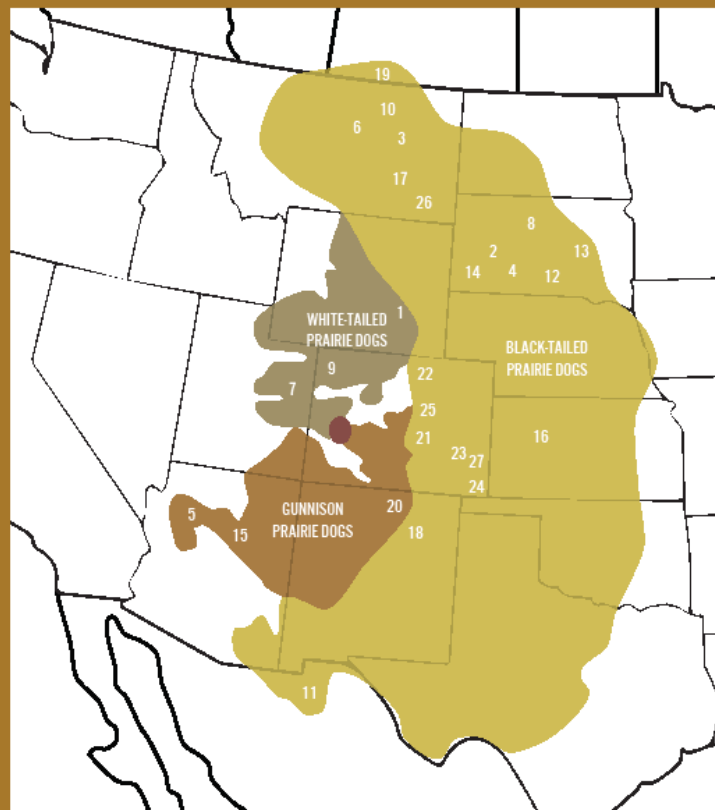


# Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

## State Member Contributions to Black-footed Ferret Recovery



### BLACK-FOOTED FERRET REINTRODUCTION SITES INITIAL RELEASE # (YEAR)



1. Shirley Basin, WY (1991)
2. Badlands NP, SD (1994)
3. UL Bend NWR, MT (1994)
4. Conata Basin, SD (1996)
5. Aubrey Valley, AZ (1996)
6. Ft. Belknap Reservation, MT (1997)
7. Coyote Basin, UT (1999)
8. Cheyenne River Reservation, SD (2000)
9. Wolf Creek, CO (2001)
10. BLM 40-Complex, MT (2001)
11. Janos, Mexico (2001)
12. Rosebud Reservation, SD (2004)
13. Lower Brule Reservation, SD (2006)
14. Wind Cave NP, SD (2007)
15. Espee Ranch, AZ (2007)
16. Logan County, KS (2007)
17. Northern Cheyenne Reservation, MT (2008)
18. Vermejo Park Ranch, NM (2008)
19. Grasslands NP, SK, Canada (2009)
20. Vermejo Park Ranch, NM (2012)
21. Walker Ranch, CO (2013)
22. Soapstone Complex, CO (2014)
23. North Holly Complex, CO (2014)
24. Liberty Complex, CO (2014)
25. Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge (2015)
26. Crow Indian Reservation (2015)
27. South Holly Complex (2015)

# **Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies**

## **State Member Contributions to**

### **Black-footed Ferret (BFF) Recovery**

#### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Voluntary Participation  
Non Regulatory Approach  
Incentives Based  
Cooperative Partnerships  
Continuing Communication

"BFF recovery and de-listing are possible within the next decade if all of our partners fully commit to providing adequate landowner assistance, disease suppression, and prairie dog management."

Bob Broscheid, Director, Colorado Parks & Wildlife

"Participation in BFF recovery is especially rewarding since regulatory implications have been changed so that landowners and wildlife managers can engage in doing the right things for the BFF."

Keith Sexson, Assistant Secretary, Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism

**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Member Contributions to  
Black-footed Ferret Recovery  
ARIZONA**

- Two BFF reintroduction sites, both with extensive Gunnison's prairie dog habitat
- Big Boquillas Ranch privately owned by Navajo Nation was 5<sup>th</sup> site nationally, early participant in 1996
- Long term monitoring of BFFs and prairie dogs
- Innovative onsite pen management of BFFs and spring releases of bred BFF females; ongoing sylvatic plague management and re-search
- Arizona Game and Fish Department hosting of BFF Recovery Implementation Team Executive Committee annual meeting for many years



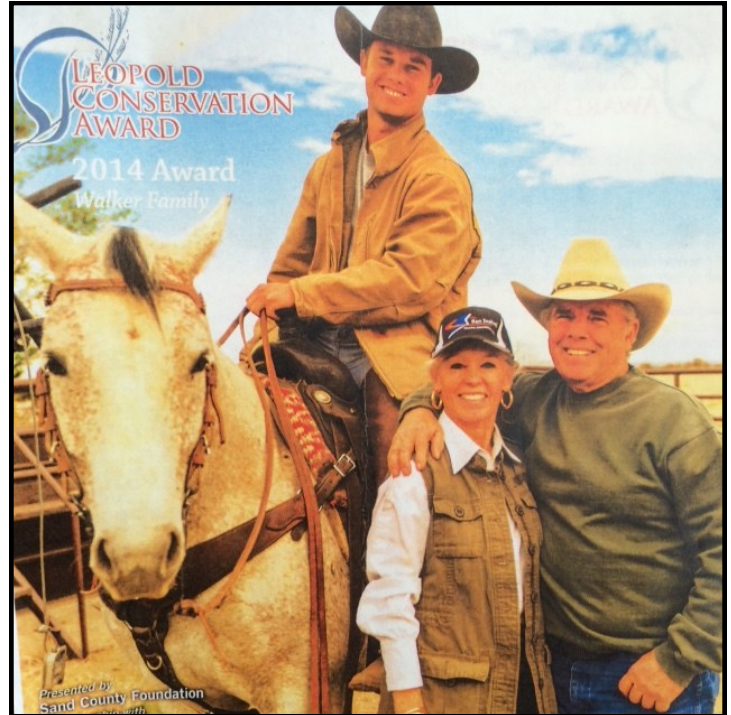
- BFF captive breeding facility at the Phoenix Zoo; approximately 250 volunteers, many of them returning, participate annually for spotlighting surveys coming from across the country and as far away as the UK and Africa
- Partners include Arizona Game & Fish Department, private land owners, Navajo Nation, Espee Ranch, State lands, and the BFF Recovery Team





**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Member Contributions to  
Black-footed Ferret Recovery  
COLORADO**

- Seven BFF reintroduction sites, six in black-tailed prairie dog habitat and one in white-tailed prairie dog habitat; extensive prairie dog habitat in the state
- Aggressive utilization of 2013 Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement- five new reintroductions sites via this approach 2013-2015
- Groundbreaking NRCS landowner assistance to support BFF recovery
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife Director current Chair of BFF Recovery Implementation Team Executive Committee
- BFF captive breeding facilities at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo (CMZ), Colorado Springs and the USFWS northern Colorado facility; educational displays at Fort Collins Museum of Discovery and CMZ
- Partners include Colorado Parks & Wildlife, private landowners, Colorado Cattlemen's Association, Federal agencies, City of Fort Collins/Meadow Springs Ranch and Folsom Grazing Association, and the BFF Recovery Team





**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Member Contributions to  
Black-footed Ferret Recovery  
KANSAS**

- One BFF reintroduction site, black-tailed prairie dog habitat
- Long term monitoring of BFFs and prairie dogs
- Successful cooperative agency prairie dog boundary control management, no reports of sylvatic plague
- Early private land BFF Safe Harbor enrollment (2015)



- BFF educational displays at five facilities
- Spotlight surveys documented wild-born BFFs for the eight consecutive years; approximately 300 volunteers have participated in surveys
- Partners include Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, private landowners, and the BFF Recovery Team



**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Member Contributions to  
Black-footed Ferret Recovery  
MONTANA**

- Five BFF reintroduction sites, extensive black-tailed prairie dog habitat

- UL Bend National Wildlife Refuge early participant in 1994

- Long term monitoring of BFFs and prairie dogs

- Ongoing sylvatic plague management and research

- BFF reintroduction sites on three Tribal reservations: Ft. Belknap, Northern Cheyenne, and Crow

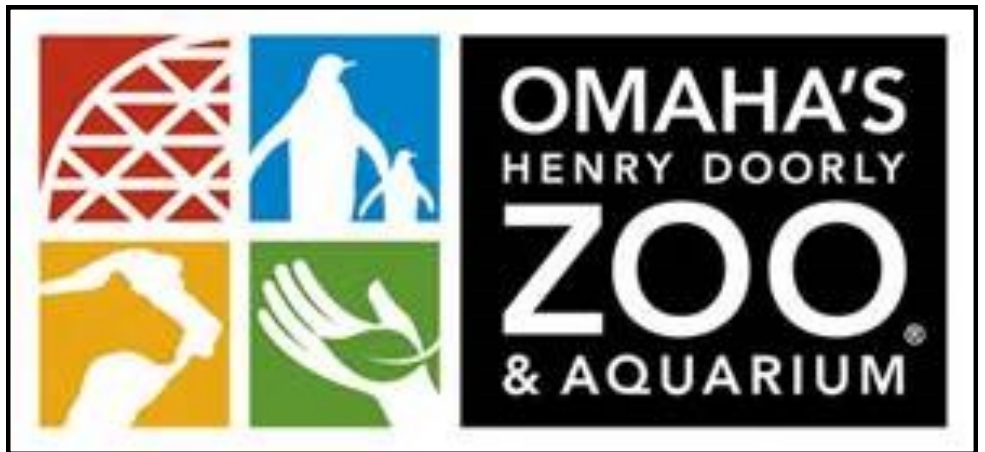
- Partners include Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, private landowners, Tribes, Federal agencies, and the BFF Recovery Team





**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Member Contributions to  
Black-footed Ferret Recovery  
NEBRASKA**

- No BFF reintroduction sites to date
- Adequate black-tailed prairie dog habitat to support BFF reintroduction efforts
- Limited sylvatic plague reported
- Henry Doorly Zoo, Omaha, NE involved early in BFF captive breeding program
- Partners include Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, Henry Doorly Zoo, and the BFF Recovery Team



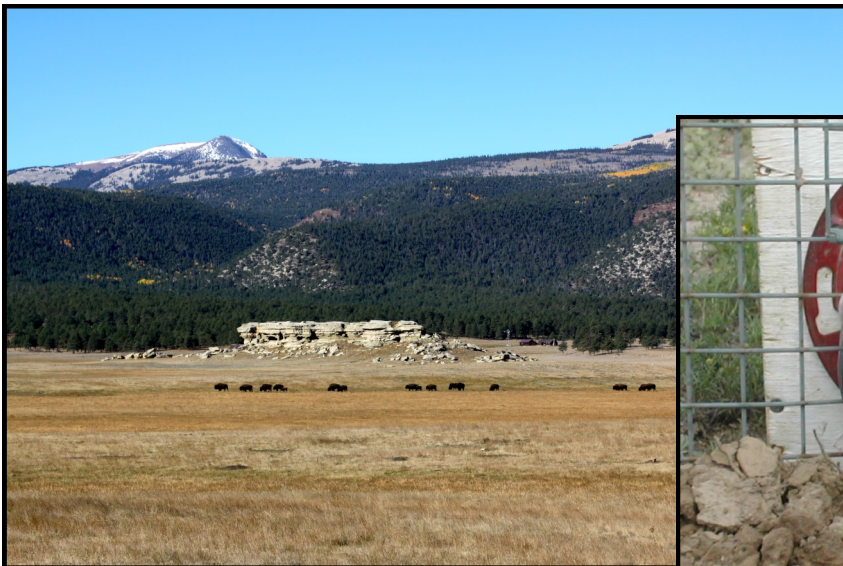


**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Member Contributions to  
Black-footed Ferret Recovery  
NEW MEXICO**

- Two reintroduction sites, one in Black-tailed prairie dog habitat and one in Gunnison's prairie dog habitat on the Vermejo Ranch
- Innovative onsite pen management of BFFs; 393 BFF kits have been pre-conditioned in outdoor pens at Vermejo
- Long term monitoring of BFFs and prairie dogs
- Ongoing sylvatic plague management
- 2009 TESF documented the first wild born BFF in New Mexico in 75 years
- Partners include New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, private landowners, and the BFF Recovery Team



**2009 BFF Kit**



**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Member Contributions to  
Black-footed Ferret Recovery  
NORTH DAKOTA**

- No BFF reintroduction sites to date
- Adequate black-tailed prairie dog habitat to support BFF recovery
- BFF display at Dakota Zoo, Bismarck, ND
- Interest in BFF recovery expressed by private land-owners, Standing Rock Tribal Reservation, and Theodore Roosevelt National Park
- Dispersing BFFs from SD observed at the Standing Rock Tribal Reservation
- Partners include North Dakota Game & Fish Department, Standing Rock Tribal Reservation, Federal agencies, and the BFF Recovery Team





**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Member Contributions to  
Black-footed Ferret Recovery  
OKLAHOMA**

- No BFF reintroduction sites to date
- Adequate black-tailed prairie dog habitat to support BFF recovery limited to Panhandle area
- Significant State prairie dog conservation efforts
- Partners include Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, and the BFF Recovery team





**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Member Contributions to  
Black-footed Ferret Recovery  
SOUTH DAKOTA**

- Six BFF reintroduction sites, extensive black-tailed prairie dog habitat
- Badlands National Park and US Forest Service, Buffalo Gap National Grasslands were 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> reintroduction sites nationally, respectively, early participants in 1994 and 1996
- 300+ BFFs once observed at one site now reduced due to sylvatic plague
- Long term monitoring of BFFs and prairie dogs
- Ongoing sylvatic plague management and research
- Partners include South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks, private landowners, Tribes, Federal agencies, and the BFF Recovery Team



**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Member Contributions to  
Black-footed Ferret Recovery  
TEXAS**

- No BFF reintroduction sites to date, extensive black-tailed prairie dog habitat
- Interest expressed by private landowners and Forest Service National Grasslands
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Deputy Director past Chair of BFF Recovery Team Executive Committee
- BFF educational displays at the Abilene Zoo, Amarillo Zoo, and El Paso Zoo
- Partners include Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Federal agencies, and the BFF Recovery Team





**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Member Contributions to  
Black-footed Ferret Recovery  
UTAH**

- One BFF reintroduction site, extensive white-tailed prairie dog habitat
- Early participant in 1999
- Long term monitoring of BFFs and prairie dogs
- Ongoing sylvatic plague management and research
- Partners include Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, private landowners, Federal agencies, Tribes, and the BFF Recovery Team





**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Member Contributions to  
Black-footed Ferret Recovery  
WYOMING**

- Extensive white-tailed prairie dog habitat and black-tailed prairie dog habitat State wide
- Shirley Basin was the first BFF reintroduction site and Experimental, Non-Essential designation nation wide in 1991
- Statewide Experimental, Non-Essential designation for Wyoming completed in 2015
- 200+ BFFs documented on approximately 1/7 of Shirley Basin habitat several years ago; recently reduced, but still significant BFF population



- Long term monitoring of BFFs and prairie dogs
- Participation in sylvatic plague research
- Wyoming Game and Fish Deputy Director past Chair of BFF Recovery Executive Committee



- Partners include Wyoming Game & Fish Department, private landowners, Federal agencies, and the BFF Recovery Team



**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Member Contributions to  
Black-footed Ferret Recovery  
SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA**

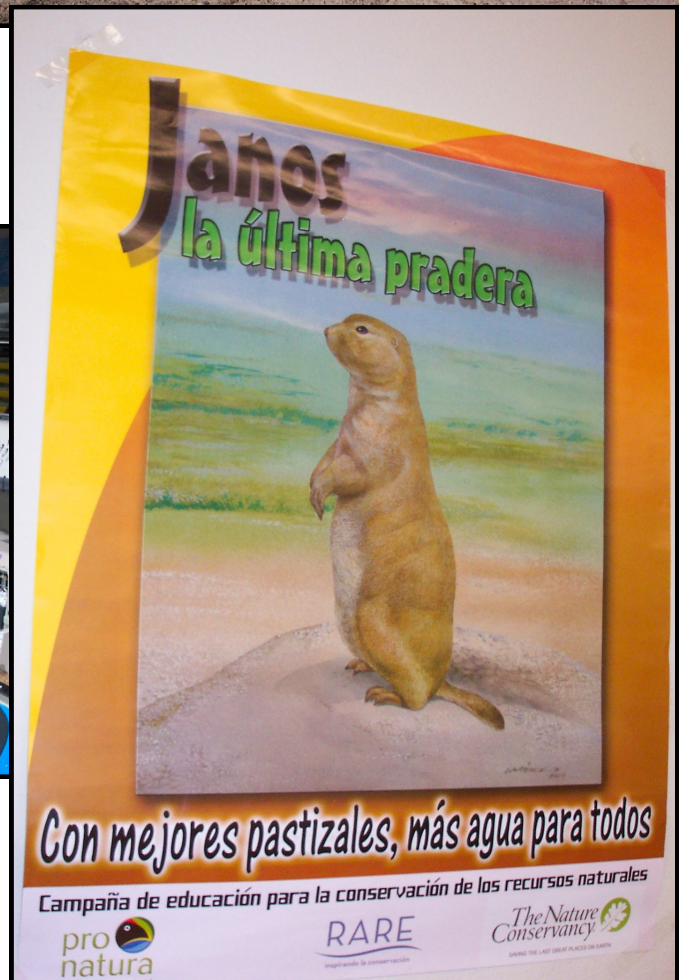
- Grasslands National Park (CN) BFF reintroduction site initiated in 2009 (Val Marie SK)
- Current recovery efforts focused on enhancing and increasing black-tailed prairie dog habitat.
- Ongoing sylvatic plague management and research
- BFF captive breeding facility at the Toronto Zoo
- BFF educational display at the Saskatoon Zoo
- Active member of the BFF RIT Executive Committee and Subcommittees





**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies State Member Contributions to  
Black-footed Ferret Recovery  
CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO**

- One BFF reintroduction site initiated in 2001
- Extensive black-tailed prairie dog habitat
- Interest in sylvatic plague management
- Recent renewed interest in BFF recovery
- Partners include the Janos Ejido, Universidad Nacional Mexico, and the BFF Recovery Team





# WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

## RESOLUTION



### FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR PRIVATE LANDOWNER CONSERVATION OF PRAIRIE DOG HABITAT

{Sub-title: Request for specific actions by the U.S. Department of Interior (USDOI) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that would contribute materially to the conservation of Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' (WAFWA) Grassland Initiative sensitive wildlife species, particularly black-footed ferrets, prairie dogs and other associated species}.

**WHEREAS,** WAFWA Adopted in Convention a resolution on July 21, 2010, that recognizes the importance of balancing prairie dog conservation with private landowner interests in order to conserve various associated wildlife species, including the black-footed ferret (BFF), while simultaneously protecting western ranching operations, and

**WHEREAS,** prairie dogs historically occupied approximately 20% of all North American prairie habitat and significantly influenced the number and viability of many other wildlife species, and

**WHEREAS,** WAFWA is particularly interested in endangered species conservation programs with clear, achievable goals, including the BFF as specified in its recently completed 2013 Revised Recovery Plan, an effort in which WAFWA members were significantly engaged, and

**WHEREAS,** WAFWA is cognizant of the challenges of BFF recovery as it relates to its dependence on the purposeful conservation of a small amount of prairie dog habitat (approximately 500,000 acres, representing roughly 15% of currently-occupied habitat and 0.5% of historically-occupied habitat in 12 western states, and

**WHEREAS,** WAFWA recognizes the potential inherent conflicts of even very limited prairie dog populations with agricultural interests, and

**WHEREAS,** WAFWA believes that recovery and delisting of the BFF, as well as achieving significant conservation values for prairie dogs and associated wildlife species that may be at risk in the future i.e. mountain plover, burrowing owls, ferruginous hawks, swift fox, etc.), are possible within the next decade if programs are developed to assist private landowners who are interested in voluntarily conserving these species, and

**WHEREAS,** WAFWA has a long history of encouraging voluntary participation by private landowners in incentive-based wildlife conservation efforts that minimize regulatory constraints, and

**WHEREAS**, significant efforts have occurred in this regard in response to the WAFWA 2010 resolution, including the enrollment of several private landowners in a BFF Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement (PSHA) developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USDOI USFWS), the initiation of Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) financial incentives for BFF PSHA participants in Colorado that have demonstrated private landowner willingness to participate in a voluntary incentive-based wildlife conservation effort, the expansion of Animal Plant and Health Inspection Wildlife Services' (USDA APHIS WS) prairie dog management activities in support of BFF recovery, and research related to the development of a promising new vaccine for sylvatic plague control by the U.S. Geological Survey (USDOI USGS), and

**WHEREAS**, WAFWA and these agencies entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) last dated September 12, 2012, to further the purposes of the wildlife conservation activities described above, and

**WHEREAS**, WAFWA desires to provide further guidance beyond its aforementioned 2010 resolution to USDOI and USDA regarding additional actions necessary to fully achieve the desired outcomes described in the purpose section of this MOU.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that members of WAFWA encourage both USDOI and USDA to consider the following actions as they are appropriate to the interests expressed in this MOU, and to coordinate accordingly with appropriate WAFWA member states:

1. USDOI USFWS continue to enroll interested private landowners in the BFF PSHA sufficient to meet the BFF recovery goals specified in its 2013 Revised BFF Recovery Plan.
2. USDA NRCS consider a National Initiative with adequate funding for BFF and other prairie dog habitat associated wildlife conservation rather than state-by-state efforts that do not adequately address landscape conservation goals.
3. USDA NRCS consider a per acre per year payment to private landowners who agree to accept BFF reintroductions and conserve the prairie dog populations on which they depend that is commensurate with cattle production net per acre per year income potential in various regions,
4. USDA NRCS consider at least a decade long enrollment period which better fits both the biology of western wildlife species and the planning needs of western livestock operators.
5. USDA NRCS recognize a wildlife habitat conservation commitment by private landowners who welcome BFFs, prairie dogs and associated wildlife species, and not penalize this effort as a result of drought, disease, or temporary BFF absence. NRCS funding for any BFF efforts should not diminish support for its current wildlife conservation programs.
6. APHIS WS utilize its operational presence in the 12 state historical range of the BFF in cooperation with appropriate WAFWA member states to conduct comprehensive prairie dog management, including both disease management and population control, on and near BFF recovery sites, and allocate budget appropriations to support this effort. APHIS WS should facilitate the transition of USDOI USGS sylvatic plague vaccine research and development to potential APHIS WS operational use in appropriate areas.



**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that WAFWA members reaffirm their commitment to the provisions of its aforementioned July 21, 2010, resolution, and to the more specific direction provided in this follow-up resolution

Adopted in Convention  
Reno, Nevada  
July 22, 2015