

News Release



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Mountain-Prairie Region
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, Colorado 80228

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Colorado Flood Recovery Efforts Not Delayed by Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse

Contacts:

USFWS:

Susan Linner, 303.236.4774; Susan_Linner@fws.gov
Leith Edgar 303.236.4588; Leith_Edgar@fws.gov

FEMA:

FEMA News Desk: 303-649-6967
State Public Information Officer Micki Trost: 303-472-4087

LAKEWOOD, Colo. – Recent news accounts suggesting the Endangered Species Act and the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse are delaying flood recovery projects in Colorado are inaccurate. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are collaboratively working together with other federal, state and local partners to expedite the processing, review and funding of Colorado's flood recovery measures, while still ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for threatened and endangered species, including the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*), or Preble's. Consultation between the two federal agencies is required for flood recovery projects within occupied and designated critical habitat for the federally threatened mammal, and other listed species under the ESA.

"We are working very closely with FEMA and other partners to make sure important flood recovery projects proceed on time while ensuring no harm occurs to species listed under the ESA," said Noreen Walsh, Regional Director for the Mountain-Prairie Region. "But let me be clear: the Preble's and other federally listed species have not, and will not, delay flood recovery efforts in Colorado."

"FEMA is working closely with the USFWS to help determine the quickest and least costly way to proceed with recovery efforts and comply with all environmental protection laws," stated Tom McCool, Federal Coordinating

Officer for Colorado’s fall flooding disaster.”

All recovery stakeholders are strongly invested in continuing the rapid pace of permanent work and, at the same time, completing the requirements of all applicable laws, including the ESA. Neither FEMA nor the USFWS have halted or delayed the Colorado recovery efforts.

The USFWS is in the midst of finalizing streamlined programmatic consultation documents that will cover FEMA’s reimbursement for non-emergency, permanent repair projects throughout the flood disaster area. These documents will also streamline requirements for the USFWS and other Federal, State, county, and local partners. USFWS biologists are working closely with FEMA staff to ensure and expedite compliance with the ESA’s regulatory requirements, while promoting valuable conservation that is important not only to the mouse’s immediate and long-term recovery, but to the many ecosystem services – such as flood control, water quality, fishing, kayaking, hunting, hiking, birding, and other economic benefits – that streamside habitats provide to local communities.

The Preble’s was listed as threatened in 1998. It’s one of three federally listed species found only in streamside, riparian habitats along the Front Range in Colorado. The flash floods of September 2013 flooded, destroyed, or altered many riparian habitats throughout the Preble’s range in Colorado and likely drowned individual mice or entire populations. The flash floods also adversely impacted federally designated critical habitat for the Preble’s.

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. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/>. Connect with our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/USFWSMountainPrairie>, follow our tweets at <http://twitter.com/USFWSMtnPrairie>, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmtmprairie/>