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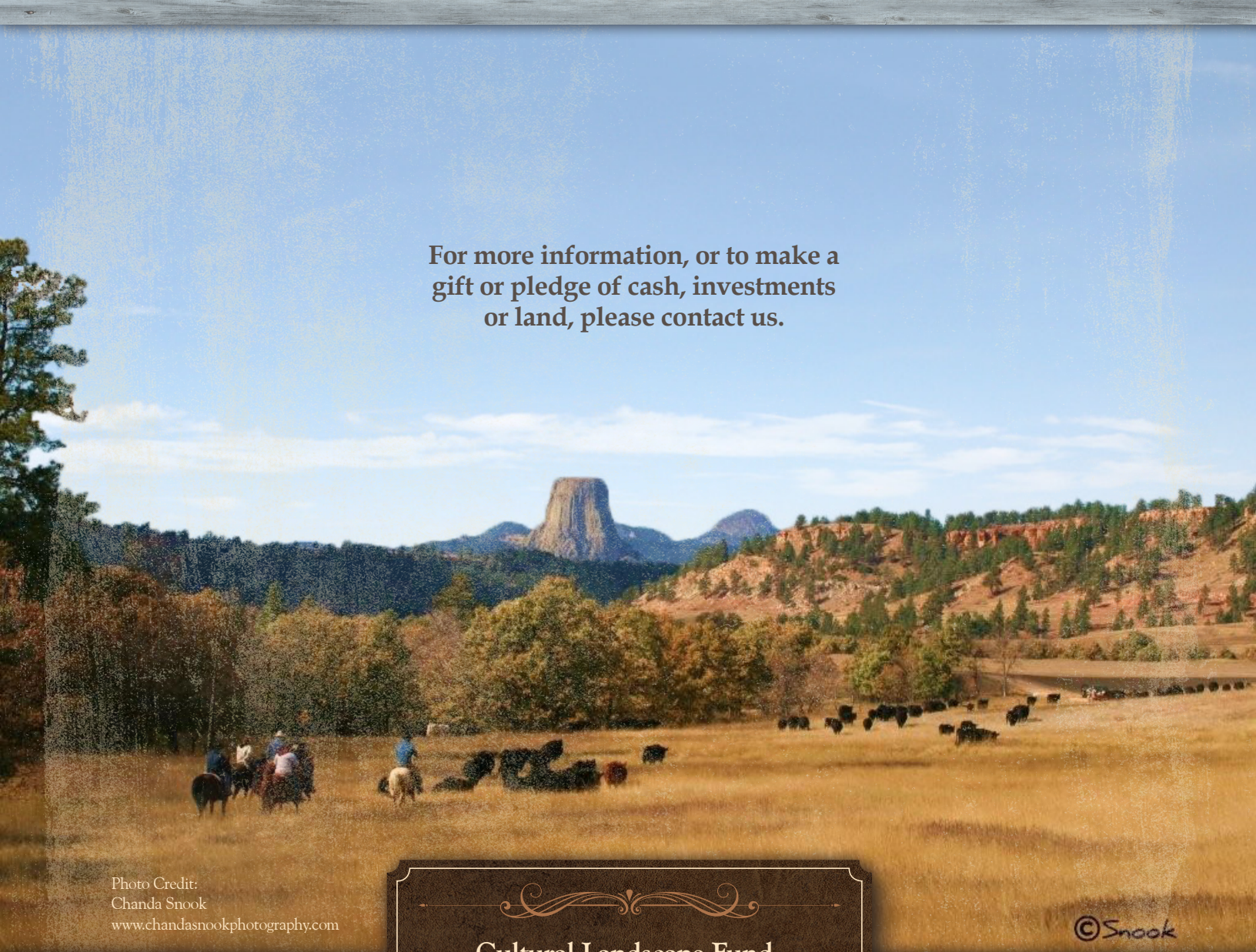


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Cultural Landscape Fund
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**THE CULTURAL
LANDSCAPE FUND**
IN MEMORY OF ALVIN WIEDERSPAHN

The Cultural Landscape Fund has been established by the family of Alvin Wiederspahn to help private landowners maintain the range through ranching culture.



PRESERVING A LEGACY

In order to conserve Wyoming's vibrant agricultural landscape, the Cultural Landscape Fund has been established in memory of Alvin Wiederspahn to help private landowners maintain the range through ranching culture. Funds will be directed by the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust to assist with voluntary conservation of private ranch lands so that they may sustain people and cultural resources for generations to come. Donations to the Cultural Landscape Fund may be utilized for traditional conservation purposes, such as the acquisition of conservation easements or the costs associated with completing that work, estate or succession planning assistance to ranch families, or to further awareness and the conservation of ranch culture. Alvin Wiederspahn served on the Board of Directors of the Stock Growers Land Trust from 2009 up to his death in 2014 and as Chairman from 2012 through 2014. He was passionate about our work and the opportunity we have to conserve not just land, but Wyoming's "cultural landscape."

"Ranch culture is comprised of a distinctive set of cultural components, which include animal husbandry, architecture, courtship, cuisine, dance, dress, etiquette, free enterprise, gestures, individual freedom, language, music, values and work ethic."

- Al Wiederspahn

THE RANCHING CULTURE

by Alvin Wiederspahn

It is a privilege for me to serve on the Board of the Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust. While much of WSGALT's work focuses on the conservation of ranch lands, it is perhaps less recognized that by preserving agricultural uses on those lands, WSGALT also furthers the protection of a culture; the culture of ranching.

Culture has been described as the total way of life that characterizes a group of people. By any measure or definition, ranching embodies a singular culture. The ranch culture is comprised of a distinctive set of cultural components, which include animal husbandry, architecture, courtship, cuisine, dance, dress, etiquette, free enterprise, gestures, individual freedom, language, music, values and work ethic. It is primarily through the agency of their culture that people interact with and modify their environment. Ranch culture affects certain attributes of the land, reflecting the way of life of the people who live and work on it. The ranch culture's relationships with the physical environment create a unique "cultural ecology."

The stewardship exercised through these relationships has preserved sustainable environments that are largely unchanged by human behavior. Many of Wyoming's prodigious landscapes are inextricably tied to production agriculture.

Our State's defining physical features – climates, landforms and natural vegetation – are particularly well suited to stockraising. Ranching's human activity, with all its attributes and works, has preserved open space, protected habitat for wildlife and provided food and fiber for a nation. The ranch culture is in alignment with resource conservation because ranchers' lives and livelihoods depend on the good stewardship of those places entrusted to their care. That is why one of WSGALT's premiere objectives is to facilitate ranch families' personal decisions concerning their private property, allowing the creation of conditions that will protect ranches for future generations and preserve both a landscape and a way of life. Through the creation of a properly crafted conservation easement, WSGALT provides a means to preserve the "cultural landscape" of ranching.

Cultural landscapes have been defined as "geographical terrains which exhibit characteristics, or which represent the values, of a society as a result of human interaction with the environment" or as lands which "represent the combined works of nature and man..." or, more philosophically, as "a set of ideas and practices embedded in a place [which] captures the relationship of [its] tangible and intangible qualities."

The value of such cultural landscapes is coming to be increasingly recognized and appreciated. A noted geographer, Pierce Lewis, has stated, "The attempt to derive meaning from landscapes possesses overwhelming virtue. It keeps us constantly alert to the world around us, demanding that we pay attention not just to some of the things around us but to all of them – the whole visible world in all of its rich, glorious, messy, confusing, ugly and beautiful complexity." Ranchers have always been attuned to this complexity and to the productive, cultural, aesthetic and, yes, theological meaning derived from the landscape.

By protecting ranchlands and ranch life, the Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust works to preserve ranch culture, ranch landscapes and this important cultural ecology of Wyoming – and well it should. After all, "culture" is our middle name.

