

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Developing strategies for managing cultural resources at risk from fire and climate change in Rocky Mountain National Park

Type of Project: Technical Assistance
Discipline: Cultural Resources
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: University of Northern Colorado
Effective Dates: July 15, 2009 - July 31, 2010
Funding Amount: \$15,039

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract: The aim of this project is to refine the existing GIS information on the more than 2500 identified cultural resources in Rocky Mountain National Park and develop standard operating procedures and appropriate mitigation measures for their protection from fire and fuel management activities. Specific objectives include:

- a. Categorizing cultural resources by location, type, susceptibility to fire, vegetation cover, fire history, and fire regime.
- b. Identifying appropriate mitigation measures based on the resource categories identified in step A.
- c. Identifying the highest risk or highest priority resources.
- d. Determining appropriate fuels management activities necessary to protect at-risk resources identified in step C (e.g. prescribed fire or manual fuels reduction).
- e. Identifying preferred locations for areas of concentrated activity to be used during fire management operations (e.g. potential staging area locations, helispots, safety zones, etc.).
- f. Identifying what level a cultural resource specialist must be involved in fire management activity (e.g. not needed, notify, consult, on-site monitoring, etc.).
- g. Developing standard operating procedures for the protection of cultural resources (to be included in fire management plan).
- h. Identifying where more information is needed regarding protection of cultural resources from fire.

Rocky Mountain National Park is beginning the process of preparing a new Fire Management Plan. One essential aspect of this work is to analyze fire effects on the more than 2500 cultural resources already identified in the park. Rocky Mountain National Park's diverse prehistoric and historic resources include Native American sacred sites, wickiups, ranger cabins, a ghost sign (a fading advertisement painted on a rock), trails, irrigation ditches, culturally peeled trees, and historic landscapes. This project aims to identify and analyze these resources so they can be protected during fire management activities, including planned and unplanned wildland fire events and other hazardous fuel reduction treatment activities.

Outcomes with Completion Dates: Due Date for Final Report and/or Other Products: January 31, 2010

List of Products:

1. Two day workshop to discuss cultural resources at risk from fire and climate change to be held in Estes Park, Colorado in the fall of 2009. This includes the meeting room rental and lunch for all participants for two days. A facilitator will plan the conference, make arrangements, organize travel, and prepare materials before and after the workshop.

2. Workshop notes delivered via email to NPS key official no more than 15 days after the workshop.
3. Refined GIS layer showing cultural resource priorities and fire treatments, along with potential climate change impacts, no more than 90 days after the workshop.
4. A workshop report (meeting notes and participant recommendations) no more than 90 days after the workshop.
5. Assigned sections of fire management and cultural resources standard operating procedures authored by university partner due no more than 75 days after the workshop.

Keywords: cultural Resources, fire risk, Fire Management Plan, Rocky Mountain National, University of Northern Colorado,