

## Friday, Oct. 28, 2016 – Armory Prairie Dog Update

### Relocation update:

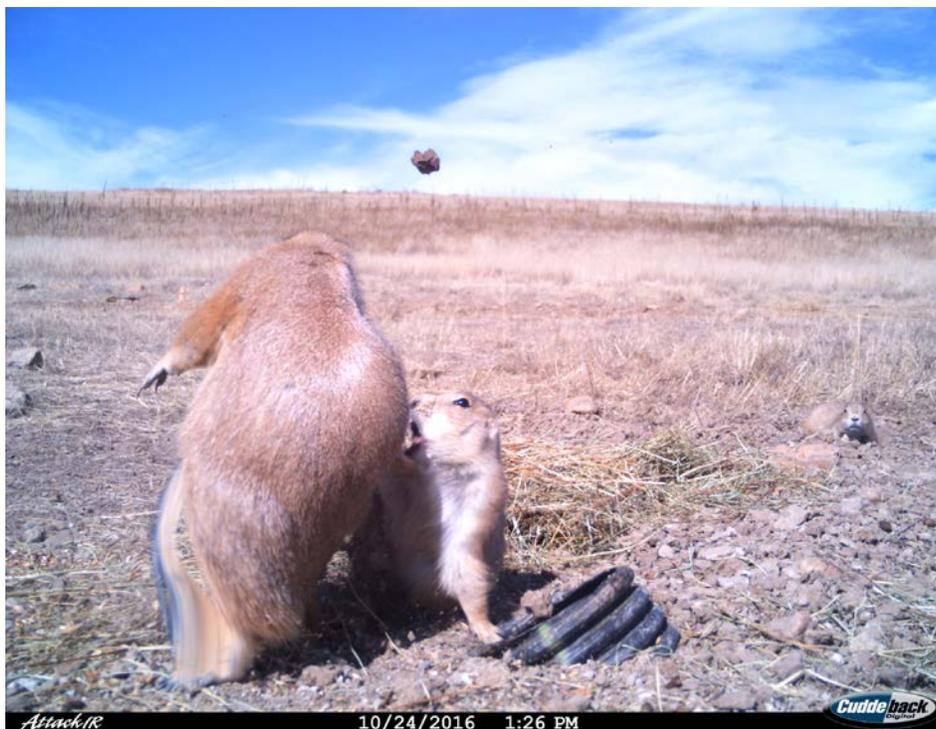
- Active trapping began on Friday, October 7. As of this report, a total of 151 animals have been translocated to the Damyanovich release site. The demographic break-down of the animals is as follows:
  - 35 adult females
  - 22 adult males
  - 17 yearling females
  - 11 yearling males
  - 65 juveniles
- Trapping success was extremely high, resulting in the majority of animals being captured and released within the first two days of active relocation. An estimated two animals have so far evaded capture at the Armory, and efforts will be focused on catching those individuals.



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

- The capture technique utilized for the remainder of the project will be flushing. [Learn more about this capture technique.](#)
- Flushing will be completed by Sunday, October 30.
- Following the flushing effort, if prairie dogs still remain on the Armory site, in burrow lethal control in the form of a carbon monoxide (CO) fumigant will be used in advance of construction beginning at the site.

### **Damyonovich prairie dog update:**



*Figure 2. There are occasional territorial scuffles among the released prairie dogs.*

- At this time, all retention cages and pens have been removed, and the animals are free to utilize the site as they desire.
- On Monday, October 23, 2016, staff observed a burrowing owl (see Figure 5) on the release site. Its behavior was territorial, and it was using burrows for refuge and cover. Burrowing owls are a state-threatened species and are target species for conservation on OSMP. Burrowing owls are also a species

associated with prairie dogs, and included in the prairie dog and associates conservation target in the OSMP Grassland Ecosystem Management Plan.

- Initial observations of the released prairie dogs 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 3. A prairie dog gathers nesting materials in preparation for winter.*

- On Tuesday, October 11, city staff installed a number of remote, motion activated cameras to monitor the release burrows. Cameras will be removed at the conclusion of the relocation and staff will continue to monitor the colony on a periodic basis.
- Photos from these cameras suggest that the prairie dogs are in good shape and are remaining in the area, expanding the number of burrows utilized and behaving as expected.



*Figure 4. Mice have begun to establish themselves on the site. They share burrows with prairie dogs and are part of the prey base that supports beneficial predators like American kestrels, burrowing owls and coyotes.*



*Figure 5. A burrowing owl has made an appearance at the release site, along with other prairie dog colony associated species like red-tailed hawks, horned larks, western meadowlarks and prairie falcons.*