



## Forest Service News Release

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### Scenario-Based Assessment Helps Inform Sustainability of the Black Hills National Forest

*Public invited to science webinar*

**FORT COLLINS, Colo., March 23, 2021** – USDA Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station scientists today published the general technical report, *A Scenario-Based Assessment to Inform Sustainable Ponderosa Pine Timber Harvest on the Black Hills National Forest*. The report, based on forest census data, provides context, rationale, and evaluation of harvest level scenarios across a range of mortality and growth rates in the Black Hills. This report offers scientific information that can inform discussions concerning future harvest levels on the Black Hills National Forest.

A primary finding is that the current volume of standing live sawtimber does not support a sustainable timber program at recent rates of harvest, under a wide range of scenarios considering growth and mortality rates. This report along with other best available scientific information can support forest managers, Tribes, stakeholders, and the public in working together in future forest planning efforts on the Black Hills National Forest.

To ensure the highest quality data and scientific standards, a comprehensive review process was used. Scientists, technical and blind peer reviews, and an open public comment period produced over 350 comments. “We had tremendous input during our comment period, which helped improve the scope and content of the final report,” said Terrie Jain, report co-author. “This resulted in a significant revision from the earlier draft that was presented to stakeholders in April 2020.”

In response to reviewer comments, the final report contains ten times the original number of possible future scenarios covering a wide range of mortality, growth, and harvest rates. “In the end, our science team developed and evaluated 60 scenarios assessing ponderosa pine timber harvest levels in the Black Hills,” said Mike Battaglia, co-author for the report.

“This report is a great example of how USDA Forest Service Research and Development supports the science needs of the National Forest System with real-time data and analysis,” said Alison Hill, Rocky Mountain Research Station Science Program Manager. General technical reports, such as this one, are scientific documents, not policy or decision documents. This report, the associated Forest Inventory and Analysis data, and a large body of science related to the Black Hills are available for land managers to consider.

USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station will host a science-focused webinar to share the outcomes of the report. The free science webinar is scheduled for April 7, 2021 (10:30-12:30. MDT) and is open for any interested parties to attend. The presentation will be focused on information about the report and its key findings and authors will be available to answer questions about the data and analysis. The authors will not address forest management decisions, as that will be addressed later by forest managers. To learn more about the report please see [this link](#). To register for the webinar please see [this link](#).

“This report would not have been possible were it not for the dedication of Dr. Russell Graham and his many years of research focused on the Black Hills,” said Battaglia and Jain. Dr. Graham was the initial lead author and passed away during the final phase of updating the report.

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