

Wildlife Management Request

Location: City of Longmont Landfill (Currently Closed to the Public)
Species: Black Tailed Prairie Dog
Count: Estimated at 12 Prairie Dogs during the 2017 field season.
Date: July 7, 2017

In accordance with the Wildlife Management Plan, 4.4.4, staff has prepared this report for executive review in order to identify a specific management action.

Background:

Staff observed prairie dogs at the closed city Landfill. State regulations require the protection of the landfill cover/cap in order to preserve the integrity of the landfill. Burrowing animals can cause water intrusion inside the covered landfill creating the potential for water intrusion and an eventual landfill failure.

Wildlife Management Plan References:

According to the Wildlife Management Plan, the order of priority for removal of prairie dogs from City lands should be as follows:

- Preferred Option – Relocation, if the number to be removed is greater than 25 animals and a suitable release site has been identified, approved by the Colorado Division of Wildlife while giving the public and City Council adequate notice.
- Second Option – Removal for donation to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service black-footed ferret recovery program or raptor rehabilitation program
- Finally- Extermination within the burrows.

The choice among these options should be based on criteria such as urgency, cost, and the express need for euthanized animals for ferret recovery or raptor rehabilitation programs.

Evaluation of Options:

1. Relocation: The lack of relocation sites in Weld County and along the Front Range makes this option improbably by all practical standards. In addition the Wildlife Management Plan states that relocating numbers less than 25 results in low survival rates and a

disproportionate administrative and fiscal burden. Therefore this is not a viable option. Passive relocation is not a viable option, as these prairie dogs would need to be passively relocated to private property and the owner has stated she would not approve of this and would ultimately exterminated the animal on her property.

2. Donation to the black-footed ferret or raptor program: This is not a practical option due to the relative small number of prairie dogs that would be donated. A minimum of 25 animals is recommended by the Wildlife Management Plan
3. Extermination within the burrow: Due to the complicating facts associated with relocation and donation, and the fact that there are less than 25 animals, extermination would be consistent with the as recommended by the Wildlife Management Plan. In addition, the City would require the use of carbon monoxide which is considered a form of humane euthanasia by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Additional Considerations:

Once the prairie dogs have been removed from this area, annual inspections need to be performed and the site managed as a “Remove” category.

Staff Recommendation (pre / post management)

Consistent with the Wildlife Management Plan, staff recommends that the few prairie dogs (less than 25) located on the landfill be euthanized and that a physical and visual barrier be placed on the boundary fence between the landfill and private property. The private property owner has already granted the City permission to install the barrier on the west side of the boundary fence.

After the removal of the prairie dogs, City staff or designee will be responsible for continuing to manage the areas as a “Remove” site, free of prairie dogs that might migrate into this area.

A burrowing owl survey would be conducted at this site prior to any management activity.

City Manager: _____ **Date:** _____

Approval / Comments:

SH 119

Private Property

HIGH PLAINS PRESERVE and LANDFILL

Prairie dogs to be removed from this area

Prairie dog barrier to be installed

STRAIN CREEK

Boulder Creek