



News Release

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &
Thunder Basin National Grassland
<http://fs.usda.gov/mbf>

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U.S. Forest Service Solicits for Prairie Dog Control Contractor

(DOUGLAS, Wyo.) Aug. 5, 2016 – As part of a broad prairie dog colony management effort, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has announced a contract solicitation for lethal prairie dog colony control on the Thunder Basin National Grassland (TBNG), from October through December. Another contract solicitation for non-lethal prairie dog colony control will be announced in the near future.

Control would take place at locations in Campbell, Converse, and Weston counties on approximately 1,100 acres. Mitigation efforts would focus on addressing prairie dog colony expansion located on the Grassland near where neighbors have concerns for their private lands and residences.

The official announcement can be found at www.fbo.gov and contract-specific details can be searched using AG-8508-S-16-0032. Offers are due Aug. 19 by noon.

USFS Contract Specialist Star Yeo can give more information about this available contract. She can be reached at (303) 275-5311.

This project is a result of the continued implementation effort of the Thunder Basin National Grassland Land and Resource Management Plan, and the updated December 2015 Conservation Assessment and Strategy. Control efforts are focused along boundaries with private land owners and near private residences where USFS neighbors have concerns.

“Management of prairie dog colonies on the Thunder Basin National Grassland is important in numerous ways,” said Douglas District Ranger Shane Walker. “In this instance, we have coordinated, cooperated, and consulted with our partners; Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Weston County, Converse County, and Campbell County, so that we can take control measures where they will be most appropriate and useful.

“Ultimately we want to balance management of viable prairie dog colonies with the concerns of livestock permittees, private landowners, who are our neighbors, and other multiple uses and resources for a more sustainable land over many generations.”

Black-tailed prairie dogs are a unique, keystone species for grassland and prairie ecosystems because they create habitat which cannot be duplicated by another species and is required, either directly or indirectly, by multiple other wildlife species.

The TBNG is coordinating with the grazing associations, adjacent landowners, County Weed and Pest, and the State of Wyoming to determine priority areas and methodology for control (non-lethal and

lethal) in 2016. In addition to the current contract solicitation, examples of recent management efforts include:

- Implementing in early 2016 an updated USFS shooting closure for prairie dogs on approximately 65,074-acres, a 24% decrease on the TBNG in the Category 1 and 2 areas.
- Dusted approximately 1,000-acres in 2015 with Deltamethrin in Management Area 3.63 (Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Habitat) per the existing National Grassland plan to manage plague.
- Accomplished approximately 1,400-acres of lethal prairie dog control in 2015 on the TBNG in coordination with Campbell County.
- Changed Category 1 and 2 acreage and boundaries in 2015 in response to a request to remove state and private lands.
- Completed a second year study in 2015 of potential impacts of prairie dogs on forage in the TBNG.

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