

Lakewood, CO
Pam Sponholtz,
Project Leader
JoAnn Wise,
Budget Admin

Buckley Air Force Base,
Aurora, CO
Dustin Casady,
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
Kyle Colburn
SCA intern

Peterson, Schriever, Cheyenne Mtn Air Force Bases,
Colorado Springs, CO
Katy Fitzgerald
Wildlife Biologist

US Air Force Academy,
Colorado Springs, CO
Brian Mihlbachler,
Biological Scientist
Melissa Whittingslow,
Wildlife Biologist
R. Joe Murphy III,
Forester
Bryan Wilfong,
Forestry Technician

Rocky Mountain National Park, Estes Park, CO
Chris Kennedy,
Fish Biologist

F.E. Warren Air Force Base,
Cheyenne, WY
Alex Schubert,
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
Keegan Delurey
SCA intern

McConnell Air Force Base,
Wichita, KS
Mike Jungen,
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
Montanna Hayes, Theresa Wolff - SCA interns

Pueblo Chemical Depot,
Pueblo, CO
Rickey Jones,
Wildlife Biologist

Fort Collins, CO
Cole Brittain,
Aquatic Biotechnician

Gunnison, CO
Dana Shellhorn,
Aquatic Biotechnician

Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office



JULY 2020

Unified Regions 5/7 Priority Projects

Species Conservation & Management

Chris Kennedy conducted a mark-recapture population estimate on the cutthroat trout population in Ypsilon Lake in Rocky Mountain National Park with several volunteers and SCA intern Keegan Delurey. Close to 500 fish were captured by hook-and-line, fins clipped for marking and released back into the lake. Results of the population estimate are pending but the population looks excellent with an abundance of fish present and apparent annual recruitment.



Keegan Delurey, SCA intern, weighing and measuring a fish at Ypsilon Lake.



Dana Shellhorn assisted biologists from Colorado Parks and Wildlife and US Forest Service to release over 3,000 hatchery raised Boreal Toad tadpoles to the Boreal Toad restoration site on the Rio Grande National Forest near Creede, CO. Enhanced high alpine wetlands were designed for Boreal Toad reintroduction at the site. Toad eggs were collected from breeding sites earlier in the summer and raised at the Native Species Hatchery in Alamosa, CO.

A Boreal Toad in the final stages of metamorphosis from a tadpole to a toadlet, prior to release at the Boreal Toad restoration site.

Partnerships and Accountability



Wildland fire crew member cutting invasive tamarisk along Sand Creek.

- Katy Fitzgerald and Dustin Casady worked with Air Force Wildland Fire Safety Center, and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to remove invasive Russian Olive and tamarisk from Sand Creek, which flows from Peterson Air Force Base (AFB) onto the Colorado Springs Airport.
- Mike Jungen coordinated with USDA APHIS Wildlife Services to select grass and forb species for a new grassland conversion project at McConnell AFB. They selected species that would provide the most color throughout the year with different blooming periods while also excluding any species that may attract flight risk bird species.

Leadership in Science and Technology



Rickey Jones along with faculty, graduate and undergraduate students from Colorado State University-Pueblo trapped black-tailed prairie dogs on Pueblo Chemical Depot to fit them with telemetry collars as part of the base-wide wildlife movement project. The crew captured 18 adult prairie dogs and 16 juveniles. All individuals were PIT (passive integrated transponder) tagged, marked for visual identification, sexed, weighed, and swabbed for pheromones and adults were fitted with collars. Visual counts and social behavior analyses will be conducted weekly through late October 2020.



Cole Brittain continues graduate research on the fish passage parameters of small-bodied native fish at Colorado State University. The second round of research examines the potential impacts of light on fish passage success. This will determine if passage is negatively impacted by reduced/enhanced light levels and instruct future management and optimal fish passage designs.

Joe Murphy is working with the Air Force Civil Engineering Center to implement a study utilizing aerial imagery from UAV's (unmanned aerial vehicles) to detect bark beetle infested trees at the US Air Force Academy (USAFA) and nearby US Forest Service land. Utilizing UAV imagery will allow for greater coverage of USAFA's forests, and the infrared imagery will indicate beetle infection before the tree begins to lose its needles.

Top: Captured black-tailed prairie dog in a trap fitted with a radio telemetry collar. Bottom: Black-tailed prairie dog being processed for a pheromone check swab.

Habitat Conservation & Management

- Brian Mihbachler reviewed the proposed access routes and boring locations for a geo-technical analysis of Kettle Creek at USAFA to ensure impacts to Preble's meadow jumping mouse habitat are avoided or minimized. Results from the analysis will inform channel stabilization and habitat restoration to help mitigate significant erosion and habitat loss on the creek.
- Melissa Whittingslow worked with contractors to treat Leo Lake at Farish Recreational Area. In July, the lake had algae growth, high pH and low dissolved oxygen readings. Solitude, the contractor responsible for the fishing lakes and non-potables on Farish and the USAFA, assessed and treated the lake, improving water quality readings within a few days. Melissa continues to monitor and take water quality readings on all the fishing lakes.
- Bryan Wilfong conducted post-thinning remediation of surface disturbance in forest stands to prevent erosion, reduce visual evidence of mechanized thinning operations, and reduce the spread of invasive plants at USAFA.
- Alex Schubert and Keegan Delurey checked the status of common teasel, an invasive plant at F. E. Warren AFB, and mechanically removed teasel from 3 ditches on base where these plants were found.



From left to right: Variable checkerspot butterfly on aster flowers at the USAFA. Injured mule deer fawn found on the USAFA that was brought to a wildlife rehabilitator. Small bullsnake caught during a fish survey at the Baca NWR.