

# Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office



OCTOBER 2019

## Who We Are/ Where We Are

### Lakewood, CO

*Pam Sponholtz,*

*Project Leader*

*JoAnn Wise,*

*Budget Admin*

### 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

### Hunting & Fishing

The cow elk hunt started October 1st on the US Air Force Academy (USAFA) and goes till January 31st. USFWS uses hunting as a management tool to effectively manage the elk population, protect habitat, and minimize elk-vehicle accidents.

Other hunts on USAFA include a turkey hunt that concluded in early October and the upcoming US AFA deer hunt December 7-8 and 14-15.



Alex Schubert and Kyle Colburn and Emily Frederickson (SCA Interns) surveyed fish at Lake Centennial at F.E. Warren AFB. All bluegill caught were transferred to North Pearson Lake. The addition of bluegill to Pearson Lakes will increase the fishery potential of those waterbodies. Fish species captured at Lake Centennial included largemouth bass, bluegill, and yellow perch. F.E. Warren AFB supports healthy fisheries!

## Species Conservation and Management

- Clark Jones and Joe Murphy conducted a tree survey on Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station (CMAFS) in October. This survey was intended to identify dead and dying trees requiring removal for forest health, human safety, and infrastructure security. Trees at CMAFS suffer from salt stress and beetle infestations, which requires regular management. Snags are often left as wildlife trees if they do not pose a risk to human health and wildlife safety. In addition to tree surveys, Joe and Clark also toured perimeter fencing to survey locations in need oak removal for wildland fire mitigation.
- Chris Kennedy worked with Forest Service biologists on a fish movement study to determine whether a waterfall on the Cache la Poudre River is a barrier to fish passage. Over 700 fish were tagged with passive integrated transponders (PIT) and placed downstream of the waterfall in 2018. Stream sections above and below the waterfall were electrofished during October to determine if fish were able to ascend the falls, collect density estimates, determine tag retention, tag additional fish and determine growth of tagged fish.



## Partnerships & Accountability



- Rickey Jones and Clark Jones participated as judges in the Colorado State University – Pueblo undergraduate research poster session for the Communities to Build Active STEM Engagement Program. Students presented on various topics in wildlife studies, microbiology and chemistry. Several students presented research on wildlife projects they participated in this past summer in cooperation with the USFWS and U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot.
- Student Conservation Association interns from Buckley Air Force Base, Kyle Colburn and Emily Frederick, completed their 24 week internships with the COFWCO. These interns provided assistance on 6 military installations, 2 National Parks, and 2 National Wildlife Refuges. Thank you Kyle and Emily for a job well done!
- Brian Mihlbachler organized 7 groups and approximately 60 volunteers for the Creek Week clean-up of USAFA's streams and drainages. Creek Week is sponsored by the Fountain Creek Flood Control and Greenway District, and this is the 6th year that USAFA has participated in the event. A total of 135 bags of trash was collected from eight stream segments.
- Dana traveled to Montrose, CO to assist with the STREAM (Science Technology Recreation Engineering Arts and Math) girls camp hosted by Trout Unlimited local chapter – Gunnison Gorge Anglers. The camp was attended by 18 girl scouts between fourth and sixth grade. The girls were led through activities to explore a local stream, in this case the Uncompahgre River, as a scientist, artist and angler. The girls did a "stream walk," observing and drawing different aspects of the river such as the wildlife, plants, and hydrology. identified macroinvertebrates to determine river health.



## Habitat Conservation & Management

- The USFWS Forest Health Protection grant proposal was submitted in October to thin the 35 acre in the USAFA Stables Unit. This area was selected due to its proximity to heavily used recreation areas and housing, substantial beetle attacks in the stand, stressors in the area (salt, drought, urban pressure), and the progression of mistletoe into the stand.
- Pam Sponholtz helped Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management and Trout Unlimited biologists with the final touches on a fish passage project in Abrams Creek. This project will open up 2 miles of fish habitat for Colorado cutthroat trout.

