

Native American Student Funded for Summer 2009 Internship through RM-CESU NPS task agreement with UM-Perry Brown:

The USGS research project "Monitoring Bear Populations in the Northern Rockies" recently completed its first field season, establishing nearly 5,000 natural bear rubs located throughout occupied grizzly habitat in northwestern Montana. Almost 10,000 bear hair samples were collected for genetic analysis during June-October; genotyping results will be used to estimate population growth rates over the course of the next three years. This project builds on the successes of the USGS Northern Divide Grizzly Bear Project, the results of which were published in January 2009. This multi-agency effort benefitted tremendously by employing a student from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), made possible by support from the NPS-Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit. The intern, Ryan Adams, worked with private landowners, Tribal biologists and managers, and representatives from other partner agencies including the US Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Thanks to the intern's knowledge of the area and ability to work with a diverse range of people, sampling sites were established in a far greater geographic extent than previously possible. This is the third field season working with the CSKT on grizzly bear research. Their assistance, along with that of the Blackfoot Nation, is a critical component in assessing the status and trend of this threatened population. For more information, visit http://nrmsc.usgs.gov/research/NGSbear_monitoring.htm