools to youth living in the Virgin River Corridor
  - development and implementation during calendar year 2007 of a public outreach plan

## **FORMAL REPORT:**

### **Virgin River Conservation Partnership 2005-OLVF-611-P-2005-01**

#### *Species Addressed*

Species include the woundfin, Virgin River chub, Southwestern willow flycatcher, and Yuma clapper rail.

#### *Summary Project Description*

Virgin River Conservation Partnership ['VRCP'] is a collaborative group of public agencies and entities which has formed to coordinate issues of conservation and restoration of the Virgin River ecosystem together with all other interested partners.

#### *Project Status/Accomplishments*

Key outputs of the VRCP group during this contract period include:

- Discussion, design, production and distribution of a public education brochure initially printed on in June 2006.
- Development and posting of a VRCP webpage on the Entrix VRHCP website (continues to be an internal site to date) located at <http://dev.fargeo.com/vrhcp/>

The Virgin River Conservation Partnership was conceived in the spring of 2002 – originally a project of the NPS – Rivers & Trails Program. The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, also known as the Rivers & Trails Program or RTCA, is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. RTCA staff provides technical assistance to community groups and local, State, and federal government agencies so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. When the original funding concluded in 2004 – the Outside Las Vegas Foundation facilitated shared funding of the program to assure continuity of the Partnership.

#### *Partners:*

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality  
 Arizona Department of Water Resources  
 Arizona Game and Fish  
 Bunkerville Town Advisory Board  
 Clark County Department of Air Quality and Environmental Management  
 Clark County Desert Conservation Program  
 Clark County Flood Control District  
 Clark County Rural Town Services  
 Clark County Town & Liaison Services  
 City of Mesquite, Nevada  
 Colorado River Commission  
 Conservation District of Southern Nevada  
 Entrix  
 MRREAIAC  
 Mohave County, Arizona  
 Mohave County Flood Control  
 National Park Service – Lake Mead National Recreational Area  
 National Park Service – Water Resources Division  
 Nevada Department of Wildlife  
 Old Spanish Trail Association

Outside Las Vegas Foundation  
 ROBCYN, LLC  
 Southern Nevada Interpretive Association  
 Southern Nevada Water Authority  
 The Conservation Fund  
 Trust for Public Land  
 U.S. Corp of Engineers, Los Angeles District  
 U.S. Bureau of Land Management – Arizona Strip Field Office  
 U.S. Bureau of Land Management – Las Vegas Field Office  
 U.S. Bureau of Reclamation – Lower Colorado Regional Field Office  
 USDA – Natural Resource Conservation Service  
 USDA – Wildlife Services  
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 U.S. Geological Survey  
 Virgin Valley Water District

*Project Contact:*

Alan O'Neill, Executive Director – Outside Las Vegas Foundation, (702) 461-6162  
 Deborah Campbell, Virgin River Partnership Coordinator-Facilitator, (702) 845-4393

*Funding:*

\$81,000

*Completion Date or Status:*

Consultant (Outside Las Vegas Foundation) is retained under this contract for the period of April 1, 2005 through March 31, 2007 with the option to renew for (1) 2-year period. The Virgin River Partnership is an ongoing collaborative partnership with a four year history.

During calendar year 2006 the Virgin River Conservation Partnership met as a group 6 times: February 24, 2006; April 28, 2006; June 16, 2006; August 17, 2006; October 20, 2006; and December 15, 2006.

The August 17<sup>th</sup> meeting was a joint meeting of the Virgin River Conservation Partnership and the Upper Virgin River Collaborative – the first meeting of its type bringing together more than 70 individuals from agencies representing Nevada, Utah and Arizona Virgin River and Virgin River Corridor interests. The meeting was convened by the US Army Corp of Engineers, Los Angeles District which has secured funding from the federal government to conduct a Virgin River Watershed Study.

During 2005, monthly meetings were held at the following partner agencies throughout Clark County. See list below:

January – Mesquite City Hall, Mesquite  
 February – Clark Co. Government Center, Las Vegas  
 March – Clark Co. Government Center, Las Vegas  
 April – BLM USFS FWS Interagency Offices, Las Vegas  
 May – BLM USFS FWS Interagency Offices, Las Vegas  
 June - Mesquite City Hall, Mesquite  
 July - Southern Nevada Water Authority, Las Vegas  
 August - Clark Co. Government Center, Las Vegas  
 September - Department of Wildlife, Las Vegas  
 October – Colorado River Commission of Nevada, Las Vegas

November/December - Mesquite City Hall, Mesquite

*Documents/Information Produced:*

All documents prepared by VRCP members for presentation at monthly meetings can be found on the VR HCP website at the following address:

*VRCP meeting presentations, white papers and photographs:* <http://dev.fargeo.com/vrhcp/>  
*Click documents, Log in information: stakeholders – vrchpSh.*

## **Introduction:**

### ***Project Description***

The Virgin River Conservation Partnership is a collaboration of governments, agencies and organizations working together to develop a comprehensive conservation and management strategy for the Virgin River ecosystem.

*Vision:*

The Virgin River Conservation Partnership will create a restored, protected Virgin River ecosystem through collaborative planning and management and community-based action.

*Mission:*

The Virgin River Conservation Partnership seeks to balance the conservation and restoration of the Virgin River ecosystem with economic development, while promoting ecological sustainability, economic viability, responsible use and stewardship, and long term community benefits.

*Virgin River Conservation Partner Responsibilities:*

Participates in scheduled meetings; assumes responsibility for reviewing all meeting material provided in advance gathering input from appropriate individuals with the designated agency or group, as appropriate;

Is the primary liaison between the Partnership and designated agency or community partner; represents the interest of the designated agency or community partner or, if individual, broad community interests; promotes the involvement of the partner agency or community group in the work of the Virgin River Conservation Partnership;

Actively contributes expertise and information to the Partnership as a staff member or volunteer;

Represents the Partnership in the community, building public awareness and motivating community involvement; and

Participates in the administration and management of the Virgin River Partnership.



*Background and Need for the Project:*

Clark County is developing a Conservation Management Strategy to identify and prioritize actions and funding of those actions for the County portion of the Virgin River, as required by

the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Incidental Take Permit No. TE 034927-0 issued for the Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan. COUNTY is working with other agencies through the Virgin River Conservation Partnership.

Over the last decade, the City of Mesquite and Clark County have experienced high growth rates and associated increasing demands for residential and commercial development. To meet the needs of increased growth, federal lands surrounding the City were made available for acquisition and development. This was done as part of the *Mesquite Lands Act of 1986*, as amended in 1996. Before development can proceed, the City must obtain a *Section 10 permit* from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to comply with the federal *Endangered Species Act (ESA)* [16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.]. To obtain a permit, the City must develop a Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) that will outline the activities to occur and measures that will be taken minimize effects on threatened and endangered species; in this case, in the *Virgin River Watershed*. This Virgin River Habitat Conservation Plan (VRHCP) is being developed jointly by the City, County and FWS and will cover activities conducted by the City and County that will affect the main stem of the Virgin River and surrounding watershed. Activities are primarily planned development and ongoing operations and maintenance activities of flood control facilities, parks and recreational trails, and current restoration efforts



The Outside Las Vegas Foundation has subcontracted with a consultant (Deborah Campbell of Deborah Campbell and Associates) to plan, conduct, manage, and evaluate meetings of the Virgin River Conservation Partnership and to represent the partnership and its interests by coordinating with other groups sharing the common interest. The efforts have resulted in enhanced meetings of the Virgin River Conservation Partnership and increased effectiveness of the Partnership by efficiently coordinating issues of conservation and restoration on the Virgin River.

## ***Project Goals and Objectives***

### *Role(s) of Virgin River Conservation Partnership:*

Facilitates communication and encourages collaboration between agency and community partners;

Serves as a clearinghouse of information, while actively sharing knowledge, expertise, and/or other resources;

Serves as a forum for discussion and recommendation of strategies, actions and issues related to Virgin River Conservation programs and mandates; and,



Supports and coordinates funding efforts by members of the Partnership.

*Goals of Virgin River Conservation Partnership:*

Conserve and restore the Virgin River ecosystem;

Coordinate and participate in the planning, development and implementation of strategies for Virgin River conservation;

Establish a sustainable partnership;

Build public awareness and encourage community involvement;

Maintain community health and quality of life;

Seek compatibility between conservation and development efforts; and,  
Recognize contribution of agriculture lands to wildlife and riparian ecosystems.



### ***Methods and Materials***

N/A

### ***Results and Evidence of the Results***

Meeting attendance has increased 25% since the inception of the monthly meetings bringing all governmental stakeholders together in facilitated meetings. Representatives from represented groups indicate the major outcome for them is the chance to meet in one room together on a scheduled basis to share information and coordinate common efforts in the Virgin River Corridor.

### ***Evaluation/Discussion of Results***

This project is measured by the number, quality and attendance at scheduled meetings. All contracted goals of the VRCP facilitator/coordinator were met with the exception of distributing notes from meetings within 10 business days of each meeting.

Originally the plan was for notes to be drafted by meeting participants on an agency rotational basis. There was little interest in agency members taking notes; therefore, the facilitator took notes and facilitated meetings concurrently, resulting in delayed note compilation and distribution following meetings.



***Conclusion***

Virgin River Conservation Partnership meetings continue to be effective according to meeting participants – a continued contract to the Outside Las Vegas Foundation funded by Clark County, SNWA, City of Mesquite and BLM for the period of April 2007 to March 2008 has been funded and is in the process of approval – evidence of the continued value of such meetings and collaboration.

***Recommendations***

Continue VRCP monthly meetings as long as partners see the value and continue to demonstrate their support through funding and meeting participation.

***Literature Cited***

n/a