

**National Forest Advisory Board (NFAB) Meeting**  
May 18, 2011  
Mystic Ranger District

**Members Present:**

Jim Heinert, Chairman; Tom Blair, Jim Scherrer, Craig Tieszen, Becci Rowe, Nels Smith, Hugh Thompson, Bill Kohlbrand, Sam Brannan, Jeff Vonk, Bob Paulson, Tom Troxel.

**Forest Service Representatives:**

Craig Bobzien, Dennis Jaeger, Bob Thompson, Tom Willems, Rhonda O'Byrne, Claudia Hill, Twila Morris - Recorder.

**Others:**

Approximately 20 members of the public were in attendance. Three Congressional representatives were also in attendance; Chris Blair (Johnson – D, South Dakota), Mark Haugen (Thune – R, South Dakota), Sandy Massey (Noem – R, South Dakota).

**Members Absent:**

Donovin Sprague, Carson Engelskirger, Ev Hoyt, Nancy Kile.

**Welcome:**

**Chairman Heinert:** We have a quorum; call the meeting to order 1:00

**Approve April Minutes:**

**Heinert:** Do we have a motion to approve the minutes from the April meeting? Motion made by Rowe second by Blair, motion carried, minutes approved.

**Approve the Agenda:**

**Heinert:** Are there any changes to the Agenda?

**Tieszen:** I would like to request that we move the travel management topic up to first on the regular agenda.

**Heinert:** If there are no objections, we'll move item three to item one, and go in subsequent order from there.

Do we have a motion to approve the agenda as amended? Motion made by Scherrer, second made by Tieszen, motion carried, agenda approved.

## **Housekeeping:**

**Bobzien:** For those of you in the audience, we have two new faces today; Scott Guffey and Katie Haugen; Katie is working with Representative Noem's staff. Frank is not here today. Bob in the event we had to evacuate, how would we proceed?

**B.Thompson:** In the event of an emergency, we would all proceed out the front door. If that access is blocked, we would go out the back door of the conference room, and follow the exit to the back of the building.

**Bobzien:** Thanks to the public for attending today. We also have our new Natural Resource Staff Officer, Dave Mertz, with us today. He comes to us from the Kiabab NF in Arizona. Dave is originally from North Dakota.

## **Meeting Protocol**

**Heinert:** We'll make time at the end of the agenda for public comments. I appreciate the Board observing the standards for our meeting and discussion; this has helped us have orderly meetings. With that, we are ready to go to hot topics.

## **Hot Topics**

### **Bark Beetle Response**

**Bobzien:** Thank you Mr. Chair. Several of us attended the Save Our Black Hills Coalition roundtable on Monday at Crazy Horse. The purpose of the roundtable was to look at better ways to educate and involve the public, and to improve ways to address the bark beetle situation and the long term health of the Forest. There was representation from South Dakota and Wyoming. Bill Kohlbrand was there from Wyoming, Ray Sowers from South Dakota, and Tom Troxel representing the association of industries.

With that there was considerable discussion about what we are doing now, and what can we do in the future; assisting private landowners to take care of the bark beetle on their land. This is a grassroots group, formed last summer; with a broad array of interests. Of particular interest to that group is the tourism industry, and locally looking at the forest health that affects the citizen's economy and tourists. Are there any comments from Tom, Bill, Dennis or Dave?

**Troxel:** There were a couple of things we talked about, one was funding. Craig summarized the Forest request, and that they still don't have the final numbers. Tentative numbers are about five million short, and that is a huge part of getting the program of work done. I have a copy of a letter from the Secretary to the congressional delegation, I don't know if there is more money or if it's the money we already have. The other thing we talked about was NEPA and a letter Representative Herseth Sandlin sent last year for alternative arrangements. My assignment was to distribute that letter. The letter is a good follow up issue for all of us.

**Kohlbrand:** It was a pretty good meeting. The cool thing about the Save Our Black Hills Coalition is they don't accept "I can't". Their thing is "how can" we do something. They are a diverse group, they have one common goal and that is to whip the bark beetle, and enable everyone to do the right thing as far as the bark beetle goes.

**Heinert:** Are there any comments or questions?

**Scherrer:** Do they have a schedule of events or plan of action, or is there anything specific that we should be expecting or looking for in the next 30 – 90 days. If they are pushing, June 15 is rolling around pretty quickly.

**Bobzien:** They didn't discuss a schedule of events while I was there. They had sent a separate request of considerations that would help private landowners to remove trees efficiently, we did certain things like waiving fees for the removal of bark beetle trees, so those are just a couple of examples that they organized and we responded.

**Troxel:** They did not get to an action plan, but I come back to those two topics, NEPA and Funding that the BBNF has requested.

**Rowe:** Did anyone have suggestions for sustainable management so that these things won't happen again in the future?

**Kohlbrand:** One thing was excessive growth, vs. the amount we are harvesting, that contributes to the bark beetle problem. It was addressed, and that group has a strategy formulated; there are a lot of people involved with the strategy, and they are not all in agreement.

**Rowe:** When we are replanting in burned areas, will the planting be thinner to allow more grassy areas, less of a tree farm? Are we using a little bit of vision so that we have a good forest in the future with less chance of wildfire?

**Bobzien:** The places we are replanting in the Jasper are places where the seed source was actually burned. It will be a very diverse forest; we wanted to have the conifers back in there. We are not over planting.

**Heinert:** We are ready to move on to the next topic, good questions, thank you.

### **Stratobowl - Status**

**B.Thompson:** The Stratobowl is on the outskirts of Rapid City on HWY 16. It was an area where balloons were released in part of the push to go into space. It is a natural limestone bowl, really looks like a bowl. The Department of Interior through the Park Service did an evaluation of numerous sites and they had proposed to list the Stratobowl as a National Historic Landmark. It would include National Forest system land; at the overlook. It would also include some private land, which is where the Stratobowl actually is.

If the private parties do not want it, the Park Service won't designate it. They weren't asking the FS for our opinion, and they weren't asking the County because they had no land. They were in essence asking the private parties. Pennington County had a meeting with Park Service representatives, and they asked a number of questions. Pennington County determined they had no role. The Park Service representatives were out last week to meet with private landowners, and the Forest archeologist, Dr. Mike Hilton. There is one landowner that is adamantly opposed, so right now there is no proposal to list this as a historic landmark. Whether the Stratobowl has a special designation or not, it is still a historically important place.

**Blair:** Who owns the Stratobowl itself?

**B.Thompson:** There are two land owners; a husband and wife and a corporation, and only two families live in the bowl. Their concern was that everyone would be coming in and getting on their private land.

**Heinert:** Thank you Bob, I believe you are up next as well.

### **Falling Rock – Public Safety on Public Lands**

**B.Thompson:** Another person has fallen and hurt themselves from the Falling Rock area. There have been serious injuries and deaths there over the years. The Falling Rock area is on Hwy 44 right out of Rapid City. It is a beautiful limestone area that a lot of folks go to for climbing, hanging out and horsing around. It used to be a party spot, but we've gotten most of that stopped. This last fall raised the question – "it's dangerous spot, why don't you close it"? If we decide this is a dangerous spot and we close it, but we didn't close all of the other dangerous spots on the Black Hills, we are setting the taxpayers up for a costly situation. The Black Hills National Forest has a lot of potentially dangerous spots, and it is every individual's responsibility to be careful.

**Heinert:** We'll take a 10 minute break.

**Heinert:** Reconvene 2:24. We'll get started now on our regular agenda topics.

### **Regular Agenda**

#### **Travel Management Subcommittee report**

**Tieszen:** The Subcommittee was identified, and has met. A discussion was held about what we could do to help facilitate Implementation. If we could chose something that would provide some tangible results, what would be the best first undertaking. We chose the subject of connectivity and the gateway community connections that are part of the decisions; they are mentioned to make this system available for connectivity. Most of the gateway and connectivity decisions have to be made by counties, cities, state, etc. We noted that there has been some impediment to all of that happening in an organized way. Not because those entities weren't in the loop, there is no need to point fingers and try to figure out why that is not going as smoothly as it could. I would point out that we were asked to ask the Forest Supervisor to facilitate ...the intent is not to ask them to make a particular decision, but rather outline for them what decisions they will be faced with.

The Subcommittee would like the support of the Advisory Board to request the Forest Supervisor to convene two meetings with decision makers from around the Forest who need to be better advised about the decisions they will have to make about connectivity and gateway communities.

We think that if we can make County Commissioners, city councils, etc., aware of what decision will need to be made, it will be easier. We won't have finger pointing; the County saying, go see the FS, etc. We need to encourage decision makers to attend.

**Scherrer:** The terminology for the record: The purpose of the meeting is to educate all the players/decision makers to understand the decision space they have as a result of the Travel Management decision.

**Blair:** Bob Thompson's statement, about all of the decision makers is a good one. He said "by not making a decision they are making a decision, not acting is making a decision". So getting them all together and laying out what they need to know will help. We are kind of the facilitator. We can get a trail up to point A, but if it's county or state land, it's not our jurisdiction after that.

**Rowe:** I would like to say that this would only be a courtesy educational meeting, to educate city, and county leaders to understand what they may or may not do from this point; only a courtesy for education purposes.

**Brannan:** Thanks for the Subcommittees work on this. I have a question, there was sense of urgency as I recall. And you are advising the FS to take action on the educational meetings. Is there a time bound entity? I got such a sense of urgency at the last meeting.

**Blair:** It is in the record of decision.

**B.Thompson:** [Bob read from the Record of Decision] There is a little disconnect because it seems people don't understand. They'll go to the county and they get sent to the FS, we need to at least make sure all the parties' know what the rule is.

**Tieszen:** We didn't have discussion about the time line; we realize we are in the infant stages of implementation.

**Scherrer:** We would like to get the full Board support to take to Craig. I second the recommendation of two smaller meetings. I suggest that the meetings are scheduled as soon as possible based on the specific needs of Craig's folks.

My feeling is we meet with these people next week. We are trying to address the folks who are in a panic. Most people run their business in a panic mode. All the work we did proactively was good because we didn't have a crisis, but now we have a crisis. We need to get a hold of the people who can make the decisions, and we want to get a hold of those people so that they can get the information and make a decision. They have to be motivated to what they will listen to. This is pretty important.

**Heinert:** You've articulated the issue very well. I would like to know, do I understand that the Subcommittee is making a recommendation that they would like the Board to endorse?

**Blair:** We are asking for you to bless our recommendation, so that we can send our advice to Mr. Bobzien to go forward with this. No one will come to a meeting by getting a letter under my signature, but they will come to a meeting under Craig's signature.

**Heinert:** This is a little unusual, because usually we would receive the recommendation in writing. Does the Board understand what the recommendations of the Subcommittee are?

**Smith:** Read the motion.

**Heinert:** Let's get the recommendation on the floor.

**Blair:** I move that we are allowed to ask the Forest Supervisor to implement two meetings; one on the Northern Hills and one in the central hills, to disseminate information to the appropriate entities, to help further implement the Travel Management Decision.

**Heinert:** Do I have a second?

**Scherrer:** Second

**Rowe:** We all need to keep in mind that neither this Advisory Board or the Black Hills National Forest has the responsibility for independent business owners' success or lack of. We have a lot of economic woes going on. There are a lot of trail accesses. To educate is wonderful, but it is their responsibility to step forward. The Advisory Board is assuming the responsibility of reaching out. It is not our responsibility to make sure a business is successful in the economy

**Heinert:** It is our duty to function as a conduit and it is up to the Forest Service to facilitate it.

**Tieszen:** Would the Forest Supervisor have any comments about the request?

**Bobzien:** We are certainly willing to honor the motion that is on the table. Let me say that by comparison when we convened a meeting last fall for conservation leaders, there was no follow up calls needed, 54 people came to the bark beetle meeting. If we use that same way of convening and doing that, we could encourage that, in terms of our ability to convene people in a respectful way.

**Smith:** The frustration the Forest Service feels for the lack of turn out is real and understandable; crisis management being what it is, many communities are saying, "Oh – this is what they were talking about".

I would like to amend the motion to provide a condition and coordination with state and local , counties, cities, etc., because now this is on the ground, and the incentive is there now. I move to add and coordinate state and local decision makers.

**Heinert:** Any objection? Done. Discussion?

**Scherrer:** We didn't want to spend a lot of time talking about the details, on how the Subcommittee would work with the Forest Service on the prep for the meeting, but with all the folks in the room today, we will make sure that those who can light a fire know about the meeting. I suspect that if you guys know that there will be a meeting, you will get in touch with your Commissioners, etc., and make sure they get to the meeting.

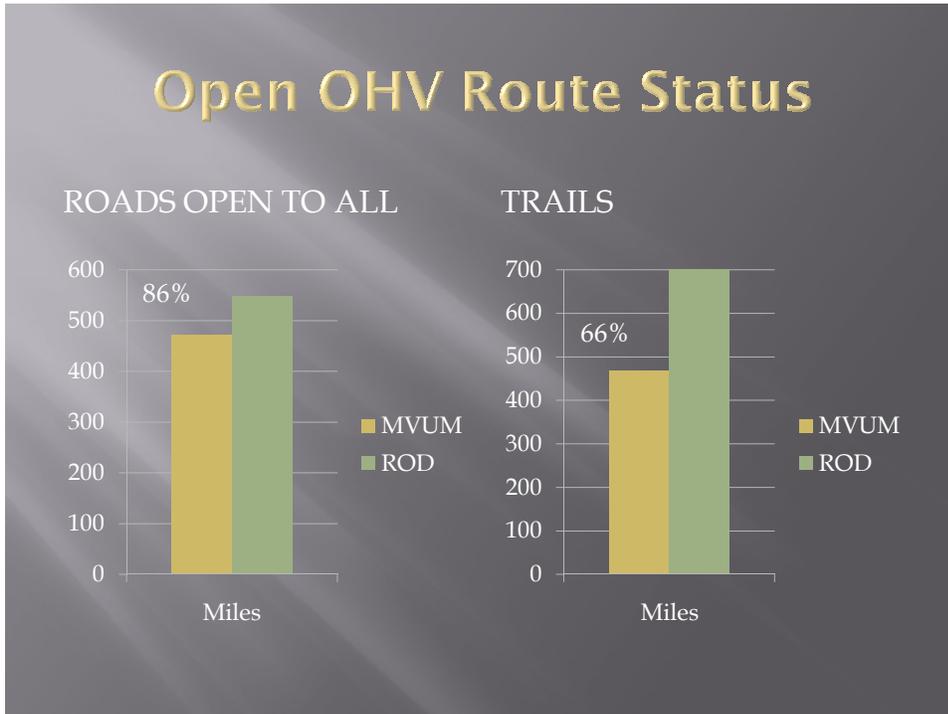
**Heinert:** Discussion? All in favor say aye, oppose nay, motion passed.

**Heinert:** Thanks to Subcommittee for the report.

## Designated Motorized Vehicles – Progress Report

**Bobzien:** Thanks Mr. Chair. We said at the last meeting we would give a summary, and wanted to include some of Greg Mumm’s comments from the last meeting. I would like to go through this in a focused way. Special thanks to Tom and Claudia who worked on this.

PowerPoint presentation Summary:



(Slide) Motorized Mixed Use

- Share The Road – 95%
- Highway Legal Only – 50%
- Road ID Markers – 90%
- Trail ID Markers – 90%

(Slide) FY 11, on the ground projects:

- Installation - 31 Road Cattleguards
- Installation - 68 OHV Cattleguards
- Improve - 12 Stream Crossings
- Informational Kiosks – Install new educational information
- Maintenance - Current MVUM Routes

(Slide) Motorized trail permits:

- Annual Permits Sold – approx 1900, \$25
- 7-Day Permits Sold – approx 100, \$20
- Commercial Permits Sold – 20, \$125
- Revenues Available in FY12
- Available On-Line and FS Offices

(Slide) Gateway Communities:

- Hill City
- Keystone
- Other Local Elected Officials

**Bobzien:** Gateway Communities is an area of concern that Greg shared. This is a concept that we carried forward throughout the decision. Early on there was some work with Hill City and Keystone and that has come back up again. Some of the County Commissioners are interested now to see what they can do to edge match with the NF trails.

(Slide) Communication/Education/Enforcement

- Black Hills NF Public Webpage – Home
  - MVUM
  - Color Companion Maps
  - GPS Data (Garmin Compatible)
  - Google Earth Map
  - Motorized Trail Permit Sales
- Delayed Implementation in 2010
  - Outreach to hunter community
- Media/Newspaper Outreaches
  - Wet weather, avoid resource damage
- Custer County RAC Project
  - Rehabilitate damaged areas

Webpage: Ours is a National Configuration, all Forest webpage's look similar.

**Rowe:** Most folks have a droid or a phone that have your maps on it. With your GPS you could locate right where you are, and you could book mark right where you're at, that is fantastic!

**Vonk:** The GPS data is compatible to your Garmin GPS?

**Bobzien:** Yes

**Bobzien:** Trail permit sales; there is now a location right on the home page to buy your permit. This is a National vendor, very experienced. There is mailing time involved, so you will have a proof of purchase very similar to buying a license through the State of South Dakota.

(Slide) Opportunity on the ground:

- Single-Track Trail Assessment Ride
- FY11 Focus – Current MVUM Routes
  - Public Safety and Resource Protection
  - Future – Staged Implementation

**Bobzien:** There are some trails that are planned that are still roads, and the reason for that is because they are treating the bark beetle in those areas, and they are still closed to OHV use.

Single track trail assessment ride: This weekend, an evaluation of the routes.

(Slide) Funding Mechanism:

- Recreation Enhancement Act Grant - \$40K
- SD RTP Grant FY 10/11 - \$359K
  - Cattleguards, signs, stream crossings, trailheads
- Black Hills NF Earmark - \$100K
  - Grant match: fund equipment and labor
- SD RTP Grant Request FY 11/12 - \$200K
  - Stream crossing, trail, and trailhead improvements
- Prior Year Equipment Purchased
  - Sutter Trail Dozers, Single Track Mini Excavator

**Bobzien:** Recreation Enhancement Act: Funds will be available for spending on October 1, 2011. This will be on our September meeting agenda.

**Scherrer:** Of the tools that you have purchased for the permittees, etc., what is the percentage of that stuff that is on the ground and on the trails? I would like to know the status and time frame for completion.

**Jaeger:** As far as the Cattleguards are concerned, we have been through the design process, they are ordered, and to be delivered in a couple of weeks. Most of the cattle come on the Forest in June. We are working with the Rangers to pick key spots and plan to install cattleguards throughout the summer.

**Scherrer:** If I'm a permittee, have I been informed that there is going to be construction on my unit and it is part of the travel management implementation plan that you will have them installed?

**Bobzien:** Travel management has been on their minds for years, related to authorizations for business use, etc.

**B.Thompson:** We meet with our permittees, they now which routes are open; these are routes that have been getting used. We are making the situation better for them really, by getting rid of gates.

**Rowe:** In an earlier meeting, I thanked Bob and Tom and I want to thank you for all the work, the huge undertaking, and massive trail system. Implementation seems to be going smoothly. How much volunteer help have you received, are you getting adequate volunteer to help with implementation?

**Bobzien:** We have in the past, yes. This Friday night there will be a large contingent coming out to do an evaluation of the single track trail. These people will help to do implementation as soon as possible. Leaders of these groups in the Black Hills feel confident that they will have volunteers.

**Rowe:** Sticker sales are a little low, but I would say that is because of the economy. I remember in our planning that we said we would have 60,000 ATVs in South Dakota alone buying these stickers. We are not getting our locals buying these stickers. The trail system just opened. Can we phase in our implementation according to our money as it is coming in, we can't over spend. I see sticker sales lower than what I expected. Do you have a backup plan to inform people, of

when trails are open?

**Bobzien:** The concept of staged implementation was throughout the decision. There was no capitol to fully implement and operate. The slide showed our source of income. The stickers will be evaluated by the Board, to decide the best use of the money.

**H.Thompson:** As a grazing permittee, it isn't the designated routes, it is the 2% that are still going everywhere and leave gates open and cut fences. This first season, what is your plan for having people out there to enforce the decision?

**Bobzien:** The first year is education, and we'll always maintain enforcement discretion. We did saturation education in the hunting season this past year. This coming year, we are working with our problem areas, and we'll do saturation education again. We do not have a set list of employees, where I can tell you we'll have a certain number of people in those areas.

**O'Byrne:** I can speak for the Northern Hills. We are bringing on all the seasonal employees right now, and they are being trained in travel management implementation. That will be a part of their role even though their main work may be timber marking, recreation, etc. They will be working on travel management implementation as well.

**Paulson:** You mentioned the rehabilitation that the Custer County RAC is doing. Do you have a metric, as far as tracking rehab of old damage, mileage done, etc.? Is there money being set aside for the work?

**Bobzien:** We are doing restoration on Hat Mountain right now as it is a sacred site to Native Americans. The one with the RAC project are citizen groups, so we look at that in terms of the acres restored for soil or water. There will be a reference point, yes.

**Smith:** You commented that the FS is getting those signs out, they may not have been required, but they were needed, you headed off a public relations mess by doing the signing, thank you. One other comment, the percentage of roads available that you listed is only the roads that were officially recognized, so in reality, the percentages are not that good. Is that correct?

**Bobzien:** That is correct. We looked at our ability to what we could maintain over time. The routes were total routes, old skid trails, etc., around 10,000 miles. Our system of roads and trails is now at a manageable level that we can sustain.

**Smith:** When you are working on the single track trail assessment, I urge you to follow what is on the ground, except for the person that is trying to climb the steepest trail in the Hills. Follow the lead of tracks that were already there from ordinary use.

**Bobzien:** To the degree we can. We need to protect heritage resources, plants, etc., which may require relocating a trail. We are being as common sense as we can.

**Heinert:** Any further questions?

**Scherer:** At the last meeting, I asked that you have an opportunity to respond to the outline by Greg Mumm. As I follow these minutes, you did a nice job on this, thank you, that is exactly what I was asking for.

**Bobzien:** This is a credit to Claudia, Tom, the Staff and Rangers on the Forest. The purpose was to hit the main points.

### **Fire Season Outlook**

**Jaeger:** Travel management implementation, grazing, bark beetles, all things we are managing... plus fire. The fire program is an interagency program. We work with Federal, State, and local, agencies in our efforts to reduce fire and fire fuels. We just got the Tatanka Hotshots certified for the season. We've asked our partners to join us today.

**Joe Lowe:** Mr. Chairman, Board Members, thank you. I'm Joe Lowe, and I am the Division Director for the South Dakota Division of Wildland Fire (WFS).

[Video presentation]

[PowerPoint presentation]

The South Dakota Division of Wildland Fire (WFS) was created within the Department of Agriculture at the request of the Governor and with the approval of the State Legislature on July 1, 2011. We operate by the cooperation of multiple agencies; one team one fight, which is the way it should be.

Our division is a proud and professional fire agency. We are the state's wildland fire department and are here to protect and serve the citizens of South Dakota.

**Heinert:** Any questions?

**Blair:** Any predictions Joe?

**Lowe:** I'll leave that to the fire meteorologist.

**Kohlbrand:** I'm with Wyoming State Forestry in Wyoming. We are not strictly a fire fighting organization. The County is our initial attack organization. We are tasked with protection and utilization of the land, and in doing so we work with the private landowners.

Crook and Weston County are staffed with all volunteer firefighters, so any cooperation we can get from the State and Federal agencies is vital.

Weston County has about 20 red carded firefighters. We have a lot of people who show up in a straw hat, and we don't turn them away. They have 60 engines, two dozers, and we are getting a retardant base.

Crook County has 122 red carded firefighters, 69 engines, and two dozers, as well as an ops van.

We also have the Honor Conservation Camp in Newcastle.

The State of Wyoming will have a helicopter, but since there are only three foresters at the office, we are spread pretty thin. Our role with the County is to assist them, and that is the key to our success, everyone goes – we fight fire, and most of the time we go home that night. We don't worry about who is paying for what up until 10:00 a.m. the next morning. After 10:00 a.m., we start looking at the agreements we have in places, etc.

Having all these resources is a tribute to Craig Bobzien and Todd Pechota. Like Joe said, it is seamless, when we get in a bind Joe is on the phone with us asking what we need.

**H.Thompson:** What is the status of Type 2 Teams in Wyoming?

**Kohlbrand:** There are three Type 2 Teams and a Type 1 Team for the Rocky Mountain area.

**Lowe:** The Great Plains Team is a Zone Team, so we are first out for South Dakota, Nebraska, and this side of Wyoming. We can be there in four or five hours.

**H.Thompson:** Are those still a three shift team? If you can't catch it in three shifts, they are replaced by a higher team?

**Lowe:** I've been in this business for 36 years, and what happens is, you can tell right away if it's going to take off. In 2002, you knew right away that the fire in Deadwood was going to be a Type 1 fire. Regardless you do battle till the relief team comes in.

**Jaeger:** For your information two of the Type 2 Incident Commanders are in this room right now.

**Kohlbrand:** I appreciate what the Black Hills does to help us out.

**Rowe:** I just want to say thank you all and God bless you.

**Pechota:** Thanks for having me. I have the pleasure of serving as Fire Management Officer for the Black Hills; I am also an Incident Commander for a Rocky Mountain area Type Two Team.

I'll be talking about preparedness today, and I will give you an overview of another program area, and that is fuels management; which is just as important as preparedness.

PowerPoint presentation Summary: The Black Hills is a fire dependent environment; Pine forests need regular treatments to thin trees and reduce fuels; opportunity for biomass utilization; interagency fire fighting resources are ready.

**Heinert:** Any further questions?

**Darren Clabo:** I am the South Dakota Fire Meteorologist, Predictive Services; I'm also the incident meteorologist for Joe Lowe's Team.

PowerPoint presentation Summary: Above average moisture over the winter months combined with a prediction for average temperatures and precipitation amounts through September result in a forecast of an *average to below average* fire season in terms of number of fires and acreage burned **within SD**. It should be noted that this discussion covers climate conditions on average over the fire season. However, the fire potential can still increase in locales on the short-term if hot/dry conditions persist. **Drought conditions expected to persist and spread over the south** Including Colorado.

**Heinert:** Any further questions? If not, we'll break for 10 minutes (3:22), reconvene 3:30. We're Back in session, coming back to the travel management topic.

## **Travel Management Implementation**

**O’Byrne:** Thanks for inviting me back; I the one that hauled you all up to Spearfish a couple of months ago to talk about winter recreation.

We’ve been coordinating with the State snowmobile trails folks for years. Based on the outbreak of the bark beetle, we’ve been coordinating with them on our urgent removal timber sales. Coordination has really had to increase on the Northern Hills, because a lot of those sale units are on snowmobile trails. We are working the South Dakota Snowmobile Association, the State and industry to try to forecast what might happen next season. If there are any areas that we see conflicts we look in the summer for places that we can re-route the trails. Bonnie and Shannon (with the State), and industry can point to some areas for re-routes, and it has been very successful, we’ve never had to shut a trail down.

Timber sales have been sold around Cheyenne Crossing on the Northern Hills, and they are all urgent removal.

There are two main trails where the most urgent removal is located. These are the trails we’ll have to look at this summer to see if we can re-route. There are multiple sales that will all have to use that road to haul out. This will be our big effort this summer, working with the State to figure out how we can avoid shutting the trail down.

Another challenge is that if the timber sale gets snowed out, we can’t just open up the trails if we don’t have them mapped and signed. In addition, this year we looked at sales that we think are going to sell where they might be operating, in the next snowmobile system.

**Heinert:** Are there any questions?

**Brannan:** How wide is that urgent removal area that you are showing in pink on the map?

**O’Byrne:** It’s probably about 40 to 50,000 acres.

**Blair:** What’s at the bottom of that area?

**O’Byrne:** Rochford and Deerfield.

## **Partnership Strategy – Subcommittee Report**

**Willems:** Greetings, the Subcommittee met on April 27, which was the second meeting. At the April 27 meeting, I presented a nine page draft of a plan to enhance our partnership strategy. During that meeting we talked about the purpose of the partnership strategy, and it was about building and maintaining more emphasis and focus on the purpose of having a partnership strategy. This reminded all of the Subcommittee members why the Subcommittee is important. We have to build and maintain those successful partnerships and volunteer programs the FS currently has.

When we are talking about building together, we are looking at the local communities; cities, towns, counties, organizations and businesses. There are other stake holders such as permittees and private individuals as well. It was the consensus of the group that we want to focus and

emphasize the Black Hills and those stake holders in our strategy.

The bottom line is, they wanted me to go back and revise the strategy with a more local flavor, and we are in the process of doing that. I will try to schedule another meeting. I'm going to forward out the latest revision, have the Subcommittee send back the comments, and we will attempt, before the June NFAB meeting, to finalize our input the Board, in the format of a report with recommendations and the rationale behind our recommendations.

**Scherrer:** Did I hear you say that this can be done by e-mail rather than a face to face meeting? You have the outline, why could you not get the input and have it done by e-mail?

**Willems:** We can.

**Smith:** I agree.

**Heinert:** Craig tells me that Bill Kohlbrand has a presentation.

**Kohlbrand:** We've been in the middle of this beetle mania for the last couple of years, and we've been doing so many meetings, and we find that some people don't know what a bug tree looks like. I've brought my bug collection with me as well as a couple of beetle infested logs.

**Scherrer:** Do the Ips beetle attack small trees?

**Kohlbrand:** Typically yes, they'll breed four to six generations over the summer; they are bad during drought years. This log is the first generation of the Ips. There are three to five females to the male. They attack the tops of the tree, the Epps is capable of taking the whole tree, but they start at the top.

**Brannan:** So that's the difference between bark beetle and Ips?

**Kohlbrand:** The color is an indication too, if you see faders now, it's pine beetle, if you see brown in December, it's probably Ips.

**Bobzien:** Ranger Kozel attended a meeting of Bills, and said that the way that Bill presented the information was as good as it gets. It was all about your professional way, and the way you assist people in Wyoming, and the way you identify the best ways to improve "cut and chunk" practices. Thank you Bill, and thank you for sharing this with us today.

### **Public Comments**

**Chairman Heinert:** That concludes all of the agenda items, is there anyone present that would like to address the Board?

**Norma Cramer:** Aviation historian, I was dismayed to hear the report on the Stratobowl. I think it is important that the public be made more aware. In 1934 a hydrogen balloon was sent up to take photos of the earth. That flight ended in an explosion. In 1935 they launched explorer two, the public was to observe it on the rim of the Stratobowl. It was a big deal; dance floors were constructed, so the public could come see it. It put South Dakota on the aviation map. That attempt ended in failure. They did do a successful second launch to the edge of

space. The Government used the Stratobowl to take people up in open gondolas to test space suits. Steve Faucet made his first attempt at an around the world trip from the Stratobowl.

The land at the bottom is privately owned, but in the 1950s, Governor Joe Foss put a marker on the rim above. In 2004, Ed Yost erected large granite markers detailing the various attempts. The road has been blocked since the early 1980s so you have to park your car and hike in. I think it is ill conceived to not pursue this landmark.

**Heinert:** Thank you for your informative comments.

**Scherrer:** What would your solution be rather than saying that it's ill conceived; what would you have the Forest Service do. What steps would you recommend, and how can you and others that have this interest help? Is there anything we can do to raise the awareness?

**Cramer:** When they do the historic landmark designation, they could only mention the Forest Service controlled land, so the private landowners will not object, and so that people do not go down to the bottom. You would need to develop a group of people that would be caretakers of that site. I know of no local organization that could do that. When Ed Yost developed the markers, he envisioned another tourist trap in the Black Hills, and that is not practical. There is one plaque in place, and the other markers are there. To just say that land is a National Historic Landmark would really be all that would need to be done. An organization would have to promote it.

**Scherrer:** I would encourage you to apply some effort to put together a document and submit it to Bob Thompson and Craig Bobzien, and Chairman Heinert for that matter. It's difficult to get my arms around it without a plan of action. Outline the issue, what the trouble is and what you would like to be done.

**B.Thompson:** The designation is through the NPS, they are the ones that develop the proposal, so they actually put that together, and it is their determination. They informed us, but we didn't have a vote in it. The way their rules work, the private landowners decide. Thus far, we've maintained the historical significance of the area. It's not actionable for us.

**Scherrer:** I would address it to the NPS then.

**Heinert:** Thank you for your remarks, I appreciate them.

**H.Thompson:** At the last meeting we had a brief discussion over the planning rule, we acknowledged that this group is so diverse that we could not agree on a document of response, but we did vote to submit a letter with our recommendation that the comment period be extended. It is my understanding that Chief Tidwell denied that.

**Heinert:** I would like to read the meeting notes from the April regarding planning rule. (Twila provided copy of notes; the Chairman read the pertinent points).

**Bobzien:** I understand that there was a letter written, but that it did not make it to Tom Blair.

**H.Thompson:** The record should reflect that. We weren't the only people to ask for an extension, there were a lot of the congressional delegations that asked as well; Cynthia Lummis, and Kristie Noem and a whole page of other members of Congress. It will be a hot topic for

awhile, and it will be in the evaluation process for awhile. Will there be another draft on this or what do you anticipate? This thing was a mess, a horrendous document. People of both sides of the multiple use aisle, found fault.

**Bobzien:** I don't know if there will be another chance to comment. Normally there is just the taking of comment leading to a decision, but that's not saying that based on information they have received, that there might be another opportunity to comment.

**Smith:** The recommendation was made but somehow in the shuffle the letter didn't get sent out, so therefore this Board is not up the line on a position. That looks to me like an opportunity, I agree with Hugh and others. One of the few points of agreement is that the draft rule is a gigantic monstrosity that doesn't get at what we want. You cannot make something workable out of a draft that is fundamentally flawed. I wish they would pull it back and start over. I move that we recommend that if it's wrong we start over.

**Scherrer:** We no longer have a quorum to make a motion.

**Heinert:** Are we saying that we have missed the opportunity to submit the letter to request the extension?

**H.Thompson:** I think that what Nels is saying is that we ask for another chance to comment. This affects the future management of the Forest Service. We should have spoke up earlier, but we lost our chance due to an electronic screw up of some kind. I would second Nels' motion that it be withdrawn and overhauled and we send the letter.

**Heinert:** The point of order that Mr. Scherrer makes is that we don't have a quorum.

**Brannan:** There was no deadline in the minutes about submitting that letter. We get postmarked letters that are past due, but we follow thru with the letter, even though the deadline has passed. We won't have legal standing, but we could send the letter now so that we are on the record.

**Heinert:** If the Board wished to revisit this and consider Nels' motion, we could do that when we have a quorum.

**Blair:** The letter was only asking for an extension. All we are doing is correcting the error.

**Heinert:** Can we go ahead and get the letter requesting an extension sent?

**Bobzien:** Yes

**Heinert:** Then let's have that letter drafted.

**Scherrer:** I urge the Forest Service to execute on this. It does not look good when we ask you to do something and it doesn't happen. For you guys now to execute on it is a good thing for your credibility and ours. I strongly support you Mr. Chairman, to get this letter under your pen in a timely manner.

**Bobzien:** The letter was done and sent to Tom Blair on April 22, 2011.

**Scherrer:** We just need to make sure it gets fixed.

**Heinert:** Any other comments?

**Smith:** Food for thought when we convene this meeting, Bob showed us two ways out. A former Board member with emergency services, said he won't send fire crews in because if they get trapped there's no way out, really urge on a long term or short term to look at that situation for public safety.

The other is when we get the bug infested timber cleared out, you'll have a lot of grass cover, and there is a provision to get grazing in there recognizing that it is transitory. But you really need to do that as your fist spark that comes from a cigarette, etc., won't be so likely to catch the grass on fire.

**Heinert:** Could I have a motion to adjourn the meeting? Motion made by Blair, second by Scherrer; meeting adjourned.

**Next Meeting:**

June 15, 2011