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Organization:

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Comments: I have lived in the Black Hills for about 50 years, am a landowner, and have managed my own woodlot here. I have supported the Black Hills approach to forest management through selective thinning of mature trees and encouraging diversity in our tree species. But the recent "removal of over-story" pine trees north west of Custer looks like a clear cut disaster. Also, the proposed removal of 25,000 acres of spruce does not appear to support diversity in our forest. The Black Hills is a Ponderosa Pine forest with few other tree species, and those are generally sparsely spread throughout the hills. Spruce thrive on north facing slopes and wet, dark valleys where pine does not grow well. Spruce also provides habitat and shelter with their low, thick branches for small birds and other animals that pine and aspen cannot provide. If the goal is to address wildfire concerns, I'd suggest thinning the large number of acres with thick "dog-hair" pine left from recent logging and Mountain Pine Beetle kill areas, and through controlled burns.