

Thunder Basin National Grassland
Cooperative Working Group
Meeting 1: February 27, 2017

Group 1:

- Commitment to follow through on management decisions
 - Emails, add to dist lists
 - Face to face
 - This group
 - Commission meetings
 - Web site (need notified)
 - Message board
 - Diversity is a challenge
 - Consistent messaging
 - Keeping lists current
 - No response/blow off
- Funding
 - Parameters of agency vs. corporation
 - Financial burden to private due to expansion boundary control issues
 - Allocation to pdog management
 - Make limited money count via coordination
 - Staffing
 - Where is money coming from
 - Sources
 - Process
 - Amount is variable based on conditions
 - USFS commitment to more money
 - Flexible
 - Contractor pool that will work with government contracts
 - Interest in multi-year contracts (lack of)
 - Need education on USFS limits
- Priority of pdog management to USFS
 - Other issues to prioritize
 - Oil & gas
 - Sage Grouse
 - Etc...
 - Competing for staff/resources
 - Perception of adequate staffing
 - Need education on USFS structure, priorities, and allocation
 - Where does pdog management fit in
- Method of population count
 - Desire density count
 - Current info needed
 - Who does this?

- HPHIS?
 - Who coordinates #s
 - Accuracy?
 - What data is used?
 - How to use all data
 - Cooperation
 - Make it useable
- Threats against USFS
 - Staffing in pairs
 - Effect on work load?
- Shooting ban
 - That it exists
 - Wrong spot for signs
 - Too big
 - Mis-information
 - Consistent
 - Rigidity
 - Why does it exist
 - Data for/against?
- Boundary control
 - Difference in management objectives across boundaries
 - How to effectively address?
 - Coordinate
 - Optimize limited funds
 - Rodenticide limitations
 - What is the process for allowable
 - Lots of boundary
 - How to prioritize
 - Lack of coordination between managers
 - Time of year to treat
 - Buffers
 - With residents
 - What distance?
 - Relates back to funding
- Range condition
 - Forage loss
 - Competition with cattle
 - Balance with non-monetary values such as wildlife
 - How to?
 - Land/asset value
 - Habitat loss/wildlife
 - How density of populations affects rangeland
 - Conflicting research/science

- Quantity vs. Quality
 - Inter-related species
 - Owls, plover, etc...
 - Water quality/ecosystem function
 - Erosion
 - Topsoil
 - Relates back to management objectives and boundary control
- Cultural impact
 - Historic use
 - Social
 - Concern over economic impact
 - Way of living
- Ferrets
 - What is planned?
 - Process
 - History
 - Truthfulness
 - Who controls this?
 - Need education
 - Who is responsible?
 - Roles?

Group 2:

- Current rangeland conditions on the TB and other ecological conditions – water, air quality (dust) *
 - Degradation ok if pdog's doing it
- Funding (lack of) and how it is being used. How is it being prioritized for management of pdog *
 - Need a clear plan to primer how money will be spent and coordinating that with other agency efforts
- Status of NEPA and ability to implement management actions
- Information gaps – identify the data that is missing *
- Use of data – gather data that is local
 - Need to agree on the science and data that will be used to support management decisions. Don't use data from CT in WY
- Black footed ferret. Inconsistent messages depending on who you ask *
- Is the TB plan a pdog plan or a BF plan?
 - Ecology vs. Biology – where does sage grouse fit in?
- Need to develop an actual strategy with identifiable actions
 - If this... then
- Forest plan limitations. Amendment?
- Conflicting management objectives for different species and across agency boundaries
- Risk – spreading plague and cyclic nature of pdog populations

- Lack of trust on all sides
- Forest plan – inconsistent application of standards, guides, or desired conditions. It is a moving target.
- Boundaries – Cat 1, 2, 3. Data to support management within categories is not current *
- Impacts to private land *
- Buffers – we don't use these effectively *
 - (one size fits all) – doesn't work
- Need more control options *
 - Lethal and non-lethal
- Is there opportunity to identify options for more good neighbor type work?
 - Information needed
- Fear of litigation – don't let it prevent proper management actions
- User conflict and interests in the management of the TB
- Lack of formal advisory committee to provide recommendations. What is the point of this group – it has no teeth. *
- Fear that this is just another meeting
- Concern that it will take too long to get things done on the ground. We are already behind.

Group 3:

- Lack of management perspective
 - Need understanding of history and regulatory frame works of all involved *
 - Ecology of pdogs especially for figuring out best tools
 - FS way or highway
 - Need better understanding of what FS is managing for, approaches used, etc. *
- Not being good neighbors
 - No buffers – if put, landowners are controlling - need commitment from FS to control on our side
 - Through meetings; come up with coordination and implement schedule with timely communication *
- Lack of funding to control pdogs *
 - Section 12 Granger Thye Act
 - Need incentives to reimburse landowners
 - ½ of revenue from grazing leases should be used for control
- Lack of will on part of FS to control pdogs
- Need to expand control tool box to include Rozol *
 - Way FS requires control to be done drives up prices on private lands
 - FS needs to better follow product labels and application timeframes
- Burning of sagebrush to improve pdog habitat??
 - Need to understand FS management goals for sage grouse and how they interact with pdogs *
 - Contradiction for other species management
- Why are state laws readily ignored? Pdogs are a pest for many

- BFF re-introduction *
 - Public land owners worry that reintroduction will occur without involvement
 - Need to be clear about management objectives
- Plague and disease
 - Why buffers are needed
 - Potential to endanger human life
- We've been discussing this topic for **ages**; why no progress???
- Gets at trust and lack of credibility *
- Need assurances that this process is not another example of 'insanity'
- What is the vision of rangeland health?
 - FS and other government agencies
 - Where are they similar?
 - Where are they different?
- Erosion from bare ground conditions that pdogs create
- Misunderstanding on FS part relative to private landowner desires
 - Don't want them gone; want them controlled
- Control efforts should consider 'weeds' so as not to spread
 - How do we address particularly in drought years?
 - Site-specific reclamation needs should be considered

Group 4:

- Pdog management and ability to treat *
- Over expansion of colonies *
- Density of pdogs and subsequent forage reduction *
- Encroachment onto private and state owned lands *
- USFS is limited in treatment tools and flexibility in existing tools *
- Boundary management *
- Lack of clarity regarding management tools *
- Lack of clarity regarding why USFS is managing for BFF reintroduction *
- Lack of understanding regarding USFS budget *
- Lack of clarification regarding agency roles (USFWS + USFS) regarding BFF *
- Lack of mapping of existing and expanding pdog colonies *
- Control of pdogs for human health and safety *
- Erosion in the watershed *
- Lacking understanding of USFS prioritization of resources/efforts *
- Need a discussion of who benefits from management
- How to tackle short-term (< 2 year) issues for landowners
- Lack of forage (quantity) on grazing land
- Could we look at a "conservation cost share"?
 - Who holds the burden of financial responsibility? ... for harm already done by mismanagement?
- Concerns regarding wildlife habitat (mostly big game) *
 - What is the threshold on habitat amount/quality for different species of wildlife?

- Is it possible to expand the windows during which we can conduct pdog control?
- Threat of lawsuits against the USFS *
- Need a plan for exponential growth of colonies *
- When plague hits, we need a plan for adaptive management from that point on (as part of a strategy update?)
- Short-term vs mid and long-term plans
 - Some short-terms needs addressed before April
- Implementation of recommendations
 - Are they working?
 - Have they actually been implemented?
- How is sage grouse habitat impacted by pdog management? *
- Non-lethal control methods may not address short-term concerns (and its success is difficult to document)