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First name: Peter
Last name: Balunek
Organization:
Title:
Comments: To Whom It May Concern,

As a user of public lands, I urge the Forest Service to reconsider its proposed amendments to the Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands (NNFG) Land Management Plan that would expand prairie dog poisoning across public lands in Nebraska and South Dakota.

The Forest Service has limited public participation in a decision with significant consequences for prairie dogs, endangered black-footed ferrets and associated wildlife.

Protect wildlife from poisoning

The proposed rodenticide amendment (p. 17) could substantially expand poisoning seasons and allow additional toxicants, including anticoagulants Rozol and Kaput-D. These toxicants cause prolonged suffering in prairie dogs and pose significant secondary poisoning risks to predators and scavengers.

Safeguard black-footed ferret recovery

The proposed changes threaten important ferret recovery areas, including Conata Basin and Fort Pierre National Grassland. Recent surveys documented 35 ferrets at Fort Pierre, representing approximately 12 percent of the estimated wild population. Their natural dispersal from the neighboring Lower Brule Sioux Reservation presents a nationally significant opportunity to advance ferret recovery on public lands.

Prioritize nonlethal management

The Forest Service should prioritize conservation translocation, visual and vegetative barriers, grazing and vegetation management, and proactive plague mitigation to support healthy prairie dog populations and address conflicts.

I urge the Forest Service to:

- Retain existing seasonal restrictions on rodenticide use.
- Prohibit anticoagulant rodenticides throughout the NNFG.
- Require consideration of feasible nonlethal alternatives before authorizing lethal control.
- Protect established and emerging black-footed ferret recovery areas.

Our public lands should support the recovery of endangered species, not undermine it.

Sincerely,

Peter Balunek