



CVA Team 2022 (left to right):
David Brigham, Taylor Jackson,
Erika Nunlist, Shannon Wilkey



Centennial Valley Association — July 2022

CVA Program Updates

Invasive Species Management Program Update

Invasive weed season is in full swing in the Centennial Valley! The CVA and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) crew is Shannon Wilkey and Mac McCall, who are taking the lead on the program. They have been hard at work mapping and treating invasive weeds, coordinating with partners, and making sure efforts ramp up as summer progresses with more weeds popping up. Management efforts began in June, with a focus on early season invaders, like whitetop and black henbane. In late June, the first Weed Week was held across the Valley. A second in mid-July was just completed, but data has not been analyzed yet. Two more Weed Weeks will occur in early August and mid-September. Focus is shifting to later occurring species, including spotted knapweed, hoary alyssum, and houndstongue. From June through early July, the crew has:

- ☼ Treated/Monitored over 65-acres ☼ Eradicated 40 Points ☼ 156 Points were Unlocated Year 2
- ☼ Identified 73 New Points ☼ 320 Points were Unlocated Year 1 ☼ 51 Points were Unlocated Year 3

Canada Thistle— Mac McCall



CVA will be hosting three sponsored Spray Days, in coordination with Beaverhead County, and we will provide a homemade lunch, dessert, and beverages to partners and volunteers in attendance. Please let us know if you are interested in joining us! The CVA Spray Days are scheduled for:

- ☼ Wolverine: August 9th @ 9am at ☼ Lima Dam: August 11th @ 8am
the gate below the spillway
- ☼ Red Rock Pass: August 10th @
9am at top of the pass



Native species, Glacier-lily— Carol Bergstrom

In addition, Mac and Shannon have been spending extensive time on Long Creek, which is part of the CVA's Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) grant. They have been treating whitetop and Canada and musk thistles in an effort to reduce the invasive weed footprint on the Long Creek landscape before the end of July. CVA will be conducting a fall native plant reseed on TNC's Long Creek property, courtesy of the WHIP grant and funding provided by the Montana Native Plant Society. Reseeding bareground areas, that have been historically inundated with invasive weeds, allows native plants to reestablish and outcompete invasive weeds in the future, as well as provide habitat and forage for wildlife.



Mac spraying at Lima Dam- Shannon Wilkey

Thank you to James Waxe (TNC), the Range Rider Team, and partners, including the Beaverhead County Weed District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Taft-Nicholson Center, and the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, for their efforts in invasive weed management so far this season!

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to volunteer during upcoming Weed Weeks and CVA Spray Days, please do not hesitate to reach out at invasiveweeds@centennialvalleyassociation.org.

Native species, White Mule-ears— Timber Biggers



Water and Drought Awareness Program

Shannon Wilkey



The April, May, and even June rain and snow really helped the Centennial Valley “green up”, despite being in a severe drought classification the majority of the winter and early spring. Currently, the Centennial Valley is not

classified in any drought status, except for a sliver in the Centennial Mountains indicating abnormally dry ([National Integrated Drought Information System](#)).

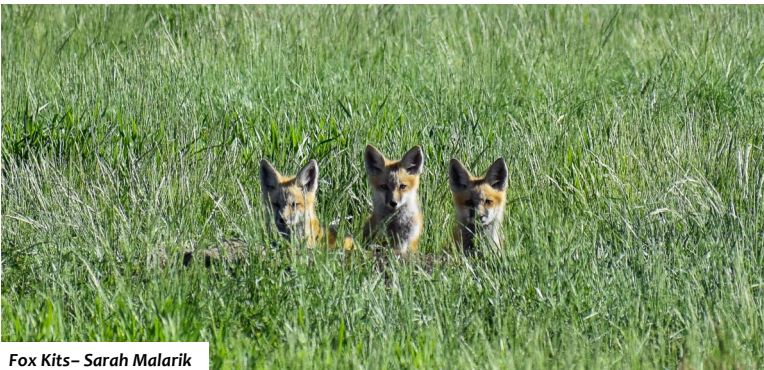
Shannon has been managing seven automated rain gauges placed throughout the valley floor. In addition, The Nature Conservancy and Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge monitor CoCoRaHS rain gauges, the BLM has a RAWs station automatically collecting data, and CVA Members, Scott and Shane, share data from their automated rain gauge in Lakeview. The data is being monitored monthly and is compiled at the end of each month. As of July 24th, Lakeview (south-central) has received 1.93” of rain and the Sandhills (northeast) has received 0.97” of rain.

Arnica spp.- Mac McCall



Despite the rain, wildfires continue to pop up throughout the West. The Clover Fire is burning in the Gravelly Range, north of the Centennial Valley. It is an 8-acre fire currently, and is burning in dead/down and dead standing timber. The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest issued an area closure, effective July 22nd. The closure area includes portions of Warm Springs Road, Gravelly Range Road, and Moose Lake.

As we move deeper into the summer, remember to be water and fire smart! If you have questions, suggestions, or would like to subscribe to the Water Reports, contact drought@centennialvalleyassociation.org.



Fox Kits- Sarah Malarik

PO Box 240077
Dell, MT 59724
info@centennialvalleyassociation.org

Range Rider Program Update

Range Riders have been out riding and tracking wildlife regularly since the end of May, and everything has been going well! There have not been reports of predator-



livestock conflict and the Team has not found evidence of conflict themselves. A handful of cattle have died due to poisonous plants, but otherwise cattle have been mostly healthy and living large on good grass that came with all the spring moisture. From range riding, game cameras, and community reports, the Team has recorded 16 grizzly bear, 2 black bear, and 7 wolf observations.

In addition to riding and tracking activities, Range Riders have also attended and/or hosted several educational events. This included a grizzly bear talk in Alder, MT, and a depredation workshop and bear aware training in Dillon, MT, to help increase community awareness and safety while working and recreating in bear country. The Team is looking forward to the rest of the summer and hope it brings more great wildlife photos and program successes to share.

If you have any comments, questions, or wildlife sightings, please feel free to reach out to Erika Nunlist, Wildlife Program Coordinator at (406)407-2297 or wildlife@centennialvalleyassociation.org.

Education Opportunities

Thank you to Jeff Warren, US Fish & Wildlife Service, for teaching us about Scaup during the Wildlife Speaker Series earlier in June! About 40 people were in attendance for the event. Everyone enjoyed a chili dinner and then Jeff taught us about the migration effort required by this tiny duck each year.

Erika and Shannon provided wildlife and agricultural education at the Henry's Fork Wildlife Alliance's Wildlife Festival in Island Park. Hundreds of people were in attendance!



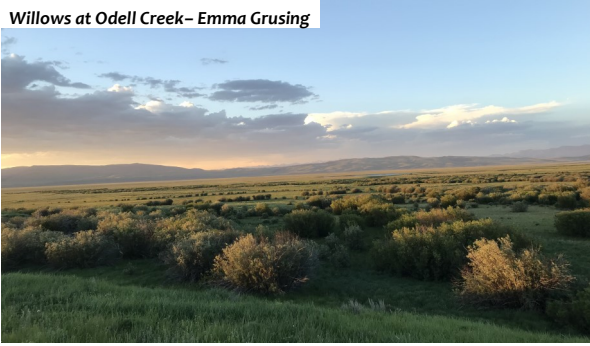
CVA table at the Wildlife Festival- Shannon Wilkey

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Partner Updates

Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

Willows at Odell Creek – Emma Grusing



The Refuge is continuing to expand on willow browse surveys that it has periodically conducted since 2006. Data collected from 60 transects and three ungulate exclosures will help assess browse pressure exhibited by moose. We are specifically looking at whether the sampled willows are being browsed to the point of mechanical protection, browsed to the point of dying back, or are continuing to grow despite browsing. Given that willows provide important habitat for songbirds, and are food resources for several animal species including moose, understanding browse impact is important in determining willow community health.

-Jennifer Baxter – Biological science technician and browse survey project lead

The Refuge has been spraying for Canada and musk thistle up Odell Creek Trail and at the newly erected exclosures where aspen tree planting took place earlier this spring. Recently, the USFWS-Montana Invasive Species Strike Team came out to the Refuge and helped spray hoary alyssum and dame's rocket at Teepee Creek. This year's observations compared to previous years' treatments and observations are showing monumental improvements with very few of these species remaining in this area. In the coming weeks, the Refuge will continue to spray up Odell Creek Trail, throughout the timber harvest unit there, and along roadways mapping new areas needing treatment.

-Kelsey Loverink – Biological science technician and invasive species project lead



Refuge spray rig – Kelsey Loverink

Camera trap surveys have captured several carnivore species of interest that the Refuge seeks to inventory, as well as numerous ungulates with their young. The occasional sandhill crane family with colts in tow make random appearances that are always a delight to see. This camera trap study helps the Refuge document species of concern and provides a wholistic snapshot of the wildlife that inhabit different areas of the Refuge.

-Bendigo Artley – Biological science technician and camera trap project lead



The Refuge has had an established mountain bluebird trail since 2006. Today, the bluebird trail is at over 90 nest boxes. Current surveys of the trail show that nearly half of these nest boxes are occupied by mountain bluebirds with tree swallows occupying most of the rest. To date, the trail has produced in excess of 113 nestling bluebirds and over 95 tree swallow nestlings. Parent birds continue to incubate eggs and fledge young, so these numbers are expected to increase significantly. With invasive bird species, like European starlings and English sparrows, often outcompeting native bluebirds for natural nest sites, the Refuge's bluebird trail takes on an increased importance.

-Nathan Cornille – Biological science technician and bluebird trail project lead

Bluebird using nest box – Jennifer Baxter

- ⊗ In mid-May, the Refuge planted over 1,700 trees on 5-acres of land within its timber harvest unit.
- ⊗ Aspen seeds from mother trees were again collected and will be propagated for a spring planting next May with another 750 tree seedlings expected to be planted.
- ⊗ Road improvements are expected to commence in August – October for Lower Lake Road and Idlewild Road.
- ⊗ The Refuge completed work on a new Hunt, Fish & Public Use Brochure and hopes to have it available for recreators by September 1st.
- ⊗ New signage will begin to be erected throughout the Refuge to facilitate updates in the new brochure, and new picnic tables, fire rings, and bear storage boxes will soon be in place in the campgrounds.
- ⊗ Wildflowers on the Refuge are currently in peak bloom, with blanketflower, flax, harebells, sticky geranium, sulphur buckwheat, Indian paintbrush (red & yellow), and lupines providing brilliant colors.

-Cortez Rohr – Deputy Refuge Manager



Blue flax – Cortez Rohr

Partner Updates (continued)

University of Utah– Taft-Nicholson Center

The Taft-Nicholson Center is hopping with activity. We have welcomed four classes and are waiting for our fifth. So far, we have hosted 28 high school science teachers from Utah, a class of undergrads from the UofU Honor College, older adult learners from MSU, and the WYSS Scholars Program organized by University of Montana which supports the graduate-level education of a new generation of leaders in U.S. land conservation.



Blanketflower– Taft-Nicholson Center

Our faculty fellow program continues this year with 7 faculty members from various departments at the UofU, spending July in the Centennial working on their individual research.

We've been delighted with the turnout for our weekly Science Wednesday lecture series and potluck so far this season. We look forward to August with even more activity on campus!

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP)

Montana FWP Wildlife Biologist, Dean Waltee, will complete an aerial classification survey of antelope and moose across the Centennial Valley during late July or August. The survey is expected to be completed using the yellow FWP SuperCub and take one morning. The objective of the survey is to classify samples of antelope and moose to document annual fawn production and ratios of adult males to females. In addition, Dean is classifying all moose observed through the end of August. If you observe moose, please send along the date, location, and classification as a cow, calf (born during spring 2022), yearling bull, or adult bull.



Robin Mackenzie

Centennial Valley Historical Society

The Centennial Valley Historical Society (CVHS) is preparing for their annual BBQ and fundraiser on August 6th at the Taft-Nicholson Center! Highlights include a BBQ meal, silent auction, pie auction, water color painting art show, Montana Barns presentation by Chere Jiusto, and T-shirts designed by Dell, MT local Skylar Martinell. CVHS will furnish burgers and condiments. Paper goods and drinks will be supplied by the Taft Ranch. Please bring a dish to pass, a silent auction item, and/or pie to auction. Remember to bring cash or check for purchases. We hope you can join us for this fun-filled event!

PO Box 240077
Dell, MT 59724
info@centennialvalleyassociation.org

Rocky Mountain Iris– Emma Grusing



Beaverhead Watershed Committee

The Beaverhead Watershed Committee is continuing to work with the Beaverhead County Collaborative to address the Hidden Pasture Wilderness Study Area, and the inconvenience it causes locals. We should have a final recommendation for Congress by the end of the summer. Be on the lookout for information on a public meeting in the Dell area in August!

We're back out measuring flows on the Red Rock, and this year feels very similar to last year, with a whole bunch of water coming out of Lima Reservoir, but still only a trickle at Kidd. The reservoir seems to be holding strong at around 50% full, which isn't terrible.

The transfer of Cornell Park from Beaverhead Trails Coalition to the FWP Fishing Access Site program is moving along, and the final decision from the FWP Commission should be made in August. Thanks again to John & Phyllis Erb for donating the property the Trails Coalition.

We've been watching drought conditions closely this spring, as I'm sure everyone has. Things aren't nearly as bad as they might have been, thanks to the April/May rain, snow, and cool weather. Hopefully crops and cattle are set up fairly well. Now we're watching for fire danger, as things could still dry out in a hurry.

-Zach Owen



After a hailstorm on Antelope Peak– Scott Jackson

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Bitterroot– Erika Nunlist

Thank You from CVA!

Thank you Defenders of Wildlife, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Livestock Loss Board for the continued support of the Range Rider Program.

Thank you to the Lima School District for their support of our Wildlife Speaker Series earlier this summer! The school provided us space, technological materials for the speaker, as well as additional outreach to families in the community.

Thank you Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) for awarding CVA a Watershed Management Grant! Over the next two years, CVA will be revisiting our Water and Drought Awareness Program to build-in tools to provide additional hydrological data to the community, such as additional rain gauges and soil moisture monitoring sites.

Thank you to The Nature Conservancy in Montana for partnering with CVA to host a Field Technician position for the 2022 field season. The Field Technician is a split position between both organizations, increasing capacity for a variety of projects in the Centennial Valley.

Thank you Bears Den Essentials for partnering with CVA on a fundraising opportunity for CVA that is slated for this fall.

Thank you to the individuals, families, organizations, and businesses that have sent in dues and donations! Your contributions, whether they be monetary or in-kind, supports and sustains the amazing staff and activities behind the Invasive Species Management, Outreach and Education, Range Rider, and Water and Drought Awareness Programs. **We appreciate you!**

Finally, the CVA is actively looking for grants and other monetary or in-kind support and opportunities to ensure our programs are effective and meaningful to the Centennial Valley in 2022 and into the future. Please reach out to Kara, Executive Coordinator, at (715)681-0795 or communityorg@centennialvalleyassociation.org if you have suggestions or would like to help CVA in any way.



Lupine– Kara Maplethorpe

Thank you for all the support so far in 2022!

Friends of the CVA

CVA strives to build and utilize working relationships with numerous agencies and organizations, such as:

- ⊗ Federal, State, and County Agencies like the Beaverhead County Weed District, Red Rock Lakes NWR, Bureau of Land Management, Montana DNRC, and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
 - ⊗ The Nature Conservancy
 - ⊗ Taft-Nicholson Center
 - ⊗ Future West
- ⊗ Heart of the Rockies/High Divide Collaborative
 - ⊗ USFWS Partners Program
- ⊗ Montana Watershed Coordination Council
 - ⊗ Cross Charitable Foundation
 - ⊗ Greater Yellowstone Coalition
 - ⊗ Defenders of Wildlife
 - ⊗ Livestock Loss Board
- ⊗ Western Sustainability Exchange
- ⊗ Missouri Headwaters Partnership
- ⊗ Friends of Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and the Centennial Valley
 - ⊗ Fish, Wildlife and Parks WHIP Program
 - ⊗ Montana Native Plant Society
 - ⊗ Western Landowners Alliance
 - ⊗ And Many Others!



Dark-throated Shooting Star– Xavier Rolet

CVA Board Members

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Yvonne Martinell, Chairwoman | Scott Huntsman |
| Ed Wolfe | Peggy Dulany & Andrew Anderson (Proxy) |
| Kevin Crowe & Tassi Duffner (Proxy) | Mel Montgomery |
| Jerry Scheid (Advisory) | Mark Bergstrom (Advisory) |

CVA Committees

- Weeds: Scott Huntsman
 Wildlife: Yvonne Martinell, Bill West
 Hunting: Jerry Scheid, Scott Huntsman