



HANDS ON THE LAND FINAL REPORT 2006 THE KEYSTONE CENTER

PROJECT TITLE: Hands on the Land
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REPORTING PERIOD: September 2005-May 2006

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

The proposal as put forth July 30, 2002 describes how Partners in Resource Education (PRE), and The Keystone Center (TKC), will work together to provide national leadership and coordination for the Hands on the Land (HOL) Program. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) submitted this proposal to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Environmental Education on behalf of PRE.

Proposal Objectives

- Develop and implement a business plan for HOL within the sponsoring agencies and nationally to ensure long term sustainability of the program;
- Maintain and expand the HOL network;
- Maintain and improve communication among sites, and browser/member access to information on the web site (<http://www.handsontheland.org>);
- Establish partnerships with national education institutions, environmental education monitoring programs and service learning organizations.

ACTIVITY REPORT:

Below is an outline of tasks and sub-tasks as identified in the work plan. Listed below each sub-task are deliverables, information regarding the completion of the sub-task and location for documentation.

1. Develop and implement a business plan for HOL within the sponsoring agencies and nationally to ensure long-term sustainability of the program. Coordinate the interest and environmental education needs of each of the five federal partners.

1.1 Develop a list of potential funders (local and national) and share with PRE.

Deliverable(s):

- Provide a list of approximately ten potential funders for Hands on the Land.

Reported Work:

- Sub-task completed in November 2005. See the September 2005 report for the complete list of potential funders. See the November 2005 report, *Appendix A* for the summary of PRE feedback.

1.2 Increase and/or stabilize PRE agency contributions to HOL (PRE lead).

Deliverable(s):

- TKC will contact the PRE agencies and provide a written report summarizing funding contributions to date.

Reported Work:

- This sub-task was deleted from the work plan per discussion with PRE members at the 10/05/05 PRE meeting. TKC solicited feedback on agency contributions. To view a summary of the feedback, see the November 2005 report, *Appendix A*.

1.3 Develop draft monitoring and evaluation plan for HOL for PRE's approval.

Deliverable(s):

- Solicit PRE input on a draft table of contents for an evaluation and monitoring plan for HOL
- Using PRE's input, draft an evaluation and monitoring plan and circulate to PRE for comment.
- Submit a final Evaluation and Monitoring Plan for HOL sites.

Reported Work:

- Sub-task completed in May 2006. To view the evaluation webpage, visit: <http://www.handsontheland.org/manage/evaluation/methods.cfm>
- To view additional communications with experts in the field, refer to the December 2005, January 2006 and February 2006 monthly reports.
- TKC added a sample evaluation submitted by the Great Sand Dunes National Park to the HOL website. To view the sample evaluation, visit: http://www.handsontheland.org/manage/documents/sample_eval.pdf

1.4 Partner with PRE to develop a business plan based on HOL criteria, including necessary resources.

Deliverable(s):

- See the completed Interagency Strategy as the deliverable.

Reported Work:

- Sub-task completed as per conversation with Drew Burnett, US EPA Office of Environmental Education, 8/25/2005.

2. Maintain and expand the HOL network, through increased capacity building. Bring additional partners and support into the HOL program at the national and local levels.

2.1 Develop a web-based application and screening process for joining HOL including sites and/or schools without established partnerships.

Deliverable(s):

- Provide the URL for the online application.
- Provide a hard copy of the application.

Reported Work:

- Sub-task completed in October 2005. To view the web-based application, visit: <http://www.handsontheland.org/manage/membership/join.cfm>

2.2 and 2.4 Assess environmental education and website needs for all sites (including those that currently do not meet HOL membership criteria that have applied to participate in the network) and provide technical assistance as appropriate.

Deliverable(s):

- Conduct a professional development and website technical needs assessment for all HOL members using a Zoomerang survey.
- Summarize needs assessment data in a report including a list of existing professional development opportunities to meet those needs.
- Create a web link on the website to the list of training and professional development opportunities identified.

Reported Work:

- Sub-task completed in March 2006. See the January 2006 report, *Appendix C*, for a written summary with recommendations. To view a list of professional development opportunities, visit: <http://www.handsontheland.org/manage/hub.cfm>.

2.3 And 2.7: Develop an online “How to” manual and other resources to guide individual site participation in HOL.

Develop a training program to help new HOL sites with the implementation of HOL at their site.

Deliverable(s):

- Develop a forty-five minute workshop presentation and guide for using the HOL website and partnering with local public land agencies. The audience for this training is those sites that are interested in joining HOL. Components should include how sites become HOL members, how sites partner with schools and examples of model agreements. Provide hard copy of the presentation with supporting materials.
- Using the forty-five minute workshop presentation guide, create an online tutorial for educators to help them utilize the HOL website and partner with local public land agencies.

Reported Work:

- Sub-task completed in May 2006. TKC held a one-day workshop at the national NSTA convention in April 2006. To view an agenda of the workshop, see the March 2006 report, *Appendix D*. A summary of the workshop can be found in the April 2006 report, *Appendix C*.
- Two “How to” manuals were created: one to guide sites in navigating the HOL website and network; another to guide sites in partnering with schools and communities. To view the Website “How to” manual updated in May 2006, visit: http://www.handsontheland.org/manage/documents/how_to_hotl.pdf
- To view the Partnering with Schools “How to” information, visit: <http://www.handsontheland.org/manage/membership/partnerships.cfm>
- TKC requested samples of agreements with schools from sites and received only one submission. The sample agreement was modified and posted to the HOL site. To view the agreement, visit: http://www.handsontheland.org/manage/documents/sample_agreement_schools.doc

2.5 Assure all relevant information is included in the website databases, and other content areas.

Deliverable(s):

- Create an online table that shows membership criteria data (see BLM input on criteria) for each HOL participant site. The table will be sortable (searchable) and updated annually.
- Provide the URL of the table (with username and password), and create a link to it from the Administration Hub page.

Reported Work:

- Sub-task completed in October 2005. To view the Membership Requirement Table, visit: http://www.handsontheland.org/manage/documents/site_info_table.cfm

2.6 Conduct usability testing with HOL members on website data input page.

Deliverable(s):

- Provide a list of ten sites to conduct usability testing for the website data input page.
- Create and provide written copy of online survey for usability testing.
- Provide URL of data input page.
- Gather results of usability survey and make recommendations for website enhancements.
Provide a written report summarizing results of usability testing.

Reported Work:

- Sub-task completed in March 2006. To view the summary of the Usability Survey, see the March 2006 report, *Appendix E*.

3. Maintain and improve communication among the sites, and browser/member access to information on the website (<http://www.handsontheland.org>).

3.1 Develop additional online tools that promote coordination and communication among HOL sites.

Deliverable(s):

- Provide estimate and written rationale for number of online tools acceptable.
- Provide written list of potential online tools that promote coordination and communication among HOL sites.
- Provide copies of monthly newsletters and responses (if any).
- Provide list of those sites receiving the monthly newsletter.
- Provide written report of progress and evaluation of current online tools.

Reported Work:

- Sub-task completed in April 2006. To view a report of current online tools, see the September 2005 report, *Appendix G* and the April 2006 report, *Appendix D*.
- Monthly newsletters were sent to all HOL members via hard copy and online each month. To view monthly newsletters, visit: http://www.handsontheland.org/articles/bulletin_results.cfm

3.2 Develop search pages for each of the databases on the website and conduct usability testing with HOL browsers and members.

Deliverable(s):

- Provide a list of HOL databases with the search function URL for each database.
- Provide a written copy of the test instruments, a collection of all raw data collected and a summation with recommendations for the future.

Reported Work:

- Sub-task completed in March 2006.
- To view the list of HOL databases with associated search function URLs, see the March 2006 report, *Appendix F*.
- To view the report on the search page Usability Survey, see the March 2006 report, *Appendix E*.

3.3 Work with PRE to develop a portal webpage of programs and materials focused on high priority resource management issues such as: watersheds, invasive species, forest health, the

role of fire etc. Use the EE Guidelines to review the quality of the programs and materials and submit to Drew.

Note: The last sentence in this item is to be deleted as per conference with Drew Burnett, US EPA Office of Environmental Education, 8/25/2005.

Deliverable(s):

- Create a portal webpage with links to programs and educator resources focused on high priority resource issues and solicit and incorporate PRE's input.

Reported Work:

- Sub-task completed in May 2006. To view the Hot Topics webpage, visit: http://www.handsontheland.org/teachers/materials/hot_topics.cfm
- Two of the Hot Topics pages, Fire and Forests, are lacking background information. Repeated efforts to get this information from the assigned PRE members were not fruitful. Mostly, TKC heard from PRE members that they didn't have time to work on the task.

3.4 Coordinate all revisions to and maintain the website according to PRE's Quality Assurance Plan (QAP).

Deliverable(s):

- Provide a written copy of the HOL website's current Quality Assurance Plan (QAP).
- Provide a written report detailing issues with the implementation of the QAP and recommendations for the future.

Reported Work:

- Sub-task completed in March 2006. To view the QAP revisions and recommendations see the March 2006 report, *Appendices G and H* or visit: http://www.handsontheland.org/manage/documents/qa_plan_2006.pdf
And: http://www.handsontheland.org/manage/documents/qap_recommendations.pdf

4. Establish partnerships with national education institutions, environmental education monitoring programs and service learning organizations.

4.1 Work with national environmental education monitoring programs (e.g. GLOBE) that allow HOL sites to share environmental monitoring data.

Deliverable(s):

- Provide a written report containing details of all communications with appropriate environmental education monitoring groups. The report will include an overview of progress and recommendations for the future.

Reported Work:

- Sub-task completed in May 2006. See *Appendix C* of this report for a complete summary.

4.2 Identify and investigate partnership opportunities with service learning organizations

Deliverable(s):

- Provide a contact list of potential partnering and service learning organizations.
- Provide a written report containing details of all communications with appropriate service learning and potential partnering groups. The report will include an overview of progress and recommendations for the future.

Reported Work:

- Sub-task completed in May 2006. To view a list of service learning organizations, visit: <http://www.handsontheland.org/slo.cfm>

- In May 2006, TKC submitted a partnership application to the Take Pride in America organization. TPA will provide HOL information on its website as a result. Partners with a link pay a fee.
- For a complete report with recommendations, see *Appendix D* of this report.

5. Administration, Monitoring, and Reporting Requirements

5.1 Update the on-line task table

(<http://www.handsontheland.org/access/administrator.cfm>) with the information from this proposal, and every two weeks during the project.

- TKC has posted the monthly reports under Administrative Monthly Reports to the Admin Hub of the HOL website.
- This task is ongoing. See *Appendices A and B*.

5.2 Provide written (and when possible, in person) program updates at PRE meetings, as well as written biannual progress reports to NRCS. Biannual progress reports will include an analysis of the progress of each task; including problems encountered and suggested solutions, as well as financial status report.

Deliverable(s):

- Provide a monthly written report that summarizes work plan progress, including website use statistics such as number of site visits per month, length of stay on the website per use, visitor domain, etc., and all revisions made to the website.
- Participate and attend PRE meetings every other month in Washington, D.C.
- Provide a biannual written report that summarizes work plan progress.

Reported Work:

- TKC provided monthly written reports and emailed to PRE members. The view monthly reports, visit: http://www.handsontheland.org/manage/planning_docs.cfm and click on the administrative monthly report. Visit all previous monthly reports for specific website revisions and website statistics.

6. Submit the SF_270 “Request for Advance or Reimbursement” shall be sent to Bill Boyer, NRCS Program Manager, P.O. Box 2890, Room 6165, Washington DC 20013.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Please note: This financial report is being submitted prior to the close of May’s financials. When these financials are completed, TKC will submit a final report.

	Original Budget EPA Grant August 2005- May 2006	Expenses 8/01/2005 - 4/30/2006	Projected Expenses 5/1/06- 5/31/2006	Funds Remaining
Personnel	\$ 88,591.50	\$ 84,128.07	\$ 6,463.43	\$ (2,000.00)
Travel	\$ 9,093.91	\$ 6,471.47	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,622.44
Contract	\$ 3,261.75	\$ 154.54	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 607.21
TOTAL	\$ 100,947.16	\$ 90,754.08	\$ 9,963.43	\$ 229.65

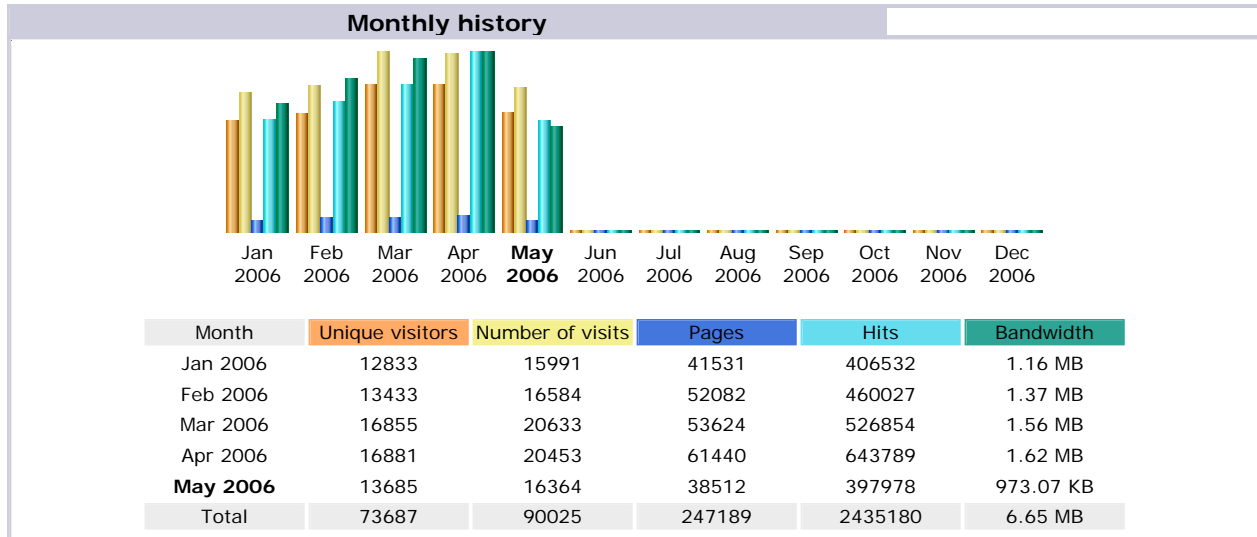


APPENDIX A WORKPLAN TASK 5.1 WEBSITE USE STATISTICS

To see a complete list of Website Use Statistics, visit: <http://reports.marketmatrix.com/cgi-bin/awstats.pl?config=HandsOnTheLand.org>

Summary					
Reported period	Month May 2006				
First visit	01 May 2006 - 00:01				
Last visit	21 May 2006 - 23:58				
	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Viewed traffic *	13685	16364 (1.19 visits/visitor)	38512 (2.35 pages/visit)	397978 (24.32 hits/visit)	973.07 KB (0.05 KB/visit)
Not viewed traffic *			86545	108142	594.47 KB

* Not viewed traffic includes traffic generated by robots, worms, or replies with special HTTP status codes.





APPENDIX B WORKPLAN TASK 5.1 UPDATES TO WEBSITE

May Website Updates
Completed work on Flash Profiles page, made allowances for special characters
Contacted new sites
Fixed site profile search engine wall
Added View Map feature on profile_details.cfm page
Updated watershed activity
Limited membership application access by agency, reworked contact directory, streamlined new member application process
Limited access to the Admin Hub to members registered in Contact Directory; redirects these members to Contact Directory Post
Teachers can now enter Educator Resources
Permissions now change when an administrator updates a user type in contact directory
Added general resource for teachers that are posting lesson plans
Added view map feature for non-Flash profile
Created method to eliminate spam-link posts
Updated membership application
Posted environmental monitoring information for EPA listing
Chose images for ATIS site tour
Created site tour editing center
Consolidated environmental monitoring and contact directory entries
Posted article explaining the new site tour update procedure
Created export data files for inverts, salamanders and slime mold
Created export page for H2O
Updated How-to Manual
Posted site tour text for Shane Barrow
Updates and bulletin post
Posted image and links for Joe Ross bulletin entry
Added new benefits to program provider application
Looked over PowerPoint and added new logos, posted sample agreement for school partnerships
Updated Bulletin Post to remove spam



APPENDIX C

WORKPLAN TASK 4.1

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION MONITORING GROUPS

Hands on the Land currently works with 49 environmental monitoring groups from schools, federal lands programs and organizations. TKC investigated the possibility of formalizing a partnership with GLOBE. The opportunity exists. However, due to funding concerns and availability of staff and time to manage the Ozone monitoring database this partnership remains informal. In order to create partnerships with high profile and established environmental monitoring groups TKC recommends the following:

- Continue to raise the profile of the HOL program (i.e. grow memberships, etc.) in order to attain name recognition from those in the field of environmental monitoring.
- Create proven protocols for data gathering for each of the databases currently on the HOL site.
- Identify additional sites around the country that can participate in the current environmental monitoring projects in order to enhance the profile of the program.
- Create basic marketing materials to encourage sites to participate in environmental monitoring through the HOL site.
- Hold workshops and/or create online guide to train sites in proper environmental monitoring protocols.
- Once a well-established and robust environmental monitoring program exists on the HOL website, approach nationally recognized monitoring groups to investigate partnership opportunities.

Although the current environmental monitoring databases are being used, they are currently utilized by only a small portion of the HOL member sites. Increasing the program's scope will serve to enhance its profile and potential partnering opportunities.

Below is a list of current groups that participate in the HOL environmental monitoring:

Acadia National Park	Deep Creek, GSMNP
Asheville HS	E. McDowell JH
Bethel Elem.	Episcopal School of Knoxville
Big Bend National Park	Fairview Middle
Big Thicket National Preserve	Fort Worth Country Day School
Biscayne, Everglades National Park	Hazelwood Elem
Boston Harbor Islands	Headwaters Forest Reserve
Cataloochee Valley, GSMNP	Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
Centennial Campus Center	Jonathan Valley Elem.
Central Elem.	Junaluska Elem.
Central HS	Meadowbrook Elem.
Cherokee Middle School	Mount Mitchell State Park
Clyde Elem.	Mt. Rushmore National Memorial
Congaree National Park	N. Canton Elem
Cradle of Forestry	N. Mills River, Lower Site
Cullowhee Valley School	N. Mills River, Upper Site

NCSU Arboretum
Obed Wild & Scenic River
Oconaluftee, GSMNP
Olympic National Park and NCMN
Pisgah NF
Prairie Ridge
Purchase Knob
Riverbend
Robbinsville HS
Rocky Mountain National Park
Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve
Tremont
Tuscola HS
Upper Cover Creek
Waynesville Middle School
West HS
Zion National Park



APPENDIX D WORKPLAN TASK 4.2

PARTNERSHIPS WITH SERVICE LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS

Report

The Keystone Center (TKC) worked with Partners in Resource Education (PRE) to create an appropriate list of service learning organizations to post to the HOL website. The list includes the following organizations: Take Pride in America, American Forest Foundation, Rocky Mountain Field Institute, Student Conservation Association, Marin Conservation Corps, National Public Lands Day, USA Freedom Corps, Watershed Action, and Wilderness Volunteers. TKC pursued a partnership with Take Pride in America (TPA) and intended to use the experience as a model for future partnerships. In October 2005 TKC staff met with TPA staff to discuss the possible partnership. After an additional meeting in early December, TKC outlined the following partnership benefits for each organization:

Benefits to TPA:

- High visibility on the HOL homepage
- Access to service learning projects on public lands via HOL sites
- Web link directly from HOL to TPA homepage
- How-to list to involve schools in TPA Schools initiative

Benefits to HOL:

- Link from TPA homepage to HOL (this was promised in early conversations; it is not possible now unless HOL pays \$10,000 in partnership fees)
- Increases the profile of HOL to be linked to TPA
- Directs teachers involved in the TPA Schools initiative to the HOL website resources and potentially to a nearby federal public lands site

TKC contacted TPA in January, February and March to request a partnership application and to solidify the partnership. Due to changes in TPA's partnering guidelines, the process was delayed. In May 2006, TKC contacted TPA again and learned of the new cost stipulation. A partnership application was submitted for HOL. However, TPA will only list HOL's name without any web link.

Recommendations

TKC recommends pursuing additional partnering organizations as the HOL program grows. Had the program been higher profile at the initial approach to TPA, a different outcome may have resulted. Name recognition is critical to solidifying national partners. Based on the experience with TPA, TKC recommends the following:

- Continue to increase HOL memberships to enhance the national profile of the program
- Create a simple marketing brochure to introduce the program to potential partners
- Include benefits of partnering with HOL in marketing
- Use TPA partnership as leverage to bring on additional national partners
- As the profile of HOL increases, approach nationally known service learning organizations (such as those listed above)
- Research partnering structures and guidelines of nationally recognized programs and adopt appropriate guidelines for HOL (i.e. payment schedule, marketing items, etc.)

In summary, the partnership process with TPA served as a model for future partnerships. When the national profile of HOL increases, so will the partnership opportunities.