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(S.D.)-Black Hills Forest Unveils Beetle Plan

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 12/18/2012 07:42 AM

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) - The Black Hills National Forest in South Dakota and Wyoming will use extensive commercial tree thinning to battle the mountain pine beetle.

Forest Supervisor Craig Bobzien says the plan developed over more than a year will target 248,000 acres of vulnerable woodlands within the 1.2-million-acre forest. Commercial logging and non-commercial thinning will be used on almost half of the acres over five to seven years to make them more resistant to the destructive bugs that have infested more than 40 million acres of the nation's forests.

Officials estimate that about 405,000 acres of the Black Hills National Forest is infested. That's about one-third of the forest.

Bobzien says the response plan includes a variety of treatment options and will cost about \$70 million to implement.

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