

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/25/2024 11:43:02 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: This is Hugh Thompson, partner on the Thompson Family Ranch on the Rifle Pit Divide, which is on the immediate margin of the above referenced project. My grandfather, N.H.Thompson homesteaded in this area before the turn of the last century. He had a small sawmill in the mouth of Thompson Gulch and irrigated crops on the adjacent meadow with Sand Creek water. Thus, we Thompsons have been successful ranchers in this area for over 100 years.

I am a retired professional forester and range management specialist. I retired as Forest Supervisor of the Dixie N.F. in 1998 and again as Deputy Director of the Utah Department of Natural Resources in 2004. I know natural resource management, people management and the myriad jungle of environmental laws and regulations necessary to accomplish any project on the ground. Having said that, I heartily approve of the North Sand project as far as you have planned it. I am, however, contending that you have not gone sufficiently far in the scope of this project. There is little doubt that the Black Hills N.F. has greatly increased in pine and oak density in the past century as evidenced by the number of natural springs that have dried up or small reservoirs that fail to fill as a consequence of this woody vegetation overload. Hydrologically, the Black Hills are in real trouble.

I have managed the timber resource on our ranch for the past 20+ years. I thinned our mature pine stands to a 60 square foot basal area leaving sufficient areas unharvested to serve as wildlife hiding habitat. We have a healthy forage resource which we now lease out. If I wasn't an old geezer and pretty much "over the hill" I'd love to help design this project.

You have my vote. Get 'er done.

s/c Hugh Thompson

