

## **Project Summary**

### **Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit**

**Project Title:** Developing a Social Research Plan for Yellowstone National Park

**Type of Project:** Technical Assistance  
**Discipline:** Social Science  
**Funding Agency:** National Park Service  
**Other Partners/Cooperators:** University of Montana  
**Effective Dates:** 6/1/2012 - 9/30/2013  
**Funding Amount:** \$93,800

**Investigators and Agency Representative:**

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**Project Abstract:** In this proposed project, YNP Management will work cooperatively with the University of Montana to develop a strategic plan for social science in Yellowstone National Park. The plan will identify issues to be addressed and prioritized, and questions to be asked (the "what's") and provide thoughts on some methodologies to address those questions (the how's). The plan will also provide a protocol for social science conduct within Yellowstone including ethical practices, proposal and report review (IRB, peer review and OMB) and NPS and YNP permitting procedures, etc. The process will include a review of existing social science on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, development of an information needs assessment, formulation of information needs into domains of research questions, development of criteria for question prioritizing and processes for proposal solicitation.

The issues and information needs assessment will be derived from interviews and focus groups with Yellowstone Staff, existing scientific cooperators, regional scientists and academics, NGO's, gateway community members and other National Parks who have developed such a plan. Organizing the plan, developing criteria for prioritizing research questions and finalizing the product will occur in cooperation with a YNP management committee.

Depending on the priority issues that emerge, numerous social scientific disciplines may contribute to such a research program. Yellowstone's appeal as a world renowned protected area could easily draw from a national reservoir of scientific talent. The CESU system provides access to much of that pool of academics and scientists. The social science plan will include recommendations on how to distribute calls for proposals to a national audience.

**Outcomes with Completion Dates:** 2012/13 Annual Interim Report due on 5/30/13

**Keywords:** social science, research, strategic plan, Yellowstone National Park, University of Montana