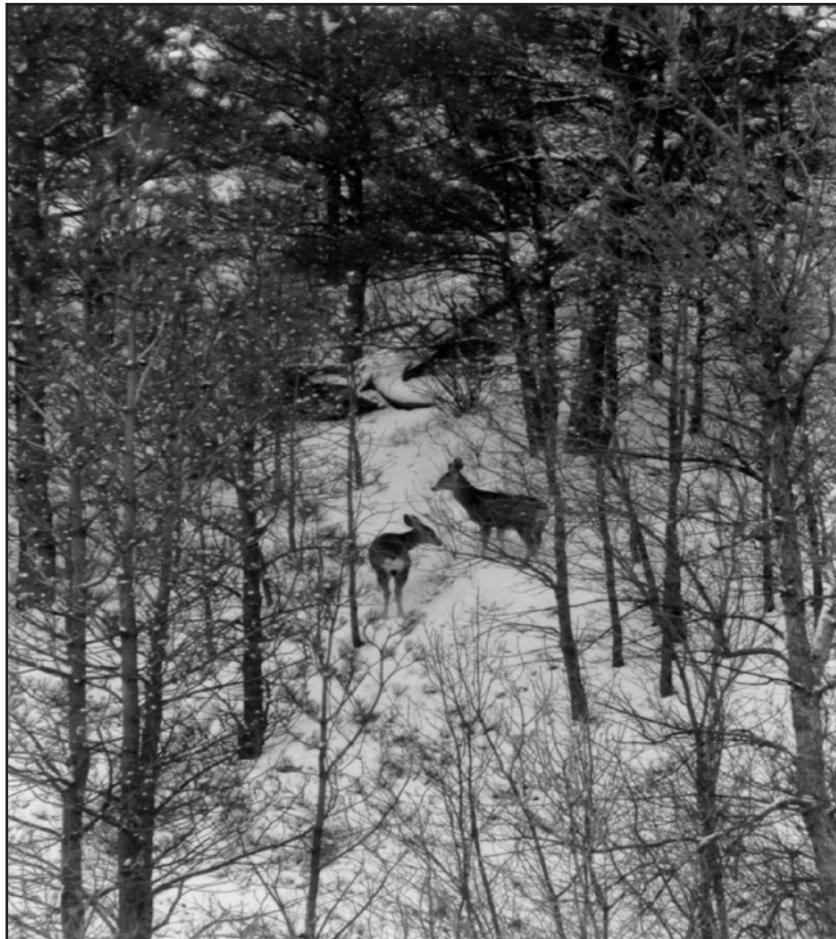


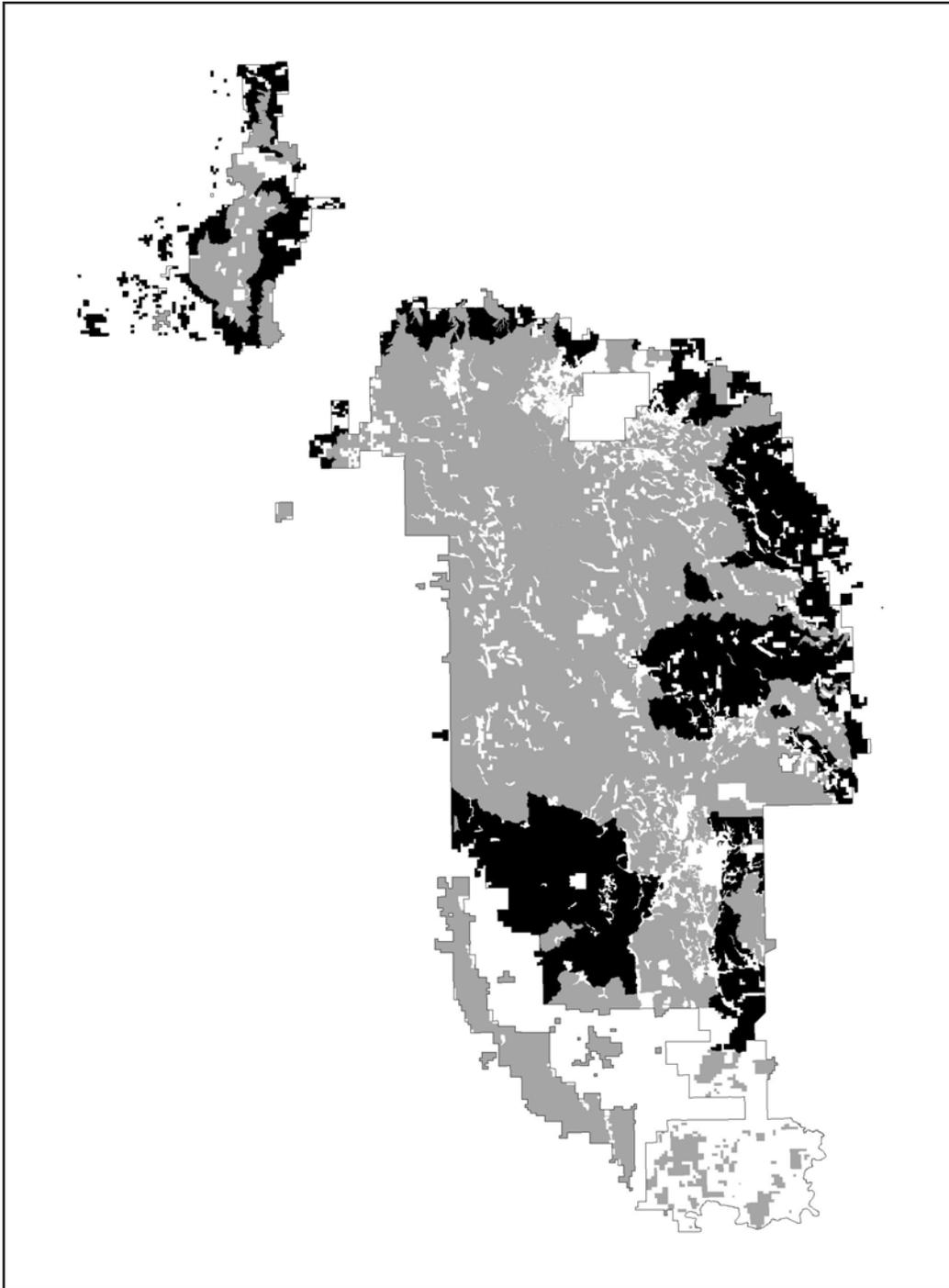
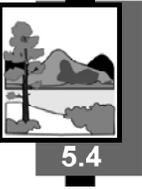
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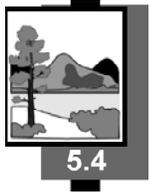
## Management Area 5.4 Big Game Winter Range Emphasis

**Theme:** These areas are managed to provide high-quality winter and transitional habitat for deer and elk, high-quality turkey habitat, habitat for other species, and a variety of multiple uses.





**Management Area 5.4**  
396,516 Acres  
31.8 Percent of Forest



**Setting:** Typically, these areas are located in foothill positions or on old wildfire sites where reduced snow depths and often better-than-average forage conditions provide the habitat sought by deer and elk during the winter. These areas represent the traditional wintering sites selected by deer and elk and important transitional habitats where deer and elk often linger, giving birth to their young before returning to summer ranges elsewhere in the Black Hills. These low-elevation habitats play a critical role in the annual life cycle of many Black Hills elk and deer, and these areas are becoming increasingly important, especially since residential and commercial development continues on private lands adjacent to National Forest System lands. The amount of use these areas receive from deer and elk depends on the severity of the winter. These areas also provide turkey habitat on the forest.

### Activities and Opportunities:

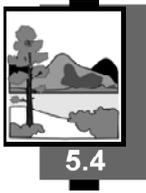
Non-motorized Dispersed Recreation	Yes
On-Road Motorized Vehicles	May Be Restricted
Off-Road Motorized Vehicles	May Be Restricted
Timber Harvesting	Yes
Livestock Grazing	Yes
Mineral Development	Yes

**Desired Future Condition:** The area is managed to provide big game winter range while maintaining healthy plant communities and recreational opportunities. All activities, including recreation, are managed so that deer and elk can effectively use the area during winter and other critical time periods. The full range of management practices occur.

High quality winter habitat is in part maintained by reducing vehicle access to key areas. Vehicle traffic is limited to only a portion of the total road network. Off-road motorized travel is limited in certain areas. Low-standard roads are visible, but may be permanently closed by barriers or seasonally closed by gates.

Management emphasizes a vegetative mosaic, with natural and created openings and diverse sizes and ages of tree stands. Species diversity is evident, including aspen, bur oak and mountain mahogany, as well as ponderosa pine and white spruce.

Timber harvesting and prescribed burning are the primary management tools used to stimulate browse production and to improve habitat within these key wildlife areas. Hiding and thermal cover and late-successional areas are provided. Vegetation is managed to provide healthy plant communities with a variety of species for food and cover.



**Management Area 5.4**

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Appropriate habitat effectiveness is maintained to provide deer and elk with cover, forage and solitude. As such, the landscape is composed of a variety of forest conditions, including openings, and high- and low-density stands. Some dense, mature forest stands are conserved for thermal cover. Motorized road and off-road closures may be implemented, especially during the winter months, particularly to minimize stress to wildlife, especially deer and elk.

Mining and livestock grazing may be seen. Hunters and hikers, as well as other recreationists, may frequent these areas.

By creating or maintaining big game habitat on the National Forest, the time spent by these animals on private lands may be reduced.

**Management Area Goals and Objectives**

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**Biological Elements -- Flora**

**Forest Communities**

5.4-201. Manage tree stands for wildlife habitat and vegetative diversity. **GOAL**

5.4-202. \*DELETED

5.4-203. \*DELETED

**Rangeland**

5.4-204. Improve forage on range areas. **GOAL**

**Biological Elements -- Fauna**

**Wildlife**

5.4-205. \*DELETED

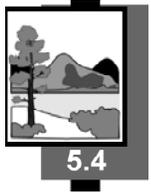
5.4-206. \*NEW. Manage for the following percentages of structural stages in ponderosa pine across the management area in a variety of sizes and shapes.

**OBJECTIVE**

SS1	5%		SS4A	25%*
SS2	5%		SS4B	25%*
SS3A	10%		SS4C	5%*
SS3B	15%		SS5	5%**
SS3C	5%			

\*10% of the structural stage 4 ponderosa pine acreage in the management area will have an average tree size of "very large". Seek opportunities to increase understory shrubs in open-canopy structural stages.

\*\*Active management is allowed, and may be necessary, to provide desired late-successional characteristics.



5.4-207. \*NEW. Manage for an open-road density of 1 mile of road per square mile or less for general public travel from December 15 through May 15. **OBJECTIVE**

## **Management Area Standards and Guidelines**

### **Physical Elements**

#### **Minerals**

5.4-1501. \*Operating and reclamation plans shall minimize or mitigate impacts to deer and elk habitat. Operating plans shall restrict the period of operation to reduce the disturbance to deer and elk during periods of high use. **STANDARD**

### **Biological Elements -- Flora**

#### **Forest Communities**

5.4-2101. \*DELETED

5.4-2102. Suitable lands are available for timber production and contribute to the allowable sale quantity. **STANDARD**

#### **Rangeland**

5.4-2501. \*Design livestock management strategies including distribution and stocking rates to be compatible with big-game habitat objectives. **STANDARD**

5.4-2502. Feature big game use of forage increases, that result from the vegetative improvements, while also allowing for livestock increases. Follow forest-wide proper allowable use guidelines or residual levels documented in AMPs or AOIs for combined use by wildlife and livestock. **GUIDELINE**

### **Biological Elements -- Fauna**

#### **Wildlife**

5.4-3201. Temporary openings in the grass/forb stage should be between 1 to 10 acres. **GUIDELINE**

5.4-3202. Consider adjacent private land resources when designing management for isolated Forest System tracts. **GUIDELINE**

5.4-3203. \*DELETED

### **Disturbance Processes**

#### **Fire and Fuels**

5.4-4101. Utilize appropriate fuel treatment practices, including prescribed fire, to achieve resource management objectives. **GUIDELINE**



## Management Area 5.4

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5.4-4102. Emphasize the use of prescribed fire as a tool to increase the density, vigor and nutritional value of important forage plants for improved health of wintering big game animals. **GUIDELINE**

### **Social Elements**

#### **Recreation**

5.4-5101. Any activities may be prohibited when needed to mitigate adverse impacts on wildlife. **GUIDELINE**

5.4-5102. Manage use to allow low to moderate contact with other groups and individuals. **GUIDELINE**

5.4-5103. The recreation opportunity spectrum is roaded natural. **GUIDELINE**

#### **Scenery Management**

5.4-5601. The adopted scenic integrity objectives are:

High = 51,224 Acres

Moderate = 166,821 Acres

Low = 176,348 Acres

**GUIDELINE**

### **Transportation and Travel**

◇ 5.4-9101. Off-road motorized travel is allowed where designated by a project decision, but is prohibited from December 15 through May 15. **STANDARD**

◇ 5.4-9102. Motorized road travel is allowed where designated. **GUIDELINE**

5.4-9103. Over-the-snow motorized travel is restricted to designated routes and areas. **STANDARD**