

Pinyon's QA/QC Group Created to Better Serve Our Clients' Needs

At Pinyon, Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Control (QC) have always been a huge part of the product we deliver. In order to better provide these services and to continue to improve upon them, we decided to dedicate an entire team to the QA/QC process. My team members (below) have been tasked with helping Pinyon provide the highest standard in QA/QC services.

I'm often asked about the difference between QA and QC. In a nutshell, QA is a process focused on managing quality with the goal of defect prevention. QC verifies the quality of a product with the goal of defect detection. The two are intricately interwoven. If we only apply QA, we might have a solid process but the final product is never actually checked for quality. If we only apply QC, we are simply testing each product without a plan for error elimination or improvement.

In order to develop a reliable QA/QC process, we must be experts in environmental regulations and understand our clients' needs, goals, and objectives. Every document we provide is reviewed for technical accuracy, grammar, typos, adherence to regulatory standards, readability, understandability, and usability.

Karlene Thomas, PE
Principal - QA/QC



Everything we do at Pinyon starts with our Mission Statement: *Embrace excellence and demonstrate this commitment by surpassing expectations and continuously improving quality.* We take the "continuously improving quality" part very seriously. Pinyon's number one priority is serving our clients' needs while pushing ourselves to improve the quality of our work. We're proud to say that some of our first clients are still coming back to us 23 years later, and feel this is a testament to our commitment to quality. We're excited to see all the positive changes our new QA/QC group will bring to the Pinyon organization for many years to come.

Deliverable Plan



Pinyon Environmental's QA/QC Team

Management:

Karlene Thomas, Principal - QA/QC
Elly Weber, Deputy - QA/QC

Team Members:

Jillian Cipriani and Michelle Marin - Quality Management Plan
Mark Daniels - Quality Standards and Metrics
Julie Linn and Holly Bender - Training Program Development
Karen Hadley and Russ Cirillo - Quality Assurance
Stanley Adamitis, Miguel Vargas, and Jessica Gunn - Quality Related Document Control

Did You Know?

Pinyon Adds a New Tool to Their ESA Compliance Toolbox

Pinyon now holds a permit to conduct Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse (PMJM) surveys.

Karin McShea, Technical Group Manager - Biological Resources



One of the services that Pinyon provides our clients is compliance with, and permitting for, species protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The purpose of the ESA, which was enacted in 1973, is to “protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend.” In Colorado, the ESA is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Species that are protected under the ESA can be listed either as endangered or threatened: “endangered” means a species is in danger of extinction, and “threatened” means a species is likely to become endangered. The USFWS also maintains a list of “candidate” species that may be listed as endangered or threatened in the future. As many know, it is unlawful for a person to “take” an animal protected under the ESA without a permit. Take is defined as “to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect or attempt to engage in any such conduct.”

There are over 50 species protected by the ESA that may occur or be impacted by activities in Colorado. One of these protected species with which our clients may be familiar is the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) (PMJM). This small mammal occurs along the foothills of the Front Range from southeastern Wyoming through the Colorado Springs area in Colorado. Typically, PMJM live along streams with live water in well-developed riparian areas with adjacent, relatively undisturbed grassland communities.

For many years, Pinyon biologists have conducted habitat assessments for the PMJM. During these assessments, Pinyon biologists evaluate the habitat quality to determine the potential for the presence of PMJM. However, habitat evaluations only show the *potential* for the presence of PMJM. In order to determine the actual presence or absence of this species, a species-specific survey must be conducted. Species-specific surveys for the PMJM are conducted using a

series of live traps that allow small mammals to be trapped and then set free. Due to the potential for harming small mammals, including the PMJM, during the trapping surveys, only qualified biologists can conduct these surveys using pre-defined survey guidelines.

Pinyon now holds a USFWS Fish and Wildlife Permit (TE81016B-0) and a Colorado Parks and Wildlife Scientific Collection License (16TR2156) that allow Pinyon biologists to conduct PMJM-specific surveys to determine presence or absence of the species. Pinyon biologist Karin McShea has conducted PMJM trapping surveys at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site and has conducted research on the PMJM. Her experience and knowledge allowed Pinyon to apply for and receive the federal permit and state license. Pinyon biologist Korby Mintken has also participated in PMJM trapping surveys.

There are many areas within the PMJM habitat range where existence of the species has been confirmed through trapping surveys. Additional areas along the Front Range, called block clearance zones, have been mapped where the habitat quality is low and trapping surveys have not resulted in positive findings. Although there is a lot of information on the PMJM, there are still areas along the Front Range where information about the presence or absence of the species is lacking. In addition, the 2013 flood event may have carried PMJM individuals downstream into the block clearance zones where the individuals may be utilizing habitats with sub-optimal quality.

Pinyon will continue to provide habitat assessments for PMJM and other species protected under the ESA, but can now also conduct species-specific surveys for the PMJM. We believe that by continuing to improve our skill-set and adding to our capabilities as biologists, we can better meet our clients' changing needs.

Pinyon in Action

Pinyon is pleased to announce that we are now a member of the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) and are currently providing environmental support for several wind energy projects in various stages of development. Key tasks we are supporting include environmental permitting and assistance with wildlife-related environmental compliance.

Pinyon Welcomes!



Allison Haraminac
Environmental Scientist

Allison has eight years of experience providing environmental planning and permitting services to clients in a variety of industry sectors including renewable energy, mining, oil and gas, and federal projects across the U.S. She has extensive experience planning and permitting wind and solar energy projects, both with and without a federal nexus. She specializes in biological resources, primarily migratory birds, bats, and threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. She has been a biological resources specialist for many National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) projects and prepared supporting NEPA documentation such as Biological Assessments and Biological Evaluations.



Karen Hadley, AICP
Technical Group Manager
NEPA & Planning

Karen is an American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) certified planner with over 14 years of experience focused on environmental planning, natural resource compliance, NEPA studies and documentation, long range planning, corridor planning, and public involvement/agency coordination. Karen specializes in preparing and managing NEPA documents and evaluating environmental impacts and regulatory issues for private and public projects.



Stanley Adamitis
Technical Group Manager
Drafting/Graphics

Stanley has over 11 years of experience in Computer Drafting and Design, and is skilled in Autodesk (AutoCAD)-related software, MicroStation and ESRI ArcMap applications. He has experience with commercial, transportation and transit, electrical, water and sewer utility projects preparing survey plans, mapping CSX Railroad systems, and developing AutoCAD drawing standards for the production of as-built drawings.



Corinne Wardell
Environmental Engineer

Corinne has 13 years of experience as an environmental engineer and project manager. She is an engineering intern (EI) in Colorado with an undergraduate degree in environmental engineering from Colorado State University. Her engineering practice has focused on project management, engineering design of remediation systems, and petroleum and chlorinated solvent site remediation.



Chase Taylor
Ecologist

Chase has six years of experience providing environmental planning, biological and ecological surveys, Endangered Species Act (ESA) studies and permitting, natural resource compliance, and project management services to clients across the oil and gas, transportation, electric transmission, and federal land management arenas. Chase specializes in ecological and biological resources, with an emphasis on threatened and endangered species, invasive species, migratory birds, large mammals, and habitat restoration. He has served as a biological specialist and ecological task manager for a variety of projects involving designated critical habitats across the US.



Jenn Dobb
Economist

Jennifer comes to Pinyon with a MSc in Agricultural & Resource Economics from Colorado State University and four years of experience assessing environmental issues for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Her past work has blended regional and environmental economics to examine human-wildlife conflicts, socioeconomic impacts of federal land management decisions, and ensure non-market values and quality of life indicators are considered in planning and management decision-making.



Michelle Marin
Technical Group Manager
Regulatory Compliance

Michelle, who originally started with Pinyon in 1998, has returned on a full time basis. Michelle has over 20 years of environmental project management experience. Her experience includes regulatory compliance and reporting at the federal, state, and local levels, environmental audits, Phase I Site Assessments throughout the US, Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure plans, and soil and groundwater investigations.



Miguel Vargas
CAD Specialist

Miguel Vargas is a professional CAD Designer/Draftsman with over four years of experience in the design of buildings and structures. He has an in-depth knowledge of AutoCAD, is an innovative problem solver, and is able to see aesthetic, budgetary, and technical sides of any problem. Miguel develops specific goals and plans to prioritize, organize, and accomplish project deadlines within strict time and budget constraints. Miguel will prepare CAD drawings illustrating many technical areas, such as bulk sample locations, asbestos material locations, abatement scope of work drawings and air sample location drawings.



Bianca Arnold
Administrative Assistant

The youngest member of Pinyon's staff, Bianca comes to us as a graduate of Green Mountain High School. Bianca plans to return to school to pursue a career as an Ultrasound Technician. She has prior experience as a Customer Service Associate, Receptionist and Financial Assistant.

News From Around the Office

Awards & Honors:

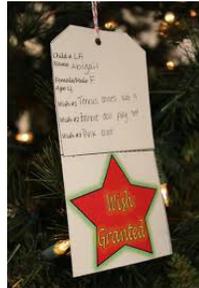
It's been an exciting time for **President, Lauren Evans**. This fall she was inducted to the **Order of the Engineer (OOE)**, a national organization dedicated to upholding the standards and dignity of the engineering profession.

Lauren was selected by the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of Colorado to receive the prestigious **Orley O. Phillips Award for 2016**. The individual nominated is someone who has made a significant contribution to the profession, the Council and its programs.

Last but not least, Lauren was named to the Board of **Arizona Forward**. The organization helps ensure healthy communities through smart growth and development, efficient transportation, improved air quality, responsible water management, energy alternatives and meaningful education throughout Arizona.

Pinyon Gives Back:

For the fourth year in a row, Pinyon participated in the **Metro West Housing Solutions (MWHS) Holiday Giving Tree**. For the Holiday season, Metro West Housing Solutions decorates a Giving Tree with the wishes of the boys and girls



in their housing communities. Participating individuals and groups work with MWHS to grant their wishes. This year Pinyon adopted three families and was part of a

network that helped 175 children have a brighter Christmas Day. You can find out more about MWHS services and their Giving Tree Program by going to their website at www.mwhsolutions.org.



Conferences:

In January, Lauren attended an **Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) DBE Supportive Services program Joint Task Force** where she participated on a P3/Mega Project Panel. Lauren also attended the **ACEC Southwest Regional Conference** in Sedona, Arizona at the end of January.

In January, Scott Epstein attended the **Arizona Rural Transportation Summit** in Yuma Arizona. Amy Kennedy and Scott Epstein also attended the **ACEC's 2016 Training for Colorado Transportation and Environmental Professionals** in Denver on March 1st and 2nd.

Lauren Evans, Amy Kennedy and Scott Epstein plan to attend the **ACEC Arizona Conference on Roads and Streets** March 23rd, 24th and 25th in Tucson Arizona. The Arizona Conference on Roads and Streets is the largest event for Arizona engineers and contractors from the public and private sectors.