

# Ranch & Bird Tour

## Presenters and Organizers

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### Keynote Speaker



#### **Allen Williams, PhD., President, GFI, LLC**

Allen Williams is a 6<sup>th</sup> generation family farmer (since 1840) and founding partner of Grass Fed Beef, LLC, Grass Fed Insights, LLC, and a partner in Joyce Farms, Inc. He has consulted with more than 3500 farmers and ranchers in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and South America on operations ranging from a few acres to over 1 million acres. Allen pioneered many of the early grass fed protocols and forage finishing techniques and has spent the last 15 years refining those. He is a “recovering academic”, having served 15 years on the faculty at Louisiana Tech University and Mississippi State University. He holds a B.S. and M.S. in Animal Science from Clemson University and a

Ph.D. in Genetics & Reproductive Physiology from LSU. He has authored more than 400 scientific and popular press articles, and is an invited speaker at regional, national, and international conferences and symposia. Major areas of research focus include soil health, forage & grazing management systems, live animal carcass ultrasound, reproductive technologies, Meat Science, and alternative marketing systems.

He is featured in the Carbon Nation film, “Soil Carbon Cowboys” (<http://vimeo.com/80518559>) and has a recently released book co-authored with Teddy Gentry, “Before You Have A Cow”. Allen is a regular contributor to “GRAZE” and has written articles for the “Organic Broadcaster”, “Stockman GrassFarmer”, and many other publications. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Grass Fed Exchange and the Mississippi Sustainable Agriculture Network, Core Team Member of the Pasture Project, and Co-Investigator for Team SoilCarbon. He also serves as an officer in the Starkville Civitan Club and is active Deacon in his local church.

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### Thursday Afternoon Presenters

**Alison Lyon-Holloran** is the Executive Director of Audubon Rockies. She began working for Audubon Wyoming in February 2001. Alison is responsible for planning and executing all conservation and science programs Audubon Rockies is involved in including: the Important Bird Areas (IBA) of Wyoming; Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship; and Greater Sage-grouse lek monitoring programs. Before working for Audubon, Alison was a research scientist for the Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Wyoming. Alison also received her master's degree in Zoology and Physiology from University of Wyoming and her bachelors of science in wildlife management from University of West Virginia.

**Scott Cotton** is a native of northern Wyoming who serves as the UW Extension Agriculture Area Educator for the Natrona/Converse/Niobrara area. His 22 year efforts as an Extension Educator and Certified Professional Range Manager has included serving as the Co-coordinator for the Colorado Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, Vice chairman of the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition and Colorado SRM Section President. Cotton has worked with partners to organize and conduct numerous grazing/bird habitat/wildlife tours since 1996 in three states. As a legacy agriculture producer his major focus is on enhancing the stewardship of land owners.

**Dave Pellatz** grew up on a ranch, and his family and in-laws both have ranches in the Thunder Basin grasslands. After receiving degrees in both petroleum engineering and geological engineering as well as owning several different businesses, he has returned to the rural setting he loves and recently completed his masters in Natural Resources Stewardship. His creativity led him to work as Executive Director and Conservation Coordinator for the Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Association and as Range Manager for the Thunder Basin Grazing Association.

**Adrienne Larrew and Dan Larenz** operate and run all day-to-day operations of Corner Post Meats a company that offers an extensive selection of grass finished beef and lamb and pasture raised chicken, pork and eggs that offer health, flavor, and quality. They believe that the relationship of selling meat to your family, direct from their ranch, opens a door for people to support their local agriculture. If people know where their food comes from, and how the land is managed and the livestock cared for, then there is a greater sense of accountability that we value as a partnership between the land, their ranch and your family.

**Nick Van Lanen** has been working on avian research projects since 2001. These projects have led him to work in seven different states while investigating a range of topics including breeding, stop-over, migratory, and wintering behavior of songbirds, raptors, and gamebirds. In addition, Nick spent eighteen months as an interpretive naturalist on the Georgia coast. He returned to school in 2008 and in the Spring of 2010 received a master's degree from Colorado State University for his research investigating the potential competitive interaction between Northern Spotted and Barred Owls. After graduate school Nick immediately started working for RMBO. As a full-time Biologist with the Science Division, Nick assists with program development, conservation delivery, data analyses, reporting, and publications while overseeing RMBO's avian monitoring efforts in Wyoming.

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## Friday Presenters and Tour Leaders

**Zach Hutchinson** is a Community Naturalist for Audubon Rockies. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Zoology from Northwest Missouri State University. Zach is an avid birder, who serves on the board of directors for multiple local organizations, including the Platte River Trail Trust and the Murie Audubon Society. He will be leading Thursday's option field trip to Ayers Natural Bridge.

**Jacelyn and Dusty Downey** started Audubon Rockies Education and Outreach programs ten years ago with the goal of getting youth and adults outside to explore this great state. Dusty and Jacelyn now work extensively on Audubon's Prairie Bird Initiative and are fourth generation owners of the Downey Ranch located near Keyhole Lake in the northeast corner of the state.

**Cameron Clark** is the High Plains Area Resource Soil scientist for the USDA-NRCS out of the Douglas area office. He was raised in the Virginia suburbs of Washington, DC but headed "out West" for college, attending Montana State University in the 80's. Cameron went back to school in the early 90's and earned a Master's Degree in Agronomy from the University of Arkansas. After graduation, he worked as an Extension Agent for 12 years. He has been with NRCS in Wyoming for eight years.

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## The Ranchers

**Jay and Linda Butler** run nearly 18,000 acres of rolling hills and Sagebrush Steppe on the beautiful Pronghorn Ranch near scenic Douglas, WY. Jay was previously a science teacher and states that "One of the goals of the ranch is to raise cattle and at the same time maintain biodiversity. The long term health of the ecosystem is critical component of the ranch philosophy".

**Frank G and Leslie Eathorne** are long-time ranchers north of Douglas, Wy who have taken an active role in conservation leadership and community service. In addition to both working with Audubon and other groups and agencies to promote a clear understanding of the interaction between land management and conservation they have personally engaged in numerous community roles. Frank has served as a Converse County Commissioner, as President of the Thunder Basin Grasslands Ecosystem Association, President of the Thunder Basin Grazing Association, and a member of the Western Prairies Ecosystem Association. Frank and Leslie have several collaborative bird habitat monitoring sites on their property and have engaged in years of on-site educational efforts.

