



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

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Region

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Route To:

Subject: Addition of Black-tailed Prairie Dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) to the Region 2 List of Sensitive Species

To: Forest Supervisors

Effective July 1, 2000, I am adding the black-tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) to Region 2's list of sensitive species. The reason for this addition is based on new and substantial information which suggests this species meets the criteria identified in the Region 2 Supplement No. 2600-94-2 to the Forest Service Manual. Specifically, one criterion of Section 2672.11a reads:

The species is declining in numbers or occurrences, and evidence indicates it could be proposed for federal listing as threatened or endangered if action is not taken to reverse or stop the downward trend.

The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) determined on February 4, 2000, that listing the black-tailed prairie dog as a threatened species is warranted but precluded by other higher priority actions to amend the Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants (*Federal Register* 65(24):5476-5488). The same *Federal Register* notice also added the species to FWS's list of candidate species for listing.

The FWS decision was based on the number, variety, and significance of threats affecting the species, especially sylvatic plague (an exotic disease to which the species has no resistance) and inadequate regulatory mechanisms (some areas mandate eradication); evidence of recent general population declines in a significant portion of the species' range; and cumulative range-wide population data indicating overall population declines since 1980. The potential downward trend in population identified in the FWS's decision meets the criteria outlined in FSM Section 2672.11a for identification of sensitive species.

As of July 1, 2000, I expect all Forests and National Grasslands containing black-tailed prairie dogs and their habitat to review proposed Forest Service programs and activities in sufficient detail to determine how actions or proposed actions will affect the black-tailed prairie dog. Specifically, please adhere to the direction outlined in the R2 Supplement No. 2600-94-2, FSM 2670.



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It is important for you to convey to your District Rangers and staff that it is my decision that past or current Forest Service actions that are completed or ongoing at the time of designation are exempt from sensitive species procedural requirements for this particular species with the exception of any Forest Service decisions made from July 1, 2000, forward.

If you or your staff have any questions, please refer them to Joan Friedlander, R2 TES Program Leader in the Regional Office or John Sidle, the Great Plains TES Coordinator.

/s/ Lyle

LYLE LAVERTY
Regional Forester

Friedlander/ejs/6/8/00/x5068/PDOGlisting.doc