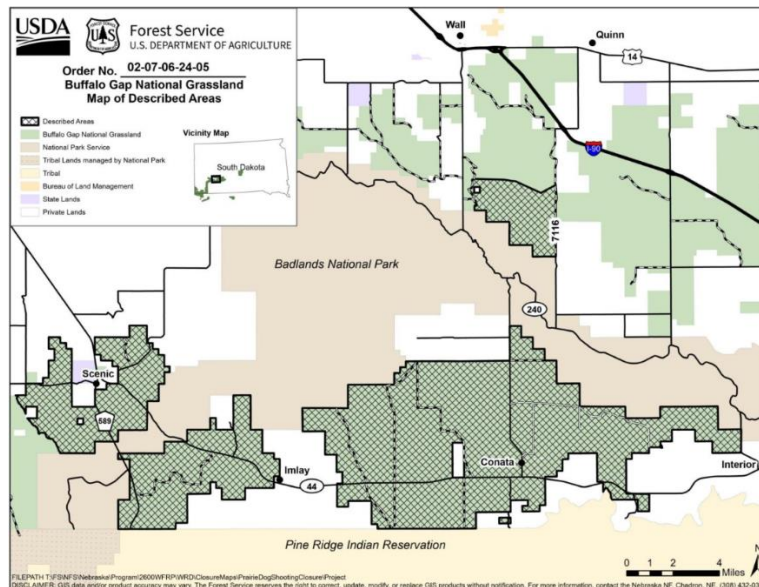


**May 3, 2024**

## **Prairie Dog Hunting Permanent Ban**

The U.S. Forest Service recently issued a permanent directive which expressly prohibits prairie dog hunting within a designated portion of the Buffalo Gap National Grassland situated in the southwestern region of South Dakota. The region, also known as the Conata Basin, is approximately 125 square miles across Jackson and Pennington counties. Notably, this area serves as crucial habitat for the reintroduction of the endangered black-footed ferret species of which prairie dogs are it's main source of food. The map below describes the permanently banned prairie dog hunting areas.



This regulatory decision also marks a departure from the Forest Service's historical practice of recurrently reissuing temporary prohibitions on prairie dog hunting in the Conata Basin area, a practice initiated in 2018 with successive 30-day extensions. South Dakota Farm Bureau submitted a letter during the rulemaking process elevating the concerns about a permanent ban. To read South Dakota Farm Bureau's comments, please click the link below.

Click [here](#) to read SDFB's comments on the issue.

## **30x30 "Conservation and Stewardship Atlas" Released**

The Biden administration released the live version of the American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas (Atlas). This Atlas is intended to be the baseline for measuring the Administration's goal of conserving 30 percent of America's lands and waters by 2030.

The Atlas includes a framework for categorizing conservation and restoration, and characterizes “Permanently Protected Areas,” “Additional Conserved Areas” and “Areas with conservation actions for additional, review, information and data development”. USDA conservation programs are listed under the latter two categories.

The Atlas is not part of a formal rulemaking and does not require any specific action to be taken on private or public lands as a result of its unveiling. However, it provides a lens through which land and water use are viewed as being part of “conservation and restoration” or not, and that could impact policies at the federal or state level or activities of conservation-related non-governmental organizations.

To view the Atlas, please click [here](#).

### **APHIS To Require Electronic Animal ID for Certain Cattle and Bison**

Recently, USDA’s APHIS issued an amendment to require electronic animal ID to its animal disease traceability regulations for certain cattle and bison. According to USDA, the rule is designed to implement a modern animal disease traceability system that tracks animals from birth to slaughter using affordable technology that allows for quick tracing of sick and exposed animals to stop disease spread. As a result of requiring the tags, USDA will continue to provide tags to producers free of charge.

It is important to note that the final rule applies to all sexually intact cattle and bison 18 months of age or older, all dairy cattle, cattle and bison of any age used for rodeo or recreation events, and cattle or bison of any age used for shows or exhibitions.

The rule requires official ear tags to be visually and electronically readable for official use for interstate movement of certain cattle and bison, and revises and clarifies certain record requirements related to cattle.

To view a copy of the rule, please click [here](#). A copy of this rule may be viewed today, and the rule will be published in the Federal Register in the coming weeks. This rule will be effective 180 days after publication in the Federal Register.

To learn more about animal disease traceability and how APHIS responds to animal disease outbreaks, visit [www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov).

For information on how to obtain these free tags, please see [APHIS’ Animal Disease Traceability webpage](#).

### **Contact for Questions**

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