

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

January 17, 2024

The Black Hills National Forest (BKNF) National Forest Advisory Board was convened at 1:00 P.M. on January 17, 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 Gollither  
Scott Guffey

Alan Johnson  
Paul Pierson  
Geody VanDewater

Travis Bies  
Dick Terry  
Steve Vance

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 Black Hills NF present:

Shawn Cochran, Forest Supervisor \*  
Toni Strauss, Deputy Forest Supervisor  
Ralph Adam, Physical Resources Staff Officer  
Todd Butler, Customer Services Staff Officer  
Patrick Champa, Bearlodge District Ranger  
Jim Gubbels, Mystic Ranger District Ranger  
Rob Hoelscher, Hell Canyon District Ranger

Lou Conroy, Forest Plan Revision Lead  
Scott Jacobson, Public Affairs Officer \*\*  
Ben Schumacher, MYRD Rec Staff  
Will Leininger, MYRD TMA  
Madison Crawford, MYRD Botanist  
Michael Vogt, MYRD, FSR  
Krista Landreneau, Executive Assistant

\* Designated Forest Officer (DFO)

\*\* Committee Coordinator

## Congressional Staff present:

Mark Haugen (Senator John Thune – R, South Dakota)  
Adam Kaemingk (Senator Mike Rounds – R, South Dakota)

Katie Murray (Representative Dusty Johnson – R, South Dakota)  
Kylie Anderson (Senator John Barrasso – R, Wyoming)  
Ally Garner (Senator Cynthia Lummis – R, Wyoming)  
Trinity Lewis (Representative Harriet Hageman – R, Wyoming)

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

Patty Brown (Off-Road Riders Club)	Alice Allen (Back Country Horsemen)
Ty Brown	Sam Griner
Lori Brown	Ben Wudtke (BHFPA)
Don Baily	Chris Mueller
Jim Allen (Back Country Horsemen)	

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

Deputy Forest Supervisor Toni Strauss introduced the new Forest Supervisor (DFO) Shawn Cochran. DFO Shawn Cochran briefed the Board on his background in the Forest Service.

Vice-Chair Travis Bies called the meeting to order; still awaiting one more Board member for quorum but will get started with our Legislative Updates (ninth Board member joined virtually at 1:10pm.)

Deputy Forest Supervisor Toni Strauss presented general housekeeping information and protocols.

**Hot Topics**

Legislative Updates – Federal

Mark Haugen, Office of Senator John Thune:

- Continuing Resolution passed extending to March 1<sup>st</sup> for NDAA, Ag, and Energy.
  - All others extended through March 8.
  - NDAA is moving forward as well as most military promotions (below 4 star).
- Working on the Farm Bill but waiting on the final Budget.
  - Working on more timely crop programs.

Adam Kaemingk, Office of Senator Mike Rounds

- Worked on the CR this past week.
- Priority on the Farm Bill.
- Acting against Biden Administration allowing beef imports from Paraguay – setting up safety and food standard group.

- NAIV (National American Indian Veterans Organization) – efforts to get the Charter approved by Congress recognizing the organization (HQ @ Cheyenne River Sioux).

Katie Murray, Office of Rep Dusty Johnson.

- Working the same issues as the Senate.
- Priorities are the budget and the boarder.
- Trust in Congress Act – SEC (should members of Congress invest in stocks? Requires investments placed in blind trust until 180 days after last term).
- Will have a booth at the Stock Show next week.

Kylie Anderson, Office of Senator John Barrasso

- No Updates.

Ally Garner, Office of Senator Cynthia Lummis

- Led a Letter with Ron White (OR) to the General of SEC requesting information about why the agency had not implemented cyber best practices.
- Attended hearings on public awareness and solution to stop trafficking of Fentanyl.

Trinity Lewis, Office of Representative Harriet Hageman:

- Sponsoring two bills in Congress.
  - HR 1246 - Authorizes leases up to 99 yrs for lands held in trust for tribes – priority to guarantee hard infrastructure.
  - HR 5482 - Energy, Poverty Prevention and Accountability Act.
- Speaking out about SEC decision to list Natural Asset Companies on the exchange. She signed on to get the comment period extended and the rule was retracted by the SEC.
- Congresswoman in district for Town Halls.

Questions:

Sarah Anderson – Can anyone on either the SD or WY sides speak to the Old Growth Rule? Ally Garner – Cannot speak to it other than we are waiting to find out the guidelines regarding definitions and how to implement.

### Legislative Updates – State

No updates from State of South Dakota

Dick Terry, State of Wyoming:

- No updates.

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

DFO Shawn Cochran addressed the original Executive Order regarding Old Growth. Agency is still going through the review process and hopefully each Region and Forest will have a say in how this will be implemented.

Questions:

Dick Terry – The interactive map of the BKNF old growth showed very little old growth and some small areas of mature – do you know what the implications would be?

Shawn – We are taking a hard look at the information, and it is a little early to determine implications before we know what we will be asked.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

**OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLE (OHV) PERMIT FEES (Ralph Adam, Physical Resources Staff Officer, BBNF):** [https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd1161227.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd1161227.pdf)

The Board was given an overview of the process for adjusting the BKNF Recreation fees and the role the NFAB Board Members will play as the official Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC).

Questions:

Scott Guffey – You spoke of the “shoulder seasons” for the campgrounds – when is this? Ralph – some shoulder seasons extend into December and some through February (for ice fishing).

Scott Guffey – Would the road into Bear Gulch be maintained/plowed? Ralph - We would have to look at that. These fees are for the shoulder season only.

Steve Vance – The Forest has pointed out all the maintenance and why the fees needed to be increased and mentioned that you would look at what other Forests were doing – is what is in place for the Black Hills NF higher/lower/same range for fees? Ralph – we would be looking at the full range and see what they are offering and for what type of amenity. Steve – Suggest we look at higher/highest rates since we cannot go up to cover all the costs associated. Interest is increasing in the recreation opportunities in the future and costs will also increase.

**FOREST PLAN REVISION UPDATE (Lochen Wood, Mountain Planning Service Group)** [https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd1161311.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd1161311.pdf)

The Mountain Planning Team gave an overview of how we can work together going forward. There have been a couple shifts since the last meeting: more staff have onboarded. We do not know how the Old Growth Initiative will affect the Plan Revision Process but will probably be the least impacted and we want to make sure we incorporate everything.

- NFAB assistance will be requested to let us know of anything we may have overlooked.
- External Engagement:
  - Host topical meetings or special events.
  - Help at public meetings (set up, logistics, topic areas).
  - Communicate emerging issues.
  - Deconflict social issues.
- Planning process:
  - Serve on working groups or special teams.
  - Review products.
  - Provide information or data.
  - Regular meetings.
  - Provide recommendations to process, products, and tactics.
- Structure of how we would like to engage:
  - Would like to meet every two months.
  - Email list.
  - Additional meetings as needed (working groups, issue de-escalation, emerging topics).

#### Questions:

Scott Guffey – Comments have been received and now that Shawn is here, what is the next step? Lochen – with Forest Supervisor Shawn Cochran here there may be some shifts and adjustments. We are still on track to publish a Notice of Intent (NOI) and start a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We are thinking of April to start the Planning Process. We are shoring up our internal Inter-Disciplinary Team (IDT) members and building our project management tools and processes to be more linear.

Alan Johnson – I heard a request for the NFAB Board members to accept a role in this process and that the process is still being determined. I believe we need to have a formal process established so we as a board have a defined way to provide the input being requested – a well laid out/designed method to provide this input. Lochen – Thank you, I have some ideas and will bring more concrete processes and potential subcommittee topics for planning or particular interest areas.

Paul – Thanks for the update. I was wondering what you are working on regarding a public engagement plan and where it is at and what it looks like? Lochen – We are working on a formal public engagement strategy as well as a communications plan. The timing for when we issue it is still indeterminate, but we will send out to you between meetings so you can look it over.

Paul – When would we identify some of the “hot topics” and determine subcommittees? And as far as general topics, we can take on the broader topics as a whole Board.

Travis – We will definitely identify these topics and any potential committee members.

Ralph Adam provided a point of clarification from the Recreation Presentation: Changes to the standard fees for the Rec sites can also include sites in the State of Wyoming; the Trail Permit fees will ONLY apply to the South Dakota side – the State of Wyoming has a separate state-wide system to include 50” width.

Alan Johnson – Ralph mentioned that we could have a role for the NFAB early on for the Recreation fee determinations with their staff as they study the elements. I believe we should accept and provide a list of the names of those willing to take this on. Moved that the NFAB would like to make a motion to accept invitation involved with planning proposal for the recreation planning fees. Seconded by Paul Pierson. The Board unanimously approved.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Patty Brown – Member of and Former President of Off-Road Riders Club for the past 30 years and have been involved with the travel management planning process since 2005. I am here with OHV on the agenda. Some fees are Forest based and some are State based; my predecessor on the Board asked for budgets and accountability for the fees that we have never received. Transparency needed for the budget and why the fee increase has to happen. Some of the problems are outside the reach of what the Forest Service can do or take care of, so the fee increase will not help in those instances. Since so many UTVs are riding on roads, not trails. You have Forest Service roads and these come under the jurisdiction of license plating buy the State so it cannot be taken care of by the Forest. Thank you.

Sam Griner – Representing placer claim owners who are at the non-mechanized level – pick and shovel. Believe that small electric motors should not be qualified as mechanized. Looking forward to meeting and working with the new Forest Supervisor. Thank you.

Travis Bies – Thank you everyone for taking part in this forum and please feel free for the public to reach out to the Board member representing your area of interest.

## **DISCUSSION OF NEXT MEETING**

Next Meeting is scheduled for March at the Mystic Ranger District in Rapid City, SD. Actual date requires some deconfliction and we will get that out next week.

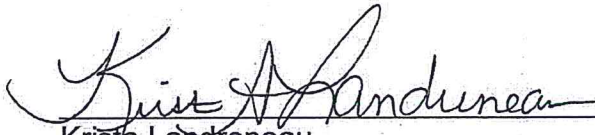
Vice-Chair Travis Bies requested a motion to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn made by Sarah Anderson; Seconded by Michael Gollither.  
Unanimous consent to approve.

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 P.M.

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



Krista Landreneau  
Executive Assistant  
Black Hills National Forest

3/20/2024



Travis Bies  
Vice Chairman  
Black Hills NF National Forest Advisory Board

3/20/2024

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.