

CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE, NEED AND DECISIONS TO BE MADE

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service is proposing to amend the 1997 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) for the Black Hills National Forest (the Forest). This LRMP amendment is considered a significant action requiring preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). This chapter explains the purpose and need for the amendment, outlines the proposal’s major components, describes the major issues associated with the proposal, and describes the scope of the decisions to be made.

The Phase II Amendment is being prepared under the 1982 National Forest Management Act regulations also known as the 1982 Planning Rule (USDA Forest Service 1982). The more recent 2005 National Forest Management Act (NFMA) regulations also known as the 2005 Planning Rule (USDA Forest Service 2005h) are mentioned in this Final Environmental Impact Statement as it relates to the transition portion of the 2005 rule at 36 CFR 219.14.

The states of Wyoming and South Dakota were cooperating agencies in analysis of the Phase II Amendment. They utilized state and local agencies and departments listed below in providing resources and information during the process:

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA	STATE OF WYOMING
SD Department of Agriculture	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
SD Department of Game, Fish and Parks	Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
SD Department of Environment and Natural Resources	Wyoming State Engineers Office
SD Department of Transportation	Wyoming State Geological Survey
SD Department of Tourism	Wyoming Department of Agriculture
SD Office of Economic Development	Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission
SD Department of Labor	Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources
Lawrence County Commissioners	Office of State Lands and Investments
Meade County Commissioners	Wyoming Business Council
Pennington County Commissioners	Wyoming Department of Transportation
Fall River County Commissioners	Crook County Commissioners
Lawrence Conservation District	Weston County Commissioners
Pennington Conservation District	Crook County Natural Resource District
Custer Conservation District	

Chapter 1 is divided into the following sections:

- 1-1. Background: Provides a timeline of key dates, decisions, and actions leading up to the Phase II Amendment.
- 1-2. Location: Briefly describes the project area.
- 1-3. Purpose and Need for Action: Describes the purpose and need for the proposed Phase II Amendment.
- 1-4. Decisions to Be Made: Presents the scope of the decisions to be made in the Phase II Amendment.
- 1-5. Proposed Action: Describes the proposed federal action.
- 1-6. Public Involvement, Issues, and Concerns: Summarizes the public and agency input process and issues to be considered in this analysis.
- 1-7. Key Changes Between Draft EIS and Final EIS
- 1-8. Document Organization: Briefly describes the Final EIS chapter contents.
- 1-9. Final EIS Appendices

1-1. BACKGROUND

The Phase II Forest Plan Amendment has its basis in a number of events that have occurred since 1997. In brief, these events include the decision by the Office of the Chief of the Forest Service (USDA Forest Service 1999a) on a number of appeals of the 1997 Revised Forest Plan; a lawsuit filed against the Forest Service (1999) and the resulting Settlement Agreement (U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado 2000); a number of large fires and a continuing insect epidemic on the Forest; and emerging national policy related to forest health. To help the reader better understand the context of the Phase II Amendment, these events are explained in more detail in the following paragraphs.

1-1.1. 1997 Revised Forest Plan

A LRMP creates a programmatic framework for decision-making on Forest management as required under the NFMA of 1976. The NFMA also provides guidelines for updating the LRMP with new information and regulations as they become available. On August 19, 1983, the Regional Forester for Region 2 (R2), the Rocky Mountain Region of the Forest Service, approved the original LRMP for the Forest. Subsequently, new information and regulations were incorporated into a revision and released in 1996 as the Revised LRMP for the Forest. The revision was evaluated under NEPA in a 1996 EIS. In 1997, an errata, a revised reference list, and letters received since the Final EIS release were presented in the 1997 Revised LRMP Final EIS Addendum. A Record of Decision (ROD) was signed on June 24, 1997, for the Revised LRMP Final EIS and Addendum, establishing the 1997 Revised LRMP as the new programmatic Forest guidance. The 1997 Revised LRMP and its Appendices, the Final EIS for the 1997 Revised LRMP, its Addendum and ROD, and the associated Planning Record are incorporated in this document by reference.

1-1.2. Chief's Forest Plan Appeal Decision

A number of groups and individuals administratively appealed the Regional Forester's decision to adopt the 1997 Revised LRMP. On October 12, 1999, Deputy Chief James R. Furnish, the reviewing officer for the Chief of the Forest Service, issued his 1999 Appeal Decision on three of the appeals. His decision affirmed the Regional Forester's June 24, 1997, decision in part, with instruction for further actions concerning mining, species viability, and diversity.

The interim direction in the 1999 Appeal Decision required the Forest to avoid management actions that could adversely affect species viability and diversity pending adjustments to the 1997 Revised LRMP. An action plan was developed by the Forest Service to implement these adjustments. The action plan scheduled accomplishment of these adjustments to the 1997 Revised LRMP in two phases: a short-term Phase I Amendment and a long-term, comprehensive Phase II Amendment. A summary of the main points of the Appeal Decision are discussed in the Administrative Record (administrative record file: appeal_settlement_issue_resolution).

1-1.3. Lawsuit And Settlement Agreement

Shortly after the Chief's Appeal Decision in November 1999, several individuals and groups filed suit against the Forest Service to block implementation of the Veteran Salvage Timber Sale within the Beaver Park Roadless Area. The lawsuit cited several of the deficiencies identified in the Chief's Appeal Decision and claimed 1997 Revised LRMP direction was inadequate to protect certain resources in the timber sale area. Negotiations were initiated to settle the lawsuit, and in September 2000 a Settlement Agreement (the Settlement) was signed and issued by the parties (U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado 2000). In signing the Settlement, the Forest agreed to undertake the Phase I and Phase II Forest Plan Amendments. Further, the Forest agreed to consider several specific items in the Phase II effort including: 1) the analysis of candidate areas for RNAs on the Forest; 2) completion of any designation process as a part of the Phase II Amendment; and 3) further evaluation of the viability of management indicator species (MIS), and the northern goshawk.

1-1.3.1. Research Natural Areas

Research natural areas (RNAs) are part of a national network of ecological areas designated in perpetuity for research and education and/or to maintain biological diversity on National Forest System (NFS) lands. RNAs are also important reference areas used to compare with areas that are being actively managed. NFMA Planning Regulations (36 CFR 219.25) state, "Recommendations for establishment of areas shall be made to the Chief through the (Forest) planning process." Forest Service Manual (FSM) 4063.03 states, "...Forest plans shall include analysis of, and recommendations for, any proposed research natural area establishment."

A decision on research natural areas was not made as part of the 1997 Revised LRMP. The 1996 LRMP Final EIS (USDA Forest Service 1996a) page II-23 states, "Rather than recommend for RNA designation areas which might be "less than best", the Black Hills has, with the concurrence of the Regional Forester, chosen to wait. The Forest has recently entered into a cooperative agreement with the Midwest Region of The Nature Conservancy to conduct a 2-year Black Hills plant community inventory". The results of this inventory were used in the candidate RNA analysis.

1-1.3.2. Management Indicator Species And Northern Goshawk

Goshawks were a focal point of the Chief's Appeal Decision as they reflect a number of general species viability questions as well as some specific to goshawk. Plaintiffs were also concerned about the goshawk and MIS, and the Settlement Agreement addressed the goshawk and MIS specifically.

1-1.4. Phase I Amendment

The Phase I Amendment was completed on May 18, 2001. This effort amended the 1997 Revised LRMP for the short term (2 to 5 years). The Amendment contained management direction for various species and incorporated new and updated monitoring protocols into the 1997 Revised LRMP Monitoring Implementation Guide for sensitive species surveys and monitoring, watershed monitoring, and evaluation of the effectiveness of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the Prevention of Non-Point Source Pollution.

It was determined that the Phase I Amendment did not represent a significant change to the 1997 Revised LRMP and could be accomplished without preparation of an EIS and without meeting the procedural requirements of an LRMP revision process (36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 219.10[f]). Adoption of this direction ensured that actions taken during the intervening 2 to 5 years would not be expected to foreclose future management options concerning species viability and diversity and that adequate habitat would be conserved on the Forest for species for which there may be a viability concern. This approach allowed the Forest to proceed with management actions until completion of the more comprehensive Phase II Amendment while minimizing risk for these species.

1-1.5. Forest Health

In August 2000, the Jasper Fire started west of Jewel Cave National Monument on Forest-administered lands. By the time the fire was controlled in mid-September, it had burned over 83,000 acres of NFS lands. The Jasper Fire occurred during one of the worst fire seasons in history nationally and during a time of prolonged drought conditions on the Forest.

Since the year 2000, more than 14 percent of the Black Hills National Forest has burned, and the mountain pine beetle epidemic that began at the same time continues to spread across various portions of the Forest. Public, state, and congressional interest in doing more to reduce the risk to forest resources and private property is high. The national events of the 2000 fire season led to the development of the National Fire Plan (NFP), a large-scale interagency policy initiative to address hazardous fuel conditions on forest and rangelands nationwide. The NFP is a cooperative effort between the USDA Forest Service and the US Department of Interior, with the intent of actively responding to severe wildland fires and their impacts to communities while ensuring sufficient firefighting capacity for the future. The NFP addresses five key points: firefighting, rehabilitation, hazardous fuels reduction, community assistance, and accountability.

The Healthy Forest Initiative (HFI) provided direction to: 1) streamline compliance with NEPA, 2) provide amended rules for HFI project appeals, and 3) improve Endangered Species Act consultation to expedite Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) decisions.

In 2003, the HFRA became law (Public Law 108-148). The purpose of the HFRA is to “improve the capacity of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects on NFS lands and Bureau of Land Management lands aimed at protecting communities, watersheds, and certain other at-risk lands from catastrophic wildfire, to enhance efforts to protect watersheds and address threats to forest and rangeland health, including catastrophic wildfire, across the landscape, and for other purposes.”

1-1.6. Phase II Amendment

The analysis in this Phase II Amendment Final EIS builds on the information developed by the Forest for the 1997 Revised LRMP Final EIS and the Phase I Amendment analysis. The Forest published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the 1997 Revised LRMP Phase II Amendment on November 28, 2001 (66 Federal Register 59406). **Table 1-1** summarizes key events, as outlined in this section, leading to the preparation of this Final EIS.

Table 1-1. Key Dates And Actions Leading To Preparation Of This Phase II Amendment Final EIS

Date	Action
August 1983	LRMP for the Forest approved
December 1996	Revised LRMP and Final EIS released
May 1997	Revised LRMP Final EIS Addendum released
June 1997	ROD for 1997 Revised LRMP Final EIS signed
September 1998	Increased bark beetle activity detected in Beaver Park Roadless Area
October 1999	Decision Issued on Appeals of 1997 Revised LRMP
November 1999	Lawsuit filed against the U.S. Forest Service (Veteran Salvage Timber Sale)
November 1999	Settlement negotiations initiated for Veteran Lawsuit
August 2000	Jasper Fire begins; eventually burns 83,000 acres on the Forest
September 2000	Settlement negotiations completed; Settlement Agreement signed and released
May 2001	LRMP Phase I Amendment complete
November 2001	NOI published to prepare an EIS for LRMP Phase II Amendment
September 2004	Phase II Draft EIS Notice of Availability and beginning of public comment period is published in the Federal Register.
January 2005	Phase II Draft EIS public comment period ends.

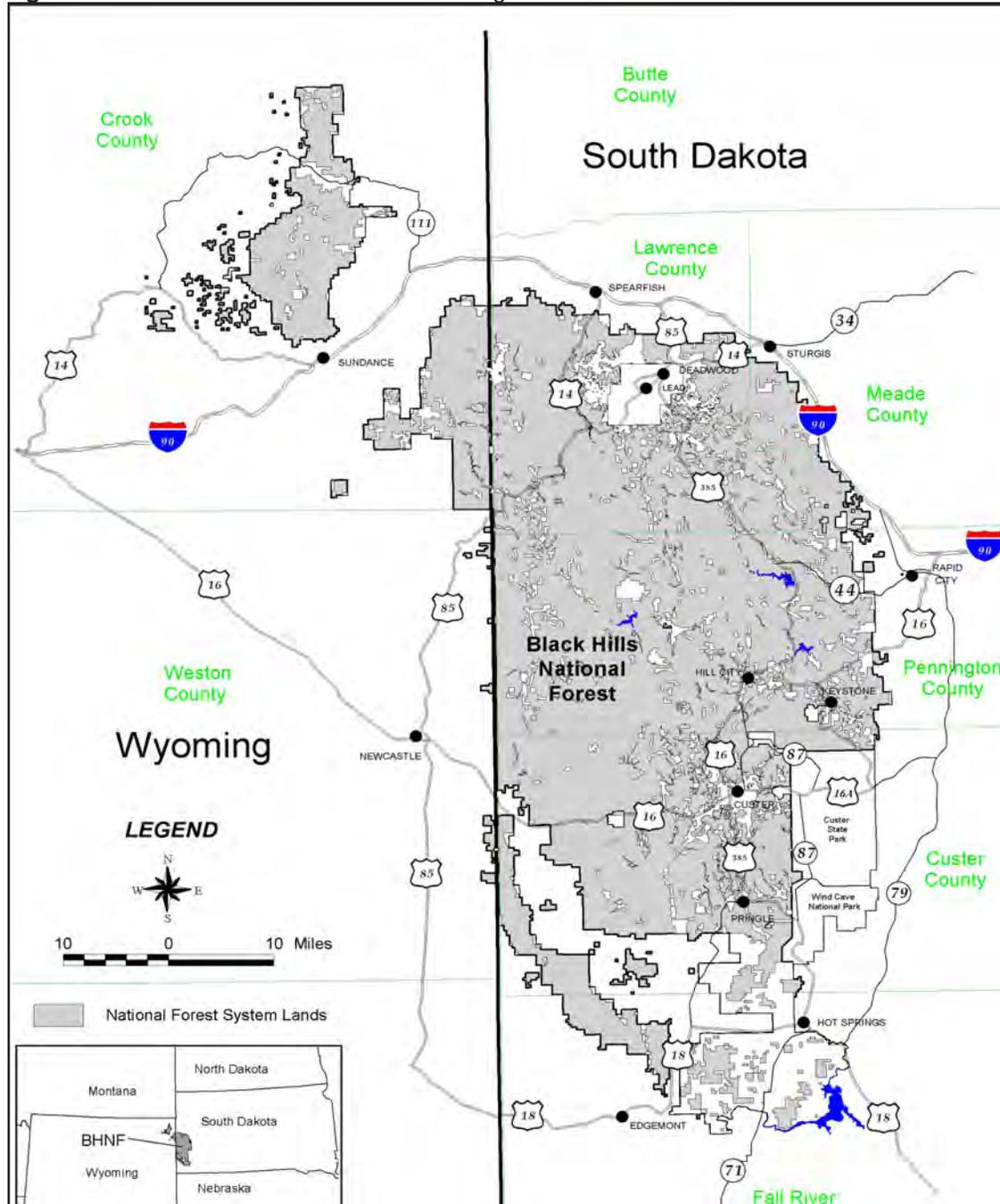
As the Forest Service implements the NFP, HFRA, and HFI, it must comply with the NFMA requirements such as species viability. The Forest has chosen to accomplish this through a forest plan amendment that incorporates both issues.

1-2. LOCATION

The planning area consists of the Forest, comprising approximately 1.2 million acres in western South Dakota and eastern Wyoming (**Figure 1-1**). The bulk of the Forest is located in a contiguous block in western South Dakota, with parcels in eastern Wyoming, including the Bear Lodge Mountains. The gross area within the administrative boundary of the Forest depicted in **Figure 1-1** is 1.5 million acres meaning there are approximately 300,000 acres of non-NFS lands within the Black Hills. Most of this is non-federal ownership (just under 2,600 acres comprise Jewel Cave and Mount Rushmore National

Monuments) or private lands. A majority of the lands on the periphery of the Forest is also non-federal land and privately owned. The interior 300,000 acres are seen in **Figure 1.1** as white inclusions in the gray background. The private lands on the periphery of the Forest and within the Forest are prized for private subdivision development, private recreational ranches, and land speculation whose end purpose is generally residential development. Wildland-urban interface (WUI) issues are a prime consideration in the management of the Black Hills NF and an important consideration in the Phase II Amendment.

Figure 1-1. Black Hills National Forest Planning Area



Source: (USDA Forest Service 2004h)

1-3. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

This section describes the need to change the 1997 Revised LRMP as amended by Phase I and why the Forest Service decided to complete the Phase II Amendment. The Phase II Amendment need for change can be tied back to the three events to which the amendment effort is responding.

1. Complying with the Chief 's October 1999 Appeal Decision on the 1997 Revised LRMP as described in Section 1-1.2 of this chapter that requires the following deficiencies to be corrected:
 - a. Viability determinations for species,
 - b. Standards and guidelines to maintain viability of species,
 - c. MIS requirements, and
 - d. Monitoring direction for sensitive species.
2. Fulfilling components of the 2000 Settlement Agreement to complete an analysis of candidate RNAs and to accomplish the designation process through the Phase II Forest Plan Amendment, and evaluate the viability of MIS and the northern goshawk as described earlier in this chapter.
3. Modifying management direction for fire hazard and insect risk to address both species viability and diversity and effects on resources, human safety, and property, especially around at-risk communities (ARC) and in the WUI (see Section 3-7 Natural Disturbance Processes).

Under the proposed action described below, the 1997 Revised LRMP as amended by Phase I would be amended. The LRMP sets programmatic direction and creates a framework for project-level decision-making and compliance with federal environmental policies. This Final EIS addresses the general effects of implementing this programmatic direction. It does not speak directly to the effects that might arise from site-specific or project-specific implementation of that direction.

1-4. DECISIONS TO BE MADE

The Regional Forester will decide whether to amend direction in the 1997 Revised LRMP and, if so, in what manner. The decision will be based on the Final EIS analysis and the accompanying Administrative Record. The Regional Forester will prepare and sign a ROD documenting his decision for the Phase II Amendment. This resource management direction will remain in place until the LRMP is amended or revised according to NFMA regulations.

The following decisions, which meet the purpose and need described in Section 1-3, are to be made in the ROD for the Phase II Amendment:

- If and how the goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, and monitoring requirements included in the 1997 Revised LRMP will be modified to address species viability (including northern goshawk) and diversity (including MIS)
- Whether or not candidate RNAs will be designated on the Forest, and if so, which ones, and the Forest Plan direction necessary to administer them, and
- Whether or not to modify management direction for fire hazard and insect risk to address both species viability and diversity and effects on resources, human safety, and property, especially around ARCs and in the WUI, and if so, in what manner.

The Forest has determined that the following elements of the 1997 Revised LRMP as amended by Phase I are still adequate and will not be addressed in the Phase II Amendment:

- Management area (MA) allocations, except for the possible designation of RNAs
- The number of acres of unsuitable timber land, with the possible exception of RNA designation, meadow restoration, and the allowable sale quantity (ASQ) for the remaining acres, and
- Designation of new roadless or recommended wilderness areas; providing additional protection for roadless areas; or consideration of other special designations such as wild and scenic rivers or special interest areas.

Natural resource management is the study and application of tradeoffs, both in natural systems and in the flow of goods and services from the Forest. In natural ecological systems there is no ideal set of forest stand conditions suitable for all species. As vegetation communities go through a successional process from bare ground to multi-aged or savannah ponderosa pine forest, one host of species are persistent while others are decreasing. For example, ruffed grouse thrive as aspen increases, tend to decline as the aspen is replaced by ponderosa pine, and are generally absent by the time the stand becomes a dense mature pine stand with no remaining aspen trees.

People demand a continuous flow of goods and services from the Forest. These can include scenic vistas, pleasure driving, timber, camping, livestock grazing, clean water, mining, nature photography, hunting, fishing, hiking, and mountain climbing. Many expect the Forest to be protected from fire and insects. In the multiple-use concept, the Forest Service recognizes there is room for many uses and natural systems, but all uses and systems cannot occupy the same location at the same time. They must be distributed across the Forest in a pattern that makes ecologic and social sense while providing long-term sustained yield of goods and services.

The main tradeoff considered in the Phase II alternatives is between fire-hazard and insect-risk reduction and the species that require high fuels- and insect-risk habitat. The NFMA planning regulations (36 CFR 219.19) recognize that tradeoffs must be made to meet multiple use objectives, “Each alternative shall establish objectives for the maintenance and improvement of habitat for management indicator species selected under paragraph (a)(1) of this section, to the degree consistent with overall multiple use objectives of the alternative.” While all alternatives must maintain viable populations of native and desired non-native species, the tradeoff is between the abundance of species needing certain habitats and the need to reduce fire hazard and insect risk.

The analysis in this Final EIS provides the decisionmaker with a range of options for ensuring compliance with agency obligations under NFMA by maintaining viable populations of existing native and desired non-native vertebrate species and providing for plant and animal community and species diversity on the Forest (36 CFR 219.19; 36 CFR 219.26), and other laws and regulations. Alternative strategies presented in this Final EIS are designed to apply over the remainder of the planning period. Finally, the analysis discloses the general effects of the Phase II Amendment programmatic direction on the environment (particularly on continued species viability in the Forest) and explains how public issues are considered and addressed. The analysis in this effort is based on the best available scientific information and can be incorporated in individual project plans and management practices.

The LRMP Phase II Amendment Administrative Record documents the evaluation of this analysis and is hereby incorporated by reference.

1-5. PROPOSED ACTION

The NFMA and its implementing regulations require that changes to management direction in LRMPs be accomplished through the amendment process, which includes “appropriate public notification and satisfactory completion of NEPA procedures” (16 USC 1604[i]; 36 CFR 219.10[f]).

The Regional Forester proposes to change existing Forest Plan goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, and management direction as outlined in Alternative 6 as listed in Appendix D and as summarized in the Final EIS Chapter 2. The No Action Alternative and alternatives to the proposed action are also summarized in Chapter 2. The effects of the alternatives are summarized in the **Table 2-3** and are listed in detail in Chapter 3. Because the LRMP provides programmatic direction, the LRMP Phase II Amendment does not include site-specific or project-specific decisions.

1-6. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, ISSUES, AND CONCERNS

On November 28, 2001, an NOI to prepare the Phase II Amendment EIS was published in the Federal Register (66 Federal Register 59406). The NOI outlined the scope of the Phase II Amendment and invited interested parties to provide comments during the initial 60-day scoping period.

Alternative development began during scoping. Government agencies and the public participated in four open houses held in September 2002 to provide input for alternative development. The Forest utilized several methods (e.g., newsletters, website, press releases) to notify agencies and the public of meeting opportunities and provide current information on the EIS process.

A draft EIS was released September 2004. Appendix A of the Draft EIS describes important public involvement milestones, summarizes issues developed from scoping, describes alternative development, lists cooperating agencies, and describes American Indian tribal consultation.

The Draft EIS provided for a 90-day comment period, that was extended upon public request for an additional 30 days until January 15, 2005. Approximately 5,400 comments were received during that period. The purpose of a draft EIS public comment period is to give people, agencies, and organizations an opportunity to tell the Forest Service how well it considered and analyzed previous comments, legal and regulatory requirements, current forest conditions, best available science, a range of alternatives, and environmental effects.

NEPA provides for cooperation early in the process through the designation of cooperating agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise (40 CFR 1501.6). Cooperating agency status was granted to the States of Wyoming and South Dakota to provide the Forest with information on areas including local economics and wildlife populations, and to assist in coordinating communications with local government units. The cooperating agencies have participated regularly through meetings and conference calls and have contributed substantially to the development of the purpose and need, alternatives, and the effects analysis.

The Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board (NFAB), formed to advise the forest supervisor, is comprised of 15 members representing diverse government, conservation, environmental, commercial, industrial, and tribal interests. Presentations were made to the Board by the interdisciplinary team and cooperating agencies at various meetings. Citizens provided comments at the meetings. A subcommittee

prepared, and the Board approved a resolution finding that: (1) A significant change in the 1997 Revised Forest Plan is needed to address large disturbance events and forest management objectives; (2) More diverse forest conditions could reduce the severity of wildfire and insect events and improve management response to these events; and (3) Fire-hazard and insect-risk management is a high priority across the Forest, especially within the wildland-urban interface.

1-6.1. Significant (Key) Issues

The NEPA process requires that federal agencies conduct an open process to identify the significant issues related to a proposed action and that these issues become the primary focus of alternative development and the analysis. The NFMA also requires that the Forest determine the major public issues to be addressed in the planning process. The Forest Supervisor and the interdisciplinary planning team (ID Team) reviewed the scoping comments received from the public and identified several significant issues related to this proposal. These key issues were used in developing alternatives to the proposed action and follow.

1-6.1.1. Viability Of Plant And Wildlife Species

ISSUE STATEMENT: Modifying Forest Plan goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, and monitoring requirements in the 1997 Revised LRMP or the 2001 Amended LRMP may be needed to provide for long-term viability of native and desired non-native plant and animal species in the dynamic Black Hills disturbance ecosystem compatible with other multiple uses of the Forest. Key ecosystem elements of the viability issue include the extent and condition of late-successional and/or dense mature forests, the extent and condition of spruce forests, the condition of riparian areas and aquatic ecosystems, the occurrence of snags, the extent and condition of grassland and hardwood ecosystems, the condition of cave ecosystems, and the occurrence and condition of understory shrubs.

By law the agency must maintain viable populations of plant and wildlife species. The Chief of the Forest Service in an October 12, 1999 decision determined that some provisions in the 1997 Revised Plan were not adequate to meet this legal direction or that documentation was inadequate to demonstrate compliance with this direction.

All alternatives address species viability and diversity to varying degrees as displayed in the alternatives comparison chart at the end of Chapter 2 and in Chapter 3. The ID Team used a systematic approach to address species viability and diversity for the Phase II Amendment alternatives. The approach is addressed in Appendix B – Description of Analysis Process and in Appendix D – Land and Resource Management Plan Direction by Alternative.

1-6.1.2. Fire Hazard And Insect Risk

ISSUE STATEMENT: Legal mandates to conserve species habitat and populations could limit the degree to which the Forest addresses the National Fire Plan, the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, and the Healthy Forest Initiative and associated risks to private and public property and those living in and near the Forest.

Numerous non-federal and other parcels of land exist within the proclaimed boundary of the Forest. Recent large fires and insect attacks on the Forest have altered habitat and placed lives at risk as well as public and private property. These and similar events nationwide have prompted an increased national policy emphasis on forest and rangeland ecosystem health.

The alternatives address this issue to varying extents. The degree to which each alternative addresses this issue is displayed in the alternatives comparison charts at the end of Chapter 2.

1-6.1.3. Research Natural Area Assessment

ISSUE STATEMENT – Additional RNA establishment could remove some existing resource uses of the Forest and restrict Forest Service actions to address fire hazard and insect risk. RNAs are needed to represent certain plant communities in a national network, and establishment can help conserve unique plant populations.

In September 2000 as part of the Settlement Agreement, the Forest agreed to analyze candidate RNAs as part of the Phase II Amendment process. RNA designation would limit the level and types of management actions that can be applied in these areas. Some believe that additional RNA establishment could restrict Forest actions to address fuel conditions and insect attacks. Others believe that RNAs could provide valuable habitat conditions for species if surrounding lands are aggressively treated to reduce fire hazard or insect risk.

All alternatives address this issue to some extent. The degree to which each alternative addresses this issue is displayed in the alternatives comparison charts at the end of Chapter 2.

1-6.1.4. Volume of Timber And Other Commodities Offered

ISSUE STATEMENT: Forest direction adopted to conserve species viability and diversity could limit the management actions to meet objectives under Forest Plan Goal 3 of the 1997 Revised Plan and 2001 Amended Plan and the jobs, income, and way of life associated with Goal 3.

Goal 3 provides for commodity production in an environmentally sustainable manner. It was determined that this issue should be tracked through the range of alternatives. Timber volume outputs expected under each alternative are displayed in Table 2-3.

1-6.2. Non-Key Issues

1-6.2.1. Change In The Allowable Sale Quantity

Adjustment to the allowable sale quantity (ASQ) is outside the scope of the purpose and need for the Phase II Amendment.

1.6.2.2. Roadless Inventory and Wilderness Recommendation

Wilderness analysis and recommendations were made as part of the 1997 Revised LRMP and are outside the scope of the Phase II decision. A roadless analysis and possible wilderness recommendations may be conducted when the Black Hills LRMP is next revised.

1-7. KEY CHANGES BETWEEN DRAFT EIS AND FINAL EIS

In response to public, organization, other agency, and Forest Service review many adjustments were made in the Final EIS. Some of the adjustments made include, but are not limited to, the examples that follow:

- A shift to desired outcomes versus treatment acres.
- Adjustments to structural stage objectives.
- Additional refinement of large tree objectives.
- Modification of candidate RNA boundaries and those recommended.
- Changes to objectives, standards, and guidelines addressing species viability.
- Refinement of insect- and fuels-hazard objectives.
- Refinement of MIS used and MIS Forest Plan direction.
- A refinement of the social and economic impacts.

Alternative 6 was revised in response to comments in several ways. First, a number of comments were used to clarify and make the direction easier to implement. Treatment objectives were changed from “acres” treated to “outcomes.” For example, instead of saying the Forest would restore 46,000 acres of aspen (a doubling of the current aspen acres), Alternative 6 was rephrased to “manage for 92,000 acres of aspen” (the existing 46,000 acres plus 46,000 acres restored). Similarly, the large tree component of the management area structural stage objectives was clarified to provide 10 percent of the managed ponderosa pine stands as very large trees (“very large trees” have an average stand diameter generally greater than 16 inches)

The fire-hazard objective (10-01) has been changed from providing 75 percent low-to-moderate fire hazard to providing 50 to 75 percent low-to-moderate fire hazard in the WUI to allow project managers the flexibility to consider terrain and other resource features in reducing fire hazard. Another change in Alternative 6 is reduction of mature, dense ponderosa pine (structural stage 4C) and an increase in the amount of mature, moderately dense pine (4B) in MAs 4.1, 5.1, 5.4, 5.43, and 5.6. Neither dense mature forest habitat nor fire hazard and insect risk would be ideal, but Alternative 6 represents a level of dense mature forest that meets the intent of law (36 CFR 219.19(a)) for providing for species viability consistent with multiple use objectives; in this case reduced fire hazard and insect risk. In response to comments and additional field review, the boundaries, acreage and preference location of candidate RNAs included in the Draft EIS were changed for the Final EIS to get better plant community representation and resolve resource concerns.

1-8. DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

The remaining chapters present the alternatives, describe the affected environment and potential environmental consequences, and address proposed monitoring protocols.

- Chapter 2 describes the alternatives, including the 1997 Revised LRMP (Alternative 1); the Phase I Amendment to the 1997 Revised LRMP (Alternative 2); and three options for action (Alternatives 3, 4, and 6). Chapter 2 briefly describes other alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed analysis and includes a comparison of the alternatives and summary of the consequences.
- Chapter 3 describes the affected environment and potential environmental consequences from implementation of each of the alternatives. This chapter includes the scientific and analytical basis for the alternative comparisons.
- Chapter 4 identifies the environmental impact statement preparers.

1-9. FINAL EIS APPENDICES

- Appendix A Public Involvement
- Appendix B Description of Analysis Process
- Appendix C Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation
- Appendix D Land and Resource Management Plan Direction by Alternative and Monitoring Items
- Appendix E Glossary
- Appendix F References
- Appendix G Management Areas and Candidate Research Natural Areas – Acreage and Map

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