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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Centennial Ranch Conserved In Albany County, Wyoming

Laramie, Wyo. — The Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust (WSGLT) has partnered with the Croonberg family to conserve the 6,650-acre Croonberg Ranch located west of Laramie. The conservation easement project was made possible with funding from the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust (WWNRT) and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

The Croonberg Ranch conservation project connects and provides unfragmented open space, agricultural land and wildlife habitat between the Medicine Bow National Forest and the Little Laramie River. The conserved landscape is within view of those traveling west of Laramie on the Snowy Range Scenic Byway or Interstate 80. Astrid Martinez, State Conservation for the Wyoming NRCS commented on the project closing saying, “The NRCS is pleased to partner with the Croonberg family, and the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust to protect this special ranch for conservation and agricultural purposes while keeping the Wyoming ranching way of life alive.”

The first portion of the ranch was purchased by the Croonberg family in 1917, and has grown throughout the last 102 years. The ranches history in agriculture is apparent on the property through the presence of old livestock camps and corrals, as well as the barn which was built in the 1930’s. The ranch continues to be rooted in agriculture and maintains healthy hay production and a cattle herd. The Croonberg’s rich history was honored in 2017 when the ranch was recognized by the State Historic Preservation Office as a Centennial Ranch.

Linda Croonberg, co-owner and operator of the ranch spoke about what the conservation of the ranch means to her, “Twenty-five years ago an associate commented to me that he would subdivide this ranch in a heartbeat. I still remember how adversely that remark hit me. That’s when the seed was planted. I knew I would never subdivide and develop, but I had to see to it that no one else ever would. Many years ago I chose the WSGLT. Each year that passed, my resolve for this partnership grew – even through the sometimes frustrating process. As the population exponentially explodes, saving any wide open spaces becomes more and more important. I am glad to be a part of preserving that limited resource.”

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The Croonberg Ranch not only stands out for its history, but for the ecosystems and wildlife populations that flourish on the property. The Little Laramie River Aquatic Crucial and Moose Terrestrial Crucial Habitat Priority Areas encompass the ranch. Additionally, crucial habitats for mule deer, elk, and pronghorn can be found on and near the property. The agricultural operation and wildlife population benefit from the presence of the Little Laramie River which meanders through the property and provides irrigation for hay and a riparian corridor for wildlife. Executive Director of the WWNRT, Bob Budd communicated the importance of the project, “This is yet another important conservation project along the Little Laramie River, located in an area that provides essential connectivity between mountains and plains. Another outstanding example of conservation that comes from the ground-up. Hats-off to the WSGLT and the Croonberg family.”

With the closing of the Croonberg Ranch project, the WSGLT now holds over 31,000 acres of conservation easements in Albany County, which is an area twice the size of the city of Laramie. WSGLT Conservation Director, Eric Schacht reflected on working with the Croonberg family to complete the project, “I have enjoyed working with Jean and Linda Croonberg, the mother and daughter that own and operate the Croonberg Ranch. Not only are they good stewards of the land and its resources, but they have an excellent sense of humor. The WSGLT thanks the Croonberg family and our funding partners in conserving this piece of Wyoming’s heritage for future generations.”

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About the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust

The Wyoming 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 Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust holds and stewards conservation easements on more than 275,000 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.