**Project Summary**
**Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit**

**Project Title: Development of an early detection of invasive plants monitoring protocol for the Mojave Desert Network Inventory and Monitoring Program**

**Discipline:** Natural
**Type of Project:** Technical Assistance
**Funding Agency:** National Park Service
**Other Partners/Cooperators:** University of Montana
**Student Involvement:** No
**Effective Dates:** 09/01/2015 – 09/30/2017
**Funding Amount:** $161,334 [FY16: $126,334; FY15: $35,000]

**Investigators and Agency Representative:**
NPS Contact: David Gundlach, GIS Specialist, MOJN I&M Program Manager, National Park Service, 601 Nevada Highway, Boulder City, NV 89005; (702) 293-8757; david_gundlach@nps.gov

Investigator: Ragan Callaway, University of Montana, Natural Sciences Annex 106, 32 Campus Dr. Missoula, MT 59812; (406) 243-5077; ray.callaway@mso.umt.edu

**Project Abstract:** Early detection monitoring of incipient invasive plants was ranked among the top priorities in the Mojave Desert Network (MOJN) Inventory & Monitoring Program (I&M) in the vital signs selection process due to the clear identification of, and concern about, the effects these plants can have on park ecosystems. Only when invasions are caught early will the chance of eradication remain high. Early detection monitoring in the MOJN will include three main components: 1) updating and/or creating individual park early detection species lists; 2) opportunistic surveillance monitoring of invasive plant species that will focus on educating monitoring field crews, cooperators, volunteers, and resource managers on invasive species identification; and 3) development and maintenance of a coherent framework for reporting and disseminating information on potential infestations. The product of this project, a monitoring protocol for invasive plants, will benefit not only the MOJN parks, but society at large. The NPS will collaborate with the University of Montana to develop a work plan, oversee assignments, distribute tools and provide technical assistance and safety training. This project will engage and educate the University of Montana, partners of public lands throughout the Mojave Desert, communities associated with and visitors to the Mojave Desert Network parks.

**Keywords:** Mojave Desert Network Inventory & Monitoring, University of Montana, invasive plants, monitoring protocol, early detection