

## Interested in Becoming a Citizen Scientist?

Seventh Generation Institute  
Effective Conservation and Sustainable Use  
through Applied Science and Collaboration

Seventh  
Generation  
Institute



Citizen scientists will gather valuable data on pika populations in New Mexico and the impacts of climate change on this species. Data gathered will be used by scientists and wildlife managers to better understand trends in pika populations and will influence future decisions regarding pika management and protection, including possible Endangered Species status.

All training for citizen scientists will be provided by Seventh Generation Institute. No previous research experience is required, but volunteers must:

- Be in good physical condition and able to hike on varied terrain.
- Be willing to learn field techniques and carefully follow detailed protocols in the field
- Have transportation to/from the field site.

You can meet great people, learn a lot and have fun, but this is also a serious commitment.

If you are up for the challenge, please be in touch!

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Seventh Generation Institute is a nonprofit conservation organization based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. 7GI is dedicated to sustainable resource use, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and ensuring an optimistic future for the human communities that depend on the natural world.

*“In every deliberation we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations.”*

— Great Law of the Iroquois —

7GI thanks the following organizations and individuals for their generous support.

- New Mexico Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
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- The Biophilia Foundation
- The Norcross Wildlife Foundation
- The ESRI Conservation Program
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- OnFocus Photography
- Individual supporters, members and volunteers of Seventh Generation Institute
- The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

To add your support, please visit our website at [www.seventh-generation.org](http://www.seventh-generation.org). You can become a member of Seventh Generation Institute, make a donation, volunteer, or purchase coffee, tee shirts or other products that support the program.



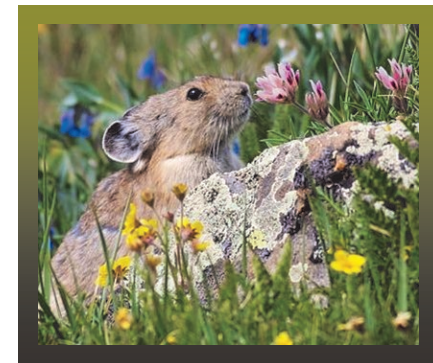
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Assessing the Impacts of  
Climate Change on Pika:

A Citizen Science Investigation





# Assessing the Impacts of Climate Change on Pika: a Citizen Science Investigation.



Climate change studies project severe impacts to the high elevation ecosystems of the Western United States. A species that may already be serving as the “canary in the coal mine” of these impacts is the American Pika.

*Assessing the Impacts of Climate Change on Pika: A Citizen Science Investigation* will train and use volunteer “citizen scientists” to collect field data on the pika and its habitat. This long-term project will develop a better understanding of climate change in New Mexico’s mountains and help ensure the long-term survival of the pika.

## What Will be Accomplished?

*Assessing the Impacts of Climate Change on Pika: a Citizen Science Investigation* has two goals:

1. Advance the long-term survival of the American pika in the wild, with a focus on New Mexico.
2. Increase the knowledge of and appreciation for science, natural ecosystems and natural resource management for the New Mexicans who participate.

## Why is the Project Needed?

The American pika lives among the most stunning scenery in North America - typically on mountains above 8000 feet elevation - from California to New Mexico and north into Canada.

Like polar bears, pikas have recently gained attention as early indicators of the effects of climate change on wildlife. In the case of pikas, it is not sea ice that they require but talus fields, alpine vegetation and mountain peaks that are cool in summer and have a blanket of insulating snow in winter - all of which are being altered by climate change. Recent research shows that approximately one third of the pika populations in the Great Basin region of the Intermountain West have disappeared.

The pika was proposed for listing as an endangered species, but in 2010 the US Fish and Wildlife Service determined that this status is not warranted at this time. Why? Because the scientific information about pikas is not yet clear. Pikas seem to be disappearing from some mountainous areas but not from others. And in a few places, pikas are found at low elevations

and do well in the warmer temperatures.

Working with a network of other citizen scientist-based pika monitoring projects around the West, this project will help to clarify the controversy about pikas. It will collect information that will be used by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and other wildlife managers to evaluate the range-wide status of pika and make informed management decisions so pikas continue to thrive.



Pika “hay pile” - vegetation collected for winter food cache. Photo: Jim Stuart

## What is Citizen Science?

There are many definitions of citizen science. Our favorite is “projects in which volunteers partner with scientists to answer real-world questions.”

Citizen science programs have a long and illustrious history in the US. These programs train volunteers to collect scientific information, thus making a significant contribution to conservation and one that would not be possible without volunteers. More information on becoming involved is located on the back of the brochure or visit [www.seventh-generation.org](http://www.seventh-generation.org).

A volunteer collecting pika data in a citizen science project in Colorado



Pika foraging on alpine flowers

*“Unlike other species, pikas don't shut down in the winter. They have a high metabolism to keep them going. Then, in the summer, if there's a hot period, they can't keep themselves cool enough.”*

Dr. Liesl Erb  
University of Colorado, Boulder



Pika vocalizing

Volunteer citizen scientists monitoring pika on talus slope

