

Annual Prairie Dog Meeting 2024 Overview

Thursday, December 5, 5:00 p.m.

**Boulder County Parks &
Open Space**



Agenda

Introduction/Policy Context

2024 Prairie Dog Management Activities

- Agricultural Focused Management
- Conservation Focused Actions
- Special Projects

Wrap Up/Questions/Comments

What governs our prairie dog management?



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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.

Managing Our Land's Mixed Purposes and Uses

- **Assess our properties as a system**
- **Group properties into designations**
 - **HCA (Habitat Conservation Areas)**
 - **MOA (Multiple Objective Areas)**
 - **NPD (No Prairie Dog Areas)**

Prairie Dog Control on Agricultural Properties

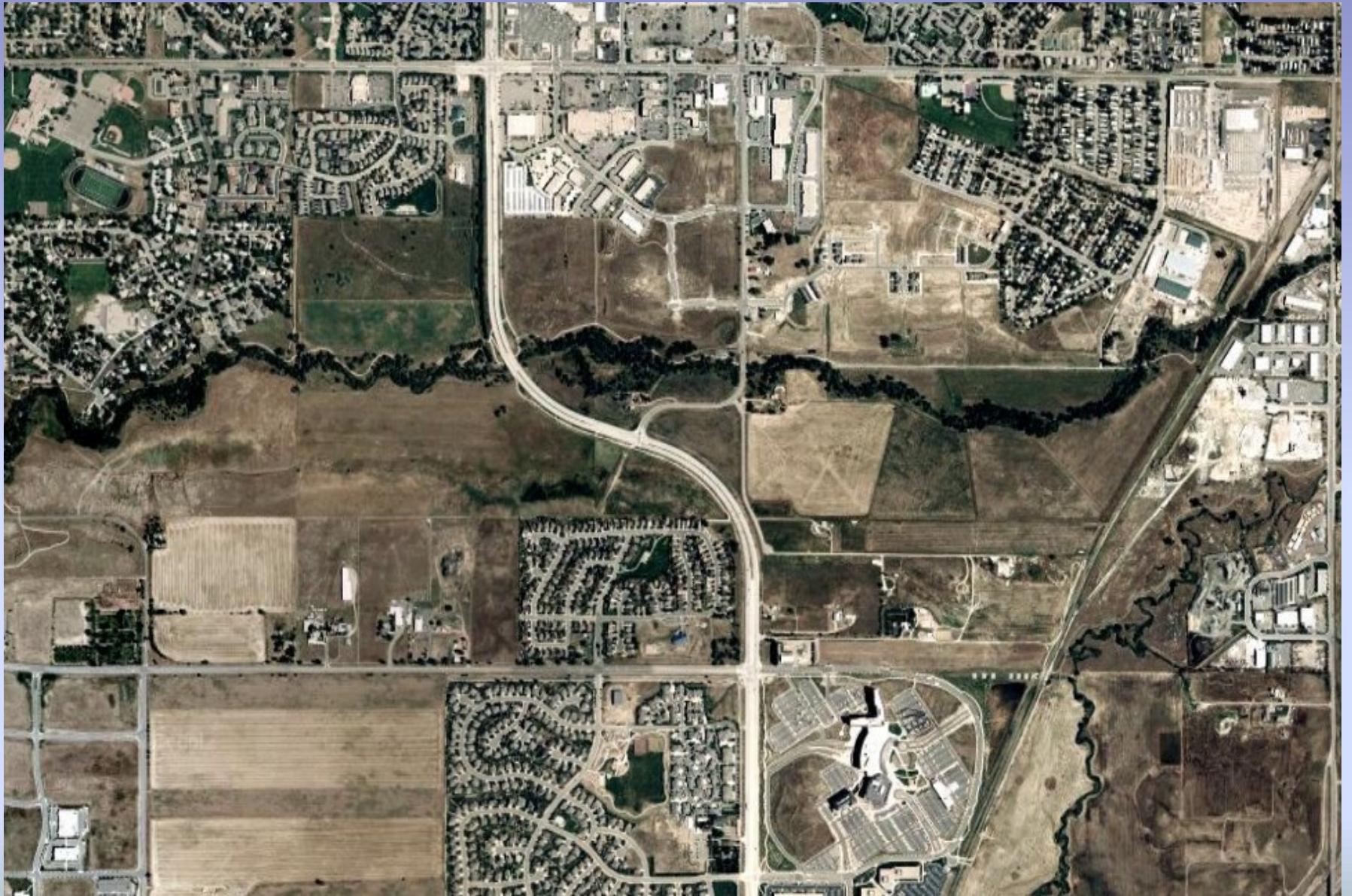
Barrier Fencing

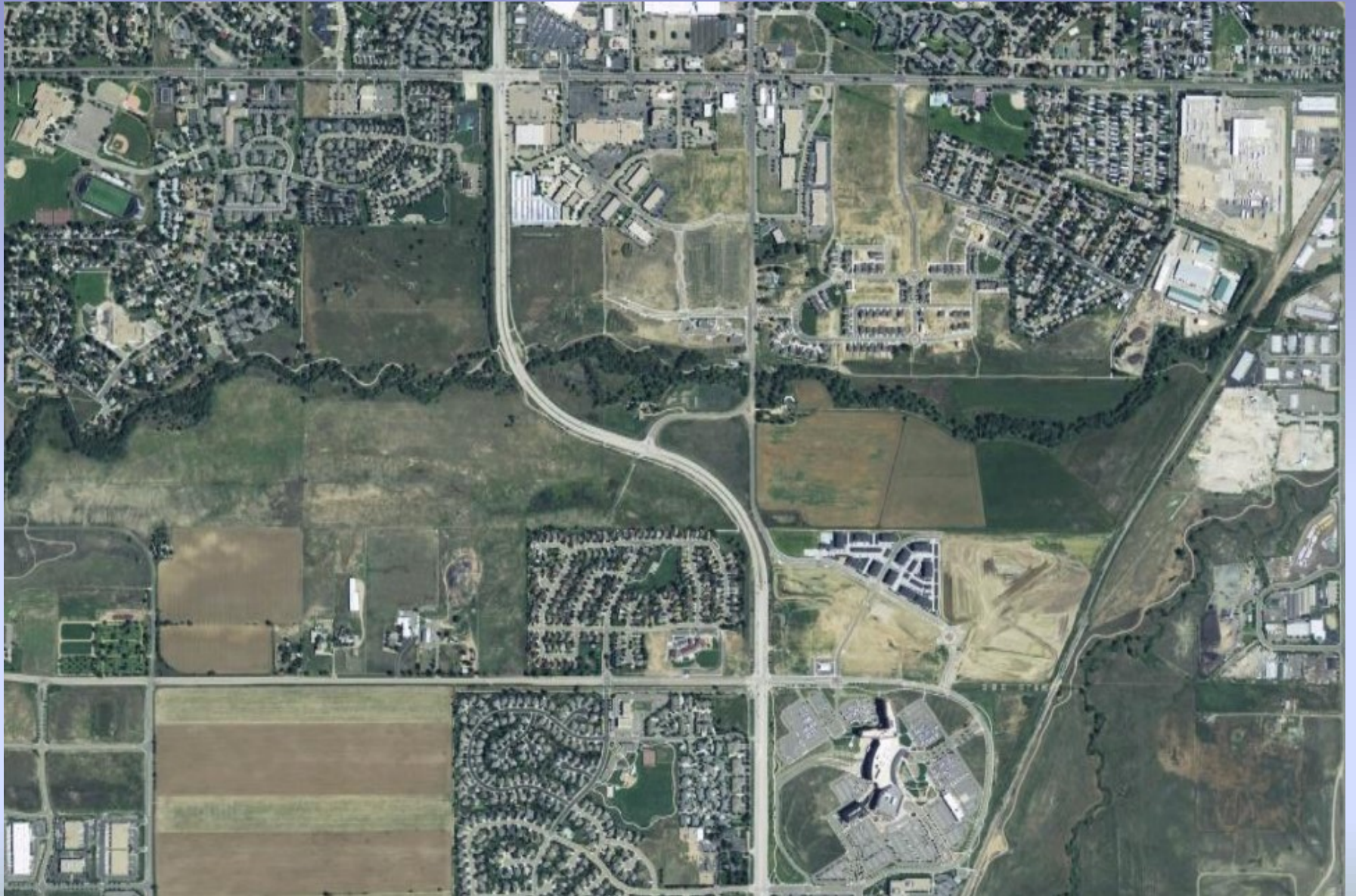
Trapping and Removal

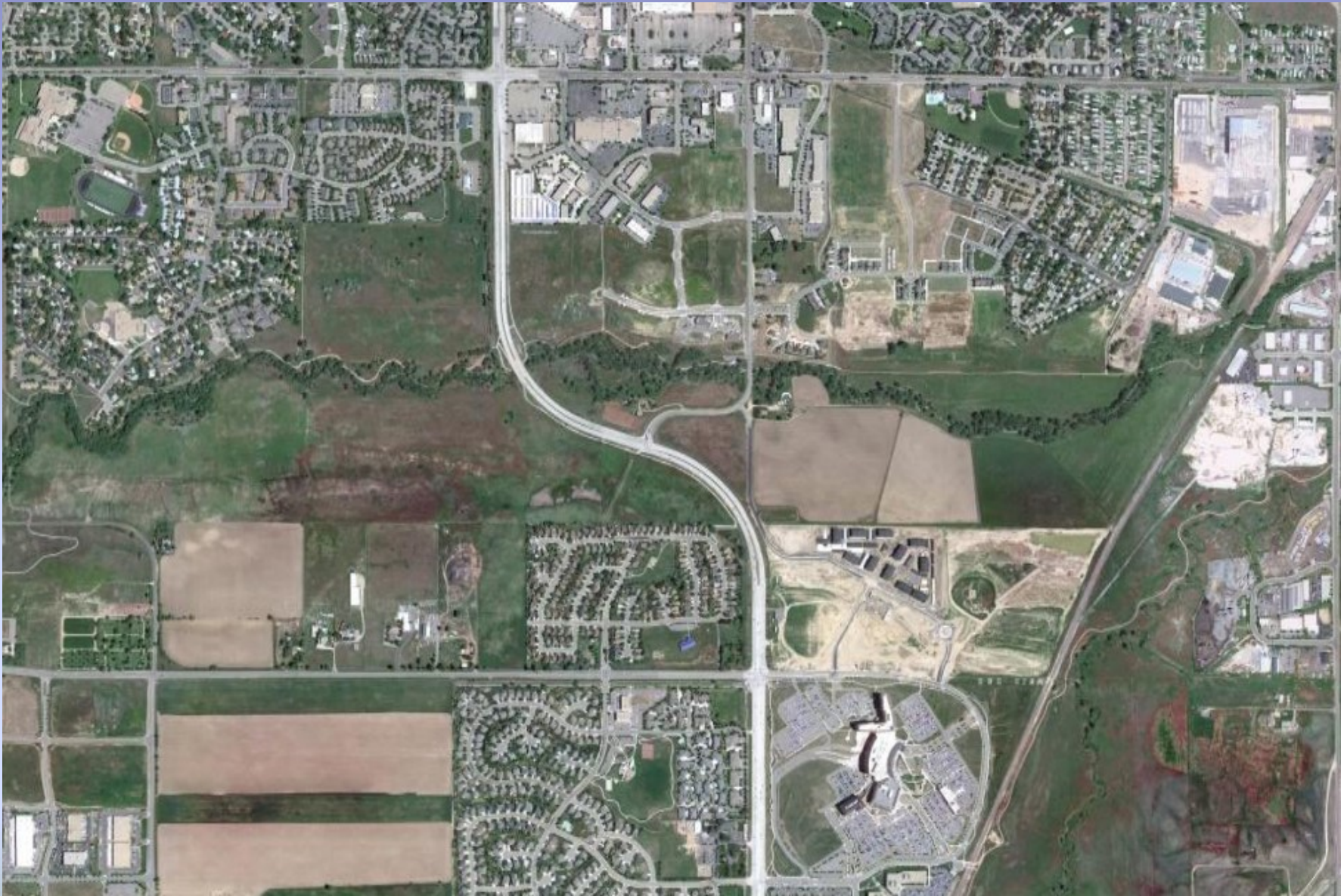
Lethal control





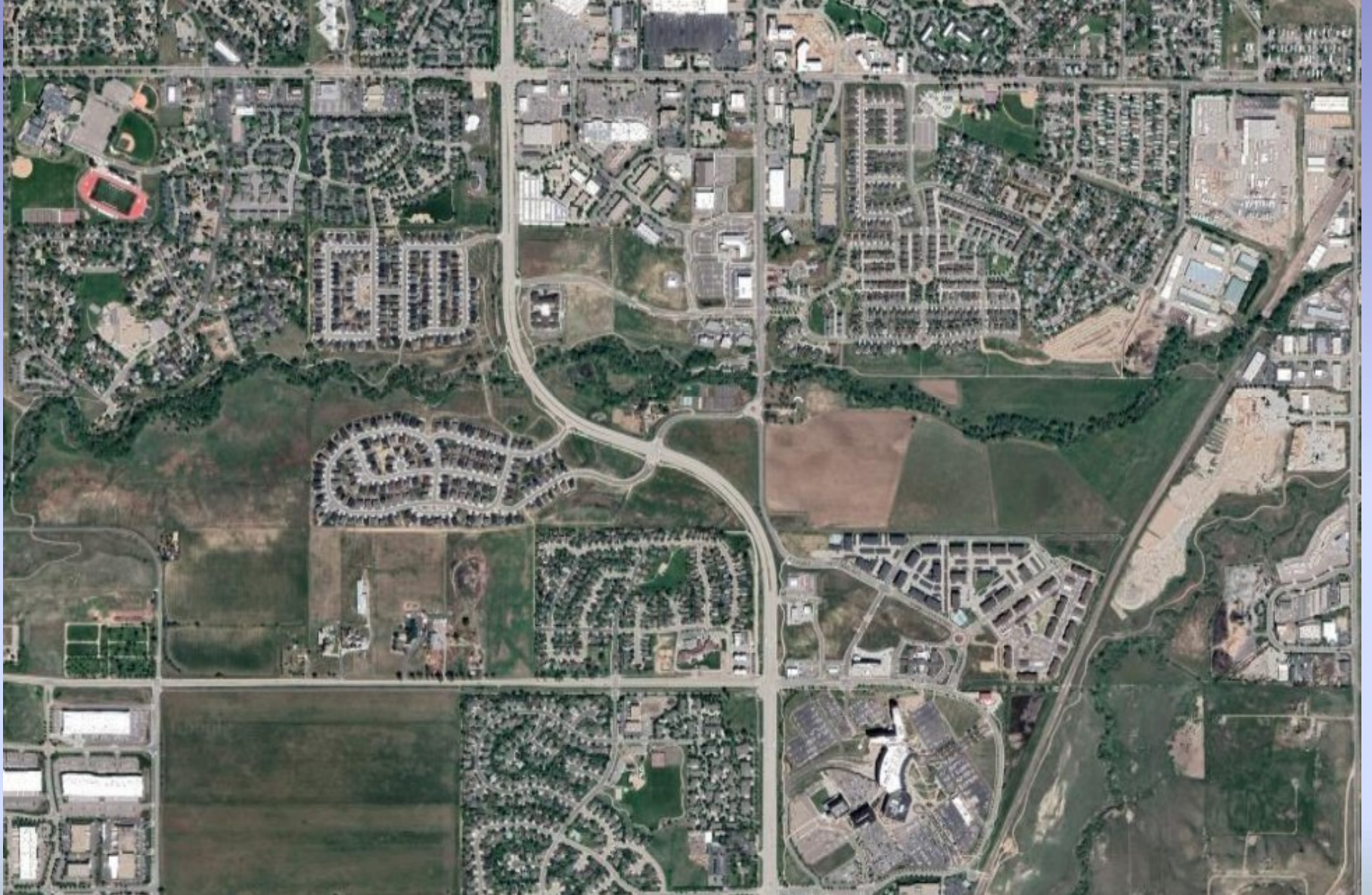


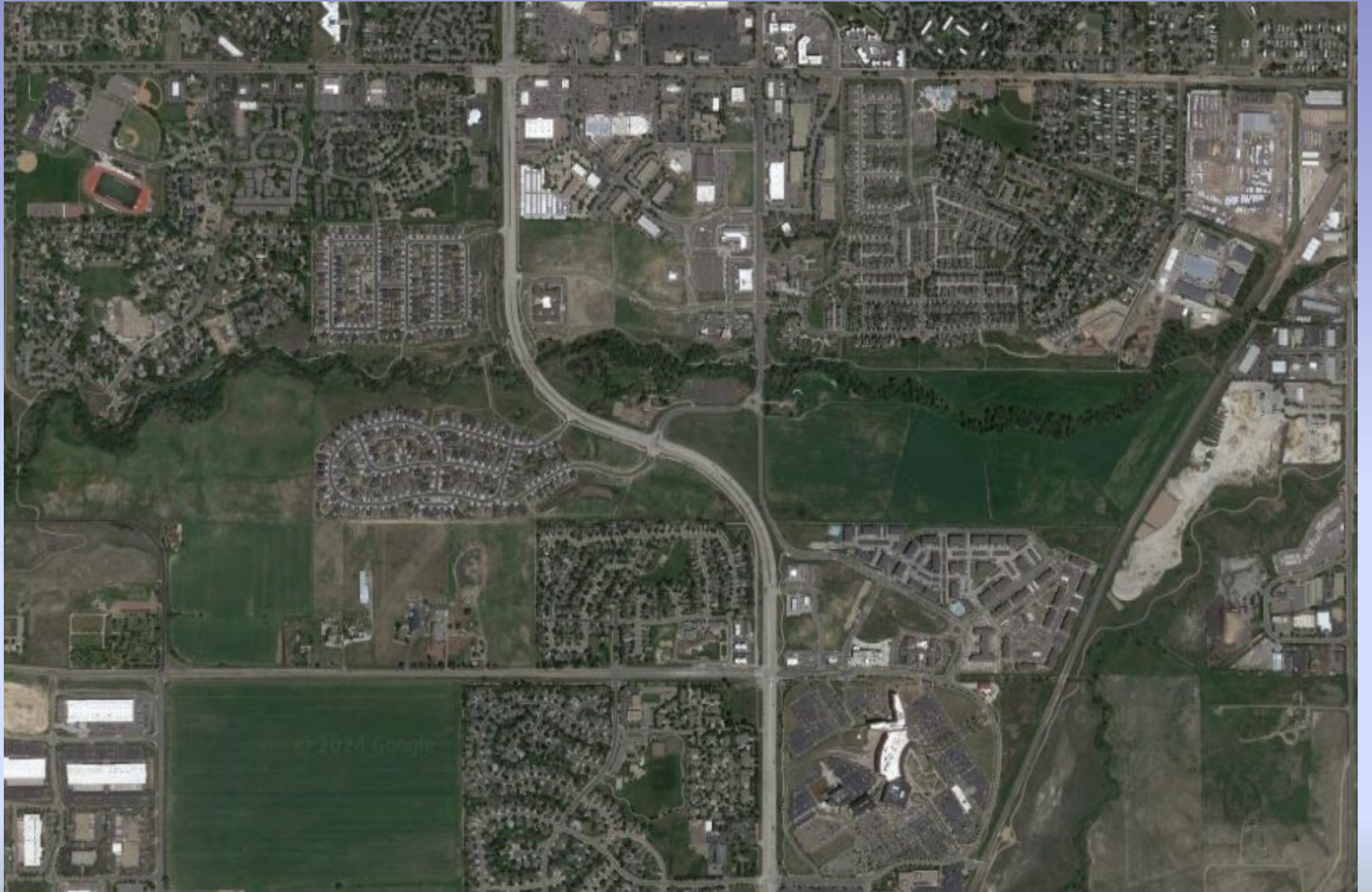


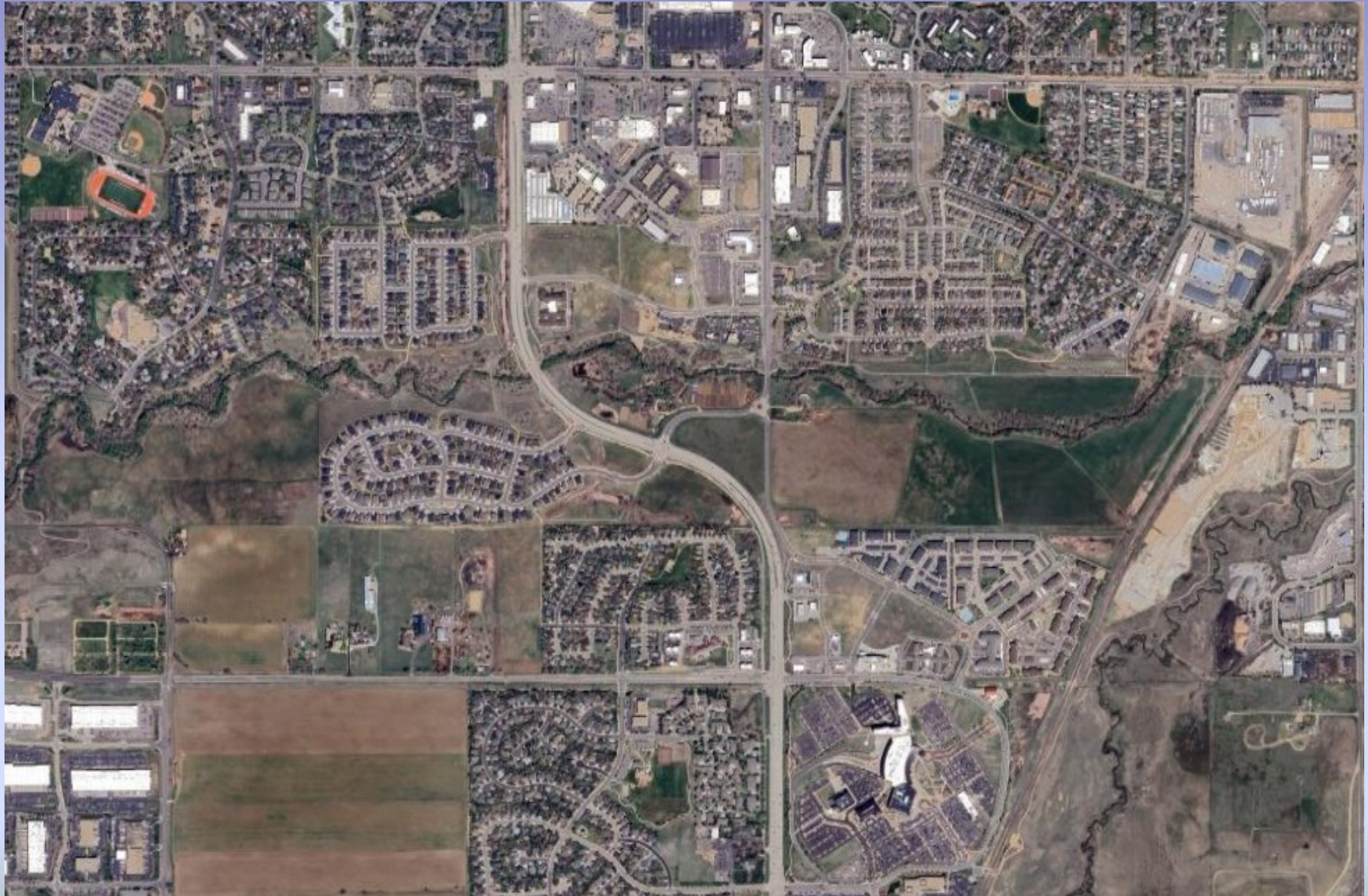
















Prairie Dog Barrier Fencing 2024

Prairie Dog Barrier Fencing 2024

**8,200 feet installed on 14 properties
by staff, youth corps, and volunteers**



Prairie Dog Visual Barrier 2023 - 2024



**952 feet installed
by staff in 2023**

Fall/Winter
2023

Bales
moved by
wind



Summer 2024 bales stabilized and barrier fencing



Habitat Restoration



June 2022



May2024



Trapping and Removal

Timing

- dates for trapping are set by CPW

Number of traps

- 5 – 15 % trap rate

Black Footed Ferret Recovery (USFWS)

- Most animals are euthanized
- Small number keep the burrows viable

Raptor Recovery

- All animals are euthanized prior to delivery



Trapping and Removal

- 10 properties
- 2,110 animals
 - 1,269 to Black Footed Ferret Recovery
 - 841 to Raptor Rehab



Lethal Control

- 35,029 burrows on 35 properties
- 449 acres treated
- 2 tenants treated on 2 properties

Prairie Dog Stakeholders' Meeting 2024 Update



Conservation-Focused Management 2024 Overview

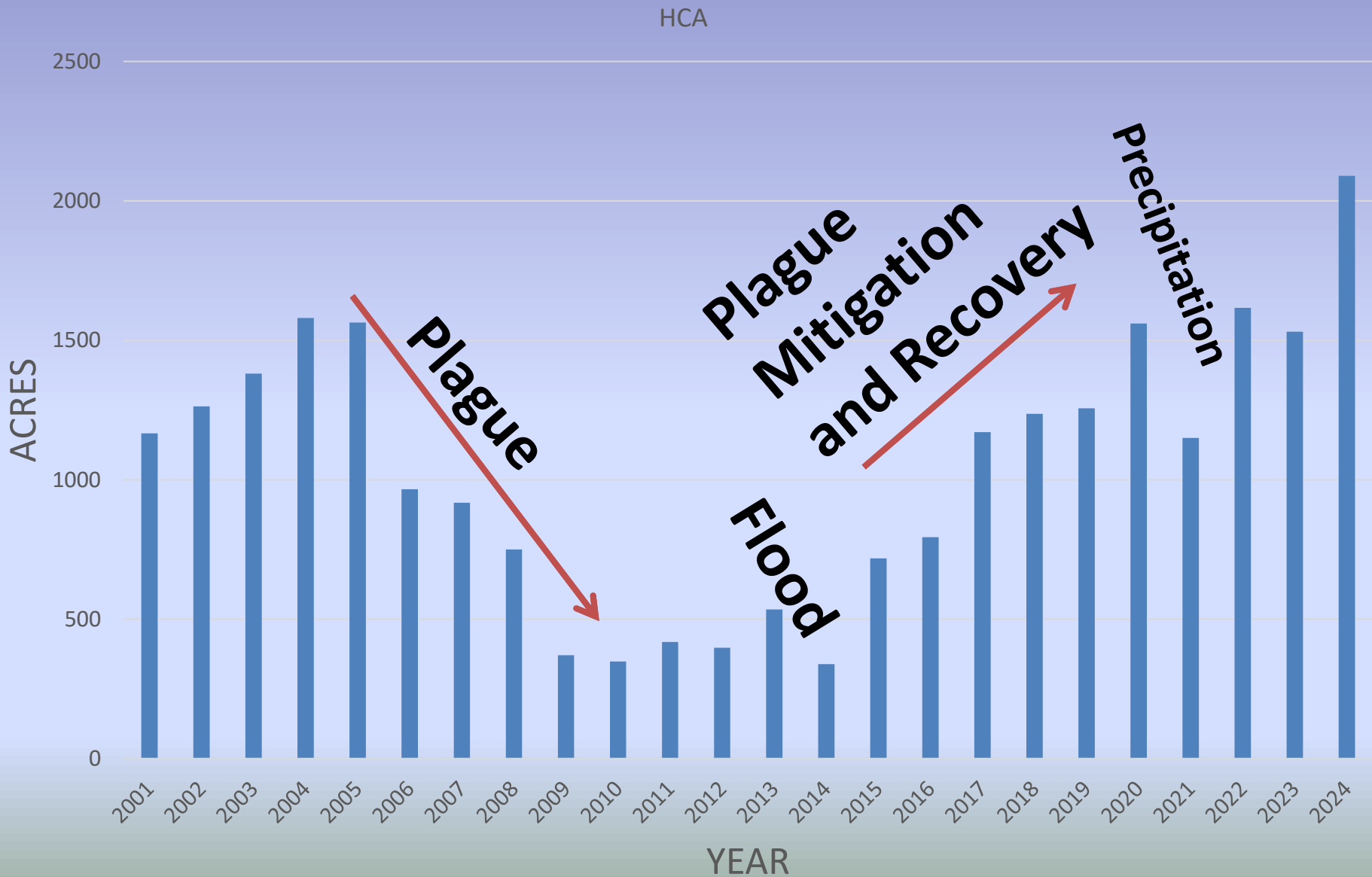
- Colonized Acres of Prairie Dogs
 - MOA and HCA
- Burrowing Owls
- Black-Footed Ferret
 - Reintroduction
 - SPV and Dust
 - Suitable Colonies



Total Prairie Dog Colony Size Per Management Category: 2020-2024



HCA Colonized Acres 2001-2024



MOA Colonized Acres 2001-2024



Burrowing Owl Update 2024





Black-Footed Ferret Reintroduction Progress





Plague Abatement Strategies: Delta Flea Dust

- **Applied to BCPOS colonies in South County Grasslands and Rabbit Mountain since 2016.**
- **No dusting 2024. Wet weather.**
- **More potent SPV formulation used.**
- **Dusting in spring 2025**



Plague Abatement Strategies: Sylvatic Plague Vaccine (SPV)

- **South
County Grasslands**
 - **503 Acres treated**
 - **16 staff**
 - **71 hours**
- **Rabbit Mountain**
 - **1409 Acres
treated**
 - **17 staff**
 - **126.5 hours**

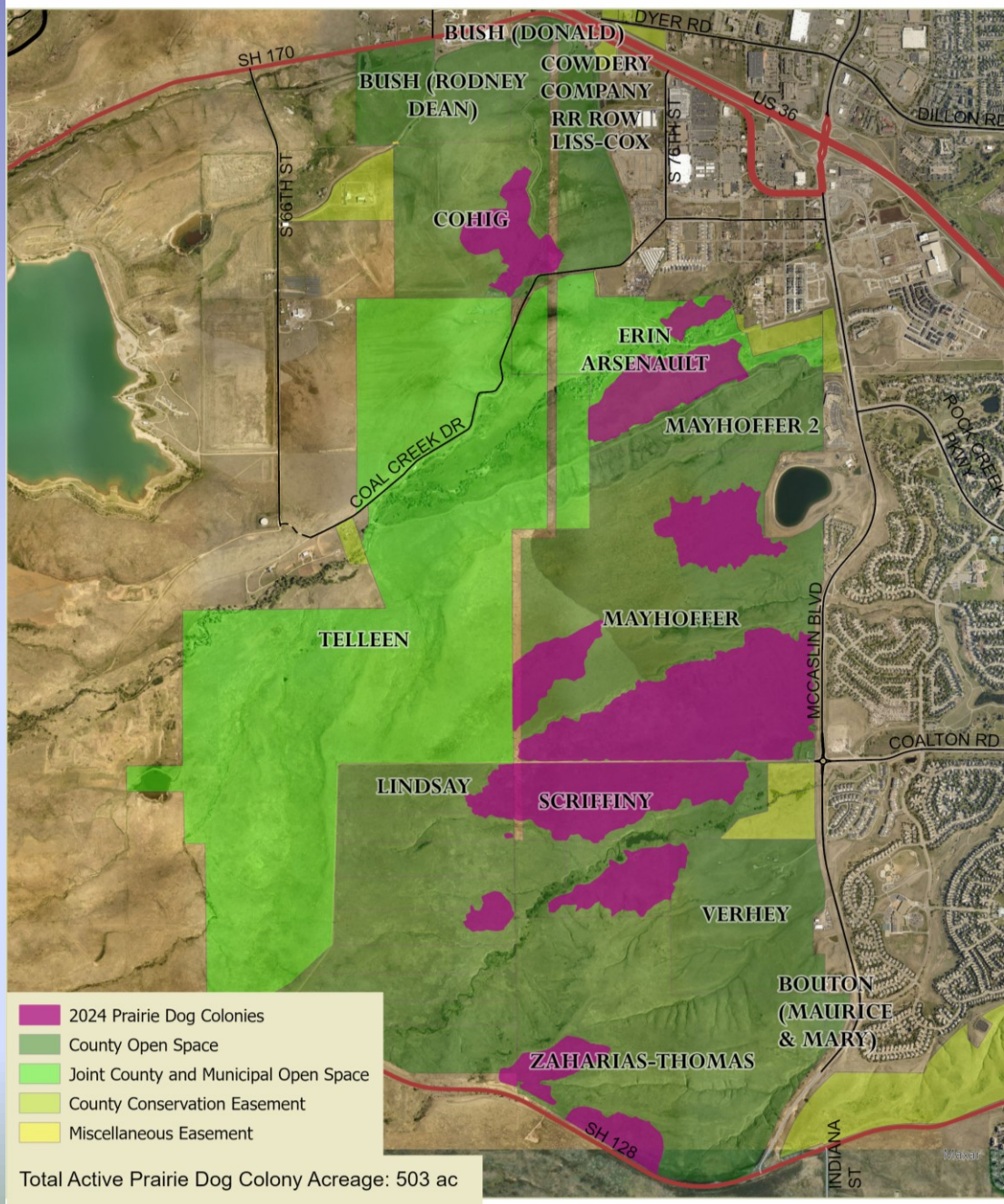
SPV and Dust Annual Costs

Year	Property(s)	Cost	Note
2016	SE Grasslands only	\$3,600	SPV and Dust donated by CPW
2017	SE Grasslands and Rabbit Mtn	\$19,100	SPV and Dust
2018	" "	\$22,375	SPV and Dust
2019	" "	\$15,100	SPV Only
2020	" "	\$17,500	SPV and Dust
2021	" "	\$21,286	SPV, Bait Matrix, and Dust
2022	" "	\$26,120	SPV, Bait Matrix, and Dust
2023	" "	\$23,880	SPV, Bait Matrix (no dust)
2024	" "	\$20,800	SPV, Bait Matrix (no dust)
		Total Cost = \$169,761	

2024 South County Grasslands: Potentially Suitable Ferret Reintroduction Area

Increase in Colony Size

Year	Acres
2023	324
2024	503

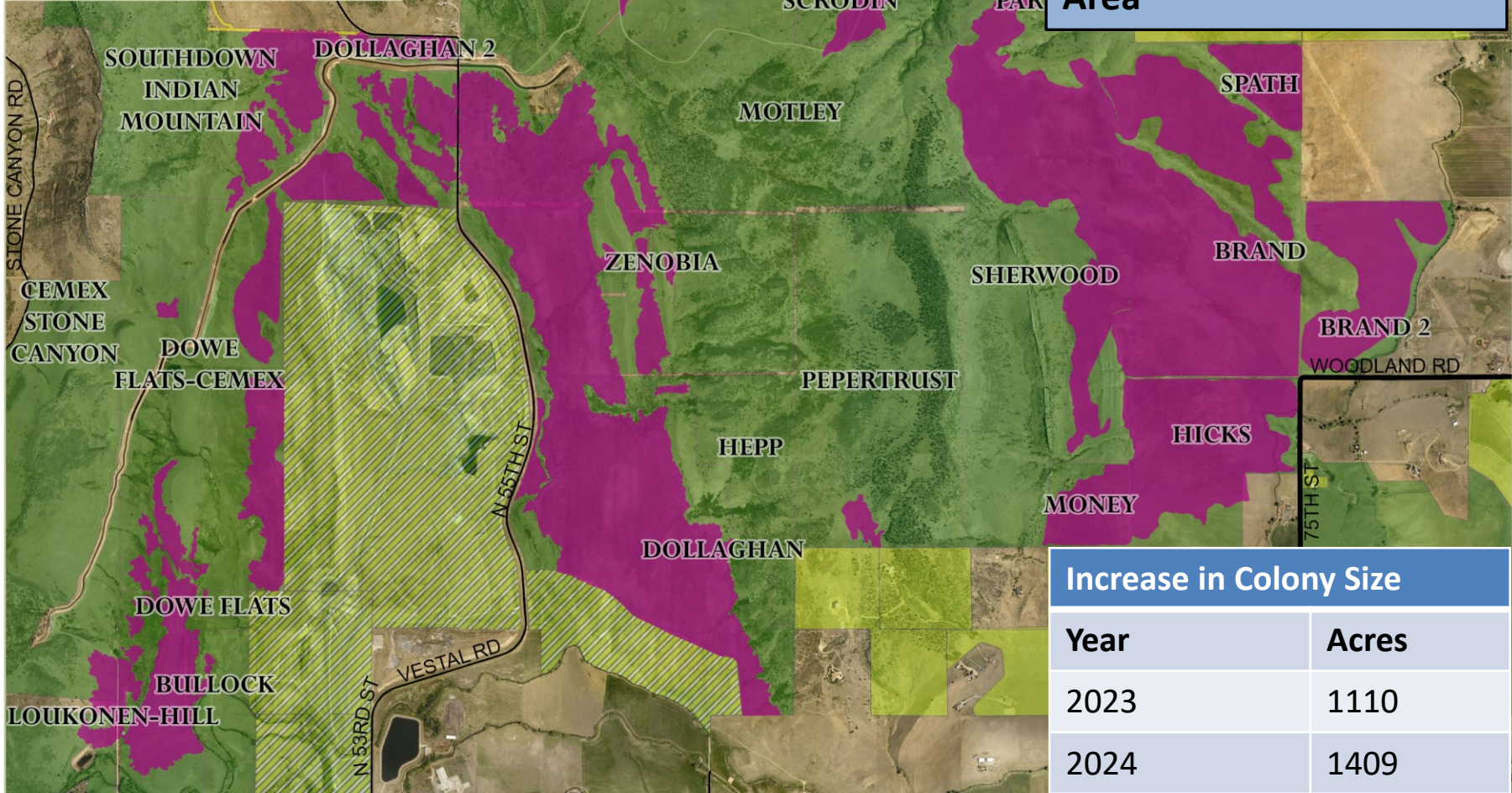


Total Active Prairie Dog Colony Acreage: 503 ac

2024 Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain Active Prairie Dog Colonies

- 2024 Prairie Dog Colonies
- County Open Space
- County Conservation Easement
- Miscellaneous Easement
- Standard CE/Option to Acquire Fee

**2024 Rabbit Mountain:
Potentially Suitable
Ferret Reintroduction
Area**



Increase in Colony Size	
Year	Acres
2023	1110
2024	1409

2024 Total Active Prairie Dog Colony Acres: 1,409 ac



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Questions?



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Totals Acreage

County managed land under 7,000ft elevation

47,846 ac

Active Prairie Dog Colonies on County Managed land

4,672 ac

Management Category

Occupied and Total Acreages

Habitat Conservation Area

2,090 occupied

6,782 total

Multiple Objective Area

1,366 occupied

5,807 total

No Prairie Dogs

1,166 occupied

16,790 total

Non-Suitable Habitat

0

18321 total