



**DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE
and NATURAL RESOURCES**

3305 WEST SOUTH STREET
RAPID CITY SD 57702-8160
danr.sd.gov

February 20, 2025

James Gubbels, Mystic District Ranger
8221 S. Mount Rushmore Rd.
Rapid City, SD 57702

RE: Comments on the Sawbuck Forest Management Project

Dear District Ranger Gubbels,

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) has reviewed the proposed Sawbuck Vegetation Management Project and respectfully submits the following comments for consideration.

DANR supports the decision to conduct an Environmental Assessment considering the scale of the proposed treatments. We agree with the preliminary assessment to the scale of timber stand improvement (TSI) needed in this project area. As areas are identified for need of TSI treatments, we ask that you assess need based on forest condition (e.g., trees per acre, onset of stem exclusion), and forest health (i.e., presence of insects and disease) on all slopes, suitability, and management areas.

We support the planning of commercial treatments in this project area and encourage the use of steep slope logging where appropriate and necessary. The results from previous steep slope logging in the Black Hills has been positive. We are encouraged to see more consideration of its use in the Hills.

The wide variety of projects proposed (planting, prescribed fire, stream and wetland improvements and enhancements, road improvement) is very encouraging and creates an opportunity for interested partners and stakeholders to get engaged. DANR looks forward to working with the Mystic Ranger District on this project.

Sincerely,

Amanda Morrison

Amanda Morrison
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