National Forest Advisory Board Meeting
November 20, 2013
Mystic Ranger District

Members Present:
Chairman Jim Scherrer, Bill Kohlbrand, Jeanne Whalen, David Hague, Linda Tokarczyk, Craig Tieszen, Richard Brown, Danielle Wiebers, Lon Carrier, Mike Verchio, Lauris Tysdal, Ev Hoyt Nancy Trautman, David Brenneisen, Jeff Vonk, Tom Blair, John Gomez, Becci Flanders-Paterson

Members Absent:
Mary Zimmerman, Donovin Sprague, Bob Burns

Forest Service Representatives:
Craig Bobzien, Dennis Jaeger, Scott Jacobson, Katie Van Alstyne, Ralph Adam, Dave Mertz, Todd Pechota, Steve Kozel, Terry Tompkins, and Twila Morris

Others:
Approximately fifteen members of the public were in attendance. Three Congressional representatives were also in attendance; Kyle Holt (Noem – R, South Dakota), Chris Blair (Johnson – D, South Dakota), Mark Haugen (Thune – R, South Dakota)

Introduction & Welcome:

Scherrer: Welcome everyone. Primary members please take a seat at the table; if there are extra seats at the table, the Alternate members are welcome to join us at the table. Welcome to the November Advisory Board meeting. We have a lot on the agenda today because of the closure in October. We'll get started with comments from DFO Bobzien.

Bobzien: It's great to be here, great turnout today. We have a number of guests today; we'll introduce as we go along. We have a full agenda, and some folks are watching the weather so if you need to go, go. With that, I'll turn it back to the Chairman.

Approve the September Meeting Minutes:

Scherrer: Our first order of business is to approve the minutes from the September meeting. The notes were forwarded to all for review, corrections were incorporated. Do I have a motion to approve the September NFAB meeting minutes? Motion made by Lon carrier, second by Dave Hague. All in favor say aye, opposed same sign; the minutes are approved.

Approve the Agenda:

Scherrer: There are no modifications or adjustments to the agenda today; do I have a motion to approve the Agenda? Motion made by Linda Tokarczyk, second by Craig Tieszen. Is there any discussion? All in favor of approving the agenda as it reads say aye; opposed same sign. The Agenda is approved.

Housekeeping:

DFO Bobzien: Welcome to our guests and Board members. In case of an emergency, the main exit is to the front where you came in; there is another exit down the hall in the back and out to the back parking lot; restrooms to the front and back as well and refreshments on the table in the back.

Scherrer: Before Craig goes into his comments; I would just like to say that we have 155 Forests in the US, and our Forest Supervisor, Craig Bobzien, is chosen to step up to represent the Nation more times than not. Craig has just returned from a detail in Washington DC – we know you have a lot of horse power, and we're blessed to have him back. And Dennis, thank you for stepping up during Craig's absents; we had some challenging times in the last few months, but we're back in business. Thank you both.

Comment to the Chair

DFO Bobzien: First off, I would like to thank the Board members and everyone who makes the Board what it is. We have several brand new members, and some that have been here for a while. We had a chance in August, with the field trip, to start to understand the work of the Board. The Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) appreciates the advice that you'll provide to the employees on the issues facing the Black Hills and for representing the citizens the way you do. In the course of your service here, you'll all bring perspectives that are diverse, you also have a representational function, and you'll bring your own values, but also those of your constituency. The other piece is that you are all here because you care about making the BHNF the best it can be. We've had a lot of success in the past in terms of the Board providing advice; we have a great staff of people on the BHNF, and our work complements one another. There are so many things that go beyond the normal interaction with the public; we couldn't come out with as good of recommendations as we do if it were not for this Board.

We do need to create common understanding among Board members; some will have a terrific amount of knowledge some will have a smaller amount of knowledge and then well learn together about what it is and why it matters and answer the questions about what we need help on. We have some challenges, and we'll be asking some of you to spend some extra time on a "Working Group" to serve a function for the greater good of the Board. We'll learn as we go, but with each one of the topics we'll try to understand the why – why does it matter. Then we'll get into more specifics.

Meeting Protocols:

Scherrer: Make sure your phone is on silent or vibrate. Input from audience members will come at the end of the meeting if we have time. We've set aside 15 minutes for public comment, but if we do not have time, I recommend that you take your concerns to the Board member that represents your area of interest; and that Board member can make sure that your input is heard. All of the Board members are volunteers, and I want to make sure than their voice is heard and that we use all the time we need for that.

Hot Topics

Legislative Updates - Federal

Scherrer: Routinely we have the three Congressional delegation folks from SD at our meetings and we invite the Wyoming delegation. We ask each representative to give us an update on issues related to the Forest Service. Keep in mind that we ask that you keep it to three minutes; thank you.

Scherrer: We'll start out with Senator Thune's representative, Mark Haugen.

Mark Haugen: The Senator took part in an Ag Subcommittee meeting in DC, the title was, "how tight budget and management decisions can affect wildfires". Tom Troxel was in attendance. They discussed the funding shortfalls, and the hurdles that are in the way; continuing the argument about how this Forest is more deserving of the money.

The Fish & Wildlife Service attended a meeting with the City of Spearfish to discuss the DC Booth Fish Hatchery. The focus of the Fish & Wildlife's input was a 37% cut in their fisheries budget. You'll see more of this as the budget continues to tighten, whether it's Forest Service (FS) or Fish and Wildlife. Spearfish has kicked in on the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) battle and now they are being asked to kick in with the DC Booth battle.

The Senator is optimistic about the Farm Bill; he still thinks there will be something done by the end of the year. My counterpart – Lynn Churchman in DC hosted a round table regarding pasture, rangeland forest, etc., and primarily the main issue was insurance, but also there is grazing issues. We haven't heard much about the grazing issues on the BHNF, this might be something that we could hear about some time in the future.

Scherrer: Thank you Mark, are there any questions for Mark?

Scherrer: We'll move on to Chris Blair of Senator Johnson's office.

Chris Blair: Tim has been out to South Dakota a couple of times this last month, dealing with the storm issues. We've been in touch with the FS regarding impacts from the blizzard. This is a difficult time with the blizzard damage, sequestration, and the budget continuing resolution. Conference committee has met with the Congress on the Farm Bill; we're hearing promising things that it may be passed by the end of the year. The shutdown cost the US economy $24 billion dollars; so the cuts we'll see to our budget will likely be significant.

Thursday the Forest Planning Rule Committee will meet to talk about the new planning rule. A lot of the recommendations will be about wilderness, range, timber, grazing, wildlife, etc., a wide range of issues. We welcome public comments; send those to me and we'll pass them along to the committee members.

Gomez: Can you give us an update on the Black Hills Cemetery Bill?

Blair: I believe we are just waiting for confirmation on the Senate side.

Scherrer: Thank you Chris, does anyone have any more questions?

Scherrer: If there are no more questions for Chris, we'll move on to Kristi Noem's representative Kyle Holt.

Kyle Holt: BH cemetery bill has passed the house, but has not been scheduled for a vote yet.

As far as Ag and forestry issues, the October storm had a big impact. Kristi did some touring up north. The Farm Bill is taking up a lot of her time. Kristi has been named as a conferee on the Farm Bill, which is the first time someone from South Dakota has been named to this position. Livestock disaster programs are going to be her priority. Kristi did say that she expects that the food stamp issue will be a big part of it, but she does not want that to stop it from passing.

Chief Tidwell did accept Kristi's invitation to come out and see the Black Hills. The Chief and Congresswoman were given an aerial tour and a ground tour. After the field tours, a Stakeholder meeting was held at the Forest Service office in Custer. Thank you Craig, Dennis, Scott and Twila, and all of the Forest Service folks, for all of your work on making that happen.

Scherrer: Thank you Kyle; are there any questions for Kyle?

Legislative Updates – State

Scherrer: We'll go to Wyoming Commissioner Jeanne Whalen for an update on what our neighbors in Wyoming are up to.

Whalen: Crook County Commission have regular round table discussions and bring the Forest Service, Devils Tower, the BLM and others to the table. It was brought to our attention that the Fish and Wildlife is considering listing the Northern Long Eared bats as endangered. This bat is common in only small portions of the Black Hills. The Fish and Wildlife recognized that the white nose syndrome is a big factor. Crook County will be commenting on this issue. A request for a moratorium is being made to stop all caving at this time. Is that a Forest Service request?

Jaeger: The Forest Service along with a Working Group from this Board worked on a Regional White Nose Syndrome EA; we came out with the decision, and have an active plan. The answer to your question is, no, this is not our request, so it must be coming from Fish and Wildlife Service.

Scherrer: Senator Tieszen would you please give us an update us on what is going on in the State.

Tieszen: We go into session on January 14 – this is a time to meet with all interested parties and get their feedback and input. The MPB response and funding is forefront on the issues; we have provided funding the last couple of years. We found out that when this subject comes up, not only to west river legislator's love the forest, but flat landers love it too; and they have been very supportive of our efforts here, I'm amazed at the response. I believe that support is still strong for the program, because we see good value from he dollars invested, and very appreciative of the cooperation between agencies and entities.

December Meeting – December 18, 2013

Scherrer: The supervision of the FS and BHNF have been encouraging and supportive of us having a makeup meeting on December 18; to maintain continuity, to help regain momentum, and to assure continued relevancy of this Board. I would also like to tell you that there is precedence to this. In the last 11 years, there have been numerous meetings canceled because of shutdowns, and we have had make up meetings in the past. The FS was kind enough to provide all of the comforts that we have here for these meetings, but one time they were not allowed to be at the meeting. Tom Blair led the charge to have a meeting at the GF&P office anyway.

I'm here today to gain confirmation that we'll have the December 18th meeting, so that Scott can send a message to Washington DC to let them know we'll have another meeting. I'm looking for what level of interest – by a show of hands, in a meeting in December. (Enough for a quorum raised their hands). We will have a meeting on December 18. I know the passion that is in this room, and I assumed this would happen. We'll have a full agenda in December and we might add the WNS if we have time.

Regular Agenda

Black Hills Mountain Pine Beetle Strategy

Scherrer: First item on the regular agenda is a presentation by Dave Thom.

Bobzien: The update here on the agenda is for the MPB strategy – we'll talk about the why part; obliviously the scenic change, but also in terms of watershed, forest health, while we recognize that tourism is 2nd in the South Dakota economy. Secretary Vonk brought forward that forest health is the underpinning of what takes place in the Black Hills, and that comment has stuck with me.

Kyle brought up that Congresswoman Noem and the Chief of the FS were here. During their visit, with all of their comments, the operative word is "we". They understand our common interest and common cause of working together. Several years ago we "coordinated" and we did that well, but now we "collaborate" which works much better. The whole dynamic of what Dave will be talking to us about is how we can put our resources together, investment, but ultimately, we won't have all the resources we would like to have, so how do we work together in the right places. You'll hear that about the MPB Response Project. The Board provided support and recommendation to us on this as well. We'll also roll into one of our very large projects, a 248,000 project. Last we'll thread this with anther interest which is fire. Dave is the coordinator; he's done an excellent job in coordinating the Working Group of the MPB Team. Dave Thom.

Dave Thom: Thank you Craig and to the Board for allowing me time to talk about the MPB today. I have seven things to talk about, but they'll go quick. The first is, Craig in his introduction talked about the collaboration; the sheet that you received is a narrative form of the collaborative work that is going on. Marie Curtain has done an excellent job of pulling this together.

The sheet shows the entities that have been participating. Secondly, the acres of activities or numbers of trees treated are listed. Some of the highlights are:

- Acres Surveyed and infested trees marked: 207,992 acres; 493,980 trees
- Infested tress treated: 165,973 acres and 342,575 trees.
- Trees sprayed: 1,520
- Commercial timber sales: 26,665 acres sold, 45,911 acres harvested.
- Trees sawmilled: 1,504,311
- Workshops held: 12

Cut and Chunk: Common term of saying cutting trees into little pieces by March first, letting them dry out and killing the MPB larva. That work is progressing on BHNF and private lands. It is fair to say we are a little behind because of the shutdown and the 40+ inches of snow. The crews are finding less infested trees per acre this year, which is a good sign, but it's too early to tell for sure.

De-Barking: In lieu of cut and chunk, de-barking uses a machine to debark and kill the larva; short of a timber sale, it's the most effective process.

Stewardship Agreements: A way the FS can work with other entities to pool resources, share goods and services, and get work done.

Five Year Plan: Dave Mertz talked about the FS five year plan this morning at our Working Group meeting. This is done to make sure the FS is addressing the MPB in the most important places.

2014 Operations: Every month we learn how to do work better. Knowing what we know now, how can we improve next year? As we go we can continuously learn how to improve.

Funding: Part of my job is to pull together all the costs the entities are incurring and where the money is being spent. We spent 18 million dollars in 2013 and next year there is only about 16 million projected to be available. We need more money to help the FS get their funding and program up to where it was last year and secondly the State of SD provided $2 million last year. We are working with the Governor, and Senators and we've asked for $2.4 million this year.

Scherrer: Time for questions to Dave, and I have one. Would you expound on what Senator Tieszen mentioned earlier about a meeting on Friday regarding this issue?

Thom: The State Legislators and community leaders will attend a meeting on Friday to talk about what is going on in the MPB world. The meeting is Friday, November 22nd at 2:00 p.m. at the outdoor campus. This is just a meeting to brief folks on the importance of the MPB issue.

Scherrer: Is the public invited?

Thom: It's not a closed meeting, but the general public has not been invited.

Scherrer: Will there be presenters?

Thom: Yes, there will be several from the County, the Forest Service, the State; it will be a sampling of the partners that are working together.

Tokarczyk: In regards to funding, do you see that it might be helpful also to have an additional person from industry step up and help fund the coordination effort?

Thom: It is our intention to invite other entities that are interested in help. Letters will be mailed out in the near future to invite folks to help.

Tokarczyk: I think that would be good as far as the collaborative effort so that everyone will see this as truly an all lands approach.

Thom: We're also thinking about the future. Since we can kind of see the light at the end of the MPB tunnel, we're thinking about what happens after that. The model of the collaboration of people getting together to solve problems, could carry over into many other aspects of the work that is done on the BHNF.

Scherrer: Hopefully your presentation at the meeting on Friday will be a launching pad for the same type of cooperation from the east river folks as you received last year

Mountain Pine Beetle Response Project Update

Scherrer: Next on the agenda is an update on the MPB Response Project.

Bobzien: When I look around this room, we have members of local fire departments, states, all kinds of agencies, and it's impressive how many people have their fingers in this project. Many have met Katie before; Katie is out Team Leader. Katie.

Katie Van Alstyne: This project has been going on for a long time, since its inception in August of 2011. One and a half years later, a decision was signed on December 10, 2012, and today we are implementing. The Subcommittee of this Board really strengthened the product that we had, and were a tremendous asset to the FS. On October 1, 2013, the FS initiated eight activities including cut and chunk, and timber sales.

One of the projects is the Buck Mountain project, up by the Black Hawk area. We've been monitoring that and looking at how the cut and chunk activity will carry forward to the larger activity of a timber sale. The Buck Mountain sale was sold on November 8. This is all possible thru this decision and thru the adaptable approach. Like Dave said in the past we did coordinate with other entities, but today we are actually collaborating. Thru the MBP response project we have 248,000 acres that we can work with you on so that at the Working Group meetings we can all look at the five year plan and make decisions together. A lot of projects were stared in FY13, but will completed in FY14. We are well underway of implementing.

Scherrer: Are there any questions for Katie?

Brenneisen: If you look at some of the recent projects PBR went back and augmented some of the other projects, it didn't do anything for some of the more recent projects that had sanitation in them. What we are seeing now is that the older projects have leap frogged the newer projects in

terms of treatment. The older projects in these high risk stands you can do some thinning, is there anything that can be done with the more recent projects that just have the sanitation provision to bring them up to speed with the older projects?

Van-Alstyne: When we have 300,000 acres plus covered in NEPA that gives us a lot of flexibility. Some of them are integrated with the older projects, but some are the new projects; investing in the right place at the right time. Working with the Working Group, Districts, timber industry, we are working in the areas we should be right now. We are now looking at this for the winter to make sure we are still in the right area.

Brenneisen: What's the next step? We have projects that were augmented by PBR where we can no go in and add in the missing pieces, high risk stands will be treated. We have some newer projects that weren't addressed. There are contracts in place within some of the other projects, and we aren't seeing the options on them where we see the sanitation only.

Bobzien: PBR was a new model; which covers 248,000 acres covered with some of the older areas, that maybe had limits on what could be done. So we look at where is our best 30,000 acres. We have to have a real compelling need to go back and do more NEPA. It is possible, but again, we have to say is that a wise investment; is there an area that it is important? If we think there is, then we will weight that as a possibility.

Tysdal: Dave, could you define sanitation as defined in the PBR project?

Brenneisen: It is the removal of infested trees or those that are in emanate danger of becoming infested.

Tysdal: A couple of years ago, a tornado touched the boundary of a timber sale and you were able to take care of that downed timber. Can you make those things fit with the PBR?

Bobzien: It goes back to the original decision, so we can evaluate that; In this case, it fit so that we could respond to it. We have to look at it case by case.

Scherrer: This topic had a lot of discussion this morning at the MPB Working Group meeting, because the guys on the ground don't see any reason not to go across the landscape, so common sense dictates that if you can get all across the landscape from wall to wall, that would be beneficial. The timber industry raised this question. It's frustrating for both sides of the table. Bill said this morning that there are a lot of good things happening with MPB and we are filling a lot of holes, but we have limited resources and have to follow the rules. If you do new NEPA, it won't be done for three years and then it's' too late.

Aerial Photo flight

Thom: Last year's high resolution air photos have just arrived. The State of SD coordinated that flight using FS, private, and State money. They've divided the photos into Wyoming, Custer County, Lawrence County and Pennington County. It takes them awhile to look at 1.5 million acres of photos covering Osage to Rapid City.

Wildfire Risk Assessment & Prioritization Process (WRAPP)

Scherrer: We'll take a 15 minute break (2:05); then we'll go into the WRAPP presentation which is a real opportunity for this Board to provide input.

[Re-Convene]

Bobzien: The WRAPP is a cutting edge endeavor. You have all lived, worked, and played in the Black Hills so you know that the two major disturbances are insects and fire. Of major concern to us is the increase of fire, and crown fire. We have always had wildlife shaping the BHNF. So much of what we do in integrating Forest health is being mindful of wildfires. We've had all this focus on the MPB, but we've been mindful of the fuels out there; what does it mean to our fire risk? In looking across the landscape, what is our best science? Today, this is a work in progress, brand new. Todd will introduce the why and what of this endeavor.

With us today are Jim Menakis who is a National Fire Ecologist for the Forest service. It is really good to have Jim here. Elise Brown is here for technical support; she makes all these things happen. Brenda Wilmore is the Assistant Branch Director in Fire Ecology. And Todd Pechota is our Forest Fire Management Officer whom you've met before.

Pechota: I've heard a couple of words mentioned several times; relevance, our friends that started our hot topics talked about declining budgets, the folks from Pierre talked about the need for support from east river; this is a relevant issue. WFRPP is being run on the Forest to keep us relevant to let Legislators at both State and National levels know that we are a good investment. We have used a collaborative process from the start on this. Jay Esperance with the State, Bill Kohlbrand with the State of Wyoming and Dave Thom are helping look at where is our greatest risk. Everyone has risk and their focus may be narrowly focused. Jim will talk about the nuts and bolts of the model.

The National Wildfire Cohesive Strategy has been developed by National level Wildland Fire executives. There are three goals to the strategy:

National Goals:

- Restore and Maintain Landscapes: Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances in accordance with management objectives.
- Fire-adapted Communities: Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property.
- Wildfire Response: All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.

When I look at a chunk of ground, and it's steep, with snags – that means a lot of risk and a lot of exposure. We kill a lot of people every year doing work like that. This is a way to get some restoration done, and compete for the funding that is available at the same time.

Jim Menakis: I feel honored to present to this collaborative group. One common theme with our greatest success stories is that everyone was engaged.

[PowerPoint Presentation]

Why

- Prioritize our Investments
- Over 1/3 of NF Lands in Rocky Mountain Region CC 2 and 3
- National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

What is the Cohesive Strategy?

- A national, collaborative approach to addressing Wildland fire across all lands and jurisdictions
- Developed with input from Wildland fire organizations, land managers and policy-making officials representing all levels of governmental and non-governmental organizations

National Goals

- Restore and Maintain Landscapes: Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances in accordance with management objectives.
- Fire-adapted Communities: Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property.
- Wildfire Response: All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.

Process

- Who?
  - Resource specialists, Partners and Leadership
- What?
  - Resource Specialists and Partners Identify Highly Valued Risk Assessment (HVRAs) of Interest and develop response functions
  - Leadership establish relative importance of each HVRA
- How?
  - Discussion and expert opinion
  - Iterative Process

Summary

- We collaborate with others in an "all lands strategy" ,
- We incorporate a wide number of values at risk;
- We want to invest in sufficiently large landscapes where we can make a difference;
- We recognize the positive values and the potentially adverse effects of fire;
- We plan to use this in our out year investment FY 15 and beyond
- We will continue to monitor, evaluate and adjust as we go.

Scherrer: Are there any questions for Jim?

Pechota: In terms of the wildland fire risk and prioritization process, how many national forests out of 155 are at the same place we are in this process?

Menakis: This is a prototype forest, we are way ahead of the curve, and this forest is number three in the process. The implementation has broad effects; and the results have broad effects. Our National direction is to apply this to all forests. It has high visibility and high credibility, and the BHNF is a prototype.

Kohlbrand: When you were here "collaborating" you got a lot of input, have you made a run and spit anything out?

Menakis: We did make a run, and some of the results were shown in my presentation. We are in the process of evaluating the output before we move on.

Pechota: Bill you know that when everything's important, nothing is important; and that is what I have seen has happened. We are in the process of pairing it down to five HVRAs and 11 sub values. The initial was just too much and it made it so that nothing was important. As we continue to work thru it, it will look much better.

Menakis: Risk assessment can be used for many things. What we are using it for is allocation of fuels dollars.

Brown: Your presentation talked about "wildland" and "wildland/urban" interface. What is the definition used for wildland and would that be different in the eastern part of the county or is it a national definition?

Menakis: There are two Federal register definitions. We are scaling both definitions to the locality.

Brown: As you do the assessment, that definition might be localized and have a different definition than a National definition. The definition could make a difference. Urban interface for me could be my local property – which is the highest of course. (Laugh)

Menakis: You raise a good question; this has to be a step down approach, we do not want to compare you to California. We try to be consistent with definitions, each level there are more things going on. If I was measuring the cost of California I would get different numbers deepening on how low to the ground your survey is.

Vonk: You say the BHNF is a prototype – what is the plan for when this goes nationwide and when will it be implemented. Allocation of funds – will this be used in the forest to take whatever is allocated for fire and will that be stepped up to across the national forest?

Pechota: I don't think this model is going to make any decisions; this model is to help Craig and Dennis make a wise decision. This is a decision to help inform, and to tell those with the budget why we are a good investment.

Vonk: So it's not an allocation process?

Menakis: It's meant to inform that process, not decide on the process.

Bobzien: Jeff do you suppose there are any politics in an allocation process? (Laugh) Jim has explained that it is a science based process; it will help us inform; and if you think about all lands, this can be applied on all lands. Our reality is we dance with who wants to dance. If we had a partner that wants to support something, but we say we don't have risk there; this will help inform that. We have a real clear need in some places and we have partners that make sense. If States and Counties want to use the model they could do that too.

Scherrer: This is a big issue and will add extensive value going forward. I'll invite questions from the alternates and members of the audience at this time.

Hoyt: You mentioned that input to the model factored in MPB, but your last slide said it complimented the MPB risk assessment.

Menakis: The MPB is embedded into the model, so what I meant to say was that it is part of the process, we are taking that process and adjusting our probability, but it is complimentary to the effort mentioned today.

Jaeger: As an example, we took Congresswoman Noem to west of Custer where we had done MPB work. We had a fire in that area that started out as 10 acre in the grass, and a half hour later, it was 300 acres. When the fire ran into the area that was treated for MPB, we were able to stop it. If you look at the MPB group giving us priorities of acres at risk, you can get two birds with one stone; where are the high value locations. John says your biggest risk is Silver City, and Bill says, no – it's my back yard, so we put it on the map and in coordination with the MPB group, we can get our best bang from the buck.

Blair: I remember 10 years ago, we had a special guest visit us, Chief Bosworth, and maybe this is something rather than saying Dicks land is more important, we look at it as a whole. The Chief said that the BHNF is the most urban forest in the most rural state, and that's truly what we are. The BHNF map is green spattered with white. It didn't come to head until people started using the term WUI.

Kohlbrand: Will this process supersede the Community Wildfire Protection Plans?

Menakis: No not at all, it's meant to inform that process as well.

Kohlbrand: Are those factored into your model?

Menakis: No.

Pechota: But all of the elements are; the private property boundary, the homes, etc. The WUI HVRA isn't just municipalities, it includes other non-federal lands, be it grazing, ski areas, etc. We used county structure maps to establish structure density.

Menakis: When this is complete, you can use it to evaluate CWPs, engage discussion, add value to the process and it gives you another product to consider.

Tokarczyk: How often will it be updated?

Menakis: Not yearly, I know that for sure. I'm not sure we know what the lifecycle is, but I'm seeing a 3-5 year cycle. But it is repeatable, so you could incorporate changes, and run it again.

Scott Guffey: I'm the Pennington County Weed and Pest Director and I worked on the MPB Strategy. MPB work is fire risk work as well, they benefit each other.

Menakis: The treatments I've seen for MPB, thinning and opening up the forest, enables the trees to have the ability to avoid the MPB, it also enhances the ability for the fire to go from crown to ground.

Guffey: How do you see the effects of cutting and chunking; which leaves a lot of fuel on the ground?

Pechota: In the model, we are trying to recognize the large chunks of area, that a good MPB treatment is a good fire treatment; we are taking about aerial fire.

Guffey: There's been a lot of debate in terms of if the cut and chunk adds too much ground fuel.

Menakis: If you're leaving fuels on the ground that would increase the risk for sure. But we are mostly concerned about the crown fires.

Flanders-Patterson: Could this tool be used on a local level so that we would know if intermediate actions need to be taken, and could be addressed?

Menakis: You can run the model as often as you want. And this can be used in a lot of different areas rather than just fire.

Trautman: This would be of great deal of interest to fire departments and emergency management departments. What plans to you have for distributing this information? We could use this in many ways.

Bobzien: We stared small and have a work in progress, we think it has application, and our intent is to broaden the use and application. Being first is going thru the prototype to get the tune up done; then we'll be good to go with States, local entities and others that want to use this tool.

Menakis: One of the last elements is response to wildfire. I look at this in terms of evacuation strategies and so you'll know where your risks are. When Missoula had fires, the local fire guy said, I now know what to do.

Trautman: That is what I saw especially giving the amount of dead trees we have in Pennington County.

Whalen: When I hear the words assessment and allocation of funds it worries me some. Ten years ago or so, in Crook County, the FS only fought fires on a 9:00-5:00 basis, and at 5:00 they went home for the day. Since then, the FS and Crook County work together; we all wear the same yellow shirt, we all eat at the same table. I would hope that if we are talking about allocations, it doesn't go back to the way it was. Reassure me that it won't go back to the way it was.

Bobzien: The principal is looking at what we are doing the real part is what we can do proactively, recognizing the HVRA, what our best investments are. I've never heard anything like that before so thank you; this is to inform our best business decisions.

Menakis: The most economical way to fight a fire is doing it ahead of time. They are doing that in the south west, and they don't have $90 million fires.

Bobzien: Thank you Jim for your presentation. This deal in August, the preliminary work was a grinding session – it was tough, prioritizing, etc. Bill hung in there and when we got done, and I said thanks for hanging in – he says "Of course I want that output to agree with what I think is most important, but at least if it doesn't agree, I'll know how the thing was built".

It's an important role; again, we are at the ground floor of this to find what is relevant. We're talking about all lands and all risks. For the Board this is introductory; we want to follow this up with the concept of a Working Group, so I'll ask the Board to be thinking about Working Group participation. We'll pick this up and integrate this with our MPB Working Group.

When the FS Chief was out here; 155 national forests, he's been around, he knows the BHNF, he knows about the NFAB, and he's been tracking about the MPB project. One of the questions he asked was how it works here on the Black Hills. I told him there are three things we consider. 1) Environmental – Our active management resembles small disturbances that have occurred historically from insects and fire. 2) Economic – Investment; we have the fortune of a sustainable wood product. Our capacity is about 30,000 acres a year. 3) Social - Interaction and support. The Chief was surprised that we had all of the private land and we are in a lot of back yards. Our integrity of having a high standard of work is a pretty high bar. All those fit together, and that's the platform for how we get to the next level, how do we enhance and strengthen?

Scherrer: We'll take a break, but before we do that; I have a request. I would like the entire Advisory Board to receive an e-mail copy of the PowerPoint presentation that Jim just showed. And secondly, I would like the Advisory Board to receive a copy of the article that Craig had sent to me as background for today's presentation. Twila will you send these two items to all? (NOTE: Scott Jacobson sent the two documents to the Board on 11/20/13).

We have the ability to really add some horse power to this; this is the next big thing. I'm going to ask people to be as highly educated as possible. We're on the cutting edge of this and I don't want to lose that, if we don't move fast, someone will run over us. Come prepared to the December meeting so we can move forward with a working group.

SD Motorized Trail Permit Fees

Scherrer: I'll let Dennis provide the background on this next topic.

Jaeger: Ralph will give you a quick update on the status of the motorized trail permit fee issue. The Recreation Enhancement Act says that we can charge a fee for permits and maintenance. It also says that changes have to be approved by the Recreation Advisory Committee (RAC), which this Board serves as. If we establish a fee or change a fee, we come to the NFAB for the recommendation and also the approval process as we move forward.

The basic question that we have for the Board is "should we change our trail permit fee for calendar year 2015". If yes, what should we change it to, and if no, we'll address this again next year. We'll need the answer in February or March.

Ralph Adam, our Physical Resources Staff Officer will walk you thru the details.

Ralph Adam: Thank you for having me here to speak again. My presentation today is on the Travel Management Plan for the BHNF.

Travel Management Decision:

- Effective Date: December 1, 2010.
- Brought Forest in Compliance with 2005 Travel Management Rule.
- Closed the Forest to cross country travel unless designated open.

Key Points of Decision

- Effective Date: December 1, 2010
- 3,900 Miles of roads and Trail designated for motorized use
- Protects water quality
- Improves conservation of cultural resources
- Routes available for people with disabilities
- Maintains non-motorized walk-in areas
- Allows motorized elk retrieval within 300 feet of roads in designated areas
- Allows dispersed camping within 300 feet of roads in designated areas
- Routes for various groups (single track-rock crawlers etc.)

Available for Motorized Use

- ROD designated roads & trails: 3,900 miles
- In 2014:
  - 634 miles of motorized trails
  - 500 miles of roads open to all vehicles
  - 2,587 miles open to highway legal vehicles only

Break down for 2014

Travel Designation	Northern Hills	Mystic	Bearlodge	Hell Canyon	Outside FS boundary
HLO	**646.4**	**782.4**	**37.8**	**1107.4**	**13.4**
ROTA	**109.3**	**119.9**	**229.7**	**27.5**	**13.5**
TOTA	**58.7**	**64.1**	**1.6**	**26.1**	0
62"	**120.1**	**150.2**	**0**	**75.3**	0
50"	**0**	**0**	**68.8**	**0**	0
Motorcycle	**14**	**55.6**	**0**	**0**	0
Total Miles/District	**948.5**	**1172.2**	**337.9**	**1236.3**	

Funding Sources:

- Permit Fees
- Grants
- Appropriated Dollars
- Trust $ (KV)

Motorized Trail Permits (South Dakota):

- Motorized trail users are required to purchase a Black Hills National Forest *Motorized Trail Permit.*
- Each motorized trail vehicle (e.g., motorcycle, ATV, UTV, 4x4) is required to display a *Motorized Trail Permit.*
- Types of Permits available: Annual Permit - $25; 7-Day Permit - $20; and an Annual Commercial Permit (for vehicle rentals) - $125.
- Permits are valid for the calendar year in which they are purchased
- Permits Available at all Black Hills National Forest offices, vendors in the community as well as online.

Motorized Trail Permit Fees

- Essential for an Active Trail system
  - Specifically designed, maintained, and enforced to provide for specific uses
- NFAB/Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC)
  - Analysis
  - Public participation
  - Business Plan Produced
  - Recommendations made to Forest Supervisor
- Broad Support for a special user permit system to support the trail system

Motorized permit sales.

Permit Type	Number Sold	Fees Collected	Fees Projected	% of Projected Goal
7-Day-$20	2,250	$45,000	$30,000	133%
Annual-$25	9,000	$225,000	$400,000	56%
Commercial-$125	30	$3,750	$5,000	75%
TOTAL	**11,280**	$273,750	$435,000	**63%**

Brief Summary from 2010-2013

- Permit sales have not yet achieved the numbers projected in 2010 though trending upward
- 90% of the motorized trail miles in ROD are open in 2014
- Tremendous support to system from grants
- Appropriated $ support though trending downward
- Volunteer/user group support is valuable

Should adjustments be made?

- Examples
  - Adjust fees
  - Adjust trail system to budget
  - Stay the course

Motorized trail fee adjustment

- Steps required prior to a change in fee
  - Step 1. Provide Public Notice and Request for Comments
  - Step 2. Present findings and results of public notice and comments to the Forest's RRAC
  - Step 3. Submit to Region 2 Fee Board and Regional Forester for Approval, include comments and recommendations from the Forest's RRAC
  - Step 4. Prepare/Implement for the next year's fee cycle

Hoyt: Explain how you would adjust.

Adam: Assign a cost of what it is to maintain the system; does the budget we have match the amount of system we have?

Hoyt: In other words, close a trail.

Brown: Is there some possibility of adjustment to the current trails to add different trails, the rider usage would go up if the trails were the right ones. Encourage users to use the existing trail to a greater degree.

Adam: The Districts are always assessing the trails within their boundaries; to make the trails more user friendly.

Brown: Maybe you need to assess if the trail system is appropriate enough for the users.

Adam: We need to be in contact with our users; communicate if what we have out there is what they want.

Scherrer: this is a good time for this dialog since we'll be appointing a Working Group.

Vonk: To do what Dick is suggesting is to open up the travel management planning process again, because you've already identified the areas that are in and the ones that are out.

Scherrer: The most valuable use of our time here is getting the information out. We'll be referring to the group as a "Working Group". This is the time for everyone to make your comments, because of the fact that there are alternates that have a lot of knowledge on this they can speak too.

Blair: If we adjust and compact the trail system because of budgets, trail riders will go out and create their own trails and therefore we have a problem, and secondly if they stayed on the existing trails and you put them all on the trail, the impact will go up, and the maintenance on the trail will go up.

Jaeger: I want to make sure we understand the difference between SD & WY, so if we could, let Steve Kozel give a brief overview of the Wyoming side of the process that would be helpful.

Kozel: The difference between the SD & WY portion; Wyoming is covered under the Wyoming ORV registration statues that was implemented in 2002. Trails and roads have to be enrolled by the jurisdictional agency. If it's an enrolled trail you are required to have an ORV permit, which is $15.00 in Wyoming. If you have an enrolled road, you can have a license plate or an ORV sticker.

We have a 10 year overview of the statistics for the State of Wyoming. The report shows that there has been a quarter of a billion dollars of economic activity generated by ORVs. The State runs a grant program; all agencies can apply for those grants. There were 6700 permits sold in Wyoming in 2002, the first year, and last year there were almost 53,000 stickers sold. The initial program started slowly, but it has gone up drastically.

Tieszen: I'm still recovering from the legislation trauma of this process. (Laugh) Our numbers show that we are trending up to now 90% of trails being open, what happens to budgets when we reach 100%, and secondly, what is the analysis of the condition of the trails that are open, what is the degradation and what is the maintenance?

Adam: A lot of the trails that were opened were roads so they were in good condition. We haven't realized the maintenance of the trails at this time.

Kozel: Regarding the use and maintenance in Wyoming. We are seeing quite a bit of use on the open trails, and those trails will need maintenance. We starting to see them used frequently and it will require more maintenance in the future.

Tieszen: If we had the slide that shows the percentage of trails open; how much of the expenditures is going to opening the new trails, and when we get to 100% where does the budget go?

Adam: We increased most of the trails on the Mystic district; and as far as cost, it was low in comparison to actual construction.

Scherrer: From my position as Chair; the dollars that came into the program dropped by 15% from 2011 to 2012, and by 18% from 2012 – 2013. I charge the group with this to try to understand.

Verchio: On the trails you are talking about, is that all the trails in Wyoming, or just on the Black Hills of Wyoming?

Kozel: My information includes all of Wyoming.

Verchio: Is the license an off road vehicle license or is it a vehicle license?

Kozel: They just changed that a year or two ago. The vehicle can be plated or stickered.

Verchio: There are those that say there is so much more opportunity to ride in Wyoming than in South Dakota.

Kozel: If you buy a sticker in Wyoming, you can ride anywhere in the State. What we found in our compliance check is that most people are buying the stickers.

Hague: In regards the budget; you have to have some idea of what it will cost per mile for operation and maintenance, so what is that?

Adam: The planning figure right now is $300.00 a mile.

Vonk: Over what time frame?

Adam: That is on a three year grid maintenance cycle. As you are aware, a mile in one portion of the Forest can cost very little, and we're still getting our arms around it.

Hague: That will change as we get into this. Some trails may have to be moved because they are causing damage, etc.

Tysdal: I read that Recreation permits are 50% off; does this include the motorized trail permit sticker?

Adam: No it does not. The 50% off is through our concessionaire for recreation permits for 2014.

Tysdal: I noticed that you listed KV funding to fund this trail permit; aren't KV funds supposed to be used for thinning, etc., and what is the plan for paying these KV funds back?

Adam: Those KV funds were from the Mystic District. With forethought, they put that money into their plans for closing high use areas that were not going to be in the system; resource protection, monitoring. That KV money was from sales prior to 2008.

Adam: KV funding our first priority is reforestation, essential kinds of projects as long as we take care of the basics, so we can take care of other resource protected projects within the sale area.

Hague: In terms of adjusting fees, have we thought about the fact that we might be priced to high. Look at the Walmart way of doing things; lower prices bring in more people.

Vonk: Revenue is going down; we didn't plan on a hefty grant program to support this and we have that. Thru the RTP program; and it receives favorable response from the committee. As this work group gets together and looks at this, you have to look at the sum total of resources available.
We face the issue of fees in my Department pretty regularly; and we always make the argument that the license is the smallest part of your trip. I spent $25.00 for a permit in Colorado; there is no weekly permit.

Scherer: Good input on the ongoing input on grants from the State.

Vonk: As long as there is an RTP program, this system will receive support.

Kozel: In Wyoming statewide, permit sales dipped in 2009, and went down 6,000-7,000 permits in that time period; but it is rocketing back up again.
Hague: Wyoming is $15.00, and we have a Black Hills only permit as opposed to an all of Wyoming permit.

Bobzien: Quickly, I would like to recognize Tom Willems who was on the ground floor of this. When we developed the first business plan, we did not have a lot of hard data, we had to look across the country for examples. It was also done in ways that would recognize non-motorized areas. We had three years of data on fees. We did not anticipate being so competitive on the grants; I'm glad we competed so well. As we go forward thinking about fees is one aspect. All of our campgrounds, and our big recreation budget; is trending down. Our best estimate on our forecasting for grants, but we'll realize empirical data going forward.

Gomez: Last month we learned that we have very good compliance; in Wyoming do we have an idea of compliance?

Kozel: 2010 was 96% compliance, 2012 100% compliance and 2013 100% compliance.

Gomez: If we have very high compliance, but are still within 60% of projected permits; maybe out projection was too high.

Adam: We were optimistic on the number of permits we would sell.

Scherrer: The fact is we did a lot of surveys of states and their motorized systems, so we had 15 or 20 state data types and we used that data. Then, like we do in Kentucky, we just started throwing darts at our numbers; so it doesn't surprise me that we are out of kilter with the estimate.

Blair: The other problem that we had was that we implemented this in conjunction with the downturn of the economy and discretionary spending is the first thing to go.

Flanders-Patterson: We've seen wonderful presentation on fees, and expenses, but never together; what kind of deficit are we running?

Adam: We don't run deficit.

Flanders-Patterson: So we're just not doing maintenance?

Adam: Yes we are doing maintenance, and it's increasing, and we know that as the years go by, it will continue to increase.

Hague: Are we premature on adjusting the fees since we have not completed the system?

Adam: The purpose of the brief is not to advocate one way or the other; it's just to give you the facts and options.

Scherrer: We're getting close to a presentation by the DFO as to what the charge of the Working Group will be.

Vonk: Do you keep information on who is buying what kind of permit? Are the seven day permits mostly out of State?

Adam: The 2009 data shows that the seven day permits were mostly in State.

Vonk: I don't have the option in Colorado of buying a seven day permit, it doesn't matter if it's for a week or not, you have to buy the yearly permit.

Adam: The permit fees charged on other forests are in most cased significantly higher.

Hague: There are multiple forests in the State though that they can ride for the one permit.

Hoyt: In the presentation, the chart that shows the funding; total column represents the cost of the operation of the system?

Adam: Not the cost of operation, because we are still implementing.

Hoyt: So the total that are shown there is not the cost of operating the system?

Adam: It is funds available.

Vonk: What did the business plan project in grants? At the end of the day it is the dollar resources that are available to manage the system; even if were 40% short in the permit side, but ahead on the other side, we're still doing well.

Adam: I don't recall grants being included in the business plan.
[Continuing on with the PowerPoint presentation]

<u>Timeline for Completion of Fee Change Steps</u>

- **Step 1.** Provide Public Notice and Request for Comments MARCH/APRIL
- **Step 2.** Present findings and results of public notice and comments to the Forest's RRAC MAY/JUNE
- **Step 3.** Submit to Region 2 Fee Board and Regional Forester for Approval, include comments and recommendations from the Forest's RRAC JULY
- **Step 4.** Prepare/Implement for the next year's fee cycle SEPTEMBER
- **Step 5.** Implement on January 1

Hoyt: As a follow up to last year's situation, will the 2014 permits be available January 1, 2014?

Adam: The 2014 permits are available right now. You can go out to the front desk and buy one today; and it becomes effective January 1, 2014.

Scherrer: Should you send out a news release?

Scherrer: With that in mind, let's hear what it is the FS wants.

Jaeger: I waited for four hours for someone to ask that question! (Laugh) There are a lot of moving parts; I want to thank Secretary Vonk for the support we've gotten from the State of SD. We have come a long way in three years. Craig and I would like a recommendation from the Working Group on fees for 2015.

The question for the Working Group is: Should we change our trail permit fees for calendar year 2015.

Scherrer: In order to avoid catching people off guard we've already named the Working Group; they are:

- Chairperson Tom Blair
- Becci Flanders-Paterson and Mary Zimmerman (shared position)
- Dave Hague
- Bob Burns
    - Chairman Jim Scherrer will be in attendance.
    - Forest Service Representative Ralph Adam.

Scherrer: The time frame for this would be the January 8th meeting. If we could have the recommendations so that in the event, that there is not unanimity or close to that, we are in the position to go back to the Board. I've spoken to both Craig and Dennis and they agree it meets their time frame. I'll defer to Mr. Blair to communicate about meetings etc. As chairperson, I find it valuable for me to attend these meetings and would appreciate your notice of meetings to me.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Scherrer: There are still a few folks in the audience that may have input. Public comments are to be limited to three minutes; I would now open the floor.

Daryl Zimmerman: I'm from Lawrence County and I live adjacent to FS land near a trail that is no longer open. I appreciate being able to attend this meeting and learn about the process of the motorized trail system. Thank you for letting me participate and be a part of the discussion.

Scherrer: there is a link on the Forest service web site that will direct you to information about this Board. Dave Hague is the Board member that represents your interest group; so visit with him if you have any questions. Thank you for coming.

Scherer: Are there any more comments? If not, could I have a motion to adjourn; motion made by Dave Brenneisen, second by Bill Kohlbrand; meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 18.