

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

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

Discipline: Natural Resources

Type of Project: Technical assistance

Funding Agency: National Park Service

Other Partners/Cooperators: Utah State University

Effective Dates: 5/31/2007- 8/30/2008

Funding Amount: \$5000

Investigators and Agency Representative:

NPS Contact: Ben Bobowski, Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS, 266 Warren Lane, Deer Lodge MT 59722, 406-846-2070, x240, ben_bobowski@nps.gov

Investigator: Ben Baldwin, Utah State University, EnvS Dept. 5215 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322-5215, 435-797-2582, ben.baldwin@usu.edu

Project Abstract: The Columbian Ground squirrel is a native species that is considered a pest by the agricultural community and many NPS staff. This small mammal is expanding its range, growing at an unknown rate, and changing a cultural landscape in areas that are currently unacceptable to many staff. This plan will aid managers in the thoughtful management of a native species in an agricultural national park unit. The objective of this project is to develop an Environmental Assessment (EA) that analyses options for management of Columbian Ground squirrel populations in the park.

The NPS and Utah State University will work closely with Gary Swant (local ecologist) to complete an EA. The NPS will provide a current example of an EA, all biological/ecological information, and access to printers/copiers as appropriate. Gary Swant will submit an EA draft to the NPS and Ben Baldwin, Utah State University, by the end of July to give Ben Baldwin at least 4 weeks to review the document for content and alignment with NEPA. Comments will be given back to Gary Swant (copied to the NPS) for integration. A final draft EA will be submitted to the NPS by the end of September, 2007.

Outcomes with Completion Dates:

- July 2007: Draft an EA (Gary Swant).
- August 2007: Review content for alignment with NEPA and for content (Ben Baldwin and assistant)
- September 2007: Final draft complete and submitted to NPS.

Keywords: Columbia ground squirrels, environmental assessment, Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, Utah State University