

Why is Management Important?

Within their natural habitat, Prairie dogs are considered a “Keystone” species because their colonies provide habitat to many other grassland wildlife. Due to changes in land use, only 1-2% of all historic Prairie dog habitat still exists. In order for this species to co-exist along Colorado’s Front Range a variety of management practices must be implemented.

Habitat

Prairie dog colonies were once found across the great plains. Their diets consist of a variety of vegetation, such as grasses, forbs, seeds, roots, and sedges.



References

Colorado Parks and Wildlife

<http://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/SOC-Black-tailedPrairieDog.aspx>

City of Longmont

<http://www.longmontcolorado.gov/departments/departments-n-z/parks-open-space-trails/plans-maps-and-reports/wildlife-management-plan>

City of Boulder

<http://user.govoutreach.com/boulder/faq.php?cid=23415>

City of Fort Collins

<http://www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/pdf/wildlife-management-guidelines.pdf?1194997661>



City of Longmont

Natural Resources Division
7 South Sunset Street
Longmont, CO 80501

Phone: 303-651-8416
www.longmontcolorado.gov/parks/index.htm

Wildlife Management Guidelines



*Prairie Dog Colonies
within the City limits*

Prairie Dog Management Policy

Balancing Ecological and Societal Perspectives:

First, the presence of Prairie dogs are very beneficial to some wildlife species but have an adverse affect on other species.

Second, some citizens place a high value on being able to observe Prairie dogs and knowing that they survive in Longmont, while others consider them a nuisance that interfere with other uses of the land.

Third, Prairie dog colonies are not stagnant but tend to grow in size and to be a source of offsite dispersal.

Fourth, Prairie dogs only have one litter per year. Their liter size can range from 4 to 6 pups. Gestation lasts between 30 to 35 days and the pups emerge from the burrow 4 to 7 weeks after birth, around the 1st of June.

Fifth, managing Prairie dogs—whether by attempting to constrain the size of a colony, impeding dispersal to other properties, or relocating them to another site can be costly.



Methods of Management

Preferred Option – Relocation, if the number to be removed is greater than 25 animals and a suitable release site has been identified, approved by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and City Council, and the public is given adequate notice.

Second Option – Removal for donation to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service black-footed ferret recovery program or raptor rehabilitation program

Third Option— extermination within the burrows.

The City of Longmont recommends and prefers the method of pressurized carbon monoxide (PERC) for extermination. This is considered to be a more humane method of control.

Relocation Requirements

Colorado Parks and Wildlife Permit

Some site preparation is needed before the relocation. Receiving sites should have suitable habitat as determined Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and mowed to an appropriate height. The maximum number of Prairie dogs that can be relocated is typically in the range of 7 to 10 animals per acre. Long-term monitoring is also required by CPW.

Prairie dogs cannot be moved to another county without the approval of the County Commissioners.

Management via Barriers

Barriers are used as a management tool when a Prairie dog colony resides in the adjacent property of a development area.

After Prairie dog removal, **Developers are required to continually monitor the property to ensure individual prairie dogs do not return to the site during construction.** To make the monitoring process easier, and allow greater success in the removal of the Prairie dogs, **barriers should be utilized and time between removal and construction, should be limited.**

For more information and specifications on Prairie dog barriers, please contact the Natural Resources Division.

303-651-8416

