

Background:

Forests burned by wildfires contain snags (dead trees), which provide valuable economic opportunities for logging communities across the Pacific Northwest. They also pose potential threats as hazard trees along roads and trails. However, removal of snags can have negative ecological consequences, including reduction of habitat for wildlife species associated with recently disturbed forests (e.g., several woodpecker species of conservation concern).



Black-backed woodpeckers favor unlogged, recently-burned forest for nesting. They move from place to place, following outbreaks of wood-boring beetles in recently burned habitats.

White-headed woodpeckers make their nests by excavating holes primarily in snags, and sometimes trees or stumps. Mosaics of burned forests adjacent to green forests make attractive 'cities' where they can place nests in snags and forage in live trees.



Lewis's woodpeckers rarely excavate wood-boring insects themselves. They arrive 2-3 years after a wildfire to prey on flying insects associated with shrub regrowth after fire.

Research Proposal:

Rocky Mountain Research Station recently initiated a four-year study in Oregon (as well as Washington, Idaho, and Montana) to help answer and validate from other studies the following questions:

1. How do levels of salvage harvest relate to nesting densities of black-back, white-headed, and Lewis's woodpeckers during the first four years after a wildfire?
2. What are the changes in woodpecker occupancy and nest survival in relation to the gradient of salvage logging?
3. How do burn severity, snag distributions, and ponderosa pine influence nest placement by woodpeckers?

The Canyon Creek Complex Fire Salvage Project area on the Malheur National Forest was selected to be part of this research.

Results will help shape management practices by identifying post-fire salvage harvest prescriptions that allow benefits to economics, while minimizing impacts to wildlife.



How you can help:

Knowledge! The specific density of trees left behind in each study unit is by careful design, and these numbers are crucial to informing this research. Success of woodpecker nest sites in each study area will help determine how much salvage logging can be allowed before these species become negatively impacted.

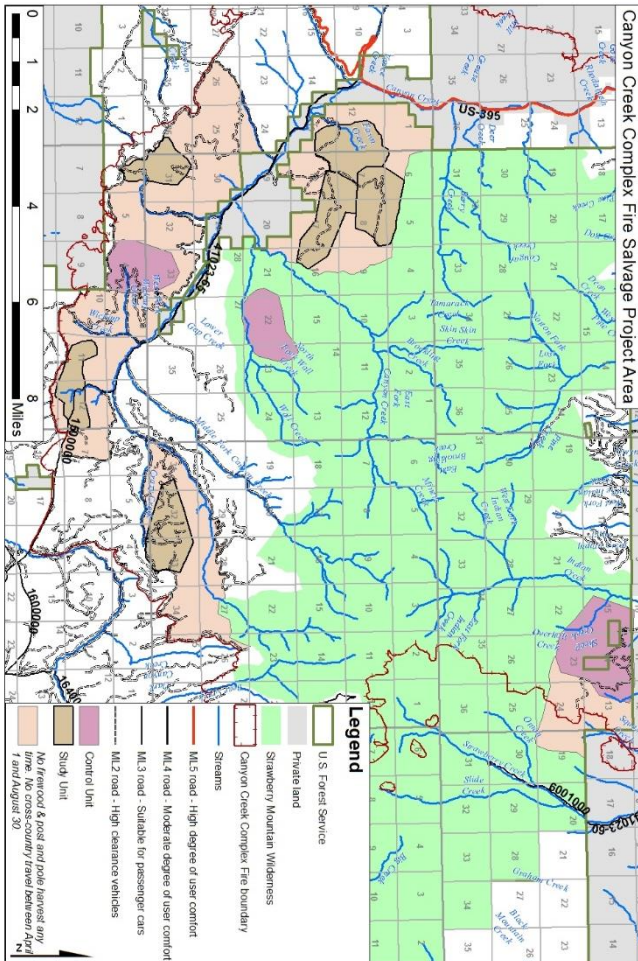
Avoid the research units! Because some human activities may interfere with woodpecker nesting success, we appreciate your understanding and compliance with cross-country travel and firewood cutting restrictions in place for the Canyon Creek Complex Fire Salvage Project area.

Follow the rules! During the four-year duration (2016-2019), we ask that Forest visitors refrain from the following activities:

- No firewood cutting within the project study or control units
- No cross-country travel from April 1 to August 30 within study or control units
- If enjoying non-motorized recreation in the area, please respect potential woodpecker nest sites and keep noise levels to a minimum.

Spread the word! Please help us get the word out and make this research project a success.

Canyon Creek Complex Fire Salvage project area:



More information:

Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS), Birds and Burns Network:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/wildlife-terrestrial/birds-burns/>

Joint Fire Science Briefs:

https://www.firescience.gov/projects/briefs/06-3-4-15_FSBrief143.pdf

RMRS post-fire salvage logging research:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/rmrs/science-spotlights/using-habitat-requirements-woodpeckers-design-post-fire-salvage-logging>

Canyon Creek Complex Fire Salvage and research project:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=48518>

Black-backed woodpeckers:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-backed_Woodpecker/id

<http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/black-backed-woodpecker>

<https://birdsna.org/Species-Account/bna/species/bkbwoo/introduction>

White-headed woodpeckers:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/White-headed_Woodpecker/id

<http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/white-headed-woodpecker>

<https://birdsna.org/Species-Account/bna/species/whhwoo/introduction>

Lewis's woodpeckers:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Lewis_Woodpecker/id

<http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/lewis-woodpecker>

<https://birdsna.org/Species-Account/bna/species/lewwoo/introduction>

Woodpecker photos and permissions by:

Tom Kogut Photography

<http://tkogut.zenfolio.com/>

Malheur National Forest

Woodpecker Research

in the
Canyon Creek
Complex Fire
Salvage Area



USDA is an equal opportunity employer

