

The Black-footed Ferret was listed as endangered in 1967.

Ferrets live in the burrows made by prairie dogs. Prairie dogs are the main food source for ferrets. **In Texas**, the prairie dog population became smaller in number because of changes on the land. As the prairie dog towns disappeared, so did the Black-footed Ferret.

Black-footed Ferret ...A True Story

A ferret female and her young need at least **100 acres** of prairie dog burrows!

The prairie dog communities have declined and are now separated by areas of farmland. This separation caused problems for the ferrets.

If prairie dog communities are too far apart, young ferrets searching for a home can be eaten by owls, eagles, hawks, coyotes, foxes and bobcats.



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Historical range (shaded) and last known current range (•) of the Black-footed Ferret.

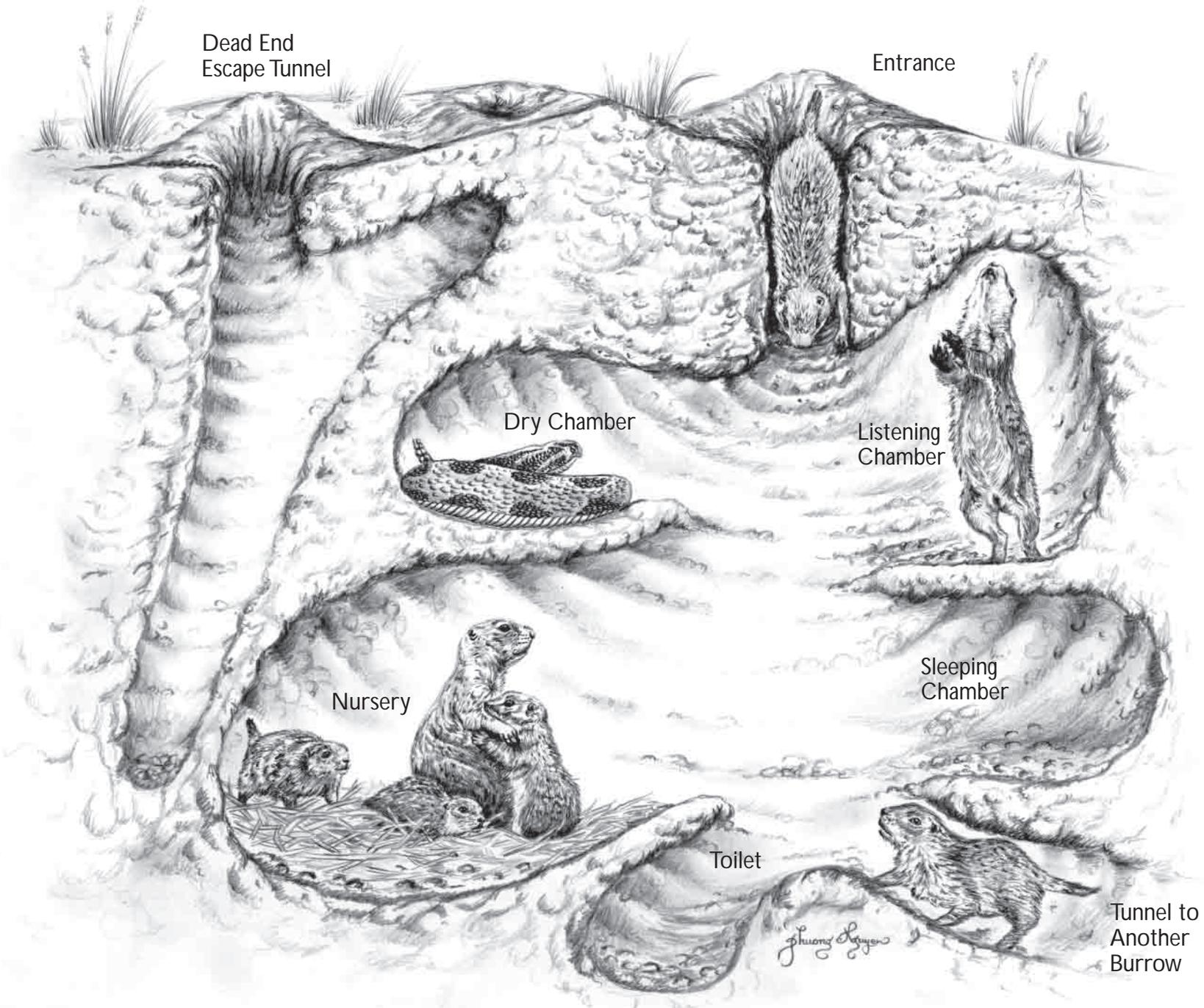
Black-footed Ferrets and prairie dogs are an example of animal communities that are part of an ecosystem. If one population declines then it affects the population of another animal or plant in the ecosystem.

How do you think the decline of prairie dog towns affected the Black-footed Ferret?

How did the ferrets get enough food?

How did they protect their young?

**Example
of a
Prairie
Dog Town**





The ferret is tan with a black face "mask" and a dark "saddle" on its back. It has black feet and legs and a black-tipped tail.

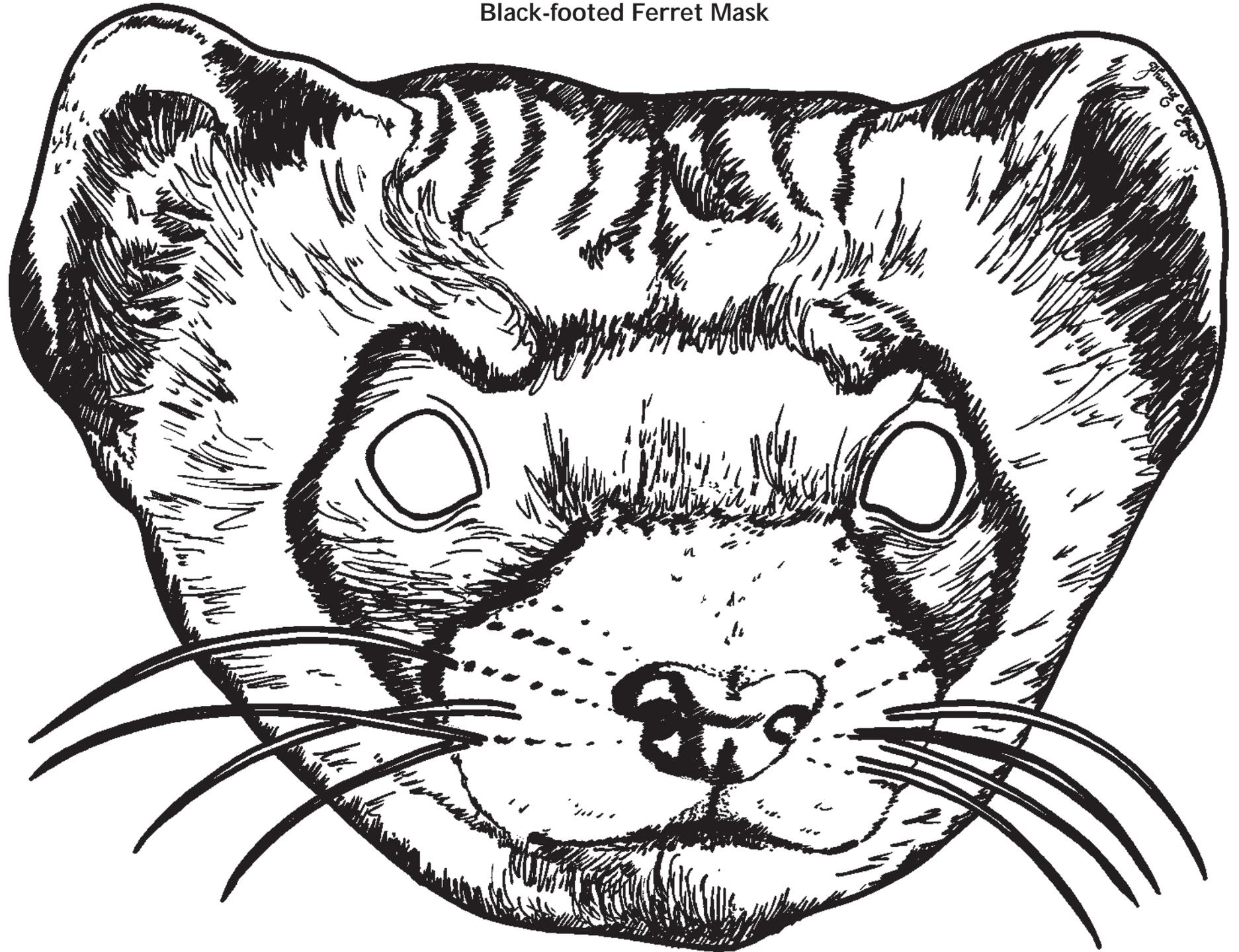
Black-footed ferret and prairie dog masks

1. Color and cut out the masks in this section and become a Black-footed Ferret or a Prairie Dog for a "partner talk"!
2. After you have cut out and colored your masks, you can hold them up to your face with your hands. (You could also tape a straw, pencil, or popsicle stick to the bottom of the mask to use as a grip.)
3. After your mask is on, you are ready for your "partner talk."
Ideas for your "partner talk":
 - a. Discuss the loss of your animal community.
 - b. How did it affect you?
 - c. What can people do to fix your problem?

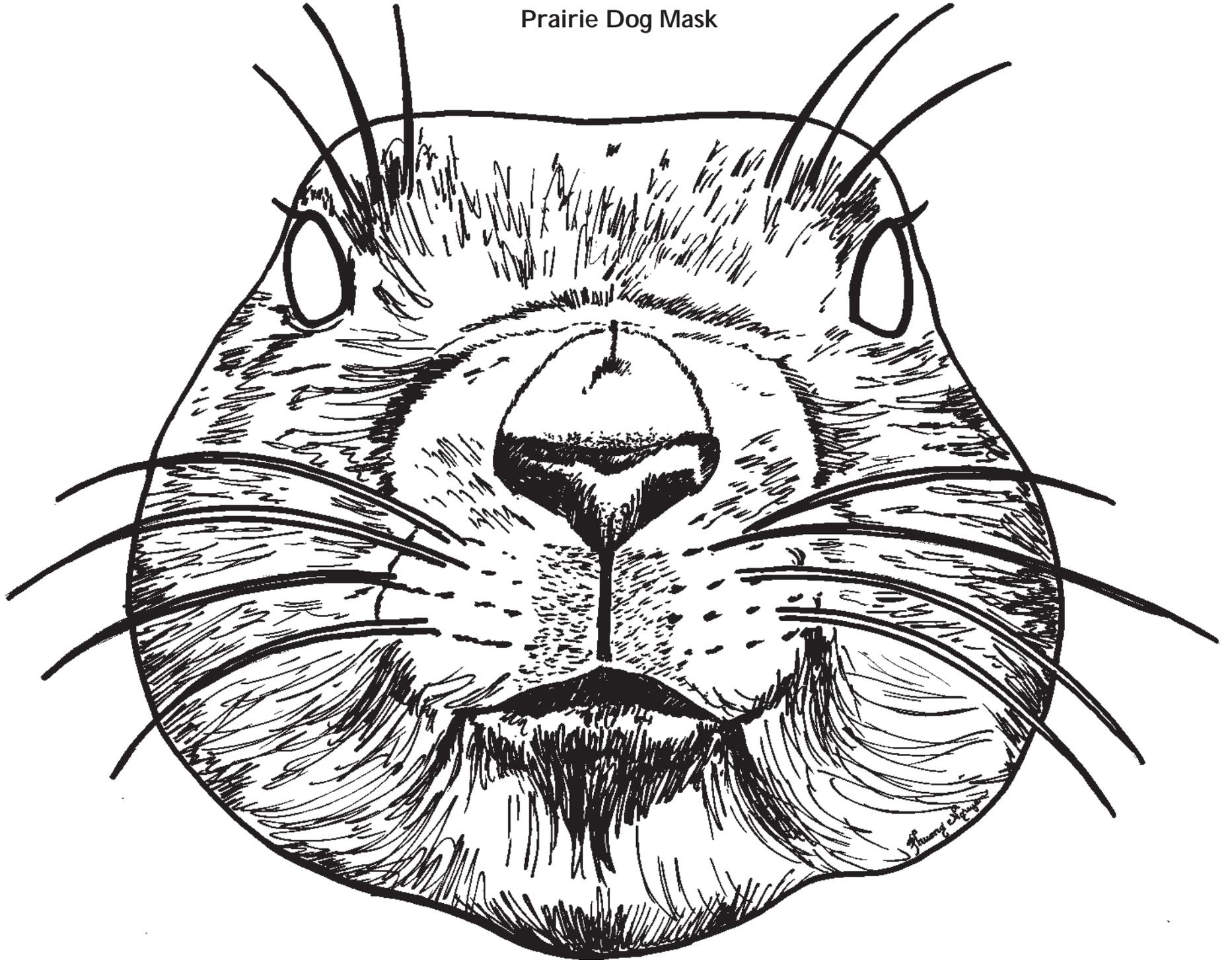


Prairie dogs in Texas have a black-tipped tail and are yellowish brown in color.

Black-footed Ferret Mask



Prairie Dog Mask





Draw your own prairie dog town — be sure to add a Black-footed Ferret in a burrow.