

## A BLACK-TAILED PRAIRIE DOG CONSERVATION STRATEGY FOR MONTANA<sup>TWS</sup>

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Evolution of black-tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) conservation in Montana is documented, including initial efforts, development of management guidelines, establishment and composition of a working group, response to the petition to list the species, drafting of a Montana conservation strategy, and relationships between Montana's efforts and those of other states. Updated information on the current status of Montana's black-tailed prairie dog population is presented. Montana's conservation efforts predate those of other states, resulting in a unique leadership role in regional conservation planning. Details of the Montana Conservation Plan are discussed, including the goal of providing for management of prairie dog populations and habitats to ensure long-term viability of prairie dogs and associated species. Five objectives and associated strategies deemed necessary to achieve this goal are described. The relationship between state planning and conservation efforts and potential federal classification is discussed as well as updated information on the status of the listing petition.