

EVENT MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

MEETING WITH NEVADA GOVERNOR BRIAN SANDOVAL

DATE: December 6, 2014
LOCATION: Four Seasons, Sierra Boardroom
TIME: 2:00PM - 2:30PM PST
FROM: Sarah Greenberger, Counselor; John Blair, Director OIEA

I. PURPOSE

You will be meeting with Governor Sandoval to:

- Resolve outstanding issues related to Nevada Greater sage-grouse plans including:
 - o latest offer by the state to bridge differences between BLM and State approach would likely lead to a listing proposal by the Service
 - o Need additional protections on priority habitat and state regulatory action to protect wet meadows on State and private land.
- Introduce your plans to develop an enhanced rangeland fire strategy.

II. ATTENDEES

- Governor Sandoval
- Michon Martin, General Counsel, Governor Sandoval's Office
- Ryan McGinness, DC Director, Governor Sandoval's Office
- Sarah Greenberger, Counselor
- John Blair, Director OIEA

III. TALKING POINTS

BLM Plans

- We appreciate the effort and investment in a cutting-edge market approach to conservation that our team believes holds much promise for innovation.
- In the context of a pending listing determination, as presently presented, the State latest proposed plan does not provide the certainty of outcomes the Service needs as it weighs the threats to sage grouse in the Great Basin.
- FWS has been quite clear that the State's latest proposal would not provide adequate certainty for the long-term conservation of sage grouse and would make a finding of not warranted for federal protection difficult. This is especially true given the threats posed by:
 - o fire and invasives,
 - o unlimited potential for locatable mineral development, and
 - o the absence of regulatory protections for critical wet meadow habitat on state and private land.
- The FWS is supportive of the current BLM proposed plan that sets a high priority on conservation of sage-grouse priority and general habitat.
- To allow additional room for the state plan, we would need:
 - o Stronger protections on priority habitat than the State currently supports,

- o Proposed withdrawal in the Stronghold area,
 - o State regulatory action to protect wet meadows on State and private land.
 - o The Service recognizes there will be a need for mitigation to counter harm and unforeseen circumstances. If the areas as recently identified by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Program and others are addressed, and if an adaptive management strategy can be invoked, the Service would not object to the State's plan being used in General Habitat where mitigation will be needed while implementing the BLM Plan.
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- Is that a path forward you can support?

Fire

- FWS has identified the downward spiral of sage-brush ecosystems caused by invasive grasses and fire in the Great Basin as one of the greatest threats to Greater sage-grouse.
- Our team, lead by Assistant Secretary Janice Schneider, is engaged in an effort to develop an enhanced approach to combatting rangeland fire that will give the Service something to consider in their listing process.
- I am planning to issue a Secretarial Order in the near future directing my Department to develop this approach focusing on research, efficient resource allocation, seed banking, and expedited administrative processes, among other things.
- We will want to work closely with your team to develop that strategy and build on work you are doing in Nevada.
- Would also welcome your advice on how to engage WGA and governors more broadly in this work.

V. BIOGRAPHY



Governor Brian Sandoval (R) is the 29th and current Governor of the U.S. state of Nevada and Chair of the Western Governors Association (WGA). Sandoval is a former judge of the United States District Court for the District of Nevada. On June 9, 2010, Sandoval defeated his GOP challengers (including incumbent governor Jim Gibbons) to win the Republican nomination for the 2010 Gubernatorial election. Prior to his service as a federal judge, he served as the Attorney General of Nevada, the youngest chairman of the Gaming Commission of Nevada and a state legislator. Sandoval was also the first Hispanic candidate elected to statewide office in Nevada. In 2014, Sandoval won his re-election with 70% of the vote.