

# Forest Landowner Education

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Today's Forest Program supported the South Dakota Forest Action Plan by utilizing educational strategies addressing threats to fragmentation, forest health, wildfire, weeds and invasive species, water quantity and quality, climate change, underutilization of woody biomass, and loss or degradation of wildlife habitat. These strategies support the themes outlined by the State & Private Forestry (S&PF) National Priorities and Objectives.

Examples of the strategies outlined in this document include, but are not limited to:

- Educate private forest landowners, the public, school children, conservation districts, and business/community leaders about the importance of forests, forest management, planning, programs, availability of assistance, and how to implement recommendations.
- Promote utilization of woody biomass for a broad spectrum of products to maintain and expand a viable and diverse forest products industry.
- Increase public awareness of the need of fire prevention and fuels mitigation.
- Educate forest landowners and forest workers about BMPs for protecting water quality during forestry operations.
- Promote and support practices that improve resilience of forested landscapes and restore impacted landscapes to maintain ecological functions and critical ecosystem services.

## Today's Forest Program



The majority of forest land in the United States is categorized as non-industrial private forest land; there are approximately 10 million owners of 354 million acres. In South Dakota, there are 12,000 landowners of 492,000 acres of non-industrial private forest lands.

Today's Forest is a series of educational workshops developed for non-industrial private forest landowners. Funded by a grant from the USDA Forest Service, the series was developed as a cooperative effort between the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, Resource Conservation & Forestry Division, SD Cooperative Extension Service, Wyoming State Forestry, and Nebraska Forest Service.



# 2012 - 2014 Workshops

Seven workshops were organized and delivered to audiences in South Dakota, Wyoming, and Nebraska. Workshop topics are:

- Best management practices
- Estate planning and taxes
- Firewise wildfire preparedness
- Forest health and invasive species
- Forest planning and certification for sustainable management
- Markets, contracting and available program assistance
- Silviculture and forest ecology

All seven of the multi-state workshops are posted on the internet and can be viewed at the SDSU Extension's iGrow Today's Forest website <http://igrow.org/gardens/trees-and-forests/> under landowner education.



# 2012 - 2014 Accomplishments

- 7 workshops (indoor and field) delivered to audiences in SD, WY and NE
- 12 workshops specific to managing and preventing MPB infestations in SD
- 22 video vignettes addressing specific topics discussed in the workshops
- "A New Look at an Old Fuel Source: Home Heating Fuel, Wood Pellets or Firewood" brochure published
- 2 Public Service Announcements were produced and aired on local television stations in the Black Hills area to advertise landowner workshops
- Preliminary and final landowner surveys were conducted to gauge interest in participation and follow up for effectiveness of the program



Filming during Landowner Workshops for video vignettes

## 2012 - 2014 Outcomes

### Post-project survey results indicated:

- Most forest landowners focus on protecting their forest lands rather than gaining income from their property.
- They prefer active learning opportunities, workshops that can teach them skills in managing their forests rather than provide information.
- Video vignettes length must be condensed to under two minutes and clearly focus on specific topic or skill.
- 1,200 hours of contact, either through workshops, webinars or video vignettes.

**Estate Planning** is not featured in the table on the right. Since a workshop on estate planning would not require a field session, it was held during the winter (February 2012) as a webinar that people could view from their home computer. Webinars enable synchronous communication between the presenter and the audience which is not available with video vignettes. Four public viewing sites were also provided to further facilitate discussion during and after the 2-hour webinar.

The webinar was viewed from **38 computers** plus the **4 public viewing sites**, one each in Nebraska and South Dakota and two in Wyoming. The public viewing sites had **5 people** in attendance at the SD site, **9 people** attended one of the two public sites in WY and **8 people** attended the single site in NE.

Table 1: Forest landowner workshop by subject and attendance

Subject	NE	SD	WY
Best Management Practices	27	44*	N
Firewise	41	19	N
Forest Health and Invasive Species	53	126	3
Forest Planning and Certification	14	31*	N
Markets, Contracting and Program Assistance	N	14	N
Silviculture and Forest Ecology	30	40	6

\* two locations in the state

N = none held

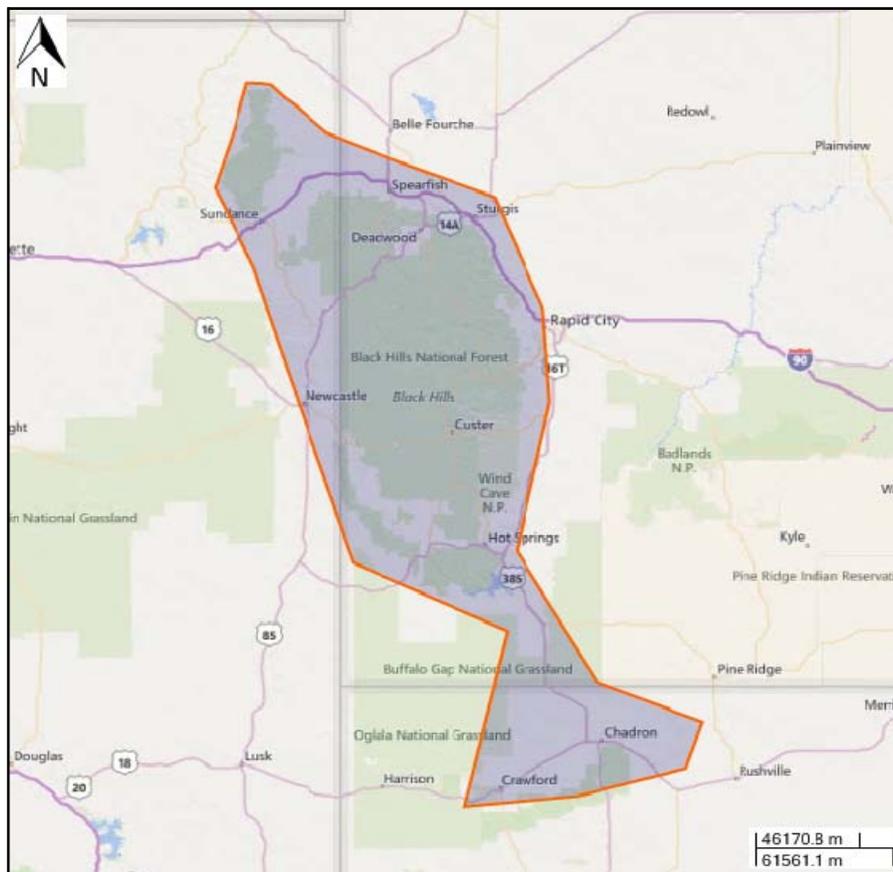
The workshop schedule was altered after the second workshop as attendance in Wyoming was very low, so no further workshops were held in that state.

# 2010 - 2014 Partnerships

- SD Department of Agriculture, Resource Conservation & Forestry Division
- Nebraska Forest Service
- Wyoming State Forestry Division
- SD Wildland Fire Suppression Division
- SD State Energy Office
- Dakota's Society of American Foresters
- SD Tree Farm Committee
- SD Family Forest Association
- Black Hills Forest Resource Association
- Black Hills National Forest
- SD Cooperative Extension Service



# 2010 - 2014 Impact Area



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