



**Norbeck Society**  
**P. O. Box 9730**  
**Rapid City, SD 57709**

---

May 24, 2024

Patrick Champa, District Ranger  
Elizabeth Krueger, Bearlodge Ranger District Resource Planner  
Bearlodge Ranger District  
Black Hills National Forest  
P.O. Box 680  
Sundance, WY 82729

Re: South Slope Winter Burning - 65539

Dear Ranger Champa and Planner Elizabeth Krueger,

As part of our mission of advocating for sustainable use of public lands, Norbeck Society comments reflect a desire to support a management approach for the Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) that recognizes the imperative of protecting and enhancing the biocomplexity of forest ecosystems that serve and support growing numbers of people. A vision for long-term sustainability of all aspects of the land is paramount to ensure that benefits flow perpetually to those who come after us.

The Norbeck Society is in full support of the South Slope Winter Burning project as described except for the number of acres planned per year. Rather than 500 acres per year, we encourage the Bearlodge Ranger District to strive for more acres per year. We believe the Forest Service has qualified and knowledgeable fire personnel and that this type of project will be a good start on what needs to be a more prominent part of land management in the Black Hills now and in the future.

This important work is a necessity for our fire-dependent ecosystems and will enhance the strength of native forb and grass populations while either creating or maintaining low levels of fuel loading.

This is also a very cost-effective way to treat regeneration of pine and the mortality rates described in the scoping letter are certainly acceptable.

As these locations likely have a built-in seed bank, we ask that you do only necessary revegetation with seeds of native species.

We hope that the work done with the South Slope Winter Burning project will increase the ability of the district to conduct other prescribed burn projects in the future.

As always, we appreciate the opportunity to provide input to the USFS about the management of the Black Hills National Forest.

Sincerely,

Mary Zimmerman, President  
On behalf of the Norbeck Society

[info@norbeckociety.com](mailto:info@norbeckociety.com)