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Ultra, Shell and Questar Help Green River Valley Land Trust Meet Fundraising Goal to Purchase Murdock Double Bar E Ranch Conservation Easement

June 25, 2007 - The Green River Valley Land Trust (GRVLT) announced last week that it raised the \$1.2 million necessary to conserve a portion of the Murdock family's ranch northwest of Pinedale.

In addition to the more than one hundred individuals and families from Sublette County, around the state and around the country who contributed to enable the GRVLT to meet its fundraising goal, Ultra Resources, Inc., Shell Exploration & Production Co. and Questar Market Resources (USQ) made one of the largest donations. This gift - along with contributions from other organizations such as The Nature Conservancy of Wyoming, the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust Fund, the Tom Thorne Sage Grouse Conservation Fund and several private foundations - had the effect of boosting the project over the top to meet the \$1.2 million goal in order to work with the Murdock family toward a project closing date in the next several weeks.

Bill Piquet, Ultra, J.R. Justus, Shell and Paul Matheny, Questar emphasized that, "While the focus of Ultra, Shell and Questar's long-term management proposal is to avoid and minimize onsite impacts, this conservation easement is a prime example of why offsite mitigation is also important. It provides immediate benefits to the wildlife that will remain intact long after oil and gas development is complete." Mitigation efforts must include a meaningful offsite mitigation component to adequately address the several key issues associated with Anticline operations, including wildlife conservation, wildlife displaced to private land, as well as, protection of surface water, groundwater and air quality.

The GRVLT Board feels strongly that conservation easements offer the most effective, long-lasting offsite mitigation tool available. GRVLT Board President John Andrikopoulos explained that, "Conservation easements are market-based, permanent, and eliminate or severely restrict residential and commercial developments, which are the biggest threats to habitats on vital private land used by wildlife inhabiting and migrating through the Anticline during their annual cycles. Eliminating these threats means wildlife from sage grouse to mule deer to pronghorn can continue to benefit from these properties' vital habitat forever."

In fact, a wide variety of government agencies and non-governmental organizations repeatedly endorse conservation easements as a significant tool to conserve and improve habitat function, including the BLM, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, the NRCS, and the Ruckleshaus Institute of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming.

Deena McMullen, Shell's Senior Communications Advisor said, "We're pleased that we have been able to work with the Green River Valley Land Trust to support this conservation easement, which will not only provide benefits to wildlife and the environment, but will also conserve the historic Murdock family ranch as a way to honor all of the families that helped build Sublette County."

GRVLT Executive Director Lara Ryan added, "The completion of the conservation easement is another example of how collaboration among groups — industry, regulatory agencies, conservation groups and citizens — can have a lasting effect on the land uses of Sublette County. We're pleased to have USQ's support of a project that conserves valuable habitat and promotes the values of Sublette County."

The Green River Valley Land Trust is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting landowning families of the area in the conservation of agricultural, ranch, and natural lands in order to sustain and protect open spaces, watersheds, wildlife habitat, and other ecological values for today's inhabitants and as a legacy for future generations. Since 2000, GRVLT has worked with more than 35 families to conserve nearly 20,000 acres of working ranchland, wildlife habitat and open space in Sublette County.

For more information on the Murdock project and other GRVLT efforts, please contact Lara Ryan, Executive Director, at (307) 367-7007 or lara@grvlandtrust.org.