

Black-footed ferret kits found in Logan County

A survey by federal biologists found four litters of endangered black-footed ferret on a ranch in Logan County and at least one on the Nature Conservancy's Smoky Valley Ranch.

On Aug. 22, wildlife experts found four litters of wild-born ferrets in Logan County.

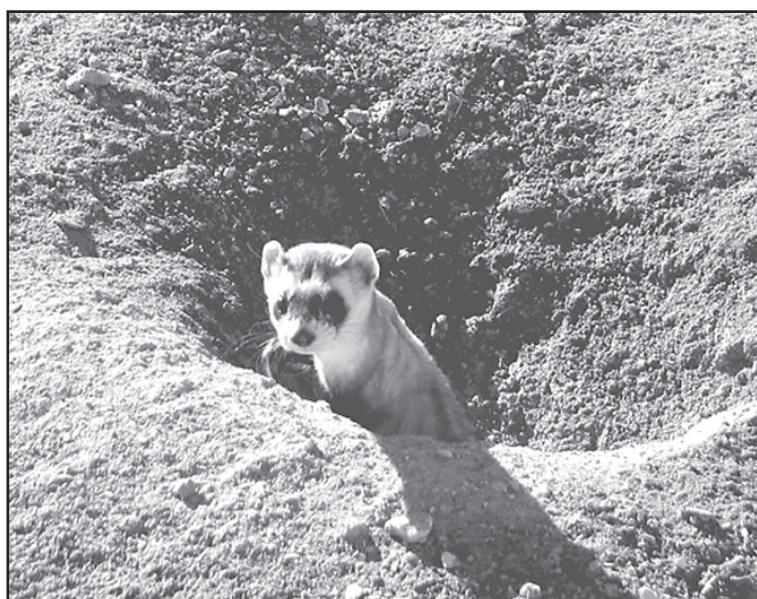
Larry Haverfield, who lives south of Russell Springs and is one of the landowners working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reintroduce the ferrets, said he was pleased they had found the ferret kits, but the wildlife experts were disappointed they were unable to catch any of the little guys.

The litters mark a step forward for the ferret reintroduction program. In December 2007, 10 ferrets were released onto Smoky Valley Ranch and 14 on lands owned by Haverfield and Gordon Barnhardt, as part of a reintroduction plan by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The ferrets are considered one of the most endangered mammals in North America, and the reintroduction marked the first time wild ferrets had been documented on Kansas soil in 50 years.

"This is great news for all the partners involved with the reintroduction and for the public. We all hoped the reintroduction would be successful, but these are complex initiatives" said Rob Manes, director of conservation for the Nature Conservancy's Kansas Chapter. "The discovery of these kits indicates that successes are possible."

Over a week, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service workers surveyed Smoky Valley Ranch and the Logan County reintroduction sites to determine how many ferrets were present after the spring whelping season. A total of four litters was found. Biologists say black-footed ferret litters may contain as many as four kits.



A black-footed ferret poked his head out of a burrow in Logan County where four families of kits were found during a survey in August. The ferrets had been reintroduced in two areas of the county in December by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Photo by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Haverfield said Sunday he has gone out spotting the ferrets since the survey and has found a couple of them.

He said the dispute about the prairie dogs and ferrets with his neighbors and Logan County continues. He said the county had hired an exterminator to poison the barriers around his property in August, and with all the green grass, he believed it has not done any good. He said Logan County sent him a bill for \$4,800, and he is talking to his attorney about not paying it.

"I have asked the county in the past to poison the barriers in the fall, when it will do some good," Haverfield said, "but this was a waste of time and chemicals."

Haverfield said a lawsuit filed by 13 of his neighbors was tossed out of court, but he said the neighbors may plan to appeal the decision.

He said the Fish and Wildlife Service still plans to bring about 30

more ferrets to the area in October in the second of a five-year reintroduction project.

Ferrets live and rear their young in prairie-dog burrows and depend on prairie dogs as their main food source. The kits are usually born in May or June and do not come above ground for the first six weeks. The Fish and Wildlife Service wanted to measure the success of the reintroduction before the kits mature and move to other prairie dog burrow, said Mike LeValley, service field supervisor for the federal wildlife agency.

The nocturnal black-footed ferret, which weighs no more than three pounds full grown and measures less than two feet, has been at the brink of extinction in recent decades due to disease, prairie-dog control programs, loss of native grasslands and a steep decline in the number of prairie dogs, their main food source.

County to poison prairie dogs this fall

By Pat Schiefen

pschiefen@nwkansas.com

A dozen or so land owners were at the final meeting of the month for the Sherman County Commissioners on Friday morning at the court house to talk about prairie dog control.

The land owners — members of the county prairie dog committee — were there to talk about using poisoned bait to kill prairie dogs. The commissioners asked for their help to identify problem areas. The county agreed to pay one-third of the cost for the land owners to participate in the program.

"We know the program works," said cattleman Ron Schilling from Edson.

The commissioners decided to send a letter out the end of September to let those land owners know they need to control their population of prairie dogs.

If the poisoning is done right in the fall all it takes is cleanup in the spring, said Buffalo Guy Ken Klemm. We will always have problems with property bordering on the state line and county lines.

"The land owners have 30 days to respond to the letter with payment or compliance,"

said County Attorney Bonnie Selby.

"If contacted most will treat the prairie dogs," said Daryl West, county noxious weed director, and county prairie dog control person.

He said the cost of the poisoned bait went up six percent. It costs \$30 per hour per machine for the county to put out the bait. The county has two machines West said.

"Some have good intentions, just not getting it done," said Brent Flanders of the Kuhrt Ranch.

"It is critical for everyone to poison in the same two weeks," said another land owner.

"If we get the prairie dogs beat back to the borders and keep them beat down that is the best use of county money," said Commissioner Chuck Thomas.

Klemm offered to help apply the bait if the land owner will buy.

"Let's get it done," said Klemm.

"We appreciate everything the county has done for us," said Schilling.

Sherman County Clerk Janet Rumpel said the county has bought a total of \$43,000 worth of prairie dog bait this year leaving \$19,000 left for the rest of the year.

College asks city to help with utilities

By Tom Betz

nibetz@nwkansas.com

Sewer lines have been moved and concrete poured for an addition to the Northwest Kansas Technical College student village, but the college president is asking the city to consider taking on some of the cost for water lines and electrical service.

Ken Clouse explained the proposed development of the Village III student housing complex to the north of the existing units at the city meeting on Aug. 18.

City commissioners listened to Clouse outline why he felt the city ought to help with the project, then said they would get some figures from the city staff and let him know what they could do.

Clouse said the college plans to build three six-room housing units, with one six-room unit this year and two more a year or two later.

"I am here to seek assistance to move water to the Village III location," he said. "The main water lines runs to the east of the high school track. From a layman's view, I don't see a need for a fire hydrant because (there is one) at 13th."

He said Charlie Bandel, city electrical supervisor, had told him that the complex would need 1,000-amp service and that to run it under-

ground would cost about \$20,000.

"I am asking for consideration from the city about these two issues," he said. "The college spends about \$120,000 on electricity and water each year."

"We believe we are a considerable economic impact for the community. I am seeking your assistance and would appreciate anything you can do."

Commissioner Josh Dechant asked if the plan was to go straight east to get the water. Clouse said it is.

Mayor Rick Billinger asked about the size of the water line the college would tap into. Rich Simon, public works director, said it is a 10-inch line. He said he would like to see an eight-inch line put in to the expansion. He said the city did a six-inch line for the diesel technology building extension to be able to handle a fire sprinkler system.

Simon said he wants to have a fire hydrant near the housing to be able to flush the line. He said the ideal thing would be to have the lines looped, but did not see that happening.

Billinger asked if Simon had a fire hydrant that could be installed. Simon said he had a six-inch hydrant, and the cost would be about \$4,000 to \$5,000.

Simon asked Clouse how the

students would get to the new housing units. Clouse said they would extend the existing parking lot to the north, but not to open any streets.

Dechant asked Clouse what size of water line he was thinking the area needed. Clouse said he felt a four-inch line would meet the needs. Simon said he did not know what it would cost.

Dechant asked if the fire hydrant could be put in later.

"It could be," Simon said, "but it is better to do it while you have it dug out. That way, you get it done the first time."

Commissioner John Garcia asked Clouse what he felt the electrical needs would be.

"I think it will take about 200 amps per unit," Clouse said. "It will come in underground. The price tag is higher for that, right at \$20,000. That was a bit of a shocker to me when I heard that."

Clouse said with the utility costs he was quoted, he was not feeling that Goodland is extremely friendly for people who want to build here.

"You are exactly right," Billinger said, "and it is something we have talked about. I agree it is not right, and you hit the nail on the head."

"I know we got burned on a couple of deals a few years ago, but we are not helping people build here."

"From my vantage point we

would like to see the town grow," Clouse said, "and we really need that to happen. We need each other. Just a point of view I have."

He said he could come back with more specific answers, but wanted to let the commissioners now what they are talking about.

Commissioner Dave Daniels asked what the projected use is for the units.

"This is a six bedroom unit," Clouse said, "and I am sure it will fill up."

Simon said he would get the commission some figures on the water line.

Billinger asked Clouse about the college enrollment this year.

Clouse said it looks like we were going to be up, but had nine no shows and another withdrew, so it would probably be about even with last year, around 250 to 260.

"We are double bunked in some of our Village units," Clouse said. "That is not what we had planned or what we want to do."

Billinger asked if the student housing units would be built through the college building trades programs.

"Yes," Clouse said, "We will do all the work except the concrete. The electrical (department) will wire the building. We will hire out the bricklaying and landscaping."

matters of record

District Traffic

The following fines have been paid to the Sherman County District Court. All ages are at the time of the ticket.

July 10: Paul A. Christensen, 68, Cheyenne, Wyo., \$225 for violating motor carrier safety rules and regulations, log book not consistent.

Nibras A. Hassan, 29, Blaine, Minn., \$175 for violating motor carrier safety rules and regulations, 14-hour rule.

July 11: Beverly E. Albrecht, 65, Santa Fe, N.M., \$135 for speeding, 85/70.

Brett L. Almy, 50, Lakewood, Colo., \$141 for speeding, 86/70.

Edward A. Genereaux, 53, Beiseker, Alberta, Canada, \$175 for not paying United Carrier fees.

Erin D. House, 36, Riverside, Calif., \$175 for violating motor car-

rier safety rules and regulations, not registering with United Carrier.

July 12: Amy N. Idano, 30, LaCajon, Calif., \$147 for speeding.

July 13: James W. Cook, 59, Double Springs, Ala., \$225 for violating motor carrier safety rules and regulations, false log.

July 14: Kevin M. Bennetts, 48,

Lakewood, Colo., \$175 for violating motor carrier safety rules and regulations, not paying United Carrier fees.

Lawrence A. Cooper, 26, Warsaw, Mo., \$175 for violating motor carrier safety rules and regulations, not paying United Carrier fees.

Jeffery B. Harris, 53, Pine Bluff,

Ark., \$130 for violating motor carrier safety rules and regulations, not paying United Carrier fees.

July 15: Matthew David Argetsinger, 30, East Jordan, Mich., \$175 for violating motor carrier safety rules and regulations, not paying United Carrier fees.

corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

IMPROVEMENT GRANTS AVAILABLE

The Sherman County Economic Development Office is offering 2 separate grants for Sherman County residents for improvements to housing or businesses. If you are interested in this program, please stop by the office at 104 E. 10th for requirements and application. Applications must be received by 4 p.m. on September 19. For questions, please call 785-890-3743

Classifieds

work!

899-2338

Shape Up Sisters has a new name!

Changing Lifestyles

1224 Main, Goodland (785) 890-7512

Come in and register your thumb print from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Sept. 2-5.

We will be open 24 hours a day starting Sept. 5!
NO MORE EXCUSES!

We wish to thank everyone for being patient while we make this transition.

A more Flexible way to get in shape.

A New Star on the Horizon



The Goodland Star-News