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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I want to go on record supporting the maximum conservation efforts for ferrets. I have worked on black-footed ferrets, seeing my first ferret in South Dakota in early 1970's. I worked with USFWS, BLM, and several states on ferret conservation for over two decades in WY, MT, and other states. As well, I published several dozen scientific papers on ferrets, as well as a couple books. My Phd was on prairie dogs. Over the decades, I spent many weeks in Thunder Basin. Finally, I have worked on several dozen endangered species, worldwide.

I want to comment on the Thunder Basin National Grassland 2020 Plan Amendment Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), in response to notice 84 Federal Register 54899. I am concerned about the three proposed action alternatives (e.g., proposed action, grassland-wide, and prairie dog emphasis) is the elimination of the Management Area 3.63 - Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Habitat (MA 3.63) and associated conservation measures for black-tailed prairie dogs.

I oppose these, because they reduce the prairie dog acreage needed to sustain a viable population of black-footed ferrets on Thunder Basin. Ferret recovery needs restoration and conservation of large, connected prairie dog colonies/populations. TB National Grassland has the biological potential to substantially advance ferret recovery.