

**Annual Prairie Dog Meeting
2022 Overview
Tuesday, January 17, 5:30 p.m.
Boulder County Parks &
Open Space**



Tonight's Agenda

Introduction/Policy Context

2022 Prairie Dog Management Activities

- Agricultural Focused Management
- Conservation Focused Actions
- Special Projects
- Designations since 2018- new properties, and changes to existing
- Questions on 2022 Management

Wrap Up/Questions/Comments

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.

What governs our prairie dog management?

Prairie Dog Management Plan

- Originally approved in 1999
- Modified and amended over time to address new properties and considerations
- Needs to address full range of issues across the full spectrum of properties

What are the goals of that management?



- Reflects the multiple values of the county and its residents
 - The maintenance of croplands for agriculture
 - The stewardship of natural areas and systems

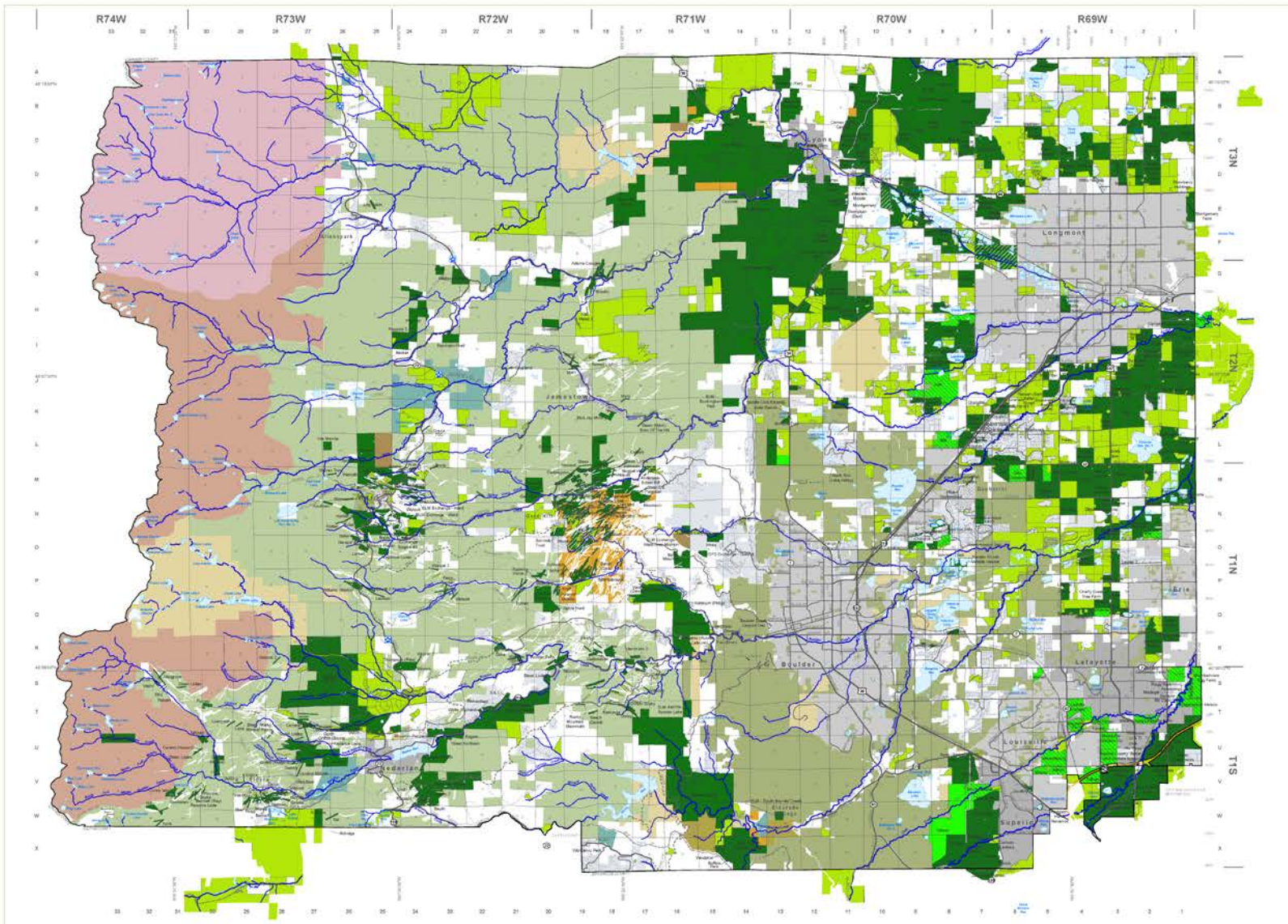
BCPOS Mission Statement

- To conserve natural, cultural, and agricultural resources and provide public uses that reflect sound resource management and community values.

Goals

1. To preserve rural lands and buffers
2. To preserve and restore natural resources for the benefit of the environment and the public.
3. To promote and provide for sustainable agriculture in Boulder County for the natural, cultural, and economic values it provides.

Open Space in Boulder County



October 2022

Legend

- County Open Space
- County Conservation Easement
or Other Restrictions on Property Use
Deed Restrictions & Restrictive Covenants
Private Property, No Public Access
- Joint County/City Open Space
- County Option Parcels
- County Closed Areas
- County Seasonal Closure Areas*
- Municipal Parks and Open Space
- State Land Board
- State Parks
- Indian Peaks Wilderness
- USFS Land
- BLM Land
- Rocky Mountain National Park
- Other Public Lands
- Non-County Conservation Easements
- Subdivisions or Platted Area
- Incorporated Area

U.S. / State Highway
Northwest Parkway

Collector
Local Access
Jeep Trail

Scenic Byways

* For individual property access and use details contact
Boulder County Parks and Open Space at (303) 440-5200
or go to www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org/bois

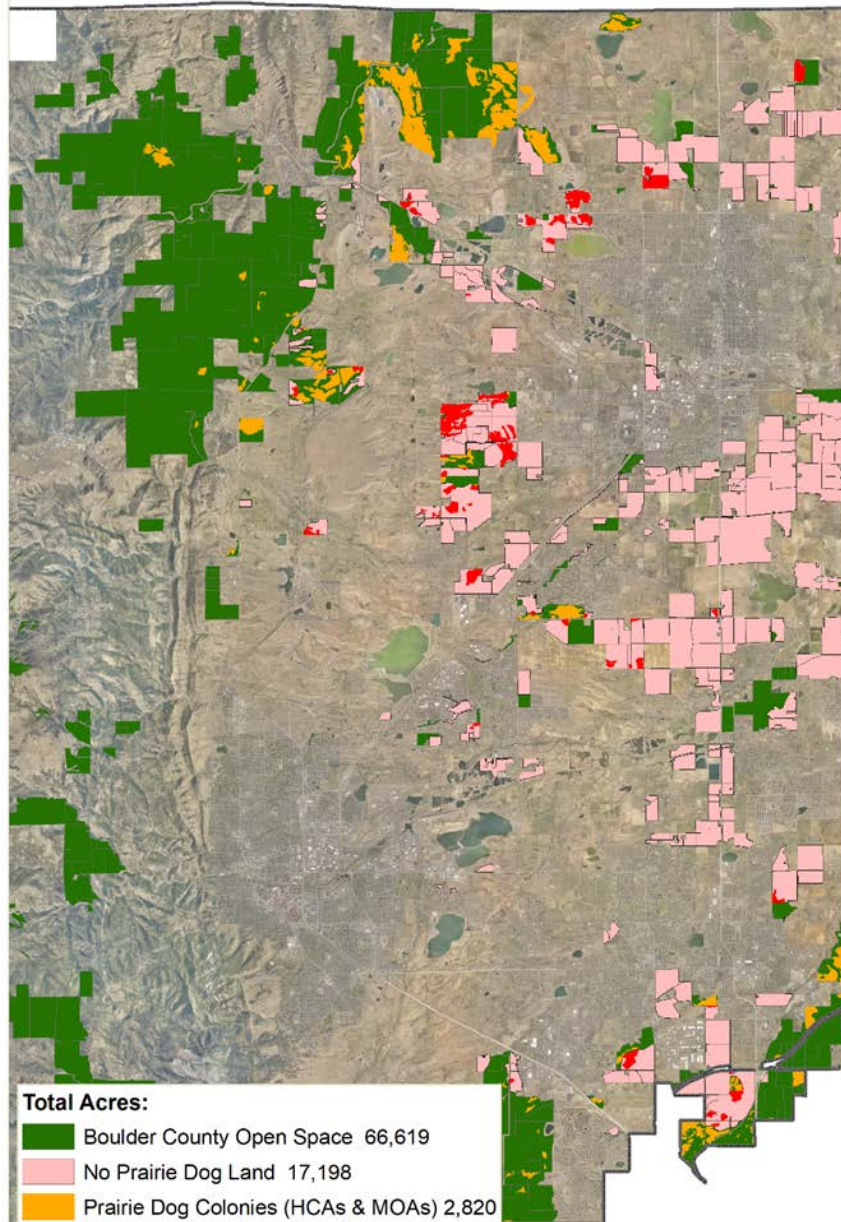


DISCLAIMER: This map is for reference purposes only and the map can be used as a guide only. It is not intended to be used as a legal document. Boulder County Parks and Open Space is not responsible for any errors or omissions on this map. The map is not intended to be used as a legal document. The map is not intended to be used as a legal document. The map is not intended to be used as a legal document.

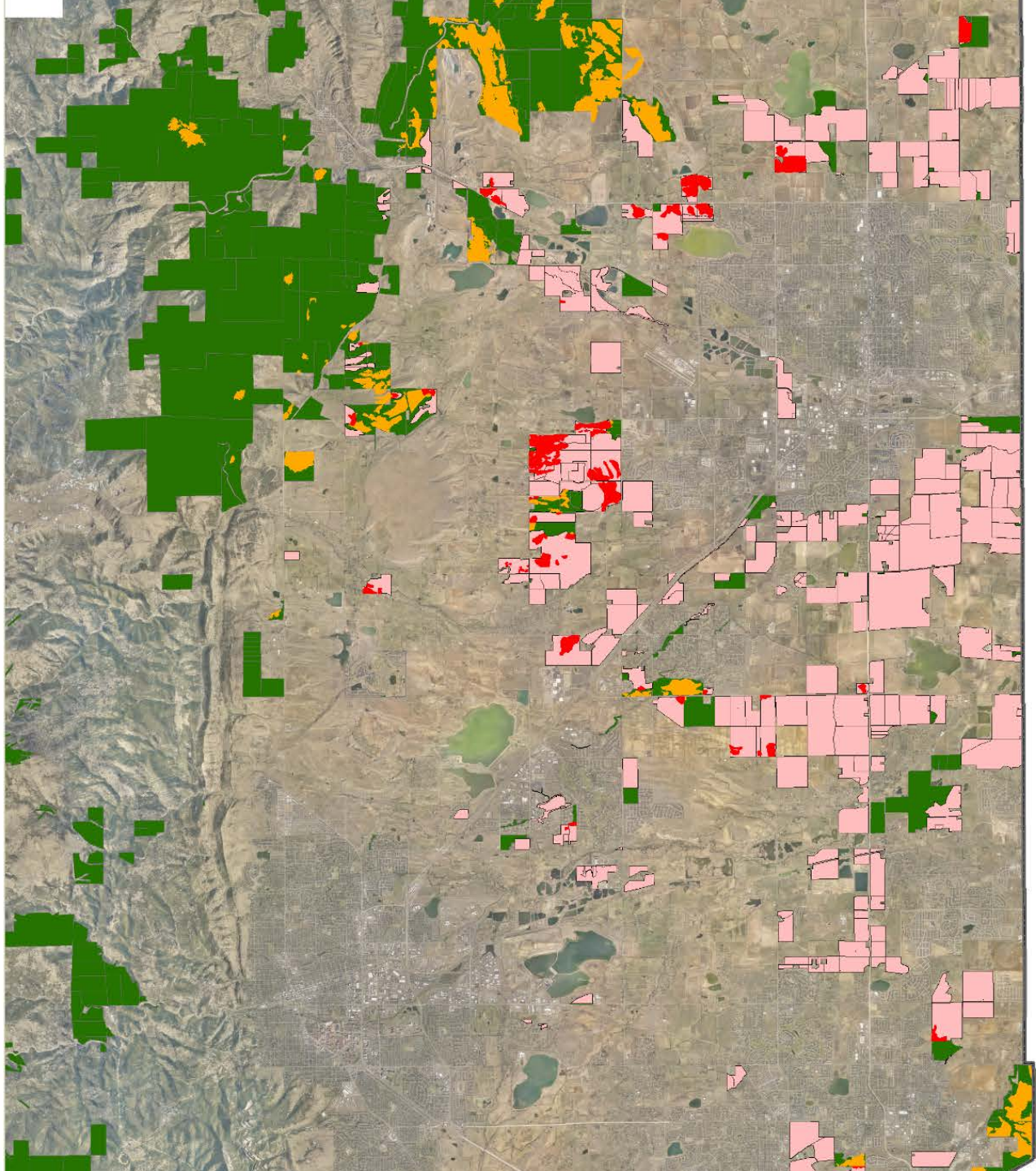
How do we manage our lands for that mix of purposes and uses?

- 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?



Prairie Dog Control on Agricultural Properties

New Acreage

Barrier Fencing

Trapping and Removal

Lethal control

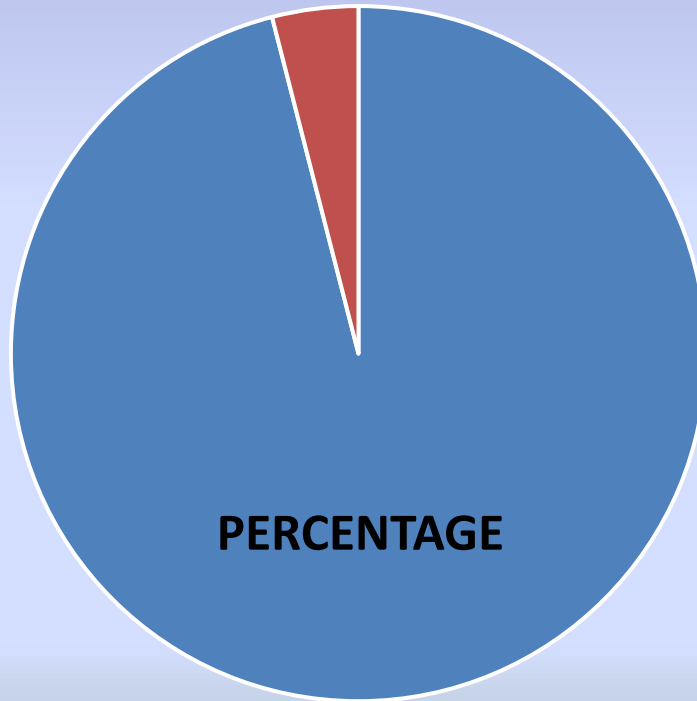
No Prairie Dog (NPD) Acreages 2022

■ **18,187 NPD Acres**

■ **5.2 % Occupied by Prairie Dogs**

New Properties

- Waneka Centennial Farms
- Canino 7M
- Clark (David Joseph)
- Chandler
- Holmes
- Madison



■ CLEAR ■ OCCUPIED

Prairie Dog Barrier Fencing 2022



Prairie Dog Barrier Fencing 2022

**6800 feet installed on 6 properties
by staff and volunteers**



Prairie Dog Barrier Fencing 2022



Trapping and Removal

- 8 properties
- 1932 animals
 - 922 to Black Footed Ferret Recovery
 - 1,010 to Raptor Rehab



Lethal Control Moratorium

Removal of the moratorium objectives :

- 1. fewer prairie dog deaths due to better overall control**
- 2. reduce on-going impacts to ag properties, tenants, and neighbors**

Lethal Control

- 32,242 burrows on 40 properties
- 340 acres treated
- 10 tenants treated on 6 properties

Prairie Dog Stakeholders' Meeting 2022 Update



Conservation Focused Management 2022 Overview

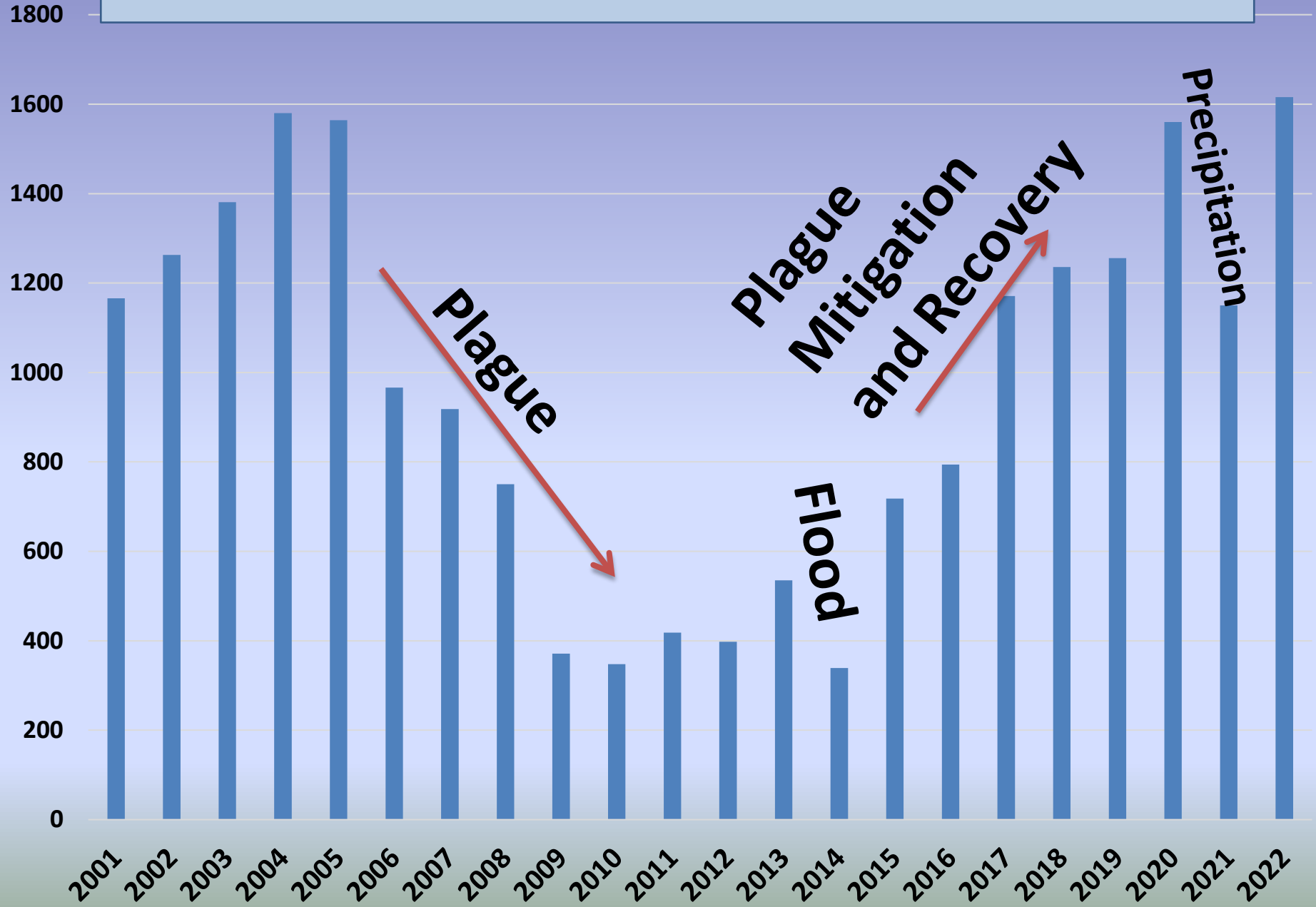
- Colonized Acres of Prairie Dogs
 - MOA and HCA
- Burrowing Owls
- Black-Footed Ferret Reintroduction
- Property Designations
 - Newly Acquired and Changes



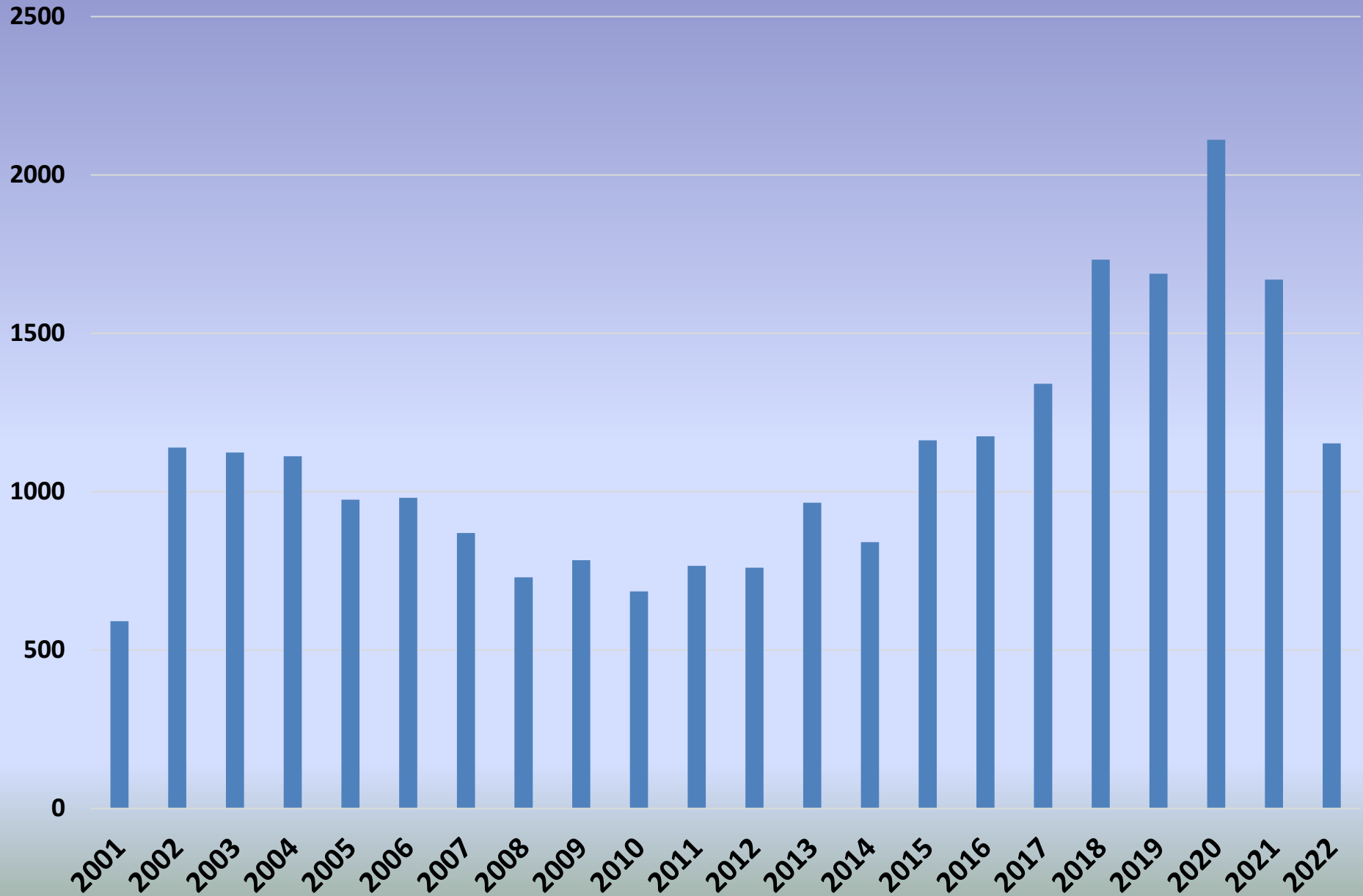
Occupied Prairie Dog Colony Size Per Property Designation Type- 2017 - 2022

Property Type Suitable Acres		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
HCA	3,700	1,171	1,236	1,256	1,560	1,150	1,616
MOA	4,520	1,341	1,733	1,688	2,111	1,670	1,153
Totals	8,220	2,453	2,970	2,944	3,671	2,820	2,769

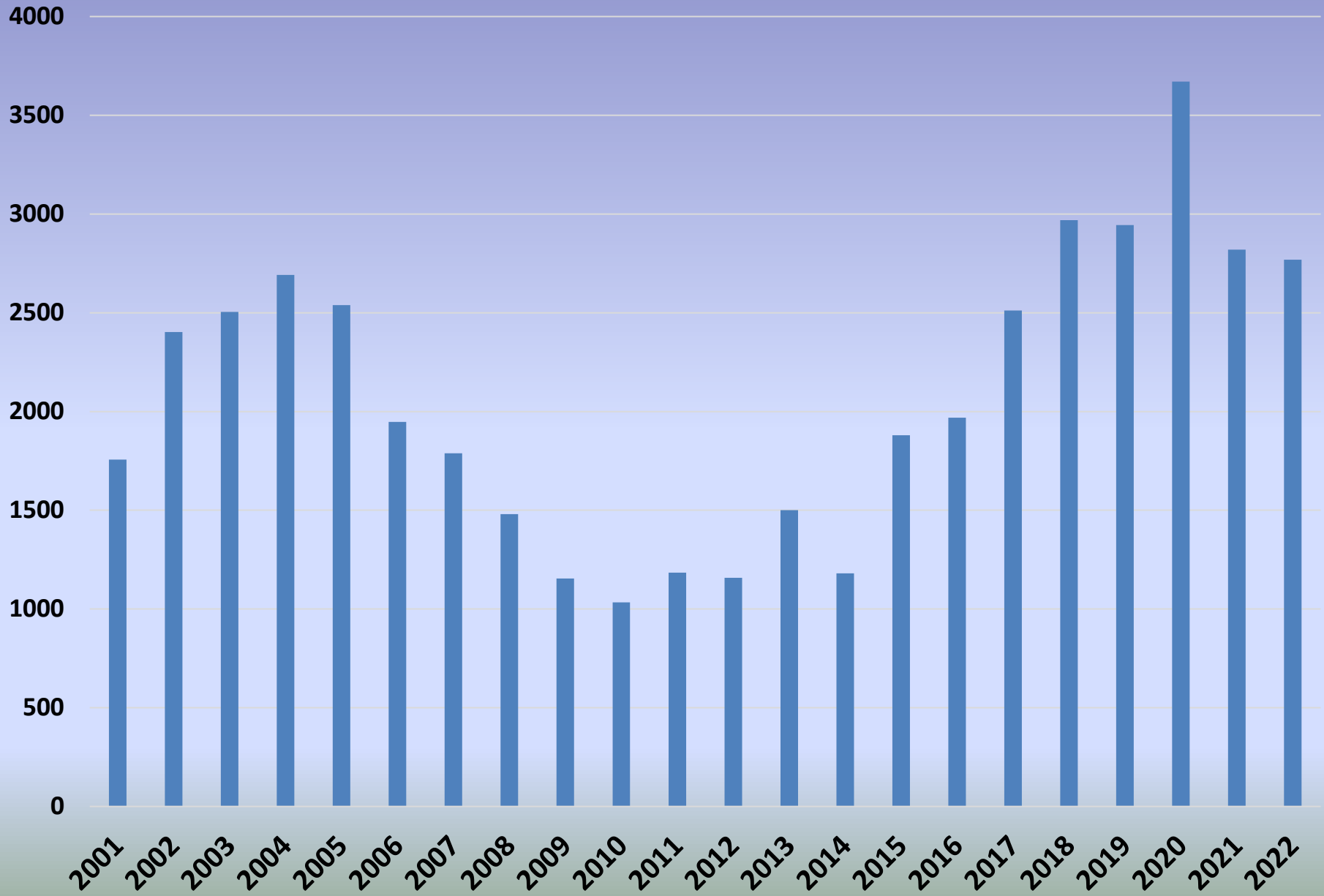
HCA Colonized Acres 2001-2021



MOA Colonized Acres 2001-2022



HCA + MOA Colonized Acres 2001-2022

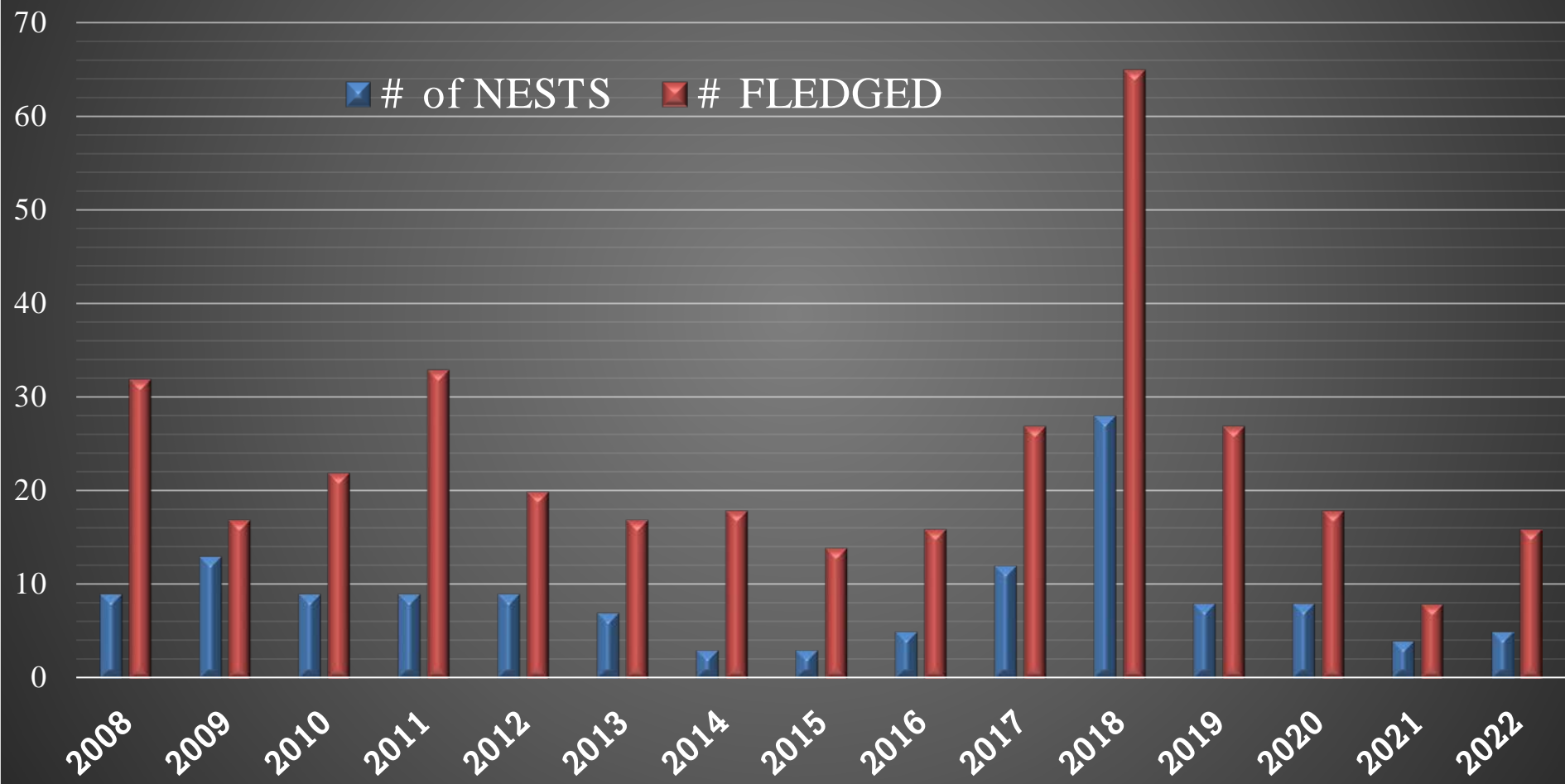


Burrowing Owls 2022

BCPOS and OSMP



BCPOS and OSMP Annual Burrowing Owl Nesting Totals 2008-2022



Burrowing Owls- Management 2022

- **Volunteer Monitoring**
- **Owl Protection Plans**

29 Volunteers
338 Hours Total
233 Hours
Surveying





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

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 operations. This nest site is located on leased agricultural land designated as No-Prairie Dog Area (NPD).

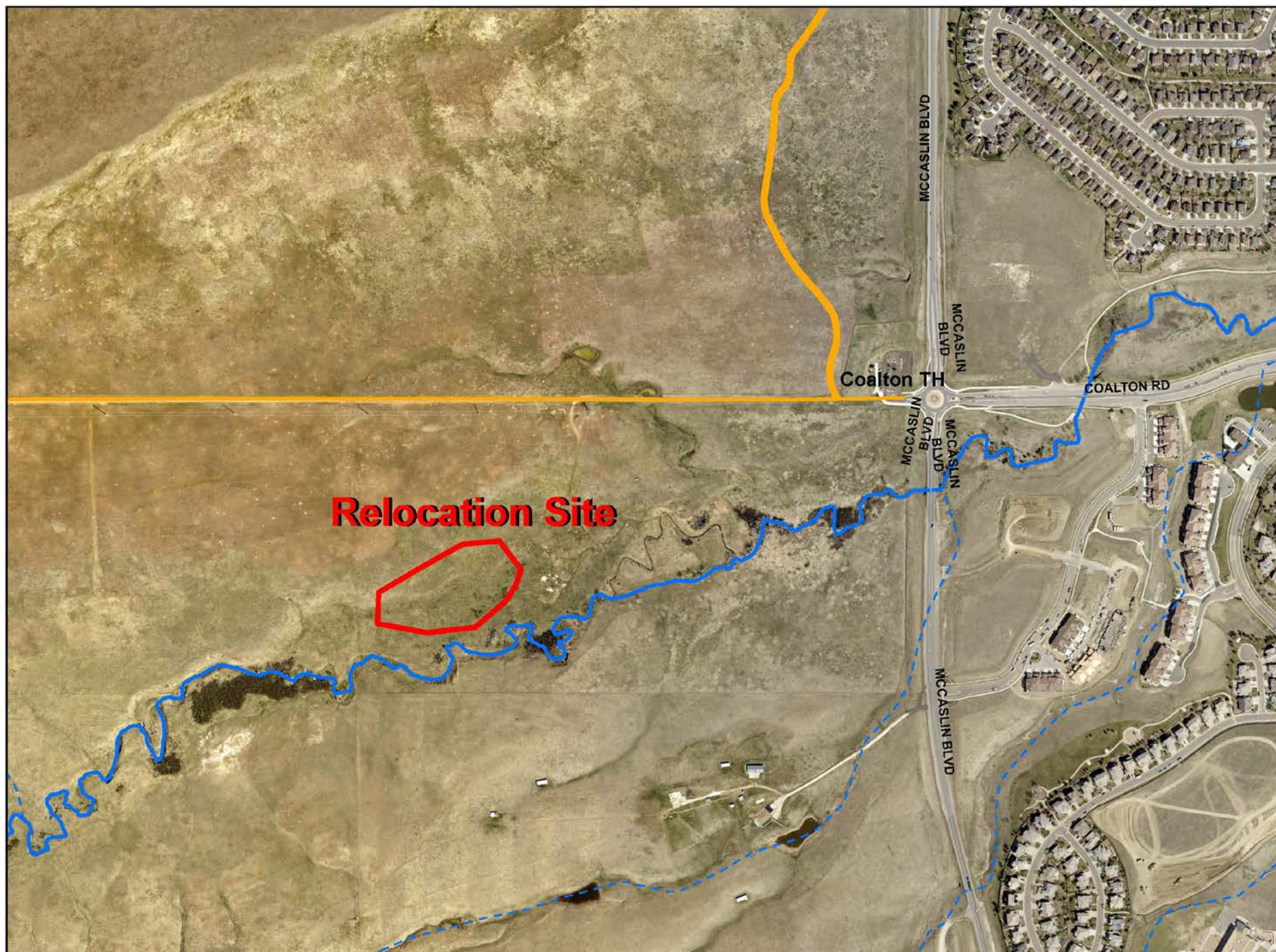


Relocation 2022



258 Relocated to South County Grasslands





Relocation Site

Coalton TH

MCCASLIN BLVD

MCCASLIN BLVD

MCCASLIN BLVD

MCCASLIN BLVD

MCCASLIN BLVD

COALTON RD



Black-Footed Ferret Reintroduction Progress



Credit: M. Lockhart/USFWS



Credit: R. Reading

Plague Abatement Strategies

- **Delta Dust** used on BCPOS colonies within the South County Grasslands and Rabbit Mountain 2016-2022*



2022 Sylvatic Plague Vaccine (SPV)



- **South County Grasslands**
 - **226 Acres**
- **Rabbit Mountain***
 - **1,152 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

2021- \$21,286

South Grassland and Rabbit
SPV, bait matrix and Dust

2022- \$26,120

South Grassland and Rabbit
SPV and bait matrix

Current Annual Material Costs Only

SPV ~ \$21,000

Dust ~ \$2,500

**Total costs will increase as colonies grow*

TOTAL = \$129,481 to date

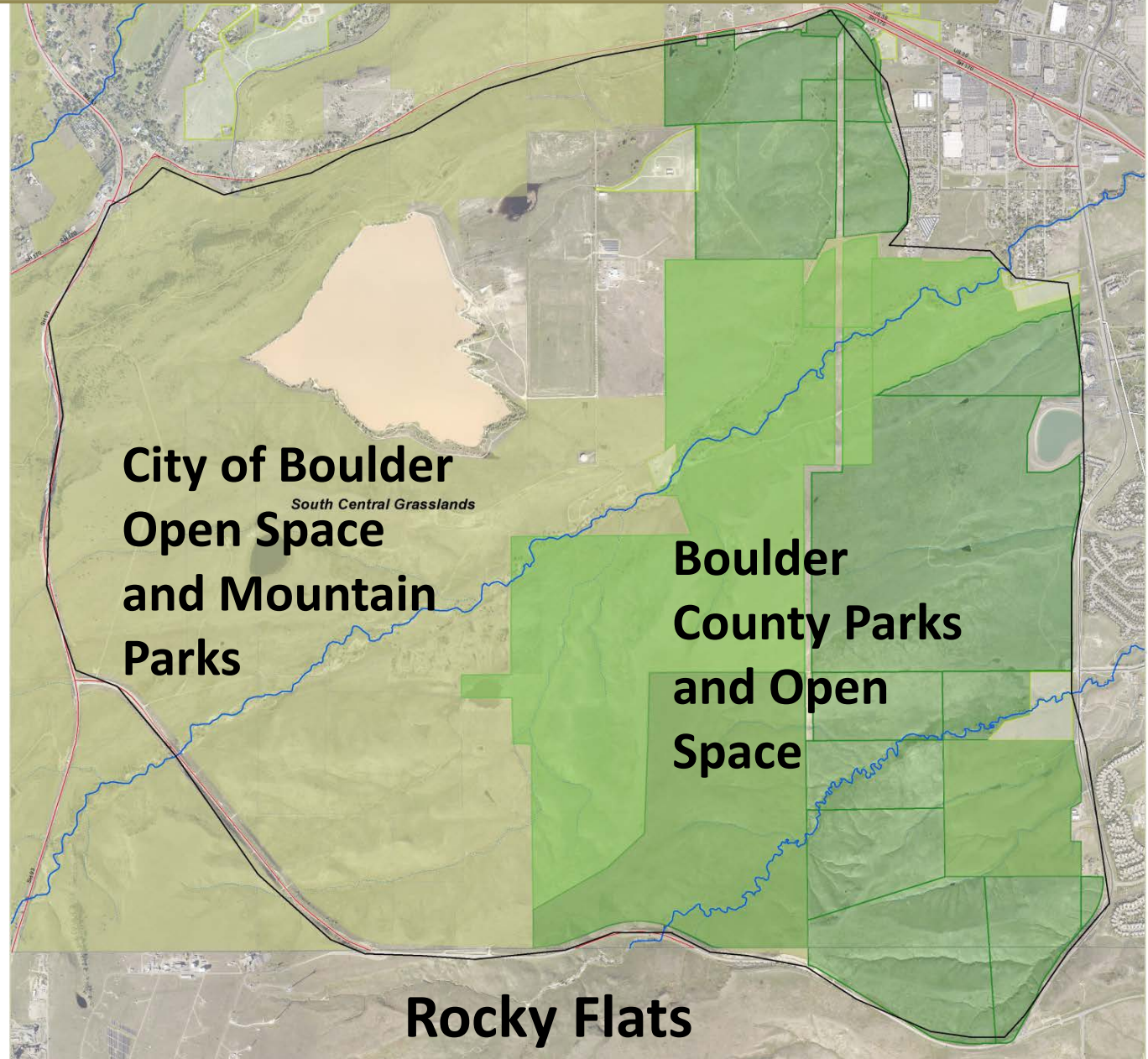


Photo: Steve Jones

South Central Grasslands HCA

**6,700
Total
Acres**

**~1,800
Suitable
Acres**

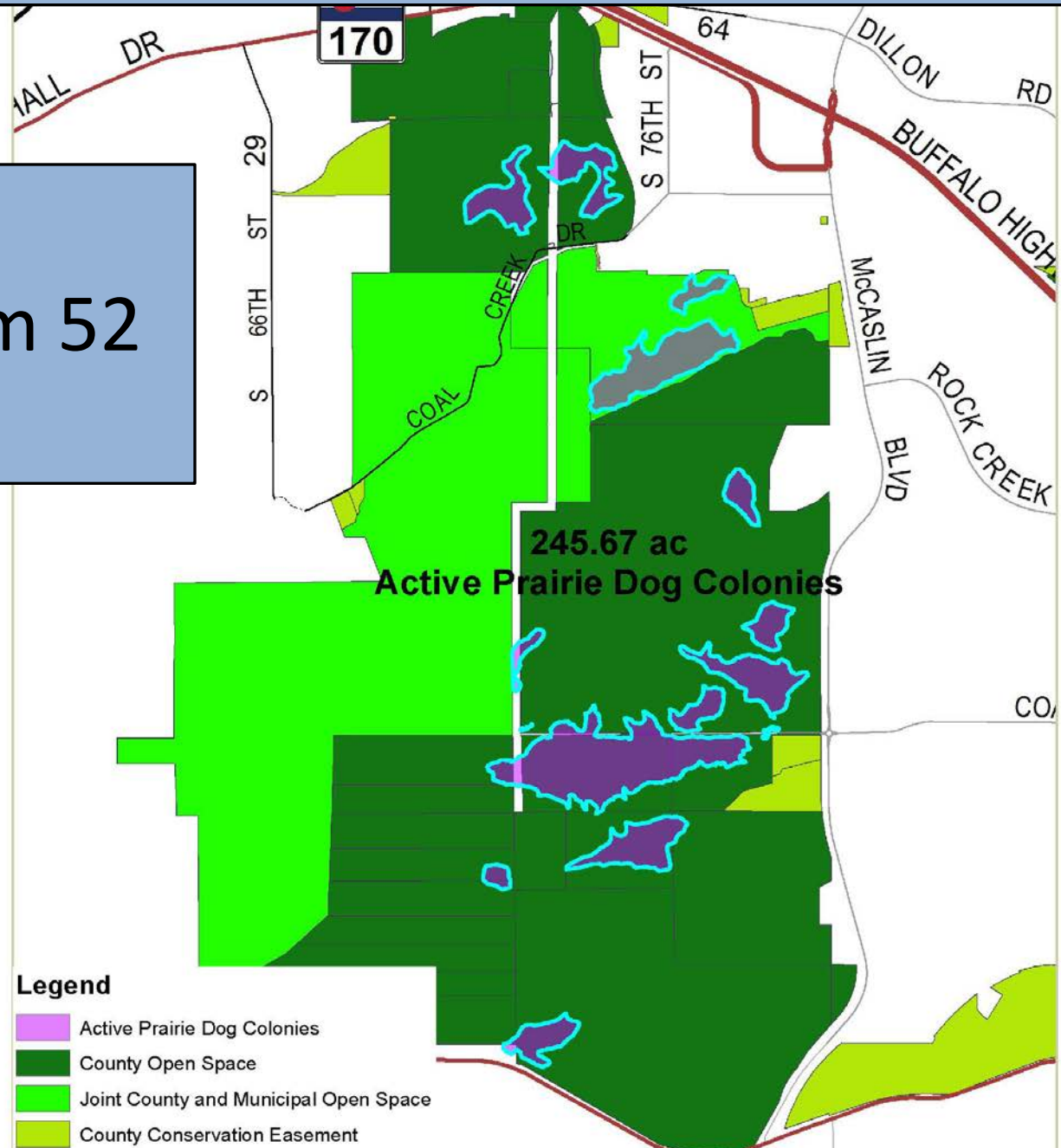


- **City of Boulder Open Space (OSMP)**
- **Boulder County Open Space**
- **Rocky Flats**
~14,000 Acres



South County Grasslands- 2022

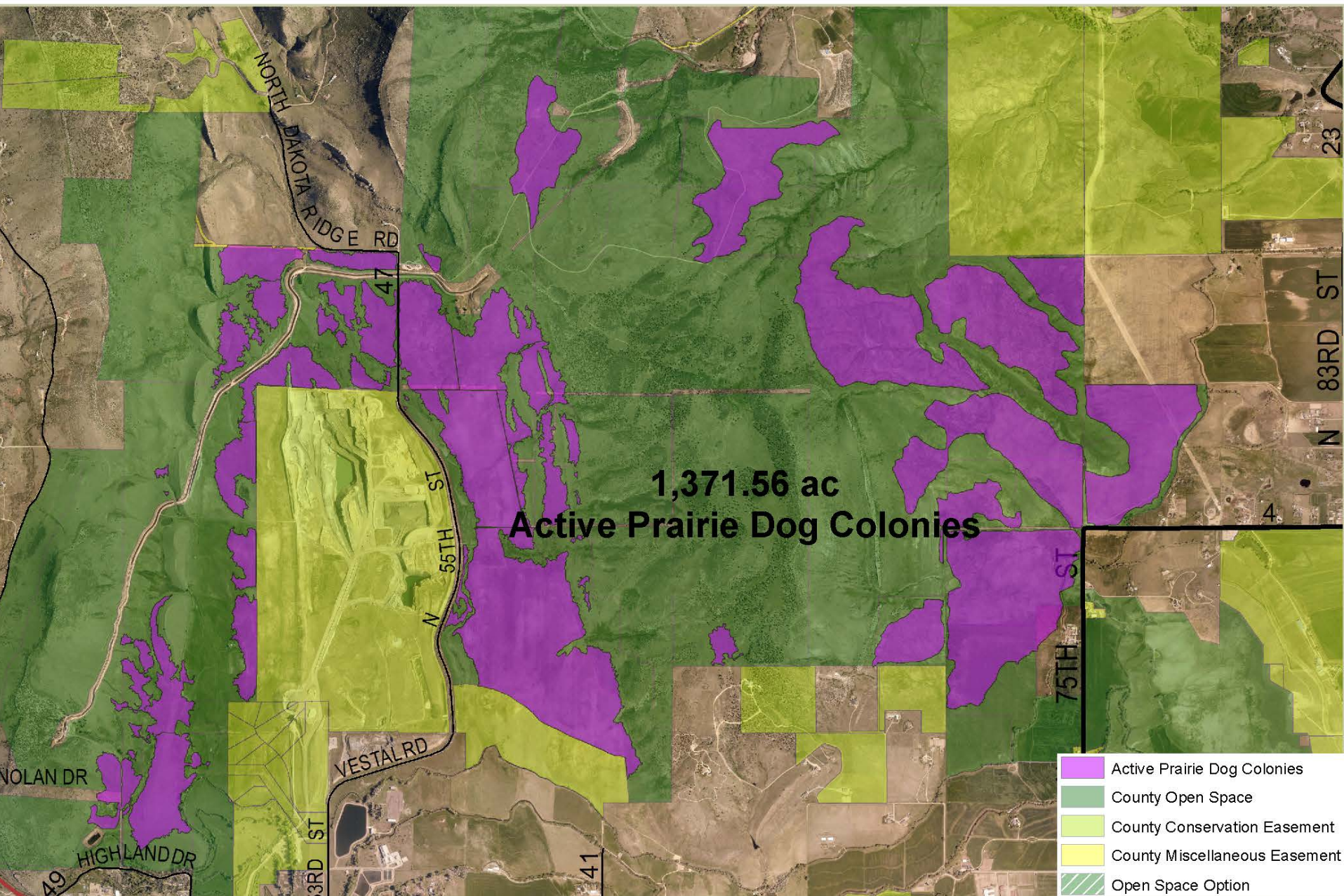
245 Acres of
Colonies up from 52
in 2021



Legend

- Active Prairie Dog Colonies
- County Open Space
- Joint County and Municipal Open Space
- County Conservation Easement

2022 Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain

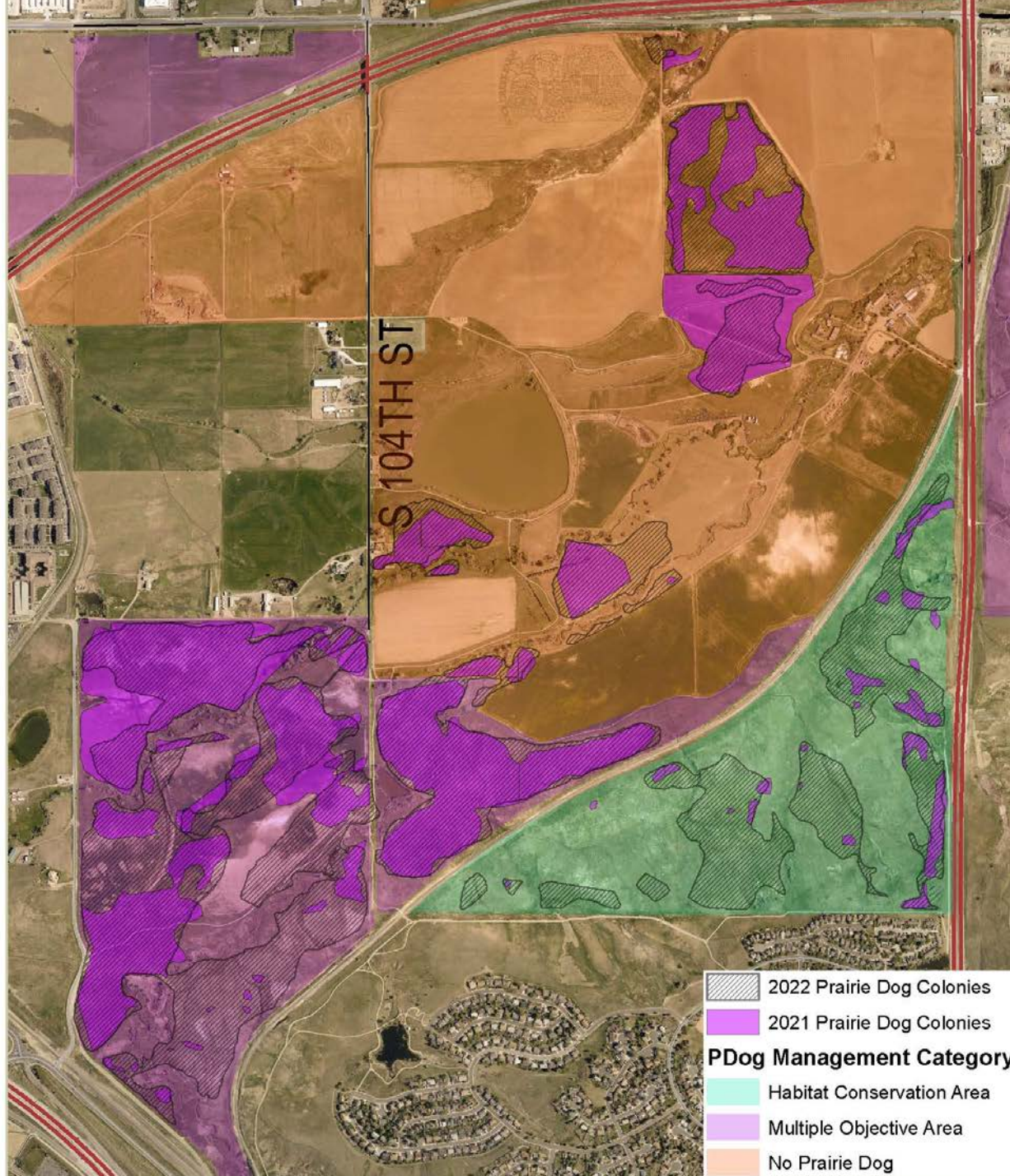


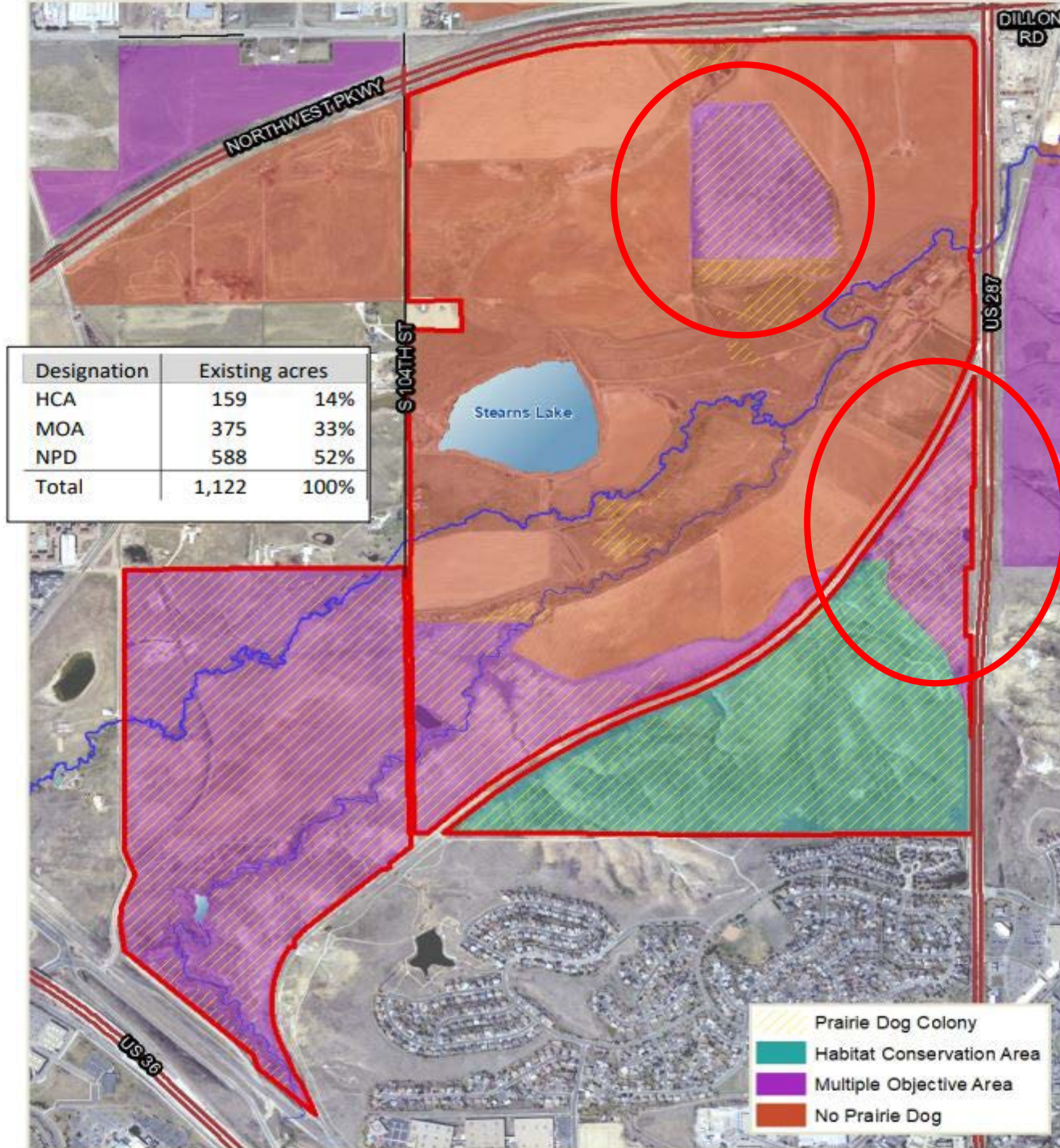
Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm- Management Plan Update



Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm Management Plan 2020 Update







ROCK CREEK FARM - Restoration Process Update

Vegetation Considerations - High Precipitation Years

2021 had record setting rainfall in most of Colorado.



Observations: Prairie Dogs contracted in colony acreage significantly due to decrease in visibility.

Increased Predation: It seemed likely that predators were able to approach/surprise unwary prairie dogs using the cover of high vegetation.

Adaptive Strategies



Conducted seed collection of native annuals, unpalatable to prairie dogs.
Kept vegetation standing, by not mowing weeds (especially curly dock).

Species Collected:

- Silky Sephora (*Sophora nuttalia*)
- Oppositeleaf Bahia (*Picradeniopsis oppositifolia*)
- Plains Milkweed (*Asclepias pumila*)



2021



2022



Property Designations Changes and Modifications



Property Designation Modifications - NPD to MOA

Property	Original Designation	Modified Designation	Acres
Kenosha	NPD	MOA	297
Brewbaker	NPD	NPD *correction no change. Will stay NPD	71
Jafay	NPD	MOA	75
Hodgson Harris	NPD	MOA	19

Property Designation Modifications – MOA to HCA

Property	Original	Modified	Acres
Dowe Flats	MOA	HCA	284
Trevarton	MOA	HCA	724
Pierce	MOA	HCA	88
Etter	MOA	HCA	37
Cohig	MOA	HCA	155
Verhey	MOA	HCA	70
Money	MOA	HCA	41

Property Designation Modifications – MOA to NPD

Property	Original	Modified	Acres
RCF- Hewitt Parcel	MOA	NPD	40

New Property Designations- Purchased since 2019

Property	Designation	Acres
Ramey (Shadi)	MOA	29
Brand 1, Brand 2	HCA	117
Holmes	NPD	137
Madison	NPD	73
Waneka Cent Farms	NPD	132
Canino 7M Ranch	NPD	299
Clark David Joseph	NPD	38
Chandler	NPD	40



Questions about 2022 management?



Questions?

