

June 17, 2008

Mr. Dennis M. Boal, Chair of the Environmental Quality Council
122 W. 25th Street, Herschler Bldg., Rm. 1714
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Dear Mr. Boal and all members of the Environmental Quality Council,

The Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation represents agricultural producers statewide. The organization is dedicated to ensuring agricultural producers receive equitable returns on their agricultural operations. Many of our agricultural producer members utilize the private and federal lands encompassed by or surrounding the proposed “very rare and uncommon” designation for the Sand Creek Area in Northeast Wyoming.

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation has concerns regarding designating the area known as Sand Creek as Very Rare or Uncommon. These concerns are outlined as follows:

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation policy supports multiple use of our governmental lands. We believe lands should be managed for the best and highest use. Granting designations such as very rare and uncommon will not allowed lands to be used for its best and highest use because some uses will be eliminated or reduced.

We are concerned about maintaining or improving the agricultural uses of the area proposed for “very rare and uncommon”. We realize that agricultural uses are supposedly protected. However, in many cases such as wilderness areas, over time, special designations either directly or indirectly cause agricultural uses to decline and often are eliminated. This may happen not only to the area given special designations but also surrounding lands. This would lower the viability of local agricultural producers and the entire local economy. Reducing or eliminating land uses could cause ecological harm to the area intended to be preserved.

We are concerned with the negative cumulative economic effects this designation would have for residents of Crook County and Wyoming. Crook County does not enjoy the mineral wealth that other areas in Wyoming do. Gold and uranium are known to exist in Crook County. Should the “very rare and uncommon” designation be granted, most mining activities would not be allowed, depriving area and state residents much needed tax revenue. Should mining eliminated in this area, most underground minerals would become essentially worthless, because they could not be utilized. No value means no taxes collected.

We feel that designation of the area as “very rare and uncommon” will lead to further restrictions on the use of the area for multiple use. We feel a more robust economic analysis of the cumulative impacts needs to be performed before the public can fully analyze the impacts of such a designation. At this time we cannot support such a designation. We ask that you do not consider the petition.

Thank you for your consideration.

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