

Annual Prairie Dog Meeting 2025 Overview

Thursday, December 11, 5:00 p.m.

**Boulder County Parks &
Open Space**



Agenda

Introduction/Policy Context

2025 Prairie Dog Management Activities

- Agricultural Focused Management
- Conservation Focused Actions
- Special Projects

Wrap Up/Questions/Comments

BCPOS Mission Statement

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

Goals

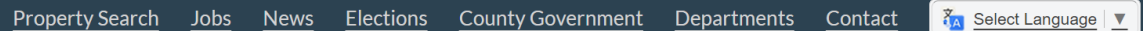
1. To preserve rural lands and buffers
2. To preserve and restore natural resources for the benefit of the environment and the public.
3. To promote and provide for sustainable agriculture in Boulder County for the natural, cultural, and economic values it provides.

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

A close-up photograph of a prairie dog sitting upright on a patch of dark, moist soil. The prairie dog has light brown, slightly shaggy fur and is holding a small, dark, round object (likely a piece of food) in its front paws, bringing it to its mouth. Its eyes are dark and focused on the food. The surrounding ground is covered with small, green, leafy plants and some dry, brownish vegetation. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.



LICENSES, PERMITS & RECORDS



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

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

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 2025

Prairie Dog Barrier Fencing 2025

**16,064 feet installed on 14 properties
by staff, volunteers, contractors, and staff of
neighboring municipalities**



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

(through December 1)

- 9 properties
- 1643 animals
 - 772 to Black Footed Ferret Recovery
 - 871 to Raptor Rehab



Habitat Restoration



Lethal Control

- Staff treated 26,278 burrows on 46 properties
- 8 tenants treated 5,155 on 15 properties

Prairie Dog Conservation Actions - 2025 Update

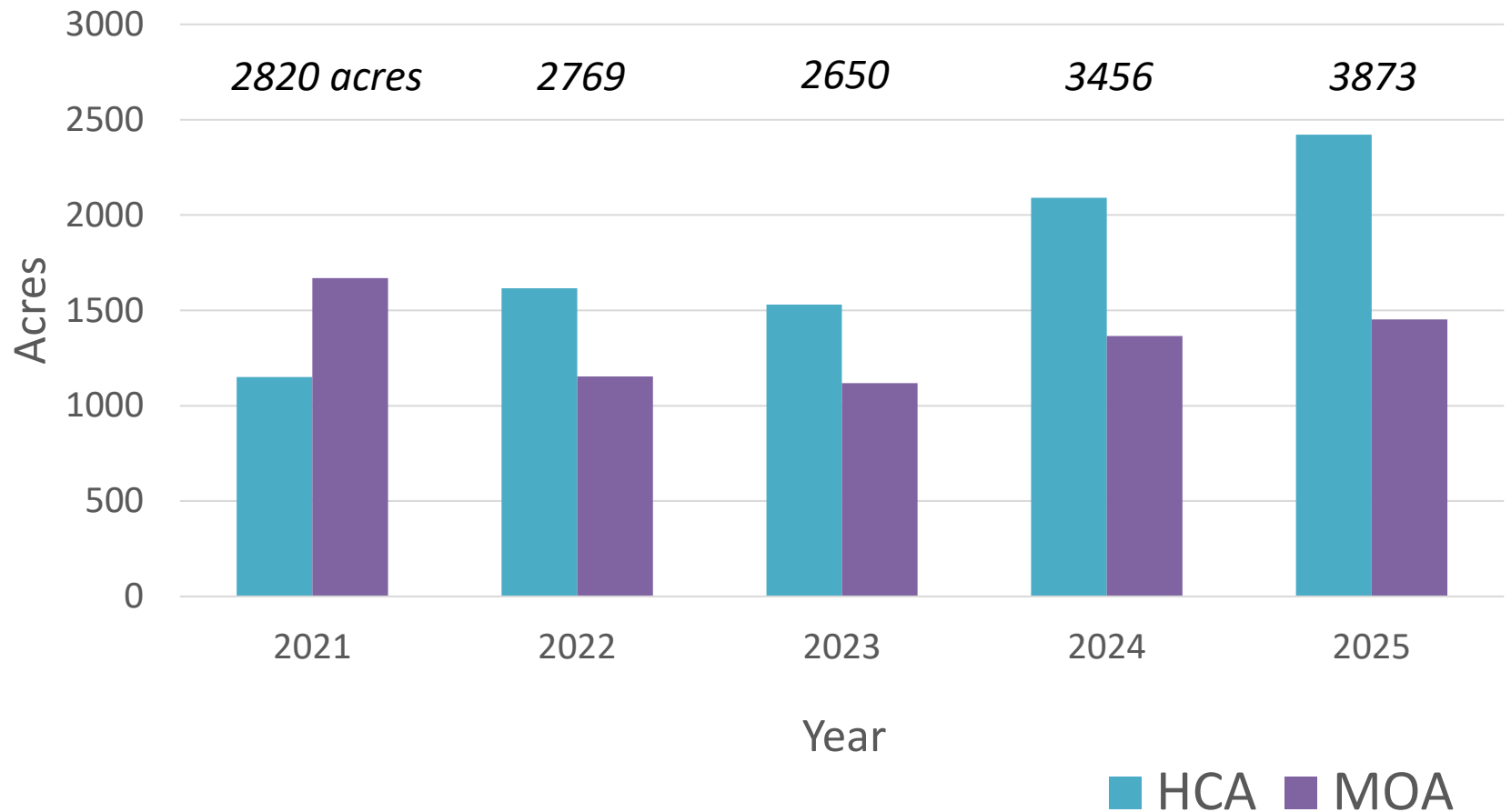


Conservation-Focused Management 2025 Overview

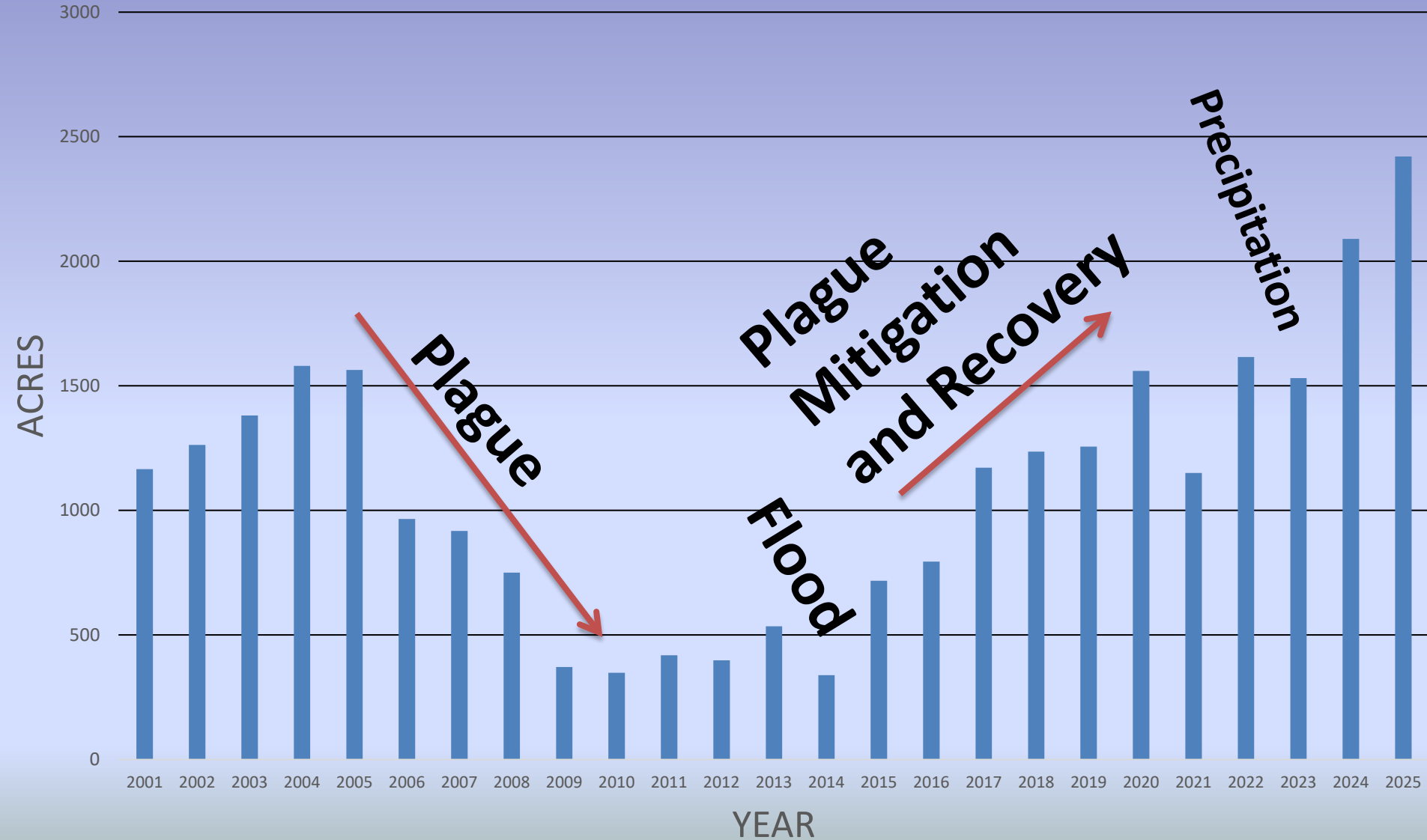
- Colonized Acres of Prairie Dogs
 - MOA and HCA
- Burrowing Owls
- Black-Footed Ferret
 - Reintroduction
 - SPV and Dust
 - Suitable Colonies



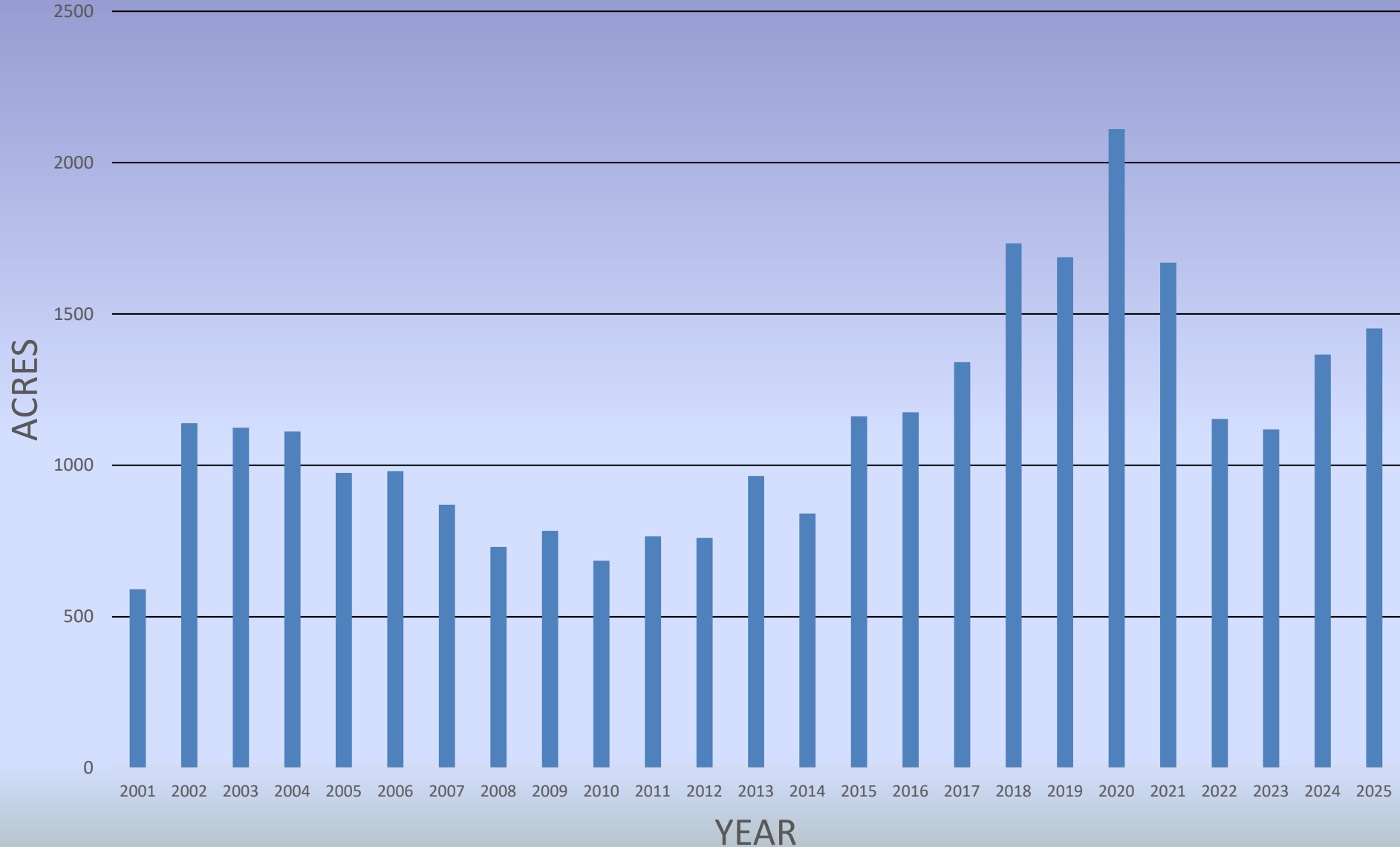
Total Prairie Dog Colony Size Per Management Category: 2021-2025



HCA Colonized Acres 2001-2025



MOA Colonized Acres 2001-2025



Burrowing Owl Update 2025




A black-footed ferret is shown in its natural habitat, sitting on a mound of sand. The ferret has a slender body, a long tail, and distinctive black markings around its eyes and on its feet. The background consists of dry, sandy soil with sparse, dry grass. The text "Black-Footed Ferret Reintroduction Progress" is overlaid in white, bold font across the center of the image.

Black-Footed Ferret Reintroduction Progress

A photograph of three prairie dogs on a grassy mound. Two are standing upright, facing each other, while a third is partially visible in the foreground. The background is a soft-focus landscape with green grass and some small plants.

Plague Abatement Strategies: Delta Flea Dust

- Totals as of December 01, 2025
- Dusting continues into 2026
- Southeast County Grasslands
 - 15 staff
 - 87 hours
- Rabbit Mountain
 - 24 staff
 - 131.25 hours

A ground squirrel is shown in a close-up, standing on its hind legs and holding a small, bright red heart-shaped object in its paws. The squirrel has light brown fur on its body and a darker, almost black, patch on its head. The background is a blurred, natural outdoor setting with dry grass and soil.

Plague Abatement Strategies: Sylvatic Plague Vaccine (SPV)

- Totals as of December 01, 2025
- SPV continues into 2026
- Southeast County Grasslands
 - 251 Acres treated
 - 12 staff
 - 40 hours
- Rabbit Mountain
 - Pending SPV distribution

SPV and Dust Annual Costs

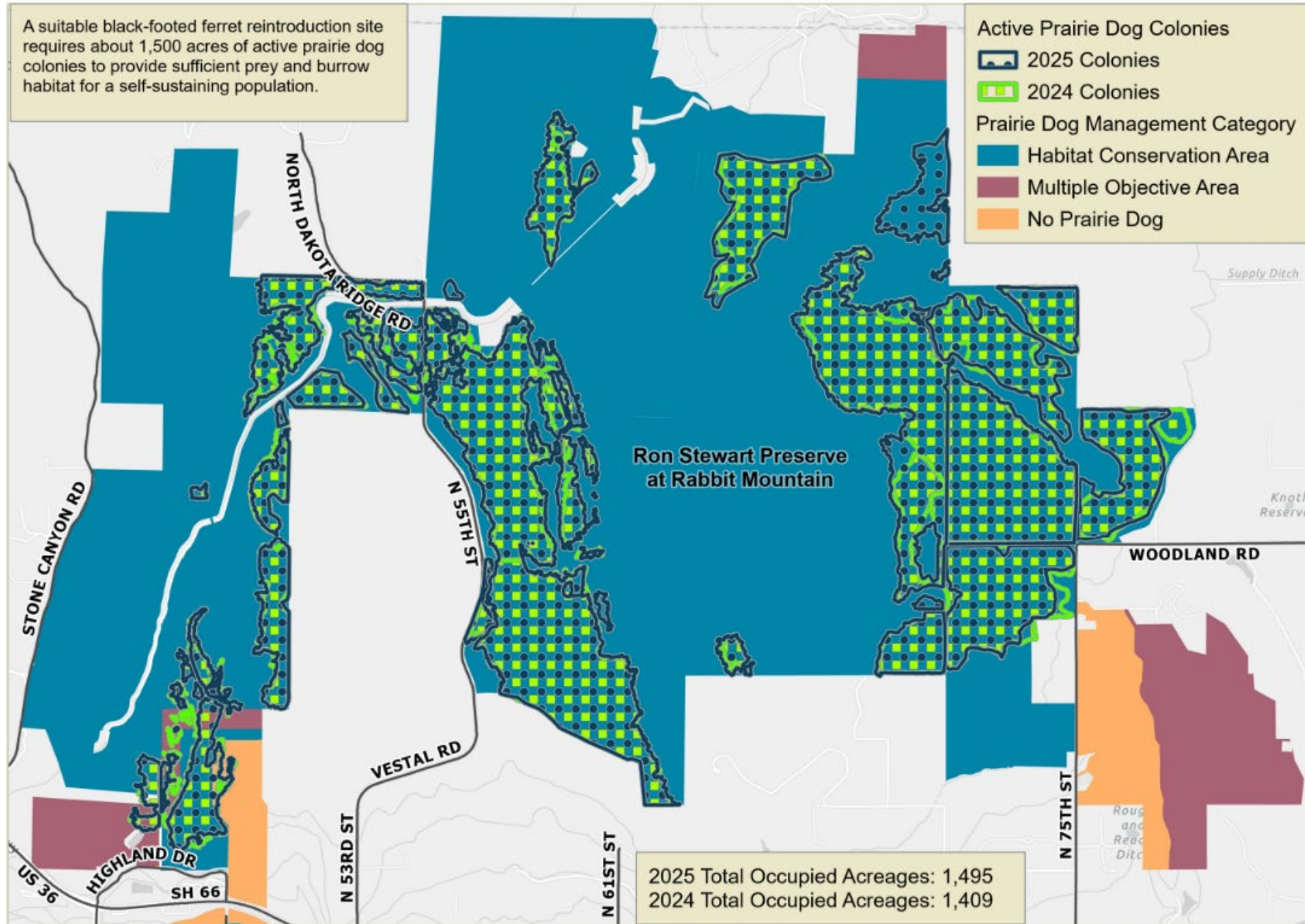
Year	Property(s)	Cost	Note
2016	SE Grasslands only	\$3,600	SPV and Dust donated by CPW
2017	SE Grasslands and Rabbit Mtn	\$19,100	SPV and Dust
2018	" "	\$22,375	SPV and Dust
2019	" "	\$15,100	SPV Only
2020	" "	\$17,500	SPV and Dust
2021	" "	\$21,286	SPV, Bait Matrix, and Dust
2022	" "	\$26,120	SPV, Bait Matrix, and Dust
2023	" "	\$23,880	SPV, Bait Matrix (no dust)
2024	" "	\$20,800	SPV, Bait Matrix (no dust)
2025	" "	\$34,000	SPV, Bait Matrix, and Dust
	Total Cost = \$203,761		

Rabbit Mountain Complex Prairie Dog Conservation Area



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A suitable black-footed ferret reintroduction site requires about 1,500 acres of active prairie dog colonies to provide sufficient prey and burrow habitat for a self-sustaining population.

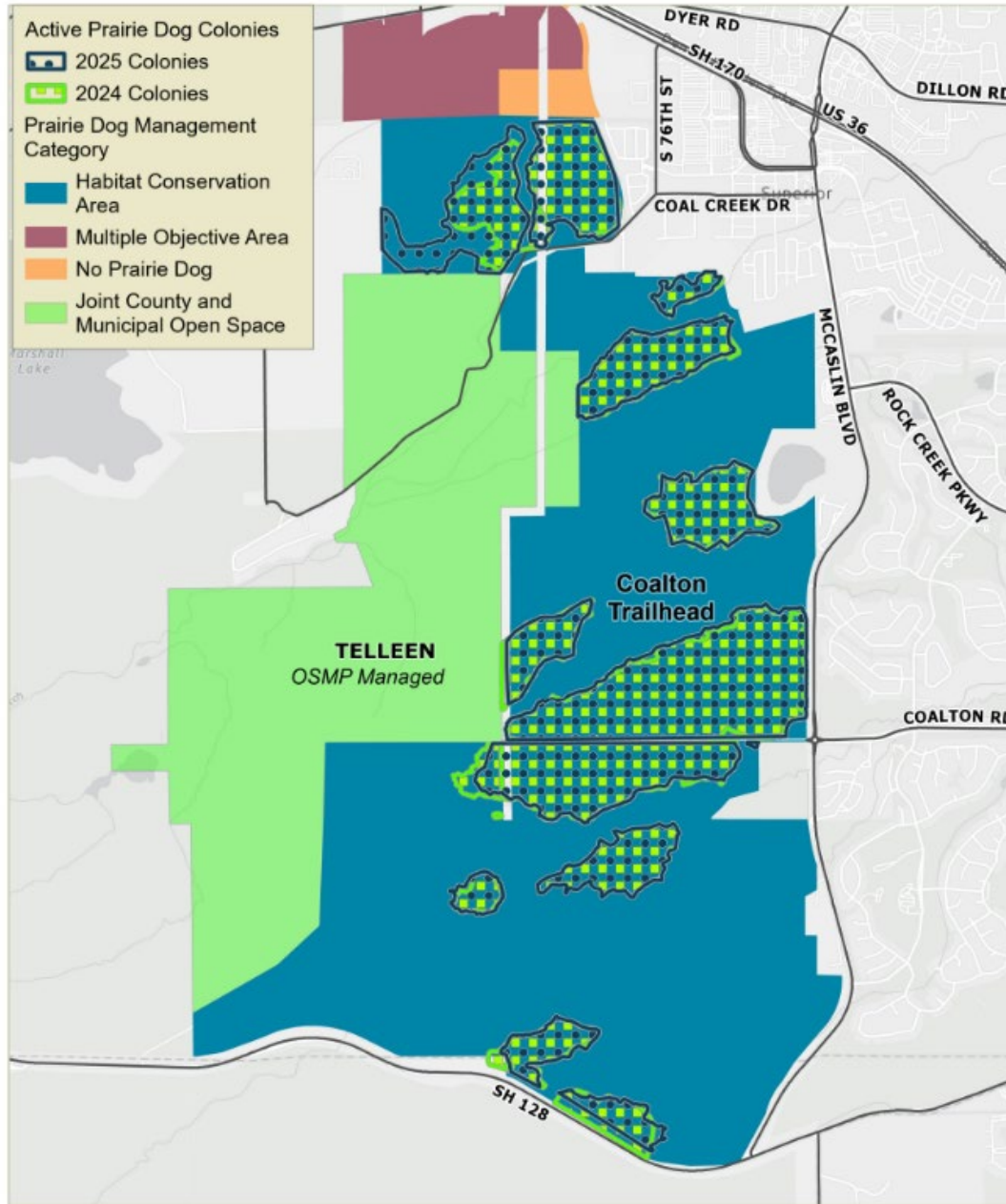


2025



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Miles

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2025

2025 Total Occupied Acreages: 581
2024 Total Occupied Acreages: 555

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Miles



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Questions?



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