Seven federally protected Mexican spotted owl chicks hatch on Los Alamos National Laboratory property

July 13, 2015

LOS ALAMOS, N.M., July 13, 2015—Biologists located a record seven federally threatened Mexican spotted owl chicks on Los Alamos National Laboratory property during nest surveys last month.“We’ve never found this many chicks,” said Chuck Hathcock, wildlife biologist with the Environmental Stewardship group at Los Alamos National Laboratory. “It’s encouraging to see successful nests because it’s an indication that our efforts to protect these species are making an impact.”Under its Habitat Management Plan, the Laboratory protects and manages species that are federally listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act, including the Mexican spotted owl and Jemez Mountain salamander. The Laboratory’s plan was originally approved in 2000 and requires surveillance and protection of endangered species and their habitats.Much of the owls’ primary habitat in the Jemez Mountains

was destroyed during the Las Conchas fire in 2011, making the protection of the remaining habitat on Laboratory property even more crucial.“Stewardship and our national mission operate hand-in-hand at the Laboratory,” said Michael Brandt, associate director of the Environment, Safety and Health directorate. “We’re committed to establishing protective actions for our environment while planning mission-critical projects. Through these efforts, we hope to maintain a robust wildlife habitat as we strive to achieve the Laboratory’s mission.”

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