**PR Number: R1496120046**

**Award Number:** **P12AC10530**

**Project Number: CSUCP-414**

**Park/NPS Unit:** Mesa Verde National Park

**Title of Project:** Data Development and Field Surveys for Special Status Plants in Mesa Verde National Park, Montezuma County, Colorado

**Administered through the:** Colorado Plateau Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Cooperative Agreement Number H1200-09-0005

**CESU Partner:** Colorado State University

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**Funding Information:**

**Amount Funded: (**$22,000)

**NPS Account Numbers (amounts in parentheses):**

 1496-1000-NZP ($15,730)

 1242-020T-RYY ($6,270)

**Fund Source (e.g., ONPS, FLREA, CRPP, CESU, etc.):**

[x] NPS Funding

[ ]  Is this funded using a reimbursable account number? If yes, IMR contracting needs a copy of the Interagency Agreement.

**Project Dates:**

**Start Date:** May 21, 2012

**Any Other Product Milestone Dates you need to include:** (full dates can go in with the project description)

**End Date:** May 31, 2013

**PROJECT ABSTRACT:**

Mesa Verde National Park, known primarily for its outstanding archeological sites, contains a rich diversity of natural resources. The Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) and The Nature Conservancy have classified all of Mesa Verde National Park (MEVE) within their Network of Conservation Areas (NCA) because of exceptional occurrences of rare plant and animal species. There are also two smaller sections within the CNHP Potential Conservation Areas (PCA) system totaling 26,442 acres because of outstanding biological diversity related specifically to rare plant species.

This 52,000-acre unit of the national park system is located in the southwestern corner of Colorado, and is characterized by winding canyons and by mesas dominated by old-growth pinyon-juniper. These habitats support several of Colorado’s rarest plant species, including *Astragalus deterior*, *Astragalus schmolliae* and *Hackelia gracilenta*. Surveys for these species are needed to determine current viability and long-term trends of existing populations, and to look at the effects of impacts from management and human use to these populations and their potential habitat. Despite rare plant surveys conducted in 2011 by CNHP and MEVE staff, many occurrences in MEVE have not been visited in the last twenty years. Furthermore, extensive suitable habitat for these species remains unsurveyed. In 2012, we will conduct surveys to update historical occurrences, survey potential habitat for these species on NPS lands, and make existing data available in a more contemporary format.