

**NORTH INDIVIDUAL POPULATION AREA
ACTION PLAN
FEBRUARY 2010**

The Implementation Planning Workshop for the North Individual Population Area (NO IPA) was held on the December 16, 2009 at the Wattenberg Center in Walden. Participation was open to anyone interested in prairie dog conservation and management. 22 participants representing CDOW, BLM, USFS, USFWS, Jackson County, and private landowners met and ranked the issues affecting white-tailed prairie dogs (WTPD) in the NO IPA. Attendees at the NO IPA meeting reviewed issues that could negatively impact the WTPD and ranked their significance in the NO IPA. The participants identified 1) lack of information on population status, 2) lack of information on population structure, and 3) disease as the three highest potential threats to WTPD in the NO IPA. The participants at this workshop did not review or prioritize the specific strategies from the Colorado Gunnison's and White-tailed Prairie Dog Conservation Plan. Rather, the participants had an open discussion of possible strategies in North Park. The discussion centered around improving our understanding of the current population status, trend and distribution of WTPD in North Park.

ACTION PLAN:

Population Monitoring

A common issue throughout the workshop was that there is little understanding of the current distribution and trend of WTPD in the NO IPA. While there are two years of occupancy monitoring data (from 2005 and 2008) that indicate a relatively stable trend in occupancy for WTPD in Colorado, nothing is known about current overall distribution or trend specific to NO IPA.

- **Task:** Continue occupancy estimation for WTPD in Colorado every 3 years as per WAFWA agreement and protocol. The next year of planned occupancy estimation for WTPD is 2011. Conduct necessary occupancy plots in the NO IPA.
- **Lead Agency:** CDOW
- **Cooperators:** BLM, Private Landowners, USFWS, State Land Board
- **Cost:** \$80,000 for the WTPD range.
- **Timeline:**
 - NOVEMBER 2010 TO MARCH 2011 – Do preparation work, hire seasonal technicians, gain landowner and cooperating agency approval to survey plots, secure housing for 2011 survey.
 - MAY 2011 TO JULY 2011 – Conduct occupancy surveys in North Park.
 - AUGUST 2011 TO DECEMBER 2011 – Compile and analyze data; produce report.

- **Task:** Improve understanding of current WTPD distribution in North Park. Work with North Park Stockgrowers to develop a landowner survey aimed at determining WTPD distribution on private land. Refine GIS mapping of potential WTPD habitat in North Park. Improve knowledge of WTPD distribution on public lands.
- **Lead Agency:** CDOW
- **Cooperators:** Private Landowners, BLM, USFWS, State Land Board
- **Cost:** Distribution and other incidental expenses to complete landowner survey. Support of CDOW staff time to improve the GIS model of potential WTPD habitat in North Park. Support of CDOW and other agency staff time to refine mapping on public lands. ~\$5,000.
- **Timeline:**
 - JANUARY 2010 - MARCH 2010 – Refine GIS model for WTPD habitat in North Park. Improve CDOW SAM mapping for WTPD in North Park.
 - MARCH 2010 - JUNE 2010 – Develop and distribute landowner survey to gather better information of WTPD distribution on private land.
 - JULY 2010 – DECEMBER 2010 – Compile landowner survey information and public lands mapping points to incorporate into GIS map of known distribution of WTPD in North Park.
- **Task:** Develop a modified occupancy protocol to inventory overall distribution of WTPD in North Park as well as establish a baseline occupancy estimate that is specific to the NO IPA.
- **Lead Agency:** CDOW
- **Cooperators:** BLM, USFS, Private Landowners, State Land Board
- **Cost:** Support of CDOW staff time and other incidental expenses to do research on methodology and develop a robust design for current distribution. If suitable, conduct modified occupancy protocol in North Park ~\$40,000.
- **Timeline:**
 - JANUARY 2010 TO DECEMBER 2010 – Investigate the feasibility of developing a protocol and identify potential funding for implementation of protocol.
 - APRIL 2010 - AUGUST 2010 – Pilot study will occur in Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Routt counties.
 - MAY 2011 - JULY 2011 – Implement modified occupancy protocol in North Park.
 - AUGUST 2011 - DECEMBER 2011 – Compile and analyze data; produce report.