

Friday October 14, 2016 – Armory Prairie Dog Update

- Active trapping began on Friday, October 7th and will continue until all prairie dogs are captured, or trapping success drops to zero for a period of at least 5 clear weather days. The most recent capture was on the afternoon of October 14th. A total of 150 animals have been translocated to the Damyanovich release site. The demographic break-down of the animals is as follows:
 - 35 adult females
 - 22 adult males
 - 17 yearling females
 - 11 yearling males
 - 65 juveniles
- Trapping success was extremely high, resulting in the majority of animals being captured and released within the first 2 days of active relocation. At least one more animal has so far evaded capture at the Armory and efforts will be focused on trapping that individual over the weekend.



Figure 1. The nest box caps have been removed from all 10 structures, allowing the relocated prairie dogs to roam freely throughout the site.

- Prairie dogs have been settling into their new home at Damyanovich.



Figure 2. Liberated prairie dogs are actively re-excavating natural burrows on the site.

- The prairie dogs have further excavated natural burrows within their pens and in at least one case appear to have reconnected their release burrow to an old entrance outside the pen. Prairie dogs seem to be coming and going inside and outside the pen.
- Many of the pens and cages have now been removed following a period of confinement to encourage the prairie dogs to adjust to the site.

- Prairie dogs continue to be fed high energy and high water content food on the site and additional animals that are trapped will continue to be released.



Figure 3. Released prairie dogs enthusiastically eat supplemental food such as carrots, lettuce and horse sweet feed.

- Initial observations of the released animals suggest continued use of the artificial nest boxes and natural burrows they were released into as well as digging and use of other natural burrows in the area not used for release that were either partially open or had previously filled in.



Figure 4. Vigilant prairie dogs stand watch outside of their nest box.

- On Tuesday, October 11, city staff installed a number of remote, motion activated cameras to monitor the release burrows. Staff is coordinating with the relocater to visit the site to check cameras during release/feeding events to minimize on-the-ground disturbance to the new colony.
- Photos from these cameras suggest that the prairie dogs are in good shape and are remaining in the area, consuming the food provided, and behaving as expected.



Figure 5. A released prairie dog enjoying the view from its new home.

- The relocation is on-going and updates will be provided as additional prairie dogs are captured and released.



Figure 3. A content prairie dog at a nest box entrance