

**From:** [Matt Kales](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**Cc:** [Michael Thabault](#); [Nicole Alt](#); [Pat Deibert](#)  
**Subject:** GRSG: FWS statement re: sage-grouse stronghold polygon boundaries  
**Date:** Thursday, January 15, 2015 11:49:58 AM

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As requested. Please let us know if you need more/different language. Thanks. mk

FWS statement re: maintaining the integrity of sage-grouse stronghold polygon boundaries:

We appreciate our federal and state conservation partners' receptivity to our recent sage-grouse "stronghold" mapping exercise and associated management recommendations. We fully support our partners' efforts to reconcile minor technical issues with our stronghold maps and are actively working to address those issues and make appropriate changes. However, we do not support changes to the our original stronghold polygon boundaries because those boundaries identify the landscapes the current scientific literature indicates are important for long-term persistence of the species (i.e., strongholds). To go beyond correcting minor technical mapping errors and significantly change the original stronghold boundaries is to risk fragmenting or otherwise compromising the ecological integrity of those landscapes and negating the intent of the stronghold concept and its value to range-wide sage-grouse conservation efforts.

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