

RM-CESU –Final Report, FY 08

October 2008

Project Title: Summer 2008 Tehabi Intern

Park: Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS

Funding Source: Rocky Mountains CESU Tehabi Intern

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University Partner, Utah State University

RESEARCHER: Casey Snider

The scope of this internship changed between the initial proposal and the actual internship. No intern could be secured with interest, education, and experience in water or range management. The best fit was young intern Casey Snider with a background of working on farms and dairies; and an interest in water law.

About one third of Casey's time was spent determining the exact internship product and then seeing it to completion. The other half of the time Casey assisted with typical ranch resource management duties such as calving, moving pipe and haying. He also completed safety courses on lifting hay, horseback riding, and ATV use.

Together with the park supervisor, it was determined Casey's internship project would be clarification of water rights associated with the West Side Ditch Company. At the Superintendent's request, Case wrote a briefing statement to summarize the water rights facts and issues at the park. This document was published on the park's website. It has become part of a bundle of briefing statements used by the Superintendent to inform potential partners of the ranch. This document is attached as a product of this internship.

Casey also developed a summary document in order to help GRKO with issues involving the West Side Ditch and West Side Ditch Company. The first step involved gathering together documentation from many locations around the park and from the University of Montana School of Law Library. Personal contacts were developed with various individuals such as staff at Montana DNRC and NPS Water Rights Branch in Fort Collins, Colorado. These individuals helped Casey define the issues and interpret the law. The research was written into an overview of facts and issues on the West Side Ditch and Company. This summary document is considered confidential at this time.

Casey walked away from the internship with some intangible benefits. He experienced the challenges and frustrations of working in a bureaucracy, learned how to work as part of a team, and that his energetic ways may not be suited to the amount of research, reading, and writing required by the law field. The park benefited by a very concise and well written briefing on water rights, a summary of West Side Ditch Company issues that can be used in future research and negotiations, and having an extra hand to get the work done around the ranch.