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Buckley Air Force Base,
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Kyle Colburn
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Peterson, Schriever, Cheyenne Mtn Air Force Bases,
Colorado Springs, CO
Katy Fitzgerald
Wildlife Biologist

US Air Force Academy,
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Brian Mihlbachler,
Biological Scientist
Melissa Whittingslow,
Wildlife Biologist
R. Joe Murphy III,
Forester
Bryan Wilfong,
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Rocky Mountain National Park, Estes Park, CO
Chris Kennedy,
Fish Biologist

F.E. Warren Air Force Base,
Cheyenne, WY
Alex Schubert,
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Gunnison, CO
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Aquatic Biotechnician

Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office



MAY 2020

Unified Regions 5/7 Priority Projects

Species Conservation & Management

Brian Mihlbachler reviewed the site preparation for re-vegetation of nearly 8 acres of upland habitat on US Air Force Academy (USAFA) that is within the Preble's Conservation Zone that was disturbed by a sewer line replacement project. Several items were identified, including the need to spread more composted organic material, disk the site to reduce soil compaction and incorporate organics, and remove large rocks that would impede the drill seeding equipment.



A Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) from the US Air Force Academy.

Melissa Whittingslow stocked all 5 lakes at USAFA and the 3 lakes at Fairish with rainbow trout during the month of May. The USAFA fishing lakes opened back up on May 6 for recreational fishing and Farish Recreational Area opened up for weekends only. Melissa collected water quality readings from the 5 USAFA fishing lakes and the 3 Farish fishing lakes prior to stocking them. Due to covid-19 the 60% or above lifetime fishing permits have been moved to the sportsman online system.

Leadership in Science & Technology



COFWCO staff sampling fish at F.E. Warren AFB.

- Alex Schubert reviewed and commented on draft aquatic resources study plan for upcoming Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) project in F. E. Warren AFB missile field. He reviewed and commented on draft Threatened and Endangered Species study plan for upcoming GBSD project in F. E. Warren AFB missile field.
- The 2020 Annual Operating Procedure (AOP) for USAFA was reviewed by Joe Murphy and signed by all parties in May. The AOP is a working document compiled and reviewed each year to document annual variances in the procedures, policies, and responsibilities to implement cooperative wildfire protection and fuels management activities on all lands under the jurisdiction of USAFA. Projected fuels mitigation projects are also outlined annually in the document.

Partnerships & Accountability

- Chris Kennedy took part in the Greenback Cutthroat Trout Recovery Team virtual Teams meeting on May 4th. He prepared and gave two presentations during the meeting. One presentation reports previous and future activities related to spawning activities and development of a broodstock of greenback cutthroat trout at the Leadville National Fish Hatchery. The other presentation related to a document he is working on entitled Prioritization of Waters for Native Cutthroat Trout Restoration in Rocky Mountain National Park.
- Rickey Jones initiated Section 106 consultation with the Colorado SHPO for a Munitions of Explosive Concern (MEC) clearance project that is located in the Pueblo Chemical Depot (PCD) sensitive area for cultural resources. All ground-disturbing activities will be monitored by an on-site archeologist. Several cultural resources are located in the project area and measures are being taken to preserve these resources at PCD.
- Katy Fitzgerald, Joe Murphy, and the FWS wildland fire crew performed a tree removal survey on Cheyenne Mountain AFS. Trees were identified for removal, measured, and cause of death or reason for removal was documented. This survey provided an educational opportunity to calibrate our understanding of tree health and mortality.
- Dustin Casady coordinated and assisted the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies with the Spring 2020 Migratory Bird Survey at Buckley AFB. Data collected during the yearly survey will guide management decisions through population values, including species most important to airfield and wildlife safety. The survey is divided into three zones (stratums) that include urban, natural areas, and the airfield.

Top: Bobcat checking out a black-tailed prairie dog burrow at Pueblo Chemical Depot.

Bottom: Tree removal survey being conducted on Cheyenne Mountain AFS.

Habitat Conservation

- Bryan Wilfong conducted field monitoring at USAFA and Farish Recreation Area to identify trees contributing to wildland fire fuel loads. He identified/documentated trees with evidence of decline for further monitoring. He also collected basic forestry data on identified trees and when necessary marked them for removal. He removed unauthorized structures erected in forested areas two at Farish Recreation Area and one at USAFA.
- Cole Brittain worked on developing a memorandum for restoration/creation of habitat for Rio Grande sucker and chub on the Baca National Wildlife Refuge. He has been in communication with Bill Rice concerning the need to develop this criteria for restoration objectives when modifying the stream channel on the Refuge.



From left to right: Peregrine Falcon flying over Cheyenne Mountain AFS, Burrowing Owl at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, and a Lark Bunting at F.E. Warren AFB.