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NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

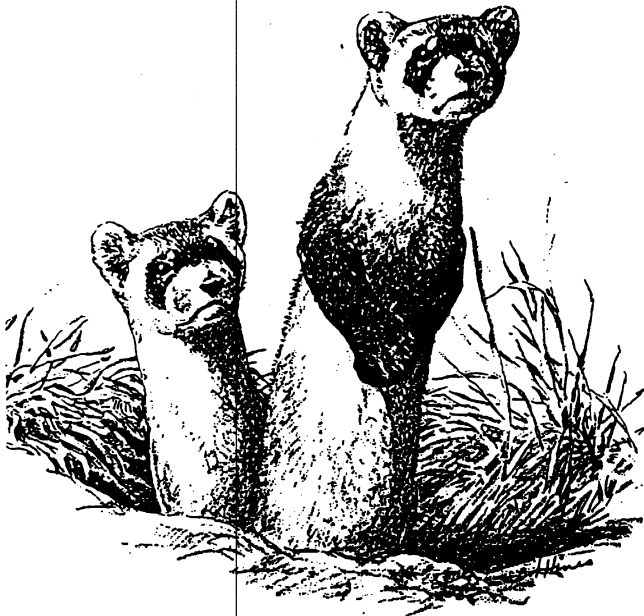
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Endangered Species Program
Project SE-1-~~2~~

January 1, 1993 - December 31, 1994

Study I: Black-Footed Ferret Conservation Program



K. L. Cool
Director

Submitted by
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March 1995

Report Number 7

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INTRODUCTION

The black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*) is classified as endangered by federal law. Although the state of North Dakota has no official list of endangered or threatened species, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society, and North Dakota Natural Heritage Inventory all regard the black-footed ferret (BFF) as endangered in the state. Recent evidence and lack of substantiated reports would indicate that the BFF has been extirpated from North Dakota as a breeding species.

The historical breeding range of the BFF extended over vast areas of the western Great Plains from Texas to Montana. The species has been extirpated throughout much of its former range. The most recent wild viable population of BFFs was discovered near Meeteetse, Wyoming, in 1981. However, the Meeteetse colony has been all but eliminated as a result of an outbreak canine distemper. In 1987 all the known remaining BFFs were captured and placed in a captive breeding facility in Sybille, Wyoming. This captive propagation effort may be the last chance for recovery of the species. The possibility exists for other remnant populations, but due to the rarity and elusive nature of the species none have yet been discovered.

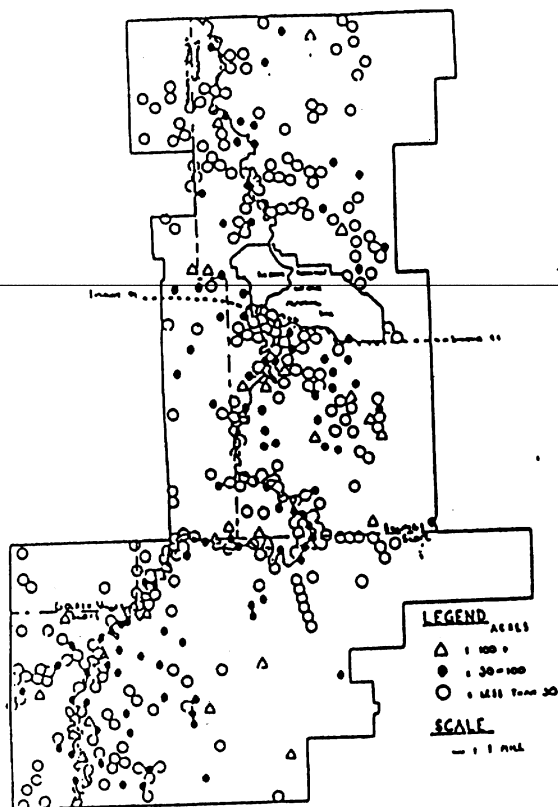
The population decline of the BFF has been caused by complete eradication or significant reductions in prairie dog populations throughout the species' range. The BFF has a very close ecological relationship with the prairie dog. subsequently, the conversion of native grasslands in combination with extensive poisoning have been responsible for the decrease in prairie dog numbers and subsequently the BFF's current plight.

Since the discovery of the Wyoming population, the BFF recovery effort has expanded substantially. The current primary objective of the BFF Recovery Plan is to "maintain at least one wild self-sustaining population of BFF in each state within its former range." Achieving this objective would require reintroduction in areas possessing suitable habitat and in North Dakota potentially suitable habitat for BFFs has been dramatically reduced. A 1976 study by Bishop and Culbertson documented the extent of this decline in an area of southwestern North Dakota which included portions of Billings, Slope, and Golden Valley counties. Figure 1 shows the decline in prairie dog towns within the study area. Similar trends, or even more dramatic declines, were observed throughout North Dakota during the 1930's. There may however, still remain a high enough density of prairie dogs and prairie dog towns in North Dakota to provide adequate habitat for BFFs. While adequate habitat may exist, the threat of destruction is ever present. Continued conversion of native grasslands and pressure from livestock grazers for greater prairie dog control are the principle threats to remaining prairie dog populations in North Dakota.

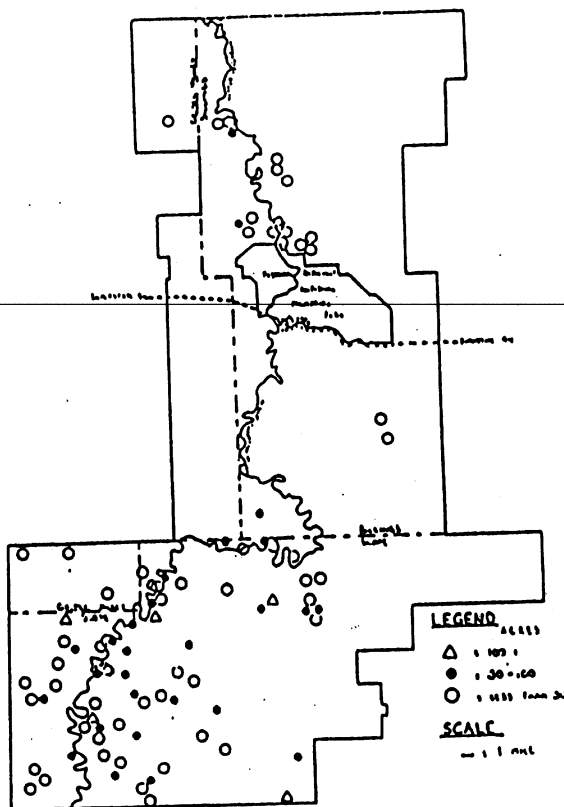
Objectives and Expected Benefits

In 1986 the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, in cooperation with the USFWS, began a Section 6 study designed to assess the status of the BFF in North Dakota and the availability of suitable habitat for the species. The key objectives of the study were:

1-A



1-B



1-C

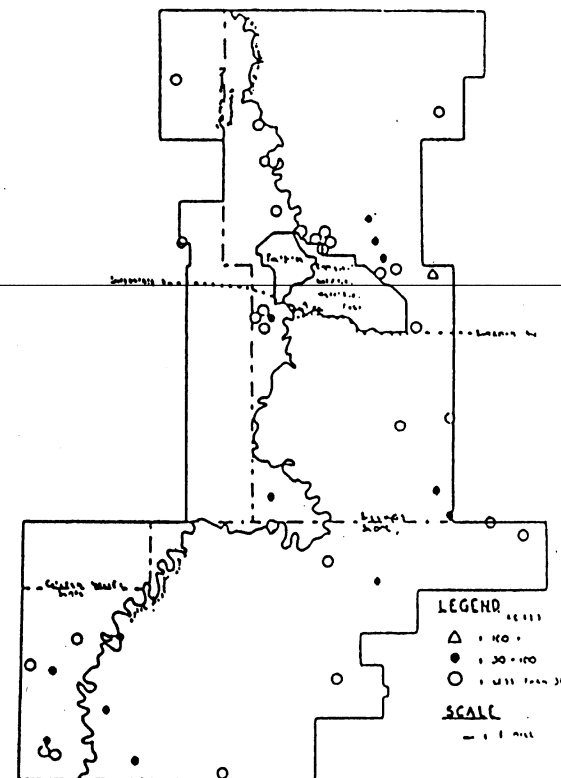


FIGURE 1. Decline of prairie dog towns in southwestern North Dakota

(from: Bishop and Culbertson)

- 1-A: PRAIRIE DOG TOWN DISTRIBUTION IN 1976 STUDY AREA FROM 1939 TO 1942.
 1-B: PRAIRIE DOG TOWN DISTRIBUTION IN 1976 STUDY AREA FROM 1957 TO 1965.
 1-C: PRAIRIE DOG TOWN DISTRIBUTION IN 1976 STUDY AREA FROM 1970 TO 1972.

1. To obtain information on population status, habitat use, habitat availability, and potential threats relative to the BFF in North Dakota.
2. To determine, delineate, and protect existing habitat that may be suitable for sustaining a BFF population in North Dakota or suitable for sustaining a reintroduced population of BFFs, which may be attempted in the future.
3. To coordinate the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's BFF program with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and BFF Interstate Coordinating Committee as well as with other state and federal agencies and private organizations.

Management activities and data collected during the time period January 1, 1993, to December 31, 1994, are presented in this report to assist the FWS and BFF recovery workers in evaluation of North Dakota's potential BFF habitat as it currently exists. Future recommendations resulting from the evaluation will provide the North Dakota Game and Fish Department with long-term management direction for BFFs, BFF habitat, and prairie dogs. The FWS and BFF Interstate Coordinating Committee recommendations will be beneficial in the following ways.

1. Determination, if in fact, there currently exists enough suitable habitat to maintain a viable, wild population of BFFs in North Dakota.
2. Delineation of any areas in North Dakota which presently provide suitable habitat and those with potential to support suitable habitat for BFFs.
3. Determination if North Dakota's existing suitable habitat or enhancement of existing habitat would provide an adequate base with the necessary quality and quantity to support a BFF reintroduction effort.
4. Possession of the necessary data to soundly base habitat protection, enhancement, and restoration strategies and/or priorities.
5. Identification of additional data which would be necessary for FWS and BFF recovery workers to make an accurate evaluation of North Dakota's potential BFF habitat.

Job 1: To determine existing habitat in North Dakota that may be suitable for black-footed ferrets. This will require an extensive inventory of existing prairie dog towns in North Dakota.

Job Duration:

All prairie dog town inventories have been completed in southwestern North Dakota. Periodic updates will be necessary in order to maintain an accurate knowledge of prairie dog town locations, size, and condition. Therefore, this portion of the project will be annually recurring. In addition, this portion of the project will include site specific evaluations and analysis during the next several years, given that the cooperative project will be continued.

A key component in the nationwide BFF Recovery Plan is to accurately determine the distribution of potentially suitable habitat in each state which historically had populations of BFFs. In North Dakota it had been 14 years since the last comprehensive inventory designed to determine location and acreage of existing prairie dog towns was conducted. Under the current North Dakota Section 6 study, a comprehensive inventory of the state's prairie dog towns was begun in 1986 and completed in 1990. This survey documented the location and approximate acreages of prairie dog towns in southwestern North Dakota. Special emphasis was placed on those prairie dog towns located within the administrative boundaries of the Little Missouri National Grasslands (LMNG) (Figure 2). This area has historically encompassed the majority of North Dakota's prairie dog towns. In addition, the LMNG area has a high percentage of public land, both federal and state. This ownership pattern may be essential for the success of any protection or reintroduction efforts.

The inventory was conducted by utilizing information from the USFWS, USFS, BLM, and various other state and federal agencies having data on BFFs or prairie dogs. Following identification and confirmation of existing prairie dog towns, each town was plotted on a series of county maps. The information assembled during this project period is presented in Appendix I. In this project period, inventories in the counties of Morton, Grant, and portions of Sioux were completed.

The final step in the initial analysis of potentially suitable BFF habitat in North Dakota was to compile all pertinent data and mapping information in a format that could readily be evaluated. This was accomplished during 1990. Following compilation, all the information was screened using the standard 7 kilometer rule test. The purpose of this procedure is to identify prairie dog town complexes that meet the minimum criteria for BFF reintroduction sites. Six complexes in North Dakota were identified (Figure 3).

In September 1990, detailed field analysis on complex number one was initiated. This complex was chosen based on its overall density of prairie dog towns, high percentage of public land, and past BFF records. A cooperative effort by our Department, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service resulted in the near completion of individual prairie dog town mapping, size/acreage determinations, and active burrow density counts. Approximately 70 percent of the towns within

the complex were completed in 1990. The remainder were finished during 1991 and analysis on a second complex was completed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The results of these analyses are in Appendix 2. The report provides biological data necessary for the evaluation of the area as a BFF reintroduction site.

In 1992, work continued on evaluating sites in Bowman, Morton, and Sioux Counties. In addition, the data for Theodore Roosevelt National Park complex was re-evaluated during 1992 in preparation for the BFF-ICC meeting.

During the time period January 1, 1993, to December 31, 1994, activities on Job I were very limited due to lack of additional Section 6 funding. The leftover funding from the previous project period was dedicated to interagency coordination covering prairie dog management. Agencies involved included USFWS, USFS, NPS, and BLM.

Table 1. Summary of statewide prairie dog town numbers and acreages.

County	# Towns	Total Acres	Ownership-----					BIA
			BLM	USFS	NPS	State	Pvt.	
Adams	2	60				40	20	
Billings	54	2,396		1,254	538	156	442	
Bowman	20	1,942	400			190	1,352	
Dunn	24	1,545				113	1,099	341
Golden Valley	25	929		227		1	701	
Grant	11	475					475	
McKenzie	34	1,923		1,168	214	59	482	
Morton	36	3,520				610	2,910	
Slope	38	2,482		1,190		81	1,211	
Stark	11	270					270	
Sioux	93	4,012				105	1,160	2,777
State Total	348	19,554	400 (1%)	3,839 (20%)	752 (4%)	1,355 (7%)	10,122 (52%)	3,118 (16%)

Average prairie dog town size in state = 56 acres.

FIGURE 2. North Dakota counties being inventoried for prairie dog distribution

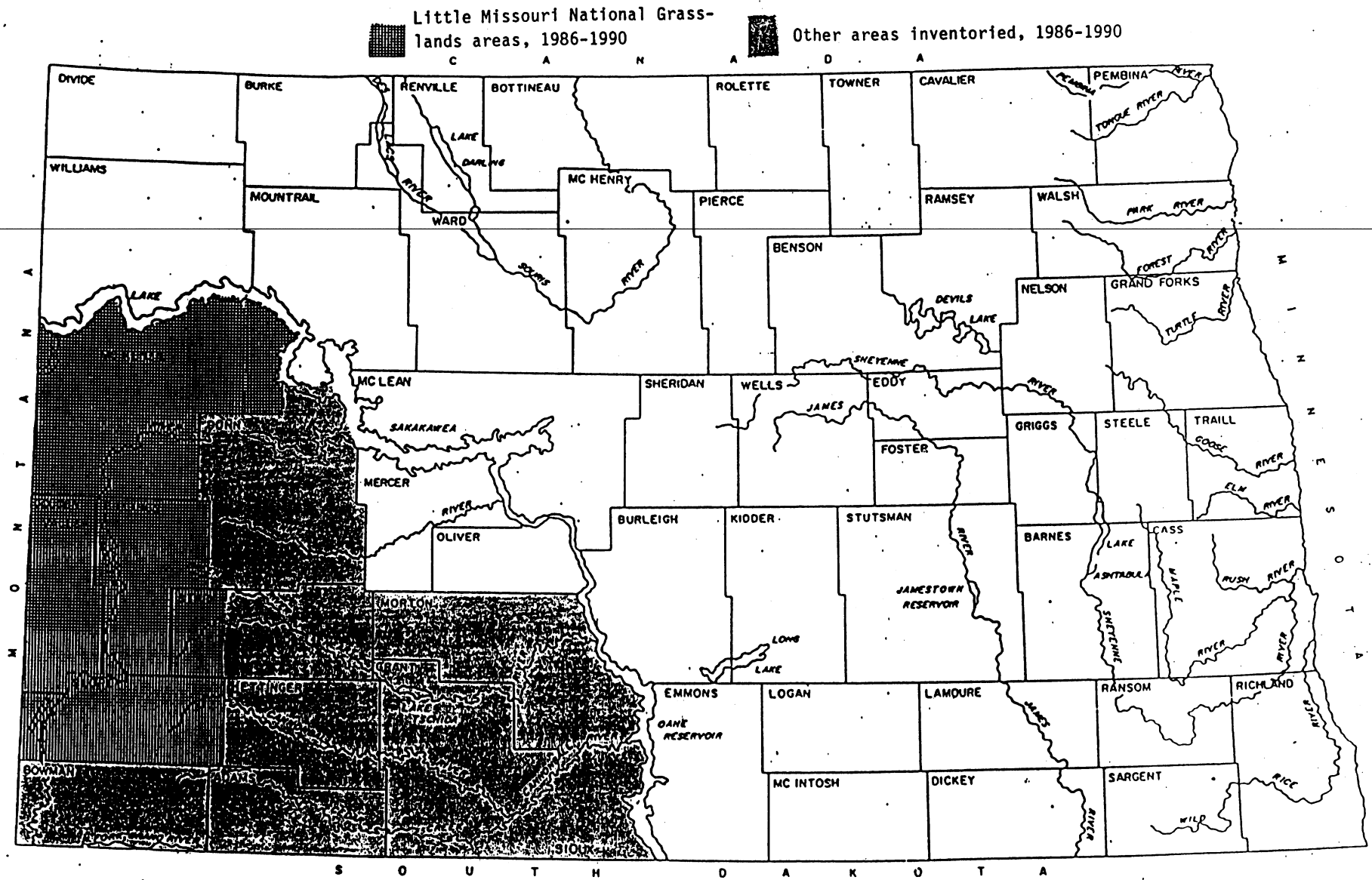
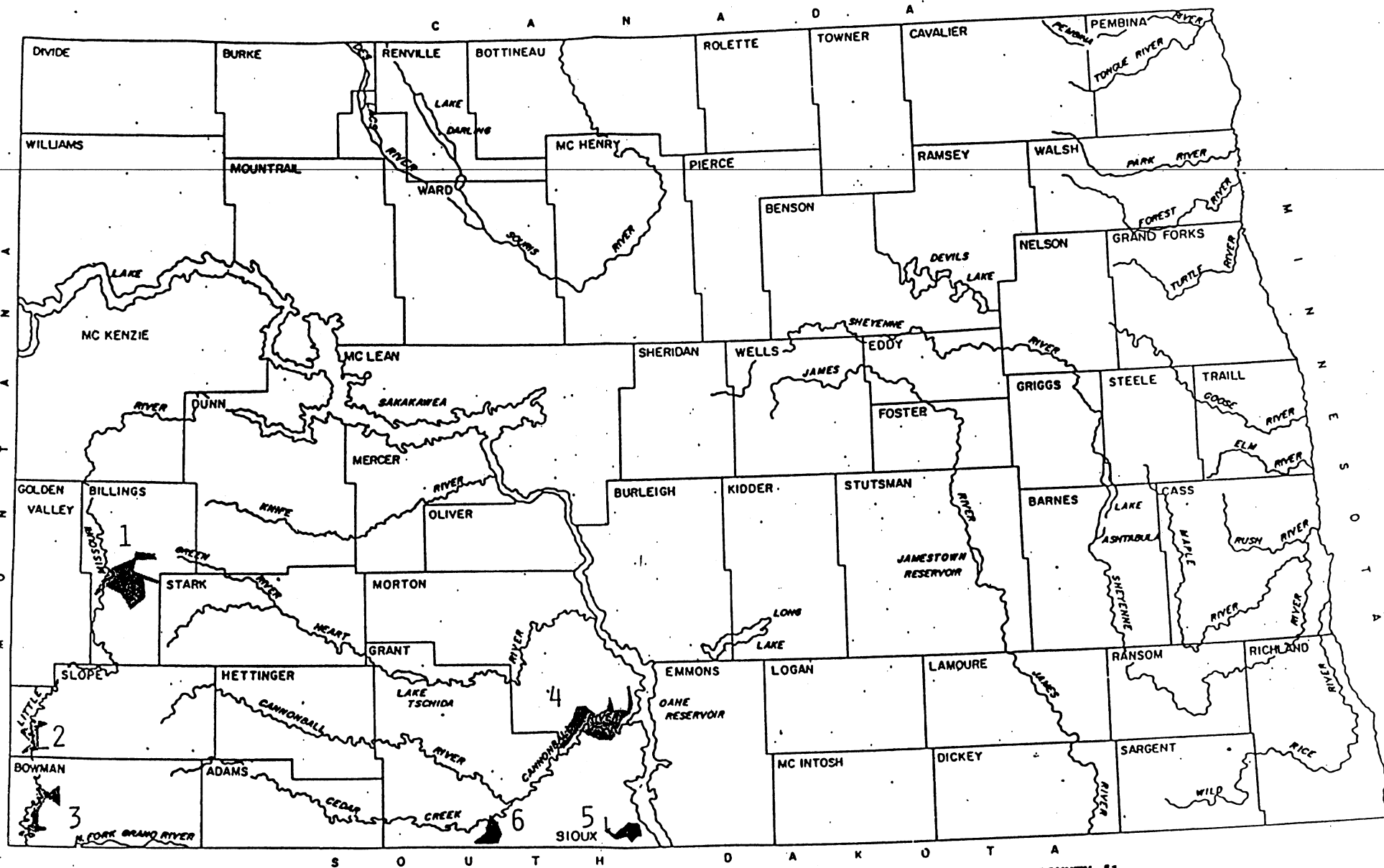


Figure 3. Prairie Dog Complexes Meeting The Minimum
Criteria For Potential Ferret Reintroduction



COMPLEX: 1 = TR NATIONAL PARK AREA
2 = SW SLOPE COUNTY

3 = BLM BOWMAN COUNTY AREA
4 = MORTON/GRANT AREA

5 = SIOUX COUNTY #1
6 = SIOUX COUNTY #2

Job 2: To determine the current status of the black-footed ferret population in North Dakota through solicitation of sightings and confirmation of those sightings.

Job Duration:

1986 - annually recurring.

One of the most cost effective methods of estimating the population status of BFFs in an area is through solicitation of reported sightings from the general public and resource agency field personnel. It has been noted in other states that public awareness and subsequent reports can result in substantial contributions to BFF inventories. Under current study plans, confirmation of the most probable sightings are conducted by North Dakota Game and Fish Department in cooperation with the USFWS. Survey techniques used for verification will be those described in the most recent FWS - BFF Recovery Team guidelines.

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has compiled a yearly record of reported BFF sightings in the state over the past several years. All pertinent data and information regarding BFF sightings are forwarded annually to the FWS. During this project period our Department and USFWS received one report of a possible BFF sighting in North Dakota, which was confirmed or listed as probable.

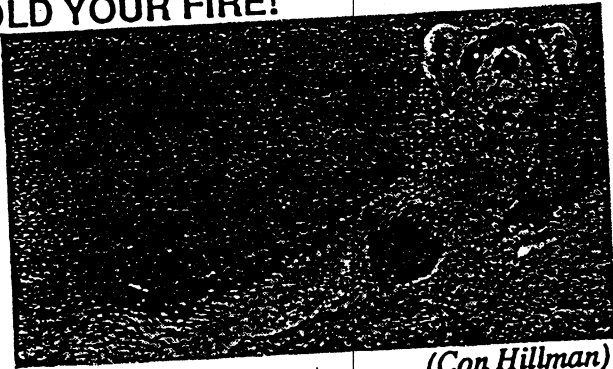
Our Department provides informational materials to prairie dog hunters and encourages reports of BFF sightings. This promotion is meant to increase public awareness and increase opportunities for locating any remnant BFF populations in North Dakota. An informational sheet alerting prairie dog hunters about BFFs was completed in the fall of 1988 (Figure 3). This sheet will be included in all future responses to prairie dog hunters who contact the Department for information. In addition, supplies of the sheet have been provided to Department district offices, US Forest Service offices, NPS information centers, and the USFWS.

Also, periodic news releases are issued highlighting nationwide developments in the BFF recovery program. These news releases in concert with public endangered species presentations, educational materials, and information requests combine to increase people's awareness regarding BFFs.

PRAIRIE DOG HUNTERS

PLEASE REPORT SIGHTINGS of BLACK-FOOTED FERRETS

HOLD YOUR FIRE!



(Con Hillman)

IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS

The black-footed ferret is larger than a weasel; about 18-24 inches long and weighing between 1.5 and 3 pounds. Its general appearance is sleek with a black-tipped tail equaling one-fourth of total body length. The ferret has buffy-yellow back and sides; light underside; black feet and legs; and a light face that is contrasted by a black mask.

HABITS

Black-footed ferrets live principally in prairie dog towns and feed to a great extent on these animals. Ferrets are primarily nocturnal, but may also be active during daylight hours, especially in the summer months. Most sightings occur near prairie dog burrows with only the ferret's head showing, or lying on the edge of the mound as seen in the photo to the left.

DISTRIBUTION

The original range of the black-footed ferret, one of our most endangered mammals, extended over much of the Great Plains and included parts of southwestern North Dakota. Today, no black-footed ferrets are known to exist in the wild. However, small remnant populations of the species may still be found in prairie dog towns throughout this area.



(Bill Miller)

DON'T CONFUSE WITH THE LONG-TAILED WEASEL

The long-tailed weasel is much smaller than the black-footed ferret; weighing only 7-12 ounces and having a length of 12-20 inches with a tail nearly half as long as the total body length. It is light brown to chocolate brown with a yellowish underside during summer months and white in winter.

To report the sighting of a black-footed ferret or receive more information about this endangered species, contact:

NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPT.
100 NORTH BISMARCK EXPRESSWAY
BISMARCK, ND 58501
(701) 221-6300

or

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
1500 CAPITOL AVENUE
BISMARCK, ND 58501
(701) 250-4492



Job 3: Protection of existing BFF habitat in North Dakota

Job Duration:

1986 - annually recurring.

In this portion of the project, efforts were directed toward ensuring the continued existence of known and potentially suitable habitat in order to protect undetected BFF populations and to maximize recovery potential in North Dakota. Our Department's primary method of BFF habitat protection was to survey and evaluate current land management programs and land use practices in areas, both public and private, believed to be potentially suitable as BFF habitat. Following this evaluation our Department was able to develop preliminary protection strategies through the following measures:

- Monitoring and evaluation of existing federal and state management programs and practices by agencies which may adversely affect BFFs or potentially suitable habitat.
- Participation in the planning of prairie dog control programs and other management practices which are known to adversely impact ecological requirements of the BFF.
- Development of an education and information program designed to increase public awareness of the BFF.
- Aggressive enforcement of the Endangered Species Act as it pertains to the BFF and its habitat.

During this project period the Department actively cooperated with federal and state agencies regarding BFFs and prairie dogs. Monitoring of current public land management practices and participation in the planning of new programs afforded our Department the opportunity to increase protection of potentially suitable BFF habitat in North Dakota.

The Department worked closely with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) on the implementation of the Custer National Forest 10 Year Management Plan, development of grazing Allotment Management Plans, and implementation of new prairie dog control guidelines for the McKenzie District of the Custer National Forest. Similar activities were coordinated with the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, N.D. State Land Department, and private landowners.

The Department also participated in meetings of the Black-Footed Ferret Interstate Coordinating Committee (BFF-ICC). All states involved with the BFF-ICC provided representatives to the working sessions along with summaries of BFF and prairie dog related activities. Comments on BFF-ICC projects and position statements, including a contingency plan for the disposition of any BFFs found in the wild, were provided by our Department in cooperation with the USFWS, Bismarck. North Dakota officially drafted and implemented a BFF disposition contingency plan, which was endorsed by the BFF-ICC (Appendix III).

In addition, the Department participated in meetings of the North Dakota BFF State Work Group. This group included all previously mentioned federal and state land management agencies and Indian Reservations with prairie dog concentrations. The purpose of the Work Group is to achieve better coordination on all aspects of BFF and prairie dog management and set the stage for cooperative field habitat evaluations of potential reintroduction sites.

Continued North Dakota Game and Fish Department participation in the activities of the BFF-ICC will be limited due to lack of adequate Section 6 funding.

Appendix I

A listing of prairie dog towns occurring in southwestern North Dakota, including the counties of: Adams, Billings, Bowman, Dunn, Golden Valley, Grant, Hettinger, Mercer, McKenzie, Morton, Oliver, Sioux, Slope, and Stark.

NOTE:

Complete lists are available upon request. All lists will be included in the final project report.

Appendix II

Theodore Roosevelt National Park Area
Prairie Dog Complex: A Biological
Evaluation as Black-footed Ferret Habitat

**THEODORE ROOSEVELT NATIONAL PARK AREA
PRAIRIE DOG COMPLEX**

NORTH DAKOTA



**A BIOLOGICAL EVALUATION AS BLACK-FOOTED
FERRET HABITAT**

DECEMBER 1, 1991

Results of a
Biological Evaluation of the Theodore Roosevelt
National Park Area Prairie Dog Complex as
Potential Black-footed Ferret Habitat

Submitted by:

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December 1, 1991

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The biological evaluation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park Area Prairie Dog Complex as black-footed ferret habitat was completed in 1991. The complex is quite small in terms of area but dense in terms of the number of prairie dogs per unit area. How it ranks in comparison with other state's potential reintroduction sites is unknown at this time. Regardless of the complex's comparative rank, it should be understood that completion of this evaluation is only the second step in a series of necessary evaluations. Future evaluations will include not only additional biological aspects but also the social, economic, and political questions that will require analysis and consensus before this complex can be considered as a black-footed ferret reintroduction site.

INTRODUCTION

In 1991, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department and the US Fish and Wildlife Service completed a field evaluation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park area prairie dog complex. The evaluation was the second in a series of steps intended to determine the potential of this area as a possible site for reintroduction of the black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*).

Since the mid-1980s, there has been a nationwide effort to identify and evaluate potential sites for reintroduction of this endangered mammal. The black-footed ferret, which relies almost exclusively on prairie dogs for food, is being captively propagated in an effort to provide animals for reintroduction. States within the former range of the ferret have been inventorying their prairie dog complexes in an effort to determine size and density of prairie dog towns.

In North Dakota, six complexes met the minimum criteria as outlined in the "7 kilometer rule." The Department, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other cooperating agencies have completed the second phase of the evaluation, which consists of prairie dog density work, on two of the six complexes. The two completed complexes were chosen as the first to receive attention primarily due to their public land characteristics. The remaining four complexes are predominately private land and tribal land. Working on field analysis in these areas is more complicated and will be pursued, where possible, in the next two to three years.

The Theodore Roosevelt National Park complex is the focus of this report. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is completing a similar report on the Marmouth Complex which is located some 40 miles to the southeast of the Park complex. The Park complex is of particular interest due to its high percentage (over 90 percent) of public land. The 14,000 hectare complex (600.4 ha of actual prairie dog towns) is comprised of National Park Service lands and large areas of US Forest Service administered national grasslands. In addition to private land holdings within the complex, the State Board of University and School Lands also manages some significant tracts. The prairie dog towns themselves are distributed on various lands in the following manner.

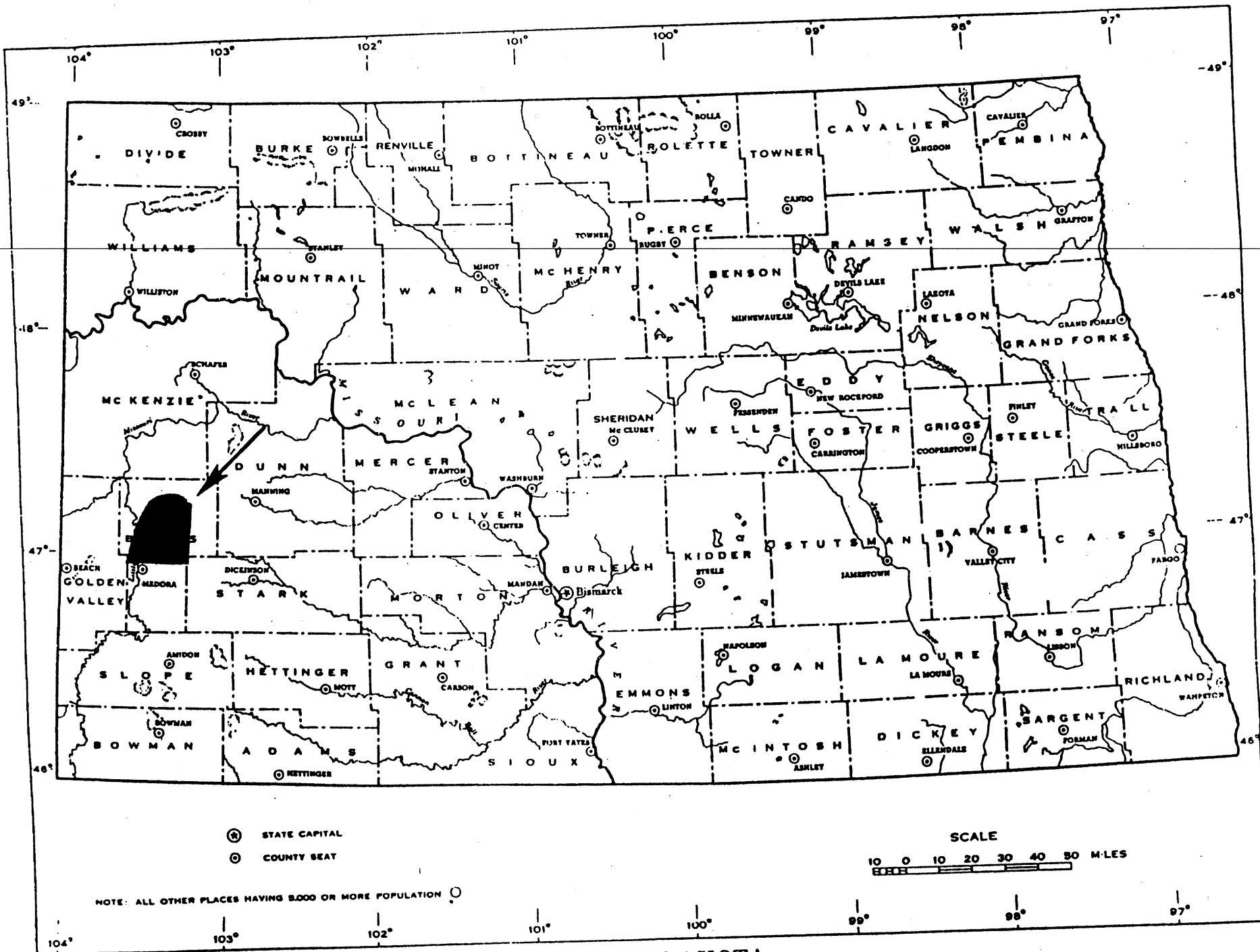
NPS	= 287.9 ha (711.1 acres)	48%
USFS	= 257.8 ha (636.8 acres)	43%
Private	= 35.5 ha (87.8 acres)	6%
State Schools	= 19.2 ha (47.4 acres)	3%

600.4 ha (1483 acres) 100%

Following completion of the field analysis in which 95.8 percent of the prairie dog towns were sampled at a rate of 5 percent or greater, the results were analyzed using the suggested formulas by Biggins, et al. The data analysis resulted in a complex rating of 52.53 for the Theodore Roosevelt National Park Complex. How this complex rates in comparison with others throughout the western United States remains to be seen. In general, it can be said that the complex is quite small in terms of area but dense in terms of the number of prairie dogs per unit area. Black-tailed prairie dogs exhibit these dense colonial tendencies versus white-tailed prairie dogs that are not so dense but have much larger colonies in terms of area. Whether or not the density makes up for the small area is a question that remains unanswered at this time. We will be depending upon the BFF Interstate Coordinating Committee and other experts for this analysis.

Finally, it should be noted that completion of this second phase of evaluation does not mean the Theodore Roosevelt National Park Complex is ready for black-footed ferrets. Several more biological evaluation steps are necessary as is the important issues of socio-economic impacts and public and private support. The easy part is the biological evaluation. A much more difficult task lies ahead in reaching a consensus among all the stakeholders, both public and private, on the question whether reintroducing black-footed ferrets to the area will work and be acceptable.

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NORTH DAKOTA

NORTH DAKOTA

THEODORE ROOSEVELT NATIONAL PARK--SOUTH UNIT--BLACK-FOOTED FERRET REINTRODUCTION COMPLEX

Colony Number	Name	Legal	Ownership	Size	Density Work	No. of BFF Family Groups
1	Little Wannagan Creek	141-102-15	USFS	11.6 ha	9/27/90	1.26
2	Moser Homestead	141-101-19 & 20	Pvt/NPS	12.8 ha	9/27/90	1.21
3	Gov't Creek--St. School	141-101-21	State Schools	12.8 ha	8/06/91	1.32
4	Gov't Creek--St. School NE	141-101-15	State Schools	6.4 ha	8/06/91	.92
5	Gov't Creek--Private	141-101-22	Pvt	12.8 ha	NA*	1.12
6	Mike Auney Wells	141-101-29	NPS	14.5 ha	9/27/90	1.31
7	Jules Creek	141-101-27	Pvt/NPS	15.7 ha	9/26/90	1.62
8	Beef Corral Area	140-102-1	NPS	62.7 ha	8/5-6/91	6.80
9	Big Plateau	140-102-2	NPS	18.6 ha	8/21/90	1.76
10	Ekblom	140-102-2	NPS	2.3 ha	8/20/90	(.25)
11	Tomomichael	140-102-3	NPS	5.8 ha	8/20/90	.58
12	Peaceful Valley	140-102-11	NPS	25.0 ha	8/06/91	4.02
13	Halliday Wells	140-102-12	NPS	18.6 ha	8/22/90	1.98
14	Johnson Plateau	140-102-14-23	NPS	34.3 ha	8/20/90	3.51
15	West Paddock Creek	140-101-18	NPS	1.6 ha	8/22/90	(.09)
16	East Paddock Creek	140-101-17	NPS	2.9 ha	8/22/90	(.38)
17	Old Entrance	140-101-28	NPS	11.0 ha	9/26/90	.97
18	Boicourt Springs	140-100-2	NPS	20.3 ha	9/27/90	1.15
19	Talkington West	140-100-1	USFS	107.5 ha	8/07/91	8.26
20	Lindbo	141-100-33	USFS	23.8 ha	8/07/91	1.65
21	TRNP-East-Jones	140-100-29 & 30	NPS	64.5 ha	9/25/90	2.77
22	Talkington East	140-100-2 & 3	USFS	67.4 ha	8/06/91	6.63
23	Sully Springs	139-101-11	USFS	24.3 ha	9/26/90	1.63
24	Andrews Creek	140-102-20,29-30	USFS	23.2 ha	9/26/90	2.06

Total = 24

% Density Sampled = 95.8%.

Total ha = 600.4 (acres = 1483)

Complex Rating = 52.53

Ave. size ha = 25.01 (acres = 61.8)

* Density work not completed

Number	Name	Legal	Ownership	Size	Density Work	No. of BFF Family Groups
**25	Frank's Creek East		USFS	29.5 ha	8/06/91	2.52
**26	Hawk Diner	141-100-1	Pvt	6.4 ha	NA*	----
**27	Frank's Creek West	Pvt 141-100-5	Pvt	34.3 ha (est)	NA*	----

Total = 27

% Density Sampled = 88.8%

Total ha = 670.6 (acres = 1656.4)
Ave. size ha = 24.8 (acres = 61.3)

* Density work not completed
** Colonies fall outside 7 km complex

EVALUATION OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT NATIONAL PARK PRAIRIE DOG COMPLEX--NORTH DAKOTA--1991

Town	N	Prop Good	Total ha	Good ha	Burr/ ha	PD/ ha	PD Est.	PD/ 763	COMMENTS
Little Wannagan	1	1.0	11.6	11.6	263.3	83.3	966.3	1.26	
Moser Homestead	2	1.0	12.6	12.8	228.3	72.2	924.0	1.21	
Gov't Creek (SS)	3	1.0	12.8	12.8	248.9	78.7	1007.6	1.32	
Gov't Creek (SS-NE)	1	1.0	6.4	6.4	346.6	109.6	701.5	.92	
Gov't Creek (Pvt)	*	1.0	12.8	12.8	-----	-----	-----	*1.12	Estimate--not sampled
Mike Auney Wells	5	1.0	14.5	14.5	218.6	69.2	1002.7	1.31	
Jules Creek	4	1.0	15.7	15.7	249.2	78.8	1237.2	1.62	
Beef Corral	9	1.0	62.7	62.7	261.8	82.8	5192.3	6.80	
Big Plateau	3	1.0	18.6	18.6	227.8	72.0	1339.9	1.76	
(Ekblom)	(1)	1.0	(2.3)	(2.3)	(263.3)	(83.3)	(191.5)	(0.25)	Not included in complex
Tomomichael	2	1.0	5.8	5.8	243.3	76.9	446.3	.58	
Peaceful Valley	2	1.0	25.0	25.0	388.8	122.8	3070.0	4.02	
Halliday Wells	4	1.0	18.6	18.6	257.5	81.4	1514.7	1.98	
Johnson Plateau	8	1.0	34.3	34.3	247.1	78.1	2680.0	3.51	
(W. Paddock Creek)	(1)	(1.0)	(1.16)	(1.16)	(200.0)	(63.3)	(73.4)	(.096)	Not included in complex
(E. Paddock Creek)	(1)	(1.0)	(2.9)	(2.9)	(316.66)	(100.2)	(290.4)	(0.38)	Not included in complex
Old Entrance	1	1.0	11.0	11.0	213.3	67.5	742.0	.97	
Boicourt Springs	5	1.0	20.3	20.3	136.6	43.2	877.4	1.15	
Talkington West	6	1.0	107.5	107.5	185.5	58.7	6307.5	8.26	
Lindbo	3	1.0	23.8	23.8	167.7	53.1	1262.8	1.65	
TRNP--East--Jones	7	1.0	64.5	64.5	183.3	32.8	2116.9	2.77	
Talkington East	4	1.0	67.4	67.4	237.5	75.1	5062.4	6.63	
Sully Springs	6	1.0	24.3	24.3	161.6	51.1	1242.4	1.63	
Andrews Creek	9	1.0	23.2	23.2	214.8	67.9	1576.1	2.06	

TOTAL

85

593.4

593.4

39,270

52.53

Appendix III

North Dakota
Contingency Plan for Managing
Black-Footed Ferrets Found in
the Wild

NORTH DAKOTA
Contingency Plan for Managing Black-Footed
Ferrets Found in the Wild

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has adopted the following guidelines for action in the event that a black-footed ferret is found in North Dakota. These guidelines meet the minimum criteria for action as recommended by the Black-Footed Ferret Interstate Coordinating Committee.

1. If a sighting of a black-footed ferret is confirmed, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is to be notified immediately. One of the following individuals is to be contacted by phone:

Randy Kreil - (NDGFD) Bismarck, North Dakota
Office: (701) 224-9870 Home: (701) 224-9833

Mike McKenna - (NDGFD) Bismarck, North Dakota
Office: (701) 221-6300 Home: (701) 222-4160

Roger Collins - (USFWS) Bismarck, North Dakota
Office: (701) 250-4492 Home: (701) 258-6849

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will in turn contact appropriate state and federal natural resource agency representatives.

2. The National Ecology Center, Ft. Collins, Colorado will be notified as soon as possible with detailed information on the confirmed black-footed ferret sighting. The following individuals are to be contacted at NEC:

Dean Biggins - Fort Collins, Colorado
Office: (303) 226-9467 Home: (303) 484-0829

Lou Hanebury - Fort Collins, Colorado
Office: (303) 226-9467

Other individuals to be contacted in the event of a confirmed sighting are:

Tom Thorne - Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Office: (307) 776-5629 Home: (307) 742-3352

Ron Crete, BFF-ICC, Chairman, USFWS - Helena, Montana
Office: (406) 449-5225

3. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department will contact and apprise affected landowners (public and/or private) and seek their support and cooperation.
4. A team from the National Ecology Center and other appropriate captive breeding specialists will capture up to nine (9) black-footed ferrets found at a site, examine females for lactation, and transport males and non-lactating females to a captive breeding facility.
5. A team will be designated to monitor lactating females and young until young can be captured (lactating females will not be captured until after all known young have been captured).
6. Surveys will be initiated for black-footed ferrets on all prairie dog colonies in the vicinity of discovery.
7. Consultation with the Commissioner of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department will be required prior to taking any further action not addressed in these guidelines.

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