

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Documenting the 1999 Buffalo Walk and Reporting on the Cultural Significance of Bison to at Least Two American Indian Tribes Associated with Yellowstone National Park

Discipline: Interdisciplinary

Type of Project: Education

Funding Agency: National Park Service

Other Partners/Cooperators: University of Montana

Effective Dates: 9/25/2006 - 12/31/2008

Funding Amount: \$5,628 (\$928 added in FY08)

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract:

This project will provide a graduate student at University of Montana with an opportunity to work on an internship at Yellowstone NP during summer 2007 to document the 1999 Buffalo Walk in Yellowstone and report on the specific and unique associations of at least two park-associated American Indian tribes with bison in YNP. This project will unearth the cultural significance of two sites in the park as well as the intricacies and nuances of American Indians' long-standing relationship with bison. This information will inform YNP staff, especially bison managers, about the valuable perspectives of several long-term stakeholders in management of YNP bison. Research will require the student to synthesize some anthropological, historical, and archival documents, a few oral histories, and literature, most of which is located in YNP's archives. The student will be expected to provide suggestions for further research within the report. The anthropology faculty at the University of Montana will assist the student in planning and developing the project meeting, identifying the appropriate methodologies to use in working with tribes, and assist in documenting tribal information, and logistical assistance with setting up tribal meetings. The student will also geo-spatially document each site. The student will work with park scientists, park-associated tribal members, and the park's cultural staff to identify questions and issues to be addressed during the interviews and to properly report on the findings of the consultation. The student will also briefly present information to YNP managers. Culminating the student's internship will be the dissemination of the report to natural and cultural park managers, as well as the Division of Interpretation, and the Office of Planning and Compliance.

Outcomes with Completion Dates: Due by December 31, 2008

- 1) Research on the significance of the Buffalo March of 1999 and bison to at least two park-associated American Indian tribes;
- 2) Interviews and documentation of the event-related park sites in Yellowstone;
- 3) Written report of all findings
- 4) Presentation to Yellowstone National Park managers regarding the cultural significance of bison

Keywords: affiliated tribes, student intern, bison, Buffalo Walk, Yellowstone National Park, University of Montana