

# Monitoring fuels and woodpeckers on Collaborative Forest Restoration Projects (CFLRPs) for adaptive management of dry conifer forests in the Interior Northwest

**Introduction:** The USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS); Intermountain Region, Payette National Forest; and Pacific Northwest Region are leading the effort to provide consistency in monitoring the effectiveness of CFLRP treatments at reducing fuels and restoring dry conifer forest habitats of the Interior Northwest. Monitoring is a key component of the CFLR program and our work is designed to address how well CFLRPs are meeting their forest restoration and wildlife habitat conservation goals. The white-headed woodpecker is a regional endemic species of the Interior Northwest and may be particularly vulnerable to environmental change because it occupies a limited distribution and has narrow habitat requirements in dry conifer forests. Monitoring in CFLRPs, such as the Weiser-Little Salmon Headwaters project on the Payette National Forest, also contributes to other ongoing, regional efforts to monitor effectiveness of silvicultural and prescribed fire treatments for white-headed woodpeckers throughout their range in Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Vegetation and fuels data collection also support modeling of fire-climate impacts on future forest conditions and wildlife habitat suitability.



**Male White-headed Woodpecker on Ponderosa Pine**

## **Monitoring & Research Objectives:**

- Determine current habitat suitability for nesting woodpeckers in burned & unburned forests.
- Determine effectiveness of silvicultural & prescribed fire treatments on fuels reduction & wildlife habitat.
- Evaluate historical & future forest & habitat conditions under different management & climate scenarios.
- Identify future habitat suitability needs to help guide forest restoration activities.

## **Monitoring & Research Approach:**

- Broad-scale occupancy monitoring - designed to provide scientifically credible, standardized data on the distribution, site occupancy, & population trends of white-headed woodpeckers across their range.
- Treatment effectiveness monitoring – designed to assess effect of stand-level treatments on fuels reduction & on woodpecker occupancy & nest survival.
- Fuels data collection – designed to support modeling of fire-climate impacts on historical & future dry mixed conifer forests & wildlife habitat suitability

## **Forest Management Implications:**

Restoration of dry forest habitat occupied by white-headed woodpeckers is the goal of most CFLRP projects of the Interior Northwest, which have the potential for either beneficial or negative effects on woodpeckers and their habitat. This monitoring will inform restoration projects allowing for implementation of adaptive management in dry coniferous forests to meet forest restoration & wildlife habitat conservation goals.

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