

Opinion: Sage grouses' fate subject to power grab

By Cliff Gardner

I don't know how many folks have read Gov. Brian Sandoval's sage grouse plan, recently completed and released. I was fearful of what it might entail.

I had no idea it would be as bad as it is.

By all appearances, it should be titled the "Kenneth Mayer Plan" rather than the governor's plan.

It designates the Nevada Department of Wildlife, directed by Kenneth Mayer, as the primary agency for making habitat determinations in consultation with the federal Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

It calls for the establishment of a "regulatory process" for the management of all occupied, suitable and potential habitat for the ground-dwelling bird.

It calls for the creation of an advisory council, which will mirror the makeup of the Governor's Sage Grouse Advisory Committee, whose responsibility will be to resolve conflicts between industry, land owners and resource managers.

It calls for the establishment of a sage grouse mitigation program – similar to what was established in Southern Nevada for the desert tortoise, whereby those altering landscapes will be allowed to proceed only when certain amounts of money are paid into a fund that is to be used for sage grouse enhancement projects.

It calls for the creation of a "technical team" – using the Tahoe Conservation Team as a model – with the responsibility

of providing consultation for those wanting to conduct activities in occupied or potential sage grouse habitats.

It's hard to believe that persons calling themselves Americans would be advocating a program of this nature. Clearly, the plan is designed not to help sage grouse, the environment or anything else. It is designed to advance the goals of those in government. It's a power grab of the worst kind.

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