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## Alpine Plant Community Trends on the Elk Summer Range of Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado: An Analysis of Existing Data: Usgs Open-File Report 2

By Linda C Zeigenfuss

Bibliogov, United States, 2013. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 246 x 189 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book \*\*\*\*\* Print on Demand \*\*\*\*\*.The majority of the elk (*Cervus elaphus*) population of Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado summer in the park's high elevation alpine and subalpine meadows and willow krummholz. The park's population of white-tailed ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucurus alpinus*) depends on both dwarf and krummholz willows for food and cover. Concern about the effects of elk herbivory on these communities prompted the monitoring of 12 vegetation transects in these regions from 1971 to 1996. Over this 25-year period, data were collected on plant species cover and frequency and shrub heights. These data have not been statistically analyzed for trends in measured variable over time to determine changes in species abundance. Krummholz willow species (*Salix planifolia*, *S. brachycarpa*) declined 17-20 percent in cover and about 25 centimeters in height over the study period. Graminoids (particularly *Deschampsia caespitosa*, *Carex*, and *Poa*) increased slightly from 1971 to 1996. No significant increases of nonnative plant species were observed. An increase in presence of bare ground over the 25-year period warrants continued measurement of these transects. Lack of good data on elk density,...



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