

RMC PROFESSOR WINS AUDUBON-TOYOTA FELLOWSHIP

For more information: Elizabeth Sorrell (212) 979-3185 / esorrell@audubon.org

Kayhan Ostovar (406) 657-1175 / kayhan.ostovar@rocky.edu

Rebecca Sills (800) 542-2748 / rsills@audubon.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK – Kayhan Ostovar, Rocky Mountain College assistant professor of biology and environmental science, is one of two Montanans chose to receive a \$10,000 fellowship from TogetherGreen, a conservation alliance between Audubon and Toyota that offers specialized training in conservation planning and execution.

The other Montanan receiving one of the national fellowships is Rebecca Sills, a National Audubon Society chapter services program associate.

Ostovar's Fellowship will focus on water quality in the proposed Yellowstone River Important Bird Area by harnessing the charisma of local osprey. These birds are affected by the same threats to the ecosystem as humans, including rising mercury levels, and are valuable bio-indicators of environmental health.

“The Fellowship funding will allow our project to involve more local participants, including nontraditional partners such as the local American Indian communities, ranchers, and irrigation districts,” said Ostovar.

Ostovar will work with students from Rocky Mountain College to further develop an Audubon osprey monitoring program and research project. RMC students will work with citizen scientists, the local Audubon chapter, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and several power companies to provide safer nesting sites for these birds. (The osprey currently nest on power poles due to lack of suitable habitat.)

With the help of her Fellowship, Sills will launch a pilot program within the National Audubon Society Chapter network to attract new and diverse audiences to Audubon.

“Montana is a clear powerhouse of passionate individuals who want to make a difference in the health of our environment,” said Audubon President David Yarnold. “Kayhan and Rebecca have the passion and the skills to inspire others, exactly the kind of people the environmental community needs to tackle the huge challenges and opportunities confronting us.”

Fellowship recipients were chosen from a large pool of highly qualified individuals. All were required to have at least six years of experience in conservation, environmental education, policy, or related issues; a demonstrated passion for conservation and a proven track record of reaching previously underserved audiences. Applicants also need to express a desire to learn and grow. An advisory committee composed of conservation professionals and experts in environmental education, communications, outreach, and conservation planning made selections.

A complete list of the 2011 *TogetherGreen* Fellows can be found at www.TogetherGreen.org/fellows.

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