

## **Project Summary**

### **Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit**

**Project Title:** Ph.D. Graduate Assistantship to assist with the vital signs development for the Southern Plains I&M Network

**Discipline**                      Natural Resources

**Type of Project:**            Technical Assistance/Education

**Funding Agency:**            National Park Service

**Other Partners/Cooperators:** University of Colorado at Boulder and Denver

**Effective Dates:**            4/17/2006 - 12/31/2010

**Funding Amount:**            \$127,981

**Investigators and Agency Representative:**

NPS Contact: Robert Bennetts, Southern Plains I & M Network, Capulin Volcano National Monument, PO Box 40, Des Moines, NM 88418; Tel: (719) 846-4663; robert\_bennetts@nps.gov

Investigator: Alan Knapp, Department of Biology, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523-1878, 970-491-7010, FAX: 970-491-0649, [aknapp@lamar.colostate.edu](mailto:aknapp@lamar.colostate.edu)

**Project Abstract:**

The Southern Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network (SOPN) of the National Park Service in partnership with Colorado State University to fill a 4-year Ph.D. Assistantship / Ecologist Position to assist with the development of a long-term monitoring program for 11 national parks in Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas. The student will work with their advisor and the SOPN network coordinator to select 2-4 core vital signs for protocol development. The monitoring protocol(s) will consist of, but not be limited to, field methods (possibly field tested by the student), statistical methods, determination of appropriate number of replicates to detect trends over multiple years, issues of scale, and standard operating procedures. The student will review SOPN documents (annual reports, protocols and reports developed by other entities), and participate in meetings of the SOPN Technical Committee and SOPN Board of Directors by teleconference or in-person. Critical review of the Phase II and III reports will be carried out by Dr. Knapp.

Additional funds for student support will be provided in subsequent fiscal years.

**Outcomes with Completion Dates:**

- Detailed monitoring protocols for 2-4 core vital signs.
- Review of Phase II and III Reports developed by Southern Plains Network
- Annual activity reports that will describe in detail the SOPN-related activities of the graduate student for the given year.
- Final report is due by October 30, 2010

**Keywords:** graduate assistantship, long-term monitoring, Southern Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network, Colorado State University, vital signs protocol development