Field Trip Wednesday, February 7th after the CPNPP 2018 Annual Meeting:

This half-day field trip is an optional portion of the 2018 CPNPP meeting, led by Danielle Johnson (CP&W) and Nikki Grant-Hoffman (BLM). Participants will meet Wednesday morning and carpool to a Colorado Parks & Wildlife habitat restoration trial and a short hike in BLM’s McInnis Canyon National Conservation Area. Information and links below.

Interested participants should use their registration form to sign up. Questions and late registration inquiries can be directed to Nikki Grant-Hoffman (nhoffman@blm.gov; 970-244-3020) and Danielle Johnson (Danielle.biyeu@state.co.us; 970-255-6177).

Tentative Schedule:

8:00am: Meet at Doubletree parking lot (or use Directions below and meet group at site)
8:30am: Meet at first site (CP&W research plots)
8:30am - 9:45 am: Chat at CP&W site
10:00am: Meet at Devil's Canyon trailhead
10am - 12pm: Hike in Devil's Canyon and chat about ongoing salt desert studies involving this area and others (see restoration reference site)
12pm: End field trip so folks can get lunch and head back to the Double Tree for afternoon focal group meeting or travel home

Directions: From the Fruita exit on 1-70, head south on Hwy 340. Pass the Dinosaur Museum, James M Robb State Park, and Colorado River. After the river, take the first Right onto Kingsview Rd. From here it is 2.9 miles to the site: set your odometer. Wind through a neighborhood, keep going as road becomes gravel, then go left at the fork where you will see a sign for Horsethief SWA. Continue to the field site (unsigned) where there is a vehicle gate and a 2-track road on the left side of the road. We’ll try to have a colleague from CPW waiting by the gate, with a CPW truck. The best place to park is a river overview about 60m past the site on the right hand side of the road.

Restoration site visit information:

1. Colorado Parks & Wildlife Pothole seeding restoration site at Horsethief State Wildlife Area: Pothole seeding is a method of creating large mounds and holes in order to create favorable microsites for seeding and to control cheatgrass. Cheatgrass has been shown to be hindered by pothole seeding, likely due to altered competitive dynamics and reduced seed dispersal. A degraded rangeland at the Horsethief State Wildlife Area, which had been dominated by cheatgrass and greasewood, was pothole-seeded in fall 2012. Imazapic herbicide was applied prior to treatment at 4 oz/acre and the greasewood was grubbed off. Half of the 7-acre treatment area was also treated with a super-absorbent polymer in order to increase soil moisture retention, and a mixture of native grasses, forbs, and shrubs was applied to the entire site. By three years post-treatment a diverse native plant community had developed in treated areas, while control areas remained dominated by cheatgrass. Effects of the polymer have been minimal. By five years post-treatment, cheatgrass had reinvaded the site, but native grasses and shrubs were well-established and have survived. More information at: http://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/Rangeland-Restoration.aspx
This photo from May 2017 shows the treated area to the right of the fence, untreated to the left. Most of the yarrow in the treatment area died in the hot dry summer of 2017, but native grasses and shrubs have survived.

2. McInnis Canyons NCA Information: McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area (MCNCA) is located just outside of Fruita, CO. MCNCA includes over 120,000 acres of high desert country and is home to the Black Ridge Canyon Wilderness Area. There are many hiking options near Fruita including the Pollock Bench Trail, Flume/Devil's Canyon, and the Fruita Paleo Area. https://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/colorado/mcinnis-canyons

See separate Devils Canyon & Pollock Bench Trail System Brochure.