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**For more information contact:**

Jodie Hickman, Executive Director  
605-945-2333 or executive@sdcattlemen.org

**SDCA Statement regarding the Tony Dean Cheyenne River Valley Conservation Act of 2010**

In accordance with long standing member policy, The South Dakota Cattlemen's Association (SDCA) opposes recent efforts by Senator Johnson and environmental activists to designate a portion of the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands as a federal wilderness area.

"We're concerned about how the wilderness designation will impact all existing Grasslands users, especially grazing permittees, as well as adjacent private landowners," said Jeff Smeenk, SDCA 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President and cattle producer from Newell. "Past experience dictates skepticism regarding the continuation of grazing in a wilderness area and we aren't confident the proposed legislation will ensure the Forest Service retains the ability to appropriately manage fire, wildlife and invasive species since most wilderness management activities are challenged in court."

Smeenk continued, "Management history of nearby wilderness areas legitimize our concerns regarding the continuation of sound land management practices as the pine beetle infestation has decimated the forest of the Black Elk Wilderness area. We thank Senator Thune for recognizing the concerns of current Grasslands users and urge Senator Johnson to put South Dakotan's first and reconsider this proposed wilderness designation."

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