

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Interpretation and Education Interns at Glacier National Park

Type of Project: Education
Discipline: Interdisciplinary
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: University of Montana
Effective Dates: September 1, 2008 - August 1, 2013
Funding Amount: \$35,000

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract: Education plays a critical role in the preservation of Glacier National Park. It is the goal of the "Discover Glacier" Education Program to provide free access to learning opportunities to nearly 6,000 students per year. This includes 59 different public schools within commuting distance to the park. Of these, 22% are tribal schools and another 21% qualified for the "Small Rural Schools Achievement Program." As part of this "youth partnership" project, a student intern from the University of Montana will be recruited to work during the spring (or in some cases fall or on rare occasions, summer semester) in the park with other education interns, rangers, and the park's Education Specialist. Glacier National Park goals include creating a diverse workforce and providing opportunities for children to connect with park resources. Student interns will be role models for the K-12 students who come on park field trips. The interns will receive training in conducting National Park Service education programs as well as in background information about national parks and Glacier National Park's natural and cultural resources. They will develop educational materials to use with the school groups and create lesson plans that meet Montana Content & Performance Standards. Spring semester interns will assist with leading K-8 winter ecology snowshoe field trips from January - March. In April, they will have opportunities to assist with school visits, create educational props and materials, edit and update the education website, and prepare for leading school field trips in May. The University of Montana will also administer the funding to pay the students interns, as well as the money to fund buses for transporting K-12 students to Glacier, and for each of the three "boundary" schools (Babb, East Glacier, West Glacier) to attend one Big Creek Outdoor Center program.

Outcomes with Completion Dates: (1) Written outlines and/or lesson plans from each intern of the education programs they develop and conduct with school groups. (2) Evaluations, summaries, and statistics written by the intern about each school they work with. (3) Final reports by the students on the work conducted during their internships. (4) Final written evaluation by the Glacier Education Specialist of each intern. (5) Annual report written by Glacier's Education Specialist for the Youth Partnership Program on the number programs presented, number of diversity participants, description of partnering organizations, number of employment opportunities supported, and a description of how the project benefited the participants. UM will prepare a final report at the end of the project period.

Keywords: Glacier National Park, University of Montana, interns, education, interpretation, students, boundary schools
