Annual Prairie Dog Meeting
2020

Boulder County Parks & Open Space
Tonight’s Agenda

1. Introduction/Policy Context - Jeff 10 minutes

2. 2020 Prairie Dog Management Activities
   a. Removal/Control – Rob 15 minutes
   b. Other Activities – Susan 20 minutes

3. Rock Creek Farm Management Plan Overview

4. Wrap Up/Questions

• Jeff Moline, Planning Division Manager
• Rob Alexander, Senior Agricultural Specialist
• Susan Spaulding, Senior Wildlife Biologist
What governs our prairie dog management?

Prairie Dog Management

Boulder County manages prairie dogs in a comprehensive way so prairie dogs thrive where appropriate on open space properties.

Management Plan

The goal of Boulder County is to preserve, protect, and enhance viable prairie dog populations on suitable grassland habitat.

On October 15, 2012, the county adopted the Prairie Dog Habitat Element of the Grassland and Shrubland Management Policy. The plan was updated on February 25, 2016.
What are the goals of that management?

A plan that reflects the multiple values of the county and its public.

- The stewardship of natural areas and systems.
What are the goals of that management?

A plan that reflects the multiple values of the county and its public.

- Agricultural heritage and production.
How do we manage our lands for that mix of purposes and uses?
How do we manage our lands for that mix of purposes and uses?

• Assess our properties as a system
• Categorize properties/groups into designations
  – HCA (Habitat Conservation Areas)
  – MOA (Multiple Objective Areas)
  – NPD (No Prairie Dog Areas)
What does that look like?
2020 Prairie Dog Removal Summary
Acquisitions since 2018 have added 534 Acres of NPD

- Canino 7M
- Chandler
- Madison Farms
- Rainbow Nursery
- Ramey
- Zapf
- Hicks-Stitzel (partial)
## No Prairie Dog (NPD) Acreages and Percent Coverage by Prairie Dogs Per Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total NPD Acres</th>
<th>Colonies Acres</th>
<th>Percent PDOG Coverage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>17,198</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>17,964</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>18,454</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>18,712</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>19,246</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
2020 Trapping and Removals

Totals Trapped- 1,265
• Birds of Prey Rehabilitation Center- 834
• Black Footed Ferret Recovery Facility- 431

Burrows Treated- 37,217

Removals occurred on 34 properties

Tenant Control Program
• 11 Tenants had permits in 2020
• 10 Tenants treated 6,987 burrows.
AHI Complex: AHI

2018

NELSON RD
N63RD ST
PIKE RD

2020

NELSON RD
N63RD ST
PIKE RD

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Prairie Dog Stakeholders’ Meeting-2020 Update
Stakeholders’ Meeting - 2020 Overview

- Colonized Acres of Prairie Dogs - MOA and HCA
- Barrier Fencing
- Burrowing Owls
- Black-Footed Ferret Reintroduction
Property Acquisitions Since 2018 and Designation Categories for HCA and MOA

Multiple Objective Areas- 70 acres
• McLachlan

Habitat Conservation Areas- 227 acres
• Hicks 2
• Hicks-Stitzel
• Brand 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colony Acres</th>
<th>Property Type Suitable Acres</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HCA</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>1,171</td>
<td>1,236</td>
<td>1,256</td>
<td>1,560</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOA</td>
<td>4,520</td>
<td>1,175</td>
<td>1,341</td>
<td>1,733</td>
<td>1,688</td>
<td>2,111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>8,220</td>
<td>2,009</td>
<td>2,453</td>
<td>2,970</td>
<td>2,944</td>
<td>3,671</td>
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</table>
Prairie Dog Barrier Fencing 2020

• .5 miles installed
  ◦ Broomfield North, Turkey Farm, Suitts

• Volunteers, Neighbors, Staff
Boulder County and City of Boulder Annual Burrowing Owl Nesting Totals 2008-2020

- # of NESTS
- # FLEDGED
Burrowing Owls - Management 2020

- Volunteer Monitoring
- Owl Protection Plans

Boulder County Parks & Open Space Burrowing Owl Protection Plan for Aubrey

About Burrowing Owls
Cowboys sometimes called these owls "howdy birds," because they seemed to nod in greeting from the entrances to their burrows in prairie-dog towns. These owls are small ground dwellers that typically nest in inactive prairie dog burrows. They show greater preference for inactive burrows within active prairie dog towns as compared to completely abandoned towns. Fledgling success is higher, and predation is lower, on active versus inactive towns. However, Burrowing Owl populations have been declining for many years, owing to prairie dog and ground squirrel control programs, and habitat loss. They are now designated a threatened species by the State of Colorado.

Burrowing owl habitat in Boulder County is protected in a similar manner to other land management agencies in Boulder County, with the intent to provide comprehensive protections across contiguous lands.

Why a Protection Plan?
The purpose of this Protection Plan is to clearly outline actions to be avoided which may result in the failure of a burrowing owl nest site. The protection of the site means preventing disturbances to the owls, their nesting activities and rearing their young. It also means maintaining a population of prairie dogs to provide burrows for the owls to nest in, and at the same time, minimizing the negative impacts of prairie dogs on farm and grazing resources. This project is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency's Partners in Environmental Problem Solutions (PES) Program.

26 Volunteers
312 Hours
Black-Footed Ferret Reintroduction Progress
Plague Abatement Strategies

- **Delta Dust** used on all BCPOS colonies within the South County Grasslands and Rabbit Mountain 2016-2020*
2020 Sylvatic Plague Vaccine (SPV)

- South Grasslands
  - ~100 Acres

- Rabbit Mountain
  - 1,180 Acres
SPV and Dusting Annual Costs – Labor + Materials

2016- $3,600
South Grasslands only
SPV donated by CPW

2017- $19,100
South Grasslands and Rabbit
SPV and Dust

2018- $22,375
South Grasslands and Rabbit
SPV and Dust

2019- $15,100
South Grasslands and Rabbit
SPV only

2020- $17,500
South Grassland and Rabbit
SPV and Dust

Current Annual Material Costs Only
SPV ~ $12,000
Dust ~ $2,500

*Total costs will increase as colonies grow

TOTAL = $77,675 to date
South Central Grasslands HCA

6,700 acres

City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks

Boulder County Parks and Open Space

Rocky Flats
Colonies increased 100 acres to 1,180 in 2020
Questions?
Relocations

2012 - 45 Prairie Dogs Relocated (by staff and volunteers) $29,000
2015 - 131 Prairie Dogs Relocated (contracted) $13,000
2016 - 216 Prairie Dogs Relocated (contracted) $36,000
     Nest Boxes Installed (by staff)
2017 - 86 Prairie Dogs relocated to Nest Boxes (by staff) $13,500

478 Prairie Dogs Relocated
$91,500
RABBIT MOUNTAIN
Total Acreage - 5,050
RABBIT MOUNTAIN
Total Colonies- 1,180
Fall 2019-Die-Off Event

Colorado Parks and Wildlife collected fleas - returned negative for plague*

2020 Status

~100 acres of active colonies but burrow density is sparse.
Fall 2019-Die-Off Event

58 acres of active colonies remain
S. County Grasslands-331 Colonized Acres mid-2019
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>% Occupied</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>% Occupied</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Colonized Acres</td>
<td></td>
<td>Colonized Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCA</td>
<td>3,326</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>1,171</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOA</td>
<td>4,419</td>
<td>1,175</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>1,341</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPD</td>
<td>17,198</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CRS 33-2-105.6 - Repealed due to 5 year sunset clause

Allowed for only 3 non-federal entities to receive ferrets in Colorado.

Unclear of next steps, but is in County’s interest to keep apprised.
2018 colony size = 2.8 acres
Update on 2012 Rabbit Mtn. Relocation

2017, 2018 colony size expansion to 12 acres
Burrowing Owls

Management 2019

Cradleboard Trail

Lac Amora Link

Wildlife Closure

Boulder County Parks & Open Space
Burrowing Owl Protection Plan for
AH Complex

About Burrowing Owls

Burrowing owls are small owls with "hollow holes" present near the ground, which they use for nesting. They are most common in open areas of eastern North America. They can be found in a variety of environments, including prairies, meadows, and agricultural areas. Burrowing owls are known for their distinctive calls, which consist of two parts: a soft "whoosh" followed by a louder "hoot." They are solitary breeders and typically lay eggs in late spring or early summer. The young are born with light brown feathers and are able to fly within a few weeks of hatching.

Why a Protection Plan?

The Boulder County Parks & Open Space Management Plan (AHI) includes habitat management plans that are developed to support the burrowing owl population. The protection plan includes habitat management strategies to help maintain the population and ensure the long-term survival of burrowing owls in the area. The plan includes actions such as habitat restoration, monitoring, and outreach.

This plan describes the vegetation and wildlife habitat that was previously occupied by burrowing owls. The plan was developed to support the owls by providing a more suitable environment for them.

Map Legend:
- Trail Detour
- Local Connector
- Trail Closed
- Roadway
- Trail Open