

- The Navajo Nation is home to one of the largest population of Gunnison Prairie Dog
- 25% of its rangeland is located on the Navajo Nation
- Habitat for Prairie Dogs on Navajo Nation has declined by 98%
- Reason for decline
 - Massive habitat conversion
 - Plague
 - Eradication Program





- Prairie Dogs are social mammals,
- Live in large group called towns,
- They section off into small family units,
- Mostly feed on grasses, forbs, and sedges,
- Live 4-5 years

- Prairie dogs are an important part of the Natural Environment
- Considered a "keystone species",
- Help maintain the desert grassland
- They help determine the number of diversity of other species in the desert grassland
- Species diversity is greater inside a prairie dog town as compared to outside
- They create habitat for many other species.





- The burrow of Prairie Dogs are used by many species of mammals, reptiles, and invertebrate predators
- Use burrow to survive difficult conditions like the summer heat, cold weather, etc.
- Scientist have found over 200 animal species using these Prairie Dog Towns

Prairie Dog Burrow:

- 15 Feet Deep
- Have separate Chambers for Nesting, Raising Young, Food Storage and bathrooms,
- They have two entrance for air flow and escaping predator
- Help control flooding and reduce erosion by channeling rain water into lower soil level,
- They encourage plant growth by increasing soil aeration and reduce soil compaction





- Prairie Dogs themselves serve as food for many predators, such as:
 - Black Footed Ferret & Other Weasels
 - Red, Gray & Kit Foxes
 - Coyotes
 - Badgers
 - Golden Eagles
 - Ferruginous & Red Tail Hawks

Gunnison Prairie Dog



Prairie Dog Town



Not Always Compatible with Agriculture



Prairie Dog Control

- Navajo People have concerns about prairie dog
- Some Examples:
 - They carry the plague
 - They destroy crops
 - They are moving into Housing areas-which is a Health concern
 - And many other issues with prairie dogs



Prairie Dog Control



- Navajo Fish and Wildlife Predator officer can assist you with issue involving Prairie Dogs
- They can be contacted at 928-871-6451
- Program Manager is Jeff Cole
- Tour of Duty is Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm
- They do work weekends when needed.

Prairie Dog Control

- At least 10 to 15 mounds per acre to economically justify control
- Rest rotation and light stocking rates can reduce potential prairie dog invasion in mid to tall-grass prairies
- Be alert for endangered black-footed ferrets and burrowing owls

Regulations

- Label for Restricted Use Pesticides (Aluminum Phosphide) state "may not use this product for control of prairie dogs unless a pre-control survey has been conduced".
- "Contact NNDFW-NHHP to determine if black-footed ferret survey requirements are required."

Regulations

- If black-tailed prairie dog town is > 80 acres (> 200 acres for Gunnison prairie dogs) within a 4.5 mile radius, then a ferret survey must be conducted
- UNLESS obtain approval from NNDFW-NHP.

Black-Footed Ferret



Burrowing Owl



Prairie Dog Exclusion

- Exclusion is rarely practical
- Discouraged by tight-mesh, heavy-gauge, galvanized wire
- 5 feet tall with 2 feet buried in the ground

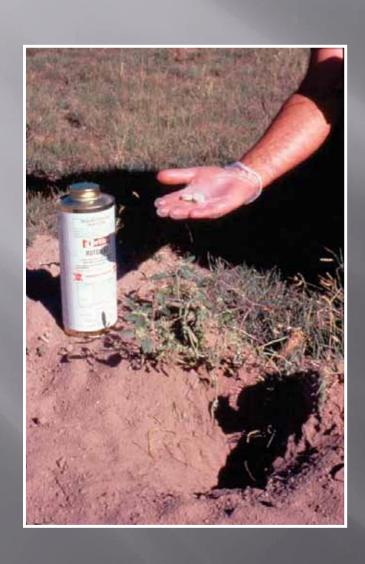
Prairie Dog Control - Cultural Methods

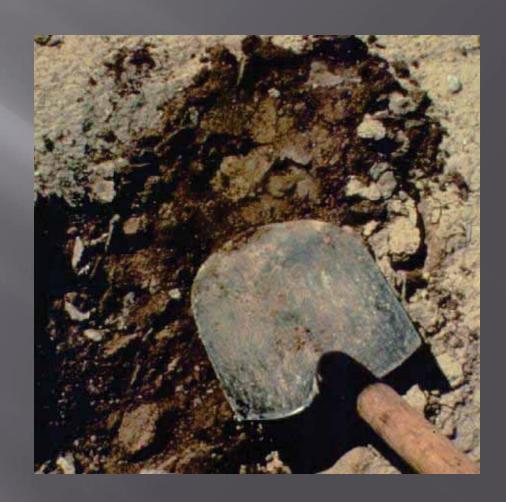
- Reduced prairie dog numbers by plowing or disking town and leaving fallow for 1-2 years
- Establish tall grain crops after second year
- Flood irrigation

Prairie Dog Fumigants – Aluminum Phosphide

- Cost 5 to 10 times more per acre than poison grain baits (\$0.32 per burrow)
- Practical when nontarget wildlife mortality, public relations and other considerations eliminate other methods.
- Aluminum phosphide (Fumitoxin or Phostoxin) is 95 - 100% effective
- Must have good soil moisture to keep gas concentrated in burrow

Fumitoxin





Prairie Dog Fumigants - Gas Cartridges

- Gas cartridges 35 to 65% effective
- Not a restricted use pesticide
- Approved by American Veterinarian Association as humane method to euthanize (carbon monoxide)
- Nontarget animals within treated prairie dog holes are normally killed

Gas Cartridge



Economics

- ♦ Aluminum Phosphide (95% 100% efficacy)
 - \$16.00 per acre
 - \$0.32 per burrow opening * 50 burrow openings per acre
- - \$100 per acre
 - \$2.00 per burrow opening * 50 burrow openings per acre

Remember!

- Follow the Label on all toxicants and fumigants
- Proper Licensing (private applicator license not valid for use on schools, parks, BLM, USFS, NPS, etc.
- Be alert for burrowing owls
- Contact NNDFW-NHP regarding black-footed ferret issues

Trapping and Shooting Prairie Dogs

- Traps place in burrow entrances work well
 - Trapping impractical for large colonies
- Consistent shooting can remove 65% of population during the year
 - Expensive and labor intensive
 - Rarely proves to be practical form of control
- Navajo Nation Small Game Permit is required to remove Prairie Dogs from Navajo Nation Land

ANY QUESTIONS

