



The Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust's Kurt Bucholz Award this year goes to Little Snake River Valley rancher Pat O'Toole. WSGLT photo

O'Toole receives Bucholz conservation award

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The Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust announced today that Patrick "Pat" O'Toole is the recipient of the 2016 Kurt Bucholz Conservation Award.

O'Toole and his wife, Sharon, together with their family, manage the Ladder Ranch — a mix of private and public lands — in the Little Snake Valley on the Wyoming/Colorado border.

O'Toole manages the rangeland of the Ladder Ranch with an eye to producing healthy livestock with optimal genetics, while also ensuring the health of the landscape, watershed and streams. He is a proponent of Wyoming conservation efforts and has drawn on the knowledge that he has gained as a steward of the land, to be a steward of policy.

He was a member in the Wyoming House of Representatives and sat on its Select Water Committee, as well as serving on the Presidentially-appointed Western Water Policy Commission. He has also testified in front of national committees on issues impacting the agriculture, including the U.S. House Resource Committee and the U.S. Senate Energy Committee.

Currently, O'Toole presides over the Family Farm Alliance, where as president he speaks about water use and irrigation issues. He is also an Advisory Board Member for AGree, a think tank focusing on agricultural policy issues in the international arena.

"Receiving the Bucholz Award is a great honor for me and my family," O'Toole said. "It has been said that 'water is the new gold.' It is more than that. Water is life. I have had the great fortune to work with many of Wyoming's Water Buffalo, including my friend Kurt Bucholz. Our challenge is to treat our water as the valuable resource it is for Wyoming's future."

The Bucholz Conservation Award is given in memory of the late veterinarian Kurt Bucholz, a rancher from Carbon County and an early supporter of the WSGLT.

According to a press release from the land trust, the Bucholz Award winner "encompasses the values and stewardship goals that Kurt exemplified in his life."

Laura Bucholz, Kurt's widow, commented on this year's award: "I am happy to present the award to someone who is such a strong advocate for conservation on a local, and state level."

The Bucholz award honoree receives a bronze statue sculpted by Wyoming artist Jerry Palen that depicts the Stock Growers Land Trust horse and rider logo. Past recipients include Alan Barnett (2015), Bobbie Frank (2014), Mike Healy (2013), Bob Budd (2012), Jim Chant (2011), Joe Glode (2010), John Lunt (2009) and Dennis Sun (2008).

The Bucholz award will be presented at the WSGLT's 15th Annual Barbeque, to be held at the C-Bar-B Ranch outside of Buffalo on August 27.

Based in Cheyenne, the non-profit WSGLT is dedicated to conservation through ranching. The organization serves all of Wyoming and is the state's only agricultural land trust. Through partnerships with ranch families, the trust holds and stewards conservation easements on more than 223,946 acres of land on ranches and farms. 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.

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