

**Who We Are/
Where We Are**

Lakewood, CO

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Buckley Air Force Base,

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Katy Fitzgerald

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US Air Force Academy,

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Brian Mhlbachler,

Biological Scientist

Melissa Whittingslow,

Wildlife Biologist

R. Joe Murphy III,

Forester

Bryan Wilfong,

Forestry Technician

Rocky Mountain National

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F.E. Warren Air Force Base,

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Fort Collins, CO

Cole Brittain,

Aquatic Biotechnician

Gunnison, CO

Dana Shellhorn,

Aquatic Biotechnician

Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office



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Unified Regions 5/7 Priority Projects

Species Conservation & Management

Rickey Jones conducted visual counts on the black-tailed prairie dog restoration release site at Pueblo Chemical Depot (PCD) to estimate the number of prairie dogs that survived the fall 2019 translocation. Visual counts will continue monthly through 2020. Rickey also set traps to capture and relocate a badger that was disturbing the site.



Melissa Whittingslow met with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) about eagle and falcon nests on the US Air Force Academy (USAFA). The CPW monitors nests outside USAFA that require access on the base for viewing. They visited one possible nest location on base that will be monitored throughout the spring for activity. There have been documented sightings of golden and bald eagle at USAFA but no verified active nests.

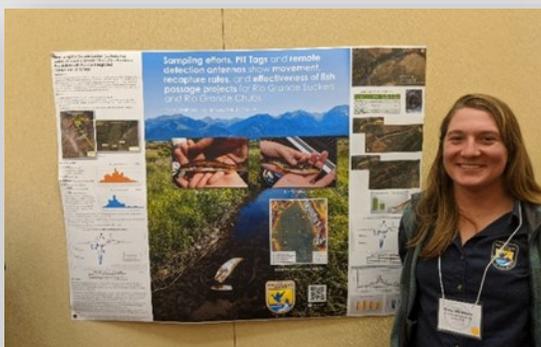


Alex Schubert and Cole Brittain conducted a February 2020 pronghorn survey at F. E. Warren Air Force Base (AFB). They observed only 136 pronghorn on the installation. This is new an all-time low for the base after last month. The survey indicated that the current size of the herd is below the objective "social carrying capacity" level for the installation. Cole and Alex are using trail cameras to collect more information.



Caught on camera! From left to right, prairie dog at PCD, mule deer at FE Warren, and bobcat at PCD taken from game cameras.

Leadership in Science & Technology



Dana presenting a poster at the Colorado Wyoming AFS chapter.

Chris Kennedy, Pam Sponholtz, Alex Schubert, Dana Shellhorn and Cole Brittain attended the Colorado/Wyoming Chapter Meeting of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) in Laramie WY. Many students and biologists presented research on different topics including managing fisheries in a changing climate, fish movement, fish culture innovations, aquatic invasive species, species interactions, distribution and habitat use, sportfish management, and improving research approaches. Dana Shellhorn presented a poster on monitoring Rio Grande Sucker and Chub populations using PIT tags at the Baca National Wildlife Refuge.

Chris Kennedy completed a draft of the report on prioritization of waters for native Cutthroat Trout restoration in Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP). The report compiles data on a number of variables for each body of water within RMNP which currently contains fish. Each waterbody, sub-drainage and drainage was then ranked on their potential for restoration projects.

Partnerships & Accountability

- Dustin Casady worked with Student Conservation Association intern to update a display booth at Buckley AFB with information the Environmental Office would like to present to the public. They were awarded money from the Civil Engineering Squadron Commander for outreach for the event that they will spend on tree saplings to give away at display booth.
- Joe Murphy, Forester at USAFA, met with representatives from the wildland fire support module and natural resource manager for the Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station (CMAFS) to discuss forest and fuels management projects at both CMAFS and USAFA. A set of mastication projects, overstory thinnings, tree removal, and prescribed fire units were proposed to improve forest health and reduce the risk of crown driven wildfires at the bases. These meetings will continue throughout the year to ensure proper forest management and collaboration.
- Brian Mihlbachler called for volunteers to assist with routine trail maintenance this spring and summer at the USAFA. Over 25 individuals and several large groups have expressed interest in helping out with minor trail repairs, erosion control, vegetation clearing, and trash cleanup.
- Dana Shellhorn helped with the sixth grade ski days at the Grand Mesa, organized by The Nature Connection and US Forest Service. The organization brings students from the western slope to cross country ski and learn about winter ecology and snow science. Dana taught students about strategies for winter survival in mammals. The students examined different animal pelts and performed an experiment with insulation and den selection.



Sandhill cranes gather on the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge during the annual crane festival.



Dana Shellhorn shows students a bobcat pelt during the sixth grade ski days on the Grand Mesa, CO.



Porcupine resting in a tree at Baca National Wildlife Refuge.

Habitat Conservation & Management

- Bryan Wilfong conducted forest health and hazard tree inspection on USAFA grounds and Farish Recreation Area, documenting compromised trees and marking them for removal or further assessment/monitoring. He also assessed elk exclusion fencing at Farish Recreation Area and investigated an area of observed tree decline on the base, discovering a healthy population of porcupines.
- Katy Fitzgerald is working with Schriever AFB Natural Resources, USFWS Wildland Fire Management, and other internal and external partners to plan a prescribed burn on Schriever AFB in 2021. The goals for the project include providing wildland fire experience for Schriever AFB fire staff, managing wildfire risk on the base, and improving the ecological condition of the grassland habitat.