

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

**Project Title:** An Examination of Yellowstone National Park's Visitor Segments and a Predictive Analysis of National Park Support

**Project Code:** UMT-301, P14AC00824

**Type of Project:** Research

**Funding Agency:** National Park Service

**Partner University:** University of Montana

**NPS Agreement Technical Representative:** Sara Haas, Yellowstone NP, Yellowstone Center for Resources, PO Box 168, Mammoth Hot Springs, WY 82190

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**Start Date of Project:** July 1, 2014

**End Date of Project:** October 31, 2016

**Funding Amount:** \$120,750

**Project Summary**, Below is a project summary for RM-CESU project P14AC00824 (An Examination of Yellowstone National Park's Visitor Segments and a Predictive Analysis of National Park Support). The project has been completed to the park's satisfaction.

In 2014, the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) and Yellowstone National Park (YELL) began the initial staging of a summer visitor study to assess why park visitors currently support YELL and the drivers that contribute to future engagement. Through a rigorous literature review, a framework was developed to test the drivers of park support among 2015 summer visitors. On-site data collection began May 2015 with a stratified random sample of summer visitors at each of the five YELL exit gates. Through September over 2,200 summer visitors were surveyed with 800 completed and returned surveys to ITRR. Upon completion of the study, ITRR compiled two large-scale technical reports for YELL managers along with multiple presentations at international tourism and park studies conferences. Three journal articles are currently in development and review within tourism and recreation academic journals. Results signified a low level of current support, but an optimistic view into the future. Primary recommendations revolved around identifying meaningful experience typologies which drive the two primary forms of park support: acknowledged and unacknowledged.

## **Presentations:**

Jake D. Jorgenson and Norma P. Nickerson Ph.D., "Attachment to tourism destinations: The role of memory and place attachment" (June 3, 2016). Tourism Travel and Research

Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally.  
[http://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttra/2016/Academic\\_Papers\\_Visual/2](http://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttra/2016/Academic_Papers_Visual/2)

Jorgenson, J. and Nickerson, N. (2016). Building a Constituency for Yellowstone National Park. Presented at "Building on the Past, Leading into the Future: Sustaining the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem in the Coming Century", 13th Biennial Scientific Conference on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, Grand Teton National Park, WY.

Jorgenson, J. and Nickerson, N. (2016). Memory and the Visitor Experience. Proceedings of the Greater Western Travel and Tourism Association. Scottsdale, AZ.

Nickerson, N. and Havens, G. (October 2016). "Understanding Park Support – Philanthropy and other Support for Yellowstone." Building on the Past, Leading into the Future: Sustaining the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem in the Coming Century. The 13th Biennial Scientific Conference on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, Grand Teton National Park, WY.

Nickerson, N. & Havens, G. (May, 2016). "Exploring Park Support: A study of Philanthropy and other Support for Yellowstone National Park, Presented to YNP management level employees and superintendent, Mammoth Hot Springs, WY.

#### **Technical Papers:**

Jake D. Jorgenson and Norma P. Nickerson PH.D., "Attachment to tourism destinations: The role of memory and place attachment" (June 3, 2016). Tourism Travel and Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally.  
[http://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttra/2016/Academic\\_Papers\\_Visual/2](http://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttra/2016/Academic_Papers_Visual/2)

Jorgenson, Jacob Daniel and Nickerson, Norma P., "Building Constituency at Yellowstone National Park: Predicting Visitor Support Now and Into the Future" (2016). Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research Publications. [http://scholarworks.umt.edu/itrr\\_pubs/338](http://scholarworks.umt.edu/itrr_pubs/338)

Havens, Geoffrey G. and Nickerson, Norma P., "Understanding Park Support: Philanthropy and their Support for Yellowstone National Park" (2016). Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research Publications. [http://scholarworks.umt.edu/itrr\\_pubs/337](http://scholarworks.umt.edu/itrr_pubs/337)

#### **Academic Journal Articles:**

Jorgenson, Nickerson, Dalenberg, Angle, Metcalf, and Freimund (In Review) Measuring Visitor Experiences: Creating and Testing the Tourism Autobiographical memory Scale (TAMS). Journal of Travel Research.

Jorgenson and Nickerson (In preparation). Getting to the root of the construct: Autobiographical memory as an antecedent to place attachment. Tourism Geographies.

Jorgenson and Nickerson (In preparation). Predicting Support for National Parks: Personal Memory and Place Attachment's Role in Yellowstone National Park. Journal of Park and Recreation Administration.

**Number of students participating in this project:** One graduate student received an MS in Recreation Management from the University of Montana, Geoffrey Havens, Spring 2016. Another student received a Ph.D. in Recreation Management for his dissertation titled: Jacob Jorgenson, *Autobiographical Memory of Nature,-Based Tourists, Formation of Place Attachment and Influences on Visitor Behavior*, University of Montana, Missoula, MT, Spring 2016.

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