

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Enhance Visitor Understanding and Appreciation of Plants at Devils Tower National Monument

Discipline: Natural
Type of Project: Education/Technical Assistance
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: University of Wyoming
Effective Dates: 3/1/2011 - 12/31/2013
Funding Amount: \$20,000

Investigators and Agency Representative:

NPS Contact: Kara Paintner-Green, NPS, Northern Great Plains I&M Network, 231 East St. Joseph Street, Rapid City, SD 57701, Office 605-341-2807, kara_paintner@nps.gov

Investigator: Bonnie Heidel, Botanist, Wyoming Natural Diversity Database, 1000 E. University Ave., Dept. 3381 University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY 82071, (307) 766-3020, bheidel@uwoyo.edu

Project Abstract: Two plant publications will be developed for visitor education and outreach: Checklist of Plants of Devils Tower National Monument (low-cost booklet submitted as pdf) and Plants that Tell the Devils Tower National Monument Story (a flyer submitted as pdf). In addition, the two current brochures on woody plants and on wildflowers of the monument will be reformatted to include a map that cross-references viewing on the existing trail system, rather than create a marker system requiring maintenance. The University of Wyoming's Wyoming Natural Diversity Database (WYNDD) will draw from written reports, existing datasets, and existing interpretive materials on plant species found at Devils Tower NM. WYNDD will also coordinate with natural resources staff at DETO and the Northern Great Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network (NGPN) staff to determine if there is any new information on plant species in the park. WYNDD will provide NGPN and DETO an updated species and voucher list in spreadsheet format listing species name, authority, and Taxonomic Serial Number for each species which will be used for updating the certified species list for DETO.

A total of 421 plant species have been documented at DETO across an array of habitat types (NPSpecies 2011) 12 more were vouchered incidental to rare plant surveys (Heidel 2008), and there are also 46 species that are probable (NPSpecies 2011). When appropriate, field visits to DETO will be used to collect "probable species". Rather than prepare a field guide to limited numbers of common species, or a marker system to even fewer common woody species, a 3-level interpretive program is proposed to intersect with visitor views and interests at many levels. The checklist will not provide information on identification, and the only graphics will be eye-catching photographs on the cover, but it can be used in combination with the one-page illustrated handout, plant field guides, and other resources. These fill critical gaps in the information available to Devils Tower visitors, gauge the public interest in linking natural history with human history, and serve as an interpretive springboard for displays, interpretive programs, and other developments.

Outcomes with Completion Dates: December 31, 2013
Submission of draft documents for review, April 30, 2013

Keywords: visitor education and outreach, plants, publications, Devils Tower National Monument, University of Wyoming, Wyoming Natural Diversity Database (WYNDD)