

Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office



WINTER 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

Max Canestorp,
Wildlife Biologist

US Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO

Brian Muhlbacher,
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

Clark Jones,
Wildlife Biologist

Gunnison, CO

Cole Brittain,
Aquatic Biotechnician

SCA Interns

Brock Best



The Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation office was awarded the *2019 National Military Fish and Wildlife Association Conservation Partnership Award* at the March 2019 Meeting in Denver. This award recognizes “those who develop fruitful partnerships benefiting natural resource conservation on military installations in support of the military mission” (NMWFA.org).

The COFWCO team is proud to work with our military partners and is honored to have received this prestigious award.

Region 6 Priority Projects

Cutthroat Trout Recovery

Chris Kennedy worked on the greenback cutthroat trout broodstock development project at the Leadville National Fish Hatchery.

Hunting & Fishing

Melissa Whittingslow escorted elk hunters throughout the 2018-2019 Academy elk hunt, which ran from October 1st to January 31st. Five hunters were escorted and 4 cows were harvested. Natural Resources went out a total of 34 mornings escorting elk hunters, spending 94 hours in the field.

Grassland Birds

Clark Jones and Nick Van Lanen (Bird Conservancy of the Rockies / Colorado State University – Fort Collins) gave a webinar presentation for the Department of Defense Natural Resources Program on Avian Monitoring. The presentation focused on using results from the Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions (IMBCR) program to inform management decisions on military lands across the Front Range of Colorado. This program can be used to examine

contributions made by the Department of Defense to reverse the declining trend of grassland nesting migratory birds.

Pollinator Conservation

Alex Schubert and Nicole Ng interseeded native prairie grasses and forbs at F. E. Warren AFB to provide better erosion control, stormwater protection, and pollinator and wildlife habitat.



Native seed drill.



Pronghorn on F.E. Warren AFB.



Burrowing Owl on Pueblo Chemical Depot.

Partnerships & Accountability

- Dustin Casady attended the 2019 National Military Fish and Wildlife Association (NMFWA) conference. As part of the NMFWA Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) special session, Casady and John Callon (USDA) gave a presentation and led a field trip that toured Buckley AFB to highlight BASH risk reduction projects that also conserve natural resources. Projects include: raptor trapping and relocation and habitat modifications to reduce avian presence near the runway and within flight paths. The tour also included an up close look at an F-16 to show how vulnerable they are to a bird strike.
- The USAFA team assisted Team Rubicon in implementing their annual saw training for their group and other interested parties. Team Rubicon is a veteran service organization that uses disaster response to help reintegrate veterans back into civilian life. Joe Murphy worked with the Team Rubicon USAFA representative, Dave LaRivee, to provide an area to remove trees and practice the skills needed to become certified as a sawyer as well as space for class work. Plans to continue the partnership include future assistance with additional saw classes, fuels mitigation, and felling of Natural Resources designated trees to provide proper experiential training.
- Brian reviewed drafts of a biological assessment for the proposed private development of a new USAFA visitor center at the North Gate. Although the 38 acre development site does not overlap Preble's meadow jumping mouse habitat, there are potential direct and indirect affects to the adjacent mouse habitat related to the stormwater management plan. Brian assisted the developer (Blue & Silver) with developing Conservation Measures and bmp's that will help avoid, minimize, or mitigate the project impacts.
- Laura Mendenhall helped market the natural resources program at McConnell AFB for the Commander-in-Chief Award selection committee. Areas highlighted include: ability to partner with other agencies, the landscaping paradigm shift, and low cost stormwater management.

Background Photo: Preble's meadow jumping mouse habitat in the foreground near Monument Creek that will receive stormwater from the proposed True North Commons development near USAFA's North Gate.

Habitat Conservation & Management

- Bryan Wilfong and Joe Murphy traveled to Farish Recreation Area for wildland fuels/defensible space work to be conducted by the USAFA Wildland Fire Crew in late March and April. Trees were marked for removal and areas in which trees/shrubs would need to be pruned were demarcated on a site map. The duo also assessed the conditions of slash piles in the area to determine if they were cured sufficiently and if it would be possible to burn them in situ.



Juvenile Golden Eagle at F.E. Warren AFB.



Bobcat observed on Pueblo Chemical Depot after caching a pronghorn.

Pronghorn cached by a bobcat on Pueblo Chemical Depot. Clark Jones documented this wildlife interaction.

