

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Web Management and Development for Greater Yellowstone Science Learning Center and Learning Center of the American Southwest

Discipline: Interdisciplinary
Type of Project: Technical assistance
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: Montana State University
Effective Dates: September 11, 2008 - March 31, 2010
Funding Amount: \$18,900

Investigators and Agency Representative:

NPS Contact: Tami Blackford, National Park Service, Yellowstone Center for Resources, PO Box 168, Yellowstone NP, WY 82190; 307-344-2204; tami_blackford@nps.gov

Investigator: Rocky Ross, Computer Science Dept. Montana State University, EPS 357, Bozeman, MT 59717; 406-994-4804; ross@cs.montana.edu

Project Abstract:

Background Information

Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, the Rocky Mountains CESU, and the Greater Yellowstone I&M Network are collaborating with universities, nonprofits and other partners to develop a Greater Yellowstone Science Learning Center (GYSLC) and in particular a GYSLC website. The Chihuahuan Desert I&M Network, Southern Colorado Plateau I&M Network, Sonoran Desert I&M Network, and Southern Plains I&M Network have also joined to create a Learning Center of the American Southwest (LCAS) website. The goals of these National Park Service Research Learning Center websites are to connect parks, science, and people by facilitating research, promoting active partnerships, integrating science into park management, engaging citizen scientists, and providing science outreach and educational opportunities. In support of those goals, the GYSLC, LCAS, and Montana State University will work together to further develop the websites. The websites serve as the definitive source for scientific information on the important natural and cultural resources within 52 park units (see www.greateryellowstonescience.org and <http://dev.southwestlearning.org/>).

MSU, the "University of the Yellowstone," has developed a strong partnership with the National Park Service (NPS) and with Yellowstone National Park specifically. In particular, MSU has worked to provide relevant scientific results as well as strategic guidance to the NPS regarding ecosystem processes and patterns in parks in the western U.S., including Yellowstone. Given MSU's mission to synthesize and communicate scientific understanding about the Greater Yellowstone and other large, complex ecosystems, they have been an active participant in the development of the GYSLC. In 2006, the Greater Yellowstone Science Learning Center began working with MSU's Big Sky Institute to design and host the GYSLC website to communicate natural resource information and results from monitoring.

The goal of our partnership is to establish a relationship with the MSU Computer Science Department to collaborate on the further development of a robust and interactive website designed to communicate science that can be shared with up to 21 other Research Learning Centers throughout the nation.

Our specific objectives are to:

- Streamline and improve the functionality of the current GYSLC and LCAS websites and create a blank website template that can be handed to other RLCs
- Work on the project cooperatively with university partners and NPS staff
- Get people (NPS staff, university staff, students, and the public) excited and informed about science in parks
- Make easily accessible the results of research and monitoring to assist park managers in science-informed decision making

Statement of Work

The work outlined in this proposal will be coordinated by **Tami Blackford (YELL)** and **Rob Bennetts (SOPL)** in collaboration with **Dr. Rocky Ross, Computer Science Dept., Montana State University** (CESU cooperator). **Mateo Jara**, (CESU cooperator), will be the main researcher on the project working with the NPS to complete the scope of work.

The Cooperator Agrees to:

- Appoint Rocky Ross, Computer Science Dept. as Principal Investigator.
- Hire and supervise Mateo Jara and/or other employee(s) to work on NPS tasks identified in the agreement. Direct supervision will be the responsibility of MSU.
- Perform the technical work necessary to achieve the agreed-upon improvements to the structure of the websites.

The National Park Service Agrees to:

- Provide financial assistance to Montana State University to accomplish the goals of this agreement.
- Assign Tami Blackford, Science Communication Lead, as the National Park Service Key Official.
- Assign Rob Bennetts, Southern Plains I&M Network Coordinator, as an NPS collaborator.
- NPS Key Official will decide on overall scope of the project and work with the cooperator to assure that website development is to NPS satisfaction.
- Work closely with MSU personnel throughout the project to evaluate the progress of this project and provide direction for project objectives.

Both the National Park Service and Montana State University will:

- Cooperatively determine type and timing of project activities, evaluate progress of work, and provide direction.
- Work collaboratively on hiring student and/or professional employees.
- Train and motivate employees to perform work assignments. Provide feedback to employees regarding work assignments, with the ultimate supervision remaining with MSU.
- Cooperatively write a completion report for the RM-CESU to post on their web site.

Outcomes with Completion Dates:

Due Date for Final Report and/or Other Products: 1 September 2009

Keywords: Web Management and Development, Greater Yellowstone Science Learning Center, Learning Center of the American Southwest Parks, Montana State University