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Boreal Toad Research in Rocky Mountain National Park

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Worldwide, amphibians are among the most threatened class of vertebrates due to significant threats including climate change and disease. In RMNP, research centered on boreal toads hopes to document the evolving relationship between the amphibious species and their environment. Currently, research funded through RMNP's non-profit partner, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, is studying the effects of Chytridiomycosis on boreal toads in the park. Chytridiomycosis is a disease caused by *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd), a type of chytrid fungus. This fungus negatively affects amphibious populations by interfering with their ability to breathe and absorb water through their skin. This has contributed to a worldwide decline of amphibious species. Current research is also focusing on developing possible solutions or methods for combating Chytrid and preserving the park's boreal toad population. Part of this research is lab based, attempting to isolate naturally occurring bacteria from the toads' environment that could be used in a probiotic treatment against Bd, helping toads resist infection and increase their chance for survival.



Collecting soil samples at Lost Lake which are utilized to isolate potentially beneficial, naturally occurring bacteria from the boreal toad's environment.

Photo by Matt Bitters

Amphibian decline is a significant concern for conservation biologists, who warn that the decline could indicate future and more widespread biodiversity loss. Since amphibians all over the world are facing similar problems, boreal toad research in RMNP helps contribute to a broader library of research and knowledge.

See Rocky Mountain National Park's website for more information on [Amphibians and Reptiles](#).

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