

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Archeological Survey of Perennial Ice Patches in Yellowstone National Park

Discipline: Cultural
Type of Project: Technical Assistance
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: University of Colorado, Boulder
Effective Dates: 4/1/2011 - 4/30/2013
Funding Amount: \$10,000

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Investigator: Craig Lee, Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research, University of Colorado, Campus Box 450, Boulder, CO 80309-0450, phone: 303-735-7807, Craig.Lee@colorado.edu

Project Abstract: This project will use established methods to survey and record archaeological and paleobiological material at ice patches in the southeastern portion of the Park where no research has been conducted (Lee 2009, 2010b). Previous research indicates specific factors affect the likelihood an ice patch was used prehistorically. These factors include geographic characteristics of the ice patches, such as its location (e.g., downwind of snow catchments in relatively gentle topography), relative ease of access, relative isolation from glaciers and vast snow covered areas, and proximity to existing travel corridors. The ice patches present in the proposed project area, known as "The Trident," possess these characteristics. The PI and team will conduct pedestrian survey of the ice patches to assess the degree of melt occurring in this area. Survey will coincide with the period of maximum annual melt in the early fall. The team will document the nature of the material melting out and the PI will report the findings to the Park. The results of the survey will be used by the Park to gauge the necessity and timing of future visits to the area by Park staff. This is a stand-alone project, but it complements a similar survey that occurred in the northern part of the Park in 2008.

Outcomes with Completion Dates: April 30, 2013

Keywords: Ice Patch Archeology, paleoecological data, climate change, Yellowstone National Park, University of Colorado at Boulder