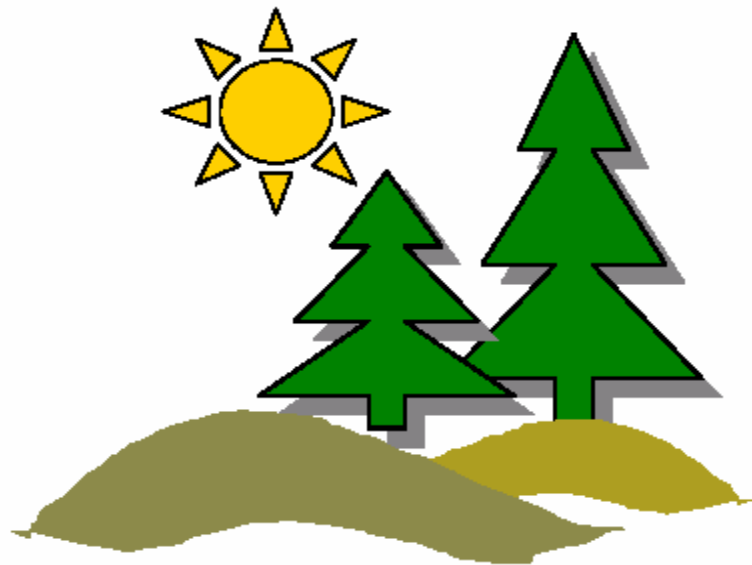


Black Hills National Forest

Travelways Public Meetings Summary

November 13-16, 2006



General Comments

Reinforcing the statement “all politics are local,” meeting participants focused on recreation opportunities near their communities. Participants tended to be members of local interest groups and group leaders, though general members of the public also attended. In addition, each of the meetings was attended by a core group of interest group leaders and members representing the motorized recreation community, non-motorized recreation community, and conservation/environmental community at a regional or state level.

Throughout all the meetings, participants were actively engaged in the process while they also had time to discuss issues with Forest line officers and staff. The balance between both the process and personal time with Forest leadership seemed to meet the needs of most participants.

Comments By Meeting Location

Custer Meeting

The Monday evening meeting in Custer, SD received significant publicity prior to the meeting and was expected to be well-attended. Approximately 69 people participated in the meeting, with general motorized recreation users being in the majority. Following an initial introduction and prework question response exercise, participants divided into four groups for the mapping exercise. After an initial issue with the prework question exercise being biased by individuals putting more than one dot per question, the dot matrix exercise was redone.

Responses to Prework Questions

Of the 69 people at the meeting, only 59 people responded to the prework question exercise. The Custer meeting respondents represent 18 percent of the total Forest response.

On the first question, **“What does the forest offer in terms of outstanding travelway opportunities and experiences?”** Nearly 90 percent of the people responded in three categories: “extensive improved roads”, “quiet experiences and good exercise”, and “access for motorized and non-motorized activities”.

The response to the second question, **“In what ways are you satisfied with the forest’s travelways and why?”** was more varied. However, 68 percent of people responded in two categories, “year-round use on roads and riding trails” and “solitude, peace and exercise.” The next highest interest was in “variety of travel opportunities.”

For the third question, **“What is the role of the community in helping to provide a quality travelway system?”** a majority of participants responded that “groups must work together to address needs and create a healthy compromise.” The next closest choice was “Set standards, priorities for use to ensure that the forest can be passed down to future generations and minimize impact on environmentally fragile areas.”

The last question, **“What do you want to be sure is part of the travelways in the future?”** was fairly even between three responses: “create an accurate map,” “ensure long-term protection of forest and wildlife areas,” and “large motorized travel system.”

Dot Matrix Exercise

Attendees submitted 105 forms for the Dot Matrix Mapping exercise.

Sundance Meeting

Due to poor driving conditions the Tuesday evening meeting in Sundance was attended by only 27 participants. In addition, due to some confusion about snowmobiling closures, several of the motorized recreation participants were focused on snowmobiling rather than other motorized travel. Again the local focus was evident, as the Sand Creek area was the main issue for participants at this meeting.

Responses to Pework Questions

Of the 27 people at the meeting, 26 people responded to the prework question exercise. The Sundance meeting represented 8 percent of the total Forest response.

On the first question, **“What does the forest offer in terms of outstanding travelway opportunities and experiences?”** 73 percent of participants responded to “access for motorized and non-motorized activities” and “extensive improved roads.” In addition, a participant added “winter use,” however; there was only one response to that addition.

In responding to the second question, **“In what ways are you satisfied with the forest’s travelways and why?”** there was an overwhelming response to “year-round use on roads and riding trails.” This response might have reflected the number of people at the meeting who rode snowmobiles. In addition, Sundance participants’ response to “variety of roads and trails” represented 50 percent of the total forestwide response to this question indicating a current satisfaction with the types of travelways available in the area.

There was a strong response to the third question, **“What is the role of the community in helping to provide a quality travelway system?”** to “a say in what is used, open, and not open on the BHNF.” Though it represented only 38 percent of the Sundance meeting, it represented 25 percent of the total forest-wide response. Another difference with the Sundance meeting’s response to this question was to “users and volunteers help out” representing 27 percent of the total forest response. This might indicate a strong willingness by local individuals to work with the Forest in this area.

The strongest response to the fourth question, **“What do you want to be sure is part of the travelways in the future?”** was “create an accurate map” followed by “large motorized trail system to prevent overcrowding.”

Dot Matrix Exercise

Attendees submitted 17 forms for the Dot Matrix Mapping exercise

Spearfish Meeting

The Spearfish meeting was attended by 97 participants, with several of the participants previously having attended the Custer meeting. There appeared to be a fairly diverse group of participants at the Spearfish meeting with some participation generated by people hearing about the previous meetings.

Responses to Prewrite Questions

Of the 97 people at the meeting, 83 people responded to the prework question exercise. The Spearfish meeting represented 25 percent of the total Forest response.

On the first question, **“What does the forest offer in terms of outstanding travelway opportunities and experiences?”** 45 percent of respondents chose “offers access for motorized and non-motorized activities,” followed by “offers quiet experiences and good exercise.” These responses are consistent to the overall Forest response.

Also, like the Custer and Sundance meetings, participants responded to the second question, **“In what ways are you satisfied with the forest’s travelways and why?”** with “year-round use on roads and riding trails (49 percent).”

Spearfish also was consistent to the forest-wide response to the third question, **“What is the role of the community in helping to provide a quality travelway system?”** with “all users should be involved in the process (47 percent).” This response was followed by “set standards, priorities for use (25 percent).”

However, Spearfish differed from the other meetings in response to the fourth question, **“What do you want to be sure is part of the travelways in the future?”** The most popular response to this question was “large motorized trail system to prevent overcrowding.” Forest-wide, the most popular answer was “create an accurate map,” which was responded to by only 7 percent of people at the Spearfish meeting.

Dot Matrix Exercise

Attendees submitted 127 forms for the Dot Matrix Mapping exercise

Rapid City Meeting

As expected, the Rapid City meeting had the largest attendance with 205 participants. Several people had attended several or all of the previous meetings and were willing to stand back to allow new people to participate in the process. In addition, 5 tables were set-up to facilitate the mapping process and people had the opportunity to do the Dot Matrix mapping exercise in the lobby.

Responses to Pework Questions

Of the 205 people at the meeting, 160 people responded to the prework question exercise. The reduction in participation likely reflects the number of people who had done the exercise at previous meetings. Overall, the Rapid City meeting represented 49 percent of the total Forest response.

On the first question, **“What does the forest offer in terms of outstanding travelway opportunities and experiences?”** 52 percent of participants responded to “access for motorized and non-motorized activities. The second most popular response was “quiet experiences and good exercise.” This division is consistent with the forest-wide response.

In responding to the second question, **“In what ways are you satisfied with the forest’s travelways and why?”** participants chose “year-round use on roads and riding trails” followed by “solitude, peace and exercise.”

In responding to the third question, **“What is the role of the community in helping to provide a quality travelway system?”** people in Rapid City strongly responded to “all users should be involved in the process.” The second most popular response was “set standards, priorities for use.”

Respondents in Rapid City spread their response to the fourth question, **“What do you want to be sure is part of the travelways in the future?”** between three comments – “create an accurate map;” “protect walking and hiking trails;” and “balance of motorized and non-motorized use.” The response to “balance of motorized and non-motorized use” is an exception to the previous meetings.

Dot Matrix Exercise

Attendees submitted 241 forms for the Dot Matrix Mapping exercise

Summary of Data for Public Meetings

Pework Question One:

What does the forest offer in terms of outstanding travelway opportunities and experiences?

- A. **Extensive improved roads**, two-track and single-track system for motorized vehicles, uncrowded travel through beautiful landscapes and surrounding hills.
- B. A “*jewel in the prairie*” with roads and trails that allow **access to towns, campgrounds, and trailheads**.
- C. **Family experiences** -- trail variety from ‘easy-going’ riding to physically challenging rides – great for different riding abilities.
- D. **Forest service roads have alternative uses** – good for jogging, cross-country skiing, hiking, and bicycling trips.
- E. Offers **quiet experiences and good exercise** (beautiful and pristine Mickelson trail), hiking lets people experience “*the spring bloom, the small shy animal peeking out, the faint bird call.*”
- F. Offers **access for motorized and non-motorized activities** including hiking, mountain biking, dirt biking, and ATV riding.
- G. Offers **diversity in terrain** for a wide variety of travel experiences.
- H. Enables access for elderly, “*easy to get around*” **unique way of seeing backcountry**.
- I. Offers **miles of cross-country travel** to explore spectacular scenery, historical sites, interesting geology, hunting & fishing.
- J. PARTICIPANT ADDED: Winter Use (snowmobiling)

Answer	Forest (percent)	Custer 18 percent of respondents (percent)		Sundance 8 percent of respondents (percent)		Spearfish 25 percent of respondents (percent)		Rapid City 49 percent of respondents (percent)	
		Meeting	Forest	Meeting	Forest	Meeting	Forest	Meeting	Forest
A	16%	36%	40%	27%	13%	2%	3%	14%	43%
B	<1	1	50	0	0	0	0	<1	50
C	4	3	17	12	25	3	25	2	33
D	2	0	0	0	0	2	40	2	60
E	30	31	18	4	1	33	27	34	54
F	45	24	10	46	8	45	25	52	57
G	1	0	0	0	0	2	50	1	50
H	1	0	0	4	25	1	25	1	50
I	4	5	21	4	7	8	50	2	21
J	<1	0	0	4	100	0	0	0	0

Green highlights the top responses at the Forest level

Forest-wide, the greatest response was to “offers access for motorized and non-motorized activities including hiking, mountain biking, dirt-biking, and ATV riding with 45 percent responding to that comment. The second greatest response was to “offers quiet experiences and good exercise” with 30 percent. All the meetings, with the exception of Sundance, were generally divided between those two comments. However, Sundance had a much stronger response to “offers access for motorized and non-motorized activities.”

Prework Question Two:

In what ways are you satisfied with the forest's travelways and why?

- A. **Open, cross-country travel** and ability to explore hills.
- B. **Variety of travel opportunities** allowing people to discover new places, access recreation sites, view scenic areas.
- C. **Well-maintained, well-marked, and well located trails** undisturbed by motorized traffic.
- D. **Continuous travel** to wide-spread areas on roads and riding trails.
- E. **Dramatic geology and microclimates** on Mickelson trail.
- F. **Year round use on roads and riding trails** with a variety of experiences and difficulty levels. Virtually unlimited roads and riding trails and opportunity to explore on seldom traveled roads.
- G. **Solitude, peace and exercise** on hiking trails.
- H. **Family opportunities** on roads, riding trails and hiking trails.
- I. **Variety of roads**, logging trails and paths.
- J. **PARTICIPANT ADDED:** Snow-mobile trails are not closed allowing winter users access.

		Custer 18 percent of respondents (percent)		Sundance 8 percent of respondents (percent)		Spearfish 25 percent of respondents (percent)		Rapid City 49 percent of respondents (percent)	
Answer	Forest (percent)	Meeting	Forest	Meeting	Forest	Meeting	Forest	Meeting	Forest
A	9%	7%	13%	4%	3%	2%	6%	15%	77%
B	13	15	22	11	7	4	7	16	63
C	2	2	16	0	0	2	33	2	50
D	2	3	25	0	0	7	75	0	0
E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
F	44	46	19	38	7	49	29	40	44
G	24	22	16	11	4	31	33	23	46
H	2	3	29	8	29	2	29	1	14
I	3	2	10	19	50	1	10	2	30
J	<1	0	0	8	100	0	0	0	0

Green highlights the top responses at the Forest level

Across the Forest, the majority of respondents (44 percent) chose the comment “year-round use on roads and riding trails” followed by “solitude, peace and exercise on hiking trails” (24 percent). Rapid City represented the largest number of users who wanted “open, cross-country travel and ability to explore hills,” both as a percentage of the meeting and the overall Forest. This may represent the participation of a number of young rock crawlers and extreme riders at this meeting compared to other meetings. Spearfish had the least amount of variability in the answers, which may indicate polarization between groups.

Prework Question Three:

What is the role of the community in helping to provide a quality travelway system?

- A. A **say in what is used**, open, and not open on the BHNF. Area residents need a greater voice.

- B. All users should be **involved in the process**, motorized and non-motorized alike. Then, all groups must work together to address needs and **create a healthy compromise**.
- C. **Responsibility to contact legislators**, managers, and officials, to make needs known.
- D. **Users & volunteers help out**. Examples: provide ideas, clean-ups, build bridges, identify and/or fence sensitive areas, maintain & monitor trails, install cattle guards, identify travelways, and map areas.
- E. **Tourism encouraged** for its economic benefits, and **visitors educated** on proper use of the land to minimize negative effects – to keep forest clean and “tread lightly”.
- F. **Businesses** that profit **contribute** to the system.
- G. **Provide education and training** about the use of the forest through guides, maps, trail rules, and interpretive centers.
- H. **Understand the value and fragility** of the BHNF.
- I. **Collaborate with law enforcement** including programs like a TIP hotline, to create stronger enforcement capabilities.
- J. **Set standards, priorities** for use to ensure that the forest can be passed down to future generations, and minimize impact on environmentally fragile areas.
- K. Community **involvement** will always be **linked to economic issues**; it won’t serve the health of the forest.
- L. **PARTICIPANT ADDED**: Volunteers can distribute trail maps and other materials.
- M. **PARTICIPANT ADDED**: Provide for tourists who seek quiet.

		Custer 18 percent of respondents (percent)		Sundance 8 percent of respondents (percent)		Spearfish 25 percent of respondents (percent)		Rapid City 49 percent of respondents (percent)	
Answer	Forest (percent)	Meeting	Forest	Meeting	Forest	Meeting	Forest	Meeting	Forest
A	13%	1%	2%	38%	24%	4%	7%	17%	66%
B	46	33	22	15	3	47	26	46	49
C	<1	0	0	7	66	0	0	<1	33
D	7	8	23	23	27	4	14	5	36
E	2	3	33	0	0	0	0	3	66
F	1	0	0	0	0	2	50	1	50
G	3	1	11	0	0	5	44	3	44
H	2	0	0	0	0	5	50	3	50
I	6	5	15	15	20	5	20	5	45
J	20	19	17	0	0	25	32	21	52
K	<1	0	0	0	0	1	50	<1	50
L	<1	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
M	<1	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0

Green highlights the top responses at the Forest level

With some consistency, participants at all meetings responded that “all users should be involved in the process, motorized and non-motorized alike.” Sundance was an exception with a strong response to “a say in what is used, open, and not open on the BHNF.” The second most popular response was “set standards, priorities for use.” Again, this response was fairly consistent (as a percentage) across the meetings, with the exception of Sundance. Sundance’s second most popular response was “users and volunteers help out.”

Pework Question Four:

What do you want to be sure is part of the travelways in the future?

- A. **Create an accurate map** with an inventory of all trails and roads. Map should include both common names and forest service numbers.
- B. **Provide education to users** including minimal impacts on land, tread lightly, how to respect the land with the various modes of travel.
- C. **Sign all trails and roads.** Make sure the signs indicate user types (
- D. **Cross country** (open) riding areas.
- E. **Motorized access to scenic sites**, historical sites and recreation opportunities.
- F. **Varying difficulty levels** for motorized travel.
- G. **Large motorized trail system** to prevent overcrowding as well as to connect food, fuel and lodging.
- H. **Separate** motorized and non-motorized use.
- I. Travelway **system** is not larger than what can be **managed and policed**.
- J. Ensure long-term **protection of forest and wildlife areas**. Prevent unnecessary erosion
- K. **Protect walking and hiking trails**, no destruction from motorized vehicles, no noise pollution.
- L. **Long-distance** motorized travel.
- M. **Significant walk-in areas** to minimize impacts on wildlife.
- N. Restrict motorized travel to limited and **regulated areas** of designation.
- O. **Alternatives to closing trails** such as fencing sensitive areas.
- P. Ensure allowances to **retrieve game**.
- Q. **Balance of** motorized and non-motorized use
- R. **PARTICIPANT ADDED:** Ensure fuel tax dollars are used for motorized portions of the trail system.
- S. **PARTICIPATED ADDED:** Unnecessary travelways are not just closed, but obliterated.

		Custer 18 percent of respondents (percent)		Sundance 8 percent of respondents (percent)		Spearfish 25 percent of respondents (percent)		Rapid City 49 percent of respondents (percent)	
Answer	Forest (percent)	Meeting	Forest	Meeting	Forest	Meeting	Forest	Meeting	Forest
A	22%	30%	25%	38%	14%	7%	8%	24%	52%
B	1	0	0	0	0	1	25	2	75
C	5	1	13	0	0	1	13	4	75
D	9	3	7	4	4	1	4	15	86
E	2	5	43	0	0	1	14	2	43
F	3	0	0	0	0	8	78	1	22
G	15	19	23	19	10	33	56	3	6
H	<1	0	0	3	50	1	50	0	0
I	<1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100
J	9	25	48	0	0	6	16	6	35
K	17	0	0	7	4	22	33	22	64
L	<1	0	0	3	33	2	67	0	0
M	<1	5	50	0	0	2	33	<1	17
N	<1	2	12	12	38	2	25	1	25
O	<1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100
P	<1	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Q	16	7	8	12	6	11	18	22	69
R	<1	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
S	<1	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0

Green highlights the top responses at the Forest level

With the exception of the Spearfish meeting, the greatest response was to “create an accurate map.” At the Spearfish, the greatest response was to “large motorized trail system to prevent overcrowding;” however, there was a very limited response to this comment in Rapid City the following evening. The second most popular response was to “protect walking and hiking trails;” however, this is mainly came out based on the responses in Spearfish and Rapid City. Notably, Custer had no response to this comment, but had a strong response to “protection of forest and wildlife areas.”