



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Black Hills
National
Forest

Mystic Ranger District
8221 South Highway 16
Rapid City, SD 57702
Phone 605-343-1567 Fax 605-343-7134

File Code: 1950-Calumet Project Area

Date:

JUN 18 2012

Greetings from the Black Hills National Forest:

Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) personnel recently completed a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Calumet Project Area. The project area lies approximately six miles southwest of Rapid City, SD. Sheridan Lake is also located within the project area. The project covers approximately 31,772 acres. The project area consists of 27,617 acres of National Forest System lands, as well as, 4,155 acres of interspersed private lands.

The project's main focus is to help protect communities and resources by reducing the threat to ecosystem components, including forest resources, from the existing mountain pine beetle (MPB) epidemic and by reducing hazardous fuels. The Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003 (H.R. 1904) provides improved statutory processes for hazardous fuel reduction projects and healthy forest restoration on National Forest System lands.

Title I of the HFRA focuses primarily on expedited hazardous fuel treatment projects on NFS lands that are at risk of wildland fire, including insect infestations. The Calumet Project qualifies as an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project under HFRA Section 102(a)(4). This section of the Act specifies what project characteristics authorize a given project to be planned and implemented under various provisions of the Act.

The purpose of and need for the Calumet Project:

- Moves existing land and resource conditions toward desired conditions as specified in the Forest Plan.
- Reduce the threat to ecosystem components, including forest resources, from the existing mountain pine beetle epidemic.
- Help protect local communities and resources from large-scale wildfire by reducing hazardous fuels.

The DEIS presents one alternative approach to meeting the purpose and need. Chapters 1 and 2 provide background and comparison of the No Action Alternative (Alternative A) and the Proposed Action (Alternative B). This comparison allows readers to judge the relative merits of the Proposed Action's approach to reducing the rapidly expanding mountain pine beetle epidemic, potential for severe wildfire, and other issues. At this time, the Forest Service has identified Alternative B a preferred alternative. More details on the effects of alternatives are presented in Chapter 3.

The Calumet Project Area DEIS and a Comment Form are available on the Black Hills National Forest web site at <http://go.usa.gov/Bh1>. Therefore, no hardcopies are being mailed to you at this



time. For more information or to request a copy of the Calumet Project DEIS, please contact Jessica Eggers at (605)-343-1567.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) provides for a 45-day public review/comment period for a DEIS. Comments on the Calumet Project Area must be in writing and postmarked or emailed no later than 45-days after the Notice of Availability is published in the *Federal Register*, which is expected to be on June 15, 2012. Comments on the DEIS should be specific and address the adequacy of the document and the merits of the alternatives discussed (40 CFR 1503.3). So, for example, if you prefer some aspects of an alternative but disagree with others, please be as specific as possible when sending in your comments. I would appreciate it if you would take the time from your busy schedule to review and comment on the Calumet Project Area DEIS. The Final EIS for this project will be subject to the Objection process pursuant to Forest Service regulations (36 CFR 218). Those who provide comments on the DEIS may participate in the Objection process.

Please send comments to: Robert Thompson, District Ranger, Mystic Ranger District, Calumet Project, 8221 South Highway 16, Rapid City, SD 57702. Or, if preferred, you may email your comments to: comments-rocky-mountain-black-hills-mystic@fs.fed.us with "Calumet Project" as the subject.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me, Lou Conroy, or Jessica Eggers at the Mystic Ranger District Office in Rapid City at (605)-343-1567, or write to us at the above address.

Sincerely,


ROBERT J. THOMPSON
District Ranger