

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

RM-CESU Cooperative Agreement Number: J1242049007

USU Proposal/Grant Code: 061190

TITLE OF PROJECT: Support of Collaborative Natural Resource Stewardship (Tehabi)

NAME OF PARK/NPS UNIT: Greater Yellowstone Network

PROJECT SCHEDULE AND FINAL PRODUCTS:

Project Initiation: September 15, 2005

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

Final Project date: December 31, 2007

PROJECT SUMMARY:

This project supported one Tehabi internship stationed at Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area in Wyoming; funding was made available by the National Park Service, RM-CESU. This year Tehabi had 19 students from eight universities participate with the internship program. These interns worked with the NPS and BLM in five states at seven offices. The internship began with a field course held from May 20-27, 2006 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 13-16, 2006, 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 DESCRIPTION:

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area/Greater Yellowstone Network

Cultural/Natural Resources

Supervisor: Cassity Bromley

Intern: Emily Yost, University of Pittsburg

Emily Yost worked as a natural/cultural resource intern for the NPS Greater Yellowstone Inventory and Monitoring Network and was based out of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. She developed content for the Greater Yellowstone Science Learning Center website (www.greateryellowstone.org/index1.html), a virtual science learning center which provides public access to technical and scientific information on the natural and cultural resources of Greater Yellowstone Network parks (Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area (BICA), Grand Teton National Park (GRTE), and Yellowstone National Park (YELL)). Information on park

resources is presented in products which provide different levels of information to interested audiences.

Emily drafted products that include an overview, almanac pages, project page, and references and links page. The overview provides an in-depth background on the natural history, ecology, and management of a resource. *Almanac* pages explain the significance of a resource, its status and trend, and a discussion of factors which contribute to its status and trend, complimented by relevant data and photos. The projects page describes current projects which contribute to the understanding and management of the resource. The reference and link page includes links to relevant management documents, *Yellowstone Science* articles, and the top references for the resource.

Emily's research included reading technical articles, reports, and management documents, working with scientists and managers in each park, and compiling photos for presentation on the website. Emily's primary topic was bighorn sheep in each park. Emily researched and wrote drafts of overview, almanac pages for each park, projects list, and reference list for bighorn sheep in all three network parks. Emily also wrote an introductory page to BICA, a page on Ewing-Snell Science Center, a page on White Grass Dude Ranch in GRTE, and preliminary drafts of overview, almanac, and projects pages on seeps and springs in BICA. Managers of the resources and *Yellowstone Science* staff reviewed Emily's drafts prior to publication. This project supports the Greater Yellowstone Science Learning Center's purpose of building stronger relationships with scientists and communicating scientific results with interested audiences.

Emily also wrote a history of the Ewing-Snell Science Center, which will appear in a welcome book for guests of the center. Emily provided assistance with bighorn sheep monitoring and checking small mammal traps at BICA. Emily completed her project and achieved all critical results on her Employee Performance Plan and Results Report.



Emily Yost working at her desk, Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area.



Emily Yost and Cassity Bromley in the field.

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

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

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.

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).