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# Preface

## I. Understanding the Forest Plan

### A. PURPOSE OF THE FOREST PLAN

This is the Black Hills National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, usually called the “Forest Plan.” It has been prepared in accordance with the 1976 National Forest Management Act (NFMA), the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other laws and associated regulations. This is a revision of a Forest Plan first released in August, 1983. The Phase II Amendment was published February 23, 2006 and became effective March 2, 2006.

The Forest Plan provides guidance for all resource management activities on the Black Hills National Forest. It establishes goals, objectives, standards and guidelines; it describes resource management practices, levels of resource production, people-carrying capacities, and the availability and suitability of lands for resource management.

The Forest Plan embodies the provisions of the NFMA, the implementing regulations and other guiding documents. The goals, objectives, standards and guidelines constitute a statement of the management direction. It should be understood, however, that projected outputs, services and rates of implementation are dependent on the annual budgeting process.

### B. RELATIONSHIP OF THE FOREST PLAN TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

The planning process and the analysis procedures used to develop this Revised Forest Plan are described or referred to in the accompanying Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Several alternatives were developed as the Forest Plan was revised, in accordance with the NFMA and NEPA. An extensive analysis of the alternatives is described in the Final EIS. Environmental analysis of projects to implement the Forest Plan will be tiered to the Final EIS.

The actual decisions that were made in creating this Forest Plan are described in the accompanying Record of Decision. Amendments to this Plan will be based on requisite environmental documents.

## C. A READER'S GUIDE TO THE FOREST PLAN

The reader will find the following in this document:

**Chapter 1: Goals and Objectives.** This is the overall direction for the Forest.

**Goals** describe desired end results and are normally expressed in broad general terms. Forest Plan goals link broad agency goals as set forth in law, executive order, regulation, agency directives and the Resource Planning Act program. These goals also closely reflect the Regional goals described in the Rocky Mountain Regional Guide (1992).

**Objectives** are concise statements of measurable desired results intended to promote achievement of Forest Plan goals. Objectives describe (1) **desired resource conditions** in the area covered by the plan, either in the next decade or longer and (2) **desired levels of goods and services** that the plan area is capable of producing in the next decade.

**Chapter 2: Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.** This chapter contains standards and guidelines applied forest-wide. Each item is identified as either a standard or a guideline.

**Standards** are limitations on management activities that are within the authority and ability of the Forest Service to meet or enforce. Standards are mandatory. Deviation from standards is not permissible without an amendment to the Revised Forest Plan.

**Guidelines** are preferred or advisable courses of action. Deviations from guidelines are permissible if the responsible official documents the reasons for the deviation.

**Chapter 3: Management Area Direction.** This chapter contains direction that applies only to specific portions of the Forest as indicated on the Management Area Map. Management area direction is applied in addition to the forest-wide direction. The following is given for each management area.

**Management Area Theme** -- A short description of the management direction.

**Management Area Setting** -- A short description of the location of the management area.

**Management Area Activities and Opportunities** -- Information about the availability of some of the major activities and opportunities within the management area.

**Management Area Desired Future Condition** -- A description of the management area environment as the Forest Plan is implemented. (forest-wide desired future condition is included in the discussion under each forest-wide goal.)

**Management Area Goals and Objectives** -- These are goals and objectives that describe desired resource conditions for the management areas. The other type of objective, which describes levels of goods and service, is only listed on a forest-wide basis.

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**Management Area Standards and Guidelines** -- These are standards and guidelines that apply to a particular management area in addition to the forest-wide standards and guidelines

Management area goals, objectives, standards and guidelines are applied in addition to forest-wide direction. Where there is conflict, the more site-specific or the more stringent direction applies, either forest-wide or management area direction.

Goals and objectives that changed in the Phase II Amendment are noted with an asterik (\*). Appendix D in the Final EIS explains these changes with Alternative 2 being the current Forest Plan and Alternative 6 being the Phase II Amendment Forest Plan.

**Chapter 4: Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy.** This chapter describes how the Forest Service will ensure that the Forest Plan remains current and that it has the effect it is intended to have.

**Glossary:** This appendix defines scientific, technical, governmental and special terms.

**Literature Cited:** Many standards and guidelines cite references that are listed here.

**Appendix A: Related National Goals.** National goals relevant to land and resource management contained in the Forest Service Manual (FSM).

**Appendix B: Key National and Regional Policies.** Key national policies related to land and resource management contained in the Forest Service Manual and Forest Service Handbook (FSH).

**Appendix C: Relevant Federal and State Statutes, Regulations, Executive Orders and Agreements.** Key statutes, regulations and executive orders related to land and resource management.

**Appendix D: Best Management Practices and Best Mineral Management Practices.** Additional direction incorporated by reference into the Forest Plan.

**Appendix E: Further Direction for Norbeck Wildlife Preserve.** Further standards and guidelines for the Norbeck Wildlife Preserve.

**Appendix F: Developed Recreation Site Standards.** Lists the developed recreation sites and their standards.

**Appendix G: Timber Suitability.** Describes the lands suitable for timber harvest.

**Appendix H: Timber Stocking Charts.** Provides guidance when implementing intermediate timber harvests (thinning).

**Appendix I: Suitability for Grazing and Browsing.** Describes the lands suitable for livestock grazing.

**Appendix J: Vegetative Buffer Equation.** Describes how to determine the width of vegetative buffers adjacent to water.

**Appendix K: Landtype Associations.** Provides information about landtype associations for use in project planning.

**Appendix L: Supplemental Species Information.** Provides guidance on the use of the HABCAP model for assessing effects on wildlife from projects.

**Appendix M: 6th Level Watersheds.** List of watersheds, map and acreages.

**Appendix N: Oil and Gas Leasing Stipulations.** Required stipulations to be used with leases.

**Maps:** Accompanying maps show the following:

- 1) Management Areas, including visitor map (except section lines), utility corridors, and electronic sites
- 2) Travel Management
- 3) Late Succession Management Decisions, including late successional landscape management areas and individual Resource Information System (RIS) sites being included as late successional stands
- 4) Timber Suitability
- 5) Range Suitability
- 6) Oil and Gas Decisions, including areas available for oil and gas leasing where stipulations apply
- 7) Scenery Management Map, including travel corridors and other information not available on the management area map

## **D. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOREST PLAN**

### **1. Introduction**

The Forest Plan provides the framework to guide the day-to-day resource management operations of the Black Hills National Forest and subsequent land and resource management decisions made during project planning. The NFMA requires that resource plans and permits, contracts, and other instruments issued for the use and occupancy of National Forest System lands be consistent with the Forest Plan. Site-specific project decisions must also be consistent with the Forest Plan, unless the Forest Plan is modified by amendment.

## 2. Project Level Decisions

The objectives of project planning are twofold. In the case of agency-initiated actions, the objective is to move toward or achieve the integrated direction in the Forest Plan through the proposed action. For example, if improvement of fisheries habitat is a forest-wide objective, projects to move toward or achieve that objective might include placement of fish habitat structures in a stream to promote recovery of streamside vegetation.

In the case of proposals made by others, the objective of project planning is to determine if the proposal is or could be made consistent with forest-wide and management area standards, and if the project is in the public's interest in terms of forest-wide goals and objectives. An example of an external proposal might be the proposed construction of a road or utility line serving private land across National Forest System lands.

The following concepts are important:

- Forest Plan Goals and Objectives guide the identification and selection of potential agency projects.
- The determination of whether or not an individual project is consistent with the Forest Plan shall be based on whether or not the project adheres to forest-wide and management area standards.
- Projects that cannot comply with standards in the Forest Plan must be found inconsistent with Forest Plan management direction, unless the standard is modified or waived through Forest Plan amendment. In the latter case, project approval and Forest Plan amendment may be accomplished simultaneously.
- Plan objectives, forest-wide and management area guidelines, project-specific outputs, and activity schedules should not be used in the consistency determination. Under those circumstances where a guideline is modified or not applied as described in the Forest Plan, the responsible official should recognize the purpose(s) for which the guideline was developed. He or she should also provide assurance that any subsequently approved actions are not in conflict with the objective(s) the guideline was intended to achieve. This will be documented during project analysis in accordance with the NEPA procedures.
- Resource plans and permits, contracts, and other instruments issued for the use and occupancy of National Forest System lands must be consistent with the Forest Plan unless specifically exempted from applicability in an amendment or revision decision document. Determinations of consistency of permits, contracts, and other instruments for occupancy and use of National Forest System lands are based on whether or not they adhere to forest-wide and management area standards.

- Generally, it is during Forest Plan implementation when a project decision is made, that the irretrievable commitment of resources is made. Therefore, prior to the making of decisions, additional environmental analysis and site-specific disclosure of environmental effects is required in accordance with NEPA procedures.

Following are some examples of site-specific project decisions that require additional environmental analyses and disclosure during implementation of Forest Plans. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive:

- Timber harvest methods and related activities such as slash disposal, which create site-specific impacts
- Allotment management plans
- Fish or wildlife improvement projects
- Watershed improvement projects, abandoned mine reclamation, and Federal Facility Compliance projects (projects generating air and/or water pollutants and hazardous material treatment or removal)
- Prescribed burn projects in support of resource management objectives
- Decisions for winter-sports development, outfitter-guide proposals for Wilderness or other areas, and other externally generated projects involving occupancy and use of National Forest System lands
- Selection of roads and trails where motorized vehicle travel will be allowed, restricted or prohibited
- Construction and reconstruction of trails, roads and staging areas, buildings, dams, bridges, recreation sites, utilities, potable water systems and road closures
- Oil and gas leasing decisions made pursuant to 36 CFR 228.102(c)
- Oil and gas leasing decisions made pursuant to 36 CFR 228.102(d) and 36 CFR 228.102(e)
- These decisions were only made on those portions of the Forest that have low to high mineral potential, consisting of 609,573 acres. The remaining 633,689 acres were not analyzed because of unknown potential and no interest by industry. Areas that are available for leasing and required stipulations are displayed on the Leasables Map in the map packet which accompanies this document. If the areas are leased, site specific analysis will be done for each drilling proposal.
- Notice of Intent to Operate, Plan of Operation, Surface Use Plan of Operation, mineral sales contracts, mining plans, and lease readjustments and renewals

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### 3. Operational Activities Exempt from the National Environmental Policy Act Process

In order to assist in orderly implementation of a Forest Plan, Forest Service managers conduct resource inventories, prepare action plans and schedules, and administer previously approved activities. These activities are called operational activities. Because operational activities represent neither binding decisions nor irretrievable commitments of resources, they are not subject to environmental analyses and disclosure under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures.

Following are some examples of operational activities that do not constitute site-specific project decisions and are therefore exempt from NEPA procedures. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive:

- Implementation schedules, 3 to 5-year plans, etc. Examples: 5-year timber sale plan and timber "gate system"
- Developing timber-stand improvement, reforestation and K-V collection plans, where the actual projects have been previously approved in project-level decisions with appropriate NEPA analysis (FSH 2409.19)
- Scheduling revision of allotment management plans (FSM 2210)
- Amending grazing permits to comply with the Forest Plan (FSM 2230). Reissuing grazing permits to the original holder of the permit or another permittee
- Developing 5-year wildlife operating plans (FSM 2620)
- Conducting resource inventories or identifying adverse air-quality conditions in Class 1 airsheds (FSM 2580)
- Identifying opportunities for improved water yield (FSM 2510).
- Developing fire-situation reports, escaped fire-situation analyses, fire evaluations, fire-season severity requests, fire-management action plans; dispatching fires (FSM 5120, 5130)
- Scheduling maintenance for developed recreation sites; developing heritage-resource overviews, scenic-byway management plans, and interpretive services (FSM 2330, 2360, 2380, 2390)
- Developing Wilderness implementation schedules (FSM 2320)
- Preparing Forest Development Transportation Plans for roads, trails and off-highway vehicle use, the Forest Facility Master Plan, master plans for recreation sites, dams, and other facilities, and associated maintenance and operation plans (FSM 7300, 7700)

- Preparing landownership adjustment actions (FSM 5400)
- Preparing biological evaluations, forest-pest suppression schedules, and forest damage/condition statistical reports (FSM 3450)
- Developing rural community action plans in accordance with the National Forest-Dependent Rural Communities Diversification Act of 1990, Section 2375
- Preparing requests for materials, personnel, and budgets, including spreadsheets projecting dollars and implementation activities through the life of the Forest Plan (FSM 1930, 6520)
- Developing law enforcement plans (FSM 5310)
- Developing the schedule for analyzing all legally available lands for oil and gas leasing not previously analyzed (36 CFR 228.102(b))

**Note:** Operational activities exempt from the NEPA process are not synonymous with categorical exclusions. Operational activities, as described above, do not represent irreversible commitments of resources and do not, of themselves, create any environmental effects. Actions that can be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement are described in FSM 1952.2 and FSH 1909.15. Actions that can be categorically excluded do represent irreversible commitments of resources, but do not individually or cumulatively have significant effects on the human environment.

#### 4. Public Involvement and Coordination with Other Government Agencies

Ongoing public involvement and governmental coordination is a central part of implementing the Forest Plan.

Table Preface-1 shows some of the coordination and involvement required by law.

**Table Preface-1.** Public involvement and Government coordination.

Air Quality	- Clean Air Act of 1977 (42 USC §7401 to 7671q)
American Indians	- American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 - Archeological Resources Protection Act - Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 USC §3156 et seq.) - Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1992 - 36 CFR Part 219 - 36 CFR Part 296 - 36 CFR Parts 1500-1508
Caves	- Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988 - FSM 2356.03-8 - FSM 2356.2 - FSM 2356.5
Fire	- Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-313)

Heritage Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Antiquities Act (16 USC §431-433)</li> <li>- Archaeological and Historical Preservation Act of 1980 (16 USC §469-469c-1)</li> <li>- Archaeological Resources Protection Act</li> <li>- National Historic Preservation Act (16 USC §470 et seq.)</li> <li>- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1992</li> <li>- 36 CFR Part 60</li> <li>- 36 CFR Part 296</li> <li>- 36 CFR Part 800</li> <li>- FSM 2360</li> </ul>
Insect and Disease Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-313)</li> <li>- Federal Plant Protection Act of 1957 (7 USC §150aa-150jj)</li> <li>- Plant Quarantine Act of 1912 (7 USC §151-165,167)</li> </ul>
Land Acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clark-McNary Reforestation Act</li> </ul>
National Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National Trails System Act of 1968 (16 USC §1241-1251)</li> </ul>
Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 36 CFR Part 295</li> </ul>
Pesticide Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Federal Insecticide Rodenticide and Fungicide Act of 1972 (7 USC §136-136y)</li> <li>- FSM 2150.3</li> </ul>
Proposed, Endangered, Threatened and Sensitive Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-205)</li> <li>- FSM 2671.45</li> <li>- FSM 2620.2</li> </ul>
Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 USC §3156 et seq.)</li> <li>- Rangeland Improvement Act of 1978</li> <li>- 36 CFR Part 222</li> <li>- FSM 2203.1-8 14</li> </ul>
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FSM 2303-11</li> </ul>
Resource Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (43 USC §4321-4370a)</li> <li>- National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 USC §1600-1612)</li> <li>- 36 CFR Part 219</li> <li>- 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508</li> </ul>
Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organic Administration Act of 1897</li> </ul>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act</li> </ul>
Watershed Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Federal Water Pollutions Control Act Amendments of 1972</li> </ul>
Wild and Scenic Rivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 USC §1271-1278)</li> <li>- FSM 2354.03-5</li> </ul>
Wildlife and Fish Habitat Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934 (16 USC §661-666c)</li> <li>- Sikes Act of 1974 (USC §670a-670o)</li> <li>- 36 CFR Part 219</li> <li>- 36 CFR Part 241</li> </ul>

## **5. Budget Formulation**

Annual Forest budget proposals are to be based on the activities and actions required to achieve the goals and objectives of the Forest Plan. Monitoring results and actual experienced costs of implementing the standards and guidelines will be used as a basis for each year's budget proposals. Costs to implement the Forest Plan are not complete without providing for an adequate level of monitoring and evaluation of projects.

## **6. Budget Execution**

Implementation of the annual budget must be in compliance with the Forest Plan and any specific direction provided in the annual Appropriations Act (FSM 1930). As actual allocations rarely, if ever, provide for full funding of the Forest Plan requirements, the scheduled activities and actions for any particular year must be adjusted to conform to the intent of Congress. Although budget changes themselves do not require Forest Plan amendment, implications of budget changes may. For example, a project for which money is appropriated must be consistent with the Forest Plan; the project or the Forest Plan may require modification to assure consistency.

# **E. FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT AND REVISION**

## **1. Forest Plan Amendment**

The amendment process changes a discrete component of management direction in a Forest Plan. Unless circumstances warrant a revision, the amendment process should generally be initiated whenever the Forest Supervisor determines through monitoring and evaluation that achievement of a forest-wide objective is unduly constrained by conflicting Forest Plan direction or that adequate progress toward achieving the desired future condition is not being made.

Other needs for amendments may arise during the evaluation of agency-initiated projects to achieve the integrated direction in the Forest Plan or during the evaluation of external proposals. Amendments arising from agency-initiated projects or external proposals may be analyzed, and decisions documented in a decision notice or record of decision, simultaneously with project-approval decisions provided that the consequences of the proposed amendment and alternatives to the proposed amendment are specifically disclosed in the environmental assessment or environmental impact statement prepared for the project or proposal.

Significant and non-significant amendments differ. Generally speaking, significant amendments are those that affect the long-term balance of goods and services produced on the Forest.

The Regional Forester is the responsible official for significant amendments. The Forest Supervisor is the responsible official for non-significant amendments; he or she conducts the process and forwards proposed significant Forest Plan amendments to the Regional Forester for approval.

## **2. Forest Plan Revision**

The Forest Plan will normally be revised on a 10-year cycle. This means that the anticipated completion of a normal revision will occur about 10 to 15 years following completion of the current Forest Plan. Variations to this general rule may occur for various reasons. For example, some catastrophic event might indicate an acceleration of the revision. A delay in the normal revision schedule might be warranted because of scheduled inventories, anticipated staffing changes significant amendments, or other circumstances that might improve planning efficiency. A delay in revision is not appropriate if monitoring and evaluation indicates more immediate changes in the Forest Plan are needed.

A complete review of the Forest Plan should be completed prior to initiating a Forest Plan revision. Such a review is conducted by the Forest interdisciplinary team and includes the following:

- Recent monitoring and evaluation results along with pertinent research findings and recommendations
- A review of new laws, regulations or policies that may indicate a need to change the Forest Plan
- A determination of how well the Forest is progressing toward the stated desired future condition
- Demand projections for selected outputs
- Evaluation of the predicted and actual ecosystem responses
- Assessment of predicted and actual costs, outputs, responses, etc.
- A review of the RPA program
- Identification of emerging issues and opportunities

## **F. INTEGRATION WITH FOREST SERVICE DIRECTIVES SYSTEM**

Management direction in the Forest Service Directives System, including the Forest Service Manual and the Forest Service Handbook, is part of the Forest Plan management direction and is appropriately referenced within the Forest Plan. Applicable laws, regulations and policies are part of the applicable management direction even though they may not be restated in the Forest Plan.

Appendices A and B reference the minimum resource management direction

described in the directives system. Nothing precludes the development of additional minimum resource management direction whenever appropriate. Under the following circumstances, minimum resource management direction has not been referenced in this Forest Plan:

- The specific resource or use is not present on the Forest;
- The requirement addresses a condition or problem not applicable to the Forest; or
- A sound rationale for the exception is documented in the planning records.

## **II. Understanding the Black Hills National Forest**

The Black Hills National Forest is located in western South Dakota and northeast Wyoming. It is elliptical in shape - 110 miles long and 70 miles wide - and rises as much as 4,000 feet above the surrounding plains.

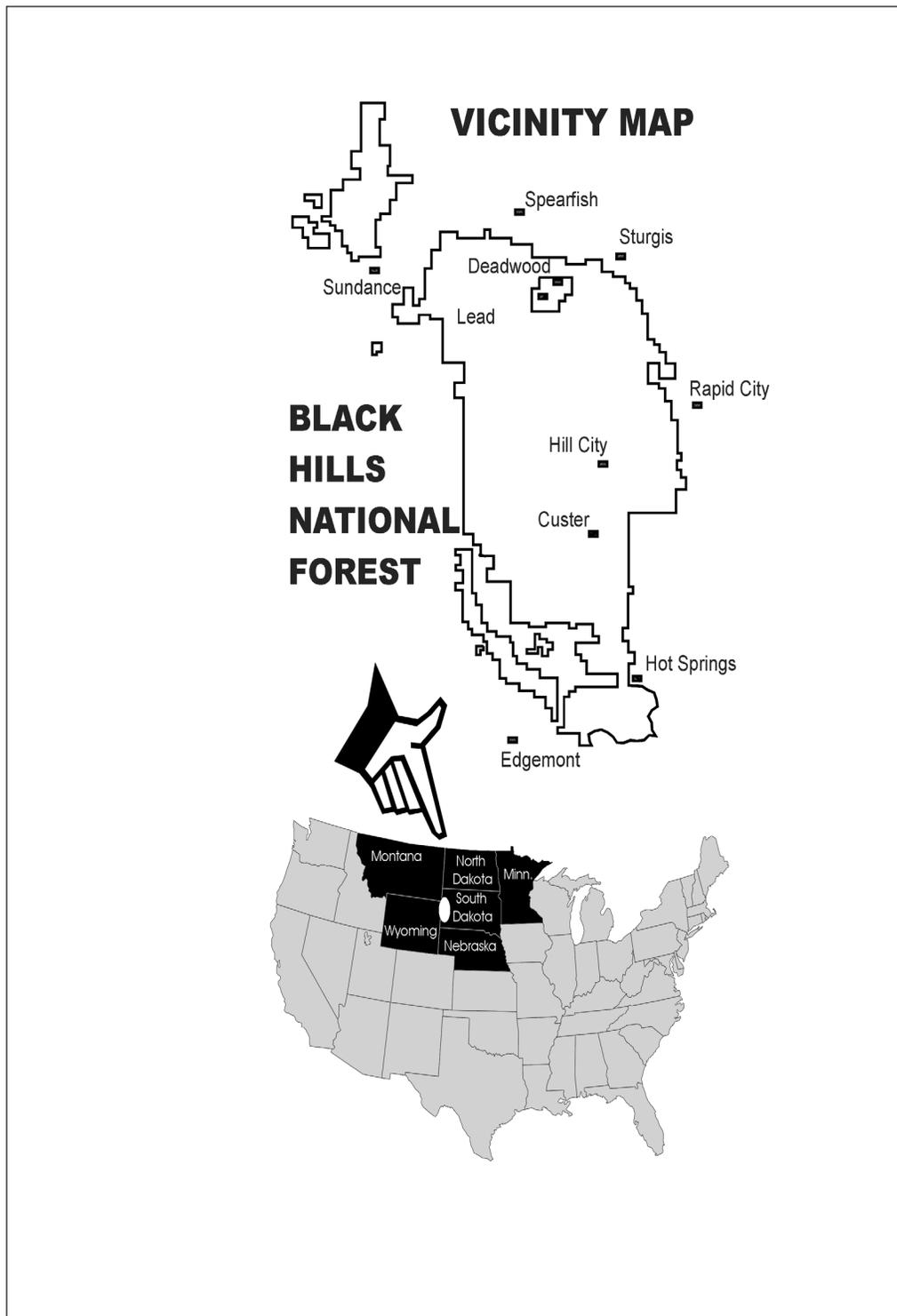
A vicinity map is shown in Figure Preface-1, page Preface-13.

In the hierarchical ecological mapping system used by the Forest Service, the Black Hills are in the “Dry-domain, Temperate-steppe Regime of the Mountain Division.” Because the Black Hills are clearly distinct from the surrounding prairie, they exclusively comprise the next two smaller subdivisions: the “Black Hills Province” and the “Black Hills Section.”

Of the more than 1.5 million acres within the National Forest boundary, approximately 289,000 acres are in private, state, or other federal agency ownership.

Counties containing lands covered by the Forest Plan include Custer, Fall River, Lawrence, Meade and Pennington in South Dakota and Crook and Weston in Wyoming.

Figure Preface-1. Vicinity Map



## **A. THE BLACK HILLS NATIONAL FOREST: DISTINCTIVE ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

**The Black Hills National Forest is ...**

### **1. Global/Intercontinental/National Scope**

- The setting for a region that is a top tourist destination in the country.
- The setting for Mount Rushmore and other attractions.
- The setting for some of the longest caves in the world.
- The setting for some of the richest mineral deposits in the world, including the largest gold mine in the Western Hemisphere.
- The setting for nationally designated areas: Black Elk Wilderness, Norbeck Wildlife Preserve, Upper Pine Creek Research Natural Area.
- The setting for national Scenic Byways in Norbeck Wildlife Preserve and Spearfish Canyon.
- The setting for important historical events, including Brevet Major General George Armstrong Custer's 1874 Expedition, a major gold rush in the late 19th century, the lore surrounding settlement of Deadwood Gulch, and conflicts between American Indians and the U.S. cavalry in the 19th century.
- The setting for nationally designated historic sites, including Harney Peak, Inyan Kara Mountain, Cold Springs School House, Mystic Townsite.
- Adjacent to Devils Tower, the nation's first national monument.
- The location of the first government timber sale in the United States to Homestake Mining Company in 1899, and the longest history of multiple-use management in the National Forest System.

### **2. Multi-State/Regional Scope**

- An "island in the plains" - a mountainous uplift covered mainly by ponderosa pine and surrounded by prairie and badlands
- The setting for the largest percentage of suitable timber lands and the highest allowable sale quantity in the Rocky Mountain Region
- A recharge area for the Madison Aquifer, a large pool of groundwater important to communities in the area
- The setting for Deadwood, the gambling capital of the region
- The traditional spiritual home of the Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho nations

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### 3. Forest Scope

- The setting for a variety of plant and animal species
- The setting for blue-ribbon trout streams
- The setting for Pactola Reservoir, Sheridan Lake, Deerfield Reservoir, and other popular recreational attractions
- The setting for important experiments within the Black Hills Experimental Forest and the Sturgis Experimental Watershed
- The setting for contributions to local communities, such as economic returns-to-counties and employment
- The setting for the Boxelder Job Corps Center, where youth learn important skills and can earn their high school diploma

## B. TRENDS THAT MAY AFFECT THE BLACK HILLS NATIONAL FOREST

### 1. Global/Intercontinental/National Scope

- Climate trends
- Shifts in national timber demand supplied by Canada and other countries, southern states, and the West Coast
- Mineral prices
- Changes in off-road vehicle technology
- Changes in modes of recreation
- Military necessity
- Tourism

### 2. Multi-State/Regional Scope

- Regional population trends
- Shifts in employment and manufacturing base
- Shifts in tourism
- Drought and water availability
- Major fire risks
- Insect and disease outbreaks
- Economics
- Trends in visitor use
- Shifts to ecosystem/landscape management emphasis

### 3. Forest Scope

- Major flood events
- New highway construction through the Forest
- New industry moving near the Forest
- Shifts in recreation visitor preferences
- New uses for forest products

## C. RESOURCE COMMODITIES AND SERVICES FROM THE BLACK HILLS NATIONAL FOREST

Following is a brief summary of the analysis of the management situation, including demand and supply conditions for resource commodities and services, production potential, and use and development opportunities within the Black Hills National Forest. (36 CFR 219.11(a)) This information was derived from the accompanying Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Supply conditions, production potential, and use and development opportunities vary by alternative. As explained earlier, differences among alternatives are displayed in the Final EIS. The supplemental tables in the Final EIS contain specific levels of outputs, activities, allocations and costs.

### 1. Recreation

**Dispersed Recreation:** Dispersed recreation is that portion of outdoor recreation use that occurs on all areas of the Forest outside developed recreation sites. Between 1978 and 1995, there was a four percent annual growth rate of use. This rate is assumed to continue in the future. Both motorized and non-motorized recreation are assumed to grow at the same rate. Supply will meet projected recreation demand for at least the next 20 years.

**Developed Recreation:** Developed recreation includes all recreation activities that take place on a developed recreation site. Managed capacity is 750,000 Recreation Visitor Days (RVDs). Predicted demand during the next 10 years is 594,200 RVDs.

### 2. Minerals

**Locatable Minerals:** Locatable minerals important to the history and economy of the Black Hills include gold, silver, uranium, feldspar and mica. Mineral production will continue in accordance with the 1872 Mining Act.

**Leasable Minerals:** The only known leasable minerals on the Black Hills National Forest are oil and gas. Currently, there are no producing wells on National Forest System lands in the Black Hills. Projections indicate that two exploratory wells are expected in the next 15 years. No discovery is expected.

### **3. Timber Production**

Timber harvesting is the keystone of forest management. The Black Hills National Forest has the highest allowable sale quantity (ASQ) of any forest in the Rocky Mountain Region.

A high demand exists for wood products manufactured from ponderosa pine, the primary species in the Black Hills, and from white spruce.

Growth of the local timber industry was encouraged by the Forest Service in the 1970s. A modern, efficient wood-product industry exists today in the Black Hills region with a capacity to process more than 200 million board feet annually.

Roughly two-thirds of industry's needs are supplied by the Black Hills National Forest. Demand for sawtimber from the Forest is expected to remain much higher than can be supplied.

### **4. Livestock Grazing**

Livestock grazing is 128,000 animal unit months. This number represents grazing by cattle; there is no grazing by sheep in the Black Hills. Demand is much higher than supply.

There are 1,037,598 acres suitable for livestock grazing and browsing. Suitable lands are those lands where the economic and environmental consequences and alternative uses foregone, have been analyzed to determine that they are appropriate for livestock grazing management (36 CFR 219.3).