

Project Summary
Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Haleakala National Park–Visitor experience study

Discipline: Social
Type of Project: Technical Assistance
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: Washington State University
Students Involvement:
Effective Dates: 12/15/2014 - 8/31/16
Funding Amount: \$61,188

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract: Watching sunrise and sunset at Red Hill, Haleakala Visitor Center, Kalahaku Lookout, Halemauu Overlook, and Leleiwi Lookout are the most popular activities among visitors to Haleakala National Park. Due to the large volume of visitors to these locations, visitors often experience overcrowding, lack of parking, and other negative experiences. In addition, since the activity often occurs during the time when natural lighting is limited, it is harder for visitor to locate necessary support facilities or interpretation resources. In addition, limited staff is available to rove at sunrise—the staff currently only staffs Haleakala Visitor Center in the pre-dawn hours. Also, Haleakala Visitor Center is closed at 3pm daily so the park does not have an open visitor center or any roving interpreters at sunset. A visitor survey to obtain visitors' opinions about these issues and recommendations for improvement is needed to provide park managers with scientific information to plan for enhancing visitor experience.

The Social and Economic Sciences Research Center at Washington State University will collaborate with Haleakala National Park personnel through a task agreement to develop a survey questionnaire, conduct the survey, and prepare the report. The data collected from the survey will help inform management decision to allocate resources and programs at the park.

Keywords: Visitor experience, overcrowding, ranger interpretation program, Haleakala National Park, Washington State University