



Open House

Wildlife Management Guidelines & Prairie Dog Land Use Code Updates

Please sign in and make a nametag.

Stations to visit:

- **Overall goal of Wildlife Management Guidelines**
- **Wildlife Management Guidelines proposed changes**
- **Urban prairie dogs**
- **Soapstone Prairie Natural Area prairie dogs**
- **Proposed changes to prairie dog management**
- **Land Use Code proposed changes**

**Please complete a feedback form
and enjoy a snack.**

Overall Management Goal



Manage natural areas to support a wide variety of native plants and wildlife as well as maintain and enhance the health and integrity of ecological systems.





Wildlife Management Guidelines

Adopted after review by City Council and apply only to the City’s natural areas.

2007 Chapter and Content	Proposed Updates, Additions, and Changes
Chapter 1: Scope and Purpose: “The Natural Areas Department will have the Land Conservation and Stewardship Board review these Wildlife Management Guidelines every five to seven years.”	Change to the number of years between review: “The Natural Areas Department will have the Land Conservation and Stewardship Board will review these Wildlife Management Guidelines every <u>ten years</u> .”
Chapter 2: Section: Existing Policies Guidelines and Plans	Will be updated to reflect current policies, guidelines, and plans in the City of Fort Collins.
Chapter 2: Section: Fort Collins City Municipal Code	Will be updated to reflect current City Municipal Code.
Chapter 3: Table 3.1. Comparison of bird diversity in the Fort Collins region with that in national parks and grasslands.	Will be updated to reflect current area bird counts.
Chapter 3: Table 3.2 Wildlife <u>Species of Concern</u> in City of Fort Collins Natural Areas	Change to “Table 3.2 Wildlife <u>Species of Interest</u> in City of Fort Collins Natural Areas.” This new list was created during the Natural Areas Department’s internal Restoration Plan process and reflects wildlife that occurs or may occur on Fort Collins Natural Areas and is listed by Colorado Parks & Wildlife as Tier 1 or Tier 2, or is tracked by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program.
Chapter 4: Ecosystem Health: An Ecological Framework for Wildlife Management	This chapter will be shortened and simplified.
Chapter 5: Mammals section	A section on small mammals will be added. Monitoring is needed to better understand this set of species.
Chapter 5: Mammals section- Bats	Colorado Bat Society will be contacted for additional species monitoring and habitat improvement suggestions that will be considered for incorporation.
Chapter 5: Birds- Grassland Birds section	Language will be added from the Nature Conservancy’s State of the Birds Report such as “ 27% of all grassland birds are on the Watch List and declining steeply. These birds are of high conservation concern and are at risk of extinction without significant action (North American Bird Conservation Initiative, 2016).”
Chapter 5: Birds- Riparian Song Birds section	Update will be provided about the river restorations and bird species seen. Language regarding the importance riparian habitat in Colorado will be added (2% of landscape that 80% of bird species need). Language to be added regarding the importance of fruit bearing shrubs and mid-story habitat to riparian birds. Add a strategy to evaluate escarpments for importance to bank nesting swallows prior to restoration activities that affect these banks.
Chapter 5: Fish section	Information on native fish reintroductions to be added including those at Topminnow Natural Area and Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. Update on health of the river.
Chapter 5: Invertebrates section	Will include information about the importance of pollinators and specific butterfly species targeted for conservation will be added.
Chapter 6: Prairie Dog Management	See posters about Urban Prairie Dogs, Soapstone Prairie prairie dogs and Land Use Code proposed changes.
Chapter 7: Native Wildlife Recovery and Reintroduction	Include and update information about reintroductions since 2007. including back-footed ferret, bison, native prairie fish.
Chapter 8: Beaver section	Include information about the benefits of beavers. If beavers are negatively impacting native habitat, it is proposed to consider relocation and seek out areas that need relocated beavers. Natural Areas is considering monitoring for population density and finding appropriate reference sites for comparison.
Chapter 8: Canada Geese	Update with latest techniques and success (such as the placement of plastic coyote statues which scare geese away). Natural Areas will continue to research best management practices to reduce goose impacts to restoration sites.



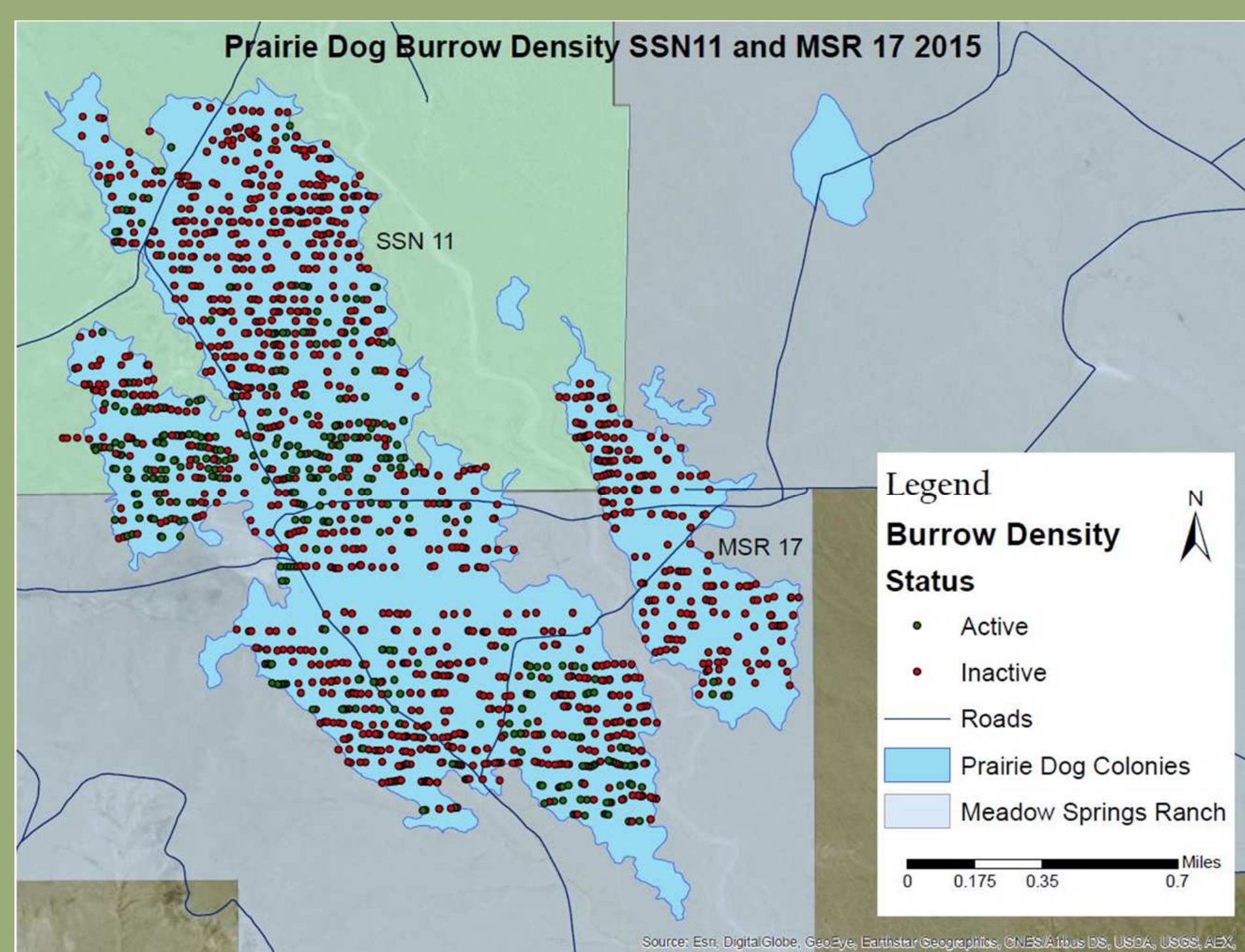
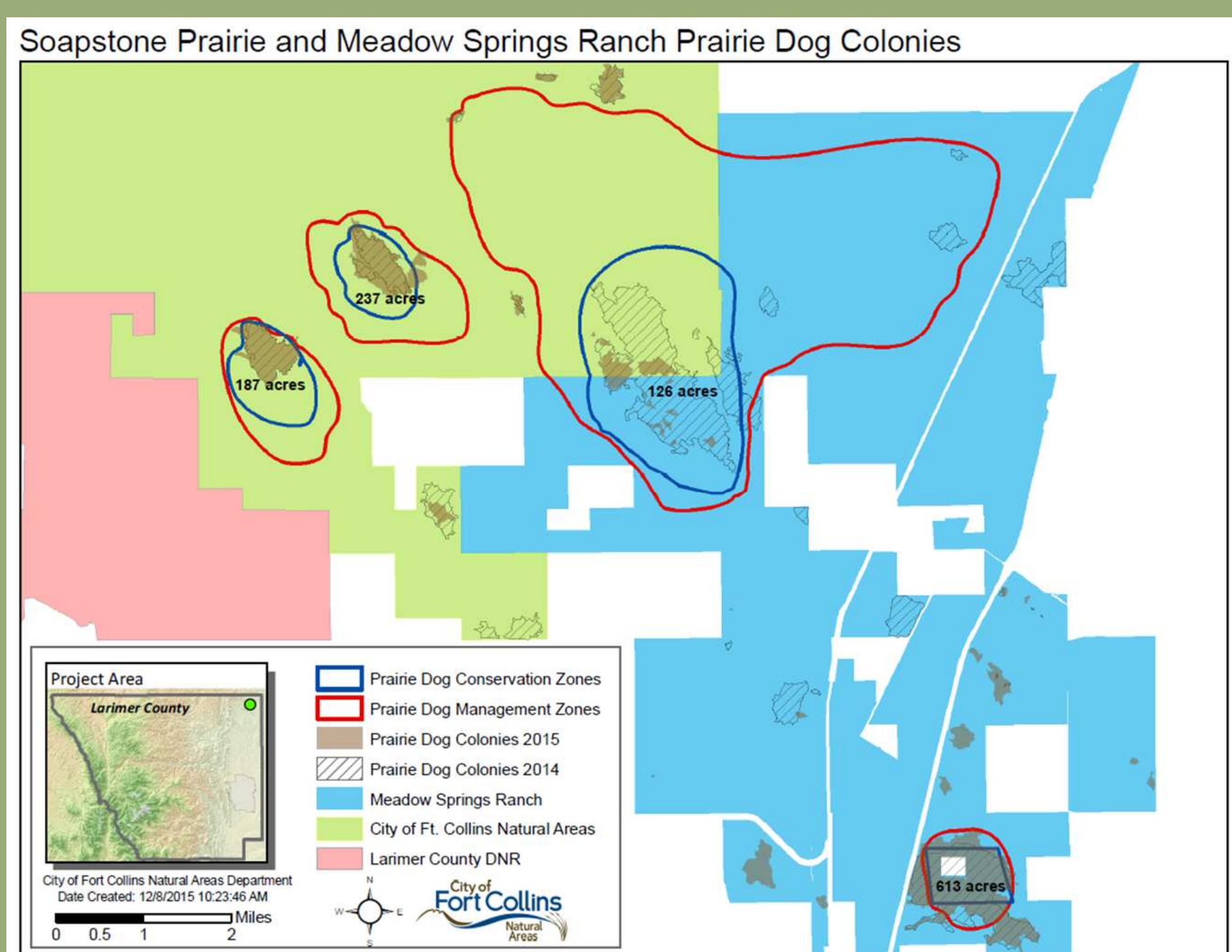
2007 Chapter and Content	Proposed Updates, Additions, and Changes
Chapter 9: Feral/ Free Ranging Cats; “Scientific studies conclude that hundreds of millions of birds and three times as many small mammals are killed every year by feral or free roaming cats.”	Update to numbers of wildlife killed each year by free ranging domestic cats according to a study in 2013: “1.3–4.0 billion birds and 6.3–22.3 billion mammals annually” (Loss, et. al. 2013)
Chapter 9: Bullfrogs	Update with attempted methods of bullfrog control including eggmass collection efforts and bullfrog round-up. Natural Areas will continue to pursue methods of control particularly if leopard frog reintroduction is possible. The department will continue to research best management practices for chytrid fungus.
Chapter 9: Carp	Update with attempted methods of carp control since 2007.
Chapter 10: Chronic Wasting Disease	Consider Colorado Parks and Wildlife’s recommendation for managed hunting opportunities to help control this disease in deer.
Chapter 11: Fish Habitat: Recycled Christmas Trees	Remove this section as it is no longer applicable.
Chapter 12: Wildlife Inventory and Monitoring	Add information about Natural Areas’ Indicator Species and Species of Interest monitoring. Species may be monitored when there is a management outcome such as understanding where species occur to inform habitat modifications or protections. A database to track incidental observations by staff is recommended and also a goal of Natural Areas’ internal Restoration Plan (2016).
Appendix A: Responding to Wildlife Emergencies	Will update to include protocol for dead prairie dogs including testing for plague.
Appendix B: Key to Wildlife Species of Interest in City of Fort Collins Natural Areas	Will update to reflect current nomenclature.
Appendix D: Summary of Comments	This will be updated with comments from the current public engagement process including comments from the Land Conservation and Stewardship Board, City Council, and the public.
Appendix E: Board Letters of Recommendation	This will be updated to reflect current Board feedback.
Appendix G: Comparison of 1998 Prairie Dog Policy and 2007 Wildlife Management Guidelines	Will be a comparison of 2007 Wildlife Management Guidelines and 2016 Wildlife Management Guidelines, similar to this chart.

Prairie Dogs at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area

Prairie dogs are a necessary and valued component of the healthy shortgrass prairie that is conserved at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area.

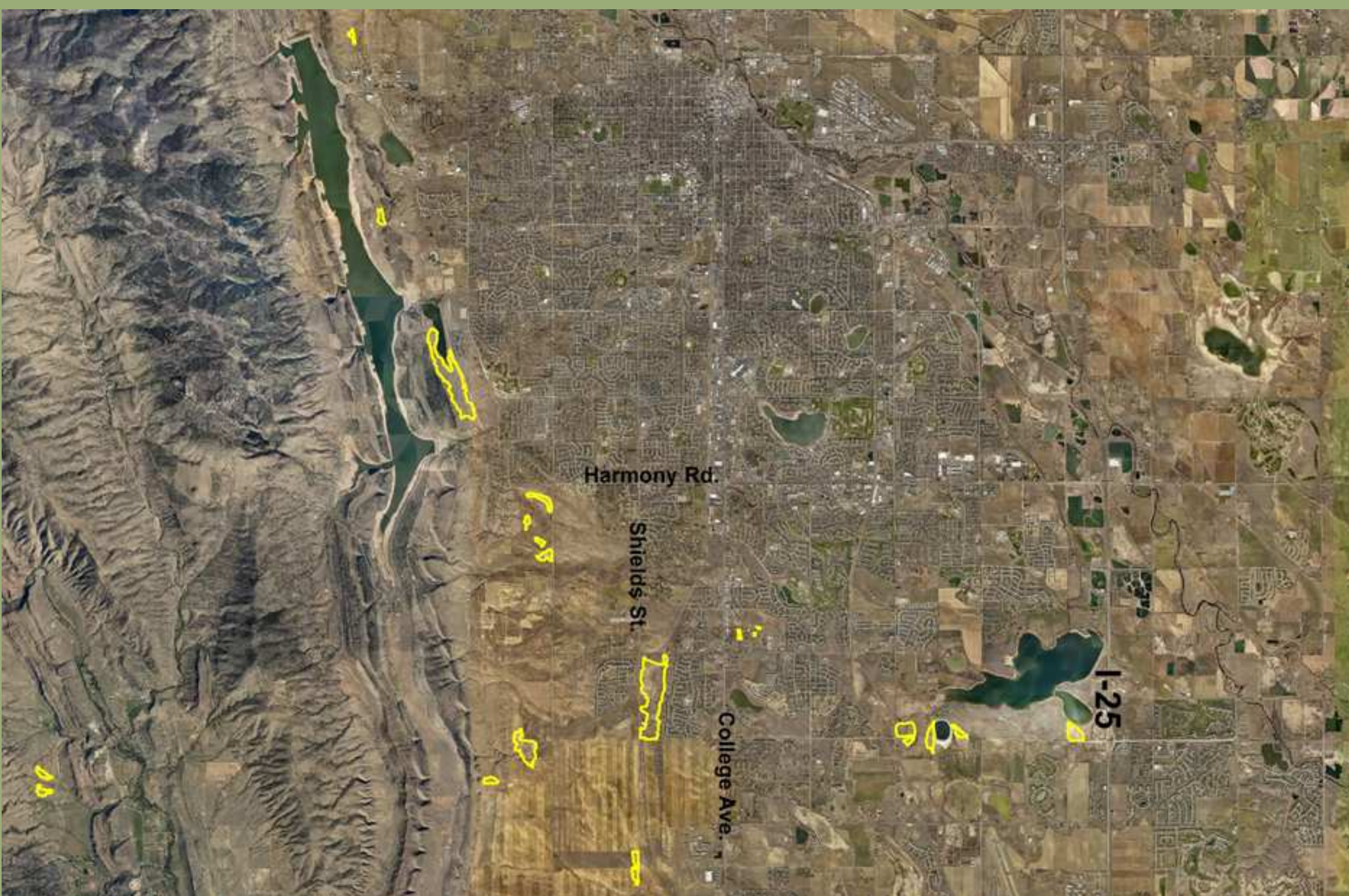
The reintroduced endangered black-footed ferrets need about 1,500 acres of prairie dogs to survive (the current acreage).

The overall goal for the prairie dog colony complex at Soapstone Prairie and Utilities' Meadow Springs Ranch is 3,000–4,000 acres.

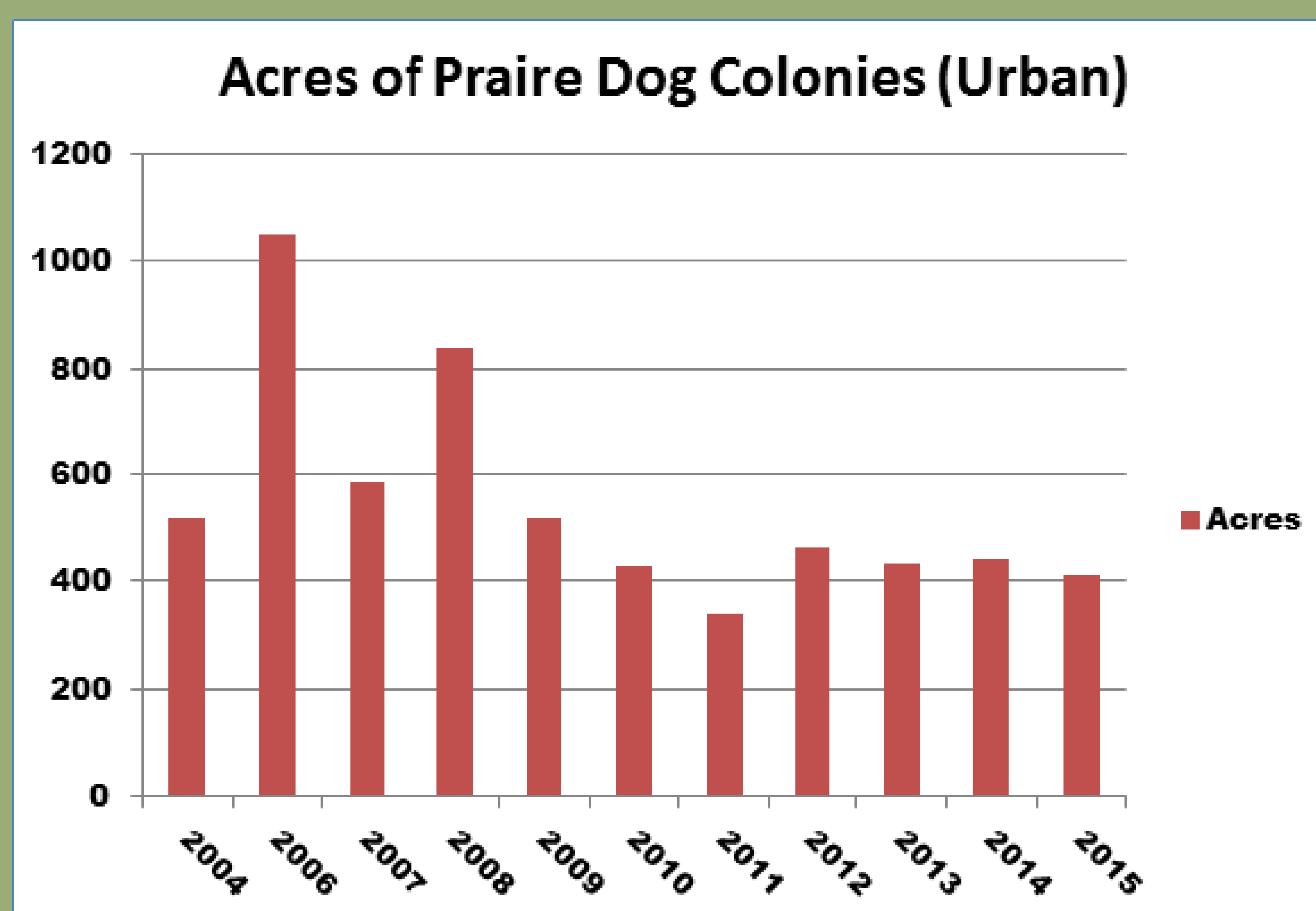


Treating fleas to help control plague.

Prairie Dogs in Urban Natural Areas



Current urban prairie dog colonies in yellow– about 400 acres.





Proposed Changes to Prairie Dog Management Guidelines

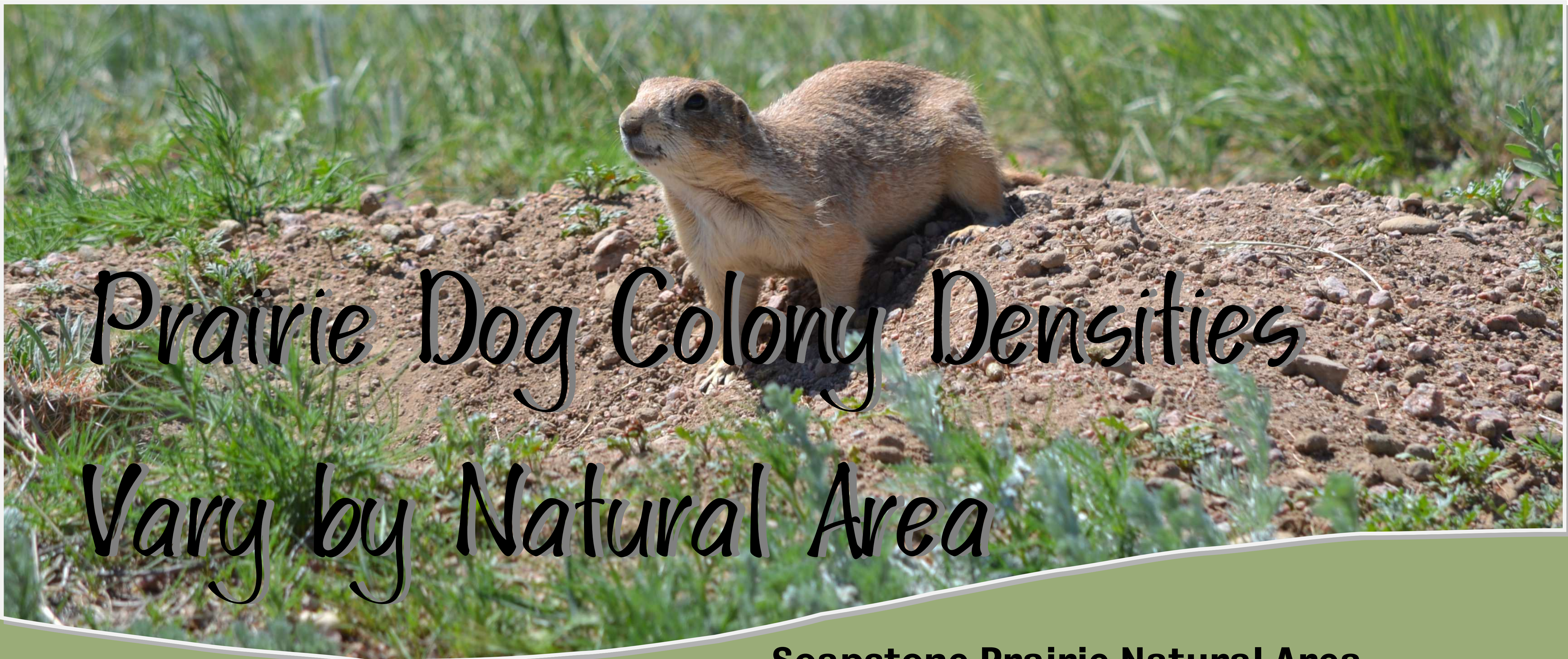
Goal of about 10% to 20% occupation of suitable habitat in urban areas.

Allow/accept relocation to natural areas under certain circumstances:

- to establish new colonies on unoccupied sites with suitable habitat.**
- to repopulate after plague (following 12–18 month resting period).**
- An existing burrow network must be available.**
- For private to public relocations, land owners must provide financing.**

Carbon monoxide is the only method used for lethal control on natural areas, and is considered the most humane.

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to manage natural areas to support a wide
variety of native plants and wildlife as well
as maintain and enhance the health and
integrity of ecological systems.**



Prairie Dog Colony Densities Vary by Natural Area

Soapstone Prairie Natural Area



Colonies here can expand so burrows/acre are relatively low. Long-established, healthy native vegetation is adapted to grazing by prairie dogs. Plants typically remain in the spaces between burrows preventing erosion.



In urban natural areas, colony expansion opportunities are limited and can result in overgrazing and soil erosion.