

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Evaluating Non-Motorized Pathway Use in Grand Teton National Park - Post-Pathway, 2010

Discipline: Social Science
Type of Project: Research & Technical Assistance
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: Montana State University
Effective Dates: 7/1/2010- 6/30/2011
Funding Amount: \$25,000

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract: As stated in the September 2006 Transportation Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Grand Teton National Park (GRTE) (1), "Bicycling has become an increasingly popular activity in [GRTE], despite the lack of designated bike lanes and bike paths. Evidence of the interest in bicycling occurs each spring, prior to opening the Teton Park Road to motor vehicles. After the road is cleared of snow by April 1, it remains closed to motor vehicles until May 1. During this time, it is available for non-motorized uses (e.g., bicycling, walking, wheelchairs, rollerblading). The popularity of these activities, especially with local residents, is evident on most days, and during nice weather the Taggart Lake parking lot is often filled beyond capacity, with the overflow continuing down the road toward Beaver Creek." Consequently, the plan recommends the adoption of separated shared-use pathways along several roadway corridors within the park. The purpose of these pathways is to enhance mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians in the park, while enhancing their safety by separating them from motorized traffic.

In 2009, 7.7 miles of shared-use pathways were completed paralleling Teton Park Road from South Jenny Lake Junction to Moose Junction, ending at Dornan's. Shared-use pathways are a major infrastructure change in the park that could impact visitor travel patterns. As stated in the 2007 EIS/Record of Decision (ROD) (2), pre- and post-pathway construction monitoring will collect data on pathway user distributions, volume, user types, behaviors, satisfaction, and conflicts to determine the pathway's effects on visitor use and experience. This project is consistent with the ROD requirements as it monitors pathway and Teton Park Roadway non-motorized traveler volumes and conducts surveys to learn about opinions on safety, accessibility and types of visitor use on the pathways. The information on the number of users, patterns of use, and different types of users (e.g., bicyclists, pedestrians, etc.) will be used to complement the wildlife monitoring and data collection program, and to inform planning and design of later phases of the pathway system (2). The wildlife monitoring is being conducted under a separate effort.

In short, this project will address the following questions: How have pathways changed non-motorized use along Teton Park Road? Have non-motorized travelers' perceptions of safety in the park changed following the construction of pathways? Baseline data was collected on these topics in 2007 prior to pathway construction. Using a similar methodology to 2007, this project will collect post-construction data related to non-motorized use along the shared-use pathway between Dornan's and South Jenny Lake.

Outcomes with Completion Dates: March 8, 2011

Keywords: Grand Teton National Park, Western Transportation Institute, Montana State University, visitor questionnaire, non-motorized use, transportation planning, adaptive management plan