



DENVER ZOO

**FIELD CONSERVATION /
ROCKY MOUNTAIN + GREAT PLAINS**

BISON, BIGHORN SHEEP, BOREAL TOAD + BEYOND

47

**AMERICAN
BISON**

**DONATED TO
NATIVE AMERICAN
COMMUNITIES**

Protecting Iconic Species + Habitats of the American West

As a global conservation organization with a department dedicated to field conservation for the past 25 years, Denver Zoo has a proven history of defending wildlife and wild places around the world. We're lucky to live in a state blessed with deep ecological diversity, but even some of Colorado's iconic species are vulnerable to increasing threats.

So, here on our home turf, we work alongside a committed cadre of partners—including individuals, communities, industries and universities, non-profit organizations, agencies and more—to protect the species and ecosystems that define the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains. Here's an overview of our work from prairie to peak.

BREEDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR BISON

By 1908, Denver Zoo's 18 American bison were all that remained in Colorado. In our first official field conservation effort, the Zoo partnered with Yellowstone National Park officials and others to help propagate the endangered species. In 1914, the growing conservation herd was restored to Genesee Park and placed under the care of Denver Mountain Parks. Denver Zoo continues to work with DMP on bison conservation, prairie restoration and cultural reconciliation—and since 2021 we have worked with City of Denver to donate 47 bison to Native American communities as a form of reparations.

SAFE PASSAGE FOR COLORADO'S WILDLIFE

Every year, 4,000 wildlife-vehicle collisions occur in Colorado, with tragic consequences. In 2018, Denver Zoo co-founded Summit County Safe Passages: a working partnership between state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, the outdoor industry and mountain communities to help mitigate this critical issue with innovative wildlife crossing structures. Hundreds of species, including Rocky Mountain icons such as elk, the vulnerable black bear and the threatened Canada lynx, are expected to use the structures to move safely within their extensive range.

379
**COMMUNITY
SCIENTISTS**

**HAVE CONDUCTED
FIELDWORK
TO SUPPORT THE
PIKA PROJECT**

THE LITTLE LAGOMORPH WITH A HUGE IMPACT

In Colorado's high-alpine ecosystem, Denver Zoo's Pika Program leverages the skills and passion of more than 400 community science volunteers to collect detailed data on the American pika. As an indicator species, these diminutive rabbit relatives help us understand the effect of climate change. The Colorado Pika Project is a partnership between Denver Zoo and Rocky Mountain Wild, in collaboration with the White River National Forest, Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, the University of Colorado Boulder and Colorado Mesa University.



682

**ENDANGERED
BOREAL TOADLETS
BRED + RELEASED**

Denver Zoo: Impact at Any Altitude

**FIELD CONSERVATION /
ROCKY MOUNTAIN + GREAT PLAINS**

As with all our Field Conservation programs, our Rocky Mountain/Great Plains efforts target projects where need is high and investment are low—including near-endangered species, tribal conservation and inter-agency landscapes.

2,050

**VOLUNTEER HOURS CONTRIBUTED
BY 198 VOLUNTEERS IN 2021**

HELPING ENDANGERED TOADS BOUNCE BACK

One of the animals most severely affected by the deadly chytrid fungus is Colorado's endangered boreal toad. In 2019, Denver Zoo became the first institution to successfully breed chytrid-resilient toads in a zoological setting, ultimately releasing 682 toadlets into the wild in Utah. In collaboration with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, we are now expanding our efforts to Colorado. A successful breeding and release program would be potential game-changers for the species—allowing us to supplement wild populations while buying time for boreal toads to adapt to this dangerously persistent pathogen.

EPIDEMIC INTERVENTION FOR BIGHORN SHEEP ON INDIGENOUS LAND

For centuries, wild bighorn lived in harmony with the Diné (Navajo) people and their domestic sheep. Yet by the 1990s, the Navajo Nation bighorn population had plummeted to mere dozens—and today local herds are in the grip of a deadly pneumonia epidemic. Denver Zoo, in collaboration with the Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife, Colorado State University and the Wildlife Conservation Society, is identifying high-contact areas and working with Diné herders to develop indigenous solutions for preventing disease spillover from domestic sheep into their wild cousins.



Photo By: Kristi Odum

90

NAVAJO NATION BIGHORN SHEEP TESTED FOR PNEUMONIA

BALANCING RECREATION + CONSERVATION AT MT. EVANS

The highest paved road in North America lies at Mt. Evans, which receives 200,000 visitors per year. Visitors bring salt, which attracts bighorn sheep and mountain goats into parking lots and trailheads—creating human-wildlife conflict. Denver Zoo, with support from National Geographic, is stepping in to help resolve this conflict. We are taking soil cores to identify salt sources, engaging visitors to stop wildlife-feeding and other destructive behavior, and deterring mountain goats and bighorn sheep by spreading mountain lion urine in parking lots.



Photo By: Kristi Odum

2021

97M+ PEOPLE REACHED

WITH COVERAGE IN

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC AND OTHER OUTLETS