

Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office



NOVEMBER 2019

Who We Are/
Where We Are

Lakewood, CO

Pam Sponholtz,

Project Leader

JoAnn Wise,

Budget Admin

Solomon Pomerantz

Assistant Project Leader

Buckley Air Force Base,

Aurora, CO

Dustin Casady,

Fish and Wildlife Biologist

Peterson, Schriever, Chey-

enne Mtn Air Force Bases,

Colorado Springs, CO

Clark Jones,

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

McConnell Air Force Base,

Wichita, KS

Laura Mendenhall,

Fish and Wildlife Biologist

Pueblo Chemical Depot,

Pueblo, CO

Rickey Jones,

Wildlife Biologist

Fort Collins, CO

Cole Brittain,

Aquatic Biotechnician

Gunnison, CO

Dana Shellhorn,

Aquatic Biotechnician

Region 6 Priority Projects

Species Conservation & Management

Rickey Jones planned and implemented a black-tailed prairie dog translocation project at Pueblo Chemical Depot (PCD). Jones worked with Colorado State University-Pueblo students and professors to capture 81 prairie dogs from urban areas in Pueblo and release them at PCD. The goal is to re-establish the historic prairie dog population after a major plague incident in 2015-2016. This project will increase biodiversity at PCD. Prairie dog colonies would support burrowing owls, mountain plovers, swift fox, ferruginous hawks, and eventually allow reintroduction of black footed ferrets.

Hunting & Fishing

Alex Schubert coordinated with Saratoga National Fish Hatchery to stock Peterson Lakes at F.E. Warren AFB with 600 brown trout. These 4 year old fish averaged 3.5 lbs each.

The cow elk hunt continues at the US Air Force Academy (USAFA). Melissa Whittingslow escorted elk hunters and coordinated the upcoming deer hunts in December.



Top: Jones works with CSU-Pueblo student to move trapped prairie dogs to PCD

Bottom: Brown trout stocking in Peterson Lakes at FE Warren AFB



Leadership in Science and Technology

Chris Kennedy conducted inventory of 2014-2018 year classes of greenback cutthroat trout at the Leadville National Fish Hatchery. These fish are part of the genetic matrixing program to determine the relatedness of each possible male-female pairing. The most distantly related fish will be spawned to help to maximize genetic diversity in the current broodstock and produce offspring which are stronger and better adapted to changes in the wild. The number of fish with deformities were significantly less in the 2017 and 2018 year classes which have spent their entire lives at Leadville. Kennedy presented a talk on these activities at the Greenback Cutthroat Trout Recovery Team meeting on Nov. 25th.

Right: Leadville National Fish Hatchery volunteer relocating young of the year greenback cutthroat trout.



Partnerships & Accountability



- Cole Brittain was invited to speak on different fishing techniques and conservation opportunities to 8th graders in Thornton, CO. The students have undertaken conservation objectives as part of their coursework and USFWS was asked to help teach them and provide information. Enabling young urban adults with the information and opportunities to enjoy and protect the outdoors is a rewarding experience for both the professionals involved and for the species that will rely on these young stewards of the land.
- Pam Sponholtz, Clark Jones, and Solomon Pomerantz attended the Joint Annual US Air Force (USAF)-US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Natural Resource Conservation Partnership Meeting at Hill Air Force Base/Utah Test and Training Range in Ogden, Utah. This meeting was designed to keep the USAF and USFWS informed about planning, coordination, policy, and outreach regarding natural resource management issues on Air Force installations across the U.S. This year's meeting highlighted numerous USFWS projects going on across the country on various installations made possible by USFWS-US Air Force collaboration under the Sikes Act.
- Alex Schubert prepared a presentation on the life history and biology of the Colorado Butterfly Plant and will present at a celebratory event held in Cheyenne for the de-listing of this species as threatened from the federal list of threatened and endangered species.
- Brian Wilfong and Melissa Whittingslow provided oversight for a reconstruction project on the Falcon Trail at the USAFA to address erosion and safety concerns on approximately 2500-foot of multi-use trail. Two new 20-foot bridges were also constructed on West Monument Creek and Deadmans Creek to protect riparian habitat and water quality at the stream crossings. Maintaining trails in a safe, user-friendly condition helps reduce the likelihood that users will create new "social" trails to avoid hazards, thereby protecting habitat adjacent to the trail system.
- Dana Shellhorn presented on Rio Grande chubs and suckers and USFWS's conservation work with these species at the Montrose Ignite chapter. Ignite is a series of events where speakers have five minutes to talk on a subject accompanied by 20 slides, for 15 seconds each.



Top: Brittain educates students in Thornton, CO about conservation techniques. Middle: Butterfly plant in bloom Bottom: Falcon trail restoration project at USAFA

Habitat Conservation & Management

USAFA Natural Resources hosted its annual field tour of selected fuels mitigation efforts with the Pikes Peak Wildfire Prevention Partners. This year the tour visited Farish Recreation Area to review a Defensible Space Project implemented by the Wildland Fire Support Module and a Western Spruce Budworm mitigation treatment. These projects reduced fuels in 52 acres of forested areas and created defensible space within 100 feet of Farish's structures. These projects, in conjunction with a thinning in surrounding forested areas by the Forest Service, provide the necessary fuels mitigation to reduce the risk of a wildfire in this area.

