

# **Project Completion Report**

## **Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (RM-CESU)**

**Project Title:** Web Management and Development for Greater Yellowstone Science Learning Center and Learning Center of the American Southwest (PMIS #146121)

**Project Code :**MSU-166 and J1580080582

**Type of Project :**Technical Assistance

**Funding Agency:** National Park Service

**Partner University:** Montana State University, Computer Science Dept.

**NPS Agreements Technical Representative:**

Tami Blackford, National Park Service, Yellowstone Center for Resources, PO Box 168, Yellowstone NP, WY 82190; 307-344-2204; tami\_blackford@nps.gov

**Principal Investigators:**

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**Start Date of Project:** September 1, 2008

**End Date of Project:** March 31, 2010

**Funding Amount:** \$18,900

**Project Summary,**

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 the Greater Yellowstone Science Learning Center (GYSLC) and specifically 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 also joined to create the 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. These websites serve as the definitive source for scientific information on the important natural and cultural resources within 52 park units (see [www.greateryellowstonescience.org](http://www.greateryellowstonescience.org) and <http://dev.southwestlearning.org/>). In this project, the GYSLC, LCAS, and Montana State University's Computer Science Department worked together to further develop these robust and interactive websites that can now be shared with up to 21 other Research Learning Centers throughout the nation.

**Project Deliverables Included:**

The rebuild of these websites that took place during the duration of this agreement was substantial and critical to the long-term success of the project, but it took longer than anyone anticipated when we began.

- Original sites were moved to a new server, where they now reside.
- Trainings/meetings were provided to guide the development of views modules and help Learning Center partners use and maintain the Drupal Content Management System.
- The original websites' structures were rebuilt and are now improved and consistent.
- Views Modules were developed.
- A template consisting of a suite of custom modules is available for use by new RLCs, based on GYSLC and LCAS websites.
- Researcher check-in prototype for YELL was developed.
- Other technical improvements were implemented as agreed, including site revisions based on results of a separately conducted evaluation.

Some of the work on the original agreement has and will continue under a different contract through the Sonoran Institute:

- A new LCAS website has since been launched and the GYSLC will follow.
- Development sites using this template are getting started for five additional learning centers (North Coast and Cascades Research Learning Network, Schoodic Education and Research Center, Pacific Coast Science and Learning Center, Pacific Islands Network, Southern California Research Learning Center).
- The sites' main search function and Google rankings continue to be improved.
- Integration with National Park Service national databases continues to be investigated.

**Number of students participating in this project: undergraduates, graduate students, degrees conferred.**

Researcher: Mateo Jara (Bachelors degree)