



Guadalupe-Nipoma: Dunes National Wildlife Refuge

Memorandum

October 24, 2003

To: The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center

CC: California Coastal Conservancy
CDFG-OSPR

Subject: Western Snowy Plover Education Program Final Report

Enclosed please find a copy of the "Western snowy plover education program final report" for work performed from October 1 2001 thru October 31, 2003 under the Dunes Stewardship Collaborative interim projects.

The goal of this interim funded projects were to facilitate a hands-on education program for the Western snowy plover. The ability to coordinate docent programs, produce support materials, and develop focused outreach products under this grant enhanced land mangers ability to communicate with visitors regarding actions taken to recover the species and greater understanding of issues affecting their survival. The docent programs conducted in CY02 & CYO3 will continue through support of the individual agencies working together with the resources produced under this grant.

The Outreach products and work plans produced have been made available to other sites throughout the species range and increased greater range-wide coordination of outreach efforts. Sharing of resources and expertise allowed us to complete this program under budget. A binder of the work products produced is available upon request along with CD:ROM's print ready versions of each product.

On behalf of all of us at the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service we wish to thank the Dunes Center along with the restoration subcommittee for your willingness to administer programs that aid us in achieving our mission and goals for recovery of the Western snowy plover and support for cooperative stewardship.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Barr".

Christopher J. Barr
Refuge Manager

Attachments: Final Report

Western Snowy Plover Education Program Dunes Stewardship Collaborative Final Report

Introduction:

The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes National Wildlife Refuge in partnership with the Dunes Center through funding from the Dunes Stewardship Collaborative designed, conducted educational materials and programs to assist in furthering public understanding of the fate of the federally threatened Western snowy plover. Through focused programs, exhibits, outreach products funded under this grant we were able to increase public awareness of and support for conservation strategies within key areas throughout the range of the Western snowy plover with an emphasis on the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes. Increased partnership opportunities were developed that will continue past the grant program. The program was initiated in 2001 with docent programs conducted in 2002, 2003 plover breeding season. The programs developed will be continued in 2004 season by the individual agencies utilizing the materials produced under this grant.

Project Goals:

- Develop and conduct volunteer plover docent program for the Guadalupe dunes.
- Produce supporting outreach documents to aid in interpretation.
- Support local/range-wide plover outreach coordination and partnerships.
- Establish plover exhibit at the Guadalupe Dunes Center.
- Hire education specialist and contractors to aid in coordination and product design and fabrication.

Task Accomplishment Report:

Task 1: Contract employees

The product of this task was the contracting of education specialist, graphic designer, and other specialist in development of key programs under this grant.

Education specialist(s)

The use of contract employees to serve as the education specialist to develop programs and serve as project coordinator was instrumental in performance of this grant. The contractors provide project coordination amongst California State Parks, Refuge, CNLM, and County Parks. The contractors held responsibility of volunteer recruitment, training, and supervision. Prepared support materials and coordinated the development of the outreach materials.

Graphic Designer(s)

The use of contract employees to design and prepare the layout of the outreach products was essential to the quality of the outreach materials produced. The uses of small independent contractors were used for their ability to work closely with the education specialist to develop the appropriate images and designs necessary to reach the target audience. The Graphic designers worked closely with the vendors and provide expert advice to the education specialist.

The following individuals were hired as independent contractors under task 1 through the announcement and requests for resumes. The selection of contractors was based on previous experience and ability to provide services under as an independent contractor.

2002 Education Specialist
2003 Education Specialist
2002 Graphic Designers
2003 Graphic Designer

Gail A. Kordowski
Willie Richerson
Tom Newman
Ryan Harris

Task 2: MOU Development

The goal of this task was to seek County and State support for the long-term management of the docent program and support for cooperative programs to support the recovery of the Western snowy plover. Coordination meetings were held throughout the grant program along with pre/post season plover meetings. Through these efforts it was determined and Memorandum of Understanding was not warranted and cooperative programs would be able to continue by each individual land management agencies with sharing of resources. This approach allowed the workload necessary to implement the programs to be shared amongst each agency while at the same time providing for the exchange of communication and better coordination of programs.

Task 3: Development of Work Plans

The products under this task included the development of volunteer training manuals and education plans that support the programs and products developed under this grant. Docent training manuals were developed to provide resources and information to volunteers participating in the docent program. An educator's guide was produced to allow teachers and educators to conduct focused activities in the classroom and in the field related to shorebird conservation and biology of the western snowy plover.

In an effort to identify the target audiences and to identify the types of outreach strategies and products to convey key messages an information and education plan was prepared based on samples from other areas. This plan was developed to compliment range-wide outreach efforts.

A resource binder containing all known examples of various information related to the western snowy plover was prepared. This resource binder was helpful in evaluating examples or types of products and key messages used throughout the species range related to plover conservation. The resource binder was digitized and put onto CD:Rom and distributed to others throughout the species range.

The following lists of work plans were produced under this task:

Docent Training Manual 2002 Docent Training
Manual 2003 Western Snowy Plover Educational
Activity Guide

Western Snowy Plover Interpretive It Education Plan
Western Snowy Plover Outreach Binder

Task 4: Equipment, Supplies, and Materials

Equipment and materials necessary to support the docents programs were secured under this task. The following equipment was purchased and distributed to the Rancho Guadalupe Dunes County Park, and Oso Flaco Natural Area for use in the plover docent program and outreach efforts:

Equipment Et Supplies:

Spotting Scopes and tri pods (2)
Binoculars (2) Backpacks (2)
Docent vest and sweatshirts
Beach chairs and shade screen (2)
Cell Phones (2)
Bird guide (2)
First Aid kits (2)

Binders and assorted paper supplies
Printer (1)

Task 5: Outreach products

The below listed outreach products were produced under this grant. Where feasible copies of all materials were shared throughout the range of the plover and drafts of products were solicited for review with other plover sites. The volume of request received for the materials exceeded the funding available to produce and demonstrated the demand for this type of information. Samples of the materials produced can be found in the attached binder. The outreach products were produced throughout the grant period and evaluation tools are being used to access the effectiveness of the products. Copies were distributed to each site with the Guadalupe Dunes.

Below a list of the products developed:

Outreach Products:

- Docent training video
- Hotel rack cards produced
- "Snowy plover need your help!" bookmarks
- "Share the Beach" restaurant standees
- Plover Photo Flip Guide Book
- Dunes Center Plover interactive exhibit
- "Beaches as Habitat" folder display
- Banners and Photo's
- Share the Beach posters
- Enjoy/Restore/Protect poster series

Program Accomplishments:

- Plover docent programs conducted in CY2002/2003
Agency support and agreement to continue in 2004
- Increased visitor awareness
- Matching funds and in-kind services from other organizations
- Strong support and interest in materials throughout plover range
- Ability to provide limited supplies to other sites
- Aid in Service information regarding plover outreach in preparation of final recovery plan.
Demonstrated need for volunteers on the beach.
- Development of a Tri-County Plover Outreach Forum
Web sites: westernsnowyplover.org
- Range-wide outreach coordination 2002-2003
- Plover interpretive walks very effective in helping public identify plovers and understand management actions.

Lessons Learned:

- Education specialist or volunteers need land management agency support and oversight
- Volunteers cultivated and managed by one point of contact for each site.
- Volunteers prefer to work on one particular site.
- Focus plover issues as fate of shorebirds builds stronger support.
- Look for opportunities for collaboration range-wide to reduce cost.
- Public do not know where to find and/or how to identify a plover.
- Presence of docent or agency personnel on beach most effective in seeking voluntary public compliance with seasonal restrictions.
- Significant lack of plover materials.
- Need to keep docents engaged and motivated.
- Difficult to keep volunteers throughout the season.

Summary:

Through the funding of this grant the restoration subcommittee, Dunes Stewardship Collaborative enabled us to reach a larger audience and provided focused programs and materials that help inform the dune visitors on fate of plovers and other shorebirds and reasons behind seasonal restrictions on various land management areas. The grant also allowed us to expand out partnerships and to share our experiences with the range-wide plover community allowing us to solicit feedback from others. We were able to demonstrate that through working together we can both protect nesting shorebird habitats and still provide visitor use opportunities. Without the dedicated volunteers and commitment from the agencies to support this program we would not have been able to produce the variety of products in this grant. The materials produced will continue to be useful in subsequent years and shared with others in a format they can easily modify to meet their local area needs. It is only through these cost effective means and detailed planning that we were able to develop the best possible products at the least expenses that reach the greatest audience. It is not sufficient that we understand the biology of the species, nor have the tools to manage their habitat if we can not articulate the need to protect and solicit the public's support and/or understanding of why it is important to recovery species such as the Western snowy plover. This grant enabled us to fill in the missing management piece for recovery.....public appreciation and support.