

Project Completion Report

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (RM-CESU)

Project Title: Development and Technical Review (NEPA and Content) of an Environmental Assessment (EA) Evaluating Management Actions Regarding the Control of Columbia Ground Squirrels

Project Code : USURM-39,

Type of Project (Technical Assistance

Funding Agency: National Park Service

Partner University: Utah State University

NPS Agreement Technical Representative (with complete contact information):

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Start Date of Project: 5/31/2007

End Date of Project: 3/30/2010

Funding Amount: \$5,000

Project Summary,

The purpose of this project was to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) that analyzes options for management of Columbian ground squirrel (CGS) populations at Grant-Kohrs National Historic Site (GRKO). Gary Swant, a local ecologist working through Utah State University, utilized current park data and information and collected contemporary scientific information to draft management options. As the project developed, specific focus was given on completing a thorough review of all references to CGS in GRKO management documents and archives, a CGS survey protocol was developed, and CGS population and suitable habitat assessments were completed. An Inter-Disciplinary Team was formed to initiate the NEPA

process for development of the CGS Management Plan EA. A USU student assisted with the records research, reviewed the survey protocol, and participated in the development of the purpose and needs section of the plan.

Products produced from the project include:

- Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site Draft Columbian Ground Squirrel Management Plan;
- Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historical Site Survey Protocol for Columbian Ground Squirrel; and
- References of Columbian Ground Squirrel in Management Documents and Archives for Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site.

In addition, photo points and GPS locations were recorded at all survey points and a GIS map was produced.

Park resource staff will utilize the products produced to bring the GRKO CGS Management Plan EA through the NEPA process. CGS management decisions and actions will then be guided by the plan.

The products produced exist in hard and electronic form in park resource staff files and are available for review at GRKO. A copy of the final GRKO CGS Management Plan EA will be made available to RM-CESU upon completion of the NEPA process.

Number of students participating in this project: undergraduates, graduate students, degrees conferred.

1 graduate student – Elizabeth Szilagyi