



# FEATURED LANDOWNER: JUNE AKERS

June Akers and her husband, Archer, built their home on 17 acres along Rock Creek just north of Wheatland in 1968.

June was born in Wheatland and, with the exception of overseas assignments with Archer, has lived here her whole life. Archer served in the Army for approximately 20 years during which he and June

lived in Japan, Germany, and Holland. After retiring, Archer and June purchased a local western wear store before his passing in 1986. June has retained the property and looks forward to visits from her children Peggy Darling of Douglas and George Akers of Arizona.

George and his two horses spend summers with June in Wheatland, and the two horses help manage the grass when they are not at a team roping. June takes great pride in her yard and the aesthetic values of the property. The grazing of the horses is managed to

maintain the lawn grass and keep the pasture grass trimmed while not overgrazing.

Many may think 17 acres is plenty to maintain two horses during the summer, but June's many years in Wyoming taught her the horses must be managed carefully so the beauty of the land is maintained.

George fences the horses in small paddocks and moves the location of the paddock throughout the summer. This allows grazing to be concentrated on a small piece of land for a short time. The horses are then moved and the grass is not grazed again until the next year.

The horses are rotated around the land using a ribbon-type fence that can be connected to an electrical charger. This fence is easily built and moved so the land available to the horses for grazing can be rotated. Supplying water can be as simple as a tank moved with the horses.

The corral is an important tool in managing the grazing. "It's been awfully dry here the last few



*The cottonwood and spruce trees near the Akers house are area landmarks.*



*June Akers*

years,” June says. Her years of experience in the area certainly give that statement credence. Before the grass runs out, the horses can be penned in the corral and fed hay to relieve the grazing pressure.

June and George are careful in managing grazing because Rock Creek runs through her property. If the horses were allowed to overgraze the land, the stream banks could deteriorate and could contribute to potential water quality concerns for the creek. The grasses along the stream bank are vigorous and the roots help hold the stream bank intact and protect the quality of the water.

Living close to Rock Creek has created some excitement on the rare occasion the creek floods. “The scariest time was when the dam on Wheatland Reservoir No. 1 broke,” June remembers. “They were running water everywhere trying to control it, and we had water right up to the house but, thankfully, it didn’t make it in.”

June is proud of the trees on her property. She planted the large cottonwood in front of the house and the two spruce trees behind the house that are now area landmarks. “When we bought those blue spruce trees, they told us they would be 5 or 8 feet



*George Akers uses a small water tank for his horses that can be easily moved from location to location as grazing conditions demand.*

tall. I have no idea how tall they are now, but they get plenty of water from the creek.”

The Akers are doing a wonderful job managing their property in a sustainable manner. After all, isn’t the beauty of the land the reason we enjoy living in the country? June would agree.

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