

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Branding of an Ecosystem Wide Bear Safety Message

Discipline: Social
Type of Project: Technical Assistance
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: Montana State University
Effective Dates: 5/1/2012 - 2/28/2013
Funding Amount: \$5,000

Investigators and Agency Representative:

NPS Contact: Sue Consolo-Murphy, Grand Teton NP, P.O. Drawer 170, Grand Teton NP, Moose, WY 83012, (307) 739-3481, Sue_Consolo-Murphy@nps.gov

Investigator: C. Graham Austin, Assistant Professor of Marketing, College of Business Montana State University, Bozeman MT 59717, 406.994.6193, Caroline.austin@montana.edu

Project Abstract: Currently a wide variety of bear safety messages/signs can be found throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) and the presentation of these bear safety message differ across agencies as well as within agencies. Overall, agencies feel that they have adequate bear safety information and education material available, BUT question if they have the expertise to disseminate the information most effectively and so that it resonates with the public.

The proposed work aims to look at the efficacy of the bear safety messages across the entire GYE. Our objective is to ask the following two questions:

1. Is there too much variation in the bear safety messages posted by federal (and state) agencies, which results in diluting the message, confusing the message, and therefore rendering the message less effective?
2. Would land managers be more effective in disseminating bear safety messages if we were able to brand a clear and concise message and standardize signs and messaging across the landscape? (e.g., the "Stop, Drop and Roll" fire message that young children learn in elementary school).

The content of the bear safety message already exists and does not need to be re-created. Graham Austin, a marketing professor from Montana State University, will collect and assess current bear safety information and education efforts across the ecosystem from a marketing perspective, with a focus on GRTE and Yellowstone National Parks. This will be achieved by documenting bear safety messages posted throughout the ecosystem. Graham will provide her professional opinion/critique to answer the following questions: 1) can the bear safety message be branded more effectively, and 2) what is the best way to target the public with this message?

Outcomes with Completion Dates:

A draft technical report is due on November 1, 2012 and a Final draft is due by February 1, 2013

Keywords: Branding, Bear Safety Message, Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, Grand Teton National Park, Montana State University