

## **National Forest Advisory Board Meeting**

September 17, 2014

Mystic Ranger District

### **Members Present:**

Vice Chairman Dick Brown, Jennifer Hinkhouse, Bill Kohlbrand, Lauris Tysdal, Linda Tokarczyk, Tony Leif, Danielle Wiebers, Mary Zimmerman, Lon Carrier, John Gomez, Keith Haiar, Craig Tieszen, Jeanne Whalen, Mike Verchio, David Brenneisen, Alice Allen

### **Members Absent:**

Nancy Trautman, Bob Burns, Jeff Vonk, David Hague, Wayne Bunge, Susan Johnson, Jessica Crowder

### **Forest Service Representatives:**

Craig Bobzien, Rhonda O'Byrne, Scott Jacobson, Beth Doten, Scott Haas, Mark Vedder, Julie Wheeler, Blaine Cook, Ralph Adam, Steve Hirtzel, Twila Morris

### **Others:**

Approximately 10 members of the public were in attendance. Three Congressional Representatives were also in attendance; Chris Blair (Johnson – D, South Dakota), Kyle Holt (Noem – R, South Dakota), Mark Haugen (Thune – R, South Dakota).

### **Introduction & Welcome:**

**Brown:** Call the meeting to order, 1:05 p.m. Welcome everyone to the meeting. Those who are at the table should be alternates or primary members of the Board.

### **Approve the Agenda:**

**Brown:** There are no changes in the agenda; do I have a motion to approve the agenda? Motion made by Lon Carrier second by Craig Tieszen. All in favor of the agenda as it is presented, say aye, opposed say no; the agenda is approved.

### **Approve the June Meeting Notes:**

**Brown:** The draft meeting notes were sent out, corrections made, and then resent. The process is the notes go to the Chairman for review and then to the Board for review. Do I have a motion to approve the June meeting notes? Motion made by Linda Tokarczyk, second by Lauris Tysdal. All in favor of the notes as presented, say aye, opposed say no; the June meeting notes are approved

### **Housekeeping:**

**Bobzien:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. Many of you have worked with Rhonda O’Byrne; she is the District Ranger on the Northern Hills Ranger District and right now she is the Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor for two months. Welcome to all the members of the public. If we have an emergency, there are two exits; thank you all for signing in for emergency purposes. Thanks to the Job Corps Center for providing the refreshments. The restrooms are out the front door, and the back door of this conference room.

### **Meeting Protocols:**

**Brown:** Make sure your phone is on silent or vibrate. If you have questions, please use a microphone. At the end of the meeting we have input from audience members if we have time. We’ve set aside 15 minutes for public comment at 4:45, 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. We have 16 members so that all of the areas are covered and we want to make sure your concerns are heard.

### **Hot Topics**

#### **Elections**

**Brown:** Before we have elections, I would like to have Supervisor Bobzien talk about all of the vacancies we currently have on the Board, and how those will be dealt with.

**Bobzien:** We are looking at a two wave approach to identify new members. We’ve gone through vetting on all but two members. We’ll have a second wave of approval, so we won’t be waiting on the whole Board for a few members. It’s a pretty long time schedule, but within a few months we’ll have the Board full and we’ll also have to resubmit the Charter for approval.

**Brown:** Hopefully we’ll welcome new members sooner than later.

#### **Legislative Updates - Federal**

**Brown:** Next we would like to hear from our Congressional Representatives. We’ll start with Wyoming, Jeannie if you would please.

**Whalen:** I’ve talked with Senator Enzi, Senator Barrasso, and Representative Lummis. Senator Enzi and Representative Lummis are working on refiguring the Endangered Species Act. None of these bills are expected to advance this year, but they will start the conversation. In June, Representative Lummis and Tim Walls from Minnesota introduced the National Forest Trails Stewardship Act. The government outlined the challenges to maintain 158,000 miles of trails. Only ¼ of those are adequately maintained. In this Act, they’ll be studying volunteers, liability, fire crew utilization, and outfitter and guide permit fees.

**Brown:** Any questions? If not, thank you Jeannie. Next we’ll hear from Senator Johnson’s office, Chris Blair.

**Chris Blair:** Congress is back in session for a few more days. Tim was out in the state and toured both East and West River; he heard from producers in the hills. The issues were the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Tim is meeting with Industry as we speak, Tom Troxel, Jim Niemen and others to discuss these issues. Congress is working on the Continuing Resolution (CR) to get that passed before we convene and head back. The CR will get us thru till December. Congress is hoping to pass the appropriations bill. Fire borrowing is a concern again this year; \$3 million have been borrowed from the Forest Service budget for firefighting. Timber targets: Still at 139 million ccf for the Forest program, 3.1 billion board feet for FY 15 budget.

I would like to say a special thanks to the Board; this will be my last Board meeting representing Tim Johnson. It has been a pleasure for the last 14 years working with this Board.

**Brown:** Thanks Chris for your update, are there any questions for Chris. If not, we'll ask Mark Haugen of Senator Thune's office to speak next.

**Mark Haugen:** Thank you. This past week the Senator has unveiled EPA bills; the latest in regards to the air quality standards, we are in favor of clean air, but they want to lower the standards; there are 200+ counties that don't meet the current standards in place now, so the Senator believes EPA should enforce the rules they have now before creating more. EPA also thinks they have the power to garnish wages, so if you didn't pay your fine, they could garnish your wages. Senator Thune is looking to remove that from their powers. Clean water act; expansion of Waters of the USA. The Senator was here just before Labor Day; he held town hall meetings and met with Troxel, Ben and the timber folks. It was good to hear their concerns on the Long Eared Bat issue. The Senator is working closely with Enzi on the Endangered Species Act. Thune will be here for the buffalo round up, and will do some meetings in Faith, Kadoka, etc. On the National Park Service side, DC Booth Fish Hatchery; the delegation wrote a letter and received a response. This is the first time we heard them say in writing that there were no plans to close the facility. Rail car shortage; looked at a farmer and rancher issue, the North Dakota oil fields have first dibs on rail cars. Corn and soybeans will be getting piled up soon, so the Senator is working closely with Burlington Northern to get this cleared up. There is a bill coming up that address the surface transportation.

**Brown:** Thank you Mark. Are there any questions for Mark before we move on to Kyle Holt from Representative Noem's office? If not, Kyle; you're up.

**Kyle Holt:** Kristie and 230 others signed a letter requesting they withdraw the Navigable Water portion of the bill. They passed the Waters of the USA Regulation Act. CR will be the big issue this week and next week. Since we met last, the BH Cemetery Act did get passed. John (Gomez) and the folks at Silver City hosted Kristi for a celebration of the Act. Endangered Species Act also passed the house in July; haven't seen any reform in that since the late 70s. That bill would require them to be more transparent. They have to make public the data they are using, second it would require them to let the states that would be impacted know so they could comment.

**Brown:** Thank you Kyle. Are there any questions for Kyle? Before I call on Senator Tieszen, I want to mention to Chris Blair and Senator Johnson; thanks so much for all the great things you've done for this Board and South Dakota. You and your Dad have been very involved with

this Board from the beginning. It's been valuable to have a key person like yourself coming to these meetings - that is important. Chris it has been a great journey, thank you very much. With that we'll move on to Senator Tieszen.

**Tieszen:** Not everyone that attends these meetings is regulated by their father, so Chris has had a challenge. The South Dakota Legislature is all up for re-election, in November. More than 30% of the seats are uncontested, so many of us already know that we have a stake in the next session. We'll be choosing our leadership, and the Governor's budget address will be given the first week in December; then we'll be off and running in January. As soon as the elections are over in November, we'll get together to talk about strategies on how we'll approach the MPB issue and how we'll fund it. Otherwise this summer we've had summer studies going on. We've had a group looking at juvenile justice reform, transportation funding, and wine importation in SD; we'll get that problem solved, but Mike is on the transportation funding study – I don't know if they'll have that solved.

**Verchio:** One thing I would say is, let's not get complacent on the MPB issue. We cannot get quite on that, no matter how good or bad the report is, we cannot let that go.

**Brown:** We'll hear more about that today from the Working Group. This Board is very supportive of the MPB work, and I would suggest that we'll continue our efforts as a Board to do what we can.

The August field trip was wonderful and informative, Supervisor Bobzien would like to talk about that; Craig.

### **Forest Service Hot Topics ~ Craig Bobzien**

**Bobzien:** Before I go into the August field trip, I would also like to thank Chris Blair. You have been awesome to work with; communications are always wide open and timely. Thank you for your great service.

Thanks to everyone for the August field trip; Jeannie for your role working with Todd and then Steve; Lauris and Linda were out there helping. I would ask the Board, for the purpose of the notes; is to hear feedback from those who attended. Things that went well or things we can improve on. We'll use this feedback to help build next year's field trip. In my opinion, I thought it was a great field trip, great preparation, the presenters were outstanding, many attended, and it was overall a fantastic day.

**Brown:** One valuable thing you provided was the booklet of briefing papers on the areas that we visited. Could we e-mail these to the full Board? Thanks to the Wyoming group for putting this together. Thanks to the Boxelder Job Corps for the food - the food was excellent

**Scherrer:** Jeannie, Jennifer, Bill, Lauris, Linda, and all, thank you very much for hosting us. Wyoming put on a nice field trip. You are obviously proud of your state, and have every right to be. Cook Lake was really a dramatic demonstration of the power of nature and the vulnerability of the human race. Thank you very much for taking the Advisory Board recommendation for

getting out there and closing Cook Lake; you won't be in there for a long time because of that danger. Thanks a lot Wyoming.

**Brown:** Any other comments? It was outstanding thank you.

**Bobzien:** We've had a couple of great events recently; I would like to share with you. The first is the Experience the Outdoors Day (ETO). This is one of the most heartfelt times spent with people of varying abilities. This year we had 220 participants. The event is made possible by our concessionaire, FRM; the Forest Service, individual sponsors, private donations, and time to go out and make this event happen. There are activities such as fishing, Native American dancing, wagon rides, panning for gold, and many more to allow folks to experience the outdoors. I visited with folks from different workshops, and they told me how much they look forward to getting out doors. There is a group that works on the Northern Hills Ranger District cleaning campgrounds; they talked about how they also make stakes for the oil fields in North Dakota, and how much they enjoy working. It was a heartfelt day, by our employees and sponsors who elected to go out and do this.

The second is the Wilderness 50<sup>th</sup> Year Celebration. We had Laura Burns brief the Board in June on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Bob Marshall was one of the first promoters of Wilderness, so the celebration was held at Camp Bob Marshall near Custer. The camp is for youth, and is under concession with the 4-H groups. There were a number of activities; cultural activities, using primitive tools, canoeing, using livestock, and many others. We have one Wilderness in the Black Hills, which is the Black Elk Wilderness. Over 100 people were in attendance.

The third is The Gold Mountain Mine Restoration. With our partnership with Black Hills Historic Preservation Trust, and working with the Deadwood Historic Society Committee, we were able to complete the interpretive portion of the Gold Mountain Mine Restoration project. This is the only known mill left in the Black Hills; it is outside of Hill City. The determination was made that rather than demolishing it, the Forest Service would partner with others to restore it. We held a dedication of the interpretive trail, and it was a great event.

The fourth and last thing is the ongoing work at Meeker Ranch near Custer. This has been a great effort along with the BH Historic Preservation Trust to capture the history, promote education and understanding, as well as promote tourism.

Thank you Mark (Haugen) for your input on the water issue and water regulations. This is a big issue right now, and has captured a tremendous amount of attention. There are Forest Service regulations, ski area water rights, ground water rights, all with the EPA, and Corps of Engineers; a lot of things in DC that are coming back out to us.

I would like to tell you about an opportunity the Black Hills got; we received \$1.2 million dollars from the Washington Office for hazardous fuels work. The National Office had the money and looked Nationwide for a Forest that could use the money quickly for hazardous fuels treatment. We had the work available and ready to go, so we received the money. The Vestal project near Custer has several thousand acres of hazardous fuels to treat. Our Contracting Group has a type of contract called "Indefinite Quantity", and they had that in place along with the Hell Canyon Ranger District having the work ready to go, so that when we receive the funds, we have the contract in place and we can implement rapidly. We still have to get the awards done, but we

feel that we'll accomplish a few more thousand acres of restoration across the large landscape in Custer County. We'll report out on the result of this at a later date.

**Brown:** That gives a lot of credibility to the Forest. That is excellent news. Are there any other comments or questions? If not, we'll move to our Regular agenda and start out with elections.

## Regular Agenda

### Elections

**Brown:** I've asked the Supervisor to remind us why we have the elections and how the Charter says we do it.

**Bobzien:** In June we began thinking about the election and who you would like to nominate. The Charter says that we have flexibility as a Board on how we do elections. Traditionally it's been thru a balloting process. So you have flexibility. I'll turn it back to you Vice Chair. The only part I would add is on the voting protocols, for anything that comes for a vote, there is only one representative for each area. One vote only; either primary or alternate may vote.

**Brown:** With that I will open the floor to nominations for chairman.

**Kohlbrand:** I make a motion to nominate Dick Brown for Chairman.

**Whalen:** I second the nomination.

**Brown:** Are there any other nominations for Chairman?

**Tieszen:** I move that nominations cease, and a unanimous vote be cast to elect Dick Brown as Chairman.

**Brown:** All in favor of ceasing nominations and casting a unanimous vote for Dick Brown for Chairman, say aye - opposed say no. The motion is approved.

Thank you very much.

**Brown:** I will now open the floor for nominations for Vice Chairman.

**Tokarczyk:** I nominate Bill Kohlbrand.

**Carrier:** I second that nomination.

**Brown:** Are there any other nominations for Vice Chairman.

**Whalen:** I would like to nominate Dave Brenneisen.

**Gomez:** I second that nomination.

**Brenneisen:** I would like to decline the nomination at this time.

**Brown:** John, Jennie will you withdraw your nomination?

**Whalen:** Yes.

**Gomez:** Yes.

**Brown:** Are there any other nominations for Vice Chairman?

**Tieszen:** I move that nominations cease, and a unanimous vote be cast to elect Bill Kohlbrand as Vice Chairman.

**Brown:** All in favor of ceasing nominations and casting a unanimous vote for Bill Kohlbrand for Chairman, say aye - opposed say no. The motion is approved. Congratulation's Bill.

### **Forest Health Working Group Update ~ Dave Thom**

**Brown:** Our next topic is the Forest Health Working Group update. I would invite past chairman Scherrer to participate. Dave (Thom), I see that your shirt is a little lighter green today – is there a reason for that?

**Thom:** Thank you Mr. Chairman; it is easier not working for the Forest Service. I'll be sending a handout around. I would also like to recognize Scott Guffey, Larry Man, and Jim Scherrer for their efforts with the Working Group. Thank you for the opportunity to talk about the MPB strategy and FY15 planning.

[PowerPoint Presentation]

### **Discussion**

**Thom:** Bill, would you like to talk about the money the State of Wyoming has received?

**Kohlbrand:** Jennifer corrected me, so I'll let her talk.

**Hinkhouse:** We've received \$1.8 million, and a possibility that the Governor will release another \$1 million, but the 1.8 is what we have secured.

**Brown:** The \$1.2 million that has come in to Custer; how does this interface with the new moneys that may come in, or are they totally separate?

**Thom:** I put that 1.2 million in the figures of the presentation; because it's part of the long term forest health - it totals \$12.9 million dollars.

**Scherrer:** Look at the document that the group sent around, priority area 5, notice there that what Dave is talking about is 14,227 acres of private lands around Custer that will be treated with money allocated thru state. The \$1.2 million will be all for Forest Service property work. So it is completely additional, and will not at all force us to change our priority areas. It will be for addition sanitation work on the Forest Service side because of new money.

**Brown:** Jim any additional comments about the Working Group?

**Scherrer:** First of all I want to thank Dave (Thom), he is doing a hell of a job because of his background in forestry, his ability to see the work that needs to be done, and he has a great personality.

The Working Group sponsored a booth at the Pennington County fair for seven days. Representatives from the Working Group manned the booth; County Private, Forest Service, we all helped out. My main observation is that even after this many years (1997 to 2014), it is impressive how some people are so knowledgeable and ask good questions and are doing work on their private land. On the other hand, it's equally impressive how many others are completely ignorant about the topic. My take away from the time at the fair is that we must continue with communication and education, and communication and education, and when we get tired of that, more communication and education. Frank Carroll – I'm glad you are here today, thank you for writing in the Journal, keep doing that.

The next meeting of the Working Group will be September 30<sup>th</sup>, and we'll use that meeting to develop data and develop more information. The Subgroup of Working Group; Larry Mann, who is in the audience, is the lobbyist that works with the Working Group representing our interests. That meeting was held two weeks ago, frankly we are being very aggressive so that when we meet with the legislators we have as much organization and information as we possibly can. We want to be prepared with what information they'll need in order to get us more funding. The important thing is that we have to keep the pressure on; we have to use all this money, so all the collaborators have to work together. The fact that \$1.2 million has come into play is a positive thing, it proves to the State that they can't get tired of giving money to the MPB effort, because now the feds gave more money. Scott Guffey is the Vice Chair of the group; Scott may have some comments about what the counties are doing.

**Guffey:** Dave mentioned \$600,000 carried over from last year that the counties will put on the ground this fall and winter. Additional crews will be covered as well. I had the pleasure of going to Wyoming to attend their Working Group meeting; they are a very aggressive group as well and are collaborating with others. One of the barriers to us utilizing our funding is the rules and regulations that limit access for our cutters in areas in and around existing and future timber sale areas.

**Scherrer:** We need to use all the money and look like we are starving for more before we go to the Legislature next year. I spoke with John (Gomez) earlier today and there are things the whole Board needs to hear to make this work more effectively.

**Brown:** Does anyone have any comments, or questions?

**Gomez:** Dave, do you have a breakdown of the money being spent; the amounts spent on private, counties, Forest Service, etc.?

**Thom:** I don't have that with me, but I will make sure that the breakdown is available, and we'll go over it at the next Working Group meeting.

**Gomez:** As an outsider attending the Working Group meetings, I am quite impressed; to see the Counties, States, and everyone working together. The all lands approach is a very good

approach. However, once you start going in to specifics, the system breaks down a little bit, they can't quite find how to attack those areas because there are barriers in the Forest Service; every meeting they are struggling to find a way. How is the Administrative Master Agreement going?

**Bobzien:** Certainly that is what it's set out to do, if there are new issues we would modify it, but it addresses many of the issues.

**Kohlbrand:** Is this a new agreement you are talking about, or is it participating agreements?

**Bobzien:** It is very similar, but I won't say it is set in stone. We have other things with the Good Neighbor Authority that we are looking at as a new tool. There may be aspects of that may be superior to other tools. Rhonda and I are working on getting that in front of us.

**Kohlbrand:** Will you be talking about Wyoming with those agreements also?

**Bobzien:** Certainly.

**Thom:** The Committee met with the South Dakota Rangers and talked specifics to get at those issues. The County folks and the Forest Service folks that know the land got together and got to some of the specifics; we'll keep hammering away at it.

**Kohlbrand:** I would like to elaborate about what John was talking about. When a timber sale goes under contract, the entire timber sale area will go off limits to doing direct control work, within the timber sale area. The actual cutting area will only be a 1/2 or a 1/3 of the area in the boundary, so you lose a few years where nothing will be happening. Service contracts kick in and depending on how they do those contracts, you may lose another five years, and that is crippling when we should be continuing our efforts.

**Brown:** Senator Tieszen and Verchio, as you look ahead to the upcoming session, and start looking at the possibility of funding, you'll let us know if this Boards action thru communications thru the Forest Supervisor will be as beneficial as they were in the past. There may be a role for us to play within what is appropriate.

**Tieszen:** It's early in the legislative process to figure out where we'll be. We'll start sorting out some of it when we get the Governor's budget. As far as your question about the influence of the Board, I think it is critical. We've enjoyed wide spread support in the Legislature for MPB work. I've been impressed that East River Legislators, a long way from the Black Hills, get it and understand. It's important that we have a broad cross section that can be supportive and lobby for the Black Hills.

**Brown:** Please keep us posted.

**Allen:** I'm curious about the Good Neighbor Authority and how it addresses the issues we have.

**Bobzien:** It's an all lands strategy for doing projects, to be granted authority to do work on State lands. It's very consistent with our strategy of "All Lands".

**Brenneisen:** Back to what Bill was saying – other treatments taking place within sale areas; is there any room for movement on that? Purchasers have given their blessing for that type of work

to be done.

**Bobzien:** It is pretty complex; a lot of it is related to contracts, contract laws, and liabilities. There are possibilities that could limit sale areas, or timing. In doing that you also run the risk of limiting the contractor, the holder of the contract could conduct some of those treatments. It's not a sure thing unless it's a contract specification. Narrow down what the choices are; liability, bonding, responsibility all has to be taken into consideration. Certainly worth looking at other contract language; if it's restrictive we would be open to other ways of doing business.

**Brown:** Are there any other comments or questions?

**Bobzien:** Thank you Dave, Working Group, and Board members. The level of investment and involvement is incredible. \$55 million dollars and the thousands of acres being treated, is the first point. There are incredible expectations in doing this. What does it mean to the Board? I appreciate the high level of involvement by the Board, and we'll be asking the Board in terms of strategy, for recommendations for treatments in 2015. Start rubbing your crystal balls; where do we invest in FY16 and beyond. We have 300,000 acres that are still at risk. Dave said we do about 30,000 acres of timber sales. Usually there is about 40,000 acres that you'll have to come back in to and treat again. The part is, there are choices that have to be made, in some of our areas, we have all the resource information; cultural resource information, sensitive plants animals and things like that. Most times we just have the money to invest where we think we'll be going, not every place on the Forest, but the areas we know we will be going so we could be ready to go there. So that puts the pressure on where we need to be in the future to invest in this fiscal year to where we think we'll be in 2015. We have obligations under law to conduct certain surveys, etc. We'll invite you to participate in that for federal lands, not private. In terms of our priority areas, like Dave depicted, that will be one of the things we'll ask of you, and that won't be easy. I get a lot of calls, what about my place? Remember we are in the 30,000 acre vicinity per year out of 300,000 acres. I value your opinions on that, we are in this together. We'll look at our budget; we'll get with Dave when the beetle flights are done this fall. You saw where we'll be in FY15, but we'll ask where we want to be in FY16 so we can gather the resource information we need.

**Brown:** Our next topic is the Recreation Facility Working Group. We would like an update from the Group and an update from Scott Haas. The Supervisor appointed a Working Group of four to look at opportunities. We held a meeting on June 18<sup>th</sup>, our next meeting is in October.

The Black Hills has 150 developed sites; the 2008 assessment stated there were 110 sites. On August 19 Scott came in with a sheet for us to look at – we've added more columns for the 110 sites we are looking at. There are lots of needs, lots of deferred maintenance. We will be looking at those and have the next meeting to go over this in more detail, facility by facility. There is a significant economic impact, what you see and what you do when you get there. After our next meeting we will have more information about how to respond to it. Scott if you'll give us an update on where we are on this please.

**Haas:** Thank you Dick; I think you covered most of it. Our Forest was chosen as one of six in the Nation to take on the analysis. The end result of this will be a five year program of work to

look at improving sites, and possibility decommissioning sites. We don't have 150 additional sites, we have 150 altogether. We'll look at everything from a gravel trailhead, to the Pactola Visitor Center. Why are we doing this? Because we have deferred maintenance costs of \$4.9 million dollars, these are services we are not providing.

**Brown:** How much money is currently available to address the deferred maintenance costs?

**Haas:** The total recreation budget for developed recreation, dispersed recreation, heritage, etc., is \$960,000. Developed sites are about \$30,000 of that, other resources, average \$60,000. We run some of the facilities after the concessionaire leaves. It takes a little under \$400,000 a year to run the sites.

**Brown:** It's not just the MPB issue that we are dealing with here on the Forest; the challenging solution is simple, it's money.

**Allen:** The Working Group was confused at first about what the Forest wanted from us. After looking at and working thru the last meetings, we have the budget but we also have a huge array of rec sites that were developed in the 50s, 60s, and 70s, so we are looking at current recreationists, and future recreationists and what they will use; to move the whole pool toward the future.

**Tokarczyk:** I attended the information meeting on Cook Lake and it was driven home to me that there is a passion for our recreation areas; I heard it in their voices. The question was raised, how much money does Cook Lake bring in? Cook Lake is in the lower 25% of the facilities producing revenue; so it is a big challenge to weigh up the value with the cost.

**Carrier:** Alice summed it up. We didn't know what direction to go at first, but we are on a path now.

**Haas:** We have recently gotten the statistics of use in the developed sites. The three year average is 35% occupancy rate. In undeveloped sites, it is 2%. This gets to Alice's point about the old sites and which sites are relevant today.

**Brown:** Does anyone have any further observations or questions? If not, it is 2:45, so we will take a 10 minute break.

### **Rangeland Management on the Black Hills National Forest ~ Julie Wheeler**

**Brown:** Welcome back everyone. Let's go onto our next agenda item on the Black Hills National Forest NFAB agenda; Grazing Program Overview and State Coordination.

**O'Byrne:** A lot of you may recognize Julie Wheeler. She is currently the Acting Forest Range/Botany/Weeds Staff. With vegetation management, we are responsible for managing a copious area and we want to make sure all the NFAB members understand the basic foundation of vegetation management. Julie will focus on grazing. Also, the State of South Dakota is currently looking at elk management and developing a rangeland management plan.

**Wheeler:** This will be a little bit of a repeat from last month as I will talk about range and also wildlife, including elk, which we have been coordinating with the State of South Dakota on.

**PowerPoint:** “Rangeland Management Black Hills National Forest; Program Overview and State Coordination”

**Rangelands defined:**

Rangeland is defined in the Region 2 Rangeland Analysis and Management Training Guide as land producing or capable of producing, native forage for grazing and browsing animals, and lands that have been revegetated naturally or artificially to provide a forage cover that is managed like native vegetation. It includes all grasslands, forblands, shrublands, and those forested lands which can – continually or periodically, naturally or through management – support an understory of herbaceous or shrubby vegetation that provides forage for grazing or browsing animals.

**Objectives of the rangeland management program for NFS lands and resources are:**

- To manage rangeland vegetation to protect basic soil and water resources, provide for ecological diversity, improve or maintain environmental quality, and meet public needs for interrelated resource uses.
- To provide expertise on rangeland ecology, botany, and management of grazing animals.
- To provide for livestock forage, wildlife food and habitat, outdoor recreation, and other resource values dependent on range vegetation.

**From the Forest Plan to...**

The Forest Plan Objective 301. Produce on a sustained basis and make available up to 233 million pounds of forage for livestock and wildlife use each year (weather permitting). Livestock use will be up to 127 million pounds (approx. 128,000 AUMs). Wildlife use will be up to 106 million pounds (approx. population levels of 70,000 deer and 4,500 elk or other combinations).

The FS manages the rangeland resources or habitat and it’s uses such as livestock grazing, timber harvest, recreation, etc. The States manage the wildlife populations. We coordinate with the states, the grazing permittees, the timber industry, and other interested parties in the management of the resources and the implementation of the Forest Plan.

**...Allotment Management Plan**

We don’t manage the resources (rangeland/habitat) for one single species or one single use. The Forest Plan goals, objectives, standards and guides for all resources are considered during environmental analysis of allotments.

An interdisciplinary team including botany, hydrology, range, wildlife, and archeology develops allotment specific desired conditions that could include:

- Allowable use of forage by livestock
- Stream bank stability
- Recruitment of willow species
- Protection of a sensitive carex species
- Season of use for livestock grazing
- AUMs available

## Grazing on the Black Hills National Forest

District	Bearlodge	Hell Canyon	Mystic	Northern Hills	Total
Active Allotments	33	45	30	27	135
Vacant Allotments	0	2	0	7	9
Permittees	49	90	29	39	144
Term Permits	42	125	29	44	240
Term Private land Permits	9	30	1	8	48
Permitted Numbers	5,577	9,500	5,017	4,057	24,151
Permitted AUMs	19,111	50,000	25,203	25,823	120,137

There are 1,476,310 acres of National Forest System and private lands within grazing allotment boundaries. National Forest System acres cover approximately 1,200,000 acres or about 97 percent of the Forest.

### Implementation of the AMP

AMP → Implementation → Monitor → Need for Change? → AMP

### AMP in action...some perspective

Do livestock get priority? In this pasture rotation the cows enter Pasture 1 for 1.5 months. The other two pastures are available for use by elk first. Allowable use is 45% in all three. When 45% is hit the cows move even if elk used 15% before the cows got there. The elk then have the opportunity to use the regrowth from the first two pastures the livestock used.

- Pasture 1 - 1.5 months
- Pasture 2 - 3 months
- Pasture 3 - 1 month

### Miller Creek – Monitoring (short-term)

#### 2012

- Forage Utilization on Kentucky Bluegrass (Popr) was 83% (Standard is 45%)
- Utilization of Riparian Sedge (Carex sp) was 39% (Standard is 45%)
- Stream bank alteration was 57% (Standard is 26%)
- 2012 was obviously an extremely dry year coupled with excessive use from trespass and permitted cattle.

#### 2013

- Forage Utilization on Kentucky Bluegrass is 5-10%
- Utilization of Riparian Sedge is 0-5%
- Stream bank alteration is 4%
- (All from elk use)
- 2013 was obviously an extremely wet year coupled with rest from cattle.

A MIM transect was also established.

### Miller Creek

#### Issues

- Ongoing unauthorized use issues from adjacent permittee (off of private land)
- Excess use in 2012 (drought)
- Lack of maintenance on boundary fence

## **Management Actions**

- Rested in 2013 (any use would be considered unauthorized)
- pasture was inspected 5 times over the season
- Boundary fence was rebuilt
- It rained!

## **Gudat Creek – Monitoring (long-term)**

(Photo: Post grazing 1999 - Season of use 6/1-10/30 with 92 C/C pair) This pasture was scheduled for 8 weeks of grazing. Starting in 2001, riparian utilization standards were implemented.

## **Gudat Creek**

(Photo Post grazing 2013) In order to enhance stream bank stability, temporary hot wire enclosure was placed around the stream from 2009 - 2011 to prevent hoof shear.

## **Gudat Creek**

(Graph)

## **Coordination with State agencies**

### **South Dakota**

- South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
- Existing MOU

### **Wyoming**

- Wyoming Game and Fish Department
- Regular coordination meetings

## **Coordination**

- March 2012. GF&P Commission meeting. Concerns for lack of forage for wildlife and livestock overgrazing were brought up.
- May 2012. GF&P Commission meeting. Forest Supervisor addressed concerns and vegetation management.
- October 2012. GF&P and Commission members tour examples of overutilization on Forest.
- December, January, February 2013. Letter exchange and conference calls take place. Action items developed – field trips and development of white paper discussing rangeland conditions.
- March 2013. GF&P Regional Supervisor to organize field tours with BHNF. Planning meetings take place with GF&P and BHNF.
- May 2013. Tours on Hell Canyon and Northern Hills Ranger Districts.
- August 2013. BHNF Range Staff and GF&P staff met. Coordinated development of white paper.
- January 2014. BHNF Range and Wildlife Staff and GF&P Staff meet to discuss vegetation management, forage production and the Elk Management Plan and the potential effects an increase in Elk numbers may have on Forest Service administered lands..
- June 2014. Forest and GF&P staffs meet in the field to demonstrate and discuss monitoring protocols.

- Dumont allotment. Implement rest rotation grazing system using Gonzales pasture.
  - Improve wildlife and riparian habitat by resting all pastures (i.e....gudat ck) every other year. Conduct wildlife use monitoring.
- Wildcat allotment. Incorporate Besant Park into grazing system.
  - Improve vegetation for wildlife. Develop improved water system for livestock.
- Hell Canyon/Mystic Ranger Districts.
  - Develop joint vegetation monitoring of Elk concentration areas and water developments to improve wildlife habitat.
- Porcupine Holistic Resource Management.
  - Ongoing coordination project that includes several entities.

**Mark Vedder:** The Porcupine allotment was started back in the late 1980s. A lot of organizations have been involved with this project, including outdoor entities and the Forest Service. Craig Beckner started the coordination and five groups are involved as voting members. The project takes a little different approach to grazing and it is the only one on the Forest that is set up this way. We can reduce the amount of litter beyond 45 percent and it seems to be pretty successful. We have had really good results on the ground.

### **Coordination with Wyoming**

- Regular meetings with WGFD
- Participated in a drought workshop sponsored by the WGFD, NRCS, and the Wyoming Extension.
- Middle Redwater Wetland Rehabilitation
- East Creek Project

**Brown:** I want to ask Tony Leif who is the director of SD GFP to make a couple of comments. Tony, you talked about the Forest Service management plan and I can say personally as a former GFP commissioner (Dick Brown), they would like to see that capacity increase to 7000 – 8000 head. Would you share your general observations and as this process moves forward, what do you see as the challenges and do you have any comments?

**Leif:** We have been working on the development of an elk management plan. The first step that we implemented was to put together a stake holder group. I am not here to report directly for the group on what is going on but I do hear from the group. One of the objectives is to set the elk objective. I'm glad to hear that we are going to talk about this next month and that there will be opportunity for additional discussion. Our goal is to have a draft management plan in front of Game Fish and Parks by the end of the year. A number of different staff across the state are drafting this plan. We need to take a second look at those forage calculations and do calculations need to be done with some better technology.

**Wheeler:** We, including Kerry Burns, sat down and had a good meeting at the Rapid City office with the range staff and state staff to coordinate.

**Leif:** The main point is that we recognize that rangeland is very important to many entities. It takes 15 years to draw a license and there is a desire among the state residence to have more elk. It's about finding that balance for a desirable elk herd which isn't an easy task. I don't know where that number will end up but there will be a number in the State management plan that will be adopted.

**Tysdal:** Were there ranchers at the stakeholder meeting? Can we get a copy of the minutes?

**Wheeler:** There were a couple of ranchers at the meeting and I will check on minutes.

**Tysdal:** Have you considered buying permits, fencing, and putting them on your own land? There is a lot to consider.

**Leif:** We have a number of different programs available and we plan to add additional programs to support the elk. Tieszen and Verchio have voted on a bill. A 5\$ to \$10 fee will be used for additional programs for private entities in the Black Hills. We sought information from additional organizations and looked for representatives including the cattlemen, stockmen, in addition to the wildlife foundation. We are seeking that balance in finding the management objection for the Black Hills.

**Wheeler:** That is mostly for permittees. We have been discussing monitoring and the potential for monitoring and conflict areas that might require additional monitoring.

**Zimmerman:** To get better picture of the Forest, what percentage of these allotments, when you calculate forage, do these take up and do they all have range per acre of animal that exist in the allotments?

**Wheeler:** Most of the Forest is in an allotment. We have a few areas that are not. We have 9 allotments that are vacant, which is over 40,000 acres. 97 percent can be grazed and within several of those allotments is private land. We have additional country to the west of Bearlodge and there are parcels that are surrounded by private land.

**Zimmerman:** Is it 10 acres for each MOA?

**Wheeler:** There are a lot of allotments where very little of it is available for grazing because of topography. To give you an acre per animal is difficult because cows like the riparian areas best and there are places where there is a lot of forage but not a lot of water, so those areas are not grazed. At the Forest scale it is hard to say, but at individual scale it's easy, there are 325 – 16,000 acre pastures, so there is a range in size and depends on where you are at on the Forest.

**Haiar:** What is the current estimated elk population in the Black Hills?

**Leif:** We flew two years ago and the estimate was over 5000 elk. Since then that has grown to a wintering population of 5,500 - 6,000. This is just the South Dakota portion of the Black Hills and is a wintering population. We have some very large areas in the jasper burn where elk are located. Of the 5000 elk, 2/3 of those are located in the Jasper area. A fair amount also comes in from Wyoming.

**Gomez:** Do you have any restrictions on livestock usage near large water areas?

**Wheeler:** That's where our riparian guidelines and standards come in. We have riparian pastures and we have some areas where we put in electric fence. Are you asking if there are any places we've closed down grazing along the creek? If so, I don't believe so.

**Vedder:** I can't think of any specifically.

**Hirtzel:** There are a couple of walk-in fisheries where they are excluded.

**Tysdal:** There are a couple of creeks where there is not livestock including Castle Creek which runs into Deerfield. We put a pump down there and we pump it up the draws to keep the cows out of there.

**Vedder:** McIntosh fen is not grazed specifically because it is protected for a rare willow.

**Brown:** What now is the new potential with acres that have been burned? What significant impact has that had on the carrying forage capacity not withstanding impacts?

**Wheeler:** There are a lot of things going on and most likely there is more carrying capacity. We probably will not be doing a Forest Plan revision. One note on fires is when we get fires or timber sales from a rangeland standpoint, we would consider that transitory range. We don't rely on that because we know the trees are coming back.

**Kohlbrand:** Is there coordination on the harvest of elk with the amount of forage used in the Forest or do the cattle take the total run of the use?

**Leif:** Right now the license allocation system is based on some preliminary objectives for the Black Hills. One of the components gives some room to move up and down based on the forage conditions. We will have to look at some long time trends with elements within the plan that will allow us to lower that herd and allow us to expand again once we get back into a wet cycle.

**Tysdal:** We have a lot of room for elk.

**Brown:** With that we have two other presentations and we will take a 5 – 10 minute break.

### **Northern Long Eared Bat Listing Update ~ Kerry Burns**

**Brown:** We are now ready to move into the next topic, an update on the Northern Long Eared Bat (NLEB).

**Bobzien:** Steve Hirtzel is with us today, thank you for being here. Steve is a biologist in our Custer office and works with Kerry Burns. Steve will be focused on the NLEB with many responsibilities. This is a very important situation on the Forest. The NLEB covers 39 states. Steve, please give us an update. Again Kerry has presented to the Board in the past, but over the next several months, Steve will be engaged with many people across the country and keeping the Board informed of progress.

**Hirtzel:** Kerry was in front of the Board back in June. The most significant thing that has happened since then is that at the end of June the Fish and Wildlife (F&W) made a decision to extend the listing for six months. The reason they did that was because they felt they were taking the action based on substantial disagreement about data relevant to their decision. That decision also triggered a 60 day comment period. The Forest Service took advantage of that

comment period and submitted several comments. An example would be, their definition of the hibernation season being October 1 thru May 15. Based on the actual biology of the species on the Forest, we suggest the hibernation season is October 1 thru April 1.

Another example is their calculation of the hibernacula on the Forest, which they say are seven. Our records show that there are 19 hibernacula; 13 are mines, six are caves. There are two additional hibernacula (caves) not on Forest land but adjacent to the Black Hills NF. We also hadn't seen any acknowledgement of Bat species research that occurred in the late 1990s on the Southern Hills which concluded that roosts are not always in large old snags. 19% were in ponderosa pine with a cavity. Summer roost areas are a little more specific. The F&W report said that any tree greater than three inches may be suitable for summer roost. The F&W was specifically asking for conservation practices such as watershed. We were able to respond to that with all of the good things we are already doing that protects the bat.

The F&W is also undergoing a process where they've put together three teams: 1) Conservation Measures, 2) Threats, and 3) Ecology Biology. I am on the Ecology Biology Team. Because of my involvement on the Ecology Biology Team, I was invited to the F&W Services Association meeting in Minneapolis representing Region 2. There will also be 10 or 12 folks representing Region 8 & 9 and the Washington office, so I'll have the inside on what is going on.

With my involvement with that work, we are beginning to transition to the technical side with the Biological Assessment, looking at the items we implement under the Forest Plan Biological consultation assessment; we'll find out where we need to be to protect the bat. That concludes my update, are there any questions?

**Brown:** Does anyone have any questions for Steve?

**Brenneisen:** The timber industry is nervous about some of the recommendations in the planning guide. Some read as the political effort to prohibit management activities, stand changing activities, from April 1 thru the end of September. What will the BHNF input be?

**Hirtzel:** The F&W Service interim planning guidance is preliminary, and voluntary, it is not finalized, and may not be. Right now we plan on consulting on the Forest Plan as written. We've considered the listing process, and if the implementation of our Forest Plan jeopardizes the existence of the species, and we have determined that it has not. We feel that status quo with the Forest Plan is adequate. Future discussions may change that but will have to wait and see.

**Zimmerman:** Are the comments available to read?

**Hirtzel:** They are in the public record - we could share them with the Advisory Board.

**Bobzien:** Mary are you referring to the comments we provided or all of the comments.

**Zimmerman:** The comments the Black Hills wrote to the F&W.

**Bobzien:** Yes those are available.

**Hirtzel:** There is a website that has all of the comments, but it would be easier for us to send them to you. If the Forest is emailing other comments and documents, we'll put the link to the

website in the e-mail.

**Whalen:** Crook County would be interested in your comments as well. This affects not just the timber industry, but anyone who may want to make housing development in or near the Forest and many other industries. We would be very happy to see your letters and comments as we start to write our own as well.

**Brown:** Is the document too large to provide by e-mail?

**Hirtzel:** It's about four pages, with the Forest Plan attached for another 20 pages plus.

**Brown:** May be best to send us each the link to the location of the documents.

**Tysdal:** Back east where the fungus started, have they tried to eradicate the fungus; like a fumigant or something to take care of the fungus before we do have it here?

**Hirtzel:** One of the presentations at the F&W Association meeting will be a block of time for the Forest Service to talk about ways to deal with the fungus. At some point we'll do more updates as things progress.

**Kohlbrand:** Explain "consulting" with F&W.

**Hirtzel:** When a species is proposed, we would confer or conference with the F&W. It is not till it is listed that we conference.

**Kohlbrand:** If the determination is to no list, do you go back to business as usual?

**Hirtzel:** If the bat does not get listed, that's the end of story as far as I'm concerned. There are other Regions that are looking at dealing with it in a holistic approach, but I don't believe we'll be involved in that.

**Brown:** Are there any other questions for Steve?

**Brenneisen:** You mentioned the Kryan study done in the Black Hills. I looked at a copy of that and I believe that where they found the bats, all but three of the sites had evidence of harvest activity. We obviously have a lot of evidence of harvest activity in the BH. It seems like we have good bat habitat, and part of that is due to the management in the BH. Is that a point that you feel you can use? The Kryan study may be something that was overlooked, it seems like that would be a point to argue in favor of our Forest Plan.

**Hirtzel:** One component of the Biological Assessment is the life history. As far as the Kryan study, we tried to be somewhat unbiased. The report singled out a sentence that said that the largest location for bat habitat was in a forest that hadn't been harvested in 50 years.

**Brown:** Steve will you please provide a link to the Board members so that we can access this information? Any there any other questions for Steve? Thank you very much Steve.

### **Forest Inventory and Analysis ~ Blaine Cook**

**Brown:** Our last topic of the day is the Forest Inventory and Analysis. Supervisor Bobzien, I'll

let you introduce this.

**Bobzien:** Welcome Blaine Cook; Blaine is our Forest Silviculturist. Blaine is passing out the “Forests of the Black Hills National Forest 2011” publication. Blaine will go over the highlights of this publication that was developed for the Black Hills in 2011. I reviewed the draft, and then was asked to write the forward. My forward starts out with “Understanding forest inventory is essential in building a greater understanding of complex forest conditions, and the interdependent plants, animals, and human uses and opportunities”. And that’s what this presentation is about today, understanding the forest conditions. Blaine won’t get into all of it today, but there is good information in the data. Thanks to Blaine for being here today, Blaine recognizes the value of forest inventory.

**Cook:** Thank you Craig. Forest inventory analyses are done across the nation, usually in certain areas and/or Regions. I requested an analyses and a report that would address the whole Black Hills National Forest, both in South Dakota and Wyoming. That’s what this report does.

Forest inventory analyses are done for all lands, including private lands; there are plots all over the state. The contract is done by the Northern Research Station thru the state of South Dakota. This is the handbook (Blaine shows a copy) that guides the individuals that looked at the 220 plots on the Black Hills. One of the contributors to this is in the room today, Dave Thom. As you know, there are 1.6 million acres in the Black Hills; that equates to approximately one plot for every 5,000 acres. It’s a thumbnail look at the forest. The picture on the front is curtesy of Beth Doten.

Highlights of the Document: (page one)

- Forest land in the BHNF 1.6 million acres.
- Ponderosa pine is the dominant forest type.
- Live aboveground tree biomass is estimated to be 30.2 million oven dry short tons.
- Eleven tree species documented in the BHNF.
- Average annual net growth of ponderosa pine growing stock exceeds 21 million cubic feet per year.
- Net growth to removals ratio of ponderosa pine growing stock is 0.88.
- The BHNF holds more than 55 million tons of carbon.
- BHNF ponderosa pine forests have larger coarse woody debris and litter fuel loadings in tons per acre than neighboring Montana.
- Net sawtimber volume on the BHNF is 4.98 billion board feet.
- In 2009, 29.3 million cubic feet of industrial roundwood was harvested from the BHNF.

This report shows that we are removing timber faster than we are growing it. Most of our growth is from 7 to 16” trees. What the survey shows is that we have a lot of removal on the forest. It points out an area that we want to further address. Page five of the report shows the location of all of the plots across the forest. Ponderosa pine had average annual mortality of approximately 14 million cubic feet per year, or 140,000 ccf per year largely due to the MPB. Compare that to what we cut last year, 200,000 ccf per year. Our ASQ is 181,000 ccf. Those numbers become very sensitive to the Forest Service and timber industry when we have a lot of death from bugs, and a lot of timber harvest – removal.

Long term sustained yield of the forest; 240 ccf. That was calculated in the mid-90s, before all of the disturbances, such as the Jasper fire and the MPB, took place on the forest. The net sawtimber volume on the BHNF was estimated at more than 4.98 billion board feet. In the 02 report, that number was 6.1 billion board feet. A billion board feet went off the shelf thru removal or death.

There are nearly 20 million standing dead trees (snags) in the BHNF; an average of six per acres. Most of those are in the 7" to 15" range. But that is still a lot of snags. These 20 million snags contain more than 2.4 million tons of aboveground biomass.

We have a task group looking at the questions, getting to why it was calculated the way it was, etc. This report gives you a good thumbnail of what the Black Hills looks like. We've used these types of plots in 1983 & 1997 in Forest Plan revisions.

**Kohlbrand:** You do have better information that is more accurate about the growth and yield for the BHNF above and beyond this report don't you?

**Cook:** The last calculations were done in 1997. Phase 2 was met with a lot of restrictions, and with restrictions the wood cutting gets lower. The number that was produced was politically unacceptable. Behind the scenes the database is there; it needs to be updated, and recalculated.

**Kohlbrand:** Before you would adjust the ASQ, you would go thru the recalculations and do all of the research correct?

**Cook:** Most definitely.

**Brenneisen:** The 2002 report with 6.1 million of standing inventory, how would you characterize the stocking level of the BHNF with 6.1 million on it?

**Cook:** My opinion is that, that is when the pressure cooker started; in 1999 we had no fires, we were coming off growth years, not many bugs, we were a tree growing machine. Then, in the spring of 2000, we had the snow storm that damaged a lot of trees. August of that year was the Jasper fire, followed up with many, many other fires. The suitable land is where we do the harvesting, 2/3 of the forest is suitable, 800,000 acres, some of these fires and bugs are in this turf. 83,000 acres in Jasper, it took the cookies off the shelf. When we do calculations of ASQ, in the future there will be no ASQ; there will be "long term sustained yield". The present planning rule is under political fire, and who knows where that planning rule will go. Jasper blessed us with structural stage one, and produced benefits like elk.

**Brenneisen:** I feel it is necessary to make the point that standing inventory from six to five billion is not necessarily a bad thing. We would have like to see it done without the fuel loads like it is, but six billion is what got us in to the problems that we see today. Do you do anything with this information at this point; between now and forest plan revision?

**Cook:** Craig gets asked a lot of questions, and he can give a thumbnail description of what the Forest looks like. Right now I don't predict we will do anything with this information, back in 83, our first Forest Plan, we had a much higher ASQ. In 89, we did a new Forest Plan, none of us were in the room back at that time, but we couldn't meet that ASQ, it was too high, that's 256

ccf per year, we currently are challenged with 181 ccf per year. Species viability; Goshawks, and things like that nibbled away at why we can't get there.

**Kohlbrand:** Does the FIA give any indication; some of the other stuff had to do with hardwoods, things like that. Does it give you an indication about that?

**Cook:** About different species, it is a thumbnail. Our database gives us a much better picture of the forest.

**Brown:** Blaine, thank you very much. Are there any other comments or questions for Blaine?

**Bobzien:** Thank you Blaine. Context wise, this is a very big picture look, snap shot look. We'll make sure that all Board members that are not here today get a copy of this report. It's a part where you all represent different things, and different perceptions of what we observe and that's a strength of the Board, this adds a broad scale look; it's not for specific project planning, it's for the big picture.

We have received some concerns about the confidence level of the Industry folks. Bill I'll invite you to go into a task group to go deeper into the sources of the information. What I like compared to this report is that it is just numbers, and you read it and think so what, and you're left to your own perceptions. It's another point of reference.

As far as questions regarding our Forest Plan; we continue to implement the Forest Plan that we have today. Species viability, plants, and animals, timber resource, that all means so much to our timber industry, as well as to the beauty and scenery we have. The Forest Plan is about our desired conditions and goals. Big picture look, important for the Board to have.

**Brown:** Anything else from the Board members?

**Tysdal:** It's hard for this Advisory Board to get a handle on where you are going without putting dollar figures on some of this stuff; you produced more in the 80s and it was worth more, the National Forest took a real dive not just a little. How does that factor into the overall picture of the National Forest? It should all have a dollar value on it. It has the potential to pay its way plus more in the government so we can see what is happening dollar wise.

**Bobzien:** There are ways that it can be quantified, but if you look at the greater public at large, often the choices that are made are not to benefit the Government financially. The National Forest position is about the health of the land, it's not for putting it up for bid to return the greatest amount of money back. Same with the timber industry; it's about what the public wants to see when the harvest is done, not just maximizing the return. The max economic return does not drive the consideration on the forest.

**Tysdal:** We are trillions of dollars in debt; it might be wise to start looking at ways to make more money off of the National Forest.

**Brown:** That is an interesting topic, thank you Lauris; and another interesting part is having the Advisory Board, with 16 members, considering our quality of life, and the impacts this type of Board can make. The Black Hills NF Advisory Board is one of just two in the Nation. If we knew the future, we could make better decisions – if we lived 200 years.

## **Public Comments**

**Brown:** Is there anyone in the audience that would like to say anything?

**Scherrer:** Saving Blaine till the end was wise in your planning, this is a major big deal and to say we are pulling out more than we are growing, I'm gratified to hear that there will be a significant number of well-trained people that will analyze the data prior to any changes being made. We used to have multiple logging companies in the Black Hills, we are now down to one very well run timber company and Neiman's do a heck of a job and they give a lot of their resources back. We have been blessed to have a timber industry that has cooperated, and has taken out wood that isn't always marketable. I would be concerned if we did anything in a premature manner, to jeopardize that group. I'm glad to hear, I know Craig and others will study this really closely, and I advocate feedback from this group.

**Brown:** Does anyone else have any comments or questions?

**Kohlbrand:** To just look on the brighter side, think about the Jasper fire, we were growing twice as much wood as harvesting, take out Jasper, then the bugs took out more acres of timber than the mills did and with all of that, we still really aren't doing that bad.

## **ADJOURN**

**Brown:** Are there any more comments? If not, could I have a motion to adjourn; motion made by Craig Tieszen and seconded by Alice Allen. The motion passed unanimously.

The Meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m. Next Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 15.