

## Boreal Toad Pond Project

Boreal Toads are amphibians that live in marshes, wet meadows, and riparian areas between 8,500 and 11,800 feet. Once widespread throughout Colorado, the species has declined and is classified as an endangered species by CPW, listed as a sensitive species by the RGNF, and may likely be listed as federally threatened in the next 3-5 years. In the San Juan Mountains, there are 6 breeding sites, all of which are in the Rio Grande Basin. Threats to habitats include Chytrid fungus, predation, habitat loss, and weather conditions.

In an effort to be proactive, partnering agencies have worked to protect and rebuild populations. There is high potential for successful, proactive restoration projects in the West Fork Complex Fire burned area. Toads readily colonize burned areas and burned areas appear to have half the rate of fungus infection. Restoration populations with local genetics are available at the local toad hatchery and there are robust partnerships in place to implement the project.

CPW, USFWS, USFS, CRGRF, and RWEACT have partnered to develop a project through which shallow wetlands will be created near Fern Creek, and boreal toads will be reintroduced. The USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife program has provided in-kind assistance in developing the designs. CPW is providing the needed augmentation water to supply the “first fill” and annual evaporation of the ponds. CPW is also providing toads and \$10,000 in cash match. The USFS is the landowner and has provided permitting assistance. The USFS is also contributing \$10,000 in cash match. RWEACT has allocated \$8,000 to the project. The CRGRF will provide project management, contract with the construction contractor, and manage payments for invoices.

The partners have obtained the needed funds to build two ponds and will begin construction on the first two in Summer 2016. Additional ponds will be built as funds are secured. Additional sources of funds are being sought by CPW.

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