

Forest Wide Projects

Pollinator Project

You can help biologists collect data on pollinators, especially bumblebees and butterflies. We are specifically looking for sightings of western bumblebees and white veined arctic butterflies.



Canada Lynx Project

Canada lynx were reintroduced to Colorado on the San Juan and Rio Grande National Forests. Help biologists continue to monitor lynx populations by collecting data on lynx sightings and signs, such as tracks and scat.



Bighorn Sheep Monitoring

Help wildlife biologists track the presence and activity of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep! Bighorn sheep are at risk of developing respiratory disease contracted from domestic sheep. We document the presence of bighorn sheep and stray domestic sheep to help land managers protect bighorns from diseases. We are particularly interested in bighorns that are in close proximity to domestic sheep grazing allotments and stray domestic sheep.



Michael Levine-Clark/Flickr

Species of Interest

Some species, Species of Conservation Concern and Endangered or Threatened species, are of particular interest to the Rio Grande National Forest land managers. These species are listed below.

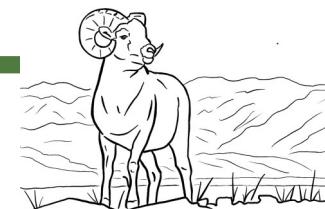
American martin	Olive-sided flycatcher
River otter	Western yellow-billed cuckoo
Canada lynx	Peregrine falcon
Rock Mountain bighorn sheep	Mexican spotted owl
Gunnison prairie dog	Flammulated owl
Norther pocket gopher	Boreal owl
Plains pocket mouse	Northern Goshawk
New Mexico meadow jumping mouse	Boreal toad
Fringed myotis	Rio Grande chub
Townsend's big-eared bat	Rio Grande sucker
Southern white-tailed ptarmigan	Rio Grande cut-throat trout
Southwestern willow flycatcher	Western bumblebee
Gunnison sage grouse	White-veined arctic butterfly
Brewer's sparrow	Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly
	Silverspot butterfly

Caring for the land and serving people.

Contact Us

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Plant and Animal Observations



Citizen Science Projects

**RIO GRANDE
National Forest**

What is iNaturalist?

iNaturalist is a program that creates a network of naturalists, citizen scientists, and biologists. Through the program, people can work together to map and share observations of biodiversity.

What is eBird?

eBird is another program that is used across the world. You can contribute bird sightings and keep a list of what you saw. The Merlin Bird ID app is a great tool in bird identification and you can link it to eBird!

How can you help?

Information collected on iNaturalist and eBird is used by land managers here on the Rio Grande National Forest.

All you need is an email to create an iNaturalist or eBird account. You can use the website or app to report observations. Observations are anything interesting you find or you can contribute an observation to a specific projects.

You can also help confirm sightings by looking at other peoples' observations and identifying them.



Photos of invasive species:
Common toadflax and cheat grass

Tony Atkin/iNaturalist

Bhklappe/iNaturalist

How do you make an observation?

Observations record an encounter with an organism. You do not necessarily need to see an animal to know it was there. Signs, such as tracks, nests, and sounds, can also tell us a lot. When you make an observation on your account, try to record as much as possible.

- **Where you saw it:** GPS coordinates are best. Make sure to note how accurate your location is.
- **When you saw it:** Record the date and time of your encounter, not the date you post it.
- **What you saw:** Choose a group of organisms like butterflies or better yet a specific organism like the monarch butterfly. If you can provide evidence but don't know the species, the community can help identify it.
- **Evidence of what you saw:** By including evidence such as a photo or sound, the community can help add, improve, or confirm the identification of what you saw. Having multiple, clear photos is very helpful. Including a common object like a pencil or water bottle can help show scale for things such as plants and tracks.



Dan Dzurasin/flickr

Forest Wide Projects

The Rio Grande National Forest has a few key initiatives that we are looking to collect data on. Learn more about how to help us with these projects below.

You can become a member of the project by scanning the QR code or searching for the project on iNaturalist.

Busy Beaver Survey

Our wildlife biologists need help tracking the presence and activity of beavers on the Forest. Please take photos of the animals themselves, if possible, but also capture pictures of beaver signs including dams, lodges, chewed tree trunks, tracks and more. This information helps the RGNF to identify where beavers are on the forest and where we may want to translocate beavers to restore watershed conditions.



Michael Zahra/Wikimedia



Invasive Species Inventory

One of the most important projects our land managers need help on is documenting invasive species. Help us keep our plant communities native by sharing your observations. You can also stop by the Divide District office to pick up a free guide on invasive species of Colorado.

Photo: invasive musk thistle



Abelkinser/iNaturalist

