

## Project Summary

### Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

**Project Title:** Evaluation and Assessment of "Be Bear Aware" Information at Grand Teton NP

**Discipline:** Social Science  
**Type of Project:** Research  
**Funding Agency:** National Park Service  
**Other Partners/Cooperators:** University of Wyoming  
**Effective Dates:** 9/30/2009 - 7/30/2012  
**Funding Amount:** \$16,750 [\$11,750 in FY09; \$5000 in FY10]

**Investigators and Agency Representative:**

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**Project Abstract:** University of Wyoming will evaluate whether the information in the Bear Safety program is in fact reaching the park visitors, and is effective, it would be ideal to answer the following four questions:

First, what do park visitors believe about bears before they visit the park? This information will provide a baseline by which to compare how much of the information from the park the visitors assimilated. Ideally, we would want information about what visitors believe about safety in bear country *before* they enter the park. This assumes a pre- and post- test format, which would likely be prohibitively expensive.

Second, what information do park visitors remember from park literature, ranger talks, etc.? By asking park visitors what they remember from park information sources, we will be able to assess which types of information and information sources were most effective. In order to adequately answer this question, we need to know the messages given to visitors to GTNP so as to develop the specific questions to measure how much of these messages were remembered. To answer these questions, we have met with appropriate park managers to discuss those messages and how those messages are given to the visitors.

Third, what actions have park visitors taken in response to such information? These actions would include food storage; care of cooking utensils; care of clothing in which the cooking took place; hiking behavior; behavior when encountering bears. Since the emphasis is on the behavior of front country visitors, we suggest that to accomplish item #2 as well as item #3, we interview campers in the campgrounds in both the early afternoon and the early evening. At that time, we can include as part of the interviewing process a visual check on how food is stored.

Finally, what are the attitudes of park visitors toward required changes in their behaviors? The attitudes of park visitors toward the required changes are important since a positive attitude will more likely lead to maintaining the desired behaviors.

**Outcomes with Completion Dates:** Final report of survey results and recommendations available for the park's use in redesigning informational messages. July 30, 2011

**Keywords:** Bear Safety, public information, evaluation, Grand Teton NP, University of Wyoming