

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

RM-CESU Cooperative Agreement Number: H1200040001

USU Proposal/Grant Code: 05-1207

TITLE OF PROJECT: Tehabi Student Intern to Assist with Native Plant Restoration Project

NAME OF PARK/NPS UNIT: Bent's Old Fort and Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Sites

PROJECT SCHEDULE AND FINAL PRODUCTS:

Project Initiation: September 15, 2004

Final Products include: Final presentation and summary report of the internship

Final Project date: March 15, 2006

PROJECT SUMMARY:

This project supported one Tehabi internships stationed at Bent's Old Fort and Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Sites in southeastern Colorado. This year Tehabi had 19 students from seven universities participate with the internship program. These interns worked with the NPS, BLM and a private corporation in seven states at twelve offices. The internship began with a 2-week field course held from May 15-27, 2005 at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site (GRKO) in Deer Lodge, Montana. At the conclusion of the field course interns traveled to their sponsoring office to work under the direct supervisor of the agency. Over 12 weeks the interns developed and completed a performance plan and individual project and completed other duties as assigned by their supervisors. In addition to their work duties, the interns participated in a three-credit course that continued with topics from the field course. After 12 weeks all of the interns returned for a final meeting held August 15-18, 2005 at the USU Bear Lake Training Center. The interns discussed their internship experiences and gave individual presentations on their summer internships and final projects.

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS:

Bent's Old Fort NHS

Restoration Ecology

Supervisor: Fran Pannebaker

Intern: Jon Kravitz (Penn State University)

As an intern at Bent's Old Fort NHS, Jon Kravitz's main project was to create a photo monitoring protocol for Bent's Old Fort and Sand Creek Massacre NHS. This required a great deal of field work in the great plains of southeastern Colorado. Jon took photos in a repeatable manner as directed by the protocol in order to develop an understanding of how the Fort's land management program has affected landscape change after the removal of all tamarisk in 1996. In order to understand the program's effectiveness over time, Jon's protocol will be used on a five-year interval.

Jon's other duties include performing vegetation transects, fire plots for bear grass monitoring, mosquito trapping, re-seeding, mechanical weed management (mowing), chemical weed management, mouse trapping, plant identification, removal of dead cottonwoods from roads, prairie dog monitoring, well hydrology monitoring, and

wildflower inventories. Jon completed his project and achieved all the critical results on his EPPR.



Jon Kravitz at Bent's Old Fort NHS.

The final reports, summaries and any intern individual project products were approved by and left with their NPS supervisor at the conclusion of the internship. Pictures of some interns at work are available from Ben Baldwin (Ben.Baldwin@usu.edu).

This project provided excellent education opportunities for this student. This type of internship allows students to work with their agency supervisors to engage in their discipline and gain first-hand experience of the job. The supervisor also acted as a mentor and provided the intern with additional support, advice and challenges. The intern learned numerous lessons, many of which were not intended but appreciated. Overall, internships, and Tehabi internships in particular, provide students with good experiences with agencies. And in turn, the offices get good summer employees and completed projects that they need done.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Challenges to the internship program include:

- Funding. Funding provides the greatest challenges to this program. The funding issues can be broken down into several main categories:
 - Inconsistent funding – each year the offices that have available funds for interns changes. This makes position development difficult. In essence, there is not “internship” funding available but rather funds from projects or seasonal hires.
 - Lack of funding – Offices just don't have money in their budgets for internships (as well as many other things). Even if offices have willing supervisors and good projects often they simply don't have funds available for the intern.
 - Late funding – offices don't have their final budgets or are not allowed to spend until late into the recruiting season. This makes getting qualified candidates harder.

- Housing – Due to the remote location of many of the Great Basin offices and the short duration of the internships, housing becomes an important factor. In some locations there is not available housing and in others it becomes cost prohibitive. Offices that are more successful in providing housing or helping the students find affordable housing are usually more successful at finding qualified interns.
- Challenging positions – Most students are looking for challenging positions within their discipline. The goal is to find positions that challenge the student and allow them to apply their educational background. This usually means finding a supervisor that can modify existing projects to fit the skill set of the student and help them when they are having difficulties. In addition, the short duration of the summer internships makes it hard to give the interns a full experience that introduces them to their job and agency.

Additional comments (student and supervisor feedback and evaluations) are available from Ben Baldwin (Ben.baldwin@usu.edu).