Chadrad Communications, Inc.
226 Bordeaux St - Chadron, NE 69337
308-432-5545 fax 308-432-5601
E-mail: kcsr@chadrad.com

(S.D.)-Permits Available For Cutting Christmas Trees

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 11/16/2012 08:10 AM

(Custer)-People planning for the Christmas holiday can cut their own fresh Christmas tree this year from the Black Hills National Forest. Christmas tree permits will be available at most Black Hills National Forest Service offices in western South Dakota and northeast Wyoming. White spruce, ponderosa pine and western juniper are available.

Each permit is accompanied by a handout with guidance about appropriate tree removal. Trees may not be cut in developed recreation sites, Forest Service administrative sites, active timber sales, the Black Hills Experimental Forest near Rochford, the Black Elk Wilderness, the Beaver Park area near Sturgis, or within Spearfish Canyon.

Individual permits cost $10, up to a maximum of five permits per individual, and the maximum allowable height of cut trees is 20 feet. Permits require that you cut the entire tree, leaving no more than six inches of stump, and that you cut unused branches so they lay flat on the ground. The adhesive permit tag must be attached before a tree is removed from the woods; a citation can be issued for possession of a cut-but-untagged tree, even if a tag is available in person or in your vehicle.

Trees should be placed in water as soon as possible to help keep needles fresh. Once indoors, trees should be placed away from stoves, heaters, or heating ducts. After Christmas, used trees should be disposed of properly as yard waste. Do not dump used trees on national forest land.

There are no refunds for uncut trees or unused permits, and all permits expire December 31st. Please note that Forest Service offices do not accept credit cards, and that all Forest Service offices will be closed on Thanksgiving Day. Friday, December 21st is the last day permits will be sold at Forest Service offices.

(Story courtesy of Black Hills National Forest)

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