

**National Forest Advisory Board (NFAB) Meeting**  
April 16, 2008 – 1:00 p.m.  
Forest Service Center, 8221 South Highway 16, Rapid City, SD

**Members Present:**

Tom Blair, Chairman; Hugh Thompson, Everett Hoyt, Bob Paulson, Becci Jo Rowe, Donovin Sprague, Mac McCracken, Pat McElgunn, Tom Troxel, Terry Mayes, and Bill Kohlbrand.

**Forest Service Representatives:**

Dennis Jaeger, Frank Carroll, Craig Kjar, Dave Thom, Steve Kozel, Rick Hudson, Twila Morris - Recorder.

**Others:**

Approximately five members of the public, and three congressional representatives; Chris Blair, Mark Haugen, and Rick Hanson, were in attendance.

**Members Absent:**

Jim Heinert, Jim Scherrer, Nancy Kile, Nels Smith, Doug Hofer

**Welcome and Roll Call:**

**Chair Blair:** Quorum present, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Welcome everyone; please turn off your cell phones. Thanks to Job Corps for the low calorie treats!

**Comments to the Chair:**

**Jaeger:** Welcome Bill Kohlbrand, State of Wyoming District Forester out of Newcastle. Bill is replacing Matt Hoobler as a primary member of the National Forest Advisory Board.

**Blair:** I have a letter from Matt Hoobler thanking us for the time and energy the Board shared with him. Bill Kohlbrand welcome. We also have Tom Troxel here who is replacing Aaron Everett, thank you Tom.

**Approve February Minutes:**

**Blair:** Are there any changes to the February minutes? Hearing no corrections, the minutes stand as reported.

**Approve Agenda**

**Blair:** Are there any changes to the agenda?

Motion to approve made by McCracken, motion second by McElgunn.

**Blair:** The agenda stands as presented.

**Housekeeping:**

**Carroll:** Directions around building given.

## Meeting Protocols – Issues:

### **Secretarial Appointments – Certificates, Travel Vouchers & Travel Claims, Member Directories**

**Blair:** The Regional Forester is now allowed to sign and approve the Secretarial Appointments certificates.

**Carroll:** For a year we have been waiting to see these certificates, we finally received them, and they were unsigned. We sent them to the Regional Forester in Denver for signature, and have them to hand out today.

**Jaeger:** Passed out certificates.

**Carroll:** There are a few certificates missing, we'll have those ready for the next meeting. This is the fifth year of meetings for the NFAB, our first meeting was April of 2003 at the Ramkota.

**Carroll:** You may claim your mileage charges, and if you meet the per diem rules, we would pay for lodging and meals. If it's just a matter of driving, you may be reimbursed for your mileage. If you are interested in being reimbursed, fill out the form (ASC Worksheet #01), and pass that to Twila today. Use form AD-616 to track your mileage charges, and submit those claims to Twila quarterly.

**Carroll:** One last item we have to pass out is the updated member directory. The Member Contact list is confidential and for members only.

## HOT TOPICS

### **Repatriation of American Indian Remains ~ Donovan Sprague**

**Chair Blair:** Thank you Frank. We'll move now to the Hot Topics.

**Carroll:** For generations, people have been finding interesting historical items in the garage, in their attic, etc., but now, as these generations change, people are bringing forward some items that they feel belong somewhere besides the garage. Under the Native American Graves & Registration Act (NAGRA), we have a duty to return Native American items, or remains to the appropriate place. There is a repatriation site set aside by the Black Hills National Forest (BHNF), for any tribe that has an aboriginal claim in the Black Hills (BH), to properly care for remains. Donovan, please tell us about your recent experience.

**Sprague:** We had three or four remains that were found in a cave a year ago, and those had been exploited and displayed in a museum and eventually they ended up back in the BH. Most recently, an anonymous individual came forward with some remains that ended up in the BH; the remains, it turns out were originally from Florida. The individual had used the remains for professional archaeological research.

The individual had read about the burial location on the BHNF, and the remains were brought to Donovan who is the Director of the Lakota non-profit organization First Nations Heritage. The remains have been in Donovan's care while consultation with the Tribes has taken place. Consultation took place with the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Miccosukee Tribe of Indiana, Seminole Nation of Florida, Muscogee Creek Indians, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Chickasaw Nation, and Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research. At this point, it has been decided to put the old American Indian remains in the care of Ryan Wheeler of the Bureau of Archaeological Research in Tallahassee in Florida.

There is a process of notifying the elders, and the Tribes in Florida have a great taboo against even talking about the subject or dealing with it at all. They have appointed non Indian people to handle it because it is such a sensitive matter. They would not discuss this on the phone. During the time Donovan had the remains, he was in Oklahoma a few times and worked with the Tribal Designation Officer.

Miami Florida is the location of a huge burial location which was occupied for centuries. One of the first burial locations was found in 1896 with the construction of Miami's first hotel. At that time 50 or 60 skeletons were removed. There is still land there that they would like to develop, but it is protected. The Miami circle is separated by grave sites with a hotel in the center. The remains are quite old.

**Carroll:** We just wanted to bring this forward to let the Board know that there is this activity in the BH. First Nations Heritage is Donovan's non-profit group that would handle this situation for anyone. Are there any questions?

**Hoyt:** Your remarks were related to remains, but I recently attended the gun show, and I saw a number of artifacts for sale. Are these subject to recovery?

**Sprague:** If they receive Federal funding they would have a Preservation Officer or a local Medicine Man who will look at them and declare if they are sacred or not. People are skeptical about it, but we had a Pipe Keeper who found ceremonial items that were in storage in Pierre, and they were repatriated.

**Carroll:** What if they are privately owned?

**Sprague:** Then there is nothing to protect them.

**Mayes:** They are protected if they leased or rented public land then, depending on how they got them.

**Sprague:** There is a movement to start giving these items back – even the Smithsonian has given things back.

### **ABC's Good Morning America, National Geographic, "The Drying of the West" ~ Frank Carroll**

**Carroll:** Last year at this time, the National Geographic came to the BH and started shooting a story that became "The Drying of The West"; the focus of the story became centered on fire. The Chief of Studio, Mark Thesian started out on the BH in June and the first photos were taken on the Four Mile fire in Custer State Park. The July issue of the National Geographic will feature the story.

At the end of May, ABC's Good Morning America (GMA) will be on the BH talking about the drought, the drying of the west, etc. Sam champion, GMA's weather man was with Rick cables in Denver discussing the same issues. In the morning of May 29<sup>th</sup> we will have a coordinated effort with State and Federal Agencies, and local organizations to have firefighters on hand for demonstrations of their equipment and job duties. In the afternoon there will be a practice fire, which GMA will tape. GMA will have a long format piece in the studios in New York on the morning of the 16<sup>th</sup> of June. Governor Rounds will have some things to say about fire and the State of South Dakota. We'll keep you posted on these things.

## **FLAME ~ Funding Firefighting ~ Dennis Jaeger**

**Jaeger:** I am passing out a copy of an article from the Casper Star Tribune that explains the FLAME bill. The bill would revamp federal funding for firefighting by creating a special program for catastrophic fires.

Last year we discussed a statement written by five retired Forest Service Chiefs, who have now joined to support the bill. Last year, the Forest Service spent \$741 million more than budgeted and Interior spent \$249 million more than budgeted for emergency wildfire suppression. Congress would have to approve the money for the fund each year. It would be separate from the regular budget for the agencies, which also is approved each year.

**Carroll:** Has anyone heard of this?

**Troxel:** There is supposed to be another bill offered that would be combined with this one.

**H. Thompson:** Herseth Sandlin sponsored both of them.

**Blair:** Are the bills in separate areas?

**Troxel:** Both bills are in the House, one with the House Agriculture Committee and one with the House Natural Resources Committee.

## **Biofuels and Race Cars ~ Frank Carroll**

**Carroll:** We received a message that came out of the State of South Dakota, Wildland Fire Suppression Division. The article was about corvettes being used as race cars, and that biofuels and cellulosic ethanol, produced from BHNF, was being used to fuel these corvette race cars. This took us by surprise; we were not interviewed for the article.

**Mayes:** I have recently seen two races and they talked about the ethanol that they were burning. There is another thing they are doing; they are racing some of these cars with diesel because they can use an alternative fuel. The race car industry is moving forward. Diesel burns clean in the motor and comes out clean.

**Blair:** Honda had a piece on one of the sports channels, and it was their Indy car level, which is almost exclusive motors by Honda, and they are all burning e85 or higher. They are going to almost totally ethanol rather than gasoline. It burns clean, but one of the draw backs is that it was very hot.

## **Jane Darnell ~ New Nebraska Nation Forest, Forest Supervisor ~ Dennis Jaeger**

**Jaeger:** Jane Darnell has been announced as the new Forest Supervisor on the Nebraska National Forest. Don Bright is moving on. Jane's report date is yet to be determined. Jane was the Forest Service & State of Wyoming Liaison; she has also been a District Ranger. Right now Jane is the Deputy Director of the BLM for the State of Wyoming. Jane will be a great asset.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **Recreation Facilities Analysis – REA & Public Involvement, Recreation Fee Hearings ~ Rick Hudson**

**Carroll:** Between the W.O., R.O. and Forests, the Forest Service has several emphasis areas. Healthy Forests, Travel Planning, and Range Recission for the BHNH. Emphasis areas for the R.O. are, Healthy Forests, Water, and Recreation; and for the W.O., Water, Kids in the Woods, and Climate.

Before Rick starts his presentation, we have a book for you called “Last Child in the Woods” by Richard Louv. It’s an interesting concept. He says that our children are losing touch with the Forest and we need to get them back in touch. We also have another book for you, which is a history of the west up to about 1802 called “One Vast Winter Count” by Colin G. Calloway. This is a part of our continuing education.

**Paulson:** This book dovetails with 1491.

**Carroll:** And one more thing for you is an “Atlas of Water Resources in South Dakota”.

**Carroll:** Recreation Facility Analysis is our next topic, and Rick Hudson will discuss this, and will give us a refresher on the Recreation Enhancement Act. The Act has come under fire; there are Delegations that would like to see this Act rescinded. The local Federal Delegation has told us that as long as folks are lined up and what we are working on and meeting the needs of other Agencies, etc., then it is still a viable tool. As Tom will talk about in the second part of today’s program, The Recreation Enhancement Act may be something you will discuss. Tom will lead the discussion on what Craig has asked the Task Group to do as far as business planning. The last piece of today’s agenda will be an outlook on the fire season in the BH.

**Hudson:** Thank you Mr. Chairman and Board, pleasure to be back here to visit with you.

Rick’s presentation generated the following discussion:

**McElgunn:** There is an effort on the part of the Rapid City Chamber with Southwest and Frontier Airlines to compile articles that are seven or eight pages long. They are running in the airline magazines. It has been well received, and the exposure is in the 100’s of thousands.

**Carroll:** The travel channel is running pieces on the Black Hills. Also Disney has named the Black Hills in the top fifty places to visit, the Black Hills being number 30.

**Hudson:** We now have a virtual tour of the scenic byway. There is a link on the Black Hills web page. It’s been up and running for a month, and has been well received. You can follow the route around the byway, and click on icons that will bring up special information.

**Blair:** What kinds of things are involved in the back log of deferred maintenance?

**Hudson:** Water systems are one of the biggest items, vault toilets that have out lived their time span, campsites that have worn away from use, roads, camping spurs, aging buildings.

**Blair:** Is part of it the large portion of the Forest Service budget that gets deferred to the fire fighting effort or other immediate concerns. In other words, is deferred maintenance way down on the list?

**Hudson:** As far as our recreation management and facility maintenance dollars it has remained fairly constant. But budgets are getting tighter, and as costs increase, the budget stays flat, so in that sense, funding is down.

**Blair:** There are obviously time frames to all these things. Pursuing partners has a limited geographic area – works well like in Custer State Park, but in areas such as the Moon area it is harder to attract partners; so when you get down to the process of decommissioning sites – is that a long term thing?

**Hudson:** Five to 15 years.

**Blair:** We're saying that in the next seven plus years, we want to eliminate the deferred maintenance, are some of these things that should have been done earlier?

**Hudson:** Yes, and that is why we have the back log because we weren't able to keep up with it. We believe it is viable. With our concession operation working well right now, we are holding our own. The goal is to eliminate the six million dollar backlog.

**Kohlbrand:** If you decommission the campground what is to keep people from continuing to use it?

**Hudson:** If we close it for environmental reasons, then there is no use permitted. Otherwise, as far as it being available for use, they can still use it – it's still public land. On this forest we haven't closed many areas. If we do close it and take out all the facilities, it's still open for dispersed use. In South Dakota and the BH the only place to have a fire is in a campground, so they may not use the decommissioned areas as much, because most campers do want a campfire.

**Paulson:** What is the status of Cascade Falls?

**Hudson:** That is an isolated day use site, and it's popular.

**Blair:** Is vandalism a major problem?

**Hudson:** My experience is that it is rare. It does happen, but it is rare. Not every year and not major.

**Carroll:** Bob, what about that swimming site?

**Paulson:** Four years ago, I was at Cascade Falls, and I counted over 300 people in the pool at the one time. The infrasturce is not there to support that kind of use. The Forest Service put concrete blocks down that were vandalized, they are all laying in the bottom of the pool now. This would be a great project for volunteers to clean up.

**McCracken:** Help me understand this, the concrete was disassembled and thrown into the pool?

**Paulson:** The blocks were not glued, so they were easily disassembled.

**Blair:** So vandals disassembled them, and threw them in the water.

**McCracken:** So how can you say vandalism is not a big problem?

**Hudson:** At the Cascade Falls site, yes it is a big problem, but as far as vandalism Forest wide, it is not.

**McCracken:** As far as services being removed from certain sites on the BH, do you plan to have meetings to gather public reactions so that the public doesn't find out about this by traveling to a site and finding out when they get there that there are no services?

**Mayes:** If you were to target a site, and advertise the problems associated with it, I wonder if there would be civic organizations, or other volunteer groups that would step up and help out?

**Hudson:** Yes, I believe there would be. Custer County is going to take over Hazelrod.

**H. Thompson:** In some areas such as Dug Out Gulch Trail Head, I wouldn't recommend pulling out structures that prevent ATVs from going in.

**Hudson:** I agree, we are talking about the sign, picnic table, and other items such as these.

**Blair:** With the number of law enforcement officers on the forest, we'll never be able to enforce it. Obviously the user that uses it correctly is the answer to the problem.

**McCracken:** There are a number of people that clean up Rapid Creek; there could be other efforts like that.

**Blair:** The ditches are also cleaned by groups.

**Mayes:** How often are road closure gates getting torn down?

**Kozel:** We have around 220 gates, and we haven't replaced a gate in five or six years. People do go around them, but as far as tearing them out, no. I want to echo what Rick is saying, I came from a Forest where closures and public facilities were heavily vandalized. People here take more pride in the Forest, and they do not vandalize nearly as much.

**Carroll:** I know of a situation coming up soon, where we will have six FPO's out at a site where vandalism has become a problem, the goal will be to bring an end to it before it gets worse. We have more help than just the LEO's, and we have more resources.

**Hoyt:** I was a first time elk hunter last fall and almost without exception, particularly on trails that were supposed to be closed, the little brown trail markers were broken off and laying there. The gates were ok, but 90 percent of the signs had been destroyed.

**Rowe:** In piedmont the gates have been destroyed almost beyond recognition.

**Hoyt:** I am interested in knowing what the budget is for this program, and to what extent to you receive funding from SD Game, Fish, and Parks, for such projects as Roubaix.

**Hudson:** SD Game, Fish, and Parks are a partner of ours. We receive \$200,000 annually to operate the recreation facilities. It is enough because we have a recreation concessionaire.

**Hoyt:** There was a GF&P hearing in Custer last year concerning the rates to be charged by the State for camping in the park. The concessionaire for the Forest also operates privately owned facilities that raise the potential for a conflict of interest.

**Hudson:** We have a national reservation system. Some of the partners in the concessionaire business own other business ventures, but the customers that they cater to are different than the customers that come to the BHNF. Our sites are primitive.

**Blair:** That was the discussion in Custer; they were removing sites from primitive and upgrading to other services, which then became the discussion of charges. Right now GF&P almost exclusively takes reservations through BH Central Reservations In Deadwood.

**Hudson:** The Forest Service, Park Service, and Corp of Engineers all use a nationwide reservation service.

**Blair:** That was the argument, the other agencies were moving into another area. There are some who will be looking for primitive, but that was changing. This is an issue that the private entities look at very closely. When you start using federal tax dollars to be in competition with private businesses, it gets questionable. Camping is an issue that is on the move. As baby boomers retire, we're looking at 12 to 16% increase in use.

**Hudson:** We would take out half of the campgrounds and put in one large site if we were going to do what was actually the most cost efficient. Most of ours are small and isolated.

**Carroll:** For about 60 days we'll be doing public involvement with meetings and getting input on these issues, so that if people do want to partner, or cooperate, if communities want to step in, there will be a long comment period to surface these before we move on with implementation.

**Paulson:** Are there meetings scheduled?

**Hudson:** Not yet, the NFAB is the first stop.

**Carroll:** Let us know if you have comments or suggestions.

**Blair:** 10 minute break.

### **Recreation Enhancement Act:**

**Hudson:** This is a 10 year authority that allows the Forest Service to retain fees from special permits such as outfitter guides (44 outfitter guides on this Forest), Recreation Event special use permits, sales of Christmas tree permits, forest operated campgrounds and rental cabins. The Act requires a majority of revenue be reinvested in fee sites. This act merges current nation wide interagency passes into one pass called the "America the Beautiful".

This Act is an important revenue source for the Forest. Not a huge amount of money but every little bit helps. Current collections are \$80,000.

**Carroll:** The NFAB for the BH is the Recreation Resource Advisory Committee, so if the Forest Service has an idea for a fee, the NFAB would be consulted before we would move forward with the fee. After the Boards input we would get public input.

**Hoyt:** If there were a proposal for a fee on a trail system, it would come first to this group?

**Hudson:** Yes, or if we wanted to set up a fee for anything else we might offer, we would come to the Board first.

**Carroll:** All other Federal agencies in the BH use the BLM RRAC.

**Hudson:** We operate five campgrounds and one cabin, Beaver Creek, Moon, Redbank, Castle Peak, and Black Fox Camp Grounds, and Summit Ridge Cabin.

**Blair:** We're just starting into a fee structure for the OHV, and would these fees be included in REA?



**Hudson:** The money would all be under REA.

**Paulson:** Size wise how does this Forest rank with the rest of the Forests?

**Hudson:** We're probably average.

**Carroll:** I would say we are probably in the lower third.

**Paulson:** We are probably more intensely used per acre.

**Blair:** We are also fragmented – if someone uses the park, is that counted.

**Hudson:** The people that were leaving the Forest were counted.

**H. Thompson:** Have you been able to capture any monetary value out of the stewardship contracting. You should look at that as a source of funding.

**Hudson:** I don't believe we have.

**Hoyt:** Are those KV dollars?

**H. Thompson:** No, they are dollars that come from the products removed that can be spent on trail heads, etc. this money can be paid in lieu of paying the Forest Service for the product.

**Kozel:** The stewardship authority does allow us to mix and match but the money can not be used for Forest Service employee salaries, it has to be used in contracts. Typically what we have done is combine like activities together, such as timber sales, with fuel treatment. But yes it is available.

**Paulson:** How many recreation residence cabins do we have on the Black Hills?

**Hudson:** We have 159 recreation residence cabins on the BH. The fees from recreation residences go to treasury.

**Blair:** Who maintains the cabins?

**Hudson:** The cabin owner, they pay a fee to have the cabin on the Forest. Back in the 20's and 30's they had a program to allow recreation residences on the Forest. You can't use them as your year round residence, it's a weekend thing. The private owner owns the structure, and they pay us a fee. Nation wide there are about 14,000 recreation residences.

**Carroll:** The reason for this was to get people into the woods, and to have people experience the woods.

**Hudson:** The leases were issued in 20 year increments. But if you refuse to pay your fees or follow the guidelines, you would not be renewed.

**Paulson:** Deerfield trail bridges are being replaced, where is the money coming from?

**Hudson:** Appropriated dollars, that money is not the REA money.

**Blair:** Five minute break.

## **Travel Planning Task Group – Business Plan, Objectives ~ Chairman Blair & Frank Carroll**

**Blair:** The attempt to develop a cooperative agreement between the Forest Service and the State of South Dakota did not actually get off the ground even though we had six or seven task force meetings, and sent the recommendation to the Governor. We didn't think that we had much opposition except for within the donut. We have a mandate from the W.O. that we will develop a program and it will be properly funded. We developed recommendations that we sent on to Washington.

This Task Force is not a Task Force to revisit those recommendations; this Task force is to look at how to fund the program. I've asked Doug Hofer if he would be on the Task Force since Scott Carbonneau is no longer available.

We need to look at setting up a budget, and what we would do with the money. We know what the numbers are for new vehicles, and the number of users. When we were talking with the State of South Dakota, some things fit well, other things did not because we were changing the way ATV's were taxed, from maybe sales tax to excise tax, and that would take a chunk of money out of the sales tax fund. I would like to have a few ideas. There is the ability to develop a sticker system. We have been successful with the sticker system in snowmobiles. You're dealing with a sticker system that deals with a lot more than just snowmobiles. The snowmobiles and the trails go away after a few months. This is a multi faceted system; there are motor bikes, ATVs, pickups. We're looking at conservatively 50,000 vehicles in the State of South Dakota, and I don't think we touched on a number of visitors. But I would bet the number is equal that come from other states.

**Mayes:** If you could tell me what the plan is for enforcing the system, it would be easier to offer advice on a fee system.

**Blair:** One of the things we dealt with was enforcement, and it was a major discussion. We already know that we have less than two enforcement officers on the Forest. We're left with the idea of having other agencies helping, whether it was County, Highway Patrol, etc. We already know that the greatest enforcement is word of mouth. When Craig sent me a short note, I wrote back, and said what about the money collected from fines. He informed me that we don't get to keep fine money, under current law that money goes to schools.

**Mayes:** If you know you could collect a fee from every user you would know that you could pay for the enforcement.

**Blair:** That's why we had such a discussion with the State. If the user was going to use the ATV for agricultural purposes, they wouldn't pay the fees, but then there is a problem when they go to trade it in. We can't stop going forward with this. We don't want to wait till someone from Washington tells us what we must do. We have to do it in a timely fashion, because we know that in 2009 the rules will be in place. We have to have the funding to fund enforcement, mapping, education, etc.

The Task Force meeting will be a public session, we'll be happy for the input. Maybe we'll have this, and one more meeting prior to the next NFAB meeting so that we will have a draft.

**Hoyt:** Looking at a business plan, obviously we need to know what will be funded. Is the construction of the trail system funded with permit fees? Will the task force and the Forest Service develop the budget in 30 to 60 days?

**Blair:** Will we construct more trails? Down the road, will we re-hab? Signages, mapping, etc., these are all questions to be answered. You can't tell people they have to pay for a sticker with out an education system. I would hope we would have most of the budget in style and form before our August field trip. We have to be ready for it to go forward. When we get done, I expect the Board to spend time reviewing it.

**Carroll:** We have certain funds that are available for operations of the travel ways. The Task Force is going to be looking at what else.

**Blair:** Our meeting is scheduled for Tuesday the 22<sup>nd</sup>, here at this office. Time?

**Mumm:** The word I got was 5:30 p.m.

**Kohlbrand:** Are the other NF doing the same thing?

**Blair:** Some of the NF have a very good trail system in place, Wyoming is one of them. We are able to look at what other Forests have done.

**Kohlbrand:** As long as we take into consideration that Wyoming already has a fee. If a person would have to buy a sticker for every Forest they ride in, that might be unreasonable.

**Blair:** We have no rules on operation in the Black Hills, and this system is not working. We had 12 or 15 meetings with the public and there wasn't anyone who didn't think they shouldn't pay their fair share.

**Mayes:** The reason is because we only have one Forest here, but in Wyoming there are several.

**Kohlbrand:** In Wyoming, I buy one sticker and it's good for the whole state.

**McCracken:** When we were done on veto day, Doug and I had a brief conversation regarding the OHV Task Force, but Doug was going to contact the Governor to see if the OHV Task Force is still viable.

**Blair:** We have never technically been disbanded. We left it with the Governor's office. I'm not saying that some of the things aren't useable.

**McCracken:** I would suggest that you contact Doug and see if he has talked with the Governor.

**Blair:** I would ask Craig to talk with Doug. We have to go forward with our Business Plan Task Force regardless of the status of the OHV Task Force.

**Mayes:** If enforcement is important, you're way better off to have the licensing process go through the State, because that would energize a lot more enforcement agencies.

**Blair:** The State process is exactly what we needed, but it did not go forward. And we can't change some of those systems that the State has to do.

**Rowe:** Couldn't we dovetail our plan so that when or if the State does come on board, we would already be in compliance. It would be a smooth transition.

**Blair:** One of the issues is the private ground, municipalities, other state and federal agencies. I don't think we'll have to reinvent the wheel. One of the problems we had at that time was issues from the States standpoint. Some of those needed to be changed at a State level. Right now the only road we can't take ATVs on is the interstate. We had discussion with folks from the DOT, and talked about safety issues. I would like to see us make changes that would smoothly interface with the State when the State develops their system. I don't want to see an interruption of service or fees.

**McElgunn:** The Senator may disagree, but I don't believe the legislature will take this on any time soon. They don't like to raise taxes. I would just suggest that the Forest Service come forward, and say what they need to do, what is the set up cost, maps, signage, education, etc., and I think that should be the starting part. I don't think it's possible to blend with the State when you don't know what they will do. It's really a challenge to figure out how to classify, tax, license, safety of these vehicles, etc. The Forest Service would be best suited to look at what their mandate is, and move forward. I don't think you want to go in with a low ball number, look at this process like a fishing license – it's a hit and miss proposition. You may have to put in some money up front to enforce it. I think you just have to move on with what the Forest Service does have to do. If you can spend \$10,000 on a 4-wheeler, you can spend \$50.00 to license it... don't low ball it.

**Blair:** We will move forward.

**Paulson:** There are other National Forests in the State. Would there be any advantage to do a federal permit, and have more groups involved?

**Blair:** The BLM is doing some things regarding fees.

**Paulson:** They are done.

**Blair:** There may be common ground.

**Paulson:** Especially Buffalo Gap, they are working on theirs now.

**Blair:** I spoke at two tourism classes at Black Hills State University this week on biomass and ATVs, and had some pretty good input on ATVs. Several of the people that were there rode. I also had a chance to visit the heating system that just came on line at the Star Academy in Custer. The Academy is brand new and state of the art. They had functioned for 26 days, and keeping a daily log on their savings. In 26 days they saved \$18,000 in fuel costs. There were some glitches, but the Lead Deadwood School District was with me, and it was run so well, the School was going to go back and recommend it for them. In the Lead area, with the lab coming on board, we're starting to talk with other people and share information. Chadron College has a system that pipes its heat for blocks and blocks. The discussion was what else could we co-op with; City Hall, public buildings, the lab?

We also talked about the cellulosic ethanol in Upton. They are really close to breaking that thing and what is going to happen. We had a meeting a month and a half ago with Herseth Sandlin and a large group of people. I tried to emphasize that you can't have a two year contract, you have to have a 10 year contract. They can't get the money based on a two year contract.

**Hoyt:** Could you review the timeline now in moving to a trail system that is in effect by next January.

**Carroll:** We are in the middle of alternative development, and analyzing effects analysis, five alternatives. By the end of May we will start a series of public meetings, so that people will be able to look at maps. We plan to release the DEIS for public comment on June 16<sup>th</sup>. We'll then have a 45 to 60 day comment period, and then we'll go to a final environmental impact statement, and record of decision. We'll have a four month period and we expect the final map to be produced and out to the public by the end of February. There are some time frames that don't make sense because coming into the end of the year, we have a window that we can make decisions, and the decisions can go forward, if our decision comes in during the holidays, they won't go forward. Ultimately it will result in a map by the end of the year.

## **Fire Season Outlook ~ Dave Thom**

**Thom:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today; I am Renewable Resources Staff Officer for the BBNF.

I'll start with some background. Fire is an historic part of the ponderosa pine forest in the BH. An estimated 40,000-50,000 acres burned annually depending on weather. Prior to European settlement fire occurred about every 11 years in the southern and 40 years in the northern BH. As property has been developed in the wildland-urban interface (WUI), fire suppression becomes more complex and costly.

The Alabaugh Canyon Fire near Hot Springs in 2007 burned more than 5,000 acres, destroyed 35 structures, injured two firefighters in an entrapment, and killed one resident. The Alabaugh Canyon Fire was used as a case study in a national firefighter training video for 2008.

**Hoyt:** Why was Alabaugh used in a national video, were the techniques new or unusual?

**Thom:** Because of the incident with the two firefighters, the safety issues, and the extreme fire behavior. After the investigation we were tasked with developing a video to learn from our mistakes. The video was adopted nationally.

**Thom:** Last week we had the Alabaugh staff ride, we had 40 people per day for three days. We relived and went through the steps in decision making that took place on July 7<sup>th</sup> when it was 100 degrees. For the Forest Service, last year the most significant thing was the injury to our firefighters.

**Carroll:** Every year we have a fire refresher, and the national fire center in Boise puts together a training package, so our Alabaugh fire was part of the package.

**Jaeger:** Fires in Colorado, three fatalities yesterday. It hits home.

**Carroll:** Small air tanker, and two volunteers.

**Mayes:** What are you doing about bug tree removal?

**Thom:** Forest Industry is an important partner. We're working to get ahead of the beetles, and thin the Forest before the beetles hit.

**Mayes:** So if the trees have gone to blue stain, you leave them?

**Thom:** In some areas we may do a biomass fuel removal project.

**Mayes:** We just wait till they fall out or burn?

**Blair:** The National Guard and reserves are going to continue to do projects of cutting dead timber and hauling it to reservations.

**Thom:** The National Guard, Tribes, and Forest Service has an agreement that involves 3,000 slash piles. The Guard hauls firewood to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. They will do 500 cords this year, last year they did 300 cords.

**Jaeger:** This was all part of the Golden Coyote Exercise. The Guard will handle hauling and logistics.

**Thom:** We treat about 25,000 acres a year. KL Process in Upton will take two loads a week, the public takes some, and Baker Timber takes some for Merrillat.

**Mayes:** It's still an issue as far as fire right?

**Thom:** The fire danger happens when the needles are brown. We get about four million dollars a year to treat those areas through prescribed fire and mechanical treatment.

**Mayes:** Is there a catch up point or are you always behind?

**Thom:** I don't think we'll catch up until the beetles subside. We spend the most money in the wildland urban interface.

**Blair:** The catch up for that process, and it is still a few years down the road, is going to be biomass, and cellulosic biofuel. We need to stay on top of the Federal people so the National Forest stays involved in the farm bill, the energy bill, etc.

**Kohlbrand:** A big part of this fire fighting organization is the volunteer fire fighters. There are probably more volunteer fire fighters than Agency folks.

**Thom:** On the Forest Service side, our funding has increased slightly, but VFDs have been pretty successful in getting grants for their funding to improve equipment.

**Blair:** If you get a chance, go up into the Lead area, into the Hearst Addition and see their *Firewise* area. If you go around those housing projects, they have done a wonderful job of protecting the area.

**Paulson:** *Firewise* is BLM funded.

**Thom:** 3,000 biomass piles existing on the Forest. The projected biomass output is about 200,000 green tons annually. The most economical part is sales; the timber harvesters pull most of it out to the road where it is accessible.

Other Statistics:

- 10,000 chip vans/year
- KL process in Upton uses two vans per week
- Star Academy uses two vans per week
- 212,600 ccf
- 100 mmbf

**Mayes:** Do you take bug trees into the factor?

**Thom:** When you watch the news about Colorado, they are in a different situation that we are. We have the sawmill facilities and the ability to treat the bug problem here, Colorado does not.

**Blair:** 15 years ago, how many ethanol plants did we have? At the end of the year we will have 32 that will produce 40 million gallons of ethanol each. But the horizon is bright, because we've created the need.

**Kohlbrand:** We hosted a biomass producer's workshop, and free isn't cheap enough. The producers need a subsidy out of the money that you would spend to burn the piles.

**Blair:** If we could take part of the gas company's profit, we could help everyone out!

## Other Topics

**Paulson:** Have we heard back on the open space letter to the Congressional Representatives? What do we need to do to find out where that is at?

**Chris Blair:** Matt Thornblad is addressing the issue for Senator Johnson; he is looking at researching other forests, and looking at historical information to evaluate the proposal.

**Rick Hansen:** Leslie is working on it, I will look into it.

**Paulson:** Is the meeting on April 22<sup>nd</sup> (Business Plan Task Force) open to the public?

**Blair:** Yes, everyone please show up, we'll take all the suggestions we can.

**Blair:** On another note, we had requests to put things on the agenda. The agenda is a cooperative agreement with the Chair, and the Committee Management Officer (Frank). If there's an issue that you wish to discuss that is pertinent, call me and we can try to get it done.

**Paulson:** Were the Chiefs Four Threats replaced with the Emphasis Items?

**Carroll:** No, the Emphasis Items are in addition to the Four Threats.

**H. Thompson:** I think we were fed some bologna on the climate change presentation, and I did ask that we consider looking at the other side of the issue. There are an equal number of scientists that claim other than what was presented in the climate change area. Frank sent out a whole bunch of papers, and web site links for the other side. I'll consider that the subject is closed, but I think we do have a right to expect balance.

On the emphasis items, from Region Two and the W.O., I notice that water comes up twice. Equally important is water yield. In the early days of the Forest Service when the Forest Service was still committed to the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960, there was a shield, and the logo was of timber, range, recreation, water, and wildlife. The Forest Service has gone more over to the recreation. I think it's important that we look at water yield. With our increasing standard of biomass, it's one of the products that have been reduced.

**Blair:** Does anyone have anything else?

**McElgunn:** Have we ever had a discussion on the budget cycle, how the budget gets where it does? It's all about the money, and what you go in with, and how much of the request is actually realized.

**Carroll:** We would be glad to do that.

**Blair:** When I had the exchange with Craig over fines, I was astounded that we do not keep the money from fines. In the municipal part you keep the money.

**Rowe:** Even though we may not get the fine money, it will detour people from doing it again, and we'll gain from it in the long run, and there will have to be less reclamation.

**Blair:** A long time ago, when the GF&P arrested someone for a hunting violation, they confiscated the guns and sold them at the State Fair. Imagine if they confiscated an ATV. About 30% bought their own back.

**Paulson:** What did it cost you to buy your rifle back?!

## **Public Comments ~ Chairman Blair**

**Chair Blair:** If anyone from the public wishes to address the Board, please do so.

**Colin Paterson:** The Forest is down to less than 1 ½ Law Enforcement Officers, will the positions be filled?

**Jaeger:** Yes, we're filling the vacancies.

**Carroll:** Plus Forest Protection Officers.

**Colin Paterson:** My next comment is on the Telegraph Project, proposed on the Northern Hills. The comment period closed yesterday. This is a project designed to deal with pine beetle, fires, etc. One comment on this 60,000 acre project is about the 82 miles of new road construction. The issue is in the Swede Gulch area, it was less roaded and more open, and now there is a proposal to put roads in that area, so it's really defeating the purpose. So my question is this, are these projects coordinated with the Travel Planning projects?

**Jaeger:** The same people that are working with the Telegraph Project are working on the Travel Planning project.

**Thom:** Colin, were the roads denoted as temporary roads, that when the project is done, they would be obliterated?

**Colin:** They are recommended for closure, so we have recommended obliteration.

**Colin:** Craig Bobzien will be talking on the topic of More Kids in the Woods at the Sierra Club meeting here at the Mystic Office. April 22 is Earth Day. There is also going to be an entertainer at the Journey, he has claimed to have walked 26, 000 miles of wilderness trails. He puts on a multi meada show at the Journey which will start at 7:00 p.m. on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## **Adjournment:**

**Chair Blair:** If there is no other business to come before the Board, I will ask for a motion to adjourn.

Motion made by McCracken, and seconded by Paulson. Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

## **2008 Meeting Dates:**

May 21

June 18 – At Boxelder Job Corps

July – No Meeting

August 20 – Field Trip

September 17

October 15

November 19

December – No Meeting

January 6, 2009 - Tentative