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Comments: To the US Forest Service and to all in charge of the management of the Black Hills. It is incomprehensible that you are considering clear cutting grand stands of spruce trees within select areas of the Black Hills area. This planned project appears comparable, in small scale, to cutting the old CA redwoods. The aesthetics of spruce and their environment has been enjoyed for decades by residents and are an integral part of the Black Hills beauty that attracts tourists to this area.

Spruce trees and pine/aspen trees do not compete within the ecosystem and an extensive list of publications discuss environmental preferences of the genus in detail. The root system of a spruce is shallow compared to that of a ponderosa pine. Spruce trees thrive in moist areas within select formations of the Black Hills, on northern faces and at high elevations. The symbiotic relationship of the Spruce's root system within metamorphic and granitic rocks creates natural springs and small water sheds promoting a unique Black Hills environment for flora and fauna to thrive withstand harsh seasonal conditions.

It is obvious that this planned project will provide moneys to a select group of people. Is this money grab more important than preservation of a pristine environment on Federal Lands? Bottom line. Spruce trees are and have been an integral part of the beauty of the Black Hills. I ask persons responsible for this planned deforestation of spruce trees in the Black Hills to consider input from the concerned public and reconsider this irrational approach.