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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wyoming Organizations Team Up To Conserve Over 1,400 Acres of Ranchland in the Big Horn Basin

Worland, Wyo. -- The Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust (WSGLT), along with the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust (WWNRT) and the Wyoming Game and Fish (WGF), joined together with ranch owner, Dave Slover to conserve portions of the Gooseberry Creek Ranch in the Big Horn Basin.

The 1,450 acre easement, located southwest of Worland, is the second portion of the ranch to be conserved with the WSGLT. The first easement consisted of 1,920 acres and was completed in 2007. The Gooseberry Creek Ranch is a hay and livestock operation with a rich landscape which offers habitat for several different species of plants and animals.

Ranch owner Dave Slover noted at closing "I am proud to have entered into this conservation easement with the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust, and their partners to preserve this land for ranching while simultaneously protecting wildlife habitat for future generations. What makes this unique is that it ties in with our previous easement, and those of neighbors, to create approximately 7 miles of contiguous riparian corridor that is conserved under easements with the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust."

The conserved area consists of three distinct parcels which offer a rich diversity of habitats including riparian creek bottom, wooded wetlands, sagebrush uplands, and salt desert shrub lands.

The easement will conserve 235 acres of the Oregon Basin Sage Grouse Core Area, adding to the 74,168 acres of grouse habitat that WSGLT has already conserved. The easement also includes 972 acres of Mule Deer Crucial Range, 51 acres of Pronghorn Crucial Range which provide seasonal, and year-long habitat for the animals.

John Kennedy, Deputy Director of WGF commented on the role of the WGF in the conservation of this key habitat area. "This project represents an important private land-wildlife habitat conservation partnership in the Big Horn Basin," Kennedy stated. "The collaboration among the landowner and other partners involved in this project, and their desire to conserve agricultural land and wildlife habitat, is impressive. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department is proud to be a part of this outstanding partnership."

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The ranch borders both BLM and State Trust lands and offers one of the only water sources for livestock and wildlife in the area. The public lands surrounding the ranch are enjoyed by outdoor enthusiasts, and the conservation of this property will allow them to continue to enjoy uninterrupted views of Wyoming's wide-open spaces.

In addition to conserving productive agricultural lands and important wildlife habitats, the easement is also conserving a piece of Wyoming history. The property boasts unique rock formations and the ranch itself was homesteaded in the early 1900's.

Bob Budd, Executive Director of the WWNRT spoke about the importance of the conservation easement for Wyoming. "This project connects multiple conservation easement projects funded by the Trust. When we are able to conserve multiple ranches in a contiguous fashion, we achieve conservation at the landscape scale which is truly a major win for Wyoming."

This important conservation project which began in 2010 nearly fell apart after the loss of federal funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service ("NRCS") in late 2015 because of a report that showed low potential for future oil and gas development on the property. After the NRCS pulled their funding, organizations around Wyoming including the WWNRT, the WGF, and the WSGLT, and ranch owner Dave Slover joined together in true Wyoming spirit to complete the easement.

Bo Alley, Executive Director of the WSGLT commented on the closing saying, "Many thanks to our partners at the Game and Fish and the WWNRT. This project stands as an example of Wyoming entities, through multi-organizational cooperation, making the right decisions and conserving another piece of Wyoming's productive agricultural lands, wide-open spaces, wildlife habitat, and cowboy culture for generations to come."

About the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust

The Stock Growers Land Trust is dedicated to conservation through ranching. Based in Cheyenne, the non-profit organization serves the entire state and is Wyoming's only agricultural land trust. Through partnerships with ranch families, the Stock Growers Land Trust holds and stewards conservation easements on more than 236,000 acres of land on ranches and farms throughout Wyoming. Founded in 2000 by the 140-year-old Wyoming Stock Growers Association, it is one of the largest among the 1,659 regional land trusts in the United States. For more information, visit www.wsgalt.org.

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