

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: A Social Normative Study of Backcountry Visitor's Acoustic Expectations and Experiences in Denali Park and Preserve

Discipline: Social Science
Type of Project: Research
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: Colorado State University
Effective Dates: 8/1/2010 - 4/1/2013
Funding Amount: \$115,698 (FY11: \$55,750; FY10: \$59,948)

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract: Over the last decade, Denali National Park has developed a comprehensive park-wide inventory of the park's acoustic resources. These efforts have largely focused on quantifying the physical properties of Denali's soundscape, and have collected and analyzed sound pressure level, acoustic event, and sound source audibility data. A number of surveys administered to backcountry users in Denali have included soundscape components, and have been helpful in formulating park policy, such as the 2006 Backcountry Management Plan (BCMP). However, the BCMP acknowledges the need for additional research in certain areas, including soundscape indicators. A social study focused specifically on soundscapes in Denali is needed to fill current knowledge gaps and inform management of status and trends in visitor's acoustic expectations.

This study attempts to address questions concerning potential conflicts between, and possibly within, user groups. As Denali is faced with new and changing use patterns, intensity of uses, and modes of travel within the park, it becomes more and more challenging to provide continued recreational activities and experiences that depend on high quality wilderness conditions. Therefore, Denali National Park requires new information on visitor preferences associated with the park soundscape. By better understanding the nature of acoustic impacts in a National Park setting, we can make wise decisions about how to meet acoustic expectations of visitors under changing park visitation trends.

Outcomes with Completion Dates: November 15, 2011

Keywords: soundscape, visitor experience, Denali National Park, Colorado State University