

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit
Project Summary

Project Title: Cooperative Programmatic Support for the University Host of the Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Task Agreement: P19AC01224 **Mod:** 1
Discipline: Interdisciplinary
Type of Project: Technical Assistance
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Cooperators: University of Montana
Student Involvement: No
Effective Dates: 8/15/2019 – 9/30/2022
Funding Amount: \$60,000

Investigator and Agency Representatives:

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Project Abstract For nearly 20 years, the State of Montana as the University of Montana (UMT), has contributed office space and modest administrative support to the National Park Service Research Coordinator, at no cost to the federal government. As the host institution of the Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (RMCESU), UMT supports active, cooperative partnerships to deliver, technical assistance, research, and education projects from partner institutions to various bureaus of federal government. DOI bureaus, particularly NPS, have seen great benefit of this program through cost-effective, partnership-based, collaborative technical assistance.

In addition to honoring the proven partnership between the federal government and the states, this arrangement would enable the NPS Research Coordinator to contribute directly to bison conservation activities at the NPS-WASO and DOI levels. Specifically, the NPS funding would originate from NPS-WASO-Biological Resources Division to enable the UMT administrative position to support some data entry and document assembly tasks that the RC, a senior science advisor, must presently attend to. Doing so would free some of the RC time to work more directly in his area of expertise, directly support the Secretary's Priority 1.a., encourage cross-region coordination on bison conservation issues across the NPS, and deliver cross-bureau coordination and communication through his role as Chair of the DOI Bison Work Group. Furthermore, the added administrative capacity would enable expansion of student experiential internship opportunities between the NPS and UMT, by placing students in direct service to NPS units at no cost to Parks.

The purpose of this agreement is to provide programmatic support for the successful operations and quality, cost-effective service to the unit and member state institutions. Specifically, this project would provide modest funding to partially (~40%) support a UMT administrative position that would deliver program support to the CESU and the NPS Research Coordinator (both hosted by UMT). The State of Montana would provide the balance of funding (~60%), in recognition of the project meeting shared objectives. These funds are not required as documented cost-match to enable the federal award. This modest federal funding will have disproportionate benefits to the proven partnership with western states and organizational efficiencies for NPS and DOI.