

**CUSTER NATIONAL FOREST, SD:
IN ACTION NO MATTER WHAT THE CAUSE = SERIOUS DAMAGE**



The Brewer Fire burned on the Custer National Forest in South Dakota in 1988. Following this fire, which killed nearly all the trees in this drainage, none of the dead trees were removed. This area burned again (photo above taken following 2nd burn) at extremely high temperatures in August 2002 during the Kraft Springs Fire, fueled by the hazards left from the 1988 fire. The white lines of ash are what is left of the downed trees originally burned in 1988. The 2002 fire consumed most of the organic matter and new regeneration.

Following the 1988 burn, the Forest Service advertised a salvage sale but all of the salvage volume from the 1988 fires had overwhelmed local sawmill capacities and the sale went no bid. Most of the dead trees had fallen onto the ground, and fuel loading exceeded 40 tons per acre.

While the inaction following the 1988 fire was not the result of process delays, appeals, or litigation, this does demonstrate what can happen if action is not taken, no matter what the reason, following catastrophic events to remove dead trees and recover the area.