



News Release

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

Media Contact: Aaron Voos, (307) 745-2323

U.S. Forest Service Solicits for Prairie Dog Barrier Fence Contractor

(DOUGLAS, Wyo.) Sept. 9, 2016 – The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has announced a contract solicitation for non-lethal prairie dog colony control on the Thunder Basin National Grassland (TBNG). This latest effort is part of multi-faceted prairie dog colony management by the Douglas Ranger District.

The contractor will construct approximately 20,000 feet of barrier fencing around prairie dog colonies by May of 2017 at locations in Campbell, Converse, and Weston counties. The fencing is meant to be part of a larger effort to discourage the movement of prairie dogs onto private land.

Approximately 10,000 feet of temporary electric fence will also be constructed to exclude livestock grazing in boundary areas in prairie dog colonies to encourage vegetative growth. The electric fence should not have noticeable impact on the overall management of the grazing allotments. Mitigation efforts will 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-16-0033. Offers are due Sept. 16 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 part of continued implementation of the Thunder Basin National Grassland Land and Resource Management Plan, and the updated December 2015 Conservation Assessment and Strategy, in coordination with the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Converse County Weed & Pest, Campbell County Weed & Pest, and Weston County Weed & Pest. Control efforts are focused along boundaries with private land owners and near private residences where USFS neighbors have concerns.

“We are striving to balance management of prairie dog colonies on the Thunder Basin National Grassland by using as many tools as possible,” said Douglas District Ranger Shane Walker. “Construction of visual barriers and using vegetative barriers are examples of another tool to use in how we hope to manage colonies by non-lethal methods.

“As will be common practice from here on out, we have worked with our neighbors to find the best methods for control in problem areas. We want to be strategic and take actions where they will be most appropriate and useful for the long-term management of the National Grassland.

“You’ll hear me say this a lot, but ultimately we want to balance management of viable prairie dog colonies with the concerns of our neighbors, as well as other multiple uses and resources for sustainable land over many generations.”

A fixed price contract for lethal prairie dog colony control this fall was recently awarded to R&S Weed & Seed, Douglas, Wyo. Control will take place at locations in Campbell, Converse, and Weston counties on approximately 1,100 acres.

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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