

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—April 8, 2020—A Bar A Ranch, Encampment, WY—Contact Justin Howe Email: [justin.howe@AbarAranch.com](mailto:justin.howe@AbarAranch.com); Office: 307-327-5454**

The A Bar A, a guest or “dude” ranch in Encampment, WY, has announced that it will cancel its 2020 guest season due to concerns arising from COVID-19. This is the only time the Ranch has closed in 98 years of operation. The A Bar A is a Wyoming institution, known around the world for its family focus and unmatched hospitality.

Ranch Managers Justin and Lissa Howe described the situation and the reasons for their decision:

“The effects of COVID-19 expand each day with impacts lasting well into the summer season. We have all learned a lot about the virus, but many unknowns remain. Key among these are asymptomatic contagion, uncertainty when testing will be widely available, and when effects of the outbreak will diminish.”

“The A Bar A experience is based upon close associations, even though they occur in wide-open spaces. Each week the ranch brings together guests who have travelled from throughout the United States and the world to enjoy our region, hospitality, and this valley. In the end, this is about protecting the health and well-being of Ranch guests, staff, and the broader Encampment-Saratoga-Walden community.”

The Ranch acknowledges that this is a blow not only to the Ranch, but also to the community that relies on summer tourism. According to Diane Gates Wallach, chair of the Gates Family Ranch Board, “The Gates Family has owned and operated the ranch since 1962, and throughout this time we have demonstrated our commitment to the ranch, our guests, employees and the local community. COVID-19 challenges and today’s decision will never diminish our commitment, but safety and trust come first. Doing things the right way is part of our operating philosophy, extending from our hospitality and cattle businesses to investments in conservation, wildlife habitats and rangeland.”

Justin Howe, whose family has managed the Ranch since 1984, added, “All full-time staff will retain their employment and work at the Ranch through the summer. Work by local contractors and local summer staff will continue. The A Bar A and Gates family are in this for the long-term. We will maintain our program of annual improvements, ensuring we will continue to operate and serve this community and our guests for decades to come.”

During a typical summer, A Bar A hosts a community of more than 100 guests each week from June through September and has almost 90 seasonal staff.

Web: [www.AbarAranch.com](http://www.AbarAranch.com)