**Award Number (for administrative use only):**

**PR/J Number:** R1496100141

**PROJECT ABSTRACT**

**Colorado Plateau Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit**

**(Cooperative Agreement # H1200-09-0005)**

**Park:** Mesa Verde National Park

**Project Title:** Phase III: Documentation, Analysis & Conservation of Architectural Surface Finishes at Front Country Sites, Mesa Verde National Park

**Funding Amount:** $50,318

**CPCESU Partner Institution:** University of Pennsylvania

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**Start Date:** July 9, 2010

**End Date:** December 31, 2012

**Abstract:**

An essential feature of Mesa Verde’s prehistoric architecture is the applied surface finishes and wall paintings found at many of the Ancestral Puebloan alcove sites in the park. An architectural surface finishes documentation and treatment program was developed between 1994 and 1997 through a partnership between the University of Pennsylvania’s Architectural Conservation Laboratory (ACL) and the National Park Service (NPS). This has produced a methodology to record, study and preserve these fragile site components and has generated a vast quantity of data regarding the mechanisms of surface finish deterioration, low impact treatments, and advanced integrated digital recording methods. Since the implementation of this project, architectural conservators, archaeologists and conservation students from all over the world have assisted in the stabilization of this World Heritage site.

Based on previous successes at Mug House, Cliff Palace, and Spruce Tree House, additional sites including Fire Temple, have been identified as high priority for finishes investigation and conservation. The documentation and treatment funded through this project will prolong the life of an irreplaceable and undeniably significant resource as well as aid in new interpretation of these sites for the professional and public. This project also continues the tradition of conservation research and educational training that previous cooperative agreements between the National Park Service and the University of Pennsylvania have provided. It also responds to the priority survey of front country sites prepared in 1999 and will also provide park staff with the necessary baseline information for stabilizing and monitoring the deterioration of high profile areas of these sites.