

National Park Service Project Completion Report Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (RM-CESU)

Project Title: Administrative History of Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

Project Code: CSU-RM-145, J1526095208

Type of Project: Research/Education

Funding Agency: National Park Service

Partner University: Colorado State University

NPS Agreement Technical Representative: Fred Bunch, Great Sand Dunes Park and Preserve, 11500 Highway 150, Mosca, CO 81146-9798, 719-378-6361, fred_bunch@nps.gov

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Start Date of Project: 10/15/2008

End Date of Project: 12/15/2010

Funding Amount: \$30,000

Project Summary, Coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service, the Public Lands History Center at Colorado State University has announced the publication of *Sea of Sand: A History of Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve*, written by local Fort Collins historian and Colorado State University alumnus Michael M. Geary. Published by the University of Oklahoma Press as Volume 2 in the Public Lands History series, *Sea of Sand* guides readers on a fascinating historical journey through over 10,000 years of human history at Colorado's Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, home to the tallest sand dunes in North America. The book also explores the more recent legislative effort led by an unprecedented coalition of local, state, and federal agencies, including The Nature Conservancy and the National Park Service, to secure national park status for the Great Sand Dunes. Information on the book can be found at <http://www.oupres.com/ECommerce/Book/Detail/2115/sea%20of%20sand>

Michael M. Geary wrote this book as part of his degree requirements at Colorado State University, under the direction of Dr. Mark Fiege. This work was done through the Rocky Mountains CESU, with funding from Great Sand Dunes and the NPS RM-CESU. The author, Michael Geary, is a writer, researcher, avid historian, and long-time resident of Fort Collins who has also written *A Quick History of Grand Lake* (Western Reflections, Inc., 1999). For more

information on the Public Lands History series, see publiclands.colostate.edu/public-lands-book-series.

Number of students participating in this project: MA Student Michael Geary

Lessons Learned from this project: During the process of compiling the administrative history of GRSA, the park was enlarged and added considerable ecosystem complexity. The MA student at CSU continued his work, in spite of being past the end date of the project, to include new information on the park and preserve. The GRSA staff were instrumental in making this happen.

Other RM-CESU agencies or research partners who participated in this project: Other agencies that played a part in getting information to the author on the environmental history of GRSA included USGS, FWS and USFS.