

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

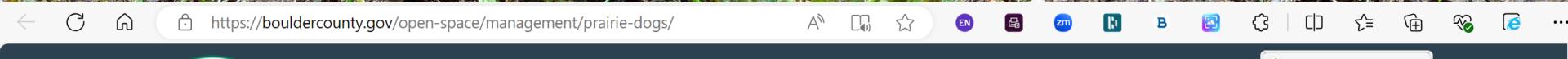
1. To preserve rural lands and buffers
2. To preserve and restore natural resources for the benefit of the environment and the public.
3. To promote and provide for sustainable agriculture in Boulder County for the natural, cultural, and economic values it provides.

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

What governs our prairie dog management?



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FAMILIES
& ADULTS

OPEN SPACE
& RECREATION

PROPERTY
& LAND

ROADS
& TRANSPORTATION

ENVIRONMENT
& SUSTAINABILITY

SAFETY
& LAW

LICENSES, PERMITS
& RECORDS



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 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

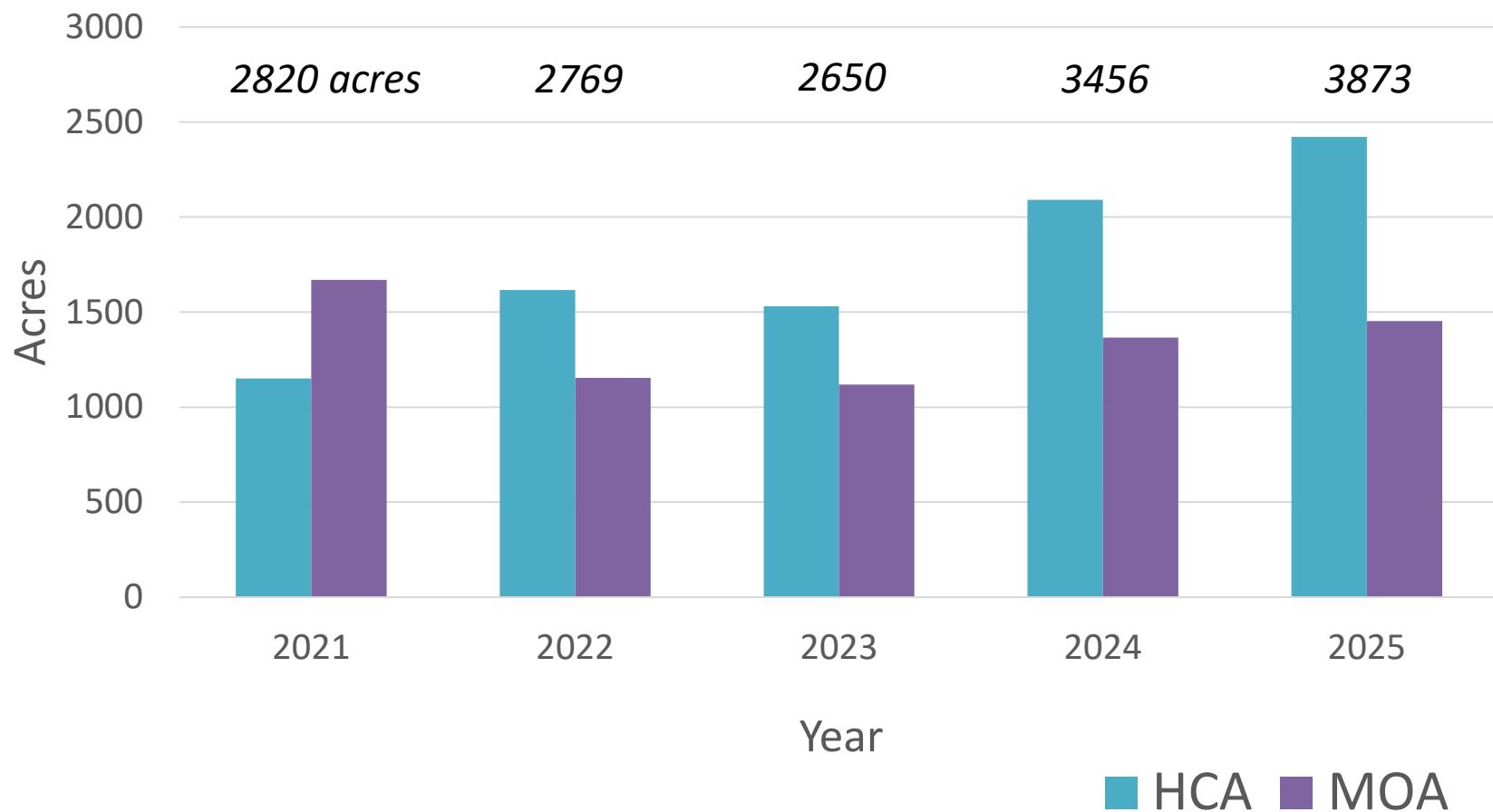


Conservation-Focused Management 2025 Overview

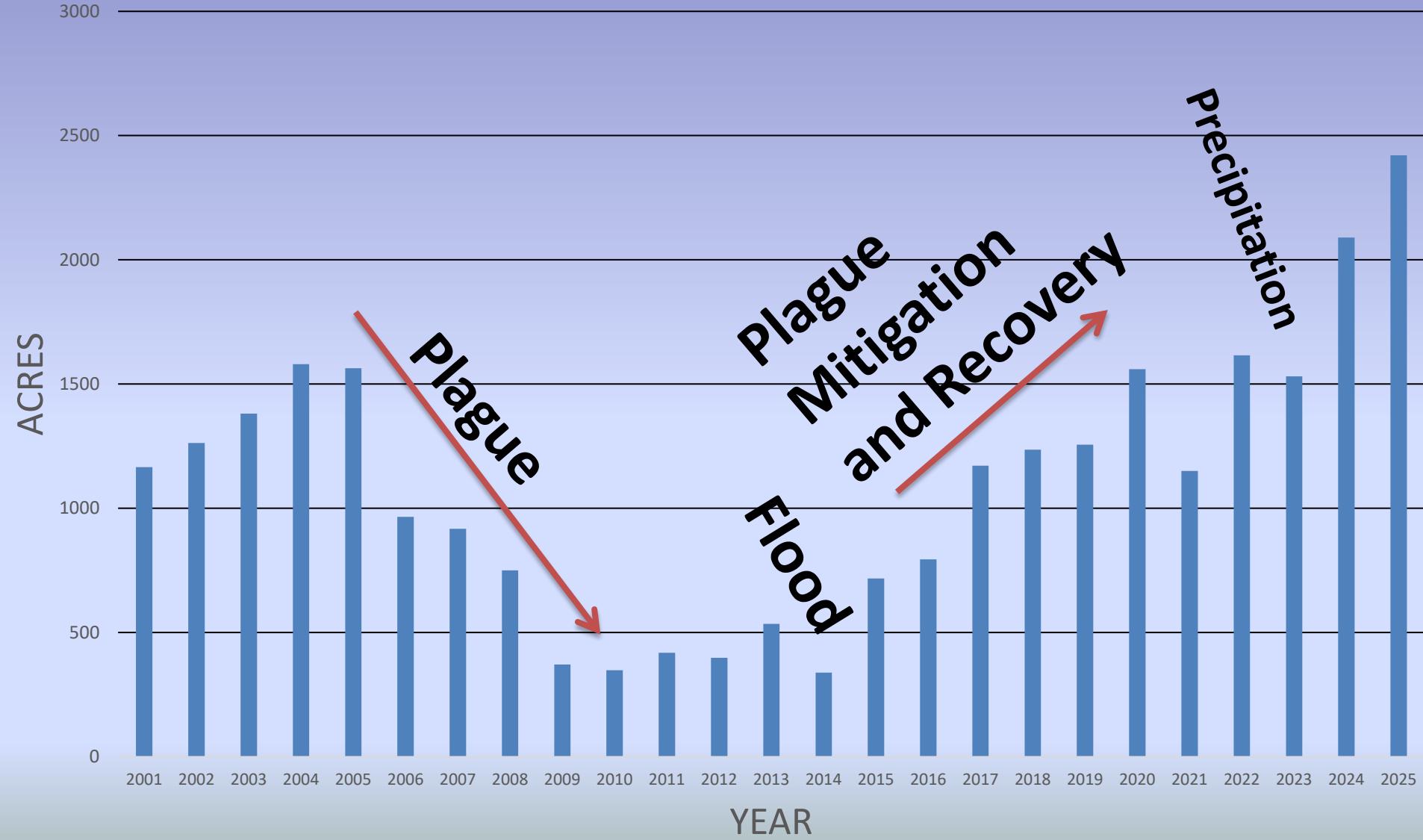
- Colonized Acres of Prairie Dogs
 - MOA and HCA
- Burrowing Owls
- Black-Footed Ferret
 - Reintroduction
 - SPV and Dust
 - Suitable Colonies



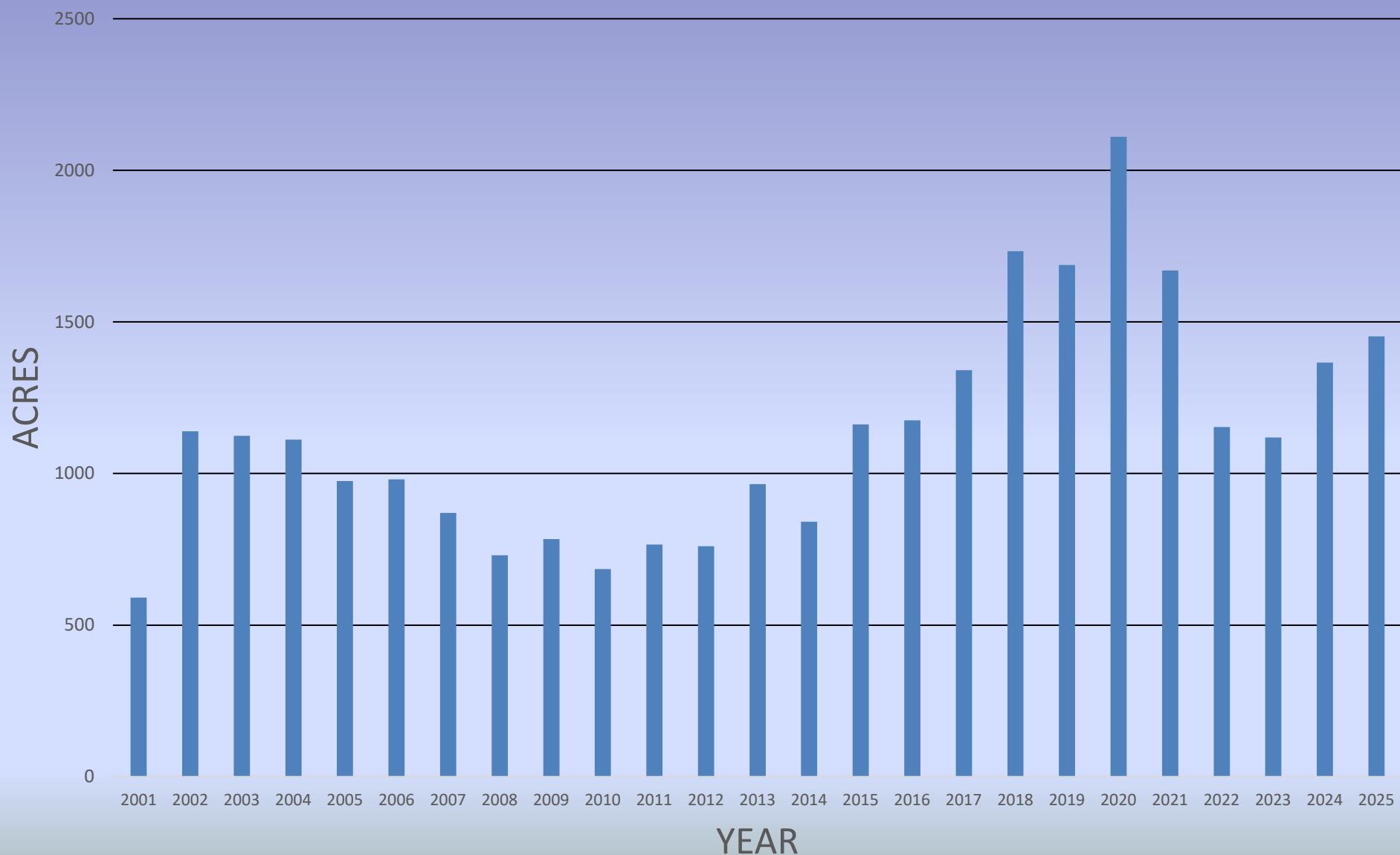
Total Prairie Dog Colony Size Per Management Category: 2021-2025



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 the ground and looking towards the left. The ferret has a light brown coat with dark markings around its eyes and ears. The background is a dry, grassy landscape.

Black-Footed Ferret Reintroduction Progress

A photograph of three prairie dogs in a natural, sunlit environment. One prairie dog is standing on the left, facing right. Two others are sitting on the right; one is on top of the other. They are surrounded by dry grass and small green 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



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

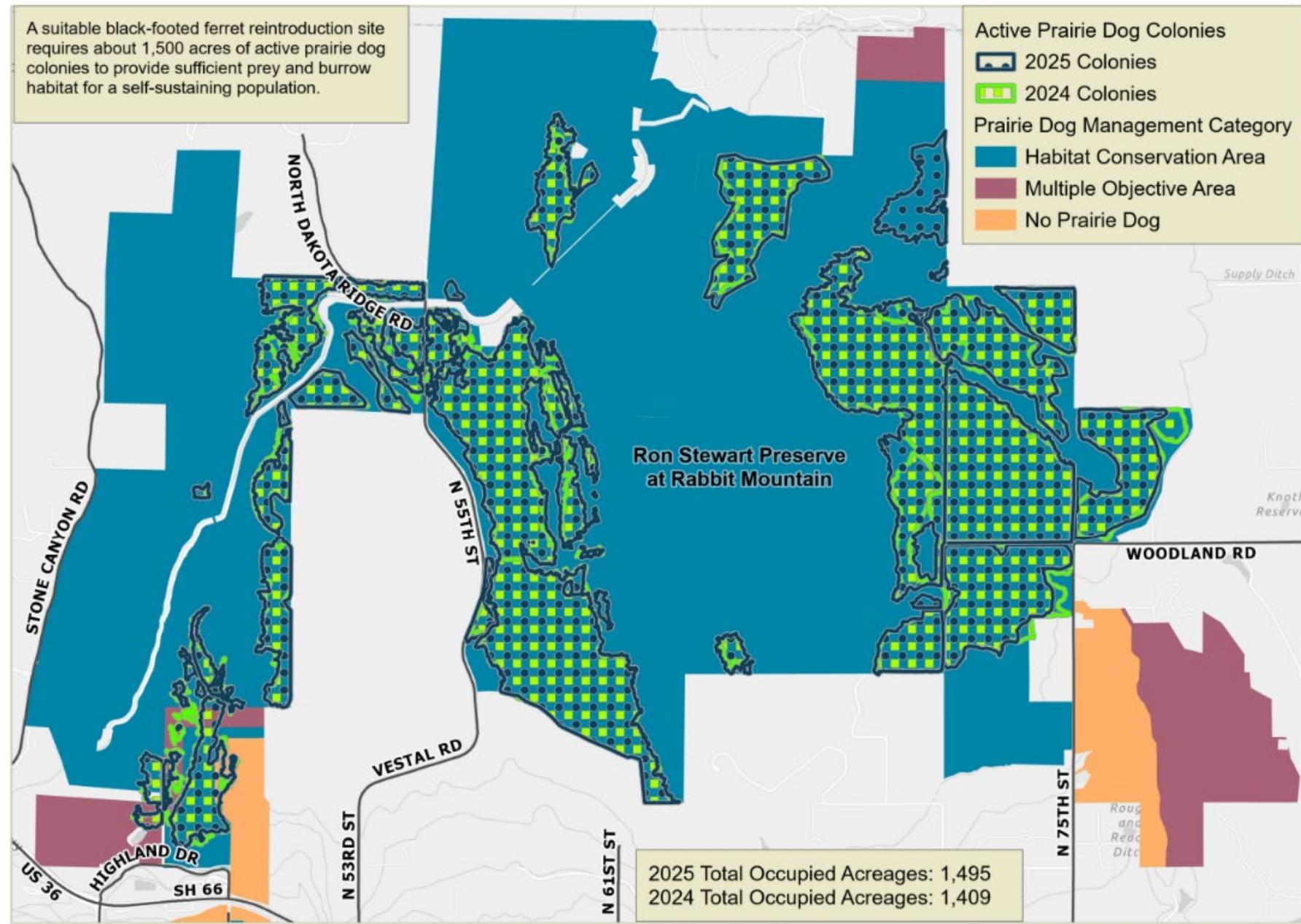
Year	Property(s)	Cost	Note
2016	SE Grasslands only	\$3,600	SPV and Dust donated by CPW
2017	SE Grasslands and Rabbit Mtn	\$19,100	SPV and Dust
2018	" "	\$22,375	SPV and Dust
2019	" "	\$15,100	SPV Only
2020	" "	\$17,500	SPV and Dust
2021	" "	\$21,286	SPV, Bait Matrix, and Dust
2022	" "	\$26,120	SPV, Bait 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.



Southeast County Grasslands Complex Prairie Dog Conservation



Parks &
Open Space

Active Prairie Dog Colonies

2025 Colonies

2024 Colonies

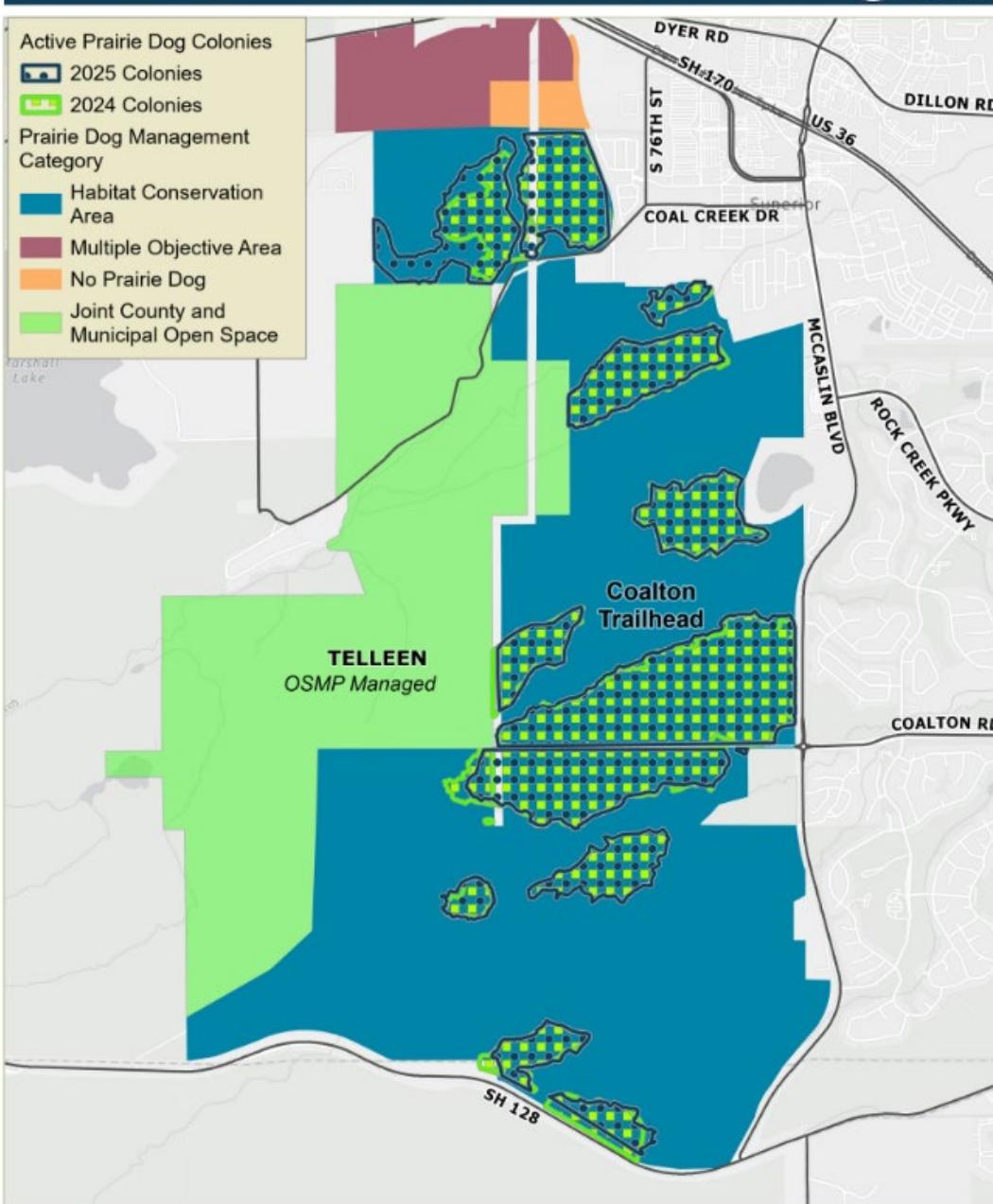
Prairie Dog Management Category

Habitat Conservation Area

Multiple Objective Area

No Prairie Dog

Joint County and
Municipal Open Space



2025

2025 Total Occupied Acreages: 581

2024 Total Occupied Acreages: 555

0

1/2
Miles

View the Map Accessibility Disclaimer: <https://www.bouldercounty.org/parks-and-open-space>

Questions?



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