

RMR Launches New CPSU Plan

The Rocky Mountain Region is undertaking a new Regional CPSU program calling for a network of CPSUs in all RMR states, utilizing university staff as unit leaders on a less-than-full-time basis. These units would be the focus for research within the respective states.

Some 18 research scientists duty-stationed at Rocky Mountain, Grand Teton, Yellowstone, and Glacier NPs will be transformed into "park-based CPSU staff," in cooperation with four regional universities. Implementation is subject to negotiation, but it is expected that the Rocky Mountain NP unit will be aligned with CO/State/U, the Grand Teton NP with U/WY, the Yellowstone NP unit with both U/WY and U/MT, and the Glacier NP unit with U/MT and Mt/State/U.

John Varley of Yellowstone and Cliff Martinka of Glacier will serve as unit leaders for their respective parks. Grand Teton will recruit for its unit leader. The Rocky Mountain unit will be led temporarily by a university staff member to be selected while park Chief Scientist Dave Stevens pursues his PhD degree.

A competitive contracted research program currently operated cooperatively with U/WY will continue under a one year extension. It is hoped that NPS research authority legislation will be passed in the next year and that the cooperative competitive program may be advertised for open competition among universities for future involvement. The competitive program features a nationally circulated Request for Proposals and over a million dollars in current research contracts for the Region. It is administered by Prof. Mark Boyce of U/WY NPS Research Center and Bob Schiller, RMR Science Branch Chief.

The completed network would feature (1) part-time academic involvement for all NPS researchers to foster professional growth; (2) true peer review of annual work plans and accomplishments; (3) Regional oversight to "standardize" project documentation and improve coordination; and (4) a "balanced" program that protects the needs of small parks.