

Project Summary
Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Complete and Implement Museum Plans, Treat Artifacts, Revise National Regis & Complete NAGPRA Project

Discipline: Cultural

Type of Project: Technical Assistance/Education

Funding Agency: National Park Service

Other Partners/Cooperators: Montana State University

Student Involvement: yes, intern

Effective Dates: April 1, 2019 through December 31, 2021

Funding Amount: \$32,427

Investigators and Agency Representative:

NPS Contact: Jason F. Smith, Jason_f_smith@nps.gov, 406-846-2070 x232

Investigator: Janet Ore, janet.ore@montana.edu, 406-994-5208

Project Abstract: For several years, Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS staff and the Principle Investigator have worked together to provide student interns with real-world museum collection management experience. This Agreement will provide 12-week hands-on internships in a NPS museum environment. The primary tasks will be to assist with inventory, assessment, and cleaning of the over 3000 artifacts on exhibit in the Ranch House, Bunk House, Thoroughbred Barn, and Blacksmith Shop, as well as thoroughly cleaning the rooms that house them. This will include hands on experience handling a vast range of object and medium types from delicate china and crystal to farm wagons and presenting in all states of stability. They will work with a team of 2 to 6 people, learning from each other, and brainstorming on best method as needed. The collection always presents an issue that even the curator will not have a clear cut answer to, and has to use all of her experience to come up with the best practice. This process will take up roughly half of the projected time at the park.

Interns will also assist with packing and moving a little over 19,000 objects. Objects need to be properly packed and moved to allow contractors to put in additional compact shelving units in the collection storage building. The curator who will work beside them in the process will train interns.

NPS museum management has changed and evolved over the last 40 years since the collection transferred into the NPS's care. The interns will learn about past practices used at GRKO and other NPS sites and how museum collections are managed by current NPS policy and laws, as well as museum trends. The team will have open discussions about the pros, cons and best practices, sometimes even with the interns bringing something in from their course work that had not been known by the NPS staff.