



WYOMING STOCK GROWERS AGRICULTURAL LAND TRUST

UPPER NORTH PLATTE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION TOUR – WHAT A TRIP!

On June 12, over 100 people converged in the North Platte Valley for a full day of touring and learning about land and water conservation. Joe Glode, Bob Budd and Rick Knight started off the day with inspiring remarks. They talked about community collaboration, surmounting challenges and finding opportunities in agriculture and conservation. We revisited the many benefits and services provided by ag lands, and discussed how agricultural producers often help create the culture and fabric of our communities by being civic leaders who contribute to the local and state economy.

After the morning presentations, 3 busloads of people headed for the Encampment River Restoration project. There, Glen Leavengood described the in-stream rock structures that improved fish habitat and water quality, and enhanced irrigation water diversion system. The next stop was the One Bar Eleven Ranch conservation easement, where owner Steve Schalk gave a fascinating talk about the history of the ranch, the conservation easement, and future land protection plans. We then toured the Brush Creek Ranch conservation easement before heading back to the Community Center for lunch. Roger Cox gave a presentation

about the Highline Watershed Improvement District's Sowder Gulch pipeline project, which rerouted water out of a steep gulch and piped it to a diversion point, thereby reducing sedimentation and improving water quality and efficiency.



Steve Schalk speaks to tour attendees at the Upper North Platte Land and Water Conservation Tour about his family's choice to place their land in a conservation easement. The

The afternoon continued with a stop at the Highline Ranch conservation easement, presented by John Lunt of WSGALT board. John gave an informative talk about his family's choices regarding their conservation easement, as well as a general overview of the nuts and bolts of conservation easements. Next, we traveled to an overlook point along Jack Creek Drainage, where Roger Cox and Bob Budd discussed sage grouse habitat characteristics and statewide issues. The Kelly

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Cattle Company corral relocation project was next on the agenda. This cooperative effort between the landowner and SERCD relocated corrals from the stream to a higher bench where nutrients from corralled animals would drain away from the stream.

The final tour stop was at Joe Glode's Sheep Rock Ranch, where he gave a thorough explanation of how the 'inefficiencies' of flood irrigation benefit vegetation production, water quality and quantity, and fisheries habitat. The group dis-

cussed how flood irrigation methods create the lush and verdant scenery folks associate with mountain valley ranches. Mr. Glode then described how the conservation easement he placed on the property benefited him financially and had no effect on his agricultural operation.

The tour ended at the PVCC for dinner and a wrap-up discussion by Rick Knight and a slide show presentation by Pamela Dewell, WSGALT Executive Director. Local musicians helped the crowd wind down from a full day with some classic country tunes. Overall, a great time was had by all. The weather held, the food was plentiful, and people left with a renewed appreciation for the land and people that make this state what it is.

Hearty thanks go to our fellow hosts and sponsors, including: Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District, Upper North Platte Valley Water Conservation Association, Century 21 Cornerstone Realty, Brush Creek Ranch, Platte Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited, Carbon County Chapter of WSGALT, private individuals, with special thanks to the George B. Storer Family Foundation for support of our work in the Valley.



Dr. John Lunt speaks to tour attendees at the Upper North Platte Land and Water Conservatino Tour. WSGALT holds a conservation easement on Lunt's Highline Ranch near Saratoga.

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