

National Public Radio broadcast summarizes acoustic monitoring project

Editor's Note: The research summarized here is described in detail in a report by L. Park et al. on page 59.

DAN MEYERS, RADIO HOST OF KCFR'S COLORADO MATTERS, interviewed the National Park Service (NPS) Natural Sounds Program scientist Dr. Kurt Fristrup about acoustical research the program conducted in Rocky Mountain National Park. Over the summer of 2008, researchers conducted acoustic monitoring and recorded sounds in the park in order to determine whether transportation noise from roads disrupts visitor enjoyment of some of the park's trails.

Monitoring acoustic resources requires specialized equipment that researchers can leave unattended in the backcountry for weeks at a time. In the case of the Rocky Mountain National Park research, a monitoring device was deployed in the park at a base station, and a researcher walked trails in the area collecting data with a mobile acoustical monitoring device. These data can be used to model the propagation of sound through the area.

Using this research as an example, the broadcast is a primer for understanding why and how the Natural Sounds Program collects acoustic data in parks. Results from this work will help park managers determine which areas of the park are most quiet, which management actions are needed to reduce inappropriate noise, as well as which sound sources are creating the most noise. This has the potential to benefit the visitor experience in the park as well as to create a healthier environment for park wildlife.

Reference

Meyers, D., host. 2008, October 14. Scientists study sound in Rocky Mountain National Park. Colorado Matters, KCFR News. http://www.kcfr.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=497.

—Dave Stack