1. **Species:** Northern Pocket Gopher (*Thomomys talpoides agrestis*)

2. **Status:** Table 1 summarizes the current status of this species or subspecies by various ranking entity and defines the meaning of the status.

Table 1. Current status of Northern Pocket Gopher

Entity	Status	Status Definition
NatureServe	G5T3	*Species is Vulnerable* At moderate risk of extinction or elimination due to a fairly restricted range, relatively few populations or occurrences, recent and widespread declines, threats, or other factors.
CNHP	S3	*Species is Vulnerable* At moderate risk of extinction or elimination due to a fairly restricted range, relatively few populations or occurrences, recent and widespread declines, threats, or other factors.
Colorado State List Status	SGCN, Tier 2	Species of Greatest Conservation Need
USDA Forest Service	None	N/A
USDI FWS[b]	None	N/A

[a] Colorado Natural Heritage Program.
[b] US Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service.

The 2012 U.S. Forest Service Planning Rule defines Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) as "a species, other than federally recognized threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species, that is known to occur in the plan area and for which the regional forester has determined that the best available scientific information indicates substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long-term in the plan area" (36 CFR 219.9). This overview was developed to summarize information relating to this species' consideration to be listed as a SCC on the Rio Grande National Forest, and to aid in the development of plan components and monitoring objectives.

3. Taxonomy

Genus/species *Thomomys talpoides agrestis* is accepted as valid (ITIS 2015).

4. Distribution, abundance, and population trend on the planning unit [12.53.2,3,4]:

The distribution of *Thomomys talpoides agrestis* is limited to the San Luis Valley (Pineda et al. 1999, Arctos 2015).

Occurrences in the San Luis Valley are reported at or near Alamosa, Fort Garland, San Luis, San Acacio, and Great Sand Dunes National Park (Arctos 2015). There are no known occurrences of Northern pocket gopher within the planning area. No trend information for the planning area is available.

Table 2. Known Occurrence Frequency within the Planning Area (NRIS database)

Known Occurrences in the past 20 years	0
Year Last Observed	N/A

5. **Brief description of natural history and key ecological functions [basis for other 12.53 components]**:

Little information is available for subspecies *T.t. agrestis*. At the species level, *T. talpoides* females are monoestrous. Mating usually occurs from March to mid-June, depending on weather and latitude. Gestation lasts about 19-20 days. Litter size is 4-7. Young disperse from natal burrow at about 2 months of age (Jones et al. 1983 cited in NatureServe 2015).

Rangewide habitats include alpine, cropland/hedgerow, grassland/herbaceous, savanna, shrubland/chaparral, woodland/conifer, and mixed woodlands. It prefers deep soils along streams and in meadows and cultivated fields, but also found in rocky soils and clay. Northern pocket gophers are active throughout the year. They do not hibernate but may be inactive in winter and midsummer for brief periods. Most burrowing activity occurs in spring and fall when soil is loose (NatureServe 2015).

Food items rangewide include a roots of forbs, cacti, grasses, stems, bulbs, tubers, and leaves (NatureServe 2015). In a subalpine area in Colorado (elevation = 9,900 ft), 87% of the summer diet consisted of leaves of forbs, 1% grasses, and 12% roots. Also in Colorado, where the vegetation was composed of 50% grasses, 42% forbs, and 8% shrubs, the summer diet of *T. talpoides* was composed of 6% grasses, 93% forbs, and 1% shrubs; 74% of the diet was aboveground parts of plants and only 26% consisted of roots (Vaughn 1974 cited in Verts and Carraway 1999).

6. **Overview of ecological conditions for recovery, conservation, and viability [12.53 7, 9?, 10, 11, 12]**:

Pineda et al. (1999) reported that this subspecies was found from 7,400 to 8,500 feet in the San Luis Valley during inventories by in 1997 and 1998. Predominately grass vegetation was found with occurrences of this subspecies. Baltic rush (*Juncus balticus*) was the dominant vegetation at Denton Spring, with needle-and-thread grass (*Stipa comata*) in the upland.

There are no recent population studies of this subspecies, but field observations suggest that this subspecies' population may be stable at several sites in the San Luis Valley (C.A. Pague, unpubl. data cited in Pineda et al. 1999). Land-use conversion could have negative impacts on the viability of this subspecies (CNHP 1997 cited in Pineda et al. 1999).

7. **Threats and Risk Factors**

Vegetation treatments that affect forb availability may negatively impact northern pocket gophers. On an area treated with the herbicide 2,4-D in Colorado that reduced production of forbs by 83% and increased production of grasses by 37%, the diet of *T. talpoides* shifted from 82% forbs and 18% grasses to 50% each forbs and grasses. It was also reported that northern pocket gophers lost body mass when forced to eat grasses. Also, the population on a treated area declined by 87%, but the following year the population on a nearby control area declined by 74 percent. As treated rangeland vegetation reverted to the perennial forb type, the population of *T. talpoides* became denser than on untreated areas (Tietjen et al. 1967, Keith et al. 1959, Hansen and Ward, 1966, all cited in Verts and Carraway 1999).

Roads with wide clearance limits may create barriers to movement (NatureServe 2015). Other threats or risk factors have not been reported for this species.

8. Key literature:

Arctos. 2015. Collaborative collection management solution. Accessed online at: http://arctosdb.org/ [07/06/2015].

Hill, J.E. 1942. Notes on mammals of northeastern New Mexico. Journal of Mammalogy 23(1): 75-82.

NatureServe. 2015. An online encyclopedia of life. Accessed online at: http://explorer.natureserve.org/index.htm [07/06/2015].

Pineda, P.M., R.J. Rondeau, and A. Ochs. 1999. A biological inventory and conservation recommendations for the Great Sand Dunes and San Luis Lakes, Colorado. The Nature Conservancy, Saguache, Colorado. 87 pp.

Verts, B.J. and L.N. Carraway. Thomomys talpoides. Mammalian Species 618:1-11.

9. Map of Known Occurrences and Modeled Suitable Habitat

Known occurrences (NRIS) in the vicinity of the planning area are shown in Figure 1. Suitable habitat for this species within the planning area has not been mapped or modeled.

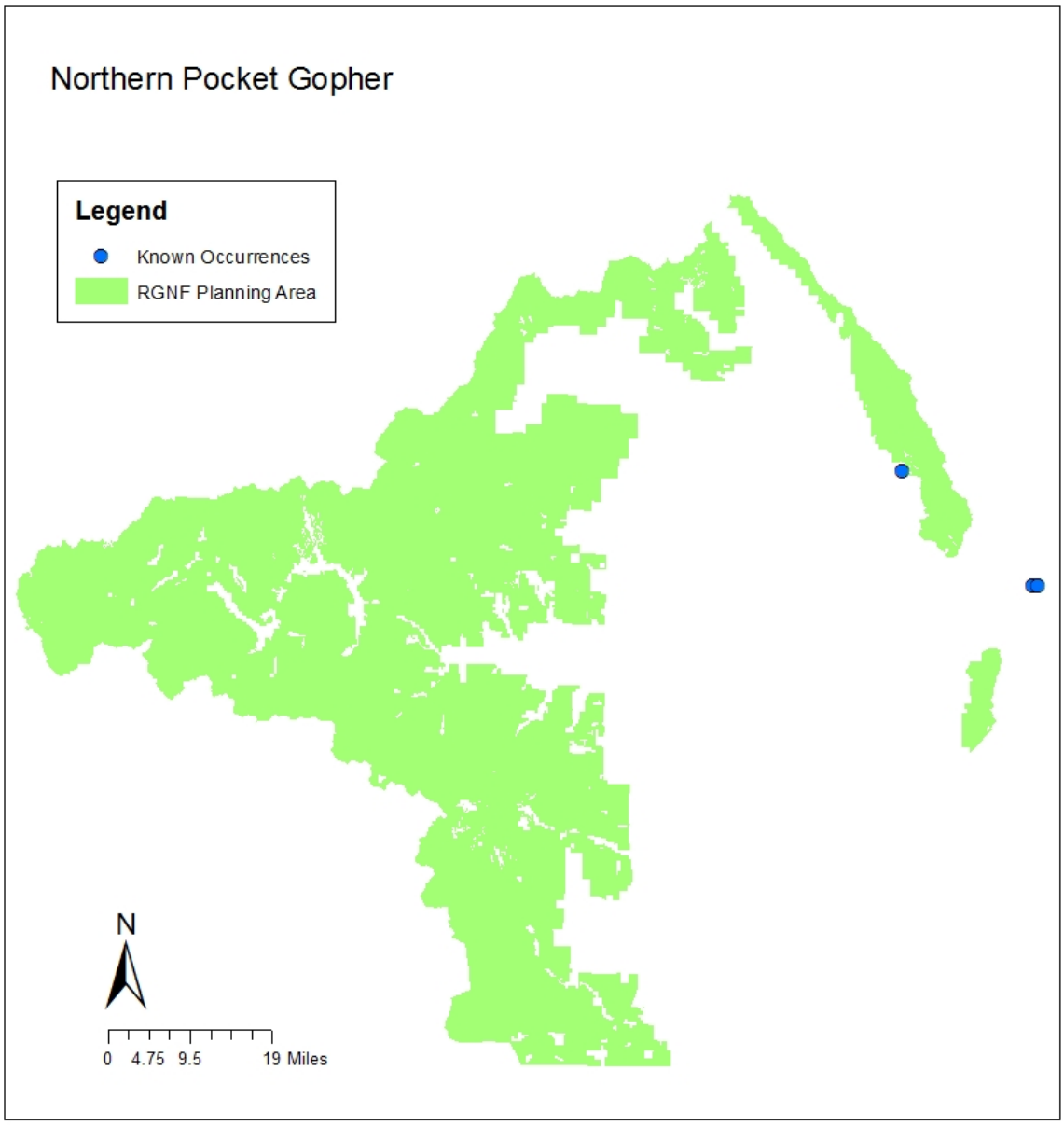

Figure 1. Northern Pocket Gopher Known Occurrences in NRIS Database.