

recommendation made by a Recreation Resource Advisory Committee prior to a final decision and implementation.

Visitors wanting to reserve Castle Rock, Rocky Bend or Hebo Kitchen group sites would need to do so through the national reservation system at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) or by calling 1-877-444-6777 when it becomes available.

Dated: June 17, 2016.

**Jeremiah C. Ingersoll,**

*Forest Supervisor.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to re-establish the Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board.

**SUMMARY:** The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), intends to re-establish the Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board (Board). In accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), the Board is being re-established to continue obtaining advice and recommendations on a broad range of forest issues such as forest plan revisions or amendments, forest health including fire management and mountain pine beetle infestations, travel management, forest monitoring and evaluation, recreation fees, and site-specific projects having forest wide implications.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Scott Jacobson, Board Coordinator, USDA, Black Hills National Forest, by telephone: 605-673-9216, by fax: 605-673-9208, or by email: [sjjacobson@fs.fed.us](mailto:sjjacobson@fs.fed.us).

Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Board is a non-scientific program advisory board established by the Secretary of Agriculture in 2003 to provide advice and counsel to the U. S. Forest Service, Black Hills National Forest, in the wake of increasingly severe and intense wild fires and mountain pine beetle epidemics.

The purpose of the Board is to provide advice and recommendations

on a broad range of forest issues such as forest plan revisions or amendments, travel management, forest monitoring and evaluation, and site-specific projects having forest-wide implications. The Board also serves to meet the needs of the Recreation Enhancement Act of 2005 as a Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC) for the Black Hills of South Dakota. The Board provides timely advice and recommendations to the regional forester through the forest supervisor regarding programmatic forest issues and project-level issues that have forest-wide implications for the Black Hills National Forest.

The Board meets approximately ten times a year, with one month being a field trip, held in August and focusing on both current issues and the educational value of seeing management strategies and outcomes on the ground. This Board has been established as a truly credible entity and a trusted voice on forest management issues and is doing often astonishing work in helping to develop informed consent for forest management.

For years, the demands made on the Black Hills National Forest have resulted in conflicts among interest groups resulting in both forest-wide and site-specific programs being delayed due to appeals and litigation. The Board provides a forum to resolve these issues to allow for the Black Hills National Forest to move forward in its management activities. The Board is believed to be one of the few groups with broad enough scope to address all of the issues and include all of the jurisdictional boundaries.

#### Significant Contributions

The Board's most significant accomplishments include:

1. A 2004 report on the Black Hills Fuels Reduction Plan, a priority following the major fires including the 86,000 acre Jasper Fire in 2000;
2. A 2004 initial Off-Highway Vehicle Travel Management Subcommittee report;
3. A report on their findings regarding the thesis, direction, and assumptions of Phase II of our Forest Plan produced in 2005;
4. The Invasive Species Subcommittee Report in 2005 covering recommendations to better stop invasive species from infiltrating the Forest;
5. A final Travel Management Subcommittee Report in 2006 in which the Board made 11 recommendations regarding characteristics of a designated motor vehicle trail system, the basis for our initial work to prepare our Motor Vehicle Use Map in 2010-2011;

6. The Board's annual work to attract funding through grants based on the Collaborative Landscape Forest Restoration Program (CFLRP), a program of the Secretary of Agriculture *CFLR* Program to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes;

7. A letter to the Secretary and the Chief of the Forest Service to work, restore and maintain open space for wildlife habitat and recreation needs like snowmobile trails; and

8. The annual reports to the Secretary detailing the Board's activities, issues, and accomplishments.

The Board is deemed to be among the most effective public involvement strategies in the Forest Service and continues to lead by example for Federal, State, and local government agencies working to coordinate and cooperate in the Black Hills of South Dakota and Wyoming.

#### Background

Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. II), the Secretary of Agriculture intends to re-establish the Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board. The Board provides advice and recommendations on a broad range of forest planning issues and, in accordance with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (Pub. L. 108-447 (REA)), more specifically will provide advice and recommendations on Black Hills National Forest recreation fee issues (serving as the RRAC for the Black Hills National Forest). The Board membership consists of individuals representing commodity interests, amenity interests, and State and local government.

The Board has been determined to be in the public interest in connection with the duties and responsibilities of the Black Hills National Forest. National forest management requires improved coordination among the interests and governmental entities responsible for land management decisions and the public that the agency serves.

#### Advisory Committee Organization

The Board consists of 16 members that are representative of the following interests (this membership is similar to the membership outlined by the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act for Resource Advisory Committees (16 U.S.C. 500, *et seq.*)):

1. Economic development;
2. Developed outdoor recreation, off-highway vehicle users, or commercial recreation;
3. Energy and mineral development;
4. Commercial timber industry;

5. Permittee (grazing or other land use within the Black Hills area);
6. Nationally recognized environmental organizations;
7. Regionally or locally recognized environmental organizations;
8. Dispersed recreation;
9. Archeology or history;
10. Nationally or regionally recognized sportsmen's groups, such as anglers or hunters;
11. South Dakota State-elected offices;
12. Wyoming State-elected offices;
13. South Dakota or Wyoming county- or local-elected officials;
14. Tribal government elected or appointed officials;
15. South Dakota State natural resource agency official; and
16. Wyoming State natural resource agency official.

The members of the Board will elect and determine the responsibilities of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson will act in the Chairperson's stead. The Forest Supervisor of the Black Hills National Forest serves as the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) under sections 10(e) and (f) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. II).

Members will serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for travel expenses while performing duties on behalf of the Board, subject to approval by the DFO.

Equal opportunity practices are followed in all appointments to the Board in accordance with USDA policies. To ensure that the recommendations of the Board have been taken into account the needs of diverse groups served by USDA, the membership shall include to the extent practicable, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent the needs of all racial and ethnic groups, women and men, and persons with disabilities.

Dated: June 20, 2016.

**Gregory L. Parham,**

*Assistant Secretary for Administration.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Four Forest Restoration Initiative, Rim Country Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, and Tonto National Forests

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, and Tonto National Forests are proposing to conduct restoration activities within 1.24 million acres of ponderosa pine ecosystem over approximately 10 years. Treatment areas are located on the Black Mesa, and Lakeside Ranger Districts of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, the Mogollon and Red Rock Ranger Districts of the Coconino National Forest, and the Payson and Pleasant Valley Ranger Districts of the Tonto National Forest. Project treatments would occur in the vicinity of Happy Jack, Payson, Young, Heber-Overgaard, Show Low, and Pinetop-Lakeside, Arizona. The objective of this project is to re-establish forest structure, pattern, and composition, which will lead to increased forest resilience and function. Resiliency increases the ability of ponderosa pine forests to survive natural disturbances such as insects and disease, fire, and climate change.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the proposed action in this notice must be received by August 11, 2016. The draft environmental impact statement is expected in July 2017 and the final environmental impact statement is expected in September 2018.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to Coconino National Forest, Attention: 4FRI, 1824 S. Thompson Street, Flagstaff, Arizona 86001. Comments may also be sent via email to [4FRI\\_comments@fs.fed.us](mailto:4FRI_comments@fs.fed.us), or via facsimile to (928) 527-3620.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Annette Fredette, 4FRI Planning Coordinator, at 928-226-4684, or [4FRI\\_comments@fs.fed.us](mailto:4FRI_comments@fs.fed.us).

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#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Purpose of and Need for Action

The purpose of the Rim Country Project is to reestablish and restore forest structure and pattern, forest health, and vegetation composition and diversity in ponderosa pine ecosystems to conditions within the natural range of variation, thus moving the project area toward the desired conditions. The outcome of improving structure and function is increased system resiliency. Resiliency increases the ability of an ecosystem to survive natural disturbances such as fire, insects and disease, and climate change without changing its inherent function.

This project is needed to: Increase forest resiliency and sustainability, reduce risk of undesirable fire effects, improve terrestrial and aquatic species habitat, improve the condition and function of streams and springs, restore woody riparian vegetation, preserve cultural resources, and support sustainable forest products industries.

#### Proposed Action

To meet the purpose and need for the Rim Country Project and move the project area toward desired conditions, the Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, and Tonto National Forests propose mechanical thinning, prescribed fire, and other restoration activities throughout the project area that would make the forest more resilient to natural disturbances such as fire, insects and disease, and climate change. Restoration activities are needed to maintain or restore forest structure and pattern, desired fire regimes, and watershed and ecosystem function in ponderosa pine, ponderosa pine-Gambel oak, ponderosa pine-evergreen oak, frequent fire mixed conifer (dry mixed conifer), aspen, and grassland cover types, moving them toward conditions within the natural range of variation. Facilitative operations may be needed in other cover types (such as pinyon juniper) to enable or complete treatments in target cover types, by reducing uncharacteristic fire risk, reducing ground disturbance from fireline construction, or improving operability. Restoration activities proposed for the Rim Country project area include:

- Mechanically thin trees and/or implement prescribed fire on approximately 952,330 acres.
  - Mechanically thin trees and implement prescribed fire on approximately 1,260 acres in the Long Valley Experimental Forest (in coordination with the Rocky Mountain Research Station).
  - Implement prescribed fire alone on approximately 45,290 acres.
  - Mechanically thin and/or implement prescribed fire on approximately 68,360 acres of Mexican spotted owl (MSO) protected activity centers (PACs), approximately 128,800 acres of MSO recovery habitat, and approximately 500,940 acres of northern goshawk habitat.
  - Mechanically thin trees and/or implement prescribed fire to restore approximately 40,760 acres of grasslands and meadows (includes 21,550 acres of grassland cover type).
  - Conduct facilitative operations (thin and/or burn) on up to 157,270 acres of non-target cover types to support treatments in target cover types.