Appendix A Part 2: Proposed Plan Components in Text Format

This appendix provides proposed amended plan direction for each alternative presented in chapter 2 of the final environmental impact statement (FEIS). Those who do not require use of screen reading software may prefer to view this information in table format, available in a separate document on the project website (Appendix A Part 1, http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=55479).

Plan components listed for Alternative 1–No Action are written exactly as they are in the 2002 Thunder Basin National Grassland Land and Management Plan, as amended. The list of plan components is not comprehensive. It only includes those existing plan components that are proposed for amendment during this plan amendment process. The full grassland plan is available on the Medicine Bow Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland website and on the project website.

For each action alternative, a set of amended plan components is provided. These plan components are intended to translate the descriptions of the alternatives from chapter 2 of the final environmental impact statement into plan components that would be adopted as the final plan amendment at the end of this environmental analysis process.

Definitions for Plan Components

On National Forest System lands, land and resource management plans guide management activities and contain desired conditions and objectives as well as standards and guidelines that provide direction for project planning and design. Forest Service plan component definitions are in the planning rule at 36 CFR 219.7(e)(1). The following terms and definitions are used throughout this draft environmental impact statement:

- **Desired Condition (DC)** - A description of specific social, economic, and/or ecological characteristics of the plan area, or a portion of the plan area, toward which management of the land and resources should be directed. Desired conditions must be described in terms that are specific enough to allow progress toward their achievement to be determined, but do not include completion dates.
- **Objective (O)** - A concise, measurable, and time-specific statement of a desired rate of progress toward a desired condition or conditions. Objectives should be based on reasonably foreseeable budgets.
- **Standard (ST)** - A mandatory constraint on project and activity decision-making, established to help achieve or maintain the desired condition or conditions, to avoid or mitigate undesirable effects, or to meet applicable legal requirements.
- **Guideline (GL)** - A constraint on project and activity decision-making that allows for departure from its terms, so long as the purpose of the guideline is met. Guidelines are established to help achieve or maintain a desired condition or conditions, to avoid or mitigate undesirable effects, or to meet applicable legal requirements.

Optional plan content, including management approaches, is defined and presented in Appendix B

Alternative 1 – No Action

Chapter 1: Goals and Objectives

Goal 4.b: Effective Public Service: Provide appropriate access to NFS lands and USDA Forest Service Programs.

Public and Organizational Relations

Objective:
(p. 1-8) 2. Work in cooperation with federal, state, and county agencies, individuals, and non-governmental organizations for control of noxious weeds and invasive species and animal damage.

Chapter 1: Standards and Guidelines

Physical Resources

B. Water

(p. 1-9) 2. Manage land treatments to maintain enough organic ground cover in each land unit to prevent harmful increased runoff (exceptions shall occur in special habitat situations (e.g. prairie dog habitat)). **Standard**

Biological Resources

F. Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants

Black-footed Ferret

(p. 1-14) 18. In prairie dog colonies known or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets, limit oil and gas development to one location per 80 acres to help maintain suitable ferret habitat. **Standard**

(p. 1-15) 19. To help provide suitable habitat for black-footed ferrets and their young during the breeding and whelping seasons, prohibit the following activities within prairie dog colonies, or those portions of larger colonies, occupied or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets from March 1 through August 31: construction (e.g. roads, water impoundments, oil and gas facilities); reclamation; gravel mining operations; drilling of water wells; oil and gas drilling. **Standard**

(p. 1-15) 20. To help provide suitable habitat for black-footed ferrets and their young during the breeding and whelping seasons, do not authorize the following activities within prairie dog colonies, or those portions of larger colonies, occupied or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets from March 1 through August 31: construction (e.g. pipelines, utilities, fencing); seismic exploration; permitted recreation events involving large groups of people. **Guideline**

(p. 1-15) 21. (*as revised in Amendment 3, 2009*) Any net loss of suitable black-footed ferret habitat as a result of development of new facilities within colonies shall be replaced within the year. This is based on the amount of suitable habitat available prior to prairie dog dispersal in the year of the development. **Standard**

(p. 1-15) 22. For routine maintenance, access to oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies occupied or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets should be limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs. **Guideline**

Mountain Plover

(p. 1-15) 23. Prescribe burn selected large flats (a section or more in size) to evaluate the effectiveness of burns in attracting and inventorying mountain plover. Prescribed burns should be timed to provide large blackened areas in the spring. **Standard**

(p. 1-16) 27. Any net loss of suitable and occupied mountain plover habitat as a result of prairie dog poisoning or development of new facilities within prairie dog colonies will be replaced within the year by concurrent expansion of suitable plover habitat or in some cases, by enhanced management and protection of occupied plover habitat elsewhere on or near the national grassland. The amount of habitat loss is based on the amount of suitable and occupied habitat available prior to prairie dog dispersal in the year of the poisoning or development. **Guideline**

(p. 1-16) 28. To help reduce disturbances and risks to nesting mountain plover, prohibit the following activities in plover nesting areas or within 0.25 miles of plover nests from March 15 through July 31: construction (e.g. roads, water impoundments, oil and gas facilities); reclamation; seismic exploration; gravel mining operations; oil and gas drilling; drilling of water wells; prescribed burning. **Standard**

(p. 1-16) 29. To help reduce disturbances and risks to nesting mountain plover, do not authorize the following activities in plover nesting areas or within 0.25 miles of plover nests from March 15 through July 31: construction (e.g. pipelines, utilities, fencing); workover operations for maintenance of oil and gas wells; permitted recreation events involving large groups of people; grasshopper spraying; prairie dog shooting (in consultation with state wildlife agencies and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). **Guideline**

(p. 1-16) 32. Vegetation management projects in suitable mountain plover habitat will be designed to maintain or improve mountain plover habitat. **Standard**

(p. 1-17) 34. Use the following criteria at the project level to help determine where to use prescribed burning and high livestock grazing intensities (Appendix I) to provide low grassland structure and enhanced mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat: proximity to existing mountain plover nesting areas; proximity to prairie dog colonies; presence of expansive and flat grassland areas. **Guideline**

Burrowing Owls

(p. 1-19) 62. To optimize habitat for burrowing owls, manage for active prairie dog colonies that are larger than 80 acres. **Guideline**

Black-tailed Prairie Dog

(p. 1-19) 63. Coordinate and consult with the appropriate wildlife management agencies and local landowners to prohibit prairie dog shooting in areas where significant risks have been identified for other wildlife species or where shooting is preventing or slowing a desired prairie dog population expansion. Restrictions shall be year-long or seasonal, and dates of seasonal restrictions shall vary depending on the species at risk. **Standard**

(p. 1-20) 65. Evaluate prairie dog management 3 years after management plan approval. Evaluate prairie dog management again when the total acres of active prairie dog colonies expand to 35,000 acres (approximately 7%) of suitable habitat on the Thunder Basin National Grassland. **Standard**

(p. 1-20) 65b. (*as added in Amendment 3, 2009*) Adopt and implement a black-tailed prairie dog management strategy. This strategy is made a part of this plan (Appendix N). **Standard**

H. Animal Damage Management

(p. 1-23) 1. (*as revised in Amendment 3, 2009*) Limit the use of rodenticides (grain baits) for reducing prairie dog populations to the following situations:

- Public health and safety risks occur in the immediate area. **Standard**
- Damage to private and public facilities, such as cemeteries and residences. **Standard**
- On site-specific colonies where unwanted colonization onto adjacent non-federal lands is occurring and other tools are impractical, ineffective or have been proven to be unsuccessful. **Guideline**
- Colonies outside Categories 1, 2, 3, and 4 (as identified in strategy) if the Forest Service determines they are not needed for habitat for prairie dogs, black-footed ferrets or other associated species. **Guideline**.

(p. 1-23) 2. (*as revised in Amendment 3, 2009*) In consultation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, determine the appropriate response to complaints of unwanted colonization on adjoining private and state lands. A spectrum of management tools will be considered based on site-specific evaluations. **Guideline**

(p. 1-23) 3. Reduce conflicts with adjacent landowners over prairie dog management through and active landownership adjustment program. **Guideline**

(p. 1-23) 4. From January 1 through September 30, don't use rodenticides (above-ground baits) to reduce prairie dog populations. This is necessary to reduce risk to migratory birds. To reduce risk to other wildlife, don't use burrow fumigants in prairie dog colonies. **Standard**

I. Livestock Grazing

(p. 1-23) 3. As needed, or at a minimum annually, adjust management activities to account for the effects of natural processes (e.g., drought, fire, flood, grasshoppers) on forage availability. **Guideline**

Administration

M. Land Ownership

(p. 1-27) 3. Consider the following when opportunities to acquire lands occur (Reference 36 CFR 254):

- Lands with important or unique resources, such as water frontage, wetlands, flood plains and associated riparian ecosystems, cave resources, crucial big-game winter range, threatened or endangered species habitat and habitats needed for recovery, Forest Service sensitive species habitat, important paleontological or geologic sites, important historical, heritage resources or traditional cultural properties, outstanding scenic values, or critical ecosystems when these resources are threatened by change of use, or when management may be enhanced by public ownership.
- Lands that include prairie dog colonies or that present opportunities to allow expansion of colonies that already exist on nearby National Forest System lands are a high priority.
- Important botanical, wildlife, and fishery management areas. This includes lands supporting rare plant communities.
- Lands with important value for outdoor recreation purposes.
- Lands needed to protect resource values by eliminating or reducing fire risks or soil erosion.

- Non-federal lands in mineralized areas that have low potential for future mineralized patents, and where the minerals will be donated to the United States.
- Lands that reduce Forest Service administrative costs and improvement of management efficiency. This includes: reducing miles of landline boundaries and number of corners, special uses, title claims, rights-of-way grants and easements, numbers of allotments and intermingled ownership livestock pastures, and other factors that decrease administrative costs and improve management efficiency.
- Lands that would reduce conflicts between Forest Service, tribal lands, and private landownership objectives, especially when conflicts are adversely impacting National Forest System management. This includes reducing conflicts involving the management of prairie dog colonies along National Forest System lands.
- Lands within or around existing blocks of public ownership of at least 2,000 acres.
- Lands that would correct maladjustments of land use as described in the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act. **Guideline**

Chapter 2

Broken Hills Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

(p. 2-2) The desired condition in this geographic area is an open, scenic landscape with little evidence of human influence or activity. Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition (seral stages) and structure. Natural outbreaks of native insects and diseases will be allowed to proceed without intervention unless there is a substantial threat to high-value resources. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass, needle and thread grass, green needlegrass, little bluestem, blue grama, and prairie junegrass.

Habitat suitability and effectiveness will be maintained for key wildlife species. Prairie dog colonies will be maintained or increased.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have high infiltration rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments, such as oil and gas wells and pipelines, will be present but visually subordinate to the landscape in the mid and background. Pastures will be large.

Management Area Prescription Allocation (as revised in Amendment 3, 2009)

(p. 2-3)

- 1.31, Backcountry Recreation Nonmotorized: 6,545 acres
- 2.1, Special Interest Area: 14,170 acres
- 3.63, Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Area: 13,300 acres

- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural-Appearing Landscapes: 71,499 acres
- 3.68, Big Game Range: 18,426 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 33,577 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

(p. 2-3) Desired seral stages (plant species composition) and vegetation structure across the geographic area are as follows:

Desired Seral Stages - **Objective**

- Late: 15 to 25%
- Late Intermediate: 30 to 40%
- Early Intermediate: 25 to 35%
- Early: 10 to 20%

Across the landscape, grass and sagebrush are intermingled. In some areas, grasses are the dominant species; in other areas, sagebrush is the dominant species. The vegetation composition varies depending on seral stage.

In grass-dominated communities in mid to late seral stages, the dominant native grass species are western wheatgrass, needle and thread grass, green needlegrass, and little bluestem. In grass-dominated sites in early to mid-seral stages, grasses such as blue grama often dominate. Threeawn and blue grama are commonly the dominant grasses on prairie dog colonies in early seral stage.

In sagebrush-dominated communities, there is more sagebrush in the mid to late seral stages than in early to mid-seral stages. As the community moves from early to late seral stage, the percentage of grasses declines. In the understory, the dominant native plant species are western wheatgrass and green needlegrass.

Desired Vegetation Structure - **Objective**

- High: 30 to 40%
- Moderate: 40 to 50%
- Low: 15 to 25%

High vegetation structure can be achieved on moderate and highly productive grasslands dominated by mid grasses (late or late intermediate seral stages). Grasslands on moderate to highly productive soils but in an early seral condition and dominated by short-stature plant species generally do not have the capability to provide high vegetation structure. Management changes may be necessary to move some existing seral conditions toward a higher seral condition to meet structure objectives.

Prairie dog colonies provide low structure, as do grassland areas grazed by livestock at high intensities. Low vegetation structure can result from a dominance of low stature plant species or from heavy utilization of mid grasses.

The height and density of grasses, forbs and sedges in the understory of sagebrush stands are important factors influencing structure for several wildlife species. The relationship of structure to quality nesting habitat for sage grouse is described in Appendix H. Appendix H describes quality nesting as sagebrush understories with residual herbaceous cover averaging at least 7 inches in height. This objective is primarily provided when sagebrush habitat types are in a late seral condition.

Infrastructure

(p. 2-5) 1. Increase the average pasture size as opportunities arise over the next 15 years. **Objective**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

(p. 2-5) 1. Maintain an increasing trend of black-tailed prairie dog populations across the geographic area over the next 10 to 15 years. **Objective**

(p. 2-5) 2. Maintain and expand the current distribution of black-tailed prairie dogs across the geographic area over the next 10 to 15 years. **Objective**

(p. 2-5) 3. Improve the complex of prairie dog colonies (10 or more colonies with distances between nearest colonies not exceeding 6 miles) in the central part of this geographic area over the next 10 to 15 years. This area has been designated as MA 3.63. **Objective**

(p. 2-5) 4. To help increase prairie dog populations and habitat for associated species, allow and encourage expansion of the prairie dog colony complex (10 or more colonies with a total colony acreage of at least 1,000 acres and intercolony distances of less than 6 miles) in the central portion of this geographic area over the next 10 to 15 years. Colonies protected by conservation agreements or easements on adjoining land jurisdictions, including private, may be considered part of a complex. **Objective**

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

(p. 2-6) 2. Manage vegetation by Management Area (MA) according to the following table to achieve the desired seral stage (plant species composition) objectives for the Geographic Area. **Guideline**

Management Area	Late: Target	Late: Range	Late Inter-mediate: Target	Late Inter-mediate: Range	Early Inter-mediate: Target	Early Inter-mediate: Range	Early: Target	Early: Range
1.31	25%	25-30%	35%	35-40%	30%	25-30%	10%	10-15%
2.1	15%	15-20%	35%	30-35%	35%	30-35%	15%	15-20%
3.63	15%	10-15%	10%	10-15%	15%	15-20%	60%	60-65%
3.65	20%	20-25%	35%	30-35%	30%	30-35%	15%	10-15%
3.68	25%	25-30%	35%	30-35%	25%	25-30%	15%	10-15%
5.12	15%	15-20%	35%	30-35%	35%	30-35%	15%	15-20%

(p. 2-6) 3. Manage vegetation by Management Area (MA) according to the following table to achieve the desired structural objectives for the Geographic Area. **Guideline**

Management Area	High: Target	High: Range	Moderate: Target	Moderate: Range	Low: Target	Low: Range
1.31	30%	30-35%	50%	45-50%	20%	15-20%
2.1	30%	30-35%	50%	45-50%	20%	15-20%
3.63	30%	30-35%	10%	10-15%	60%	60-65%
3.65	35%	30-35%	50%	45-50%	15%	10-15%
3.68	40%	40-45%	50%	45-50%	10%	10-15%
5.12	40%	40-45%	40%	40-45%	20%	15-20%

Infrastructure

(p. 2-7) 1. Maintain or increase average pasture size. **Guideline**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

(p. 2-7) 1. Emphasize an active landownership adjustment program adjacent to the complex, throughout the geographic area in an attempt to reduce private land conflicts over prairie dog management and to enhance long-term management opportunities for expanding prairie dog populations in this area. Landownership adjustments may need to be completed in some locations before implementation of some actions to accelerate prairie dog population growth. **Guideline**

(p. 2-7) 2. A range of 23,616 to 31,488 acres of low structure grasslands is prescribed for this geographic area. Much of this acreage should be located in the northeast portion of the geographic area in areas adjoining existing colonies and where prairie dog colonies are known to have occurred in the recent past. This will accelerate expansion of existing colonies and re-establishment of past colonies that are not along private land boundaries. **Guideline**

Cellers Rosecrans Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

(p. 2-9) Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass, needle and thread grass, green needlegrass, little bluestem, blue grama, and prairie junegrass. Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, and other woody plants.

Management direction in Special Interest Areas will emphasize cultural and zoological resources. Plant and animal species and communities associated with black-footed ferrets and black-tailed prairie dogs will be actively restored.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid and background. Pastures will remain large.

Unique Attributes

(p. 2-10)

- A proposed Cheyenne River Valley reintroduction site for the endangered black-footed ferret.
- Significant populations of black-tailed prairie dogs.
- Large, consolidated areas of public land.

Management Area Prescription Allocation (as revised in the Amendment 3, 2009)

(p. 2-10)

- 2.1, Special Interest Areas: 6,940 acres
- 2.2, Research Natural Areas: 1,213 acres
- 3.63, Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Area: 31,126 acres
- 3.68, Big Game Range: 6 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 81,562 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

(p. 2-10) 1. Desired seral stages (plant species composition) and vegetation structure across the geographic area are as follows:

Desired Seral Stages - **Objective**

- Late: 10 to 20%
- Late Intermediate: 20 to 30%
- Early Intermediate: 25 to 35%
- Early: 25 to 35%

Across the landscape, grass and sagebrush are intermingled. In some areas, grasses are the dominant species; in other areas, sagebrush is the dominant species. The vegetation composition varies depending on seral stage.

In grass-dominated communities in mid to late seral stages, the dominant native grass species are western wheatgrass, needle and thread grass, green needlegrass, and little bluestem. In grass dominated sites in early to mid seral stages, grasses such as blue grama often dominate. Threeawn and blue grama are commonly the dominant grasses on prairie dog colonies in early seral stage.

In sagebrush-dominated communities, there is more sagebrush in the mid to late seral stages than in early to mid seral stages. As the community moves from early to late seral stage, the percentage of grasses declines. In the understory, the dominant native plant species are western wheatgrass and green needlegrass.

Desired Vegetation Structure - **Objective**

- High: 30 to 40%
- Moderate: 25 to 35%
- Low: 30 to 40%

High vegetation structure can be achieved on moderate and highly productive grasslands dominated by mid grasses (late or late intermediate seral stages). Grasslands on moderate to highly productive soils but in an early seral condition and dominated by short-stature plant species generally do not have the capability to provide high vegetation structure. Management changes may be necessary to move some existing seral conditions toward a higher seral condition to meet structure objectives.

Prairie dog colonies provide low structure, as do grassland areas grazed by livestock at high intensities. Low vegetation structure can result from a dominance of low stature plant species or from heavy utilization of mid grasses.

The height and density of grasses, forbs and sedges in the understory of sagebrush stands are important factors influencing structure for several wildlife species. The relationship of structure to quality nesting habitat for sage grouse is described in Appendix H. Appendix H describes quality nesting as sagebrush understories with residual herbaceous cover averaging at least 7 inches in height. This objective is primarily provided when sagebrush habitat types are in a late seral condition.

Infrastructure

(p. 2-12) 1. The landscape is dominated by large pasture size. **Objective**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

(p. 2-12) 1. Maintain an increasing trend of black-tailed prairie dog populations across the geographic area over the next 10 to 15 years. **Objective**

(p. 2-12) 2. Maintain and expand the current distribution of black-tailed prairie dogs across the geographic area over the next 10 to 15 years. **Objective**

(p. 2-12) 3. Improve the complex of prairie dog colonies (10 or more colonies with distances between nearest colonies not exceeding 6 miles) in the southwestern part of this geographic area over the next 10 to 15 years. This area has been designated as MA 3.63. **Objective**

(p. 2-12) 4. To help increase prairie dog populations and habitat for associated species, allow and encourage expansion of the prairie dog colony complex (10 or more colonies with a total colony acreage of at least 1,000 acres and intercolony distances of less than 6 miles) in the central portion of this geographic area over the next 10 to 15 years. Colonies protected by conservation agreements or easements on adjoining land jurisdictions, including private, may be considered part of a complex. **Objective**

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

(p. 2-13) 2. Manage vegetation by Management Area (MA) according to the following table to achieve the desired seral stage (plant species composition) objectives for the Geographic Area. The table has a target percent displayed, with an acceptable range of percents included. **Guideline**

Management Area	Late: Target	Late: Range	Late Inter-mediate: Target	Late Inter-mediate: Range	Early Inter-mediate: Target	Early Inter-mediate: Range	Early: Target	Early: Range
2.1	15%	15-20%	35%	30-35%	35%	30-35%	15%	15-20%
2.2	15%	15-20%	35%	30-35%	35%	30-35%	15%	15-20%
3.63	15%	10-15%	10%	10-15%	15%	15-20%	60%	60-65%
3.68	25%	25-30%	35%	30-35%	25%	25-30%	15%	10-15%
5.12	15%	15-20%	35%	30-35%	35%	30-35%	15%	15-20%

(p. 2-13) 3. Manage vegetation by Management Area (MA) according to the following table to achieve the desired structural objectives for the Geographic Area. The table has a target percent displayed, with an acceptable range of percents included. **Guideline**

Management Area	High: Target	High: Range	Moderate: Target	Moderate: Range	Low: Target	Low: Range
2.1	30%	30-35%	50%	45-50%	20%	15-20%
2.2	40%	35-40%	40%	35-40%	20%	15-20%
3.63	30%	30-35%	10%	10-15%	60%	60-65%
3.68	40%	40-45%	50%	45-50%	10%	10-15%
5.12	40%	40-45%	40%	40-45%	20%	15-20%

Infrastructure

(p. 2-14) 1. Maintain or increase average pasture size in Management Areas 2.1, 2.2, and 3.63. **Guideline**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

(p. 2-14) 1. Emphasize an active landownership adjustment program adjacent to the complex, throughout the geographic area in an attempt to reduce private land conflicts over prairie dog management and to enhance long-term management opportunities for expanding prairie dog populations in this area. Landownership adjustments may need to be completed in some locations before implementation of some actions to accelerate prairie dog population growth. **Guideline**

(p. 2-14) 2. A range of 36,324 to 42,378 acres of low structure grasslands is prescribed for this geographic area. Much of this acreage should be located in the northeast portion of the geographic area in areas adjoining existing colonies and where prairie dog colonies are known to have occurred in the recent past. This will accelerate expansion of existing colonies and re-establishment of past colonies that are not along private land boundaries. **Guideline**

Fairview Clareton Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

(p. 2-16) Grazing will be a significant activity. The area will be managed to provide a rural/agricultural landscape. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass, needle and thread grass, green needlegrass, little bluestem, blue grama, and prairie junegrass.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have high infiltration rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

There will be more development and a moderate number of facilities in this geographic area. Facilities and landscape modifications will be visible but reasonably mitigated to blend with natural features. Portions of the area will contain frequent fences, livestock developments, and roads. Structures associated with mineral development (e.g., oil and gas wells, pipelines) will be clearly visible. In some locations, operations will dominate the landscape; in others, they will be visually subordinate in the background. At the conclusion of mineral activities, lands will be reclaimed to approximate pre-disturbance levels or to meet a specific purpose consistent with the management area direction.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

(p. 2-17)

- 2.1, Special Interest Areas: 5,670 acres
- 4.32, Dispersed Recreation High Use: 5,650 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 14,165 acres
- 6.1, Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis: 66,653

Geographic Area Direction - Objectives

Vegetation

(p. 2-17) 1. Desired seral stages (plant species composition) and vegetation structure across the geographic area are as follows:

Desired Seral Stages - **Objective**

- Late: 10 to 20%
- Late: Intermediate 30 to 40%
- Early: Intermediate 30 to 40%
- Early: 10 to 20%

Across the landscape, grass and sagebrush are intermingled. In some areas, grasses are the dominant species; in other areas, sagebrush is the dominant species. The vegetation composition varies depending on seral stage.

In grass-dominated communities in mid to late seral stages, the dominant native grass species are western wheatgrass, needle and thread grass, green needlegrass, and little bluestem. In grass-dominated sites in early to mid seral stages, grasses such as blue grama often dominate. Threeawn and blue grama are commonly the dominant grasses on prairie dog colonies in early seral stage.

In sagebrush-dominated communities, there is more sagebrush in the mid to late seral stages than in early to mid seral stages. As the community moves from early to late seral stage, the percentage of grasses declines. In the understory, the dominant native plant species are western wheatgrass and green needlegrass.

Desired Vegetation Structure - **Objective**

- High: 25 to 35%
- Moderate: 45 to 55%
- Low: 15 to 25%

High vegetation structure can be achieved on moderate and highly productive grasslands dominated by mid grasses (late or late intermediate seral stages). Grasslands on moderate to highly productive soils but in an early seral condition and dominated by short-stature plant species generally do not have the capability to provide high vegetation structure. Management changes may be necessary to move some existing seral conditions toward a higher seral condition to meet structure objectives.

Prairie dog colonies provide low structure, as do grassland areas grazed by livestock at high intensities. Low vegetation structure can result from a dominance of low stature plant species or from heavy utilization of mid grasses.

The height and density of grasses, forbs and sedges in the understory of sagebrush stands are important factors influencing structure for several wildlife species. The relationship of structure to quality nesting habitat for sage grouse is described in Appendix H. Appendix H describes quality nesting as sagebrush understories with residual herbaceous cover averaging at least 7 inches in height. This objective is primarily provided when sagebrush habitat types are in a late seral condition.

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

(p. 2-18) 2. Manage vegetation by Management Area (MA) according to the following table to achieve the desired seral stage (plant species composition) objectives for the Geographic Area. The table has a target percent displayed, with and acceptable range of percents included. **Guideline**

Management Area	Late: Target	Late: Range	Late Inter-mediate: Target	Late Inter-mediate: Range	Early Inter-mediate: Target	Early Inter-mediate: Range	Early: Target	Early: Range
2.1	15%	15-20%	35%	30-35%	35%	30-35%	15%	15-20%
4.32	15%	15-20%	35%	30-35%	35%	30-35%	15%	15-20%
5.12	15%	15-20%	35%	30-35%	35%	30-35%	15%	15-20%
6.1	15%	15-20%	35%	30-35%	35%	30-35%	15%	15-20%

(p. 2-19) 3. Manage vegetation by Management Area (MA) according to the following table to achieve the desired structural objectives for the Geographic Area. The table has a target percent displayed, with and acceptable range of percents included. **Guideline**

Management Area	High: Target	High: Range	Moderate: Target	Moderate: Range	Low: Target	Low: Range
2.1	30%	30-35%	50%	45-50%	20%	15-20%
4.32	30%	30-35%	50%	45-50%	20%	15-20%
5.12	40%	40-45%	40%	40-45%	20%	15-20%
6.1	30%	25-30%	50%	50-55%	20%	15-20%

Hilight Bill Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

(p. 2-21) Minerals exploration and development and livestock grazing will be significant management activities in this geographic area. In some areas, there may be restrictions on public use to ensure public safety and to avoid unreasonable interference with mineral operations. In those areas where mining is emphasized, reclamation activities will restore the area to a reasonable level of its pre-mining condition. In areas with other management emphases, existing vegetative diversity and structural conditions will be maintained and enhanced. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass, needle and thread grass, green needlegrass, little bluestem, blue grama, and prairie junegrass.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have high infiltration rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

There will be more development and a moderate number of facilities in this geographic area. Facilities and landscape modifications will be visible but reasonably mitigated to blend with natural features. Higher fence densities and intensive mineral development may occur.

Mineral developments and facilities such as coal mines, railroads, oil and gas wells, and pipelines will be present and will often dominate the landscape. When mineral activities are concluded, the disturbed lands will be reclaimed to blend in with adjacent undisturbed areas.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

(p. 2-22)

- 3.68, Big Game Range: 1,354 acres
- 6.1, Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis: 51,440 acres
- 8.4, Mineral Production and Development: 47,993 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

(p. 2-22) 1. Desired seral stages (plant species composition) and vegetation structure across the geographic area are as follows:

Desired Seral Stages - **Objective**

- Late: 10 to 20%
- Late Intermediate: 30 to 40%
- Early Intermediate: 30 to 40%
- Early: 10 to 20%

Across the landscape, grass and sagebrush are intermingled. In some areas, grasses are the dominant species; in other areas, sagebrush is the dominant species. The vegetation composition varies depending on seral stage.

In grass-dominated communities in mid to late seral stages, the dominant native grass species are western wheatgrass, needle and thread grass, green needlegrass, and little bluestem. In grass-dominated sites in early to mid seral stages, grasses such as blue grama often dominate. Threeawn and blue grama are commonly the dominant grasses on prairie dog colonies in early seral stage.

In sagebrush-dominated communities, there is more sagebrush in the mid to late seral stages than in early to mid seral stages. As the community moves from early to late seral stage, the percentage of grasses declines. In the understory, the dominant native plant species are western wheatgrass and green needlegrass.

Desired Vegetation Structure - **Objective**

- High: 25 to 35%
- Moderate: 45 to 55%
- Low: 15 to 25%

High vegetation structure can be achieved on moderate and highly productive grasslands dominated by mid grasses (late or late intermediate seral stages). Grasslands on moderate to highly productive soils but in an early seral condition and dominated by short-stature plant species generally do not have the capability to provide high vegetation structure. Management changes may be necessary to move some existing seral conditions toward a higher seral condition to meet structure objectives.

Prairie dog colonies provide low structure, as do grassland areas grazed by livestock at high intensities. Low vegetation structure can result from a dominance of low stature plant species or from heavy utilization of mid grasses.

The height and density of grasses, forbs and sedges in the understory of sagebrush stands are important factors influencing structure for several wildlife species. The relationship of structure to quality nesting habitat for sage grouse is described in Appendix H. Appendix H describes quality nesting as sagebrush understories with residual herbaceous cover averaging at least 7 inches in height. This objective is primarily provided when sagebrush habitat types are in a late seral condition.

Geographic Area Direction – Standard and Guidelines

Vegetation

(p. 2-23) 2. Manage vegetation by Management Area (MA) according to the following table to achieve the desired seral stage (plant species composition) objectives for the Geographic Area. The table has a target percent displayed, with and acceptable range of percents included. **Guideline**

Management Area	Late: Target	Late: Range	Late Inter-mediate: Target	Late Inter-mediate: Range	Early Inter-mediate: Target	Early Inter-mediate: Range	Early: Target	Early: Range
3.68	25%	25-30%	35%	30-35%	25%	25-30%	15%	10-15%
6.1	15%	15-20%	35%	30-35%	35%	30-35%	15%	15-20%
8.4	15%	15-20%	35%	30-35%	35%	30-35%	15%	15-20%

(p. 2-24) 3. Manage vegetation by Management Area (MA) according to the following table to achieve the desired structural objectives for the Geographic Area. The table has a target percent displayed, with and acceptable range of percents included. **Guideline**

Management Area	High: Target	High: Range	Moderate: Target	Moderate: Range	Low: Target	Low: Range
3.68	40%	40-45%	50%	45-50%	10%	10-15%
6.1	30%	25-30%	50%	50-55%	20%	15-20%
8.4	30%	25-30%	50%	50-55%	20%	15-20%

Spring Creek Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

(p. 2-26) Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass, needle and thread grass, green needlegrass, little bluestem, blue grama, and prairie junegrass. Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, and other woody plants.

Areas with heavy recreation use will have picnicking and camping facilities available. Motorized and nonmotorized trails will have signs to distinguish different uses.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid and background. Pastures will remain large.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

(p. 2-27)

- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural-appearing Landscapes: 12,332 acres
- 4.32, Dispersed Recreation High Use: 1,929 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangeland: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 34,481 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

(p. 2-27) 1. Desired seral stages (plant species composition) and vegetation structure across the geographic area are as follows:

Desired Seral Stages - **Objective**

- Late: 10 to 20%
- Late Intermediate: 30 to 40%
- Early Intermediate: 30 to 40%
- Early: 10 to 20%

Across the landscape, grass and sagebrush are intermingled. In some areas, grasses are the dominant species; in other areas, sagebrush is the dominant species. The vegetation composition varies depending on seral stage.

In grass-dominated communities in mid to late seral stages, the dominant native grass species are western wheatgrass, needle and thread grass, green needlegrass, and little bluestem. In grassdominated sites in early to mid seral stages, grasses such as blue grama often dominate. Threeawn and blue grama are commonly the dominant grasses on prairie dog colonies in early seral stage.

In sagebrush-dominated communities, there is more sagebrush in the mid to late seral stages than in early to mid seral stages. As the community moves from early to late seral stage, the percentage of grasses declines. In the understory, the dominant native plant species are western wheatgrass and green needlegrass.

Desired Vegetation Structure - **Objective**

- High: 35 to 45%
- Moderate: 35 to 45%
- Low: 15 to 25%

High vegetation structure can be achieved on moderate and highly productive grasslands dominated by mid grasses (late or late intermediate seral stages). Grasslands on moderate to highly productive soils but in an early seral condition and dominated by short-stature plant species generally do not have the capability to provide high vegetation structure. Management changes may be necessary to move some existing seral conditions toward a higher seral condition to meet structure objectives.

Prairie dog colonies provide low structure, as do grassland areas grazed by livestock at high intensities. Low vegetation structure can result from a dominance of low stature plant species or from heavy utilization of mid grasses.

The height and density of grasses, forbs and sedges in the understory of sagebrush stands are important factors influencing structure for several wildlife species. The relationship of structure to quality nesting habitat for sage grouse is described in Appendix H. Appendix H describes quality nesting as sagebrush understories with residual herbaceous cover averaging at least 7 inches in height. This objective is primarily provided when sagebrush habitat types are in a late seral condition.

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

(p. 2-30) 2. Manage vegetation by Management Area (MA) according to the following table to achieve the desired seral stage (plant species composition) objectives for the Geographic Area. The table has a target percent displayed, with and acceptable range of percents included. **Guideline**

Management Area	Late: Target	Late: Range	Late Inter-mediate: Target	Late Inter-mediate: Range	Early Inter-mediate: Target	Early Inter-mediate: Range	Early Target	Early Range
3.65	20%	20-25%	35%	30-35%	30%	30-35%	15%	10-15%
4.32	15%	15-20%	35%	30-35%	35%	30-35%	15%	15-20%
5.12	15%	15-20%	35%	30-35%	35%	30-35%	15%	15-20%

(p. 2-30) 3. Manage vegetation by Management Area (MA) according to the following table to achieve the desired structural objectives for the Geographic Area. The table has a target percent displayed, with and acceptable range of percents included. **Guideline**

Management Area	High: Target	High: Range	Moderate: Target	Moderate: Range	Early: Target	Early: Range
3.65	35%	30-35%	50%	45-50%	15%	10-15%
4.32	30%	30-35%	50%	45-50%	20%	15-20%
5.12	40%	40-45%	40%	40-45%	20%	15-20%

Upton Osage Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass, needle and thread grass, green needlegrass, little bluestem, blue grama, and prairie junegrass. Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and

willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, and other woody plants.

Areas with heavy recreation use will have picnicking and camping facilities available. Motorized and nonmotorized trails will have signs to distinguish different uses.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid and background. Pastures will remain large.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

(p. 2-34)

- 3.68, Big Game Range: 14,107 acres
- 4.32, Dispersed Recreation High Use: 18,200 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

(p. 2-34) 1. Desired seral stages (plant species composition) and vegetation structure across the geographic area are as follows:

Desired Seral Stages - **Objective**

- Late 15 to 25%
- Late Intermediate 30 to 40%
- Early Intermediate 25 to 35%
- Early 10 to 20%

Across the landscape, grass and sagebrush are intermingled. In some areas, grasses are the dominant species; in other areas, sagebrush is the dominant species. The vegetation composition varies depending on seral stage.

In grass-dominated communities in mid to late seral stages, the dominant native grass species are western wheatgrass, needle and thread grass, green needlegrass, and little bluestem. In grassdominated sites in early to mid seral stages, grasses such as blue grama often dominate. Threeawn and blue grama are commonly the dominant grasses on prairie dog colonies in early seral stage.

In sagebrush-dominated communities, there is more sagebrush in the mid to late seral stages than in early to mid seral stages. As the community moves from early to late seral stage, the percentage of grasses declines. In the understory, the dominant native plant species are western wheatgrass and green needlegrass.

Desired Vegetation Structure - **Objective**

- High 30 to 40%
- Moderate 45 to 55%
- Low 10 to 20%

High vegetation structure can be achieved on moderate and highly productive grasslands dominated by mid grasses (late or late intermediate seral stages). Grasslands on moderate to highly productive soils but in an early seral condition and dominated by short-stature plant species generally do not have the capability to provide high vegetation structure. Management changes may be necessary to move some existing seral conditions toward a higher seral condition to meet structure objectives.

Prairie dog colonies provide low structure, as do grassland areas grazed by livestock at high intensities. Low vegetation structure can result from a dominance of low stature plant species or from heavy utilization of mid grasses.

The height and density of grasses, forbs and sedges in the understory of sagebrush stands are important factors influencing structure for several wildlife species. The relationship of structure to quality nesting habitat for sage grouse is described in Appendix H. Appendix H describes quality nesting as sagebrush understories with residual herbaceous cover averaging at least 7 inches in height. This objective is primarily provided when sagebrush habitat types are in a late seral condition.

Geographic Area Directions – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

(p. 2-36) 2. Manage vegetation by Management Area (MA) according to the following table to achieve the desired seral stage (plant species composition) objectives for the Geographic Area. The table has a target percent displayed, with and acceptable range of percents included. **Guideline**

Management Area	Late: Target	Late: Range	Late Inter-mediate: Target	Late Inter-mediate: Range	Early Inter-mediate: Target	Early Inter-mediate: Range	Early: Target	Early: Range
3.68	25%	25-30%	35%	30-35%	25%	25-30%	15%	10-15%
4.32	15%	15-20%	35%	30-35%	35%	30-35%	15%	15-20%

(p. 2-37) 3. Manage vegetation by Management Area (MA) according to the following table to achieve the desired structural objectives for the Geographic Area. The table has a target percent displayed, with and acceptable range of percents included. **Guideline**

Management Area	High: Target	High: Range	Moderate: Target	Moderate: Range	Low: Target	Low: Range
3.68	40%	40-45%	50%	45-50%	10%	10-15%
4.32	30%	30-35%	50%	45-50%	20%	15-20%

Chapter 3

2.1 Special Interest Areas

SIA Descriptions

2.1b – Cheyenne River Zoological SIA

(p. 3-9) This 5,980-acre site provides for approximately 3,000 acres of prairie dog complex, including occupied mountain plover habitat and potential black-footed ferret habitat. About 6 ¾ miles of the

Cheyenne River winds through the area, offering habitat for fish and beaver. Raptors also nest in the area. The river corridor also offers potential habitat for the Ute's lady's tresses and bald eagle winter roost sites. Management emphasis is on protecting and enhancing habitat conditions.

Additional Direction:

- Coordinate and consult with the appropriate state wildlife agency to prohibit prairie dog shooting and fur harvest within the SIA. **Standard**
- Restrict motorized travel to locations and time periods when it would not reduce the optimum habitat effectiveness of the area. **Standard**
- Allow oil and gas leasing; however, prohibit ground-disturbing oil and gas activities if they may have adverse effects on black-footed ferret reintroduction objectives. **Standard**.
- Prohibit locatable mineral operating plans that would reduce effectiveness of the habitats emphasized. **Standard**
- Prohibit new special-use facilities except for valid existing rights. **Guideline**
- Manage livestock grazing and stocking rates to achieve the most rapid development of mature cottonwood willow riparian area while promoting best habitat conditions for mountain plover breeding, nesting, and brood rearing. **Standard**

3.63 Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Habitat

Theme

(p. 3-16) Black-tailed prairie dog colony complexes are actively and intensively managed as reintroduction habitat for black-footed ferrets.

Desired Conditions

(p. 3-16) Large prairie dog colony complexes are established and maintained as suitable habitat for black-footed ferret reintroductions. Land uses and resource management activities are conducted in a manner that is compatible with maintaining suitable ferret habitat.

The Forest Service works with other agencies and organizations to pursue conservation agreements or easements with adjoining land jurisdictions to achieve black-footed ferret recovery objectives. Where landownership patterns are not conducive to effective and successful prairie dog and black-footed ferret management, landownership adjustments with willing landowners may also be used to help resolve management issues.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the regulatory agency that determines many of the conditions including when and where black-footed ferrets, an endangered species, may be released.

Standards and Guidelines

General

(p. 3-16) 1. (*as revised in Amendment 3, 2009*) Authorize only those uses and activities in the reintroduction area that do not reduce habitat below the level needed to support a long-term sustainable black-footed ferret population. Until habitat is available to support a long-term sustainable black-footed ferret population, do not authorize uses and activities that would prevent annual increases in the prairie dog population. **Standard**

(p. 3-16) 2. Manage all prairie dog colonies within this Management Area as though they were occupied by black-footed ferrets, and apply all Standards and Guidelines as though black-footed ferrets occupy all colonies. **Standard**

Mineral and Energy Resources

(p. 3-16) 1. Oil and gas stipulations for black-footed ferrets (Appendix D) apply to all prairie dog colonies within this management area. **Standard**

Livestock Grazing

(p. 3-16) 1. Prior to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service authorizing a black-footed ferret release, the Forest Service will coordinate and consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the state wildlife agency and other agencies that conduct, authorize or fund predator control to help ensure that predator control activities on the national grassland to reduce livestock losses do not pose significant risks to black-footed ferrets. **Standard**

Fish and Wildlife

(p. 3-17) 1. Use of rodenticides in a colony to reduce prairie dog populations may occur only after consultation and concurrence of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The conditions when prairie dog poisoning may be authorized are presented in Chapter 1. **Standard**

(p. 3-17) 2. Relocation of prairie dogs to establish new colonies and accelerate growth of prairie dog populations in selected areas may occur only after consultation with appropriate state and Federal wildlife agencies. **Standard**

Recreation

(p. 3-17) 1. To help expand and maintain suitable black-footed ferret habitat, coordinate and consult with the state wildlife agency to prohibit prairie dog shooting within black-footed ferret reintroduction habitat. **Standard**

6.1 Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis

Desired Conditions

(p. 3-25) This management area will display low to high levels of livestock grazing developments (such as fences and water developments), oil and gas facilities, and roads.

Livestock will graze most areas annually, but a spectrum of vegetation structure and a high degree of biodiversity will be present. Livestock grazing intensity will vary, however moderate use will prevail over most of the MA. Natural disturbance processes, including grazing and fire, will be used to emulate the natural range of variability of vegetation structure and composition (see matrix objectives in Geographic Area direction). Rest and prescribed fire will be incorporated into the landscape.

Prairie dog colonies will increase in some areas of the MA.

When no substantial threat to high-value resources occurs, natural outbreaks of native insects and disease will be allowed to proceed without intervention.

See Chapters 1 and 2 for further direction.

Appendices

Appendix D: Oil and Gas Stipulations

Wildlife – Timing Limitations

Resource: Mountain Plover (TL)

(p. D-10)

Stipulation
Surface use is prohibited from March 15 through July 31 within 0.25 miles (line of sight) of a mountain plover nest or nest aggregation areas.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 28. The objective is to prevent reduced reproductive success.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to mountain plover nests and nest aggregation areas. This stipulation applies to drilling, testing, new construction projects, and to workover operations. This does not apply to emergency repairs.

Waivers
This stipulation may be waived if the authorized officer determines conditions have changed and there are no nests or nest aggregation areas within the leasehold or within the stipulated distance from the leasehold.

Exceptions
The authorizing officer may grant an exception to this stipulation if the operator submits a plan that demonstrates impacts from the proposed action are acceptable or can be adequately mitigated. An exception may be granted if the nest or nest aggregation area has not been used by June 10 of the current year.

Modifications
The boundaries of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that portions of the area do not include mountain plover nests and nesting areas.

Resource: Black-footed Ferret Habitat (TL)

(p. D-10)

Stipulation
Surface use is prohibited from March 1 through August 31 within 0.125 mile (line of sight) of prairie dog colonies occupied or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction,

Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 19. The objective is to protect ferrets when breeding and rearing young.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets. The spatial buffer extends out from the outer boundary of a prairie dog colony occupied by black-footed ferrets. This stipulation applies to drilling and testing and new construction projects, not to operation or maintenance of production facilities.

Waivers
The authorized officer may grant a waiver if ferret surveys, following protocol approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, indicate a low probability that ferrets occur in prairie dog colonies located in the leasehold or if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determines that black-footed ferrets do not occur in the area.

Exceptions
The authorizing officer may grant an exception to this stipulation if the operator submits a plan that demonstrates impacts from the proposed action are acceptable or can be adequately mitigated. An exception may be granted if surveys indicate a low probability that ferrets occur in a prairie dog colony where drilling, testing or new construction is proposed.

Modifications
The boundaries of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that black-footed ferrets do not occur in portions of the area.

Wildlife – Controlled Service Use (CSU)

Resource: Black-footed Ferret Habitat (CSU)
(p. D-12)

Stipulation
Operations in prairie dog colonies known or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80 acres.
- Suitable black-footed ferret habitat lost as a result of new facilities within prairie dog colonies must be replaced within 1 year.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies is limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs.
- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 18, 21, 22, and 69. The objective is to protect against activities that could result in adverse impacts on black-footed ferrets or ferret recovery objectives.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets.

Waivers
The authorized officer may waive this stipulation if black-footed ferrets are released under an experimental non-essential population status; this stipulation may be waived for areas inside the experimental population area but outside Management Area 3.63.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception is unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification is unlikely.

Resource: Mountain Plover Habitat (CSU)

(p. D-13)

Stipulation
Operations in mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80a cares.
- Suitable mountain plover habitat lost as a result of new facilities must be replaced within 1 year.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat will be between 9 am and 5 pm. This does not apply to emergency repairs.
- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, numbers 26, 27, 30, and 69. The objective is to prevent reductions in reproductive success.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to identified nesting and brooding habitat. Multiple facilities concentrated at a site are allowed.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver would be unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception would be unlikely.

Modifications
The boundary of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that portions of the area do not contain active prairie-dog colonies.

MA 2.1 Special Interest Area – Zoological Controlled Surface Use

Resource: Cheyenne River Zoological Area (CSU)

(p. D-21)

Stipulation
Operations may be moved or modified if it is determined that the proposed action will have adverse effects on black-footed ferret reintroduction objectives.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Management Area Direction MA 2.1 Cheyenne River Special Interest Area. The objective is to protect against activities that will adversely impact black-footed ferret reintroduction objectives.

Application Methodology
Use this stipulation in MA 2.1 SIA, Cheyenne River Zoological.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver would be unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception would be unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification would be unlikely.

MA 3.63 Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Habitat Controlled Surface Use (CSU)

Resource: Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Habitat (CSU)
(p. D-22)

Stipulation
To preserve black-footed ferret habitat (Management Area 3.63), operations in all prairie dog colonies are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80 acres.
- Suitable black-footed ferret habitat lost as a result of new facilities within prairie dog colonies must be replaced within 1 year.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies is limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs.
- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Management Area Direction, MA 3.63, Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Habitat, Standards and Guidelines, Minerals and Energy resources number 1, and the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 18, 21, 22, and 69. The objective is to protect against activities that will adversely impact black-footed ferret reintroduction objectives.

Application Methodology
Use this stipulation in MA 3.63, black-footed ferret reintroduction habitat.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver is unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception is unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification is unlikely.

Appendix G: Glossary

- (p. G-28) **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** – A process for evaluating and selecting a program from available techniques to reduce pest populations in an ecologically, economically, and socially acceptable manner. Programs may include one or a combination of available techniques: for

example, the use of pesticides, cultural or silvicultural treatments, biological control agents, host resistance, genetic control, mechanical destruction or trapping, and behavioral chemicals, including attractants and repellants.

- (p. G-41) **Prairie Dog Colony Complex** – A group of at least 10 prairie dog colonies with nearest-neighbor intercolony distances not exceeding 6 miles and with a total colony complex acreage of at least 1,000 acres.

Appendix N

- 2015 Prairie Dog Conservation Assessment and Management Strategy

Alternative 2–Proposed Action

Chapter 1: Goals and Objectives

Goal 4.b: Effective Public Service: Provide appropriate access to NFS lands and USDA Forest Service Programs.

Public and Organizational Relations

Objective:

2. Work in cooperation with federal, state, and county agencies, individuals, and non-governmental organizations for control of noxious weeds and invasive species and for seeking collaborative solutions to prairie dog management.

Chapter 1: Standards and Guidelines

Physical Resources

B. Water

2. Manage land treatments to maintain enough organic ground cover in each land unit to prevent harmful increased runoff (exceptions may occur in special habitat situations (e.g. prairie dog habitat). **Standard**

Biological Resources

F. Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants

Black-footed Ferret

18. In prairie dog colonies known to be occupied by black-footed ferrets, limit oil and gas development to one location per 80 acres to help maintain suitable ferret habitat. **Standard**

19. To help provide suitable habitat for black-footed ferrets and their young during the breeding and whelping seasons, prohibit the following activities within prairie dog colonies, or those portions of larger colonies, occupied by black-footed ferrets from March 1 through August 31: construction (e.g., roads, water impoundments, oil and gas facilities); reclamation; gravel mining operations; drilling of water wells; oil and gas drilling. **Standard**

20. To help provide suitable habitat for black-footed ferrets and their young during the breeding and whelping seasons, the following activities should not be authorized within prairie dog colonies, or those portions of larger colonies, occupied by black-footed ferrets from March 1 through August 31: construction (e.g. pipelines, utilities, fencing); seismic exploration; permitted recreation events involving large groups of people. **Guideline**

21. *Remove this section*

22. For routine maintenance, access to oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets should be limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs. **Guideline**

Mountain Plover

23. *Remove this section*

27. *Remove this section*

28. To help reduce disturbances and risks to nesting mountain plover, prohibit the following activities in plover nesting areas or within 0.25 miles of plover nests from April 1 through August 15: construction (e.g., roads, water impoundments, oil and gas facilities); reclamation; seismic exploration; gravel mining operations; oil and gas drilling; drilling of water wells; prescribed burning. **Standard**

29. To help reduce disturbances and risks to nesting mountain plover, the following activities should not be authorized in plover nesting areas or within 0.25 miles of plover nests from April 1 through August 15: construction (e.g. pipelines, utilities, fencing); workover operations for maintenance of oil and gas wells; permitted recreation events involving large groups of people; grasshopper spraying. **Guideline**

32. *Remove this section*

34. To improve or maintain mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat, vegetation management techniques that enhance short-stature vegetation communities should be considered for use in projects that occur in identified mountain plover habitat. **Guideline**

Burrowing Owls

62. To optimize habitat for burrowing owls, manage for prairie dog colonies that are larger than 80 acres where appropriate and consistent with Geographic Area and Management Area direction. Do not collapse inactive prairie dog burrows where burrowing owls are present. **Guideline**

Black-tailed Prairie Dog

GPA-FW-FWRP-GL-01. Translocation of prairie dogs in selected areas may occur only after consultation with appropriate state and federal wildlife agencies and county officials. **Guideline**

63. *Remove this section*

GPA-FW-FWRP-GL-02. To mitigate the risk of epizootics caused by sylvatic plague, plague control tools such as deltamethrin or sylvatic plague vaccine may be used in prairie dog colonies. **Guideline**

GPA-FW-FWRP-ST-03. In prairie dog colonies designated as satellite colonies:

- Recreational shooting of prairie dogs is prohibited February 1-August 15.
- Lethal prairie dog control is prohibited with the following exceptions:
    - Lethal control may be used to prevent a satellite colony from exceeding the area it occupied at the time it was designated as a satellite colony.
    - Density control may occur in no greater than 50% of the area of a satellite colony.

The designation of satellite colony will be removed only when the total acreage of prairie dog colonies within Management Area 3.67 has reached 7,500 acres. **Standard**

65. *Remove this section*

65b. *Remove this section*

H. Animal Damage Management

1. *Remove this section*

2. From February 1 through September 30, do not use rodenticides to reduce prairie dog populations. **Standard**

GPA-FW-ADM-GL-04. To avoid bait aversion, rodenticide application should not occur for more than 3 consecutive years in a given location. **Guideline**

GPA-FW-ADM-ST-05. The use of anticoagulant rodenticides and fumigants is prohibited. **Standard**

GPA-FW-ADM-GL-06. Control of prairie dogs within 1 mile of residences will be the highest priority for control, and all lethal and non-lethal control tools not otherwise restricted in this plan are available within 1 mile of residences at any time. To ensure effectiveness of treatments, prairie dog control efforts by the Forest Service should be prioritized where the adjacent landowner engages in concurrent control efforts. **Guideline**

3. Complaints of unwanted prairie dog colony encroachment or expected encroachment onto adjoining private or state lands should be addressed consistent with Geographic Area and Management Area direction. To ensure effective treatments in boundary management zones, prairie dog control efforts by the Forest Service should be prioritized where the adjacent landowner engages in concurrent control efforts. **Guideline**

GPA-FW-ADM-GL-07. To minimize impacts to species associated with prairie dog colonies, habitat value for species such as mountain plover, burrowing owl, and swift fox will be considered prior to the use of lethal control in prairie dog colonies outside of boundary management zones. **Guideline**

4. Reduce conflicts with adjacent landowners over prairie dog management through and active landownership adjustment program. **Guideline**

I. Livestock Grazing

3. Adjust management activities to account for the effects of natural processes (e.g., drought, fire, flood, grasshoppers, prairie dogs, etc.) on forage availability and to prevent or minimize impacts to biotic integrity, soil and site stability, and hydrologic function. **Guideline**

Administration

M. Land Ownership

3. Consider the following when opportunities to acquire lands occur (Reference 36 CFR 254):

- Lands with important or unique resources, such as water frontage, wetlands, flood plains and associated riparian ecosystems, cave resources, crucial big-game winter range, threatened or endangered species habitat and habitats needed for recovery, Forest Service sensitive species habitat, important paleontological or geologic sites, important historical, heritage resources or traditional cultural properties, outstanding scenic values, or critical ecosystems when these resources are threatened by change of use, or when management may be enhanced by public ownership.
- Important botanical, wildlife, and fishery management areas. This includes lands supporting rare plant communities.
- Lands with important value for outdoor recreation purposes.
- Lands needed to protect resource values by eliminating or reducing fire risks or soil erosion.

- Non-federal lands in mineralized areas that have low potential for future mineralized patents, and where the minerals will be donated to the United States.
- Lands that reduce Forest Service administrative costs and improvement of management efficiency. This includes: reducing miles of landline boundaries and number of corners, special uses, title claims, rights-of-way grants and easements, numbers of allotments and intermingled ownership livestock pastures, and other factors that decrease administrative costs and improve management efficiency.
- Lands that would reduce conflicts between Forest Service, tribal lands, and private landownership objectives, especially when conflicts are adversely impacting National Forest System management. This includes reducing conflicts involving the management of prairie dog colonies along National Forest System lands.
- Lands within or around existing blocks of public ownership of at least 2,000 acres.
- Lands that would correct maladjustments of land use as described in the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act. **Guideline**

Chapter 2

Broken Hills Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

The desired condition in this geographic area is an open, scenic landscape. Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. Natural outbreaks of native insects and diseases will be allowed to proceed without intervention unless there is a substantial threat to high-value resources. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, sedges, forbs, and shrubs, including species such as: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*), buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), sixweeks fescue (*Vulpia octoflora*), marsh muhly (*Muhlenbergia racemosa*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*), woolly plantain (*Plantago patagonica*), birdfoot sagebrush (*Artemisia pedatifida)*, and plains pricklypear (*Opuntia polyacantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Habitat suitability and effectiveness will be maintained for key wildlife species. Prairie dog colonies are a key component of the ecosystem in some areas. Prairie dog colonies fluctuate annually in size and location and exist among a spectrum of grassland ecological sites. These colonies provide habitat for a variety of associated species.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have native soil infiltration rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments, such as oil and gas wells and pipelines, will be present but visually subordinate to the landscape in the mid and background. Pastures will be large.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 1.31, Backcountry Recreation Nonmotorized: 6,546 acres
- 2.1, Special Interest Area: 14,600 acres
- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural-Appearing Landscapes: 84,190 acres
- 3.67, Rangelands with Short-stature Vegetation Emphasis: 8,327 acres
- 3.68, Big Game Range: 13,960 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 33,020 acres
- 8.4, Mineral Production and Development: 5 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. The landscape is dominated by large pasture size 15 years from plan approval. **Objective**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

1. Contribute to achieving the target of 10,000 prairie dog colony acres in Management Area 3.67 each year during the life of the plan. **Objective**

2. *Remove this section*

3. *Remove this section*

4. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. Where consistent with other management objectives, maintain or increase average pasture size to allow opportunities to enhance habitat connectivity. **Guideline**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog

1. Emphasize an active landownership adjustment program throughout the geographic area in an attempt to reduce private land conflicts over prairie dog management and to enhance long-term management opportunities in this area. **Guideline**

2. *Remove this section*

Cellers Rosecrans Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, sedges, forbs, and shrubs, including species such as: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*), buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), sixweeks fescue (*Vulpia octoflora*), marsh muhly (*Muhlenbergia racemosa*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*), woolly plantain (*Plantago patagonica*), birdfoot sagebrush (*Artemisia pedatifida)*, and plains pricklypear (*Opuntia polyacantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Prairie dog colonies are a key component of the ecosystem in some areas. Prairie dog colonies fluctuate annually in size and location and exist among a spectrum of grassland ecological sites. These colonies provide habitat for a variety of associated species.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, and other woody plants.

Management direction in Special Interest Areas will emphasize cultural and zoological resources. In the Cheyenne River Special Interest Area, plant and animal species associated with riparian areas will predominate (see Chapter 3 for specific management direction regarding Special Interest Areas).

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid- and background. Pastures will remain large to the extent feasible.

Unique Attributes

- Host to populations of black-tailed prairie dogs and associated wildlife species.

- Large, consolidated areas of public land.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 2.1, Special Interest Areas: 4,747 acres
- 2.2, Research Natural Areas: 1,215 acres
- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural Appearing Landscapes: 2,744 acres
- 3.67, Rangelands with Short-stature Vegetation Emphasis: 27,040 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 86,132 acres
- 6.1, Rangelands with Broad Resource Emphasis: 2 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. The landscape is dominated by large pasture size 15 years from plan approval. **Objective**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog

1. Contribute to achieving the target of 10,000 prairie dog colony acres in Management Area 3.67 each year during the life of the plan. **Objective**

2. *Remove this section*

3. *Remove this section*

4. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. Where consistent with other management objectives, maintain or increase average pasture size to allow opportunities to enhance habitat connectivity. **Guideline**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

1. Emphasize an active landownership adjustment program throughout the geographic area in an attempt to reduce private land conflicts over prairie dog management and to enhance long-term management opportunities in this area. **Guideline**

2. *Remove this section*

Fairview Clareton Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Grazing will be a significant activity. The area will be managed to provide a rural/agricultural landscape. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have native soil infiltration rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 2.1, Special Interest Areas: 5,669 acres
- 4.32, Dispersed Recreation High Use: 5,652
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 14,195 acres
- 6.1, Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis: 66,179

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Hilight Bill Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Minerals exploration and development and livestock grazing will be significant management activities in this geographic area. In some areas, there may be restrictions on public use to ensure public safety and to avoid unreasonable interference with mineral operations. In those areas where mining is emphasized, reclamation activities will restore the area to a reasonable level of its pre-mining condition. In areas with other management emphases, existing vegetative diversity and structural conditions will be maintained and enhanced. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have native soil infiltration rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

There will be more development and a moderate number of facilities in this geographic area. Facilities and landscape modifications will be visible but reasonably mitigated to blend with natural features. Higher fence densities and intensive mineral development may occur.

Mineral developments and facilities such as coal mines, railroads, oil and gas wells, and pipelines will be present and will often dominate the landscape. When mineral activities are concluded, the disturbed lands will be reclaimed to blend in with adjacent undisturbed areas.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural Appearing Landscapes: 69 acres
- 3.68, Big Game Range: 876 acres
- 6.1, Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis: 51,219 acres
- 8.4, Mineral Production and Development: 45,904 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standard and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Spring Creek Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, and other woody plants.

Areas with heavy recreation use will have picnicking and camping facilities available. Motorized and nonmotorized trails will have signs to distinguish different uses.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid and background. Pastures will remain large to the extent feasible.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural-appearing Landscapes: 12,334 acres
- 4.32, Dispersed Recreation High Use: 1,929 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangeland: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 34,208 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Upton Osage Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions, and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, and other woody plants.

Areas with heavy recreation use will have picnicking and camping facilities available. Motorized and nonmotorized trails will have signs to distinguish different uses.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid and background. Bentonite mining operations will be present, but will typically be less than 160 acres in size. Some mines may be much larger than 160 acres, but they will not dominate the landscape. When mineral activities are concluded, the disturbed lands will be reclaimed to blend in with adjacent undisturbed areas. Pastures will remain large to the extent feasible.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 3.68, Big Game Range: 14,108 acres
- 4.32, Dispersed Recreation High Use: 18,201 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation
1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Directions – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation
2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Chapter 3

2.1 Special Interest Areas

SIA Descriptions

2.1b – Cheyenne River SIA
This 3,804-acre site provides for a diverse biotic riparian community along the Cheyenne River. Channels and adjacent tree galleries offer habitat for wildlife species and rare plants. Management emphasis is on protecting and enhancing habitat conditions.

Additional Direction:

- Restrict motorized travel to locations and time periods when it would not reduce the optimum habitat effectiveness of the area. **Standard**
- Allow oil and gas leasing. Adhere to the stipulations found in Appendix D. **Standard**
- Prohibit locatable mineral operating plans that would reduce effectiveness of the habitats emphasized. **Standard**
- Prohibit new special-use facilities except for valid existing rights. **Guideline**
- Manage livestock grazing to promote development of mature cottonwood willow riparian areas and other desired habitat conditions. **Standard**

3.67 Rangelands with Short-Stature Vegetation Emphasis

Theme
This area is managed to provide a mosaic of high-, mid-, and low-structure vegetation communities, with an emphasis on distribution of low-structure (short) vegetation and habitat for associated wildlife species.

Desired Conditions
Vegetation communities are managed to provide for a mosaic of native plant communities, with an emphasis on short-stature herbaceous communities.

Noxious and invasive plant species are controlled to the extent possible, and vegetation is maintained at a level that promotes native grass and forb species. Reseeding of areas and reclamation may be evident.

Short-statured plant communities may contain: grasses such as blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), sixweeks fescue (*Vulpia octoflora*), and marsh muhly (*Muhlenbergia racemosa*); sedges (*Carex* spp.); forbs such as scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*) and woolly plantain (*Plantago patagonica*); and prostrate shrub species such as birdfoot sagebrush (*Artemisia pedatifida*) and plains pricklypear (*Opuntia polyacantha*).

Riparian areas and streams are managed for healthy plant communities and water quality. Some restored or improved riparian areas and streams are evident. Trees are uncommon outside of riparian areas.

Prairie dog colonies vary in size and density. Intercolony distances of 4.5 miles or less are maintained where possible to develop colony complexes. Plant community composition varies over time on colonies. Colonies are managed to provide habitat for associated species such as mountain plover, burrowing owl, other grassland birds, and swift fox. Colonies are also managed to prevent undesired encroachment onto adjoining lands and to minimize occurrence of sylvatic plague.

Livestock and prairie dogs utilize forage in most areas annually, but some areas receive little to no use. Forage is available for both wildlife and livestock, and livestock and prairie dogs often occupy the same areas.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. *Remove this section*

2. *Remove this section*

Mineral and Energy Resources

1. *Remove this section*

Livestock Grazing

1. *Remove this section*

Fish and Wildlife

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-ST-08. Prairie dog colonies within Management Area 3.67 will be managed toward a target of 10,000 acres to support associated species such as mountain plover, burrowing owl, and swift fox. Management that adapts to fluctuations of colony acreage may occur while managing toward the 10,000 acre target. All prairie dog colony management tools not otherwise restricted by this plan will be available for use when the colony acreage in Management Area 3.67 is greater than 7,500 acres, and during drought, to mitigate colony expansion, the total acreage may be managed toward a temporary alternate target of 7,500 acres. When the acreage of colonies within Management Area 3.67 is less than 7,500 acres, lethal control tools will not be used except in the following situations:

- Use in boundary management zones.
- Density Control

- If the responsible official determines that lethal control beyond density control is warranted and the total area of prairie dog colonies is less than 7,500 acres within Management Area 3.67, then satellite colonies may be identified outside of Management Area 3.67 to temporarily allow lethal control within Management Area 3.67. The sum of satellite colony acres and colony acres in Management Area 3.67 should be greater than 7,500 acres before allowing lethal control within Management Area 3.67, so that at least 7,500 acres remain following control. **Standard**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-ST-09. ¼-mile boundary management zones within Management Area 3.67 will be established where the Grassland shares a border with private or state property. Within the boundary management zones, control of prairie dogs using rodenticides will be prioritized to reduce impacts to surrounding landowners. All other lethal and non-lethal control tools not otherwise restricted in this plan are also available in the boundary management zones at any time. To ensure effective treatments in boundary management zones, prairie dog control efforts by the Forest Service should be prioritized where the adjacent landowner engages in concurrent control efforts. Colonies within boundary management zones will not count toward the 10,000 acre colony acreage target. **Standard**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-GL-10. Where persistent or imminent prairie dog colony encroachment occurs, a temporary 3/4-mile boundary management zone may be used to prevent encroachment. Requests will be considered by the responsible official in the context of acreage targets, compliance with other plan standards and guidelines, and site-specific information. To ensure effective treatments, prairie dog control efforts by the Forest Service should be prioritized where the adjacent landowner engages in concurrent control efforts. **Guideline**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-GL-11. Density control (for example, using rodenticides, translocation, or collapsing of burrows) may be used to maintain desired vegetation conditions within a prairie dog colony. Desired vegetation structure and composition may vary by ecological site or colony. Where density control occurs, pretreatment data must be collected, and monitoring data must be collected for a minimum of two years after treatment. **Guideline**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-ST-12. When the total area of prairie dogs in Management Area 3.67 and satellite colonies is less than 7,500 acres, density control will not occur in more than 50% of the area of any colony. **Standard**

1. *Remove this section*

2. *Remove this section (moved to Chapter 1)*

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-ST-13. Recreational prairie dog shooting is prohibited from February 1 to August 15. **Standard**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-ST-14. Reintroduction of the black-footed ferret will not be precluded in the Management Area. Any effort to reintroduce black-footed ferret would occur in coordination with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. **Standard**

Recreation

1. To help expand and maintain suitable black-footed ferret habitat, coordinate and consult with the state wildlife agency to prohibit prairie dog shooting within black-footed ferret reintroduction habitat. **Standard**

6.1 Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis

Desired Conditions

This management area will display low to high levels of livestock grazing developments (such as fences and water developments), oil and gas facilities, and roads.

Livestock will graze most areas annually, but a spectrum of vegetation structure and a high degree of biodiversity will be present. Livestock grazing intensity will vary, however moderate use will prevail over most of the MA. Natural disturbance processes, including grazing and fire, will be used to emulate the natural range of variability of vegetation structure and composition. Rest and prescribed fire will be incorporated into the landscape.

When no substantial threat to high-value resources occurs, natural outbreaks of native insects and disease will be allowed to proceed without intervention.

See Chapters 1 and 2 for further direction.

Appendices

Appendix D: Oil and Gas Stipulations

Wildlife – Timing Limitations

Resource: Mountain Plover (TL)

Stipulation
Surface use is prohibited from April 1 through August 15 within 0.25 miles (line of sight) of a mountain plover nest or nest aggregation areas.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 28. The objective is to prevent reduced reproductive success.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to mountain plover nests and nest aggregation areas. This stipulation applies to drilling, testing, new construction projects, and to workover operations. This does not apply to emergency repairs.

Waivers
This stipulation may be waived if the authorized officer determines conditions have changed and there are no nests or nest aggregation areas within the leasehold or within the stipulated distance from the leasehold.

Exceptions
The authorizing officer may grant an exception to this stipulation if the operator submits a plan that demonstrates impacts from the proposed action are acceptable or can be adequately mitigated. An exception may be granted if the nest or nest aggregation area has not been used by June 25 of the current year.

Modifications
The boundaries of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that portions of the area do not include mountain plover nests and nesting areas.

Resource: Black-footed Ferret (TL)

Stipulation
Surface use is prohibited from March 1 through August 31 within 0.125 mile (line of sight) of prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction,

Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 19. The objective is to protect ferrets when breeding and rearing young.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets. The spatial buffer extends out from the outer boundary of a prairie dog colony occupied by black-footed ferrets. This stipulation applies to drilling and testing and new construction projects, not to operation or maintenance of production facilities.

Waivers
The authorized officer may grant a waiver if ferret surveys, following protocol approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, indicate a low probability that ferrets occur in prairie dog colonies located in the leasehold or if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determines that black-footed ferrets do not occur in the area.

Exceptions
The authorizing officer may grant an exception to this stipulation if the operator submits a plan that demonstrates impacts from the proposed action are acceptable or can be adequately mitigated. An exception may be granted if surveys indicate a low probability that ferrets occur in a prairie dog colony where drilling, testing or new construction is proposed.

Modifications
The boundaries of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that black-footed ferrets do not occur in portions of the area.

Wildlife – Controlled Service Use (CSU)

Resource: Black-footed Ferret (CSU)

Stipulation
Operations in prairie dog colonies known to be occupied by black-footed ferrets are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80 acres.
- Replacement of prairie dog colonies lost as a result of new facilities will be evaluated as needed to meet colony acreage targets for Management Area 3.67.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies is limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs.

- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)

For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 18, 22, and 66, and Management Area 3.67 direction. The objective is to protect against activities that could result in adverse impacts on black-footed ferrets or ferret recovery objectives.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets.

Waivers
The authorized officer may waive this stipulation if black-footed ferrets are released under an experimental non-essential population status; this stipulation may be waived for areas inside the experimental population area but outside Management Area 3.67.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception is unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification is unlikely.

Resource: Mountain Plover Habitat (CSU)

Stipulation
Operations in mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80 acres.
- Replacement of prairie dog colonies lost as a result of new facilities will be evaluated as needed to meet colony acreage targets for Management Area 3.67.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat will be between 9 am and 5 pm. This does not apply to emergency repairs.
- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, numbers 26, 30, and 66, and Management Area 3.67 direction. The objective is to prevent reductions in reproductive success.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to identified nesting and brooding habitat. Multiple facilities concentrated at a site are allowed.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver would be unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception would be unlikely.

Modifications
The boundary of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that portions of the area do not contain prairie-dog colonies.

MA 2.1 Special Interest Areas – Zoological Controlled Surface Use (CSU)

Resource: Cheyenne River Area (CSU)

Stipulation
Operations may be moved or modified if it is determined that the proposed action will have adverse effects on riparian wildlife and plant communities.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Management Area Direction MA 2.1 Cheyenne River Special Interest Area. The objective is to protect against activities that will adversely impact the riparian ecosystem in the Special Interest Area.

Application Methodology
Use this stipulation in MA 2.1 SIA, Cheyenne River Special Interest Area.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver would be unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception would be unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification would be unlikely.

MA 3.67 Rangelands with Short-Stature Vegetation Emphasis Controlled Surface Use (CSU)

Resource: Rangelands with Short-stature Vegetation and Prairie Dog Colony Associated Species (CSU)

Stipulation
To preserve habitat for wildlife species associated with prairie dog colonies (Management Area 3.67), operations in all prairie dog colonies are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80 acres.
- Replacement of prairie dog colonies lost as a result of new facilities will be evaluated as needed to meet colony acreage targets for the Management Area.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies is limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs.
- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Management Area Direction, MA 3.67, and the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 18, 22, and 66. The objective is to protect against activities that will adversely impact areas containing short-stature vegetation and species associated with prairie dog colonies.

Application Methodology
Use this stipulation in MA 3.67.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver is unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception is unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification is unlikely.

Appendix G: Glossary

- **Boundary Management Zone** – An area of National Forest System lands that adjoins non-National Forest System lands in which prairie dog colonies may be controlled at all times to prevent colony encroachment onto the adjoining lands.
- **Ecological site** – A distinctive kind of land with specific soil and physical characteristics that differs from other kinds of land in its ability to produce a distinctive kind and amount of vegetation and its response to management actions and natural disturbances.
- **Encroachment, Prairie Dog** – The expansion of a prairie dog colony from National Forest System lands onto non-National Forest System lands.
- **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** – A process for evaluating and selecting a program from available techniques to reduce pest populations in an ecologically, economically, and socially acceptable manner. Programs may include one or a combination of available techniques: for example, the use of pesticides, cultural or silvicultural treatments, biological control agents, host resistance, genetic control, mechanical destruction or trapping, and behavioral chemicals, including attractants and repellants.
- **Prairie Dog Colony** – An area containing active prairie dog burrows that is clearly distinguishable from surrounding areas by a space that does not contain burrows, as delineated by the mapping and monitoring protocol.
- **Prairie Dog Colony, Satellite** – A prairie dog colony that occupies National Forest System lands outside of Management Area 3.67 and has been designated for the purpose of meeting colony acreage targets.
- **Prairie Dog Colony Complex** – A group of two or more prairie dog colonies in which each colony is less than 4.5 miles (7km) of another colony, such that individual prairie dogs can commonly disperse between colonies.
- **Prairie Dog Colony Conservation Tools** – Actions used to promote the growth or prevent the shrinking of prairie dog colonies. Tools may include, but are not limited to: translocation of prairie dog coteries; plague control tools, such as deltamethrin or sylvatic plague vaccine; prohibitions on recreational shooting; and vegetation management, including prescribed fire.
- **Prairie Dog Colony Control** - A management action or set of management actions implemented with the intent to decrease the size or density of a prairie dog colony or to remove a prairie dog colony from an area.
- **Prairie Dog Colony Control Tools** – Actions used to carry out prairie dog colony control. Tools may include, but are not limited to: rodenticides registered for use under state law, including some

forms of zinc phosphide; vegetation barriers; translocation of prairie dog coteries, and mechanical treatment such as blading and collapsing burrows. In this plan, recreational shooting is not considered a control tool.

- **Prairie Dog Density Control** – A management action or set of management actions implemented with the intent to reduce the number of live prairie dogs within a prairie dog colony or some portion of a colony without reducing the total area of the colony. Such management actions would occur most often via the use of rodenticides but other control tools may be used.
- **Prairie Dog Lethal Control** – The use of rodenticides to manage a prairie dog colony.

Appendix N

- *Rescind this section*

Alternative 3–Grassland-wide Alternative

Chapter 1: Goals and Objectives

Goal 4.b: Effective Public Service: Provide appropriate access to NFS lands and USDA Forest Service Programs.

Public and Organizational Relations

Objective:

2. Work in cooperation with federal, state, and county agencies, individuals, and non-governmental organizations for control of noxious weeds and invasive species and for seeking collaborative solutions to prairie dog management.

Chapter 1: Standards and Guidelines

Physical Resources

B. Water

2. Manage land treatments to maintain enough organic ground cover in each land unit to prevent harmful increased runoff (exceptions may occur in special habitat situations (e.g. prairie dog habitat). **Standard**

Biological Resources

F. Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants

Black-footed Ferret

18. In prairie dog colonies known to be occupied by black-footed ferrets, limit oil and gas development to one location per 80 acres to help maintain suitable ferret habitat. **Standard**

19. To help provide suitable habitat for black-footed ferrets and their young during the breeding and whelping seasons, prohibit the following activities within prairie dog colonies, or those portions of larger colonies, occupied by black-footed ferrets from March 1 through August 31: construction (e.g., roads, water impoundments, oil and gas facilities); reclamation; gravel mining operations; drilling of water wells; oil and gas drilling. **Standard**

20. To help provide suitable habitat for black-footed ferrets and their young during the breeding and whelping seasons, the following activities should not be authorized within prairie dog colonies, or those portions of larger colonies, occupied by black-footed ferrets from March 1 through August 31: construction (e.g. pipelines, utilities, fencing); seismic exploration; permitted recreation events involving large groups of people. **Guideline**

21. *Remove this section*

22. For routine maintenance, access to oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets should be limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs. **Guideline**

Mountain Plover

23. *Remove this section*

GPA-FW-FWRP-GL-01. To optimize habitat heterogeneity for mountain plover, prairie dog colonies should vary in size up to approximately 1,000 acres with an emphasis on colonies of 200 to 500 acres. **Guideline**

27. *Remove this section*

28. To help reduce disturbances and risks to nesting mountain plover, prohibit the following activities in plover nesting areas or within 0.25 miles of plover nests from April 1 through August 15: construction (e.g., roads, water impoundments, oil and gas facilities); reclamation; seismic exploration; gravel mining operations; oil and gas drilling; drilling of water wells; prescribed burning. **Standard**

29. To help reduce disturbances and risks to nesting mountain plover, the following activities should not be authorized in plover nesting areas or within 0.25 miles of plover nests from April 1 through August 15: construction (e.g. pipelines, utilities, fencing); workover operations for maintenance of oil and gas wells; permitted recreation events involving large groups of people; grasshopper spraying. **Guideline**

32. *Remove this section*

34. To improve or maintain mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat, vegetation management techniques that enhance short-stature vegetation communities should be considered for use in projects that occur in identified mountain plover habitat. **Guideline**

Burrowing Owls

62. Do not collapse inactive prairie dog burrows where burrowing owls are present. **Guideline**

Black-tailed Prairie Dog

GPA-FW-FWRP-ST-02. Prairie dog colonies will be managed toward a target range of 10,000-15,000 acres across the Grassland. To work toward acreage targets, a variety of conservation and control tools may be used. When the total area of prairie dog colonies across the Grassland is less than 10,000 acres, lethal control is prohibited, except in the following situations:

- Lethal control in boundary management zones
- Density control.

During drought conditions, to mitigate prairie dog colony expansion, manage toward the lower end of the range (10,000 acres) of prairie dog colonies across the Grassland. **Standard**

GPA-FW-FWRP-GL-03. Translocation of prairie dogs in selected areas may occur only after consultation with appropriate state and federal wildlife agencies and county officials. **Guideline**

63. *Remove this section*

GPA-FW-FWRP-GL-04. To mitigate the risk of epizootics caused by sylvatic plague, plague control tools such as deltamethrin or sylvatic plague vaccine may be used in prairie dog colonies. **Guideline**

GPA-FW-FWRP-GL-05. Density control (for example, using rodenticides, translocation, or collapsing of burrows) may be used to maintain desired vegetation conditions within a prairie dog colony. Desired vegetation structure and composition may vary by ecological site or colony. Where density control occurs, pretreatment data must be collected, and monitoring data must be collected for a minimum of two years after treatment. **Guideline**

GPA-FW-FWRP-ST-06. When the total area of prairie dogs across the Grassland is less than 10,000 acres, density control will not occur in more than 50% of the area of any colony. **Standard**

65. *Remove this section*

65b. *Remove this section*

H. Animal Damage Management

1. *Remove this section*

2. From February 1 through September 30, do not use rodenticides to reduce prairie dog populations. **Standard**

GPA-FW-ADM-GL-07. To avoid bait aversion, application of a specific grain-bait rodenticide should not occur for more than 3 consecutive years in a given location. **Guideline**

GPA-FW-ADM-ST-08. Fumigants and anticoagulant rodenticides may be used only in boundary management zones and only after three consecutive applications of zinc phosphide. Fumigants and anticoagulant rodenticides may be used only if applied by a Forest Service-approved contractor (through direct contract or agreement) or Forest Service staff. If an area is chosen to be a black-footed ferret reintroduction site, fumigants and anticoagulant rodenticides will not be used in that area. **Standard**

GPA-FW-ADM-GL-09. Control of prairie dogs within 1 mile of residences will be the highest priority for control, and all lethal and non-lethal control tools not otherwise restricted in this plan are available within 1 mile of residences at any time. To ensure effectiveness of treatments, prairie dog control efforts by the Forest Service should be prioritized where the adjacent landowner engages in concurrent control efforts. **Guideline**

3. ¼-mile boundary management zones will be established where the Grassland shares a border with private or state property. Within the boundary management zones, control of prairie dogs using rodenticides will be prioritized to reduce impacts to surrounding landowners. All other lethal and non-lethal control tools not otherwise restricted in this plan are also available in the boundary management zones at any time. To ensure effective treatments in boundary management zones, prairie dog control efforts by the Forest Service should be prioritized where the adjacent landowner engages in concurrent control efforts. Colonies within boundary management zones will not count toward the 10,000-15,000 acre colony area target range. **Standard**

GPA-FW-ADM-GL-10. Where persistent or imminent prairie dog colony encroachment occurs, a temporary 1-mile boundary management zone may be used to prevent encroachment. Requests will be considered by the responsible official in the context of acreage targets, compliance with other plan standards and guidelines, and site-specific information. To ensure effective treatments, prairie dog control efforts by the Forest Service should be prioritized where the adjacent landowner engages in concurrent control efforts. **Guideline**

GPA-FW-ADM-GL-11. To minimize impacts to species associated with prairie dog colonies, habitat value for species such as mountain plover, burrowing owl, and swift fox will be considered prior to the use of lethal control in prairie dog colonies outside of boundary management zones. **Guideline**

4. Reduce conflicts with adjacent landowners over prairie dog management through an active landownership adjustment program. **Guideline**

I. Livestock Grazing

3. Adjust management activities to account for the effects of natural processes (e.g., drought, fire, flood, grasshoppers, prairie dogs, etc.) on forage availability and to prevent or minimize impacts to biotic integrity, soil and site stability, and hydrologic function. **Guideline**

Administration

M. Land Ownership

3. Consider the following when opportunities to acquire lands occur (Reference 36 CFR 254):

- Lands with important or unique resources, such as water frontage, wetlands, flood plains and associated riparian ecosystems, cave resources, crucial big-game winter range, threatened or endangered species habitat and habitats needed for recovery, Forest Service sensitive species habitat, important paleontological or geologic sites, important historical, heritage resources or traditional cultural properties, outstanding scenic values, or critical ecosystems when these resources are threatened by change of use, or when management may be enhanced by public ownership.
- Important botanical, wildlife, and fishery management areas. This includes lands supporting rare plant communities.
- Lands with important value for outdoor recreation purposes.
- Lands needed to protect resource values by eliminating or reducing fire risks or soil erosion.
- Non-federal lands in mineralized areas that have low potential for future mineralized patents, and where the minerals will be donated to the United States.
- Lands that reduce Forest Service administrative costs and improvement of management efficiency. This includes: reducing miles of landline boundaries and number of corners, special uses, title claims, rights-of-way grants and easements, numbers of allotments and intermingled ownership livestock pastures, and other factors that decrease administrative costs and improve management efficiency.
- Lands that would reduce conflicts between Forest Service, tribal lands, and private landownership objectives, especially when conflicts are adversely impacting National Forest System management. This includes reducing conflicts involving the management of prairie dog colonies along National Forest System lands.
- Lands within or around existing blocks of public ownership of at least 2,000 acres.
- Lands that would correct maladjustments of land use as described in the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act. **Guideline**

Chapter 2

Broken Hills Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

The desired condition in this geographic area is an open, scenic landscape. Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. Natural outbreaks of native insects and diseases will be allowed to proceed without intervention unless there is a substantial threat to high-value resources. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, sedges, forbs, and

shrubs, including species such as: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*), buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), sixweeks fescue (*Vulpia octoflora*), marsh muhly (*Muhlenbergia racemosa*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*), woolly plantain (*Plantago patagonica*), birdfoot sagebrush (*Artemisia pedatifida)*, and plains pricklypear (*Opuntia polyacantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Habitat suitability and effectiveness will be maintained for key wildlife species. Prairie dog colonies are a key component of the ecosystem in some areas. Prairie dog colonies fluctuate annually in size and location and exist among a spectrum of grassland ecological sites. These colonies provide habitat for a variety of associated species.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have native soil infiltration rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments, such as oil and gas wells and pipelines, will be present but visually subordinate to the landscape in the mid and background. Pastures will be large.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 1.31, Backcountry Recreation Nonmotorized: 6,546 acres
- 2.1, Special Interest Area: 15,058 acres
- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural-Appearing Landscapes: 86,345 acres
- 3.67, Rangelands with Short-stature Vegetation Emphasis: 5,717 acres
- 3.68, Big Game Range: 13,957 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 33,020 acres
- 8.4, Mineral Production and Development: 5 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. The landscape is dominated by large pasture size 15 years from plan approval. **Objective**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

1. Contribute to the target range of 10,000-15,000 prairie dog colony acres each year during the life of the plan. Prairie dog colonies vary in size and are distributed across the landscape. **Objective**

2. *Remove this section*

3. *Remove this section*

4. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. Where consistent with other management objectives, maintain or increase average pasture size to allow opportunities to enhance habitat connectivity. **Guideline**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

1. Emphasize an active landownership adjustment program throughout the geographic area in an attempt to reduce private land conflicts over prairie dog management and to enhance long-term management opportunities in this area. **Guideline**

2. *Remove this section*

Cellers Rosecrans Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, sedges, forbs, and shrubs, including species such as: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*), buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), sixweeks fescue (*Vulpia octoflora*), marsh muhly (*Muhlenbergia racemosa*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*), woolly plantain (*Plantago patagonica*), birdfoot sagebrush (*Artemisia pedatifida)*, and plains pricklypear (*Opuntia polyacantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Prairie dog colonies are a key component of the ecosystem in some areas. Prairie dog colonies fluctuate annually in size and location and exist among a spectrum of grassland ecological sites. These colonies provide habitat for a variety of associated species.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, and other woody plants.

Management direction in Special Interest Areas will emphasize cultural and zoological resources. In the Cheyenne River Special Interest Area, plant and animal species associated with riparian areas will predominate (see Chapter 3 for specific management direction regarding Special Interest Areas).

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid- and background. Pastures will remain large to the extent feasible.

Unique Attributes

- Host to populations of black-tailed prairie dogs and associated wildlife species.
- Large, consolidated areas of public land.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 2.1, Special Interest Areas: 6,206 acres
- 2.2, Research Natural Areas: 1,215 acres
- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural Appearing Landscapes: 4,848 acres
- 3.67, Rangelands with Short-stature Vegetation Emphasis: 23,476 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 86,132 acres
- 6.1, Rangelands with Broad Resource Emphasis: 2 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. The landscape is dominated by large pasture size 15 years from plan approval. **Objective**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

1. Contribute to the target range of 10,000-15,000 prairie dog colony acres each year during the life of the plan. Prairie dog colonies vary in size and are distributed across the landscape. **Objective**

2. *Remove this section*

3. *Remove this section*

4. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. Where consistent with other management objectives, maintain or increase average pasture size to allow opportunities to enhance habitat connectivity. **Guideline**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

1. Emphasize an active landownership adjustment program throughout the geographic area in an attempt to reduce private land conflicts over prairie dog management and to enhance long-term management opportunities in this area. **Guideline**

2. *Remove this section*

Fairview Clareton Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Grazing will be a significant activity. The area will be managed to provide a rural/agricultural landscape. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have native soil infiltration rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 2.1, Special Interest Areas: 5,669 acres

- 4.32 Dispersed Recreation High Use: 5,652
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 14,195 acres
- 6.1, Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis: 66,179

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Hilight Bill Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Minerals exploration and development and livestock grazing will be significant management activities in this geographic area. In some areas, there may be restrictions on public use to ensure public safety and to avoid unreasonable interference with mineral operations. In those areas where mining is emphasized, reclamation activities will restore the area to a reasonable level of its pre-mining condition. In areas with other management emphases, existing vegetative diversity and structural conditions will be maintained and enhanced. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have native soil infiltration rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

There will be more development and a moderate number of facilities in this geographic area. Facilities and landscape modifications will be visible but reasonably mitigated to blend with natural features. Higher fence densities and intensive mineral development may occur.

Mineral developments and facilities such as coal mines, railroads, oil and gas wells, and pipelines will be present and will often dominate the landscape. When mineral activities are concluded, the disturbed lands will be reclaimed to blend in with adjacent undisturbed areas.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural Appearing Landscapes: 69 acres
- 3.68, Big Game Range: 876 acres
- 6.1, Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis: 51,219 acres
- 8.4, Mineral Production and Development: 45,904 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standard and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Spring Creek Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, and other woody plants.

Areas with heavy recreation use will have picnicking and camping facilities available. Motorized and nonmotorized trails will have signs to distinguish different uses.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid and background. Pastures will remain large to the extent feasible.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural-appearing Landscapes: 12,334 acres
- 4.32, Dispersed Recreation High Use: 1,929 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangeland: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 34,208 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Upton Osage Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions, and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, and other woody plants.

Areas with heavy recreation use will have picnicking and camping facilities available. Motorized and nonmotorized trails will have signs to distinguish different uses.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid and background. Bentonite mining operations will be present, but will typically be less than 160 acres in size. Some mines may be much larger than 160 acres, but they will not dominate the landscape. When mineral activities are concluded, the disturbed lands will be reclaimed to blend in with adjacent undisturbed areas. Pastures will remain large to the extent feasible.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 3.68, Big Game Range: 14,108 acres
- 4.32, Dispersed Recreation High Use: 18,201 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Directions – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Chapter 3

2.1 Special Interest Areas

SIA Descriptions

2.1b – Cheyenne River-Antelope Creek SIA

This 6,460-acre site provides for a diverse biotic riparian community along the Cheyenne River. Channels and adjacent tree galleries offer habitat for wildlife species and rare plants. Management emphasis is on protecting and enhancing habitat conditions.

Additional Direction:

- Restrict motorized travel to locations and time periods when it would not reduce the optimum habitat effectiveness of the area. **Standard**
- Allow oil and gas leasing. Adhere to the stipulations found in Appendix D. **Standard**
- Prohibit locatable mineral operating plans that would reduce effectiveness of the habitats emphasized. **Standard**
- Prohibit new special-use facilities except for valid existing rights. **Guideline**
- Manage livestock grazing to promote development of mature cottonwood willow riparian areas and other desired habitat conditions. **Standard**

3.67 Rangelands with Short-Stature Vegetation Emphasis

Theme

This area is managed to provide a mosaic of high-, mid-, and low-structure vegetation communities, with an emphasis on distribution of low-structure (short) vegetation and habitat for associated wildlife species.

Desired Conditions

Vegetation communities are managed to provide for a mosaic of native plant communities, with an emphasis on short-stature herbaceous communities.

Noxious and invasive plant species are controlled to the extent possible, and vegetation is maintained at a level that promotes native grass and forb species. Reseeding of areas and reclamation may be evident.

Short-statured plant communities may contain: grasses such as blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), sixweeks fescue (*Vulpia octoflora*), and marsh muhly (*Muhlenbergia racemosa*); sedges (*Carex* spp.); forbs such as scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*) and woolly plantain (*Plantago patagonica*); and prostrate shrub species such as birdfoot sagebrush (*Artemisia pedatifida*) and plains pricklypear (*Opuntia polyacantha*).

Riparian areas and streams are managed for healthy plant communities and water quality. Some restored or improved riparian areas and streams are evident. Trees are uncommon outside of riparian areas.

Prairie dog colonies vary in size and density. Plant community composition varies over time on colonies. Colonies are managed to provide habitat for associated species such as mountain plover, burrowing owl, swift fox, and other grassland birds. Colonies are also managed to prevent undesired encroachment onto adjoining lands and to minimize occurrence of sylvatic plague.

Livestock and prairie dogs utilize forage in most areas annually, but some areas receive little to no use. Forage is available for both wildlife and livestock, and livestock and prairie dogs often occupy the same areas.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. *Remove this section*

2. *Remove this section*

Mineral and Energy Resources

1. *Remove this section*

Livestock Grazing

1. *Remove this section*

Fish and Wildlife

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-GL-12. At least one complex of at least 1,500 acres of prairie dog colonies should be maintained at any given time. **Guideline**

1. *Remove this section*

2. *Remove this section (moved to Chapter 1)*

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-ST-13. Reintroduction of the black-footed ferret will not be precluded in the Management Area. Any effort to reintroduce black-footed ferret would occur in coordination with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. **Standard**

Recreation

1. To help expand and maintain suitable black-footed ferret habitat, coordinate and consult with the state wildlife agency to prohibit prairie dog shooting within black-footed ferret reintroduction habitat. **Standard**

6.1 Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis

Desired Conditions

This management area will display low to high levels of livestock grazing developments (such as fences and water developments), oil and gas facilities, and roads.

Livestock will graze most areas annually, but a spectrum of vegetation structure and a high degree of biodiversity will be present. Livestock grazing intensity will vary, however moderate use will prevail over most of the MA. Natural disturbance processes, including grazing and fire, will be used to emulate the natural range of variability of vegetation structure and composition. Rest and prescribed fire will be incorporated into the landscape.

When no substantial threat to high-value resources occurs, natural outbreaks of native insects and disease will be allowed to proceed without intervention.

See Chapters 1 and 2 for further direction.

Appendices

Appendix D: Oil and Gas Stipulations

Wildlife – Timing Limitations

Resource: Mountain Plover (TL)

Stipulation

Surface use is prohibited from April 1 through August 15 within 0.25 miles (line of sight) of a mountain plover nest or nest aggregation areas.

Objective (Justification)

For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 28. The objective is to prevent reduced reproductive success.

Application Methodology

This stipulation applies to mountain plover nests and nest aggregation areas. This stipulation applies to drilling, testing, new construction projects, and to workover operations. This does not apply to emergency repairs.

Waivers
This stipulation may be waived if the authorized officer determines conditions have changed and there are no nests or nest aggregation areas within the leasehold or within the stipulated distance from the leasehold.

Exceptions
The authorizing officer may grant an exception to this stipulation if the operator submits a plan that demonstrates impacts from the proposed action are acceptable or can be adequately mitigated. An exception may be granted if the nest or nest aggregation area has not been used by June 25 of the current year.

Modifications
The boundaries of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that portions of the area do not include mountain plover nests and nesting areas.

Resource: Black-footed Ferret Habitat (TL)

Stipulation
Surface use is prohibited from March 1 through August 31 within 0.125 mile (line of sight) of prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction,

Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 19. The objective is to protect ferrets when breeding and rearing young.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets. The spatial buffer extends out from the outer boundary of a prairie dog colony occupied by black-footed ferrets. This stipulation applies to drilling and testing and new construction projects, not to operation or maintenance of production facilities.

Waivers
The authorized officer may grant a waiver if ferret surveys, following protocol approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, indicate a low probability that ferrets occur in prairie dog colonies located in the leasehold or if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determines that black-footed ferrets do not occur in the area.

Exceptions
The authorizing officer may grant an exception to this stipulation if the operator submits a plan that demonstrates impacts from the proposed action are acceptable or can be adequately mitigated. An exception may be granted if surveys indicate a low probability that ferrets occur in a prairie dog colony where drilling, testing or new construction is proposed.

Modifications
The boundaries of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that black-footed ferrets do not occur in portions of the area.

Wildlife – Controlled Service Use (CSU)

Resource: Black-footed Ferret (CSU)

Stipulation
Operations in prairie dog colonies known to be occupied by black-footed ferrets are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80 acres.
- Replacement of prairie dog colonies lost as a result of new facilities will be evaluated as needed to meet acreage targets Grassland-wide.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies is limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs.
- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 18, 22, and 66, and Management Area 3.67 direction. The objective is to protect against activities that could result in adverse impacts on black-footed ferrets or ferret recovery objectives.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets.

Waivers
The authorized officer may waive this stipulation if black-footed ferrets are released under an experimental non-essential population status; this stipulation may be waived for areas inside the experimental population area but outside Management Area 3.67.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception is unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification is unlikely.

Resource: Mountain Plover Habitat (CSU)

Stipulation
Operations in mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80 acres.
- Replacement of prairie dog colonies lost as a result of new facilities will be evaluated as needed to meet acreage targets Grassland-wide.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat will be between 9 am and 5 pm. This does not apply to emergency repairs.
- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, numbers 26, 30, and 66. The objective is to prevent reductions in reproductive success.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to identified nesting and brooding habitat. Multiple facilities concentrated at a site are allowed.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver would be unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception would be unlikely.

Modifications
The boundary of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that portions of the area do not contain prairie-dog colonies.

MA 2.1 Special Interest Area – Zoological Controlled Surface Use

Resource: Cheyenne River-Antelope Creek Area (CSU)

Stipulation
Operations may be moved or modified if it is determined that the proposed action will have adverse effects on riparian wildlife and plant communities.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Management Area Direction MA 2.1 Cheyenne River Special Interest Area. The objective is to protect against activities that will adversely impact the riparian ecosystem in the Special Interest Area.

Application Methodology
Use this stipulation in MA 2.1 SIA, Cheyenne River-Antelope Creek Special Interest Area.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver would be unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception would be unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification would be unlikely.

MA 3.67 Rangelands with Short-Stature Vegetation Emphasis Controlled Surface Use (CSU)

Resource: Rangelands with Short-stature Vegetation and Prairie Dog Colony Associated Species (CSU)

Stipulation
To preserve habitat for wildlife species associated with prairie dog colonies (Management Area 3.67), operations in all prairie dog colonies are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80 acres.
- Replacement of prairie dog colonies lost as a result of new facilities will be evaluated as needed.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies is limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs.
- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Management Area Direction, MA 3.67, and the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 18, 22, and 66. The objective is to protect against activities that will adversely impact areas containing short-stature vegetation and species associated with prairie dog colonies.

Application Methodology
Use this stipulation in MA 3.67.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver is unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception is unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification is unlikely.

Appendix G: Glossary

- **Boundary Management Zone** – An area of National Forest System lands that adjoins non-National Forest System lands in which prairie dog colonies may be controlled at all times to prevent colony encroachment onto the adjoining lands.
- **Ecological site** – A distinctive kind of land with specific soil and physical characteristics that differs from other kinds of land in its ability to produce a distinctive kind and amount of vegetation and its response to management actions and natural disturbances.
- **Encroachment, Prairie Dog** – The expansion of a prairie dog colony from National Forest System lands onto non-National Forest System lands.
- **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** – A process for evaluating and selecting a program from available techniques to reduce pest populations in an ecologically, economically, and socially acceptable manner. Programs may include one or a combination of available techniques: for example, the use of pesticides, cultural or silvicultural treatments, biological control agents, host resistance, genetic control, mechanical destruction or trapping, and behavioral chemicals, including attractants and repellants.
- **Prairie Dog Colony** – An area containing active prairie dog burrows that is clearly distinguishable from surrounding areas by a space that does not contain burrows, as delineated by the mapping and monitoring protocol.
- **Prairie Dog Colony Complex** – A group of two or more prairie dog colonies in which each colony is less than 4.5 miles (7km) of another colony, such that individual prairie dogs can commonly disperse between colonies.

- **Prairie Dog Colony Conservation Tools** – Actions used to promote the growth or prevent the shrinking of prairie dog colonies. Tools may include, but are not limited to: translocation of prairie dog coteries; plague control tools, such as deltamethrin or sylvatic plague vaccine; prohibitions on recreational shooting; and vegetation management, including prescribed fire.
- **Prairie Dog Colony Control** - A management action or set of management actions implemented with the intent to decrease the size or density of a prairie dog colony or to remove a prairie dog colony from an area.
- **Prairie Dog Colony Control Tools** – Actions used to carry out prairie dog colony control. Tools may include, but are not limited to: rodenticides registered for use under state law, including some forms of zinc phosphide; vegetation barriers; translocation of prairie dog coteries, and mechanical treatment such as blading and collapsing burrows. In this plan, recreational shooting is not considered a control tool.
- **Prairie Dog Density Control** – A management action or set of management actions implemented with the intent to reduce the number of live prairie dogs within a prairie dog colony or some portion of a colony without reducing the total area of the colony. Such management actions would occur most often via the use of rodenticides but other control tools may be used.
- **Prairie Dog Lethal Control** – The use of rodenticides to manage a prairie dog colony.

Appendix N

- *Rescind this section*

Alternative 4–Prairie Dog Emphasis

Chapter 1: Goals and Objectives

Goal 4.b: Effective Public Service: Provide appropriate access to NFS lands and USDA Forest Service Programs.

Public and Organizational Relations

Objective:
2. Work in cooperation with federal, state, and county agencies, individuals, and non-governmental organizations for control of noxious weeds and invasive species and for seeking collaborative solutions to prairie dog management.

Chapter 1: Standards and Guidelines

Physical Resources

B. Water

2. Manage land treatments to maintain enough organic ground cover in each land unit to prevent harmful increased runoff (exceptions shall occur in special habitat situations (e.g. prairie dog habitat)). **Standard**

Biological Resources

F. Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants

Black-footed Ferret

18. In prairie dog colonies known or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets, limit oil and gas development to one location per 80 acres to help maintain suitable ferret habitat. **Standard**

19. To help provide suitable habitat for black-footed ferrets and their young during the breeding and whelping seasons, prohibit the following activities within prairie dog colonies, or those portions of larger colonies, occupied or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets from March 1 through August 31: construction (e.g. roads, water impoundments, oil and gas facilities); reclamation; gravel mining operations; drilling of water wells; oil and gas drilling. **Standard**

20. To help provide suitable habitat for black-footed ferrets and their young during the breeding and whelping seasons, do not authorize the following activities within prairie dog colonies, or those portions of larger colonies, occupied or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets from March 1 through August 31: construction (e.g. pipelines, utilities, fencing); seismic exploration; permitted recreation events involving large groups of people. **Guideline**

21. Any net loss of suitable black-footed ferret habitat as a result of development of new facilities within colonies shall be replaced within the year. This is based on the amount of suitable habitat available prior to prairie dog dispersal in the year of the development. **Standard**

22. For routine maintenance, access to oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies occupied or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets should be limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs. **Guideline**

Mountain Plover

23. Prescribe burn selected large flats (a section or more in size) to evaluate the effectiveness of burns in attracting and inventorying mountain plover. Prescribed burns should be timed to provide large blackened areas in the spring. **Standard**

27. *Remove this section*

28. To help reduce disturbances and risks to nesting mountain plover, prohibit the following activities in plover nesting areas or within 0.25 miles of plover nests from April 1 through August 15: construction (e.g., roads, water impoundments, oil and gas facilities); reclamation; seismic exploration; gravel mining operations; oil and gas drilling; drilling of water wells; prescribed burning. **Standard**

29. To help reduce disturbances and risks to nesting mountain plover, the following activities should not be authorized in plover nesting areas or within 0.25 miles of plover nests from April 1 through August 15: construction (e.g. pipelines, utilities, fencing); workover operations for maintenance of oil and gas wells; permitted recreation events involving large groups of people; grasshopper spraying. **Guideline**

32. Vegetation management projects in suitable mountain plover habitat will be designed to maintain or improve mountain plover habitat. **Standard**

34. Use the following criteria at the project level to help determine where to use prescribed burning and high livestock grazing intensities (Appendix I) to provide low grassland structure and enhanced mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat: proximity to existing mountain plover nesting areas; proximity to prairie dog colonies; presence of expansive and flat grassland areas. **Guideline**

Burrowing Owls

62. To optimize habitat for burrowing owls, manage for prairie dog colonies that are larger than 80 acres where appropriate and consistent with Geographic Area and Management Area direction. Do not collapse inactive prairie dog burrows where burrowing owls are present. **Guideline**

Black-tailed Prairie Dog

GPA-FW-FWRP-ST-01. Active prairie dog colonies in Category 1 will be managed toward a target of 18,000 acres. When the total area of active prairie dog colonies within Category 1 is less than 18,000 acres, lethal control is prohibited, except in boundary management zones. Active colonies in Category 2 areas will be managed toward a combined target of 9,000 acres. When the total area of active prairie dog colonies in Category 2 areas is less than 9,000 acres, lethal control is prohibited, except in boundary management zones. To work toward acreage targets, a variety of conservation and control tools may be used. **Standard**

GPA-FW-FWRP-GL-02. Translocation of prairie dogs in selected areas may occur only after consultation with appropriate state and federal wildlife agencies and county officials. The use of translocation should be considered to augment prairie dog populations in Categories 1 and 2 when total colony area does not meet Category targets. **Guideline**

63. Recreational shooting of prairie dogs is prohibited in Category 1. Recreational shooting of prairie dogs is prohibited in Category 2 areas when the total area of prairie dog colonies in those areas is less than 9,000 acres. When the total colony area is more than 9,000 acres in Category 2 areas, recreational shooting is prohibited in those areas from February 1 to August 15. **Standard**

GPA-FW-FWRP-GL-03. Plague management tools (e.g., deltamethrin or vaccination) will be used where practical and effective to control plague within prairie dog colonies. **Guideline**

65. *Remove this section*

65b. *Remove this section*

H. Animal Damage Management

1. *Remove this section*

2. From February 1 through September 30, do not use rodenticides to reduce prairie dog populations. **Standard**

GPA-FW-ADM-GL-04. To avoid bait aversion, rodenticide application should not occur for more than 3 consecutive years in a given location. **Guideline**

GPA-FW-ADM-ST-05. The use of anticoagulant rodenticides and fumigants is prohibited. **Standard**

GPA-FW-ADM-GL-06. Control of prairie dogs within 1 mile of residences will be the highest priority for control, and all lethal and non-lethal control tools not otherwise restricted in this plan are available within 1 mile of residences at any time. To ensure effectiveness of treatments, prairie dog control efforts by the Forest Service should be prioritized where the adjacent landowner engages in concurrent control efforts. **Guideline**

3. ¼-mile boundary management zones will be established in Category 1 where the Grassland shares a border with private or state property. 1/8-mile boundary management zones will be established in Category 2 where the Grassland shares a border with private or state property. Within the boundary management zones, control of prairie dogs using rodenticides will be prioritized to reduce impacts to surrounding landowners. All other lethal and non-lethal control tools not otherwise restricted in this plan are also available in the boundary management zones at any time. To ensure effective treatments in boundary management zones, prairie dog control efforts by the Forest Service should be prioritized where the adjacent landowner engages in concurrent control efforts. Colonies within boundary management zones will not count toward acreage targets for Categories 1 and 2. **Standard**

GPA-FW-ADM-GL-07. To minimize impacts to species associated with prairie dog colonies, habitat value for species such as mountain plover, burrowing owl, and swift fox will be considered prior to the use of lethal control in prairie dog colonies outside of boundary management zones. **Guideline**

4. Reduce conflicts with adjacent landowners over prairie dog management through an active landownership adjustment program. **Guideline**

I. Livestock Grazing

3. As needed, or at a minimum annually, adjust management activities to account for the effects of natural processes (e.g., drought, fire, flood, grasshoppers) on forage availability. **Guideline**

Administration

M. Land Ownership

3. Consider the following when opportunities to acquire lands occur (Reference 36 CFR 254):

- Lands with important or unique resources, such as water frontage, wetlands, flood plains and associated riparian ecosystems, cave resources, crucial big-game winter range, threatened or endangered species habitat and habitats needed for recovery, Forest Service sensitive species habitat, important paleontological or geologic sites, important historical, heritage resources or traditional cultural properties, outstanding scenic values, or critical ecosystems when these resources are threatened by change of use, or when management may be enhanced by public ownership.
- Lands that include prairie dog colonies or that present opportunities to allow expansion of colonies that already exist on nearby National Forest System lands are a high priority.
- Important botanical, wildlife, and fishery management areas. This includes lands supporting rare plant communities.
- Lands with important value for outdoor recreation purposes.
- Lands needed to protect resource values by eliminating or reducing fire risks or soil erosion.
- Non-federal lands in mineralized areas that have low potential for future mineralized patents, and where the minerals will be donated to the United States.
- Lands that reduce Forest Service administrative costs and improvement of management efficiency. This includes: reducing miles of landline boundaries and number of corners, special uses, title claims, rights-of-way grants and easements, numbers of allotments and intermingled ownership livestock pastures, and other factors that decrease administrative costs and improve management efficiency.
- Lands that would reduce conflicts between Forest Service, tribal lands, and private landownership objectives, especially when conflicts are adversely impacting National Forest System management. This includes reducing conflicts involving the management of prairie dog colonies along National Forest System lands.
- Lands within or around existing blocks of public ownership of at least 2,000 acres.
- Lands that would correct maladjustments of land use as described in the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act. **Guideline**

Chapter 2

Broken Hills Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

The desired condition in this geographic area is an open, scenic landscape with little evidence of human influence or activity. Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. Natural outbreaks of native insects and diseases will be allowed to proceed without intervention unless there is a substantial threat to high-value resources. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Habitat suitability and effectiveness will be maintained for key wildlife species. Prairie dog colonies will be a key component of the ecosystem.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have high infiltration rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments, such as oil and gas wells and pipelines, will be present but visually subordinate to the landscape in the mid and background. Pastures will be large.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 1.31, Backcountry Recreation Nonmotorized: 6,546 acres
- 2.1, Special Interest Area: 14,585 acres
- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural-Appearing Landscapes: 77,567 acres
- 3.67, Prairie Dog Emphasis Area: 13,355 acres
- 3.68, Big Game Range: 15,571 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 33,020 acres
- 8.4, Mineral Production and Development: 5 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. The landscape is dominated by large pasture size 15 years from plan approval. **Objective**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

1. Contribute to the targets for prairie dog colony acres in Categories 1 and 2 management designations each year during the life of the plan. **Objective**

2. *Remove this section*

3. Develop and maintain complexes of prairie dog colonies in the central part of this geographic area over the life of the plan. This area has been designated as MA 3.67. **Objective**

4. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. Where consistent with other management objectives, maintain or increase average pasture size to allow opportunities to enhance habitat connectivity. **Guideline**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

1. Emphasize an active landownership adjustment program adjacent to the complex, throughout the geographic area in an attempt to reduce private land conflicts over prairie dog management and to enhance long-term management opportunities for expanding prairie dog populations in this area. Landownership adjustments may need to be completed in some locations before implementation of some actions to accelerate prairie dog population growth. **Guideline**

2. A range of 23,616 to 31,488 acres of low structure grasslands is prescribed for this geographic area. Much of this acreage should be located in the northeast portion of the geographic area in areas adjoining existing colonies and where prairie dog colonies are known to have occurred in the recent past. This will accelerate expansion of existing colonies and re-establishment of past colonies that are not along private land boundaries. **Guideline**

Cellers Rosecrans Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, sedges, forbs, and shrubs, including species such as: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*), buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), sixweeks fescue (*Vulpia octoflora*), marsh muhly (*Muhlenbergia racemosa*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*), woolly plantain (*Plantago patagonica*), birdfoot sagebrush (*Artemisia pedatifida)*, and plains pricklypear (*Opuntia polyacantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Prairie dog colonies are a key component of the ecosystem in some areas. Prairie dog colonies fluctuate annually in size and location and exist among a spectrum of grassland ecological sites. These colonies provide habitat for a variety of associated species.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and

willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, and other woody plants.

Management direction in Special Interest Areas will emphasize cultural and zoological resources. In the Cheyenne River Special Interest Area, plant and animal species associated with riparian areas will predominate (see Chapter 3 for specific management direction regarding Special Interest Areas).

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid- and background. Pastures will remain large to the extent feasible.

Unique Attributes

- Host to populations of black-tailed prairie dogs and associated wildlife species.
- Large, consolidated areas of public land.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 2.1, Special Interest Areas: 6,954 acres
- 2.2, Research Natural Areas: 1,215 acres
- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural Appearing Landscapes: 3,009 acres
- 3.67, Prairie Dog Emphasis Area: 31,613 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 79,088 acres
- 6.1, Rangelands with Broad Resource Emphasis: 2 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. The landscape is dominated by large pasture size 15 years from plan approval. **Objective**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

1. Contribute to the targets for prairie dog colony acres in Categories 1 and 2 management designations each year during the life of the plan. **Objective**

2. *Remove this section*

3. Develop and maintain complexes of prairie dog colonies in the central part of this geographic area over the life of the plan. This area has been designated as MA 3.67. **Objective**

4. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. Where consistent with other management objectives, maintain or increase average pasture size to allow opportunities to enhance habitat connectivity. **Guideline**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

1. Emphasize an active landownership adjustment program adjacent to the complex, throughout the geographic area in an attempt to reduce private land conflicts over prairie dog management and to enhance long-term management opportunities for expanding prairie dog populations in this area. Landownership adjustments may need to be completed in some locations before implementation of some actions to accelerate prairie dog population growth. **Guideline**

2. A range of 36,324 to 42,378 acres of low structure grasslands is prescribed for this geographic area. Much of this acreage should be located in the northeast portion of the geographic area in areas adjoining existing colonies and where prairie dog colonies are known to have occurred in the recent past. This will accelerate expansion of existing colonies and re-establishment of past colonies that are not along private land boundaries. **Guideline**

Fairview Clareton Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Grazing will be a significant activity. The area will be managed to provide a rural/agricultural landscape. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have native soil infiltration rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 2.1, Special Interest Areas: 5,669 acres

- 4.32 Dispersed Recreation High Use: 5,652
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 14,195 acres
- 6.1, Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis: 66,179

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Hilight Bill Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Minerals exploration and development and livestock grazing will be significant management activities in this geographic area. In some areas, there may be restrictions on public use to ensure public safety and to avoid unreasonable interference with mineral operations. In those areas where mining is emphasized, reclamation activities will restore the area to a reasonable level of its pre-mining condition. In areas with other management emphases, existing vegetative diversity and structural conditions will be maintained and enhanced. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have native soil infiltration rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

There will be more development and a moderate number of facilities in this geographic area. Facilities and landscape modifications will be visible but reasonably mitigated to blend with natural features. Higher fence densities and intensive mineral development may occur.

Mineral developments and facilities such as coal mines, railroads, oil and gas wells, and pipelines will be present and will often dominate the landscape. When mineral activities are concluded, the disturbed lands will be reclaimed to blend in with adjacent undisturbed areas.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural Appearing Landscapes: 69 acres
- 3.68, Big Game Range: 876 acres
- 6.1, Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis: 51,219 acres
- 8.4, Mineral Production and Development: 45,904 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standard and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Spring Creek Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, and other woody plants.

Areas with heavy recreation use will have picnicking and camping facilities available. Motorized and nonmotorized trails will have signs to distinguish different uses.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid and background. Pastures will remain large to the extent feasible.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural-appearing Landscapes: 12,334 acres
- 4.32, Dispersed Recreation High Use: 1,929 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangeland: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 34,208 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Upton Osage Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. Ecological site descriptions are used to portray ecological processes and dynamics. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions, and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges, rushes, snowberry, rose, willow, cottonwood, and other woody plants.

Areas with heavy recreation use will have picnicking and camping facilities available. Motorized and nonmotorized trails will have signs to distinguish different uses.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid and background. Bentonite mining operations will be present, but will typically be less than 160 acres in size. Some mines may be much larger than 160 acres, but they will not dominate the landscape. When mineral activities are concluded, the disturbed lands will be reclaimed to blend in with adjacent undisturbed areas. Pastures will remain large to the extent feasible.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 3.68, Big Game Range: 14,108 acres
- 4.32, Dispersed Recreation High Use: 18,201 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Directions – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. In an ecological site, vegetation should be managed to maintain a range of plant community phases within the existing state or to move toward a state that will meet desired conditions for that site. The potential for unplanned or unmanaged disturbances should be recognized and accommodated. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Chapter 3

2.1 Special Interest Areas

SIA Descriptions

2.1b – Cheyenne River Zoological SIA

This 5,996-acre site provides for approximately 3,000 acres of prairie dog complex, including occupied mountain plover habitat and potential black-footed ferret habitat. About 6 ¾ miles of the Cheyenne River winds through the area, offering habitat for fish and beaver. Raptors also nest in the area. The river corridor also offers potential habitat for the Ute's lady's tresses and bald eagle winter roost sites. Management emphasis is on protecting and enhancing habitat conditions. Additional Direction:

- Coordinate and consult with the appropriate state wildlife agency to prohibit prairie dog shooting and fur harvest within the SIA. **Standard**
- Restrict motorized travel to locations and time periods when it would not reduce the optimum habitat effectiveness of the area. **Standard**
- Allow oil and gas leasing. Adhere to the stipulations found in Appendix D. **Standard.**
- Prohibit locatable mineral operating plans that would reduce effectiveness of the habitats emphasized. **Standard**
- Prohibit new special-use facilities except for valid existing rights. **Guideline**

- Manage livestock grazing and stocking rates to achieve the most rapid development of mature cottonwood willow riparian area while promoting best habitat conditions for mountain plover breeding, nesting, and brood rearing. **Standard**

3.67 Prairie Dog Emphasis

Theme

Black-tailed prairie dog colony complexes are actively and intensively managed to provide habitat for associated wildlife species.

Desired Conditions

Large prairie dog colony complexes are established and maintained. Prairie dog colonies provide habitat conditions to support a diverse plant and animal community. A mosaic of vegetation composition and structure exists across the landscape, among and outside of prairie dog colonies.

While land uses and resource management activities are conducted in a manner that is compatible with maintaining large prairie dog complexes, colonies are also managed to prevent undesired encroachment onto adjoining lands and to minimize occurrence of sylvatic plague.

Riparian areas and streams are managed for healthy plant communities and water quality. Some restored or improved riparian areas and streams are evident. Trees are uncommon outside of riparian areas.

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. *Remove this section*

2. *Remove this section*

Mineral and Energy Resources

1. *Remove this section*

Livestock Grazing

1. *Remove this section*

Fish and Wildlife

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-GL-08. To develop prairie dog colony complexes, emphasize connectivity of colonies where possible by maintaining colonies within 4.5 miles of one another. At a minimum, two complexes of at least 4,500 acres should be developed or maintained at any given time. **Guideline**

1. *Remove this section*

2. *Remove this section (moved to Chapter 1).*

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-ST-09. Recreational prairie dog shooting is prohibited. **Standard**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-ST-10. Reintroduction of the black-footed ferret will not be precluded in the Management Area. Any effort to reintroduce black-footed ferret would occur in coordination with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. **Standard**

Recreation

1. To help expand and maintain suitable black-footed ferret habitat, coordinate and consult with the state wildlife agency to prohibit prairie dog shooting within black-footed ferret reintroduction habitat.

Standard

6.1 Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis

Desired Conditions

This management area will display low to high levels of livestock grazing developments (such as fences and water developments), oil and gas facilities, and roads.

Livestock will graze most areas annually, but a spectrum of vegetation structure and a high degree of biodiversity will be present. Livestock grazing intensity will vary, however moderate use will prevail over most of the MA. Natural disturbance processes, including grazing and fire, will be used to emulate the natural range of variability of vegetation structure and composition (see matrix objectives in Geographic Area direction). Rest and prescribed fire will be incorporated into the landscape.

Prairie dog colonies will increase in some areas of the MA.

When no substantial threat to high-value resources occurs, natural outbreaks of native insects and disease will be allowed to proceed without intervention.

See Chapters 1 and 2 for further direction.

Appendices

Appendix D: Oil and Gas Stipulations

Wildlife – Timing Limitations

Resource: Mountain Plover (TL)

Stipulation

Surface use is prohibited from April 1 through August 15 within 0.25 miles (line of sight) of a mountain plover nest or nest aggregation areas.

Objective (Justification)

For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 28. The objective is to prevent reduced reproductive success.

Application Methodology

This stipulation applies to mountain plover nests and nest aggregation areas. This stipulation applies to drilling, testing, new construction projects, and to workover operations. This does not apply to emergency repairs.

Waivers

This stipulation may be waived if the authorized officer determines conditions have changed and there are no nests or nest aggregation areas within the leasehold or within the stipulated distance from the leasehold.

Exceptions
The authorizing officer may grant an exception to this stipulation if the operator submits a plan that demonstrates impacts from the proposed action are acceptable or can be adequately mitigated. An exception may be granted if the nest or nest aggregation area has not been used by June 25 of the current year.

Modifications
The boundaries of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that portions of the area do not include mountain plover nests and nesting areas.

Resource: Black-footed Ferret (TL)

Stipulation
Surface use is prohibited from March 1 through August 31 within 0.125 mile (line of sight) of prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction,

Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 19. The objective is to protect ferrets when breeding and rearing young.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets. The spatial buffer extends out from the outer boundary of a prairie dog colony occupied by black-footed ferrets. This stipulation applies to drilling and testing and new construction projects, not to operation or maintenance of production facilities.

Waivers
The authorized officer may grant a waiver if ferret surveys, following protocol approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, indicate a low probability that ferrets occur in prairie dog colonies located in the leasehold or if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determines that black-footed ferrets do not occur in the area.

Exceptions
The authorizing officer may grant an exception to this stipulation if the operator submits a plan that demonstrates impacts from the proposed action are acceptable or can be adequately mitigated. An exception may be granted if surveys indicate a low probability that ferrets occur in a prairie dog colony where drilling, testing or new construction is proposed.

Modifications
The boundaries of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that black-footed ferrets do not occur in portions of the area.

Wildlife – Controlled Service Use (CSU)

Resource: Black-footed Ferret (CSU)

Stipulation
Operations in prairie dog colonies known to be occupied by black-footed ferrets are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80 acres.
- Replacement of prairie dog colonies lost as a result of new facilities will be evaluated as needed to meet colony acreage targets for Management Area 3.67.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies is limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs.
- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 18, 22, and 66, and Management Area 3.67 direction. The objective is to protect against activities that could result in adverse impacts on black-footed ferrets or ferret recovery objectives.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets.

Waivers
The authorized officer may waive this stipulation if black-footed ferrets are released under an experimental non-essential population status; this stipulation may be waived for areas inside the experimental population area but outside Management Area 3.67.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception is unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification is unlikely.

Resource: Mountain Plover Habitat (CSU)

Stipulation
Operations in mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80a cares.
- Suitable mountain plover habitat lost as a result of new facilities must be replaced within 1 year.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat will be between 9 am and 5 pm. This does not apply to emergency repairs.
- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, numbers 26, 27, 30, and 69. The objective is to prevent reductions in reproductive success.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to identified nesting and brooding habitat. Multiple facilities concentrated at a site are allowed.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver would be unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception would be unlikely.

Modifications
The boundary of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that portions of the area do not contain active prairie-dog colonies.

MA 2.1 Special Interest Areas – Zoological Controlled Surface Use (CSU)

Resource: Cheyenne River Zoological Area (CSU)

Stipulation
Operations may be moved or modified if it is determined that the proposed action will have adverse effects on prairie dog colonies, species associated with prairie colonies, or riparian communities in the Cheyenne River corridor.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Management Area Direction MA 2.1 Cheyenne River Special Interest Area. The objective is to protect against activities that will adversely impact biotic communities in the Special Interest Area.

Application Methodology
Use this stipulation in MA 2.1 SIA, Cheyenne River Zoological.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver would be unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception would be unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification would be unlikely.

MA 3.67 Prairie Dog Emphasis Controlled Surface Use (CSU)

Resource: Rangelands with Short-stature Vegetation and Prairie Dog Colony Associated Species (CSU)

Stipulation
To preserve habitat for prairie dogs and wildlife species associated with prairie dog colonies (Management Area 3.67), operations in all prairie dog colonies are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80 acres.
- Replacement of prairie dog colonies lost as a result of new facilities will be evaluated as needed to meet colony acreage targets for Category 1.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies is limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs.
- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Management Area Direction, MA 3.67, and the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 18, 22, and 66. The objective is to protect against activities that will adversely impact areas containing short-stature vegetation and species associated with prairie dog colonies.

Application Methodology
Use this stipulation in MA 3.67.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver is unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception is unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification is unlikely.

Appendix G: Glossary

- **Boundary Management Zone** – An area of National Forest System lands that adjoins non-National Forest System lands in which prairie dog colonies may be controlled at all times to prevent colony encroachment onto the adjoining lands.
- **Ecological site** – A distinctive kind of land with specific soil and physical characteristics that differs from other kinds of land in its ability to produce a distinctive kind and amount of vegetation and its response to management actions and natural disturbances.
- **Encroachment, Prairie Dog** – The expansion of a prairie dog colony from National Forest System lands onto non-National Forest System lands.
- **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** – A process for evaluating and selecting a program from available techniques to reduce pest populations in an ecologically, economically, and socially acceptable manner. Programs may include one or a combination of available techniques: for example, the use of pesticides, cultural or silvicultural treatments, biological control agents, host resistance, genetic control, mechanical destruction or trapping, and behavioral chemicals, including attractants and repellants.
- **Prairie Dog Colony** – An area containing active prairie dog burrows that is clearly distinguishable from surrounding areas by a space that does not contain burrows, as delineated by the mapping and monitoring protocol.
- **Prairie Dog Colony Complex** – A group of two or more prairie dog colonies in which each colony is less than 4.5 miles (7km) of another colony, such that individual prairie dogs can commonly disperse between colonies.
- **Prairie Dog Colony Conservation Tools** – Actions used to promote the growth or prevent the shrinking of prairie dog colonies. Tools may include, but are not limited to: translocation of prairie dog coteries; plague control tools, such as deltamethrin or sylvatic plague vaccine; prohibitions on recreational shooting; and vegetation management, including prescribed fire.
- **Prairie Dog Colony Control -** A management action or set of management actions implemented with the intent to decrease the size or density of a prairie dog colony or to remove a prairie dog colony from an area.

- **Prairie Dog Colony Control Tools** – Actions used to carry out prairie dog colony control. Tools may include, but are not limited to: rodenticides registered for use under state law, including some forms of zinc phosphide; vegetation barriers; translocation of prairie dog coteries, and mechanical treatment such as blading and collapsing burrows. In this plan, recreational shooting is not considered a control tool.
- **Prairie Dog Density Control** – A management action or set of management actions implemented with the intent to reduce the number of live prairie dogs within a prairie dog colony or some portion of a colony without reducing the total area of the colony. Such management actions would occur most often via the use of rodenticides but other control tools may be used.
- **Prairie Dog Lethal Control** – The use of rodenticides to manage a prairie dog colony.

Appendix N

- *Rescind this section*

Alternative 5–Preferred Alternative

Chapter 1: Goals and Objectives

Goal 4.b: Effective Public Service: Provide appropriate access to NFS lands and USDA Forest Service Programs.

Public and Organizational Relations

Objective:
2. Meet annually with Federal, State, and county agencies and governments, individuals, and non-governmental organizations to determine priorities and approaches for control of noxious weeds and invasive species and for seeking collaborative solutions to prairie dog management.

Chapter 1: Standards and Guidelines

Physical Resources

B. Water

2. Manage land treatments to maintain enough organic ground cover in each land unit to prevent harmful increased runoff (exceptions shall occur in special habitat situations (e.g. prairie dog habitat)). **Guideline**

Biological Resources

F. Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants

Black-footed Ferret

18. In prairie dog colonies known or thought to be occupied by black-footed ferrets, limit oil and gas development to one location per 80 acres to help maintain suitable ferret habitat. **Standard**

19. To help provide suitable habitat for black-footed ferrets and their young during the breeding and whelping seasons, prohibit the following activities between March 1 and August 31 within prairie dog colonies, or those portions of larger colonies, occupied by black-footed ferrets: construction of roads, water impoundments, and oil and gas facilities; reclamation; gravel mining operations; drilling of water wells; oil and gas drilling. **Standard**

20. To help provide suitable habitat for black-footed ferrets and their young during the breeding and whelping seasons, the following activities should not be authorized between March 1 and August 31 within prairie dog colonies, or those portions of larger colonies, occupied by black-footed ferrets: construction of pipelines, utilities, and fences; seismic exploration; permitted recreation events involving large groups of people. **Guideline**

21. *Remove this section*

22. For routine maintenance, access to oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets should be limited to daylight hours to minimize impacts to ferrets. This does not apply to emergency repairs. **Guideline**

Mountain Plover

23. *Remove this section*

27. *Remove this section*

28. To help reduce disturbances and risks to nesting mountain plover, prohibit the following activities in plover nesting areas or within 0.25 miles of plover nests between April 1 and August 15: construction of roads, water impoundments, and oil and gas facilities; reclamation; seismic exploration; gravel mining operations; oil and gas drilling; drilling of water wells; prescribed burning. **Standard**

29. To help reduce disturbances and risks to nesting mountain plover, the following activities should not be authorized in plover nesting areas or within 0.25 miles of plover nests between April 1 and August 15: construction of pipelines, utilities, and fencing; workover operations for maintenance of oil and gas wells; permitted recreation events involving large groups of people; grasshopper spraying. **Guideline**

32. *Remove this section*

34. To improve or maintain mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat, vegetation management techniques that enhance short-stature vegetation communities should be considered for use in projects that occur in identified mountain plover habitat. **Guideline**

Burrowing Owls

62. To optimize habitat for burrowing owls, manage for prairie dog colonies that are larger than 80 acres where appropriate and consistent with geographic area and management area direction. Do not collapse prairie dog burrows from April 15 through August 31 or where burrowing owls are present at time of implementation. **Guideline**

Black-tailed Prairie Dog

GPA-FW-FWRP-GL-01. To ensure use of best practices and comply with applicable Federal and State law and policy, translocation of prairie dogs in selected areas may occur only after coordination with appropriate Federal and State wildlife agencies, county officials, grazing associations, and non-governmental organizations. **Guideline**

63. *Remove this section*

GPA-FW-FWRP-GL-02. An integrated approach to plague management (e.g., using tools such as deltamethrin and fipronil) may be implemented to mitigate the transmission of sylvatic plague. **Guideline**

65. *Remove this section*

65b. *Remove this section*

H. Animal Damage Management

1. Outside of Management Area 3.67, authorize use of prairie dog control only in these situations:
   - Public health and safety risks occur in the immediate area, including any prairie dog colony within 1 mile of a residence.
   - On site-specific colonies where damage to private and public facilities such as cemeteries, dams, ditches, and buildings is occurring.

- On site-specific colonies where unwanted encroachment onto adjacent non-Federal lands is occurring.
- On other site-specific colonies where control is requested, after consideration of impacts to nesting, breeding, and denning habitat for species associated with prairie dog colonies.

Standard

2. From February 1 through September 30, do not use rodenticides to reduce prairie dog populations. **Standard**

GPA-FW-ADM-GL-03. To avoid bait aversion, application of a specific grain-bait rodenticide should not occur for more than 3 consecutive years in a specific location. **Guideline**

GPA-FW-ADM-ST-04. The use of anticoagulant rodenticides is prohibited. **Standard**

GPA-FW-ADM-ST-05. Fumigants may be used only in boundary management zones, 1-mile buffers around residences, and within ¼ mile of non-Federal land. Fumigants may be used only after 2 consecutive applications of zinc phosphide at that site in the 2 years prior to use of fumigants. **Standard**

GPA-FW-ADM-ST-06. Requests for control of prairie dogs within 1 mile of residences will be the highest priority for control, and all prairie dog control tools not otherwise restricted in this plan are available within 1 mile of residences at any time. **Standard**

3. Before implementing prairie dog control, the responsible official should consider whether adjacent landowners are engaging in concurrent control efforts to ensure effective treatments. **Guideline**

4. Reduce conflicts with adjacent landowners over prairie dog management through an active landownership adjustment program. **Guideline**

I. Livestock Grazing

3. To prevent or minimize impacts to biotic integrity, soil and site stability, hydrologic function, and forage availability, adjust management activities to account for the effects of natural processes (e.g., drought, fire, flood, grasshoppers, prairie dogs, etc.). **Guideline**

Administration

M. Land Ownership

3. Consider the following when opportunities to acquire lands occur to ensure consistency with local and regional priorities (Reference 36 CFR 254):

- Lands with important or unique resources, such as water frontage, wetlands, flood plains and associated riparian ecosystems, cave resources, crucial big-game winter range, threatened or endangered species habitat and habitats needed for recovery, Forest Service sensitive species habitat, important paleontological or geologic sites, important historical, heritage resources or traditional cultural properties, outstanding scenic values, or critical ecosystems when these resources are threatened by change of use, or when management may be enhanced by public ownership.
- Important botanical, wildlife, and fishery management areas. This includes lands supporting rare plant communities.
- Lands with important value for outdoor recreation purposes.

- Lands needed to protect resource values by eliminating or reducing fire risks or soil erosion.
- Non-federal lands in mineralized areas that have low potential for future mineralized patents, and where the minerals will be donated to the United States.
- Lands that reduce Forest Service administrative costs and improvement of management efficiency. This includes: reducing miles of landline boundaries and number of corners, special uses, title claims, rights-of-way grants and easements, numbers of allotments and intermingled ownership livestock pastures, and other factors that decrease administrative costs and improve management efficiency.
- Lands that would reduce conflicts between Forest Service, tribal lands, and private landownership objectives, especially when conflicts are adversely impacting National Forest System management. This includes reducing conflicts involving the management of prairie dog colonies along National Forest System lands.
- Lands within or around existing blocks of public ownership of at least 2,000 acres.
- Lands that would correct maladjustments of land use as described in the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act. **Guideline**

Chapter 2

Broken Hills Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

The desired condition in this geographic area is an open, scenic landscape. Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. Natural outbreaks of native insects and diseases will be allowed to proceed without intervention unless there is a substantial threat to high-value resources. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, sedges, forbs, and shrubs, including species such as: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*), buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), sixweeks fescue (*Vulpia octoflora*), marsh muhly (*Muhlenbergia racemosa*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*), woolly plantain (*Plantago patagonica*), birdfoot sagebrush (*Artemisia pedatifida)*, and plains pricklypear (*Opuntia polyacantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Habitat suitability and effectiveness will be maintained for key wildlife species. Prairie dog colonies are a key component of the ecosystem in some areas. Prairie dog colonies fluctuate in size and location and exist among a spectrum of grassland ecological sites. These colonies provide habitat for a variety of associated species.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges (*Carex* spp.), rushes (*Juncus* spp.), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* spp.), rose (*Rosa* spp.), willow (*Salix*

spp.), cottonwood (*Populus* spp.), as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have native soil infiltration rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments, such as oil and gas wells and pipelines, will be present but visually subordinate to the landscape in the mid and background. Pastures will typically be large.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 1.31, Backcountry Recreation Nonmotorized: 6,546 acres
- 2.1, Special Interest Area: 15,054 acres
- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural-Appearing Landscapes: 77,260 acres
- 3.67, Short-Stature Vegetation Emphasis: 14,478 acres
- 3.68, Big Game Range: 14,285 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 33,020 acres
- 8.4, Mineral Production and Development: 5 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. Increase pasture size as opportunities arise over the next 15 years, unless smaller pasture sizes would meet or make progress toward desired conditions for resources such as vegetation, wildlife habitat, and scenery. **Objective**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

1. Contribute to achieving the objective of 10,000 acres of prairie dog colonies in Management Area 3.67 each year during the life of the plan. **Objective**

2. *Remove this section*

3. *Remove this section*

4. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. To maintain or move toward desired vegetation communities, ecological site descriptions should be used to inform site-specific project and activity decisions related to soil and vegetation management, including suitability of land uses, vegetation management and restoration activities, and grazing management. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. Maintain or increase average pasture size to allow opportunities to enhance habitat management and connectivity, unless smaller pastures would contribute to meeting desired conditions for the geographic or management area. **Guideline**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

1. Emphasize an active landownership adjustment program throughout the geographic area to reduce private land conflicts over prairie dog management and to enhance long-term management opportunities in this area. **Guideline**

2. *Remove this section*

Cellers Rosecrans Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, sedges, forbs, and shrubs, including species such as: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*), buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), sixweeks fescue (*Vulpia octoflora*), marsh muhly (*Muhlenbergia racemosa*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*), woolly plantain (*Plantago patagonica*), birdfoot sagebrush (*Artemisia pedatifida)*, and plains pricklypear (*Opuntia polyacantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Prairie dog colonies are a key component of the ecosystem in some areas. Prairie dog colonies fluctuate annually in size and location and exist among a spectrum of grassland ecological sites. These colonies provide habitat for a variety of associated species.

Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges (*Carex* spp.), rushes (*Juncus* spp.), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* spp.), rose (*Rosa* spp.), willow (*Salix* spp.), cottonwood (*Populus* spp.), as well as other woody plants.

Management direction in Special Interest Areas will emphasize cultural and zoological resources. In the Cheyenne River-Antelope Creek Zoological Special Interest Area, plant and animal species associated with riparian areas will predominate (see Chapter 3 for specific management direction regarding Special Interest Areas).

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid- and background. Pastures will typically be large.

Unique Attributes

- Host to populations of black-tailed prairie dogs and associated wildlife species.
- Large, consolidated areas of public land.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 2.1, Special Interest Areas: 5,850 acres
- 2.2, Research Natural Areas: 1,215 acres
- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural Appearing Landscapes: 2,526 acres
- 3.67, Short-Stature Vegetation Emphasis: 27,857 acres
- 3.68, Big Game Range: 17 acres
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 84,413 acres
- 6.1, Rangelands with Broad Resource Emphasis: 2 acres Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. Increase pasture size as opportunities arise over the next 15 years, unless smaller pasture sizes would meet or make progress toward desired conditions for resources such as vegetation, wildlife habitat, and scenery. **Objective**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

1. Contribute to achieving the objective of 10,000 acres of prairie dog colonies in Management Area 3.67 each year during the life of the plan. **Objective**

2. *Remove this section*

3. *Remove this section*

4. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. To maintain or move toward desired vegetation communities, ecological site descriptions should be used to inform site-specific project and activity decisions related to soil and vegetation management, including suitability of land uses, vegetation management and restoration activities, and grazing management. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Infrastructure

1. Maintain or increase average pasture size to allow opportunities to enhance habitat management and connectivity, unless smaller pastures would contribute to meeting desired conditions for the geographic or management area. **Guideline**

Wildlife

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (MIS)

1. Emphasize an active landownership adjustment program throughout the geographic area to reduce private land conflicts over prairie dog management and to enhance long-term management opportunities in this area. **Guideline**

2. *Remove this section*

Fairview Clareton Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Grazing will be a significant activity. The area will be managed to provide a rural/agricultural landscape. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges (*Carex* spp.), rushes (*Juncus* spp.), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* spp.), rose (*Rosa* spp.), willow (*Salix* spp.), cottonwood (*Populus* spp.), as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have native soil infiltration. rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 2.1, Special Interest Areas: 5,669 acres
- 4.32 Dispersed Recreation High Use: 5,652
- 5.12, General Forest and Rangelands: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 14,195 acres
- 6.1, Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis: 66,179

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. To maintain or move toward desired vegetation communities, ecological site descriptions should be used to inform site-specific project and activity decisions related to soil and vegetation management, including suitability of land uses, vegetation management and restoration activities, and grazing management. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Hilight Bill Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Minerals exploration and development and livestock grazing will be significant management activities in this geographic area. In some areas, there may be restrictions on public use to ensure public safety and to avoid unreasonable interference with mineral operations. In those areas where mining is emphasized, reclamation activities will restore the area to a reasonable level of its pre-mining condition. In areas with other management emphases, existing vegetative diversity and structural conditions will be maintained and enhanced. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

The streams and riparian areas will be in proper functioning condition or moving towards proper functioning condition (BLM 1993). Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Desired riparian species include sedges (*Carex* spp.), rushes (*Juncus* spp.), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* spp.), rose (*Rosa* spp.), willow (*Salix* spp.), cottonwood (*Populus* spp.), as well as other woody plants. Soils in this geographic area will have native soil infiltration rates and low soil compaction, resulting in minimal overland flow events.

There will be more development and a moderate number of facilities in this geographic area. Facilities and landscape modifications will be visible but reasonably mitigated to blend with natural features. Higher fence densities and intensive mineral development may occur.

Mineral developments and facilities such as coal mines, railroads, oil and gas wells, and pipelines will be present and will often dominate the landscape. When mineral activities are concluded, the disturbed lands will be reclaimed to blend in with adjacent undisturbed areas.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural Appearing Landscapes: 69 acres
- 3.68, Big Game Range: 876 acres
- 6.1, Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis: 51,219 acres
- 8.4, Mineral Production and Development: 45,904 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standard and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. To maintain or move toward desired vegetation communities, ecological site descriptions should be used to inform site-specific project and activity decisions related to soil and vegetation management, including suitability of land uses, vegetation management and restoration activities, and grazing management. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Spring Creek Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions will exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges (*Carex* spp.), rushes (*Juncus* spp.), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* spp.), rose (*Rosa* spp.), willow (*Salix* spp.), cottonwood (*Populus* spp.), and other woody plants.

Areas with heavy recreation use will have picnicking and camping facilities available. Motorized and nonmotorized trails will have signs to distinguish different uses.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid and background. Pastures will remain large to the extent feasible.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 3.65, Rangelands with Diverse Natural-appearing Landscapes: 12,334 acres
- 4.32, Dispersed Recreation High Use: 1,929 acres

- 5.12, General Forest and Rangeland: Range Vegetation Emphasis: 34,208 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Direction – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. To maintain or move toward desired vegetation communities, ecological site descriptions should be used to inform site-specific project and activity decisions related to soil and vegetation management, including suitability of land uses, vegetation management and restoration activities, and grazing management. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Upton Osage Geographic Area

Desired Conditions

Insects, diseases, wildfire, and grazing patterns will create plant communities with diverse composition and structure. This area will have a healthy and diverse mix of grasses, including the following species: western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*).

Vegetation communities will exist in a variety of states or plant community phases designed to meet multiple desired conditions across management areas. A mosaic of habitats and forage conditions exist on the landscape as a result of planned vegetation management and natural disturbances.

Management activities will maintain or enhance hardwood and coniferous trees, woody shrub inclusions, and other beneficial plant communities and increase vegetative diversity. Tree densities within stands will vary to create landscape-scale diversity. Fire will be used in some areas to promote open park-like timber stands. Late successional-stage vegetation may be found in the area.

Riparian areas/woody draws will be managed to maintain or enhance different age classes of herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees. Some areas will be managed to achieve rapid development of cottonwood and willow riparian habitats. Desired riparian species include sedges (*Carex spp*.), rushes (*Juncus spp*.), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos spp*.), rose (*Rosa spp*.), willow (*Salix spp*.), cottonwood (*Populus spp*.), and other woody plants.

Areas with heavy recreation use will have picnicking and camping facilities available. Motorized and nonmotorized trails will have signs to distinguish different uses.

Primitive conditions with minimal facility development will be emphasized. Mineral developments such as oil and gas wells and pipelines will be present but visually subordinate in the mid and background. Bentonite mining operations will be present, but will typically be less than 160 acres in size. Some mines may be much larger than 160 acres, but they will not dominate the landscape. When mineral activities are concluded, the disturbed lands will be reclaimed to blend in with adjacent undisturbed areas. Pastures will remain large to the extent feasible.

Management Area Prescription Allocation

- 3.68, Big Game Range: 14,108 acres
- 4.32, Dispersed Recreation High Use: 18,201 acres

Geographic Area Direction – Objectives

Vegetation

1. *Remove this section*

Geographic Area Directions – Standards and Guidelines

Vegetation

2. To maintain or move toward desired vegetation communities, ecological site descriptions should be used to inform site-specific project and activity decisions related to soil and vegetation management, including suitability of land uses, vegetation management and restoration activities, and grazing management. **Guideline**

3. *Remove this section*

Chapter 3

2.1 Special Interest Areas

SIA Descriptions

2.1b – Cheyenne River-Antelope Creek Zoological SIA

This 5,361-acre site provides for a diverse biotic riparian community along the Cheyenne River and Antelope Creek. Channels and adjacent tree galleries offer habitat for wildlife species and rare plants. Management emphasis is on protecting and enhancing habitat conditions.

Additional Direction:

- Restrict motorized travel to locations and time periods when it would not reduce the optimum habitat effectiveness of the area. **Standard**
- Allow oil and gas leasing. Adhere to the stipulations found in Appendix D. **Standard**
- Prohibit locatable mineral operating plans that would reduce effectiveness of the habitats emphasized. **Standard**
- Prohibit new special-use facilities except for valid existing rights to minimize impacts to riparian habitats. **Guideline**
- Manage livestock grazing to promote development of mature cottonwood willow riparian areas and other desired habitat conditions. **Standard**

3.67 Short-Stature Vegetation Emphasis

Theme

This area is managed to provide a mosaic of high-, mid-, and low-structure vegetation communities, with an emphasis on distribution of low-structure (i.e., short-stature) vegetation and habitat for associated wildlife species.

Desired Conditions

Vegetation communities are managed to provide for a mosaic of native plant communities, with an emphasis on short-stature herbaceous communities. In greater sage-grouse priority habitat management areas where greater sage-grouse habitat exists, desired conditions for priority habitat management areas apply.

Noxious and invasive plant species are controlled to the extent possible, and vegetation is maintained at a level that promotes native grass and forb species. Reseeding of areas and reclamation may be evident.

Short-statured plant communities may contain: grasses such as blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), buffalograss (*Bouteloua dactyloides*), western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), sixweeks fescue (*Vulpia octoflora*), and marsh muhly (*Muhlenbergia racemosa*); sedges (*Carex* spp.); forbs such as scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*) and woolly plantain (*Plantago patagonica*); and prostrate shrub species such as birdfoot sagebrush (*Artemisia pedatifida*) and plains pricklypear (*Opuntia polyacantha*).

Riparian areas and streams are managed for healthy plant communities and water quality. Some restored or improved riparian areas and streams are evident. Trees are uncommon outside of riparian areas.

Prairie dog colonies are present and vary in size and density. Colonies provide habitat and landscape-scale connectivity for species associated with prairie dog colonies such as mountain plover, burrowing owl, other grassland birds, and swift fox. Plant community composition varies over time on colonies, and colonies may exhibit characteristics of short stature vegetation and bare ground communities. Colonies are also managed to prevent undesired encroachment onto adjoining lands and to minimize occurrence of sylvatic plague.

Livestock and prairie dogs utilize forage in most areas annually, but some areas receive little to no use. Forage is available for both wildlife and livestock, and livestock and prairie dogs often occupy the same areas.

Objectives

Fish and Wildlife

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-O-07. Manage toward 10,000 acres of prairie dog colonies in the management area each year during the life of the plan. In drought years, temporarily manage toward and objective of 7,500 acres of prairie dog colonies. **Objective**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-O-08. Develop a plague management plan within 3 years of 2020 plan amendment approval. **Objective**

Standards and Guidelines

General

1. *Remove this section*

2. *Remove this section*

Mineral and Energy Resources

1. *Remove this section*

Livestock Grazing

1. *Remove this section*

Fish and Wildlife

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-GL-09. When prairie dog colony acreage is less than 10,000 acres, manage to allow or facilitate prairie dog colony growth to provide habitat requirements for species associated with prairie dog colonies. **Guideline**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-ST-10. Do not authorize use of control tools when prairie dog colony acreage is less than 7,500 acres, except in boundary management zones or if approved for density control based on best available scientific information. **Standard**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-GL-11. When prairie dog colony acreage is greater than 10,000 acres, use prairie dog control tools to maintain the 10,000 acre objective to minimize resource management conflicts. **Guideline**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-GL-12. During drought, to mitigate prairie dog colony expansion, the total colony acreage in the management area may be managed toward a temporary alternate objective of 7,500 acres. Drought is defined as any year or sequence of years when annual precipitation amounts are less than 75 percent of normal, based on local climate data and in consultation with the United States Drought Monitor. **Guideline**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-ST-13. Boundary management zones generally extend ¼ mile into the management area from private and state property boundaries. In boundary management zones, control of prairie dogs using rodenticides will be prioritized to reduce impacts to surrounding landowners. All other prairie dog control tools not otherwise restricted in this plan are also available in the boundary management zones at any time. Any part of a colony within a boundary management zone will not count toward the objective of 10,000 acres. **Standard**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-GL-14. A temporary (i.e., 1 to 3 year) ¾-mile boundary management zone that includes the standard ¼-mile boundary management zone may be used at specific locations within Management Area 3.67 to address persistent or imminent prairie dog encroachment if (a) the Forest Service determines that prairie dogs on Federal land are moving toward the boundary management zone and are a potential boundary problem or (b) control efforts within ¼-mile of private or state property using appropriate tools for 3 consecutive years have not been successful. Before expanding a boundary management zone, the responsible official should consider the total area of prairie dog colonies relative to the 10,000 acre objective for prairie dog colonies, impacts to species associated with prairie dog colonies, compliance with other plan components, site-specific information, and concurrent treatment by the adjacent landowner. **Guideline**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-ST-15. Do not authorize prairie dog density control activities when total colony acreage is less than 7,500 acres, unless best available scientific information indicates that density control activities will achieve site-specific objectives and maintain habitat requirements for species associated with prairie dog colonies. Colonies treated for density control will continue to count toward the 10,000 acre objective for prairie dog colonies. **Standard**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-GL-16. To ensure conservation of habitat requirements for species associated with prairie dog colonies, density control of prairie dog colonies should not occur in more than 50 percent of any colony, by acres, in any year. Density control should occur no more than every other year. **Guideline**

1. *Remove this section*

2. *Remove this section (moved to Chapter 1)*

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-ST-17. Recreational prairie dog shooting is prohibited from February 1 to August 15. **Standard**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-ST-18. An integrated approach to plague management (e.g., using tools such as deltamethrin and fipronil) will be implemented annually. **Standard**

GPA-MA3.67-FWRP-ST-19. Any effort to reintroduce black-footed ferret shall occur in coordination with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. **Standard**

Recreation

1. *Remove this section*

6.1 Rangeland with Broad Resource Emphasis

Desired Conditions

This management area will display low to high levels of livestock grazing developments (such as fences and water developments), oil and gas facilities, and roads.

Livestock will graze most areas annually, but a spectrum of vegetation structure and a high degree of biodiversity will be present. Livestock grazing intensity will vary, however moderate use will prevail over most of the MA. Natural disturbance processes, including grazing and fire, will be used to emulate the natural range of variability of vegetation structure and composition (see matrix objectives in Geographic Area direction). Rest and prescribed fire will be incorporated into the landscape.

When no substantial threat to high-value resources occurs, natural outbreaks of native insects and disease will be allowed to proceed without intervention.

See Chapters 1 and 2 for further direction.

Appendices

Appendix D: Oil and Gas Stipulations

Wildlife – Timing Limitations

Resource: Mountain Plover (TL)

Stipulation
Surface use is prohibited from April 1 through August 15 within 0.25 miles (line of sight) of a mountain plover nest or nest aggregation areas.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 28. The objective is to prevent reduced reproductive success.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to mountain plover nests and nest aggregation areas. This stipulation applies to drilling, testing, new construction projects, and to workover operations. This does not apply to emergency repairs.

Waivers
This stipulation may be waived if the authorized officer determines conditions have changed and there are no nests or nest aggregation areas within the leasehold or within the stipulated distance from the leasehold.

Exceptions
The authorizing officer may grant an exception to this stipulation if the operator submits a plan that demonstrates impacts from the proposed action are acceptable or can be adequately mitigated. An exception may be granted if the nest or nest aggregation area has not been used by June 25 of the current year.

Modifications
The boundaries of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that portions of the area do not include mountain plover nests and nesting areas.

Resource: Black-footed Ferret (TL)

Stipulation
Surface use is prohibited from March 1 through August 31 within 0.125 mile (line of sight) of prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 19. The objective is to protect ferrets when breeding and rearing young.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets. The spatial buffer extends out from the outer boundary of a prairie dog colony occupied by black-footed ferrets. This stipulation applies to drilling and testing and new construction projects, not to operation or maintenance of production facilities.

Waivers
The authorized officer may grant a waiver if ferret surveys, following protocol approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, indicate a low probability that ferrets occur in prairie dog colonies located in the leasehold or if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determines that black-footed ferrets do not occur in the area.

Exceptions
The authorizing officer may grant an exception to this stipulation if the operator submits a plan that demonstrates impacts from the proposed action are acceptable or can be adequately mitigated. An exception may be granted if surveys indicate a low probability that ferrets occur in a prairie dog colony where drilling, testing or new construction is proposed.

Modifications
The boundaries of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that black-footed ferrets do not occur in portions of the area.

Wildlife – Controlled Service Use (CSU)

Resource: Black-footed Ferret (CSU)

Stipulation
Operations in prairie dog colonies known to be occupied by black-footed ferrets are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80 acres.
- Replacement of prairie dog colonies lost as a result of new facilities will be evaluated as needed to meet the acreage objective for prairie dog colonies for Management Area 3.67.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies is limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs.
- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 18, 22, and 66, and Management Area 3.67 direction. The objective is to protect against activities that could result in adverse impacts on black-footed ferrets or ferret recovery objectives.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to prairie dog colonies occupied by black-footed ferrets.

Waivers
The authorized officer may waive this stipulation if black-footed ferrets are released under an experimental non-essential population status; this stipulation may be waived for areas inside the experimental population area but outside Management Area 3.67.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception is unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification is unlikely.

Resource: Mountain Plover Habitat (CSU)

Stipulation
Operations in mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80 acres.
- Replacement of prairie dog colonies lost as a result of new facilities will be evaluated as needed to meet the acreage objective for prairie dog colonies for Management Area 3.67.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in mountain plover nesting and brooding habitat will be between 9 am and 5 pm. This does not apply to emergency repairs.
- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, numbers 26, 30, and 66, and Management Area 3.67 direction. The objective is to prevent reductions in reproductive success.

Application Methodology
This stipulation applies to identified nesting and brooding habitat. Multiple facilities concentrated at a site are allowed.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver would be unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception would be unlikely.

Modifications
The boundary of the stipulated area may be modified if the authorizing officer determines that portions of the area do not contain prairie-dog colonies.

MA 2.1 Special Interest Areas – Zoological Controlled Surface Use (CSU)

Resource: Cheyenne River-Antelope Creek Zoological Area (CSU)

Stipulation
Operations may be moved or modified if it is determined that the proposed action will have adverse effects on riparian wildlife and plant communities.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Management Area Direction MA 2.1 Cheyenne River-Antelope Creek Zoological Special Interest Area. The objective is to protect against activities that will adversely impact the riparian ecosystem in the Special Interest Area.

Application Methodology
Use this stipulation in MA 2.1 SIA, Cheyenne River-Antelope Creek Zoological Special Interest Area.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver would be unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception would be unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification would be unlikely.

MA 3.67 Short-Stature Vegetation Emphasis Controlled Surface Use (CSU)

Resource: Short-stature Vegetation and Prairie Dog Colony Associated Species (CSU)

Stipulation
To preserve habitat for wildlife species associated with prairie dog colonies (Management Area 3.67), operations in all prairie dog colonies are subject to the following constraints:

- Limit oil and gas development to no more than one location per 80 acres.
- Replacement of prairie dog colonies lost as a result of new facilities will be evaluated as needed to meet the acreage objective for prairie dog colonies for the Management Area.
- Access for routine maintenance of oil and gas facilities in prairie dog colonies is limited to daylight hours. This does not apply to emergency repairs.
- If it's necessary to place a new road in a prairie dog colony, align the road to minimize habitat loss.

Objective (Justification)
For justification refer to the Land and Resource Management Plan Management Area Direction, MA 3.67, and the Land and Resource Management Plan Grassland-wide Direction, Fish, Wildlife, and Rare Plants, number 18, 22, and 66. The objective is to protect against activities that will adversely impact areas containing short-stature vegetation and species associated with prairie dog colonies.

Application Methodology
Use this stipulation in MA 3.67.

Waivers
No conditions for a waiver are anticipated, and approval of a waiver is unlikely.

Exceptions
No conditions for an exception are anticipated, and approval of an exception is unlikely.

Modifications
No conditions for a modification are anticipated, and approval of a modification is unlikely.

Appendix G: Glossary

- **Boundary Management Zone** – A defined area of National Forest System lands that adjoins non-National Forest System lands in which prairie dog colonies may be controlled at all times to prevent colony encroachment onto the adjoining lands.
- **Ecological site** – A distinctive kind of land with specific soil and physical characteristics that differs from other kinds of land in its ability to produce a distinctive kind and amount of vegetation and its response to management actions and natural disturbances.
- **Encroachment, Prairie Dog** – The expansion of a prairie dog colony from National Forest System lands onto non-National Forest System lands.
- **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** – A process for evaluating and selecting a program from available techniques to reduce pest populations in an ecologically, economically, and socially acceptable manner. Programs may include one or a combination of available techniques: for

example, the use of pesticides, cultural or silvicultural treatments, biological control agents, host resistance, genetic control, mechanical destruction or trapping, and behavioral chemicals, including attractants and repellants. An integrated pest management program may involve periods of rest or non-application of pest management techniques. Integrated pest management encompasses integrated plague management.

- **Integrated Plague Management** – See Integrated Pest Management (IPM).
- **Prairie Dog Colony** – An area containing active prairie dog burrows that is clearly distinguishable from surrounding areas by a space that does not contain burrows, as delineated by the inventory and mapping protocol.
- **Prairie Dog Colony Complex** – *Remove this section*
- **Prairie Dog Conservation Tools** – Actions used to promote the growth or prevent the reduction of prairie dog colonies. Tools may include, but are not limited to: translocation of prairie dog coteries; plague mitigation tools, such as deltamethrin and fipronil; restrictions on recreational shooting; and vegetation management, including prescribed fire.
- **Prairie Dog Control -** A management action or set of management actions implemented with the intent to decrease the size or density of a prairie dog colony, to remove a prairie dog colony from an area, or to prevent recolonization of an area.
- **Prairie Dog Control Tools** – Actions used to carry out prairie dog control. Tools may include, but are not limited to: rodenticides registered for use under State law, including some forms of zinc phosphide and some fumigants; vegetation barriers; translocation of prairie dog coteries; and mechanical treatments such as blading and collapsing burrows. In this plan, recreational shooting is not considered a control tool.
- **Prairie Dog Conservation Tools** – Actions used to promote the growth or prevent the reduction of prairie dog colonies. Tools may include, but are not limited to: translocation of prairie dog coteries; plague mitigation tools, such as deltamethrin, fipronil, or sylvatic plague vaccine; restrictions on recreational shooting; and vegetation management, including prescribed fire.
- **Prairie Dog Density Control** – A management action or set of management actions implemented with the intent to reduce the number of live prairie dogs within a prairie dog colony or some portion of a colony without reducing the total area of the colony. Such management actions would occur most often via the use of rodenticides but other control tools may be used. Objectives for density control are site-specific and include influencing colony growth and dispersal and preventing undesirable vegetation state changes.

Appendix N

- *Rescind this section*