



## Lois Webster Fund Fact Sheet

Updated 5/9/18

**What is the purpose of the Lois Webster Fund?** The Lois Webster Fund (LWF) of the Audubon Society of Greater Denver (ASGD) was established in 1995 specifically to support Colorado non-game wildlife research and education projects that lead to the conservation of these species.

**What has LWF done?** Since its inception and through the 2018 project year, The Lois Webster Fund has awarded grants totaling over \$106,435 to 51 projects. Since grantees are required to partner with other non-profits, educational or government organizations, the LWF awards have impacts far beyond their face value, involving numerous participants and multiplying the total dollar amounts invested in these projects.

**Who benefits from these grants?** Grants have been awarded to graduate students at eight different colleges and universities; grade school and high school teachers, nonprofits that work to conserve native wildlife such as the Denver Zoo, the Colorado Native Plant Society and the Butterfly Pavilion; and local, state and federal public land and natural resource agencies. Every year, we receive more project requests than we can fund. In fact, for the past three years, applicants have submitted proposals requesting six times more money than we have been able to award. Indeed, as development proceeds to impact more habitat throughout Colorado, the need for improved understanding regarding what is necessary to sustain our native wildlife becomes greater. So, the insights gained from grant-funded projects will become more valuable in focusing our conservation efforts.



**How did the Lois Webster Fund get started?** Lois Webster, a founder of the Denver Audubon Society in 1969, was a biology teacher with the Aurora Public Schools, a dedicated birder and an active environmentalist. In honor of her 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, her friends established the Lois Webster Fund to continue her efforts in non-game wildlife education and research. A Governing Committee, that originally included Lois, has administered the Fund. The Committee is composed of 12 Colorado citizens who have experience in field research, education, and fund management, plus ASGD's President and Conservation Chair.

**How are the funds raised and managed?** The circle of friends who initially contributed to the Lois Webster Fund have been joined over the years by members of Lois's family, ASGD members, conservationists in Colorado and others who share Lois's interest and concern for Colorado non-game wildlife. The Fund's Governing Rules stipulate that not more than 10% of the fund's total assets can be awarded for projects in any given year. Its operating expenses are covered by the LWF Committee members and ASGD so all funds raised go to support projects. A finance subcommittee oversees the investment of the funds. Each Spring, there are presentations of results of the previous year's projects.

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We invite you to join us in investing in Colorado non-game wildlife research and education and in conserving our state's diverse wildlife heritage for future generations. [Donate now!](#) (In the "Comments" box, please enter "Lois Webster Fund".)

## What do contributions to The Lois Webster Fund do?

- **Enable researchers to find answers to interesting questions important for conservation**

What do Black Swifts (a Watch List Species) in Garfield, Alamosa, and Ouray counties eat? ... and what does that tell us about the habitat needs for these aerial foragers? \$1,500 helped experts at CSU's Gillette Museum of Arthropod Diversity identify 5,454 insects and find answers.



What kinds of native grasslands and/or tilled agricultural fields do mountain plovers need to successfully breed, hatch, and rear future generations? We've invested \$22,600 over many years to support different researchers from the CO Division of Wildlife, CU-Denver, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, and other organizations in completing studies that give land managers answers for making decisions about mountain plovers' habitat needs.

- **Engage learners of all ages in research and education about Colorado's native species**

A \$750 grant enabled CSU researchers to hire a first year undergraduate to work side-by-side with them, gain conservation research skills and develop a passion that she shared with fellow students - and led her to dedicate her career to protecting and conserving birds.

Grants of \$5,200 provided funding for 3 different BioBlitz projects in Brown's Canyon National Monument, the Delores River, and Boulder and Jefferson County open space lands. By engaging 300 volunteers and the collaboration of multiple nonprofits, schools and government agencies, these projects documented over 1,700 species and have been used to plan for habitat restoration and recreational uses.



Other funded projects have engaged volunteers in monitoring and learning about bees, butterflies and pikas throughout the state.

- **Provide information and techniques for enhancing habitats and populations of non-game wildlife**

An investment of \$1,500 in the Allegra Collister Nature Preserve helped them transcribe and analyze 50 years of banding data and discover how the exclusion of cattle from this riparian area had led to the increase of Brewer's sparrows (a Watch List Species, declining elsewhere) and inform management of similar lands.

What is the ecological role of free-ranging domestic cats in our urban-wildlife interface? ...and is there a disconnect between humans' perceptions of the risks and the actual risks? A \$2,500 grant enabled graduate students to use GPS and remote-triggered cameras to track cats' movements and to survey cat owners, and thereby inform education efforts to help conserve bobcats, birds, and other wildlife.



Several PhD and MA candidates have received grants to investigate the abundance, health, and habitat requirements of bats in Colorado. Their research has contributed to our understanding of the impact on bats of heavy metals in streams in mining areas and has alerted Mesa Verde National Park managers to the importance of *unburned* pinion-juniper woodlands in providing the moth and beetle prey to sustain bat populations.

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