

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

Project Title: Promoting Avian Conservation at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS

Discipline: Natural
Type of Project: Technical Assistance/Education
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: University of Montana
Effective Dates: 3/1/2013 - 9/30/2016
Funding Amount: \$4,255 part of UM, CFC task agreement UMT 274, M65742 - Burchfield FY12

Investigators and Agency Representative:

NPS Contact: Christine Ford, Integrated Resources Program Manager, Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS, 266 Warren Lane, Deer Lodge, MT 59722; 406-846-2070 x242; chris_ford@nps.gov

Investigator: Kristina Smucker, Assistant Director, Avian Science Center, Division of Biological Sciences, University of Montana, Missoula, MT, 59812, (406) 243-2035, Kristina.Smucker@mso.umt.edu

Project Abstract: The project will utilize a student to work with staff at the University of Montana's Avian Science Center and GRKO Resource Management staff to develop a bird monitoring transect that will gather scientific information on species diversity and density at GRKO. The monitoring protocol to be used is well established through the Western Monitoring Bird Program developed by Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO), Idaho Bird Observatory and associated partners. Knowledgeable ornithologists will mentor the student and data collection methods will be reviewed by the NPM Rocky Mountain Inventory and Monitoring Network staff. The student will be taught how to design transects, conduct field preparation, data collection of birds and vegetation, data entry, analyses and report writing. Data from each point will include species heard and seen and distance between the observer and the bird.

The student will survey the point count transect twice between May 25 and July 15. The student will enter all data into RMBO's IMBCR program database and will produce a field report summarizing the bird community. The ASC will conduct data proofing routines and submit proofed data to RMBO. RMBO will house the data and provide density estimates for all species detected on the Ranch which also had a sufficient number of detections statewide.

The student will also spend one day nest searching on the Ranch each time the Avian Science Center hosts the bird banding (7 sessions) program in 2013 to document the nesting community. Species composition will be compared to the breeding bird community composition derived from banding and point count data. Nest success will be monitored as time permits to gain information on productivity. This will help support the Avian Science Center's 4th year of bird banding efforts in the riparian habitat at the Ranch.

The student will use the collected data and work closely with the Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management staff to develop site specific presentation tools and conduct field education programs focused on Avian Conservation. These tools and presentations will be used for those visiting the Ranch during the summer, to engage others from the nearby communities, and for staff from the historic site to use for developing interpretive programs.

Outcomes with Completion Dates: December 31, 2014 - Project end date

Keywords: Rocky Mountains CESU, student intern, bird monitoring, Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS, University of Montana, **Avian Science Center**