

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

**Project Title:** Interpretation and Education Interns at Glacier National Park

**Project Code:** UMT-176, P08AC00030

**Type of Project :** Education

**Funding Agency:** National Park Service

**Partner University:** University of Montana

**NPS Agreement Technical Representative:**

Laura Law  
Education Specialist, Glacier National Park  
PO Box 128  
West Glacier, MT 59936  
406-888-5837  
Laura\_law@nps.gov

**Principal Investigators:**

Mike Patterson  
Associate Dean College of Forestry and Conservation  
University of Montana  
406-243-6614  
Michael.patterson@umontana.edu

Elizabeth Covelli Metcalf  
Assistant Professor, College of Forestry and Conservation  
University of Montana  
406-243-4448  
[Elizabeth.metcalf@umontana.edu](mailto:Elizabeth.metcalf@umontana.edu)

**Start Date of Project:** September 1, 2008

**End Date of Project:** September 30, 2013

**Funding Amount:** \$35,000

## **Project Summary**

This partnership met all of the goals of the agreement. Student interns were an integral part of the winter ecology education programs offered in Glacier National Park. The projects listed below were all completed on time and met the Glacier Education Specialist's approval.

The interns worked on a daily basis from January – March each year with Glacier National Park education staff to provide educational field trips for K-12 school students visiting the park. The

average number of classes attending winter ecology programs during this project was 122/year, with a total, on average, of 2,493 students/year. The interns share the workload for interacting with all of these students and providing a safe and educational visit. Over the 5 years of the project, the five interns provided the park with 2,300 hours of work.

In addition, the project provided funding for numerous rural and tribal schools to participate in the Glacier Education field trips by paying for bus travel to the park. The project met the goal of providing at least 15 buses at a cost of \$4,500 for field trips. The buses allowed for Babb and East Glacier schools (Blackfeet Reservation) to come to the park on field trips twice/year. The project also covered the round-trip busing for Babb and East Glacier schools to participate in the overnight field trips to the Glacier Institute site. All of these field trips were conducted and accomplished as proposed.

#### Product Descriptions:

- 1) Danna Hartman, Intern 2010, Product Completed
  - a. A written document to help future students in this position on how to succeed.
  - b. The written document will be a report to help further students understand how to prepare for the position, what books and references to read, what worked well and what did not work and how to prepare academically for the position.
  
- 2) Alyssa Stewart, Intern 2011, Product Completed:
  - a. Winter Junior Ranger Activities and Pilot of Winter Booklet
  
- 3) Glennis Cates, Intern 2012, Product Completed:
  - a. Winter Intern, pre-arrival DVD
  
- 4) Nick Sawinski
  - a. Winter Ecology Smartboard pre-visit lessons for teachers participating in field trips.
  
- 5) Jill Millkey
  - a. Complete inventory of materials/supplies for East Side education programs

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

Five student interns participated in the program. Four of them from the University of Montana and one of them through Lake Superior State University, Michigan.

2010, Danna Hartman (UM Forestry and Conservation) 413 hours

2011, Alyssa Stewart (UM Forestry and Conservation) 440 hours

2012, Glennis Cates (UM Forestry and Conservation) 504 hours

2013, Jill Millkey (UM Environmental Studies) 393 hours

2013, Nick Sawinski (Lake Superior State University) 592 hours

#### **Lessons Learned from this project:**

There were a number of lessons learned from this project:

- 1) Recruitment of students needs to begin in the fall, or even the previous spring to find adequate candidates for winter. Because most students do their internships in the summer, it was a challenge for the university to find individuals able to take off the spring semester to live and work in Glacier for the internship.

- 2) UM staff are key in helping to find appropriate student interns. Five students were recommended for internships over the life of the project, and after interviewing them, three of them were selected – Alyssa, Glennis, and Danna. Two of the male referrals turned down the internship because of disinterest in working with students and also the timing and location of the work and distance from Missoula. For that reason, it was a great benefit to be able to select Jill and Nick, who were not in the College of Forestry and Conservation at UM, who contacted the park about doing the internship on their own.
- 3) Recruiting for diversity candidates turned out to be a challenge for UM staff. The one male student, who was a diverse applicant, originally accepted the position, but then, due to family reasons (a child on the way) was not able to move to Glacier to do the internship.
- 4) Internship projects were especially helpful to the park. It was key to establish the project early on with each student and set up a timeline for deliverables. All of the students excelled at meeting these deadlines and working with park staff to complete their projects.
- 5) The feedback from the student interns was that this experience was extremely beneficial for them. Here is an excerpt from Danna Hartman's project with advice for future interns:
  - a. *This was a great experience. I feel I have discovered some new skills I was not sure I had. I feel more confident dealing with a variety of age groups. With new skills always comes new weaknesses; mine happens to be understanding child development. I have some knowledge but I think that a little more research and experience I will be able to master it. Have fun with this position. You might be the only experience or contact a child will have to a beautiful place and we need to mold the future constituents of conservation.*
- 6) Busing and field trip funding was integral to the project. Three rural schools – two of them from the Blackfeet Reservation – were able to participate in national park field trips and in the Glacier Institute's residential education program. These elementary school students interacted with the university interns, who provided excellent role models.

**Other RM-CESU agencies or research partners who participated in this project:**

NA