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**FILED**

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October 18, 2010

Jim Ruby, Executive Secretary  
Environmental Quality Council

Mr. Tim Flintner, Chairman  
Wyoming Environmental Quality Council  
122 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street  
Herschler Bldg, Room 1714  
Cheyenne, WY 82701

Re: Docket No. 09-1103

Dear Mr. Flintner and Members of the Wyoming EQC.

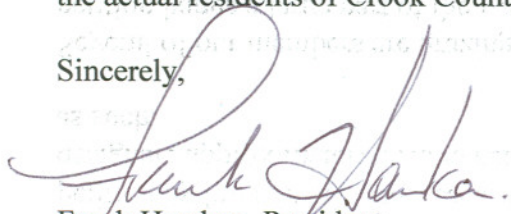
The Crook County Farm Bureau Federation represents over 400 agricultural interests in Crook County and Northeast Wyoming. We are adamantly opposed to the Very Rare and Uncommon petition by Friends of Sand Creek, Biodiversity Conservation Alliance (BCA) and others to designate approximately 17,000 acres of the Black Hills National Forest in the Sand Creek area as such.

Several of our members are grazing permittees on the Black Hills National Forest and as the petition hangs a large part of their rationale on the vegetative components of Sand Creek being Very Rare, we feel threatened that if this designation goes through, it will just lead to BCA strongly advocating the area for Wilderness status. Designated Wilderness has never been good for the livestock industry which is so important to Crook County.

This petition is full of half truths concerning the pristine nature of the vegetation, the wildlife habitat and the geology of the Sand Creek area. While this area is beautiful, it is not of true Wilderness quality, it is no more very rare or uncommon than most of the rest of the State of Wyoming. This proposed designation will do little to actually protect Sand Creek from non-coal surface mining. The greatest threats to the Sand Creek watershed are catastrophic fire and/or a mountain pine beetle epidemic. The Forest Service should be encouraged to fully implement the very good Forest Management Plan.

Once again, I urge you and your council to disapprove this blatant land grab scheme by outside interests and disapprove the petition. This would definitely be in the best interests of most of the actual residents of Crook County.

Sincerely,



Frank Hawken, President  
Crook County Farm Bureau Federation