

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Title: Rare and Sensitive Plant Survey for a proposed reroute of the Continental Divide Trail

Discipline: natural

Type of Project: Technical assistance

Funding Agency: National Park Service

Other Partners/Cooperators: Colorado State University

Effective Dates: 6/1/06-3/30/2007

Funding Amount: \$5734.00

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract: Rocky Mountain NP and Colorado State University, Colorado Natural Heritage Program, will cooperate to survey for rare and sensitive plant species along parts of the Continental Divide Trail through the park. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) will eventually follow the Continental Divide from Canada to Mexico. Substantial portions of the CDT already exist, including a portion of the trail that lies within the Arapaho National Forest (which is administered by the U.S. Forest Service) and crosses Rocky Mountain National Park (which is administered by the National Park Service) near Grand Lake, Colorado. The Continental Divide Trails Alliance is an advocacy group for the CDT. Wherever possible, the Alliance strives to find locations for the CDT where conflicts with motorized use are kept to a minimum. The Alliance has been working with the U.S. Forest Service to relocate a portion of the CDT within the Arapaho National Forest so that the trail no longer follows a motorized route. When the trail is relocated, it will enter Rocky Mountain National Park at a new location and will follow a section of the Bowen Gulch Trail to Trail Ridge Road. To connect with the existing CDT within the national park, a new one mile section of trail must be constructed. Two alternative alignments are being considered for the new trail.

In advance of this trail construction the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) will conduct a survey for rare and sensitive plants within the two proposed trail alignments in RMNP in 2006. Rare and sensitive plants (G1S1-G3S3) are defined by the Colorado Rare Plant Field Guide (Spackman et al. 1997 and RMNP's ESA and State Threatened & Endangered and rare specie lists 2005). A list of those threatened and endangered, rare and sensitive species known to occur in Rocky Mountain National Park has been provided to CNHP.

Outcomes with Completion Dates:

The products will include (1) locations of rare and sensitive plants (documented by using GPS Units), (2) extent of plant locations will be marked with pin flags, (3) digital photos of plant locations, (4) final report due September 30, 2006,

Keywords: Rocky Mountain NP, rare plants, Continental Divide Trail, trail construction, Colorado State University