



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

APR 19 2011

The Honorable Jack A. Markell  
Governor of Delaware  
Dover, Delaware 19901

Dear Governor Markell: )

Over the last several weeks, Department of the Interior leaders and I have begun a series of conversations with Governors about the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, specifically on how we can support a shared conservation agenda.

In continuing this dialogue, I would like to speak with you over the next several weeks about this effort. I have also asked leaders at Interior to meet with you and your staff in Delaware for the same purpose.

The first meetings with Governor Mead from Wyoming, Governor Hickenlooper from Colorado, Governor Deal from Georgia, and Governor Beebe from Arkansas were highly productive and identified several opportunities for collaboration.

In Wyoming, we discussed how conservation easements can help protect working farms and ranches. In Colorado, we are working together to create a great urban park and wildlife refuge that would connect two of our national wildlife refuges and increase access to one of Colorado's most important rivers. In Georgia, we discussed the continuation of conservation partnerships and how to implement Georgia's award winning Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. And last Saturday in Arkansas, our teams discussed the initiative to connect the 750,000 people who live in and around Little Rock with almost 3,000 miles of recreational trails and enhancement of fishing and hunting opportunities.

I know the economic importance of hunting, fishing, boating, and other outdoor activities to local economies. The outdoor industry alone creates an estimated 6.5 million jobs in the United States. And we all have a stake in encouraging the preservation of America's natural and cultural heritage.

I believe we can encourage this conservation agenda by finding common-sense, locally-driven ways to protect rural landscapes, restore river corridors, and establish major urban parks and wildlife areas - three categories the public asked we focus on through the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

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The America's Great Outdoor Initiative has been led by Interior and my cabinet colleagues, including Tom Vilsack, Lisa Jackson and Nancy Sutley. Through this Initiative, we are already making progress with places like the newly-established Flint Hills National Conservation Area in Kansas, the restoration of the San Joaquin River in California, and the establishment of major urban parks and wildlife areas in Denver and New York City.

Your views as Governor on this Initiative are very important to me. I respectfully ask that you consider identifying your top project-specific ideas where we might work together on conservation, recreation, and historic preservation efforts. Specifically, I would like you to share your ideas with me on each of the following categories:

1. Important rural landscapes that connect wildlife migration corridors and protect ranch and farmlands (examples include the Crown of the Continent in Montana and the Everglades Headwaters Area in Florida);
2. Major urban parks and wildlife areas (examples are the Denver project described above, the Arch and the Mississippi River at St. Louis, and New York Harbor); and
3. Rivers that deserve special recognition (Interior is involved in at least a dozen river restoration projects around the country and every state has special rivers).

I hope to have your insights on these categories of conservation to ensure that Interior and its agencies are setting the right conservation priorities in Delaware. We might not be able to advance them all within the fiscal constraints of our time, but perhaps if we leverage our joint public and private resources, we can make some progress on Delaware's priorities.

If you have other specific conservation ideas either for your state or multi-state efforts, I would appreciate hearing those ideas as well.

After we receive your suggestions, we will determine how best to move forward on Interior's efforts on America's Great Outdoors. I hope to complete this roadmap by July 1, 2011.

Please designate a person in your immediate office who can help on this effort. I will schedule a call or meeting with you over the next several days. In the meantime, do not hesitate to call me directly at 202-208-6087.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Ken Salazar

*Jack, thank you for your personal help on this effort. we are also working hard on offshore wind and a National Park for your State.*

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cc: Honorable Matthew Mead, Governor of Wyoming  
Honorable John Hickenlooper, Governor of Colorado  
Honorable Nathan Deal, Governor of Georgia  
Honorable Mike Beebe, Governor of Arkansas  
David Hayes, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior  
Anne Castle, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management  
Will Shafroth, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks  
Jon Jarvis, Director, National Park Service  
Rowan Gould, Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service  
Bob Abbey, Director, Bureau of Land Management  
Mike Connor, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation