



Forest Service

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests  
and Thunder Basin National Grassland

2468 Jackson Street  
Laramie, WY 82070  
307-745-2300  
Fax: 307-745-2398

**File Code:** 1920  
**Route To:**

**Date:** March 26, 2019

**Subject:** 2020 Thunder Basin Plan Amendment Project Initiation Letter

**To:** Interdisciplinary Team

Dear Interdisciplinary Team:

This project initiation letter represents the start of the 2020 Thunder Basin National Grassland Plan Amendment process, in which the interdisciplinary team will analyze management alternatives and associated management direction for conservation of short-stature grasslands and control of prairie dogs on the Grassland. This letter describes the preliminary purpose, need, and scope of the proposed 2020 Thunder Basin National Grassland Plan Amendment, roles and responsibilities for interdisciplinary team members, and a timeline for task delivery. As the project progresses, content from this letter will be used to populate documents as part of the environmental analysis, and updates to this letter may be issued to clarify content.

Interdisciplinary team participation throughout the 19-month project timeline will be critical to the success of this project, which is a priority for the Region, the Forest, and the Grassland. Extensive work has been completed in recent years on the subjects of grassland and prairie dog management on the Thunder Basin National Grassland, including recent collaborative development of management recommendations by stakeholders led by the Wyoming Department of Agriculture. Thus, team members will be expected to draw heavily from existing information, to incorporate existing documents by reference, and to limit the scope of analysis to pertinent issues and plan content proposed for change. Team members will be expected to prepare new content as a draft of what will appear directly in the environmental analysis. We will rely heavily on maps and graphics to tell the management story within the amendment area and clearly demonstrate the intent of the proposed action and alternatives.

Project management, scoping, and environmental analysis documents will be stored on Pinyon/Box as the agency's enterprise file management system. Team members are encouraged to work directly in Pinyon documents to keep the project record current and to avoid lost products or duplication of effort. Remember to "lock" files while working on them to prevent other team members from editing at the same time.

Files will be stored under the folder: *Box\External - 2020 Thunder Basin Plan Amendment*.

Spatial files, including one or more geodatabase that will store reference layers and a spatial snapshot of the proposal at each planning milestone, will be stored on the Forest Service T:Drive. Cooperating agency interdisciplinary team members may need to request shapefiles to maintain current spatial records.

The geodatabase will be stored at: *T:\FS\NFS\MBRTB\Project\DGSL\1920GrasslandPlanAmend2018*.

Please contact the interdisciplinary team leader with any questions regarding file organization or management.



**All project files are considered draft working documents until ready for publication on the project web site. Interdisciplinary team members shall not share working documents with stakeholders, co-workers, or cooperating agencies without approval from the interdisciplinary team leader.**

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The full interdisciplinary team is comprised of a core team, extended team, cooperating agency team members, and technical team members. All team members are expected to stay updated on project status so that they can provide support and represent their resource areas whenever needed. Core and extended team members are required to attend all interdisciplinary team meetings. Absences should be minimal; if a core or extended team member cannot attend an interdisciplinary team meeting, then an acting should attend who has been briefed on project status and can actively represent the resource area. All team members are expected to communicate directly with the interdisciplinary team leader regarding their participation and expectations on the team. Supervisors of interdisciplinary team members are expected to make team members available to serve on the team and to produce products by the deadlines. The direction, checkpoints and deadlines outlined in this letter are important commitments that I expect to be followed.

**Table 1. Draft Interdisciplinary Team/Roles and Responsibilities**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Phone and email</b>	<b>Location (time zone)</b>
<b>Core Team Members</b>				
Monique Nelson	Project Manager and Interdisciplinary Team Lead	Overall project management; task assignment, scheduling, and tracking; document preparation and submission for approval at all major milestones. Interdisciplinary team and public meeting preparation and co-facilitation with Chad Prosser. Primary project contact. Author analysis content related to climate change, special designations, planning.	<a href="mailto:monique.nelson@usda.gov">monique.nelson@usda.gov</a> 775-355-5316	Reno, NV (PT)
Chad Prosser	Rangeland Resources, Botany and Vegetation	Serve as subject matter expert for range, botany, and vegetation. Also author content related to use of rodenticides. Interdisciplinary team and public meeting preparation and co-facilitation with Monique Nelson. Primary responsibility for proposed action development, resource analyses.	<a href="mailto:chadley.prosser@usda.gov">chadley.prosser@usda.gov</a> 701-204-8426	Bismarck, ND (CT)
Katie Haynes	Botany	Provide expertise related to botany. Lead for preparation of SCC evaluations for plant species. Primary responsibility for botany BA/BE.	<a href="mailto:katharinemhaynes@fs.fed.us">katharinemhaynes@fs.fed.us</a> 307-745-2419	Laramie, WY (MT)
Tait Rutherford	Wildlife	Provide expertise related to wildlife resources and NEPA. Primary responsibility for proposed action development. Review and approve SCC evaluations for wildlife.	<a href="mailto:tait.rutherford@usda.gov">tait.rutherford@usda.gov</a> 307-745-2412	Laramie, WY (MT)



Tiffany Young (Enterprise Program)	Wildlife/Fisheries	Primary responsibility for wildlife and fisheries BA/BE. Enterprise lead for preparation of SCC Evaluations. Anticipated start date of April 2019.	<a href="mailto:tiffany.young@usda.gov">tiffany.young@usda.gov</a> 559-920-2278	Sweet Home, OR (PT)
Kristen Waltz (Enterprise Program)	Social Issues and Economics	Primary responsibility for analysis of social and economic issues.	<a href="mailto:Kwaltz@fs.fed.us">Kwaltz@fs.fed.us</a> 559-920-2776	San Diego, CA (PT)
Kyle Schumacher	Geology, Minerals (including Oil and Gas), Paleontology	Primary responsibility for analysis of issues related to geology, minerals, and paleontology.	<a href="mailto:kschumacher@fs.fed.us">kschumacher@fs.fed.us</a> 307-358-7115	Douglas, WY (MT)
Michelle Hawks (Enterprise Program)	GIS	Primary responsibility for compilation of GIS resources, cartography and map making, compilation of tables and figures for presentation in analysis.	<a href="mailto:michelle.hawks@usda.gov">michelle.hawks@usda.gov</a> 435-636-3361	Moab, UT (MT)
<b>Extended Team Members</b>				
Aaron Voos	Public Affairs/Public Participation	Develop and implement project public participation and communication plans with Monique Nelson and Chad Prosser. Write press releases, share project updates with stakeholders, communicate with congressional staffs, provide expertise for outreach and communication.	<a href="mailto:atvoos@fs.fed.us">atvoos@fs.fed.us</a> 307-745-2323	Laramie, WY (MT)
Steve Kozlowski	Wildlife/Liaison with Cooperators	Provide expertise related to wildlife. Participate in proposed action development. Review and approve SCC evaluations for wildlife.	<a href="mailto:skozlowski@fs.fed.us">skozlowski@fs.fed.us</a> 307-745-2343	Laramie, WY (MT)
Tim Byer	Wildlife	Provide expertise related to wildlife.	<a href="mailto:tbyer@fs.fed.us">tbyer@fs.fed.us</a> 307-358-7131	Douglas, WY (MT)
Geri Proctor	Range	Provide expertise related to range management and rodenticide use.	<a href="mailto:grproctor@fs.fed.us">grproctor@fs.fed.us</a> 307-745-2408	Laramie, WY (MT)
Tani Randolff	Cultural Resources	Primary responsibility for analysis of cultural resources, consultation with SHPO, Tribal consultation.	<a href="mailto:trandolff@fs.fed.us">trandolff@fs.fed.us</a> 307-358-7141	Douglas, WY (MT)
Shay Rogge	Fire/Prescribed Burning	Provide expertise related to fire. Primary responsibility for analysis of issues related to wildfire and prescribed fire.	<a href="mailto:krogge@fs.fed.us">krogge@fs.fed.us</a> 307-358-7119	Douglas, WY (MT)
Zac Fisher	Hydrology/Soil	Primary responsibility for analysis of issues related to hydrology and soils.	<a href="mailto:zfisher@fs.fed.us">zfisher@fs.fed.us</a> 307-745-2427	Laramie, WY (MT)
Jessica Rubado (Enterprise Program)	2012 Planning Rule Specialist	Provide expertise and review of content to ensure compliance with 2012 Planning Rule and other requirements.	<a href="mailto:jessica.rubado@usda.gov">jessica.rubado@usda.gov</a> 503-314-0767	Naples, FL (ET)
<b>Cooperating Agency Members</b>				
Joe Budd	Wyoming Department of	Provide expertise related to range and livestock management.	<a href="mailto:Joe.budd@wyo.gov">Joe.budd@wyo.gov</a>	Cheyenne, WY (MT)

	Agriculture Representative		307-777-7024	
Amanda Withroder	Wyoming Game and Fish Department Representative	Provide expertise related to wildlife management of prairie dogs and associated species.	<a href="mailto:Amanda.withroder@wyo.gov">Amanda.withroder@wyo.gov</a> 307-473-3436	Casper, WY (MT)
Dru Bower	Tri-County Commissioners Representative	Provide expertise related to local government, community development, social and economic factors.	<a href="mailto:dru@wyoming.com">dru@wyoming.com</a> 307-388-2709	Lander, WY (MT)
<b>Technical Team Members</b>				
Leslie Horsch (Enterprise Program)	Writer/Editor	Write sections of and edit full DEIS and FEIS, 508 compliance.	<a href="mailto:lhorsch@fs.fed.us">lhorsch@fs.fed.us</a> 307-674-2632	Sheridan, WY (MT)
Beth Waterston	Project Record /EMNEPA Specialist	Provide expertise for project record management. Organize, file, and index project files for official record. Primary responsibility for scoping and DEIS public comment period content analysis, scoping report, PALS, CARA web portal development and response to comments.	<a href="mailto:bwaterston@usda.gov">bwaterston@usda.gov</a> 530-601-1519	Quincy, CA (PT)
Casey Campbell	Project Record Support	Assist with project record keeping, notes, and document compilation.	<a href="mailto:caseycampbell@fs.fed.us">caseycampbell@fs.fed.us</a>	Laramie, WY (MT)

### Core Team

Roles and responsibilities of the core team are critical to successful completion of the plan amendment. Core team members are expected to:

- Attend all interdisciplinary team meetings, serving in a specific role as core team member;
- Lead workgroups, provide help and support to other interdisciplinary team members as needed, take on additional tasks to help the team achieve its goals;
- Attend public/agency meetings;
- Track assignments and timelines and work with supervisor to prioritize plan amendment responsibilities above new assignments (for example new forest projects, hiring teams, regional review teams, or fire assignments) and many ongoing assignments;
- Follow all responsibilities described for the extended team.

### Extended Team and Cooperating Agency Team Members

Roles and responsibilities of the extended team provide additional support and expertise to the core team. Extended team members are expected to:

- Attend all interdisciplinary team meetings;
- Participate in work groups relevant to resource area expertise;



- Prepare content for inclusion in the environmental analysis document and provide supporting documents and supplemental information if needed;
- Work with supervisor to prioritize plan amendment work above other projects to ensure timelines are met and help is provided as needed;
- Attend public/agency meetings and collaboration events as requested;
- Respond to public/agency questions, comments or issues as requested;
- Follow through with commitments to provide products on agreed to timelines;
- Elevate issues to the interdisciplinary team leader for resolution, and
- Exhibit teamwork skills when working on interdisciplinary team by participating in a productive and solution-oriented manner.

#### Technical Team Members

- Attend interdisciplinary team meetings as requested, otherwise attendance is optional;
- Provide support to core and extended interdisciplinary team members as requested;
- Work with supervisor to prioritize plan amendment work above other projects to ensure timelines are met and help is provided as needed;
- Stay engaged and up-to-date on the plan revision process so that support can be provided quickly when needed;
- Elevate issues to the interdisciplinary team leader as necessary.

#### Steering Team

Forest Supervisor Russ Bacon, Douglas District Ranger Rob Robertson, the interdisciplinary team leader, and the subject matter expert comprise the Steering Team for this project. The Steering Team will meet weekly to discuss project progress and timelines, ask questions of decision-makers, and discuss any new business pertinent to the project. This will ensure that the Forest Supervisor and District Ranger are up to date on project progress.

### **Preliminary Purpose and Need for the Project**

The purpose of this project is to amend the Thunder Basin National Grassland Land and Resource Management Plan (Grassland Plan) to better balance prairie dog colony conservation and control with other Grassland uses.

Specifically, an amendment is needed to:

- Re-focus management in Management Area 3.63, “Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Habitat,” to emphasize rangelands with short-stature vegetation that provide for multiple uses, including providing habitat for prairie dogs and associated species and providing livestock forage.
- Delineate more logical boundaries for Management Area 3.63, for example by strategically using natural topographic and hydrologic barriers and incorporating boundary management zones.
- Increase the availability of management options for prairie dog colony conservation and control, including lethal prairie dog control within Management Area 3.63.

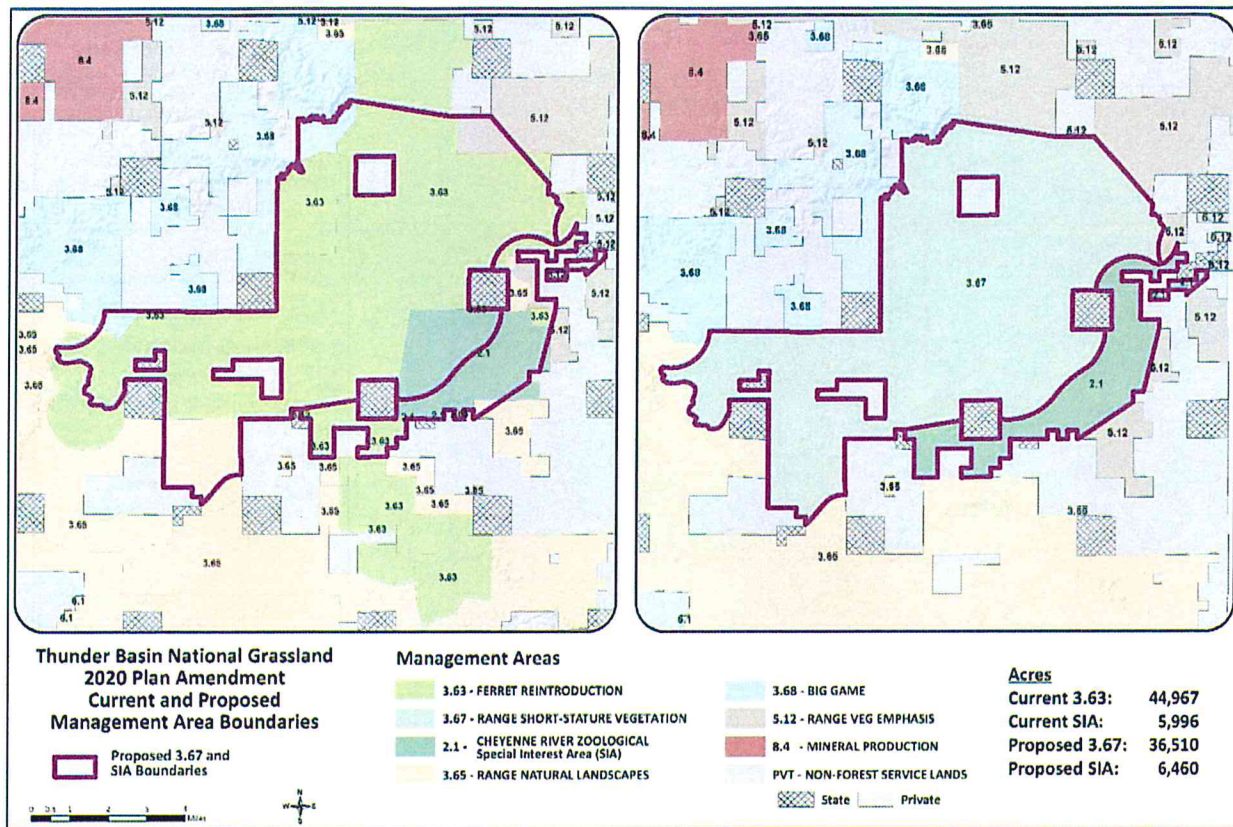
- More effectively manage prairie dog colony encroachment from the National Grassland onto private and state land. Encroachment concerns include public health, agricultural production, land values, facilities, and serving as a good neighbor as described in the Record of Decision for the Grassland Plan.
- Align with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department “Wyoming Black-footed Ferret Management Plan” (2018).
- Ensure management direction identifies habitat requirements needed to support viable populations of prairie dogs and associated species, such as mountain plover, burrowing owl, swift fox, and other grassland birds, and that management would not preclude future reintroduction of black-footed ferret.
- Engage with partners for collaborative implementation of new plan direction.

### **Preliminary Proposed Action**

The Thunder Basin National Grassland Working Group led by the Wyoming Department of Agriculture met for several months in 2018 to develop recommendations for a proposed action. To meet the needs identified above and based on the recommendations of the Thunder Basin National Grassland Working Group, the Forest Service proposes the following:

1. Change the existing Thunder Basin National Grassland Management Area 3.63: Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Habitat, to a new Management Area 3.67: Rangelands with Short-stature Vegetation Emphasis. Adopt Management Area 3.67 themes, desired conditions, standards, and guidelines to de-emphasize reintroduction of black-footed ferret and emphasize maintenance of short-stature and mixed prairie vegetation to provide habitat for a variety of dependent species (see Attachment 1, Draft Proposed Changes to Grassland Plan Direction).
2. Draw the boundaries for Management Area 3.67 to strategically use natural barriers to prairie dog movement such as the Cheyenne River and Rochelle Hills. Remove conflicts in management by: reducing overlap with sage-grouse Priority Habitat Management Areas, redrawing the Cheyenne River Zoological Special Interest Area to serve as a buffer to prairie dog expansion and focus on riparian biotic communities, excluding residences, and reducing boundaries with state and private properties (Map 1). Areas that are removed from 3.63 will be reassigned using adjacent Management Area direction.
3. Eliminate use of the Black-tailed Prairie Dog Conservation Assessment and Management Strategy for the Thunder Basin National Grassland (2009, 2015), including Categories 1, 2, and 3 prairie dog management areas and decision screens. Update grassland-wide and geographic area direction to the extent necessary for consistency with Management Area 3.67 (see Attachment 1, Draft Proposed Changes to Grassland Plan Direction).

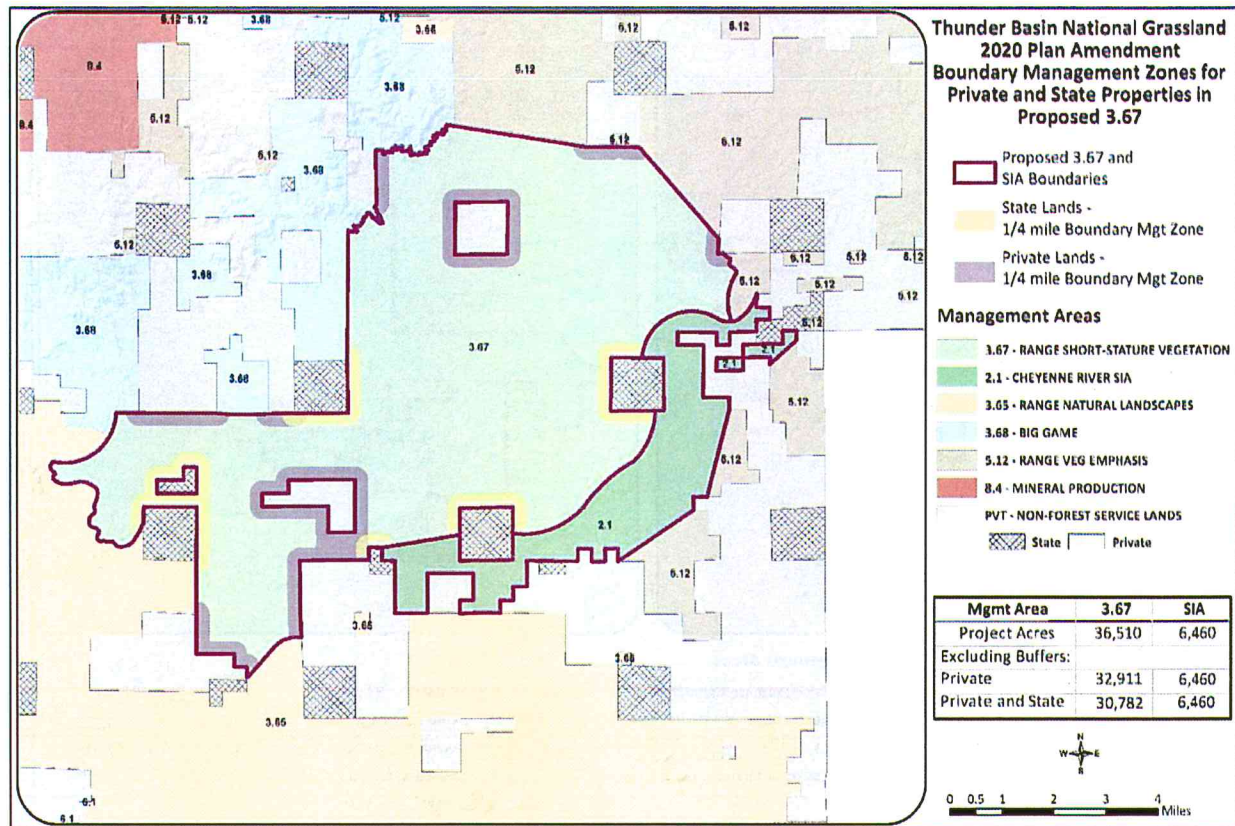




**Map 1. Current and Proposed Management Area Boundaries**

4. Establish a minimum  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile boundary management zone within Management Area 3.67 where the Grassland shares a border with private or state property. Within the boundary management zone, control of prairie dogs will be prioritized to reduce impacts to surrounding landowners (Map 2). Treatment within a boundary management zone will be in collaboration with adjacent landowners for private lands or the State of Wyoming for state controlled lands. For control on NFS lands to proceed within a boundary management zone, the landowner or State would need to engage in concurrent control on the adjacent private or state lands. If the Forest Service finds that certain colonies cause chronic encroachment problems, the Forest Service will work with partners via the Implementation Collaborative (see 6.d below) to determine appropriate actions. Landowners experiencing persistent or imminent encroachment after treatment may request consideration of a temporary  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile boundary management zone. All tools will be available for control in the boundary management zone at any time, and rodenticide is expected to be the primary tool.
5. Where possible, adopt use of the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Ecological Site Descriptions in Management Area 3.67 as the basis to describe plant communities, evaluate current and desired conditions, and maintain or improve native vegetation and wildlife habitat.





**Map 2. Boundary Management Zones for Private and State Properties in Proposed MA 3.67.**

6. Establish the following constraints for prairie dog management:
  - a. Active prairie dog colonies within Management Area 3.67 will be managed toward a target of 10,000 acres to support viable populations of associated species such as mountain plover, burrowing owl, swift fox, and other grassland birds. If the total area of active prairie dog colonies is below 10,000 acres within Management Area 3.67 and conditions warrant prairie dog control, then up to approximately 2,500 acres of satellite colonies may be identified outside of MA 3.67 to provide area that counts toward the target acreage. Satellite colonies must meet the following criteria before they may be counted toward the target acreage:
    - Current monitoring information is available to describe vegetation and habitat conditions;
    - Habitat conditions would provide for the persistence of associated species; and
    - Colonies are expected to remain active until the target acreage of 10,000 is expected to be achieved within Management Area 3.67.
  - b. In Management Area 3.67, while 10,000 acres is the goal, management that allows for fluctuation of active colony acreage within a target range of 7,500 to 12,500 acres may occur. Consistent with retaining the 10,000 acre target, and regardless of the identification of satellite colony acres, all prairie dog colony management tools will be available for use when the active acreage in the Management Area lies within the target range of 7,500 to 12,500 acres.



When the acreage of active colonies within the management area is below 7,500 acres, colony control tools, excluding density control and non-lethal control, will not be used except in ¼-mile boundary management zones.

- c. Within Management Area 3.67, colonies should be distributed across the landscape and vary in size up to approximately 1,000 acres with an emphasis on colonies of 100 to 400 acres. At least one complex in Management Area 3.67 would be managed for at least 1,500 acres of active prairie dog colonies in order to meet the requirements for potential reintroduction habitat in the Wyoming Black-Footed Ferret Management Plan.
- d. Stakeholders may contribute to annual mapping efforts and other monitoring activities; recommended priorities for expansion, control (including density control), grassland restoration; and other prairie dog management recommendations via a third-party Implementation Collaborative. National Grassland staff would work with the Implementation Collaborative to acquire the best available and most current information before pursuing prairie dog management.
- e. Prairie dog expansion tools may include, but would not be limited to: translocation of prairie dog coterries within the Grassland; application of plague prevention products, such as deltamethrin (“Delta Dust”) or equivalent, to reduce impacts from sylvatic plague; and identification of specific colonies for seasonal or year-round shooting prohibitions.
- f. Prairie dog control tools may include, but would not be limited to: use of rodenticides including zinc phosphide; use of vegetative barriers (i.e., complete vegetation projects that promote native vegetation with tall stature); and translocation of prairie dog coterries within the Grassland.
- g. Use of anticoagulant rodenticides such as Rozol and Kaput will not occur on the Grassland based on the recommendation of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, specifically with regard to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C 703), the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668).

### **Public Participation Strategy**

A public participation strategy is in development for this project and is filed in Pinyon.

### **Project Communications**

A communication plan is in development for this project and is filed in Pinyon.

### **Deliverables and Schedule**

The goal is to sign the final record of decision no later than the end of Fiscal Year 2020 or earlier, if possible. In order to achieve this goal, the schedule will be reviewed regularly with the interdisciplinary team leader and all members of the interdisciplinary team and updated when necessary.

**Table 1. Tasks, Deliverables, and Target Dates.**

Task	Description	Deliverable	Target Date for Task Completion
<b>Phase 1 – Project Development</b>			
1.1 Public Participation Plan	Develop the detailed public participation plan including any meetings, if a cooperating agency group will be formed, and how to work with the Thunder Basin collaborative working group.	Draft Public Participation Plan Final Participation Plan	Draft 2/15/19; Final 3/15/19
1.2 Communication Plan	Develop the detailed internal and external communication plan including identifying audiences and how and who will communicate with them.	Draft Communication Plan Final Communication Plan	Draft 2/15/19; Final 3/15/19
<b>Phase 2 – Determine Scope and Context for Analysis</b>			
2.1 Project Initiation	Establish formal direction for ID team and cooperating agencies. PIL will include draft project description, purpose and need (includes brief description of current condition), proposed action, possible alternatives, roles and responsibilities, Grassland Plan content, timeline and deliverables.	Draft Project Initiation Letter (PIL)	Draft to interdisciplinary team 1 week before kickoff meeting on 2/13.
2.2 Interdisciplinary Team kickoff meeting	Establish relationships between core and extended interdisciplinary team members; review and finalize PIL.	Meeting notes, Final PIL, including proposed action	2/20/19-2/21/19
2.3 Finalize the Proposed Action	Finalize proposed action for public scoping. Document issues for analysis and indications for additional action alternative(s).	Approved Proposed Action	2/22/19
2.5 Submit NOI	Submit Notice of Intent to RO/WO for review and submission to Federal Register.	Notice of Intent	2/27/19
2.6 Prepare Public Scoping Document	Prepare public scoping document for posting to PALS, including proposed action, maps, and appendices.	Scoping Document	3/25/2019
<b>Phase 3 – NEPA</b>			
3.1 Scoping	Conduct Public Scoping.	Scoping Comments	Anticipate start of 3/29. 30 day scoping period would end 4/29.
3.2 Public Meeting	Host public meeting(s) and present to the Thunder Basin National Grassland Working Group.	Scoping comments	Week of 4/15/2019
3.3 Interdisciplinary Team Field Trip	Familiarize team with project area.	Field Trip Notes	Week of 4/15/2019
3.4 Content Analysis	Complete content analysis of scoping letters.	Scoping report	5/27/19

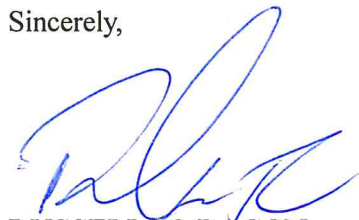


<b>Task</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Target Date for Task Completion</b>
3.5 Interdisciplinary Team Meeting	Review scoping report and develop alternatives.	Meeting notes, Issues and Alternatives	Week of 6/10/19
3.6 Issues and Alternatives, Analysis Framework	Define significant issues and alternatives for analysis. Provide direction for analysis.	Issues and Alternatives Memo	6/21/19
3.7 Prepare DEIS Draft Ch. 1 and 2	Prepare DEIS Ch. 1 and 2 (Purpose and Need and Alternatives).	EIS chapters 1 and 2	7/5/19
3.7 Prepare DEIS Draft Ch. 3	Prepare DEIS Ch. 3 (Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences); prepare draft biological assessment.	EIS chapter 3 content	7/29/19
3.8 Full Draft EIS Preparation	Compile DEIS and submit for internal review.	DEIS internal review comments	8/2/19 (with comments due 8/16/19)
3.9 Submit NOA	Submit Notice of Availability, clearance sheet, briefing paper to RO/WO for review and submission to Federal Register.	Complete Notice of Availability	8/16/19
3.10 Full Draft EIS Preparation	Revise DEIS and submit for cooperator review.	DEIS for cooperator review	8/23/19 (with comments due 9/6/19)
3.11 Public Release of DEIS	Incorporate cooperator edits and finalize DEIS for release to the public and filing with EPA.	Complete DEIS, legal notice, and transmittal letter	Estimate publication date of 9/20/19 (5 weeks from submission to WO)
3.12 Public Comment Period	Comment period is 90 days for plan amendment.	Public comments	9/20/19-12/23/19
3.13 Public Meeting	Host public meeting(s) and present to Thunder Basin National Grassland Working Group.	Public comments	Week of 10/7/19
3.14 Agency Consultations	Follow up on documents for regulatory agency consultation	Receipt of Biological Opinion or letter of concurrence from Fish and Wildlife Service and State Historic Preservation Office.	12/23/19
3.15 Public Comment Analysis	Review, categorize, and respond to public comments.	EIS comment report; response to comments	1/27/20
3.16 Interdisciplinary Team Meeting	Discuss comments, respond to comments as needed, document needs for FEIS	Finalize response to comments, list of needs for FEIS	Week of 2/10/20
3.17 Finalize Specialist Input and EIS	Incorporate changes resulting from public comments	Final EIS; supporting documents	3/13/20

Task	Description	Deliverable	Target Date for Task Completion
3.18 Submit NOA	Submit Notice of Availability, clearance sheet, briefing paper to RO/WO for review and submission to Federal Register	Complete Notice of Availability	3/9/20
3.19 Prepare FEIS and Draft ROD for internal review	Incorporate changes resulting from public comments and submit for FEIS and Draft ROD internal review	Final EIS; supporting documents, Draft ROD	3/16/20 (with comments due 3/23/20)
3.20 Prepare FEIS and Draft ROD for cooperator review	Incorporate internal comments and submit for cooperator review	Final EIS; supporting documents, Draft ROD	3/27/20 (with due date of 4/3/20)
3.21 Organize Project Record	Create filing structure; convert records to pdf; index and log all project-related documents	Completed project record through Draft ROD	4/13/20
3.22 Public Release and Notice	Final documents posted; start of objection period.	NOA, legal notice, and transmittal letter	Estimate publication date of 4/13/20 (5 weeks from submission to WO and after coop review)
3.23 Objection period	Objection period is 60 days for an EIS. Present to Thunder Basin National Grassland Working Group or cooperating agencies.	Objections	6/12/20
3.24 Notice of Objections filed	Publish notice of objections filed within 10 days.	Notice	6/22/20
3.25 Objection resolution	Objection resolution period lasts up to 90 days.	Objection resolution letters	9/12/20
3.26 Final ROD	Sign and publish Final ROD	Final ROD	BY 9/30/20

Thank you for your participation on this project. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



RUSSELL M. BACON  
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure: Draft Proposed Changes to Grassland Plan Direction