

Project Completion Report Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (RM-CESU)

Project Title: Moose-Wilson Road Adaptive Management Plan Update, continuation report

Project Code : MSU-154; J1460070027

Type of Project : Technical Assistance

Funding Agency: National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park

Partner University: Montana State University

NPS Agreements Technical Representative:

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Start Date of Project: March 1, 2008

End Date of Project: August 31, 2009

Funding Amount: \$22,500

Number of Students Involved, and Type of Student (Undergraduate, Graduate, Post Doctorate): 5 Graduate Students

Project Summary, including descriptions of project deliverables, work accomplished and/or major results. If the information is restricted (e.g. location of endangered species or cultural resources), indicate the title and location of the final report.

As part of Grand Teton National Park's Transportation Plan, management strategies have been recommended for Moose–Wilson Road. Moose–Wilson Road is a rustic, narrow, two-lane road that connects the park's Granite Canyon Entrance Station with the community of Moose, and goes through some of the best wildlife viewing areas in the park. Management strategies have been recommended because of a group of interdependent challenges and issues that are affecting the road corridor:

- Traffic Growth. Traffic volumes on Moose–Wilson Road doubled between 1988 and 2003, and

traffic is projected to continue to grow in the future. While the road operates acceptably from an engineering perspective, park personnel believe that the road is at its capacity from the perspectives of visitor experience and resource protection.

- Connectivity and Compatibility. Some members of the community desire improved mobility on Moose–Wilson Road for bicycle and pedestrian road users. However, the narrow width of the current road generally prevents a solution that would separate bicycles and pedestrians from two-way vehicle traffic. This may discourage use of these alternate modes of travel while jeopardizing the safety of those who choose to use them.

- Sensitive Environment. The Moose–Wilson Road corridor includes wetlands and wildlife habitat that would be impacted both by increased traffic and by changes or major improvements to the road corridor, such as a separated multiuse pathway.

- Access Requirements. Moose–Wilson Road serves a variety of road users, including park visitors, private landowners within the park boundary, emergency responders, park personnel and contractors. Maintaining vehicle access to these road users is at least optimal, and in some cases mandatory.

The park cooperated with the Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University to identify approaches for managing Moose–Wilson Road that could be used to address these issues. The goal was to develop a transportation management approach that enhances connectivity, compatibility between users of different modes, and preserves access to key road users (such as emergency responders and private landowners within the park boundary), while keeping traffic volumes at current levels and maintaining the existing footprint of the roadway in order to protect the sensitive environment through which Moose–Wilson Road passes.

A draft document was completed by Western Transportation Institute in January 2009. Due to funding and personnel constraints, as well as changes to the road with the addition to the LSR Preserve since WTI initiated the study, the National Park Service finalized the cooperative agreement prior to the completion of the final document.