C O L O R A D O P A R K S & W I L D L I F E

Black-footed Ferret Management Plan for Eastern Colorado

November 2019

Introduction

The black-footed ferret (BFF or ferret) was first protected in 1967 under the Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966 (USFWS 1967) and later became one of the first species to be listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973. Even with these protections the species continued to decline and was believed to have gone extinct in the late 1970s. In 1981, a remnant population of ferrets was discovered near Meeteetse, Wyoming. This population experienced significant declines due to canine distemper and sylvatic plague. In 1986 and 1987, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) captured the remaining 18 wild individuals for a captive breeding and species preservation program. These ferrets became the source for all subsequent captive breeding and recovery efforts.

The first federal recovery plan for black-footed ferrets was published in 1978 (USFWS 1988) and has undergone 2 revisions. The current plan was finalized in November 2013 (USFWS 2013a) and outlines specific targets for each state within the range of the species. For Colorado these targets include:

- One or more large size ferret reintroduction sites with the potential for more than 100 adult breeding ferrets.
- One or more medium size ferret reintroduction sites with the potential for 50-100 adult breeding ferrets.
- One or more small size ferret reintroduction sites with the potential for 30-50 adult breeding ferrets.
- A potential contribution of 149 adult breeding ferrets on 29,000 acres to downlist the species.
- A potential contribution of 288 adult breeding ferrets on 58,000 acres to delist the species.

These targets cover the full potential range of black-footed ferrets in the state and all three prairie dog species native to Colorado (black-tailed, white-tailed, and Gunnison's prairie dogs); however, the Black-footed Ferret Management Plan for Eastern Colorado only addresses ferret reintroductions into black-tailed prairie dog (BTPD) colonies.

To reach the overall goal of delisting the ferret, USFWS estimates a minimum of 494,000 acres of prairie dogs will need to be managed as ferret reintroduction sites across the entire range. This goal will be difficult to meet on public land alone, so in 2013 USFWS established the Black-footed Ferret Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA; USFWS 2013b). This mechanism offers willing private landowners assurances that no future restrictions will be imposed on their properties due to the presence of this listed species.

Three pieces of state legislation authorize the reintroduction of black-footed ferrets in Colorado – HB 00-1314, SB 13-169, and HB 14-1267. The Colorado State Legislature approved the reintroduction of ferrets into northwest Colorado in 2000 through HB 00-1314. SB 13-169 was passed by the Colorado State Legislature in 2013 and allows for reintroduction on private land enrolled under the SHA with a certificate of inclusion. The Colorado State Legislature passed HB 14-1267 in 2014, which allowed for the reintroduction of black-footed ferrets on land owned by political subdivisions of the state when enrolled under the SHA. As part of the due diligence for these reintroductions, CPW and USFWS will contact local governments and neighboring landowners for input on the proposals and any concerns will be addressed in site planning.

History of Black-footed Ferret in Colorado

Black-footed ferrets were historically found throughout the range of all North American prairie dog species, including the black-tailed, white-tailed, and Gunnison's prairie dogs in Colorado. A 1946 sighting in Costilla County is the last confirmed historical report of a black-footed ferret in Colorado. Efforts to reintroduce ferrets to Colorado began in the northwest part of the state in 2001 and expanded to black-tailed prairie dog range in 2013. Below is an overview of the reintroduction efforts, to date.

Wolf Creek

The reintroduction of ferrets into their former range in northwest Colorado and eastern Utah was a cooperative effort between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Colorado Division of Wildlife (now Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW)), USFWS, and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. Reintroduction of ferrets into Colorado began in 2001 with a total of 252 ferrets being released into the Wolf Creek Management Areas (WCMA; north of Rangely, CO) and 8 into the Coyote Basin Management Area. In the WCMA, reintroductions occurred each fall from 2001 - 2008. A plague epizootic within the white-tailed prairie dog population in the WCMA was discovered in 2008. This epizootic coincided with the reduction in detected ferrets during surveys. The epizootic continued through 2010 and populations of white-tailed prairie dogs (WTPD) were still very low in 2011. CPW has taken measures to reduce the impact of plague by treating burrows with an insecticide in 2008-2009 and monitoring areas for further outbreaks. As a result of this disease and its impacts, CPW has declined to accept any captive-bred ferrets for release within the WCMA since 2009. Future allocation requests will be dependent on future disease surveillance, and ferret and WTPD population monitoring. No surveys for ferrets have occurred at WCMA since 2010.

Walker Ranch

In November 2013, 55 ferrets were released on the Walker Ranch, Pueblo County, Colorado. The ranch is comprised of ~63,000 acres on the south border of Fort Carson. Plague was documented at Walker Ranch in 2015, reducing the active BTPD acres from ~6,500 to a low of ~700 in 2016. The colony has begun the slow recovery process, increasing in ~850 acres in Fall 2018. CPW personnel began plague management by dusting in 2014 and plague vaccine was added in 2017. As of 2018, a total of 107 ferrets had been released at the site. Spotlight surveys at Walker Ranch have documented expansion of the ferret population to the southern portion of the property (south of Hwy 50) where releases had not occurred. Surveys and plague management at the site have been a cooperative effort, including personnel from CPW, USFWS, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), US Department of Agriculture-Wildlife Services, and Cheyenne Mountain Zoo.

Soapstone Natural Area

In September and October 2014, 42 ferrets were released on Soapstone Natural Area and Meadow Springs Ranch in Larimer County, Colorado. Fort Collins Natural Areas (FCNA) manages over 1,500 acres of BTPD colonies within the 28 square miles of Soapstone Natural Area. Plague was documented annually at Soapstone since 2013, resulting in a reduction of active prairie dog acres. Soapstone continues to be a research site for sylvatic plague vaccine trials (Tripp et al. 2017) in Colorado and Fort Collins Natural Areas staff continues plague management at the site by dusting ~1,000 acres and applying plague vaccine to active

prairie dog colonies. Spotlight surveys at Soapstone have documented expansion of the ferret population across the property as well as multiple litters of wild-born kits. As of 2018, a total of 95 ferrets have been released at Soapstone. Surveys and plague management at the site have been a cooperative effort, including personnel from FCNA, CPW, USFWS, NRCS, and others.

North Holly Complex

In October and November 2014, 45 ferrets were released on the North Holly Complex, Prowers County, Colorado. The North Holly Complex is made up of 5 private ranches covering nearly 6,000 acres. Plague was documented at North Holly in 2015, reducing the active BTPD acres from ~3,000 to ~100. Plague management dusting began in 2015 and plague vaccine was added in 2017. As of 2018, a total of 61 ferrets have been released at the site. Spotlight surveys at North Holly have documented wild born kits. Surveys and plague management at the site have been a cooperative effort, including personnel from CPW, USFWS, NRCS, and others.

Liberty Complex

In October 2014, 40 ferrets were released on the Liberty Complex, Baca County, Colorado. The Liberty Complex is made up of 2 private landowners, covering ~1,500 acres. Plague management dusting began in 2015 though it appeared that a plague outbreak had already begun, reducing the active BTPD complex to just under 50 acres by 2016. Plague vaccine was applied at the site beginning in 2017. The colony has begun the slow recovery process, increasing in ~230 acres in Fall 2018. As of 2018, a total of 60 ferrets have been released at the site. Spotlight surveys at the Liberty complex have documented wild born kits. Surveys and plague management at the site have been a cooperative effort, including personnel from CPW, USFWS, NRCS, and others.

South Holly Complex

In November 2015, 15 ferrets were released on the South Holly Complex, Prowers County, Colorado. The South Holly Complex is made up of 3 private ranches covering over 2,500 acres. Plague was documented at South Holly in 2016, reducing the active BTPD acres to a low of ~200. Plague management dusting began in 2016 and plague vaccine was added in 2017. The colony has begun the slow recovery process, increasing in ~300 acres in Fall 2018. As of 2018, 28 ferrets have been released at the site. A juvenile ferret carcass was found during dusting efforts in the summer of 2017. Surveys and plague management at the site have been a cooperative effort, including personnel from CPW, USFWS, NRCS, and others.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal Complex

In October 2015, 32 ferrets were released on the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Adams County, Colorado. The Rocky Mountain Arsenal is owned and operated by the USFWS and that agency has taken the lead on the release and management of ferrets at the site. The site contains ~3,000 acres of active prairie dogs and USFWS manages plague with both dust and plague vaccine. With additional releases in 2016 and good wild reproduction, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal has the potential to become a source for wild-to-wild translocations in 2018. This release site has received a great deal of positive media and public attention, which increases the interest in ferret reintroductions throughout the state.

Management Plan Goal

The goal of the Black-footed Ferret Management Plan for Eastern Colorado is to ensure, at a minimum, the viability of 4 black-footed ferret reintroduction sites within black-tailed prairie dog range in Colorado by 2028, while addressing the interests and rights of private landowners.

Black-footed Ferret Conservation and Management Objectives in Colorado

To meet the goals of this management plan by 2028, CPW has set the following objectives:

1. Maintain multiple Management Areas that will ensure the continued persistence of the species in black-tailed prairie dog range in eastern Colorado. As outlined in the 2015 Black-footed Ferret Recovery Plan, Colorado will maintain at least one large, one medium and one small Management Area. For the purposes of this plan, Management Areas are defined as follows:
    a. Large Management Area is defined as over 15,000 acres of BTPD, with individual colonies separated by no more than 1.5 km.
    b. Medium Management Area is defined as 4,500-14,999 acres of BTPD, with individual colonies separated by no more than 1.5 km.
    c. Small Management Area is defined as 1,500-4,499 acres of BTPD, with individual colonies separated by no more than 1.5 km.
2. Maintain distribution of these sites between the Northeast and Southeast regions, with more than 20,000 acres of Active Management Area, as described below, occurring in each region and spread across more than one site.
3. Develop a long-term strategy to fund and implement species conservation, landowner incentives, and plague management at all Active Management Areas described in Objectives 1 and 2.
4. Ensure that black-footed ferret management in the state addresses the interests and rights of private landowners.

Conservation and Management Strategies

Prairie Dog Management Strategies

Successful ferret management relies on the availability of prairie dog colonies. CPW will concentrate on limiting the impact of plague outbreaks and maintaining the appropriate prairie dog acreages at ferret release sites.

Plague Management

Both BTPD and BFF experience significant impacts from plague outbreaks throughout their range. The conservation and recovery of BFF depends on the effective management of plague at release sites (Antolin et al. 2002). In Colorado, every BTPD complex that is appropriate for BFF reintroduction is susceptible to both epizootic plague and enzootic plague. In the event of an

epizootic plague outbreak, ferrets are impacted by both direct mortality and the reduction of their prey base due to the high mortality in BTPD. It also has been shown that BFF experience decreased survival in areas impacted with enzootic plague, where the disease is operating at background levels and not causing large scale mortalities (Matchett et al. 2010). Due to the severe risks that plague poses to BFF reintroduction success, plague management is a necessary component of BFF conservation.

Until recently, the main approach to plague management was the use of insecticidal dust (e.g., DeltaDust) to control fleas (Biggins et al. 2010, Tripp et al. 2016), a process that is labor intensive and requires annual application. The development of a plague vaccine for prairie dogs has added another management tool for BFF release sites (Rocke et al. 2017, Tripp et al. 2017). Specific protocols for Burrow Dusting and Field Application of Plague Vaccine can be found in *Plague Management Techniques and Monitoring in Colorado's Prairie and Shrub-steppe Ecosystems* (Tripp et al. 2018). Plague management will occur at BFF Management Areas as described below.

BTPD Monitoring

BTPD monitoring is done at various scales within Colorado. CPW monitors the overall range of the species as outlined in the *Recommended Methods for Range-wide Monitoring of Prairie Dogs in the United States* (McDonald et al. 2011). The specific protocols used in the 2016 monitoring can be found in *Monitoring Black-Tailed Prairie Dogs in Colorado with the 2015 NAIP Imagery* (Howlin and Mitchell 2016). It is important to note that this effort provides estimates of total acreage across the range, not the specific location of those acres. This monitoring will be repeated every 3-5 years, depending on the availability of appropriate aerial imagery and agency funding. The methods used in Colorado could change if the range-wide methods are modified.

BTPD monitoring is also undertaken at the site specific scale. This work can follow different methodologies depending on the goals of the management agency. Land management agencies, like FCNA, USFWS, and Boulder County, may monitor the specific acreages of active BTPD on lands they manage. CPW also monitors BTPD acreages on BFF Management Areas as described below (Black-footed Ferret Management Strategies).

Other BTPD Management

Other management actions may be appropriate or necessary on BFF Management Areas and should be coordinated with the landowners and others, as necessary. Relocation or translocation of BTPD into BFF Management Areas is not an appropriate management tool, due to potential biosecurity concerns.

Black-footed Ferret Management Strategies

CPW will focus on a number of management strategies related to reintroduction and conservation of ferrets in the state. The most obvious is the management of reintroduction sites, here defined as Management Areas. Strategies will also include plague management, landowner engagement, and agency and stakeholder involvement.

Management Area Specific Strategies

The BTPD complexes where ferrets have or may be reintroduced are defined as Management Areas under this plan. There are 4 types of Management Areas described below - Active, Suitable, Potential, and Inactive. Due to changes in habitat, disease, and other factors, classification of sites may change through time and BTPD complexes may be comprised of different types. Management actions will also change as sites are reclassified, with more intensive management occurring at Active Management Areas. As described in the Objectives section, the size of each Management Area is also important. Management Areas as defined in this plan are expected to follow the acreages enrolled in the Safe Harbor Agreement, but may be larger than those enrolled in a landowner incentive program such as the NRCS Special Initiative.

Active - Site currently has or previously had adequate acreage for BFF reintroduction and ferrets have been released. Plague management is currently being implemented. Landowners remain committed to ferret recovery on the site and are enrolled in SHA. Overall the site continues to be managed for ferret recovery.

Specific Actions:

- Habitat Mapping - To monitor the overall health of the site and to assist with other actions (e.g. plague management), the BTPD colonies on the site should be mapped annually. At a minimum, the protocol in Tripp et al. (2018) should be followed, though more detailed mapping may occur at sites when funding and staff resources are available.
- Plague Management - To maintain the health of the BTPD and BFF populations at the site, plague management will be undertaken annually at every Active site. The current standard is to apply plague vaccine over the entire Active acreage annually. Deltamethrin dust may also be applied, when necessary, to manage plague outbreaks or to augment the use of plague vaccine. Protocols for both methods can be found in Tripp et al. (2018).
- Ferret Releases - Initial releases at a site will include at least 25 BFF/year for 3 years, depending on the size and density of the site. After initial releases, the site may be supplemented with additional ferrets as needed. Released ferrets may come from captive breeding or be translocated individuals from other wild sites, depending on availability.
- Ferret Monitoring and Trapping - As sites become established, monitoring for the continued presence of ferrets may be undertaken. This effort will follow accepted methods. Ferrets may be trapped, following accepted methods, for vaccination of wild-born kits or other reasons, as staffing and budget allows. Ferrets may also be trapped at successful release sites for translocation to other Management Areas.

- Site Connectivity and Expansion - As opportunities arise, acreage can be added to an Active Management Area by identifying willing neighboring landowners with appropriate habitat. While these new acres are being prepared for release, they will be defined as Potential or Suitable (see below). Before becoming Active, the acres will be mapped and the landowners will be enrolled in the Safe Harbor Agreement.
- Rangewide Recovery Actions - Additional management and/or monitoring efforts may be needed as rangewide recovery becomes a possibility.

Suitable - Site has adequate acreage for BFF reintroduction or is within 1.5 km of an existing Active site. Plague management has been implemented and is continuing at the site. Landowners are committed to ferret recovery on the site and are enrolled in SHA. Site is waiting for resources to be committed, including staffing, budget, or ferrets for release.

Specific Actions:

- Habitat Mapping - To monitor the overall health of the site and to assist with other actions (e.g., plague management), the BTPD colonies on the site should be mapped annually. At a minimum, the protocol in Tripp et al. (2018) should be followed though more detailed mapping may occur at sites when funding and staff resources are available.
- Plague Management - To maintain the health of the BTPD populations at the site, plague management will be undertaken annually at every Suitable site. The current standard is to apply plague vaccine over the entire Suitable acreage annually. Deltamethrin dust may also be applied, when necessary, to manage plague outbreaks or to augment the use of plague vaccine. Protocols for both methods can be found in Tripp et al. (2018).
- Ferret Releases - Coordinate with USFWS on the availability of ferrets for release at Suitable sites, including where such sites fall in USFWS prioritization of releases. Released ferrets may come from captive breeding or be translocated individuals from other wild sites, depending on availability.
- Site Connectivity and Expansion - As opportunities arise, acreage can be added to a Suitable Management Area by identifying willing neighboring landowners with appropriate habitat. While these new acres are being prepared for release, they will be defined as Potential (see below). Before becoming Suitable the acres will be mapped and the landowners will be enrolled in the Safe Harbor Agreement.

Potential - One or more of the factors necessary for reintroduction is missing from the site but work is occurring to make the site Suitable or Active. Examples include needing to enroll landowners in SHA, needing to implement plague management, giving the site additional time for BTPD acreages to increase, securing funding or staffing to implement one or more of the necessary management activities, etc.

Specific Actions:

- Landowner Coordination - Work with willing landowners to identify acreages for enrollment in SHA. Work with USFWS to ensure that appropriate neighbor, agency, and other outreach has occurred and issues have been addressed.
- Management Needs - Work with willing landowners and agencies to identify needed management actions at the site. Develop a plan for implementing the actions identified.
- Habitat Mapping - To determine the suitability of the site for release of BFF, monitor the overall health of the site, and assist with other actions (e.g., plague management), the BTPD colonies on the site should be mapped, as needed. At a minimum, the protocol in Tripp et al. (2018) should be followed though more detailed mapping may occur at sites when funding and staff resources are available.
- Plague Management – Develop a plan to implement plague management at Potential sites to maintain the health of the BTPD populations and to increase colony acreage, if needed. The current standard is to apply plague vaccine over the entire Potential acreage annually. Deltamethrin dust may also be applied, when necessary, to manage plague outbreaks or to augment the use of plague vaccine. Protocols for both methods can be found in Tripp et al. (2018).

Inactive - Site was previously an Active or Suitable Management Area but for various reasons no longer meets the above definitions. Examples include reduction of acreage due to disease or other habitat changes, change of landownership, etc. Continued management could return site to Active or Suitable.

Specific Actions:

- Management Needs - Work with willing landowners and agencies to identify needed management actions at the site. Develop a plan for implementing the actions identified.
- Habitat Mapping - To determine the suitability of the site for release of BFF, monitor the overall health of the site, and assist with other actions (e.g., plague management), the BTPD colonies on the site should be mapped, as needed. At a minimum, the protocol in Tripp et al. (2018) should be followed though more detailed mapping may occur at sites when funding and staff resources are available.
- Plague Management - To maintain the health of the remaining BTPD populations and to support increases in colony acreage, plague management may be undertaken at Inactive release sites, if appropriate. The current standard is to apply plague vaccine over the entire BTPD colony every year. Deltamethrin dust may also be applied, when necessary, to manage plague outbreaks or to augment the use of plague vaccine. Protocols for both methods can be found in Tripp et al. (2018).

<u>Other Management Strategies</u>

To ensure the long-term success of ferret reintroductions it is important to continue improving plague management and ferret monitoring techniques, ensuring landowners are engaged, and maintaining agency and stakeholder cooperation. The release and management of any wildlife species is a difficult undertaking that involves anticipating the unexpected. Adaptive management -

the technique of identifying how conditions are changing and adjusting plans accordingly - will be implemented at all sites, as needed.

Improved Plague Management - As described earlier in this document, the management of plague at BFF management sites is crucial to project success. The current methods of applying insecticidal dust and/or plague vaccine are both costly and labor intensive. Continued research is needed to develop additional tools to control the impact of plague at important sites, including new/additional insecticides, new/better equipment for field deployment, new/improved vaccination methods (i.e. distribution methods, time of deployment, dose, etc.).

Landowner Incentives - Much of the available habitat for BFF in eastern Colorado occurs on agricultural land and thus there is a potential loss of carrying capacity for cattle grazing when BFF reintroductions are undertaken. Incentives to agricultural producers can offset the loss of income associated with this project. Existing Farm Bill programs, such as Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Working Lands for Wildlife, are available for some landowners. CPW and other partners will continue to develop opportunities for long-term incentives to private landowners involved in BFF reintroduction and recovery.

Monitoring Techniques - Black-footed ferrets are difficult to monitor in wild settings and various techniques have been developed to answer different questions. In determining which of the accepted methods, such as those listed below, to implement it is important to consider the objectives of the monitoring effort, the impact to landowners and neighbors, the staff time and cost of effort, and the management decisions to be made. As technology and management techniques improve, new or revised methods may be developed. Additional information about the methods listed below can be found in the Black-footed Ferret Field Operations Manual (USFWS 2016).

- Spotlight Monitoring – The use of high-powered spotlights to detect black-footed ferrets at night has been employed for many years and can assist in the capture of BFF or the deployment of PIT-tag readers.
- Snow Tracking - This method involves identifying the movement patterns of BFF after a fresh snowfall. The bounding and trenching unique to BFF can be fairly obvious but the technique is limited by appropriate environmental conditions. Snow tracking is restricted to the detection of presence.
- Radio Telemetry - This method involves attaching a radio transmitter to BFF and locating the radio signal at given intervals. Radio telemetry in BFF is currently quite expensive and labor intensive. Future advances in technology could improve the feasibility of this method.
- Other Techniques - Various other methods for tracking, monitoring, or detecting BFF have been or are being investigated, including the use of infrared cameras or scopes, drones with infrared or camera capabilities, scent dogs, and motion sensitive cameras. Testing and development of these and other methods can be undertaken as staffing and budget allow.

Cooperation with other agencies and stakeholders - There are a large number of agencies and individuals involved in BFF management and reintroduction in Colorado. Below are some of the specific aspects that involve multiple agencies.

- Safe Harbor Agreement - The USFWS implemented the Black-footed Ferret Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement in 2013. Enrollment in the SHA provides protections to the release site landowners and neighbors, such as the determination of a zero baseline population, no restrictions on grazing enrolled lands, and incidental take coverage. Landowner enrollment under the Safe Harbor Agreement is a necessary step for CPW involvement in ferret releases, as required by both Senate Bill 13-169 and House Bill 14-1267. CPW will continue to coordinate with landowners, land managers, the USFWS, and other parties to implement the SHA in Colorado.
- 10(j) Designation - A portion of Northwestern Colorado was designated a 10(j) area under the Endangered Species Act for ferret releases in white-tailed prairie dog range. Designation as a 10(j) area, also known as a non-essential, experimental population, provides increased flexibility for landowners and managers. Due to the implementation of the SHA, it is not expected that a 10(j) designation will be pursued in eastern Colorado but if conditions change, CPW will work with the USFWS on the identification and designation of a 10(j) area.
- Ferret Availability - The availability of ferrets for release fluctuates on a yearly basis due to issues with captive breeding and wild production. CPW will coordinate with the USFWS on yearly allocation requests and reporting as well as prioritization and planning for releases on Active and Suitable Management Areas.
- Political Subdivisions of the State Release Sites - House Bill 14-1267 authorized CPW to participate in ferret releases on lands owned by political subdivisions of the state. CPW will coordinate with city and county land management agencies interested in ferret releases, including identifying, initiating, and managing release sites.
- Federal Release Sites - CPW does not have authorization to participate in ferret releases on federal lands but such releases could be undertaken by the federal land management agency. CPW will work with the USFWS and federal land management agencies (USFS, Department of Defense, BLM, etc.) to stay informed of releases at federally owned/managed lands. Although CPW does not have authorization to participate, releases on federal lands may contribute to meeting the goals of this management plan.
- NRCS Initiative - The NRCS has provided incentives to landowners willing to conserve ferrets on their properties through EQIP since 2014. As of 2018, 12 properties have been enrolled and over $1 million has been provided to private landowners in Colorado. CPW will coordinate with NRCS and willing landowners to enroll eligible lands in EQIP.
- Boundary Control - When identifying potential sites for ferret release, care is taken to ensure neighboring landowners will not be impacted by the expansion of BTPD colonies. In cases where it becomes necessary to control the boundary of Active and Potential Management Areas to protect neighboring private and public lands, CPW will coordinate with USDA-Wildlife Services.
- State Working Group - To ensure agency representatives and interested stakeholders have an opportunity to share information and provide feedback, CPW has formed the Colorado Black-footed Ferret Working Group. This group includes federal, state, and municipal

agency representatives, private consultants, researchers, non-governmental organizations, and other interested stakeholders. Meetings are held annually in the spring and additional information is shared by email and conference calls, as needed.

Reporting/data management - CPW will maintain a database with information on release sites, specific animals released or captured, monitoring efforts, and other information useful in evaluating the overall reintroduction program. This information will be used to develop yearly reports for the following:

- Colorado Legislature, as required under 33-2-105.6(3) C.R.S.,
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission,
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
- Black-Footed Ferret Recovery Implementation Team Executive Committee, and
- Other Reporting and Public Information, such as CPW Fact Sheets, press releases, and educational brochures.

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