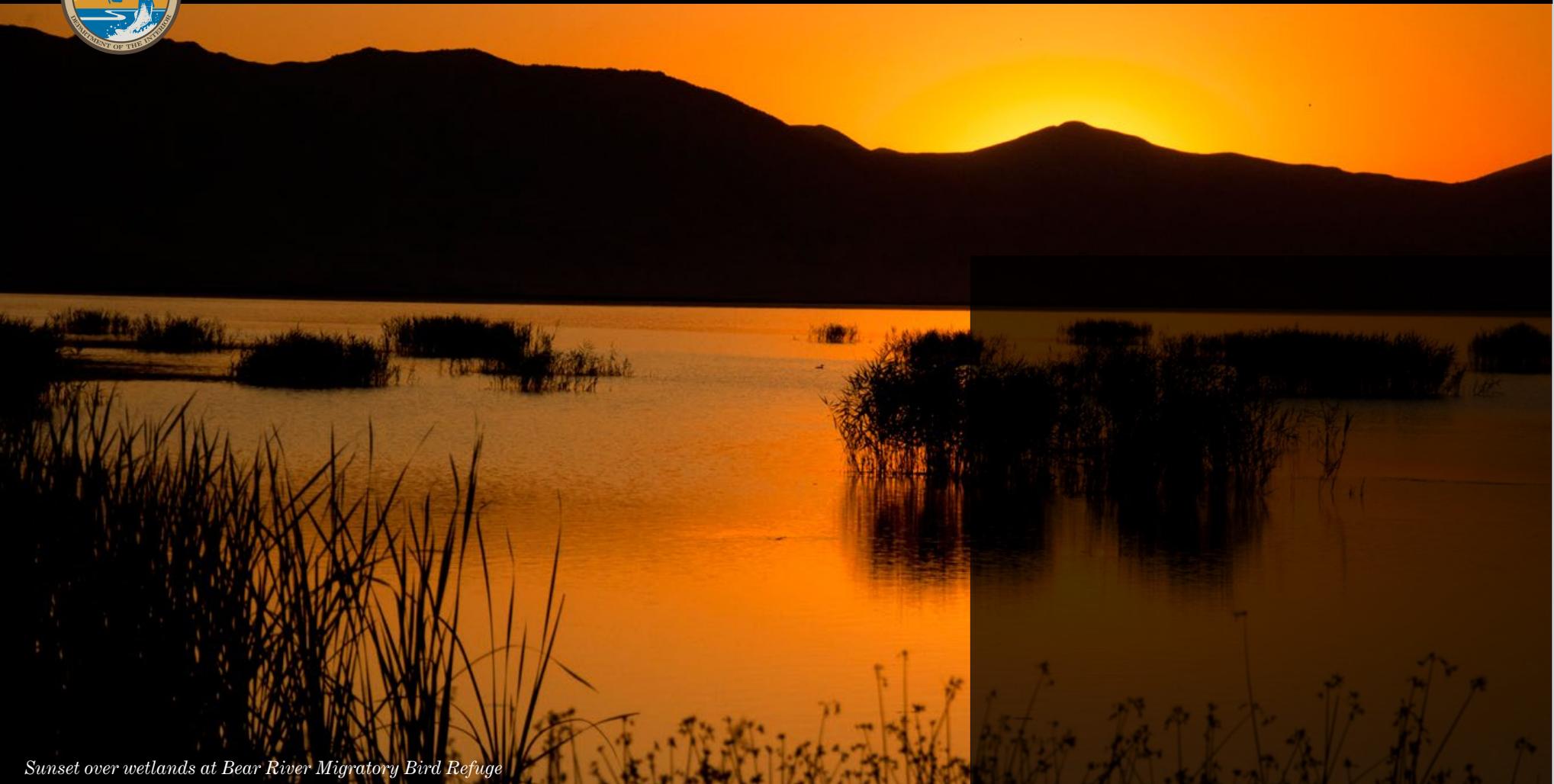




U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Peaks to Prairies: *Mountain-Prairie Regional Newsletter*

Vol 1 Issue 1 SPRING 2013



Sunset over wetlands at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

Send Your Comments

Any comments or suggestions can be emailed to kate_miyamoto@fws.gov.

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The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service What's Inside

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Welcome



Regional Director's Corner

WELCOME...

Let me begin my first Regional Director's Corner column by telling you that it is an honor to serve as the Regional Director. I feel energized thinking about the possibilities of what we can achieve for conservation across the diverse landscapes of this region. And that energy I feel is because of our employees and the skill and talent and dedication they each bring to their work and the drive and passion they have for the Service mission.

The region shares the privilege of managing some of America's most cherished natural resources and many of the nation's most iconic species. But that privilege also comes with challenges. We are at a crossroads in American conservation history.

In this region, we are faced with challenges such as land-use conversion, invasive species, water scarcity, and a range of other complex issues, all of which are potentially exacerbated by climate change. There is much to do and we can't do it alone. It is essential that we work toward building collaborative partnerships that allow for the development of ideas and solutions that are greater than any one entity, working on its own, can accomplish.

That is why we must coordinate as closely as possible with state agencies and other Federal land management

to the kick-off edition of the 2013 Mountain-Prairie regional newsletter.

agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local partners to ensure we are working together on shared objectives. When we are working together on shared objectives, using our own individual talents and tools, we achieve the most for conservation.

As conservationists, we often talk about the importance of passing on a better world for our children and grandchildren. I often find myself thinking about the world in which they will grow up - the life that they will lead and how our decisions and actions today will affect their tomorrow.

Will they get to see the massive glaciers at Glacier National Park and know that the wolverine, lynx and grizzly bear roam our majestic mountains, or see the reverse of the troubling decline of grassland bird populations?

My vision is that future generations will be as blessed by these wild places and wild creatures as we have been. It's a challenge that is worth our efforts, and I am convinced that when we work together toward shared resource goals, we can achieve more for the American people than any of us could individually.

-Noreen Walsh, Regional Director



Canada Lynx /
© Steve Torbit



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Updates

Wolverine

On February 1, 2013, the Service proposed to list the North American wolverine as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). These two proposed special rules are designed to facilitate management and recovery of the species should it receive protection. An estimated 250 to 300 wolverines now occur in the lower 48 states, where the species has rebounded after broad-scale predator trapping and poisoning programs led to its near extinction in the early 1900s. This was, in part, due to the states protecting the species from unregulated trapping. Extensive climate modeling indicates that the wolverine's snowpack habitat will be greatly reduced and fragmented in the coming years due to climate warming, thereby threatening the species with extinction. Wolverines are dependent on areas in high mountains, near the tree-line, where conditions are cold year-round and snow cover persists well into the month of May.

The Service does not consider most activities occurring within the high elevation habitat of the wolverine, including snowmobiling

“An estimated 250 to 300 wolverines now occur in the lower 48 states, where the species has rebounded after broad-scale predator trapping and poisoning programs led to its near extinction in the early 1900s.”

and backcountry skiing, and land management activities like timber harvesting and infrastructure development as significant threats to the wolverine. As a result, through one of the special rules under Section 4(d) of the ESA, these types of activities would continue. *“This proposal would give us the flexibility to tailor the protections for the wolverine provided by the ESA to only those things that are necessary,”* said Noreen Walsh, Director of the Service's Mountain-Prairie Region. *“Scientific evidence suggests that a warming climate will greatly reduce the wolverine's snowpack habitat. We look forward to hearing from our state and local partners and members of the public and scientific community on these proposals as we work to ensure the continued recovery of the species.”*

Through the other proposed rule under Section 10(j) of the ESA, the Service would facilitate potential reintroduction of the species in its historical range in Colorado. The reintroduction effort, which is still under consideration, would be led by the Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife.

Currently, wolverines occur within the North Cascades Range in Washington and the Northern Rockies of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and a small portion of Oregon (Wallowa Range). Populations once existed in the Sierra Nevadas of California and the southern Rocky Mountains in the states of Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico. Currently, one individual male wolverine is known to inhabit the Sierra Nevadas and one male wolverine resides in the southern Rocky Mountains. Both are recent migrants to these areas.

If the proposed listing rule is finalized, the Service will add the wolverine to the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. The listing would protect the wolverine as a threatened species in the contiguous (or lower 48) states as a distinct population segment under the ESA. □



Wolverine on rocks



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Updates

Gunnison Sage-grouse

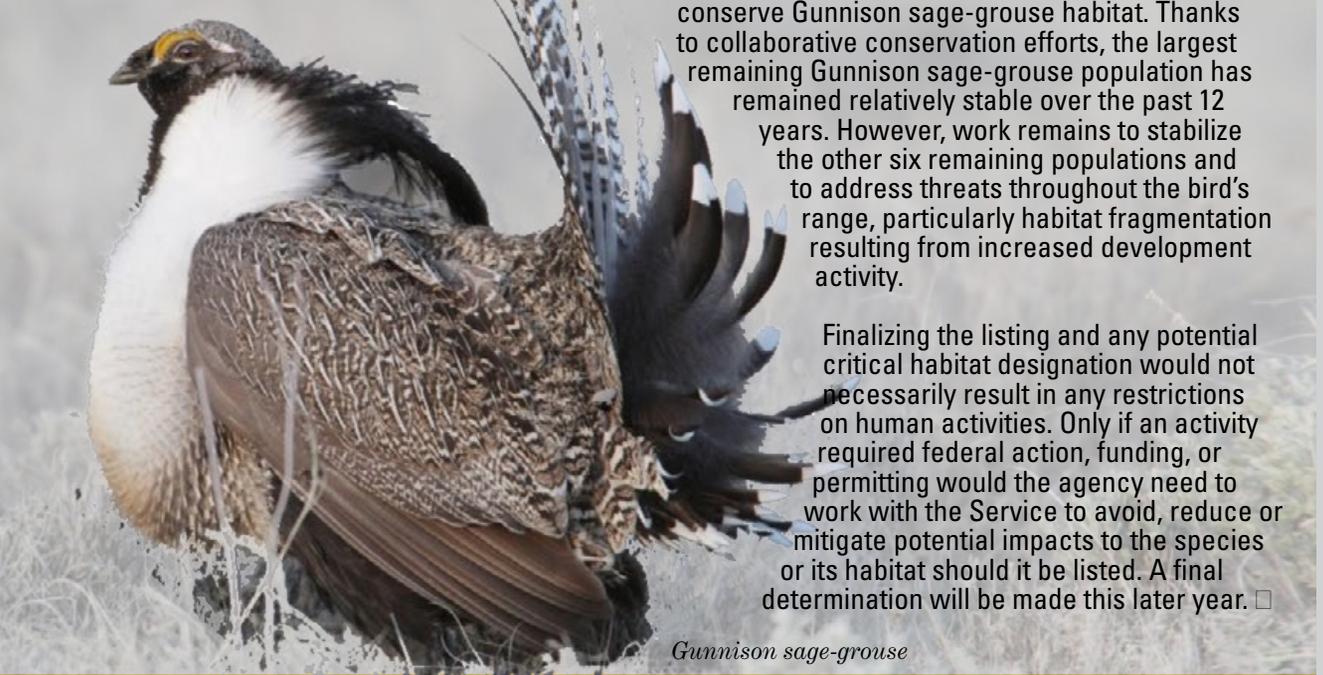
The Service announced in December 2012 that it is taking the next steps in a process to protect the Gunnison sage-grouse as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). After an extensive review conducted in compliance with a court approved settlement agreement, the agency found that current scientific evidence suggests that the Gunnison sage-grouse is in danger of extinction.

The Service opened a 60-day public comment period and provided a three week extension until April 2nd. In addition, the Service hosted a series of public meetings in order to seek new information from the public and the scientific community before making a final listing determination. Regardless of whether the species is ultimately added to the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife, the Service will continue working with agencies and landowners to facilitate ongoing and future efforts to advance its conservation and long-term recovery.

"We applaud the combined efforts of our many agency and local partners, as well as private landowners across the species' range, for their efforts to address the significant challenges faced by the Gunnison sage-grouse," said Noreen Walsh, Regional Director of the Service's Mountain-Prairie Region. *"In particular, Colorado Parks and Wildlife has worked diligently to conserve habitat through easements and conservation agreements with landowners. Continuation of these efforts will be essential for the recovery of the species, and we look forward to receiving additional*

scientific and technical information about the species from our partners and the public before making a final decision."

The Gunnison sage-grouse is a large, ground-nesting bird known for elaborate courtship displays on its breeding grounds. It is a close relative of the larger greater sage-grouse. The booming calls of male sage-grouse have long been associated with the arrival of spring on the sagebrush steppe of the West.



Gunnison sage-grouse

The Gunnison sage-grouse now occupies only approximately seven percent of its historic range. Approximately 5,000 breeding birds remain in sagebrush and adjacent meadow and streamside habitats in and around the Gunnison Basin in southwestern Colorado and southeastern Utah.

State conservation agencies, in partnership with federal agencies, are working on landscape-level, voluntary conservation planning effort to conserve Gunnison sage-grouse habitat. Thanks to collaborative conservation efforts, the largest remaining Gunnison sage-grouse population has remained relatively stable over the past 12 years. However, work remains to stabilize the other six remaining populations and to address threats throughout the bird's range, particularly habitat fragmentation resulting from increased development activity.

Finalizing the listing and any potential critical habitat designation would not necessarily result in any restrictions on human activities. Only if an activity required federal action, funding, or permitting would the agency need to work with the Service to avoid, reduce or mitigate potential impacts to the species or its habitat should it be listed. A final determination will be made this later year. □



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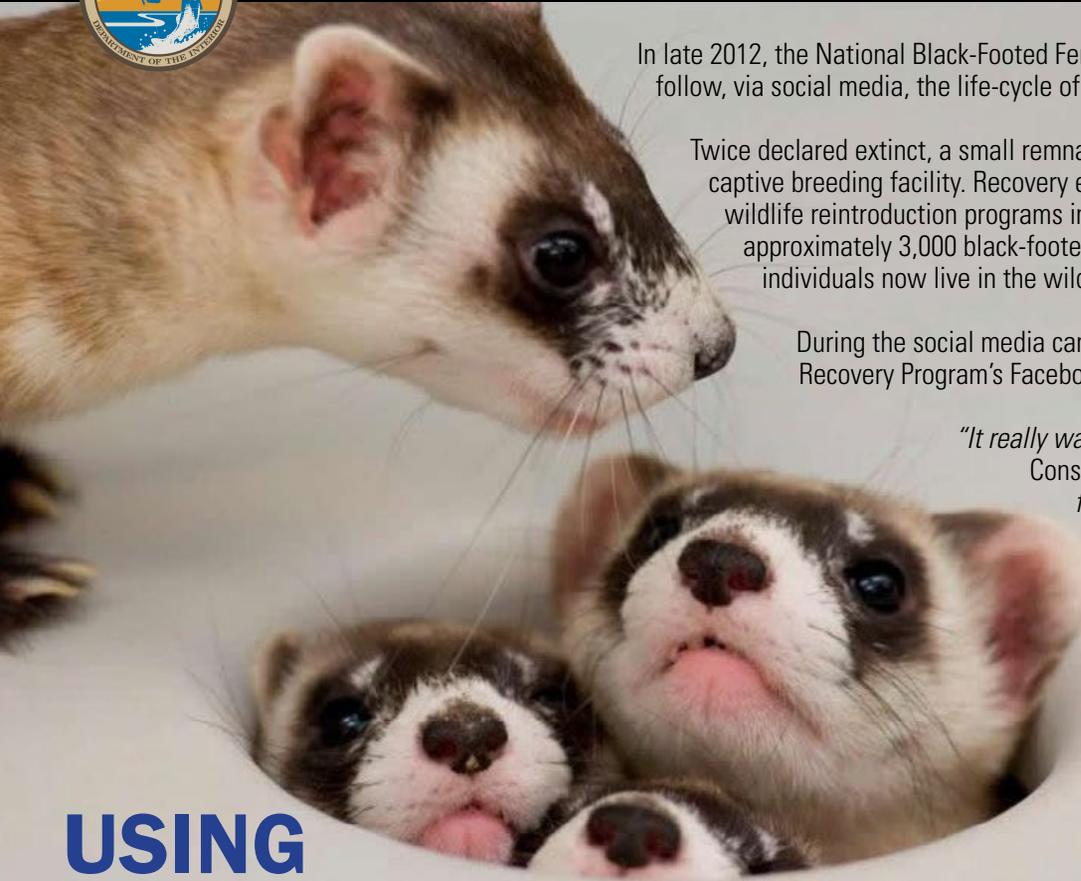


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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Social Media

#FollowtheFerrets



In late 2012, the National Black-Footed Ferret Recovery Program, a multi-partner project led by the Service, invited the public to follow, via social media, the life-cycle of one of North America’s most endangered mammals, the black-footed ferret.

Twice declared extinct, a small remnant population of black-footed ferrets was discovered in 1981 and brought into a captive breeding facility. Recovery efforts began with only 18 ferrets, slowly instituting one of the most successful wildlife reintroduction programs in history. More than 7,100 ferrets have been born in captivity since 1986 with approximately 3,000 black-footed ferrets being reintroduced back to their native prairie habitat. Approximately 1,000 individuals now live in the wild, making this one of America’s greatest conservation success stories.

During the social media campaign, the public was able to follow a number of black-footed ferrets on the Recovery Program’s Facebook page as biologists worked to prepare them to survive on the American prairie.

“It really was a rewarding project,” said Kimberly Tamkun of the National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center. “We tried to use social media in a way that creates more awareness for one of America’s most elusive, yet charismatic species. We know that if the American public learns more about this species, they’ll be much more likely to support its recovery and, just as importantly, the conservation of many other prairie species who share this rare habitat. Overall, we were very pleased with the results. We engaged hundreds of thousands of people during the campaign, which we feel was a tremendous achievement.” □

USING SOCIAL MEDIA

to Increase Awareness About the Black-Footed Ferret



Fact Sheet



Flickr Gallery



Ferret Center Page



Facebook Page

Black-footed ferret and kits



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FEATURE: PARTNERSHIPS

Colorado Partners for Fish and Wildlife and Colorado Parks and Wildlife

by Bill Noonan, Colorado Partners for Fish and Wildlife State Coordinator

WORKING TOGETHER

TO PROTECT WETLAND AND RIPARIAN HABITATS



COLORADO PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE AND COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE

The Service’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) program in Colorado has enjoyed a long and extremely productive partnership with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW). Together we have worked with other entities and more than 1,000 landowners to restore and protect wetland, upland, and riparian habitat in Colorado.

The Colorado State Waterfowl Stamp program established in 1990 required the purchase of the stamp to participate in waterfowl hunting in Colorado with a major portion of the proceeds going to fund wetland habitat projects within Colorado. The availability of the Waterfowl Stamp funds and the importance of privately owned wetlands in the San Luis Valley led to the first collaboration between Colorado PFW and CPW. Although the focus of Waterfowl Stamp funds is on migratory waterfowl such as mallard, pintail, green and blue winged teal and other “puddle” ducks, shorebirds such as American avocet, Wilson’s phalarope, and bittern also benefit from the habitat projects.

“This is a true partnership in every sense of the word, with both agencies working toward common goals and sharing expertise and resources.”



Mr. Mike Szymczak, CPW Waterfowl Researcher and Mr. Rick Schnaderbeck, Assistant Refuge Manager at the Alamosa/Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge complex initiated the first use of State funds by the PFW program for wetland restoration on private lands in 1991. An efficient mix of State funds and PFW project design and

completion was born. Although both gentlemen are now retired, that first funding effort has grown into a two decade long partnership that has restored and enhanced wetland and riparian habitat throughout the State of Colorado.

Colorado Waterfowl Stamp funds were the sole state funding source the first few years but in the mid-1990’s the advent of the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) program created the availability of lottery funds for wildlife.

This new source of funds provided the impetus for the development of a statewide collaborative approach to wetland and riparian habitat protection, restoration and enhancement. *(continued)*

American avocet / © Mike Simpson



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FEATURE: PARTNERSHIPS

Colorado Partners for Fish and Wildlife and Colorado Parks and Wildlife

With expanded and more diversified funding, more riparian work was accomplished to benefit Southwestern willow fly-catcher (an endangered species), Western yellow-billed cuckoo, yellow warbler and a host of neo-tropical migrants.

The partnership that evolved became known as the Colorado Wetland Initiative and included the

CPW, PFW, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, and the Colorado Natural Heritage Program.

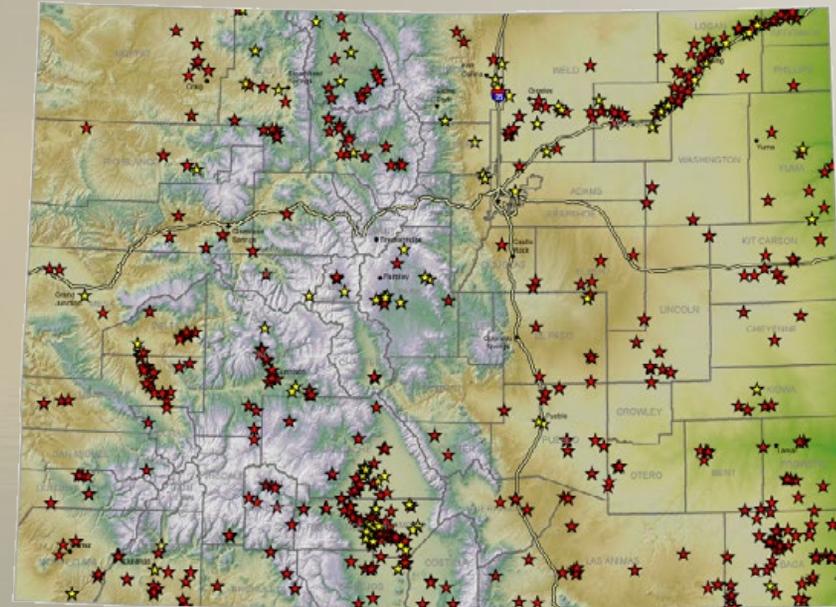
The Colorado Wetland initiative has now evolved into the CPW's Wetland Wildlife Conservation Program

and our two programs have continued to partner through successive cooperative agreements. As of December 2012, the CPW/PFW partnership has restored or enhanced nearly 32,000 wetland acres, 107,000 upland acres, and 368 riparian miles.

This is a true partnership in every sense of the word with both agencies working toward common goals and sharing expertise and resources. It is a partnership which rests firmly on the realization that no one entity has the resources or breadth of responsibility to fully address wildlife and habitat issues alone. □

To Read More Visit:
[Colorado Parks and Wildlife Wetland Conservation Program](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Colorado Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program](#)



Wetland/Riparian Habitat Improvement Projects
Funded through CPW, 1991-2010

★ FWS Partner Projects
★ Other Wetland Initiative Projects



Map of Wetland Riparian Habitat Improvement Projects funded through CPW 1991-2010

American avocet / © Mike Simpson



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FEATURE: PARTNERSHIPS

by Dave Shuman, Great Plains Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

Multi-agency Partnership Strives to Recover the Pallid Sturgeon



The Great Plains Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) in South Dakota, completed its 10th sampling season as part of the Pallid Sturgeon Population Assessment and Associated Fish Community Monitoring Program. This program provides information to detect changes in pallid sturgeon and native fish populations in the Missouri River basin to enable science-based management decisions.

Data collected includes pallid sturgeon spatial distribution, growth, condition, and survival as well as the relative abundance of other fishes of the Missouri River. This collaborative river-wide program includes the Missouri Department of Conservation, Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, South Dakota Game Fish & Parks, U.S. Geological Survey-Columbia Environmental Research Center, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and three Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices (Missouri River, Great Plains and Columbia). In the past 10 years, during extreme and normal hydrological conditions, 871 endangered pallid sturgeon have been captured by the Great Plains FWCO alone, consisting primarily of hatchery propagated fish (95%). □

To obtain detailed research reports regarding the Long-Term Pallid Sturgeon Population Assessment Program, please visit our website at: <http://www.fws.gov/greatplainsfishandwildlife/publications.html>.

Pallid sturgeon in hand



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ESA Success Story

by Jared Martin, External Affairs Intern

Platte River Caddisfly

Service and Partners Ensure Future of Rare Invertebrate

If you happen to travel through central Nebraska, you may be lucky enough to encounter a newly discovered insect known only in this state. Amongst the ticks, poison ivy, and sulfur-smelling sloughs lives the Platte River caddisfly, (*Isonychia plattensis*). Found in central Nebraska, this aquatic, moth-like insect inhabits backwater sloughs along the Platte, Loup and Elkhorn Rivers.

Prior to 1997, no one was aware of the Platte River caddisfly. In fact, the species was discovered incidentally during a field study at the Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust (Crane Trust) by biologists Matt Whiles and Beth Goldowitz.

"It was first noticed on land in buckets intended to capture amphibians and was a very abundant component of the slough at the Crane Trust," writes Lindsay Vivian, a Nebraska-based biologist with the Service's Mountain-Prairie Region.

What makes the caddisfly unique to other caddisflies is its peculiar summer hibernation period during its one-year lifecycle. *"While most caddisflies live in water through the time they emerge as adults, the Platte River caddisfly spends three months aestivating on land before it emerges as an adult in the autumn,"* writes Vivian. *"The Platte River caddisfly hibernates along slough banks in moist, shaded areas, or underground against plant roots. The terrestrial life stage in the caddisfly is thought to be an adaptation to avoid the stress of summer dry periods that occur in prairie systems."*

Since the species' discovery, a number of partnering organizations have worked to conduct surveys for additional Platte River caddisfly populations to gain a better understanding of the small insect's range. Goldowitz, who at the time was with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), conducted surveys along the Platte and Loup Rivers in 1999 and 2004. Out of 48 sites visited, she found the caddisfly at nine sites along a 100 kilometer (60-mile) span of the Platte River.

In the fall 2004, the caddisfly was not found at the Crane Trust, likely due to drought. Because of its apparent rarity, the NGPC designated the caddisfly a Tier 1 species in 2005. According to the State's natural legacy plan, Tier 1 species are those most at risk of extinction on a global scale in Nebraska. In 2007, the species was found to be extirpated from one other site near Shelton, Nebraska. Because of concern over its decline, the Service enlisted the help of the University of Nebraska at Kearney to conduct more thorough searches for the caddisfly in Nebraska. Between 2009 and 2011, the caddisfly was documented at 30 new sites along the Platte, Loup, and Elkhorn Rivers. Most sites were discovered by Vivian, formerly of the University. Her efforts were supported by biologists from the Nebraska Public Power District, the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, Central Nebraska Natural Resources District, the Headwaters Corporation, NGPC, and the Nature Conservancy. In addition, one site was discovered by biologists from the Crane Trust. *(continued)*

Platte River slough



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ESA Success Story

Platte River Caddisfly



Platte River caddisfly

In 2011 and 2012, the Service assessed whether the Platte River caddisfly was warranted for protection under the Endangered Species Act. The 12-month finding concludes that the caddisfly currently inhabits a much larger area than previously believed. Additionally, using aerial imagery, potentially suitable habitat has been identified along other rivers in Nebraska, such as the Niobrara River.

Within the assessment, the Service analyzed potential threats facing the caddisfly and indicated that these stressors across the landscape are not currently threatening the caddisfly with extinction. Threats analyzed include: water impoundments and diversions for agriculture, drought, bank stabilization projects, invasive species, cattle grazing, pesticides, and climate change. In the finding, the Service also evaluated the presence of various conservation programs along Nebraska's rivers and their potential impact on the caddisfly.

Several programs and regulations have also been set forth by State and Federal agencies and non-governmental organizations that will provide protection for the insect now and into the future. These efforts primarily include protecting river flows and groundwater levels by limiting the amount of water development that can occur. Current data also indicates that a majority of the species' populations inhabit protected environments. Around 60 percent of known Platte River caddisfly populations are located on lands managed by conservation groups, which are protected from future land development. Other groups, such as the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and The Nature Conservancy, are restoring wetlands across the state of Nebraska, which provides more protection to the species. With these efforts in place and the species' apparent success in maintaining secure population numbers, the future of the Platte River caddisfly appears to be in good hands. □



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Featured Facility

by Craig Springer

D.C. Booth National Fish Hatchery & Archives Preserves the Past for the Future

By some accounts, Barton Warren Evermann was stern and pretentious. He was a consummate man of science, and proudly so. So much so, in fact, that as a young adult he added an extra N to his name so that it sounded more Germanic. German culture of his time was associated with scientific prowess. Looking through the lens of history, the man was certainly capable. Evermann was an employee of the U.S. Fish Commission, the precursor of today's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as its Chief of Scientific Inquiry, as well as the Commission's Ichthyologist. By order of Congress, he would leave his Washington D.C. office and come to intersect with the Black Hills in the early 1890s. His visits, and his reports to the Congress would shape the Black Hills into what, and how, you enjoy its pleasant purling waters.

On what now seems like a meager amount considering the magnitude of what was to be undertaken, in August 1892 the U.S. Congress granted Evermann: *"for investigation and report, respecting the advisability of establishing fish-hatching stations at suitable points in the States of South Dakota, Iowa, and Nebraska, \$1,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary."* We don't have an accounting of what was spent, but he did document very well what streams he seined, the fishes he found, and with whom he traveled. Evermann didn't waste time: *"Oct. 6. Began work at Deadwood, S. Dak. Oct. 7. Drove to Spearfish and examined Spearfish Creek and numerous springs in vicinity,"* states his 1894 Report upon the Fishes of the Missouri River Basin.

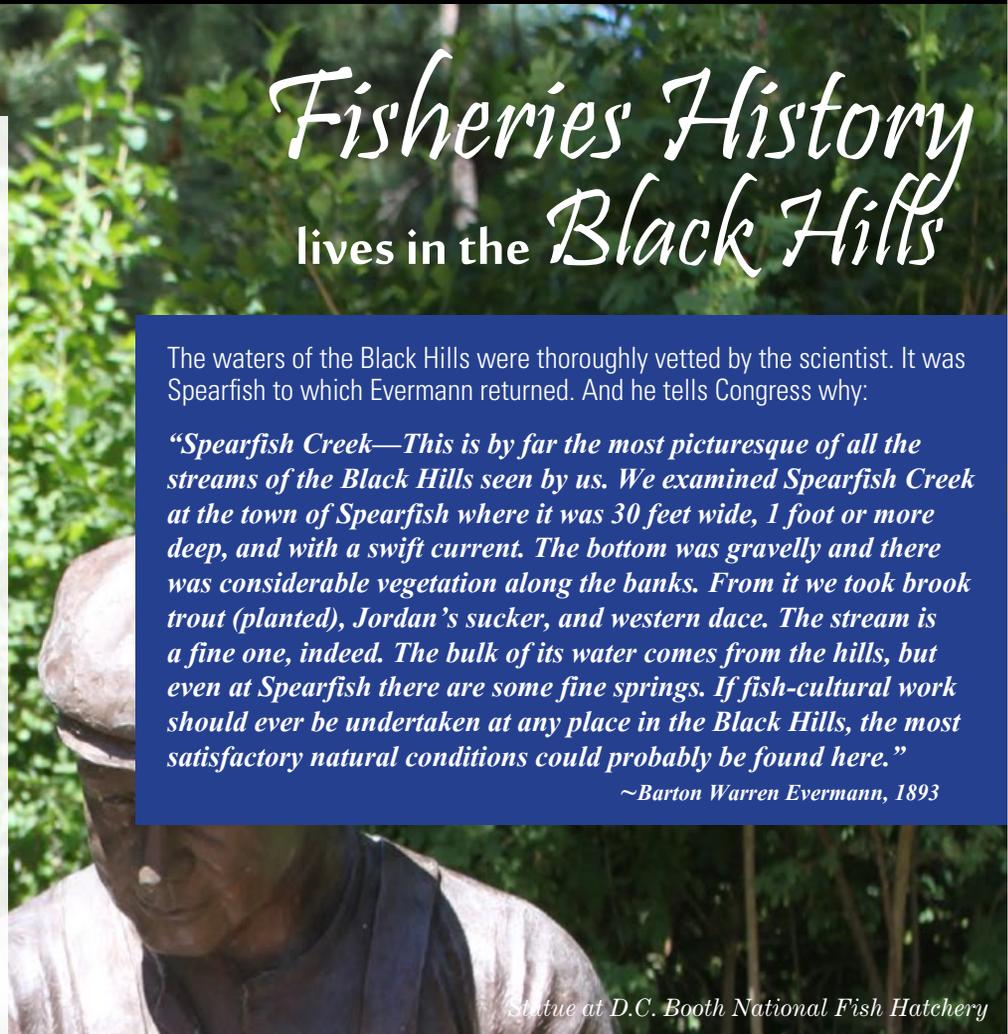
Winter soon set in. The fisheries field work ceased in early November 1892, and didn't resume until June 1893. Then, over the next two months, Evermann and crew examined not only potential hatchery sites, *"but included an examination and study of the physical and biological features of the waters, with especial reference to the species of fish and other animal life they already contain, and their suitability for stocking with other species of food-fishes not indigenous to them."* (continued)

Fisheries History lives in the Black Hills

The waters of the Black Hills were thoroughly vetted by the scientist. It was Spearfish to which Evermann returned. And he tells Congress why:

"Spearfish Creek—This is by far the most picturesque of all the streams of the Black Hills seen by us. We examined Spearfish Creek at the town of Spearfish where it was 30 feet wide, 1 foot or more deep, and with a swift current. The bottom was gravelly and there was considerable vegetation along the banks. From it we took brook trout (planted), Jordan's sucker, and western dace. The stream is a fine one, indeed. The bulk of its water comes from the hills, but even at Spearfish there are some fine springs. If fish-cultural work should ever be undertaken at any place in the Black Hills, the most satisfactory natural conditions could probably be found here."

~Barton Warren Evermann, 1893



Statue at D.C. Booth National Fish Hatchery



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Featured Facility

D.C. Booth National Fish Hatchery & Archives Preserves the Past for the Future

And so it would come to pass. By July 1899, Spearfish National Fish Hatchery situated about a mile from the bustling downtown, was operational with 17 ponds and a handsome hatching house, designed by U.S. Fish Commission Architect and Engineer, Hector von Bayer. It was neatly tucked in narrow Ames Canyon, bracketed by limestone outcrops the color of a wet mule. The hatching house sat in a commanding position above the creek. DeWitt Clinton Booth, a New York native likely named for his home state's former governor and U.S. senator, took charge of the new federal fisheries facility. Except for a brief hiatus in Homer, Minnesota, where the Fish Commission built its boats, Booth worked there the rest of his career. He lived out all of his days in Spearfish as a fixture in the community. A comfortable and attractive house built on station in 1905-06, no doubt was an upgrade from living in the upstairs of the hatching house, especially when he took a bride, Ruby, a music teacher at the nearby Normal School, today's Black Hills State University.

Spearfish National Fish Hatchery produced trout. Booth and crew, sometime attended by their families, made arduous annual forays into Yellowstone National Park to collect the spawn of "black-spotted trout," as cutthroat trout were called at the time. The fertilized eggs were returned to Spearfish for raising and stocking in the Black Hills streams. These trips were made until 1911, by rail and by wagon,

hauling most of their physical needs, including boats and nets. Other species of trout would come from the Spearfish hatchery: brook trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, lake trout. Trout live in pretty places, most anglers will agree. The Black Hills are no exception, and the trout are there due to the work of the hatchery.

The quality of the spring waters that Evermann found did not last. The water source failed—the springs dried up about 1940—and the Service looked for reliable water nearby and built Unit 2, the McNenny station, a few miles from Spearfish. In a move that one senses that Evermann would approve of, Spearfish National Fish Hatchery became a training center for work with fish diets and nutrition, adding a genetics research laboratory to the mix along Sand Creek in Wyoming, while the new McNenny hatchery produced the bulk of the trout. Together, the three stations made up the Spearfish Fisheries Complex.



Curator Randi Smith examines a flag at the D.C. Booth Archives

Spearfish National Fish Hatchery would go through another permutation when something else dried up: funding. In the 1980s, the Service divested of a number of facilities in the National Fish Hatchery System across the country. McNenny was turned over to the South Dakota

Department of Game, Fish, and Parks. The City of Spearfish took over operations of the Spearfish facility and changed its name to honor the hatchery's first superintendent. Then in 1989, the old facility would take a new turn to become an archive for all things related to fisheries conservation, operated again by the Service.

Today, on the grounds of the D.C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery and Archives, the still picturesque Spearfish Creek batters downhill over rounded stones. Its silver music fades as you approach a preserved boat, "U.S. Fisheries 39" she's named, a craft that operated on Yellowstone Lake in the 1920s (photo on right). *(continued)*



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D.C. Booth National Fish Hatchery & Archives Preserves the Past for the Future

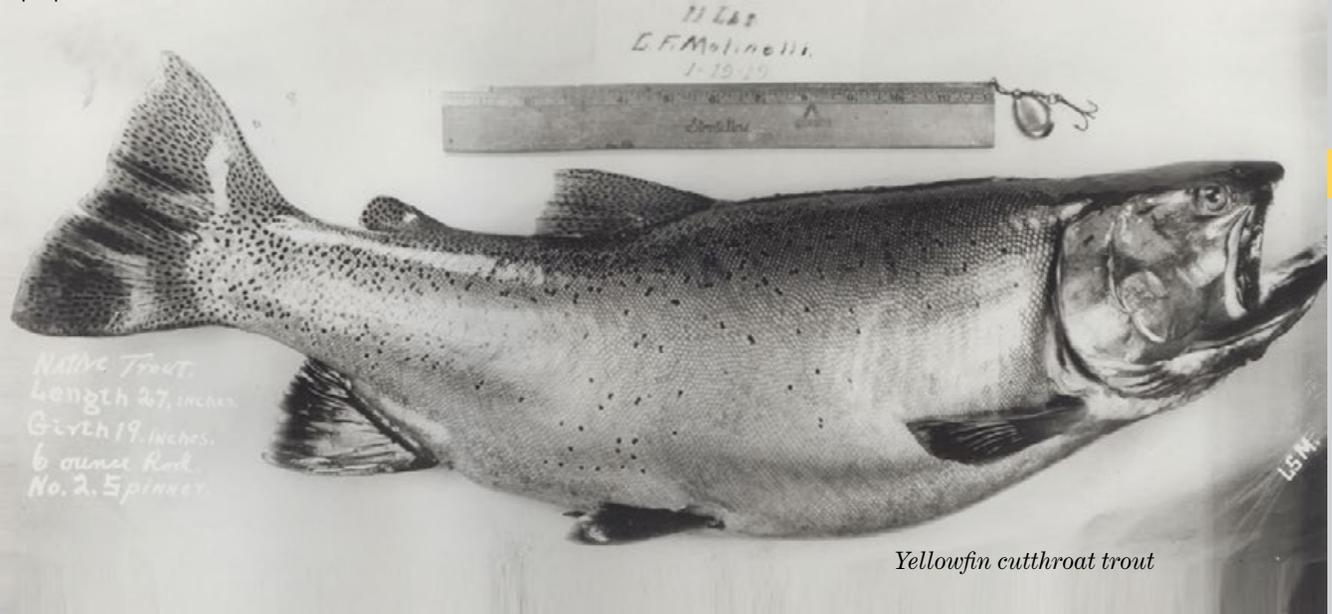
A railcar rests near the boat that's similar to what the men of the U.S. Fish Commission used to carry fish overland before the advent of highways and tank-trucks. Inside von Bayer's hatching house, still in its commanding position, you'll find a museum with old tools and artwork and photos that tell the fisheries conservation story. The old superintendent's residence, now commonly called the Booth House, up the hill is as pleasant to look at as it is entertaining to tour. Appointed with period furniture and accessories—some of it original pieces—you'll learn how the Booth family, and several other families, lived their lives.



These items have come from across the country and are of great use to researchers of history and conservation. A 1919 photograph of a now-extinct yellowfin cutthroat trout from Colorado is particularly moving (photo below). It may be the only known image of the fish. It seems appropriate to have a home here, almost in a circularity of experience. The fish was described for science by Barton Warren Evermann the year before he visited Spearfish, and the image lives in a place that he deemed suitable to raise trout. The irony is palpable. □

This is excerpted from the book *Spearfish National Fish Hatchery: Images of America*. Arcadia Publishing. The book, co-authored by Service employees Randi Smith, Carlos Martinez, and Craig Springer, will be released July 8, 2013. Springer edits *Eddies* magazine for the Division of Fish and Aquatic Conservation, published in Washington DC. See www.fws.gov/eddiess.

Perhaps the greatest treasures are those most protected. They are housed in a climate-controlled collection management facility, cared for by professional curators and archivists. Some 175,000 items related to fisheries conservation are preserved here, including most of the photos found in a forthcoming book, entitled [Spearfish National Fish Hatchery: Images of America](#). Some of the most impressive items in the archives include 100-year-old serving dishes emblazoned with the agency's logo used by fisheries workers. Scads of game warden and railcar worker badges are laid out in a tray as if in formation. Woolen flags that adorned ship masts at sea or on big rivers are spread without wrinkles. Reports and ledgers—documents written in sinuous longhand tell in great details of what fish went where—dating to the 1880s.



Yellowfin cutthroat trout



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Landscape Conservation Cooperatives

Southern Rockies LCC



Getting a Grasp on Climate Change



Gunnison sage-grouse / Audubon

The Gunnison Climate Working Group is a chartered partnership of 14 public and private organizations in Colorado's Upper Gunnison Basin. The Southern Rockies LCC (SRLCC) funded The Nature Conservancy to complete a comprehensive vulnerability assessment identifying species and ecosystems most at risk from climate change. The assessment included a set of habitat adaptation strategies for priority species, such as the Gunnison sage-grouse. As a final product, local demonstration projects were designed and installed.

The financial support and partnership provided by the SRLCC was critical to the Gunnison Climate Working Group's success and progress towards addressing climate change. As a direct result of the SRLCC involvement, partners designed and completed construction of over 100 rock structures on private lands to improve or restore wet meadows—which function as brooding habitat for the Gunnison sage-grouse.

The tools, methods, and findings of the Gunnison Basin vulnerability assessment go beyond habitat adaptation strategies applied to support populations of Gunnison sage-grouse. The new tools build ecosystem resilience and support the Gunnison Basin agricultural and recreational economies. The vulnerability assessment funded by the LCC provides a scientific foundation for a robust decision-making process, which can be carried out over a larger landscape to inform and direct conservation delivery mechanisms for use by multiple partners. □



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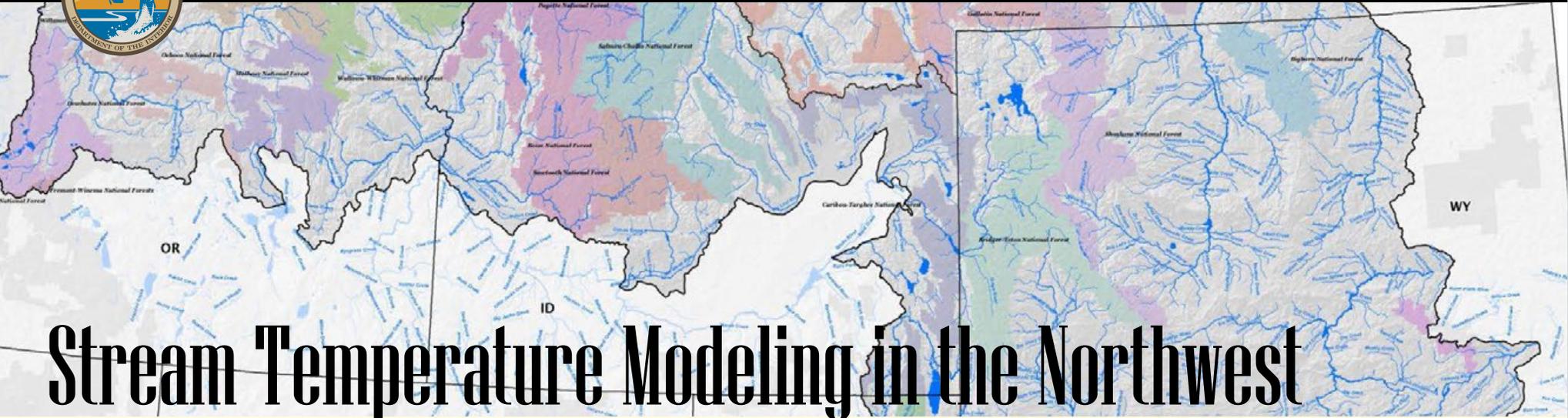


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Landscape Conservation Cooperatives

Great Northern LCC



Stream Temperature Modeling in the Northwest

The future of trout populations are in doubt as warming temperatures continue to reduce and restrict cold water species into smaller areas. To maintain these populations and their distribution, we must understand the impacts of climate change and develop appropriate adaptive management strategies. The monitoring and modeling of stream temperature data is essential to develop vulnerability assessments for all aquatic species in the Rocky Mountains. Much of the data needed to accurately map historic stream temperatures or to forecast future temperatures does not exist.

To address this data gap, the Great Northern LCC (GNLCC) funded a project led by Dr. Dan Isaak of the U.S. Forest

Service Rocky Mountain Research Station to develop a comprehensive, interagency stream temperature database. The newly developed NorWeST database includes more than 45,000 stream temperature data points from 15,000 unique stream sites throughout the northwest.

The project also modeled NorWeST data to develop a consistent set of historic and future stream temperature scenarios for 217,000 miles of northwestern streams. The scenarios are based on real temperature data and not ambient air temperatures. With funds from GNLCC, Dr. Isaak was able to assemble the NorWeST database for 1/100 of its real cost. This resulted in a cost savings of more than

\$10,000,000 to natural resource agencies to use an astounding toolkit that provides a set of collaborative web-based stream temperature prediction models.

The NorWeST stream temperature and prediction model can be applied to aquatic vulnerability assessments and prioritization exercises by resource managers from Federal, state, tribal and partner agencies. NorWeST displays a real-time look at existing conditions while predicting future changes in stream conditions. This model can be used to support decisions for numerous management actions, including fishery, aquatic biodiversity, habitat restoration, roads and silviculture. □



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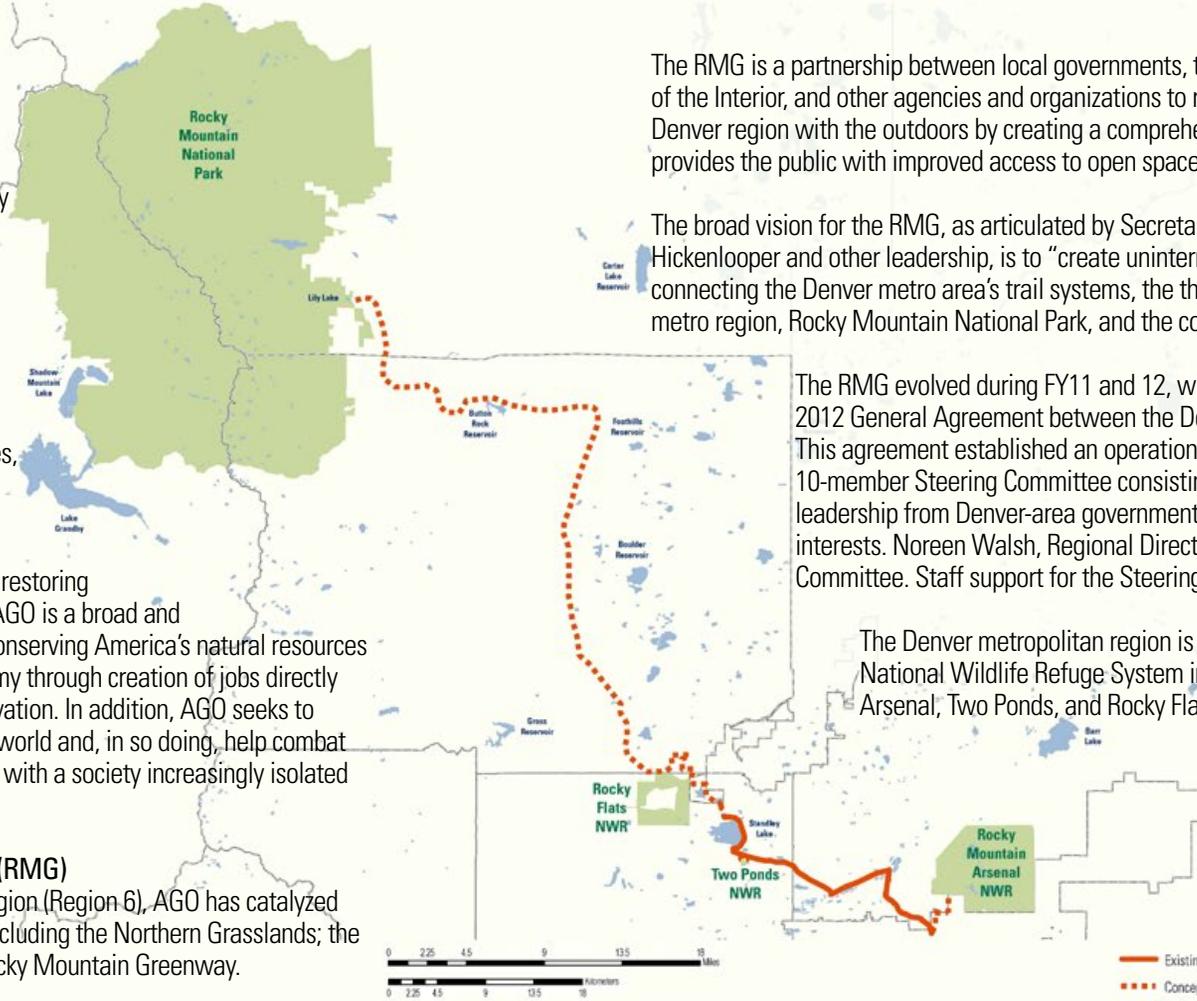
Rocky Mountain Greenway

America's Great Outdoors (AGO) is President Obama's vision for a 21st Century conservation and recreation agenda for the nation. Established by Presidential Memorandum on April 16, 2010, AGO is founded on the premise that long-term solutions to conservation problems should emerge from the grassroots. AGO seeks to foster stronger, more efficient partnerships between the federal government and states, tribes, and local communities to protect America's natural heritage.

From protecting large landscapes to restoring rivers to developing trail networks, AGO is a broad and diverse strategy aimed not only at conserving America's natural resources but at advancing the nation's economy through creation of jobs directly related to and dependent on conservation. In addition, AGO seeks to reconnect Americans to the natural world and, in so doing, help combat growing health concerns associated with a society increasingly isolated from the natural world.

The Rocky Mountain Greenway (RMG)

In the Service's Mountain-Prairie Region (Region 6), AGO has catalyzed diverse partnerships and projects, including the Northern Grasslands; the Crown of the Continent; and, the Rocky Mountain Greenway.



The RMG is a partnership between local governments, the State of Colorado, the Department of the Interior, and other agencies and organizations to reconnect residents of the metropolitan Denver region with the outdoors by creating a comprehensive and vibrant trail network that provides the public with improved access to open space and wildlife-dependent recreation.

The broad vision for the RMG, as articulated by Secretary Salazar, Colorado Governor Hickenlooper and other leadership, is to "create uninterrupted trails and transportation linkages connecting the Denver metro area's trail systems, the three national wildlife refuges in the metro region, Rocky Mountain National Park, and the community trails systems in-between."

The RMG evolved during FY11 and 12, with formal activation via the May 4, 2012 General Agreement between the Department and the State of Colorado. This agreement established an operational framework and appointed a 10-member Steering Committee consisting of executive- and senior-level leadership from Denver-area governments, agencies, organizations and other interests. Noreen Walsh, Regional Director, is a Co-Chair of the Steering Committee. Staff support for the Steering Committee is provided by the Service.

The Denver metropolitan region is fortunate to have three units of the National Wildlife Refuge System in close proximity: Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Two Ponds, and Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuges. These three national wildlife refuges are central to the RMG because they serve as "anchor points" to which planners can tie various segments of the trail network. *(continued)*



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Rocky Mountain Greenway

The geographic distribution of these refuges on the metro landscape – running east to west through the heart of the region – complements this vision. National wildlife refuges offer outstanding wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities, and by connecting the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Two Ponds, and Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuges via a trail system, this project will help promote awareness of these assets among area residents and encourage the public to take advantage of the superlative birding, hiking, fishing and environmental education opportunities available at these refuges and at the many open spaces, parks and other natural areas in the region, including, ultimately, Rocky Mountain National Park.

The RMG is important because it will elevate metropolitan Denver's already-impressive network of trails and natural areas to world-class status by enhancing connectivity among and between one of the nation's largest urban national wildlife refuges, numerous local trail systems, an iconic national park, and many other local open spaces and natural resources. This greater connectivity will provide Denver area residents and visitors with improved access to rivers, parks, and numerous other outdoor/wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities, which will in turn promote greater public support for conservation and outdoor-oriented lifestyles, resulting in healthier, more economically vibrant communities.

Current and Near-term Activities and Accomplishments

Operationally, the Service and the federal, state, and local entities with whom the Service is partnering on this project will work to identify gaps in the region's trail systems and plan and



Rocky Mountain Greenway trail map

construct trails to connect and close those gaps. As part of that work, we will identify opportunities to develop and deliver additional outdoor/wildlife-dependent recreation for trail users.

Though the RMG and the associated Steering Committee have only been in place for a short period, the partners have realized several important early successes, including the following:

- The Service and our RMG partners, notably the Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership (SCRGP), completed critical non-motorized trail linkage between Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge and existing Sand Creek Regional Greenway. This linkage effectively connects the refuge for the first time with metropolitan Denver's robust and ever-increasing regional *(continued)*



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trail and open space network, advancing the Service's goals of better-integrating the refuge to that network and providing non-motorized access to one of the largest urban refuges in the NWRS. The Service funded this project with approximately \$350,000 of US DOT Sarbanes Transit in Parks grant money, delivered on the ground through the SCRGP. In addition, working with SCRGP, we developed and posted AGO signage in both English and Spanish for trail users along multiple miles of connecting trails in the vicinity of RMA NWR.

- The Service and our partners with US Department of Transportation/Federal Highways Administration/Central Federal Lands Division and several jurisdictions in west metro Denver contracted with Atkins, a global leader in infrastructure engineering and design, to conduct a feasibility study to identify potential routes between Two Ponds and Rocky Flats NWR. The Service contributed approximately \$235,000 in NWRS road funds to the study, the results of which will inform and guide future efforts to connect these refuges to one another and to existing and emerging regional trail networks (and to RMA NWR).
- In February 2013, the Rocky Mountain Greenway partnership, including the State of Colorado, the Service, local municipalities and non-governmental organizations applied for and received more than



\$1.7 million in new funding through a Sarbanes Transit in Parks grant. The funding, part of the Federal Transit Administration's Transit in Parks program, will help establish an uninterrupted trail and open space network in the Denver metropolitan area. The grant will provide for the initial design and construction of the western trail link, connecting Rocky Flats and Two Ponds national wildlife refuges to the Greater Denver trail system. The new trail link will be approximately 7 miles long.

- The Service, working closely with the State of Colorado (co-signatory to the May 4, 2012 General Agreement between the Department and CO that formally established the RMG), convened three meetings of the RMG Steering Committee to scope and support priority projects for the RMG. The Service provided dedicated staff support for these meetings and delivered a variety of work products to advance the work of the Steering Committee.

Going forward, the Service and our partners will work to complete the feasibility study and address and resolve any outstanding issues related to routes, funding and other elements of the Two Ponds-Rocky Flats connection. In addition, we will continue to participate in and support the RMG Steering Committee as an active federal partner, supporting the work of the SC and our partners as the Steering Committee identifies and pursues priority projects for the RMG. □

Trail sign at Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Law Enforcement

Accomplishments



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service From the Mountains to the Prairies

Announcements

Transitions



The Service announced the selection of Matt Hogan as the Deputy Regional Director for the Mountain-Prairie Region. Hogan rejoined the Service in 2010 as the Assistant Regional Director for Migratory Birds and State Programs. In 2012, he served as the Assistant Regional Director for Refuges before transitioning to Deputy Regional Director in January 2013. Prior to joining the Service, Hogan served as Executive Director of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Hogan also held senior leadership positions in the Department of Interior and the Service including Deputy Director, Acting Director and Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. Hogan started his career working for a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives. □

for Fish and Wildlife projects. Prior to Pennsylvania, Riley worked at the Service's Headquarters Office. Riley first served as Special Assistant to the Director and later as a Branch Chief in the Division of Bird Habitat Conservation and Deputy Division Chief for the Division of Migratory Bird Management. Before joining the Service in 2002, Riley worked six years as an attorney for the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. □



The Service announced the selection of Will Meeks as the Assistant Regional Director for Refuges in the Mountain-Prairie Region. Meeks has more than 18 years of experience working for the Service, and previously served as the project leader of the Habitat and Population Evaluation

Team in Bismarck, N.D. Meeks gained experience working in Headquarters as both the Deputy Division Chief for Natural Resources and Conservation Planning, and as Branch Chief for the Branch of Wildlife Resources. Meeks also directed the Planning Branch of the Refuge System, which included Comprehensive Conservation Plan development and land acquisition planning efforts in support of America's Great Outdoors initiative. Meeks also served as Deputy Refuge Manager at Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska and Refuge Manager at Lostwood NWR. □

Events

Digital Communications in Conservation Training Workshop, April 9 – 11, 2013

Over the last several years, the Service has made a series of strategic investments in social media and other digital communications platforms. As a result, the Service has emerged as a leader in social media use amongst government agencies. Building upon these successes, a mix of the Service's most experienced and enthusiastic social media and digital content practitioners will convene at the National Conservation Training Center for a three-day, hands-on workshop designed to take the Service's use of social media to the next level.

The workshop is attracting a group of experts from the private sector, academia, our conservation partners and other agencies and will cover the latest research and advancements in the development and delivery of content



Aerial view of the National Conservation Training Center

across social media platforms. In addition, it will provide unique opportunities to explore how the Service can use these tools to continue taking steps to enhance engagement with citizens and foster an environment for creative ideas moving forward. □



The Service announced the selection of Clint Riley as the Assistant Regional Director for Migratory Birds and State Programs for the Mountain-Prairie Region. Riley previously led the Pennsylvania Ecological Services Field Office of the Service's Northeast Region. In that position, Riley was

responsible for projects ranging from endangered species protections to private lands conservation through Partners



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Closing Shots

Photos from Around the Region



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