Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/16/2024 12:07:51 AM
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Comments: As a local full-time resident of Red Canyon and a Crook County volunteer firefighter, along with being the President of Red Canyon Property Owners Association, I have some concerns regarding your North Sand Forest Management project.

In reading over the project scope some of the concerns that pop out are as follows:

1. Prescribed burning, this is of the highest concern in that the history of the USDA Forestry Service in the Black Hills executing prescribed burns has been spotting in the last 20 years. Their seems to be a mindset of "We're Professionals and know what we're doing, don't question us" and then we have an escaped burn that consumes numerous acres of private land that wasn't supposed to be involved. The next thing the public hears is "Yeah, maybe the winds were a little too high that day to start the burn, oops, sorry we thought we had this". And the damage is done, that will take decades to repair with no one personally being held accountable, the wonderful anonymity of a Federal agency. This area as you are well aware is listed by the US Drought Monitor as still in a drought for the past several years and this current winter isn't improving the deep soil moisture, one more reason against lighting off a prescribed burn.
1a. Burning slash piles with snow cover is not in the same scope as burning off a hillside and if done properly is fairly safe.

2. The scope of work mentions that logging operations will be conducted to thin the forest. How familiar are you with Sand Creek Road from where Crook County road maintenance ends and past Red Canyon Rd? Sand Creek Rd is in some spots not much wider than a car width and with several blind corners with significant drop offs. There is not room for cars and logging trucks to safely pass, not even mentioning the speeds that logging trucks maintain. Put yourself in the position that it is your family or loved ones that could meet a logging truck head on where it is a blind corner and only the width for one vehicle. This section of forest road is terribly maintained and definitely not suited to 80,000lb. plus logging trucks speeding along.

Now please understand that not withstanding the two major issues listed above the project overall will improve the health of the forest. There is no debate that their is significant dead fall and fire fuels cluttering the forest floor. I know that the USDA Forest Service can successfully implement this project (if they are willing to work) without prescribed burns and making changes to Sand Creek Road so that there is NOT a 80,000lb. logging truck passenger vehicle accident.