

NEWS RELEASE

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Wyoming Sage-Grouse Implementation Team Honored

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today announced the 2011 *Partners in Conservation Awards* to 17 organizations who have achieved exemplary conservation results with community engagement and local partnerships.

This year's awards recognize more than 500 individuals from all 50 states and include representatives from Tribes, local communities and states, other Federal agencies, business and industry, nonprofit institutions, and private landowners. The awards also include 150 outstanding Interior employees who are helping to advance important conservation initiatives are also recognized this year.

"The Partners in Conservation Awards demonstrate that our nation's greatest conservation legacies often emerge when agencies and citizens from a wide range of backgrounds come together to address shared challenges," Secretary Salazar said. "I am pleased to recognize the efforts of dedicated people from across our nation to conserve and restore our treasured landscapes, address water issues and forge solutions to complex natural resource issues through good government and strong partnerships."

This year's award winners include a partnership working on a large landscape restoration and water resource management in the San Joaquin River basin, California's second longest river that provides water to more than one million acres in the Central Valley. The San Joaquin River Restoration Program partners were nominated by Interior's Bureau of Reclamation.

Secretary Salazar also recognized the Permian Basin Memorandum of Agreement Program, nominated by the Bureau of Land Management, that is working to protect cultural resources and support archaeological research in conjunction with energy exploration and development in the Permian Basin of southeastern New Mexico.

The Fish and Wildlife Service successfully nominated the **Wyoming Governor's Sage-Grouse Implementation Team** for its work to develop and implement a long-term, science-based

cooperative strategy for conservation of the greater sage-grouse, a ground-dwelling bird that inhabits much of the West.

The Wyoming sage-grouse implementation team was convened in 2007 by then-Governor Dave Freudenthal, subsequently adopted by current Governor Matthew Mead. It is a group of 26 individuals representing Federal, State and County governments, non-renewable energy developers, mining companies, private landowners, and non-governmental organizations. The team's directive was to develop a list of recommendations regarding how best to enhance and preserve the habitat, breeding grounds, and winter range of sage-grouse in Wyoming while allowing energy, and other, developments to continue. All options considered were informed by science as provided by a team of species, habitat and industry experts. The team's hard work and creative thinking serve as an excellent example of how partnerships can resolve seemingly conflicting interests - protecting native species as well as the state's economic interests.

The work of the Governor's team has resulted in a cascade of conservation efforts and resource development options that currently conserve over 1 million acres of sagebrush habitats in Wyoming, and will likely extend to more than 18 million acres across the species range within the near futures. The strategy developed by this team has been commended by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a science-based effort that when fully implemented will ameliorate threats to this iconic species of the American West.

A full list of the *Partners in Conservation Award* winners is available [here](#).

The awards ceremony for the 2011 Secretary's Partners in Conservation Award was held today, September 21, at the South Interior building auditorium.

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