

From: "Louis Bridges" <LBridges@kleinfelder.com>
To: "Ron Linton" <RCL1@nrc.gov>
Date: 07/13/2007 1:59:02 PM
Subject: Re: T&E species question for HMC

Ron

One of the reasons the BFF was left out of the descriptions is due to its extirpation from the State. However, there is a captive breeding program in Raton, NM so it is still listed. I have attached a BFF section for you to include in the docket (see attached).

Feel free to call me should you have additional questions.

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>>> "Ron Linton" <RCL1@nrc.gov> 7/11/2007 3:03 PM >>>

Lou:

I went to the U.S. FWS webpage, www.fws.gov/southwest/es/NewMexico/SBC_view.cfm?spcnty=Cibola, and printed out the "Listed and Sensitive Species in Cibola County." This site lists two endangered species and four threatened species, and additional species concern and candidates. I crossed checked with your list of T&E species in Section 4.3.1 in the ER and the Black-footed ferret, one of the two endangered species, is not referenced. Is there a reason for this omission? If not, I'll need you to send me a brief write-up for the Black-footed ferret similar to what you provided for the other T&E species in the ER so I can add to the docket file. Sorry for the late question, but I just noticed it.

Ron

CC: "Alan Cox" <ACox@barrick.com>, "Alan Kuhn" <AKuhn@kleinfelder.com>

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Subject: Re: T&E species question for HMC
Creation Date 07/13/2007 1:58:28 PM
From: "Louis Bridges" <LBridges@kleinfelder.com>
Created By: LBridges@kleinfelder.com

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Ron Linton Black-footer ferret..doc		25600
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The black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*) was a charter member of endangered species lists for North America, recognized as rare long before the passage of the Endangered Species Act of 1973. This member of the weasel family is closely associated with prairie dogs (*Cynomys* spp.) of three species, a specialization that contributed to its downfall. Prairie dogs make up 90% of the ferret diet; in addition, ferrets dwell in prairie dog burrows during daylight, venturing out mostly during darkness.

The endangered black-footed ferret is approximately 2 feet long including the tail. It is yellowish in overall color; has a black face-mask, tail tip, and feet; and a white snout. It is most often found in prairie dog towns. It has not been verified in New Mexico in many years.

The black-footed ferret population crashed in 1974 and its last known member died in captivity in 1979. At that point, the species was thought to be extinct, until a rancher accidentally discovered a colony of about 120 ferrets near Meeteetse, Wyoming. Biologists were thrilled with this second chance to rescue the species from extinction, but hope dimmed when the newly discovered population succumbed to disease. In 1987, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department captured the last 18 remaining members of the colony in a last ditch effort to save the species through captive breeding.

Although historically the black-footed ferrets range included New Mexico, the lack ferret habitat and the lack of prairie dog colonies at the Homestake site support the determination that black-footed ferrets are not anticipated to occur in or adjacent to the Homestake property.