

Norbeck Society Newsletter- February 2020

Website and Facebook

We have the new up-and-running email, info@norbecksociety.com. Thanks to member Colin Keeler for sorting out that and for the ever-developing website.

Don't forget to like us on Facebook and share posts. Have you seen the Jan. 28 post of the Forest Service's advice about responsible use of motorized trails? After that, look at the Jan. 26 post with a video of one logger and his machine snapping off a stand of pines as if it were a patch of daisies. It's astonishing.

Meetings and other events

Note that there are no NS membership meetings in February or March. In March, as always, you are encouraged instead to attend the **Black Hills Botany and Ecology Workshop**.

The first **Regional Climate Change Conference** is Saturday, April 18, on the S.D. School of Mines and Technology campus. Norbeck is a sponsor.

For both these events, you should watch our website, Facebook, and local media for notice of topics, speakers, and how to attend.

Timber sustainability meeting:

The Norbeck Society is among the stakeholder entities invited to a meeting Feb. 25 about timber sustainability in the Black Hills National Forest. Bob Burns and Mary Zimmerman will be representing us. The acting forest supervisor, Andrew K. Johnson, and regional office leadership will present the most recent forest inventory data and the draft 2020 Rocky Mountain Research Station General Technical Report titled "Timber Growth and Yield in the Black Hills National Forest: A Changing Forest."

They will use Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) data (2017-2019) describing the current condition of the forest, including 15 tables with graphs covering the timber resources, volume, growth, mortality and harvest removals. Johnson says the meeting will be an opportunity to discuss the data and to chart potential courses of action for the Black Hills "with a goal of sustaining our important mill infrastructure and achieving sustainable harvest levels."

We do not know what the outcome of the meeting will be, but we know that this is a forest at a crossroads, and decisions made as a result of the meeting will have lasting impacts. There is a complicated balance to be met between pressure from the timber industry, our politicians, and the health of the forest. Recent data clearly show that the current level of harvests is unsustainable. While we think logging should be an available tool for management of the Black Hills National Forest, it should be in keeping with the National Forest Management Act requiring provision of "sustained yields into perpetuity."

The biggest crisis is not just that overcutting endangers the long-term sustainability of industry in the area, but that it's the thickets of young trees and weeds that spring up post logging. There have not been sufficient resources to take care of this and the ultimate burden for fixing these issues will be borne by the taxpayers and citizens who no longer benefit from the diminished resource.

The Norbeck Society has been advocating for lowering the annual volume of timber sold, increasing the scale and pace of removing thickets of small trees, and using prescribed burning as a management tool. We want restoration of our forests to a condition less at risk of insect infestation and catastrophic wildfire. Stay tuned, and please contact us if you have questions or ideas: info@norbecksociety.com.

Calendar: Programs, outings, volunteering

February: NO Norbeck membership meeting

February 25: BBNF Timber Sustainability meeting

March 20: Black Hills Botany and Ecology Workshop (replaces membership meeting)

April 18: Regional Climate Change Conference (partially sponsored by Norbeck Society)