

# Featured Friend

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Partners for Fish & Wildlife



### Taking Care of the Country



**T**he Hellyer family has been ranching for over 40 years in the heart of one of Wyoming's priority areas for sage grouse conservative. By working with the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and the Sage Grouse Initiative, Robert and Martha Hellyer have made dozens of rangeland improvements that benefit their livestock, sage grouse, and the many wildlife species that depend on their pastures.

"The Partners program has a good attitude: they understand that public and private lands all have to work together," says Robert.

*"SGI is one of the most exciting new partnerships I have been involved with in my 25 years as a Service employee.*

*It's an enormously successful collaborative effort." ~ Heather Johnson, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Mountain-Prairie Region*



Conservation projects on the Hellyer's ranch include creating several riparian pastures with solar-powered, wildlife-friendly electric fences, and installing a half-dozen solar-powered watering systems to better distribute livestock and protect habitat.

"We've got a lot of sage grouse around, which is a good sign!" says Martha. "What's good for our livestock is good for the sage grouse. For us, that means taking care of the country and maintaining a good balance of grasses and forbes."

Heather Johnson of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program points to the Hellyer's conservation work as an example of "getting good work done on the ground."

### Meet the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

#### About

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners for voluntary projects that improve fish and wildlife habitat and complement the activities of working private lands. Heather Johnson, the Regional Coordinator for the Partners' eight-state Mountain Prairie Region including Wyoming, oversees 50 Partner positions and supports 7 Sage Grouse Initiative field staff.

#### Role With Sage Grouse Initiative

The Partners Program has helped fund 13 total SGI positions throughout the range of the sage grouse, and works with interested private landowners to deliver on-the-ground sagebrush-steppe habitat restoration projects.



#### Contact

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Find out more at: [www.fws.gov/partners](http://www.fws.gov/partners)