

National Forest Advisory Board (NFAB) Meeting

April 18, 2012

Mystic Ranger District

Members Present:

Chairman Jim Scherrer, Carson Engelskirger, Bill Kohlbrand, Sam Brannan, Suzanne Iudicello-Martley, Lon Carrier, Ev Hoyt, Jim Heinert, Becci Flanders-Paterson, Donovin Sprague, Hugh Thompson, Craig Tieszen, Jeff Vonk, Nels Smith

Members Absent:

Tom Blair

Forest Service Representatives:

Craig Bobzien, Dennis Jaeger, Steve Kozel, Dave Mertz, Katie Van-Alstyne, Todd Pechota Marie Curtin and Twila Morris

Others:

Approximately 15 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), Brad Otten (Noem – R, South Dakota).

Welcome:

Scherrer: We have a quorum; call the meeting to order at 1:04.

Scherrer: I would like to thank everyone for spending four hours of your time here today; providing expertise and advice. I would also like to thank the public for being here today.

Bobzien: I would like to say thanks to two people. Thank you Jim Heinert for the years you served as chairman; thank you for your leadership. Thank you Jim Scherrer for stepping up as our new Chairman for the National Forest Advisory Board (NFAB); we are looking forward to working with you. It's great to see all of the Board members, and members of the public here today, thank you for coming.

For those that are new to this office, the restrooms are out both of the side doors, as well as the exits.

Approve the Minutes:

Scherrer: Our first item of business is to approve the minutes. Do I have a motion to approve the minutes? Motion made by Engelskirger, second by Brannan. Is there any discussion?

Iudicello-Martley: I would like the minutes to reflect that the approval of the request for action on Sand Creek was not unanimous; I would like it noted that I did abstain.

Scherrer: Let the records reflect the correction to the vote; it was not unanimous, and that Suzanne abstained. Are there any other comments or corrections? If not, all in favor of approving the minutes with the correction say aye, opposed nay; motion passed.

Approve the Agenda:

Scherrer: Next item of business is to approve the agenda. Do I have a motion to approve the agenda? Motion made by Heinert, second by Hoyt. Is there any discussion?

Bobzien: Just one change, Dan Jiron our Regional Forester, will not be here today, he'll attend a future meeting.

Scherrer: Any other changes, hearing none, all in favor say aye, opposed nay; motion passed.

Housekeeping:

Scherrer: Cell phones will be turned off; if yours rings during the meeting, you will bring treats to the next meeting.

Comments to the Chair:

DFO Craig Bobzien: What are the two biggest natural forces that shape the forest? Fire and insects, so it's no coincidence that today's agenda includes the natural things that shape the forest. It is how we work with nature, and what values are important to us and the wildlife. I think about that sometimes, we don't just stumble on to the agenda; the agenda is well thought out, and we include topics that are important. I'm looking forward to today and all of the good discussions. As a side note, I did send out an optional request to the Congressional delegations for a legislative update on things that are happening, so that we can be in tune with what is important to us.

Meeting Protocols & Comments From the Chair:

Scherrer: First of all, I would like to say thank you to our ex-Chairman Jim Heinert for raising the bar on how these meetings are run. Jim has a lot of experience in running meetings, he's very professional, and I take my hat off to you Jim; having said that, I will try to maintain that level of integrity when running these meetings for the next few months. When you look at the By-Laws of our Charter, it outlines the way a meeting should be run, and it's just how Heinert ran the meetings. As Chairman, I will avoid commenting on issues, but if the issue is such that I just can't stand it, I will take my hat off as Chairman and speak representing dispersed recreation. A couple of other issues; before speaking, Board members are asked to be recognized by the Chairman before making comments or asking questions. Remarks should be addressed to the Chairman; motions will be restated before seconds and votes; and everyone on the Board will have an equal opportunity to present their position before voting takes place.

Legislative reports are very important and we'll establish a protocol that in the Hot Topics, we'll ask our Congressional delegation representative to come and present an update. Each representative will have three minutes to give their update; updates should relate to the Forest and forest issues; not campaigning, but what is helpful to the Board.

Another aspect of the meetings I want to touch on is the format for voting on issues. As I read through the Bylaws, I feel comfortable with consensus building and providing advice. I look back on my experience in the private sector, and I've always said private business is not a Democracy. But, I'll ask that as we have discussions and reach a point for advice, I want to go around the room and ask each person to summarize their position, and state why you believe as you do, in a minute or less. The purpose of that is so that each individual will be heard, and why they feel the way they do. Twila will be able to bullet point the "whys" in the notes. Then when the vote comes in, whether its four to twelve, nine to seven, whatever it is, we then, by virtue of the requirement of the Secretary, will be able to do a report that will record the vote and the reasons why we provided the advice that we did. We have the privilege of serving the citizens of our communities, in 16 areas of expertise. We owe the Forest Supervisor a solid good piece of advice. Not always will it be unanimous, but we want Craig to know why our advice is as it is, so that he can process it when making a decision. It doesn't take that long to go around the room and it will provide accountability on all of our positions.

On the issue of public input, I'll tell folks up front, if at all possible we will have an opportunity for public input at 4:45. There will be no public input during the meeting. Board members represent the citizens of the Black Hills, having said that there are a lot of people that sit here for four hours and may not get a chance to give their input. I encourage people who want to have input to provide the input to the representative of that interest prior to the meeting, preferably in writing. So if someone has a pressing issue, say that the Forest Service is closing a creek that provides you really good fishing, rather than sit there, and be angry if you don't get to speak at the end; get your information to Ev, call him on the phone, write it down, so that he can present it to the Board. The 16 people, who are here on this Board, represent everyone. If you feel we're not doing a good job, fill out the paperwork, apply for a position on the Board, and get involved.

I promise you that whenever there is prework to be done, we will get it to you a week before the meeting so that you have time to read it and process it just like that last meeting that worked so well.

Those are the ways that I like to operate and I'm confident that we'll have a good year.

Heinert: I do appreciate your comments, and clarifying the Boards representatives and the reason we sit at this table. I also appreciate your comments about how the public input should be viewed. I view this as a meeting of the Board and the public, not necessarily a public meeting with the Board. Thank you for your leadership.

Scherrer: Nothing is carved in stone, so we can make exceptions. If we happen to have an expert in the room and we need their input, we'll call on them.

Hot Topics

Legislative Updates

Scherrer: Chris, I see you first so I'll call on you. Chris is with Senator Tim Johnson's office. Chris also tells us that Tom had surgery and is recovering at home; tell him we're thinking about him and send our prayers; I know that surgery is difficult.

Chris Blair: My name is Chris Blair; I'm with Senator Johnson's office. I appreciate the opportunity to tell you what's happening on the federal delegation side. Here in the last couple of weeks, Senator Johnson has met with Chief Tidwell. The Senator raised several issues with him, and had good open dialog. Last week the Senator met with Craig and Dennis here in Rapid City, and discussed all of the Black Hills issues, including the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) project, the upcoming fire season; looking at potentially an above average year, and partnerships. I would like to thank the Forest Service for the Interagency Dispatch Center, and the great work and coordination that is going on there; it's already been tested, and is ready.

Senator Johnson was on the Appropriations Committee addressing the Forest Service (FS) budget for 2013. The President proposed a 4.86 billion dollar budget for 2013. They are trying to consolidate a number of programs, and with the FS budget, they are taking a hard look at the fire budget, with an expected busy fire season, air tankers that need to be replaced, etc. The President is also requesting authority for stewardship contracting.

The Senator is concerned with the 9th Circuit ruling prohibiting the injections to the FS on the CE rule; this will affect 90 current projects throughout the nation.

Hoyt: I began a discussion with Chris earlier, but my question is why our Congressional Delegation did not get together on the streamlining bill? When our own delegation is deadlocked it makes it easy for Congress to say, when you guys come together – come see us. Why the gridlock at the state level, and what did the Senator find wrong with the bill that he could not sign off on it.

Blair: The legislation in large part, Johnson agreed with. The good neighbor portion, the streamlining, etc., are all pieces that the Senator agrees with. It was the constitutionality of the piece of legislation that Tim was in disagreement with. Tim believes we can't exclude an entire branch of the government. The rest of it, he would agree with.

Hoyt: If that part were amended out, so you think the Senator would agree with it?

Blair: Yes, I think he would agree.

Smith: Why does the FS come under the Department of Interior?

Blair: USDA Forest Service budget does fall under the Department of Interior

Smith: Still don't know why that is, seems inconsistent.

Mark Haugen: I'm Mark Haugen and represent Senator John Thune. Chris mentioned a meeting with Chief Tidwell and John was at that meeting as well. Our biggest issue right now is the National Forest Emergency Response Act; H.R. 4331/S. 2277; which was introduced by Representative Noem and Senator Thune on April 19, 2012. The Senator has been to many meetings with groups such as the Save Our Black Hills Coalition, the Black Hills National Forest, and the Regional Foresters office in Denver, and he's heard that there is a problem trying to get through CEQ, and claiming an emergency here in the Black Hills. Senator Thune followed up on that and the answer was still no. So this bill grants the emergency delegation to the Black Hills, it allows the Secretary to grant at least one project in the state, and has a sunset of 10 years,

not ongoing and perpetual, 10 year expiration date. That triggers expedited procedures under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA). HFRA is mostly used in urban interface areas, but this will allow the HFRA process to be used Forest wide. This Act doesn't go around or skip NEPA, it simply speeds up NEPA.

Funding; that is always the number one priority for the Senator, and has been since he was in the House. We've now moved on to the next thing where we might be able to make progress. The plan is to include this process in the Farm Bill. The Ag Committee met this morning, and we hope to have a draft by this week. If the Democratic staff like the bill, but want it amended some, we are willing to tweak here and there to make it a better bill. Thank you.

Judicello-Martley: Could you explain how environmental analysis would be used on these projects if they are done as CEs because what that means under NEPA is that you don't have to do NEPA. You say it doesn't exclude NEPA.

Haugen: I believe it more relates to the length of the comment period. Craig may be able to address that further.

Judicello-Martley: I'll hold that question till we get to the discussion on MPB.

Brad Otten: Hello, my name is Brad Otten; I'm with Representative Noem's office. Thanks for the invitation to speak today. Mark did a good job on summarizing the bill. Thanks to Senator Thune's office and especially Mark, he did the heavy lifting on the press conference we had last week. I passed out a copy of the bill so you can look through it if you would like. On the House side, money is a concern, last month we talked about the million dollars that was rolled over to the FS. Noem will continue to look for funding. The Senate wants to include this in the Farm Bill, and the House side is gathering support. The House agrees that this bill gets us where we need to be. The only other bill we have is regarding Black Hills cemeteries. There are eight small cemeteries included in the bill; and the purpose of the bill is to turn them over to the local boards to manage; along with and addition two acres to provide for unmarked graves and expansion.

Hoyt: Brad, given the lack of unanimity in our own Congressional Delegation, when do you see this passing?

Otten: The plan is to attach it to the Farm Bill, but we may not have a Farm Bill this year, so I can't really say for sure.

Haugen: We see the Farm Bill as the best way of getting this through. Standalone bills are not very well received; maybe it's a 50-50 chance. This is not a messaging bill, it's been in the works for a long time, and there is a lot of support for it. It's not a show bill

Otten: This was being worked on as early as October and November; this was the next step after CEQ.

Scherrer: Thank you all for your updates, please keep us posted on anything that comes up and is of importance to the Board. You can send updates to me, and I'll forward them out to the Board. Thank you.

Regular Agenda

Election of Vice Chairman

Scherrer: As you recall, toward the end of the last meeting we held elections for a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson. At that time Tom Blair nominated Sam Brannan for Vice Chairperson. Sam chatted about her challenges to accept that nomination, she had to think about it. Sam in return then said that she would nominate Tom. The Board decided to table the election to give the Board time to think it over. There have been e-mails regarding Sams option to serve if nominated, and that is where we are today. I would ask for nominations for Vice Chairperson to serve from today through May of 2013.

Thompson: I would like to reaffirm the nomination of Sam Brannan to be our Vice Chairperson.

Engelskirger: I second that nomination.

Heinert: I move the nominations cease.

Smith: I second

Scherrer: All in favor of Sam Brannan as Vice Chairperson say aye. All opposed nay, unanimous vote for Sam.

Scherrer: Sam brings a lot of experience and expertise to the table. She will be able to carry forward, because remember 23 out of the 34 will be replaced next spring. We need to start talking to those who are interested in serving on the Board. We have invested a lot of time on this, and we don't want to see lost momentum. Sam, I know you'll carry forward, and I encourage folks to apply for the Board if they are interested.

Brannan: Thank you, but most importantly, my only hesitation is that I know that I'm an advisor to the Forest Supervisor, and we have to remember that and remember that our role is advice only. Thank you

Pine Beetle Response Project ~ Katie Van-Alstyne

Bobzien: Katie Van-Alstyne gave back ground last month to the Board on the Mountain Pine Beetle Response Project (MPRP). Katie is our Team Leader, and she and the rest of the Team are preparing a draft Environment Impact Statement (EIS). This is a large project that will serve the BHNF well, and also the FS. This is one we will be asking advice from the Board on, and we want this to be well thought out advice. We have also discussed forming a Subcommittee for this project.

Van-Alstyne: Thank you. It seems like just yesterday that I briefed you, but you were all looking a little more frazzled than today. We are in the final stages of putting together the draft EIS, fine tuning, etc., and it should be out this spring. Once it's out, the 45 day comment period starts. Looking at the notes, I see that there will be a Subcommittee from the Advisory Board reviewing the EIS.

Last month I ran through the whole process and told you that we had developed a third

alternative. With public comments we refined the preferred action, and we are now at 248,000 acres. Alternative C is addressing a landscape scale to address the MPB, to address Spearfish Canyon and the issue of roads. The EIS will be out this spring.

Scherrer: This spring, in April still?

Van-Alstyne: It will most likely be the first part of May since there are only two weeks left in April.

Scherrer: What do you see as a timeline for a report from our Subcommittee from this group? The Subcommittee will have to meet and come back to the full Board so that we could vote and approve the report. If I'm going to ask people to invest that much effort, I would like to know what that looks like.

Van-Alstyne: Once the draft is on the street there is 45 days to comment. With the Advisory Board itself, how you want to task your Team to get back with a report, I don't know if I can answer that.

Bobzien: It would be ideal to have the report within the 45 day comment period. We have flexibility to establish dates so that it could be after June. The review and advice from the Board is very important, so we would work at fashioning that so that it could be back to the Board by June 20th. We have some flex in that and we would factor that into the time line.

Scherrer: If it comes out the first of May, can it be in the hands of folks on the Subcommittee right away?

Van-Alstyne: Yes.

Scherrer: I took the time to call some folks, because I don't like to surprise folks. The best way to go about this is, I'll just ask you if you would be interested in serving on the Subcommittee. I didn't ask folks to agree on the phone, I wanted them to hear the presentation first.

The time frame is the first part of May, with work to be done and a report fairly sophisticated in terms of its availability and presentation, to the full Board, no later than the week before June 20th. If you look at it for the first time on June 20, it's not likely that we would be able to find consensus. We have no meeting in July and a field trip in August, so it's imperative that we have the report by June.

Tieszen: I would hate to have the timelines intentionally or artificially delayed because of acts required by this Board. We try to do things timely, want things done timely, and I had hoped that the report might be ready for the May meeting.

Scherrer: I need to have people serve and we need to come in with a report that the whole Board can agree on.

Vonk: With an early May release of the Draft EIS, you'll be within the 45 day period anyway. I don't think an extension is needed. We will have the May meeting to discuss the report, and comments will be due in June.

Scherrer: We are ready to discuss a Subcommittee. I spoke with Sam. Sam, would you be willing to serve on the Subcommittee?

Brannan: I would love to, and I look forward to working with Katie. We'll push hard the first two weeks of May so clear your calendars.

Smith: I would sure concur with the Subcommittee working to have a draft for the May meeting.

Scherrer: I spoke with Suzanne. Suzanne, would you be willing to serve on the Subcommittee?

Judicello-Martley: Yes I will.

Scherrer: I spoke with Ev. Ev, would you be willing to serve on the Subcommittee?

Hoyt: Yes I will.

Scherrer: I spoke with Hugh. Hugh, would you be willing to serve on the Subcommittee?

Thompson: Yes I would be interested in serving and I would like to ask Katie a question. Katie, did you mention Roadless when you were up front there?

Van-Alstyne: Not Roadless, roads.

Thompson: If the Roadless issue is not in their EIS, I don't know if I want to serve; but I will, and I'll tell you why Mr. Chairman; because it needs to be addressed; and pending our discussion today, we'll see where we go with it.

Scherrer: Part of what I want to see us do this year is bringing all the dissenting opinions to the table clearly and provide good advice. I appreciate it Hugh, because you have that expertise and advice.

Scherrer: Sam would you be willing to Chair the Subcommittee?

Brannan: Yes

Scherrer: I'll also be on the Subcommittee, but for assistance only.

[Members of the Subcommittee: Sam Brannan, Chairperson; Suzanne Martley, Ev Hoyt, Hugh Thompson and Jim Scherrer]

Smith: Is management or options for the Roadless area precluded as this is laid out?

Van-Alstyne: Basically when it comes down to incorporating Roadless into this project; Agency policy, the Forest Plan, etc., are all things that would slow this down. We considered but eliminated going into Roadless areas. If we want to do something in Roadless, it can be a standalone document. It's easier and quicker to do this separately.

Thompson: I can't believe Craig that you would agree with that approach.

Bobzien: I not only agree, but I made the decision. The Healthy Forest Restoration Act provides a provision where we may evaluate both sides. With the timeline, stakes and scale of this project, I decided not to include the treatment in Roadless.

Smith: This is a classic example of the process getting in way of the purpose. Craig had to be where he had to be. You have a huge need, and you have to be under a rock to not know that the MPB has been an issue on the BHNF for a decade. In order to get something done on an expedited high powered basis, we exclude one of the real hotspots, it's cross purpose. I hope everyone here will work on some kind of a solution, because you can't control a problem that spreads when you have an incubator in the middle, its biological reality.

Flanders-Patterson: I'm curious if there is any way, when considering Roadless, that you could have utilized hotshots, foot going crews, etc., and there by not losing the Roadless designation. Was that your worry, that you may lose the Roadless designation?

Scherrer: The issue of Sand creek Roadless is on the agenda today. I'll give some background so we're all up to speed on what we want to accomplish. At the last meeting, Hugh brought up a question and asked for action by the FS and asked us to vote on a motion. Hugh's motion reads: I do move that the Board encourages the Forest Service to seek approval to address the problem in the Sand Creek area. At any rate, during that meeting – you recall that there were some strong statements showing support for action by the FS in the Roadless area. If you gave me a test today about the rules of Roadless – I wouldn't pass. After the meeting I received some communication from Suzanne, and Suzanne said that if we provide advice to the FS, I would like us to be educated about our advice.

I know for myself and others that don't have the background in forestry, that a discussion and education in Roadless areas would be beneficial. I asked Suzanne what she proposes we do. Suzanne would like to spend some time hearing from the folks that would like to see no action in those areas. Suzanne said that someone needs to provide the input from both sides of the issue. I asked Carson to present the argument of doing work in the Roadless area, and Suzanne will present the argument of doing no work in the area. Today we'll hear from people on our Board who have expertise, on what they feel regarding the Roadless area. We'll learn and ask questions, and then in May, we have requested the FS to respond to Hugh's motion by reporting to us at our May meeting.

Steve Kozel will present his findings on the Roadless areas. We'll be in a position to understand things a little better – otherwise, we'll hear what the FS has to say, and think that's it – but I don't want us to do that. I want us to provide good advice even if it's with emotion, and tension, so at the end of the day, no matter what we do, I suspect we'll have a conclusion and action. I want us to provide good information based on knowledge, and then the FS can do what they want to with it. Today there will be discussion, but frankly the big discussion will be the next meeting. Does that answer your question Becci?

Flanders-Patterson: Yes, that answers it, and I will wait to hear the discussion.

Hoyt: I understand the process and believe we can provide educated advice, but we've introduced a 60 day delay to the MPBRP.

Scherrer: We told the FS that we would like a response in 60 days, so there is no delay

Hoyt: Our agendas need to be urgent and timely, and our response should be timely, and the Board should not introduce delays. There is another way we could education ourselves ahead of time, I hope we can do that regularly. I got the Roadless rule form Nancy Hilding. And there are questions as to what constitutes an exception. We've seen delays either caused by regulations that must be followed, or staffing, or funding delays; and we're frustrated by the delay and the deadlock in our Legislation.

Scherrer: Not only are we not delaying, but it will provide the Subcommittee additional education. We're not delaying, the folks on the Subcommittee will know a little bit more, and in May, when we meet, we'll be with in the 60 days.

Vonk: A concern that seems to bubble up as I listen to this discussion and it builds on what Ev was saying and what I thought I heard Hugh express, is that this Subcommittee is going to respond to an EIS on the MPR and in the EIS it is not going to consider the Roadless areas. So my question is how does the Subcommittee have the discussion and 30 days later have a report, when Roadless is being excluded in what the subcommittee is reviewing?

Scherrer: The Subcommittee is for Pine Beetle Response.

Vonk: I understand that, but the issues are related and hard to separate, and I know very little about the reasons that Craig had to make the decision he made to exclude Roadless form the EIS, but we're asking a Subcommittee, and then in May or June we're asking that Subcommittee to make comment directly to the response plan. How do we get it integrated, so we don't lose the opportunity with what the Subcommittee is assigned to do?

Brannan: I would rather solve the problems in the Middle East than try to solve this conversation! Categorically there is no way we can ignore the Roadless area. We are not going to get around it.

Scherrer: I see this Advisory Board as key to emphasizing your point. If at the end of the day, this Board hears the information, and hears that the beetles don't follow boundaries, and we understand the issues, but we as an Advisory Board say do it anyway – the Board has that ability. We are obligated to provide these folks with the advice that is as strong as we can come to consensus on, one way or the other. I don't see them as separate. I see the Sand Creek as a Roadless area; his motion is pretty clear, it encourages the FS to seek approval. I think that we are not delaying and by virtue of adding discussion we are lending credibility to the discussion.

Bobzien: We will discuss Sand Creek roles later, Steve will report next month. Part of this on the MPBRP; the BHNF is 1.3 million acres. We have three Roadless areas, Inyan Kara, Sand Creek, and Beaver Park. We have one wilderness, Black Elk. Those Roadless areas represent 1% of the BHNF, and Black Elk represents 1% of the BHNF. From my chair – those are the most controversial areas in the BHNF. Could it be in the MPB response, yes, but I had to make a choice, between a project that has 248,000 acres that is in urgent need, outside the areas of other

areas we have. I had to decide if I wanted to include these controversial areas considering what is at stake. Before my tenure, the lawsuit was here in Beaver Park, when I got here it (lawsuit) was Sand Creek, and recently it has been Norbeck. If you think about what it will take to get boots on the ground to do treatments on a huge area that is why I made the choice to exclude Roadless.

Scherrer: We'll have a lively discussion.

Let's take a 10 minute break – after the break, we'll go into the MPB Strategy, then I would like to switch and have the fire folks go before Sand Creek.

Black Hills Regional Mountain Pine Beetle Strategy

Scherrer: It's been pointed out that when I changed the agenda I should have asked for approval, but I didn't, so we'll go ahead with MPB all lands strategy, then fire, then Sand Creek; so with that DFO Bobzien and Bill Kohlbrand, you're up.

Bobzien: Thanks Mr. Chairman. Last month, there was discussion on the all lands strategy, as the notes reflected there were issues brought up. The Board gave the support to proceed forward but we had concern from land management agencies. With Carson, representing Industry, Dave Mertz, representing the Black Hills National Forest, Scott Guffey, representing the County, and Greg Josten representing the State we worked on the wording. Carson is the hub for the wording coming in from the state and others. We're very close to an agreeable version. I would like to ask Carson to add anything he would like. Also, we would like to request a progress report from Bill Kohlbrand, and others who have a report on boots on the ground.

Engelskirger: Since our last meeting, we've been in touch with the Governor's office from South Dakota, and settled on the language. We forwarded that to the Governor's office in Wyoming, and it seems like we are on board with Wyoming. We'll compile the final tweaks and distribute for signature. The Subcommittee will get back together and decide how we'll get signatures.

Hoyt: Carson, as you know the tune I'm playing today is the lack of solidarity between the Congressional Staffs; does there need to be Congressional input on this?

Engelskirger: We haven't submitted this to the Congressional Delegation. It's intended more for the stakeholders. We intend to give the Congressional Delegation a copy of the final, but as far as comments, we didn't ask.

Hoyt: In the interest of time you might not want to. Also, Doug Hofer had some concerns of the Department or the State that he expressed, have those concerns been resolved?

Vonk: Yes

Kohlbrand: We've been operating on a shoestring the last few years, this year the Wyoming Legislators came through with \$2 million. One million through the Emergency Insect Management program and one million from the general funds of the Wildlife Trust fund. It

required changes to put work on private and Federal Lands, but they got it done. The first million went to Crook and Weston Counties. Those grants were on a three day turn around. The Wildlife Trust Fund money is available statewide, but they really went to bat for north east Wyoming because we have an industry that we have to preserve, and we still have a chance in this battle. The state of SD has thrown money in and the FS has too. We are grateful to the FS for keeping us going. We're running a pilot project and we'll get 8000 trees cut this month. We'll be prepared to get into the fall season and be more aggressive.

Scherrer: Thank you Bill. The fire season outlook is next on the agenda. I'll turn it over to Todd Pechota who is the Fire Management Officer for the Black Hills National Forest, and the rest of the folks.

Fire Season Outlook for 2012

Bobzien: Welcome Dan McKemy, also welcome our new State Wildland Fire Officer Jay Esperance. Jay has worked here with our team while he was in Wyoming. Bill Kohlbrand, as part of preparedness, will give us an update. Last month when Brian Ferebee was here (Brian is our new Deputy Regional Forester for Resources) we looked at work on the ground, and there was that feel that we could have a long duration fire that could be skipping between snow banks and fuels; and just a week later, we had the Apple Fire. Before this meeting, I had a briefing and did fire preparedness for the year with the Tatanka Hot Shots. I learned that in this country, the number of years that have had average or slightly above average precipitation are in the minority. A huge area in the country is set up to have big fire seasons. We usually call this presentation the pre-season report, this year we're calling it the current season report.

Dan McKemy, South Dakota State Fire Weather Service

McKemy: My name is Dan McKemy; I'm filling for Darren Clabo.

PowerPoint Presentation & Discussion:

- Precipitation summary of past six years: Northern plains have been very wet, and it has been very dry in the south east.
- Average rain fall in the Black Hills is 21". Early 2000's were pretty dry, but we've been above normal the past few years.
- Past 12 Months: Around the Black Hills region in terms of yearly, it's been about average, but in the past six months, it has been quite different. 25-50% below average precipitation in the last six months. This does not include this past weekend's rain which will help.
- Last spring was really wet in the Black Hills; much of western SD was well above average last year. By September, the precipitation was below normal.
- Past three months have been very, very dry and warm.
- March was an extremely warm and dry month in SD; we only had 5-20% of our normal precipitation and anywhere from 6 to 12% above normal temperatures.
- Rapid City airport observations: Set many records in March. Recently we have had quite a bit of rain, 2.95" of rain in the past week.
- Warmest March on record for Rapid City, but also entire nation. 44.3 degrees was the old record for Rapid City, this year 47.6 degrees was the high temperature.

- Driest March on record for Rapid City. Recent rain has helped out significantly.
- Fuels: Copious moisture over the past four years has led to a large amount of fuel buildup, tall dead grass in most locations, and little green up so far this year. High number of red flag warnings. Little snow this year except in the Northern Hills
- Mountain snowpack; if you have an above average snowpack, you'll have a below average fire season. Most of the Rockies were above average last year, but quite a difference for this year, with below average snowpack.
- Soil moisture is another good indication for the fire season. Very very dry.
- US Drought Monitor indicates moderate drought in western South Dakota.
- What will 2012 bring? Spring is our wettest season here in the BH, and we will get rain this spring. In April we've already gotten 2".
- June, July, August precipitation during El Nino, we average 7" of rain. During La Nina years we see 6" of rain.
- Winter/Spring: La Nina tends to keep weather cool/moist, but not always, look at March, warm and dry.
- Summer: Forecasting for the La Nina to become neutral – which would be typical, turning to El Nina would be wetter and cooler.
- Official forecast, average to above average fire potential.

Hoyt: Dan I would like to compliment you on your presentation, I would say you are ready for Primetime!

Smith: What is the energy release data? I've never heard of that.

McKemy: How hot a fire would burn, so during the past few months they were off the charts.

Todd Pechota, Black Hills National Forest, Fire Management Officer

Pechota: Hello, I'm Todd Pechota, the FMO for the BHNF. I'll speak to you today about the BHNF 2012 fire and fuels program.

PowerPoint Presentation & Discussion:

- Fire is a natural part of ponderosa pine forests.
- 40,000 to 50,000 acres burned annually pre-settlement.
- Fire frequency, ~11 years in the southern hills, 40 years in the northern hills.
- In the last 30 years an average of 120 wildfires have covered 9709 acres per year.
- **Effects on the fire setting:**
 - Climate change, since 1986 we've had a 4X increase in the number of wildfires.
 - Overcrowded trees, prolific tree regeneration, and MPB
 - Fire suppression
 - Not enough noncommercial thinning
 - Estimated 450,000 – 700,000 acres in high/very high fire hazard
 - Development in the Wildland Urban interface (WUI)
 - In the WUI, fire suppression is more complex, costly and political. The priority is on property protection over natural resources.

- **What is being done?**
 - Vegetation treatment
 - Varied and more open spacing
 - About 77,000 acres of various treatments
 - Homeowners:
 - National Fire protection association www.nfpa.org.
 - Firewise principles. The single most important thing that people can do would be to go on to the website and embrace the principals of being responsible. If you live in the Black Hills you have to assume that at some time you may be affected by fire.
 - Every county has an approved wildfire protection plan, and that allows us to implement projects through HFRA.

- Resources available for 2012.
 - The Black Hills will have approximately 115 qualified firefighters, and 15 support personnel.
 - Other FS militia totaling approximately 230 personnel – these are people whose normal jobs are not fire.
 - 14 engines on this year, which is a reduction of 2 from FY 2011. These are both large engines and smaller engines.
 - Type I Helicopter, available from 6/15 – 9/12 – we host this one – it’s not always here.
 - Severn person Interagency Helitack Crew and Type III helicopter available from June 21 to September 18th. We own this one.
 - Interagency Hotshot Crew
 - Air tanker base located at the RC Regional airport.
 - Both large air tankers and single engine air tankers SEATS of the State of SD
 - Interagency dispatch center staffed yearlong provides single point ordering and coordination of firefighter equipment.

- 2012 Fire Season Preparedness
 - No single wildland fire agency can do the job alone
 - Strong interagency cooperation is critical to a successful fire suppression program. The interagency cooperation here is the best in the country.

- Conclusion:
 - The BH is a fire depended environment,
 - Pine forests need regular treatments to thin trees and reduce fuels,
 - Opportunity for biomass utilization,
 - Interagency fire fighting resources are ready.

Jay Esperance, Division Director, Wildland Fire Suppression Division

Esperance: Hello, my name is Jay Esperance, thank you for inviting me to speak today. I came to South Dakota in mid-February after retiring from a Fire and Aviation Staff Officer position with the Federal Government.

I won't go into great detail about the States operations; I've passed out a booklet that tells about the things the State of South Dakota is doing.

Interagency cooperation as Todd said is the key to success. This is the most professional and functional group that I've ever worked with, and I, like Todd, have worked in several different areas.

- Interagency Dispatch Center:
 - This group answers to an interagency Board of Directors. As a group we provide the direction for dispatch and how they will function.
- Coordination:
 - On all fires, there are different colored shirts, and different colored vehicles. Coordination optimizes the staffing, which also is a financial efficiency.
- Hierarchy:
 - Todd Pechota and I talk almost daily. The Duty Officers talk daily. I get a phone call every Monday morning from Marc Boche and Bill Ott of the Regional Office in Denver at 7:30 a.m.; just checking in for the week, and offering assistance in any way I might need. Never have I seen this.
- Craig Bobzien and Dennis Jaeger have an open line of communication with the Governor. Governor Daugaard has Craig on speed dial. They also talk with Secretary Bones on a regular basis.
- Cooperation/Coordination between the State and Federal. I'm really proud to be associated with this group.

Brannan: 1.3 million acres in the Black Hills, and 40-50,000 acres burned historically, pre settlement/pre Forest Service. 9,000 acres average per year. It's a fraction of what burned, and we're treating 1/% a year.

Pechota: 78,000 acres treated in 2011; that is not an average.

Hoyt: In addition to coordination and cooperation, the old challenges used to be communications. How are the radio communications these days?

Esperance: I'm still trying to figure that out. There are challenges, FCC challenges, and financial challenges. We are trying to work in the right direction.

Pechota: It's technology – constant state of change. FCC regulations are shrinking the frequencies that are available to us; and part of the catalyst for that is 9/11. We went from wide band analog to narrow band digital or analog. The most pressing issue is that not everyone has gotten the word that there has been a frequency change. We have had some minor hiccups in the past years, but it's not because we don't have the mechanisms, it's more of a technology thing. It costs a local fire department \$50.00 per radio to reconfigure the radio. That's a \$100,000 bill within the Black Hills for all of the VFDs. But yes we do have the ability to listen to both the state and federal radio communication.

Hoyt: So field units might not be able to communicate.

Kohlbrand: You can no longer just pick up the radio and use it; there's a whole learning curve involved.

Hoyt: So everyone has to be on Facebook?

Bill Kohlbrand, Wyoming State Forestry

Kohlbrand: Hello, I'm Bill Kohlbrand with Wyoming State Forestry. We have a little different system; we don't have a full time professional outfit over there. We rely on volunteers. Our initial attack in Crook and Weston County is volunteers, along with about three paid individuals. We have plenty of equipment, getting people on the equipment is the problem sometimes. We are in a new program that we can get good trucks, and we are trying to trade in some of the old engines. We are trying to get the numbers down, but the quality up.

Each County has 100+ fires a year, but we have cooperation between FS and the State of SD. Team C is always there for us. The guys up in Bearlodge are always there to help us out. The FS comes out and the County comes out and we do what we can. We don't have a lot of problems when things get rough. There's respect for each other – the young folks appreciate the old guys and the old guys appreciate the young guys.

Weston County came up with one of the first cross lines agreements, there's just one in the State of Wyoming. We also have the reciprocal fire agreement where we don't exchange funds for the first 24 hours. Things like that, the cooperation with the fire departments, and the FS, and we have fewer problems than most.

Scherrer: Any questions for Bill, Jay or Todd? Let's take a break till 3:45, then we'll have a discussion with two Board members on the Roadless issue.

Sand Creek Roadless Area Discussion

Scherrer: Today our goal is to have two of our Board members provide information about the Sand Creek Roadless Area. A month from today we will have a report from the Forest Service.

Judicello-Martley: I want to thank the Chairman for letting us do this. Last month when we voted on Hugh's motion I was not sure what was on the table. It felt like we were getting swept up in the moment, and I wanted to know more about this topic. A member of the public gave us some additional information during the public comments period late in the day, and so I asked our Chairman if we could talk about this at the April meeting.

I want to have a conversation with you about Roadless Areas and the perspective of national and local environmental organizations that come to this Board.

Why do national environmental organizations have a seat on the Board? I have been the alternate for Bob Paulson since about 2003. I am now the primary for representing a national environmental organization. I own a business here in Rapid City but my clients are on the three coasts. I am an environmental lawyer who works with environmental organizations in Washington, DC. When I applied for a position on the Board I applied as a lease holder. The Forest asked me to fill this vacancy instead. I am not paid by any environmental group. My clients are all ocean-going fishermen. One of my jobs is NEPA analysis. The reason we have a national environmental organization seat on the Board is because the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) says we have to. FACA specifies diversity and people from all points of view. This is a National Forest. This is our back yard. We are passionate about this Forest and we all bring a large commitment. This is public land, national land. In the years I worked

for the Alaska Department of Game, one of the complaints I heard was, "Why do we care about the concerns of people in other States or regions." The reason is that people from other States and regions will visit Alaska and they will visit the Black Hills National Forest. This is a place of wonderful biodiversity. FACA tells us we have to be balanced, and our Charter tells us we have to be balanced. I have always appreciated the willingness of the Board to listen to views that are in the minority. I appreciate that the Chairman will let all views be in the record, instead of just the vote.

So what do folks in the beltway, etc. think about the Roadless Rule? There were two versions of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, one under Clinton and one under Bush. It is the law of the land. The last litigation that held up implementation was filed in Wyoming and was decided in March 2012. The Forest Service uses the Roadless Rule provision to protect areas from road building, especially areas adjacent to protected status surrounding areas such as parks and wilderness. It has been called a "cornerstone of protection for Forests." You all are probably more familiar with the details of the Rule. There are exceptions in the Roadless Rule – treaty rights, catastrophes, etc.

Timber Cutting is prohibited in Inventoried Roadless Areas. There are some exceptions, and I am sure there will be lots of arguments about how they apply to Sand Creek and the beetle issue. But there are different sets of values that bring information to this topic. (MAP). We have very few Roadless areas in the Black Hills National Forest – only 7,000-9,000 acres total. These photographs indicate some of the values – an intermittent creek, pure water, important habitat for recreational fishing species, wildlife habitat, rare and uncommon plants. A lot of these values were laid out in the petition to request the Roadless Area designation. We are going to hear next month from Steve Kozel regarding plans to deal with beetles in the area. The idea of burning in the area has been challenged in court. The science is not overwhelming clear whether cutting and chunking, or burning, will be effective against beetles in ponderosa pine. There is a lot of information out there. I plan to get more educated before the May meeting, and look forward to having the conversation with you. In closing, I want to say that sitting in the seat that I occupy, I am going to ask that we are provided with alternative information, to bring in additional points of view. I am looking forward to Steve Kozel's presentation in May. And, I am requesting that all views, as we go around the table, become part of the record.

Engelskirger: Chairman Scherrer asked me to give a talk on the benefits of going into the Roadless Area, and whether we can go in to do something about the current epidemic we are seeing right now. I have two points. First, the Forest Service does have the authority to go into the Roadless Area, and second, the Forest Service should exercise this authority. We do not have a lot of acres of Roadless Areas in the Black Hills National Forest, but we should look nationally – almost 1/3 of all national forest lands are Roadless Areas. Roadless Areas have good soil, water and air. They are, quoting from the Roadless Rule: sources of public drinking water, diversity of plant and animals, traditional cultural properties, etc. (MAP).

RARE, 1972. National analysis for wilderness designation. This Roadless Area Review and Evaluation was thrown out in Court.

RARE II, 1977. This was a do-over of RARE I. It provided an inventory of Roadless areas. Individuals involved in the RARE II inventory were actually going with a map of the Forest and told to mark any areas that would qualify as Roadless areas and

wilderness. Some areas were expected to be released later, but none ever were. Several States tried legislation to settle the dispute, because they wanted to release some areas.

Wyoming Wilderness Bill, 1984. This legislation was intended to end the dispute. But it mostly muddied the water.

Forest Plan Revision, 1997. The Forest Plan Revision looked at Sand Creek for wilderness protection. Sand Creek was re-analyzed at that time.

2001 Roadless Rule – most recent. It is very vague and open to interpretation of some components. There is a prohibition on timber cutting, sale, etc. “Timber may not be cut, sold, or removed... except as in paragraph B.” Paragraph B states that a ...timber sale or removal of small timber is allowed if needed for one of the following reasons...to improve overall characteristics, to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition and structure, such as to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire effects...

Because of all the controversy over the Roadless rule, this was a statement from the Secretary of Agriculture stating that the Chief of the Forest Service has responsibility to answer. The Chief of the Forest Service declined, saying that the Secretary of Agriculture should be the point man. Therefore, all decisions have to go through the Secretary of Agriculture. There have been a number of projects that have occurred in Roadless Areas including: the Debug Timber Sale on the Umpqua National Forest; Orion North, on the Tongass National Forest; Smith’s Fort Timber Sale on the Uinta-Wasatch Cache National Forest; Hamm’s Fork Timber Sale on the Bridger Teton NF, and several more.

If you actually look at the Sand Creek Roadless Area you actually have four underlying management areas. The largest is the late-successional areas. There are approximately 8,000 areas in Roadless areas that need to be consistent with the Forest Plan. Forest wide there are some 24,000 acres of late successional. We have the unique big trees in this area, which is great, but they are the trees most susceptible to mountain pine beetle. We can treat this area with minimal invasive treatments.

Using some of the latest data, the 2010 bug flight which is the most current mapped flight we have, we delineated each brown spot of trees. All we could see was the brown spots, with a trend of 3 to 1 expansion. We estimated 3800 trees infested, or 56.1 acres in the Sand Creek Roadless Area. Peppering across the landscape often indicates the inflight of wind carrying beetles. Bugs are just dropping in and conditions are suitable. This is the 2010 dead trees. This area was analyzed under the Rattlesnake Project.

The Rattlesnake Project: The Green areas are commercial treatments that could potentially reduce susceptibility to mountain pine beetle. There is no treatment planned in Sand Creek, timber-wise. There is some burning planned in the Sand Creek areas. (MAP) Most of Sand Creek area and the surrounding areas are at high risk for fire.

Excerpt from the 1997 LRMP FEIS – Areas treated in Roadless Areas would reduce

We have two different levels of policy, national and local. The National policy is the Roadless Rule. The local policy is the Forest Plan. One cannot trump the other. Sand Creek emphasizes

late successional. The Forest Plan is a contract with the public. The Forest received thousands of comments from interested people, and these comments have been incorporated into the plan. This indicates it is not supposed to be a hands-off area.

The Roadless Area Conservation Rule allows some tree cutting. Objectives for a mountain pine beetle response within the Roadless Area Conservation Rule are to achieve forest plan objectives and reduce the potential for catastrophic fire. We could go in with hand crews to accomplish cut and chunk.

Flanders-Paterson: When I read the Federal Register notice, it says the cutting, sale or removal of generally smaller trees is allowed. My first question is, with only 8,000 acres of Roadless area, why would we go in and cut smaller diameter trees? Or are you not going for smaller diameter trees?

Engelskirger: If we did end up going in, we would want to go in and cut the infested trees, which would probably be trees with dbh of nine inches or bigger. We would probably cut some bigger trees. My interpretation is that if you are going in to treat for the mountain pine beetle, you would want to go for infested trees.

Flanders-Paterson: It would help prevent a major catastrophic event. But we have lots of areas that are potential areas for major catastrophic events. I would like to see Sand Creek maintain its Roadless Area designation, and would not want any actions that might affect the Roadless Area.

Engelskirger: We have a dynamic ecosystem here and this area is highly susceptible for beetle activity. I am all for preserving the big trees, but you have to cut out some to save the remainder. Right now the problem is small, and if we cut a few trees and do some prescribed burning, I think we have a chance to save some trees. I am not talking about industry going in there. This is not our deal. This area is a poster child for what could happen.

Flanders-Paterson: Do you think that by incorporating management of the Sand Creek Roadless Area, you would protect people and homes? Do you think this is a higher value area to protect? Is it higher value than other areas?

Engelskirger: Yes, just to the north you have homes, Spearfish and Sundance, approximately 9 miles away. You have the potential for a big fire to get going and make a run. The Sand Creek Roadless Area is not adjacent to a community, but remember that the Jasper Fire ran several miles in one day.

Brannan: Would Suzanne and Carson email us their PowerPoint Presentations so we can review them? This sounds like spot and take, similar to the 1970s approach of taking trees by hand. The edginess is more on commercial timber aspects in the area. Suzanne, there are 17 people in here, and we all feel that we are in the minority. We are all minorities and that is what is beautiful about this Board. That is what is great about this Board.

Engelskirger: Basically, cutting and chunking is a form of sanitation on site, no commercial products removed, hikers cutting trees and cutting them in to chunks. It is the one tool we have right now that does not require heavy equipment. It would keep the integrity of the Roadless Area, and if done right, it would have more than 90% effectiveness.

Thompson: Suzanne, this is a hold-over from the controversy when the Sand Creek area was nominated for a “Very Rare and Uncommon” designation by BCA and PHAS and was not selected by the Wyoming Committee. Carson, in your history, you neglected to say that the Sand Creek area was proposed as a Resource Natural Area in 2004, I think. Craig (Bobzien), you said that Sand Creek is an environmental magnet. We need to be professional. Your one slide of the waterfall is not in Sand Creek, but on private land.

The timber in the Sand Creek Area is not in the timber base for the Black Hills National Forest. The Forest is not counting on it to be harvested. There are some 25 miles of roads – two track roads and full bench cuts coming up onto the ridges. Homestake logged the area in the 1950s. I mentioned the possibility of using hand crews, Native American crews, or hot shot crews that could go in and spike out. They could set up a camp and keep them in there with the existing roads. It is remote and hard to get to. You would spend all your time getting there if you did not camp in there. I think we have got to look at it. If I had one spot on my lungs and I was told that it only comprised 1% of my lungs, I would still want to get it out of there before it compromised all of my lungs. Any effect on the fire setting is going to jeopardize success in the Roadless Area and the surround areas. I think the Forest has some responsibility for areas outside the boundaries of the National Forest, which are in ponderosa pine.

Hoyt: I wonder if Suzanne and Carson could compare and contrast the Black Elk Wilderness and the Sand Creek Roadless Area.

Judicello-Martley: Wilderness Areas and Inventoried Roadless Areas are not the same. They have some similar characteristics and values. I guess I understand the argument about the spot on the lungs. I get that. But I think that proponents of Roadless Areas and Wilderness Areas feel that there are some parts of public lands that we have said as a society, “This part of the public lands we are going to let function without intervention.” I know that is hard for many people to understand. We will let fires burn, we will not have timber sales. Wilderness is supposed to be the area that goes where nature takes it. This is a fire and insect driven ecosystem.

Engelskirger: When I compare and contrast Wilderness Areas and Roadless Areas, a few things come to mind. Wilderness is a place that is untrammled by man. In a Roadless Area you have the late successional forest, a living forest, and we have the opportunity to go in and protect it. In the Wilderness Area we have a dead forest. The late successional forest in the Wilderness has been reset. We do monitoring and have the potential to do something in the Roadless Area – minimal treatments like sanitation, prescribed burning. The Wilderness Area is hands-off. But we have an opportunity to preserve the late successional landscape.

Hoyt: I would ask again, what then responsibility do you see in the management of public lands to the adjacent landowners?

Judicello-Martley: That is where it gets very difficult. It gets difficult in the Black Hills because the Forest is so interlaced with people, communities, etc. The Hills are very exceptional – that is wonderful and exceptional. It is very hard when the entire Forest is crazy-quilted with private property and human life. I do not know how I am going to come down on that. I was in a conversation with a number of Forest Service folks who manage roads and build culverts, and I asked them, “How do you see this place in 2050?” Their vision was so sad, because they thought

that by 2050 the Black Hills was going to be managed completely like a municipal park, well-thinned, no commercial timber, pretty landscapes, manicured, like Central Park. I found that devastating to my spirit. Given the crazy-quilt nature of the landscape, I just do not know. I am looking forward to hearing from Steve Kozel next month. It is the toughest question.

Kohlbrand: I guess where I sit, sanitation is the first step. If we fail to do something right away you pretty much know where it is going to go. Take the first step and try to push the bugs back. Then you have 4-5 years to decide if you want to let nature take its course, or whether you want to try to preserve the late successional. You could then use prescribed burning or other tools. Sanitation now, would give us options later. This is just an initial step.

Tieszen: I appreciate both of you bringing this information today regarding the Sand Creek Roadless Area and its history. One of Suzanne's slides showed that the primary feature of Sand Creek that led to the Roadless designation was the large, old trees. I think we have to think about that. The natural course is that it is those trees that the beetles are going to kill. Then what? We have removed the major reason why it was designated to start with. If we stand by for a few years, will the big trees go away? It does not make a lot of sense.

Smith: Craig's remarks remind me of a story about a job interview. The applicant stated that most of his field work experience was gained in the Sahara Forest. The potential employer responded, "But, that's a desert!" The applicant responded, "Yes, now." (Laughter). I was one of the original members of this Board, and because of the broad base of this Board, we have the ability to bring a tremendous amount of expertise and to work towards a common end. If the majority, and usually we arrive at consensus, but if the majority comes to one position, there is direction in the Charter/Bylaws for a minority report to be produced. We have a danger here of the Rule becoming the end instead of the means to an end. The horrors of the Spanish Inquisition were done according to protocol. They followed the rules. Let's not go that far. It appears that we really do need to go into that area and treat the beetles. Do not rule out the possibility of modern equipment, the commercial harvest, going in there. This is going to be expensive. If we can get personnel, it is going to be dog-gone expensive, do not rule out commercial timber efforts. The Black Hills National Forest heals fast.

Scherrer: Suzanne and Carson, on behalf of the rest of the Board members, thank you for preparing this information and putting it out there and potentially taking hits from both sides. I think Senator Tieszen speaks for a lot of us. Is there any direction you will be taking before we meet in May? In May, the sub-committee will, hopefully, present a draft response regarding the Mountain Pine Beetle Response Project.

Bobzien: A couple of things. Thank you, Suzanne and Carson. That was a great overview by Board members who did some research and covered a lot of ground. Two things for clarity. Part of that is that the Black Hills National Forest has a lot of projects going on. Steve Kozel included the Sand Creek Roadless Area in the Rattlesnake Project, so there are some environmental findings for Sand Creek and the adjacent lands. Regarding the Mountain Pine Beetle Response Project, we did not include Roadless areas for reasons I mentioned earlier in the meeting. That does not mean that they could not be included in the future. The 248,000 acres we are analyzing are high-risk. Even the Mountain Pine Beetle Response Project does not include all areas where we are doing treatments. We have several large landscapes in the 30-50,000 acre size that we are working on at same time. We will give a summary of all activities

we are doing on the Forest in our Planning efforts. Again, thank you again for the great summaries, Suzanne and Carson.

Iudicello-Martley: When you do the long list of everything you are doing, would it be possible to indicate any areas that are being held up by rules, red-tape, environmental review, or roadblocks, so we can get a sense of the money vs. rules discussion? If there are pieces that are clearly being slowed down by that, could you indicate which they are?

Bobzien: Could you send me your specific questions, and I will try to answer the questions, and indicate concerns.

Flanders-Paterson: Are we representing new birds in the nest, “chirp, chirp, chirp,” and Craig Bobzien is taking it all in? I want to thank Craig for gathering us here and we are hoping to give you good solid advice.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Colin Paterson, The Norbeck Society

I have a question from Carson Engelskirger’s presentation. In the proposed treatment for the Rattlesnake Project, what is the time frame for treatment in the Rattlesnake area?

Steve Kozel stated that he would be able to more fully respond to that question when he addresses the Board in May. He will give a comprehensive review of what has been decided, and what is planned for the areas considered in the Rattlesnake Project. This response was agreeable to Mr. Paterson.

Linda Takarczyk, Manager of Rare Element Resources

Rare Element Resources will be holding two public meetings, April 30th in Sundance and May 1st in Upton (flyers were distributed), regarding the Bear Lodge Project.

Bob Burns

At the last meeting the question was asked “If the Sand Creek area were not a Roadless Area, would it be a priority area for treatment by the Forest Service.” The answer was no, this area would not be a priority. The Forest Service was asked how much they would need to protect all areas, and the answer was \$58 million. I would rather see them protect the Cook Lake area. The Sand Creek Roadless Area has become the forbidden fruit, and I think we have other areas we should focus on.

Nancy Hilding, Prairie Hills Audubon Society

The Prairie Hills Audubon Society has scheduled their 6th Annual Endangered Species Day, May 18th in Rapid City (flyers were distributed).

I have worked to protect the Sand Creek area since 1990. I did the original inventory for the Sierra Club proposal to designate the area. Sand Creek was included in RARE II – it was trading grounds. There were areas in the Rockies that people wanted, and they traded Sand Creek for areas in Rockies. South Dakota kept the Black Elk Wilderness and Beaver Park, but Wyoming released Sand Creek because they were focused on the Rockies. Sand Creek was released – 12,000 acres. It was logged. An Environmental Assessment indicated recommended logging in the late 1980s. In 1990, environmentalists saw which areas were slated for the Bull Hill timber sale. The Bull Hill Environmental Assessment was yanked by the Forest Supervisor. When the

Forest Service did the Forest Revision, it was supposed to see if Sand Creek qualified as a Wilderness Area and whether or not to designate it as a Wilderness Area. Environmental organizations nominated 9,000+ acres, and the Forest Service came back with fewer acres. The Forest Service has re-evaluated this. The two issues are: 1) whether or not it could be designated as wilderness; and 2) whether or not you want it to be wilderness. This is according to the current Forest Service Handbook. There is very little of the Black Hills National Forest that is Roadless: 1.1% in the Black Elk Wilderness. Beaver Park is designated as Wilderness but it has been logged. **Jim Scherrer** communicated that the allotted three minutes for comments were up, and requested that Ms. Hilding submit her comments in writing.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Next Meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2012.