

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Environmental History of Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

Discipline: Interdisciplinary
Type of Project: Research
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: Colorado State University
Effective Dates: 12/15/2009 - 6/1/2015
Funding Amount: \$55,000

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract: Little Bighorn Battlefield NM is protected because of the events which occurred there in June of 1876. The landscape, with its riparian woodlands, coulees, bluffs and prairie grasslands, was a significant shaper of the events which transpired there. Research into the historic record including analysis of historic photography, historical accounts, and Indian oral history will allow the monument to develop a clearer image of what the battlefield may have looked like in 1876, and answer important questions about plant and animal species that were present on the battlefield landscape. This information will contribute to more accurate interpretation and better visitor understanding, education, and appreciation of Little Bighorn Battlefield's landscape during the Battle of the Little Bighorn for over 290,000 visitors annually. The data will also be used by Natural Resource management staff to more closely restore the landscape conditions, geomorphology and native plants that the monument was created to preserve. This report is intended to cover the entire battlefield, not just the portion protected by the NPS. Publication and distribution of the completed Environmental History will improve the public's understanding and visitor experience by more closely matching the viewshed perceived by visitors with that experienced by the participants of the battle.

Outcomes with Completion Dates:

- Project orientation meeting: before Feb 26, 2010
- Outline with chapter headings and source list: August 31, 2010
- First draft of report and complete bibliography due to NPS contacts: August 31, 2011
- NPS and external review comments due: November 30, 2011
- Final draft of management report, including photographs and maps, due: June 30, 2012

Keywords: environmental history, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Colorado State University