

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: National Park Service Vital Signs Inventory and Monitoring: technical and operational support to the Greater Yellowstone Network parks

Discipline: Natural
Type of Project: Technical Assistance
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: Montana State University
Effective Dates: 7/1/2010 - 6/30/2012
Funding Amount: \$89,962

Investigators and Agency Representative:

NPS Contact: Cathie Jean, Greater Yellowstone Network I & M Program, 2327 University Way, Suite 2, Bozeman, MT 59715; 406-994-7530; Cathie_Jean@nps.gov

Investigator: Todd Kipfer, Big Sky Institute, 107 AJM Johnson Hall, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717; 406-994-5122, tkipfer@montana.edu

Project Abstract: The goal of Greater Yellowstone Network I & M Program's partnership with Big Sky Institute is to collaborate towards scientifically robust and credible inventory and monitoring program designed to detect change in natural resources within the parks of the Greater Yellowstone Network and thus contribute towards the implementation of a Vital Signs Monitoring Plan.

The objectives of this task agreement are as follows:

1. To design and test robust sampling strategies, that will enable the Networks to achieve monitoring and sampling objectives identified in their protocol development summaries, protocol narratives, and their Network monitoring plans.
2. To use long-term data sets available from the NPS and research community-at-large to inform the Network monitoring protocols, and to ensure that data collected by the Networks are broadly applicable for use in larger regional analyses and applications.
3. To complete all necessary written sampling design components of a comprehensive monitoring protocol and Network monitoring plan, following NPS I&M guidelines.

This project will provide a wide range of technical and administrative support to assist the Greater Yellowstone Network on designing and implementing monitoring protocols. An important aspect of this Task Agreement is the mutual benefit derived by this Big Sky Institute at Montana State and NPS cooperative relationship. The primary objective of this Agreement is to design and develop sampling designs for long-term monitoring protocols for the Greater Yellowstone Network. A secondary objective, however, is to foster the development of an academic program at MSU that is responsive to the search for practical solutions to the enormous set of complex issues confronting contemporary natural resource managers. This project will enhance the knowledge base, and hence the capacity at MSU, for development of technical outreach programs that are pertinent to the sustainable use of natural resources, biodiversity conservation, and ecological restoration. Ultimately, this collaborative project also contributes to the knowledge base available at MSU to develop and deliver curricula pertinent to the real-world demands graduates will face after leaving academe.

Outcomes with Completion Dates: June 30, 2012

Keywords: Montana State University, Greater Yellowstone Network I & M Program, technical support