

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

Project Title: Yellowstone Archeology Program Technical Assistance

Project Code (such as UMT-72 and/or the “J” number): UMT-215, J1580090464

Type of Project (Research, Technical Assistance or Education): Technical Assistance

Funding Agency: National Park Service

Partner University: University of Montana

NPS Agreement Technical Representative (with complete contact information):

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Start Date of Project:

September 30, 2009

End Date of Project:

December 31, 2010

Funding Amount:

\$60,570.00 (total cost)

Project Summary, including descriptions of project deliverables, 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 project was both task and product based. The list of tasks and products outlined in the agreement included the cataloging and entry of artifacts into the National Park Service's database system (ANCS+), and getting these artifacts processed and into storage in the Yellowstone Heritage and Research Center (HRC) museum storage facility. The products of this objective are available as restricted records in the database and as artifacts stored in the HRC. Approximately 250 artifacts were processed, and their records were created or updated in the database.

A second task listed in the agreement was conducting small-scale archaeological inventories and site monitoring, as needed. A total of 25 sites were recorded or had their condition assessed as part of regular monitoring during this project. The products created for this task are site forms, photos, and other documentation generated from site discovery/re-visits, and are considered restricted materials on file in the archaeology laboratory in Yellowstone. Condition assessments and site information has been entered/updated for all of these sites in the ASMIS database to date.

Assisting with cultural compliance for ground disturbing projects was an additional task outlined in the agreement. A total of 4 construction projects required on-site monitoring during this agreement. No cultural materials were collected, and no products were created for these tasks.

One larger survey and inventory project was performed under this CESU agreement:

Solfatara Powerline Corridor: Class III Inventory, Yellowstone NP, WY

This project was undertaken in response to a proposal to remove vegetation from a corridor created by electric transmission lines. These powerlines were installed in the early 1960s, and an access trail was created for travel by all terrain vehicle (ATV), snowmobile and other vehicles to allow for maintenance of the powerlines. A hiking trail and access road follow generally the same route through the majority of the Area of Proposed Effect (APE), except where the access road veers to the north to bypass a thermal area. In 2007 a new agreement for clearing of powerline right-of-ways was drafted with Northwestern Energy Corp., which states the condition of notifying Park management regarding vegetation

clearing and the need to comply with regulations mitigating impacts to natural and cultural resources. Therefore, a complete inventory of all cultural resources in the anticipated APE was necessary. This project was begun in September of 2010, and involved two weeks of fieldwork, plus another three months of laboratory analysis of the artifacts and report preparation. The report was completed in December 2010 and awaits submission to the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office. This report is on file in the archaeology lab and is considered restricted material. Project objectives were completed in full.

The survey and inventory was restricted in area by the same length as the APE corridor (2 miles/3.22 km) and a width of 10 meters (~33 ft.), with the access road serving as centerline. The total area for the survey was 12.8 acres, slightly wider than the proposed APE in order to more thoroughly assess any resources present. This project involved pedestrian survey and shovel testing of four new prehistoric sites. The main object was to thoroughly record the cultural resources within the APE and assess their potential for inclusion in the NRHP.

Robin Park, listed as researcher under this agreement, was the project lead/principal investigator in the field and performed all the laboratory work (including lithic analysis) and report preparation (including background research, file search and Smithsonian number requests, map preparation, site sketches and report writing). A total of six NPS employees were involved with this project, plus one cooperative employee, three NPS volunteers, one NPS intern and one volunteer from the park concessionaire. NPS volunteers for the Archaeology department, Allen Hard and Marjorie Siegel, and Stanford University intern Elizabeth Wessells assisted with pedestrian survey, mapping and testing of sites. National Park Service employees Bridgette Guild, Bianca Klein, Adrienne DeSmet, Becky Wyman, Chiara Dorati, and Zachary Park of the Yellowstone Co-op Employee Recreation Program volunteered as field crew members. Bob Flather, NPS volunteer, assisted with research on the Norris wagon road. NPS archaeologist Elaine Hale provided editorial comments on the draft report.

Testing was performed at the four new prehistoric sites. A total of 25 shovel test pits were investigated using standard techniques outlined by the WY SHPO. Over 700 obsidian flakes, cores and bifaces were recovered from these test units. One hammer stone was recorded and collected from the surface. The evidence suggests that at least two of the four prehistoric sites recorded during this survey were lithic reduction areas. All four sites were evaluated to be in good condition with ongoing, known impacts.

Two of these four sites were recommended eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. A segment of the historic Norris Road was also recorded. This was the original wagon road (built in 1878) running from Mammoth Hot Springs to Old Faithful. This segment was bypassed by a new route in 1885 (a similar route to the modern-day Grand Loop Road). Unfortunately, this segment of the Norris Road is essentially destroyed, as a hiking trail and powerline corridor had been built immediately over the road. Only a small remnant could be observed, consisting of two ditches on either side of a raised road bed, completely overgrown by grasses. This segment was therefore not eligible for NRHP status. This information will be used by NPS compliance staff in evaluating the next steps to be taken with Northwestern Energy in regards to their proposed vegetation clearing activities and future use of the access road and trail.

One incoming report prepared by a contractor was reviewed by Mrs. Park during this agreement. This final report, *Historical Resource Mitigative Excavations at 48YE252: The*

Donner Site, authored by Brian C. Vivian of Lifeways of Canada, Ltd., was submitted to Yellowstone National Park in December 2009. This report was the result of field work performed by the contractor (Lifeways of Canada Ltd.) for Yellowstone. This fieldwork consisted of several weeks of excavation at the Donner Site, located on Yellowstone Lake. Data recovery was necessary to save as much information from the site as possible, as it had been rapidly eroding from the lakeshore into Yellowstone Lake over the past few years. Mrs. Park reviewed this report prior to its submission to the Park. Apart from small editorial changes the report met with professional standards.

In 2010, Mrs. Park presented seminars to Yellowstone employees at two locations within the park (Lake and Mammoth Hot Springs) on Yellowstone archaeology, including the results of two projects undertaken as part of this CESU agreement. In addition, similar presentations were made by Mrs. Park to participants in workshops and programs operated by agencies with ongoing research and working relationships with Yellowstone NP (the Big Sky Institute and the Youth Conservation Corps). These seminars and presentations help to ensure a high level of communication of the archaeology program's ongoing work of interest to employees, associated organizations, and the general public. Sharing non-sensitive information with these parties is essential to maintaining appropriate interaction with the public, as is suitable for an agency such as the Park Service.

Number of students participating in this project: undergraduates, graduate students, degrees conferred.

Robin Park (MA)