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(S.D.)-Custer-Area Rancher Seeks To Expand Beetle Project



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 07/15/2013 08:04 AM

CUSTER, S.D. (ASSOCIATED PRESS) - Jim Hughes says he knows how to beat the mountain pine beetles on his Black Hills property and has been doing it for years.

But the Custer-area rancher says that he needs more help from the U.S. Forest Service to stem the flight in from federal land.

Hughes hopes to expand a project based on a bark-stripping machine that he modified to make more mobile. He sought modifications in ongoing arrangements with the U.S. Forest Service that allow landowners to cut infested trees on national forest bordering their property.

He says he knows it's asking a lot to seek funding from the Forest Service, but he thinks residents have shown that they can be proficient in destroying pine-beetle habitat.