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17,757 Acres Conserved in Carbon County

Cheyenne, WY – Nov. 4, 2025 – On October 29, 2025, the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust and Ryan Lance, President and Manager of the Pathfinder Sand Creek Ranch, finalized a conservation easement to permanently protect 17,757 acres in Carbon County— safeguarding productive agricultural land, vital wildlife habitats, and historic open-spaces.

“The conservation of the Pathfinder Sand Creek Ranch builds on generations of stewardship that define Wyoming’s history,” said Executive Director, Christine Adams. “Through our wonderful partnership with the Pathfinder Sand Creek Ranch, we’re ensuring that this working landscape continues to support agriculture, wildlife habitat, and open space for generations to come. Together, we honor the legacy of those who came before us while conserving the Wyoming we love for the future.”

Located near the historic Sweetwater and North Platte Rivers, the Pathfinder Sand Creek Ranch is rich in both agricultural and cultural heritage. The property sits at the heart of one of Wyoming's most historically significant landscapes — where the Oregon, Mormon, Pioneer, and California Trails, collectively known as the Emigrant Trail, cross its northern boundary. These routes once guided nearly half a million travelers heading west from the early 1800s through the 1860s, leaving a lasting imprint on the land and Wyoming's history.

Just 10 miles west of the property lies Independence Rock, a famed waypoint along the Oregon Trail where more than 5,000 emigrants carved or painted their names into the granite outcrop, marking their passage through the frontier. Nearby landmarks such as Devil's Gate and Martin's Cove — both recognized for their importance to the Mormon handcart pioneers — further underscore the area's deep historical and cultural significance.

The Pathfinder Sand Creek Ranch also played a role in Wyoming's early ranching history, with its roots tracing back to the 1870s Tom Sun Ranch and Albert J. Bothwell, who began acquiring land in the Sweetwater Valley in the 1880s. Bothwell's endeavors in agriculture, irrigation, and settlement helped shape the region's ranching traditions and contributed to key moments in Wyoming's territorial history, including the era of open-range conflicts that culminated in the Johnson County Cattle War of 1892.

Today, the Pathfinder Sand Creek Ranch continues its agricultural legacy as a working cattle operation. The land supports a mix of yearling and cow/calf pairs that graze across its extensive rangeland pastures. In addition to its ranching operations, the Sweetwater River Conservancy Conservation Bank (SRCCB) operates on the property to support a healthy, intact greater sage-grouse population. The SRCCB's conservation efforts benefit far more than sage-grouse; it also enhances habitat for elk, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, 34 species of waterfowl, including 16 migratory shorebird species, along with numerous small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians.

"Pathfinder is pleased to partner with the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust on the conservation easement on the Sand Creek Ranch," said Lance. "The protections created through the conservation easement will not only ensure that greater sage-grouse and other habitats are safeguarded in perpetuity, but the deep agricultural heritage of the ranch endures in future generations."

The Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust is honored to continue working with landowners who share a dedication to conserving Wyoming's working lands and the history they represent.



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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 families, the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust holds and stewards agricultural conservation easements on more than 307,000 acres of land throughout Wyoming. Founded in 2000 by the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, it is one of the largest regional land trusts in the United States.

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