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First name: Christopher

Last name: Lish

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Wednesday, January 8, 2020

Subject: Reject the proposal to allow more poisoning and shooting of prairie dogs in Thunder Basin National Grassland -- 2020 Thunder Basin National Grassland Plan Amendment

Dear Chief Christiansen,

I strongly support conserving native wildlife on Thunder Basin National Grassland, including prairie dogs and the many species that need and utilize the habitat prairie dogs create. The current protections are essential to many species of wildlife, and to the future recovery of the endangered black-footed ferret. I strongly urge you to reject any alternative that further removes prairie dog protections from the current management plan, a compromise developed over many years. I urge you to continue fully protecting the last area on the Grassland that remains free from prairie dog poisoning and shooting--a safe-haven for prairie dogs and other prairie wildlife and future home to the endangered black-footed ferret.

"Our duty to the whole, including to the unborn generations, bids us to restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations. The movement for the conservation of wildlife and the larger movement for the conservation of all our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose and method. "

-- Theodore Roosevelt

All of the Forest Service's alternatives for a plan amendment are designed to strip vital protections on which vulnerable native species depend in this last protected area, effectively placing private ranching interests over public wildlife conservation. [comment end] The alternatives would subject prairie dogs to poisoning and shooting on 100% of the Grassland, leaving no area fully protected. Prairie dogs and the unique habitat they create with their burrowing activities are essential for other Great Plains wildlife, including the critically-endangered black-footed ferret. The proposed alternatives would have dire consequences for native grassland species that depend on prairie dogs to survive and would eliminate the ability to successfully reintroduce a viable population of the endangered black-footed ferret back to these grasslands. Thunder Basin National Grassland is a vital location for the overall recovery of the black-footed ferret and the prairie dog is a keystone species needed for its comeback. None of the alternatives would maintain the high-quality prairie dog habitat needed to recovery 100 breeding adult ferrets, the number scientists tell us is required to recover this endangered species.

"Every man who appreciates the majesty and beauty of the wilderness and of wild life, should strike hands with the farsighted men who wish to preserve our material resources, in the effort to keep our forests and our game beasts, game-birds, and game-fish--indeed, all the living creatures of prairie and woodland and seashore--from wanton destruction. Above all, we should realize that the effort toward this end is essentially a democratic movement. "

-- Theodore Roosevelt

As species across the globe face the threat of extinction, we must do all we can to prevent our cherished wildlife from disappearing from the earth. Thunder Basin National Grassland is regarded as a critical site for long-term ferret recovery. The alternatives presented are all extreme and would violate federal laws and Forest Service policies. As manager of our public lands, the U. S. Forest Service has a duty to protect species and habitats on

these federal lands from this threat. Unfortunately, this proposal would do the exact opposite. Please reverse course for our native wildlife and for future generations. Please do not undermine past compromise, common sense, federal law, and the wildlife and health of our public lands with this plan amendment process.

"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. "

-- Aldo Leopold

Thank you for your consideration of my comments. Please do NOT add my name to your mailing list. I will learn about future developments on this issue from other sources.