

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Water rights activity assessment, and water rights records research and management in protection of water and aquatic resources of Units of the National Park System

Discipline: Natural Resources
Type of Project: Technical assistance and Education
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: Colorado State University
Effective Dates: 1/30/2014 - 4/30/2018
Funding Amount: \$ 64,512

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract:

The National Park Service Water Resources Division (WRD) provides technical advice and recommendations on water resources and rights issues to national parks throughout the country. Through the WRD's Water Rights Branch, NPS evaluates water development proposals and advises park management of the appropriate response to such proposals. This activity involves the review of water rights notices, research of records, preparation of maps and other information in support of NPS actions. This activity also includes developing case evidence materials and securing water rights for units of the NPS system.

The cooperative assistance of a Colorado State University student is needed to:

-Examine published notices of water right applications, prepare maps, conduct records research, and obtain technical information in support of NPS evaluations of proposed water developments.

-Collect data and information that supports evaluations of proposed water development and its impact on NPS water rights and water and water-dependent resource attributes in or near park units. Data and information relevant for collection and review includes historical documents (legislative, land, other records), water right publications and court rulings, and documents pertaining to federal and state water right regulations and policies. Depending on individual park settings, the relevant information may also include hydrology, geology, aquatic biology, and other technical data as they pertain to NPS water rights and water-related resources.

-Develop and maintain appropriate reference "libraries" to manage collected data, information, and review findings and disseminate compiled water resource information via WRD-developed internal shared sites. This includes data bases, technical document repositories, map files, water right issue files, and other filing systems as needed to allow effective archival, searching and retrieval of stored materials.

The student will: prepare weekly reports of published notices of water rights applications; evaluation requests that include maps with locations of proposed water-development projects; obtain additional information about projects; and develop and/or maintain reference "libraries" including water rights applications and archived information databases and Water Rights Branch printed records or files. The student will also be called upon as the need arises to collect data and supporting technical documents as part of technical evidence gathering efforts that support administrative and/or legal proceedings. Due dates for this latter task are driven by the courts, state administrative procedures, and/or management needs, on a case-by-case basis.

This task agreement continues a collaborative effort between NPS and Colorado State University on project together to provide an opportunity for students to gain experience in the field of natural resources management, conducting project support activities that involve research, technical assistance, and management policies related to the protection of ecosystems and water resources and management issues.

Outcomes with Completion Dates: April 13, 2016

Keywords: NPS-Water Resources Division, Colorado State University, water rights, assessment, research, students