

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

**Project Title: Science Communication Internship at the Crown of the Continent  
Research Learning Center, Glacier National Park, Summer 2016**

**Project Code: UMT-320**

**Type of Project: Education**

**Funding Agency: National Park Service**

**Partner University: University of Montana**

**NPS Agreement Technical Representative: Tara Carolin, Glacier NP, P.O. Box 128, West  
Glacier, MT 59936, tara\_carolin@nps.gov ; 406-888-7863**

**NPS Technical Expert : Melissa Sladek, Science Communication Specialist CCRLC; P.O.  
Box 128, West Glacier, MT 59936; 406-888-7894; fax: 406-888-7903;  
[melissa\\_sladek@nps.gov](mailto:melissa_sladek@nps.gov)**

**Principal Investigator: Phil Condon, Environmental Studies Program, Rankin 104,  
University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812, Phone: 406-243-2904, Fax: 406-243-6090,  
phil.condon@mso.umt.edu**

**Start Date of Project: May 23, 2016**

**End Date of Project: August 25, 2016**

**Funding Amount: \$13,155**

## **Project Summary,**

The University of Montana Environmental Studies graduate student, Tom Sentner, provided assistance in the production of science communications media and publications for the Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center. This included in-field interviews with fisheries biologists in Glacier National Park and the synthesis of a related feature article for the annual "Science in the Crown" newsletter showcasing research, education, and citizen science at the CCRLC. The graduate student also interviewed Glacier National Park planners and compiled statistics and published research about planning in the park to produce a "Research Hot Topic" article providing information to the public and park staff about the Going-to-the-Sun Road Corridor Management Plan. The graduate student also aided in general communications concerning visiting speakers, Artists-in-Residence, and citizen science events. The student also received training in the use of the National Park Service's Content Management System for publishing digital content and web-pages, and assisted in the initial stages development of the Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center's website.

**Task 1 – Produce Article on Research in the Crown of the Continent for Annual Newsletter**  
Tom researched the conservation biology of threatened bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) in the

upper Columbia River watershed and Glacier National Park. He synthesized an overview of the current science guiding bull trout recovery efforts as well as the invasion biology of lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) in the watershed. Then Tom accompanied fisheries field biologists to Quartz Lake, where he conducted interviews and assisted with research in backcountry locations to provide the narrative and testimonials for the newsletter article. With help from Science Communications Specialist Melissa Sladek, Tom produced a feature article highlighting the unusual and exciting work of fisheries management in Glacier National Park.

**Task 2 – Research and Synthesize a “Resource Hot Topic” Article on the Going-to-the-Sun Road Corridor Management Plan**

Tom interviewed Mary Riddle, Glacier National Park’s Chief of Planning, and worked with her to produce a compilation of some of the most important statistics informing the Corridor Management Plan. The article explains the need for the plan, the challenges facing planners, and the reasons why Glacier National Park’s preferred alternative was chosen. This involved extensive analysis of a wide array of park planning documents, newsletters, presentations and other resources.

**Task 3 – Assist in the initial development of the Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center (CCRLC) website using the National Park System’s Content Management System (CMS).**

The CCRLC website had been previously hosted on a non-government server, and Science Communication Specialist Melissa Sladek is currently creating a new, improved website hosted by the Department of Interior’s web services. Tom assisted with photos, text, and layout for the new site.

**Number of students participating in this project: 1 graduate student**

**Lessons Learned from this project:** This internship offers excellent learning opportunities for entry level professional science communications and should be continued.

**Other RM-CESU agencies or research partners who participated in this project:**

**USGS, University of Montana**