

# **Project Completion Report Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (RM-CESU)**

**Project Title: Research on History of West Side Ditch Water Rights at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS**

**Project Code: UMT-143, J1242077019**

**Type of Project: Research**

**Funding Agency: National Park Service**

**Partner University: University of Montana**

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**Start Date of Project: 9/1/2007**

**End Date of Project: 4/1/2012**

**Funding Amount: \$20,000**

**Project Summary, including descriptions of products, work accomplished and/or major results. If the information is restricted (e.g. location of endangered species or cultural resources), indicate the title and location of the final report. Also add web sites where project-related information may be found.**

**This was a very complex and fruitful project that produced several confidential**

memorandums addressing water right issues at the park through an ever evolving partnership of university professors, law students, park management staff, National Park Service solicitors, and NPS Washington office water rights lawyers and staff. A five year effort resulted in the organization and indexing of water right documents and 10 final and draft confidential memorandums detailing specific water rights topics the park is or will be addressing. The draft and final memos are located at the Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS.

Park staff worked with water rights lawyers to develop a prioritized list of research topics. University professors selected and worked with law students to draft memorandums. Drafts were reviewed by park staff, NPS solicitors, and NPS water rights lawyers. Several conference calls were held between all parties to discuss draft memos providing law students a unique opportunity to work with lawyers in their field of interests. NPS solicitors and lawyers used the law student's research to support legal guidance to the park.

**Number of students participating in this project:**

Three law students worked with Professor Elizabeth Kronk, and completed the initial list of tasks, and graduated. Work was completed by seven law students under the direction of Jack Tuholske.

**Lessons Learned from this project.**

The success of this project is largely based on the cooperation and meaningful input from all parties involved. Park staff had questions to answer that NPS solicitors and lawyers help formulate and prioritize. Professors selected capable law students interested in the subject. Professors remained engaged with the students providing necessary guidance and critique. Park staff and NPS solicitors reviewed all draft memos and provided important feedback for final products. If any part of this scenario was missing or dysfunctional – the quality of the products would be much diminished and of questionable use to park management.