



*Division of Resource
Conservation and
Forestry*

*Fiscal Year 2017
Annual Report*

Credits:

Bill Smith, Division Director • Resource Conservation & Forestry
523 E. Capitol Ave. Pierre, SD 57501

Greg Josten, State Forester • Resource Conservation & Forestry
3305 W. South St. Rapid City, SD 57702

Writer/Editor: Rachel Ormseth, Community Forestry Coordinator

Contributors: Greg Josten, Bill Smith, Brian Scott, Brian Garbisch, Doug Haugan, Ruth Sanders, Rick Mayko, Marcus Warnke, John Parks Brigman, Nathan Kafer, Tiffany Shannon

Photographs: Division personnel, US Forest Service, and South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts, Black Hills Adventure Lodging

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DIVISION OF RESOURCE CONSERVATION & FORESTRY

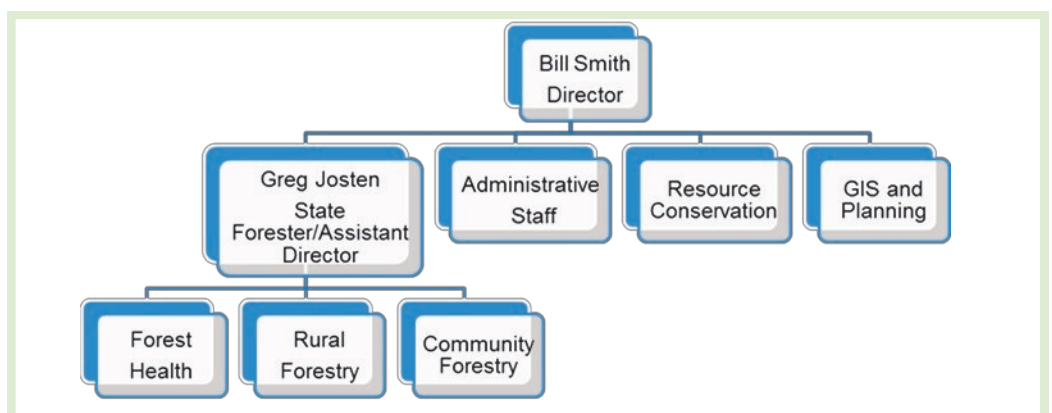
The mission of the Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry is to conserve, protect, improve, and develop the natural resources of South Dakota for its citizens.

The division has offices in the following locations:

- Lead
- Rapid City
- Hot Springs
- Pierre
- Watertown
- Mitchell
- Sioux Falls

The Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry (RCF) programs are designed to provide direct technical assistance and advice to private landowners concerning their forests and other trees. Division employees work with farmers, ranchers, rural homeowners, and urban dwellers to select the best location and tree/shrub species to plant on their property, resolve problems with trees, and to provide a better and safe habitat for all citizens. This report highlights division accomplishments and special projects in Fiscal Year 2017 by each program.

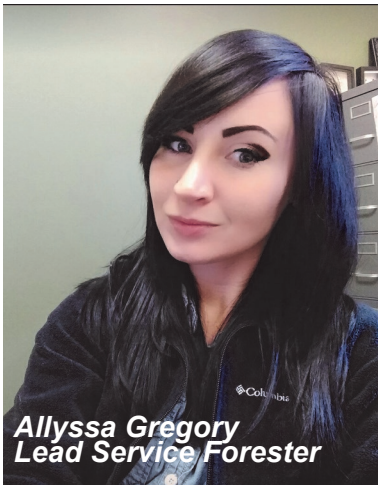
The division operates on a program level along four core programs: Community Forestry, Natural Resources Conservation (soil, water, air, etc.), Forest Health, and Rural Forestry. Each program has a team leader who reports to the Division Director, William Smith, or the State Forester, Gregory Josten.



Additional copies of our annual report can be obtained by calling 605-773-3623, emailing SDRCF@state.sd.us, or the report can be downloaded from the division at <http://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/>

Welcome to the Resource Conservation & Forestry

In FY2017, the Resource Conservation and Forestry Division welcomed three new team members, Allyssa Gregory, Tiffany Shannon, and Rachel Ormseth. Allyssa Gregory is the Service Forester in the Lead office, Tiffany Shannon is the Natural Resources Specialist in the Pierre office, and Rachel Ormseth is the Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator in the Pierre office. Please read below to learn more about our new team members.



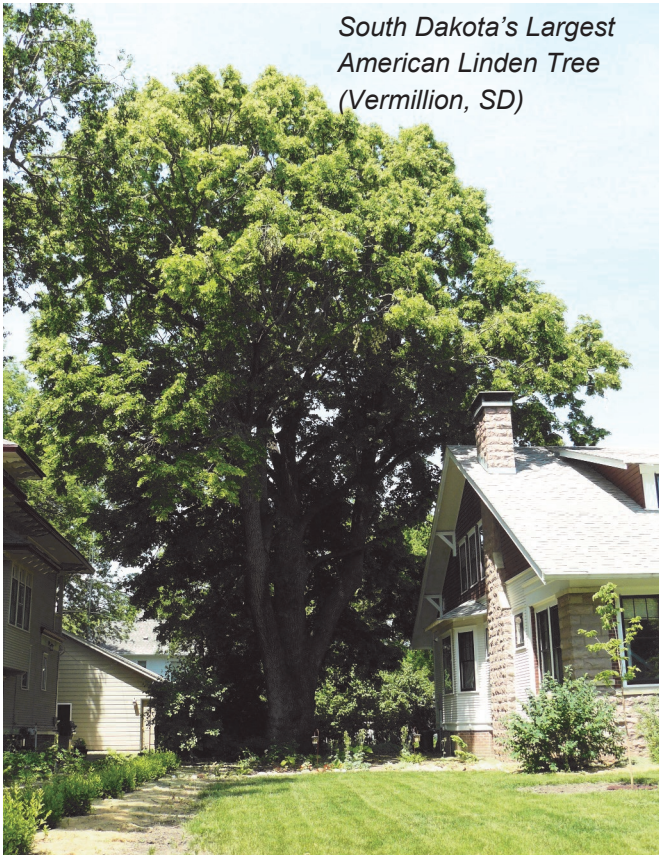
Allyssa was born in Maryland and raised in Illinois. After spending three years in Nacogdoches, Texas and a year in Carbondale, Illinois, she graduated from Southern Illinois University with a Bachelor's degree in forestry. While at college, Allyssa interned with a tree service company, participated in horticulture club, the student chapter of International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), and served on the Illinois Urban Forestry Committee for the Illinois Forestry Development Council. Collaborating with the committee encouraged Allyssa to pursue a career assisting the public with forestry related issues. After graduation, she worked as a horticultural specialist in San Antonio, Texas. Allyssa is enjoying the Black Hills and sharing her understanding of forestry practices with private landowners.

Tiffany grew up in the small town of Delavan, Illinois. She graduated from the University of Missouri with a Master's degree in Animal Science with an emphasis in monogastric nutrition. Her agriculture background inspired an interest in conservation, and prompted her to apply for the Natural Resources Specialist position in Pierre.



Rachel was born and raised in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She graduated with a Bachelor's in Agricultural Sciences in both Biology and Horticulture from South Dakota State University (SDSU) in May 2016. At SDSU, Rachel participated in the Horticulture club, most specifically as the secretary in her senior year. Upon accepting her position, Rachel became an ISA certified Arborist. Rachel has experience with nursery sales and retail as she worked at a garden center for four summers. She also interned at the Denver Botanic Gardens for a summer where she focused on Urban Agriculture and community gardens in low income areas.

South Dakota Big Tree Registry



*South Dakota's Largest
American Linden Tree
(Vermillion, SD)*

In 1980, the South Dakota Register of Big Trees was initiated. This is a list of the largest reported specimens of both native and naturalized tree species found within the state. The primary purpose of the register is to recognize big trees as a valuable natural resource worthy of conservation that may provide sources for superior seed collection and/or vegetative propagation. Through this program, uncommonly large trees of any species are located and recorded. The owners and/or locators (nominators) of such trees are recognized through news releases and special certificates.

The state register recognizes champions in 64 different species. A total of 289 trees, both champions and challengers, are currently listed on the register. South Dakota has one national champion. It is a Black Hills spruce located in the Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) which measures 9 feet 9 inches in circumference, 103 feet tall, and 30 feet in average crown spread.

American Forests and the Davey Tree Expert Company sponsor and maintain the National Big Tree Register.

Christmas at the Capitol

2016 South Dakota State Capitol Christmas Tree

Every year the division is given the task of finding the perfect tree to be the crown jewel of the Christmas celebration. This tree is selected from a number of candidates from throughout the state. Once chosen, the winning tree is decorated by a selected organization and placed in the Capitol Rotunda as the main display for the holiday season. Facts about the tree that was selected for this year:

Height:
29 feet
Tree Species:
Colorado blue spruce
Origin:
Huron, SD
Donated By:
Krutzfeldt Family
Decorated By:
Mount Rushmore Society
Theme:
A Monumental Christmas





Community Forestry in South Dakota

Seventy-seven percent of South Dakotans live within urban areas. To serve the urban or community forestry needs of these citizens, the division has offered community forestry technical assistance to individual service organizations, non-profit groups, and communities since 1972.

Technical assistance for establishment of a tree board, development of a tree ordinance, organization of community tree inventories, identification and control of insect and disease problems, and assistance with grant preparation and administration are just a few of the services offered by the urban and community forestry team. Educational programs on tree selection, planting, health, and maintenance are available for communities, schools, and other organizations. The urban and community forestry team focuses its efforts on assisting communities with the development of local community forestry programs.



Pictured above are community tree plantings from left to right in Madison, Reliance, and Pierre.

Community Forestry Challenge Grants

Since 1991, the division has provided financial assistance to South Dakota communities and service organizations each year through a portion of the division's annual allocation of Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Funds from the US Forest Service. These funds are awarded to communities and organizations in the form of Urban Forestry Challenge grants. They are used to fund projects which solve a specific community forestry problem and demonstrate the importance of trees in communities. The community or service organization must match the challenge grants on a 1-to-1 basis.

The criteria for the challenge grant require increased commitment and effort from a community. This is in place to build long-term capacity within applying communities. The criteria are listed from highest to lowest priority with their top allocation dollar amount:

1. Professional Services—\$5,000
2. Tree Inventory/Assessment—\$5,000
3. Existing Tree Care and Maintenance—\$1,000
4. Education/Training—\$5,000
5. New Tree Planting—\$1,000
6. Other Activities—\$5,000

Grants have a maximum limit of \$5,000 per year; an applicant may receive a maximum of \$1,000 per year for new tree plantings and a maximum of \$1,000 per year for existing tree care and maintenance. The required match may be met through volunteer labor, donated and/or purchased supplies, or actual cash expenditures. Twelve Challenge grants totaling \$17,840 were awarded which leveraged \$17,840 in local finds and in-kind match.

Along with the regular grant round, a storm damage grant round was held in March 2017 to help communities plant trees to replace those lost to storm damage. Six grants totaling \$10,000 were awarded which leveraged \$10,000 in local hard dollar and in-kind match.

South Dakota Community Forestry Advisory Council

The South Dakota Community Forestry Advisory Council is made up of representatives from city governments, the US Forest Service, green industry, non-profit groups, and volunteer organizations. They advise the State Forester on community forestry issues, review and recommend grant awards, help set program goals and objectives, and help develop South Dakota's Forest Action Plan.



Tree Boards

At the present time there are 106 known tree boards across the state. Local tree boards provide the foundation for most of the community forestry programs in South Dakota. These boards consist of community leaders, city employees, and volunteer citizens. Tree boards are vital to the development of tree ordinances, preparation of annual work plans, tree plantings, tree maintenance, and tree removals. These tree boards provide their citizens with information, secure and administer grant funds, and conduct local Arbor Day activities.

Technical Assistance

The community forestry program targets efforts at threats and priority areas identified in the state's Forest Action Plan. Strategies used to address threats identified in the state's plan include: technical assistance, educational presentations and materials, and financial assistance. During FY2017, the division provided 214 technical assists to community governments, volunteer-service groups, and private citizens in 27 communities. These assists covered topics such as big tree measurement (see page 4), damage evaluations, tree care recommendations, and general urban forestry projects and grant applications.

Community Forestry Presentations

The Community Forestry Team lead 67 presentations and workshops. There were 40 presentations to school classes and civic groups about Arbor Day, Tree City USA, Smokey Bear and fire prevention, and other community forestry subjects. The division held six workshops on tree planting, tree care, and forest health.

Arbor Day in South Dakota

In 1947, the State Legislature designated the last Friday in April as South Dakota's official Arbor Day to recognize trees for the many environmental functions and values they provide. On or around Arbor Day, division foresters provided presentations to school classes, service clubs, and other groups on the importance of trees in South Dakota.

Arbor Day Essay Contest

Kalissa Mayclin of Mount Vernon, Larissa Stahl of Tabor, and Maxwell Quinn of Faulkton were the winning essayists selected from the 1,423 entries in the 2017 Arbor Day Essay Contest. Sponsored by the South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts, McDonald's restaurants of South Dakota, and South Dakota Department of Agriculture, the contest provides fifth and sixth grade students the opportunity to write about the importance of Arbor Day and tree planting in South Dakota. As first place winner, Mayclin received a plaque, \$100 in cash and a McDonald's lined jacket. Her school, Plankinton Elementary, received \$150 for the purchase of supplies or equipment. Stahl, the second place winner, received a plaque and \$75 cash, while Quinn received a plaque and \$50 for his third place essay.



Fifth graders from Terry Redlin Elementary School made a trip to the Mary Jo Wegner Arboretum on the east side of Sioux Falls for an Arbor Day Planting. Photo courtesy of Keloland.

Arbor Day Poster Contest

The first place winner, Elora Gould, who attends Faith Elementary in Faith, received a \$100 cash prize, a certificate of achievement, and her artwork featured on the South Dakota Arbor Day Poster Contest Calendar. Elora's teacher, Mrs. Sarah Brindley, received \$100 for the purchase of educational supplies. The second and third place winners were Anna Blessinger of St. Thomas Elementary in Madison and Kaden Kinsley of Jones County Elementary in Murdo. Anna received a \$75 cash prize and a certificate. Kaden received a certificate of achievement and a \$50 cash prize. The contest is sponsored by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, the South Dakota Arborists Association, and Dakotas Society of American Foresters.



Pictured: Elora Gould's winning Arbor Day poster for 2017. To see the other winning poster or receive an Arbor Day calendar visit our webpage or contact Rachel Ormseth at 605.773.3594.

Arbor Day Calendar

The Arbor Day Poster Contest Calendar is a collection of artwork of the top 12 winners from around the state. The calendar is a way to recognize the winners as well as promote and celebrate Arbor Day and the many benefits trees provide.



Tree City USA Planting in Pierre, SD at T.F. Riggs High School. Photo courtesy of the Capital Journal.

According to the Arbor Day Foundation, the Tree City USA program has been greening up cities and towns across America since 1976. It is a nation-wide movement that provides the framework necessary for communities to manage and expand their public trees. More than 3,400 communities in the US have made the commitment to becoming a Tree City USA.

Tree City USA is a community improvement and national recognition program for cities and towns that meet established standards and effectively manage their public tree resources. The program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation and the US Forest Service at the national level, and by the division at the state level. To qualify for Tree City USA designation, a community must meet four standards:

1. Organize a community tree board to oversee the community forestry program;
2. Establish and enforce an effective community tree ordinance;
3. Implement a community forestry program funded by a minimum of \$2.00 per capita; and
4. Celebrate Arbor Day with an official proclamation and organized observance.

In South Dakota, there were 32 Tree City USA communities and 3 Tree Campus USA in 2017.

2017 South Dakota Tree City USA Statistical Data

Number of Tree City, USA Communities:	32
Recertification rate:	97%
Percent of population living in a Tree City, USA:	53.65%
Largest Tree City, USA community (173,000):	Sioux Falls
Smallest Tree City, USA community (66):	Wood
Funds spent by communities on community forestry management:	\$3,872,438.36
Average per capita spent on community forestry programs:	\$8.41

Project Learning Tree

South Dakota Project Learning Tree Inc. (SDPLT) is the cornerstone of environmental education in our state and is recognized as a premier environmental education program. SDPLT provides formal and non-formal educators with the tools they need to bring the environment into their lessons with students. The activities and materials provide the youth with an understanding of how to think, not what to think, about our environment and natural resources. SDPLT provides opportunities to investigate environmental issues and encourages informed, responsible decisions. Our complex environment can be better understood with critical thinking skills, service-learning, and inquiry-based activities found in *Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood* guide, SDPLT Basic Guide (PreK through 8th grade) and the five secondary educational modules. SDPLT has been active in advisory committees, editing materials, and test piloting the SDPLT guides. All of the guides are written by educators and professional resource managers and meet national and state academic standards.

In 2017, SDPLT was able to reach approximately 6,825 students in South Dakota under the leadership of Tracy Sigdestad. In addition, over 5,500 other students and community members were reached through annual events and other Environmental Education opportunities. On top of that, Tracy trained 273 new educators in 2017.

Pictured below from left to right: Lakota Kid's Camp, 2017 Envirothon Winners, , A group of children participating in Walk in the Forest



The following workshops/training sessions were completed during FY2017:

- 16 workshops for pre-school, k-8, and early childhood development;
- SDPLT worked with RCF Forester Josh Larson to facilitate a DDN (Digital Network) workshop for Envirothon coaches before the April Envirothon Competition;
- RCF Forester Jon Livermore presented 'We All Need Trees' at the Sioux Empire Water Festival in March; and,
- SDPLT and Leave No Trace did a joint workshop/summer camp for families in Pierre at the Discovery Center in June.

Other activities:

- State Coordinator, Tracy Sigdestad, attended the National PLT conference in Louisville, Kentucky;
- Lakota Kid's Camp in Canyon Calm;
- SDPLT held 2 "Walk in the Forest" events, one in the Spring and one in the Fall; and
- State Coordinator Tracy Sigdestad visited the Girl Scout camp at Storm Mountain to facilitate SDPLT and Leave No Trace activities to the Girl Scouts and their leaders.

Resource Conservation

The purpose of the resource conservation program is to provide for the conservation of soil and water resources within the state; to prevent or control soil erosion; to prevent or minimize flood damage, and to conserve, develop, utilize, and preserve the natural resources of this state (South Dakota Codified Law § 38-7-1). In addition, the division provides administrative and technical assistance to the State Conservation Commission and conservation districts. The primary programs include: Revolving Loan Fund; Coordinated Natural Resources Conservation Grant Program; Conservation District Programs; and Technical Assistance.



Left: Water piped from fenced out pond in Grant County .



Right: Wind-blown soil deposition in Sanborn County.

Revolving Loan Fund Program

Loans can be made to conservation districts or watershed districts for securing, by purchase or otherwise, necessary equipment, trees and other plant materials, and supplies needed to further their programs. Loans are made at three percent interest per annum.

FY2017 Loans:

Conservation District	Loan Amount	Project Description
Butte	\$22,500.00	No-Till Drill
Total	\$22,500.00	-

Conservation District Assistance

In FY2017, program staff made 396 grant and loan related program assists, 61 non-grant related assists.

Conservation Grants

During FY2017, 50 grant applications were received requesting nearly \$1.4 million. A total of 42 projects were funded for \$778,234 (pages 23-24)



Cover Crops in Bon Homme Conservation District

Conservation Commission

Support to the State Conservation Commission in 2017 consisted of revising the grant cost-share docket; implementing the goals and objectives outlined in the Coordinated Plan for Natural Resources Conservation; review and presentation of the Soil Conservation Award Program applications, assist with the review and update to the Conservation District Supervisor Orientation Manual, forwarding two conservation district name change requests, and updating the commission's annual priorities and work plan. The commission met with multiple conservation agencies and groups to identify priorities and shared visions for natural resource conservation in South Dakota.

Funding

House Bill 1215, passed during the 2011 State Legislative Session, repealed the refund provisions of the motor fuel tax, and declared that \$500,000 would be deposited annually into the conservation grant program fund.

General Accomplishments

Conservation program staff drafted four news releases, participated in the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Farm Bill Task Force, participated in the Annual meeting of the NACD, participated in the NACD Northern Plains Region Leaders meeting, published newsletters to conservation districts, and conducted the state conservation speech contest.

Multi-District Projects

Seventeen projects involving 65 partnerships between conservation districts were funded in FY2017.

These projects included sharing technicians, grassland and wetland improvement, multi-district information and education, and shelterbelt establishment.

Soil Conservation Award Program

The Soil Conservation Award Program was created by the 2008 State Legislature to recognize exceptional farming and ranching practices that conserve soil and other natural resources in South Dakota. Producers utilizing grassed waterways, terraces, crop rotations, sufficient crop residue to protect soil stability, no-till, grasslands managed for sustainable productivity, livestock management to limit soil and nutrient runoff, or forest lands managed according to a forest stewardship plan are eligible for the award. In FY2017, seven producers nominated by four conservation districts received the award.

District Supervisor Accreditation Program

Program staff administers a set of eleven training modules for an online Conservation District Supervisor Accreditation Program. Beginning in fiscal year 2010, staff has been working cooperatively with South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts to develop the online training program to make Conservation District Supervisors aware of the history of the conservation movement, the roles and responsibilities of district supervisors, and legal issues important to conservation districts. South Dakota State University provides the computer network for the online training program. The National Association of Conservation Districts recognized South Dakota's program at their annual conventions in 2011 to 2017. For more information, see: <http://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/district-tools/supervisor-modules/>.

56th Annual Resource Conservation Speech Contest



Ken Gillaspie awarding first place to Grace Brose.

The 56th annual State Finals of the Resource Conservation Speech Contest was held at the Capitol Lake Visitor Center in Pierre on Saturday, April 22, 2017. The theme of this year's contest was "Soil Health: What Will You Leave?" Eight high school students from across South Dakota competed at the state level. Winning first place and a \$1,100 scholarship was Grace Brose sponsored by the Pennington County Conservation District. Grace was a sophomore at New Underwood High School and is the daughter of Amanda Brose of New Underwood. Receiving second place and a \$750 scholarship was Raina Grimsley sponsored by the Davison County Conservation District. She was a senior at Mitchell High School and is the daughter of Ron and Misty

Grimsley of Mitchell. Receiving third place and a \$450 scholarship was Danika Gordon. Gordon was sponsored by the Lawrence County Conservation District and was a freshman at Sturgis Brown High School and is the daughter of Bruce and Kindra Gordon of Lawrence. Scholarships totaling \$2,300 for the winners were provided by Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of South Dakota. The contest is cosponsored by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts.

To read the winning speeches and view pictures of the contestants, please visit:

<http://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/educational-programs/resource-conservation-speech-contest/>

Next year's theme is "How Does Your Watershed?" For more information, contact your local conservation district office or SDDA at 605.773.3623.

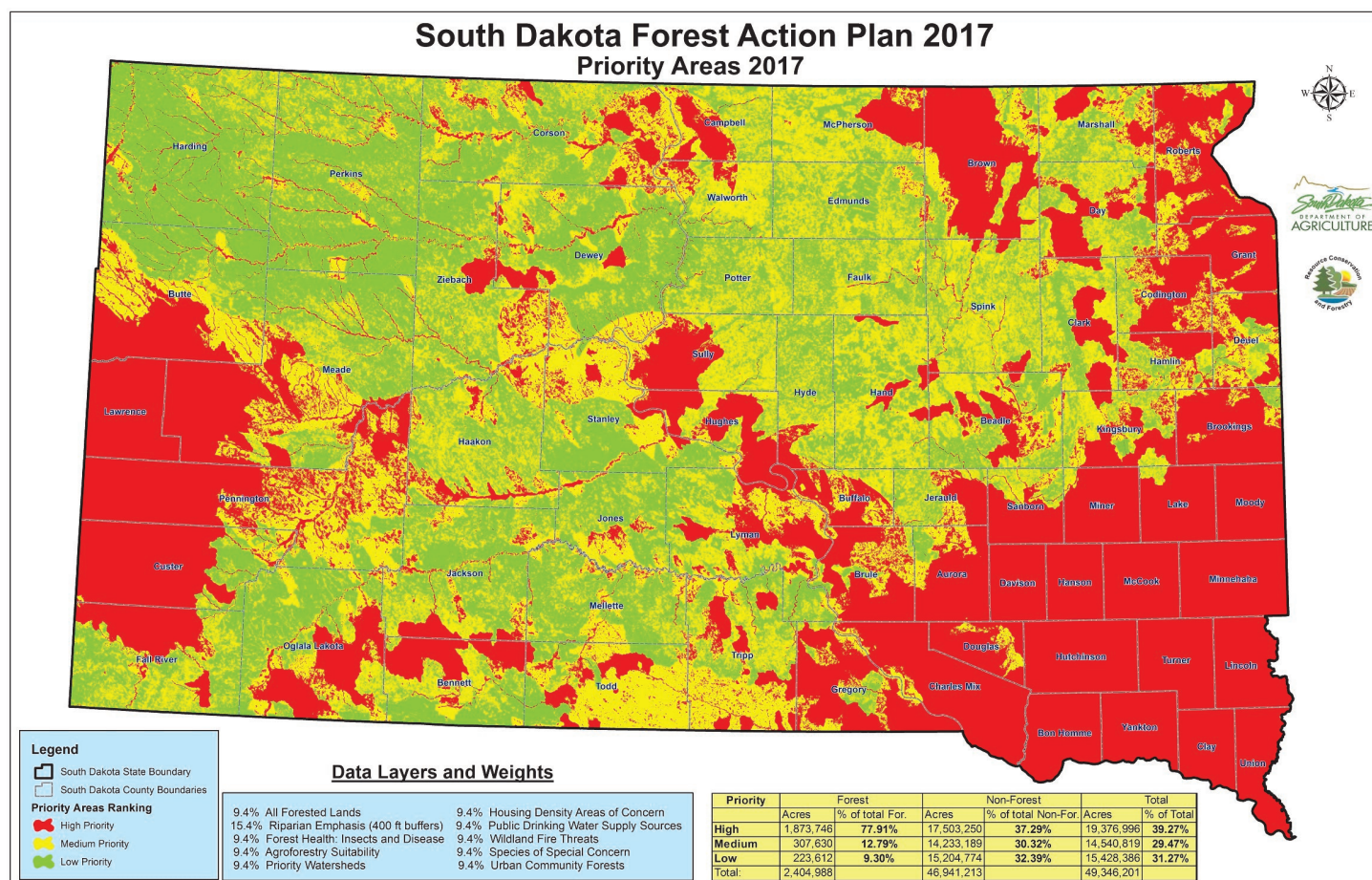


Shelterbelt planting in Brown County.

RURAL FORESTRY

Established through the 1990 Farm Bill, the Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) encourages private forest landowners to manage their lands using professionally prepared forest stewardship plans. These plans consider and integrate forest resources, including timber, wildlife and fish, water, aesthetics, and all associated resources to meet landowner objectives. In South Dakota, since 1990, there have been 1,199 plans written covering 87,635 acres of forestland. Current forest stewardship plans are new, or have been revised or updated within the last 10 years, as recorded in the USFS Stewardship Mapping and Reporting Tool (SMART). There are 131 current stewardship plans in South Dakota covering 38,119 acres of private lands.

The State Forest Action Plan, approved in 2010, established a set of priority areas for emphasis that include all ownerships: federal, state and private. In FY2017, RCF updated the state's priority areas in the map below as part of updating the Forest Action Plan. The FSP only applies to rural private lands, and therefore focuses on a subset of the state's priority areas with stewardship potential. Private lands classified as having high stewardship potential correspond to private lands within state priority areas, but outside of municipalities. All private lands outside municipalities that are included in state priority areas are classified as high stewardship potential lands. There are 1,323,861 acres of private lands with high stewardship potential in South Dakota, of which 23,255 acres are covered by current forest stewardship plans.





Aspen workshop in the Black Hills

Nationally the USDA Forest Service finances and administrates FSP through the State and Private Forestry Program. In South Dakota, the Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry administers the program with guidance provided by the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee. FSP funding from the Forest Service is matched dollar for dollar with State general funds that support the division.

In addition to forest stewardship plan preparation, FSP is the primary source of funding for forest management technical assistance provided by the division.

Stewardship Plans:

In 2017, the division prepared or approved 17 new forest stewardship plans for private landowners

covering 7,037 acres. 4 forest stewardship plans were updated covering 315 acres.

Each year, a random sample of the current forest stewardship plans are monitored to determine if the landowner is implementing practices as recommended in their plan. This activity satisfies the monitoring requirements of the Forest Stewardship Program, and helps accomplish monitoring needs identified in the state's Forest Action Plan.

Based on the 2017 monitoring sample, 100 percent of current plans are being implemented, and 100 percent of the acres covered by plans are being sustainably managed.

Agroforestry Assistance:

Assistance and planning by division service foresters resulted in the planting of 152 new trees and shrubs on 1.7 acres for conservation purposes. Foresters reviewed and approved 146 agroforestry tree planting plans for cost-share by the Coordinated Natural Resources Conservation Grant Program. Tree plantings support the State Forest Action Plan strategies of expanding species diversity and providing a younger age class of trees to offset over-mature and dying trees that are rendering windbreaks ineffective.



Aspen workshop in the Black Hills

Non-commercial Thinning: Non-commercial thinning helps private forest landowners implement their forest stewardship plans, and address the threats outlined in the State Forest Action Plan. Thinning improves the health and vigor of remaining trees. They grow faster, and are more resistant to insect attack. Treating the fuels by burning or mulching can significantly reduce the hazards of wildfire.



Division service foresters administer cost share assistance from two programs that help private forest landowners thin their non-commercial forest lands. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), and the Coordinated Natural Resources Conservation Grant Program provided funds to private landowners for timber stand improvement projects. The NRCS also provided funds to the division to administer the EQIP forestry practices. Technical assistance for the Coordinated Natural Resources Conservation Grant Program thinning grants and projects that receive no cost share came from FSP funding. NRCS and FSP funds are matched dollar for dollar with State general funds that support division activities.

Written prescriptions for 40 non-commercial projects were prepared and resulted in the improvement of 727 acres of pine and hardwood stands. EQIP funding supported 35 of the projects covering 557 acres, three were funded by Conservation Commission grants covering 64 acres, and 2 projects covering 106 acres received other funding assistance.

Windbreak Condition Project: The Windbreak Condition Project utilized Geographic Information System (GIS) and remote sensing techniques and field survey methods to identify windbreak locations. The division assessed the primary function and condition of the windbreaks in eight different counties in South Dakota. Sites that were small blocks of trees within maintained lawns, naturally forested riparian areas, ditch/road banks and fence lines were excluded from this project.

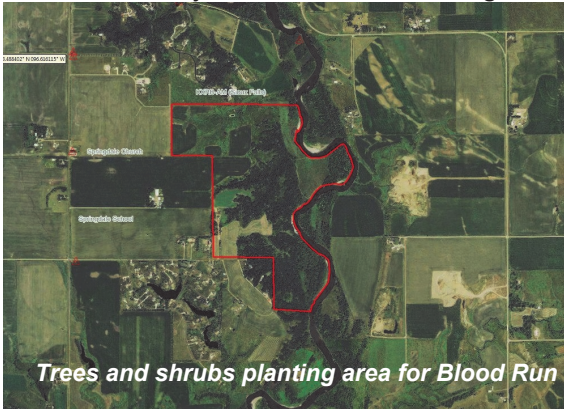
The Windbreak Condition Project included the following counties in South Dakota: Aurora, Davison, Douglas, Hanson, Hutchinson, Jerauld, Sanborn, and Yankton. The Kansas State University, Kansas Forest Service (KFS) provided analysis of the 2014 National Agriculture Imagery Program to identify windbreak locations. The following criteria was used to select the windbreaks for ground truthing.

- Geographic stratification
- Common vs. uncommon windbreak designs
- Minimum sample allotment and priority for substitute units
- Maps for locating sample units

The Windbreak Condition Project sampled a minimum of 30 shelterbelts per county. Data collected shows at least 70% of windbreaks in the eight county area are in fair or poor condition, justifying the need for windbreak renovation.

Forest Legacy - Blood Run Project

During the 2013 Legislative session, the 615-acre Good Earth State Park at Blood Run became South Dakota's first newly created state park in 40 years. The USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy Program provided \$1.2 million along with matching funds from Forward Sioux Falls Foundation and South Dakota Department of Game Fish & Parks to purchase the land. Officially titled Good Earth State Park at Blood Run by the South Dakota Legislature, the property is located about one mile southeast of Sioux Falls.



It is part of the Blood Run National Historic Landmark, which lies on both sides of the Big Sioux River at the mouth of Blood Run Creek and includes over 3,000 acres of land in South Dakota and Iowa.

In 2017, trees and shrubs were planted on the Good Earth property to meet the Forest Legacy Program criteria. There were a total of 14,530 trees and shrubs planted within 10 acres. The tree and shrub species planted were boxelder, native cottonwoods, false indigo, little leaf linden, silver maple, peachleaf willow, sandbar willow, American hazelnut, common elderberry, and redosier dogwoods.

Tree Farm Program

The American Tree Farm System promotes sound forest management through the certification of sustainably managed forestlands. The American Tree Farm System has been endorsed by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), the world's largest forest certification system. The division provides technical assistance to Tree Farmers, certification inspections, and administrative assistance to the South Dakota Family Forests Association, which administers the Tree Farm Program in the state. There are 112 Tree Farms in the state covering 23,690 acres. Division foresters completed 11 of the 30 Tree Farm inspections in FY2017, recertifying 940 acres.

In fiscal year 2007, the South Dakota Tree Farm Committee, now the SD Family Forest Association, established a program to help landowners hire consulting foresters to prepare forest stewardship plans for their property. The program is funded by the division and Neiman Enterprises. Landowners are required to pay at least 25% of the cost of the plan preparation. At the end of fiscal year 2017, 41 plans have been completed covering 6,702 acres. The total of the cost assistance provided for the completed plans is \$32,038.

Bob Burns and Mary Lahood from Blackhawk, SD won the 2017 Tree Farmer of the Year award. The Burns - Lahood Tree Farm property covers about 320 acres in Meade County. The property has been in the family since 1887. Bob and Mary won the award based on their efforts over time to sustainably manage their property and their leadership and engagement in the forestry community.



**2017 Tree Farmers of the Year
Burns-Lahood Tree Farm
L-R: Mary Lahood, Bob Burns**

Information and Education

The division partnered with the SD Family Forest Association to provide multiple landowner workshops in FY2017. The division planned or assisted with planning efforts for 3 workshops in the Black Hills area held in October, November, and May. The fall workshops focused on the ecology and management of quaking aspen in the Black Hills, and the May workshop focused on resilient forest management in the Black Hills. The October and May workshops were held on certified tree farm properties and included walking tours of different areas of interest for workshop attendees. Overall, 97 people attended the workshops.



Photo Credit to SD Department of Tourism

Forest Health

The division provided more than 317 technical assists (not including mountain pine beetle assist through the Black Hills Forest Initiative) to private landowners, conservation districts, state parks, and cooperative extension personnel. These technical assists are targeted at threats identified in the South Dakota Forest Action Plan. Other strategies used to address identified threats include educational materials and presentations, pest surveys, and preventative pest management.

Many of these assists involved issues dealing with individual landowner trees, windbreaks, and shelterbelts. The results of diagnoses on current pest problems were communicated through the weekly Pest Update located on the division's website (<http://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/tree-pest-alerts/>). The Pest Update had over 7,850 unique views in fiscal year 2017. A link to the update is sent directly to individuals associated with Agriculture extension services, conservation districts, the Department of Game, Fish and Parks, and the general public in and outside of South Dakota.

Pest bulletins with information on common insects and diseases and management or treatment methods continue to be updated with current information and can be found on the division's website (<http://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/pests-insects-diseases/>)

Gypsy Moth Trapping Project

The gypsy moth monitoring program was conducted as a cooperative effort with the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service. The gypsy moth is a defoliating insect that was introduced into New England from Europe in the 1860s. It has since spread into deciduous forests throughout the eastern United States and is now established in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Traps were placed at campgrounds and rest areas. The division placed 64 traps in spring of 2016, and no positive catches were identified in traps placed by division personnel in fall 2016. The Forest Health summer intern identified potential new locations to place additional traps. In the spring of 2017, division personnel placed 66 traps around South Dakota, focusing on rest areas, campgrounds, and recreational sites. The majority of the sites identified in spring of 2016, were targeted again in spring 2017.

Dutch Elm Disease

Dutch elm disease was discovered in Cleveland, OH in 1930. Since then it has continued to be a threat to the elm trees that remain in the communities across South Dakota. Two Dutch elm disease surveys were conducted by division personnel in the towns of Selby and Britton at the request of city officials. The number of infected trees identified in Selby in FY2017 was 12, which is up from the 11 that were identified in this community in FY16. Personnel identified 13 DED trees in Britton in FY2017. Division personnel also responded to requests for positive identification of Dutch elm disease on a case-by-case basis.

Sawmill Trapping Initiative & Community Assistance through Trapping

The division continued to place funnel traps for pine engraver beetles and mountain pine beetles at the three larger sawmills in the Black Hills area, including Spearfish Forest Products, Rushmore Forest Products, and Baker Timber Products. In total, 48 funnel traps are placed, and monitored throughout the summer and early fall months. No communities requested assistance in trapping for bark beetles in FY2017.

Information and Education

The division held aspen regeneration and forest health workshops in locations throughout the Black Hills. Three workshops were held, one in September of 2016, one in November, 2016, and one in May, 2017. The focus of these workshops was managing forests for resiliency to insect and disease outbreak and fire, and to promote overall forest health through increasing diversity. The workshops in September and May included walks through some private properties highlighting ongoing efforts to increase forest resiliency.

Weed & Pest Grants

In FY2017 forest health closed out weed and pest grants totaling \$49,000 to five County Weed & Pest agencies. This included \$7,000 each to Fall River and Lyman Counties, \$10,000 to Pennington County, \$20,000 to Lawrence County, and \$5,000 to Custer County. The FY2017 grant round for weed and pest management had three new grant applications approved totaling \$24,000 split between Fall River (\$7,000), Lyman (\$7,000), and Pennington (\$10,000) Counties.

Emerald Ash Borer

Emerald ash borer (EAB) is not yet found in South Dakota; however, the division continued to deliver information on the threat posed by EAB throughout FY2017. Information is provided to campgrounds throughout the state. EAB continues to be identified in more counties moving west in Iowa. In FY2017, EAB was discovered in Alta, Iowa, bringing the nearest infestation to within 80 miles of the South Dakota border. Notably, EAB has been detected in Boulder, Colorado reminding us that it can show up anywhere through the movement of firewood. In April, 2017, forest health and community forestry staff attended an EAB symposium in Omaha, NE. This event had speakers from different communities that had experienced EAB infestation for different amounts of time, and the different management tactics each community was pursuing. Tree care companies were also invited to showcase their methods for chemically treating and protecting ash trees from becoming infested by EAB. South Dakota's EAB Readiness plan is reviewed annually, and updated as necessary. It was last updated in FY2017.



Photo Credit to Shutterstock

Black Hills Forest Initiative

Since 1996, the mountain pine beetle epidemic has dramatically affected the ponderosa pine forest of the Black Hills. The beetle is a native insect and well adapted to the natural conditions of the region. The Black Hills experienced widespread epidemics in the 1890s, 1940s, 1970s, and the present.

Mountain Pine Beetle in the Black Hills

In FY2017 the mountain pine beetle (MPB) epidemic ended in the Black Hills. Results from the MPB survey and marking efforts during fiscal year 2017 showed a drastic reduction in the number infested trees. Marking crews covered a similar acreage, however less than 1/12th of infested trees were located compared to FY2016. The decrease follows nearly an 80% reduction of infested trees identified in FY2016 from FY2015. The peak

of the epidemic is estimated to have occurred during the 2011 flight (FY2012), and has been in decline since then. MPB infested tree numbers are down to endemic levels across the entire Black Hills area.

Throughout the epidemic, the Division and Custer State Park (CSP) jointly developed a detailed plan to aggressively manage the infestation. Harvesting infested trees and thinning to reduce stand susceptibility has been a proven means of slowing beetle populations. The use of pheromones—synthetic forms

of attractants naturally produced by the beetles—had previously been used to draw large populations of beetles into target trees, however this was not used in FY2017. These pheromone attractants are so effective at drawing beetles they can actually create problems in areas where beetle populations were previously low. For FY2017, the specific mountain pine beetle projects completed by the division on all lands in the Black Hills are listed on the next page.

Custer State Park Survey & Marking:

In FY2017, there were 414 infested trees located in Custer State Park. Of these, 239 have been treated through cutting & chunking or harvest. The number of infested trees continues to decline in CSP as the epidemic has largely ended in the Black Elk Wilderness and on adjacent National Forest System land. Not all infested trees in the Park were targeted for treatment this year, because widely dispersed pockets of few infested trees do not pose much threat of MPB population expansion. The beetles emerging from these infested trees are likely to disperse, so a threshold of greater than 5 infested trees in a 2.5 acre area was targeted for treatment. This threshold was set using our best available science, and only one area met this criteria. Park employees also cut, chunked, or removed infested trees in highly visible corridors and heavily used recreation areas.

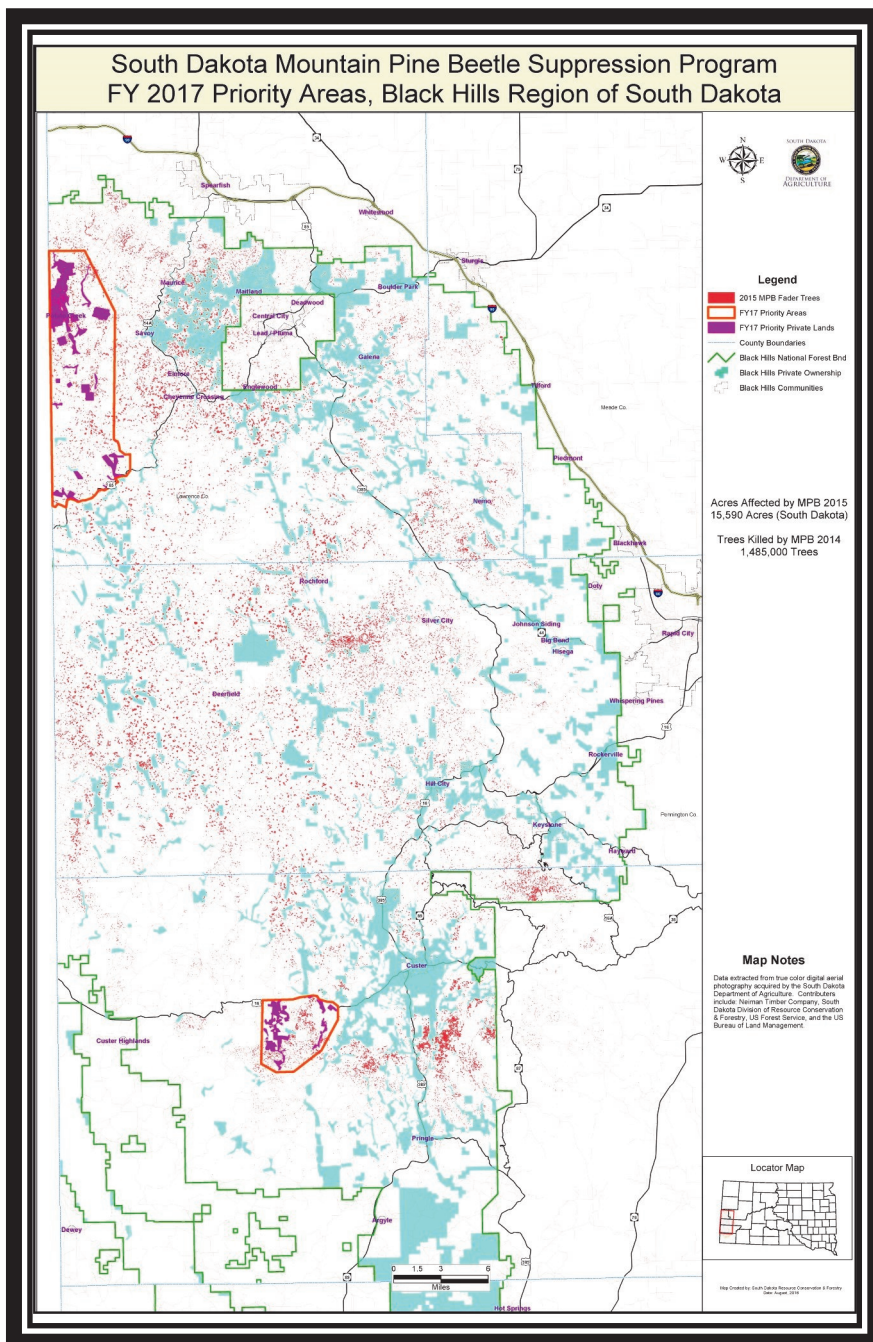
Prevention treatments on High Value trees in Custer State Park:

In addition to population suppression tactics employed in the Park, preventative spraying and anti-aggregate pheromones were also utilized. In total, the park had 1,576 ponderosa pine trees sprayed with preventative pesticides.

A relic stand of limber pine in the Cathedral Spires of CSP has received National Natural Landmark status from the National Park Service. Limber pine is a preferred host to the mountain pine beetle and there has been concern that South Dakota could lose this unique stand. For this reason, the Park also sprayed 28 limber pine trees, and placed pheromones on 38 limber pines in the Cathedral Spires/Little Devil's Tower to prevent MBP infestation. The pheromone used is called 'Verbenone,' and this acts as an anti-aggregate, communicating to the beetles that there is no vacancy for additional beetles in these trees.

Private lands surveying:

FY2017 marked the sixth, and final year of survey and marking efforts to help private landowners suppress this mountain pine beetle epidemic. Implementation included the purchase and analysis of high resolution aerial photography to monitor the epidemic and help planning efforts, landowner workshops, technical assistance in the form of locating and marking infested trees, cost share for tree removal or on-site treatment of infested trees, on-site treatment of infested trees found on National Forest land and quality control. A total of 21,025 private acres owned by 497 landowners were inspected. A total of 1,647 infested trees were identified.





Federal Lands Collaboration:

In an effort to have landscape scale effects, an “all lands approach” was adopted to target federal lands in addition to private and CSP. In FY2017, a 300 foot buffer on national forest property around CSP was also surveyed for an additional 637 acres and 14 infested trees. Crews contracted through the Pennington, Custer, and Lawrence conservation districts. also assisted in marking 1,150 acres of timber sale units on the Northern Hills Ranger District to expedite the sale and subsequent harvest of those units prior to the following year’s bug flight.

Monitoring:

Division personnel will continue to monitor the park and the Black Hills region for areas of increased MPB activity.

Cooperation:

The Mountain Pine Beetle Working Group was a sub-group of the Conservation Leaders Group. It was originally tasked with promoting active MPB suppression through a collaboration of various natural resource professionals from all levels of government, industry, and engaged private landowners in the Black Hills.

In FY2017, the group migrated away from beetle suppression and towards promoting forest resiliency through proactive management. The group is now called the Black Hills Resilient Forest Working Group, and is finalizing the Black Hills Resilient Forest Strategy. The division has remained active in this group.

Future Needs:

Even though, the MPB epidemic has ended throughout the Black Hills, a large portion of the Black Hills is still considered high risk for mountain pine beetle infestation. A continued proactive approach to forest management will reduce the risk of future mountain pine beetle epidemics. Management strategies such as commercial and pre-commercial thinning, prescribed fire, and continued monitoring of insects and diseases on the landscape will help ensure that Custer State Park and surrounding lands remain a place of beauty and biodiversity in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Shown below is a table detailing trees treated for Mountain Pine Beetle in fiscal year 2017.

Treated Trees

Priority Area	County	BHNF Trees	BHNF Acres	Private Trees	Private Acres	Landowners	State Trees	State Acres	Total Trees	Total Acres
PA1 - Pass Creek	Custer	0	0	70	126	8			70	126
PA2 - Tinton	Lawrence	0	0	21	397	1			21	397
NHRD TS	Lawrence	0	0	0	0	0			0	0
Outside of PA		0	0	1344	12911	124			1344	12911
Custer State Park		0	0				239	11373	239	11373
Totals		0	0	1435	13434	133	239	11373	1674	24807

Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA)

Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) is a USDA Forest Service program that collects, analyzes, and reports information on the status and trends of America's forests. FIA consists of three components: an inventory of the nation's forests; a national woodland owner survey; and a timber product output study. Information is collected on the amount of forested area, who owns it, how it is changing, how trees and other vegetation is growing, how much has died and/or been removed, and what happens to the trees that are removed.

This information can be used in evaluating wildlife habitat conditions, assessing the sustainability of ecosystem management practices, and supporting planning and decision-making activities undertaken by public and private enterprises.

The absence of small and medium diameter cottonwood indicates this species is not successfully regenerating. Without recruitment, the cottonwoods will begin to disappear from the

landscape as the mature trees die out.

Eastern redcedar is expanding into rangelands. It is the primary source of expanding forest area in the state, but has become a problem as it reduces grass production, which is important to livestock grazing. The area of non-stocked forest land has increased due to loss of trees to fire and mountain pine beetle.

The FIA program combines this information with related data on insects, diseases, and other types of forest damaging agents and stresses. This is done to assess the health, condition, and potential future risks to forests. This information is essential for evaluating whether current forest management practices are sustainable in the long run and whether current policies will allow future generations to benefit from the many uses that America's forests provide.

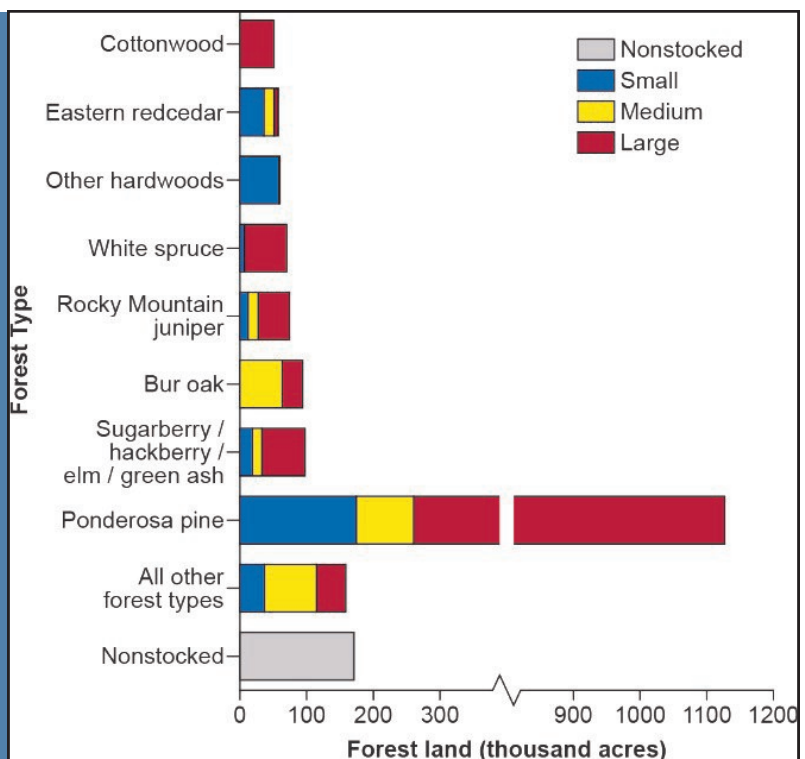
The most recent annual report on the annualized inventory in South Dakota is titled *Forests of South Dakota, 2016* and can be found at: www.fs.fed.us/nrs/pubs/ru/ru_fs110.pdf.

Figure 3.

Area of forest land by forest type and stand size class, 2016. Note: Large diameter trees are at least 11.0 inches diameter for hardwoods and at least 9.0 inches diameter for softwoods. Medium diameter trees are at least 5.0 inches diameter but not as large as large diameter trees. Small diameter trees are less than 5.0 inches diameter.

Source:

Walters, Brian F. 2017. *Forests of South Dakota, 2016*. Resource Update FS-110. Newtown Square, PA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Research Station. 4 p.



Financial Assistance to Local Organizations

County	Grant Recipient	Program	Awarded	Local Match	Other Funding	Total Project Costs
Beadle	Beadle Conservation District	CSW	\$13,000.00	\$15,243.00	\$0.00	\$28,243.00
	Beadle Conservation District	CSW	\$17,756.00	\$17,956.00	\$0.00	\$35,712.00
	Beadle Conservation District	CSW	\$13,475.00	\$13,325.00	\$0.00	\$26,800.00
Bennett	Bennett Conservation District	CSW	\$16,000.00	\$17,228.00	\$0.00	\$33,228.00
Bon Homme	Bon Homme Conservation District	CSW	\$26,450.00	\$46,350.00	\$0.00	\$72,800.00
Brookings	City of Brookings	UCF	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
	City of Volga	UCF	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$4,000.00
Brown	City of Aberdeen	UCF	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
	City of Groton	UCF	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Brule & Buffalo	Brule-Buffalo Conservation District	CSW	\$15,000.00	\$14,000.00	\$250.00	\$29,250.00
	Brule-Buffalo Conservation District	CSW	\$32,700.00	\$37,300.00	\$500.00	\$70,500.00
Butte	Butte Conservation District	CSW	\$20,000.00	\$33,920.00	\$55,000.00	\$108,920.00
	Butte Conservation District	CSW	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00
	Butte Conservation District	CSW	\$35,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$100,000.00
Clark	Clark Conservation District	CSW	\$22,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$42,000.00
Codington	Lake Area Zoological Society	UCF	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.00
	Codington Conservation District	CSW	\$4,765.00	\$9,913.00	\$0.00	\$14,678.00
Custer	Custer Conservation District	CSW	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$40,000.00
	Custer Weed & Pest	WPC	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00
	Custer State Park	WPC	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00
	Custer State Park	MPB	\$53,113.00	\$53,113.00	\$0.00	\$106,226.00
Davison	Davison Conservation District	CSW	\$11,500.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$21,500.00
	Davison Conservation District	CSW	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$0.00	\$24,000.00
Day	City of Webster	UCF	\$2,025.00	\$2,025.00	\$0.00	\$4,050.00
	Day Conservation District	CRP	\$742.50	\$742.50	\$0.00	\$1,485.00
	Day Conservation District	CSW	\$25,000.00	\$71,645.00	\$153,450.00	\$250,095.00
Edmunds	Edmunds Conservation District	CSW	\$44,500.00	\$70,000.00	\$28,000.00	\$142,500.00
Fall River	City of Hot Springs	UCF	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
	Fall River Weed & Pest	WPC	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$0.00	\$14,000.00
	Fall River Weed & Pest	WPC	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$0.00	\$14,000.00
Gregory	Gregory Conservation District	CSW	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$0.00	\$30,000.00
Hamlin	Hamlin Conservation District	CSW	\$6,200.00	\$6,200.00	\$0.00	\$12,400.00
	Hamlin Conservation District	CSW	\$12,846.00	\$29,951.00	\$0.00	\$42,797.00
Hanson	Hanson Conservation District	CSW	\$9,980.00	\$9,980.00	\$0.00	\$19,960.00
Hughes	City of Pierre	UCF	\$2,090.00	\$2,090.00	\$0.00	\$4,180.00
Hyde	Hyde Conservation District	CSW	\$25,000.00	\$22,615.00	\$1,365.00	\$48,980.00
Jackson	Jackson Conservation District	CSW	\$25,000.00	\$21,750.00	\$0.00	\$46,750.00
Jerauld	Jerauld Conservation District	CSW	\$20,000.00	\$17,391.00	\$0.00	\$37,391.00
Jones	Jones Conservation District	CSW	\$22,655.00	\$47,060.00	\$4,500.00	\$74,215.00
Kingsbury	Kingsbury Conservation District	CSW	\$1,170.00	\$1,650.00	\$960.00	\$3,780.00
	Kingsbury Conservation District	CSW	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$40,000.00

Financial Assistance Continued

County	Grant Recipient	Program	Awarded	Local Match	Other Funding	Total Project Costs
Lake	Dakota State University	UCF	\$975.00	\$975.00	\$0.00	\$1,950.00
Lawrence	City of Spearfish	UCF	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$4,000.00
	Lawrence Weed & Pest	WPC	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$40,000.00
Lyman	City of Reliance	UCF	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
	Lyman Weed & Pest	WPC	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$0.00	\$14,000.00
Marshall	Marshall Conservation District	CSW	\$4,680.00	\$4,680.00	\$0.00	\$9,360.00
	Marshall Conservation District	CRP	\$3,585.50	\$3,585.50	\$0.00	\$7,171.00
McCook	McCook Conservation District	CSW	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00
Meade	City of Sturgis	UCF	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Mellette	Mellette Conservation District	CSW	\$1,000.00	\$2,250.00	\$0.00	\$3,250.00
	Mellette Conservation District	CSW	\$2,600.00	\$2,900.00	\$0.00	\$5,500.00
	Mellette Conservation District	CSW	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$40,000.00
	Mellette Conservation District	CSW	\$28,000.00	\$43,000.00	\$12,500.00	\$83,500.00
Miner	Miner Conservation District	CSW	\$2,500.00	\$2,400.00	\$100.00	\$5,000.00
	Miner Conservation District	CRP	\$1,465.63	\$1,465.63	\$0.00	\$2,931.26
	Miner Conservation District	CSW	\$52,500.00	\$80,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$162,500.00
Minnehaha	City of Crooks	UCF	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
	Minnehaha Conservation District	CSW	\$12,480.00	\$31,547.00	\$0.00	\$44,027.00
Pennington	Burton Forest Stewardship Plan	STW	\$210.00	\$210.00	\$0.00	\$420.00
	National Wild Turkey Federation	SPC	\$112,000.00	\$112,000.00	\$0.00	\$224,000.00
	SD Family Forest	STW	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00
	SD Project Learning Tree	SPC	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$0.00	\$24,000.00
	Pennington Weed & Pest	WPC	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00
Perkins	City of Lemmon	UCF	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
	Perkins Conservation District	CSW	\$34,888.00	\$4,000.00	\$34,889.00	\$73,777.00
Sanborn	Sanborn Conservation District	CSW	\$22,000.00	\$23,500.00	\$9,320.00	\$54,820.00
Stanley	City of Fort Pierre	UCF	\$3,410.00	\$3,410.00	\$0.00	\$6,820.00
Todd	Bartlett Community Visions	UCF	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$4,000.00
	Todd Conservation District	CSW	\$40,000.00	\$63,200.00	\$14,325.00	\$117,525.00
	Todd Conservation District	CSW	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$14,250.00	\$54,250.00
Union	Union Conservation District	CSW	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$20,000.00
	Union Conservation District	CSW	\$5,589.00	\$5,589.00	\$0.00	\$11,178.00
Walworth	City of Mobridge	UCF	\$2,840.00	\$2,840.00	\$0.00	\$5,680.00
	Totals		\$1,065,190.63	\$1,275,499.63	\$384,409.00	\$2,725,099.26

Programs Guide:

CSW	Coordinated Natural Resources Conservation Grant	SPC	Special Project Grant
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program Grant	UCF	Urban and Community Forestry
STW	Stewardship Grant	WPC	Weed and Pest County Grant
MPB	Mountain Pine Beetle		



For additional copies of this report contact the division office in Pierre at:

Phone: 605.773.3623 Fax: 605.773.4003 Email: SDRCF@state.sd.us
Website: sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry

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