

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Public lands avian conservation

Dave McNitt BLM RGFO Wildlife Biologist - GARNA/ AHRA Volunteer Education Series – March 25, 2023





The Bureau of Land Management

The mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

BLM manages 1 of every 10 acres in US - 245 million acres of public lands and 700 million acres of mineral estate.

Promotes multiple-use on public lands, consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA).

- Recreation
- Minerals
- Grazing
- Forest products
- Wind and solar
- Infrastructure (transmission lines, water, right of ways)

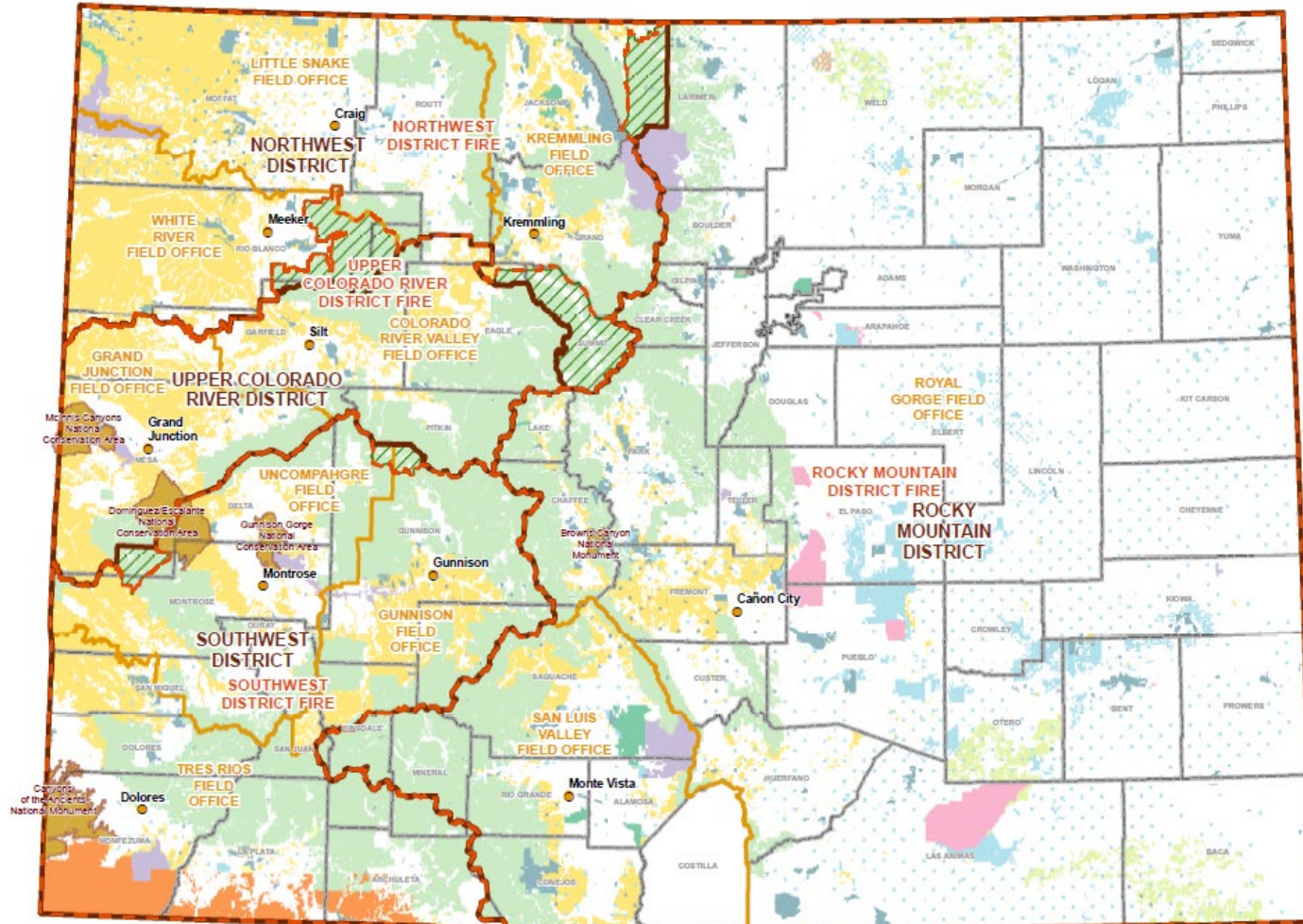




Field offices and wildlife programs

Interdisciplinary Team – wildlife, forestry, fuels, geology, recreation, archaeology, range, fisheries, etc.

Field offices
guided by
Resource
Management
Plans



Federal and
agency law, policy,
priorities, etc.



Role of BLM Wildlife Biologist

Provide wildlife expertise to Interdisciplinary Team

- Inform project planning
- Analyze effects of proposed actions
- Recommend mitigation/avoidance

Proactive conservation

- Ecological restoration/habitat improvement
- Inform land acquisitions/swaps
- Improve connectivity (e.g. fencing)
- Outreach

Research, inventory, monitor wildlife populations

- Regular monitoring of T&E/sensitive species
- Research effects of management actions
- Inventory abundance and distribution of focal species
- Science communication





Provide wildlife expertise to ID team

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- Proposed actions are reviewed under the requirements of NEPA.
- Very wide array of proposed actions within RGFO

The Endangered Species Act (ESA)

- Determine potential effects of proposed actions on T&E species.
- Consult with the US Fish and Wildlife Service when proposed actions may effect T&E species

Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA)

- Mandated to manage for multiple use
- Working landscapes





Mitigation and avoidance

Based on laws, policy, ecology, life history, local conditions, feasibility, and much more. A science and an art.

Spatial stipulations

- Avoid nests/nesting habitat
- Development caps (e.g. oil and gas)
- Avoidance of priority habitats

Temporal stipulations

- Timing limitations for migratory bird nesting
- Seasonal closures in priority habitats
- Time-of-day limitations

Many more unique methods for unique situations





Habitat improvement

Forest restoration

Process-based riparian restoration

Range improvements

Increase biodiversity, improve survival and reproduction, align with other objectives





Monitoring – T&E species





Monitoring – BLM sensitive species





Research

THE SOUTHWESTERN NATURALIST 66(4): 327–332

DECEMBER 2021

MOUNTAIN PLOVER (*CHARADRIUS MONTANUS*) OCCURRENCE IN SOUTH PARK BASIN, COLORADO

BRANDON A. SKERBETZ,* JORDAN McMAHON, AND MATTHEW RUSTAND

United States Bureau of Land Management, Royal Gorge Field Office, 3028 East Main Street, Cañon City, CO 81212

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TWS TALKS: PRESENTATIONS FROM THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Differing Effects of Vegetation and Topography on Snowshoe Hare Relative Abundance at Two Study Areas in the Southern Rocky Mountains
Presenter: David McNitt, Bureau of Land Management

Received: 17 January 2022 | Accepted: 7 July 2022
DOI: 10.1111/1365-2664.14280

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Journal of Applied Ecology

NABat ML: Utilizing deep learning to enable crowdsourced development of automated, scalable solutions for documenting North American bat populations

Ali Khalighifar¹ | Benjamin S. Gotthold² | Erin Adams^{3,4} | Jenny Barnett⁵ | Laura O. Beard⁶ | Eric R. Britzke⁷ | Paul A. Burger⁸ | Kimberly Chase⁹ | Zackary Cordes¹⁰ | Paul M. Cryan² | Emily Ferrall¹¹ | Christopher T. Fill¹² | Scott E. Gibson¹³ | G. Scott Haulton¹⁴ | Kathryn M. Irvine¹⁵ | Lara S. Katz¹⁶ | William L. Kendal¹⁷ | Christen A. Long¹⁸ | Oisín Mac Aodha¹⁹ | Tessa McBurney²⁰ | Sara McCarthy²¹ | Matthew W. McKown²² | Joy O'Keefe²³ | Lucy D. Patterson²⁴ | Kristopher A. Pitcher²⁵ | Matthew Rustand²⁶ | Jordi L. Segers²⁷ | Kyle Seppanen²⁸ | Jeremy L. Siemers²⁹ | Christian Stratton³⁰ | Bethany R. Straw² | Theodore J. Weller³¹ | Brian E. Reichert²



Research – University partners



Emily Macklin

Pinyon jay abundance and nesting colony selection

South Dakota State University

Dr. Amanda Cheeseman



Derek Schleicher

Northern goshawk nesting and resource selection

CSU Pueblo

Dr. Nate Bickford



Brandon Skerbetz

Mexican spotted owl acoustic surveys and occupancy

Western Colorado University

Dr. Pat Magee



Eli Wildey

Effects of recreation on mammalian space use

CSU Pueblo

Dr. Nate Bickford



Take homes

Management, research, conservation are all intertwined.

All facets rely on a foundation of sound data and robust science.

Laws, economics, sociocultural factors, etc. play a major role in decision making.

Issues and opportunities are diverse. Effective conservation relies on partnerships.

Resources are limited. Volunteers and engaged public are a major asset.



