

NLCS Capacity Grant Application

Project Title: Black Rock NCA Volunteer Project Management
Applicant Name: Matthew Ebert
Organization: Friends of Black Rock High Rock
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Background:

The Black Rock - Desert High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area (NCA) and 10 associated Wilderness areas cover some 1.2 million acres of public land situated in 3 Nevada counties-- Washoe, Pershing, and Humboldt. A large portion of the area is in rural Humboldt County with a population of some 15,000 with about 9.7% of those people living well below the nationally recognized poverty level. There are three Paiute tribal reservations in Humboldt County consisting of 6% of the total population. About 15% of those tribal members live below the poverty level. All of these tribes are in the Paiute clan have a population total of 9,705. All of these tribes present an equal level of poverty. Approximately 18.87% of the population in Humboldt County is Hispanic or Latino. Pershing County has similar statistics, is very rural and even more sparsely populated with about 7,000 residents and is home to the Lovelock Paiute Tribe. The gateway community of Gerlach, Nevada in Washoe County is very rural and isolated, boasting a total area population of 499 with 14.6% of the population living well below the poverty line. Washoe County is also home to the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe with ties to the NCA. Additionally, 67% of Nevada is BLM public land, which leads to complicated multi-use land decisions.

Given the statistics above, the Black Rock NCA and Wilderness faces many challenges that result from being in a very remote location with little or no on-site economic base and diverse user groups presenting a multitude of environmental impacts and issues. These include but are not limited to: illegal dumping, vandalism and looting of prehistoric and historic cultural resources, vehicle damage to sensitive resources including endangered species habitats, fragmented wildlife habitat created by illegal off road vehicle use, user group conflicts, and more. Many of these impacts result from a general lack of knowledge and understanding about the nature of the fragile desert resources as well as the natural and historical significance of the area. Some impacts are a direct result of the lack of a land use ethic by users of these public lands.

The Friends of Black Rock High Rock works with the BLM, partner groups, gateway communities, and other public agencies to meet these challenges through a comprehensive outreach and public education program. We provide opportunities for diverse users to participate in direct service restoration and resource protection volunteer projects. We work directly with over 100 volunteers a year to help educate visitors, restore landscapes, and bring additional economic resources to gateway communities through tourism. The main goal of our program is to promote land stewardship ethics among visitors and users to prevent resource damage, and to connect people to the land through direct experiences and educate them about its rich heritage. We also will establish a sustainable source of support and volunteer labor to work on projects and perform tasks that would otherwise go undone in this remote region. Having our offices and staff located in Gerlach also helps with logistics and is of great value to our partners.

Project Outline:

Our objectives are to extend our outreach to better include several underrepresented groups who are active in the region. These include ranching interests, off-highway vehicle users, hunters, community residents, and destination-related businesses. We will achieve this by building awareness via displays to be installed in targeted locations such as ranch supply stores, OHV dealerships, and highly trafficked and relevant gateway businesses. Displays will communicate the stewardship message targeted toward that particular audience and will provide a platform to distribute other publications, post information, and to engage memberships.

Further, we will develop a presentation to bring to community meetings and user group organizations to better communicate why their cooperation in stewardship education is vital to the long term viability and accessibility of the region. This will be a Power Point-style presentation/slideshow/movie and will also be useful in a fund raising context. We will also upgrade our other presentation materials from an outdated trifold tabletop presentation to a sturdier, flexible-messaging wind-resistant system. Components would include the display, various message elements (posters, images, etc). In addition, our tabletop display will be updated so that we are able to present in two locations on any given date. This will be supported in part by a grant from the Nevada Commission on Tourism.

The next objective is to engage these newly recruited members and partners in direct service volunteer events, either in collaboration with the many diverse users of the NCA who are already active, or in their own hosted projects. A catalog of projects and priority tasks is being developed by the Nevada Outdoor School in cooperation with the BLM, based on projects listed in the Implementation Plan for the NCA Resource Management Plan (RMP). These projects provide for restoration of Wilderness landscapes; road, trail, and campsite improvements; resource and habitat protection; and outreach through education and interpretation from the visitor station in Gerlach. We will work with the Nevada Outdoor School, Desert Research Institute, and the BLM to develop and distribute a survey to these new partners & stakeholders to identify projects that would fit within the objectives of the NCA RMP, thus allowing them to help rank priority projects and allow them the opportunity to sponsor or complete projects. This will further extend the feeling of ownership and responsibility among these groups, thus achieving our mission.

FBRHR is a nonprofit member organization which educates the public to foster stewardship and preserve the unique character of the Black Rock Desert region. The following is a list of some of our current partner organizations, volunteers, and stakeholders:

Partners include: Friends of Nevada Wilderness; Back Country Horsemen; Sierra Club; Desert Survivors; Desert Trail Association; Earth Guardians; University of Nevada, Reno; Reno Gem and Mineral Society; Leave No Trace, & Tread Lightly! Programs; Washoe County Sheriff's Department; Surprise Valley Chamber of Commerce; High Desert Montessori School; local gateway community schools; Nevada Division of State Parks; Oregon California Trails Association; Trail West Inc; Desert Research Institute; Black Rock City LLC; Nevada Off Highway Vehicle Coalition; Gerlach Empire Citizen Advisory Board; and more.

Stakeholders include: The NCA Resource Advisory Subgroup; gateway communities in Washoe, Pershing, and Humboldt Counties in Nevada and in Modoc County, California; various Paiute Tribe reservations; Solider Meadows Ranch and other grazing permittees; OHV organizations like High Rock Trekkers; various hunting clubs; major landowners; and more.

Budget:

Funding from the capacity building grant will be used to support the salary of the Friends of Black Rock High Rock Communications Director, who develops the publications, displays, and presentations which will attract the attention and participation of these various groups. The responsibilities of this position are currently performed by volunteer board member Margie Reynolds, who has been providing many of these services pro-bono, and as an outside consultant supported by our contract with the BLM and a grant from the Nevada Commission on Tourism. We anticipate funding her position as a staff member through the AmeriCorps program starting in September 2008. In addition to the above mentioned duties, Margie performs important event logistics tasks and assists in fund raising activities. The grant will also allow her to continue to provide these crucial services to the Friends of Black Rock High Rock.

Part of the mission of FBRHR is to increase stewardship and work with other organizations to make this happen. The talents and abilities of the Communication Director are vital to our outreach efforts. These efforts will also be supported by an ongoing AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer Coordinator position, which FBRHR will host at least through the end of 2009.

The following table outlines the proposed budget and contributions to the project from various organizations:

Project Element	Partner Contributions				TOTAL
	NLCS	BLM	NCOT	AmeriCorps	
Communication Director	\$7,500.00	\$1,000.00		\$10,000.00	\$18,500.00
Health benefits				\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Travel to and from events = fuel		\$4,000.00			\$4,000.00
Outreach & marketing project costs			\$15,000.00		\$15,000.00
Totals:	\$7,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$12,400.00	\$40,000.00

Timeline: Project development would be accomplished in 3 phases as follows:

1. August – September 2008:

- Develop concise project outline and list of partner locations.
- Develop relationships with partners, determine space requirements
- Develop draft displays and publications
- Begin Power Point and outreach display production
- Contact, meet with and/or survey partners & stakeholders

2. September 2008 – March 2009:

- Develop project calendar for FY 2009
- Advertise through various media, tracking results when possible
- Complete production on displays and publications
- Recruit and sign up volunteers and sponsor organizations
- Recruit for sponsorship and funding for projects and events

3. March – August 2009:

- Project implementation and display installation
- Complete the project implementation catalog and distribute
- Follow up with volunteers and organizations
- Continue advertising for future events, projects and sponsors
- Follow up survey with partners, user groups, & stakeholders
- Continue scheduling presentations