

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

McCConnell 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



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Partnerships & Accountability

BASH Sarah Brammell and Ted Wilkins with Environmental Resource Solutions (ERS) toured Buckley AFB to evaluate, review, and make recommendations to the Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) Plan. Dustin Casady with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and John Callon with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services led a portion of the tour on BAFB to show past and current work being done to reduce BASH risks and also reduce the take of migratory birds. Some of the work that was highlighted was avian perch removal, raptor prey removal, raptor prey habitat modifications, raptor trapping and relocating efforts, and short-grass prairie restoration. All of these projects work to reduce BASH risk, reduce the take of migratory birds, and to enhance short grass prairie habitat. A lot of positive feedback was received by ERS staff and Sarah Brammell stated "The positive working relationship between the USDA staff and U.S Fish and Wildlife staff on base was evident throughout the site visit. The ability for these staff members/agencies to work together for a common mission should be commended."



The BASH review team checking a Swedish goshawk trap on Buckley AFB during a tour to assess the BAFB BASH plan.

Elk Rescue Brian Mihlbachler assisted Colorado Parks and Wildlife Officer Cory Adler with tranquilizing a 4x5 bull elk and unangling it from soccer net on the Air Force Academy's cadet athletic fields. Brian has requested that the Athletic Department take down the nets when they are not in use. Deer, owls, and hawks have also been entangled in the nets over the years.

Landscape Restoration Plan USAFA NR is working with the US Forest Service to assist in implementing the Upper Monument Creek Landscape Restoration Plan. This project will be put into practice within the Pikes Peak Ranger District and focus on fuels reduction, timber thinning and restoration, expanding recreation opportunities, developing suitable wildlife habitat, and reintroducing fire back into the landscape. The NR Forester met with District Ranger, Fuels Specialist, and Forester from the Pikes Peak District to discuss how USAFA can best assist in this project. We will be helping USFS employees to better access the Pikes Peak Forest through USAFA to complete fuels reduction projects, improve the fuels break between the Forest and USAFA, assist in educating the public on sustainable forest/fuels management, develop a system of trails to divert traffic to the west of USAFA property, and reintroduce prescribed fire to the eastern side of the Front Range.



Region 6 Priority: Cutthroat Trout Recovery

Chris Kennedy prepared for and attended the Greenback Cutthroat Trout Recovery Team meeting. The team is made up of representatives from each agency which manages greenbacks. Talks were given on different activities related to greenback recovery. Updates were given on a po-

tential greenback cutthroat trout restoration project in Rock Creek, upstream of the Leadville National Fish Hatchery; genetic matrixing of the greenback cutthroat trout broodstock at Leadville and the cutthroat trout restoration strategy for Rocky Mountain National Park.

Species Conservation & Management

Owl rescue A great horned owl was rescued from a secure area on Pueblo Chemical Depot in November. This owl was incapable of sustained flight and was taken to the Pueblo Raptor and Nature Center for evaluation. Other than low weight and appearing to suffer from lack of food, the owl is expected to make a full recovery. It will spend the remainder of the winter at the Raptor Center until it is fully rehabilitated, at which time it will be released back onto the Depot property.

Recreational Fisheries Management Alex Schubert received an informational inquiry for the total number of fishing licenses issued on FE Warren AFB during FY17. There were 569 adult licenses, 84 senior licenses, 34 five-day licenses, 57 disabled vet, and 83 youth licenses issued for a total of 831 fishing licenses sold. Also, Alex coordinated 3 separate fish stockings that totaled approximately 2700 trout (1550 rainbows, 150 cutthroats, 1000 browns) at F. E. Warren AFB during FY17.

Hunting Program Melissa Whittingslow continued escorting cow Elk hunters on USAFA throughout the month of November. The cow elk season for the Academy (unit 512) is from October 1st to January 31st. One cow elk was harvested in November. With the deer hunt season rapidly approaching, Whittingslow and Joe Murphy spent an afternoon scouting the hunt zones and preparing for the two guided hunt weekends.

Rescued great horned owl at Pueblo Chemical Depot.



Meadow/South Ledge Ditch Diversion and Fish Passage Project Vegetation Report Clark Jones submitted the final report on vegetation monitoring for the Meadow/South Ledge Ditch Diversion and Fish Passage Project on the South St. Vrain River in Boulder County, Colorado. In September 2013, a large flood destroyed two ditch diversion structures and headgates on the South St.

Vrain River < 1 mile west of Lyons, CO. A project was initiated to rebuild and combine the original two ditches into a single structure in a manner facilitating passage of native fish species in the area while continuing to provide irrigation water within habitat of the Preble's meadow jumping mouse. The project corridor is also considered habitat for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse, so revegetation efforts and long-term monitoring were necessary to comply with a Biological Opinion issued by USFWS. After 3 growing seasons of monitoring, the project was determined to meet all the success criteria within the Biological Opinion. Many thanks to all the partners that were involved in making the project such a success.

Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse Brian met with Auxilio Management Services to kick-off a design contract for the stabilization and restoration of approximately 600-feet of Lower Kettle Creek. The project will restore Preble's habitat and help protect buried water and gas infrastructure that Colorado Springs Utilities maintains within the project area.

Tree Removal Work continues on removing all trees threatening the health of the forest on USAFA. Approximately 55 trees were removed in November to reduce the threat of hazard trees and beetle outbreaks.



Region 6 Priority: Recover the Black-Footed Ferret

Black-footed Ferret Survey McConnell AFB SCA Intern, Nicole Brown, assisted with the November black-footed ferret survey led by the Kansas Field Office on a private ranch in western Kansas. Brown spent 5 nights spot-lighting for ferrets to aid in the collection of data for the recovery effort. Highlights included the capture of a wild-born kit.



Ferret kit ready to be tagged and vaccinated in the vet trailer.

Habitat Conservation & Management

Johnson Grass Control The Conservation Corps of Iowa and Minnesota sent a work crew to McConnell AFB to initiate a long-term effort to control the spread of invasive Johnsongrass. The crew spent 8 days removing seed heads, trimming thatch, disking up rhizomes, and re-seeding with a native plant mix in targeted riparian areas. Laura Mendenhall will monitor these areas starting in early spring for potential regeneration and also for germination success of the native seed.



The hard-working Johnsongrass control crew from Conservation Corps of Minnesota & Iowa.

Soil Erosion Study Kick-Off Chris Heron and Roy Cook II, with the Center for Environmental Management on Military Lands (CEMML), Fort Collins, and Dr. Lee MacDonald, Hydrology Professor at Colorado State University, visited Cheyenne Mountain AFS to assess soil erosion and drainage system issues on the installation. Cheyenne Mountain is experiencing soil erosion in many of its drainages, and the CEMML/CSU team will be recommending what actions, if any, may be needed to alleviate the problems.

Tree Removal USFWS, USDA, and a Student Conservation Association intern partnered together to accomplish a work order submitted by

460th Safety Office to remove trees along East Tollgate Creek on Buckley Air Force Base. East Tollgate Creek historically had no trees along its reach, but due to fire suppression and change in native fauna that used to occur there, trees are now able to grow and mature. Since this establishment of trees in recent history this area has become a significant attractant to numerous avian species including large raptors and is located near the flight path creating a flight risk. The tree removal project will deter avian species from using the area, reduce take of avian species by USDA,

work to restore the native condition of the creek, and facilitate water flow.

Stormwater Management Brian Mihlbachler provided a tour of Monument Creek and the eastern tributary streams to the Air Force Academy Superintendent, Lt General Jay Silveria, to help him understand and appreciate the impact that mis-managed off-base stormwater has had on the Academy's streams, habitat, and aesthetics. Opportunities for collaboration and partnering with the City and County to address the stormwater issues was also discussed.

Defensible Space The Defensible Space Project in Douglass Valley Housing on USAFA is continuing. The contractor will be working on removing the pine fuels and will be treating the oak after green up in late spring.

Partnership with Colorado Parks & Wildlife for Fish Passage Cole Brittain assisted Ryan Unterreiner and Pete Darren (CPW) to assess a potential fish passage project on Cherry Creek in La Plata County. Cherry Creek is the largest tributary of La Plata Creek and provides crucial flows and spawning habitat for Flannel Mouth Suckers, Blue head Suckers and Roundtail Chubs. Opening additional stream miles for these native species to utilize will help increase their biomass and stabilize their presence.



Dr. Lee MacDonald, Colorado State University, Jay Burgoon, CMAFS Environmental Engineer, and Chris Herron, CEMML, visit a drainage channel showing severe bank scouring on Cheyenne Mountain AFS to discuss how best to alleviate soil erosion issues on the site.