

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Bighorn Canyon Peregrine Falcon Breeding Survey

Discipline: Natural

Type of Project: Research

Funding Agency: National Park Service

Other Partners/Cooperators: University of Montana

Effective Dates: 9/30/2007- 1/01/2010

Funding Amount: \$10,000

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract: Bighorn Canyon NRA represents some of the finest peregrine falcon habitat in the region. 70 miles of steep sided canyon bound the reservoir providing ample nesting, perching and hunting areas. Rock doves and other prey are abundant. In addition to the main canyon, several tributaries provide additional habitat. In the mid 1980s, there were no known peregrine nests in Montana. After a concerted effort by agencies, land owners and the Montana Peregrine Institute, which included releasing more than 600 birds, 69 pairs are known to be nesting in the state. Bighorn Canyon's ample habitat can play an important part in this continued success story. There are 2 known eyries in the canyon. In high density populations, breeding pairs can be spaced as close as every 2 miles. Montana's peregrines are in a recovery mode and increased densities are anticipated as population expansion continues.

Bighorn Canyon proposes working closely with the Peregrine Institute, and the University of Montana to hire a student to survey the canyon and its tributaries for falcon eyries. Surveys will be conducted (primarily by boat) in late June and July, when young are fledging, and detection probabilities are highest. This will also allow surveyors to get a minimum count of productivity (number of young fledged).

The Peregrine Institute will provide assistance with survey methods and techniques, Bighorn Canyon will provide a spotting scope, boat, one week of boat training, and housing, and Erick Greene at the University of Montana will provide additional expertise and aid in recruiting a suitable student, who will be paid by The University of Montana.

Outcomes with Completion Dates: Final report, including a map, GPS Coordinates and list of number of young fledged at each eyrie, and date of fledging, due by the end of 2009.

Keywords: peregrine falcons, survey, Bighorn Canyon NRA, University of Montana, Peregrine Institute

For Administrative Use Only:

Date Annual Report Received:

Date Final Report Received:

Publications, etc. on file: