

National Forest Advisory Board Meeting

January 8, 2020

Mystic Ranger District

Members Present:

Chairman Bob Burns, Vice Chairman Danielle Wiebers, Dave Hague, Alice Allen, David Wolff, David Miller, Paul Pierson, Dick Brown, Dick Terry, Ben Wudtke, Corissa Busse, Rachel Day, Lloyd La Croix, Michael Gollither, Tony Ortiz, Greg Josten, John Gomez, Kevin Robling

Members Absent:

Lauris Tysdal, Travis Bies, Patty Brown, Alan Johnson, Mary Zimmerman, Jennifer Hart, Wayne Garman, Keith Haiar, Richard Hanson, Ben Rhodd, Dennis Yellow Thunder, Jessica Crowder, David Johnson,

Forest Service Leadership & Speaker Representatives:

Andrew Johnson, Acting Forest Supervisor; Jerry Krueger, Deputy Forest Supervisor; Scott Jacobson, Beth Doten, Twila Morris, Steve Kozel, Jim Gubbels, Mike Gosse, Ralph Adam, Brad Phillips, Karl Emanuel, and approximately 10 other Forest Service employees.

Others:

Approximately 15 members of the public were in attendance. Three Congressional Representatives were also in attendance; Mark Haugen (Thune – R, South Dakota), Katie Murray (Johnson – R, South Dakota) and DeAnna Kay (Enzi – R, Wyoming).

Introduction & Welcome:

Burns: Welcome to the January NFAB meeting. We'll start with introductions.

Krueger: Happy New Year. Mark Van Every retired on December 31st after 37 years; I thank him for his service. The Acting Regional Forester, brought in Andrew Johnson to fill in behind Mark for four months. Andrew is in day three on the Black Hills, so I'll be the DFO today.

Johnson: Andrew Johnson, I'll be Acting Forest Supervisor through the end of April while the Agency works to fill the position. I am normally the Forest Supervisor on the Bighorn NF. Excited to be here today, and would like to say how lucky the Black Hills is to have this group to help us through our issues; there are not many of these Boards in the Nation, and those of us who don't have one wish we did.

Approve the January Agenda:

Burns: The first item on the agenda is to approve today's agenda. Motion made by Dick Terry second by Paul Pierson all in favor say aye, opposed nay; agenda is approved.

Approve the November Meeting Notes:

Burns: Motion to approve the November meeting notes made by Dick Brown second by David Miller all in favor say aye, opposed nay; November meeting notes are approved.

House Keeping:

Krueger: Restrooms out both doors of the conference room. There are exits in the front and the back of the building; in case of an emergency, we'll exit out the front of the building the way you came in; and gather out on the far parking lot.

Meeting Protocols:

Burns: The Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board was established, consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, to provide advice and recommendations to the Black Hills National Forest on a broad range of Forest issues. The Board consists of 16 volunteer members representing areas of interest each has a substitute. If the primary is not in attendance today, I ask that the substitute join us at the table to ensure their area of interest is represented in discussions.

I encourage everyone that is not on the Board, that has a specific concern to contact their primary representative to get their issue on a future agenda, however we do a lot time at the end of the meeting to allow anyone in the audience three minutes to make comments to the Board on items listed on today's agenda. I would only ask that you direct your comments to the Board. If you have specific issues that require a back and forth discussion with Forest Service Staff or Board members, please reach out to them after the meeting.

Hot Topics

Legislative Updates – Federal

Burns: With that, we'll move on to the Legislative updates; we'll start with Mark Haugen.

Mark Haugen, Office of Senator Thune:

- The Senator was here last week for several visits. He visited the B9-Creations which is a business that started at the SD School of Mines and now is worldwide. B9-Creations makes the printers and scanners for 3-D printing. Visited with the RC Journal Editorial Board, spoke at the Rotary luncheon, and met with the Elevate RC Board.
- Passed 12 appropriations bills before the holiday break.
 - Increases for National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, FSA Offices, Wildland Fire, and Hazardous Fuels Reduction.
 - Also funded was the B-21 Bomber program, boarder wall, and Ag disaster relief. Another bill was the Prohibition Against Closing VA Facilities – protection for Hot Springs VA. National Defense Authorization Act passed which included a pay raise for troops. Good news on the trade front; the USMCA passed the Finance Committee yesterday, which locks down tariff free exports to beef.
 - President Trump and the President of China will meet to sign the Phase 1 Agreement; the deal with China that largely affects the grain markets.

- Also on the Trade front, they recently announced an agreement with Japan which removes tariffs on about \$7 billion worth of goods. The EU voted to grant the USA a portion of their beef.
- Senator Thune's Trade Act, the robo call bill got passed and signed by the President; more teeth to try to get rid of robo calls. Won't stop them all.
- The Senate confirmed 187 judges before Christmas break.

Krueger: Regarding the increase in wildland fire funding included in the omnibus that was passed; this is the follow through on the fire funding fix. You've heard us talk about this; it removes the obligation from the Forest Service to fund wildland firefighting costs above a certain level. Every August, we were in a position where we had run out of wildland fire funding and had to take it from other programs like Recreation, etc., and this fixes that. So full credit to the Congressional Staff for fixing that, it's a big deal to this Agency.

Katie Murray, Office of Representative Johnson:

- Year in review:
 - 358 meetings with South Dakotans in DC.
 - 297 business tours in State.
 - 21 town halls in State; as well as tele-town halls.
 - Took a couple of fact finding missions; to Israel, and to the boarder.
- Before congress left for the holiday break, they passed the USMCA Trade Deal, the Omnibus Budget, the US National Authorization Defense Act, and they did get impeachment through, so that shows they can get things done!
- This week the House is considering a couple of 5G Bills, and they are considering a PFAS Bill; this is about a contaminate from fire foam that is affecting wells.
- Our office has been monitoring what is going on with Iran; rapidly changing environment. They have talked about bringing either a War Powers Bill or a new Authorized Use of Military Force.
- Dusty will be at the Stock Show the end of the month, January 31 and February 1.

DeAnna Kay, Office of Senator Enzi:

- Bi-Partisan Congressional Budget Reform Act was passed out of the Senate Budget Committee, this is the first reform of the budget since 1990. This Act helps make sure the Federal Government is spending more efficiently. The Senator is going to continue to spread that word that we do not have a revenue problem, we have a spending problem.
- The Senator also co-sponsored the updated version of the bi-partisan Prevent Government Shutdowns Act.
- The President did sign his legislation to help protect bow owners who travel through National Parks; it was illegal to take your bow through a National Park.

Burns: We're on to our State representatives, David isn't here, is there anything from Wyoming?

Dick Terry: The State is working to acquire a piece of property from the Moskee Land Corporation. Currently in the public comment period which ends the 14th. This would add another 5,000 acres of land to the State bordering the National Forest.

Andrew Johnson: Our Acting Regional Forester is meeting with Governor Gordon next week

to talk about a variety of issues, one of which would be, we are getting close to signing a Shared Stewardship Agreement with the State of Wyoming, which will set up a path forward on how we will work more closely to implement our common goals.

Brown: How many acres are in the Moskee deal, and is there a link to where we can give comments?

Terry: The link is in the Office of State Lands and Investments website for comments, and the property that would be gained is about 5,000 acres.

Brown: From a sportsman's perspective, we're excited about this. Is it managed by the Wyoming Game and Fish?

Terry: It will be under the State Lands and Investments and will become Trust Land, which will be open to hunting. We will take comments from the Game & fish, but it will not be under the Game and Fish.

Burns: With that, would anyone like to give a South Dakota?

Kevin Robling: Nearing the Legislative Session; the State address is next week, the Governor will give her address and then the session will kick off. The Department of GF&P will bring one bill regarding zebra mussels; trying to slow the spread of zebra mussels. Plenty of bills that will be on the LRC website about what is happening day to day.

Burns: Was the trapping a one year thing?

Robling: The Nest Predator Bounty Program (NPBP) will be discussed at the January 16th Commission Meeting in Pierre. Governor Noem implemented a program that focused on removing nest predators and getting families outdoors, which was a big piece of the program. Participation in trapping went down in South Dakota, it's kind of a lost heritage. To curtail that participation rate, the NPBP was launched, we had over 3,000 participants, by the end of the Program, 54,000 tails were turned in, and \$10.00 per tail was given. The Department feels it was a very successful program, we had a public approval rating of 84%, good program with good results. The commission will guide us through to determine what we do from here. This is a State program, not related to the National Forest in any way.

Forest Service Hot Topics – DFO Jerry Krueger

Deer Valley Land Conveyance

Krueger: This is a transfer of ownership; 110 acre piece of ground on the north side of Custer. Working with the General Accounting Office who handles sales for the Federal Government. This has been in auction status now for six weeks, closing next week. Soft closure, meaning if a bid comes in within 24 hours of the closure date and time, the auction is automatically extended 24 hours. There are three separate parcels, available for public viewing; the location has been published. Some concern about the bids that were placed, initially very low. There is always a real estate valuation done, and if the bids don't rise to the level of the valuation, we would retain the property.

Custer Airport Land Conveyance

Krueger: Sixty five acres of ground on the Custer County Airport; it is the ground that the middle of the runway sits on. This has been in a special use permit with Custer County, and the County is interested in acquiring the deed to this land so they can qualify for grants from FAA for small airports. We have worked with partners and stakeholders to pass legislation directing us to convey the property to Custer County, for its highest and best used value. Custer County now needs to complete the survey and real estate assessment.

Bearlodge Office Purchase:

Krueger: The purchase of our Ranger District office in Sundance Wyoming. This was on a lease that started in the early 90's, the lease ran out and we continued to renew, we elected to purchase the property. Paperwork was signed December 19th. We will be upgrading the property for public health and safety.

F3-Gold:

Krueger: We've talked here about the proposal from F3 Gold to do exploratory drilling in the Jenny Gulch area. F3-Gold conveyed a Plan of Operations to the Mystic Ranger District over a year ago. Given the interest in the project, Mark Van Every decided that we would accomplish an EA in spite of the fact that it was eligible for a categorical exclusion. The reason being were concerns over water quality and potential effects. We accepted the proposed plan of operations under NEPA; the Company has hired a third party contractor and they're in the midst of conducting the EA. All of the product for the EA from the contractor will be evaluated by Forest Service personnel for adequacy and that they've addressed the concerns that folks have; and that we land in a place where concerns have been addressed or mitigated before they would be authorized to proceed. No drill rigs up there on Forest Service land, we're in the very early stages of this process. We have a public meeting here in this room at Mystic from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 16th. The public meeting will be an open house format where we will have folks that are able to speak to interested parties about the proposal and forms will be available if folks would like to provide written input. Electronic comments are also acceptable. There is a 30 day public comment period open now.

Gomez: The EA is running right now by the contractor; when do you expect them to finish, and then what is the next step?

Krueger: They need a field season, so it won't be done before this summer. The next step is, F3-Gold will get with their contractor and will evaluate their work, once it clears them, they'll submit it to us, and our Specialist will review that document, with the District Ranger initially deciding if it's acceptable. If it's accepted, we would then move forward with the draft document being released to the public for public comment. We would then evaluate the comments, then we would go through another final EA which would also be available for public comment. There would then be an objection period before a decision is signed.

Burns: I know there was a press release, but is there a mechanism to notify adjacent land owners who would be most affected by this?

Gubbels: Letters have gone out, we'll be having our public meeting, and the information is posted on the Forest website, and it's on twitter.

Brown: Could the Board could get a copy of that press release, we could take it forward to our user groups.

Jacobson: We will send a link to the website with all of the documents to the Board.

Gomez: Believe me, every resident knows about it.

Krueger: During this process we'll also engage in Government to Government consultation with Tribal Governments.

Pierson: The EA is only for the exploratory drilling correct? But it qualified for a CE?

Krueger: Yes, that is correct.

FIA Analysis

Krueger: Ongoing effort to complete the Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA), it is a forest inventory process that is handled by our Research branch of the Forest Service. FIA has been completing a survey of over 400 research plots on the Black Hills; that data collection was completed in September. The files are not yet available. Once they are available on the public facing piece of FIA, which is that they are cleared for public information, the Forest Service will then roll out that information because of a collaboration with South Dakota and Wyoming State Forestry, the Timber Industry, and the Forest Service, we have specific attributes about the Forest condition that we are investigating. Once we have the FIA data, we will roll all of that out to the interested stake holders, and to members of the NFAB. A stakeholder meeting will occur no sooner than two weeks after the release of that data but no later than the end of February.

Wolff: At previous meetings, Mark gave updates on the bison round up, do you have an update?

Krueger: We had 72 bison belonging to Pe'Sla on the Forest. They made a labor intensive effort to attempt to complete the roundup. Right before Christmas, we were down to five bison on the landscape. On Monday the 6th, we received a word that they all went back out again. There were some that were transported to Rosebud, but there were still 28 left and they all went back out. The work is being done again to round them up. (UPDATE 13 January 2020: We were notified that the bison were back on Pe'Sla and they will be transported to Rosebud).

Robling: One of our snowmobile trail groomers did see 16 of them north of Rochford on the snowmobile trail. We hope none of them get hit by a snowmobiler.

Regular Agenda

Annual Ethics Training – Scott Jacobson

Burns: With that, we're on to our annual ethics training.

Jacobson: This is an annual requirement by FACA, please read the Ethics Training document and hang on to this document for future reference.

Orientation Topic: Cave Resources and Closure Orders – Brad Phillip

Krueger: Thanks Brad Phillips for being here for our monthly orientation. We are proud of the work that Brad and other folks are doing to conserve our cave resources on the Black Hills. Everyone understands the attachment that folks have to an internationally known cave system. This causes issues for us, both in the conservation of those caves, and with our obligation under the Endangered Species Act to conserve Northern Long Eared Bat because of White Nose Syndrome. Folks like Brad who have a passion and interest have helped us lead the way in our cave and species recognition, we want to recognize what Brad does and how important it is to us.

Brad Phillips: I'm joined by Karl Emanuel who is a geologist who can answer questions about cave formation.

[Power-Point Presentation]

Caves of the Black Hills



Limestone geology:

- The caves of the Black Hills are primarily found in the upper half of the Mississippian Pahasapa limestone. All Black Hills caves have formed in this layer 300 to 600 feet thick. Originally it was laid down on a shallow sea bottom about 300 million years ago.

Cave Types:

- Lava Tubes
- Erosional Caves
- Sea Caves
- Glacier Caves
- Solution Caves

Paha Sapa Grotto:

- Approx. 300 (known) caves
- BHNH: 130 caves known

36 CFR- Part 290 – Cave Resources Management

Section 290.3 – Nomination, evaluation, and designation of significant caves.

(c) Criteria:

- (1) **biota**, (2) cultural
- (3) geologic/mineralogical/paleontological,
- (4) hydrologic, (5) recreational,
- (6) educational or scientific.

Confidentiality of significant cave location information.

“Authorized official” has been delegated to the Forest Supervisor.

Caving ethics

Unfortunately, not everyone respects the *‘leave no trace’* policy:



Forest Plan Direction:

GOAL 1 – Protect basic soil, air, water and cave resources

Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988. (36 CFR, Part 290)

Standard 1401- For caves that have been determined significant or that have not been evaluated for significance *36CFR 290.3 (c) or (d)*, manage to protect or enhance biological, cultural, ecological, hydrological, and physical characteristics with the following actions:

- a)** Avoid ground disturbance within 100 feet of an opening of a natural cave. (Standard)
- b)** Take measures to prevent human-caused changes in the cave ecosystem, water, sediment, nutrient, chemical, airflow, humidity, or temperature regimes. (Guideline)
- c)** Gating of caves will only be done where it is the only viable option to protect cave resources. If a gate is utilized, it will allow free passage of bats, small animals, air and water. (Guideline)

Forest Plan Objectives:

109. Allow public use of caves unless restrictions are necessary to protect values present in significant caves. Work cooperatively with agencies, research institutions, cave interest groups and the public for cave resource use, scientific study, significance evaluation, safety, protection and management.

110. Manage the majority of caves as “wild” caves, with no modifications or facilities to aid or impede use.

111. Determine significance of all caves.

112. Manage significant caves using site-specific criteria in accordance with the Federal Cave Resources protection Act 1988.

113. Apply for mineral withdrawals to protect significant cave ecosystems and resources.

Bats:

Standard 3207 – Where caves or abandoned mines serve as nurseries or hibernacula for bats, vegetative changes within 500 feet of the opening area allowed only if needed to maintain bat habitat or if topography or other features protect the openings from disturbance.

Standard 3208 – Use seasonal closures in caves or abandoned mines that are known bat nurseries or hibernacula and there are identified conflicts with people.

Standard 3209 – Evaluate abandoned mines for bat habitat potential prior to closure. If it is necessary to close mines or caves that function as bat habitat, closures shall be designed so that bat movement is not impeded.



Status of White Nose Syndrome

The fungus that is the cause of WNS (Pd) was detected in the Black Hills in 2018. The Regional WNS Environmental Assessment (2013)

Tier II - all caves would be closed unless identified as targeted opening.



Regional Cave Closure Order

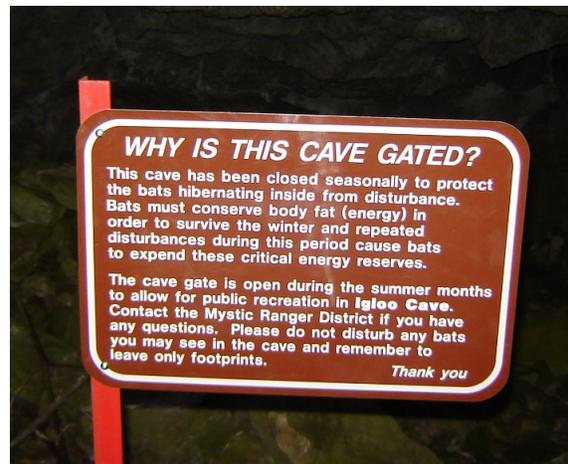
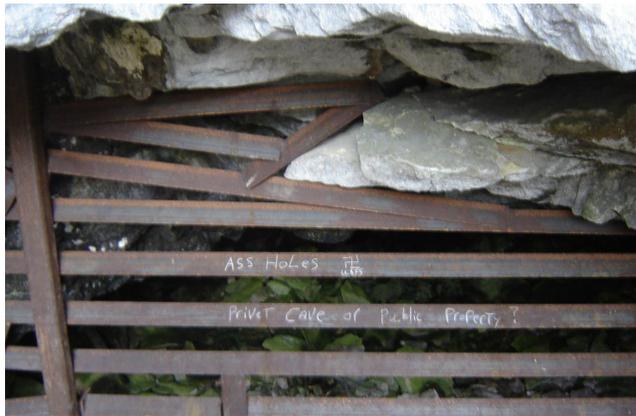
Black Hills NF is currently covered under this Rocky Mountain Regional order (R02-2019-01). *In effect until 7/31/2021, or until terminated.*

It closes listed caves used by bats, especially as hibernation sites, to recreational caving. Also to reduce the likelihood of inadvertent spread (by humans) of the fungus that causes White-Nose Syndrome.

21 BBNF caves are listed in this closure order. A few are year-round closures, most are hibernation seasonal closures (Oct. 1st - May 31st).

Recreational Caving

Cave gates are all about the bats. Closing them is a sensitive issue for some cavers. Only seven caves have bat gates. Some are opened for seasonal (summer) visitation.



Ongoing Cave Projects on Forest

North Cave Exploration - Paha Sapa Grotto (NSS), **Rainbow Cave** – paleo-dig (Mammoth Site)



Paha Sapa Grotto

BHNF has been in Participating Agreement with the Grotto for many years. One of the more recent products: a re-survey/mapping of our caves.

FS/Grotto Cave restoration project:



Boy Scouts – Caving Program

Under a Special Use Permit (HCRD)
Plan of Operations Includes:

- Timing of visits
- Decontamination
- Number of cavers each trip (limit)
- Safety, ethics, etc.

Wonderland Cave is located on FS land. Operated as a ‘show cave’ under permit.

Jewel Cave – 208.5 miles

Wind Cave - 153.6 miles

Interagency Cooperation

- ‘**Service First Agreement**’
- Pd/WNS Surveillance /testing
- Bat surveys/ habitat use
- Cave safety

South Dakota's Top 50 Longest and 25 Deepest Caves

Submitted by Marc Ohms

THE 50 LONGEST CAVES IN SOUTH DAKOTA

CAVE	LENGTH
1. Jewel Cave	163.06 miles
2. Wind Cave	139.83 miles
3. Stagebarn Crystal Cave	5.69 miles
4. Reed's Cave	4.29 miles
5. Bethlehem Cave	3.76 miles
6. Coyote Cave	1.02 miles
7. Black Hills Caverns	1.01 miles
8. Triple Threat Cave	4,552 feet
9. Beautiful Rushmore Cave	3,649 feet
10. Brooks Cave	3,455 feet
11. Goodhue Cave	2,655 feet
12. Mystic Cave	2,650 feet
13. Davenport Cave	2,549 feet
14. Porcupine Cave	2,513 feet
15. Sand Cave	2,353 feet
16. Crystal Cave	2,189 feet
17. Sitting Bull Cave	2,145 feet
18. Jasper Cave	1,616 feet
19. Wonderland Cave	1,414 feet
20. Button Ranch Cave	1,180 feet
21. Onyx Cave	812 feet
22. S & G Cave	734 feet
23. Cave 41	714 feet
24. Crow Peak Ice Cave	668 feet
25. Dahm Spring Cave	613 feet
26. King Tut Cave	583 feet
27. Potter's Cave	580 feet
28. Spring Cave	554 feet
29. Crater Ice Cave	505 feet
30. TaTanka Cave	494 feet
31. Williams Cave	485 feet
32. Hanging Rock Cave	470 feet
33. Bitch to Find Cave	401 feet
34. Popcorn Cave	394 feet
Bad Luck Cave	394 feet
35. Whitewood Crystal Cave	390 feet
36. Erskine Cave	385 feet
37. Rainbow Cave	358 feet
38. White Onyx Cave	330 feet
39. Estwing Cave	318 feet
Knifeblade Cave	318 feet
40. Buffalo Cave	309 feet

41. Packrat Cave	296 feet
42. Fake Snake Cave	285 feet
43. Reynolds Cave	267 feet
44. Crook Mountain Sink #1	260 feet
45. Galena Ice Cave	258 feet
46. White Gate Cave	243 feet
47. Silent Hill Cave	240 feet
48. Ice Cave	236 feet
49. Casino Cave	231 feet
50. Salamander Cave	230 feet
Classic Crack Cave	230 feet

THE 25 DEEPEST CAVES IN SOUTH DAKOTA

CAVE	DEPTH
1. Wind Cave	646 feet
2. Jewel Cave	631 feet
3. Stagebarn Cave	326 feet
4. Davenport Cave	320 feet
5. Crystal Cave	241 feet
6. Reed's Cave	222 feet
7. King Tut Cave	195 feet
8. Black Hills Caverns	184 feet
9. Goodhue Cave	180 feet
10. Bethlehem Cave	172 feet
11. Sand Cave	157 feet
12. Brooks Cave	142 feet
13. Sitting Bull Caverns	136 feet
14. Onyx Cave	134 feet
15. Jasper Cave	121 feet
16. Ta Tanka Cave	118 feet
17. Bitch to Find Cave	113 feet
18. Hanging Rock Cave	105 feet
19. Crater Ice Cave	103 feet
20. Wonderland Cave	101 feet
21. Coyote Cave	91 feet
22. Triple Threat Cave	90 feet
23. Spring Cave	85 feet
24. Reynolds Cave	83 feet
25. Cave 41	82 feet

Terry: Question about the White Nose Syndrome; we had the 4D Rule before WNS was here. Now that it's here, what kind of rules are there now for timber harvest?

Phillips: We're still operating under the Fish and Wildlife Service 4D rule. It hasn't impacted the program at all, because what we are doing in the few places that there are hibernation or maternity sites, it's so infrequent that it's a drop in the bucket as far as acreage. A lot of these limestone caves are in the Jasper fire area, so there are no trees out there anyway.

Terry: There was roosting in trees, how far away from hibernacula is there roosting?

Phillips: It's all a guess, the F&W has told us it is a quarter mile. If there is a maternity site, there is a quarter mile no cut, we protect them in the active season.

Krueger: I forgot to mention that Brad is the Wildlife Biologist on the Hell Canyon District in Custer.

Burns: On to our next topic, Mineral Withdrawal recommendation.

Follow Up on Mineral Withdrawal Recommendation – Jerry Krueger

Krueger: There continues to be interest in the proposed Mineral Withdrawal; we have been working on for this for a number of years. A draft Environmental Assessment draft has been accomplished. BLM manages the mineral estate for the Forest Service, and they reviewed our EA and asked us to redo our mineral potential report. We made the changes, and are now waiting to have a qualified geologist to spend time to update the report; once that occurs we'll resubmit to the BLM.

Burns: Any questions?

Motorized Use Video – “Know Before You Go” – Beth Doten

Burns: Let's get started back up with our Motorized Use video.

Jacobson: We've been working on a video about the OHV use on roads and trails on the Forest. We wanted to create a video that users could watch before they buy a permit so they'd have some knowledge about riding on the Forest, purchasing permits, use of the trails and roads, and a lot of other information that users would need before riding on the Forest. Ben Schumacher who is the Trails Technician on the Mystic District is the spokesperson and narrator on the video. The video will be shared far and wide on social media, South Dakota Tourism, etc. Beth did an awesome job on this, she is our chief photographer and editor.

[VIDEO]

Motorized Trail Strategy Recommendation – Alice Allen

Burns: Next up is the Motorized Trail Strategy Recommendation and Alice Allen.

Allen: Thanks to the Working Group Members, John Gomez, Kevin Robling, Ben Wudtke, Lauris Tysdal, and Dave Hague, it was a large time commitment.

[PowerPoint]

Background

- ✘ Travel Management Plan ROD Authorized development of a system of motorized trails including 663 miles trails that would provide users a variety of experiences by identifying trails open to all, trails for motorcycles, and trails for varying width of vehicles.

Process – February 2019

- The “ask” from FS:
- Recommendation on developing a motorized trail strategy – how can we make it work better?
- Review Trail conditions
- Review Business Plan
- Review Budget
- Recommendation on fees
- Recommendation on joining programs with the Nebraska NF

Process – October 2019

- How do we use the trail rangers to better educate OHV trail users to address unwanted behaviors such as mud-bogging?
- How should we organize the centralized OHV workforce?
- How can we best address commercial permits in terms of education and cost of the permits?
- Should we consider formal opening/closing dates for the OHV trails? Should they be flexible or firm?
- What process should be used to add/delete trails for the next decade?
- Should we consider revocation of permits? Would it be effective? How should it be done? (cost of a citation for not having a permit is ~\$280)
- Ideas for developing a good “user-friendly” map that can be updated with closures in real time and is “droppable” to other users.

Issues

- Identified Issues
- Categorized:
 - Management
 - Enforcement
 - Environmental
 - Social
 - Funding

Solutions

- Brainstormed solutions – any/all
- Input from outside groups
- Filtered, winnowed
- Discarded
 - State management of OHV system
 - Fee increase at this time

NFAB Recommendations for Action

Motorized Trails Management Strategy

- Goals:
- Make the trail system more user-friendly for all Forest users
- Make the trail system more environmentally sustainable
- Make the trail system financially sustainable

Recommendation Summary

- More enforcement including rangers and LEOs
- Better maps and trail marking
- Increase use of volunteers
- One-time focused NEPA for reroutes, additions, deletions not to exceed miles approved in ROD
- Monitoring and adaptive management strategy
- Update business plan to determine budget needs and recommend fees for the next decade

Recommendations:

1. Recommend developing a trail brochure similar to the Tread Lightly brochure but including more locally important information e.g. stay on marked trails, seasonal closures, temporary closures, respect private property, close livestock gates, etc.
2. Recommend requiring OHV rental vendors to take Tread Lightly or Ride with Respect training prior to being issued a commercial permit. When purchasing their OHV permit, log/track the name of the business, contact information (phone, address), where will they primarily be operating out of (district and general location), add a disclaimer at the bottom of their form that if they are caught renting machines when it is clearly too wet, their permits can be revoked without refund.
3. Recommend stepping up level of citations when appropriate. Word does get around quickly thru social media!
4. Recommend developing tracking and accountability items for the Motorized Trails program. Consider the following items: 1) track trail numbers and locations that are consistent problems spots, 2) track actual work hours accomplished by trail number, 3) track verified compliance with OHV permits, 4) Track total number of citations and warnings issued, and 5) track volunteer hours and value.
5. Recommend tracking how and where the OHV funds are being spent in an itemized format that can be shared with the public on an annual basis. Permit purchasers have a right to know how their fees are being spent. Consider adding this item to the Forest Monitoring Plan.

6. Recommend using trail volunteers to help with trail maintenance to control costs. Consider an Adopt-A-Trail program. Consider working with volunteer groups to purchase and install trail marking and additional educational signage. There are several available signs (Rockart Signs) that can easily educate motorists using the road/trail system. For example, "Stay on the Trail, Protect Your Privilege". Keep the volunteer program as simple and uncomplicated as possible.
7. Recommend using OHV funds to purchase tools and equipment (shovels, carsonite drivers, cordless impact drivers, wrenches, chain saws, Bobcat 5600 Toolcat) make these items available for volunteer groups to train on, and sign out for trail maintenance tasks.
8. Recommend developing 62" connector routes between the various riding areas. Focus on areas that can get OHV's off the gravel roads and onto actual trails. This will reduce the conflicts between the OHV's and the traditional traffic on the roads. Eliminate dead-end trails except where needed to reach a specific destination. Combine all the reroutes/connectors into one NEPA analysis to reduce costs and ensure connectivity. Maintain total miles of motorized trail within the level authorized by the Travel Management ROD.
9. Recommend re-routing the portion of the Centennial Trail between Dalton Lake and Pilot Knob to separate motorized vs. non-motorized users. At the time of the TM ROD, this section of the Centennial Trail was located on a road. With the increase in OHV use over the past decade, this section of trail is no longer providing a high quality experience for non-motorized users.
10. Recommend reviewing all the seasonally closed trails. Consider the reason they were designated a seasonal trail and determine if the closure is it still necessary. Update the trail map as changes are made.
11. Recommend using OHV funds to close user created trails to further travel when they are in an area that is not a designated trail. If the trail has high OHV traffic because it leads to a destination or acts as a connector route, consider upgrading it to a designated route.
12. Recommend adding rock crawling routes on the map with its own designation. Currently the maps list the rock crawling routes as "Trails open to All Vehicles". These trails require vehicles with substantial modifications in order to safely drive on these trails. The current designation of "Open to All Vehicles" is inappropriate.
13. Recommend using the Trail Proposal Process that was developed for the Non-Motorized trails for changes proposed by the public to the motorized trail system, outside of the recommended connector trail NEPA analysis (recommendation #8).
14. Recommend surveying end user's annually, over three days (one day each N.H., Mystic, HC) to gauge how they feel about their trail system, what direction they want us to go with the development of the trail system. This should be done during times of high use (eg. weekends) and could utilize a combination of trail rangers, volunteers, and NVUM.
15. Recommend working with the State and Counties to provide additional law enforcement on Forest Service and County roads to address problems of excessive speed, riding abreast, DUI, and littering. Recreationists using the Black Hills NF motorized trail system make major contributions to the state's tax revenue thru state highway tax on fuel and sales tax on lodging and meals. Additionally in 2017, 38,000 license plates were purchased for ATV's, UTV's and dirt bikes. Many non-residents license their OHVs in SD so that they can ride on state, county, and Forest Service roads. The average fee is \$35 representing \$1.3 million in tax

revenue to the counties and state. Some of these funds could be used to assist with law enforcement on county roads.

16. Recommend setting up a shared Hotline for the public to report issues/violations. It is important that the hotline be able to receive text messages. Two possibilities are 1) the Stand Up program currently used in schools to report suspicious activity, and 2) the State Patrol dispatch office currently used to notify law enforcement officers (state, county, and Forest Service) of problems. Trail rangers could be added to the list of LE officers to be contacted. This could be an area where the State could contribute tax dollars back to the program. Signs with the hotline information should be posted and visible in prominent areas near trailheads.
17. Recommend developing a plan for combining OHV program management with the Nebraska NF (NENF) for OHV trails/areas located in SD where only one permit would be required to ride trails on both the BHNF and the NENF. This would make it easier and cheaper for users and provide more consistency for managers and users.
18. Recommend investigating permit reciprocity with the State of Wyoming for the portions of the BHNF Motorized Trails system located in the state of Wyoming. On these trails either a BHNF Trails permits **OR** a Wyoming State OHV permit would be recognized. This would make it easier and cheaper for users where these trail systems overlap.
19. We support the Forest's initiative to develop a more user-friendly map of the motorized trail system. We recommend that the map be available on the BHNF Home page. The map should be updatable in real time to reflect changes to seasonal and temporary closures. Also, in the map "Legend" descriptions include the wording "OHV Permit Required" after it says "Trails Open to All Vehicles" and similarly for all other trail designations. This will match the signing at the trailheads and help ensure that users realize a permit is required. It is essential that on-the-ground trail marking is in place and matches the map. Closed trails should be appropriately marked on the ground as well.
20. Recommend establishing a flexible season of use for the motorized trails based on actual weather and ground conditions in the Black Hills. Most trails would be open from April 15 to December 1 in areas not designated as big game winter range. However, the opening and closing dates would be flexible based on actual ground conditions and could vary by District or trail. The advantage of establishing a season would be to help both trail managers and the public plan activities. Allowing for on-the-ground flexibility would allow for more public access when trail conditions are acceptable. For example, trails in the southern Hills could be open all winter in some years.
21. Recommend developing a monitoring plan that would include impacts and conflicts. The monitoring plan could be implemented by the trail rangers and used to determine when trail conditions warrant temporary or seasonal closures. Items to be monitored should include 1) number of OHVs using trails 2) overall trail conditions 3) problem spots on trails 4) maintenance needs for all trails 5) locations with user conflicts or safety issues 6) costs associated with trail maintenance 7) volunteer hours and contributions. The results could be used as a discussion point with commercial permit holders and local user groups. Tracking costs will help to guide future funding needs/increases.
22. Any future NEPA analysis should include an adaptive management strategy that would define trigger points and list possible future management actions when those trigger points are reached. Information obtained through the monitoring plan could guide development of

an adaptive management strategy by helping to determine “sustainable” levels of impacts/conflicts.

23. Recommend monitoring OHV use on Forest Service roads. Items to monitor and report should include: 1) Percent of OHV use on roads 2) Damage to roads from OHV and other use 3) Additional costs to repair damage through appropriated funds or other contracted road maintenance/repair 4) Citations issued on roads. This could be incorporated into the monitoring recommended in #21.
24. Recommend updating the 2010 Business Plan to reflect anticipated future costs and revenues for the next decade thru 2030. Determine costs to manage the current trail system (including the trail Ranger program) and to fund desired future improvements. Determine the per mile maintenance cost for light maintenance (signage, deadfall removal and box drag smoothing of trail bed) and heavy maintenance (trail dozer work to repair rutted, spider trail beds). Then determine if more fees need to be collected and from which users.

Cost/Per Mile Comparisons by State:

Utah
50” & 60”
\$30
Multiple State & National Forest, & BLM
>2000 miles of trail available

West Virginia
50” & 52”
\$26 Resident \$50 Non-Resident
8 National Forest, 5 State Parks
Hatfield McCoy, >600 miles
All 13 riding areas >1000 miles available

Arizona
50” up to 65”
\$25
Multiple State & National Forest, & BLM
>2000 miles trail available
*2003 OHV economic impact study found \$4 billion boost to Arizona’s economy.

Wyoming
50”- larger are required to stay on the 4 X 4 road system.
\$15 -avg. annual sales are 50k
Multiple State land, National Forest & BLM
They boast >10000 miles of road & trail available.
*2012 OHV Economic Impact study found a \$212 million boost to their economy.

Montana
50”
\$27- reciprocal with Idaho and North Dakota
Multiple State, National Forest & BLM areas
>1000 miles available

Colorado

50"

\$25- 160k avg. sold \$4 million revenue to the state

Multiple State, National Forest & BLM areas, >1000 miles

South Dakota

(Only one on the list not a state ran program)

62"

\$25

1 National Forest with disconnected riding areas

<700 miles, <90 miles single track, <400 62"



[End of PowerPoint]

NFAB Motorized Trails WG
Supporting budgetary information

BHNF OHV Permit Receipts

Calendar Year	No. of Annual Permits	\$\$\$
2013	8,666	\$216,650
2014	9,583	\$239,575
2015	12,833	\$320,825
2016	13,722	\$343,050
2017	15,843	\$396,075
2018	15,967	\$399,175
		\$1,915,350

Calendar Year	No. of 7 Day Permits	\$\$\$	
2013	2,451	\$49,020	
2014	2,638	\$52,760	
2015	3,914	\$78,280	
2016	5,358	\$107,160	
2017	5,485	\$109,700	
2018	3,164	\$63,280	\$460,200

Calendar Year	No. of 7 Commercial Permits	\$\$\$	
2013	53	\$6,625	
2014	53	\$6,625	
2015	57	\$7,125	
2016	118	\$14,750	
2017	180	\$22,500	
2018	240	\$30,000	\$87,625

Total \$2,463,175

2018 Surplus OHV Funds
\$900,000 approximate

Summary of 2019 Motorized Trails Budget

Source: Annie Apodaca, BHNF Recreation Staff

Permit Sales: \$527,322 this year in permit sales.

Expenditures:

Salary: \$297, 945.64
Premium pay (holidays): \$10,724.84
Fleet: \$34,052.57

Other personnel expenditures: \$4005.25

Travel/Training: \$5582.25

All other: \$198,042.87

Total Expenditures: \$550,353.42

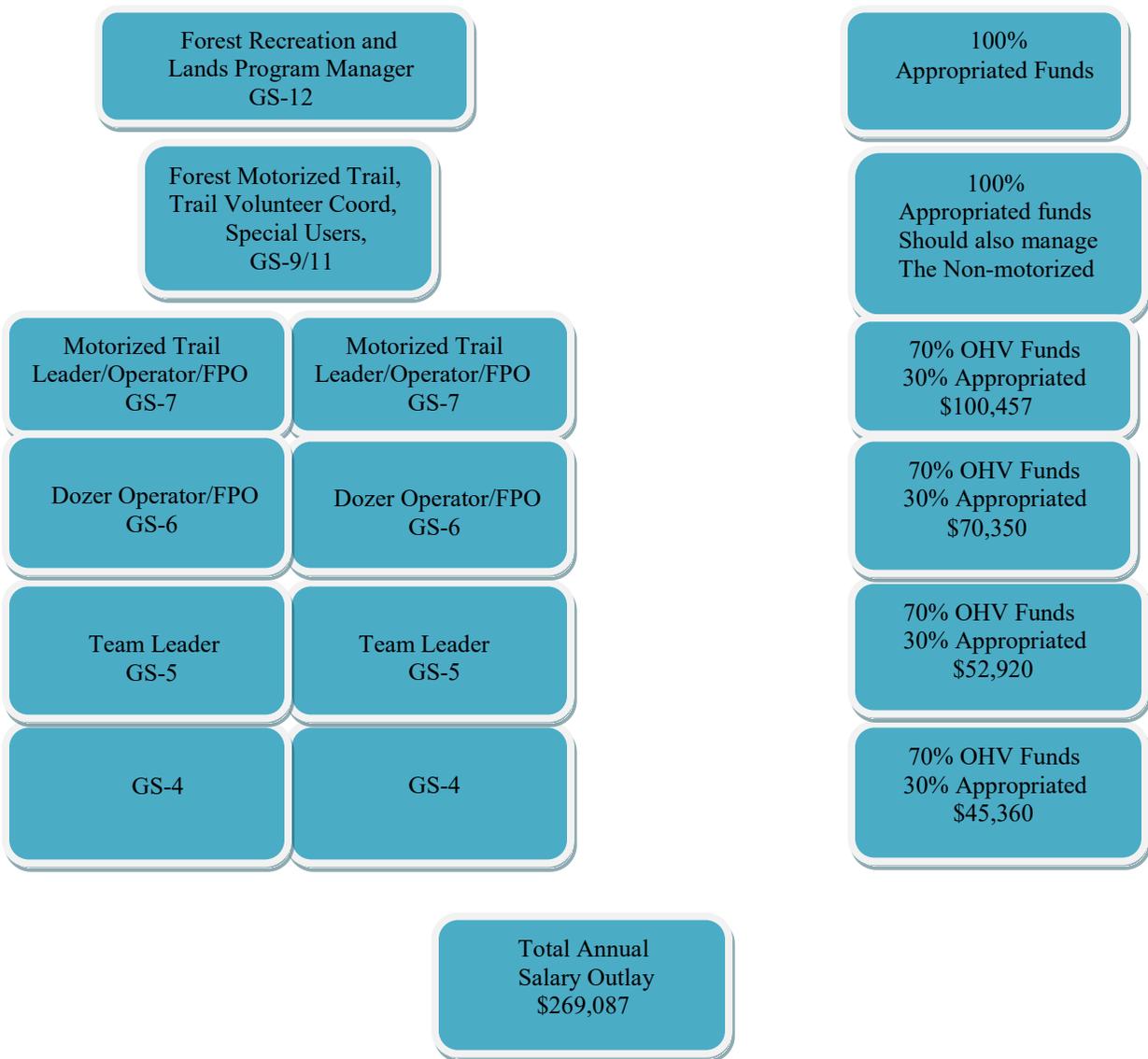
This is a difference of \$23,031.42 more spent than was brought in. BHNF also give 5% of the proceeds (FY 19 \$27,517.67) from the permits to the Regional Office, as required. So BHNF actually spent over \$50,000 more than was collected in 2019. These \$\$ came from carryover funding in FDDS pool.

Decisions pending that will affect future budget needs

- Structure of the FS permanent workforce to support OHV program and associated costs (see attachment 2)
- Inventory of trail maintenance needs/costs resulting from wet weather
- Decision on which NFAB recommendations to implement and associated costs

NFAB WG Bottom line: Without knowing future costs of operating expenses and maintenance needs, as well as, having a large pool of funds available presently, we feel it is premature to recommend a fee increase at this time. We do not have sufficient information to recommend an appropriate fee increase and/or for which users. Once that information is available, then a fee increase may be appropriate. (Attachment 3 - Info on OHV permit costs from other states)

Proposed Organizational Structure and Salary Projections



Wyoming 2012
Economic Impact Study

(There is no information available for the value of ORV recreation in South Dakota. Therefore we used the information from WY as a proxy.)

ORV recreation generates a total of \$244.2 million per year of economic activity for the Wyoming economy.

Total direct ORV-related expenditures in Wyoming totals \$206.2 million per year

At 4% sales tax, revenue to State would be over \$8 million.

The full comprehensive report is available upon request

Burns: The plan is to ask questions now, get more information, and at the next meeting, this could be amended or pass as it is. This is quite a document; I want to commend you for a lot of work.

Hague: Alice ran an exceptional Working Group, she had an open mind on everything, and did a great job.

Pierson: Every other program on the list is run by the State, very similar to the Snowmobile Trail system here in South Dakota. If you buy a permit through the state of Wyoming, does the Forest see any maintenance?

Hague: In Wyoming, on State land, they enroll the trail in the system, then they can draw funds out of the system. Wyoming is selling approximately 50,000 permits a year.

Pierson: On the recommendations, clarification on #20, confused on the date range. Tied to big game winter range, it seems backwards.

Allen: The winter ranger closures where they are in affect for big game run from 5/15 to 12/15; but we felt that a better range/season of use would be 4/15 to 12/1.

Pierson: So trails would be open from 4/15 to 12/1. It seems like we should be moving the opening date and doing a later closure date.

Discussion.....

Allen: That is a good suggestion, we'll talk more about this. Thank you. The advantage is that you have a firm start stop date.

Burns: That would give some consistency across the Forest.

On the suggestion to reroute Centennial Trail between Dalton Lake and Pilot Knob seems like it would be cheaper to reroute the pedestrian route.

Kozel: We've been looking at some re-routes for quite some time; and maybe we need to go back and take another look.

Krueger: Thanks to Alice and Dave and the other members, awesome job.

Next Steps:

1. Members of the Board take the document and read it over; share it with your constituents. Come prepared next month to discuss what might be a final product, final recommendation.
2. The Forest Service will then take the final recommendation to our internal working group; and based on resources including staffing and funding, we'll decide what it is we have the capacity to work on now and in the future. Another part of it is the Trail Ranger Program which we are hiring permanent employees into.

Wiebers: Salary for 2019, 297,945...was there a change? Is there a change to the staffing proposal? 24 is a lot of recommendations? Are they prioritized?

Allen: I think they are proposing a change, and no, they are not prioritized or in any particular order.

Brown: Question about the 5% of the fees that goes back to the Regional Office, is that to be utilized on the motorized program on a Regional basis?

Krueger: The reference in the document refers to the amount of fees paid out of this piece of the FDDS.

Over-Snow (Fat Tire Bikes) Working Group – Bob Burns

Burns: The next topic is Over-Snow.

Krueger: We have spent a lot of time and energy working on this internally and with members of board, stakeholder groups and with the State of SD, other partners and interested groups. The Forest was approached last year and the year before to permit fat tire bike use on our groomed snowmobile trail system. It is another fee area that involves capital expenditures and maintenance. There is a lot of concern and interest from winter recreationists about fat tire bikes using the snowmobile trail. Van Every began discussions with snowmobile groups and the State of SD on allowing fat tire bike use on the groomed snowmobile trail system. There has been a closure order for wheeled vehicles for using the snowmobile trail system. Through many discussions, bargaining and negotiations, this winter there will be a pilot program to allow wheeled fat bike tire use on 6.1 miles of two trail systems #1 & #3 on the Big Hill trail system which overlaps with the groomed snowmobile trail. We worked with many groups to come up with what might be a palatable pilot program, including the State of SD & WY. At the end of the season, we will sit down and see what worked and didn't work and how to adapt it. Exclusive use occurring on public land is delicate and there are many boundaries and hurdles to overcome. This pilot program will be effective on Jan. 15.

Robling: Safety was a highly discussed topic and we wanted to ensure is that the snowmobile groups were informed and engaged. The amount of trail in this pilot program is not significant but will give us an idea of what works and what doesn't and will provide additional outdoor

recreation opportunity. I want to thank the Forest Service for having us be a partner and I am eager to see how this ends up as either a success or failure. I like the pilot program approach.

Burns: There was a large attendance at the meeting involving the Forest, working group and groups that represented different sides. The reason this rule for no wheeled vehicles was in place was when the snowmobile trail system was put in, many of the snowmobilers didn't want ATVs on it. Fat tire bikes were not an issue then. Fat tire bikers have said, this is public land and other users, snowshoes, and skiers can use trail but why are we prohibited? There were many vocal opinions during that meeting. One suggestion was to voluntarily have fat bikers buy a sticker for riding on the 6 miles to help pay for it. The fees that pay for it come from more than just the stickers, they come from registration fees, gas taxes, etc. It is a complicated situation. Safety was brought up as a main concern. In WY, they have mixed use and don't have problems but the trails are more distributed. I don't think that the safety issue is as important as finding an acceptable use. This pilot program won't impact much of the 450 miles.

Krueger: Fat bikers want to be good stewards of the land.

Burns: Fat bikers want a hard surface to ride on that does not leave an imprint. There was another comment about dirt bikes that put a ski on and if that is allowed.

Wolff: Before this pilot program, there were other designated fat bike trails & other options, right?

Krueger: Correct. The next step is to see how this pilot program works. I think it will work well. Exclusive use is something that is fading away rather than growing and we need to learn to mitigate for difficulties and co-exist.

Hague: Maybe we should be tracking how much the fat bikers are using it and how many hours they are on it to see if it is too much of a risk.

Election of Chair/Vice Chair in February – Jerry Krueger

Burns: The next item for discussion is the election of a chair/vice chair.

Krueger: I want to give a heartfelt thank you to Bob Burns. Being the board chair requires extra work, involvement and coordination. Bob, very well job done. His time has come to a close. We are on to nominations. Danielle Wiebers will move into the chair role and take over the Feb. meeting on behalf of Bob. We need to nominate an individual to serve as the vice chair and take the role of chair after that. Dick Terry's name was raised by board members as a nominee. Dick's name has been put in but if there are other folks that would like to step forward and take that role, please let us know. Dick has been a long time member, active and involved.

Jacobson: The board will need to vote and approve the leadership next month. On another note, one administrative comment regarding status of appointments. I'm working with Guy Chandler as we lost the program manager at the Washington Office. A lot of the actions and work have been done by Mr. Chandler. The action that we are trying to push through is an 8 month extension for 29 members, it was 30 members counting CJ Clifford who passed away. Your term is either over in June or your term will go until February 2021. Chandler is working to get the

appointments signed by the Secretary. Hoping to have an update next month on if the appointments have been extended. Everyone will be re-appointed or their terms will be up in June and we will have to get a new package put together.

Burns: Do you know how many members are term limited?

Jacobson: Ten members are on their 3rd terms.

Burns: Will the alternate fill their spot?

Jacobson: No, we will have to go through another appointment process. If you are on your 3rd term, we will need help with outreach. They want 2 names for every position. If you have names, let us know of people who would be willing to serve on this board.

Brown: It would be helpful to know who is on their 3rd term as the sooner we can get you names, the better. Also, could we do this election now? Since the two identified need to be voted on, I move and nominate that Danielle Wiebers be elected as Chair and the Vice Chair be Dick Terry. In the absence of any other nominees, I move that we cast the vote and proceed. Paul Pierson 2nd this motion.

Burns: Any discussion? All in favor, say “Aye.” (Unanimous vote made in favor by board on motion.)

Public Comments:

Burns: If you would like to make a comment please identify yourself, and speak no more than three minutes.

Tim Rangcheck: Regarding fat bikes, there are also 12 miles on the Mickelson Trail. Hopefully that can give some additional data. Thanks for the 6 miles.

Ben Schrieves: During the legislative updates for the state, I don’t know if this is the right meeting, but wanted to say for the nesting boundary program that is multi-faceted and there is a lot of money that went to different things. It seems to me as a private citizen that trapping and tails is the biggest promotion of the initiative. It seems that habitat creation and conservation seems to have a positive effective on game bird production, so if we do move into the future, would like to see re-doing this program or putting more money into or promoting habitat.

Chris Mum: I run an ATV rental business. A lot of my concerns are your concerns too. Talking with other businesses, the last thing we want is trails closed. I am in favor of raising the fees and I believe we could generate more income. I see 50-80 vehicles a weekend that don’t have registration.

ADJOURN

Burns: Are there any more comments? If not, could I have a motion to adjourn? Motion to adjourn by Alice Allen and seconded by John Gomez. Meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m. Next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 19, 2020.