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WATER RIGHTS
PRICE

Regarding: Argyle Canyon water use:

I have land above Argyle Canyon along Ashley National Forest. I have noticed an area above the creek which is sometimes moist when other parts of the land are dry. I have thought perhaps there is water there. When I received notification of the public hearing on November 18, I called to see what it was about. When I learned people were filing for water rights, I was at first confused, because drilling wells is so costly. Then I immediately thought I should also apply for a water right, you never know when it might come in handy, etc.

I sincerely believe that mentality, which I shared, is ruining the West. This is not to presume to know anything of the thoughts which went into other people's decision to apply for a water right. It is only that I briefly became part of the grab-what-you-can-when-you-can philosophy which is causing problems for people who actually love the land and want to share in a part of it.

I called the Price office and was informed that the people irrigating down the canyon are worried about having enough water. I don't know whether irrigating that land is cost effective, and I certainly wouldn't support increasing the acreage of irrigated land at that relatively dry location. I do know I wouldn't feel good about disrespecting the people who have irrigated the land for years, and I was assured they would be given first priority for water.

There is not enough water for everyone in the Argyle Canyon area, and some people have brought in large water storage tanks for their cabins. That solution appears preferable to a first-come, first-served system in which only a chosen few are allowed to take water from the land. There is a wonderful public spring, so no one needs to go thirsty, unless others choose to deplete the resources.

I have consulted with people who know more than I about water law, and learned that water rights are intended for people who use the water year around. That applies to no one with mountain hide-a-ways, and so the problem may be resolved. I would think cabin owners can bring up their own water, similarly, as they take out their garbage.

Sincerely



Jan Ellen Burton