

Appendix 4. Vegetation Guidelines

Interim Vegetation Composition Recommendations for Utah Prairie Dog Habitat

These recommendations serve to update the vegetation guidelines in the Interim Conservation Strategy (1997) which were developed to address inadequacies in the guidelines identified in the 1991 Utah Prairie Dog Recovery Plan. These recommendations are approved by the Utah Prairie Dog Recovery Plan Implementation Team for use by all land managers, and should be used in the management of Utah Prairie Dog habitat until the Utah Prairie Dog Recovery Plan is amended. The following recommendations were developed based on a literature review and best professional knowledge. The Utah Prairie Dog Recovery Plan Implementation Team approves these recommendations for vegetation composition and recommends their use by all land managers.

These recommendations are suggested for vegetation management of Utah Prairie Dog habitat rangewide. They may be modified in the future if it is found that they do not meet the needs of the prairie dog or that Recovery Area specific recommendations are needed. Sites with vegetation within these parameters should be considered suitable habitat, or the desired plant community, for this species. These recommendations apply to habitat not associated with urban or agricultural areas.

Vegetation Type	Percentage of Ground Cover	Additional Requirements
Warm-season grasses	1% - 20%	If warm season grasses are less than 3%, then forbs must be 11% - 20%.
Cool-season grasses	12% - 40%	A minimum of three species are required, with at least one native species present.
Forbs	1% - 10%	Non-annual, and a minimum of 1% of forbs must be species as defined below.
Shrubs	0% - 8%	< 10% canopy cover
Plant Diversity	> 10 species	

Soils are an important component of prairie dog habitat, but at this time we do not have enough information to recommend parameters.

Monitoring

The toe pace or step method will be used for monitoring sites to determine conformance with these recommendations. Sampling should occur during a period representative of the peak production of the vegetative community, which is generally June and July.

Definitions

Vegetative Type	Definition	Examples
Warm season grasses	Grasses which "green up" and do most of their growing during the warm summer months.	Sand dropseed, curlygrass, mountain muhly, and grama grass.
Cool season grasses	Grasses which "green up" and do most of their growing during the cool spring months.	Indian ricegrass, squirreltail, western wheatgrass, crested wheatgrass, needle and thread grass, bluegrass, and wildrye.
Forbs	Included are any herbaceous plants other than those in the grass family (<i>Poaceae</i>). Must be palatable and provide nutritional value to prairie dogs.	Astragalus, alfalfa, aster, <i>Cymopterus</i> spp., buckwheat, fleabane, <i>Penstemon</i> spp., cinquefoil, phlox, globemallow, vetch, <i>Cryptantha</i> spp., lupine, crazyweed, clover, and goosefoot or pigweed.
Shrub	A plant with persistent, woody stems and a relatively low growth form, compared to trees, and that generally produces several basal shoots.	Sagebrush, big rabbitbrush, greasewood, four-wing saltbush, and broom snakeweed. Desirable subshrubs include forage kochia, winterfat, Gardiner saltbush, and little rabbitbrush.

Literature Reviewed

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