

**APPENDIX J
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Implementation Plan for Colorado Grassland Species Conservation Plan

Objective / Action	Status	Completion Deadline
Objective 1: Meet occupied acreage and distribution target objectives as defined for Colorado in “A Multi-State Conservation Plan For The Black-tailed Prairie Dog, <i>Cynomys ludovicianus</i>, in the United States, Addendum to the Black-tailed Prairie Dog Conservation Assessment and Strategy” (Luce 2003).	Complete	
Action 1.1: Submit for peer review and publication, the methodology, discussion and results of the 2002 aerial survey of black-tailed prairie dogs in eastern Colorado.	Ongoing	July 2004
Action 1.2: Implement a monitoring protocol to estimate black-tailed prairie dogs populations in eastern Colorado on a three year interval (2002, 2005, 2008, 2011)	Complete 2002	2005, 2008, 2011
Action 1.3: Coordinate with the multi-state black-tailed prairie dog conservation team to implement a standardized monitoring protocol applicable in all 11 states of the prairie dogs range.	Ongoing	2005
Action 1.4: If populations fall into the Yellow – Vulnerable zone (250,000 – 350,000 active acres) or below, frequency and intensity of monitoring will increase to determine the cause of the decline and management actions will be developed to stabilize or reverse the decline.	Monitoring	If Warranted
Action 1.5: Initiate a public outreach program to inform landowners, hunters, and other members of the public concerning the need to notify the CDPHE/CDOW of die-offs of prairie dogs or ground squirrels.	New Program	December 2004
Action 1.6: Develop and implement a voluntary reporting protocol.	New Program	December 2004
Action 1.7: If populations fall into the Green – Secure zone (350,000 – 450,000 active acres) or below, a clause requiring the reporting of die-offs of prairie dogs or ground squirrels will be added to all CDOW contracts for work involving prairie dogs or associated species.	Monitoring	If Warranted
Action 1.8: If populations fall into the Yellow – Vulnerable zone (250,000 – 350,000 active acres) or below, plague monitoring protocols (see Appendix X) recommended in the “A Multi-State Conservation Plan For The Black-tailed Prairie Dog, <i>Cynomys ludovicianus</i> , in the United States, Addendum to the Black-tailed Prairie Dog Conservation Assessment and Strategy” (Luce 2003) will be implemented.	Monitoring	If Warranted
Objective 2: The CDOW will continue its efforts to produce, encourage and support the best available science regarding monitoring long-term population trends and distribution of shortgrass associated species.	Ongoing	
Action 2.1: Support ongoing efforts to monitor long-term population trends for the Mountain Plover on the Pawnee National Grassland and in South Park.	Ongoing	Annually
Action 2.2: Support ongoing efforts to evaluate potential Mountain Plover and other shortgrass prairie bird monitoring methodologies in eastern Colorado.	Ongoing	2005
Action 2.3: Implement best available monitoring methodologies for shortgrass associated bird species including the Burrowing Owl and Ferruginous Hawk to determine long-term trends and distribution.	Ongoing	Annually
Action 2.4: Implement mark-capture monitoring protocol to estimate swift fox populations in eastern Colorado on a five-year interval (2003-04, 2008-09, 2013-14).	2003-04	2008-09, 2013-14
Objective 3: Recognizing that private landowners provide critical habitat and act as stewards to the land supporting populations of the black-tailed prairie dog and other shortgrass associated species, voluntary, incentive-based, non-regulatory partnerships with private landowners will be used to ensure the conservation and management of these species and their habitats in Colorado.		
Action 3.1: Secure 150,000 acres of high quality shortgrass prairie habitat for the conservation of black-tailed prairie dogs and associated species through permanent (preferred) or long-term easements or conservation agreements by 2011.	Ongoing Currently negotiating agreements on ~20,000 acres under CSCP	2011
Action 3.2: Work with other federal, state, and municipal agencies as well as non-governmental organizations, state agricultural organizations, and private landowners to identify high priority areas to implement partnerships.	Ongoing	2005
Action 3.3: Map existing areas that provide secure quality native shortgrass prairie habitat and their spatial relationship to proposed areas for conservation easements/agreements.	Ongoing	July 2004
Action 3.4: Promote coordination among existing entities that have land protection capacity and an interest in the shortgrass prairie (potentially including CDOW, The Nature Conservancy, Colorado Cattleman’s Agricultural Land Trust, Colorado Open Lands, Douglas County Land Conservancy, etc.).	Ongoing	
Action 3.5: Support efforts of the Interstate Coordinator for the Prairie Dog Conservation Team and others in building public/private partnership initiatives like the High Plains Partnership to provide federal funding for conservation efforts.	Ongoing	
Action 3.6: Work in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to implement conservation programs under Farm Bill programs such as the Conservation Reserve, Conservation Reserve Enhancement, Grassland Reserve, Wildlife Habitat Incentives, and Environmental Quality Incentives Programs to benefit grassland associated species.	Ongoing	
Action 3.7: Implement mountain plover nest conservation in cultivated fields project to minimize the impact of agricultural cultivation activities on nesting mountain plovers.	Ongoing	Annually
Action 3.8: Develop Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA’s) and other cooperative agreements, as needed, with private		December 2004

landowners for species that are candidates for federal listing. Action 3.9: Support the Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT) Shortgrass Prairie Initiative, which is designed to streamline regulatory compliance and fulfill CDOT's mitigation needs in the shortgrass prairie through the establishment of proactive perpetual conservation easements and active management.	Ongoing	December 2006
Objective 4: Raise awareness of grassland conservation needs within the private and public sectors. Maintain healthy populations of grassland wildlife in conjunction with economic development and viability, and protection of property rights. Raise awareness for grassland wildlife of high conservation concern including: how to identify the species, habitat needs and management recommendations. Familiarize private landowners with different grassland habitat incentive programs including state, federal and non-profit partners with which they can work. Promote long-term conservation and sustainable use of grassland wildlife and their habitats.		
Action 4.1: Develop a standard presentation and "train-the-trainers" on delivery at local meetings	New Program	July 2004
Action 4.2: Build and expand partnerships for grassland conservation with Colorado Farm Bureau, Colorado Cattleman's Association, Colorado Livestock Association, Cooperative Extension, Resource Conservation & Development, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil Conservation Districts, County Commissioners, Colorado Division of Wildlife, private landowners, and others through outreach.	Ongoing	Annually
Action 4.3: Use workshops as an outreach tool to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss grassland conservation priorities and raise awareness for priority species and their habitat needs • Discuss incentive programs for grassland habitats • Provide a comfortable atmosphere for landowners to network with partners on the grasslands • Raise awareness for Mountain Plover conservation efforts • Provide outreach documents including Sharing Your Land with Shortgrass Prairie Birds, Shortgrass Prairie Resource Guide, Pocket Guide to Prairie Birds, Colorado Division of Wildlife's program booklet, etc. 	Ongoing Completed 5 Summer 2003. 3 additional workshops scheduled.	Annually
Action 4.4: Attend annual Farm Bureau, Cattlemen, State Conservation District, County Commission and other agricultural related organization meetings and give presentations on grassland conservation and/or have informational booths.	Ongoing	Annually
Action 4.5: Distribute the Mountain Plover video to agricultural organizations and other interested parties.	Ongoing	October 2003
Action 4.6: Develop web page on CDOW's web site with information on Colorado's Grassland Conservation plan, include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming outreach activities • Links to partners • Links to other state plans and information • Information on Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances 	Ongoing Video under production, available Spring 2004	December 2004
Action 4.7: Facilitate implementation of on-the-ground grassland conservation efforts through outreach, technical service, and financial assistance	Ongoing	Annually
Action 4.8: Develop press releases for local and state-wide newspapers and radio stations on grassland conservation, ongoing projects, and upcoming activities and meetings	Ongoing	As Needed
Action 4.9: Secure long-term funding for outreach, education, and on-the-ground conservation	Ongoing	Annually
Objective 5: Collaborate with CDA to demonstrate through law, regulation, or cooperative agreement adequate regulatory authority and regard for black-tailed prairie dog conservation objectives as it relates to the use of toxicants or shooting to control black-tailed prairie dogs causing damage to private property.		
Action 5.1: Develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the CDOW and CDA which outlines each agencies authorities and responsibilities regarding the use of toxicants to control prairie dogs in Colorado as it relates to the conservation objectives described within this plan by July 2005.	New Project	July 2005
Action 5.2: If populations fall into the Green – Secure zone (350,000 – 450,000 active acres) or below, gather and compile annual product sales information for Colorado by registrants for toxicants used to control prairie dogs.		As Needed
Action 5.3: If populations fall into the Yellow – Vulnerable zone (250,000 – 350,000 active acres) or below, gather and compile annual product sales information for Colorado by registrants and dealers for toxicants used to control prairie dogs.		As Needed
Action 5.4: If populations fall into the Orange – At Risk zone (150,000 – 250,000 active acres) or below, gather and compile annual product sales information for Colorado by registrants, dealers, and end users for toxicants used to control prairie dogs		As Needed
Action 5.5: If populations fall into the Red – Danger zone (<150,000) or below, gather and compile annual product sales information for Colorado by registrants, dealers, and end users for toxicants used to control prairie dogs. Use of toxicants heavily restricted and use by permit only. Permitting based on stringent criteria.		As Needed
Action 5.6: If populations fall into the Orange – At Risk zone (150,000 – 250,000 active acres) or below, shooting allowed for control of prairie dogs causing damage on private property. Permits will be issued to monitor take.		As Needed
Action 5.7: If populations fall into the Red – Danger zone (<150,000) or below, shooting will be allowed for control of prairie dogs causing damage on private		As Needed

property by special permit only.

Objective 6: Adaptive management, including a continuous process of planning, acting, monitoring and evaluating designed to take into account changes in ecological and social systems, identify and evaluate new information, and make adjustments in actions to achieve specific goals and objectives will be used.

Action 6.1: CDOW will form a technical committee to review new research information and analyze monitoring data as it is collected on a three-year interval; identify changes that would move acreage and distribution targets from one zone to another and make recommendations to decision makers regarding the changes in management necessary to maintain viable shortgrass species populations. The Technical committee members will be nominated by members of the Grassland Species Conservation Working Group and approved by the Division of Wildlife.

Action 6.2: If populations fall in the Yellow zone – Vulnerable (250,000 – 350,000), evaluate and implement management tools to address the decline.

Action 6.3: If populations fall in the Yellow zone – Vulnerable (250,000 – 350,000), develop conservation agreements with counties and municipalities in high decline areas to implement management tools to address declines.

Action 6.4: If populations fall in the Orange zone – At Risk (150,000 – 250,000), implement adaptive management agreements with counties and municipalities.

Action 6.5: If populations fall in the Red zone – Danger (< 150,000), implement adaptive management agreements with counties and municipalities in order to receive certificates of inclusion in statewide umbrella Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA).

Objective 7: The CDOW will initiate, continue ongoing and stimulate new research to identify and minimize, eliminate, or mitigate causes for declines when possible for shortgrass associated wildlife species.

Action 7.1: Support ongoing research to develop habitat suitability models for prairie dogs on the PNG which will be used to determine how much of the area has been used by prairie dogs over time, how the models relate to prairie dog population estimate, and provide supporting data for ongoing work on prairie dog genetics and plague surveillance.

Action 7.2: Support ongoing research for developing vaccines to control plague and on plague dynamics.

Action 7.3: Support ongoing research on vegetation manipulation by livestock to maintain a mosaic of successional stages in shortgrass prairie habitat.

Action 7.4: Support ongoing research on resolving conflicts of Mountain Plover breeding on private lands.

Action 7.5: Support ongoing research on using stable isotopes to document link between breeding and wintering locales for individual Mountain Plovers.

Action 7.6: Support ongoing research on the relationship between Mountain plover breeding activity and prairie dog colonies.

Action 7.7: Identify, prioritize, and seek funding for additional research needs in Colorado for shortgrass prairie associated species.

Objective 8: The CDOW will encourage significant contributions from publicly owned lands, particularly the National Grasslands, toward grassland species conservation and work with federal, state, county and municipal partners to support these efforts.

Action 8.1: Inventory shortgrass prairie habitat occurring on CDOW SWAs and, where appropriate shortgrass prairie habitat occurs, manage SWAs for the conservation of grassland species.

Action 8.2: Participate in planning efforts on publicly owned lands to integrate conservation measures for grassland species in public land management planning efforts.

Action 8.3: Work with public land managers to quantify active occupied acres of prairie dogs on publicly owned lands.

Action 8.4: Encourage consolidation of or creation of conservation buffers on publicly owned lands through conservation easements, land trades or acquisitions. CDOW incentive programs will give added consideration to projects adjacent to other publicly owned lands managed for grassland species conservation.

Action 8.5: Recommend maintaining a minimum of 20% of the total acreage of the Pawnee National Grassland in low structure vegetation suitable for nesting mountain plovers and other shortgrass associated species with a long term goal of increasing this to 40%.

Action 8.6: Recommend maintaining low structure vegetation by increasing range allotment carrying capacity and grazing intensity, encouraging expansion of black-tailed prairie dog colonies, or through prescribed burning as appropriate.

Action 8.7: Recommend positioning areas targeted for low structure vegetation based on historic records of concentrations of nesting Mountain Plovers.

Action 8.8: Secure funding to partner with the USDA Forest Service to implement changes in allotment infrastructure to return/maintain low structure vegetation

**Necessary to review 2005
Inventory Data**

September 2006

**As Needed
As Needed**

**As Needed
As Needed**

Ongoing

**Final Report Due
June 2004**

Ongoing

**As Funding is
Available**

Ongoing

**As Funding is
Available**

Ongoing

**Final Report Due
January 2004**

Ongoing

**Scheduled for
Completion 2005**

Ongoing

**Scheduled for
Completion 2005**

Ongoing

Annually

Ongoing

**Inventory Completed
by Summer 2004**

Ongoing

As Needed

**New Project
Ongoing**

**December 2004
As Needed**

**Priority given in both
CSCP and Protecting
Colorado's Landscapes**

Programs

Ongoing

Ongoing

Ongoing

Ongoing

\$50,000 funding

with no financial burden passed on to permittees.		available FY0304 and FY0405 July 2005
Action 8.9: CDOW will work with the SLB to develop and implement a Threatened and Endangered Species Policy to address SLB involvement in species conservation issues.	Ongoing	
Objective 9: The CDOW will encourage the acquisition and management of city and county open space on suitable grassland habitat along the front range for the conservation of the black-tailed prairie dog and associated grassland species.		As Needed
Action 9.1: If populations fall in the Yellow zone – Vulnerable (250,000 – 350,000), develop conservation agreements with counties and cities in high decline areas to implement management tools to address declines.		
Action 9.2: Provide scientific expertise and recommendations to front-range open space managers on standardized monitoring methodologies developed by the multi-state black-tailed prairie dog conservation team.	Ongoing	When Available
Action 9.3: Develop science-based best management practices for addressing grassland species management issues for use by managers of front-range open space.	Ongoing	July 2004
Action 9.4: Develop a consolidated resource of updated scientific information (biological and social) addressing grassland species conservation issues in urban/suburban areas.	New Project	July 2005
Action 9.5: Conduct bi-annual symposia to provide an open forum for discussion and summarize new information on the conservation of grassland species.	Ongoing	February 2005
Objective 10: Establish shared responsibility (front range and eastern plains) for conservation of the black-tailed prairie dog and associated species.		
Action 10.1: Develop mechanisms for front-range interests (developers, non-profit organizations, etc.) to provide funding for grassland species management.	New Project	January 2005
Action 10.2: Develop and distribute (hard copy and electronic) informational materials that inform the public about the necessity of shared responsibility for management of grasslands species.	New Project	January 2005
Action 10.3: Conduct urban wildlife and habitat conservation and management workshops.	Ongoing	One Completed Spring 2003, Additional Workshops scheduled 2004
Objective 11: Support and encourage public education and wildlife viewing opportunities on suitable black-tailed prairie dog and grassland open space areas.		
Action 11.1: Provide scientific expertise and recommendations to local open space managers in the development and use of educational/interpretive materials	New Project	January 2005
Action 11.2: Assist in the development/enhancement of wildlife viewing opportunities.	Ongoing	As Requested
Objective 12: The CDOW will work towards developing substantial increases in funding necessary for the conservation of grassland species in Colorado.		
Action 12.1: Pursue partnerships with other federal, state, county, and municipal agencies, private foundations, private landowners, and non-governmental organizations to increase funding for the conservation of grassland species.	Ongoing	
Action 12.2: Pursue innovative ideas for funding of grassland species conservation in Colorado.	Ongoing	