



# Rocky Mountain Research Station

## Effects of Recreation on Forest Wildlife

FY 2011 President's Budget

### ISSUE

Multiple use of natural resources is a U.S. Forest Service mandate. However, the meteoric rise in non-consumptive, recreation on national forests exceeds current scientific understanding of the potential effects of such recreational pressure on forest wildlife. RMRS scientists are bridging this gap with cutting-edge research into the type, severity, and mechanisms for effects caused by a wide array of recreational activities on a variety of avian and mammalian species.



### IMPORTANCE

Effective management of Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs) is one of the biggest, most pervasive problems facing public land managers. Through controlled experimentation, RMRS scientists have been studying how varying time, distance, and patterns of ATVs, enduro motorcycles, and even birdwatchers, affect nesting spotted owls. Other research focuses on the potential effects of snowmobiles on competitor access and northern lynx critical winter habitat. Also, recreational watercraft, civilian and military aircraft, logging trucks, and road maintenance equipment have been evaluated for their potential effects on bald and golden eagles, goshawks, and other wildlife.



### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Potential effects of recreational and other forms of human activity depend on multiple factors associated with the type of disturbance, the species affected, and the circumstances surrounding the interaction. The goal of RMRS recreation/wildlife research is to evaluate this complex scenario, develop predictive models from the underlying mechanisms, and provide both broadly applicable, generic, as well as species-, location-, and circumstance-specific management recommendations. Partnered with ERDC, RMRS scientists are pioneering our understanding of the subtle effects of noise on wildlife. Numerous reports and scientific publications are already facilitating management decisions on National Forests.



### PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

- National Forests in Regions 1,2,3,4,5
- U.S. Army Environmental Research & Development Center (ERDC)
- U.S. Fish & Wildl. Serv., National Park Serv.
- State Game & Fish Departments
- Several Universities
- Multiple, non-governmental, private and non-profit organizations



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