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NEWS - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **CELEBRATED AUTHOR AND ESSAYIST GRETEL EHRLICH TO KEYNOTE SHEEP TALES GATHERING AT THE 2021 TRAILING OF THE SHEEP FESTIVAL**

The Trailing of the Sheep Festival, taking place October 6-10 in the Wood River Valley of Idaho, is proud to present celebrated author and essayist Gretel Ehrlich as keynote speaker for its Sheep Tales Gathering. She will speak on Friday, October 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at The Argyros Theater in Ketchum, Idaho.

Ehrlich will share the stories of her travels and her deeply personal concern for friends and peoples throughout the world that are losing their traditional connections to the land through climate chaos. Their experiences fill her new book *“Unsolaced: Along the Way to All That Is.”* After the reading, Jenny Emery Davidson, Executive Director of the Community Library in Ketchum will join Gretel in conversation about her experiences and the writing of this book.

Throughout its pages she travels around the world from Wyoming to Alaska, to Japan, to Kosovo and more. She listens to stories in threatened communities all a part of disappearing landscapes thriving only several years earlier. She spends time with friends and experts charting ice flows in Greenland and viewing innovative grazing practices with Zimbabwe’s Allan Savory. She is determined to understand the losses she has seen and what’s at stake for the future.

Ehrlich’s first awareness of the beauty and complexities of our changing world began during her transformative days living and cowboying in Wyoming and are found in her debut publication in 1985, *“The Solace of Open Spaces.”* The book is a collection of essays on rural life in Wyoming. Her new book *“Unsolaced: Along the Way to All that Is”* has been called a bookend to the first publication.

Ehrlich’s presentation is part of a lineup of special events to celebrate the Festival’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

But Friday night’s program is unique, according to Festival Co-Founder and Artistic Director, Diane Peavey. “Stories and oral histories are at the heart of the Trailing of the Sheep Festival” she explained. “The weekend is a yearly celebration of folk and traditional art, history, heritage

and the cultures of Idaho and the West. People have always shared their stories with family, friends and their tribe.”

Peavey noted that, “The goal of the Sheep Tales Gathering is to share from the stage those stories and experiences that explain the culture and the landscapes of home and the life and commitment to sheep herding and ranching in Idaho. And during this evening with Gretel, we take this exploration a step farther. Her experiences are unique and provocative, and we come away exposed to new and important information about our own lives.”

“This is the importance of storytelling,” Peavey added. “We extend our vision and broaden our responses to the world around us by sharing insights, listening, and learning from each other.”

### **About *Unsolaced: Along the Way to All That Is***

Ms. Ehrlich’s newest work, “*Unsolaced: Along the Way to All That Is*,” was released in January 2021. It is meditation on how water, light, wind, mountain, bird, and horse have shaped her life and her understanding of a world besieged by a climate crisis beginning with her time in Wyoming. The summary of this work reads: “Amid species extinctions and disintegrating ice sheets, this stunning collection of memories, observations, and narratives is acute and lyrical, Whitmanesque in breadth, and as elegant as a Japanese teahouse.”

‘Sentience and sunderance,’ Ehrlich writes. “How we know what we know, who teaches us, how easy it is to lose it all.” As if to stave off impending loss, she embarks on strenuous adventures to Greenland, Africa, Kosovo, Japan, and an uninhabited Alaskan island, always returning to her simple Wyoming cabin at the foot of the mountains and the trail that leads into the heart of them.”

The *New Yorker’s* comments on this work says: “Perpetual motion fuels this episodic memoir about loss and getting lost...After years of living and working outdoors, she empathizes with those for whom climate change is an acute trauma: nomadic sea-ice hunters with no ice, shepherds tending cattle in drought-stricken lands. Her immersion in timeless, strenuous modes of life yields a message of profound fulfillment.”

### **About the Trailing of the Sheep Festival**

The annual Trailing of the Sheep Festival honors the 150+ year annual tradition of moving sheep (‘trailing’) from high mountain summer pastures down through the Valley to traditional winter grazing and lambing areas in the south. This annual migration is living history and the focus of a unique and authentic Festival that celebrates the people, arts, cultures, and traditions of sheep ranching in Idaho and the West.

The five-day Festival is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021 from October 6-10, featuring nonstop activities in multiple venues - history, folk arts, a Sheep Folklife Fair, lamb culinary offerings, a Wool Festival with classes and workshops, music, dance, storytelling, championship

Sheepdog Trials and, the always entertaining, Big Sheep Parade with 1,500 sheep hoofing it down Main Street in Ketchum.

The Trailing of the Sheep Festival has also garnered some well-deserved accolades over the years, including being recognized as one of the **Top Ten Fall Festivals in the World** by *msn.com travel*, **Top Ten US Fall Festivals** by *smartertravel.com*, **Top Animal Festivals in the World** and **Top Ten Fall Festivals** by *USA Today*, **Top 7 Fun Fall Festivals** by *AARP*, **One of the Greatest Cultural Events in the West** by *Northwest Travel*, and recipient of the Society of American Travel Writer's **Phoenix Award** for best in cultural tourism, and the **Idaho Governor's Award for Cultural Heritage**.

***Note:** The Argyros Performing Arts Center in Ketchum has strict COVID-19 protocols in place to ensure the health and safety of all event attendees. Their Vaccine Verification Policy requires that all guests (over the age of 12) show proof of vaccination against Covid-19. Valid forms of proof include a CDC vaccination record card or a copy thereof. A negative Covid-19 test, taken within 72 hours of showtime, will be accepted in place of proof of vaccination. In addition, masks are expected to be worn at all times, unless eating or drinking.*

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