

**Project Summary**  
**Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit**

**Project Title:** Enhancing Visitor Experience through Noxious Weed Management, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument

**Discipline:** Natural  
**Type of Project:** Technical Assistance  
**Funding Agency:** National Park Service  
**Other Partners/Cooperators:** Colorado State University  
**Student Participation:** yes  
**Effective Dates:** 3/20/2017-12/31/2018  
**Funding Amount:** \$56,800

**Investigators and Agency Representative:**

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**Project Abstract:** Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument (FLFO) lies within the eastern slope of the Southern Rocky Mountains in the Montane Life-Zone. The monument is characterized by mountain meadows interspersed with open forests of ponderosa pine. Dense forest stands of Douglas fir and blue spruce are also found on the hilltops and north facing slopes. Aspen trees are restricted to moist drainages throughout the park. Meadows occupy most of the area that falls within the boundaries of the prehistoric Florissant lakebed. Several exotic species of vegetation exist due in part to the intensive grazing and agricultural activities that occurred on the landscape before becoming a national monument in 1969. Plant communities at FLFO have been greatly affected by human activity including farming and grazing up to 1984, erosion due to overgrazing, construction of soil conservation features, logging since the 1860s, various utility rights of way, and continued fire suppression.

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument (FLFO) is in the process of enhancing its noxious weed management program to protect and preserve the native vegetation species throughout the park.

The park's management team will work with the Noxious Weeds Program of the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) at Colorado State Univ. (CSU) to cooperatively plan for and implement enhanced treatments, mapping and monitoring of new populations of noxious weeds. The CNHP Noxious Weeds Program has many years of experience mapping, treating, and monitoring vegetation across Colorado. CNHP is also very familiar with FLFO having been a partner with NPS Rocky Mountain Inventory and Monitoring Network and others to complete the FLFO vegetation map and inventory.

This project focuses on evaluating, monitoring, treatment of noxious weeds, native seed collection, plant salvage, and recommendations for revegetation of disturbed areas with native plant species. The project will also include the mapping of treatment areas, early detection mapping, and data sets for the park's annual Pesticide Use Proposal System annual report.

**Keywords:** visitor experience, noxious weed management, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument, Colorado State University, Colorado Natural Heritage Program