

WILDLIFE HABITAT

Protecting habitat, monitoring species

The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland (ARP) provides wildlife habitat for more than 500 species and eight threatened and endangered proposed species. Habitat improvement focuses on projects to ensure vegetative structure and diversity.



A bull snake on Pawnee National Grassland.

WILDLIFE 2012 FACTS

- Improved **6,300 acres** of habitat through **20 miles** of road obliteration.
- Installed **8 bat gates**.
- Improved **160 acres** of habitat through the removal of **1 mile** of barbed wire fence.
- Restored **65 acres** of wetlands.
- Hosted **8 education** events.
- Temporarily closed **3 areas** for raptor nesting.



A wildlife biologist tests boreal toads for signs of disease in the Upper Williams Fork area on Sulphur Ranger District.

▶ The ARP completed a variety of **wildlife habitat improvement projects** including riparian restoration on the Boulder (BRD), Canyon Lakes (CLR) and Clear Creek (CCR) Ranger Districts where unofficial dispersed campsites were relocated away from streams, trails were improved and modified to protect watersheds, and sediment catchment ponds were constructed to improve stream quality.

▶ The Forest partnered with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to **monitor wolverine habitat**.

▶ Wildlife biologists **restored habitat** through a variety of projects on each ranger district. BRD relocated a road to prevent further damage to the Jenny Creek Stream. The District also partnered with the Trail Ridge Runners OHV group to restore areas damaged by motorized use and prevent further damage through the installation of barriers and planting of native seed. Fences were constructed on CLR to manage recreation and grazing in sensitive habitats in Elkhorn area. Sulphur Ranger District (SRD) partnered with the **Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation** volunteers and internal partners to restore habitat, reduce fragmentation, and provide security by continuing effective road obliteration and barbed-wire fence removal programs removing one mile of fencing.

▶ Canyon Lakes Ranger District partnered with the **Wild Sheep Foundation** to install interpretive signs along the Cache la Poudre Scenic Byway, a popular bighorn sheep viewing area on the CLR.

▶ Sulphur Ranger District continued community education efforts in Grand County through the annual **Christmas Bird Count, adventure backpack program, and Save the Frogs Day**.

▶ The Forest reduced the number of human/wildlife interactions by partnering with **American Lands and Leisure** campground concessionaire and CPW to educate campers about safely coexisting with bears.

▶ The ARP **installed eight gates on abandoned mines** to protect bats who roost there and the public who recreates nearby on BRD, CLR, and CCR.

▶ Districts implemented short-term **area closures for raptor nesting and fledging** on BRD, SRD, and Pawnee National Grassland (PNG).

▶ Staff worked with adjacent landowners to **manage prairie dogs** and place barriers between private and public lands on PNG.

▶ Volunteers helped **install escape ramps in stock tanks** to prevent drowning and predation of small mammals and birds on PNG.

► Biologists conducted **wildlife surveys** to update data needed for the management of wildlife and species conservation. Surveyed species included: raptors (osprey, goshawk), bats and amphibians (boreal toad, northern leopard frog). On PNG, biologist also surveyed mountain plover and swift fox as well as mapping prairie dog towns.

► The ARP cooperated with the White River National Forest, CPW and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to apply for funds from CDOT to complete an ongoing study and expand the **White River lynx/recreation study to CCRD**.

► Trapping for the federally listed (threatened) **Preble's meadow jumping mouse** resulted in known occurrences on CLRD.

► In cooperation with CPW, **remote camera stations** were established in wolverine and lynx habitat on SRD.

► Biologists on SRD authored the region's first lynx linkage assessment, the **Berthoud Pass Lynx Linkage Plan**. The goal of linkage areas is to ensure population viability through population connectivity; broad areas of habitat where animals can find food, shelter and security. The goal of the plan is to assess effectiveness of the Berthoud Pass lynx linkage with the goal of creating, maintaining or improving long-term function in balance with human uses.



Installing interpretive signs for the new bighorn sheep viewing area in the Poudre Canyon on Canyon Lakes Ranger District.

RANGEPROGRAM

Grazing and forage sustainability

The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland (ARP) have an active range program with allotments on each ranger district. Rangeland management includes the production of vegetation for the protection of watersheds to provide high-quality water, stability to the soil, a variety of plants and forage for wildlife and livestock.

► In 2012, permittees, grazing associations and Forest Service personnel worked together to manage rangelands through a **prolonged season of drought**. Range specialists worked with range permittees and two grazing associations to ensure sustainable forage, which included reducing livestock numbers and shortening seasons in response to drought. Livestock use on the forest and grassland was reduced about 45 percent.

► The extensive tree mortality caused by **mountain pine beetles** has complicated rangeland management on the Forest by restricting livestock movements and damaging improvements such as fences. Rangeland management specialists are working with permittees to address these challenges.

► **High Park Challenges:** The High Park Fire in 2012 impacted multiple active and vacant grazing allotments and damaged infrastructure. Rangeland specialists continue to work with permittees in addressing concerns.



Cattle on Canyon Lake's Sand Creek Allotment.

RANGE 2012FACTS

■ *Managed 176 active allotments located on 551,890 acres.*

■ *Administered 137 term grazing permits.*

■ *Authorized 64,096 Animal Unit Months.*