

From: K Haiar <khaiar@hotmail.com>
To: <jgirar@state.wy.us>
Date: 6/23/2008 7:01 AM
Subject: Sand Creek Rare and Uncommon Designation

Dear Mr. Girardin,

I am part of a family ranch, Haiar Enterprise, which holds a grazing permit on the Sand Creek Allotment in the Black Hills National Forest. We have operated a ranch at this location and grazed cattle on the adjacent forest for several generations.

I am writing to comment on the petition to designate part of the Sand Creek area as Rare and Uncommon. I have read through the petition and was invited to a meeting last year by some of the members of the "Friends of Sand Creek". As a local resident and forest user, I understand and appreciate the beauty and importance of the Black Hills in general and the Sand Creek area in particular. It is a wonderful resource that should be available for everyone to enjoy. Our family and the Sand Creek Country Club share many interests and concerns about the forest area that we border. However, we disagree on the need for the Rare and Uncommon designation. We do NOT believe this designation will be a benefit to the Sand Creek area, the Black Hills National Forest, or Crook County. This appears to be a redundant layer of regulations on an area that is already adequately managed by several State and Federal agencies.

I have several objections to this petition. The first is based on the motivations and intent of the "Friends on Sand Creek". At the meeting I attended last year, they stated the main reason they were pursuing a Rare and Uncommon designation was to block mining in upper Sand Creek and prevent potential changes to the stream flow through the Country Club. Therefore, this petition for Rare and Uncommon designation by the "Friends of Sand Creek" is not an altruistic, independent analysis of the Sand Creek area, but a means to further complicate activities in their neighborhood of which the "Friends on Sand Creek" don't approve.

Secondly, the petition incorrectly implies the Sand Creek area is special with regard to mule deer range. The upper Sand Creek area is not unique within the Black Hills National Forest or the State of Wyoming for providing mule deer winter range. Thirdly, finescale dace are not unique/exclusive to the Sand Creek area. The petition itself states "populations of finescale dace exist in spring seeps in Nebraska, Wyoming and South Dakota." Finally, though I find the Sand Creek area to be beautiful it is not uniquely scenic within the Black Hills which would be apparent to a reasonable person on a weekend driving tour (e.g. the Needles).

Based on my review of the petition, the findings presented are NOT strong enough to warrant action by the Environmental Quality Council. We believe this petition does NOT justify the designation of the Sand Creek area as Rare and Uncommon. In addition, this designation is unnecessary for the "Friends of Sand Creek" to achieve their primary aim of protecting Sand Creek stream flows due to the existing State and Federal agencies and rules in place.

Sincerely,
Keith Haiar, Crook County Resident and Grazing Permittee

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