



Landowner Stories in Bird Conservation



Managing for Cavity-Nesting Birds in Ponderosa Pine Forests

Bird Conservation in Private Ponderosa Pine Forests

Michael Woodruff



American Bird Conservancy (ABC), in cooperation with the American Forest Foundation, Forest Restoration Partnership, and several other partners, is working with private landowners to implement bird conservation

measures in ponderosa pine habitat throughout the western United States. Our partnership seeks to help family forest owners restore open, mature stands of ponderosa pine habitat to meet the needs of cavity-nesting bird species of conservation concern, notably the Flammulated Owl, Lewis's Woodpecker, and White-headed Woodpecker.

We have been working with landowners on large and small tracts of ponderosa pine forest to encourage the implementation of ponderosa pine restoration and conservation measures such as thinning, fuels reduction, and snag management. Our program also includes activities such as the preparation of management plans, field demonstration days hosted by private landowners, development of education and outreach materials, initiation of nest box programs, and the collection of inventory and monitoring data that describe habitat conditions and assess the presence and habitat suitability for priority bird species.

This "landowners' stories" booklet has been developed as an outreach tool to support ABC's ponderosa pine cavity-nesting bird program, and to stimulate the interest of private landowners in conducting habitat management for priority cavity-nesting birds and other wildlife. The stories highlight not only some of the management activities and goals of each

landowner, but also their more personal relationship with their land. It is our hope that their passion is familiar to many landowners, and that the stories will both encourage those already engaged in bird conservation to continue, and stimulate many others to initiate similar types of activities.



COVER PHOTOS: Dan Casey flagging snag to be retained at Tom Thomsen property, Darin Stringer; birds (top to bottom) Lewis's Woodpecker, Alan Wilson; Flammulated Owl, Michael Woodruff; White-headed Woodpecker, Alan Wilson.

Hunt Hatch with large deformed tree to be retained as a future snag; Dan Casey



Priority Cavity-Nesting Birds in Ponderosa Pine Habitat



Michael Woodruff

Flammulated Owl. This tiny owl inhabits montane pine and aspen forests where it feeds almost entirely on insects, especially moths and beetles. Flammulated Owls nest primarily in cavities excavated by woodpeckers in large trees and snags (more than 16 inches in diameter). They consistently select habitat that combines open forest stands with large trees and snags for nesting, occasional clusters of thick understory vegetation for roosting and calling, and adjacent grassland openings that provide optimum edge habitat for foraging.



Alan Wilson

Lewis's Woodpecker. The Lewis's Woodpecker is a large woodpecker that will excavate its own cavity in soft wood, and also use existing cavities and even some nest boxes. They are dependent on open ponderosa pine habitat, preferring sites with large snags, but will also nest in cottonwoods and in recently burned forests. They forage on insects and ripe fruits, and have specialized aerial flycatching behaviors.

White-headed Woodpecker. The White-headed Woodpecker is highly dependent on large tracts of open, mature ponderosa pine forest with dead or dying trees for nesting and large trees for foraging. They excavate nesting cavities in snags and stumps, often within ten feet from the ground.



Tom Grey

Ponderosa Pine Forest Habitat for Birds: Then and Now

Dry forests dominated by ponderosa pine are distributed widely throughout the west at lower elevations, often representing the first forest zone above lower elevation grasslands and sagebrush. Historically, these forests burned at regular intervals of 5-25 years, promoting an open, uneven-aged forest, dominated by large pines with open grassy and shrub understories. Because fires were generally of low intensity, more than 70% of the acres of this forest type were stands of large, mature pines as recently as 100 years ago. Logging, habitat conversion, and encroachment of denser fir stands have resulted in a dramatic decrease in the distribution of mature pine stands in the last 50 years. Fire suppression has led to conditions where much denser stands of Douglas-fir have replaced the open stands, making them much more susceptible to crown fires. The extent of recent fires in the West emphasizes the need to restore appropriate structure to ponderosa pine stands.

Much recent funding and management action on public and private lands has focused on restoring ponderosa pine forest habitats towards historic conditions, and improving their resiliency to fire through thinning and prescribed burns to reduce fuel build-up and create a more open canopy and understory. However, few of these efforts

have been implemented with specific standards or actions for cavity-nesting birds, and the availability of dead or dying trees these birds require continues to be a broad-scale deficiency, even where restoration is occurring. While conducting these restoration activities, we have an excellent opportunity to re-create the conditions needed by declining cavity-nesting bird species of concern. This can include protecting and recruiting snags for nesting, and maintaining a diverse understory for feeding habitat.

Darin Stringer measuring the diameter of a large pine tree for snag suitability: Dan Casey



White-headed Woodpecker:
Tom Grey



The Role of Private Lands

Private lands can play a key role in the conservation of ponderosa pine habitats and the birds that depend on them. Approximately 44% of the 15 million acres of ponderosa pine forest in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho is on private lands. Many ponderosa pine forests on private lands are adjacent to public forest lands, providing an opportunity to enhance their value through cooperative efforts with public land managers. Many of these forests are interspersed with grassland, sagebrush, aspen, and riparian habitats that can be important to our target species (e.g., grasslands for Flammulated Owl and riparian habitats for Lewis's Woodpecker).

This project provided us with an opportunity to work with several private landowners to integrate habitat objectives for cavity-nesting birds within the context of other private landowner objectives such as sustainable harvest for economic values, resiliency from catastrophic fire, and other wildlife goals. Even private landowners with small acreages can play a role in bird conservation through the creation or retention of a few snags on their property. Snag management can be done with minimal financial loss by dedicating snags from low-value “character” trees.

Thinning a pine stand

Step 1 – overstocked before thinning



Step 2 – removing small diameter trees



Step 3 – after thinning



What You Can Do

Reducing the risk of fire through logging and brush removal has become a priority for western landowners in recent years. Much of this effort to reduce fuel levels on public and private lands is consistent with restoring the historic habitat structure needed by nesting and foraging bird species of concern. Where Flammulated Owls, Lewis's Woodpeckers, and White-headed Woodpeckers are known or suspected to occur, we encourage family forest owners to take advantage of opportunities to manage ponderosa pine forests using the following recommended strategies:

- ▲ Retain all live ponderosa pine trees over 21 inches in diameter, and as many large (greater than 17 inches) live trees as possible
- ▲ Use thinning and fire to remove invasive trees and shrubs and restore open but patchy understory conditions
- ▲ Retain all snags and broken-top trees greater than 9 inches in diameter
- ▲ Recruit (create) one large snag (greater than 20 inches) per acre, where feasible

Some of these activities, such as development of large trees, will take many years to achieve. However, landowners can see quick results from thinning, understory management, and snag retention and creation.

Jim Dovenberg:

Living the Dream on 10,000 Acres

Since his early 20s Jim Dovenberg never had any doubt about his future. “I wanted a place with the potential to raise cattle and manage timber in a sustainable manner.” Although he grew up in a rural part of the Cascade Mountains outside Seattle, Washington, his dream was to ranch in the wide open spaces of eastern Oregon. It took him 20 more years to fulfill his dream. While building a business based on specialty products, including the development of “synthetic ice”, which is used in place of natural ice on indoor and outdoor skating rinks all over the world, Jim maintained the dream. Twenty years ago, after

spending three years searching for just the right place, he found it on Widow Creek Ranch, a five-mile square block of land encompassing 10,000 acres just outside of John Day, Oregon.

The property came with a lot of history. It took its name during the 1860s, after four women were forced to raise their families and run their riverside homesteads single-handed after each of their husbands died. The entrance to the ranch, along Highway 26, is near the site where the last killing of a European settler in Oregon by Native Americans is reputed to have occurred.

Jim Dovenberg and Darin Stringer assessing the condition of two large pines: Dan Casey





With so much land, Jim quickly realized he needed lots of help. So, over the last 20 years, he has probably made more use of government programs and partnerships than anyone in eastern Oregon. “The money and the technical support is available, so why not take advantage of it,” Jim says. His extensive history of collaborative land management includes fencing riparian areas and restoring runs of steelhead trout in Widow Creek. He also initiated juniper control to improve water availability and stream flows, years before this became the mantra for land management in this part of the world.

Jim’s land management goals are pretty simple in concept. “I want to manage the forest and the rangelands in a sustainable manner to support the ranch and also accommodate wildlife.” However, this task is immense on such a large property. So he has assembled a cadre of foresters, biologists, weed specialists, and others with whom he can consult at any time to support his efforts. In particular, he has worked closely with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife over the years on habitat management and numerous wildlife surveys. He has become his own game manager, and his habitat efforts have improved populations of game birds such as Chukars from five to more than 500 birds. He also has one of the few populations of Mountain Quail around. Wintering mule deer herds that used to number 2,000 or so currently stand at around 100, and management efforts are now underway to bring those numbers back up again.



Pygmy Nuthatch: Alan Wilson

“I used to take 10-12 truckloads of dead and dying trees off the property each year, but now I will leave a lot of those dead trees for wildlife, especially cavity-nesting birds.”

—Jim Dovenberg

Jim now lives outside Portland, but his goal is spend one-third to one-half of his time at the ranch. However, his passion for traveling all over the world big game hunting cuts into that time. So ranch managers take over much of the responsibilities of the cattle, and he has developed a management plan for the forestry operations. After working with American Bird Conservancy and its partners and learning about the importance of snags for cavity-nesting birds, Jim quickly modified his management plan to add a snag component.



Jim Dovenberg points out the boundaries of his property to Bob Altman and Darin Stringer: Laura Dunleavy



Huntington “Hunt” Hatch:

Safeguarding the Future of the Forests

Growing up in Moscow, Idaho, Huntington “Hunt” Hatch was instilled with a love of the outdoors through the fishing and hunting trips he took with his father throughout northern Idaho and western Montana. His father, Olden Hatch, had worked in the Bob Marshall Wilderness as a young man, and had later served as the head of Idaho Fish and Game, and as a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Hunt followed in his father’s footsteps, receiving a forestry degree from the University of Idaho. He then worked for three years as a “smoke-jumper”, parachuting in from airplanes to fight forest fires across the northern Rockies. After a stint in the Air Force and National Guard, he went on to spend 28 years as a commercial pilot. Though officially based out of New York, his schedule for international flights allowed him to live in the place he loved. So in 1970, he bought a homesite on 180 acres outside of Kamiah,

Hunt Hatch leads a tour of his forest with Bob Altman and Darin Stringer; Dan Casey





Idaho that supported mature ponderosa pine forest, a burgeoning Wild Turkey population, and Lewis's Woodpeckers. It was the first of four parcels that he now owns, totaling over 2,500 acres, nearly 2,000 of which is ponderosa pine forest. He combines his passion for managing these forests compatibly for both timber and wildlife in between seasonal trips to Alaska, where, in keeping with his outdoorsman persona, he is a commercial salmon fisherman.

Sharing a dinner of homegrown vegetables and wild-caught salmon with Hunt and his wife Leticia at their house, the walls of which are festooned with elk and caribou heads and other hunting trophies, it is clear that they love the land and want to see it remain productive for generations to come. Indeed, they have ensured just that, by entering into Conservation Easement agreements with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation that will prevent future subdivision on three of their properties. "My vision is to see that this land remains in my family, sustainably producing income and wildlife to be enjoyed by future generations," says Hunt.

Hunt has been selectively logging, planting, and thinning stands on his land for over 20 years, doing much of the work himself with an energy and enthusiasm that belies his nearly 70 years. He has a keen eye toward restoring mature pine forests

and providing wildlife habitat wherever possible on all his tracts. The largest of these is the "Maloney" tract, a 1,300-acre site overlooking the Snake River that was homesteaded and heavily logged in the 1800s. From 1893 to 1948, the nearby town of Forest, Idaho was sustained by the harvest of virgin ponderosa pines. The timber was taken out by rail, with the tracks laid drainage area by drainage area as the trees were felled. Only an



Michael Woodruff

"Old snags are part of what makes these lands important to the bird community... They are an intrinsic part of a healthy forest, and a healthy forest is a productive forest."

— "Hunt" Hatch

empty saloon and a few of those original giant trees remain as a testament to the past, but large pines are once again growing in the area. Hatch is attempting to recreate the open, mature stands that once stood here, along with the elk, mule deer, and bird populations they support. American Bird Conservancy is helping achieve that goal, working with Hunt and contracted foresters to create suitable new snags for woodpeckers and Flammulated Owls on the Maloney tract to supplement existing old snags.



Dan Casey next to old pine snag: Darin Stringer

Gordon and Joan Oster: Buying More than Just a Campground

After escaping the congestion and the concrete of Los Angeles, Gordon Oster and his wife Joan settled in Boise, Idaho in 1988. Avid campers, they became dismayed over the years with the increase in people recreating on national forest lands, and cancelled their annual Fourth of July camping trip. The switch to what has become a labor of love was flipped when Gordon said to Joan, “We need to buy our own campground.” And so they did—151 acres of mixed conifer forest near Bear, Idaho (population 14). Nestled in the foothills of the Seven Devils Mountains, three hours north of Boise, they are surrounded on three sides by national forest land.

After the initial glow of having their own forest paradise, the reality of the work that needed to be done to improve the condition of the forest settled in. They were now the proud owners of a mixed-age dense forest ripe for catastrophic wildfire, with large patches of dense young trees choking each other and sterilizing the forest floor, and extensive areas of invasive grasses and forbs such as beggar’s lice. With a full-time job in Boise as a physician’s assistant, Gordon knew his weekend efforts would only result in falling further behind. So, starting with a state-sponsored forest stewardship course, he sought help and assistance from private landowner project funds.

Gordon Oster discusses thinning of young pines with contracted foresters: Bob Altman





He worked with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to help thin the forest, and most recently began working with American Bird Conservancy and several partners to improve habitat conditions for cavity-nesting birds.

Now, Gordon spends nearly every weekend and vacation working on the property, along with a succession of visiting federal, state, and non-governmental foresters, silviculturalists, hydrologists,

“I get more educated every time I bring someone on the property.”

— Gordon Oster

and ecologists, who provide essential advice and assistance on management and restoration. Gordon even enlists his friends and the families of the martial arts students he teaches to visit and help out. They all get well fed by Joan’s famous Dutch oven cooking.

A self-professed “tree-hugger by birth”, Gordon has used the knowledge he has gained from the professionals and his own research to establish his goal of long-term management of the property for multiple uses including timber, wildlife, aesthetics, and recreation.

When the winter snows are too deep to work on the property, he spends his evenings and weekends reading books on forestry, silviculture, and wildlife management to prepare for the coming year’s activities. However, he puts the books down for a monthly trip to snowshoe across the property, for as Gordon puts it, “I can’t stand to be away from the place for more than a few weeks.”

He is most proud of his collaboration with federal, state, and non-governmental entities on forest and wildlife habitat management projects. The most recent habitat management for cavity-nesting birds has really opened his eyes to the importance of dead trees in the forest. As a proud landowner and Idahoan, he now feels it is his obligation to have Idaho’s state bird, the Mountain Bluebird, nesting on the property, and the snag creation and thinning project is a perfect start to attract this beautiful cavity-nesting ambassador of healthy forests.



Gordon Oster with snag created as part of project: Bob Altman



Mountain Bluebird:
Tom Grey

Tom and Connie Thomsen: Responsibility to Rehabilitate and Restore

A couple of adventurous and humbling elk hunting trips started it all for Tom Thomsen. In the early 90s, Tom was working in Portland as a money manager when he was invited by a client to go on his first ever elk hunt in Grant County, Oregon. The client fell crossing a fence and broke a couple of ribs, and Tom never even saw an elk. The next year, his wife Connie joined them for her first time hunting, and promptly bagged a large elk. She got two more in subsequent years before Tom ever fired a shot. Despite the razzing he got from family and friends, he had been bitten by the bug, and was determined to own some property in that beautiful part of the world. Several years later, Tom got a phone call from his friend saying the 960-acre Lone Pine Ranch was up for sale, and the owner was in a hurry. Unfortunately, Tom's schedule did not allow him to get over there, so of course, he did the most logical thing – he bought it sight unseen!

The property came with an interesting history, having formerly been owned by a well-known leader of the effort to cease free-range cattle grazing in Oregon. The owner had run into some legal problems after shooting 17 of his neighbor's cattle, hence his need to sell immediately. The land had been poorly managed, and the ponderosa pine forest Tom now owned was infested with juniper, unhealthy, and very susceptible to disease and catastrophic wildfire. The previous owner had even built a large log house made entirely from juniper trees felled on the property.

In Tom's view, the property came with great responsibility. "Although I have been very fortunate to be able to acquire the ranch, I feel that I need to improve the health of the land as well as the habitat for plants and animals," he said. Due to intensive grazing and past logging practices it needed some help. This did not mean that Tom wanted to stop cattle grazing or timber harvests; it just meant better land stewardship. Tom started devouring information on ponderosa pine forest management. After all his research, he knew what he wanted the property to look like, but when American Bird Conservancy and its partners came



Darin Stringer records location of large tree retained for a future snag; Dan Casey



Tom Grey

along with information about the importance of maintaining snags for cavity-nesting birds, it opened up a new opportunity for Tom to support his goals for wildlife habitat on the property, especially the White-headed Woodpeckers and Flammulated Owls that he has seen there. Connie is now a budding birder and always takes a pair of binoculars and a bird book with her whenever she goes hiking.

In addition to the cavity-nesting bird project, Tom and Connie are immersed in several other endeavors, including aspen enhancement through fencing and invasive tree removal, and extensive removal of juniper to recharge water tables and stream flows. Fenced riparian areas and juniper removal have improved springs and stream flows in the small creek coursing through the property, which in turn has helped native steelhead trout. "It is a lot of work, but we love the ranch, and parts of it are beginning to look like what we had hoped for."

Tom has had to make some changes to his stewardship practices along the way, however. "I started doing all the work by hand, but quickly realized I needed to become more mechanized if I was ever going to make any progress towards my goals." So now, with a dozer, skid-steer, excavator, backhoe, bucket truck, and chipper – and of course a new building to house everything – Tom does much of the work himself with his own crew. Most of the early work focused on pine

thinning and de-limbing to open up the forest and minimize catastrophic fire. They immediately noticed improvements with grasses and wildflowers coming back, which brought in more deer and elk. With more seeding of native grasses, Tom is now ready to start running some low-intensity fires through the property to keep it free of young juniper.

"I want the land to look more like it was 150 years ago."

— Tom Thomsen

Retired seven years ago, Tom and Connie still live on a farm near Portland, but they like to spend three to four months each year at the ranch, which has now expanded to nearly 3,600 acres with the purchase of adjacent properties. Spare time on the ranch is spent observing wildlife, including a flock of Wild Turkeys. Tom does not hunt the birds, but works with the Oregon and Idaho chapters of the Wild Sheep Foundation to provide a youth hunt for a child and parent from each state every year as a fundraiser for the two chapters.



Tom Thomsen indicates the area where thinning needs to occur: Dan Casey

Matt and Valerie Welles: Doing a Lot with a Little

One quickly understands the concept of doing a lot with a little when visiting the property owned and managed by Matt and Valerie Welles near Tonasket, Washington. While we might tend to think that forest bird conservation and ecosystem restoration are exclusively landscape-level concepts, Matt has put his background and “land ethic” to work in making the most of their 45-acre gem, a restored open ponderosa pine forest with a healthy understory of native grasses and shrubs.

The Welles’s starting coming to the Okanagan Valley to fish and camp while living in the Seattle area, where Matt had finished his Navy career. Having graduated from the New York Ranger School, Matt maintained his interest in natural history through his military travels in Somalia, Kenya, and the Persian Gulf. He continued his education in civil engineering, surveying, hydrogeology, and forestry, and then began working as consulting forester and surveyor, all the while looking for a piece of forested land to call his own. Twenty years ago, a friend called to say that a unique opportunity was available; a forested, west-facing slope was up for sale at just \$150 per acre. Matt traveled to the site and paced off a 25-acre parcel on foot. Later he added another adjoining 20 acres.

Matt’s pride in the accuracy of that initial survey, and in the quality of the forest he has managed since,



Matt Welles uses a clinometer to collect data on tree height: Dan Casey

show clearly as he walks the property with American Bird Conservancy staff and contracted foresters. One senses that he knows the age and condition of nearly every tree. He has a clear vision of which trees will be cut, and when, and which trees will be left alone to provide food and shelter for wildlife, as well as seed stock for the future. The stumps on this land show that it once supported massive ponderosa pines 600-700 years old. The surviving 345-year-old tree, struck by lightning on more than one occasion, with an obvious cavity high up its trunk, is clearly as valuable a part of the landscape to him as the smaller, lumber-producing Douglas-firs on other parts of his forest.



Matt Welles also takes great pride in the interest in birds that his mother, an ornithologist trained at Michigan State University, passed on to him. He also embraces the land ethic espoused by Aldo Leopold, who, with Roger Tory Peterson, was one of his mother's professional contacts. The Welles's land already supports both Lewis's and White-headed Woodpeckers, a pair of the latter nesting in a huge old snag a mere stone's throw from their house.

Both woodpecker species are among the birds the Welles's enjoy at their feeders and water features. The water features are created in part from springs and cisterns on the property that also supply water for their goats and garden. Matt carefully manages the forest around these springs to ensure the water supply at his shallow well. Combine these with the straw bale house, the partial-solar electrical system, and their plans to add wind-generation capacity, and it is clear that the Welles's are striving to live sustainably on the land.

Partnering with American Bird Conservancy to create ten hand-selected snags to complement his forest thinning efforts was therefore a natural extension of this land ethic.

These snags, which will provide improved habitat for woodpeckers and owls for years to come, were created with various combinations of delimiting, topping, and girdling, with the intent

of assessing which recipe of treatments will provide the most suitable nesting habitat. ABC will work with Matt in future years to assess the response by cavity-nesting birds, providing valuable information not just for his property, but for other landowners who are interested in following a similar path of sustainable land stewardship.

Snag created as part of the project on Matt Welles property: Dan Casey



Lewis's Woodpecker and young: Tom Grey

Jim and Margaret Wood: New Age Settlers on the Oregon Outback

The saying: “tough times never last, but tough people do” applies perfectly to Jim Wood and his family, owners of Aspen Valley Ranch near Post, Oregon. During 45 years of family ownership, sheer force of determination has seen their cattle, horse, and timber operation survive floods, wildfire, depressed timber and cattle markets, and even a locust outbreak. The Wood’s are new age settlers in Oregon’s outback.

Driving to the ranch through Post, Oregon (population 104, and the geographic center of the state) at first seems like a trip back to an earlier time. However, once you enter the property, you realize things move fast here—they have to. Managing the 18,000 deeded acres of range, juniper, and ponderosa pine woodlands is a huge undertaking. After following Jim and his wife Margaret around for a day (if you can keep up with them), one quickly learns they can give even the fastest multi-tasking city slickers a run for their money. On one particular day, they bought and sold cattle, fixed fences, birthed a calf, drove their eight-year old son Lachlan 30 miles to school, pulled and sprayed noxious weeds, retrieved stray cows from a neighboring property, and fixed a broken truck—all before lunch.

Jim returned to Post to manage the family ranch in 1992 after spending several years as a student and instructor at the University of Glasgow’s Veterinary School in Scotland. Margaret, the other half of the operation, landed in Post after spending years in the corporate world in San Francisco and New York City.



Jim Wood’s son Lachlan with large pine tree to be released with thinning: Darin Stringer

The Wood’s business strategy has been to embrace holistic management, knowing that ultimately their success depends on maintaining healthy and productive lands. Aspen Valley Ranch is part of Oregon Country Beef/Country Natural Beef, a cooperative of ranchers whose operations are third-party certified based on the humane treatment of livestock, feeding them a hormone-free diet, and the protection of range resources. The Woods have also devoted significant time to promoting many land management causes, from wildlife habitat to protecting rangeland from conversion. The ranch is participating in a sage-grouse study with Oregon State University and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to better understand threats to



this species. With funds from the Crook County Soil and Water District, they have completed riparian fencing to protect water and fish, and with funds from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, they are enhancing the few remaining aspen groves on the property through fencing and juniper removal.

The ranch also contains approximately 1,600 acres of ponderosa pine forests, which are being actively managed to restore large tree structure while reducing potential losses from fire, insects, and disease. Jim has been watching old pines fading from the landscape for years. His efforts have concentrated on restoring



Jim praises project partners for “their collaborative approach to decision-making, and the camaraderie in working together to meet both our objectives.”

his younger forests and preventing large-scale beetle outbreaks on public lands from spilling onto his lands.

Managing for cavity-nesting birds had not been part of Jim’s plan until his recent collaboration with American Bird Conservancy and partners. Now Jim plans to keep some of the younger snags that don’t appear to be part of a larger beetle outbreak, as well as large old snags that have long since been abandoned by bark and wood-boring beetles. In addition to the snag management, project foresters enhanced the best remaining large diameter pine grove on the ranch by removing encroaching small trees, and conducted thinning in patterns to encourage a mosaic of structure, and accelerate large tree development. Ultimately, a few of these trees will become snags and be left for wildlife.



Maintaining operations such as Aspen Valley Ranch that combine traditional and new approaches to sustainable land management is key to the future of the Oregon Outback.

Williamson’s Sapsucker:
Peter LaTourrette,
www.birdphotography.com

Landowner Assistance Programs

Several programs exist to assist landowners with management of their forestland. Assistance can take the form of technical expertise and advice in the design and planning for tree thinning, consultation on site-specific approaches to reducing fire risk, or financial assistance for fuel reduction and habitat enhancement. Some of these include:

State Forestry Agency: Your state forestry agency can provide technical assistance including help with developing multi-resource management plans and information on any relevant cost-share assistance programs for family forest owners.

Idaho Forestry Assistance Bureau:
www.idl.idaho.gov/bureau/forasst.htm

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation: www.dnrc.mt.gov

Oregon Department of Forestry:
www.oregon.gov/ODF

Washington Forest Practices Division:
www.dnr.wa.gov/forestpractices

State Wildlife Agency: Your state wildlife agency can provide information on protecting and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats. Some states may have funding available for family forest owners through their State Wildlife Grant funds.

Idaho Fish & Game: www.dfw.state.or.us

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks:
<http://fwp.mt.gov>

Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife:
www.dfw.state.or.us

Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife:
www.wdfw.wa.gov

Partners for Fish & Wildlife: The Partners program works with private landowners on habitat-based projects that meet the needs of declining species.
www.fws.gov/partners

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): The NRCS can assist with conservation planning and administers a number of habitat-related cost-share and easement programs. www.nrcs.usda.gov



Bob Altman speaks to landowners on bird conservation at Demonstration Field day: Laura Dunleavy

For More Information

To learn more about the opportunities for restoring ponderosa pine forests for priority bird species contact:

American Bird Conservancy

Bob Altman
541 745-5339
baltman@abcbirds.org

Daniel Casey
406 756-2681
dcasey@abcbirds.org

American Forest Foundation

Drue DeBerry
202 463-5188
ddeberry@conservationforestry.org

Forest Restoration Partnership

Darin Stringer
541 517-3875
darin@forestpartners.org



This project is being implemented to support priority conservation actions within the State Wildlife Action Plans of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Funding was granted through the Wildlife Conservation Society's Wildlife Action Opportunities Fund, with financial support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Landowner participants at Demonstration Field day near Prineville, Oregon: Laura Dunleavy



Matt Welles recording data on potential snag to be created with contract forester: Dan Casey



American Bird Conservancy (ABC) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to conserve native wild birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. ABC acts across the full spectrum of conservation issues to safeguard the rarest bird species, restore habitats, and reduce threats, while unifying and strengthening the bird conservation movement. ABC advances bird conservation through direct action and by finding and engaging the people and groups needed to succeed. www.abcbirds.org



American Forest Foundation (AFF) is a non-profit organization that strives to ensure the sustainability of America's family forests for present and future generations. AFF's Center for Conservation Solutions conserves and enhances ecosystem services of family forests by developing innovative approaches for owners to manage for ecological and economic gains. www.forestfoundation.org



Forest Restoration Partnership is a non-profit organization founded to promote the conservation and restoration of declining forest habitats on private lands in the western United States. We promote this mission through collaborative projects that emphasize the design and implementation of cutting-edge habitat restoration practices and holistic forest management, and education and outreach to promote innovative forest restoration systems. www.forestpartners.org