

National Forest Advisory Board Meeting

April 15, 2020

Virtual Via Adobe Connect

NFAB Members:

Chairman Danielle Wiebers, Vice Chairman Dick Terry, David Wolff, David Miller, Dick Brown, Lloyd La Croix, Michael Golliher, Ben Wudtke, Tony Ortiz, Greg Josten, Lauris Tysdal, Patty Brown, Alan Johnson, Alice Allen, and John Gomez, Dave Hague, Paul Pierson, Corissa Busse, Mary Zimmerman, Wayne Garman, Dennis Yellow Thunder, Bob Burns, Rachel Day, Kevin Robling, Travis Bies, Jennifer Hart, Keith Haiar, Richard Hanson, Ben Rhodd, Jessica Crowder, David Johnson

Black Hills National Forest Leadership Team:

Andrew Johnson, Acting Forest Supervisor; Jerry Krueger, Deputy Forest Supervisor; Ralph Adam, Physical Resources Staff Officer; Todd Butler, Customer Services Staff Officer; Jon Word, Natural Resources Staff Officer; Jason Virtue, Fire, Fuels, Aviation, Safety Staff Officer; Tracy Anderson, Hell Canyon District Ranger; Steve Kozel; Northern Hills District Ranger; Mike Gosse, Bearlodge District Ranger; Jim Gubbels, Mystic District Ranger; Scott Jacobson, Public Affairs Officer; Twila Morris, Executive Assistant.

Congressional Staff:

Mark Haugen (Thune – R, South Dakota); Katie Murray (Johnson – R, South Dakota) Jim Selchert (Rounds – R, South Dakota); Deanna Kay (Enzi – R, Wyoming), Jordon Fischer (Congresswoman Cheney – R, Wyoming).

Introduction & Welcome:

Andrew Johnson: Welcome to the April NFAB meeting. Thank you for joining, and using this virtual format which we will also use next month in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. I hope you are all doing well while we endure this.

Thanks to all of you for your welcoming me in January, this will be my last NFAB meeting as I head back to the Bighorn National Forest at the end of the month. Jerry will be the Acting Forest Supervisor starting the end of the month. This is a great move that will provide continuity.

Approve the April Agenda:

Wiebers: The first item on the agenda is to approve today's agenda. If there are any exceptions, please add that to the chat box. Nothing added, so the agenda is approved.

Approve the March Meeting Notes:

Wiebers: The second item on the agenda is to approve the March meeting notes. If there are any exceptions please add that to the chat box. Nothing added, so the March meeting notes are approved.

House Keeping:

Krueger: Two conference lines active, NFAB Board members and presenters' lines will be managed by the Team; members of the public's line will remain muted. The interface that everyone is on is Adobe Connect which is managed by Tiesha Street. Comments or questions can be typed into the Chat Box. Members of the public can send their questions in an e-mail to Scott Jacobson.

Hot Topics

Legislative Updates – Federal

Wiebers: Legislative Updates:

Katie Murray, Office of Representative Johnson:

- Katie Murray reporting for Representative Johnson, Senator Thune and Senator Rounds.
- Throughout this crisis, the Senators and Congressman continue to work for South Dakota; they continue to reach out via virtual systems – they've been working just as hard as ever. All of our Rapid City offices are still open, not taking walk-ins, but available by phone or e-mail.
- Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed by President Trump to help provide financial stability and relief for individuals and businesses affected by COVID-19. The Act provides the following:
 - Cash payments and unemployment assistance.
 - Retirement account changes.
 - Enhanced tax benefits for charitable gifts.
 - Mortgages relief.
 - Student loan/education relief.
 - Small business owner relief.
 - Relief to farmers and ranchers; our bosses worked really hard for the farmers and ranchers.
 - Relief to State and Tribal Governments.
- People on Social Security do get this check.
- The IRS does not contact people via e-mail or text, so beware of scammers.
- Eventually there will be a fourth round of aide.

Deanna Kay, Office of Senator Enzi:

- The CARES Act is the biggest issue at the time. The IRS will be sending out letters within 15 days after depositing money to explain the details.
- Our staff joined a call with Wyoming County Commissioners, the Forest Service, the BLM and State Parks to visit about the COVID-19 response. Many people are concerned about out of state visitors arriving in Wyoming.
- Senator Enzi is in DC, he continues to monitor Wyoming needs.
- Joined in sending letters urging help for rural hospitals, farmers' and ranchers'.
- Our offices are open, not taking walk-ins but will take calls or e-mails. Committed to helping in any way we can.

Forest Service Hot Topics – DFO Andrew Johnson

COVID-19 Forest Response

- Like all of us; COVID-19 has had a significant impact on our mission delivery in the Forest Service.
- Our primary focus is ensuring the health and safety of employees as well as trying in any way possible to continue with delivery of mission.
- All of our offices are closed to the public, but we are still open for business. Moved all services to on line or by phone. One example is that we made personal use firewood permits free, this eliminates the need to come into the office to buy a permit.
- Risk assessments are being done on how we do work in the field; adjusted how we are housing temps, adjustments made on how we are using our vehicles.
- Shared resource strategy that has helped us for a number of years to implement our timber program; employees from around the country have come to the Black Hills to help us accomplish our timber sale program. This year, due to lack of funding and staffing shortages, along with the COVID-19 issue, we are not able to bring in the large number of employees that we had intended to bring in. That is all on pause for right now in keeping with CDC guidance. On a daily basis we evaluate the risk.
- Challenges have impacted our mission delivery; we continue to evaluate our response. The sooner this is over the better. This is definitively affecting our ability to get work done.
- Regional changes; prohibition of campfires; the intent is to minimize human caused fires. This will help our firefighters if we can eliminate the risk.
- Closed the recreation sites, places with paved parking lots, toilets, etc., because we can't mitigate the risk to the public, concessionaires, or employees.
- Motorized trails are open for now, but we will be talking about weather as it is related to trails.

Bison on the Forest

- There are no bison left on the Forest. Through our partnership with USDA APHIS, we were able to harvest the buffalo that were left on the Forest.

Hiring of Trail Rangers & Maintenance Crew Update

- The Forest is working to stand up the Trail Ranger Crew; we made some selections, the lead will be Corbin Herman from the Custer office. The intent is to fully staff the crews and have them ready for this summer season. We are dealing with COVID-19 related delays. We have concerns around wet conditions on our trails. Wet trails lead to significant impacts; so you will see the Forest implementing short term closures.

Hell Canyon Ranger District Reforestation – Jasper Burn Area

- Moving forward with reforestation in the Jasper burn area; the planting contractor and our contracting group came up with some good risk management measures in order to keep this contract moving forward.

Regular Agenda

Norbeck Wildlife Preserve 100th Anniversary – Sara Erickson

- Sara Erickson, Program Manager for the Hell Canyon Ranger District is facilitating collaboration with partners and neighboring agencies including Black Hills Parks & Forest Association, Norbeck Society, Custer State Park, SD Game Fish and Parks, Mount Rushmore, and FS to plan events, etc. to commemorate the 100th anniversary, and shifting gears a bit with covid-19.
 - The Norbeck Organic Act of June 5, 1920 authorized the establishment of the Custer State Park Game Sanctuary “for the protection of game animals and birds and to be recognized as a breeding place therefor.” The sanctuary was officially established by proclamation on October 9, 1920 by President Woodrow Wilson. The name Custer State Park Game Sanctuary was changed to Norbeck Wildlife Preserve on October 6, 1949 (16 USC 675, 1998).
 - Discussions on the bill urged cooperation between the State of South Dakota and the federal government “in this game preserve and in the protection of wild animals,” and state that “The object is to set aside certain portions of the Harney National Forest ...for the protection of game” (Cong. Record, 5/29/1920).
 - The Norbeck legislation is rather unique in that similar legislation was passed for only a very few other areas in the nation.
- Possible Events For 100th Anniversary Celebration:
 - Open houses at visitor centers,
 - Booths with education and interpretive displays at events,
 - Raptor Center events,
 - Interpretive talks with Custer State Park and Mount Rushmore; tying these into the Forest Service Moon Walk events.
 - Reenactments,
 - Youth outreach,
 - Creating a logo for pins and stickers.
 - More education through social media; Facebook, etc.

South Dakota National Guard – Golden Coyote 2020 – Landon Dinius

- Landon Dinius, National Guard Liaison with Black Hills National Forest. The Golden Coyote exercise has been cancelled as well as the aviation exercise that we had planned. Currently working with the SD Army National Guard to plan a training opportunity for later this summer.

F3 Gold Proposal and Environmental Analysis Review – Jim Gubbels

- Status update; Jenny Gulch exploration drilling project:
 - **Project Overview:**
 - Project Plan of Operations submitted to USFS Dec. 2018.
Proposal for 42 drill pads for exploratory drilling operations.
No mining, milling or processing proposed with the Plan of Operations.
- USFS and F3 Gold LLC signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** on October 01, 2019
- **Purpose of MOU:** Prepare an Environmental Analysis pursuant to National Environmental Policy Act
- NEPA documents prepared by third party contractor Barr Engineering. All documents will be reviewed and approved by the USFS.

- Tasks Completed:
 - Initial 30-day Public Scoping ended Feb. 05, 2020
 - Public Information Meeting Jan. 16, 2020
 - Interagency Scoping Meeting Jan. 16, 2020
- Public Scoping-Results:
 - 334 Letters received with 1,146 unique comments
 - Comments focused on:
 - Water quality/water supply
 - Mining
 - EA vs EIS
 - Tribal consultation & cultural resources
 - Recreation & travel management
 - Fisheries & Wildlife
 - Access & Transportation
 - Public Health & Safety
- Tasks Completed:
 - Collection & assemblage of field survey data including:
 - Heritage data-FS & contractor collected data (as part of North Pactola most recent)
 - Hydrology-FS and USGS data
 - Wildlife-FS and contract survey data, bat surveys pending within 500 ft. of mine shafts/adits for summer 2020
 - Botany-FS collected data
 - Content analysis of public comments
 - Meeting with City of Rapid City Public Works Water Treatment & Ellsworth AFB
 - On-going responses to tribal requests for Govt. to Govt. consultation
 - Yankton Sioux Tribe
 - Oglala Sioux Tribe
 - Northern Cheyenne Tribe
 - Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
 - Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
- Work to Complete:
 - Identification of issues & additional input
 - Tribal consultation meetings
 - Alternative development, design criteria and analysis review
 - Completion of technical reports for the EA
 - Completion of EA-Late 2020
 - Decision

Dennis Yellow Thunder: Request a copy of this presentation.

Scott Jacobson: Copies of all of the presentations will be sent to all Board members.

Yellow Thunder: What does exploratory drilling consist of? What would the depth of those holes be?

Jim Gubbels: Information from the Plan of Operations describe up to 42 drill sites, the drill pads are 50 feet by 50 feet; they use a diamond core drill point that goes into the ground – three inches in diameter, anywhere from 500 feet to 6,000 feet in depth; each drill hole is different.

Yellow Thunder: As Board members do we have access to the Plan of Operations and is it going to get submitted to the Board?

Andrew Johnson: The Plan of Operations was released publically by F3-Gold. This is for NFAB’s information, approval or review of F3’s proposal is the Forests responsibility, not NFAB; the POO is on the BBNF website under projects.

Yellow Thunder: In the initial exploratory drilling - will they be using any type of chemicals?

Gubbels: They said they only use water in the drilling process; sourced from a municipal water source. They will have to negotiate and purchase water from a nearby source.

Additional Note: Mr. Yellow Thunder asked additional questions about the F3 proposal that had been answered previously, or were available on the project web page and he was advised in the interest of time to review that information. Mr. Yellow Thunder made additional comments regarding a lack of communication between himself and the Oglala Sioux tribal government regarding consultation on the F3 proposal. He indicated he would reach out to them as a NFAB member about consultation.

Johnson: Tribal consultation is underway, Government to Government Consultation. The Oglala Sioux Tribe has already responded. For you, it’s not appropriate to reach out to the Tribe as a NFAB member, you can do so as a private individual.

Mineral Mountain Resources (MMR) Proposal and Environmental Analysis Review – Steve Kozel

- **Rochford Exploration Project**

- Proponent – Mineral Mountain Resources (MMR)
- Two PoOs submitted – Northern Hills RD and Mystic RD
- Exploratory Drilling – subsurface gold deposits
- 23 Drill Sites – NHRD
- 13 Drill Sites – MYRD
- Access Drill Sites On Existing Roads and Trails
- Approximate Drill Pad Size - 50’X50’

- **Rochford Project – Next Steps**

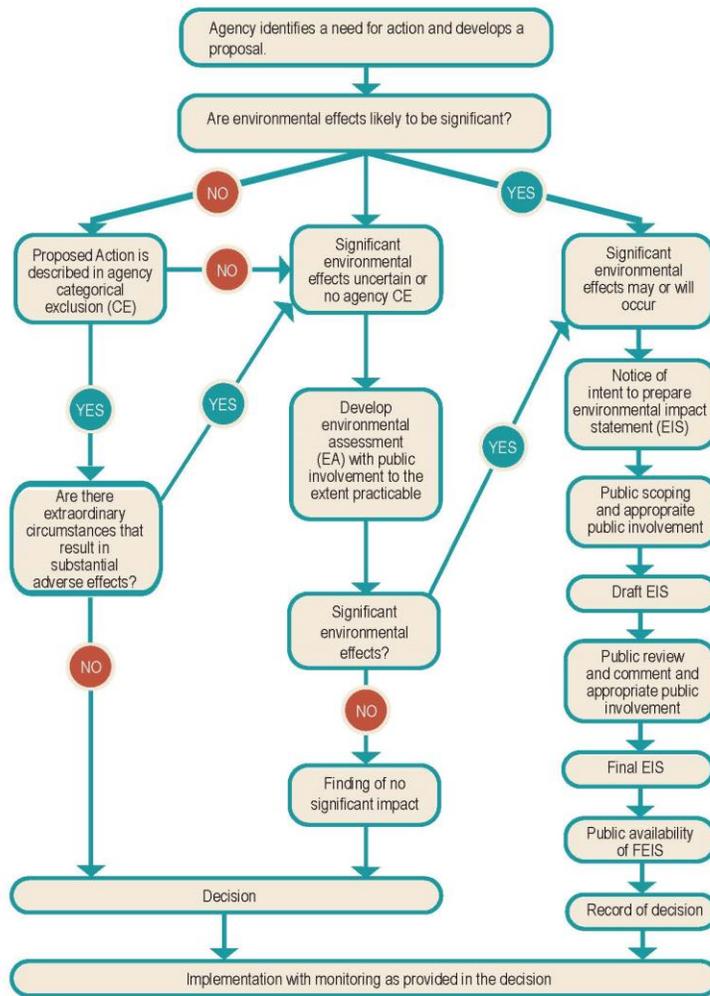
- Review MMR response to USFS comments on PoO.
- If response provides additional needed clarity, then the USFS deems the PoO sufficient to proceed to environmental analysis, public involvement, and decision-making process.
- Develop cost collection agreement with MMR to redeem agency oversight and analysis costs.
- Develop MOU with MMR for third party NEPA contractor. USFS would direct

- and review all work performed by contractor.
- Solicit and select third party contractor
- Engage in Government-to Government consultation with Native American tribes.
- Begin the NEPA process



United States Department of Agriculture

The NEPA Process



*Significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns or substantial changes in the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns may necessitate preparation of a supplemental EIS following either the draft or final EIS or the Record of Decision (CEQ NEPA Regulations, 40 C.F.R. § 1502.9(c)).



Forest Service

Sustainable Forest Discussion & Timber Sustainability Working Group – Andrew Johnson & Greg Josten

- We've tasked the Timber Sustainability Working Group with helping the Forest make some decisions including what a five year pathway looks like because we need a bridge solution.
- This is a new document being presented today to the Working Group so that they can begin to answer the questions we would like input on.
- The Working Group task is as follows:

The Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board (Board) working group on Timber Sustainability is tasked to provide advice to the Forest Supervisor through the Board on the following two issues based upon the stated assumptions and constraints. Present your recommendations to the full Board by the June meeting for consideration and recommendation to the Forest Supervisor.

1. For the Black Hills NF commercial timber program develop and recommend a *no more than five-year pathway to meet sustainability* requirements based on the following constraints and assumptions. A five-year pathway will allow time for the forest to plan for longer term solutions, for example Forest Plan revision.
 - a. Constraints
 - i. Forest Service Law, policy, and regulation
 1. National Forest Management Act requirement to manage the forest in a sustainable manner.
 - ii. Existing structural stage objectives found in the Forest Plan as amended in 2005.
 - iii. Estimates of current distribution of structural stage conditions within the suitable base.
 - b. Assumptions
 - i. The Forest Inventory and Analysis data set released in January 2020 represents sound, statistically supportable science with which to make informed forest management decisions about our commercial timber program.
 - ii. The conclusions represented in the DRAFT General Technical Report (Graham, Battaglia, and Jain) are valid based on the FIA data, stated variable values for growth, mortality (removals), and standing volume. Additional scenarios can be run upon request.
 - iii. White spruce, unsuitable base ground pine, and off-forest timber represent viable alternate sources of commercial wood fiber.
2. Present a recommendation to the Forest Supervisor on:
 - a. The need to enter Forest Plan revision (or amendment).
 - b. If recommended, the timing on revision/amendment.

Josten: During the stakeholder meeting, a number of questions were raised about the GTR, so should we expect those questions to be answered before we dive into this, or do we take the GTR at face value at this time. If we wait till after the next Stakeholder meeting on May 1st that would put us two weeks off our deadline.

Johnson: What we were looking for is the recommendations from the Working Group at the June meeting. A number of questions came up regarding the GTR data and analysis, we collected the questions, and we have agreed to work on those responses, and have them out by April 17, 2020. Some of the comments and recommendation mirrored comments that would be made on the GTR. All those technical questions around data and assumptions that have a real bearing, those will be the ones we'll get answers to. We would be happy to work with the Working Group and get any addition answers you'd need.

Josten: Will there be a Forest Service Liaison to the Working Group

Johnson: Yes, that would be beneficial; Jerry Krueger and Jon Word will be your two contact people.

Josten: I'll be reaching out to the group later this week to organize our first meeting and get started on how we want to approach this and lay out a time line for getting it down.

Johnson: If you need any assistance with virtual tools we will try to help.

Zimmerman: Under the new planning rule, how is sustainability determined? Also wondering about the bridge period and development of a new forest plan.

Johnson: Forest Plan revision is a decision that has not been made, the decision is made at a National Level since the Agency can only sustain so many revisions at a time. The BH stands next in line with in R2 for forest plan revision. We are looking for a recommendation from the Working Group. The new Planning Rule is quite a bit different than the existing Planning Rule, it's a complicated conversation. One critical and central difference is the new planning rule does not have the concept of ASQ in it; that is a thing of the past. The 2012 Planning Rule is quite different. We could put this on a future agenda.

Krueger: Mary's question was submitted with comments from the Norbeck Society; and a detailed response will be coming out this week.

Wudtke: The NFAB is formed as a FACA Board to give advice and recommendation to the Black Hills National Forest. Greg mentioned this was the first time he saw this task document, it seems like it would make sense for the Working Group to review the task before accepting the assignment.

Johnson: Yes, NFAB is a FACA Committee, one of the roles is for the Forest to present tasks that we want advice and recommendations on. And this is the task we are giving to the Working Group and the Board. The Motorized Trail Strategy is a good example of a topic that was of interest and the Forest tasked the Board to develop recommendations.

Wiebers: We always have the option to not submit comments to the Forest Service; if for example we cannot come to a consensus. I wouldn't recommend not looking at a topic posed by the Forest.

2020 Fire Season

South Dakota School of Mines and Technology – Darren Clabo

- 2019 Recap – Top 4 Wildfires in SD
 - Sand Hills (Todd)
 - 11/23: 919 acres
 - Lonesome (Oglala Lakota)
 - 4/4: 249 acres
 - High Plains (Custer, BHNF)
 - 4/17: 140 acres
 - Truck (Potter)
 - 8/26: 995 acres
- **2019 SD Total Acres: 2,456.13**
- 2018 SD Total Acres: 4,985.4
- 2017 SD Total Acres: 79,427.08
- 2016: 96,809.76
- 2015: 68,345.84

2019 South Dakota Outlook Summary

- **Below average large fire potential**
 - **No temperature trend seen**
 - Long duration (10+ days) of above average temperatures leads to large fire growth over western SD
 - **Trend toward wetter than average spring/summer**
 - Wet early spring should jump start herbaceous growth
 - Drought is important factor for large June/July wildfires
- **Remember: Climate drivers change throughout the year**
 - **Monthly outlooks will be released to reflect changes**



2019 Fire Weather Outlook

Summer Fire Season Drivers (Climate)

June	July	August
- Drought - Above average temperatures in June - Short- and long-term precipitation deficits	- Drought - Above average temperatures in June/July - Short- and long-term precipitation deficits	- Above average temperatures in July/August - Short-term (1 to 3 month) precipitation deficits

South Dakota Outlook Summary (June – August)

- Average to below average large fire potential
 - Weak signal for above average precipitation
 - Current soil moisture is still very high
 - Drought is important factor for large June/July wildfires
 - No temperature signal observed, hints to warmer
 - Long duration (10+ days) of above average temperatures leads to large fire growth in BHNF (if aligned with climate factors)

Black Hills National Forest – Jason Virtue

- **2019 Fire Statistics**
 - 10 Human Caused for 1 acre
 - 19 Lightning Caused for 148 acres
 - 2 Undetermined for 0.3 acres
 - 31 Total Fires for 150 acres
- **2020 Fire Preparedness**
 - Resources available for fire response:
 - Approximately 122 qualified firefighters and 26 support personnel
 - Other Forest Service militia totaling approximately 100 personnel
 - 12 Wildland Fire Engines
 - 1 Ten-person Wildfire Module
 - 2 dozers with operators
 - 1 Boxelder Job Corp Handcrew
 - All resources will be staffed from May through October
 - Type III Helicopter w/ 8 Person Crew available: 6/14/20 – 9/26/20
 - Tatanka Interagency Hotshot Crew available: May - October
 - Rapid City Airtanker Base: June 1- September 30
 - Great Plains Dispatch Center staffed year round & provides single point ordering and mobilization of firefighters, equipment and supplies
 - Type III Helicopter w/ 8 Person Crew available: 6/14/20 – 9/26/20
 - Tatanka Interagency Hotshot Crew available: May - October
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 - Great Plains Dispatch Center staffed year round & provides single point ordering and mobilization of firefighters, equipment and supplies
- **Prescribed Fire**

	FY19	FY20
Machine Piles	3,019	176
Hand Piles	12,000	1,463
Acres	1,374	64



State of South Dakota – Jay Esperance

- Most of our current activities are related to COVID-19.
- Recent executive order stated that State offices would remain closed through the end of May, will continue to work virtually till June 1, 2020.
- Initial attack take their modules home, firefighters would respond to the station to pick up engines, then respond to the fire. In warmer weather engines will be taken home.
- Seasonals: If we're not working from stations I just can't see bringing on employees, so on June 1st we'll start with seasonals except for out of starters, they'll come on the 18th of May. They will be paid for two weeks of self-quarantine and training, so they'll be available June 1.
- Aviation: Single engine air tanker contract being reviewed right now. We have one located in Hot Springs, Pierre and Lemmon. Decommissioned the one in Buffalo. In the future we'll have one in Spearfish.
- National Guard is available to assist with aviation; helicopter is a Blackhawk. Certified by the US Forest Service, fortunately that has been extended to June 1.
- \$950,000 has been put into upgrading our King Air 90. Outstanding asset for air attack as well as doing recon. We're not in the business of competing with contractors – they get first choice, but if we get in a pinch we have offered up this aircraft. The Governor has prioritized the use of this aircraft as number one for fighting fires.
- Dispatch center: Two folks are working at one time then rotating the other two people in. Half of the dispatch center is State and they are working virtually.
- Governor has not issued a hiring freeze, but with the challenges the State is having with budgets, there will be a delay in hiring. The State FMO will be retiring in less than a week, and we have a vacant engine boss, and a finance officer that is retiring.
- Concern about our volunteer fire departments. A lot of engines show up when called. There's no use in having six stations sent out for a single tree burn, so we are working on changing that. We rely very heavily on our partners, including the volunteers.
- Prescribed burn program; since we'll be staying at home till the end of May, come June 1 we'll be out of prescription, so as of today we've shut down prescribed burning.
- Annual fire training, annual pack tests, if they were certified a year ago, we'll acknowledge those certifications for this year. New firefighters will receive training virtually.
- Volunteers were certified prior to COVID-19
- Cooperators in the State are mostly going to be responding within their jurisdiction; most likely won't see east river fire departments coming out to help us, and won't see as many volunteers assisting in out of state assignments.

- The Governor has been working with Jason to provide housing for hotshot crews and others at the Star Academy.
- Purchasing thermometers to take temps daily.
- We all work together when an emergency takes place; our concern is to put that fire out.
- Working with Jason Virtue since 2008, and want to say congratulations to Jason.

State of Wyoming – Dick Terry

- New helicopter this year 407 high performance better for higher altitudes. 120 day contract starting on the 1st of June.
- All Helitack personnel will come on June 1st.
- Three engines throughout the state that will be manned with State Forestry personnel.
- Inmate program, in a re-building phase, getting more experience to get them to a Type 2 level. We're down to one 20 man crew. Currently they are shut down with COVID-19. If we get a fire, I'm not sure if DOC will let them out for the fire.
- We've always done aggressive initial attack, but this will be more of a priority now to try to keep the fires small; but thinking if it's a single tree snag we don't have to empty the hall.
- If the fire does go big, we might not have the big fire camps that we've seen, we'll handle it on a smaller like a Type 3 fire.

Zimmerman: Regarding monitoring; I'm wondering if and how you track risk or forest conditions, is there some routine assessment that you look at the risk of wildfire, and can you comment on any trends over the years with the reduction or increase of hazardous fuels on the forest.

Jason Virtue: We have a number of measures that we can utilize, fuel sampling is one where the Fuels Crew weighs the fuels, and it's broken down by 10 hour, up to 100 hour fuels, so we can track that and identify them as fuels start to weigh less they are getting dry. Energy release component; we can identify a 97th percentile; as that number starts to trend up, we watch that and identify when that starts to peak, and that's when we implement our response. Each morning we all do a fire briefing with fire crews talking about weather, looking at the indices; typically it follows suit with the time of year; as we get into June, July, August, we have a pretty good idea what a new start can do. Information is available on the Great Plains Dispatch Center website.

Zimmerman: That is moisture related – but over all conditions of the forest – the maps that show risk, wondering if the forest, during any season is monitoring that. And the trends over time, are the reducing or increasing across the Forest or remaining the same?

Esperance: We have a working group including Greg Josten, and Jerry Krueger that looks at fire risk, that looks at fuels in our community, and from that we prioritize areas that require treating. The State, County, Forest all work together.

Virtue: Fuels folks are monitoring and are up to speed, and identifying areas that need treatment. If we're seeing an increase in down fuels, trying to clean up the landscape might include prescribed fire. There are certain areas we don't get to, but we try to keep ahead of it, but there might be some environmental factor, like a wind event that either breaks or tips over large patches of trees. I don't have a good answer about if we're above or below; don't have a way of quantifying it off the cuff.

Wiebers: Public comments can be sent to Scott Jacobson via e-mail, these will be added to the minutes.

Krueger: We want to inform Board members whose appointments are ending in June, we'll get a six month extension to get us through the end of the year. This will align with the expiration of our Charter. We'll be putting out an outreach for new members, and we would look for an approval of both the new Charter and the new members beginning in January 2021.

Wiebers: Let's help outreach for the National Forest Advisory Board. If you have any ideas of people who would be willing to serve as new Board members, tell them to call Scott or Jerry.

Yellow Thunder: I would like to make a comment for record. Jim I apologize for what happened earlier, I just want to understand the rights and responsibilities of being a Board member. I would never be presumptions enough to speak on behalf of the Board. I would like to offer a piece of advice, we need to take a close look and take seriously the emotional and spiritual impact that will have on the people of the Tribes that are connected to the sacred Black Hills as well as the concerns of the people that live in the surrounding area in regards to the water. Happy that I could hook up today. Thank you.

Wiebers: Alice Allen has a question about the current status of the motorized trails; are they open or closed at the moment?

Johnson: Current seasonal closures are in place on the motorized trail system, which ends on May 15. Trails would open then unless there are wet conditions or other resource conditions where we would want to push and extend the emergency closure. Those are things we are considering for site specific extensions. Closed till the 15th currently.

Public Comments:

NOTE: Public comments were requested via e-mail to Scott Jacobson; no comments were received.

Wiebers: Thanks to the Forest Service for setting this up and allowing us to meet; a lot of you are sheltering from home, and it's a lot to adjust too.

If there are no other comments, we'll adjourn and meet up again next month.

Meeting Adjourned