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Organization:

Title:

Comments: U.S. Forest Service

Northern Hills Ranger District

2014 N. Main Street

Spearfish, SD 57783

Subject: Support for Silver Creek Riparian Restoration #64119

Dear U.S. Forest Service,

I do support any goal to restore riparian area habitat in our Sacred Black Hills. It does sadden me to learn that you have to install BDAs in some of these areas to MIMIC actual beaver dams built by actual beavers. Are they no longer allowed to thrive in the area?

As you know the beaver population in the Black Hills has been decreasing steadily over the years. They are being pushed out by homeowners building their big homes beside the creeks and tributaries and are unwilling to live according to what beavers need. It is so frustrating that these homes also put in manicured lawns, which I'm sure they are using pesticides that run off into these natural habitats. And then there are people who view them as pests that damage trees and flood areas and agencies across the state set up "Beaver Season".

In a July 19, 2021 AP article about Beaver hunting under the microscope in South Dakota - Commissioner Travis Bies is quoted as saying "I grew up in the Black Hills all my life and have seen the beaver disappear out of the Black Hills." Adding, "They created better water for our cattle. About 15-20 years ago I noticed the beavers were gone, so we had to refill the dams ourselves."

As you know the beaver is a keystone species and is very important for ecosystems. If these BDAs are important to help create better water quality and habitats to release real beavers into this area, then I support this project in the hope that in the long run, you will also restore beavers to the area.

RESTORE BEAVERS TO THE BLACK HILL!! Because; "The North American beaver is a keystone species, a unique organism that supports the entire biological community. The term "keystone" refers to a wedge-shaped block that forms the apex of a stone arch, the brick that holds the entire span in place. If you remove the keystone the arch collapses. The same can be true of a keystone species-their removal can contribute to an ecosystem collapse."

"To acknowledge that beaver create environments that store water and help sustain other creatures is insufficient. Beaver are nothing less than continent-scale forces of nature and in part responsible for sculpting the land upon which Americans built their communities." - Ben Goldfarb in Eager: The Surprising Secret Life of Beaver, 2018

As always, thank you for your stewardship of our Sacred HeSapa.

Carla R. Marshall

HeSapa Resident

CRU Enrolled member.