Wildlife Partners Unite to Protect Iconic Species from Deadly Plague

Reporters are invited to an event near Fort Collins showcasing cooperative efforts to develop a potential breakthrough in wildlife management – an oral vaccine that may help protect prairie dogs against plague and assist in the recovery of endangered black-footed ferrets at specific locations in the West.

Prairie dogs in the wild are less likely to succumb to sylvatic plague after they ingest peanut-butter-flavored bait that contains a vaccine against the disease, according to recent field trials conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and others.

The development of a safe, effective and economical sylvatic plague vaccine, or SPV, to protect prairie dogs in identified management areas is part of a multi-partner collaboration to increase populations of endangered black-footed ferrets and conserve the prairie dogs that ferrets rely on for survival. SPV may also aid in the recovery of the Utah prairie dog or help prevent the Gunnison’s prairie dog from becoming at risk.

This vaccine is only the second product of its kind to be used at the landscape level to protect wildlife. It will soon be used on thousands of acres in Arizona, Colorado, Montana, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming and potentially other western states.

**WHAT:** Reporters are invited to attend a highly visual event showcasing the development and manufacture of SPV-laden bait for prairie dogs, and tour the National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center, where captive black-footed ferrets are raised for eventual release in the wild. The event will include interactive booths and presentations from key scientists and other experts. More information is available on the [media resources website](#).

**WHO:** Scientists and representatives involved in the development, manufacture, registration and distribution of the SPV bait and in the black-footed ferret recovery effort will be available for interviews, including representatives from:

- The USGS National Wildlife Health Center;
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife; and
- The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

**WHERE:** The National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center
19180 North East Frontage Road, Carr, Colorado (please see included map)
Most online maps to the location are inaccurate. For specific directions, contact Kimberly Fraser at 970-556-4334.
Please plan at least an hour and a half to travel from downtown Denver.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to noon on August 15, 2017

RSVP: Please RSVP by Monday, August 14, with Marisa Lubeck at 303-526-6694 or mlubeck@usgs.gov.

Challenges associated with disease management in free-ranging wildlife populations include the development of effective products, field delivery of products and attention to regulatory needs. This event highlights a unique multi-partner approach to address these challenges.

Sylvatic plague is a deadly disease that affects wildlife and occasionally infects people and pets. For more information about sylvatic plague and the coordinated effort to conserve black-footed ferrets, please visit the USGS National Wildlife Health Center sylvatic plague website. More information about black-footed ferrets is available on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website.

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Directions to US Fish & Wildlife Service
N on I-25 from Fort Collins
Exit on Buckeye Road (Exit 288)
Turn left on Co Rd 82
Turn right on Frontage Road (Just past I-25 SB Off Ramp)
Continue on Frontage road approximately 2 miles
Frontage Road will have a sharp curve, you’ll pass underneath I-25
Keep going straight to get to US Fish & Wildlife Service complex (do not continue on Frontage Road)
Administration Building will be first building on your left
Phone 970-897-2730 X241