

# Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office



SEPTEMBER 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, Cheyenne 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

Cole Brittain, Emily Frederick (Student Conservation Association) and Alex Schubert (Student Conservation Association) led a fish survey on Pearson Lake located on the F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The lakes located on F.E. Warren provide great fishing opportunities for residents in the form of both cold and warm water species. Annual surveys of the lake allow USFWS to track species composition within the lake in order to provide the greatest opportunities for anglers.



Chris Kennedy, in coordination with the FWS Bozeman, MT Fish Health Lab, conducted disease and environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling on two streams in Rocky Mountain National Park. Disease sampling was conducted on Hunters Creek and eDNA was collected from Hunters Creek (2 sites) and the Fall River (3 sites).



## Species Conservation & Management

- Clark Jones, Dustin Casady, and Rickey Jones assisted the Lander Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office with the capture of lake trout from Lewis Lake in Yellowstone National Park. These fish were spawned in order to help restore lake trout populations in the Great Lakes. Lake trout populations in the Great Lakes are slowly recovering after facing several challenges in their native waters including previous overharvesting, effects from non-native species, and water quality issues.
- Dana Shellhorn traveled to Oakley, KS to help trap Black Footed Ferrets with Fish and Wildlife Service employees from the Endangered Species Office and volunteers from the Sedgwick County Zoo. Ferrets were spotlighted from trucks on pastureland then trapped with metal trap nets on prairie dog holes. One adult nursing female and one juvenile male were captured, identified, and anesthetized for a health check and vaccination. Four other ferrets were spotted but evaded capture and the captured female was later spotted with a kit.



# Partnerships & Accountability



- Brian Mihlbachler met with USAFA cadets to organize a new Conservation Club in the USAFA Cadet Wing to discuss ideas for volunteer opportunities on the base. A small group of cadets is working with Brian to plan and design a new handicap-fishing platform at Kettle Lake #3 to replace an existing structure built too high off the water. The Club may be able to assist with wetland and riparian plantings in spring 2020.
- The Wildland Fire Safety Branch, USFWS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Student Conservation Association, and Buckley Air Force Base (BAFB) airmen came together to effectively remove a large number of big trees from the base to improve flight safety and conserve wildlife. The BAFB Natural Resource Program and Safety Office would like to thank the Air Force Wildland Fire Safety Branch for assisting with this project.
- Chris Kennedy presented a talk on the history of fisheries management of Rocky Mountain National Park and greenback cutthroat trout recovery to Dr. Yoichiro Kanno's fisheries management class from Colorado State University.

*Left Photo: Lake Williams dam after removal of large trees on Buckley Air Force Base.*

# Habitat Conservation & Management



- Melissa Whittingslow has been harvesting milkweed seeds from plants found on the USAFA to use for next year's pollinator gardens and next year's Arbor Day Celebration held at Douglas Valley Elementary School.
- Laura Mendenhall and Montana Hayes (Student Conservation Association), initiated a mussel survey in the McConnell AFB stream network. This survey is a follow-up to a 2015 mussel survey they determined presence/absence of native freshwater mussels on the base. Mendenhall and Hayes documented several live, "fresh dead," and "weathered dead" pondhorn mussels in one site. Pondhorn is a species of freshwater mussel native to Kansas and is considered tolerant to poor water quality.
- Brian Mihlbachler is working with the USAFA Real Property office to develop an In-Grant with the Struthers Ranch Homeowners Association to provide access to Black Forest Creek to construct a channel stabilization and habitat restoration project. Access across the HOA property will provide a safer and more convenient travel route for con-

Help us welcome our newest staff member, Mr. Rickey Jones. Rickey will be working as the natural and cultural resources manager at the Pueblo Chemical Depot. Rickey comes to the COFWCO from the Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation and with a Master of Science in wildlife ecology. Welcome to COFWCO, Rickey!