

URGENT CALL FOR ACTION. June 11, 2023

PLEASE CONTACT THE BOULDER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS IMMEDIATELY TO STOP THE EXTERMINATION OF THE PRAIRIE DOG COLONY AT PICTURE ROCK TRAILHEAD ON HEIL VALLEY RANCH OPEN SPACE.

What BCPOS is doing: BCPOS is right now “thinning” this beloved prairie dog colony in response to a few landowner complaints (some not even adjacent to the colony), a couple of burrows on the bike trail (why not just fill them in?), and an “overcrowded” population. Prairie dogs over the entire colony are being live trapped and taken to the USFWS black-footed facility to be traumatized as live feed to ferrets. BCPOS states that all trapped animals will be removed from the site and killed, leaving only those prairie dogs on site that do not get into the traps.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Please ... ASAP... contact Boulder County Commissioners by email or phone (see names and contact information below) to strongly oppose this project and to make the following points:

- **Stop the trapping IMMEDIATELY.**
- THIS COLONY IS DESIGNATED AS A HABITAT CONSERVATION AREA (HCA). BCPOS policy (2022 Prairie Dog Management Plan) states that prairie dog populations on HCA's will be the priority use and will be allowed to expand and contract naturally over time. The Plan does not describe thinning as allowed on HCAs, or that HCA colonies will be periodically thinned. The Plan states that if there are neighbor complaints, BCPOS should erect barriers instead of removing and killing the prairie dogs.
- 600 traps will ultimately be placed on the entire colony and not just near conflict area and trails. All trapped animals are being removed from the landscape. This does not look like a “thinning” operation. Many more than 150 individuals will be removed. Areas where traps have now been removed are empty of prairie dogs. At the present rate, there ultimately may only be about 50 individuals left.
- BCPOS did not notify the public or the Town of Lyons about the plan to remove and kill the prairie dogs. A small sign was placed on site one day before trapping began, instead of the one-week on-site notice required by BCPOS policy.
- Sending the trapped prairie dogs to the USFWS black-footed facility in Carr, CO is sending them to a torturous, prolonged, and inhumane death as they battle for their lives with caged ferrets.
- Trapping at this time of year is heartless; the babies have just been weaned and, if they survive being trapped, will be left parentless.
- This colony is within a mile of several golden eagle nests and red-tailed hawk nests. Trapping will decrease food supply for raptors, as well as habitat and food for many other species dependent on prairie dogs for their survival.
- After the trapping is complete, Boulder County plans to spray the 20-acre property with herbicides for weeds that the prairie dogs had been managing nicely on their own.

PLEASE EMAIL OR CALL THE FOLLOWING:

DIRECTOR, BOULDER COUNTY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE:

- Therese Glowacki, Director
- tglowacki@bouldercounty.org

303-678-6202

BOULDER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:

- Commissioner Claire Levy: Commissioner.levy@bouldercounty.org
- Commissioner Ashley Stolzmann: Commissioner.stolzmann@bouldercounty.org
- Commissioner Marta Loachamin

Commissioner.loachamin@bouldercounty.org

- Acting Chief of Staff for Commissioners (phone option)

Natalie Springett. 303-441-4571