

**National Forest Advisory Board (NFAB) Meeting**  
November 14, 2007 – 1:00 p.m.  
Forest Service Center, 8221 South Highway 16, Rapid City, SD

**Members Present:**

Tom Blair, Chair; Becci Jo Rowe, Nels Smith, Mac McCracken, Matt Hoobler, Aaron Everett, Doug Hofer, Donovan Sprague, Pat McElgunn, Steve Sisk, John Culberson, and Nancy Kile.

**Forest Service Representatives:**

Craig Bobzien, Dennis Jaeger, Frank Carroll, Bob Thompson, Dave Thom, Mike Lloyd, Rhonda O’Byrne, Blaine Cook, Steve Kozel, Twila Morris - Recorder.

**Others:**

Approximately 10 members of the public, and three congressional representatives; Chris Blair, Mark Haugen, and Rick Hanson, were in attendance.

**Members Absent:**

Jim Heinert, Hugh Thompson, Bob Kloss, Ron Johnsen, Everett Hoyt, Jim Scherrer, and Bob Paulson.

**Welcome and Roll Call:**

**Chair Blair:** Quorum present, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Our November meeting is kind of our early Christmas & Thanksgiving party since we have no meeting in December. Thanks to Craig and Staff for lunch. We are now in to our fifth year of operation, several of us started on this board together; we still have four or five that have stayed the course for another year. I’ve learned a lot about the Forest, and have met some really great workers, and great friends, thanks to all of you and happy holidays.

**Comments to the Chair:**

**Carroll:** Thank you for your comments Chairman; we talked about bugs in the Forest when we first began, and we will be talking about bugs again today.

**Approve Minutes:**

**Chair Blair:** Are there any changes to the October minutes? If there is nothing, the minutes stand as reported.

**Approve Agenda:**

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

**Carroll:** Linda Joyce was not able to join us today for the Global Climate change piece, so we will reschedule her presentation.

**Rowe:** Will we be able to get an update on the Governors OHV Task Force.

**Blair:** Yes.

Motion made by McCracken to approve the agenda as corrected, motion seconded by Smith.

**Blair:** Motion carried, the agenda stands as corrected.

**Housekeeping:**

**Carroll:** Everyone should be familiar with the building, ask if you have questions.

**Meeting Protocols - Issues:**

**Chair Blair:** Action items; public comments will be taken before or at the end of the discussion, before we vote on it, this is just a change to protocols.

I had a call Monday morning about the OHV issue, and the gentleman was extremely upset about some of the trail locations, and some that were being moved from OHV to motorbike or something like that. The gentlemen wanted the right to ride where ever he wanted. I advised him to write a letter and submit it to the Forest Service. Anyone with disagreements should call the Forest Service or Tom Willems. It is a product that will grow and change, one of the changes will be the recommendation that comes back from the Governor.

**Hofer:** At our last NFAB meeting, the Governor's Task Force was on the verge of finalizing the report, and it has since been completed, both the report and the executive summary were forwarded to the Governor. He has set up a meeting with the representatives from the Task Force, that work for him, and the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the drafting of legislation that might come out of the report. The Governor usually does not announce his legislative package till the first of the year. The committee made real clear what the priority issues were, and what should be focused on initially. From there, he will decide how far he'll go this year. In the mean time, the report is complete, and should be available to any interested party. I think that in the next 30 days, the direction of the report will take shape. Three of his administrators have offered to help write the legislation. The Department of Public Safety, the Department of Transportation, and The Game, Fish & Parks will likely be the ones to help write it. We're on track as we approach the legislative session. I should have a full report when the Board meets in January. What is the date for the January meeting?

**Carroll:** Whatever would be the best day is fine for a meeting; there are no protocols for that.

**Blair:** The next NFAB meeting will be January 3, 2008 at 1:00 p.m.

Note:

- ✓ Agenda Item for January: Preview of Governors initiative in terms of the OHV framework.

**Blair:** Doug did a wonderful job of chairing this OHV project and bringing some heavy hitters to the table.

**McElgunn:** Can we get a review of the progression of the decision process; OHV as it relates to the Forest.

**Blair:** There are still two projects, the Forest Service's project, and the State's project, in places they dove tail. If everything went well in the legislature, it still would not be effective till the first of July. Then we begin money collection, which will take place before we implement the on the road part. Decision in 2008 & implement in 2009.

**McElgunn:** If the legislature decides to do nothing what will you be faced with in 2009.

**Bobzien:** We will be limited, we will have to prioritize.

**McElgunn:** What is the anticipated revenue stream in terms of money being made available for the implementation process?

**Hofer:** Licensing of OHVs (recommendation is \$20.00 each), would be the main revenue. The real unknown is how many of those are used on private land, and wouldn't be subject to licensing. There are 70,000 OHVs out there, so the licensing could generate quite a bit. There are other pieces that would be legislated, but others that would be in the rule making possibly by the Forest Service. The other piece would be the excise tax recommendation. Right now there is sales tax. Beyond that, we recommended that there would be some kind of user fee that would be for non-residents who do not pay excise tax. Collectively these three could generate a million dollars depending on how many are licensed.

**McElgunn:** If there is a million dollars that is to be managed by the Game, Fish, and Parks, would the money be distributed throughout the state?

**Hofer:** The recommendation is that the program at the State level be managed at the division of recreation, and as part of that there would be a grant established that would allow the Forest Service to access a portion of the dollars.

**McElgunn:** My concern is the major challenges associated with a package that big with that many must do items.

**McCracken:** We were going to try to get the legislators together before session, but there are a vast number of meetings that we are attending, and we wouldn't have everyone there. What we are thinking about is sending the executive summary, approved by the Governor, to all 105 for comment. As a follow up to that, we have to try to keep this into one piece of legislation, because if we split it up we will lose it.

**McElgunn:** Would it be beneficial to have a briefing for everyone, with an in depth presentation.

**McCracken:** There are pros and cons to that. There's already a meeting set that we have to participate in. The only way we could do it is to invite all 105.

**Hofer:** What if we have just the two transportation committees?

**McCracken:** What if it doesn't go to the transportation committee?

**McElgunn:** The timing is important, and if the State is not ready or if they don't have the resources to get it done, they might not act on it.

**Blair:** I've tried to stay in touch with the Department of Tourism and their board. They have their large tourism conference in March. Those people will speak to lots of issues, and this is an economical issue. We need to build some coalitions, and we would be naive to think we will not have opposition. One of the issues we have talked about and disagreed on is allowing licensed OHVs on the asphalt roads. Part of the recommendation is to do away with some of that. It was good that Senator McCracken was on the Task Force, he has a substantial voice on transportation. It's a high profile bill.

**Culberson:** Is there a way to take a look at a portion of the revenue stream for the UTV.

**Blair:** A small portion of revenue would be law enforcement fines, etc.

**Culberson:** The affect of the new legislation would be to force some people to make some OHVs street legal. I bought a used ATV, and did not pay any tax.

**Blair:** That is our thought for moving it from sales tax to excise tax. Other glitches in the past have been that some people who have purchased OHVs have never arrived at the licensing department. What happens is that there is no title that goes with them in South Dakota. Governor Rounds is dead serious about what we are doing with OHVs and I am confident that he will bring back a good recommendation.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **South Dakota Army National Guard ~ Dennis Jaeger**

- **Golden Coyote Training Exercise**

**Blair:** Welcome SD Army National Guard.

**Jaeger:** Introduction of our guests; LTC Daniel Iverson, CW4 Leon Ewert, SP4 Joe Bongert.

**Iverson:** Thanks to the Forest Service for the invitation, and your hospitality.

Iverson's presentation and subsequent discussion:

The South Dakota Army National Guard puts together an exercise called Golden Coyote; formerly called Joint Thunder. The exercise has been conducted in the Black Hills for the past 24 years. This is a combat support and combat services support oriented exercise, which provides relevant training opportunities in support of the Global War on Terrorism, (GWOT) and Homeland Defense.

**McCracken:** Were the 300 cords of wood which were delivered to the reservations cut up and ready to burn?

**Iverson:** The wood was from thinning piles. We loaded the trees, and then the Indian Tribes cut them up themselves and took them where they were needed.

**Hofer:** What are the time frames that all projects will be defined and established prior to operations in June?

**Iverson:** There are projects that we will finalize prior to the first of the year, and then we marry those up with the engineer assets that are out there. We have an engineer battalion from Missouri that is looking for missions. We have a dump truck company that can haul gravel; those are some of the services we can provide.

**Rowe:** Do the engineering units from Missouri specialize in road construction, or other specialty areas?

**Iverson:** There are three specialty areas: roads, structures, and blowing things up. We have all three types participating this year. Last year most of our engineers went to support the southwest boarder mission, but this year we have all three.

**Blair:** When you have units that normally participate that get put on active duty, are you able to change the mission, or is it far enough out to tailor the mission?

**Iverson:** Entering into our 5<sup>th</sup> year in Iraq Freedom, most units know six to eight months out.

Break

**Chairman Blair:** A letter needs to be sent to the legislators regarding our Open Space legislation, but the Forest Service is prohibited from lobbying for legislation. Pat McElgunn, Matt Hoobler, and Nels Smith will have to draft a letter to be sent to the legislation. Should I as Chairman sign the letter?

**Carroll:** We'll make a determination about who the appropriate signer is.

**McElgunn:** I would like to make a motion to prepare the letter, signed by the appropriate individual, and done between now and next meeting.

**Carroll:** The National Forest Advisory Board is part of the Department of Agriculture, but there is nothing to stop the board from doing a letter.

**Blair:** Send the letter to Frank, and maybe we can sign it at the January meeting.

**Bobzien:** We did discuss some of this at the last meeting. If it's a recommendation that we need to adopt on open space, and if we would have the letter go to the federal delegates in both Wyoming and South Dakota, and if they agreed with it, then we would actually be asking the administration for drafting services. We'll perfect that advice, and get it back to you.

**Smith:** I would be happy to deliver the letter and follow up on it.

**Blair:** The chair directs a letter to be drafted and presented for review.

**The Red Death – Mountain Pine Beetles ~ Bobzien, Thom, Cook, & Kurt Allen**  
▪ **Important change of course for the Black Hills National Forest**

**Carroll:** The "red death" was a term first coined by the research people down the hall. The map shows the red spots. We'll be talking about what is happening with us, what the magnitude is, and what we are doing about it.

Blaine Cook's presentation and subsequent discussion:

**McCracken:** What is the worst case scenario?

**Allen:** There are areas that everything is or will be dead.

**Rowe:** If you could clear those dead trees out, would there be enough water in the ground to support the remaining trees, or will it take more clearing?

**Allen:** Blaine pointed out that the beetles like the denser stands. Whether we are in a drought cycle or not, when there are so many trees, they are under continuous stress. The trees in the denser areas will always be under stress. This picture was from 2007, the trees that are red, just turned that color in May or June, basically by the time they turn that color, the beetles are already gone, so you do not get rid of any beetles by clearing the trees.

**Hoobler:** How many trees per stand do you consider dense?

**Cook:** 100 plus.

**Allen:** Also, a stand that is a little denser might hold on if there are no beetles right next to it, even thinned out

stands can be susceptible.

**Rowe:** What type of thinning will you use, or can you do a prescribed burn?

**Cook:** You could cut them, but there is no merchantability for the sawmills. You could also burn it, there are a lot of options, but with every option there is a cost.

**B. Thompson:** One treatment is to get the green infested trees out before the beetles fly – this is the best thing we can do. Thinning before the beetles even get to the area is really the best.

**Smith:** It's best to do the thinning well ahead of the bug hit. It takes two to three years for the tree to respond to the improved environment. Stay ahead of the game.

**Cook:** The challenge that Bob is faced with is that the green trees out there might already be hit.

**Blair:** Realistically, and this is not a criticism – if you came upon an area like this, and were able to say, lets get ahead of this. If you were able to draw some lines – battlefield lines to get ahead of the infestation. How long would it be before you could put the saw to the tree?

**Cook:** By law, we do a lot of analysis. The amount of time from start till the timber industry is harvesting could be two years or more.

**Blair:** The dead trees on the map are all two years or more.

**Cook:** The whole Forest is colored, because it is all beetle country.

**Blair:** Is there a process available to speed up some of the processes, such as the Healthy Forest Initiative. Obviously some options are not fast enough. We are scratching the surface on several things, such as biomass, cellulose, etc., are those options an answer to some of this?

**Cook:** Yes – those are options.

**Everett:** What are the consequences of temperature related mortality? With the warm weather we've had, are the bugs dying?

**Allen:** We need really cold temperatures by late October or early November to really kill the beetles.

**Hofer:** Next year will be good for bugs then won't it?

**Hofer:** We went to the legislature to do a thinning project to keep the bugs from going into the Park. We have six different thinning contractors to do this work. During the time of planning, and award of the contracts, in about 20 percent of the plan, the bugs had moved, and did their damage, so we had to adjust the boundaries. We'll still be able to do some good this year.

**Everett:** A good share of the work in Bugtown was removing the green trees, that did have bugs in them, but the District got in there and captured the green hit. This is also a way to reduce the bugs because they were through the mill before the bugs flew. They took out something like five million trees.

**McCracken:** Are these the type of slash piles the National Guard was hauling and how long will the bug stay alive in the slash pile?

**Cook:** Yes, these are the type of slash piles the National Guard hauled. The bark beetles won't stay alive for

long once the tree is down.

**Allen:** The bark beetles need it to be moist under the bark. Most are hauled off with the large part of the tree to the mill.

**Blair:** What is the reason for the boundary of the thinning project shown in the slide?

**Cook:** We had to stop where the slope got too steep.

**Rowe:** The chart in your presentation shows a cyclical affect. From the turn of the century, they died off, what made the spread stop? Were all the trees gone? What is the biggest threat to the pine beetle?

**Allen:** It's not that all the trees were gone, but like in the Bugtown area, the thinned stands slow down the movement. Once they get through the dense stands, they slow up.

**Hofer:** Wouldn't cold winters at the right time do the same thing?

**Allen:** If we get some good cold snaps in September or October, that can knock some of the population out. We haven't had much of that.

**Rowe:** What happened in 1910 on the chart, where it appears that they stopped?

**Allen:** Basically it was in the northwestern part of the hills. Because of the conditions in that area, the beetles thrived, but as they moved out toward the central hills, they started dying.

**Hoobler:** How does the fire cycle follow the beetle cycle?

**Cook:** The fire cycle on the south end is 15 years, on the north end it is 30 years.

**Carroll:** The conditions that are good for bugs are also good for fire. The open thinned areas typically have lower ground fires as opposed to crown fires.

**Cook:** The Jasper fire was human caused, similar to the 1874 picture that shows a fire that burned hot.

**Thom:** The vision of the Forest Plan Amendment is to create a generally more open Forest, which is resistant to fires and beetles.

**Hofer:** The fire issue in the wilderness is scary. The Wilderness is the worst spot in the Forest, and it sits between Mount Rushmore and Custer State Park.

**Kile:** When did the Forest begin to harvest timber?

**Cook:** 1899 was the first authorized timber sale. But during 1875 – 1899 early settlers and miners did what we call "pirate logging", just cutting timber where and when they wanted.

**Rowe:** What data did you use to construct the graph?

**Allen:** All kinds of data, from written narratives, observations, to aerial flights.

**Rowe:** What impact dose climate change or the droughts have?

**Allen:** I don't believe it does have a significant impact. In looking back on the pictures, the dense stands are clearly the hardest hit. I still believe the biggest thing driving it is stand condition.

**Smith:** The teens and 20's were very productive, well above average or normal in terms of rain, 30's were notorious, 40's were good, and the 50's were really rough drought. There's something more than climate driving it.

**McCracken:** Is there any parasite that is a natural enemy to the pine beetle that would take care of the beetle?

**Cook:** No

**McCracken:** Would we be further ahead to do prescribed burns in these areas to try to reduce this process?

**Cook:** There are a lot of trees up there, and if we put fire on the ground, it would consume everything.

**McCracken:** If they'll all die anyway, would it matter?

**Hofer:** Does the law allow fire in the Black Elk Wilderness? What is your ability to fight a fire in the wilderness?

**Thom:** The Hell Canyon District is working on wildlife habitat improvement for the Black Elk Wilderness. One of their thoughts is prescribed fire. Currently, we suppress the fires right away because if the wilderness is big, you can let a fire smolder around, but because of the size of the Black Elk, 13 thousand acres, we can't do that. But it's possible to do some prescribed burning, and that is being investigated by the District.

**Hofer:** Is it feasible to do under burning, can you burn under there without getting into the crown?

**Thom:** The analysis is looking at those options.

**Lloyd:** Many people have said they would hate to be in charge of that burn. You would have to have a hot fire to kill the bug bait, and a fire that hot could possibly go into the park, Mount Rushmore, etc.

**Thom:** Three points regarding vegetation management: 1) We are looking long term in creating a forest as outlined in the Forest Plan Amendment, which would be open areas with big trees and small trees throughout. We want to be ahead of that. 2) For 2008, we have 25,000 acres of commercial timber sales planned. 3) For FY 2009, we're working on the Upper Spring Creek analysis in the Hill City area, very active with beetles. That analysis is being done now, and will be completed by the end of spring. Those sales will be sold late summer 2008 or early fall 2008.

**Blair:** If the recommendation is to clear the area, when would it be implemented?

**Thom:** If a decision was made in 2010, contracts would be advertised shortly thereafter (following an appeal period), and contractors could start shortly after award and may run two to five years.

**Thom:** In closing, we continue to look long term. We have to have a more open forest, and that is what our Forest Plan reflects. We've adjusted our schedules to the degree we can to focus our efforts where needed. The ability to carry out these projects requires broad support. The industry has had to respond, and industry has adjusted their schedule to haul out the beetles.

**Rowe:** Ultimately it is going to be a healthy forest, but it will take time and money. In the really hot spots, is there any way to isolate them, a buffer area that you could put in that would slow them down?

**Thom:** There generally is not. When you look closely at the map, there are red dots all over the Forest. The idea of putting a parameter around the hardest hit areas would just be too big.

**Hofer:** I agree that you can't get around all the spots. Is there a prescription where you can slow the bugs down with something short of thinning the whole plot? The foresters from the Park seem to think that a 300-400 foot width of thinned trees will give you a buffer, that will make the normal migration of beetles reduced. I'm told that they only travel 300 feet.

**Allen:** Beetles won't fly any further than they have to to find food, they can fly up to a mile if they have to. If there are opportunities where you have a thinned area, behind where you have a buffer, then you might be able to produce a slow down in movement. If what you have behind the buffer is attractive to the beetle, the buffer will not stop them.

**Hofer:** There must be some different professional thoughts on this, and it is experimental. What they are trying to do is what Becci is envisioning. The other issue is trying to slow the fires down.

**Everett:** The advantage the State has is that when they decide to do something, they can make it happen much quicker than the Forest Service can.

**Rowe:** Will more diversification, i.e., adding aspen, hardwood, etc., slow down the beetle?

**Thom:** That is a long term thing and is part of the goal of the Forest Plan, to increase the aspen. Increasing aspen and hardwoods will not slow the current beetle infestation. Aspen and hardwoods do reduce the fire hazard. Increasing the diversity among the whole Forest is the goal.

**Bobzien:** When Kelly Honors was here and talked about Norbeck, she talked about the natural processes that are designed to take place in the wilderness areas. We have all the standing dead in the Black Elk, which is right around Mount Rushmore, Keystone, etc. Bringing more diversity to preferred species in the Norbeck, in a practical sense, helps better protect the resources. They all go hand in hand; we will use the Board to help guide us along.

**Sisk:** In the late fifties, I helped apply spray to the trees in Yellowstone. What were we spraying, so when Becci asked the question about what can be done, is spraying out of the question?

**Allen:** Yes it probably is. The beetle lives under the bark, chemicals that would penetrate the bark, and kill the beetle are no longer available.

**Thom:** We've done a little bit of peeling the bark off trees to dry out the larva.

**Kile:** Do forbs include American plum, and chokecherry?

**Thom:** As you know chokecherry and plum are woody plants, not herbaceous forbs, but are species we would expect to increase as we thin the forest.

**Blair:** You are prophetic when you say our goal is a more open Forest, the way we are going it will get that way because it will burn up. We do all these studies that take so much time, while the State moves so much faster. The goal we need to go to is on a National level, not just in South Dakota. Maybe there's an effort on the Federal scale that we don't know about. We almost have ourselves painted into a corner, in the time frame; the bug has outsmarted us one more time. As in the example with Custer State Park, when they noticed that the bug had moved, they adjusted. We have got to go back to some kind of a change in the Healthy Forest

Initiative. Maybe we declare it a disaster area, and take it to the upper levels, so that this process gets sped up. We are thinning one percent of our Forest. Now that the attacks are exponential, we are behind the game more every year. Our attack should be to change our ability to attack.

We've taken on OHV, we're working on the open space issue, we should be able to change the way we attack this kind of an issue. The bugs are not the only issue. We thin the forest because we know it is good. We were in absolute grid lock till we came to this Board, and I don't think we can be timid about it. I would like to figure out a way to go forth. The fact is, we'll be back in a couple of years looking at only grey and red.

**Culberson:** I agree with this completely. Craig remembers that I had a suggestion that we could make the Black Hills National Forest a demonstration Forest that we actually run the Forest the way it should be. In my experience, there are no more "git-r-done" guys around than the guys we have, but the problem is up the Hill. There won't be any thinning to do the way we are going. There is a down side on the Bugtown projects. I had to go back and do \$100,000.00 worth of road repair.

**Rowe:** When you look at this from a medical aspect, we have a little disease, and the medical protocol hasn't been working, so what's wrong with changing the protocol? We just had Tom take the bull by the horns, and I'm thankful for that. We have too many matchsticks, I support going forth, and I support the Forest Service.

**Blair:** Every month we have political representatives at our meetings, who are hearing all of these conversations. They can take these issues back to the Senator's and Congresswoman.

**Hofer:** I would like to have on the next agenda a bit of an update on what drives the timing on the planning and implementation that the Forest Service works under. There are Federal laws, processes, and reasons for all of it, but we may not have the understanding of it. Before we try to go down the road to change something, we better understand what we are trying to change. If you could walk us through why it is four years from now to a chainsaw taking a tree down, that would be good.

**Blair:** We have the better part of six weeks before our next meeting, could the Forest Service put that together for us?

**Thom:** The EA process and the travel planning is the same process.

**Blair:** How do we change it? We're always on the defense.

**Kile:** Vilifying the environmental groups here is not useful.

**Smith:** I heard no vilification of environmental groups; we heard an analysis, and an objective one.

**McCracken:** There are Federal delegation representatives here – do you take this information up the chain of command?

**Chris Blair:** There is a report that goes up; they analyze what then goes up to the next level.

**McCracken:** Please punch the buttons, send the reports up!

**Rick Hansen:** I will help to my ability.

**McCracken:** Why is it that the Forest Service can't lobby, such as doing town hall meetings, etc?

**Bobzien:** We can provide information, and present the information, but we can't take it to the next step and

lobby Congress, that is against Federal law.

**McCracken:** You're a purveyor of information, so why would working with town hall meetings be inappropriate?

**Bobzien:** Through a process with the Council on Environmental Quality, Congress on occasion does things to reshape the laws. Representative Herseth Sandlin had the field hearing a year ago to look at what can be done. When they hear it enough, they look at ways that they can help. We'll certainly do the primer, have people come in and look at it, work with the existing law, and if we are missing something, this is a great forum to learn that.

**Hofer:** The Norbeck would be a great example.

**Blair:** Do we have topics for January? Potential open space letter and climate change.

**Carroll:** We could make this programmatic primer the entire meeting if need be.

**Blair:** We had four charges, and travel management was one of the last on the list. We've done invasive species, open space, travel management, maybe its time to move on to how we change the NEPA process.

**Smith:** The presentation should include information about each decision point, and the amount of time they require. Where are the obstacles that we can't get around? The problem is giving personnel on the ground the latitude to get the work done, but it never seems to happen.

**Blair:** Is it time the industry throw up some roadblocks, because the industry is saturated with wood, etc., and that should be part of the discussion. If wood had taken the same run up as gold has, someone would be in Washington lobbying to change things.

**Everett:** If you're advocating for more and higher paid timber lobbyist, I could do that!

**Blair:** Any more questions? If there is anything that jumps out to you, send out an e-mail or give a call.

**Rowe:** Is there any way possible to keep the speaker on climate change for the January meeting?

**Blair:** We will leave it up to her and see if it works for her schedule.

**Culberson:** It takes so long but a lot of other things take so long too. There are 32 easements on the Hell Canyon District that Custer County took on the easements for. We identified them, and said that we want out of them, and only two of the 32 have been dealt with to finality.

**Kile:** I am not saying that the time lines are inappropriate. This discussion is important to me, and I think it would be to other people too. The other groups should be invited because this is a tax payers building, and they should be able to attend.

**Carroll:** I want the Board to know that we have about 700 comments as a result of the 60 day comment period. We've heard at length from folks on all issues such as receiving maps, funding sources, the not in my back yard issue, and game retrieval, along with various other topics such as mud bogging. We are doing a content analysis now.

**Hofer:** I would like to have a chance to look at any of the comments that might relate to the work with the Governor's Task Force. If there's a way to earmark those, the Task Force may want to look at those also.

**Bobzien:** We advertise the NFAB meetings as public meetings. I would encourage you as members to do the invitations. If I invited individuals, I would miss some. Invite any friends, constituents, etc., who would like to participate. We do have some special items, some featured speakers, etc., that we may have to find a bigger location for the meetings to accommodate.

### **Public Comments ~ Chairman Blair**

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

**Paterson:** Blaine and Kurt, what type of data is presented on the chart that shows the pine beetle history? Is it accurate? It's an interesting chart, what factors lead to the kill of pine beetles. The suggestion was made that it might be tied to pine stand density. Is fire or logging a part of it?

**Allen:** It's not terribly accurate; we're not counting actual trees, it's a general trend. There's a little of everything in it. It's a 20-25 year cycle. The stands come back into the density level after they are thinned out.

**Thom:** The chart reflects that data that was available, the data is more accurate after the 90's when aerial flights were done.

**Paterson:** It would be interesting to know what is really resulting in a reduction of the pine beetles.

**Allen:** What has really led to the populations going down, is when they run out of the stands that are their preferred hosts. Once they get out of the dense area, it started slowing down.

**Carroll:** There are a lot of natural processes that humans try to affect, like the spread of cancer, and we know that stands that are open withstand fire and bugs.

**Paterson:** If the chart could be somewhat reliable, to chart back to climate factors, and analysis, might be interesting.

**Everett:** I see three sets of errors – from the turn of the century, we have observations from a couple of guys, from then on they are observations from the Forest Service. Beginning in 1960 there is the aerial data. The other noise in the system, that I don't think we have the capacity to change, are stands on the ground until maybe about 1950, and it came up quickly in 1970.

**Hofer:** Somewhere in there, they were pouring on the chemicals.

**Everett:** By the accounts of the people, that was responsible for the drop in the numbers.

**Cook:** Along with that is precipitation, the southern Hills are different than the northern Hills, and it is different by region.

**Blair:** Colin brings up a good point. Sometimes we didn't have a gigantic outbreak of a disease, but we had a better way of diagnosis. We were just better able to count and analyze the data.

**Paterson:** Analysis based on the last forty years would be good.

**Paterson:** Doug was talking about the OHV legislation – who do we contact to get a copy? Should we be

contacting the Governor on the issue?

**Blair:** Governor Rounds is open to public comments, but I would wait to see what his suggestions are.

**Paterson:** My concern is that if the package doesn't go forward, where are we?

**Blair:** We still have a Forest plan, it wouldn't be any where near what the program could be, but we just wouldn't be able to raise the funds we want to.

**Blair:** From the Board, a big thank you to Craig, and the people who put on the chili feed. Thanks for the gifts; we won't see each other till after the first of the year.

**Smith:** You commented about the fact that we were hardly talking to one another before and now we are having communication. The make up of the Board is structured to represent everyone. The whole spectrum is represented. The results have shown it.

**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 Rowe. Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

**Next Meeting:**

The next NFAB meeting is scheduled for January 3, 2008.