

As President Teddy Roosevelt said over 100 years ago.

“You must remember that the forest, which contributes nothing to the wealth, progress, or safety of the country, is of no interest to the government.”

Forest management depends on a stable supply chain infrastructure, including timber harvesters, haulers, and end-product mills. The loss of any component compromises the entire process.

In many regions, federal timber lands are the primary source of timber for mills. A loss or reduction in federal timber availability results in the closure of mills in these areas, consequently impacting and reducing logging capacity and undermining the forest management objectives of public and private land management interests. It is a finely balanced inter-dependent system.

However, when any sector of the process is not stable or lost, it becomes a self-perpetuating downward spiral of collapse. This is evident in the USFS decision to reduce timber sale volume in the Black Hills of South Dakota, which directly contributed to the closure of a mill in Hill City that had been in operation for over 50 years. Twelve logging operations supplied this mill. Now, when the USFS decides to resume timber harvesting operations at increased volume, there will not be a mill or loggers to utilize the timber, meaning the forest management objectives of the USFS will not be accomplished.

