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Comments: Why is the Forest Service proposing four plan amendments to the 2002 Grasslands Plan, all of which would increase the killing of prairie dogs for the convenience of ranchers who lease public lands to graze their private livestock? Have you forgotten or do you turn a blind eye to the following:

Prairie dogs are a Sensitive Species that must not be poisoned or shot anywhere on Forest Service lands.

Prairie dogs are important as native wildlife, and balance the negative ecological consequences of non-native livestock.

The Forest Service has no business killing or preventing prairie dogs from accessing their native habitats, either on or off National Grasslands.

If the livestock industry cannot coexist with native wildlife on the Thunder Basin, all livestock must be removed, and replaced with free-roaming bison.

Prairie dogs must be restored to their natural densities and historic range.

"Management" of prairie dogs should be limited to nonlethal translocation of prairie dogs to repopulated areas where their population densities are low, and a blanket authorization should be granted to dust for flea control in areas where fleas carry sylvatic plague, which decimates prairie dog populations.

The Black-Footed Ferret Reintroduction Area must be fully restored and protected to support ferret reintroduction on the Thunder Basin.

All of these points stress how critical it is to prevent or stop any prairie dog killing on the Thunder Basin National Grassland. Ranchers do not take precedence over long term survival of native species, and I am appalled that any amendments to the 2002 Grasslands Plan would even be considered.

Sincerely,

Nora Butler Anderson