

Sage Grouse Initiative Success Story Wyoming

The most extensive open-space project in Wyoming, the Sommers-Grindstone Conservation Project, protects nearly 19,000-acres of prime agricultural land, important wildlife habitat and priceless cultural resources. An agreement by two ranches, and conservation and government groups was finalized in June 2010.

NRCS Wyoming was able to participate in this landmark project using Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) funds. Sommers-Grindstone is a compilation of four separate conservation easements.

The protected land includes a variety of terrain including riparian areas, sagebrush ecosystem, and provides a migration corridor for deer, antelope, elk, and moose, and habitat for various birds. Many parts of the aforementioned sagebrush and riparian habitat types play host to various sage-grouse life-cycles, including active leks.

The principal landowners are Albert Sommers and his sister Jonita Sommers, and Maggie Miller of Grindstone Cattle Co. “This easement will allow the land to remain undeveloped, which is a benefit to cattle and wildlife, and it will allow us to pass our ranch along to another generation of ranchers,” said Albert Sommers. “We are trying to create a future for this ranch.”

Total cost of the project is \$19.7 million and numerous entities contributed funding to this project.

Pictured are the Sommers easement and one of the Grindstone Cattle Co. easements. Photos courtesy of Wyoming Aero Photo, LLC.

