

## Project Summary

### Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

**Project Title: Modeling the Effects of Alternative Transportation on Resource Protection and Visitor Experiences in Rocky Mountain National Park**

**Type of Project:** Research  
**Discipline:** Social  
**Funding Agency:** National Park Service  
**Other Partners/Cooperators:** Utah State University  
**Effective Dates:** 10/1/07 - 12/31/10  
**Funding Amount:** \$60,062

**Investigators and Agency Representative:**

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**Project Abstract:** The purpose of this project is to assist the NPS in refining the design of ROMO's shuttle bus system in a manner that optimizes the operational efficiency and economic feasibility of the transportation system, and protects the park's resources and the quality of visitors' experiences. The project has two integrated components: 1) Conducting social science survey research at selected recreation sites serviced by the Bear Lake shuttle bus, and 2) Assessing resource impacts at selected recreation sites serviced by the Bear Lake shuttle bus.

Further, this study will be conducted in tandem with cooperators from Virginia Tech University (VT) and Utah State University (USU) under separate cooperative agreements in order to develop visitor use and vehicle use simulation models and better understand the relationship between use and impact. Integration of the vehicle traffic and visitor use models conducted by VT in this study with results from the research conducted by CSU and USU scientists will assist the park in evaluating the extent to which their proposed shuttle system, as outlined in the Preferred Alternative in ROMO's 2006 Draft Transportation Plan, maintains the desired future conditions of park resources and visitor experiences. Thus, this project is expected to enhance the park's ability to use alternative transportation as an essential element of visitor capacity management and resource protection.

**Outcomes with Completion Dates:**

Site visit/study kick-off meeting	October, 2007
Draft data collection instruments	April, 2008
Site visit/data collection pre-testing	June, 2008
Data collection- Field Season 1	July/August, 2008
Progress report (hardcopy or email)	October, 2008
Preliminary results	December, 2008
Data Collection-Field Season 2	July/August 2009
Presentation of results to park staff and final report	February 2010

**Keywords:** Shuttle bus system, resources, visitor experience, Rocky Mountain National Park, Utah State University