

Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office



APRIL 2018

WHO/WHERE WE ARE

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

Buckley Air Force Base, Aurora, CO: Krystal Phillips, Wildlife Biologist; Dustin Casady, Fish and Wildlife Biologist

Peterson, Schriever, Cheyenne Mtn Air Force Bases, Colorado Springs, CO: Max Canestorp, Wildlife Biologist

US Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO: Brian Mihlbachler, Biological Scientist; Melissa Whittingslow, Wildlife Biologist; R. Joe Murphy III, Forester

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

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: Clark Jones, Wildlife Biologist

Gunnison, CO: Cole Brittain, Aquatic Biotechnician

Partnerships & Accountability

Arbor Day and Earth Day Buckley AFB celebrated Arbor Day and Earth Day events on April 26th. This year Buckley AFB fulfilled all the requirements to be designated as a Tree City USA for the thirteenth time. One of these requirements is to have an annual Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation which was done at the Child Development Center. This year Colonel Endicott gave the proclamation and helped children to plant a tree in observance of Arbor Day. The observance is a good way to provide outreach to people on base and helps them understand the importance of trees for humans and wildlife.



Top: Colonel Endicott helping plant a tree with children from the Buckley AFB Child Development Center during the 2018 Arbor Day Events.

Elementary School Career Day Clark Jones, and several other employees from Pueblo Chemical Depot, participated in Avon-



Bottom: Clark Jones demonstrates the use of a small mammal trap at Avondale Elementary Career Day.

dale Elementary's career day last month. Every two years for the past 14 years, Avondale Elementary has hosted a career day to introduce students to various careers that they may not otherwise be familiar with. Clark presented to various ages on the work he does as a wildlife biologist and natural resource manager at Pueblo Chemical Depot.



Region 6 Priority: Maintain and Increase Collaboration with Native American Tribes

Brian Mihlbachler assisted the USAFA Tribal Liaison with hosting 13 Native American tribes during the annual tribal relations meeting with the Front Range Air Force bases. A tour to several important ancestral sites, including Cathedral Rock, was provided so the tribal members could review the status of the cultural resources and perform ceremonies and offerings.

Max Canestorp participated in Native American site visits to USAFA, Schriever AFB, and Peterson AFB, to provide information and answer questions regarding natural resources during consultation processes.



Brian Mihlbachler viewing inscriptions carved into rock with Native American tribal representatives during consultation processes.

Habitat Conservation & Management



Region 6 Priority: Reverse the Declining Trend of Monarch Butterflies & Other Endemic Pollinators

“This demonstration garden is intended to highlight the drought-tolerant plants of the region that are used both as [larval] host plants and nectar [sources].”

Pollinator Garden Installation
USFWS, Student Conservation Association, Buckley Air Force Base Outdoor Recreation Office and enlisted members of the DoD completed a project constructing 4 pollinator gardens on Buckley AFB. The pollinator gardens were placed in the Family Camp where they will not only provide attractive flower gardens for campers to enjoy but also pollinator habitat critical to many insects, birds, and even bats. The pollinator gardens were made to be self-watering which allows them to take advantage of natural rain events to fill them.

Pollinator Garden Installation As part of Pueblo Chemical Depot's annual Earth Day celebration, Clark Jones established a pollinator garden on the pa-

rade grounds at Pueblo Chemical Depot. This demonstration garden is intended to highlight the drought-tolerant plants of the region that are used both as host plants and nectar for pollinators in the region. The seed mix included a variety of native sunflowers and milkweed.

Native Plant Nursery Laura Mendenhall planted 300 seeds of 20 different native mixed grass prairie flower and grass species under grow lights in the natural resources building at McConnell AFB. The seedlings will be transplanted into various plantings around the base with the help of a local Girl Scout troop. Some of the seeds were collected from the pollinator gardens at the end of the 2017 growing season.

Top: Clark Jones sprinkles seeds in a new pollinator garden. Bottom: new pollinator gardens at Buckley AFB.



Forestry Work continues within USAFA Natural Resources to ready the forests for the upcoming 23 May USAFA Graduation. So far the Forest Health Contactor has removed 17 and Natural Resources removed 6 hazard or dying trees. The contractor focused on removing the larger trees while Natural Resources removed the smaller trees (up to approximately 12") and chipped them with the assistance from the Air Force Wildland Fire Center's new chipper.

Alex Schubert, Brock (SCA intern), and Nicole Ng (DoD) placed erosion control mats in two separate areas on F.E. Warren AFB

that are planning to be revegetated and also spread seed in those areas.

Native Grass Planting Melissa Whittingslow and Brian Miihlbachler assisted contractors with planting native grasses throughout a habitat restoration site on the US Air Force Academy.

Aquatic Habitat Project Chris Kennedy completed draft of West Creek habitat project in Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP). The project was to assess habitat within this greenback cutthroat trout population to assess the fish habitat following a wildfire and flooding. This creek was part of a

research project which was conducted prior to the wildfire and flood examining which habitat variables were important to the success of cutthroat trout translocation projects. Fewer pools contained undercut bank and much less large woody debris were observed in the current study.

Defensible Space USAFA forester, Joe Murphy, provided assistance to partners who hold easements on USAFA property in the form of guidance for sustainably constructing defensible space around selected structures.

Species Conservation & Management

Black-Footed Ferret Recovery Alex Schubert contacted Tyler Tretten of the USFWS National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center in Carr, CO regarding 2018 plans for pre-conditioning black-footed ferrets at F. E. Warren AFB. Tyler indicated that they would like to plan on bringing 4 adult ferrets for pre-conditioning in July and then possibly a second round of kits could be brought to F. E. Warren AFB for pre-conditioning in September.

Monarch Butterfly Habitat SCA intern, Hannah Atkinson, worked with Dustin Casady to plant 20 ounces of common milkweed seed across natural areas on Buckley Air Force Base. Common milkweed is beneficial to many insects who either use them to collect pollen or eat the plant itself. Monarch butterflies cannot survive without milkweed as it is the sole food source of their larvae. Today, because of changing land management practices, much of the milkweed has been lost on the landscape and planting common milkweed helps support monarch butterfly populations as well as other pollinators.

Dead Birds Report Max Canestorp investigated a report of dead birds

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found near buildings on Schriever AFB. Bird fatalities were the result of window strikes. Remedial measures will be undertaken to resolve the issue.

Butterfly Survey Laura Mendenhall established permanent transect and area search locations for the 2018 McConnell AFB butterfly survey, set to kick-off once of the weather cooperates in May. The goals of the survey are to establish baseline species composition and abundance across different habitat types using standardized and repeatable methods and also to establish a butterfly species list.



Alex Schubert with a painted turtle he and intern, Brock Best, found on FE Warren AFB.

“[...]planting common milkweed helps support monarch butterfly populations as well as other pollinators”



Region 6 Priority: Cutthroat Trout Recovery

Workshop Attendance Chris Kennedy attended a Species Status Assessment (SSA) workshop for the greenback cutthroat trout. The workshop gave an overview of the FWS' SSA framework process and was a first step to compiling the needed information for the sub-species under the direction of experts in the process.

Meeting & Database Update Chris Kennedy attended Colorado River Cutthroat Trout Geographic Management Unit meeting and database update. Activities from the 2017 field season were compiled and entered into the range wide database for the sub-species. I also gave a status update on FWS evaluation of cutthroat trout sub-species/lineages in Colorado for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Leadership in Science & Technology

Wildlife Health & Necropsy Course Melissa Whittngslow, Dustin Casady, and Hanna Atkinson attended a wildlife health and necropsy training class at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. During this training participants learned what tools, protective equipment, and contacts they would need to investigate and respond to a wildlife disease incidence.

Endangered Species on DoD Lands Clark Jones gave a presentation to students in an endangered species class at Colorado State University – Pueblo in April. Clark’s presentation focused on the role of the USFWS and Department of Defense for the management of endangered species on military lands. The DoD plays an important role in endangered species management. While the total acreage of all DoD installations in the U.S. is only 4.5% of all federal lands, over

20% of all listed species occur on DoD properties.

Forest Modeling Joe Murphy attended an advanced training on the forest modeling software FSveg. FSveg stores data about trees, fuels, down woody material, surface cover, and understory vegetation. FSveg supports the business of common stand exam, fuels data collection, permanent grid inventories, and other vegetation inventory collection processes.