

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Science workshop to support winter use planning at Yellowstone NP

Discipline: Interdisciplinary
Type of Project: TA/Education
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: Colorado State University
Effective Dates: 2/15/2010-3/31/2013
Funding Amount: \$35,368

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract: The 1974 Master Plan for Yellowstone NP stated that park management will provide for a winter use period between 1 December and 15 March each year. To support subsequent winter use plans, the park sought a diverse array of expert opinion regarding the effects of effects of over snow vehicle (OSV) on wildlife. These resulted in two published reviews (Olliff, Legg, and Kaeding 1999, Graves and Reams 2001). These winter use plans have been subject to high levels of public and judicial scrutiny. Yellowstone NP is preparing a new winter use plan to be implemented for the 2011-2012 season. In order to provide this plan with updated information from wildlife and social science research, a workshop will be conducted to enable university researchers, government scientists, and NPS personnel to identify and discuss potential effects of OSV use that should be considered for further analysis.

The workshop will be held for one week in Gardiner, MT. The first two days of the workshop will focus on the effects of OSV use on wildlife. The last two days of the workshop will focus on the effects of OSV use on visitor experience. The middle day will be used for a demonstration trip into the park in snowcoaches, to give the scientists the benefit of first-hand experience and provide opportunities for informal scientific discussions. Wildlife and social scientists will be encouraged to attend each other's sessions, because wildlife viewing opportunities are an important part of visitor experience.

Outcomes with Completion Dates: Final report summarizing workshop activity and findings is due January 31, 2013

Keywords: winter use planning, science workshop, over snow vehicle (OSV) use, wildlife, visitor experience, Yellowstone National Park, National Park Service, Natural Sounds Program, Colorado State University