

# Black-footed Ferret



## COLORADO REINTRODUCTIONS, 2013-PRESENT

### History

- Black-footed ferrets were one of the first species listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
- The species was believed extinct from 1979 until 1985, when a population was found near Meeteetse, Wyoming. All living ferrets are descended from these few wild individuals.



### Colorado Approach

- The Colorado State Legislature approved the reintroduction of ferrets into Colorado through HB1314 (2000), SB169 (2013), and HB1267 (2014).
- Activities are focused on private or municipal lands enrolled under the Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement.
- Current reintroductions are possible because of the partnerships CPW has developed with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey-National Wildlife Health Center, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA APHIS-Wildlife Services, City of Fort Collins Natural Areas, Colorado Cattleman's Association, private landowners, and many others.
- Black-footed Ferret Management Plan for Eastern Colorado to be finalized in Winter/Spring 2019.

### Research

- Colorado Parks & Wildlife is a leader in plague management research, developing successful vaccine baiting strategies, demonstrating the safety and efficacy of plague management techniques, and developing an efficient vaccine bait production system.
- In 2018, all private and municipal reintroduction sites in Colorado received plague vaccine produced by CPW.

### Landowner Incentives

- As of 2016, the Natural Resources Conservation Service has provided \$1,041,809 in funding to private landowners enrolled in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program Black-footed Ferret Special Effort. All current contracts ended December 2018.



## Issues

- *Plague Management* - Current methods include burrow dusting and plague vaccine, both of which are ~\$30/acre/year to implement.
- *Long-term Landowner Incentives* – Enrollment under EQIP provides funding for 3 years.
- *Survey and Monitoring* – Current protocols involve nightly spotlight surveys which are staff and time intensive. In 2015, the last year when all active release sites were surveyed, over 1,100 staff hours were spent to cover five sites for one week, an average of 55 hours of effort per night.

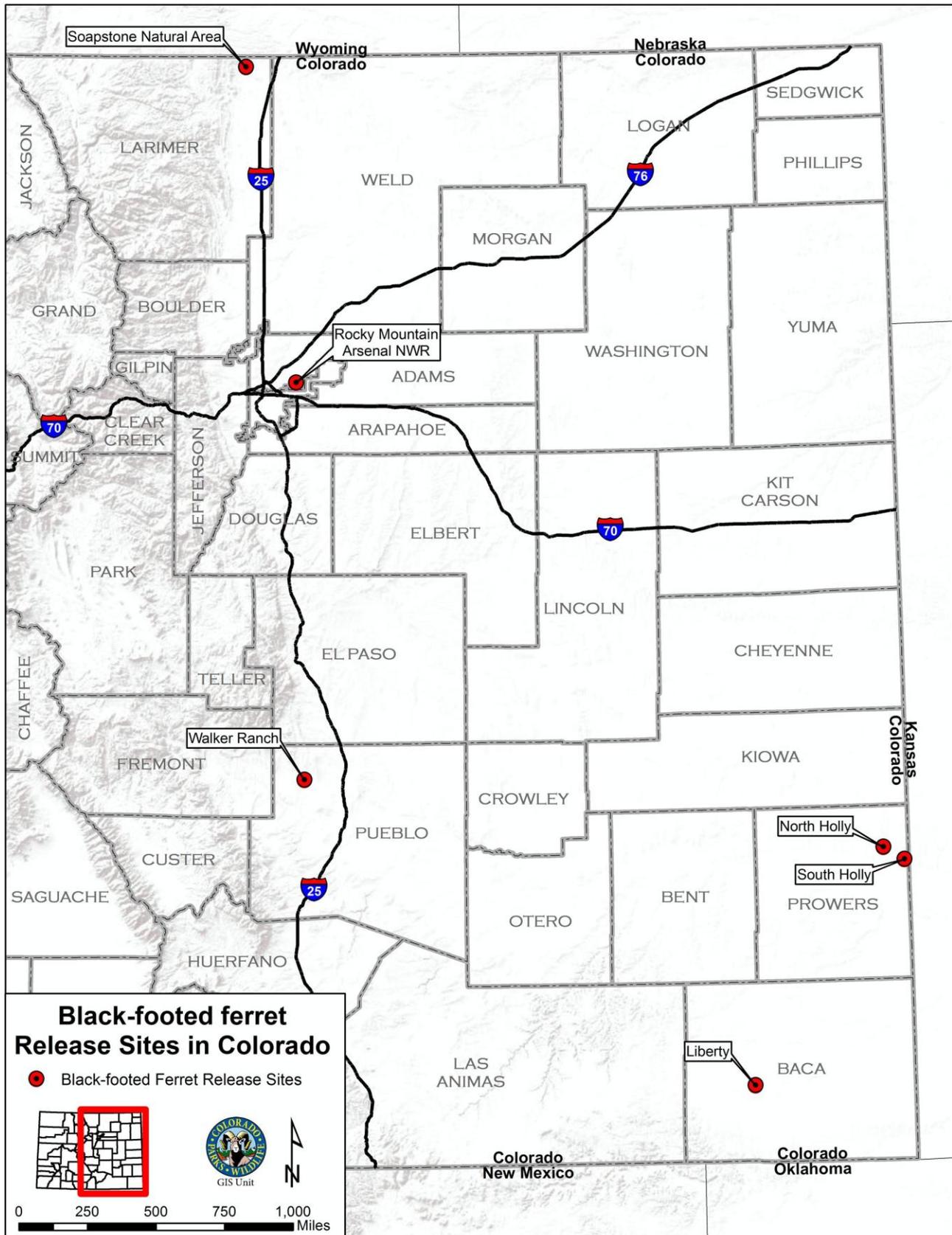


## Reintroduction Sites

- *Walker Ranch* – 1 private ranch, >3,000 acres enrolled in Safe Harbor and Incentive Program, 107 ferrets released since 2013
- *Soapstone Natural Area* – Municipal Landowner and 2 grazing associations, >1,400 acres enrolled in Safe Harbor and Incentive Program, 109 ferrets released since 2014, Wild reproduction documented
- *North Holly* – 5 private ranches, >3,000 acres enrolled in Safe Harbor and Incentive Program, 61 ferrets released since 2014
- *South Holly* – 3 private ranches, >1,700 acres enrolled in Safe Harbor and Incentive Program, 30 ferrets released since 2015
- *Liberty* – 2 private ranches, >1,500 acres enrolled in Safe Harbor and Incentive Program, 60 ferrets released since 2014, Wild reproduction documented (juvenile male in photo above)
- *Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge* – Federal Land, 55 ferrets released since 2015, Wild reproduction documented, Wild born kits transferred to release site in Arizona Fall 2018



CPW Avian Research and Wildlife Health teamed up with partners to study plague vaccine and improve habitat for endangered black-footed ferrets and other wildlife. Learn more at [cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/RAV-Plague-Management.aspx](http://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/RAV-Plague-Management.aspx)



**Black-footed ferret Release Sites in Colorado**

- Black-footed Ferret Release Sites

0 250 500 750 1,000 Miles