

Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office



JULY 2018

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, Chey- enne 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

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

Hannah Atkinson
Brock Best
Jessica Gorski

Region 6 Priority Projects

Black-Footed Ferret Recovery

Alex Schubert and Brock Best set live traps for prairie dogs in the black-footed ferret pens on F.E. Warren AFB. The prairie dogs were introduced to the pens to establish burrows for the ferrets prior to the ferrets' arrival for pre-conditioning. The ferrets are at this time expected to arrive at F. E. Warren in August. Each ferret pen will be monitored via trail cam for a few weeks prior to introducing ferrets. Ferrets will spend time in the pens prior to release into the wild somewhere within their historic range.

Cutthroat Trout Recovery

Chris Kennedy completed a mark-recapture population estimate at Upper Hutcheson Lake within Rocky Mountain National Park. Two hundred and fifty-one cutthroat trout were captured by hook-and-line and marked over three days and 65 fish were captured by gill net during the recapture portion of the project. The estimate has not been calculated as of yet; however, Upper Hutcheson Lake has a very healthy cutthroat trout population thanks to recovery efforts.

Pollinator Conservation

A bee survey was conducted at F.E. Warren AFB in the Dalmatian toad-flax treatment plots. Bee bowls traps were placed along pre-designated transects within the study plots and all invertebrates captured in the bowls were collected for later identification and laboratory analysis.

Background Photo: Volunteers Cheryl Appell, Guy Turenne, Scott Kemp, and Greg Vickerman collect fish for a mark-recapture population estimate at Upper Hutcheson Lake.

Partnerships & Accountability

- Brian Mihlbachler assisted Colorado State University Ag. Extension with organizing a two-day Natural Resources Consortium meeting for 25+ resource managers affiliated with CSU. The focus of the meeting, held on the Air Force Academy, was managing natural resources under changing climatic conditions.
- Blake Stewart, the new Assistant Fire Management Officer from the Air Force Wildland Fire Branch, completed a field tour with Joe Murphy at USAFA. The two reviewed work completed during previous fuels mitigation efforts including: defensible space project in Douglass Valley Housing, oak reduction projects utilizing mastication, and line construction along our north and south boundaries.
- Alex Schubert met with Jessica Rizzuto (WGFD Aquatic Invasive Species coordinator) on two separate days to inspect all water bodies at F.E. Warren AFB and collect samples of aquatic plants and invertebrates, including crayfish, for analysis.



Species Conservation & Management



- Clark Jones and Jessica Gorski completed prairie dog mapping and burrowing owl surveys at Pueblo Chemical Depot in July. These surveys will assess how connectivity of prairie dog colonies affects occupancy patterns of burrowing owls in response to prairie dog population recovery from sylvatic plague. These surveys will also examine the relationship between burrowing owl nest productivity and prairie dog density. Prairie dog populations were significantly reduced following an outbreak of sylvatic plague that began in late 2015.
- Hannah Atkinson assisted in deploying recently constructed Bal-Chatri traps on Buckley AFB. The traps use small nooses applied to wire mesh and work by entangling raptor talons. The Raptor Trapping and Relocating Program on Buckley AFB helps to conserve wildlife and improve airfield safety.
- Max Canestorp conducted informal surveys for burrowing owls on Peterson East Extension, an area in the process of being acquired by Peterson AFB. Two nest burrows were generally located. In addition, a peregrine falcon was observed on the ground in the area.

Habitat Conservation & Management

- Brian Mihlbachler is coordinating with USACE and the Air Force Civil Engineer Center to contract a channel stabilization and habitat restoration construction project for lower Kettle Creek and lower Black Forest Creek. The Kettle Creek project will address active channel erosion and migration. The Black Forest Creek project will address head-cutting that is threatening to undermine habitat restoration work accomplished in 2008.
- A three-person field crew led by Dr. Lee MacDonald of Colorado State University visited Cheyenne Mountain AFS to assess soil erosion impacts associated with drainage systems. The project will result in recommendations for mitigating erosion in areas subject to damage, if indeed mitigation is needed.
- Laura Mendenhall met with fire officials on McConnell Air Force Base to discuss a prescribed burn on the airfield prior to an airshow. Mendenhall expressed concerns over bare ground post-fire during fall dove migration as the doves may create a potential BASH risk

