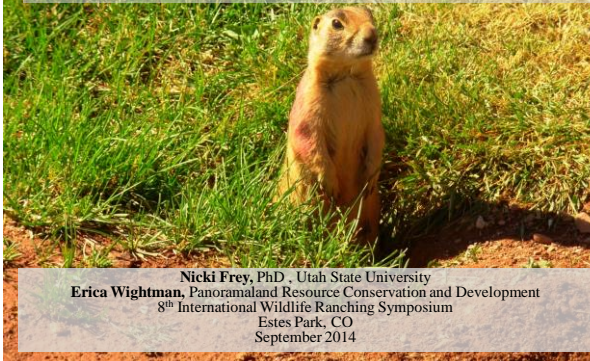
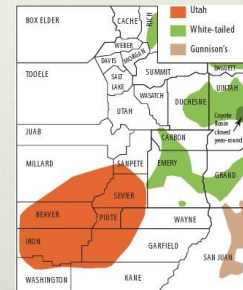


# From Opposition to Opportunity: Managing Prairie Dogs in Southern Utah



Utah Prairie Dogs (UPD)  
*Cynomys parvidens*

- ❖ In the squirrel family.
- ❖ 1 of 5 species
- ❖ Related to White-tailed prairie dogs
- ❖ Found in southern Utah
- ❖ Threatened status in ESA



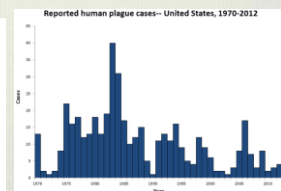
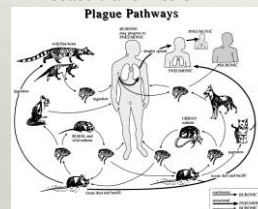
## Biological Facts

- ❖ Small litters – 3-4 per year
- ❖ Size 12-14 inches (30.5 – 35.5 cm)
- ❖ 1 - 3 pounds (0.5 – 1.4 kg)
- ❖ Live 3-4 years



## Reasons for Conflicts

## Disease transmission



## Reasons for Conflicts

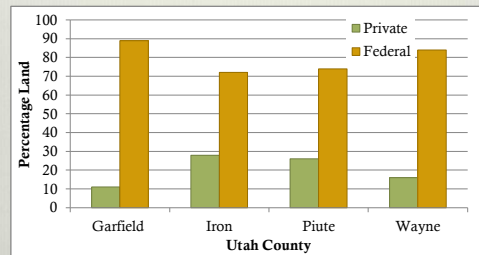
Compete with human activities

- ❖ *Like the same loose soil as our farmers*
- ❖ High populations can compete with cattle for forage on range
- ❖ Alfalfa tastes good!
- ❖ They dig – makes holes



## Reasons For Conflict

Threatened status limits commercial expansion



## Management History

- ❖ Recovery Plans based on Federal Lands
- ❖ Private landowners not on board
- ❖ *Public resource creating private problem*
- ❖ To address issue, will remove UPD on private lands onto public lands



## Ummm... this isn't working.....



From this ....



....To this?

## The Proposition

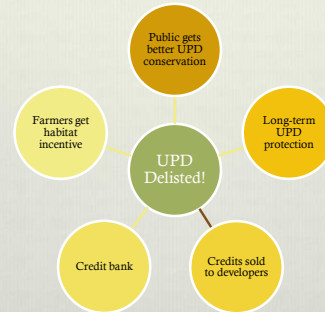
Environmental Defense Fund came to the table with an idea

- ❖ Create a program that works to assist private landowners
- ❖ Incorporate this strategy in UPD Recovery Plan

“Farmer and Rancher support of UPD on private lands? Are you nuts? It’ll take a miracle”



## UPD Habitat Credit Exchange



## Strategy in Action

1. Committees worked interactively and independently as necessary.
2. Education and outreach prior to release of program
3. Scientific basis

<b>HABITAT QUALITY</b>	
Species Richness	Species Richness = 10-3 grass, 3 forb
	Grassland Richness >10-3 grass, 3 forb
	Grassland Richness >20-3 grass, 3 forb
Average Shrub Canopy Cover	average shrub canopy cover >20%
	average shrub canopy cover 11-20%
	average shrub canopy cover 0-10%
% Ground cover	% Ground cover 0-20
	% Ground cover 20-40
	% Ground cover 40-100
Moisture rich vegetation	None
	100-1000m
	>300m
<b>LANDSCAPE CONTEXT</b>	
Landscapes Location	<1 km dispersal distances to other colony
	1-2 km dispersal distances to other colony
	>1 km dispersal distance to other colony
Barriers to dispersal	1-2 sides barred to dispersal (win 2 km)
	1 sides barred to dispersal (win 1 km)
	4 sides barred to dispersal (win 2 km)
<b>POPULATION</b>	
Population	Population < 5
	Population < 4
	Population < 3
Population Size	unknown
	occupied < 8 of 10 years
	occupied 8-10 years
	occupied consistently for 10 years (or more)

## Strategy in Action

Determined financial feasibility of matrix

1. Met with home owners associations
2. Met with commercial developers

Determined conservation benefit of matrix



## New Policy

- ❖ New UPD Recovery Plan (2012) includes language to allow a % of private, protected lands to count toward UPD recovery numbers
- ❖ Still requires protected federal lands as well
- ❖ Safe Harbor agreements
- ❖ UPD Habitat Credit Exchange lands

## Blood, sweat, tears...SUCCESS?



- ❖ Private Land Easements: 4
- ❖ Acres Protected Habitat: 280
- ❖ # Protected Dogs: 238 (adults - spring count 2014)
- ❖ Credits sold: 450

## Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreements

- ❖ Voluntary agreement between US Fish and Wildlife Service and private landowner
- ❖ Agree to baseline conditions
  - ❖ Private landowner enhances habitat
  - ❖ Allows for incidental take
  - ❖ Assurances for no additional management
- ❖ Term agreement

## Opportunities Created

- ❖ Opened communication among state, federal and private
- ❖ Built trust of "Environmentalists" through actions of Environmental Defense Fund
- ❖ Commercial Development



## We Now Have the Opportunity...

- ...To expand the distributions of UPD that we can protect and enhance
- ...To "pay back" agricultural land owners for having UPD on their land
- ...To improve and enhance agricultural lands for better habitat quality for every interest
- ...To continue to think creatively and expand management AND conservation options

THANKS

