

RM-CESU – Project Completion Report, FY 05

Project Title: Documenting & Inventorying Ethnographic Resources at Yellowstone National Park

Park: Yellowstone National Park (YNP)

Funding Source: Rocky Mountains CESU Technical Assistance Funding in the amount of \$3,625. In-kind contribution of Yellowstone National Park’s cultural anthropologist (Rosemary Sucec) and cultural resource technician (Katie White) in the amount of \$9727. This totals \$13,352 of cash and in-kind contributions.

Contacts: Rosemary Sucec, cultural anthropologist, at 207-344-2229 and Katie White, cultural resource technician, at 307-344-2205.

University Partner, PI: Greg Campbell, Ph.D., Department of Anthropology, University of Montana, 32 Campus Drive, Missoula, MT 59812; (406) 243-2478.

Student Participants: Hilary Sheaves, 226 Kensington Avenue, Missoula, MT 59801; (406) 774-6751.

Project Description:

Ethnographic resources are an essential part of YNP. They are the animals, plants, minerals, mountains, and hydrothermal features that make up the Yellowstone landscape; however, until recently, the importance of these natural resources and their uses and meanings among indigenous human populations has not been researched, let alone understood. For example, ethnobotanical resources, are one of the less understood and acknowledged resources in the park. It was the goal of this project to identify these and other resources mentioned above, through documentation, descriptions, inventory, and photographs and to make that information available to park managers and researchers.

Since YNP established an Ethnography Program in 2000, we have gathered a large amount of ethnographic information through conversations and oral history interviews with the 26 park-associated tribes. Also, various tribal members have provided ethnographic information about the importance of park wildlife to their people in relation to Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). However, due to lack of funding, these data have remained in oral history interviews, administrative files, and reports, becoming useless to park managers and researchers. It was concluded that in order to become useful, these data must be culled and inventoried. The Ethnographic Resource Inventory (ERI), an NPS service-wide database, was created for that reason - to house in an organized and accessible fashion, primarily for management decision-making, ethnographic resource data for national parks. The goal for this project was to transform the ERI database into a comprehensive and accessible tool for park staff including managers, planners, interpreters, and researchers by the addition of 80 resources to the database.

The learning objectives for the chosen intern were (1) to become a proficient user of the Ethnographic Resources Inventory; (2) to understand the background, context, and relationship of the ERI within the framework of the National Park Service as well as between the NPS and ethnographic groups; (3) to have a working knowledge of the 26 traditionally associated tribes with Yellowstone NP (i.e. names of tribes, history within the park, current relationship, etc.); (4) to become knowledgeable about several specific park-resource-tribal relationships (i.e. the Nez Perces' relationship with wolves in the park, etc.); and (5) to improve research skills (internship required intern to be creative as well as flexible in terms of gathering data).

An anthropology student, pursuing her Master's Degree from the University of Montana, Missoula was hired to complete this task. Her appointment consisted of six weeks of full-time work from June 20 through July 29, 2005. The intern stayed in Yellowstone government housing throughout her work period. She was given training in use of the ERI database and GIS gathering as well as research and interview techniques, proper backcountry conduct, and audio/visual recordings. Her enthusiasm and diligent work effort far exceeded what was expected and proved to be invaluable for completion of this project.



From left to right: CESU Intern Hilary Sheaves; NPS cultural technician, Katie White; and Stanford Intern on mountain summit during one of 6 field reconnaissance days. Elevation: 10,625 feet

During the six weeks of work, the intern surveyed documents such as oral history interviews, EIS documents, and administrative files for ethnographic resource data. Appropriate research was conducted for each ethnographic resource including obtaining scientific name, description data, documenting location, documented bibliographic sources, cultural significance, and attaining any visual documentation of the resource in digital format. Park scientists, park-associated tribal members, and park GIS specialists were consulted to properly research and document ethnographic resources. The intern also assisted in the taping of several oral history interviews and participated in the onsite documentation of many ethnographic resources in the park. Before conducting oral history interviews, the intern was provided information from the park cultural anthropologist about interviewing skills and the development of an interview schedule (questionnaire).

Project Results:

The intern completed 212 resource entries and additions to Yellowstone's ERI database during the six week period. Her work exceeded the contracted work amount by approximately 265%. The following break-down of those resource entries describes in detail the intern's products.

The first category of resource entries consisted of bolstering or making additions to currently existing resource entries. Research and data entry was made regarding each resource's description, park abundances, approximate locations, relevant treaties, and other pertinent information. Research was mostly accomplished via the internet (government websites), scientific manuals, and at Yellowstone's Heritage Research Center library and archives. The intern also consulted with tribal members, park staff, and community members to ascertain information. Although the expectation was to add 45 entries into the database, the intern added 149 resource entries.



The second category of resource entries comprised reviewing the back log of ethnographic material in order to make additions to current entries and/or new entries. The intern reviewed a large portion of the back-logged material consisting primarily of transcripts, photos, oral histories, past notes, files, and maps. The intern then deciphered the ethnographic resources described and entered all pertinent information (such as resource condition or assessment) for each resource. The intern also video-edited several tapes. Although only 20 resource additions were expected to be made under this category, the intern completed 21 entries.



Field work included documenting (photographing, GPSing, videoing, etc.) various natural and cultural resources within the park. Above depicts a likely vision quest shelter atop a peak in Yellowstone yet to be specifically attributed to a specific tribe. Below depicts Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), a plant used by many of Yellowstone's affiliated American Indian tribes for medicinal purposes.

The last category of resource entries was adding to existing records or making new entries based upon the retrieval of GIS and photo data. Six days were spent in the field traveling to the precise resource locations where the intern obtained GIS, photo, as well as all other pertinent information gleaned from the visit. The information was then entered into the database. The intern made additions and new entries to over 40 records although only 15 entries were expected.

The intern from the University of Montana, Missoula did a very good job completing all work tasks assigned. Her enthusiasm and interest, as well as her attention to detail and work ethic proved to be exceptional assets which led to the overly successful completion of her internship. It has been concluded that the intern has met all of the listed learning objectives for this project and that in doing so, the knowledge that she has gained from this experience has positively shifted her academic interests towards the work field of applied cultural anthropology.

With all the work the CESU intern completed this summer, Yellowstone's Ethnographic Resources Inventory database is far more able to accommodate the needs of park planners and managers, one of the two critical missions of the Ethnography Program at Yellowstone National Park. The sheer depth of information added to the database this

summer has increased the utility of the ERI ten-fold. Especially through intern's work on the ethnographic back log of material, she has also relieved pressure from the Ethnographic Program's staff so that current database and park issues could be addressed.

Follow-up of this Project: Ms. Sheaves and the park cultural anthropologist keep in regular communication regarding her academic projects and career, and the anthropologist provides advice as requested.

Publications, other reports expected/with dates: The work completed by the intern will be submitted to the Washington Office of the National Park Service to meet annual reporting requirements for ethnographic resources identified, documented, and inventoried. The summer work of the intern will be summarized for the annual report of the Yellowstone Center for Resources. When that report is final, a copy will be sent to the Rocky Mountain CESU office and to the intern. We are also attaching images of the intern at work this summer at Yellowstone.