

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit
Project Summary

Project Title: Assessing riparian conditions aimed at facilitating willow growth and beaver habitat restoration in Rocky Mountain National Park

Discipline: Natural

Type of Project: Technical Assistance and Education

Funding Agency: National Park Service

Other Partners/Cooperators: Colorado State University

Student Participation: Yes, Graduate and Undergrad

Effective Dates: April 1, 2020 - December 31, 2023

Funding Amount: \$60,000

Investigators and Agency Representative:

NPS ATR: Scott Esser, Ecologist, National Park Service, Rocky Mountain National Park, 1000 US HWY 36, Estes Park, CO 80517, Phone 970-586-1394, Email Scott_Esser@nps.gov

Investigator: Jeremy Sueltenfuss, Professor, 601 S. Howes St, Fort Collins, CO 80523-2002, Phone (970) 491-5430 , Email Jeremy.Sueltenfuss@colostate.edu

Project Abstract:

Project Goals – The goals of this project are to have students collaborate with Rocky Mountain National Park staff to collect relevant information and data (e.g. water table levels, vegetation health, river sedimentation, and flooding potential) to support the restoration of willow, wetland, and river systems that have become heavily degraded. The ultimate goal will be to use this information to design habitat restoration projects that will increase opportunities to view beaver, elk, deer, birds, provide for better fish habitat, and enhance the overall visitor experience at the park.

Project Objectives – The expected end result of the project is to have educated students on collecting information in Rocky Mountain National Park, to inform management with information that would support the design and success of habitat restoration projects and provide information to support the current ongoing Elk and Vegetation Management Plan. This information will allow NPS staff to be adaptive in their approach and ensure restoration success.