

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 Mhlbachler, 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

Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office



MARCH 2018

Partnerships & Accountability

NMFWA Meeting Several members of the Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office attended the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association (NMFWA) meeting in Norfolk, Virginia last month. This meeting is held annually in conjunction with the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference. This meeting is an opportunity for our office to learn more about other natural resource management programs across the country and how they deal with management issues ranging from endangered species management and bird/wildlife air strike hazard mitigation to climate change and pollinator conservation. Pam Sponholtz delivered a presentation on Sikes Act work accomplished in USFWS Region 6. Laura Mendenhall delivered a presentation on pollinator conservation at McConnell AFB. Next year's meeting will be held in Denver, Colorado so mark your calendars and we look forward to seeing you in 2019.

Arbor Day Planning Melissa Whittingslow and Joe Murphy met with Mike Keane, a science teacher from Douglas Valley Elementary, to discuss having a 2018 Arbor Day Celebration in May. During the celebration students would learn about forestry and wildlife on the US Air Force Academy.

INRMP Review Clark Jones held the annual review of Pueblo Chemical Depot's Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan in March. In attendance were Mike Trujillo (Colorado Parks and Wildlife Area Wildlife Manager for Area 11),

Chris Pulskamp (Chief of Pueblo Chemical Depot Environmental Management Office) and Pam Sponholtz (COFWCO Project Leader). In addition to reviewing 2017 projects, several topics were discussed including the proposed implementation of a tamarisk control project along Chico Creek and black rail surveys in suitable wetlands on the depot. Special thanks to Mike Trujillo and CPW for continuing to provide input for ongoing work on Pueblo Chemical Depot.

Conservation Law Enforcement Alex met WGFD Game Warden Mitch Renteria at the Base Visitor Center to get a visitor pass for a new Game Warden named Ryan. He is going through a training phase and will be providing wildlife law enforcement services for F. E. Warren AFB in the

future. Both game wardens were responding to a call from the Base of a dead pronghorn near one of the buildings.

Partners Meeting Brian attended the Colorado Natural Heritage Program "Partners" meeting at Colorado State University. Presentations and discussions focused on climate change and managing species-at-risk, conservation easements, data collection and management tools, and CNHP databases and services.

INRMP Review Alex attended an INRMP Review meeting with Travis Beckwith (DoD), and USFWS representatives. The meeting included discussion on wind turbines, T&E species management, black-footed ferrets, and military air traffic, among other topics.



Laure Mendenhall delivering a presentation on McConnell AFB pollinator conservation at the 2018 NMFWA Meeting.

Species Conservation & Management

Wildlife Barrier Dustin Casady met with William Kutosky from the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge (RMA) to discuss the installation process of wildlife barrier at Buckley Air Force Base. William Kutosky is interested in installing a similar wildlife barrier in specific areas at the RMA that are used for bison grazing. Dustin Casady provided information on what worked and what did not work when installing the wildlife barrier and the site visit should help increase the effectiveness and reduce the maintenance requirements of the wildlife barrier.

Draft Report Review Max Canestorp reviewed the draft "Sensitive Species Survey, Peterson Air Force Base, 2017," prepared by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program. No sensitive species were found on Peterson AFB during this inventory.

Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse Brian Muhlbachler helped develop a scope-of-work to identify and evaluate engineering alternatives for modifying the Kettle Creek dam and detention basin to address State dam safety concerns. Significant Preble's

meadow jumping mouse habitat could be affected depending on the selected alternative, and ESA consultation will be required after the project scope is better defined. Opportunities for channel stabilization and habitat restoration are being considered as part of the alternatives analysis.



Kettle Creek Dam and lower detention area.

Urban Tree Planting The USAFA silvicultural contractors have completed planting approximately 300 Ponderosa Pine in two main areas of the Academy. In accordance with the new planting strategy, these pines were planted around Deadman's and Ice Lakes. The main goal in planting around the lakes is to improve

on USAFA's recreational zones by reforesting these heavily used areas. These pines will produce a sound/wind barrier, shade in the summer, soil and bank stabilization, and an increased feeling of seclusion while utilizing these areas.

Canada Goose Management More than 800 Canada geese have been documented at one time on the F. E. Warren AFB lakes during the winter months. This represents military flight/human safety hazards. Regular goose/duck counts are conducted near/on base waterbodies. In order to improve military flight and human safety, F. E. Warren AFB has a Bird/Aircraft Safety Hazard (BASH) plan in place. Necessary permits are obtained from the WGFD and USFWS Migratory Bird Office and attempts are made to reduce the numbers of resident Canada geese on the installation. In the spring, goose nests are located and goose eggs are dipped in corn oil to prevent hatching and then placed back in the nests. This activity has reduced the number of goslings

hatched on the installation. In addition, a Canada goose depredation permit issued by WGFD permits activities to reduce the resident goose population on base.

"These pines will produce a sound/wind barrier, shade in the summer, soil and bank stabilization, and an increased feeling of seclusion while utilizing these [recreational] areas."



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

Pollinator Training Melissa Whittingslow attended the Managing Pollinators in Natural Areas: A Synthesis of New Research and BMPs Presented at the 2017 NAC and Resource-based Competition between Managed and Wild Bees webinar. This webinar informed participants about best management practices for pollinators.

Pollinator Conservation McConnell AFB Ecology Club kids helped Laura Mendenhall with an FY18

invertebrates project by lining mason bee houses with parchment paper prior to nesting season and by planting several species of native flowers in 2 of the pollinator gardens. Mendenhall also selected locations for butterfly surveys scheduled to begin in April. This year's project will build on the pollinator data collected in 2017 and will also feature several new restoration projects designed to benefit native pollinators.



McConnell AFB Ecology Club kids help Laura Mendenhall prepare pollinator habitat, including lining mason bee houses and planting host plants and nectar sources.

Habitat Conservation & Management

Follow the “U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mountain-Prairie Region” Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages to see more photo updates from COFWCO staff!

Forestry Partnership Joe Murphy traveled to Fort Collins to establish a working relationship with USAFA and the Colorado State Forest Service Nursery. This partnership will work to reforest our urban and housing areas with vegetation more appropriate for the region. These species will help to define the “urban forest” vs. our “natural forest”. Ponderosa Pine dominate our “natural forests” and are very susceptible to insect, salt, urban stress, and fire. Vegetation to reforest these areas will be chosen based on a combination of the following principles: drought tolerant, fast growth, bee friendly, bird friendly, Firewise Principles, and salt tolerance.

Stream Assessment Training Dustin Casady attended the Stream Habitat and Assessment Techniques course at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The course provided him with the knowledge and skills required to participate in studies assessing physical habitat characteristics of streams. Techniques learned may be applied to a variety of programs including in-stream flow, monitoring, restoration, habitat quality, and fish-habitat relationship studies.

Defensible Space Project The USAFA defensible space contractors have completed the fuels mitigation along the southern boundary. The removal of woody vegetation along 100 feet of

Coyote spotted on Pueblo Chemical Depot by Clark Jones.



Region 6 Priority: Cutthroat Trout Recovery

Habitat Assessment Report Chris Kennedy completed the draft report on the Big Thompson River 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. The habitat was determined to be in good condition and only a recommendation to revegetate the streamside with tree saplings to secure soil from entering the stream was made.

Hatchery Meeting Chris Kennedy prepared for and attended a meeting related to the Leadville National Fish Hatchery greenback cutthroat trout broodstock. The intent of the meeting was to give updates on greenback within the hatchery system and discuss how to proceed with the program. Kennedy gave a talk on greenback spawning at Leadville and a genetic matrixing project being conducted at the hatchery.

the southern boundary road has established a solid, defensible line that will help to protect both USAFA and its neighbors in the face of a wildfire or other all-risk incident.

Habitat Mitigation Brian Mihlbachler met with LaPlata LLC to tour the stormwater and habitat mitigation they have implemented in accordance with an ACOE 404 permit and

USFWS Biological Opinion for The Farm development. Some mitigation has been completed, but much of the downstream habitat on USAFA remains at risk until all of the projects identified in the BO are completed. A tour of the damaged riparian habitat and channels on USAFA is planned for early April with the developer and City stormwater engineers.



Dustin Casady learning stream assessment techniques at NCTC in West Virginia.