

RETURN OF THE

PRAIRIE BANDIT



**BLACK
FOOTED
FERRET
FRIENDS**



The black-footed ferret (BFF) is the only native ferret species on the short grass prairie of North America. One of the most endangered North American mammals, BFFs are nocturnal, solitary, and spend most of their lives in prairie dog burrows. Their native range runs from Canada to Mexico, and through 12 Western US states.



SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON

Prairie dogs

90% of black-footed ferret diet is prairie dog

Large landscapes

1,500 to 10,000+ acres of purposefully managed prairie dog colonies are needed for a sustainable ferret population (500,000 acres needed for recovery)

Quality habitat

managed for sylvatic plague

Secure release sights



THE BLACK-FOOTED FERRET FRIENDS AND RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

The Black-Footed Ferret Friends are private partners interested in the conservation of prairie wildlife, in particular the black-footed ferret. Members include representatives from private industry including livestock producers, the wildlife conservation community and Native American Tribes. The Friends focus on supporting black-footed ferret recovery by raising funds for plague management and increasing landowner participation through voluntary landowner incentives.

BFF Friends Mission Statement: Promote voluntary incentive based, black-footed ferret recovery with measurable conservation goals through advocacy, outreach and providing hands on conservation assistance in the field.

The Black-footed Ferret Recovery Implementation Team (BFF RIT) was created in 1996 to integrate the expertise and resources of various partners contributing to recovery of the black-footed ferret. BFF RIT is a multi-agency conservation effort led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and includes representatives from federal, state and tribal governments, zoos, private landowners and nonprofit organizations.

Although the role of BFF RIT is strictly advisory in nature, many team members are hands-on participants in captive breeding, reintroduction and population monitoring efforts.



LONG TERM SURVIVAL

Removal from the Endangered Species List Next Steps

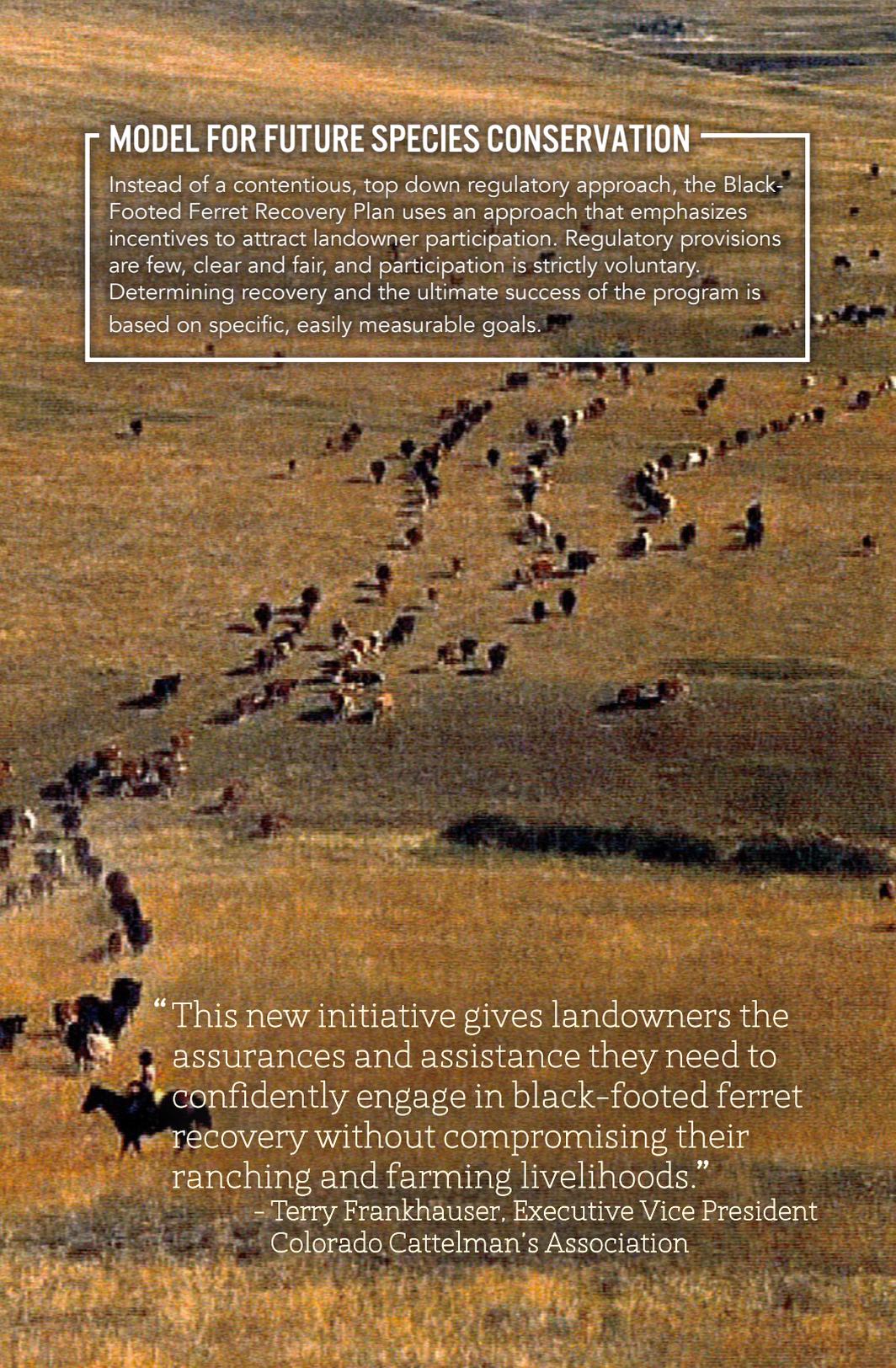
- Continuation of captive breeding program and release of black-footed ferrets at selected field locations until 3,000 adult wild-born animals are distributed across most of the species' historical range.
- Ensure that landowners' and other stakeholders' are accommodated at these special places by maintaining voluntary participation and providing regulatory flexibility, and financial compensation.
- Develop partnerships to support ferrets by purposefully managing 500,000 acres of prairie dog habitat, less than 10% of currently existing habitat.
- Protect ferrets and their prairie dog prey from disease, primarily sylvatic plague, at these purposely managed locations.



BENEFITS OF FERRET RECOVERY

- Many of the animals that live in the same places where black-footed ferrets live, including the mountain plover, burrowing owl, swift fox, ferruginous hawk, prairie dog, and others, also benefit from ferret habitat conservation efforts.
- Ranchers who tolerate prairie dogs to support ferrets on a portion of their land may receive financial compensation to offset livestock forage losses and be relieved of some pest control costs.
- Black-footed ferret conservation efforts designed to be harmonious with livestock management goals can provide an example for other endangered species conservation programs.
- Freedom from intrusive constraints on future land uses in prairie dog habitat.



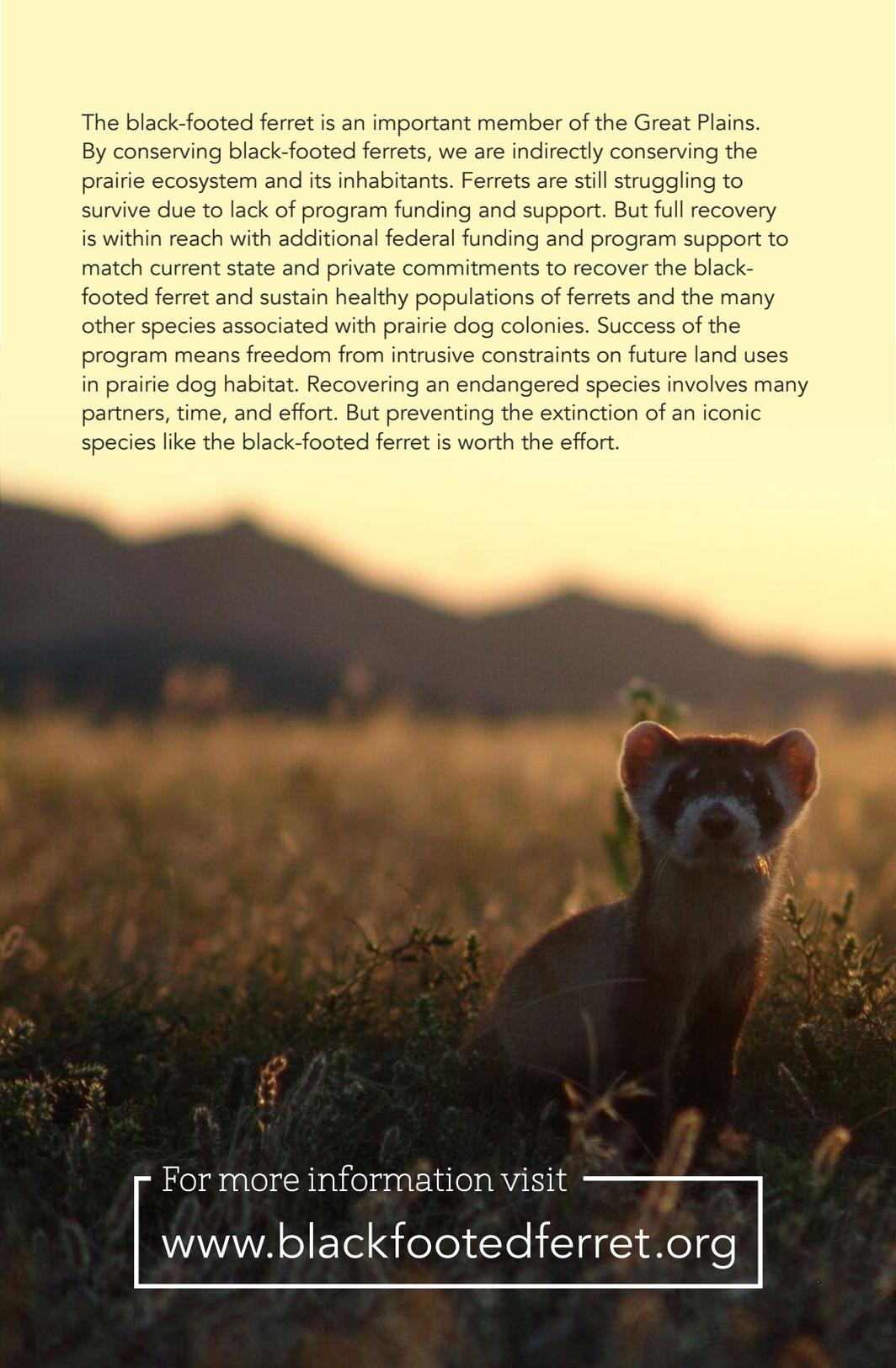
An aerial photograph of a vast, open field with a large herd of cattle grazing. The field is a mix of green and brown, suggesting a dry or late summer season. The cattle are scattered across the landscape, with some clusters and some individuals. In the foreground, a few more cattle are visible, and a person on a horse is partially seen. The background shows a flat horizon under a clear sky.

MODEL FOR FUTURE SPECIES CONSERVATION

Instead of a contentious, top down regulatory approach, the Black-Footed Ferret Recovery Plan uses an approach that emphasizes incentives to attract landowner participation. Regulatory provisions are few, clear and fair, and participation is strictly voluntary. Determining recovery and the ultimate success of the program is based on specific, easily measurable goals.

“This new initiative gives landowners the assurances and assistance they need to confidently engage in black-footed ferret recovery without compromising their ranching and farming livelihoods.”

- Terry Frankhauser, Executive Vice President
Colorado Cattelman's Association

A black-footed ferret is the central focus of the image, sitting upright in a field of tall grasses. The background is a soft, golden sunset over a range of mountains, creating a warm and serene atmosphere. The ferret's dark fur and white chest are clearly visible against the bright light.

The black-footed ferret is an important member of the Great Plains. By conserving black-footed ferrets, we are indirectly conserving the prairie ecosystem and its inhabitants. Ferrets are still struggling to survive due to lack of program funding and support. But full recovery is within reach with additional federal funding and program support to match current state and private commitments to recover the black-footed ferret and sustain healthy populations of ferrets and the many other species associated with prairie dog colonies. Success of the program means freedom from intrusive constraints on future land uses in prairie dog habitat. Recovering an endangered species involves many partners, time, and effort. But preventing the extinction of an iconic species like the black-footed ferret is worth the effort.

For more information visit

www.blackfootedferret.org