

**Prairie Dog Working Group (PDWG)**  
**April 30, 2018**  
**OSMP Annex – 7315 Red Deer Drive, Boulder CO**  
**Meeting Summary – FINAL**

*Participants:* Dan Brandemuehl, Kristin Cannon, Pat Comer, Aaron Cook, Elle Cushman, Keri Konold, Lindsey Sterling Krank, Amber Largent, Val Matheson, Andy Pelster, Carse Pustmueller, Eric Sims Jr., Heather Swanson, John Vickery

*Facilitation:* Heather Bergman, Sam Haas

**ACTION ITEMS**

<b>Pat Comer, Lindsey Sterling Krank, Carse Pustmueller, Eric Sims, Heather Swanson</b>	Work together to refine the ecological goal(s) and objectives. Pat will coordinate the meeting. Send the final document to Peak Facilitation by EOD Wednesday, May 9.
<b>Dan Brandemuehl, Aaron Cook, Amber Largent, Val Matheson</b>	Work together to refine the social goal(s) and objectives. Dan will coordinate the meeting. Send the final document to Peak Facilitation by EOD Wednesday, May 9.
<b>Elle Cushman, Keri Konold, Lindsey Sterling Krank, Andy Pelster</b>	Work together to refine the economic goal(s) and objectives. Keri will coordinate the meeting. Send the final document to Peak Facilitation by EOD Wednesday, May 9.
<b>Peak Facilitation</b>	Once the refined documents are collected, send out an online survey to the PDWG that asks members to input the expected implications that each objective would have to existing plans/policies and prioritize each objective from most urgent/important to least urgent/important.
<b>Heather Bergman and Keri Konold</b>	Draft an introductory document to include with the report.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The first ten minutes of the meeting were dedicated to written and verbal public comment. Peak Facilitation also sent public comments submitted online to the Prairie Dog Working Group (PDWG) after the meeting.

**Written Public Comment**

*Pam Wanek*

- Wanek submitted a written comment through the online form and offered feedback on the specific goals and objectives discussed by the PDWG during the April 9 meeting.
- Wanek stressed the importance of connecting state and federal goals to any Boulder prairie dog management goals. She asked that the PDWG emphasize the importance of agencies working together to achieve common objectives. (Note: Wanek’s full written comment is attached to this summary).

**Verbal Public Comment**

*Paula Shuler*

- Shuler lives south of the Brewbaker and Stratton irrigated properties, and their property is full of prairie dogs. She is discouraged that the PDWG has not discussed the value of irrigated properties as an asset to the area, as many sites have been damaged or destroyed by prairie dogs. She encourages the PDWG to consider the perspectives of agricultural

advocates. The percentage of properties that are irrigated and leasable has decreased significantly due to damage from prairie dog occupation. Shuler encourages members of the PDWG to go on the prairie dog driving tour put together by Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) staff, especially the northern portion of the tour.

- OSMP had a policy of working with property owners to take reasonable action to limit the spread of prairie dogs onto adjacent properties. OSMP recently changed the wording of the policy to "OSMP will work with neighbors and property owners to help identify actions that the landowner can take if they choose to maintain their properties without prairie dogs." The City should be a good neighbor to property owners. Shuler has asked for help for three years (she would like a barrier fence in the short term and removal of prairie dogs from the property in the long term).
- Shuler does not think it makes sense to conduct irrigation improvements on the land adjacent to her property. According to the Grassland Management Plan, the 160 acres of the Stratton and Brewbaker properties are "our land, our legacy, and our future."

### **Group Discussion of Public Comments**

- OSMP staff clarified that the changes to the website mentioned by Shuler were not a change in policy but rather an update of the 1996 language on the website. The portion of the text that Shuler mentioned was from a "frequently asked questions" page that had not been maintained, so it was recently updated to reflect current policy.
- Andy Pelster will work with Shuler to find a time to discuss her concerns.

### **SUBGROUP PRESENTATION OF SOCIAL GOAL STATEMENT**

The subgroup of PDWG members who met to refine the social prairie dog management goal presented their refined documents, and the group discussed and provided final suggestions for improvement.

### **Key Revisions**

- The objectives were revised based on the feedback received by PDWG members during the April 9 meeting. The goal was renamed "social coexistence." The goal statement was reworded to capture the intent of creating a proactive, innovative, and non-lethal approach.
- The subgroup outlined a series of steps for accomplishing the objectives. The subgroup also created categories of conflict areas around which strategies should be developed.
- Objective 4 is intended to ensure implementation of the strategies outlined in the goal, and objective 6 describes an assessment feedback loop to ensure that the implementation is successful.

### **Clarifying Questions**

PDWG members asked clarifying questions about the revised social goal and objectives. Questions are indicated in italics, followed by the response.

*The first objective mentions conflicts associated with prairie dogs and competing land uses. Should there be an explicit objective related to mitigating the conflict between prairie dogs and irrigated land uses as much as possible?*

Objective 2 identifies innovative and proactive strategies to address conflicts in each defined category (including agriculture). The subgroup did not assume that they understood all the conflict areas, so hopefully during the implementation of objective 2, strategies can be created to deal with specific conflicts. The subgroup considered buckets of conflict, each bucket would correspond to a

different mitigation idea. The success of implementation should be reported on an annual or bi-annual basis. New conflict areas may be identified during this review process.

*Does the subgroup intend for the conflicts to be identified on the ground?*

Yes, the subgroup intended for conflicts to be tangibly identified on the ground. There will likely be multiple innovative strategies recommended, and a combination of approaches may be necessary if there is a combination of conflicts.

*Objective 2 mentions "high-value areas." What are "high-value areas"?*

The phrase "high-value areas" refers to the prioritization of certain agricultural lands over others. Barriers or other exclusion methods may be tailored after the highest priority areas are determined. The strategy for identifying high-value areas will be determined during implementation.

*How much of the designated agricultural land overlaps with prairie dog occupation?*

The City has 6,000-7,000 acres of irrigated land, but not all those acres are occupied. 15,000 acres of the grassland system is leased. Prairie dogs occupy 895 acres of the designated agricultural land.

### **Group Discussion**

- The group discussed including a statement in objective 2 about identifying conflicts "on the ground," but decided that the inclusion of such a statement may be confusing since some conflicts are not centered around a geographic area but are focused on communication or other non-spatial aspects. The objective should include a statement that "current and anticipated place-based conflicts will be mapped."
- Objective 4 is intended to implement the strategies. It may not be necessary to include this objective since the milestones should serve as checkpoints for implementation of the strategies.
- Many of the objectives could use additional details in the strategies and milestones through pilot programs and target implementation dates.
- Conflicts on agricultural lands are not only resolved using exclusive methods. The subgroup should consider changing point 1 of the "agriculture" component under objective 2 to "evaluate, provide barriers, and pursue other exclusion or mitigation measures."
- There are questions about whether the achievement of point 2 of the "private and adjacent landowners" component of objective 2 is realistic. Point 2 is currently written as "add additional criteria to the definition of prairie dog conservation areas (PCAs) to filter out areas of known high conflict with neighboring properties." Some PDWG members feel that there should be some mechanism to measure which PCAs have a higher level of conflict with adjacent property owners than others. There should be a statement about continuous reevaluation of conflicts, since variables are continually changing (home sales, etc.). Some are concerned that evaluating PCAs may lead to a loss of PCA areas and would like to see the inclusion of a proposal to replace that land. The draft ecological goal and objectives include this update to the PCA designation.
- The first step is to identify the conflict zone (e.g., the overlap of agricultural land with prairie dog occupation), and the second step is to come up with strategic and innovative solutions. Each conflict should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- PDWG members asked whether current agricultural lessees are compensated by the City if prairie dogs occupy their property and whether that might be a strategic solution that this objective could suggest. The City does not compensate all lessees but does provide sprints to account for prairie dog occupation. However, the agricultural community has indicated

that the compensation does not adequately compensate property owners for the loss of production. The finalization of the Agricultural Management Program has led to discussions about lease rates potentially being determined on a case-by-case basis to account for prairie dog occupation. The subgroup should also consider including a recommendation to attach precipitation factors into the determination of lease rates.

- A logo that the City created for another campaign could be used for the prairie dog campaign. It uses the acronym SMART (sustainable management aimed at resilience targets). The campaign could survey residents to understand what they do not like about prairie dogs (e.g., the aesthetics of their colonies, etc.). The question could be "what has not worked in the past and what could be improved upon in the future?" Then a post-campaign survey could be developed that tracks changes in perception.
- One of the strategies or milestones could be the implementation of X number of barrier installation projects in collaboration with community partners such as the Prairie Dog Coalition or the Defenders of Wildlife.
- In terms of implementing a communication strategy, much of the current resources and literature on plague are outdated or lacking. Other group members may be able to collaborate with the Prairie Dog Coalition to create better resources.
- Parks and Recreation also has conflicts with adjacent landowners and competing land uses, so Joy Master should review this goal. *Val Matheson will check with Joy about this.*

#### **SUBGROUP PRESENTATION OF ECONOMIC GOAL STATEMENT**

The subgroup of PDWG members who met to refine the economic prairie dog management goal presented their refined documents, and the group discussed and provided final suggestions for improvement.

#### **Key Revisions**

- The wording of the goal statement was not changed. A milestone was added to strategy 1 of objective 1 to use the habitat quantification tool (laid out in the ecological goal) to impact positive impact.
- The language in objective 2 was refined. The group discussed the milestones for this objective at length and would like feedback from the PDWG about milestone 4.

#### **Clarifying Questions**

PDWG members asked clarifying questions about the revised economic goal and objectives. Questions are indicated in italics, followed by the response.

*How unique or unusual is it to revisit and amend department budget allocations to create a line item for prairie dog management? Do other species have distinct line items?*

OSMP has an operating plan for wildlife, and it includes a line item for prairie dogs. Parks and Recreation does not have a line item for prairie dog management. It would be good to clarify in objective 3 that it may be necessary to hire additional staff or bring in a consultant to achieved approved goals and objectives.

*Objective 3, strategy 2, milestone 1 is to "create a working relationship with at least two outside organizations to help fulfill the PDWG goals and objectives." What does a "working relationship" mean in this context?*

Typically, this means an in-kind contribution. For example, outside organizations could contribute nest boxes.

### **Group Discussion of Objective 2, Milestone 4**

Objective 2, milestone 4 is to "investigate the possibility of using private landowner agricultural lease fees to help fund use of non-lethal control methods to resolve prairie dog conflicts with adjacent landowners and on irrigated farmlands." The PDWG provided suggestions for revision.

- There are agricultural lands that are currently not leased for grazing purposes and are already used by wildlife as habitat. This objective intends to allow private conservation entities to pay a lease fee for this land to preserve it as wildlife habitat, and that money could support agriculture or be deposited into the conservation fund. This recommendation is not specific to irrigated land. The agricultural community is concerned that a conservation entity may compete and outbid agricultural producers for the properties and that this could exacerbate conflict.
- This milestone could be framed as: "investigate the possibility of creating a conservation lease program (e.g., "adopt an acre") with a priority focus on prairie dog conservation and an effort to avoid irrigable lands and/or bidding wars with agricultural tenants."
- Some members of the PDWG support using the "adopt an acre" language, and some do not. There are concerns that the terms "lease" or "adopt an acre" may lead conservation entities that have participated in this program to believe that they have rights to the property, which could create more conflict with agricultural uses. Some PDWG members would prefer that it be framed as the creation of a funding mechanism for conservation entities to contribute to relocation and conflict mitigation.
- There are agriculture properties that are not being leased for which OSMP has made the management decision to maintain as wildlife habitat. Only irrigated portions of Open Space receive a designation; properties do not have to have an agricultural designation to be leased. So, it would be possible for a conservation group to adopt a parcel of agricultural land that is not currently being leased and keep it as it is.
- The intent of objective 2 is to create a strategy for tapping into existing resources by 2020. However, the language implies that the goal is to *identify* opportunities, rather than create a plan or strategy. The language should be more precise.

### **Group Discussion of Other Objectives**

- In objective 3, strategy 1, the subgroup should clarify in the document that the strategy is to revisit "annual *work plan* objectives" (not just "objectives").
- Objective 3, strategy 2, milestone 2 should clarify that it is to "make *data* available for other funding opportunities."
- Objective 2 should specify who determines how the money in the conservation fund will be used and who will oversee proper distribution of the money. The OSMP Board of Trustees will be made aware of the budget for the fund. The subgroup should discuss who the oversight body would be considering that Parks and Recreation has a different board.

### **SUBGROUP PRESENTATION OF ECOLOGICAL GOAL STATEMENT**

The subgroup of PDWG members who met to refine the ecological prairie dog management goal presented their refined documents, and the group discussed and provided final suggestions for improvement.

### **Key Revisions**

- The ecological subgroup did not have time to meet in person to refine the goal. There are some areas on which the group has not reached a consensus that require further discussion by the full PDWG.
- The subgroup would like the full PDWG to discuss several issues on which the subgroup did not reach a consensus. The first topic is the location of a broader swath of land on which prairie dogs are the priority for management. Some feel that PCAs are inadequate because they are fragmented, and would like to see the designation of a more substantial conservation area, perhaps on the Southern Grasslands. The second topic is the impact to prairie dog colonies of protecting all at-risk species. Some believe that there should be a threshold or limit placed on the protection of at-risk species that allows prairie dog conservation targets to be met while still emphasizing the importance of at-risk species. The final topic is the criteria for receiving sites. Some subgroup members would like to include language about how the intent of revising the receiving site criteria is to produce more receiving sites while others do not feel comfortable specifying a desired outcome for the revision process.
- The subgroup struggled to decide where the topic of receiving sites and relocations should be placed in the goal document. Some felt that it belonged within the ecological goal and some felt that, given the social implications of relocations, it belonged within the social goal. The "take-site" is often a source of conflict, and the receiving site is often the area where ecological principles are most important. Some members of the subgroup felt strongly that the receiving site criteria and relocation issue belonged in the ecological goal because they believed it should be tied to the Grassland Management Plan update and pulling it out of that context would not make sense. Other members of the subgroup felt strongly that the revision of the receiving site is urgent and should not happen as part of the Grassland Management Plan revision.

### **Group Discussion**

- Objective 5 of the prior version of the document was to "update receiving site criteria to fully utilize grassland receiving sites." This objective was contingent upon the completion of the work laid out in the other objectives.
- There are a lot of properties in the OSMP system that are not being used to their fullest potential as receiving sites. The PCAs are not getting recycled quickly enough and are underutilized.
- There may be a lack of consensus about objective 1 because the group has not agreed upon the overall goal statement. Some seem to be aiming to expand receiving sites, and others do not see this as the primary goal.
- The suitability model must be updated, and the components of the Grassland Management Plan that relate to viability must be revisited first. These updates may translate into more areas of prairie dog occupation, but including that as an objective would be "putting the cart before the horse."
- There are specific components of the Grassland Management Plan that should be prioritized as urgent, including the revision of the habitat suitability model and the grassland habitat viability criteria and the receiving site criteria. The document should state that these components should be revised as a separate, expedited amendment. The subgroup should rewrite this objective to clarify that these components of the Grassland Management Plan should be revised quickly (2018-2019).
- Many of the goals, objectives, strategies, and milestones are dependent on each other and have sequential components. Putting these objectives and milestones into a timeline would be helpful.

- Some members of the subgroup felt the purpose of objective 2 was to use existing grassland habitat for prairie dogs and to create new areas on the grassland. The new areas should be managed like PCAs and should be used as receiving sites. While OSMP staff PDWG members said that there are areas on the Southern Grasslands being managed for sustainable prairie dog occupation, other members of the subgroup said that the current version of the objective is written in a way that implies status quo management. One suggestion is to change the objective to: “Manage existing and newly-established interconnected networks on City land to secure the most suitable habitat as PCAs for priority use and to serve as receiving sites.”
- OSMP does not typically manage land for a single use and would be uncomfortable labeling an area as priority prairie dog use when other values are necessary to manage. The goal could specify that prioritizing prairie dogs would not mean the diminishing the importance of other goals. Some members of the PDWG expressed discomfort at the idea of “finding new areas” for prairie dogs, as prairie dogs have access to the entire grassland system and putting them in a specific area may jeopardize the mosaic of the grassland system.
- This objective may also need to include a statement about utilizing lands outside of the OSMP boundaries and working with adjacent landowners, including Boulder County to find priority habitat.
- The underlying issue is that more receiving sites are needed but the City is also managing for different objectives, and revising the habitat suitability criteria may not necessarily lead to the creation of more receiving sites. Members of the PDWG felt they had agreed at the last meeting that one of the goals is to create a large block of prairie dog habitat on the grasslands that would allow for the reintroduction of the black-footed ferret.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS MOVING FORWARD**

Heather Bergman, Peak Facilitation, offered several suggestions for how the PDWG should proceed with their future collaborative efforts.

- PDWG members should individually reflect upon the amount of uncertainty they are comfortable with. It is possible to reach a successful outcome without giving up anything other than an entrenched position. The challenge with framing an issue as a binary choice is that it leads to positional bargaining rather than interest-based bargaining. In positional bargaining, people state what they want (e.g., “increase the number of receiving sites”), and in interest-based bargaining, people state why they want it (e.g., “I care about creating a healthy ecosystem for prairie dogs”). Interests are the “why;” positions are the debate about “how.” PDWG members should determine how specific the final document should be while recognizing that too much specificity will lead to a positional debate about “how.”
- Given the uncertainty of the final outcome, it is natural to want to propose processes that make it more likely that specific desired outcomes are met. Because the outcome is unknown, PDWG members are encouraged to develop recommendations that match all the interests stated in the group in some way.
- The ecological subgroup should return to the document that they presented during the April 9 meeting and review the specific recommendations for change from the full group. The subgroup should be strategic about where they choose to insert specifics.
- The audience for the final recommendation document is the City Manager, City Council, and the department heads of OSMP, Parks and Recreation, Sustainability, and Housing.
- It may be possible to recommend creating a subgroup that acts as a touchstone or review entity after the conclusion of the PDWG process to ensure that the implementation of the goals and objectives honors the intent of the full PDWG. Creation of such a group may soften the sense of urgency and the desire for specificity. The City Manager may be open to the

possibility of approving the formation of a group that meets annually to review progress and provides additional suggestions to City Council.

- The PDWG does not have funding for more than one more meeting. The PDWG decided to postpone the final meeting and use the designated meeting time on May 7 for the subgroups to finalize the goal documents.
- The final recommendation document should include a cover page that specifies that the group cares about impactful implementation of the strategies and milestones. The cover page could include a statement about how the PDWG would like to see the implementation of X amount of pilot projects by Y date. This cover document should also articulate that implementation takes additional staff time and capacity, and that funding for this additional capacity is critical. (There is also an objective in the economic goal related to the provision of resources for the implementation of the approved recommendations.) The cover page should also include a statement about how some objectives/strategies/milestone in one goal are dependent on the completion of objectives/strategies/milestones laid out in another goal. The cover document should also include a definition of the term “conservation.”

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- The May 7 PDWG meeting will not be a full group meeting. Rather, three subgroups will meet during that time to further refine and hopefully finalize the ecological, social, and economic goals. Subgroups will send their final documents to Peak Facilitation by Wednesday, May 9. The subgroups are:
  - **Ecological goal:** Pat Comer (coordinator), Lindsey Sterling Krank, Carse Pustmueller, Eric Sims, Heather Swanson
  - **Social Goal:** Dan Brandemuehl (coordinator), Aaron Cook, Amber Largent, Val Matheson
  - **Economic Goal:** Elle Cushman, Keri Konold (coordinator), Lindsey Sterling Krank, Andy Pelster
- Peak Facilitation will send a Doodle poll to PDWG members to reschedule the May 7 meeting for later in May or June.
- After the subgroups send Peak Facilitation their documents, Peak will create an online survey. The survey will ask PDWG members to provide their thoughts on the implications of the goals, objectives, strategies, and milestones on existing plans and policies and what plans and policies may need to be changed. It will also list each objective and ask PDWG members to prioritize them from most important and urgent to least important and urgent. Peak will create a report of the responses and send it to the PDWG before the next meeting.
- Peak Facilitation will send out the written public comment from Pam Wanek.
- Heather and Keri will write a draft introductory document, which will be sent to PDWG members for their review, to use as a cover page for the recommendations,
- There is a PDWG update to City Council on August 7. The City Manager will review the PDWG memo and determine what she will present to City Council.



## ATTACHMENT 1

### WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENT (Please note this comment is verbatim as submitted by Wanek)

#### ***Pam Wanek from Unincorporated Adams County***

Thank you for allowing me to attend the 4.9.2018 PDWG meeting. I have not been a participant during the last 11 meetings so I am sure you have probably looked at some of the items I am going to address here. To give you my background, I have a working background with prairie dogs for the last two decades this involves working in the field and review of multiple federal, state and local government policies and law. Please consider my comments for your plan:

- The overall objective of state and federal governments is to maintain or increase “occupied acres” of prairie dogs to avoid listing. Other objectives are to equalized distribution of prairie dogs throughout the state where inventories are conducted on a county by county basis, and the establishment of prairie dog complexes measured in thousands of acres.
- In both federal and state documents the biggest threat to prairie dogs is plague and the current target population numbers set by both agencies are an estimate of what is needed and a starting point for conservation but no way guarantees that it is enough for self sustaining populations. There are no population models that can adequately predict how many “occupied acres” are needed in the event of plague; therefore, the recommendation is to have larger “occupied acres” and complexes than would be normally estimated due to the presence of plague.
- Another huge threat to prairie dogs is a lack of regulatory control and the failure of local governments and agencies to fully understand the magnitude of the problem. Collaboration among these entities will be vital to avoid future listing of the species.  
Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA’s) Might potentially be one goal to strive for that would protect local governments and private landowners under an umbrella agreement should prairie dogs or other species become officially listed.
- Key documents every local government should be looking at an incorporating into their conservation plans include the following: The Multi-state Conservation Plan for the Black-tailed Prairie Dog, The Colorado Grasslands Conservation Plan, State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) and review of Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances:
- Given this background the following are my recommendations for the City’s plan:  
The goal statement needs to broad and more encompassing consider this:  
The overall prairie dog conservation goal is to conserve, enhance or re-establish occupied prairie dog acreage by working collaboratively with state, federal and other local jurisdictions while balancing the ecological, social and economic goals of the city.
- This goal statement recognizes collaboratively working with multiple agencies for the goal of “occupied acres” but still respects the city’s responsibility to balance the local community’s interests. It also educates the city’s own residents that there are other federal and state agencies that actually do have goals to stop further decline of the BTPD and one of those goals is a shared responsibility among all local governments and to ensure that BTPD populations are distributed across broad ranges to prevent their entire collapse in the event of plague or other unnatural events.

#### **Goal 1: Ecological**

- Objective 2 – Manage prairie dog colonies on city OSMP plague resistance –  
My comment: concerned that this is just being assigned to OSMP and not other departments – Parks and Rec or other private landowners. The goal of the city should be “Occupied Acres” of prairie dogs. Why confine this to OSMPs? The responsibility for plague

management should be shared on a multi-landowner multi-departmental basis. The city might consider targeting certain colonies at multiple ownership levels as their focal colonies to protect (due to manpower and other cost factors) and private landowners may be interested in plague resistance protocol for their colonies as well.

- Objective 3 – Update Grassland Management Plan ...Strategy 3: Work with local experts...apply to lands across City and adjacent county, public and private parcels... Working group comments:- cannot extend authorities to other lands, may cause ill feelings by outside jurisdictions – My comment: excellent point and this is one reason why the county must be on board with this. Under current federal and state guidelines (See Multi-state conservation plan BTPD and the state) “occupied acres” inventories are based upon countywide occupancy; therefore, it would be prudent for the county to become engaged in any loss or gain of protected “occupied acres” for any city or private landowners within the county.  
Val: What is a viable population definition? Linds: it means stable. Patrick: a population that can be regulated by predators and not plague. Pam Comment: I really like Patrick’s idea here and would add to this...a sustainable population is one that can reproduce itself every year and is self-regulating by predators or other natural factors and not plague. You may need to really open up what is stable, this includes natural factors such as attrition throughout the year (i.e natural population swings). How little is too little for stable? Can pdog populations self-regulate (internal pdog factors...infanticide...etc). Also, consider gains and losses of “occupied acres” at the macro and micro levels.
- Objective 4: Completed and implement plan for re-introduction of BFF.... Someone mentioned to add other predators to this and I liked that idea. My comment: swift fox, ferruginous hawks, burrowing owls, plover, curlew, any other associates in decline from the loss of prairie dogs. Add another section here. My conversation with T. Jackson (CPW)...she mentioned that swift fox had become abundant in some areas in Colorado and they were transferring them to Wyoming for example.

## **Goal 2: Social ...minimize conflicts**

- Pam: develop a response systems for pdogs that move off of designated conservation areas to unsuitable areas...there must be accountability to inhibit a potential problem. This is one reason why people don’t want prairie dogs next to them because they don’t know how to manage them! Educate city planners to incorporate barriers along with approved development plans. The city may want to relax vegetation standards in some situations where it is beneficial for non-pdog lands to grow plants to heights without city ordinances to require vegetation management (mowing). The city may need to hire extra staff that are specifically trained in how to fix problem areas.  
Andy: ag land need proactive strategies  
Pam – Social – goes way beyond local communities it is a regional and statewide problem it will be extremely important to press for the goals in the Colorado State Grasslands Conservation Plans all 12 objectives are very encompassing and the more you talk about this it will educate the state as a whole. Equally important is the State Wildlife Action Plan (2005 and 2015). And of course education about the Colorado Local Land Use Control Enabling Act. Local governments have the primary authority to protect habitats within their political jurisdiction.
- Work with other county commissioners: SB99-111 my comments about this bill. It is used too much as a scapegoat by local governments, although I do agree in some instances it is a difficult bill to maneuver around when other counties do not have prairie dog conservation plans therefore do not understand why they need protection or why such protections would be economically beneficial. Rural counties benefit because private landowners can maintain

large complexes without the costs born onto the county and these “occupied acres” are a positive count to their county inventory. The key point with SB99-111 is: Why should a county accept another county’s prairie dogs? And this is a good point. Each county should be accountable for prairie dogs within their jurisdiction.

- In 2002 we presented to the capitol HB02-1183 that made clarification of SB99-111 basically two provisions where county commissioner approval not required: 1. In cities that have annexed lands into multiple counties (because counties only have land use planning jurisdiction in unincorporated sections of the county) and 2. Sanctuaries on private lands approved by CPW. What it did not do is allow local governments to buy land beyond their contiguous political boundaries for prairie dogs. The bill failed mainly because the issue was political and genuine hate for prairie dogs. Since I worked on that bill, with CDOW at the time, I have all the notes, etc...and am more than willing to share. This bill needs to be presented again!

My comments: Education the key---involve metro chambers, DRCOG, Colorado Counties, etc...most of these entities have no idea about the Multi-state Conservation Plan or the State Grassland Conservation Plan. Must drive in over and over that these documents do exist and there is a problem with the loss of pdogs and securing acreages that are pdog occupied.

Joy: need to categorize conflicts – Pam: yup and then perhaps put into a decision tree – those that want pdogs, those that like pdogs but NIMBYs, those that do not want any prairie dogs.

Carse: Conservation funding how much \$ will conservation fund have and how will this be allocated to staff and other things. Is a viable pdog population more important than buying land?

My comment: Carse raises a very good question how is the money allocated how is it designated. Remember the key to conservation is “occupied acres” of prairie dogs.

Obviously land is needed to do this but just managing pdogs for plague and reinstatement is difficult too. Do you set occupied acreage limits? If so after the limit reached how do you allocate.

My comment: Mitigation money should clearly not be comingled with the general operating budget. Skeleton goals should mimic general language under CCAA – candidate conservation agreements:

Qualifying actions may be:

- protecting and enhancing existing populations and habitats;
- restoring degraded habitat;
- creating new habitat;
- augmenting existing populations;
- restoring historic populations; and
- not undertaking a specific, potentially impacting/damaging activity.

Working Group: Mitigation – originally used net gain but removed because too difficult to quantify

- Pam – Why? Net gain and net loss seems to be fairly simple, either lands have prairie dogs or they do not. Is the city done annexing land? County can use three mile annexation plans for cities within jurisdiction.

- Pam – City may be statutorily restricted for fees on infractions...infractions should be applied to each “occupied acre” Very important to hinge the importance of the goal of occupied acres – that terminology!

- Pam- may need to change development code to increase required OS for developers to mitigate with contiguous OS rather than piecemeal.

- Pam – monies from O & G royalties to mitigate damages and buy more OS
- Andy – willing sellers more of a limitation than money.

**On Delta Dust and SPV –**

• Pam – I had some real issues with this, in my conversations with D. Tripp Delta Dust and SPV will ALWAYS need to go hand in hand you cannot just depend on SPV – plague is ubiquitous and many other species will remain infected if you only depend on SPV and they will carry this to other unprotected colonies...espec, fox, coyotes, birds of prey and mountain lions (die from plague)

• Pam – IPM – will need an entirely separate section dedicated to prairie dogs – the city must be flexible to dust colonies to protect human health, not only next to public buildings but for those individuals that work directly within burrows or other pdog habitat related activities. Deltadust is being used to protect a species of greatest conservation need this is a paradigm shift where you actually need to pesticide to protect a native species from the city’s current position where pesticides may harm people and other native species. The city must accept that in certain situations, pesticides can be helpful for native species and humans...especially with the introduction of exotic diseases. It’s a reality just like human inoculations to avoid serious disease.

• Val – in general has a problem with goal statements but not having a problem statement. For example we cannot have ferrets because we don’t have big enough blocks for prairie dogs. Build goal statements from problems statements – Pam – yes perfect approach.

Finally, thanks for all your hard work and determination to make this a great document!