

Intro

My name is Jose Iniguez and I'm known by Pepe, and I'm a landscape fire ecologist with the Rocky Mountain Research Station.

About the project

For right now, we're working on this project in Southern Arizona looking at the impacts of recent fires on both the vegetation and the birds in those areas.

So, one of the reasons why these areas is very important is because the Sky Islands of Southern Arizona are these mountain ranges that come out of the desert, and they're unique

because there you get assemblages from the vegetation, the Madrean vegetation which comes

from Mexico, and then what they call the cordillera vegetation which comes from the United States.

And, so, in those mountain ranges, that's what you kind of see, a mixture of those two vegetation types coming together.

And, so, that vegetation provides the perfect habitat for unique kind of assemblage of bird species.

So, the other important part about that landscape is that the Sky Islands are so steep that they've actually never been commercially logged.

And, so, there's actually very little information about the vegetation, much less about the birds.

Because we collected vegetation data and bird data in the 1990's and then these fires happened

in 2000's, now we're able to go back to these areas and collect post-fire information and be able to compare the impacts of those fires.

So, one of the things that really excites me about this project is that I'm originally from this area.

I was actually born and raised in Nogales, Arizona, which is right on the Mexican border.

And, so, my whole life I grew up in the desert, but I was always, I always as a kid, looked up to these mountains and wonder what was up there.

And, so, when I went college, I was able to study forestry and get involved in studies, and now this is kind of a lifetime project in terms of being able to collect data up there in those mountain ranges and see them from the top, see the desert.

And, so, it's really a life, a dream come true to kind of have an opportunity to conduct research for the Forest Service in these unique mountain ranges.