

# BLACK HILLS NATIONAL FOREST NATIONAL FOREST ADVISORY BOARD SUMMARY OF MEETING

November 20, 2024

The Black Hills National Forest (BKNF) National Forest Advisory Board was convened at 1:00 P.M. on November 20, 2024, at the Mystic Ranger District, Rapid City, South Dakota. Shawn Cochran, BKNF Forest Supervisor, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) presided.

In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public from 1:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.

## Board members present:

Sarah Anderson  
Michael Gollhofer  
Rachel Nelson  
Travis Bies  
Ty Brown

Wayne Bunge  
Steve Vance  
Scott Kenner  
Scott Guffey  
Brian Barnes

Lori Brown  
Debra Black  
Brian Mueller  
Marcus Warnke  
Jeremy Dedic

For the record, it is noted that to avoid a conflict of interest, Board members absent themselves from the discussion and vote when the Board discusses applications from their respective institutions or in which a conflict of interest may occur. Members are asked to sign a statement to this effect. This does not apply to "en bloc" actions.

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## Staff of the USDA, Forest Service and the Black Hills NF present:

Shawn Cochran, Forest Supervisor \*  
Toni Strauss, Deputy Forest Supervisor  
Ralph Adam, Physical Resources Staff Officer  
Jason Virtue, Fire Staff Officer  
Matt Daily, Natural Resources Staff Officer  
Jim Gubbels, Mystic Ranger District Ranger  
Steve Kozel, Northern Hills District Ranger  
Patrick Champa, Bearlodge District Ranger  
Will Leininger, MYRD Timber Staff  
Ben Schumacher, MYRD Rec/Lands Staff

Brad Block, Acting Hell Canyon District Ranger  
Lochen Well, Mountain Planning Service Group (MPSG)  
Joanna Wilson (WO Rec Program Manager)  
Sam Snider (WO Rec Program Specialist)  
Todd Harbin (WO Rec Fee Program Manager)  
Amanda Loye (WO Rec Program Specialist)  
Scott Jacobson, Public Affairs Officer \*\*  
Beth Doten, Public Affairs Specialist  
Krista Landreneau, Executive Assistant

\* Designated Forest Officer (DFO)

\*\* Committee Coordinator

## **Congressional Staff present:**

Katie Neff (Representative Dusty Johnson – R, South Dakota)  
Mark Haugen (Senator John Thune – R, South Dakota)  
James Selchert (Senator Mike Rounds – R, South Dakota)  
Ally Garner (Senator Cynthia Lummis – R, Wyoming)  
Kylie Anderson (Senator John Barrasso – R, Wyoming)

## **Others present for all, or a portion of the meeting:**

Ben Wudtke (BHFPFA)	Ruth Esperance
Mary Zimmermann (Norbeck Society)	Sam Griner
Kate Shreves (Norbeck Society)	Randy Behr
Doug Shreves (Norbeck Society)	Kim Rapp
Seth Tupper (SD Searchlight)	Donald McLennen
Lee Strubinger (SDPB)	Don Bailey
Patty Brown (OHV)	Beth Burlchart
Dick Terry	Denise Grajo
Blaine Cook	Geralynn Kenner
David Mertz	

## **Welcome; Review and Approve Agenda; Review/Certify Previous Meeting Summary; Housekeeping; Comments from the Chair; Meeting Protocols**

Designated Federal Officer (DFO), Shawn Cochran called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. After introducing himself, he gave a brief welcome to both returning and new members of the Board. Quorum was established with all Board members present.

Chairperson Rachel Nelson presented overview of the agenda and initiated introduction of the Board members and what area of interest they represent.

Chairperson Rachel Nelson presented general housekeeping information and protocols.

## **Hot Topics**

### Legislative Updates – Federal

Katie Neff, Office of SD Representative Dusty Johnson.

- Many changes going on – Republican party is keeping control of the House.
  - No committee changes are expected.
- Farm Bill – One year extension at this point.
- Budget – Continuing Resolution (CR) for as long as possible.
- FEMA Director questioned.
- Meeting with FS Chief Randy Moore tomorrow.

Mark Haugen, Office of SD Senator John Thune.

- Senator Thune was selected as Senate Majority Leader effective in January 2025.
- Continuing constituent work.
- Senator will be in town next week.
- Addressing judicial nominees.
- Many changes going on – keeping control of the House.
  - No committee changes expected.
- Farm Bill – appears to be heading for a one-year extension.

Jim Selchert, Office of SD Senator Mike Rounds.

- Farm Bill and CR should take priority over judicial appointments.
- Anytime there is a new administration, there are 4000 new Presidential appointments with 1200 of those confirmed by the Senate.

Ally Garner, Office of WY Senator Cynthia Lummis.

- Sen Lummis is excited to work with the new administration.

Kylie Anderson, Office of WY Senator John Barrasso.

- Sen Barrasso will be assistant senate majority leader and is excited to work with the new administration.

### Legislative Updates – State

No updates from the State of South Dakota or the State of Wyoming.

### Forest Service Hot Topics – DFO Shawn Cochran and Toni Strauss

DFO Shawn Cochran covered Hot Topics.

- District Ranger position open in Hell Canyon; expect the hiring certificate shortly and hope to fill the position by January.
- LiDAR data analysis:
  - Nearing publication of the data.
  - Data quality of field plot data requested by State of Wyoming. Received audit results the other day and passed with flying colors – completing few minor recommended changes. Sending to SD and WY State Foresters within a few days.
  - Communication plan forthcoming. Once briefed to the FS Chief will then be released to the public.
  - The 7-10 TB of data should be released after the first of the year.
  - First layers/products should be available by Spring 2025.
  - Data set is of high degree of integrity and resolution (>80 pulses per meter).
  - Will be the only forest in the nation with this detailed of a data set.
- FPR will kick off shortly after we start getting the LiDAR data (to be included).

## REGULAR AGENDA

### GETTING TO KNOW THE COMMITTEE (NFAB Board Members):

Sarah Anderson (State, county, local-elected or appointed office, Wyoming)

- Serves with the Crook County Natural Resource District.
- Returning to the Board in her second consecutive term.
- Would like to help identify concerns and be at table with solutions.

Marcus Warnke (State Natural Resource Agency, South Dakota)

- SD State Forester – Forest Resource Mgmt from Missoula.
  - Has previous experience working in timber, hydrology, and forest health.
  - Started at the state in the middle of the pine beetle epidemic.
- This is his first term as a Board member.

Rachel Nelson (Economic Development)

- Works at Elevate Rapid City (formed from merger of the RC Chamber of Commerce and RC Economic Development).
- Returning Board member in her third consecutive term.
- Community involvement how the Forest interacts with Rec, industry, tourism, etc.

Travis Bies (Hold federal grazing permit or other land use permit)

- Five generations of permit holders and GFP Commissioner for SD
- Returning Board member in his second term.
- Spot at the table to make changes or move forward – the only way to stay involved is to get involved.

Debra Black (Dispersed Recreation)

- Chair of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Alliance and on the Board of Directors for the Black Hills Backcountry Horsemen.
- First time Board member.
- Would like a say in how the hills are managed with an eye to multi-use into the future.

Michael Gollier (Energy and mineral development)

- Mining Engineering degree from SDSMT.
  - Has been in industry for 38 years.
  - Currently works for Pete Lien and Sons.
- Returning Board member in his second term.

- Would like to bring experience and insight regarding mining in the Black Hills.

#### Wayne Bunge (Forest Products Industry)

- Strong history in his area of interest:
  - Family been in SD for over 100 years; graduated engineering from SDSMT.
  - Worked in the forest products for 41 years and have seen dramatic changes.
  - State Conservation commission for 15 years.
- Returning to the Board (served as an alternate back in 2016).
- Would like to bring collaboration and “find common ground” among the Board members.

#### Scott Guffey (State, county, local-elected or appointed office, SD or WY)

- Born and raised in Rapid City; Natural Resources Director for Pennington County for 26 years.
  - Sits as trustee on Sawyer Memorial Trust Board.
  - Regularly works collaboratively with Forest Service with sales, weeds, etc.
  - Family recreates in the Black Hills.
- Returning Board member in his second term.

#### Jeremy Dedic (State Natural Resource Agency, Wyoming)

- With WY State forestry for 17 yrs (full time forestry for 34 years).
- First time Board member.
- Looking to bring forester experience to the Board.
  - Industry is a tool to manage the Forest ecosystem (for all uses).

#### Ty Brown (Developed Recreation)

- Motorized Trail volunteer across the Forest.
  - Involved with the 4x4 community for the past five years.
- First time Board member.
- Would like to provide communities voice and be communication conduit between community and Forest.

#### Scott Kenner (Regionally recognized environmental organization)

- Born and raised in the area.
  - Civil and Environmental Engineering professor at SDSMT for the last 29 years with an emphasis in water resources.
- Returning Board member in his second term.
- Would like to represent the voice of the regionally environmental organizations. The three main areas of concern are:
  - Ecological sustainability of the forest.

- Land use practices and management that effect water supplies and water quality.
- Recreational vehicle usage

Brian Barnes (Nationally recognized sportsmen's group)

- Involved with SD Youth Hunting Adventures eighteen years.
  - Children are sixth generation South Dakotans – outdoors oriented.
- First time Board member.
- Goal is getting more people involved with the outdoors. Very exciting time where good sound forestry management will make a difference.

Brian Mueller (State, county, local-elected or appointed office, South Dakota)

- Pennington County Sheriff.
  - On Board of Directors for SD Sherriffs Association
  - Chair for the Committee for Tribal Relations for Western State Sheriffs.
- Work daily overlaps daily with the Forest Service: SAR, Multi-use, quality of life, etc.
- Recreate heavily with family in the Black Hills – multi-use.
- First time Board member.
- Excited to be on the board and able to make relationships better.

Steve Vance (Archaeological, cultural, and historical interests)

- Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) with the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.
- Second term on the NFAB Board but dealing with the BKNF for the past 17 years as the THPO.
  - Previously worked in law enforcement and as a teacher of Native American culture and history.
- Goal is to bring as much of the heritage/archeological concerns to the decision makers.
  - Concerns with access to LiDAR regarding looting.
  - Voice of reason: "What do we take vs what do we put back?"

Lori Brown (Nationally recognized environmental organization)

- Background in Range management – comes from a ranching family.
- Working with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for six years as a Watershed Manager.
  - Worked with state GFP and FS/BLM with management.
  - How import healthy lands are for healthy communities.
- First time Board member.
- Looking forward to being a part of how we work together.

### **Share information about the Recreation Enhancement Act (REA): Brad Block**

REA allows agencies to charge fees to help offset the costs of managing recreation sites.

Day use camping site usage is up – presently, we do not have sufficient resources to maintain the sites properly. Currently in the public comment phase through November 29<sup>th</sup> about Rec Fee increase. The Washington Office is here today to brief the Board about the process, roles, and the ask for the NFAB.

Introductions of the Recreation Fee Program Office Program members:

- Joanna Wilson
- Sam Snider
- Todd Harbin
- Amanda Loye

**FOREST RECREATION FEE PROPOSALS REVIEW (Amanda Loye, Recreation Specialist, USDA, Forest Service, Washington Office):**  
[Resource Advisory Committee FLREA 101](#)

Overview of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act and the role of the Recreation Resource Advisory Committee. REA requires reinvestment into the recreation program, public involvement for fee changes and RACs to provide recommendations.

Types of Fees:

- Standard Amenity Fee
- Expanded Amenity Fee
- Special Recreation Permits

Overview of fee restrictions or prohibitions. REA allows charging fees for extra services not usually provided.

Recreation Fee Proposals – required for any change to the fee program (increase, decrease, expand, eliminate, etc.)

Resource Advisory Committee recommendation required as a part of the process.

- Specifically to review proposed fee changes.
- Will receive a fee proposal packet prior to next meeting (Board members will have at least 30 days to review).
- Presentation at meeting.
- Will allow public comments.
- Final question opportunity.
- Will vote at the end of the meeting.

The Recreation Fee Proposal information is located on the Black Hills National Forest public website: [Black Hills National Forest - Home](#)

Once the public comment period ends, the WO will process all the comments provided and put together the information/proposal packets for the Board members (will receive at least 30 days).

The September 23, 2024, news release will be forwarded to the Board.

Discussion occurred covering the following topics:

- The Fee Authority has been extended every year for the past 10 years by Congress, so it is not anticipated to go away (also applies to NPS entrance fees).
- The Board will vote to make a recommendation to the Regional Forester (RF) who has final authority. If the RF decides to go against recommendation, it adds several steps including providing an explanation to the Secretary and House Sub-Committee. The Forest has never gone against a RAC recommendation yet.
- The visitor numbers have plateaued across the forest as well as the country.
- The law does have a process of getting some of payments transferred to the local entities (law enforcement, emergency services, etc.) through the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT).
- The fees at day use areas and campgrounds are collected in a fee collection box/tube (Iron Ranger). The proceeds are brought to the Collection Officer who will process the funds.
- Forest Recreation Management has an annual pass the Forest honors for the Day Use areas. The new concessionaire process is expected to go into effect in 2026 (The Forest will work through the options with the new contract.)

**NFAB – FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FACA): Scott Jacobson, Committee Coordinator, BKNF**

FACA requirements for the Board. Thank you for all your patience while we awaited the appointments. Please engage, ask questions, and actively communicate.

- This is an Advisory Board, not a governing board.
- Discretionary, not statutory.
- Requires our own charter.
  - Two-year approved by the Sec of Agriculture.
  - Current Charter Jan 2024 – Jan 2026.
- Members appointed by the Sec of Agriculture.
  - 16 Member committee – 16 different areas of interest – each person on the Board has constituents – you represent them.
  - Two-year terms – can serve three consecutive terms.

- Current Board members appointed September 17, 2024 – will serve until September 17, 2026.
- Meetings – every other month – generally third Wednesday – field tour in August (exact date TBD).
  - Must be published in the Federal Register 15 days prior (Agenda must be submitted 45-60 days prior to the next meeting).
  - Open to the public but NOT a public meeting.
  - Must have a quorum – 15 appointed so must have 8 members present.
  - Time permitting, the public may make comments at the end of the meeting – No Questions from the public.
    - Up to three minutes in duration.
    - Must relate to an agenda item.

#### Overview of the Charter

- Provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture through the Forest Supervisor.
- By-laws must be reviewed and approved by the Washington Office.
- Stipulates the role of the NFAB as the Forest's Recreation Resource Advisory Committee.
  - Implementation of fee changes.
- Defines the roles of the DFO, Chairperson, Coordinator.
- Alternates: The Washington Office removed alternates from the previous Charter. Previous NFAB wrote to Washington advocating reinstating alternates and were approved in August.
- Subcommittees only – working groups was removed.
- The two years the charter remains valid is based on the

#### Overview of the By-Laws

- Compensation – if a Board member lives more than 50 miles away, they can be reimbursed mileage (get with Scott Jacobson for the information/forms).
- Will begin the Board member outreach about one year out and submit to the Washington Office at least six months prior to expiration.
  - We need your help with the outreach.
- Termination of membership:
  - Secretary of Agriculture can terminate at will.
  - If the Board seat is of elected/appointed official and they are not re-elected, or the Board member no longer represents to group they were appointed to represent.
  - If the Board member no longer attends meetings; considered vacated.
- DFO calls the Board meetings and creates/approves the agendas.
- Chair can work with the DFO to establish priorities.

#### Discussion occurred covering the following topics:

- Board member vacancies and how to fill them: If there is an applicant, it will be sent directly to the Washington Office.

- Status of alternate member appointments: if approved we would need to outreach again (vetting forms are only valid for 6 months).

**FOREST PLAN REVISION UPDATE (Lochen Well, Mountain Planning Service Group): [Plan Revision, An Introduction to Land Management Planning](#)**

Lochen Well introduced herself and her role in the Black Hills NF Forest Plan Revision Process. She introduced the Land Management Planning and Concurrent Specialized Processes (since everyone is already at the table). Focused on requirements and the public engagement process as well as the recommendations pertaining to any designations.

MPSG is currently working on the Planning Stage and awaiting the outcomes of the LiDAR data collection to move forward.

Discussion occurred covering the following topics:

- The Cooperating Agency Meetings will be scheduled once there is an update. MPSG has been waiting for LiDAR to establish the baseline conditions.
- MPSG was able to work on some of the concurrent processes, putting the forest in a better position to move forward; several items are being set up before publishing the Federal Notice (which starts the two-year Planning period).

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The following members of the public submitted requests to make public comments:

Sam Griner – Declined to make a comment

Kim Rapp – Declined to make a comment

Norbeck Society: Mary Zimmerman (written submission) “The Norbeck Society is in support of the proposed fee increase for permits for the motorized trail system.

Congress cut funding to the Forest Service so there will be no seasonal work force for this year. This is a major concern for the Black Hills National Forest. Among other problems no trail rangers will be hired. OHV numbers are well above the forests ability to absorb their affects: the noise and dust, the increasing number of user-created trails and the damage to water ways, and wildlife and plant habitats.

We strongly recommend that congressional delegates and their staff contact and meet with Forest Service administrators here in the Black Hills to ask about the needs they will have in the absence of seasonals, particularly those in recreation given the demands of the Travel Management Program and the busy tourism season coming up.

The congressional delegates must find a way to fund seasonal work that is crucial to a smooth interface with visitors coming here, and we believe there is a fund that could be used if authorized.

If there are no Forest service employees to monitor the forest then OHV groups, who love their sport and the Black Hills, need to step up more: educate riders; have work days to repair damage; and help close down illegal trails. People out recreating in the forest need to report inappropriate behavior on the trails. Complaints about motorized use could be forwarded to OHV groups for mediation and education. Likewise, the proposed fee increase could help keep the system afloat, especially if it could support the very necessary seasonal positions.

The Black Hills National Forest is an important recreational resource for all to enjoy: OHV riders, bikers, hikers, horse riders, hunters, fishermen, botanists, birders, wildlife enthusiasts, campers, picnickers, and many others. The forest we love is going to need “all hands on deck” - all users acting with reciprocity to maintain a vibrant and safe forest and supporting the agency tasked with its care. The nominal proposed fee increase is entirely appropriate.”

Patty Brown (OHV) – She is a local OHV user and was involved with the Travel Management Plan since 2007. Off Road Riders is local club of several hundred riders that are involved, volunteer and promote responsible riding. They run the ongoing “Ride with Respect” campaign. While some fees are acceptable, the fee that increases the annual fee 100% is onerous and too much for the local dirt bike riders. Off Road Riders work tirelessly to have a fair increase to the fees.

Chairperson Rachel Nelson expressed thanks for everyone coming in and providing input.

## **DISCUSSION OF NEXT MEETING**

Next NFAB Board Meeting is scheduled for January 15, 2025, at the Mystic Ranger District office in Rapid City, SD.


Chairperson Rachel Nelson requested a motion to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn made by Travis Bies; Seconded by Marcus Warnke. Unanimous consent to adjourn.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 3:57 P.M.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

 01/15/2025  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Krista Landreneau  
Executive Assistant  
Black Hills National Forest

 01/15/2025  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rachel Nelson  
Chairperson  
Black Hills NF National Forest Advisory Board

These minutes will be formally considered by the Board at its next meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.