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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MISHURDA MOUNTAIN RANCHES EASEMENT ENHANCES KIRBY CREEK CONSERVATION

Thermopolis - The Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust announces the completion of the Mishurda Mountain Ranches conservation easement near Thermopolis, Wyoming. The Mishurdas' conservation easement ensures nearly 8,000 acres of ranchland situated between Klondike Peak and Guffy Peak remain in agriculture and protected from future exurban development.

"The Mishurda Mountain Ranches conservation easement ensures that a phenomenal piece of central Wyoming remain a viable agricultural operation; and the Stock Growers Land Trust feels very fortunate to have collaborated with Birg and Debbie Mishurda and the Wyoming Wildlife & Natural Resource Trust to ensure that this project came to fruition" said Pamela Dewell, Executive Director for the Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust. "Birg and Debbie were a pleasure to work with, their commitment to conservation and dedication to completing this project were essential to its success."

The 7,891 acres of Mishurda Mountain Ranches is a significant portion of the historic Hays Ranch and contributes to the rich tradition of agriculture in Hot Spring County. The original VH brand that belonged to the Hays family is still in use on the ranch today. Also, this conservation easement supports the vast landscape of publically owned land in the region. Mishurda Mountain Ranches has grazing leases on 3,560 acres and approximately 4,800 acres of State and BLM land, respectively. This public land will benefit from the stewardship and management of Mishurda Mountain Ranches as well as the protection from encroachment of exurban development that is guaranteed through the conservation easement. Located on the headwaters of Mini-Springs and Kirby Creek, this easement will also support and enhance a multi-year effort by regional landowners and various agencies to restore the Kirby Creek Watershed.

According to Birg Mishurda, owner of the property, "We believed there were three primary reasons for us to complete a conservation easement: 1) To conserve the rangelands into perpetuity and prevent future development; 2) Preserve primary habitat and migration corridors for elk, mule deer, antelope, game birds and waterfowl; and 3) To assist with long term family estate planning."

The Mishurda family manages the ranchland for optimal cow-calf production, and plans to continue those management strategies in the future. They would also like to continue the development of springs, dams, and reservoirs on the property for improvement of the watershed. With their stewardship of the ranchlands, and the assurances that the conservation easement provides, the Mishurda family plans to enjoy the beauty of the open spaces with friends and family members for years to come.

"The Mishurda Mountain Ranch easement will help protect an important landscape in central Wyoming. The property provides great wildlife habitat, and the easement will allow the agricultural operation to be maintained and continued into the future," said Bob Budd, director of the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust. "Keeping the property in agriculture will also help to maintain the economy of Hot Springs County."

Mishurda also stated, "I think it is significant to note that this deal was completed within four months. When you get the right group of people working together on a project, it can happen in a short amount of time. We really appreciate Graham and the Stock Growers Land Trust and all of the additional individuals who worked together to make this happen, and want to thank them for all of their efforts."

Dewell echoed echoes the Mishurdas' appreciation of following individuals' efforts: Graham McGaffin who served as Project Lead, Kim Colvin with Terra Western Associates, who completed the conservation easement appraisal; Michael Greear with Worrall & Greear, P.C., who acted as legal counsel for the Mishurdas; John McKinley with Davis & Cannon, LLP, who represented the Land Trust as counsel; Gretchen Hurley with Hurley Geological Services, who completed a report on the property's mineral development potential; Rio Franzman with Habitat Management Inc., who completed a baseline report on the property; and Lyle Casciato with Engineering Associates, who provided surveys for the conservation easement.

About the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust

The Stock Growers Land Trust is dedicated to conservation through ranching and holds almost 170,000 acres of working lands under easement. Founded in 2000 by the 140-year old Wyoming Stock Growers Association, the Stock Growers Land Trust is the 9th largest conservation holder of 1,659 regional land trusts in the United States.