

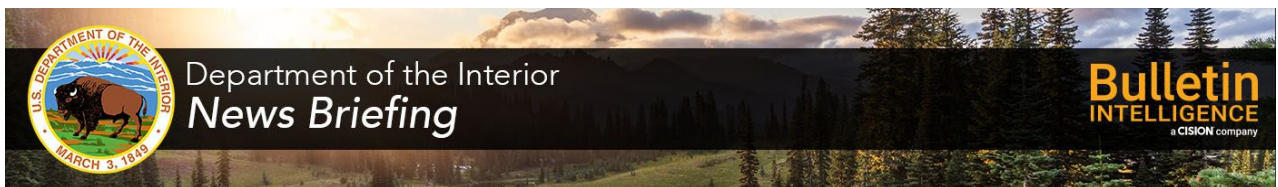
Conversation Contents

[EXTERNAL] U.S. Department of the Interior News Briefing for Thursday, April 19, 2018

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DATE: THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 2018 6:00 AM EDT

Today's Table Of Contents

DOI In The News

- Associated Press: Northwest High-Voltage Transmission Lines OK'd By Officials.
- Associated Press: Zinke Signs Order To Expand Recreational Opportunities.
- UPI: Will Interior Stick With A Higher Royalty Rate?
- Palm Springs (CA) Desert Sun: The Trump Vs. California Environmental Fight Nobody's Talking About.
- Daily Signal: Obama Interior Secretaries Spent More Than Ryan Zinke On Chartered Flights.
- Huffington Post: The Gingriches Were Very Alarmed About A 45-Foot-Tall Naked Sculpture.

Bureau Of Indian Affairs

- Osten Working To Resolve Third-Casino Snag.
- Feds Hit With Suit Over Mich. Tribe Members' Disenrollment.
- Tribes' Request For More Say In Dakota Access Study Denied.

Bureau Of Land Management

- Albuquerque (NM) Journal: Debate Flares Over BLM Methane Regulation.
- Salt Lake (UT) Tribune: Utah's San Juan County Files Its Own Claim Against U.S.
- Glasgow (MT) Courier: BLM Hosts 'Scoping' Meeting On American Prairie Reserve Request To Remove Fencing.
- St. George (UT) News: Washington County Transferring 100 Acres Of Donated Land To BLM.

Bureau Of Ocean Energy Management

- Oil Industry Signals Opposition To Amendment To Ban Drilling And Vaping.
- Topsail Beach Adds Voice In Opposing Offshore Drilling.

Bureau Of Reclamation

- Feud Erupts Between Utility, US States Over Colorado River.

Fish And Wildlife Service

- Reno (NV) Gazette-Journal: Thought To Be Extinct, Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Rediscovered.
- Ravalli (MT) Republic: Attempt To Revive Arctic Grayling Population Fails In Southwestern Montana Lake.
- Courthouse News: Scientists Strategize To Help Protect Whooping Cranes.

National Park Service

- Los Angeles Times: Upcoming National Park Week Means Free Entry At Yosemite, Death Valley, Joshua Tree And More.
- Cape Cod (MA) Chronicle: Cleared To Hold Meeting, Seashore Advisory Panel Still Faces Uncertain Future.
- Associated Press: Crater Lake Plans To More Strictly Enforce No-Drone Rule.
- Santa Cruz (CA) Sentinel: Environmentalists Plan Logging To Restore Redwood Forests.
- Frederick (MD) News-Post: Traffic Changes Being Considered Around Monocacy National Battlefield.

Insular And International Affairs

- Assistant Interior Secretary Domenech Visits American Samoa.
- A Snag In The Way Of The VI Government Receiving Federal Dollars: Matching Funds Requirement.

Office Of Surface Mining

- Under Contract.

US Geological Survey

- CBS: Hayward Fault May Pose Greatest Earthquake Risk In California.
- Additional Reading.

Opinion Pieces

- Park Service Listens To Reason.
- Additional Reading.

Top National News

- Fox News: Trump Sounds Optimistic Note On Upcoming North Korea Summit.
- Associated Press: Media Analyses: Trump Shifts On Justification For Comey Firing.
- Associated Press: Trump On Potential Mueller, Rosenstein Firings: "They're Still Here."
- ABC: Puerto Rico Loses Power After Excavator Hits Main Line.
- The Hill: EPA Implements Changes To Air Pollution Regulations.

Editorial Wrap-Up

- New York Times.
 - "Macron, At The Barricades, Warns Of Rising Nationalism In Europe."
- Washington Post.
 - "Leaders Worldwide Are Falling For A Deadly Illusion"
 - "McConnell To Trump: Fire At Will."
 - "Blake Farenthold Owes The Public \$84,000. Where's Our Money?"
- Wall Street Journal.
 - "Who Needs A Secretary Of State?"
 - "About The IRS Computer Crash."
 - "Congress And The Special Counsel."

Big Picture

- Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Washington Schedule

- Today's Events In Washington.

Last Laughs

- Late Night Political Humor.

DOI In The News

Northwest High-Voltage Transmission Lines OK'd By Officials.

The [AP](#) (4/18, Ridler) reports that federal officials on Wednesday "approved two high-voltage transmission line routes in southwestern Idaho aimed at modernizing and improving reliability of the Pacific Northwest's energy grid." The Interior Department's "approval is for the two final segments of the Gateway West project proposed a decade ago by the Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power utilities." The transmission lines "will help power the American West for years to come," Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said in a statement.

[KIVI-TV Boise \(ID\)](#) Boise, ID (4/18, Bertel) reports that said Sen. Mike Crapo, Chairman of the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, said, "Completing these two segments of transmission line will deliver reliable power to southern Idaho while also creating good paying construction and ongoing maintenance jobs. The approval of these final segments is testament to the success in the collaboration between the Bureau of Land Management, State of Idaho and surrounding communities who best understand how to protect and preserve lands while supporting needed energy infrastructure." Rep. Raúl Labrador added, "Gateway West is critical to Idaho's economy and it's great news that the final two segments have been approved. The route now reflects a solution crafted on the ground in Idaho that fairly reflects local needs – while clearing the way for an important regional energy project."

Zinke Signs Order To Expand Recreational Opportunities.

The [AP](#) (4/18, Daly) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has ordered his department "to expand recreational opportunities on public lands and waterways." The Wednesday order directs agencies "to develop plans within 90 days that focus on expanding recreational opportunities." It also "directs bureau heads to designate a full-time employee to oversee recreation." Zinke also "named senior adviser Rick May to oversee recreational policy across the department." Outdoor-recreation organization "hailed the latest directive, saying it recognizes the importance of outdoor recreation for the U.S. economy, particularly in rural areas, and for the physical and mental health of all Americans."

Will Interior Stick With A Higher Royalty Rate?

[E&E Publishing](#) reports that "industry groups and government watchdogs" are saying the Interior Department's decision to retain the current 18.75% royalty rate for deepwater offshore drilling in federal waters "may not have staying power." Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said the rate would not be lowered "at this time," and the National Ocean Industries Association "took the department's announcement as an indication that the federal government could, after conducting more research, revisit the rate structure" for deepwater leases. Meanwhile, the Government Accountability Office "has said that Interior and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management have the authority to change royalty rates, as long as agency officials can show that the government is still collecting a fair return for taxpayers." However, GAO natural resources and environment director Frank Rusco said the advisory committee that recommended lowering the rate did not provide sufficient analysis to support the justification.

According to [UPI](#) (4/18, Graeber), the NOIA argued the US "can't stay competitive in the offshore oil and gas market without incentives like reduced royalty rates." NOIA spokesperson Nicolette Nye said, "The results of recent sales on the Mexican side of the Gulf of Mexico are a significant indicator that the U.S. cannot continue to offer the same

acreage at the same terms on the U.S. side of the Gulf and expect the offshore industry to find the acreage appealing enough" and argued a lower royalty rate "can encourage new investment in the exploration and development of offshore oil and natural gas resources."

[Natural Gas Intelligence](#) (4/18, Davis) also reports that Zinke "left the door open to implement a rate reduction at some point, according to the National Ocean Industries Association." Nye said the organization "has little doubt that increased study will show that continued competition and a challenging economic environment may further reinforce the notion that the U.S. needs to revisit the royalty issue in the months and years to come." [Offshore Energy Today](#) (4/18) reports that Vincent DeVito, the chair of the committee that recommended the lower rate, said the Interior Department's decision to maintain the current rate "reflects the oil and gas industry's improving market conditions for the safe and responsible development of our abundant energy resources." DeVito added that "the Committee will continue to study ways to improve our programs, including recommendations to improve market conditions for other forms of energy like coal and offshore wind." [Offshore Source](#) (4/18) also provides continuing coverage.

The Trump Vs. California Environmental Fight Nobody's Talking About.

The [Palm Springs \(CA\) Desert Sun](#) (4/18, Roth) reports the Trump Administration is considering changes to the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan, arguing that the plan "makes it too difficult to build renewable energy projects" in the state. The article reports, "Solar and wind industry officials say it's obvious by now the desert plan isn't working," with just one company applying to build a renewable energy project in a designated development zone since the plan was finalized. That application was later withdrawn.

Obama Interior Secretaries Spent More Than Ryan Zinke On Chartered Flights.

The [Daily Signal](#) (4/18, Mooney) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has "spent far fewer taxpayer dollars on chartered flights than his two predecessors in the Obama administration, public records show." An examination of travel records by the Daily Signal shows that "on average Zinke's two predecessors spent more annually on such noncommercial flights, despite media reports critical of Zinke's spending on travel." The article notes that "the cost of such chartered flights for Zinke totaled \$72,849 in his first six months as interior secretary, the travel records show." Meanwhile, "the average annual cost of such flights for his two predecessors in the Obama administration, Ken Salazar and Sally Jewell, from fiscal years 2010 to 2016 was \$155,515, according to records provided by the Interior Department to the House Natural Resources Committee."

The Gingriches Were Very Alarmed About A 45-Foot-Tall Naked Sculpture.

The [Huffington Post](#) (4/18, D'angelo) reports that "three weeks before the National Park Service denied an activist group's request to erect a giant statue of a nude woman on the National Mall, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke received an email from former House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.)." The message sent Oct. 3 "forwarded an exchange between Gingrich, his wife, Callista, and Claire Christensen, the co-author of his 2016 book about the election of President Donald Trump." In the email chain, the article says, "the three seemed perturbed by the proposal to place the sculpture near the Washington Monument for three months." According to the article, "Zinke forwarded Gingrich's email to one of his staffers the following day, with the message: 'Pls contact Mr Speaker and arrange for an office visit. I hour. The subj is monuments. I had ta ked (sic) to him at the WH. Late in the day would be preferred.'" The article notes that "three weeks after Gingrich's email to Zinke, the National Park Service, which Zinke oversees, blocked a request from organizers of Catharsis on the Mall, a three-day art and music festival held in November, to install the 45-foot-tall statue."

Bureau Of Indian Affairs

Osten Working To Resolve Third-Casino Snag.

The [New London \(CT\) Day](#) (4/18, Hallenbeck) reports that Connecticut "State Sen. Cathy Osten, D-Sprague, remains confident the East Windsor casino the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan tribes have been authorized to build will" be completed. Osten "declined to discuss how the matter can be resolved," but said "she's working to resolve the matter that has snagged it — the U.S. Department of the Interior's failure to act on gaming-agreement amendments signed by the state and the tribes."

Feds Hit With Suit Over Mich. Tribe Members' Disenrollment.

[Law360](#) (4/18, Lidgett) reports that "dozens of Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan members who say they were disenrolled have accused the federal government in a lawsuit of failing to respond to a petition asking that they be reinstated, saying various federal officials skirted their duty to enforce a law that resolved a tribal eligibility dispute."

Tribes' Request For More Say In Dakota Access Study Denied.

The [AP](#) (4/18, Nicholson) reports US District Judge James Boasberg "has rejected the request by two American Indian tribes to be more involved in a court-ordered environmental review of the Dakota Access oil pipeline." Last year, the judge "ordered the Army Corps of Engineers to further review the pipeline's impact on tribal interests, though he allowed oil to begin flowing." The two tribes contend "they were being left out of the process and they asked Boasberg to order that they be given more involvement." Energy Transfer Partners attorneys and the Corps "accused the tribes of being difficult to work with." The wrote "in an order dated Monday that 'the parties engage in a lengthy dispute over who is refusing to talk to whom.'" He added, "The court does not believe that further inserting itself into the minutiae of this disagreement is either permissible or wise."

Bureau Of Land Management

Debate Flares Over BLM Methane Regulation.

The [Albuquerque \(NM\) Journal](#) (4/18, Robinson-Avila) reports that local and national activists are protesting "federal efforts to re-write a new rule to control methane emissions from oil and gas operations." The Interior Department ordered the Bureau of Land Management in February "to overhaul the Obama-era rule, setting a 60-day period for public comment that ends on Monday." Federal officials claim "the rule, which would force producers to limit venting, flaring and leaking of methane for all operations on BLM lands, didn't include adequate input from industry." However, "environmentalists and many local politicians say the Obama rule-making process lasted three years and was far more open to public comment than the truncated process under Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke."

Utah's San Juan County Files Its Own Claim Against U.S.

Government Over Access To Recapture Canyon. The [Salt Lake \(UT\) Tribune](#) (4/18, Maffly) reports that "without state support," San Juan County officials "recently filed a stand-alone lawsuit against the U.S. government," claiming "a right of way through controversial Recapture Canyon." The lawsuit cites "various historic records indicating the county maintained a 'road' there since 1886." The county "has not abandoned said road," the lawsuit states. "Indeed, it has continuously and regularly maintained same and its public designation as a county road."

BLM Hosts 'Scoping' Meeting On American Prairie Reserve Request To Remove Fencing.

The [Glasgow \(MT\) Courier](#) (4/18, Etherington) reports that the Bureau of Land Management "held a 'scoping' meeting in Glasgow April 12 to ask for public comment on

an environmental assessment being conducted by BLM." At issue is "a permit request by the American Prairie Foundation Inc. (commonly called the American Prairie Reserve or APR) to remove interior fencing on BLM grazing leases and to permit bison grazing year round." According to the article, "the meeting was well attended by farmers, ranchers, and local government representatives who mostly attempted to express their concerns of the proposal."

Washington County Transferring 100 Acres Of Donated Land To BLM.

The [St. George \(UT\) News](#) (4/18, Ricks) reports that "the Washington County Commission on Tuesday unanimously approved the transfer of about 100 acres of land back to the Bureau of Land Management." According to Commissioner Dean Cox, "the 100 acres being transferred to the BLM was a donation from a private landowner to Washington County."

Bureau Of Ocean Energy Management

Oil Industry Signals Opposition To Amendment To Ban Drilling And Vaping.

The [Tampa Bay \(FL\) Times](#) (4/18, Klas) reports that Florida's Constitution Revision Commission bundled two proposals Monday banning oil drilling in state waters and ban vaping in indoor work spaces. The so-called "clean air, clean water" amendment will now be placed on the November ballot. Florida Petroleum Council executive director David Mica issued a statement signaling the group's opposition. "Domestic oil and natural gas development is a key driver of Florida's economy – supporting high-paying jobs and investments in our state," he said, adding, "Linking this important decision with electronic cigarette use just doesn't make sense. Voters should be able to make decisions on public health and its economic future separately."

Additional coverage was provided by the [Miami Herald's](#) (4/18, Klas) politics blog.

Topsail Beach Adds Voice In Opposing Offshore Drilling.

The [Wilmington \(NC\) Star News](#) (4/18, Buckland) reports the Topsail Beach Town Council voted 3-2 last week "to adopt a resolution opposing seismic testing and oil exploration," making the community "the 20th in Southeastern North Carolina to formally oppose" the Trump Administration's proposal to expand offshore drilling. Councilman Tim Zizack said, "Our biggest asset is the beach. ... I valued the risk and reward (of drilling) and if something should happen, how it would devastate this community." The article recalls that Gov. Roy Cooper has pledged to take "legal action if U.S. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke does not remove North Carolina from the federal government's offshore drilling plan."

Bureau Of Reclamation

Feud Erupts Between Utility, US States Over Colorado River.

The [AP](#) (4/18, Elliott) reports that "tension over the drought-stressed Colorado River escalated into a public feud when four U.S. states accused Arizona's largest water provider of manipulating supply and demand, potentially threatening millions of people in the United States and Mexico who rely on the river." Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming, as well as Denver's water utility, "said the Central Arizona Project was trying to avoid a reduction in its share of the Colorado River while others are voluntarily cutting back to avoid a crisis amid a prolonged drought." The Central Arizona Project "denied the allegations and said it's been conserving."

Fish And Wildlife Service

Thought To Be Extinct, Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Rediscovered.

The [Reno \(NV\) Gazette-Journal](#) (4/18, Wolterbeek) reports that “the Lahontan cutthroat trout was rediscovered in a “dinky” stream near the Nevada-Utah border.” According to the article, “genetic testing by University of Nevada, Reno Associate Professor of Biology Mary Peacock led to the rediscovery of an iconic Nevada fish.” Project leader of the Lahontan National Fish Hatchery Complex Lisa Heki said, “Mary Peacock’s research and collaboration with the Fish and Wildlife Service over the last 15 years has led to a paradigm shift in how we look at recovery for lacustrine LCT [Lahontan cutthroat trout] in Tahoe and Pyramid Lake.”

Attempt To Revive Arctic Grayling Population Fails In Southwestern Montana Lake.

The [Ravalli \(MT\) Republic](#) (4/18, French) reports, “Native Arctic grayling living in Upper Red Rock Lake in southwest Montana have seen their numbers nosedive over the past four years, despite an effort to remove what were thought to be competing cutthroat trout from the same waters.” According to the article, “between 2014 and 2017 the spawning population of grayling in the waters of the Centennial Valley fell from about 2,000 spawning-age fish to 240, despite the removal of almost 90 percent of the hybridized Yellowstone cutthroat trout living in the same streams and lake.” Andrew Gilham, a fisheries biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Bozeman, said, “Their population was this low in the ‘90s and rebounded, but anytime we see such a dramatic decline it is cause for concern.”

Scientists Strategize To Help Protect Whooping Cranes.

[Courthouse News](#) (4/18, Duffy) reports that “critically endangered whooping cranes annually traverse a 2,485-mile corridor between Texas, where they winter, and their nesting grounds in Canada.” However, “the habitat they rely on as they migrate is being lost at an alarming rate to agriculture and development, and the birds’ widely scattered movements make it difficult for conservationists to identify key areas for protection.” The article says that “to combat the threats whooping cranes face, researchers have developed a model of the birds’ habitat use that could improve conservation efforts during their migration.” U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s whooping crane recovery coordinator Wade Harrell, “who was not involved in the study,” said, “Research on whooping crane habitat use throughout the migration corridor is crucial in helping us ensure that we are restoring and protecting habitat for a growing population of whooping cranes in the right places.”

National Park Service

Upcoming National Park Week Means Free Entry At Yosemite, Death Valley, Joshua Tree And More.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (4/18, Forgione) reports that national parks will waive admission fees on Saturday to mark National Park Week. In addition to waiving fees, national parks will also “host free events.”

Cleared To Hold Meeting, Seashore Advisory Panel Still Faces Uncertain Future.

The [Cape Cod \(MA\) Chronicle](#) (4/18, Pollock) reports that the National Seashore Advisory Commission, “silenced for more than a year by a federal review,” has “at last been given permission to hold a meeting.” Last week, Rep. William Keating “announced that the National Park Service had authorized the advisory commission to hold a meeting.” However, “experts say the future of the commission remains unclear, caught in the political fog hanging over Washington, D.C.”

Crater Lake Plans To More Strictly Enforce No-Drone Rule.

The [AP](#) (4/18, Urness) reports that despite a ban on drones at national parks, “the dropping price and improving technology of what are officially known as unmanned aircraft have meant an increase in the number buzzing Oregon’s only national park.”

Crater Lake superintendent Craig Ackerman said, "It's becoming quite a problem. People are using them without concern for the impacts, and we intend to start stepping up enforcement of the rule." Crater Lake officials also "said their law enforcement would 'look into' some of the videos posted" online.

Also reporting are the [Oregonian](#) (4/18, Urness) and the [Salem \(OR\) Statesman Journal](#) (4/18, Urness).

Environmentalists Plan Logging To Restore Redwood Forests.

The [Santa Cruz \(CA\) Sentinel](#) (4/17, Rogers) reports that "environmentalists who have fought loggers for generations have a surprising new strategy to save California's storied old-growth redwood forests: Logging." Save the Redwoods League, "a venerable San Francisco organization that has preserved more than 214,000 acres of redwood forest since it was founded in 1918, is embarking on a \$5 million plan to thin out 10,000 acres of redwoods, Douglas fir, tan oaks and other trees." Sam Hodder, president of Save the Redwoods League, explained, "It's about allowing the younger forests to grow more effectively. Right now in some of these places all the trees are crowding each other out."

Additional coverage was provided by the [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (4/18, Fimrite).

Traffic Changes Being Considered Around Monocacy National Battlefield.

The [Frederick \(MD\) News-Post](#) (4/18, Marshall) reports that "traffic changes could be coming to Monocacy National Battlefield, although the park's superintendent cautions there's still much to be decided." According to the article, "a draft safety assessment report of possible changes along Md. 355 in and around the battlefield is on track to be finished in May." The report will "be a starting point for conversations between the National Park Service and state and county officials, Chris Stubbs, superintendent of the Monocacy National Battlefield, said Wednesday."

Insular And International Affairs

Assistant Interior Secretary Domenech Visits American Samoa.

[Marianas Variety](#) (4/19) reports that Interior Assistant Secretary Insular and International Affairs Doug Domenech and Office of Insular Affairs Director Nik Pula are visiting American Samoa this week "where they have joined in the festivities to celebrate the 118th anniversary of Flag Day." Domenech's "schedule began as soon as he arrived in American Samoa over the weekend with a special visit to the Manu'a Islands where he visited the Fitiuta and Faleasao elementary schools, the American Samoa Power Authority power plant and solar farm, Manu'a High School, the health dispensary, and the Faleasao wharf." Domenech also met with Governor Lolo and Lt. Governor Lemanu "where he signed over \$10.6 million in infrastructure funds to support infrastructure projects at the wharf, hospital, and schools in the territory." Domenech said, "The opportunity to visit American Samoa, meet with its leaders, tour the beautiful island, and experience first-hand the amazing hospitality and generosity of the people, only reinforces my commitment to strengthening relationships and friendships, and doing all I can to support the economic and social growth of American Samoa."

A Snag In The Way Of The VI Government Receiving Federal Dollars: Matching Funds Requirement.

The [Virgin Islands Consortium \(VIR\)](#) (4/18, Gilbert) reports that "the sum of \$1.6 billion to the U.S. Virgin Islands was announced by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.) Secretary Ben Carson, along with Governor Kenneth Mapp just last week." However, "while Mr. Mapp has proclaimed loud and clear that the funds provided will help set the path for a brighter and prosperous Virgin Islands, he has failed to explain to the public a critical precondition before the funds are released: the federal matching funds requirement." The article notes that "various federal disaster recovery programs available to Virgin Islands require a local funds match from 10 to 25 percent of the project." Therefore, the article says, "if one is to apply to the \$1.8 billion the highest

percentage requirement by the federal government in local matching funds, which is 25 percent, the local government would need to come up with — though not in one bulk offering — \$450 million.”

The [Virgin Islands Consortium \(VIR\)](#) (4/19) reports that Mapp on Wednesday “said the local government had no blocks in its way to accessing the funds.” Mapp “said a plan was being prepared that would soon be presented to the federal government for use of the \$243 million presented to the local government by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.) in February.” He “explained that the local funding match is actually included in the monies being provided by the federal government, stressing the point several times.”

Office Of Surface Mining

Under Contract.

[The Hill](#) (4/18) reports that the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement “awarded a \$20,817 contract to Fury Site Works for ‘construction services’ at the Newcastle Golf Club in Washington state, which was built near a closed mine tunnel at potential risk of collapse.”

US Geological Survey

Hayward Fault May Pose Greatest Earthquake Risk In California.

The [CBS Evening News](#) 📺 (4/18, story 6, 2:15, Glor) reported that a fault line which runs from San Francisco to Oakland may pose the greatest earthquake risk to Californians, according to the US Geological Survey (USGS). Online [CBS News](#) (4/18, Evans) coverage of this story says the USGS has released a report on the potential damage that could be caused by a Hayward Fault-centered quake.

[ABC News](#) (4/18, Fuhrman) reports that the simulation models what “could happen if a magnitude 7.0 earthquake hit directly under the city of Oakland on the Hayward fault, which runs under the highly populated East Bay corridor and is called one of the most active and dangerous faults by the U.S. Geological Survey.” According to the article, “if this earthquake were to occur today, the report says it could result in the deaths of 800 people and cause 18,000 injuries – numbers the report says could be reduced by earthquake early warning systems currently in development.”

The [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (4/18, Swan) and the [KGO-TV](#) San Francisco (4/18, Thomas) website also cover this story.

Additional Reading.

- *The Yellowstone Supervolcano Has Two Magma Chambers, Say Scientists.* [Daily Mail \(UK\)](#) (4/18, Weston).

Opinion Pieces

Park Service Listens To Reason.

In an editorial, the [Jackson Hole \(WY\) News & Guide](#) (4/18, Love) says that pricing national parks “out of the reach of many Americans was surely one of the National Park Service’s worst ideas.” Thankfully, the paper says, “faced with the specter of reduced visitation and a PR nightmare, the Park Service did the right thing by moderating steep fee increases.” However, “entrance charges won’t be enough to tackle the funding problems.” The editorial says that “it’s time that Congress and the presidential administration recognize the value of the parks through adequate funding for repair and refurbishment of aging infrastructure in our national treasures.”

Additional Reading.

- *Kill Off Anti-environmental Excesses In The Farm Bill.* [The Hill](#) (4/18, Super).
- *Selle: Hefty Fee Hikes At National Parks Rile Outdoors Folks.* [Lake County \(IL\) News-Sun](#) (4/18, Selle).
- *What Qualifies A Quake As The Big One? What Happens Afterward.* [Los Angeles Times](#) (4/18, Jones).
- *2 Not-so-smart Things Arizona Has Done In The Name Of Water.* [Arizona Republic](#) (4/18, Glennon).
- *Thomas Mitchell: Opposition To Wind Farm Project Expressed.* [Elko \(NV\) Daily Free Press](#) (4/18, Mitchell).
- *OPINION: Wally Johnson 'Delay Leases'.* [SweetwaterNOW \(WY\)](#) (4/18, Johnson).
- *Scott Pruitt & Ryan Zinke Sell Out Natural Resources, Living Large.* [Esquire Magazine](#) (4/18, Pierce).

Top National News

Trump Sounds Optimistic Note On Upcoming North Korea Summit.

To mostly favorable media coverage, President Trump yesterday confirmed that CIA Director Pompeo recently visited North Korea for talks with leader Kim Jong-Un ahead of a planned summit between the two leaders and said the two had established a "good relationship." Wednesday morning, the President [tweeted](#), "Mike Pompeo met with Kim Jong Un in North Korea last week. Meeting went very smoothly and a good relationship was formed. Details of Summit are being worked out now. Denuclearization will be a great thing for World, but also for North Korea!" Trump also discussed North Korea later in the day during a joint press conference with visiting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. [Fox News](#) (4/18, Chamberlain) reports on its website that Trump told reporters "he would not hesitate to walk out" of the meeting with Kim "if I think it's a meeting that is not going to be fruitful." Said the President, "I hope to have a very successful meeting. If we don't think it's going to be successful, we won't have it. If I think it's a meeting that is not going to be fruitful, we're not going to go. If the meeting when I'm there is not fruitful, I will respectfully leave the meeting."

To the [Washington Post](#) (4/18, Gearan, Nakamura), Trump "expressed optimism Wednesday that his planned summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un can help make the world safer." The [New York Times](#) (4/18, Landler), meanwhile, says Trump "continued to express optimism – verging on eagerness – about sitting down with the North's reclusive leader," but "as the momentum for a meeting grows in both Washington and East Asia, the president acknowledged that it was a perilous undertaking that could still end in failure."

All three networks covered the story last night, and their reports are generally positive. [NBC Nightly News](#) 📺 (4/18, story 3, 2:20, Holt), for example, said the President "lifted some of the curtain of secrecy surrounding planning for a face-to-face meeting between himself and North Korea's Kim Jong-Un." NBC's Peter Alexander said the President's remarks represented "the first concrete signs of a historic summit between President Trump and Kim Jong-Un could happen." The planning is also "earning praise among some of the President's fiercest critics." Rep. Adam Schiff [said](#) 📺: "I think it is good news for diplomacy."

On [ABC World News Tonight](#) 📺 (4/18, story 3, 2:10, Muir), Jonathan Karl said "the President offered a review of Pompeo's secret trip to North Korea," saying, "He just left North Korea. Had a great meeting with Kim Jong-Un. And got along with him really well. Really great. He's that kind of a guy. He's very smart, but gets along with people." The [CBS Evening News](#) 📺 (4/18, lead story, 2:25, Glor), in its lead story, showed the President saying, "I will be meeting with Kim Jong-Un in the coming weeks to discuss the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Hopefully, that meeting will be a great success, and we're looking forward to it."

[Reuters](#) (4/18) says Pompeo's meeting with Kim "provides the strongest sign yet of

Trump's willingness to become the first serving US president to meet a North Korean leader as he seeks to resolve a crisis" over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program, and to [Politico](#) (4/18, Lima), Pompeo's trip "marked the largest step yet toward direct talks between the two leaders." The [Los Angeles Times](#) (4/18, Bierman) similarly says the developments "underscore the dramatic turn in Trump's approach toward North Korea." While the US "did not appear to have won any concessions from Kim in exchange for the visit from Pompeo," Trump did say Wednesday he would not meet with Kim "if we don't think it's going to be successful."

NYTimes Analysis: Mongolia Could Be Site Of Trump-Kim Summit. The [New York Times](#) (4/18, Watkins) notes that since taking power in 2011, "Kim is not known to have flown outside his country, and the question of his transportation adds a layer of political complications to a fraught and uncertain summit meeting." The Times says "a venue in Asia might be the easiest compromise," but "the options are limited if he wants to maintain his own political capital." It suggests that Mongolia "could serve all parties, and its government has offered to play host to the meeting."

On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (4/18, story 3, 2:10, Muir), Jonathan Karl said "one of the biggest questions is where will this meeting happen? The President has said that five locations are under consideration. One of them is not the United States. I'm also told that North Korea has been ruled out. China has been ruled out. The bottom line: Finding a secure location that is acceptable to both sides is no easy task."

[NBC Nightly News](#) (4/18, story 3, 2:20, Holt) likewise said it is "still unclear where the summit will be held. President Trump said it's down to five locations and tonight...multiple officials tell NBC News, among the front-runners [are] Sweden, Switzerland and Singapore." According to the [CBS Evening News](#) (4/18, lead story, 2:25, Glor), "it is unclear how far Kim is willing to travel given that North Korea lacks reliable aircraft to fly long distances."

Trump: US Negotiating Release Of Three Americans. The [Washington Times](#) (4/18, Boyer) reports three US citizens are still being held by North Korea – Kim Sang-duk and Kim Hak-song, who have been held more than a year, and Kim Dong-chul, who was detained in 2015 for unknown reasons. The President said the US is "negotiating now" to gain their release. "They do have three prisoners," he said. "We have been talking about them. It's harsh treatment. We're having a very good dialogue. I think there's a good chance."

Seoul Confirms Treaty To Formally End Korean War Already Being Discussed. The [New York Times](#) (4/18, Choe, Perlez) reports South Korea confirmed Wednesday "that it had been in talks with American and North Korean officials about negotiating a peace treaty to formally end the Korean War after more than 60 years." Chung Eui-yong, national security adviser to President Moon Jae-in of South Korea, said he had discussed the matter with National Security Adviser Bolton in Washington last week. Referring to his meetings with Administration officials, Chung said Wednesday, "We held in-depth discussions on various ways of how to end hostilities and eventually establish a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, how to address the North Korean concerns and how to ensure a bright future for the North if it makes the right choice." Bolton, he added, "made it clear to me that he will do his best as an honest broker in successfully implementing President Trump's peace policy on the Korean Peninsula." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/18, Jeong) reports that a South Korean security official said any peace deal involving the two Koreas would need input and backing from others, a likely reference to China and the US.

The [Washington Post](#) (4/18, Fifield) says the "mood in South Korea has changed dramatically in just a few months, from palpable fear of another Korean war to cautious optimism about making progress on the decades-long standoff on the peninsula."

Reporting the President's tweet, the [AP](#) (4/18, Lee, Miller) says Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a briefing Wednesday "that Beijing hopes the two sides will work on a political resolution of tensions on the Korean Peninsula."

WPost Analysis: Trumps Frequently Shares Historical Facts Most Already Know. The [Washington Post](#) (4/18, Johnson) reports that as President Trump announced that South

and North Korean leaders “have his blessing to discuss a permanent end to the military conflict between their two countries, he dropped in a quick history lesson.” Said the President, “People don’t realize the Korean War has not ended.” Trump’s public remarks, the Post says, “are filled with dozens of similar comments,” often beginning “with some variation of the phrase, ‘Most people don’t know...,’ and end with a nugget of information that many of those surrounding him – fellow world leaders, diplomats, journalists, politicians or aides – do indeed already know.”

US Practicing Evacuation Of Americans From South Korea. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/18, Gordon, Cheng) reports that the US is testing procedures for the emergency evacuation of American citizens from South Korea. As part of the military exercise, a small group of Americans will be flown to Dallas.

Media Analyses: Trump Shifts On Justification For Comey Firing.

The [AP](#) (4/18, Miller) reports that President Trump “is attempting to rewrite history on his rationale for firing James Comey as FBI director last year.” On Wednesday morning, the President [tweeted](#) that Comey “was not fired because of the phony Russia investigation.” But in an interview days after the sudden firing, Trump revealed that the probe into potential collusion during the 2016 campaign was on his mind at the time he made the decision.” The [Washington Post](#) (4/18, Wagner, Barrett) reports that the tweet came shortly after an appearance by Comey on NBC’s Today during which anchor Savannah Guthrie “referred to comments Trump made in a May interview with NBC’s Lester Holt that suggested that Trump’s rationale for firing Comey included the FBI’s Russia investigation.” [The Hill](#) (4/18, Savransky) writes that Trump “in recent days has been going on the attack against Comey, referring to the former FBI director as a ‘slimeball’ and saying he will go down as the worst FBI director in history.” [Reuters](#) (4/18) also covers the President’s tweet.

Comey was asked on [ABC’s The View](#) (4/18) why he thinks Trump fired him. Comey said, “I don’t know. I took him at his word when he told” Holt that the Russia investigation was on his mind when he made the decision, “and I read in the media that he also said that privately to the Russians the next day in the Oval Office. ... Today’s tweet, which I’ve seen – I don’t follow him on Twitter, but I’ve seen the tweet – both of those things can’t be true. I actually think that illustrates part of the problem that I am trying to bring up that it matters that the President is not committed to the truth as a central American value. So I don’t know what to make of it.”

Trump On Potential Mueller, Rosenstein Firings: “They’re Still Here.”

The [AP](#) (4/17, Colvin) reports, “As his frustration with the investigation into his campaign and business expands into threatening new fronts,” President Trump “refused to say Wednesday whether he plans to fire special counsel Robert Mueller and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein.” During a joint news conference with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Trump said, “As far as the two gentlemen you told me about, they’ve been saying I’m going to get rid of them for the last three months. Four months. Five months. And they’re still here. So we want to get the investigation over with, done with, put it behind us.”

[USA Today](#) (4/18, Jackson, Korte, Fritze) reports that Trump, “repeating a well-worn mantra,” said his campaign “did not collude with Russia to gain advantage in the 2016 election,” and “asserted that the GOP-led House Intelligence Committee found no evidence of collusion before voting to end its investigation into Russia last month.” The [Washington Post](#) (4/18, Gearan) reports that Trump “asserted again that the inquiry into Russian interference in the 2016 election is part of ‘a hoax.’”

The [Washington Examiner](#) (4/18, Drucker) reports that during a joint interview, “Trump’s confidantes David Bossie and Corey Lewandowski recommended against” firing Mueller. Bossie “said that Trump ‘fundamentally understands what is right and wrong. ... It was fine for them to investigate it, because people brought allegations. You see if those allegations have any credit, merit, evidence and you continue to investigate it. But that has gone away.’” Lewandowski said, “I think Bob Mueller’s investigation has to have

a definitive end date to it. I think there is a fair time that he has had the opportunity to investigate any possible collusion or coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia.”

Ex-FBI Director James Comey said on [ABC's The View](#) 📺 (4/18) that he does not think Trump will fire Mueller because “it would make no difference in the investigation. The President would have to fire everyone in the Department of Justice and the FBI to stop an investigation. So it doesn't make any sense to fire Director Mueller and bring the kind of storm that would bring.”

The [Washington Post](#) (4/18) editorializes that after Trump last week “gave the clearest indications to date of wanting to fire” Mueller, Senate Majority Leader McConnell “responded by refusing to allow the Senate to consider legislation to protect Mr. Mueller's tenure.” McConnell said that “passing a bill insulating the special counsel from the White House would be futile because the president would veto it.” But it “would be far better for Congress to deter Mr. Trump from making a rash move, rather than wait to react after he has inflamed passions and further eroded trust in law enforcement.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/18) says in an editorial that while Trump should not fire Mueller, the legislation would have been unconstitutional, as it would have intruded on Trump's prerogatives as the head of the Executive Branch.

Judge: Mueller “Had No Involvement” In Bulger Case. Retired federal judge Nancy Gertner, who presided over a case involving mobster and Whitey Bulger for which Mueller has been criticized by Sean Hannity and other Trump allies, writes in the [New York Times](#) (4/18) that Mueller “had no involvement in that case. He was never even mentioned.”

Puerto Rico Loses Power After Excavator Hits Main Line.

[ABC World News Tonight](#) 📺 (4/18, story 6, 0:20, Muir) reported Puerto Rico is undergoing “a new blackout” after “an excavator hit a main power line, and it could take 36 hours to repair,” and [NBC Nightly News](#) 📺 (4/18, story 5, 0:20, Holt) said there is “more trouble” as “Puerto Rico has been plunged into darkness again” in “an island-wide blackout.”

The [New York Times](#) (4/18, Wagner, Robles) reports the excavator was being operated by “an electrical contractor working to restore power.” Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority [PREPA] COO Justo González said he had fired the contractor, adding, “I'm angry. This is the second time in a row.” He also pledged “to restore power to every last house.” The incident, says the Times, shows “just how fragile Puerto Rico's electricity remains.” Earlier in the day, PREPA announced “that electricity had been restored to 97 percent of its nearly 1.5 million clients.” After Hurricane Maria, the Times reports, “thousands of electrical workers from throughout the United States worked for months” and the United States Army Corps of Engineers “spent \$2.1 billion” and has “already begun demobilizing the majority of the contractors.” Electrical worker's union head Angel Figueroa Jaramillo said, “This is all a process on how to dismantle the electric authority to justify privatization of the most important service in our country.” Gov. Ricardo Rosselló favors privatizing PREPA.

The [AP](#) (4/18, Coto) reports Puerto Rico “struggles to repair an increasingly unstable power grid nearly seven months after Hurricane Maria.” Figueroa told reporters “the union is investigating why a breaker at a main power station in the island's southern region did not function when the outage occurred.”

EPA Implements Changes To Air Pollution Regulations.

[The Hill](#) (4/18, Cama) reports that the Trump administration has “quietly reshaped enforcement of air pollution standards in recent months through a series of regulatory memos.” The Environmental Protection Agency is “allowing certain facilities to be subject to less-stringent regulations,” permitting companies to “use friendlier math in calculating their expected emissions.” The EPA memos “could greatly increase levels of air pollutants like mercury, benzene and nitrogen oxides,” argue environmentalists and public health advocates, who also accuse the agency of “avoiding the transparency and public input requirements that regulatory changes usually go through.” Paul Billings of the American Lung Association, said, “All of these, individually and taken together, will result in more

air pollution and less enforcement of the Clean Air Act.” But for the EPA and its supporters, “the memos simply bring the agency back to what the relevant laws and regulations are meant to be.”

Editorial Wrap-Up

New York Times.

“Macron, At The Barricades, Warns Of Rising Nationalism In Europe.” The [New York Times](#) (4/18) editorializes that French President Emmanuel Macron warned this week “of the rising fascination with antidemocratic and ‘illiberal’ ideas,” and “the deadly tendency which might lead our continent to the abyss, nationalism, giving up of freedom.” Macron “said his goal was to open a critical public debate on what Europe is about,” but the Times argues “that debate should not be limited to Europe.”

Washington Post.

“Leaders Worldwide Are Falling For A Deadly Illusion” On its editorial page, the [Washington Post](#) (4/18) says French President Emanuel Macron’s address to the European Parliament “was a needed summons. Irresponsibly, President Trump cannot find a voice for such essential principles. In this vacuum, it would be reassuring to hear German Chancellor Angela Merkel be more outspoken, as well as others who lead democratic societies. The danger of sleepwalking is real. So are the consequences of losing this battle.”

“McConnell To Trump: Fire At Will.” The [Washington Post](#) (4/18) editorializes that after President Trump last week “gave the clearest indications to date of wanting to fire” special counsel Robert Mueller, Senate Majority Leader McConnell “responded by refusing to allow the Senate to consider legislation to protect Mr. Mueller’s tenure.” McConnell said that “passing a bill insulating the special counsel from the White House would be futile because the president would veto it.” But it “would be far better for Congress to deter Mr. Trump from making a rash move, rather than wait to react after he has inflamed passions and further eroded trust in law enforcement.”

“Blake Farenthold Owes The Public \$84,000. Where’s Our Money?” The [Washington Post](#) (4/18) says that Rep. Blake Farenthold, who resigned as the House Ethics Committee “was about to lay bare some of the sordid details of his misconduct in office,” should not “be allowed to escape his obligation to repay the public the \$84,000 he used to secretly settle a sexual harassment lawsuit against him.” The Post says Farenthold thinks he can skip out “on the promise he made in December and reiterated this year to repay the public money used to settle a 2014 lawsuit brought by his former communications director.” The Post argues that if Farenthold “refuses to make good on his debt, [House Speaker] Ryan should come up with the money for repayment.”

Wall Street Journal.

“Who Needs A Secretary Of State?” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/18) editorializes that Democrats’ growing opposition to Secretary of State-designate Pompeo suggests that they view any nominee who agrees with the elected President are disqualified.

“About The IRS Computer Crash.” In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/18) takes issue with former IRS Commissioner John Koskinen, who blamed the failure of the agency’s computer system on a lack of money. The Journal points out that the system failure is a stain on Koskinen’s leadership, The Journal also points out that in 2018, the IRS has \$11 billion to work with, which should be enough to keep the computers working on Tax Day.

“Congress And The Special Counsel.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (4/18) says in an editorial that while President Trump should not fire special counsel Robert Mueller, the legislation to protect him would have been unconstitutional, as it would have intruded on Trump’s prerogatives as the head of the Executive Branch.

Big Picture

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[Fan Blade, Engine Cover Are Factors In Southwest Flight 1380 Engine Failure](#)
[As ISIS Fades In Syria, Another Militant Group Takes Root](#)
[How Tony Podesta, A Washington Power Broker, Lost It All](#)
[Is The US Shale Boom Hitting A Bottleneck?](#)

New York Times:

[If North Korea Talks Are Not Fruitful, 'I Will Respectfully Leave,' Trump Says](#)
[Inside Southwest Flight 1380, 20 Minutes Of Chaos And Terror](#)
[Puerto Rico Is Once Again Hit By An Islandwide Blackout](#)
[Raúl Castro Prepares To Resign As Cuba's President, Closing A Dynasty](#)
[Across Midwest, Farmers Warn Of G.O.P. Losses Over Trump's Trade Policy](#)
[Fury In Germany As Rap Duo With Anti-Jewish Lyrics Gets Award](#)

Washington Post:

[GOP Fears A Vote To Extend Tax Cuts Would Aid Democrats](#)
[President, Congress At Odds On Syria](#)
[In Cuba, Poised For Measured Change](#)
['She Has Nerves Of Steel'](#)

Financial Times:

[Erdogan Calls Snap Turkish Elections](#)
[Netflix Plots \\$1bn European Investment Drive](#)
[Pompeo Trip Raises Stakes Over North Korea Talks](#)
[IMF Sounds Alarm On Excessive Global Borrowing](#)

Washington Times:

[Trump Says He'll Walk Away From North Korea Summit If Kim Jong-Un Plays Games](#)
[Smuggling Cartels Fuel Surge In Border Jumpers From Terror-Prone Bangladesh](#)
[The Long Fight: Helicopter Pilots From Vietnam War Finally Get Their Due With Arlington Memorial](#)
[Lawmakers, Legal Watchdog Pursue Discipline For Andrew McCabe](#)
[Student Walkouts, Teacher Strikes Compete As Protest Culture Infiltrates Schools](#)
[Sneaky Moves On Catfish By Southern Lawmakers Could Spark Trade War With Vietnam](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: Southwest Flight Emergency; Southwest Flight Emergency-Pilot; WH-North Korea; Oklahoma Wildfire; Hawaii Flood; Puerto Rico Blackout; US-Russia On Syria; Barbara Bush Dies; Magician Lawsuit; Severe Weather; House Explosion; Concussions-Parkinson's Link; Barbara Bush Tribute.

CBS: WH-North Korea; Southwest Flight Emergency; Barbara Bush Dies; Virginia House Fire; Cuba New President; JP Morgan-Domestic Investment; California-Earthquake Fault; Playboy Model-Trump Affair Lawsuit; Police Car Crash; Barbara Bush Tribute.

NBC: Southwest Flight Emergency; Southwest Flight Emergency-Pilot; WH-North Korea; Hawaii Flood; Puerto Rico Blackout; Online Disinformation; Barbara Bush Dies; White Coat Syndrome; Dallas Police Close Call; Furniture Assembling Robot; Model Ship; Barbara Bush Tribute.

Network TV At A Glance:

Southwest Flight Emergency – 12 minutes, 30 seconds
Barbara Bush Dies – 7 minutes, 55 seconds

WH-North Korea – 6 minutes, 55 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Southwest Flight Emergency; WH-North Korea.

CBS: WH-North Korea; Southwest Flight Emergency; NASA-SpaceX Launch; Barbara Bush Dies; Nike-Work Culture.

FOX: WH-North Korea; Southwest Flight Emergency; Barbara Bush Dies; Wall Street News.

NPR: WH-North Korea; Southwest Flight Emergency; Oklahoma Wildfire; Mexico Border Troop Deployment.

Washington Schedule

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

PRESIDENT TRUMP — Has a briefing with Joint Interagency Task Force-South, NORTHCOM, and SOUTHCOM; visits Joint Interagency Taskforce-South.

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE — No public schedule announced.

US Senate: 8:30 AM Dem Sen. Dick Durbin rallies for improvements in child care – Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin and child care advocates (education experts, child care providers, and parents from across the country) call for action to reduce child care cost burdens and improve quality, at a kickoff rally as part of the Child Care Aware of America 2018 Symposium Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC
<http://www.usa.childcareaware.org/> <https://twitter.com/USACHildCare>

9:30 AM Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on Department of the Navy posture – Hearing on 'Posture of the Department of the Navy', with testimony from Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer; Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson; and U.S. Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert Neller Location: Dirksen Senate Office Building, Rm G50, Washington, DC <http://armed-services.senate.gov/>

9:30 AM Fed Vice Chairman Quarles testifies to Senate Banking Committee on bank regulation and supervision – Hearing on 'The Semiannual Testimony on the Federal Reserve's Supervision and Regulation of the Financial System', with testimony from Federal Reserve Vice Chairman for Supervision Randal Quarles Location: Dirksen Senate Office Building, Rm 538, Washington, DC <http://banking.senate.gov/>

10:00 AM ODNI, NSA, and CIA officials testify to top secret clearance-only Senate Appropriations Committee hearing – Defense Subcommittee closed hearing 'To review intelligence programs and threat assessments', with testimony from Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats; National Security Agency Deputy Director George Barnes; and a CIA official * Limited to Members and staff with Top Secret / Sensitive Compartmented Information clearance only Location: U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, SVC-217, Washington, DC <http://appropriations.senate.gov/> <https://twitter.com/SenateApprops>

10:00 AM POSTPONED: HHS Secretary Azar testifies to Senate Appropriations subcommittee on FY'19 budget – POSTPONED: Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee 'Hearing to Review the FY2019 Budget Request for the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services', with testimony from Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar Location: Dirksen Senate Office Building, Rm 124, Washington, DC <http://appropriations.senate.gov/> <https://twitter.com/SenateApprops>

10:00 AM Senate Judiciary Committee Executive Business Meeting, with Special Counsel Independence and Integrity Act on agenda – Executive Business Meeting, with agenda including 'S. 2644, Special Counsel Independence and Integrity Act', 'S. 994, Protecting Religiously Affiliated Institutions Act of 2017', and consideration of nominations of John Nalbandian to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit; Kari Dooley to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Connecticut; Dominic Lanza to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Arizona; Michael Scudder and Amy St. Eve to be U.S. Circuit Judges for the Seventh Circuit; Charles Williams to be U.S. District Judge for the

Northern District of Iowa; Joseph Hunt to be Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division; Nicola Hanna to be U.S. Attorney for the Central District of California; Steven Gladden to be U.S. Marshal for the Middle District of North Carolina; Brendan Heffner to be U.S. Marshal for the Central District of Illinois; and Theodor Short to be U.S. Marshal for the District of Maine Location: Rm 226, Dirksen Senate Office Bldg, Washington, DC <http://judiciary.senate.gov/>

10:00 AM Senate Finance Committee hearing on tackling substance use disorders – Hearing on 'Tackling Opioid and Substance Use Disorders in Medicare, Medicaid, and Human Services Programs', with testimony from Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services for Health Adm. Brett Giroir; and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Principal Deputy Administrator for Operations Kimberly Brandt Location: Dirksen Senate Office Building, Rm 215, Washington, DC <http://finance.senate.gov>

10:00 AM Senate Energy Committee hearing on rural energy challenges – Hearing 'To Examine Rural Energy Challenges and Opportunities', with testimony from Department of Energy Office of Indian Energy and Policy Programs Director Carole Plowfield; Basin Electric Power Cooperative Senior Vice President of Research, Development and Technology Matt Greek; Central Montana Electric Power Cooperative General Manager Doug Hardy; HopeSource Weatherization and Energy Assistance Program Manager Andrew Lyons; and Southeast Conference Executive Director Robert Venables Location: Dirksen Senate Office Building, Rm 366, Washington, DC <http://energy.senate.gov/public/>

12:00 PM U.N. high commissioner for human rights at event on Capitol Hill – United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein at event in the U.S. Capitol, hosted by the United Nations Foundation in cooperation with honorary co-host Senate Human Rights Caucus co-chair Democratic Sen. Chris Coons, discussing human rights challenges around the world – one of his final public appearances before his term expires this summer Location: U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, SVC-203, Washington, DC www.unfoundation.org <https://twitter.com/unfoundation>

2:00 PM Closed Briefing: Intelligence Matters Location: Rm 219, Hart Senate Office Bldg, Washington, DC <http://intelligence.senate.gov>

Annual Afterschool for All Challenge on Capitol Hill concludes – 17th annual Afterschool for All Challenge – with over 200 afterschool providers, community leaders, educators, parents, and youth from every state on Capitol Hill to 'educate Congress about the urgent need to increase, rather than eliminate, federal funding for afterschool and summer learning programs in Fiscal Year 2019' – concludes, with supporters meeting Members of Congress throughout the day to 'talk about the ways afterschool programs support students, families, schools, and communities' and 'remind elected officials that quality afterschool and summer learning programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give working parents peace of mind' * Thousands of advocates also join a national Call-In Day for Afterschool Funding from their homes today Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC www.afterschoolalliance.org <https://twitter.com/afterschool4all>

US House: 9:00 AM POSTPONED: Department of Defense Intelligence and Overhead Architecture Subcommittee closed 'Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Hearing #2' Location: U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, HVC-304, Washington, DC <http://intelligence.house.gov/> <https://twitter.com/HouseIntelComm>

9:30 AM POSTPONED: House Appropriations subcommittee hearing on the State Department and foreign operations programs budget – POSTPONED: State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee 'FY 2019 Budget Hearing – Department of State and Foreign Operations Programs', with testimony from State Department and Broadcasting Board of Governors Inspector General Steve Linick; and USAID IG Ann Calvaresi Barr Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2359, Washington, DC <http://appropriations.house.gov/> <https://twitter.com/HouseAppropsGOP>

10:00 AM House Oversight subcommittee hearing on All Aboard Florida's Brightline rail system – Government Operations Subcommittee hearing on 'Examining Tax-Exempt Private Activity Bonds for All Aboard Florida's Brightline Passenger Rail System', with testimony from Deputy Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Policy Grover Burthey; All Aboard Florida/Brightline President and COO Patrick Goddard; former American

Airlines CEO Robert Crandall; Martin County Fire Rescue Emergency Management Division Chief Dan Wouters; and Indian River County Attorney Dylan Reingold Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2154, Washington, DC <http://oversight.house.gov/> <https://twitter.com/GOPoversight>

10:00 AM POSTPONED: House Commerce subcommittee hearing on robocalls – POSTPONED: Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection Subcommittee hearing on ‘Do Not Call: Combating Robocalls and Caller ID Spoofing’, with testimony from First Orion Corporation Executive Vice President for Policy and Compliance Jennifer Barrett Glasgow; Nomorobo founder Aaron Foss; RoboKiller Chief Product Officer Ethan Garr; and Consumers Union Policy Analyst Maureen Mahoney Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2322, Washington, DC <http://energycommerce.house.gov/> <https://twitter.com/HouseCommerce>

10:00 AM House Armed Services subcommittee hearing on U.S. Army budget – Readiness Subcommittee hearing on ‘Army Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Request Readiness Posture’, with testimony from U.S. Army Deputy Chiefs of Staff (G-3/5/7) Lt. Gen. Joseph Anderson and (G-4) Lt. Gen. Aundre Piggee; Army National Guard Director Lt. Gen. Timothy Kadavy; and Chief of Army Reserve Lt. Gen. Charles Luckey Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2118, Washington, DC www.armedservices.house.gov <https://twitter.com/HASCRpublicans>

10:30 AM Health Subcommittee on Personal Stories from the Opioid Crisis – WITNESSES: Kathy O’Keefe, Executive Director, Winning the Fight; Gary Mendell, Founder and CEO, Shatterproof; Mary Winnefeld, Founder, Stop the Addiction Fatality Epidemic; Devon Hott, Director of Operations, Recovery Care Partner; Aimee Manzoni D’Arpino, Massachusetts State Chair, Addiction Policy Forum; Michael Gray, CEO and Co-Founder, Actus Analytical; Lisa Daniels, Co-Founder, Jamie Daniels Foundation; Gail Smith, Substance Use Navigator, Prevention Plus of Burlington County, on behalf of The Kenny Smith Freedom Foundation. <https://energycommerce.house.gov/events/personal-stories-from-the-opioid-crisis/> Location: 2123 Rayburn. <http://energycommerce.house.gov/> <https://twitter.com/HouseCommerce>

10:30 AM CANCELED: House Armed Services subcommittee hearing on military health system reform – CANCELED: Military Personnel Subcommittee hearing on ‘Military Health System Reform: Pain Management, Opioids Prescription Management and Reporting Transparency’, with testimony from Defense Health Agency Director Vice Adm. Raquel Bono; and Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Director of Mental Health Policy and Oversight Capt. Mike Colston Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2212, Washington, DC www.armedservices.house.gov <https://twitter.com/HASCRpublicans>

3:00 PM House Armed Services Committee staff host logistics briefing ahead of NDAA markups – House Armed Services Committee majority and minority communications offices host off-the-record session for credentialed media to discuss logistics for the Fiscal Year 19 National Defense Authorization Act markups, covering both subcommittee and full committee markups, release of legislation, and distribution of other materials Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2118, Washington, DC armedservices.house.gov <https://twitter.com/HASCRpublicans>

Annual Afterschool for All Challenge on Capitol Hill concludes – 17th annual Afterschool for All Challenge – with over 200 afterschool providers, community leaders, educators, parents, and youth from every state on Capitol Hill to ‘educate Congress about the urgent need to increase, rather than eliminate, federal funding for afterschool and summer learning programs in Fiscal Year 2019’ – concludes, with supporters meeting Members of Congress throughout the day to ‘talk about the ways afterschool programs support students, families, schools, and communities’ and ‘remind elected officials that quality afterschool and summer learning programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give working parents peace of mind’ * Thousands of advocates also join a national Call-In Day for Afterschool Funding from their homes today Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC www.afterschoolalliance.org <https://twitter.com/afterschool4all>

No votes scheduled in the House of Representatives

Other: 7:00 AM Big ‘I’ Legislative Conference continues with GOP Sen. Mitch McConnell

speaking – Big 'I' Legislative Conference continues, with day two speakers including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer Location: Grand Hyatt Washington, 1000 H Street Northwest, Washington, DC <http://www.iiaba.net/> <https://twitter.com/IndAgent>

7:00 AM Ex-Im Bank Annual Conference – Export-Import Bank of the United States Annual Conference, for companies from around the world to meet U.S. exporters. Attendees include over 1,000 exporters and representatives of financial institutions, foreign trade partners, and govt officials. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross keynotes, with other speakers including Democratic Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, bipartisan Reps. Frank Lucas and Gwen Moore, and former Rep. Tim Roemer Location: Omni Shoreham Hotel, 2500 Calvert Street NW, Washington, DC www.exim.gov [#EXIMac18](https://twitter.com/EximBankUS)

7:30 AM Baptist Communicators Association Workshop – Baptist Communicators Association Workshop, with speakers including Republican Sen. James Lankford, National Religious Broadcasters Vice President of Communications James Smith, Fox News Network Journalist Shannon Bream Location: Embassy Suites by Hilton Alexandria Old Town, 1900 Diagonal Road, Alexandria, VA www.baptistcommunicators.org <https://twitter.com/BaptistComm>

8:00 AM FIA Global Finance Forum – FIA Annual Global Finance Forum, 'Capital Markets, Growth & the Economy of Tomorrow'. Speakers include Federal Reserve Board Governor Lael Brainard, Bank of England Deputy Governor for Financial Stability Sir Jon Cunliffe, European Commission Vice-President and EU Commissioner for the Euro and Social Dialogue Valdis Dombrovskis, and Chief Economist for Vice President Mike Pence, Mark Calabria * Co-hosted with the American Investment Council, Investment Company Institute, Managed Funds Association, Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Center for Capital Markets Competitiveness Location: The Ritz-Carlton, Washington DC, 1150 22nd Street Northwest, Washington, DC fia.org <https://twitter.com/FIAconnect>

8:30 AM NIST 'Unleashing American Innovation' symposium – National Institute of Standards and Technology 'Unleashing American Innovation' symposium, with speakers including Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, Office of Management and Budget Deputy Director for Management Margaret Weichert, Deputy U.S. CTO Michael Kratsios, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Director Andrei Iancu, National Science Foundation Director France Cordova, NIH National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences Director Christopher Austin, Council on Competitiveness President and CEO Deborah Wince-Smith, Licensing Executives Society President and Chair William Elkington, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Center Vice President Patrick Kilbrie, and NIST Director Walter Copan Location: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2301 Constitution Ave NW, Washington, DC www.nist.gov <https://twitter.com/usnistgov>

8:45 AM CSIS annual Global Development Forum – Center for Strategic and International Studies 2018 Global Development Forum, to examine the role and purpose of official development assistance against a backdrop of rising incomes, economic growth, youth unemployment, and other continued complex challenges in many parts of the world. Speakers include Democratic Sen. Christopher Coons, Danish Minister for Development Cooperation Ulla Tornaes, Italian Agency for International Cooperation Director Laura Frigenti, U.S. Global Leadership Coalition President and CEO Liz Schrayner, Government of Assam Additional Chief Secretary Shri Rajiv Kr. Bora, and European Union Ambassador to the U.S. Amb. David O'Sullivan Location: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1616 Rhode Island Ave NW, Washington, DC <http://www.csis.org> https://twitter.com/CSIS_USLD

9:00 AM Arms Control Association Annual Meeting – Arms Control Association Annual Meeting titled 'The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty at 50: Strengthening and Reinforcing the Regime', featuring remarks from Democratic Rep. Adam Smith, Irish Director for Disarmament and Nonproliferation Jackie O'Halloran Bernstein, former Rep. Lewis Dunn, and former Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson Location: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1779 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Washington, DC www.armscontrol.org/ <https://twitter.com/armscontrolnow>

9:00 AM NASA 'Earth Day in the Nation's Capital' event – NASA hosts 'Earth Day in the Nation's Capital', with hands-on activities, demonstrations and talks by NASA scientists * Earth Day is 22 Apr Location: Union Station, 40 Massachusetts Ave NE, Washington, DC www.nasa.gov/earthday [#NASA4Earth](https://twitter.com/NASA)

11:30 AM Ukrainian finance minister speaks at GW – 'Ukraine's Economy Today: Opportunities, Challenges, and Risks' George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies discussion, with Ukrainian Finance Minister Oleksandr Danylyuk Location: George Washington University Elliott School, 1957 E Street Northwest, Washington, DC elliott.gwu.edu <https://twitter.com/elliottschoolgw>

1:30 PM Commerce Secretary Ross addresses U.S.-Morocco Trade Forum – Fourth annual U.S.-Morocco Trade Forum, co-hosted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce U.S.-Africa Business Center in partnership with the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco, bringing together senior officials, business leaders, and trade experts for panel discussions and speeches about the trading relationship between the U.S., Morocco, and the African continent. Speakers include Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, Morocco Ambassador to the U.S. Amb. Princess Lalla Joumala, Moroccan Economy Minister Mohamed Boussaid, National Bureau of Petroleum and Mines Director General Amina Benkhadra, IBM's Grace Brasington, ExxonMobil's Ed Austin, and The Boeing Company's Douglas Kelly Location: U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 1615 H Street Northwest, Washington, DC www.uschamber.com <https://twitter.com/USChamber>

2:00 PM Dem Rep. Jerrold Nadler speaks at Georgetown Law on Congressional oversight of the DoJ and FBI – 'Congressional Oversight of the DOJ and FBI in the Trump Era' Georgetown Law panel discussion, on the consequences of President Donald Trump's 'break from the practices of his predecessors', and the past, current, and potential role of Congressional oversight in ensuring an independent Department of Justice and FBI. Speakers include House Committee on the Judiciary Ranking Member Jerrold Nadler, former Rep. Tom Davis, former Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary McCord, former Associate Deputy Attorney General Bruce Fein, former FBI Director's Special Assistant Josh Campbell, and Georgetown Law Professor David Vladeck Location: Georgetown University Law Center, 600 New Jersey Ave NW, Washington, DC <http://www.law.georgetown.edu> <https://twitter.com/GeorgetownLaw>

2:00 PM Brookings discussion on education in Africa – 'Education in Africa: Key challenges and solutions for developing human capital' Brookings Institution Center for Universal Education and the World Bank event, on challenges and solution sin developing human capital. Speakers include Center for Universal Education Director Rebecca Winthrop, Niger Ambassador to the U.S. Amb. Hassana Alidou, The Education Commission Commissioner and Education Outcomes Fund CEO Amel Karboul, and World Bank Education Global Practice Senior Director Jaime Saavedra Location: The Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC <http://www.brookings.edu> <https://twitter.com/BrookingsInst>

3:30 PM Maryland bipartisan congressional delegation and Governor Hogan hold media availability – Democratic Reps. Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen hold media availability with Maryland Governor Larry Hogan and bipartisan group of Maryland state Reps. Elijah Cummings, C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger, Andy Harris and John Delaney Location: United States Capitol, East Capitol St NE & First St SE, Washington, DC cardin.senate.gov <https://twitter.com/SenatorCardin>

3:30 PM G24 Ministers and Governors Meeting – G24 Ministers and Governors Meeting, ahead of this weekend's IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings, followed by press conference (5:15 PM EDT) Location: International Monetary Fund, 700 19th Street Northwest, Washington, DC <http://www.g24.org>

7:30 PM G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting welcome reception – G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting welcome reception for attendees, ahead of tomorrow's main meeting, which comes before this weekend's Spring Meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund * U.S. represented at the meeting by Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin and Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell Location: International Monetary Fund, 1900

Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest, Washington, DC <http://www.g20.org>
<https://twitter.com/g20org>

G20 Finance and Central Bank Deputies meeting – G20 Finance and Central Bank Deputies meeting ahead of the G20 Meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors and this weekend's IMF / World Bank Spring Meetings Location: Washington, DC www.g20.org <https://twitter.com/g20org>

Siouxland Chamber of Commerce conference continues with Labor Secretary Acosta among speakers – Siouxland Chamber of Commerce Siouxland/Washington Conference continues, with day two speakers Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta including Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley Location: The Liaison Capitol Hill, 415 New Jersey Avenue Northwest, Washington, DC www.sioxlandchamber.com
<https://twitter.com/SiouxIndChamber>

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

Jimmy Kimmel: "The most surprising thing about this secret meeting is that Trump was able to keep it secret. He didn't accidentally tweet it while it was happening. And next he expected to meet with Kim Jong-Un himself. That's supposed to happen in May or June. He told reporters there are five possible locations being considered, which are Mongolia, Stockholm, Geneva, Seoul, and the Dave and Buster's in Pasadena. ... I think they should meet at the top of the Eiffel Tower. If you're looking for a place for a first date, it doesn't get more romantic than that."

Stephen Colbert: "Trump bragged about the Easter visit this morning, tweeting, 'Mike Pompeo met with Kim Jong-Un in North Korea last week. Meeting went very smoothly, and a good relationship was formed. Details of summit are being worked out now. Denuclearization will be a great thing for world, but also for North Korea.' Now, I, for one, hope it is a great thing for world and North Korea. But a couple of things here. Easter was two weeks ago. And, second, I can't believe Trump kept something this big secret. How did he do it? I mean, the only explanation is that Michael Cohen paid him \$130,000 to stay quiet about it."

Stephen Colbert: "When Trump saw [Nikki] Haley on TV saying Russian sanctions were coming, the President grew angry. And you wouldn't like him when he's angry. Or any other time. ... Nikki Haley does not get confused! Except for that time she joined the Trump Administration. Not sure what she was thinking then. Trump may be angry because he accidentally appointed someone competent, and there are ramblings that Trump has grown suspicious of Haley's ambitions, and Republicans are whispering about the prospect of an alliance between Haley and Vice President Mike Pence, possibly to run as a ticket in 2020. That's absurd. Mike Pence can't be on a ticket with a woman who's not his wife."

James Corden: "In other White House news, yesterday, after Ambassador Nikki Haley told the UN that the United States was going to level more sanctions against Russia, the White House quickly contradicted her, saying she suffered from 'momentary confusion.' It's got to hurt, being called 'confused' by the Trump White House. That's like being called hateful and mean-spirited by, well, by the Trump White House."

Trevor Noah: "Trump is right – if it wasn't for his craziness, North Korea would have never come to the table, you know. That's what he did. Trump is like the near-death experience that makes people forget why they were fighting in the first place."

Trevor Noah: "The whole point of a secret meeting is that you're not supposed to tell anyone. If you're in the CIA, you must dread sharing information with Donald Trump. It would be like, 'Sir, finished my secret mission.' Trump is like, 'Okay, hold on, you guys

won't believe who's here. It's Jason Bourne! Jason Bourne is here, everybody! Okay, where were we? Sorry about that."

Jimmy Fallon: "This week, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been staying at Mar-a-Lago with Trump. Trump said he wanted to sneak out and play golf with him, while Abe said he just wanted to sneak out."

Conan O'Brien: "President Trump has referred to Mar-a-Lago as the Southern White House. Yeah. Of course, when Trump refers to the actual White House, he refers to it as the Western Kremlin."

Conan O'Brien: "It's come out that the CIA Director, Mike Pompeo, had a secret meeting with Kim Jong-Un. When asked how it all came about, Pompeo said, 'I just swiped right. That's all I did.'"

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Conversation Contents

Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Pt. Reyes National Seashore - Seashore Management and the future of the Seashore and One Additional Document on Background to Controversies at PRNS

Attachments:

/43. Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Pt. Reyes National Seashore - Seashore Management and the future of the Seashore and One Additional Document on Background to Controversies at PRNS/1.1 ATT00001

/43. Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Pt. Reyes National Seashore - Seashore Management and the future of the Seashore and One Additional Document on Background to Controversies at PRNS/1.2 PRNS GMPA and EIS Letters from Individuals.pdf

/43. Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Pt. Reyes National Seashore - Seashore Management and the future of the Seashore and One Additional Document on Background to Controversies at PRNS/1.3 PRNS 20150118 Newsweek - The Oyster Shell Game.pdf

/43. Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Pt. Reyes National Seashore - Seashore Management and the future of the Seashore and One Additional Document on Background to Controversies at PRNS/1.4 ATT00002

"Willens, Todd" <todd_willens@ios.doi.gov>

From: "Willens, Todd" <todd_willens@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Wed Apr 18 2018 07:22:21 GMT-0600 (MDT)
To: Susan Combs <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Pt. Reyes National Seashore - Seashore Management and the future of the Seashore and One Additional Document on Background to Controversies at PRNS
Attachments: ATT00001 PRNS GMPA and EIS Letters from Individuals.pdf PRNS 20150118 Newsweek - The Oyster Shell Game.pdf ATT00002

FYI

Todd Willens
Assistant Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW -- MIB Room 6116
Washington, DC 20240
office: 202-208-6291

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **John Doolittle** <jtdoolittle@att.net>
Date: Tue, Apr 17, 2018 at 7:13 PM

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pt. Reyes National Seashore - Seashore Management and the future of the Seashore and One Additional Document on Background to Controversies at PRNS

To: Willens Todd <Todd_Willens@ios.doi.gov>

Cc: Carr Chris <Chris.Carr@bakerbotts.com>, David Moser <dmoser@emslp.com>, Kevin Lunny <kevin@lunnypaving.com>

Mr. Todd Willens
Assistant Deputy Secretary of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Todd:

Enclosed please find materials, which I believe to be of interest to you. They consist of communications sent to the NPS in response to their invitation to provide comments to inform the GMPA and EIS process, which is underway pursuant to the Settlement Agreement signed in July 2017. They address the seashore management and the future of the seashore and are strongly supportive of maintaining ranching at the seashore. These documents were provided to me by Kevin Lunny, owner of the now closed Drakes Bay Oyster Company, a rancher at Pt. Reyes National Seashore and a member of the Resilient Agriculture Group, which I represent.

Also there is one additional document which should have been included with the first batch of documents, which I sent to you via e-mail on April 6, 2018, and which provided background to the current controversies surrounding NPS and its management of PRNS. Since I do not have their e-mail addresses, would you please forward these documents to Susan Combs, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, and to Danny Smith, Acting Director, National Park Service? Thank you.

Conversation Contents

Fwd: After Action review for Monthly Meeting

Attachments:

/44. Fwd: After Action review for Monthly Meeting/1.1 4-11-18.pptx

Susan Combs <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>

From: Susan Combs <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Tue Apr 10 2018 16:22:15 GMT-0600 (MDT)
To: joy_nicholopoulos@fws.gov
Subject: Fwd: After Action review for Monthly Meeting
Attachments: 4-11-18.pptx

Please verify ours r ok

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Thiele, Aaron" <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov>
Date: April 10, 2018 at 5:19:07 PM EDT
To: Joseph Balash <joseph_balash@ios.doi.gov>, Timothy Petty <timothy_petty@ios.doi.gov>, Scott Cameron <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>, Susan Combs <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>, John Tahsuda <john.tahsuda@bia.gov>, John Tanner <john_tanner@ios.doi.gov>, Steven Howke <steven_howke@ios.doi.gov>, Michael Argo <michael_argo@ios.doi.gov>, Vincent DeVito <vincent_devito@ios.doi.gov>, David Mihalic <david_mihalic@ios.doi.gov>
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Subject: Re: After Action review for Monthly Meeting

All attached is the current draft for the slides tomorrow. Please note that we are still awaiting slides from ASLM and Vincent.

Thanks,
Aaron

On Tue, Apr 10, 2018 at 9:42 AM, Thiele, Aaron <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov> wrote:
All this is a reminder that slides are due today at noon.

Thanks

On Mon, Apr 9, 2018 at 9:30 AM, Thiele, Aaron <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov> wrote:
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Thanks,
Aaron

Joy Nicholopoulos <joy_nicholopoulos@fws.gov>

From: Joy Nicholopoulos <joy_nicholopoulos@fws.gov>
Sent: Tue Apr 10 2018 17:34:49 GMT-0600 (MDT)
To: Susan Combs <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: After Action review for Monthly Meeting



They are good!

On Apr 10, 2018, at 6:22 PM, Susan Combs <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov> wrote:

Please verify ours r ok

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Thiele, Aaron" <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov>
Date: April 10, 2018 at 5:19:07 PM EDT
To: Joseph Balash <joseph_balash@ios.doi.gov>, Timothy Petty <timothy_petty@ios.doi.gov>, Scott Cameron <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>, Susan Combs <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>, John Tahsuda <john.tahsuda@bia.gov>, John Tanner <john_tanner@ios.doi.gov>, Steven Howke <steven_howke@ios.doi.gov>, Michael Argo <michael_argo@ios.doi.gov>, Vincent DeVito <vincent_devito@ios.doi.gov>, David Mihalic <david_mihalic@ios.doi.gov>
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<mime-attachment.html>

<4-11-18.pptx>

Susan Combs <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>

From: Susan Combs <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Tue Apr 10 2018 18:20:39 GMT-0600 (MDT)
To: Joy Nicholopoulos <joy_nicholopoulos@fws.gov>
Subject: Re: After Action review for Monthly Meeting

Thx

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 10, 2018, at 7:34 PM, Joy Nicholopoulos <joy_nicholopoulos@fws.gov> wrote:



They are good!

On Apr 10, 2018, at 6:22 PM, Susan Combs <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov> wrote:

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Sent from my iPhone

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From: "Thiele, Aaron" <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov>
Date: April 10, 2018 at 5:19:07 PM EDT

To: Joseph Balash <joseph_balash@ios.doi.gov>, Timothy Petty <timothy_petty@ios.doi.gov>, Scott Cameron <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>, Susan Combs <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>, John Tahsuda <john.tahsuda@bia.gov>, John Tanner <john_tanner@ios.doi.gov>, Steven Howke <steven_howke@ios.doi.gov>, Michael Argo <michael_argo@ios.doi.gov>, Vincent DeVito <vincent_devito@ios.doi.gov>, David Mihalic <david_mihalic@ios.doi.gov>

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<mime-attachment.html>

<4-11-18.pptx>



Monthly Policy Briefing for Secretary Zinke



Fish and Wildlife and Parks



Draft-Deliberative

2018 Top Policy Goals

Fish and Wildlife Service

- Revised rule and EA to allow Alaska 1002 exploration and issue permits
 - Transferred to BLM per legislation
- MBTA changes
- ESA Sections 4, 6, 7, and 10 reforms
- Mitigation policy reforms
- Hunting and fishing chiefs to open 250,000 acres
- Refuge maintenance backlog
- Continue delistings
- King Cove land exchange (completed)
- Bison Range
- State FWS Commissioner Summit (canceled)



Major Actions in Next 30 Days

Fish and Wildlife Service

- Refuge maintenance backlog
 - In FY2019 President's Budget Request, in process
- MBTA changes
 - New guidance issued to FWS that implements M opinion
- ESA Sections 4, 6, 7, and 10 reforms
 - Sent to OMB for review.
- Continue delistings
 - Black-capped vireo (final delisting)
 - Lesser long-nosed bat (final delisting)
 - Kuenzler hedgehog cactus (downlisting to threatened)
 - Tobusch fishhook cactus (proposed downlisting to threatened)
- Mitigation policy reforms
 - Plan for revisions submitted to Assistant Deputy Secretary; awaiting approval



Major Actions in Next 6 Months - 1 Year

Fish and Wildlife Service

- MBTA changes
 - Possible regulation change; SOL discussions
- Hunting and fishing chiefs to open 250,000 acres
 - 186,500 acres announcement in Federal Register
 - Proposal to eliminate 1,400 regs; simplify 700 additional regs (2,100 total regs affected)
- Continue delistings
 - Hidden Lake bluecurls
 - Wild buckwheat gypsum
 - Hawaiian hawk ('lo)
 - Northern Continental Divide Grizzly
 - Grey Wolf
- Bison Range
 - On hold due to litigation



Special Projects



Special Projects

Yellowstone Bison

- Players: NPS, USDA-APHIS, Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes
- ~800 bison captured in the Stephens Creek facility
 - 1168 removed from population as of 4/3 (last treaty hunt
 - state and treaty hunt harvest
 - entered in to NPS quarantine
 - 1070 sent to slaughter or killed in treaty hunts
- 2018 Target Population: 3,600 before calving; 4,200 after



Special Projects

Yellowstone Bison

- Quarantine Update
 - Stephens Creek is considered certified, letter forthcoming
 - 98 in NPS quarantine; 3 tested positive: 95 remaining
- Transfer of yearlings to Ft. Peck, CY2018
 - APHIS will review data, generate time schedule
 - 24 hr LE presence has been in place at Stephens Creek

Conversation Contents

Fwd: After Action review for Monthly Meeting

Attachments:

/45. Fwd: After Action review for Monthly Meeting/1.1 3-14-18.pptx
/45. Fwd: After Action review for Monthly Meeting/6.1 4-11-18.pptx

"Thiele, Aaron" <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov>

From: "Thiele, Aaron" <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Mon Apr 09 2018 07:42:13 GMT-0600 (MDT)
To: Susan Combs <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>
CC: "Foster, Maureen" <maureen_foster@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Fwd: After Action review for Monthly Meeting
Attachments: 3-14-18.pptx

Hey Susan,

Now that you have taken over for Jason at FWP, you are now responsible for ensuring I get your slides and presenting them during the meeting. If you have any questions about the meeting I'd be happy to chat.

Thanks,

Aaron

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Thiele, Aaron** <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov>
Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2018 at 9:30 AM
Subject: Re: After Action review for Monthly Meeting
To: Joseph Balash <joseph_balash@ios.doi.gov>, Timothy Petty <timothy_petty@ios.doi.gov>, "Domenech, Douglas" <douglas_domenech@ios.doi.gov>, Scott Cameron <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>, Jason Larrabee <jason_larrabee@ios.doi.gov>, John Tahsuda <john.tahsuda@bia.gov>, John Tanner <john_tanner@ios.doi.gov>, Vincent DeVito <vincent_devito@ios.doi.gov>, Steven Howke <steven_howke@ios.doi.gov>, Rick May <rick_may@ios.doi.gov>
Cc: Downey Magallanes <downey_magallanes@ios.doi.gov>, Scott Hommel <scott_hommel@ios.doi.gov>, David Bernhardt <(b)(6) - Bernhardt>, Caroline Boulton <caroline_boulton@ios.doi.gov>, "Rees, Gareth" <gareth_rees@ios.doi.gov>

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"Combs, Susan" <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>

From: "Combs, Susan" <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Mon Apr 09 2018 07:50:07 GMT-0600 (MDT)
To: "Thiele, Aaron" <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov>
CC: "Foster, Maureen" <maureen_foster@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: After Action review for Monthly Meeting

yes- just chatting with Maureen about that- what is due date and time?

On Mon, Apr 9, 2018 at 9:42 AM, Thiele, Aaron <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov> wrote:

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Subject: Re: After Action review for Monthly Meeting

To: Joseph Balash <joseph_balash@ios.doi.gov>, Timothy Petty <timothy_petty@ios.doi.gov>, "Domenech, Douglas" <douglas_domenech@ios.doi.gov>, Scott Cameron <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>, Jason Larrabee <jason_larrabee@ios.doi.gov>, John Tahsuda <john.tahsuda@bia.gov>, John Tanner <john_tanner@ios.doi.gov>, Vincent DeVito <vincent_devito@ios.doi.gov>, Steven Howke <steven_howke@ios.doi.gov>, Rick May <rick_may@ios.doi.gov>

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Thanks,

Aaron

--

Susan Combs
U.S. Department of the Interior
1-202-208-4482

"Thiele, Aaron" <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov>

From: "Thiele, Aaron" <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Mon Apr 09 2018 07:55:59 GMT-0600 (MDT)

To: "Combs, Susan" <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>
CC: "Foster, Maureen" <maureen_foster@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: After Action review for Monthly Meeting

The slides are due tomorrow at 12 noon, and the meeting is 9:30 - 11:00am on the second Wednesday of every month.

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Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2018 at 9:30 AM

Subject: Re: After Action review for Monthly Meeting

To: Joseph Balash <joseph_balash@ios.doi.gov>, Timothy Petty <timothy_petty@ios.doi.gov>, "Domenech, Douglas" <douglas_domenech@ios.doi.gov>, Scott Cameron <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>, Jason Larrabee <jason_larrabee@ios.doi.gov>, John Tahsuda <john.tahsuda@bia.gov>, John Tanner <john_tanner@ios.doi.gov>, Vincent DeVito <vincent_devito@ios.doi.gov>, Steven Howke <steven_howke@ios.doi.gov>, Rick May <rick_may@ios.doi.gov>

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1-202-208-4482

"Combs, Susan" <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>

From: "Combs, Susan" <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Mon Apr 09 2018 08:00:47 GMT-0600 (MDT)

To: "Thiele, Aaron" <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov>
CC: "Foster, Maureen" <maureen_foster@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: Re: After Action review for Monthly Meeting

great- will do

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Susan Combs

"Thiele, Aaron" <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov>

From: "Thiele, Aaron" <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Tue Apr 10 2018 07:42:34 GMT-0600 (MDT)
Joseph Balash <joseph_balash@ios.doi.gov>, Timothy Petty <timothy_petty@ios.doi.gov>, Scott Cameron <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>, Jason Larrabee <jason_larrabee@ios.doi.gov>, John Tahsuda <john.tahsuda@bia.gov>, John Tanner <john_tanner@ios.doi.gov>, Vincent DeVito <vincent_devito@ios.doi.gov>, Steven Howke <steven_howke@ios.doi.gov>, Benjamin Cassidy <benjamin_cassidy@ios.doi.gov>, Susan Combs <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>
To: Downey Magallanes <downey_magallanes@ios.doi.gov>, Scott Hommel <scott_hommel@ios.doi.gov>, David Bernhardt <(b)(6) - Bernhardt>, Caroline Boulton <caroline_boulton@ios.doi.gov>, "Rees, Gareth" <gareth_rees@ios.doi.gov>
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"Thiele, Aaron" <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov>

From: "Thiele, Aaron" <aaron_thiele@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Tue Apr 10 2018 15:19:07 GMT-0600 (MDT)
Joseph Balash <joseph_balash@ios.doi.gov>, Timothy Petty <timothy_petty@ios.doi.gov>, Scott Cameron <scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>, Susan Combs <susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>, John Tahsuda <john.tahsuda@bia.gov>, John Tanner <john_tanner@ios.doi.gov>, Steven Howke
To:

<steven_howke@ios.doi.gov>, Michael Argo
<michael_argo@ios.doi.gov>, Vincent DeVito
<vincent_devito@ios.doi.gov>, David Mihalic
<david_mihalic@ios.doi.gov>

CC:

Downey Magallanes <downey_magallanes@ios.doi.gov>,
Scott Hommel <scott_hommel@ios.doi.gov>, David
Bernhardt <(b)(6) - Bernhardt [REDACTED]> Caroline Boulton
<caroline_boulton@ios.doi.gov>, "Rees, Gareth"
<gareth_rees@ios.doi.gov>

Subject:

Re: After Action review for Monthly Meeting

Attachments:

4-11-18.pptx

All attached is the current draft for the slides tomorrow. Please note that we are still awaiting slides from ASLM and Vincent.

Thanks,
Aaron

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Monthly Policy Briefing for Secretary Zinke



Fish and Wildlife and Parks



Draft-Deliberative

2018 Top Policy Goals

Fish and Wildlife Service

- Revised rule and EA to allow Alaska 1002 exploration and issue permits
 - Transferred to BLM per legislation
- MBTA changes
- ESA Sections 4, 6, 7, and 10 reforms
- Mitigation policy reforms
- Hunting and fishing chiefs to open 250,000 acres
- Refuge maintenance backlog
- Continue delistings
- King Cove land exchange (completed)
- Bison Range
- State FWS Commissioner Summit (canceled)



Major Actions in Next 30 Days

Fish and Wildlife Service

- Refuge maintenance backlog
 - In FY2019 President's Budget Request, in process
- MBTA changes
 - New guidance issued to FWS that implements M opinion
- ESA Sections 4, 6, 7, and 10 reforms
 - Sent to OMB for review.
- Continue delistings
 - Black-capped vireo (final delisting)
 - Lesser long-nosed bat (final delisting)
 - Kuenzler hedgehog cactus (downlisting to threatened)
 - Tobusch fishhook cactus (proposed downlisting to threatened)
- Mitigation policy reforms
 - Plan for revisions submitted to Assistant Deputy Secretary; awaiting approval



Major Actions in Next 6 Months - 1 Year

Fish and Wildlife Service

- MBTA changes
 - Possible regulation change; SOL discussions
- Hunting and fishing chiefs to open 250,000 acres
 - 186,500 acres announcement in Federal Register
 - Proposal to eliminate 1,400 regs; simplify 700 additional regs (2,100 total regs affected)
- Continue delistings
 - Hidden Lake bluecurls
 - Wild buckwheat gypsum
 - Hawaiian hawk ('lo)
 - Northern Continental Divide Grizzly
 - Grey Wolf
- Bison Range
 - On hold due to litigation



Special Projects



Special Projects

Yellowstone Bison

- Players: NPS, USDA-APHIS, Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes
- ~800 bison captured in the Stephens Creek facility
 - 1168 removed from population as of 4/3 (last treaty hunt
 - state and treaty hunt harvest
 - entered in to NPS quarantine
 - 1070 sent to slaughter or killed in treaty hunts
- 2018 Target Population: 3,600 before calving; 4,200 after



Special Projects

Yellowstone Bison

- Quarantine Update
 - Stephens Creek is considered certified, letter forthcoming
 - 98 in NPS quarantine; 3 tested positive: 95 remaining
- Transfer of yearlings to Ft. Peck, CY2018
 - APHIS will review data, generate time schedule
 - 24 hr LE presence has been in place at Stephens Creek

Conversation Contents

Weekly Report to the Secretary, April 8-14 2018

Attachments:

/47. Weekly Report to the Secretary, April 8-14 2018/1.1 Weekly Report to the Secretary April 8-14.docx

"Dermody, Matthew" <matthew_dermody@ios.doi.gov>

From: "Dermody, Matthew" <matthew_dermody@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Thu Apr 05 2018 14:23:52 GMT-0600 (MDT)
Andrea Travnicek <andrea_travnicek@ios.doi.gov>, "Appel, Elizabeth" <elizabeth.appel@bia.gov>, Aurelia Skipwith <aurelia_skipwith@ios.doi.gov>, Benjamin Cassidy <benjamin_cassidy@ios.doi.gov>, Billy Dove <william_dove@ios.doi.gov>, Brenda Burman <bburman@usbr.gov>, Cally Younger <cally.younger@sol.doi.gov>, Casey Hammond <casey_hammond@ios.doi.gov>, Casey Stemler <casey_stemler@fws.gov>, Catherine Gulac <catherine_gulac@ios.doi.gov>, Christina Summers <christina_summers@ibc.doi.gov>, Daniel Jorjani <daniel.jorjani@sol.doi.gov>, David Bernhardt <(b)(6) - Bernhardt>, Debrah McBride <debrah.mcbride@bia.gov>, Doug Domenech <doug_domenech@ios.doi.gov>, Downey Magallanes <downey_magallanes@ios.doi.gov>, Edward Keable <edward.keable@sol.doi.gov>, Elinor Werner <elinor_werner@ios.doi.gov>, Gareth Rees <gareth_rees@ios.doi.gov>, Gary Lawkowski <gary_lawkowski@ios.doi.gov>, Heather Swift <heather_swift@ios.doi.gov>, James Voyles <james_voyles@ios.doi.gov>, Jim Cason <james_cason@ios.doi.gov>, Joe Balash <joseph_balash@ios.doi.gov>, John Bockmier <john_bockmier@ios.doi.gov>, John Tahsuda <john.tahsuda@bia.gov>, Juliette Lillie <juliette_lillie@ios.doi.gov>, Kate MacGregor <kate_macgregor@ios.doi.gov>, Kathleen Benedetto <kbenedetto@blm.gov>, Katie Mills <katie_mills@ios.doi.gov>, Kerry Rae <kerry_rae@ios.doi.gov>, Laura Rigas <Laura_Rigas@ios.doi.gov>, Lori Mashburn <lori_mashburn@ios.doi.gov>, Mariagrazia Caminiti <marigrace.caminiti@sol.doi.gov>, Matthew Dermody <matthew_dermody@ios.doi.gov>, Maureen Foster <maureen_foster@ios.doi.gov>, Micah Chambers

To:

<micah_chambers@ios.doi.gov>, Nikolao Pula
<nikolao_pula@ios.doi.gov>, Russell Newell
<russell_newell@ios.doi.gov>, Scott Cameron
<scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov>, Scott Hommel
<scott_hommel@ios.doi.gov>, Susan Combs
<susan_combs@ios.doi.gov>, Tim Petty
<timothy_petty@ios.doi.gov>, Tim Williams
<timothy_williams@ios.doi.gov>, Todd Willens
<todd_willens@ios.doi.gov>, Todd Wynn
<todd_wynn@ios.doi.gov>, Vincent DeVito
<Vincent_DeVito@ios.doi.gov>

Subject: Weekly Report to the Secretary, April 8-14 2018
Attachments: Weekly Report to the Secretary April 8-14.docx

All,

Attached is the Weekly Report to the Secretary in both Google Doc and Word formats.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Matthew Dermody
Special Assistant
Office of the Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior

1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240
202-513-7778

 [Weekly Report to the Secretary April 8-14.docx](#)

**WEEKLY REPORT
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
APRIL 8-14, 2018**

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

No updates to report.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt will be in the office all week.

Assistant Deputy Secretary Todd Willens will be in the office all week.

Associate Deputy Secretary Jim Cason will be in the office all week.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

On or around April 9, 2018, the Office of the Inspector General report concerning the Reassignment of Senior Executives at the United States Department of the Interior is expected to become public. This report addresses the reassignment of members of Senior Executive Service between June 15, 2017 and October 29, 2017.

On or after April 14, 2018, the Office of the Inspector General will publish on its website a report of investigation addressing Secretary Zinke's use of charter and military aircraft between March and September 2017.

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

No updates to report.

Awareness

No updates to report.

OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Congressional Hearings, and Travel

No updates to report.

Week Ahead Announcements and Actions

In our continuing efforts to strengthen and improve the Department and its agencies review, response, and coordination of ethics matters and promote the highest level of ethical principles, our Ethics Office is bringing on two new senior managers. On April 15th, Scott de la Vega will join the Ethics Office team as the Designated Agency Ethics Officer and Director of the Ethics Office and Heather Gottry will join our Ethics Office staff as an SL manager and serve as the Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Officer. The addition of these two quality hires will continue to reinforce our commitment to and our requirement for the highest ethical standards at the Department of the Interior.

NEW CASES:

UPDATED: *Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation v. United States* (Fed. Cl. filed March 7, 2018)(RHH) and *Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation v. United States Department of the Interior, Ryan Zinke, Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Indian Affairs* (D.D.C. filed March 8, 2018)

The U&O Ute Tribe filed four separate lawsuits, two involving water-related issues. A briefing has occurred for the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science and others. Answers or other dispositive motions in the respective cases are currently due in early to mid-May.

Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) v. U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (C.D. Cal.) - CA Wild and Scenic Rivers

On March 27, CBD filed suit against the BLM and the Forest Service seeking declaratory and injunctive relief for the agencies' failure to timely prepare management plans for eight rivers designated by Congress under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1271 et seq.

Segments of two of the designated rivers, Cottonwood Creek and the Amargosa River are located within the California Desert Conservation Area, and are under the administration of the BLM.

California Bill SB 50 (Conveyances of Federal Land)

California enacted legislation (known as SB50), effective January 1, that purports to create a right of first refusal for the State for any lands or interests in lands in California transferred from the U.S., including patents, routine land exchanges or sales, and leases. Under that law, a transferee cannot record a deed or patent from the U.S. in the county land records unless the State Land Commission has expressly waived its right of first refusal. A transferee who attempts to record a non-compliant deed would be subject to a civil penalty of up to \$5000. In addition to Department of the Interior (DOI) bureaus, several other federal agencies are experiencing reluctance of potential transferees to negotiate for routine transactions. On April 2, the Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a civil complaint in Federal District Court on behalf of all the potentially affected federal agencies. The complaint alleges violations of the U.S. Constitution, including the Property Clause and the Supremacy Clause, and of the 1850 Act that admitted California to the Union. The Solicitor's Office has coordinated a litigation hold notice for the potentially affected DOI bureaus and offices.

SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS:

Trophy Litigation

On March 30, following supplemental briefing in *SCI & NRA v. Zinke, et al.*, Nos. 14-670 & 15-1026 (D.D.C.) on mootness and the impact of the D.C. Circuit opinion in *Safari Club Int'l, et al v. Zinke, et al.* No. 16-5358 (D.C. Cir., Dec. 22, 2017), the District Court issued a ruling favorable to and essentially adopting the government's positions in the supplemental briefing. The court concluded that since the challenged findings pertaining to import of African elephant trophies from Zimbabwe in 2014-2015 and from Tanzania in 2014 were withdrawn by FWS on March 1, in response to the D.C. Circuit's opinion, there is no longer a controversy of sufficient immediacy and reality for the Court to rule on. Accordingly, the court dismissed the cases as moot.

Burt Lake Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians v. Zinke (D.D.C.)

Plaintiffs are a non-federally recognized Indian tribe, whose 1985 petition for federal acknowledgment was denied by the Department of the Interior in 2006. In 2017, Plaintiffs filed a lawsuit against the Department alleging a series of constitutional and Administrative Procedure Act (APA) violations stemming from the denial of their acknowledgment petition. On March 29, the District Court dismissed the majority of Plaintiffs' claims for failure to state a claim or based on an expired statute of limitations. However, the court held that Plaintiffs have standing to challenge aspects of the Department's 2015 Final Rule amending the regulatory process for achieving federal acknowledgment as an Indian tribe as arbitrary and capricious under the APA.

Carpenters Industrial Council v. Zinke (D.D.C.)

In this challenge to the revised critical habitat designation for the northern spotted owl, on March 28, the court denied a motion by several environmental groups to intervene on timeliness grounds. The case is fully briefed.

OTHER LITIGATION MATTERS:

UPDATED: *Navajo Nation v. Zinke* (on remand from 9th Circuit)

On February 2, the Navajo Nation offered the United States a framework for settlement of its water rights claims in the Lower and Upper Basins of the Colorado River in Arizona, excluding in the Little Colorado River Basin. The framework proposes a 29K afy partially-firmed Lower Basin right, a 47K afy Upper Basin right, and \$271M for the construction of a Western Navajo Pipeline. In addition, settlement would require amendment of "P.L. 111-11, Section 10603(a) to allow the delivery of 6,411 afy of water in Arizona through the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project (NGWSP) without a Little Colorado River settlement." The Solicitor's Office and the Department of Justice (b)(5) dpp [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Texas v. New Mexico & Colorado (U.S. Supreme Court) - Meet and Confer; Filing of Draft Case Management Plan

In 2013, the State of Texas brought an Original Action in the U.S. Supreme Court, in which the United States intervened as a plaintiff, against the States of New Mexico and Colorado, alleging violations of the Rio Grande Compact by New Mexico. New Mexico filed a Motion to Dismiss Texas' Complaint and the United States' Complaint in Intervention, which the Supreme Court

referred to Special Master A. Gregory Grimsal. Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) and El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 (EPCWID) moved to intervene. On February 9, 2017, the Special Master issued a final report and recommendations. The Special Master's recommendations to the Supreme Court were to (1) deny New Mexico's Motion to Dismiss Texas's complaint; (2) deny in part New Mexico's Motion to Dismiss the United States (ruling that the United States' claims will lie under federal Reclamation law but not under the Compact), and (3) deny EBID and EPCWID's motions to intervene. After the Supreme Court heard oral argument in January 2018, on exceptions related to the United States' interests as set forth in the Special Master's report, the Court issued an opinion on March 5, finding that the United States has "distinctively federal interests" that favor allowing it to pursue its compact claims. Following a status conference with Mr. Grimsal on March 23, New Mexico has 60 days to file its answer and counter-claims. Parties agreed to meet and confer on April 4, 2018, with the intent of filing a draft Case Management Plan on April 13. Also, the Supreme Court announced on Friday that a new Special Master had been assigned to this case, discharging the previous Special Master. The new Master is Michael Melloy, who is a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

Bay.org, et al. v. Zinke, et al. (E.D. Cal.)

As previously reported, this case challenges the FWS' "no jeopardy/no adverse modification" findings for delta smelt in its biological opinion for California WaterFix under the APA. The case was transferred from the Northern District of California to the Eastern District on August 30, 2017. On October 23, 2017, the Court issued a scheduling order requiring that the administrative record be filed by April 20. Due to an unanticipated delay in receiving a very large number of documents from the FWS HQ office, FWS determined that it would not be able to meet the April 20, deadline. In a joint stipulation filed with the Court on March 27, all of the parties agreed to a 2-month extension (until June 20), and the Court granted the extension on March 28.

Kentucky Coal Association v. Zinke (E.D. Ky.)

On March 29, the Kentucky Coal Association filed a lawsuit against Department alleging that the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) violated the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act and the Administrative Procedure Act. According to the complaint, OSMRE improperly disapproved a state program amendment submitted by Kentucky that allowed the amount of a reclamation bond for a site that requires-long term water treatment to be based on the estimated annual cost of reclamation multiplied by 20 years.

Cayuga Nation v. Zinke (D.D.C.)

Plaintiffs in *Cayuga Nation* are a faction of the Cayuga Nation of New York (Nation) who claim to be the Nation's lawful governing body. They argue that the then-Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs (AS-IA) violated the Administrative Procedure Act and various Constitutional provisions when the AS-IA affirmed an administrative appeal from a decision of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) finding that Plaintiffs' rival faction was in fact the proper Nation leadership. On March 27, the District Court: (1) granted the United States' motion to dismiss Plaintiffs' claims against the AS-IA in his individual capacity; (2) denied Plaintiffs' motion to expand the administrative record; and (3) denied Plaintiffs' motion for a preliminary injunction seeking to prohibit the United States from recognizing Plaintiffs' rival faction as Nation leadership for the duration of the litigation. The Court ruled that all of the AS-IA's alleged wrongdoing had

occurred as part of his official duties, and that Plaintiffs' allegations in support of their administrative record and preliminary injunction motions were too speculative to satisfy applicable legal standards. Plaintiffs have fourteen days to file an interlocutory appeal with the Court's approval and sixty days to appeal a final order.

Sierra Club, et al. v. NPA, Sierra Club, et al. v. National Park Service (NPS) (4th Cir. Nos. 18-1082, 1083)

Although not directly relevant to these two cases challenging issuance by Bureaus of the Department for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, on March 28, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) denied the company's request for a modification of time-of-year restrictions on clearing. FWS had recommended time of year restrictions to protect migratory bird species, starting March 15. FERC adopted the restrictions as part of the basis for its Order issuing Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. As FERC has now declined to modify those restrictions, further clearing of the right of way will be halted until the fall. This in a sense accomplishes what Sierra Club and other project opponents have so far failed to obtain from either FERC or the Fourth Circuit: a halt to construction pending resolution of their appeals. The Fourth Circuit will hear oral argument in the above-noted cases on May 10. We do not know when FERC will rule on the appellants' request for rehearing, but if FERC denies rehearing, we expect a challenge to the Court of Appeals of that as well.

Mountain Valley Pipeline (*6 noteworthy items*)

1) *Sierra Club v. U.S. DOI and Wilderness Society v. U.S. BLM*, Nos. 18-1019, -1036 (4th Cir.): Attorneys reviewed and provided edits to the United States' response brief, which was filed on March 27. Oral argument is tentatively scheduled May 8-10.

2) **Protests:** A West Virginia state court let an injunction against protesters tree sitting in the path of BLM's right of way expire because Mountain Valley Pipeline could not prove that the protesters are within the right-of-way. Subsequently, protesters have created an additional "tree sit" to block one of Mountain Valley Pipeline's access roads in the Jefferson National Forest by placing a pole in the middle of the access road. Although the Forest Service disrupted a larger protest blocking the road and arrested a protester, the protester on the pole remains. Here is a link to a newspaper account: http://www.roanoke.com/news/local/tree-sit-protest-of-mountain-valley-pipeline-escalates-drawing-police/article_d8f6d490-4442-5ca5-8b63-3a258b66a5a3.html. The USDA OGC, Solicitor's Office, U.S. Forest Service, and BLM continue ongoing discussions regarding the protest on the access road and a related tree-sit blocking the site of Mountain Valley Pipeline's conventional bore. The protesters' stated goal is to delay tree clearing and cause financial harm to Mountain Valley Pipeline.

3) **Variance Request:** Mountain Valley Pipeline is requesting a variance in order to widen a road at a hairpin turn to sixty feet instead of fifty feet. Mountain Valley Pipeline has expressed concern about its ability to process the variance request in time to clear trees within the ten foot expansion by a March 31 deadline and asked whether they would be allowed to clear trees past the Federal species restriction deadline if they have avian monitors in place.

4) **Notice to Proceed # 3:** Attorneys reviewed a notice to proceed with road improvements and vegetation removal on access roads in the Jefferson National Forest.

5) State court proceedings: A Monroe County, WV Circuit Judge issued an opinion expanding on his reasons for denying Mountain Valley Pipeline's request for a preliminary injunction against the protesters. According to reports, the Judge concluded that Mountain Valley Pipeline failed to show an emergency requiring immediate need of delivery of natural gas and determined that the protesters "generally represented the interest of the public and the environment."

6) Non-compliance: Environmental monitors have issued two non-compliance notices and are preparing additional notices related to Mountain Valley Pipeline's non-compliance with the terms of their right-of-way, plan of development, and relevant notices to proceed. One non-compliance notice addresses Mountain Valley Pipeline's intentional concealment of tree cutting outside of the approved limits of disturbance. The other notice addresses Mountain Valley Pipeline's intentional bulldozing of an access road outside the limits of disturbance and without a pending permit from the U.S. Forest Service. The Solicitor's Office, USDA OGC, BLM, and U.S. Forest Service will meet on March 30 to discuss next steps related to the non-compliance notices.

Dine Citizens Against Ruining Our Environment v. Zinke (D.N.M.)

Plaintiffs challenge the BLM's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)-compliance for 200+ Applications for Permit to Drill (APDs), which Plaintiffs want voided. On March 31, the court issued an order denying in part and granting in part Plaintiffs' requests. The court stated that it will issue a 75+ page memorandum setting forth reasoning and remedies at a future date. The court ordered that: (1) Plaintiffs have standing; (2) Plaintiffs have challenged final agency action under the Administrative Procedure Act; (3) Plaintiffs' claims are not moot, except where challenged wells have been permanently abandoned; (4) the BLM did not violate NEPA in analyzing fracking; (5) the BLM complied with NEPA's public involvement requirements; (6) the BLM did not violate the NHPA for the wells without "historical sites" within their Areas of Potential Effects (APEs) but the BLM did violate NHPA for "some of the wells" whose APEs contain "historical sites" because "some of the cultural analyses" for those wells are conclusory, contain no finding, or are entirely absent from the record.

NON-LITIGATION MATTERS:

Application of the First Amendment in the U.S. Territories of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands

We met with Lee Dickinson of the NPS, who will be traveling to Saipan to conduct training for NPS employees working in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. A portion of her presentation will touch upon First Amendment activities on parkland. We advised her that the First Amendment applies in both territories: in Guam by virtue of the Guam Organic Act of 1950, and in the Marianas by virtue of the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America.

Grants to the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI)

We advised Assistant Secretary Doug Domenech that, (b)(5) dpp/acp

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Liberty DPP

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has provided a preliminary Final environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Liberty Development and Production Plan ("Liberty DPP") for Solicitor's Office (SOL) review. SOL's comments are due to BOEM by April 27. Issues include BOEM's analysis of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, oil spill probability and trajectories, and impacts to subsistence harvest activities. The Final EIS is scheduled to be completed by June.

Idaho Stockwatering (Idaho House Bill 718 formerly 603)

On March 28, the Governor of Idaho signed into law HB 718, along with companion legislation enacted in 2017, that will allow the forfeiture of 15,600 BLM & U.S. Forest Service state-law based stockwater rights acquired under the so-called constitutional method after a consolidated state administrative hearing if the United States is unable to show continuous beneficial use by federally-owned livestock. State of Idaho officials are willing to give the United States a small window to negotiate a solution, presumably to allow the BLM or the Forest Service to effectuate an abandonment of the rights as Governor Otter suggests in a March 16, 2018, letter addressed to both Secretaries Zinke and Perdue. The first negotiating session between the parties will be on April 12, in Boise.

30-60 Day Look-Ahead

Significant Litigation Deadlines are reported separately.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE AND PARKS

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

On April 9-13, Susan Combs, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, exercising the authority of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, will be in the office.

On April 9-13, Deputy Assistant Secretary Aurelia Skipwith will be in the office.

On April 9, FWS Principal Deputy Director Greg Sheehan will be on annual leave; on April 11-22, he will attend the 23rd Trilateral (Canada/Mexico/US) Committee Meeting at the National Conservation Training Center.

On April 10, NPS Deputy Director Dan Smith will speak at a DOI event announcing the donation of WPA posters to the Interior collection.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

On April 12, the RESTORE Council staff will meet to finalize the Department of the Interior planning grant for 2018 for RESTORE monies from the Deepwater Horizon spill. The Fairhope Alabama, meeting will include staff from ASFWP, FWS, USGS, and BOEM. (03/28/2018)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

In early April, pending approval by the Department, FWS plans to make 90-day findings on petitions to delist or downlist the Cape mountain zebra, and delist the Preble's meadow jumping mouse. For substantial 90-day findings, this is the first step in a longer process and tends not to get significant media attention; however, this action might be the first time stakeholders become aware that FWS is assessing the status of a species. All stakeholders will have ample opportunity to provide input into the eventual 12-month findings. FWS anticipates local media coverage and interest from livestock and home building industries in Wyoming and Colorado regarding the finding on the petition to delist the Preble's meadow jumping mouse. A national news bulletin and congressional notifications are planned.

Through April 9, public comments will be open for four compatibility determinations that evaluate various economic and/or commercial uses of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Based on comments received during the 2016 review period, these compatibility determinations have been revised to address comments and concerns from the public and stakeholders. One of the lead critics of the earlier draft, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, is satisfied with the revisions. This is controversial because it involves changes to fees normally paid by guides for various outdoor recreation services. (03/21/2018)

On April 10, FWS will join the New York Historical Society for a reception that celebrates a new exhibit honoring the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (Act). The exhibit is open from April 6 - July 15 and focuses on three themes: history of the Act, the connection between the Act and the women's suffrage movement, and profiles and Audubon watercolors of 13 bird species that are currently protected under the Act. FWS has partnered with the society to provide technical advice and loan historical items for the exhibit. FWS regional leadership will attend the reception and the agency will coordinate with HQ and the Society on media pitches, social media outreach and storytelling. (Updated 02/28/2018)

In early April, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice of issuance for letters of authorizations issued in 2015, 2016 and 2017 under regulations authorizing the non-lethal, unintentional take of marine mammals in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas. This is an administrative action and is noncontroversial. No news release will be issued. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 11, FWS plans to announce a proposed delisting determination on the Kirtland's warbler, which nests in Michigan, Wisconsin and Ontario, Canada, and winters in the Bahamas. Stakeholders include Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Forest Service and Huron Pines, along with other conservation groups working as part of the Kirtland's Warbler Alliance. The proposal is not expected to be controversial, as partners have been transitioning from recovery to conservation management for more than a year. FWS expects

interest in Michigan and Wisconsin and nationally among birders and conservation groups. The Michigan DNR is supportive of this announcement and will be issuing its own news release just after FWS makes its announcement on April 11. Planned outreach includes a regional news bulletin, emails to stakeholders, social media and web postings. In addition to the above outreach, FWS will offer interested reporters an operator-assisted phone call with FWS's and the state's subject matter experts to help interested media understand the issue better and give them an opportunity to ask questions. (Updated 04/04/2018)

[UPDATE] On or before April 11, FWS will make a proposed listing determination and proposed critical habitat designation for the island marble butterfly, found in Washington. The proposed critical habitat designation includes approximately 812 acres. This action is not expected to be opposed and media coverage is expected to be neutral. Interested stakeholders include the Xerces Society (the petitioner), federal partners including National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management, and state partners including Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Washington Department of Natural Resources, San Juan County Land Bank, the San Juan Preservation Trust, and local landowners. A regional news release to all interested parties and the media is planned. Pending clearance by Exec Sec.(Updated 04/04/2018)

[NEW] On or around April 11, FWS plans to issue a guidance memo related to the DOI Solicitor's M-Opinion 37050 on the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The memo will be used by program areas, regional, and field office staff to carry out the Act in light of changes in policy and practice resulting from the M-Opinion, including clarifying what constitutes prohibited take. No outreach is planned. FWS is working with DOI Comms on a communications strategy. (04/04/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 13, FWS plans to celebrate the final determination on the proposal to delist the black-capped vireo. Representatives from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Fort Hood (TX), Fort Sill (OK), USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Texas Comptroller's office, congressional offices and other partners are invited. Media will be invited. Stakeholders include the petitioners, Pacific Legal Foundation, New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association, New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau, New Mexico Federal Lands Council, Texas Farm Bureau, Department of the Army, The Nature Conservancy, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. A Communications Plan has been developed that includes congressional offices, local and state officials and stakeholders. A news release and FAQs have been drafted. Outreach, including issuing the news release and FAQs to media, congressionals and partners, as well as posting information on social media, is planned to occur at time of publication in the *Federal Register*. This action is a Secretarial priority. FWS plans to request a posting in the *Federal Register* reading room April 13 and final publication on April 16, pending DOI clearance. (Updated 04/04/2018)

By April 15, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final rule removing regulations setting forth the provisions for two depredation orders for double-crested cormorants. FWS had used these standing orders to allow for lethal control of cormorants where they impact aquaculture and public resources; however, on May 25, 2016, the District Court for the District of Columbia ordered that both the Aquaculture Depredation Order and the Public Resources Depredation

Order be vacated until FWS performs a new and legally adequate environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement for national cormorant management orders in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This final rule administratively implements the court's decision. While the depredation orders no longer exist, on November 15, 2017, FWS provided some measure of relief to aquaculture facilities. It issued a final EA under NEPA, which allows aquaculture facility managers and property owners across 37 central and eastern states and the District of Columbia to apply for individual permits for lethal take of cormorants where they are impacting resources. This latest action is not controversial. If asked talking points will be planned for outreach. (Updated 02/28/2018)

In April, pending approval by the Department, FWS will award nearly \$19 million in grants to coastal states to conserve and restore coastal wetlands and their fish and wildlife habitat. Each year, the Service supports coastal wetland conservation through the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program and the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. The grant funds are derived from excise taxes on fishing tackle and motorboat and small engine fuels. The grants will support 22 projects in 13 coastal states to protect, restore or enhance more than 30,000 acres of coastal wetlands and adjacent upland habitats, including 287 miles of shoreline. Over \$21 million in additional matching funds will be provided by partner contributions from state and local governments, private landowners and conservation groups. Conservation of this habitat will help recover coastal-dependent federal trust species, enhance flood protection and water quality, provide economic benefits to coastal communities and increase recreational opportunities for hunters and anglers. The grant recipients (states) have not yet been informed that they will be receiving funds. Planned outreach includes congressional and stakeholder notifications and a news release. (Updated 03/28/2018)

National Park Service

[UPDATE] Between April 8-15, the NPS will request approval for the apportionment of \$2,631,610 in Maritime Heritage Grants to fund 34 projects in 14 states and 1 commonwealth. The grants will be awarded based on the National Maritime Heritage Act of 1994, enacted as Public Law 103-451, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award preservation and education grants to assist to foster a greater awareness and appreciation of the role of maritime endeavors in our nation's history and culture. (Updated 04/04/18).

[UPDATED] Between April 8-30, the NPS will request the apportionment of \$18,735 in Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act grants to fund three repatriation and reburial projects. The grants will be awarded based on the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, enacted as Public Law 115-123, and pursuant to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Public Law 101-601, 25 U.S.C. 3001, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award grants to assist in implementing provisions of the Act. This grant program generally creates minimal press and Congressional interest. (Updated 04/04/18).

[NEW] On April 8, Andersonville National Historic Site will partner with the American Ex-Prisoners of War and the Friends of Andersonville to recognize the 20-year anniversary of the National Prisoner of War Museum. A commemorative ceremony will include remarks from U.S. Representative Sanford Bishop (D-GA-2) and distinguished guests will include General Joseph

Lengyel, member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Chief of the National Guard Bureau; Kathy Burns, Field Representative for U.S. Senator David Perdue (R-GA); and the American Legion Riders. (04/04/18).

During the week of April 9, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve will host its annual pre-season meeting for commercial use permittees (CUAs). A number of the eighty plus CUAs operating commercial businesses in the park are expected to meet with staff in Anchorage or Homer, Alaska. The meetings will provide CUAs with an overview of minor compendium changes for 2018, and will include discussions on development of an aviation safety working group for the park's outer coast. (3/27/18)

On or after April 9, John Muir National Historic Site will announce an upcoming public comment period on initial concepts for the Mt. Wanda Comprehensive Site Management Plan. The comment period will be open from April 21 through June 15. Public meetings/open houses will be held April 21 and May 19. The plan will outline appropriate uses and functions for the park's Mount Wanda Unit. (3/27/18)

[NEW] On or after April 9, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area will issue a joint news release with the University of California at Davis and The Nature Conservancy regarding a jointly authored report. The report provides recommendations to State transportation officials on locations for wildlife crossing structures in Southern California, home to the two most imperiled mountain lion populations in the West. The report re-affirms the location identified by the California Department of Transportation for a proposed crossing in the park. (04/04/18).

[UPDATE] Between April 10 - 30, the NPS will request approval for the partial apportionment of \$1,346,818 in Japanese American Confinement Sites grants to fund nine projects. The grants will be awarded based on the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, enacted as Public Law 115-123, and pursuant to the Preservation of Japanese American Confinement Sites Act, P.L. 109-441, 120 Stat.3288, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award grants to assist in preserving historic Japanese American confinement sites and their history. (Updated 04/04/18).

On April 10, American Rivers will announce its 10 Most Endangered Rivers List to include an 8.5-mile reach of the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities (the Gorge) located entirely within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area's 72-mile corridor. American Rivers is advocating removal of two locks and dams in this reach and is notifying Minnesota's Congressional delegation of their recommendation. American Rivers' announcement is closely tied to the initiation of a Disposition Study by the Corps of Engineers that is evaluating the future of the locks and dams in the Gorge. Both endeavors have the potential for profound changes to the park and are controversial; a communications plan is being drafted. (03/14/18).

[UPDATE] April 15-30, Death Valley National Park and Mojave National Preserve will begin efforts to relocate up to 2,500 feral burros from each park. Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue (a nonprofit partner) will fund and carry out the roundups, test burros for disease, relocate them to holding facilities, and domesticate the animals for adoption. This is anticipated to generate public interest and has already triggered a FOIA request. (Updated 04/04/18).

[UPDATE] By April 16 (pending Departmental approval), Olympic National Park anticipates issuing a news release announcing that a Notice of Availability NOA is to be published in the Federal Register for its Mountain Goat Management Plan/Final EIS (Updated 04/04/18).

[UPDATE] Between April 16-30, Death Valley National Park anticipates releasing the final Scotty's Castle Flood Rehabilitation Environmental Assessment and FONSI. This document analyzes repair work planned for historic structures, the cultural landscape, utilities, parking, and walkways to recover from damage from a flash flood in October 2015. The historic district is scheduled to reopen to the public in 2020. [FONSI link](#). (Updated 04/04/18).

[UPDATE] Between April 16-30 (pending Departmental approval of NOA), Death Valley National Park anticipates publishing a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Federal Register for the Draft Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Saline Valley Warm Springs (plan/DEIS). The NOA will initiate a 60-day public comment period on the document during which public meetings will be held in the vicinity of the park. The plan/DEIS is intended to provide a framework for natural and cultural resource management, administration and operations, and managing visitor use. [PEPC link](#) (Updated 04/04/18).

[NEW] On April 11, George Washington Memorial Parkway will begin a 30-day public review period related to the Langley Fork Park and Langley Oaks Park Land Transfer Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA evaluates a proposed land exchange between the NPS and Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA), and potential development options at Langley Fork Park. Under the NPS preferred alternative, the NPS and FCPA would exchange the NPS-owned Langley Fork Park with a portion of the FCPA-owned Langley Oaks Park, and would upgrade the Langley Fork Park facilities to potentially include expansion and improvement of athletic fields, increased signage and trail infrastructure, a pavilion, and expanded and reconfigured parking. A public meeting is tentatively planned for April 24, 2018. (04/04/18).

[UPDATE] Between April 15- 30, 2018, the NPS anticipates requesting the apportionment of \$252,626 in Preservation Technology and Training grants to fund seven projects. The grants will be awarded based on the 54 U.S.C. §305304 Preservation grants, enacted as Public Law P.L. 113-287, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award grants to ensure an effective and efficient system of research, information distribution, and skills training in all the related historic preservation fields. This grant program generally creates minimal press and congressional interest. (Updated 04/04/18).

On April 11, Lake Clark National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) will hold a public meeting in Newhalen, Alaska. The purpose of an SRC is to devise and recommend to the Governor of Alaska and the Secretary a program for subsistence hunting within Alaska national parks where subsistence is authorized. The SRCs were established under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. (3/7/18).

On April 11, the NPS will host the second in a series of public meetings to develop a management plan for Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. Winter and summer uses in the north end of the monument will be the focus of the public meeting. The meeting will be announced in late March via press release and e-newsletter. The PEPC link is <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/KAWWManagementPlan>. (3/27/18)

From April 12-18, the National Safety Council (NSC) will open the *Prescribed to Death* exhibit on the Ellipse in President's Park. The NPS is supporting the traveling exhibit that raises awareness about opioid abuse, and will provide information about the Healthy Parks Healthy People program and the Park Rx program. The NSC will host an invitation-only media preview and an invitation-only special guest preview on April 11. The public exhibition will run April 12-18. (3/20/18)

[UPDATE] On April 13, pending DOI approval of the *Federal Register* Notice of Availability, the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve plans to release the Ungulate Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for a 45-day public comment period. The plan and DEIS were developed with input from the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as formal cooperating agencies. The DEIS addresses two key issues: the need for active elk management; and the future of bison management at the park. Interested parties include affiliated tribes; Colorado Department of Natural Resources; local Habitat Partnership Program committees; Colorado Congressional offices; The Nature Conservancy; and the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. The DEIS was shared with formal cooperators on Sept. 1, 2017, and the park is currently finalizing the Draft EIS for release. <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=25517> (UPDATED 04/04/18).

By April 13, the NPS will submit comments to the Regional Environmental Officer/Department on the Railroad Control House Replacement Project, Substation #42 - Hackensack, North Bergen Township in New Jersey. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) submitted a draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for review of this project because the project will need to use Section 4(f) resources, the Pennsylvania Railroad New York to Philadelphia Historic District and specifically Substation Building #3, which is a contributing resource within the district and eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Department of Interior is required to respond and concur that there is no prudent or feasible alternative to this 4(f) resource use. The Department of Interior has delegated drafting their response to the National Park Service. (3/27/18)

[UPDATE] On April 13, responses to a prospectus seeking proposals for marina services at James Creek Marina in Washington, D.C., for the next 10 years, were originally due. The prospectus, however, has been rescinded and will be reissued when necessary updates have been made. The services include wet slip rentals, fuel service, marine sanitation, parking lot operations, and retail and vending sales. Accepting contract offers is the next step in the process. (Updated 3/27/18)

On April 14, Greenbelt Park and the Student Conservation Association (SCA) with up to 300 volunteers will clean up trash along roadways and streams and remove invasive plants in the park. This effort to help improve the Anacostia River watershed is one of many across the country that SCA is leading in celebration of Earth Day. (3/27/18)

[NEW] Between approximately April 15-30, Moonbeam Leasing & Management, LLC will commence operations as the new operator of Gateway Marina in the Jamaica Bay Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area. On March 25, Moonbeam was selected for this 60-year lease based on their ability to reconfigure, upgrade, and make improvements to the Marina

facilities. The park plans to inform local politicians and issue a press release within the week. (04/04/18)

[NEW] On or after April 19, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area will issue a joint press release with the park's friends group, the Santa Monica Mountains Fund, announcing an educational campaign about the deadly impacts of anticoagulant rodenticide on park wildlife. The awareness campaign is supported by several cities within and adjacent to the park. Local media coverage expected. (04/04/18)

[NEW] On April 20, Rock Creek Park will host a special event in honor of the 20th anniversary of [Bridging the Watershed](#). The open press event will include remarks from NPS Deputy Director Dan Smith. Local government officials and high school students will attend. Bridging the Watershed is an outreach program of the Alice Ferguson Foundation, in partnership with the NPS and area schools. (04/04/18)

[NEW] On April 21, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park will host a small groundbreaking ceremony for the Lock 5-22 project, a \$6.9 million Line Item Construction project currently underway in the park. The project also serves as the match to a \$2.45 million Maryland Transportation Alternatives Program grant to rewater the canal from Great Falls Tavern to Violette's Lock. Local elected officials have been supportive of the project and will be invited to the event.

[UPDATE] [Between April 16-30](#), Death Valley National Park anticipates releasing the final Bonnie Clare Road Reconstruction Environmental Assessment and FONSI. Reconstruction work is scheduled to start in August 2018 and be completed by May 2019. This will allow reopening of the northeast entrance to the park and restore public access to Scotty's Castle after massive damage from flooding in October 2015. [PEPC link](#) (Update 04/04/18).

Between April 15-30, Death Valley National Park and the Ridgecrest BLM office anticipate opening a public comment period on the Keystone Mine Plan of Operations Amendment and accompanying Environmental Assessment. The mine is on BLM land near the park's western border, but the mining plan includes the use of water rights within the park. (updated 2/28/18).

From April 16-20, Catoctin Mountain Park is hosting staff from Germany's Black Forest National Park. The visit will mark the beginning of a Sister Park Arrangement between the two parks, with the document signing scheduled for April 19 at a location to be determined. The State Department and the NPS reviewed and approved the arrangement. (3/27/18)

On April 17-18, Gates of the Arctic National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) will hold a public meeting in Allakaket, Alaska. The purpose of an SRC is to devise and recommend to the Governor of Alaska and the Secretary a program for subsistence hunting within Alaska national parks where subsistence is authorized. The SRCs were established under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. (3/7/18)

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

[UPDATE] On April 24-25, state and federal agency representatives on the RESTORE Steering Committee in Pensacola, Florida. The primary purpose of the meeting is to discuss progress on the Initial Funded Priorities List (FPL) and future FPL funding-related issues dealing with Deepwater Horizon spill. (3/12/18)

[NEW] On April 26, staff from DOI (FWP, FWS, NPS, BOEM, and USGS) and RESTORE Council staff to discuss DOI's proposed process for developing ideas for future project funding from Deepwater Horizon spill. (04/04/18)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

By April 27, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between FWS and Monsanto will be signed along with a joint news release announcing the partnership. A field-based demonstration event is being planned for late summer/early fall. FWS Midwest Region has been exploring the possibility of a partnership with Monsanto, and its subsidiaries, to use modern agriculture data tools to help landowners voluntarily manage their land to enhance pollinator habitat while maximizing production in their fields. Monsanto and FWS developed the MOU to outline how we will work together to: 1) provide accurate and useful information to farmers; 2) analyze data to determine the outcomes of conservation actions and make it easy for landowners to have access to conservation programs should they choose to participate; and 3) to explore the possibilities to use these tools for other cooperative conservation efforts across the country. Midwest Region is working closely with HQ on this open press event and a communications plan, which will include active national outreach. (Updated 03/21/2018)

On or around April 30, pending approval by DOI, FWS expects publication in the *Federal Register* of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to conduct a 30-day public scoping period and prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Skookumchuck Wind Energy Project Habitat Conservation Plan. The EIS will evaluate the issuance of an incidental take permit for marbled murrelet, bald eagle and golden eagle at a proposed wind energy project in Lewis County, Washington. The project is expected to be controversial with conservation organizations (e.g., American Bird Conservancy, National Audubon Society, Washington Forest Law Center). FWS has received two Freedom of Information Act requests related to the project. A communications plan has been shared with FWS HQ; outreach announcing the public scoping period is planned for Washington media, congressional office, local and state officials, tribes, and stakeholders. (03/07/2018)

[UPDATE] In late April, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on the proposal to reclassify Kuenzler hedgehog cactus, a plant species endemic to New Mexico, from endangered to threatened. This reclassification is not expected to be controversial. Primary stakeholders include the Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Forest Service. Planned outreach includes a regional news release, emails to stakeholders, social media, and web postings. (Updated 04/04/18)

[UPDATE] In late April, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a rule removing the textual descriptions of the critical habitat boundaries from certain wildlife entries that have maps sufficient to stand as the official delineation of the critical habitat designation. This rule does not

increase, decrease, or in any other way change the critical habitat designations from which we are removing the textual descriptions of boundaries. This action will save taxpayer resources. FWS is taking this action in accordance with the May 1, 2012, revision of the regulations related to publishing textual descriptions of critical habitat boundaries. No outreach is planned. (Updated 04/04/2018)

In late April, FWS will make a final determination on the proposal to delist the lesser long-nosed bat, found in Arizona and New Mexico. This action is not expected to be controversial. Stakeholders are the petitioners, Pacific Legal Foundation and the New Mexico Cattle Growers Association. Planned outreach includes a regional news release and notifications to stakeholders. This action is a Secretarial priority. (Updated 04/04/2018)

In late April, FWS will make a final determination on the proposal to reclassify the Tobusch fishhook cactus from endangered to threatened. This plant species has shown significant recovery due in part to collaborative conservation efforts with partners. Supporters of this action include the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Texas Department of Transportation, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, and The Nature Conservancy. FWS has gained positive coverage on downlisting proposals, and anticipates more interest when this final determination is announced. Planned outreach includes a regional news release with stakeholder and congressional contact, and social media postings. (Updated 04/04/2018)

In April, pending approval by the Department, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a Notice of Intent to prepare a draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) addressing the potential impacts from four similar wind energy project habitat conservation plans in Hawaii. The HCPs were submitted to the Service in support of requests for permits authorizing the take of endangered or threatened species, under the Endangered Species Act. Due to similarities in the geography, impact, covered species, and proposed mitigation measures between these four wind energy projects the Service has determined that a combined PEIS is the most efficient and comprehensive approach for considering the cumulative impacts of these actions on the human environment. When the PEIS publishes, outreach is planned to include local public notifications through the web and social media, and notifications to members of Congress in Hawaii, with targeted stakeholder outreach. (03/21/2018)

[NEW] In April or May, the FWS will release less than 14-day-old captive-born Mexican wolf pups into established wild Mexican wolf dens on federal land in Arizona and New Mexico. Arizona Game and Fish Department's Mexican wolf field team personnel (part of the Mexican wolf Interagency Field Team) lead the cross-fostering efforts in Arizona. New Mexico does not play a role except for providing permits to release cross-fostered pups into New Mexico. The window of opportunity is very narrow to identify pups born in captivity with a den of pups in the wild that are very close in age (under a week old). The Mexican wolf recovery team will only have a very short time (72 - 48 hours) to get cross-foster mission lined up for execution. Because of that, in the draft news release to announce a successful cross-foster event, the dates in draft will be open. Select reporters will be invited to attend. Media that have shown interest in attending a cross-foster event are aware they might not get notice to attend until 24-48 hours at the earliest. FWS will send a news release summarizing these cross-fostering efforts to media and stakeholders at the end of May or early June. Typically FWS will not announce until a

successful cross-foster event is completed. Last year, two pups were flown in but the den in the wild could not be located. (04/04/2018)

On or before May 1, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a proposed rule and open a 30-day public comment period on the 2018-19 Refuge-Specific Hunting and Sport Fishing Regulations. The proposed rule would open up to 28 various national wildlife refuges to hunting and/or sport fishing for the first time and expand hunting and fishing opportunities at others. Outreach is planned to include a national news release when the *Federal Register* notice is published and notifications to members of Congress in affected districts, with some stakeholder outreach. (03/28/2018)

On or around May 4, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on the proposal to list five Sri Lankan tarantula species as endangered. The species are in decline due to ongoing habitat loss, degradation, and the cumulative effects of this and other threat factors. This action is not expected to be controversial. Planned outreach will include web updates. (Updated 03/14/2018)

On or around May 9, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on the proposal to delist the Hidden Lake bluecurls, a plant in California, due to recovery. FWS does not expect opposition to the delisting. Primary stakeholders include California Department of Parks and Recreation Mount San Jacinto State Park. Planned outreach will include a national news release and notifications to stakeholders and members of Congress. (03/21/2018)

[UPDATE] On or around May 14, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on a proposed rule to list the hyacinth macaw as threatened. To address concerns raised by the pet trade industry, FWS is including a 4(d) rule that will allow for the import and export of parrots that meet certain criteria, as well as interstate commerce in this species without a permit. Stakeholders include the bird breeding community, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, and World Wildlife Fund. Planned outreach will include a national news release, and web updates. (Updated 04/04/2018)

On or around May 15, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* an action designating critical habitat for three plant species on Hawaii Island and is correcting the maps for existing designations for an additional four species. FWS intends to exclude lands owned or managed by the Queen Liliuokalani Trust, the Department of Hawaiian Homelands, and other private landowners under 4(b)(2) of the Act. This action is not controversial. Interested stakeholders include the state of Hawaii and multiple state agencies, the County of Hawaii and various private landowners. Outreach includes a regional news release, social media, emails and phone calls to congressional offices and stakeholders mentioned above. (03/21/2018)

[UPDATE] On or around May 30, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a proposal to delist the Colorado butterfly plant due to recovery. This species is located in Colorado, Nebraska and Wyoming. This action is not expected to be opposed. Outreach plans include a news release, and an if-asked FAQs. Key stakeholders include private landowners, F.E. Warren Air Force Base, the City of Fort Collins, Colorado, and the Bureau of Land Management. (Updated 04/04/2018)

On or around June 1 or later, the FWS anticipates the draft supplemental environmental impact statement for expanded public access to Rattlesnake Mountain on Hanford Reach National Monument will be available for public review and comment. This is part of the required regulatory processes to provide public access to Rattlesnake Mountain, consistent with a mandate in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA; P.L. 113-291). Section 3081 of the NDAA states “the Secretary of the Interior shall provide public access to the summit of Rattlesnake Mountain for educational, recreational, historical, scientific, cultural, and other purposes, including (1) motor vehicle access; and (2) pedestrian and other nonmotorized access.” The FWS established a Tribal Working Group with four local tribes and held public scoping meetings to address cultural concerns and to work through the process of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The FWS is addressing National Environmental Policy Act compliance by drafting a supplement to the 2008 Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Monument. Expanded public access will be controversial with tribes. FWS will continue outreach efforts to the tribes, media, and the public. A local news release is planned to alert the public to comment period. (Updated 03/28/2018)

National Park Service

[UPDATE] Beginning the week of April 1, and throughout the dry season, Burnett Oil Company will continue seismic operation within Big Cypress National Preserve. The Nobles Grade 3D Seismic Survey, a proposal that the National Park Service and Burnett examined and refined for more than two years before it was approved in May 2016, originally began in March of 2017 and suspended operations by June 2, 2017 when conditions became too wet to continue. Burnett is using a vibroseis technique to acquire geologic data to assess the potential for oil drilling within Big Cypress National Preserve. It is expected the exploration will continue this year through the south Florida dry season which should end by June 2018. (Updated 04/04/18).

[UPDATE] On April 24, pending an updated wage determination from Department of Labor (DOL), Golden Gate National Recreation Area’s General Agreement and associated draft leases for the long-term use of Pier 31 ½ as the Alcatraz ferry embarkation site will be considered by the San Francisco Port Commission for approval. This item was before the commission on February 27; however, commissioners continued the vote in response to concerns raised by labor unions about the concession contract DOL wage determination and other labor-related issues. (Updated 04/04/18).

On April 24 - 25, Cape Krusenstern National Monument Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) will hold a public meeting in Kotzebue, Alaska. The purpose of an SRC is to devise and recommend to the Governor of Alaska and the Secretary a program for subsistence hunting within Alaska national parks where subsistence is authorized. The SRCs were established under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. (3/7/18).

[NEW] On or after April 25, Lassen Volcanic National Park expects to open a public comment period on alternatives for a Wilderness Stewardship Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA). The plan will provide a comprehensive strategy to ensure the preservation and enhancement of wilderness character in the park's designated wilderness and backcountry areas. The proposed action seeks to maintain unconfined recreational use while identifying and preserving resource values that the public seeks in this setting. (04/04/18).

[NEW] From April 25-May 5, construction crews will be doing temporary stabilization repairs on Arlington Memorial Bridge. This repair work is designed to keep the bridge open to traffic during its full rehabilitation (beginning in fall 2018). Work crews will repair bridge deck supports in the drawbridge span and make repairs to the road deck in the westbound roadway. This work will require intermittent single lane closures on the bridge until Memorial Day Weekend. (04/04/18).

On April 26 - 27, Kobuk Valley National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) will hold a public meeting in Kotzebue, Alaska. The purpose of an SRC is to devise and recommend to the Governor of Alaska and the Secretary a program for subsistence hunting within Alaska national parks where subsistence is authorized. The SRCs were established under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. (3/7/18).

[UPDATE] (embargoed until public announcement) By April 30, Cape Hatteras National Seashore plans to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to lease Oregon Inlet Marina. The marina is operated under a concession contract, which has been extended on an annual basis since 2000. A lease has been determined to be the appropriate method for managing the property in order to provide for facility maintenance and continued public use of this locally-important and internationally-known charter fishing marina. The RFP is expected to garner attention from multiple interested parties, including the current operator, the local media, and elected officials. (04/04/18).

[NEW] By April 30, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson is expected to sign an amendment to Arkansas code, changing the permit conditions for large animal feeding stations like C&H Hog Farm near a tributary of the Buffalo National River. The Farm is authorized to hold 6,503 pigs. Currently, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality provides a 30-day comment period when a permit change involves retaining and then disposing of liquid animal waste. On March 15, the Arkansas House and Senate approved identical bills that would prevent third parties from filing complaints following a 30-day comment period if the farm remains in good standing with State regulators. The NPS has not been consulted in connection with this measure. (3/27/18)

In April, it is anticipated that the NPS will publish a Federal Register notice announcing that the Department has authorized the preparation of a World Heritage nomination for the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks in Ohio. With nine component properties including those that form Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, and others managed by the State of Ohio, this series of geometric mounds is approximately 2,000 years old. The nomination file, which will take more than a year to draft, will be developed by local proponents in Ohio with guidance from the NPS. Upon completion and review, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks will determine whether the nomination will be submitted to the World Heritage Committee. (03/12/18).

[NEW] By May 20, National Capital Parks-East, via the Federal Highway Administration, will award a contract to repair the roads in Fort Dupont and Fort Davis Parks. This paving project will completely reconstruct the most deteriorated sections and resurface the roads. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton has been keenly interested in the project. Public

notifications will begin in the coming weeks and work in expected to begin in summer 2018. (04/04/18)

[NEW] On May 1, 8, and 10 Voyageurs National Park and Voyageurs National Park Association will host the park's gateway communities in a series of "State of the Park Events." In addition to listening to the communities thoughts, NPS staff will provide an update of accomplishments in 2017, projects for 2018, and the recently developed 5-year Strategic Plan for the park. (04/04/18).

[UPDATED] On May 3, the 30-day public review period will close for the Theodore Roosevelt Island Cultural Landscape Report and Environmental Assessment (CLR/EA). The preferred alternative includes rehabilitating the comfort station, better defining and improving the islands trail system, and establishing soft landings and a floating dock on the island for non-motorized boats. The park will host a public meeting on the island the week of April 16. (Updated 04/04/18).

[NEW] By May 7, the NPS expects to complete a land exchange between Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO). The NPS will convey an easement valued at \$41,000 to NIPSCO, allowing them to install a 24" diameter high-pressure natural gas line on Federal land. In exchange, NIPSCO will convey fee title to the United States for Tract 02-198 valued at \$17,000, in addition to a cash payment of \$24,000 into the Land and Water Conservation Fund, resulting in an equal value exchange. (04/04/18).

Through May 11, Katmai National Park and Preserve and Alagnak Wild River will host public listening sessions and collect comments related to the Katmai National Park and Preserve and the Alagnak Wild River Wilderness and Backcountry Management Plan. During the public comment period, four open house events will be held in Kodiak, Anchorage, Homer, and Naknek, Alaska, to inform the public on the planning process and solicit public feedback. Public input on key planning issues and initial management considerations will help the park develop a proposed action and preliminary alternatives, which will eventually be incorporated in the draft wilderness and backcountry management plan. (2/28/17).

On May 15, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore expects to host public meetings and online engagement related to uses and crowding at the most heavily visited portions of the park. This public input will be used to guide the development of a visitor use management plan for the park. (3/27/18)

[UPDATE] On May 23, Golden Gate National Recreation Area is expected to release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a competitive business opportunity to establish a waterfront community center at the Fort Baker Historic Boat Shop and Marina as an affordable recreational and gathering place. The purpose of the RFQ is to identify both private- and public-sector entities interested in operating the facility, which is currently operated by the U.S. Air Force as a military recreation facility open to the public. NPS is seeking a long-term lease that will enable an offeror to make necessary investments in historic rehabilitation of deteriorating facilities, and the provision of public services and programs at the site. The park has kept the USAF informed

throughout the lead up to this announcement, and they have express interest in participating in the RFQ process. (Updated 04/04/18).

[UPDATE] By May 31, the NPS intends to award multiple concession contracts for mountaineering guide services at Denali National Park and Preserve. Applicant submissions have been scored and rated. The selection process is currently in the matching phase where, one by one, prospective concessioners with ANILCA preferences have an opportunity to match the best offer. New contracts will have a term of 10 years, beginning January 1, 2019. (Updated 3/27/18).

[NEW] Between June 1-15, Golden Gate National Recreation Area (pending Departmental approval of NOA) expects to issue a Record of Decision for the Vista Grande Drainage Basin Improvement Project Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared in cooperation with the City of Daly City, California. This project would allow Daly City to take project actions at Fort Funston to address storm-related flooding in the Vista Grande Drainage Basin. [PEPC link](#) (04/04/18).

[NEW] On June 14, the U.S. Mint will release the America the Beautiful Quarters Program coin honoring Voyageurs National Park. A ceremony will be held in International Falls, Minnesota. (04/04/18).

On June 15, Yosemite National Park's Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias will reopen to the public, following a 3-year \$40 million project funded through the NPS and Yosemite Conservancy matching funds. A new parking lot and welcome center has been constructed at the South Entrance, a shuttle bus will take visitors to the big trees, a handicap accessible boardwalk has been constructed, trails have been improved, and new restrooms have been installed. The dedication ceremony to mark the completion of the project is slated for June 14. <https://www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/mariposagrove.htm> (3/7/18)

By August 2018, the NPS and the National Park Foundation (NPF) will complete their joint Impact Investment Study. The Impact Investing Study is being funded by the NPF and will analyze how federal agencies have developed third-party financed infrastructure construction, operations, revitalization, and recapitalization programs over the past 20 years. The study will also identify potential new or modified authorities or policies required to implement alternative financing strategies to help the NPS move forward with the construction, repair, and ongoing maintenance of bureau infrastructure. (03/14/18).

Awareness

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

[NEW] On March 26, Lower Klamath NWR began pumping approximately 7,000 acre feet of water to facilitate court ordered flushing flows for disease control in federally listed Klamath River salmon populations. Upper Klamath NWR previously pumped more than 4,000 acre feet of water to Upper Klamath Lake to help maintain required lake levels for endangered suckers. By taking these steps, FWS is supporting the Bureau of Reclamation's plan to strike a fair

balance between the needs of tribes, fisheries, farmers, and ranchers this difficult water year, and enabling Reclamation to set a start date for Klamath Basin irrigators. The action has been met by criticism from the Hoopa Valley Tribe, as well as environmental groups including Audubon Society of Portland, Oregon Wild and WaterWatch of Oregon. (04/04/2018)

[NEW] Starting in mid-March, staff from the Lahontan NFH Complex saw a large increase in Pilot Peak Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) passing through the Marble Bluff Dam Fish Lock as they migrate from Pyramid Lake in Nevada up the Truckee River to spawn. Complex staff reported seeing 44 Pilot Peak LCT above the dam, and of those 44, 17 were implanted with acoustic tags. These tags will allow staff to track the fish as they migrate. Staff from the Complex will continue implanting acoustic tags until 32 fish are tagged. Lahontan NFH Complex reintroduced Pilot Peak LCT to Pyramid Lake in 2006. Recently, fish weighing more than 25 pounds have been caught by recreational anglers, enhancing the enjoyment of an internationally renowned recreational fishery. (04/04/2018)

[NEW] An unauthorized fishing structure exists on the McGregor District of Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in Iowa. The Department of Interior Solicitor's Office has requested assistance from the U.S. Attorney's Office in seeking a civil remedy to the apparent trespass. DOI and DOJ attorneys are consulting with Iowa Department of Natural Resources attorneys as the case moves forward regarding the possibility of Iowa joining as a co-plaintiff, as the structure is also partially on state land. (04/04/2018)

[NEW] FWS is partnering with state, county and local partners to help to establish a new state wildlife area in Colorado's San Luis Valley. In the heart of the San Luis Valley in Colorado, a new state wildlife area will now protect 17,019 acres of public open space along the Rio Grande, as well as outstanding habitat for fish and wildlife, thanks to the efforts of the Western Rivers Conservancy, Costilla County, Great Outdoors Colorado, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Open Lands and FWS. The Brownie Hills tract, located in Costilla County, was purchased by the Western Rivers Conservancy in 2016 with the two-fold goal of conserving a high-quality reach of the Rio Grande and connecting the Costilla County community to the river. During the week of April 2, FWS will be acquiring a conservation easement on the land as part of the Sangre de Cristo Conservation Area, using \$1.02 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In turn, Costilla County will be acquiring the actual land with funding from the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund and the Gates Family Foundation. The property will be managed as public open space via a partnership between the County and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. It will include two primitive boat launches on the Rio Grande and allow for dispersed camping, in addition to other more traditional recreational uses, such as birding, hiking and hunting and fishing (as regulated by the state). A joint press release will be issued by the partners, including FWS, to announce the establishment of this state wildlife area. (04/04/2018)

[NEW] On February 13, 2018, a Petition for Review of Agency Action was filed in U.S. District Court in Denver on related to the issuance of a nest disturbance permit under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA). The plaintiff (Front Range Nesting Bald Eagle Studies) is challenging that the defendants' (FWS and DOI) application of a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for issuance of the permit, claiming that it violates NEPA, BGEPA, and the Administrative Procedures Act (APA). On February 6, the

permit under challenge was issued to Garrett Construction Company LLC, for potential nest disturbance in 2018 and 2019 during construction of an apartment complex in Broomfield, Colorado. On April 2, Department of Justice (DOJ) requested from the court a voluntary remand of the permit in order for FWS to reconsider and reanalyze new information regarding the timing of permitted activities that may alter the likelihood of disturbance in 2018. DOJ might not hear from the judge for a week or so. If granted, FWS Region 6 Migratory Bird Management is working with our regional Office of the Solicitor (SOL) and DOJ to address specific conditions and analyses associated with the permit issuance and develop a Supplemental Administrative Record with additional supporting documentation. If the court does not grant the voluntary remand of the permit, DOJ will submit the response brief which it has been developing in cooperation with SOL and FWS, and will await a date from the court to hear the case. (04/04/2018)

National Park Service

[UPDATE] The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) seeks approval for a new right-of-way permit from Natchez Trace Parkway to begin construction of an aerial 161-kV transmission line across the Parkway at milepost 159.1 as part of a 43-mile upgrade of electrical service by April 1. Discussions with the Department, however, have resulted in the necessity to amend the EA and FONSI, and further delay the issuance of the FONSI and permit. (Updated 04/04/18).

[NEW] In March, Yosemite National Park received four new applications from Verizon Wireless to develop new cellular monopole locations in Yosemite Valley. The proposals are intended to create greater 4G wireless data coverage in Yosemite Valley. The applications are currently under review by park staff, and if deemed appropriate, the park will initiate the environmental compliance process and further public review. The applications propose changes and improvements within existing cell service zones, in developed areas of the park, rather than expanding to new areas of the park. (04/04/18).

[NEW] Law Enforcement Sensitive- Unknown timing, but expected within the next three to four weeks. The Midwest Region and Buffalo National River are preparing for the release by the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Arkansas of the findings in the Officer-involved shooting at Buffalo National River that occurred August 20, 2017. (04/04/18)

[NEW] From April 20-22, Yosemite National Park will pilot a traffic management program aimed at increasing safety and minimizing long lines at the Arch Rock Entrance Station on California Route 140. The park is working with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the California Highway Patrol (CHP) to temporarily stop vehicles on the road leading to the park, allowing traffic to incrementally enter the park on the popular road. (04/04/18)

[UPDATE] On April 27, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area will meet with the Navajo Nation's Department of Justice to continue the conversation on how to update the 1970 Quadrilateral Agreement, the 1994 Memorandum of Understanding, and 2003 Bridge Agreement, all of which expire in 2020. The Quadrilateral Agreement provides a mechanism for commercial and recreational development along the shared GLCA/Navajo Nation boundary. The 1994 MOU, concerning the implementation of the development concept plan (DCP) for

Antelope Point, is tiered from the 1970 Quadrilateral Agreement. The 2003 Bridge Agreement is between the Navajo Nation and the NPS and details the administration of the Antelope Point area. This agreement also tiers off the 1970 Quadrilateral Agreement and 1994 MOU. (04/04/18).

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INDIAN AFFAIRS

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (PDAS) John Tahsuda will be on travel status to Mashantucket, Connecticut on Thursday, April 12, but otherwise will be in the office this week.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Director Bryan Rice will be in the office this week.

Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) Director Tony Dearman will be in New Buffalo, Michigan, for the Tribal Education Departments national Assembly Conference on Education Sovereignty and Data this week.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

[UPDATED] On April 11, 2:30 p.m., PDAS Tahsuda will testify at the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs' hearing on the President's FY19 budget request for Indian Affairs. This hearing was rescheduled due to the inclement weather on the originally scheduled date of March 21.

April 12, PDAS Tahsuda will be hosting a Tribal consultation session on potential revisions to the fee-to-trust regulations at 25 CFR 151 in Mashantucket, Connecticut. This session is rescheduled from the March 15 session that was cancelled due to inclement weather and again rescheduled from April 11 to accommodate the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs' rescheduled hearing.

[NEW] The week of April 17, the Director of Office of Indian Gaming will be participating on a panel at the 2018 Indian Gaming Tradeshow & Convention hosted by the National Indian Gaming Association at Las Vegas Convention Center, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

This week, BIA Deputy Director for Justice Services, Charles Addington, will be traveling to the Navajo Nation to meet with Navajo Nation staff regarding their law enforcement and detention programs.

[NEW] This week, BIA's Office of Indian Services, Division of Workforce Development (DWD) staff will attend the 39th National Indian and Native American Employment (NINAETC)/Public Law (Pub. L) 102-477 Training in Marksville, Louisiana. DWD staff will present/train on the workforce development program activities, such as the Pub. L. 102-477 and

the new Pub. L. 115-93. They will also work with Tribes on submitting their Pub. L. 102-477 plans and talk with new Tribes who are considering submitting their first 477 plans.

On April 17, BIA Deputy Director Addington will be a panelist at the Conference on Crimes Against Women in Dallas Texas, along with the FBI Indian Country Program Chief and DOJ staff.

On April 19, BIA Deputy Director for Indian Services, Hankie Ortiz, has been invited by the Honorable Tim Groser, New Zealand Ambassador to the United States, and Whānau Tahī, a New Zealand-based enterprise owned by indigenous persons, to the New Zealand Embassy to attend a presentation on the development, framework, and evolution of cross-agency family-centered New Zealand Government policy.

Bureau of Indian Education

[NEW] April 6-10, Dr. Venida Chenault, President of Haskell Indian Nations University (Haskell) will attend the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) annual convening in Chicago, Illinois. Mr. Edward Hummingbird, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) staff, will present “Non-Academic Program Review: Evaluating Student Services and Administrative Departments.” Haskell and SIPI will have a team of representatives at the convention. The HLC convention addresses numerous topics related to the two institutions accreditation and provides critical information required in order to prepare for future HLC reviews.

[NEW] On April 11, BIE Director Dearman will serve as the keynote speaker at the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly Regional Conference on Education Sovereignty and Data in New Buffalo, Michigan.

[NEW] On April 12, SIPI will host the Ten Southern Governors and present an overview of SIPI to the new tribal leadership, on the SIPI’s campus in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

[NEW] On April 16, BIE staff will meet with the Blackwater Community School requesting a grade expansion. This is on the heels of the recent 2018 Consolidated Appropriations language concerning grade expansion for BIE schools.

BIE expects the Federal Register notice announcing proposed membership of the Standards, Assessments, and Accountability System negotiated rulemaking committee to be ready for Departmental approval. This negotiated rulemaking is required by statute and in accordance with an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education.

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

The week of April 16, Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, Division of Energy and Mineral Development (IEED-DEMD) staff will be traveling to Blue Lake Rancheria in

California for its micro-grid project ribbon-cutting ceremony. IEED-DEMD's Tribal Energy Development Capacity program grant provided funding to assist with this project.

April 22-26 is the 2018 Tribal Self-Governance Annual Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Department of the Interior's sessions will take place on Wednesday, April 25, and Thursday, April 26, with a Self-Governance Program orientation session on Sunday, April 22. PDAS Tahsuda is invited to speak on Wednesday, April 25, during the welcoming remarks and plenary session.

On May 3, the 27th Annual Indian Law Enforcement Officer's Ceremony will be at the United States Indian Police Academy Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Artesia, New Mexico. PDAS Tahsuda has been invited to speak.

On May 18, PDAS Tahsuda will be the keynote speaker at the Haskell Indian Nations University 2018 commencement in Lawrence, Kansas.

[UPDATED] May 23-24 will be the Tribal-Interior Budget Council (TIBC) meeting at the Washington Plaza Hotel in Washington, DC.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

On May 2-4, the BIA Office of Indian Services, Division of Transportation, will hold the quarterly Tribal Transportation Program Coordinating Committee (TTPCC) meeting in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The TTPCC was established by federal regulations (25 CFR 170.135) to provide input and recommendations to the BIA and Federal Highway Administration concerning the Tribal Transportation Program.

Bureau of Indian Education

BIE's Third Quarterly Corrective Action Plan (CAP) is due to the U.S. Department of Education on April 30. The report will reflect the requirements discussed during the meeting on the first and second quarterly CAP reports.

[UPDATED] May 14 - 18, BIE will host a Strategic Management Plan Face-to-Face meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to address Goals 4-6.

[UPDATED] May 16 -18, the BIE Advisory Board for Exceptional Children will meet in Choctaw, Mississippi.

Awareness

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

June 3-6, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) will host its mid-year conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

PDAS Tahsuda issued a directive on Improving Home Mortgaging Process on Tribal Trust and Restricted Fee Lands, tasking BIA with streamlining the process of review and approval of land and leasehold mortgages and issuance of certified Titles Status Reports (TSRs) and recording of mortgages. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Veterans Administration, and their lenders use TSRs for mortgage purposes.

BIA's Office of Indian Services, Division of Human Services, is working with the Office of Self-Governance to discuss how to incorporate Tribal standards of placement under the Native American Children's Safety Act into to Self-Governance Compact/Annual Funding Agreements (AFA) for Fiscal Year/Calendar Year 2019.

The Federal Register notice providing the 2018 list of Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Designated Agents List is in surname. ICWA requires State courts and child welfare agencies to provide a notice to Indian tribes whenever an Indian child (as defined in the Act) is involved in a child custody proceeding. The Federal Register notice lists the agents that each Tribe has designated to receive that notice.

May 7 is the deadline for written comments on the BIA's request for comments on its categorical exclusions (CATEXs) under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), per the Federal Register notice published on March 6.

June 3 is the deadline for issuance of final BIA guidance for Tribes on how to conduct background checks of foster care parents and employees under the Native American Children's Safety Act (NACSA). BIA is currently reviewing comments received by the March 16 deadline and revising the draft guidance as appropriate.

June 30 is the deadline for written comments on whether and how to revise BIA's fee-to-trust regulations at 25 CFR 151, per the Dear Tribal Leader letter dated February 15, 2018.

[UPDATE] Fee-to-Trust: A total of seven on-reservation cases have been completed for five Tribes and approved by the Regional Directors under the Fee-to-Trust acquisition process for a total of 180.59 acres into trust. For CY 2018, 22 cases have been completed for a total of 2,580 acres. Since 2009, a total of 656,556 acres have been conveyed into trust.

[UPDATE] Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Home Ownership (HEARTH) Act - A total of 43 leasing regulations, submitted by 39 tribal nations, have been approved under the HEARTH Act. A total of eight leasing regulations were published in the Federal Register on Mar. 28, 2018. The following is the total of 25 leasing regulations in various stages of review or awaiting approval: 2 tribal leasing regulations submitted to the Federal Register for publication; 4 tribal leasing regulations in various stages of the review and approval process; 1 tribal leasing regulations in final review with DRES; 1 in final review with the region; 14 within the in-house review process and 3 with tribal governments for modifications.

Bureau of Indian Education

On April 22, the U.S. Department of Education is planning to hold a Tribal consultation in Albuquerque, New Mexico, regarding set-aside funding for the BIE (\$1.5 million). Education notified BIE on March 12, 2018, that it is withholding 1.5 percent of the total Title I, Part A set-aside to BIE, an amount normally included for BIE's administration of the program under ESEA section 8204(b).

May 21 is the deadline for comments on the Bureau of Indian Affairs' proposed rule updating the regulation regarding when Indian students are eligible for benefits of education under the Johnson-O'Malley Act (JOM), per the Federal Register notice published on March 21, 2018.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY INSULAR AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

Insular Affairs

AS Domenech Meeting with Veterans Affairs Re: Insular Area Veterans: April 6 – AS Domenech will meet with Margaret Metcalfe, Liaison Officer for the Governor of Guam to discuss Guam issues generally and veterans concerns on Guam.

AS Domenech Travel to American Samoa for Flag Day: On April 11, AS Domenech and OIA Director Pula will travel to American Samoa to participate in the 118th annual Flag Day ceremonies. Flag Day will be celebrated in American Samoa beginning on Monday, April 16, with the official ceremonies beginning on Tuesday, April 17.

GAO Draft Report for Review and Comment: OIA has reviewed and will be submitting its official comments on April 9 to the Government Accountability Office Draft Report GAO-18-415, Compacts of Free Association, Actions Needed to Prepare for the Transition of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands to Trust Fund Income.

International Affairs

NAFTA 2.0 Round 8: *[NEW]* INT Policy Division staff will represent DOI on the U.S. delegation to Round 8 of the North American Free Trade Agreement negotiations, to be held in the Washington, D.C. area the week of April 8. INT will monitor negotiations on energy and environment, as well as any issues that may arise concerning indigenous or water issues important for DOI.

Hurricane Recovery

Philippines Fisheries Exchange Visit in Hawaii: From April 9-15, DOI-ITAP is coordinating a technical visit to Hawaii for a delegation of eight Filipino Provincial Governors, University Presidents, and Fisheries legal experts. The goal is to help the delegation improve fisheries protection and efficient fish processing techniques through exchanges with USFWS, commercial fisheries, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Law Enforcement. This effort is funded by the State Department.

Reservoir Safety Training in Vietnam: From April 9-20, DOI-ITAP will provide practical, field-based training to the operators of various classes of reservoirs, as part of the SIM project. The training is based on a standardized reservoir safety inspection protocol developed by this team during a previous phase of the project. This is the third training being provided under the statement of work. The team will consist of BLM and BOR specialists, along with the DOI-ITAP's Senior SIM Advisor. This effort is funded by USAID.

Offshore Oil and Gas Workshop for Mexicans in New Orleans, LA: From April 10-12, DOI-ITAP will be coordinating the participation of five officials from Mexico's Energy and Environmental Security Agency to participate in a two-day workshop led by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. This workshop will provide the participants with an overview of the environmental review that takes place at the planning and lease sale stages in the Gulf of Mexico. This effort is funded by the State Department.

Oceans, Great Lakes, and Coasts

DOI Senior Ocean Policy Team and Regional Ocean Contacts Meeting: *[UPDATE]* On April 7, AS Domenech met with the President and CEO of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, Kristen Sarri. The Foundation hosts Capitol Hill Ocean Week, a large ocean conference targeting Capitol Hill and the Washington, DC ocean community, in June each year. DOI has been a partner on this conference for several years.
(Washington, DC; no press)

eral Stakeholders will be participating in a meeting hosted by Health and Human Services to follow-up on recovery efforts.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

Insular Affairs

AS Planned Travel to American Samoa for 118th Annual Flag Day Ceremonies: April 17 AS Domenech and OIA Director Pula will be in American Samoa to participate in the 118th annual celebration of the day that the Chiefs of Tutuila decided to cede authority and become a U.S. territory. AS Domenech will give keynote remarks.

AS Travel to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam: April 23 – 27, - AS Domenech and OIA Director Nik Pula will be travelling to the CNMI and Guam for the Micronesian Islands Forum and other meetings with Guam and CNMI officials. The Micronesian Islands Forum is a regional meeting of the Presidents of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Palau and the Governors of Guam, and the CNMI as well as the Governors of the 4 states of the Federated States of Micronesia: Pohnpei, Yap, Kosrae, and Chuuk.

International Affairs

Unconventional Shale Gas Seminar for Ukrainians at West Virginia University: From April 16-18, DOI-ITAP is supporting participation by nine Ukrainian officials in the West Virginia

University seminar for the International Forum on Unconventional Gas Sustainability and Environment (INFUSE). This activity is funded by the State Department.

Unconventional Gas Workshop in Colombia: From April 16-17, DOI-ITAP will attend the launch event for a multi-series program requested by the Government of Colombia that will focus on unconventional gas issues and opportunities. This program is led by the Department of Commerce's Commercial Law Development Program with subject matter expertise provided by the Bureau of Land Management. This effort is funded by the State Department.

Press Releases Planned for Following:

- April 17 - FY2018 CIP announcement for American Samoa; ASIIA Domenech proposed travel to American Samoa for 118th Annual Flag Day Ceremonies - April 17 – 19.
- April or May - FY2018 CIP funding announcements for Northern Mariana Islands and Guam; ASIIA Domenech proposed travel to Northern Mariana Islands and Guam in April. He will participate in the Micronesian Islands Forum meeting composed of the Governors of Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands as well as the Presidents of Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and the Governors of the FSM States of Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Yap.

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

Insular Affairs

It has been proposed for June, by the State Department that the White House invite a visit of the three Presidents of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau to Washington, D.C. This visit was suggested in the Secretary's meeting with President of Micronesia Peter Christian and ASIIA has advocated for and supports the State Department initiative.

International Affairs

MOU with Israel on Biodiversity Conservation, National Protected Areas, and Cultural and Historical Heritage: *[UPDATE]* In late May, an official from Israel's Nature and Parks Authority (INPA) will be in the U.S. for a signing ceremony between the Secretary and the Israeli Ambassador to the United States. (This is a postponement from Israel's previous request for a meeting and signing in late March) The MOU is intended to strengthen cooperation on biodiversity conservation, national protected areas, and cultural and historical heritage. Decisions will need to be made about whether to host an event at DOI or at the Israeli Embassy, as well as regarding whether and what type of press or other public announcements should be made in conjunction with the signing. Israel's lawyers are reviewing comments on the Hebrew text by State Department translators, while DOI and State are reviewing a new set of comments from Israel.

Oceans, Great Lakes, and Coasts

World Oceans Day and Capitol Hill Ocean Week: World Oceans Day is June 8 and Capitol Hill Ocean Week (CHOW) will be held June 5 - 8. The Ocean, Great Lakes, and Coastal Program Coordinator, along with the DOI Senior Ocean Policy Team, are coordinating the Department's participation in CHOW, which is hosted annually by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. June has also historically been proclaimed as National Oceans Month, including by President Trump in 2017. Two new issues of the DOI NEWSWAVE newsletter are expected to be released in June for these events.

Awareness

\$123 Million for Palau in Omnibus Spending Bill: With funding for Palau finally made available, President of Palau Tommy Remengesau has asked Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chair Lisa Murkowski for the payment to be made to Palau in a lump sum payment. State and Interior staff are meeting to discuss how to update the funding schedule of the 2010 agreement which required specific annual outlays of funds. Included in the assistance are contributions to the Palau Compact Trust Fund, a capital improvement program, and an infrastructure maintenance plan. The specifics of disbursements must be reaffirmed by the parties prior to the implementation to the agreement.

Comments to GAO on Trafficking and Repatriation of Tribal Cultural Heritage: During the week of March 26, the INT Policy Division provided comments to GAO on their initial factual findings in a study of the trafficking of tribal cultural items by foreign auction houses and Federal efforts to help tribes repatriate sacred objects and other cultural items. This followed up on a previously reported March 21 phone call with GAO on this topic. The GAO expects to produce a draft of its report in late April or early May.

Assistance to Tribes Seeking Repatriation from Abroad: Another Paris auction was held on March 29 by the Millon auction house. Tribes requested assistance from DOI and the Departments of State and Justice to forestall sale of one Hopi item and one Iroquois item, both considered sacred objects which could only have left tribal hands in violation of customary law. In the absence, however, of specific evidence of illegality, the items were sold. INT Policy Division coordinated with the State Department to ensure a response to the tribes' requests.

Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management: On April 9-12, DOI's FWS will host this year's Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management (Trilateral) meeting at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV. Established in 1995, the Trilateral facilitates and enhances cooperation and coordination amongst the wildlife agencies in the United States, Mexico, and Canada. It also facilitates partnerships with other associated and interested entities. Delegations from each country come together annually for discussions on a wide range of topics, from joint, on-the-ground projects to issues of law enforcement and CITES to the development of information databases. INT has reviewed the agenda of the meeting and expects to receive a readout from FWS on the meeting's results.

Iceland Secretarial Meeting Request and Whaling Activities: The Embassy of Iceland is seeking a meeting with the Secretary to petition for decertification under the Pelly Amendment, which could lead to changes in their diplomatic status associated with Iceland's whaling activities (DOI certified in 2014 that Iceland was diminishing the effectiveness of CITES due to the conduct of trade in whale meat by Icelandic nationals.) INT is consulting FWS regarding the steps and timing involved in any review of the existing Iceland certification. Once that has been determined, details will be shared with DOI leadership for review, as well as discussion with the White House, which would be the ultimate decision-maker about what actions to take (if any) in response to any change in the certification. This is likely to be a sensitive subject and will require close coordination with both the Department of State and White House before any discussion occurs with Icelandic officials.

Vietnamese Minister Meeting with Secretary and MOU Signing Postponed: The Vietnamese Minister of Public Security Tô Lâm has postponed his trip to Washington, DC until a date to be determined, likely late June or early July. The Vietnamese government has expressed interest in the Minister meeting with the Secretary to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen U.S. – Vietnam cooperation to combat wildlife trafficking. The Ministry of Public Security is the government ministry responsible for managing Vietnam's police and public security forces, which play a key role in wildlife law enforcement. INT continues to work with FWS Office of Law Enforcement and the State Department to finalize the MOU with Vietnam.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR LAND AND MINERALS MANAGEMENT

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

ASLM Joe Balash will travel to New Orleans from April 2-6.

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Kate MacGregor will be in Washington, D.C. attending regularly scheduled meetings.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Casey Hammond will be in Washington, D.C. attending regularly scheduled meetings.

BSEE Director Scott Angelle will be in Washington, D.C. attending regularly scheduled meetings.

BLM Deputy Director Brian Steed will be in Washington, D.C. attending regularly scheduled meetings.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

Bureau of Land Management

In April BLM intends to complete a report to Congress detailing legislative and administrative options, including partnerships, to bring Wild Horse and Burro populations to appropriate management levels. The current population and program are unsustainable resulting in vast resource impacts and unhealthy herds. In the past year, the Department has requested the

restoration of statutory tools to manage herd levels, which includes humane destruction, and others to facilitate sales of excess animals. (2/14/18)

In Early April, a scoping report on Sage Grouse habitat management is set to be completed and released to the public outlining responses from the states and the public regarding potential management plan changes. In the coming weeks, the Department will determine whether to proceed with plan amendments and initiate a public process on the 68 Sage Grouse Resources Management Plans. BLM plans to share the Draft EIS with cooperating partners in April (2/14/18)

[UPDATED] May 1. BLM-MT/DK. The Butte Field Office is beginning to identify issues for a project to establish a Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) in the Scratchgravel Hills area near Helena, Montana. The Field Office sent out a scoping letter to stakeholders and issued a news release soliciting public scoping comments on March 20; the scoping period runs through May 1. The RAMP proposes to improve and enhance recreational opportunities and experiences in the Special Recreation Management Area by: formally developing a purpose-built trail system, open to a variety of non-motorized uses including mountain biking, hiking, and equestrians; identifying specific trail use zones; improving signage and visitor information; and providing sustainable options for existing trails. Though the initial proposed plan has drawn widespread support from recreation user groups, there is potential for controversy among some local landowners. (3/7/18)

March 19 – April 17. BLM-CO. The Royal Gorge Field Office announced a 30-day public comment period on March 19 for an Environmental Assessment analyzing the Head Full of Hope Claim—a placer gold mining proposal along the East fork of the Arkansas River northeast of Leadville. The comment period will run through April 17. Local governments in Colorado expect 30-day public comment periods for actions like this. (3/7/18)

[UPDATED] March 26 – April 6. BLM-MT/DK. Located south of Helena, Mont., the Montana Tunnels Mine mined lead and zinc with secondary silver and gold from an open pit for approximately 20 years before financing difficulties halted operations in 2008. The entire facility is in general disrepair and there are serious issues such as pit wall failures, some of which could impact Clancy Creek. The Butte Field Office and Montana Department of Environmental Quality forwarded a revised bond calculation of \$34.9 million to Montana Tunnels on Feb. 5, 2018, with a reply expected in March 2018. If Montana Tunnels cannot post the required bond amount, the agencies could begin the bond forfeiture process. A bond forfeiture would be the subject of media interest, but it is unclear whether it would generate any controversy. (3/16/18)

March 26 – April 30. BLM-CA intends to renew the site license for Calpine's Sonoma Power Plant, which is located at The Geysers geothermal area in Sonoma County. The 30-year license required for operations has expired. The Ukiah Field Office posted an unsigned Categorical Exclusion (CX) for public review on ePlanning on Jan. 24 and the CX was signed Feb. 1. Once the proponent signs the license, BLM-CA will finalize the process and issue the site license.

[NEW] March 27 – April 30. BLM-CA. The Mother Lode Field Office has temporarily closed recreation sites along the Merced River, including the McCabe Flat, Willow Placer and Railroad

Flat campgrounds, due to a mudslide, which closed Railroad Grade Road. Recent heavy rains loosened soils, causing an embankment to give way. No timeline is available for the road to re-open. This is not an area affected by the 2017-2018 wildfires; while the Detweiler Fire came close, it did not affect the area directly. (3/30/18)

March 29 – April 6. BLM-AK. The Glennallen Field Office will conduct annual face-to-face consultations in Southeast Alaska as part of the ongoing effort to improve communication and cooperation between the BLM and federally recognized tribes. Topics will include BLM-managed cultural resources around Haines and Juneau, and informing and seeking input on development of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Ring of Fire Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment. The Field Office will conduct face-to-face visits with Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, Sealaska, Sealaska Heritage for Auke Bay, Skagway Traditional Council, Chilkat Indian Village, and Chilkoot Indian Association. (3/23/18)

March 29 – April 6. BLM-WY. The Cody Field Office will issue a decision to authorize a proposed bentonite mining expansion project in Big Horn County near Lovell. The Environmental Assessment analyzed American Colloid Company's proposal to expand its mining operations by 1,175.5 acres, including 954.7 acres on BLM-managed land. The proposed expansion would provide an estimated 3,000,000 tons of bentonite from public lands over the life of the project and would continue to employ approximately 15 mine employees, 100 mill employees and additional subcontractors. The project is not expected to be controversial as the BLM routinely authorizes bentonite mining projects in the Bighorn Basin, and bentonite mining is a traditional use that continues to contribute to local economies. (2/15/18)

[UPDATED] March 30. BLM-ID anticipates having Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, sign the Decision Record for the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No New Significant Impact (FONNSI) for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project. A decision package with concurrence memo and Notice of Availability for *Federal Register* publication is under review in Washington, D.C. A request for Secretarial-level signature of the Decision Record is being considered, along with a possible signing event in early- or mid-April in either Boise or Washington, D.C., with the Idaho Governor, congressional delegation and local government officials (City of Kuna, Idaho, and Owyhee County Commissioners). The Final EA and FONNSI were published on Jan. 5, 2018, beginning a protest period on the proposed land use plan amendments. The protest period closed on Feb. 5, 2018. The three-year construction phase of segments 8 and 9 of the Gateway West transmission line will create an estimated 1,360 jobs for a total labor income of \$23.1 million. Construction of all 10 segments of the transmission line is projected to support nearly 3,100 jobs with labor income of \$55.7 million. If a right-of-way for segments 8 and 9 is not granted, there would likely be adverse impacts to economic growth, including loss of jobs in the Pacific Northwest transmission region, which encompasses Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Montana, and several Canadian provinces. Gateway West is one of several grid-modernization projects underway to improve transmission capacity in the Mountain West and Pacific Northwest. It is expected to deliver enough power to supply 975,000 homes. (2/22/18) DTS 1973

[UPDATED] April 1 – 30. BLM-AK. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plans to release the Donlin Gold Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) during April rather than in March as

previously planned. Current Record of Decision (ROD timelines include August 2018 for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and September 2018 for the BLM, with the BLM Anchorage Field Manager as the anticipated authorized officer. The BLM has submitted the final consistency review of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act Section 810 analysis, which is an appendix to the Final EIS. Donlin Gold LLC applied for permits for an open-pit, hardrock gold mine in southwest Alaska. The mine site will also include waste treatment and waste rock facilities, a mill facility and a natural gas-powered power plant. BLM-AK has been participating as a cooperating agency on the project and is responsible for a right-of-way (ROW) authorization. Donlin Gold applied for a ROW on one-third of the 316-mile proposed natural gas pipeline. The ROW would cross approximately 92 miles and 4,322 acres of largely remote and undisturbed BLM-managed public lands. The affected public lands are under a 1981 Management Framework Plan and the area is also included in the Bering Sea/Western Interior Resource Management Plan, currently under development. <http://www.DonlinGoldEIS.com>. (3/1/18)

April 1. BLM-CO. The BLM is considering renewing a royalty rate reduction (RRR) at the Trapper Mine in northwest Colorado to reduce royalty payments for 19.4 million tons of coal on the mine's leases from 12.5 percent to 8 percent. Trapper Mining Inc. requested an RRR renewal for coal in two other leases. The identified coal in one lease is not within an approved mine plan and the BLM does not believe the other lease contains any more recoverable coal. As such, the proposal is to approve an RRR for one lease only. The request is for 11 years. If granted, the RRR would be effective May 1, 2015. BLM-CO sent notification to the Governor of Colorado on Dec. 22, 2017. The State of Colorado declined to comment. BLM-CO will notify the state after the decision. The target date for the decision is April 1. (3/7/18)

[NEW] April 2 – May 1. BLM-CO. The White River Field Office will release its Travel Management Resource Management Plan Amendment/Environmental Assessment to cooperating agencies for their review. Field Office staff will meet with cooperators on April 3 to discuss the travel management plan's alternatives, as well as the BLM's new issue-driven NEPA analysis, which the Field Office used in developing the plan. Cooperators include the towns of Meeker and Rangely; Rio Blanco, Moffat and Garfield Counties; White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts; Colorado Parks and Wildlife; and Dinosaur National Monument. (3/30/18)

April 2 – 27. BLM-MT/DK. The Montana/Dakotas State Office is working with several agencies to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning rangeland monitoring. The MOU will increase the level of cooperation among the parties and provide a framework for landowners/permittees/lessees to collect data on grazing lands using methods collectively agreed upon by the parties. Other parties include Montana Rangelands Partnership, a program coordinated by the Montana Department of Natural Resources Rangeland Resources Program; Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; Division of Trust Lands Management; Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the U.S. Forest Service; and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service/Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge. The MOU will help restore trust with local communities and improve dialogue and relationships. (3/23/18)

[NEW] April 5 and April 26. BLM-OR/WA. On April 5 and 26, the Coos Bay District Office will conduct timber sales. The Crystal Clear Timber Sale includes 116 acres of regeneration harvest in the harvest land base land use allocation, and will yield 5.6 million board feet of timber. It is scheduled for auction on April 5, 2018. The First Floras Timber Sale includes 25 acres of regeneration harvest in the harvest land base, and is expected to yield 1.2 million board feet. The timber will be sold at auction on April 26, 2018. Both sales are controversial as organizations, such as Umpqua Watersheds, posit that regeneration harvests remove older forests and degrade wildlife habitat. Umpqua Watersheds informed the Coos Bay District that it intended to appeal the BLM's denial of their protest of the First Floras and Crystal Clear Timber Sales. (3/30/2018)

Week Ahead Announcements and Actions (April 9 – 15)

[NEW] April 9 – May 31. BLM-MT/DK. A March 23, 2018, order by the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana identified NEPA deficiencies in the Miles City Resource Management Plan (RMP) and the Buffalo (Wyoming) RMP. The court directed the BLM and plaintiffs to attempt to reach an agreement no later than May 23, 2018, and to prepare an expedited schedule for preparation of a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for both RMPs. Due to the court-identified NEPA deficiencies, the BLM anticipates postponing the scheduled June 12, 2018, oil and gas lease sale for 217 nominated oil and gas lease parcels within the Miles City Field Office. The BLM expects to make a final decision on the postponement and make the decision public by the end of May. (3/30/18)

[NEW] April 9 – July 8. BLM-CO. As part of its comprehensive travel management planning effort, the Little Snake Field Office will be releasing its 1,870-mile of route inventory across 638,195 acres of BLM land for a 90-day public review. This is the third and final Field Office travel management area to undergo this first public step of travel management. The public is being asked to review the inventory for accuracy and completeness, giving them the opportunity to help finalize a working map of the routes for the upcoming planning effort. The public will have several opportunities for review as the process to designate routes progresses over the next year. (3/30/18)

[NEW] April 9-12. BLM-WY will hold public meetings for the Riley Ridge to Natrona Pipeline project. The public meetings will be held from 4 - 7p.m. starting on April 9 in Casper, April 10 in Lander, April 11 in Big Piney, and April 12 in Rock Springs. Denbury Green Pipeline-Riley Ridge, LLC is proposing to construct a 16- and 24-inch carbon dioxide pipeline and associated facilities along a 243-mile linear right-of-way through Fremont, Sublette, Sweetwater and Natrona Counties in central and western Wyoming. The project would create approximately 380 direct jobs and generate \$1.7 million in state and local tax revenue during construction. The Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register on Friday, May 23. Controversy is not expected and the media may attend. (3/30/18)

[UPDATED] April 9 - 13. BLM-NV expects to publish an NOI to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) amendment, EA and a notice of segregation for the proposed Dry Lake East Designated Leasing Area in Clark County. BLM-Nevada intends to prepare an RMP

amendment and EA for the proposed Dry Lake East Designated Leasing Area 10 miles northeast of Las Vegas and east of the Dry Lake Solar Energy Zone. Through this notice, the BLM is segregating the public lands located within the proposed designated leasing area from appropriation under public land laws, including the Mining Law—but not the Mineral Leasing or Material Sales Acts—for up to 2 years from the date of notice publication. (2/21/18)

[NEW] April 9 - 13. BLM-WY. During the week of April 9, the Wind River/Bighorn Basin District will begin blading and improving BLM roads throughout the district, including some that lead to popular recreation areas. The roadwork will be ongoing and is part of an annual push each spring to improve BLM roads for public land users. (3/30/18)

[UPDATED] April 9 – 30. BLM-AK submitted a *Federal Register* Notice for revocation of five Public Land Orders (PLOs), which will open approximately 229,632 acres in the Goodnews Bay region for surface entry, mineral exploration and mining; it will also make the state selections effective, and allow the BLM to move forward in conveying lands to the State under their Statehood entitlement. The PLOs were issued in 1972, pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Sec. 17(d)(1), and were recommended for revocation in the 2008 Bay Resource Management Plan. The Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/1/18)

[UPDATED] April 9 – 13. BLM-WY State Director Mary Jo Rugwell plans to conduct visits with members and staff of the Wyoming Congressional delegation in Washington, D.C. to discuss public land management issues in Wyoming, including tribal consultation on split-estate lands, oil and gas project status and applications for permits to drill, greater sage-grouse, and wild horse and burro updates. (2/21/18)

April 9 – 12. BLM-MT/DK. The North Central Montana District will hold public scoping meetings in Malta, Glasgow, Winifred and Winnett, Mont., about the bison conservation organization American Prairie Reserve’s proposed grazing permit change. The BLM authorized American Prairie to hire an approved contractor to conduct the environmental analysis of multiple grazing allotments in the Glasgow, Lewistown and Malta Field Offices, and the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. The analysis is being conducted in anticipation that the American Prairie will request a change of grazing use from cattle to bison. American Prairie owns or leases more than 351,000 acres of deeded and public lands in the area, with 800 bison pastured on some of that land. The BLM proposes analyzing all of the grazing allotments in one Environmental Assessment (EA) to consolidate efforts across the district and be responsive to concerns raised by local stakeholders. Subsequent public meetings will be held in the same communities once the Draft EA is released for public review and comment. (3/16/18)

[NEW] April 10. BLM-UT. The first cooperating agency kick-off meeting for the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument/Kanab Field Office Resource Management Plan will be held on April 10, 2018. Cooperating agencies received MOU letters the week of March 19 and were invited to participate in the planning process and kick off meeting. The meeting will be held from 10 a.m. to noon at the BLM office in Kanab, Utah. (3/30/18)

[NEW] April 10-13. BLM-AK Acting State Director Karen Mouritsen and staff will participate in the Federal Subsistence Board wildlife regulatory meeting in Anchorage. Discussion will focus on issues affecting BLM-managed Unit 13 (Southcentral and Eastern Interior Alaska) and include extending the season for moose and revising the permit system for caribou. The Federal Subsistence Board is the decision-making body that oversees the Federal Subsistence Management Program. It is made up of the regional directors of the BLM, [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#), [National Park Service](#), [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#), the [U.S. Forest Service](#), and there are three public members appointed by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture: two represent rural subsistence users and one is the Federal Subsistence Board chairman. The Secretaries have delegated authority to manage fish and wildlife for subsistence uses on Federal public lands and waters in Alaska to the Federal Subsistence Board. Meeting materials are [here](#). (3/30/28)

[UPDATED] April 10. BLM-ID. The 15-day public review and comment period will close for the Pocatello Field Office Draft EA and unsigned FONSI for the June 11, 2018, online oil and gas lease sale. The lands nominated for leasing involve one parcel totaling 836.23 acres of split estate lands (private surface with federal mineral estate) in Bonneville County. The Field Office expects multiple comments as well as opposition. If additional coordination is needed to respond to comments, the sale may be postponed until September. (3/13/18)

April 10. BLM-CO. The Royal Gorge Field Office will announce a 15-day public scoping period for the New Elk Coal Lease by Application (LBA). The LBA is for approximately 15 million tons of coal in place of 1,279 acres of federal coal on split estate federal coal only. The lease parcel is adjacent to a privately owned coal under lease held by New Elk Coal, LLC. If approved, New Elk Coal, LLC will add this lease to its existing mine permit for the New Elk Mine near Weston. (3/16/18)

[UPDATED] April 10. BLM-NM. Acting BLM-NM State Director Aden Seidlitz will provide the opening remarks at the New Mexico Wildland Urban Fire (WUF) Summit. The WUF is one of New Mexico's largest events designed to discuss and prepare the state for wildfires, including the impending 2018 wildfire season. The theme for this year's WUF Summit is "Collaborative Community Action" and this topic will be highlighted throughout the two-day summit. Local government leaders, fire and emergency responders, businesses, and community members are encouraged to attend. (3/7/18)

[NEW] April 12. BLM-ID. Two national wildfire awards—Gold Smokey Bear and Valor—will be presented. Acting BLM Deputy Director for Operations Mike Nedd will award eight Boise District wildland firefighters the Secretary of the Interior's Valor Award for their response during a fatal fire engine accident. (3/30/18)

April 12. BLM-WY. The Pinedale Field Office will hold a public open house meeting for the Boulder Travel Management Plan on April 12, 2018. The meeting will be held as part of a public comment period for the plan that began on March 15. The public and media will attend. Additional open houses may be scheduled at a later time. The project has the potential to be controversial due to the possibility of route closures within the Boulder Travel Management

Area. However, no decision will be made until all public comments are considered and appropriate NEPA analysis is complete. (2/28/18)

April 12. BLM-UT. At the request of Department of Justice, the West Desert District will participate in a meeting of the note-holders to discuss a draft settlement agreement for the bankruptcy claims on MagCorp. The BLM has a \$6 million claim; these funds would be used to rehabilitate public lands that MagCorp abandoned at their declaration of bankruptcy. In 2001, MagCorp filed for bankruptcy and walked away from right-of-ways and leases on BLM lands in the Salt Lake Field Office. The abandonment left behind significant resource damage due to the company's failure to conduct reclamation and remove structures. The U.S. Attorney's Office is representing the BLM and EPA in this case. Settlement is necessary due to insufficient funds to settle the debts left behind by the bankrupt MagCorp. (3/7/18)

April 13. BLM-CO. Acting BLM-CO State Director Greg Shoop will participate in an annual wildland fire briefing for Governor John Hickenlooper on April 13. The Director of the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control will brief the Governor on the Wildfire Potential for 2018 and the level of state preparedness. The USFS and BLM will add remarks specific to their agencies. After the agency briefing, the Governor will hold a press conference on state resources, interagency cooperation and the 2018 fire potential, including a tour of fire equipment. (3/23/18)

April 13. BLM-UT. The Salt Lake Field Office will finalize the Diamond Fork Phosphate Environmental Assessment to authorize Falcon Isle's Mining and Reclamation Plan in the Little Diamond Fork area of Utah County. The mining is proposed on surface lands in the Uinta National Forest managed by the Forest Service. However, the BLM administers the phosphate lease. The BLM is coordinating with the Forest Service to sign the respective decisions at the same time. This project consists of 8.58 acres of BLM minerals, 3.5 acres of U.S. Forest Service surface, plus upgrades to a few Forest Service roads. Minimal economic impact will result from this action as the mine is small. (2/21/18)

April 14. BLM-CA. The Barstow Field Office and the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base will host a Resource Management Group meeting to discuss land use in the Shared Use Area of Johnson Valley. The BLM will discuss the Marine Corps plan to conduct a large-scale exercise August 1-30, 2018, including information concerning temporary land closures of the Johnson Valley Shared Use Area and public safety. This annual meeting is being conducted pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act of 2014. (3/23/18)

Bureau of Offshore Energy Management

On April 11-12, BOEM will hold a meeting with the National Academies Committee on Offshore Science and Assessment (COSA) in Washington, D.C. The meeting will be open to the press and is to be streamed online for the public. (3/16/18)

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement

April The Well Control Rule (WCR) (AA39) was submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on December 7. OIRA also hosted listening sessions with industry on the Revised WCR in February. OMB reviewed the WCR and submitted comments to BSEE which BSEE addressed. Once all OMB and interagency comments are resolved, the rule will be finalized within the Department for submission to the *Federal Register* for publication. BSEE understands that the public comment period is currently expected to last at least 30 days, after which the team will begin working on the Final Rule. Comments are 100 pages and will be sent up separately.

April The Proposed Production Safety Systems Rule (PSSR) (AA37) was published in the *Federal Register* on December 29. The public comment period ended on January 29. Fewer than 60,000 bulk identical comments were received from three environmental groups. A little over 700 regular comments were received as separate submissions and approximately 40 of these were comments with attachments, i.e. substantive comments. The PSSR Revision Team is in the process of drafting a Final Rule for surnaming prior to going to the *Federal Register* for final publication. The original deadline to begin surnaming has been revised to the end of March due to additional time needed to review the large volume of comments and to resolve legal issues raised by commenters.

We have agreed on a simultaneous submission to the Federal Register for both rules.

Bureau of Land Management

[NEW] In April. SO 3359 implements Executive Order 13817, which aims to reduce the vulnerability to disruption of critical mineral supply among other stated goals. The Order requires BLM to submit to the Secretary, within 60-days, a report with a list of recommendations to: 1) improve access to lands to explore for and develop critical minerals; 2) streamline permitting and review processes related to critical minerals development; and 3) otherwise increase critical mineral discovery, production, and domestic refining. The BLM has drafted a report with 13 recommendations across these categories is under review in Washington. (3/30/18)

[NEW] In April. At the request of the Department, the BLM prepared for the Office of Management and Budget a report on hardrock mineral royalties regimes in the United States. The report discusses options for a Federal royalty on hardrock minerals, litigations risks, legislative history, and provides additional background information. The report is under review in the BLM Washington Office. (3/30/18)

[UPDATED] In April. BLM-AK expects to publish a Notice of Intent (NOI) to initiate public scoping on the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Environmental Impact Statement. As directed by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, the BLM is working toward an oil and gas lease sale in the Coastal Plain. This includes reaching out to partners and stakeholders, consulting with affected Alaska Native Tribes and Corporations, and laying the groundwork for an environmental analysis that is required before a lease sale can be held. Because it is a major unexplored but potentially productive geologic onshore basin, oil and gas from the Coastal Plain is an important resource for meeting our nation's energy needs and achieving energy dominance. The NOI is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/16/18) DTS 1996

[UPDATED] In April. BLM-CO. The White River Field Office plans to release an Environmental Assessment of the proposed Buffalo Horn Land Exchange for a 30-day public review period. The preferred alternative would convey the surface estates of 14 parcels of Federal lands totaling approximately 2,815 acres in Rio Blanco and Moffat Counties for one non-Federal parcel in Rio Blanco County totaling 1,835 acres. Most parcels are within the White River Field Office, with one Federal parcel that includes lands in the Little Snake Field Office. The feasibility review found that disposal of the selected Federal lands and acquisition of the non-Federal lands would improve management efficiency of public land resources, provide greater public access to recreation lands, and help protect important wildlife habitat and cultural landscapes. A news release has been prepared and will be distributed once the Washington Office completes congressional notifications. (1/10/18)

[UPDATED] In April. BLM-UT expects to publish an NOA for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Enefit American Oil Utility Corridor Project in northeastern Uintah County. Publication of the NOA initiates a 45-day public waiting period pursuant to NEPA requirements of NEPA. The Final EIS analyzes Enefit American Oil's proposal to construct five utility ROWs along 40 miles south of Vernal, Utah. The notice is pending approval in Washington, D.C. (2/21/18)

In April. BLM-UT. In accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), a Notice of Intended Disposition will be published in four newspapers in the Four Corners region for two weeks. Publication will communicate BLM-Utah's intention to repatriate to the Hopi Tribe human remains and 4,121 associated funerary objects that were illegally excavated and/or disturbed in 2008 from Site 42SA9266 on BLM-administered lands in San Juan County, Utah. Publication also represents other federally recognized tribes' final opportunity in the NAGPRA process to submit a formal claim of cultural affiliation for these remains and resources. If no additional tribal claims are received within 30 days of publication of the second newspaper Notice, BLM-UT will proceed with repatriation. The repatriation will involve human remains from three individuals and cultural resources determined to be culturally affiliated with the ancestral Puebloan cultures of the Four Corners region. Site 42SA9266 is located outside of any existing or previously designated National Monument boundaries. Since 2009, BLM-UT has engaged in nation-to-nation NAGPRA consultations with more than 30 tribes in the Four Corners region regarding these human remains and associated funerary objects, as well as all of the other 42,000 plus human remains and objects included in the "Cerberus Collection." (3/23/18)

In April. BLM-AK will submit a *Federal Register* Notice providing constructive Notice of a decision approving 424.35 acres for conveyance to Sivuqaq, Inc., and Kukulget, Inc., for the Native villages of Gambell and Savoonga. Gambell and Savoonga are located on the former St. Lawrence Island Reindeer Reserve and will receive title to the surface and subsurface estates under Sec. 19(b) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Conveyance of these lands will fulfill Gambell's and Savoonga's entitlements under ANCSA, and will complete U.S. obligation to the Alaska Native people pursuant to Sec. 19(b) of ANCSA.

In April. BLM-NM. The Carlsbad Field Office expects to publish the Notice of Availability (NOA) for its Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, outlining the

BLM's long-term "landscape-level" plans and goals for public lands in Lea, Chaves, and Eddy Counties. The planning area includes approximately 2.1 million acres of Federal surface land and 3 million acres of BLM-managed mineral estate in Chaves, Eddy, and Lea Counties. The NOA is under review in Washington D.C. (3/7/18)

In April. BLM-UT expects to publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Enefit American Oil Utility Corridor Project in northeastern Uintah County. Publication of the NOA initiates a 45-day public waiting period pursuant to NEPA requirements. The Final EIS analyzes Enefit American Oil's proposal to construct five utility right-of-ways along 40 miles south of Vernal, Utah. The NOA is under review in Washington, D.C. (2/21/18)

In April. BLM-AZ will announce its Record of Decision (ROD) for Recreational Target Shooting in the Sonoran Desert National Monument, as well as plans to reopen 57 miles of travel routes for motorized access in the most heavily used portion of the monument. A March 2015 federal court order required the BLM to re-analyze impacts of recreational target shooting on the monument. The forthcoming decision, which was developed after extensive public outreach and analysis, preserves access for target shooting on nearly 90% of the monument, while ensuring public safety in the area of heaviest family recreation use—the Juan Bautista de Anza Recreation Management Zone (RMZ). Many routes in the RMZ were closed in 2008 due to damage to natural and cultural resources caused by off-highway vehicle travel. The BLM subsequently reclaimed illegal routes and completed a Travel Management Plan that designated 57 miles of RMZ routes for motorized use. Future plans for the RMZ include developing recreation facilities to enhance visitors' experience. The ROD was filed with U.S. District Court in Phoenix on March 5, 2018, and the announcement will coincide with publication of the Notice of the Availability in the *Federal Register*. (3/7/18) DTS 1976

In April. BLM-CA. The Central Coast Field Office will publish the Final Supplementary Rules related to dog management on public lands at Fort Ord National Monument. These rules also clarify some rules that have been in place on the monument since 1996, and that are consistent with the Resource Management Plan. The rules are responsive to hazards from munitions and explosives from the former Army base and conflicts between visitors on a high-use recreation area. The Proposed Supplementary Rules were published in November 2016 and no comments were received. These Final rules are the final step in the rulemaking process, and are not expected to be controversial. The Notice is pending approval in Washington, D.C. (3/1/18)

In April. BLM-AK staff will hold informational meetings on cleanup of the Red Devil Mine. These meetings will update residents on the findings of remedial investigations and feasibility studies related to contamination at the mine site and in groundwater and river sediment. BLM-AK staff and representatives of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and Alaska Department of Natural Resources will participate. Scheduled meetings include: April 2, Village of Red Devil; April 12, Chugathbaluk; April 16, Aniak; April 17, Akiak; April 18, Upper and Lower Kalskag; and, April 19, Georgetown (held in Anchorage at the BLM Anchorage Field Office). Additional meetings may be scheduled. The Red Devil Mine is an abandoned cinnabar mine and mercury production facility 250 miles west of Anchorage on 10 acres of BLM-

managed land. The land has been selected by The Kuskokwim Corporation, an Alaska Native corporation. (3/7/18)

[UPDATED] In April. BLM-WY. The Buffalo Field Office is working to complete the 1-90 Corridor Travel Management Draft Environmental Assessment. On March 8, the BLM began issuing letters to affected landowners and grazing lessees, informing them of the BLM's desire to obtain easements and/or exchanges, which will assist the BLM in designating travel routes to provide easier public access to BLM lands for recreational opportunities. The BLM has briefed county commissioners and congressional representatives in routine meetings. The goal of these letters is to open dialogue regarding potential easements/exchanges and come to mutually beneficial agreements with affected landowners. (3/1/18)

April 16 – 20. BLM-WY expects to publish the Notice of Availability for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Normally Pressured Lance (NPL) Project pending NEPA review and clearance of the *Federal Register* Package. The Final EIS is currently under review by Washington and BLM-WY needs approval of the NEPA before advancing the *Federal Register* package in compliance with WO IM-2018-028. The proposed project includes drilling up to 3,500 directional natural gas wells over a 10-year period on approximately 140,000 acres. The NPL project is projected to yield between 3.5 to 7 Trillion Cubic Feet of natural gas and between 17.5 to 140 million barrels of oil over the estimated 40-year life of the project. Project revenues are estimated at \$17.8 billion with federal royalties amounting to about \$2.2 billion, of which about \$1.1 billion would go to the State of Wyoming. The project would also bring about 954 full time jobs to the region during development. (2/21/18)

In Spring. BLM-NV. The Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) proposes to hold a meeting in Ely, Nev. Agenda items include wild horse and burro population/health issues, drought conditions and targeted/outcome based grazing. During the meeting, RAC members will take a field trip to a wild horse and burro Herd Management Area that historically has overpopulation issues, which are compounded by the lack of important resources like water. The meeting Notice is pending approval in Washington, D.C. (3/1/18)

[NEW] April 16. BLM-OR/WA. The Coos Bay District Office will release the Decision Record for the Chetco Fire Salvage Categorical Exclusion. The project includes 140 acres of harvest to salvage trees in the harvest land base that were damaged during the summer 2017 Chetco Bar Fire. The decision to salvage the timber may be controversial. (3/30/2018)

[NEW] April 16. BLM-UT. The 15-day public comment period for the September 2018 oil and gas lease sale Environmental Assessment (EA) will close. The EA analyzes the potential impacts of oil and gas leasing and development on 76 parcels encompassing 158,944 acres in Eastern Utah's Wayne and Emery Counties. The BLM is also seeking public input on 18 pending or suspended leases comprising 45,278 acres to determine if these leases should be issued or the suspensions lifted. These parcels were suspended due unresolved protests and federal court cases in 2006 and 2007 that ruled that the BLM failed to sufficiently address lands with wilderness characteristics or comply with NHPA Section 106 consultation. Resolution options include: 1) lifting the suspensions with original resource protection stipulations; 2)

adding additional resource protection stipulations; or, 3) voiding the leases and returning the bonus bids and rentals. Public comment on these parcels will help inform the direction BLM-UT takes. (3/30/18)

April 16. BLM-NV. On April 16, 30 days after publication in the *Federal Register*, the Battle Mountain District may implement a 60-day temporary closure and restrictions for the Mill Creek Campground 30 miles south of Battle Mountain. The proposed closure and restrictions will help ensure public safety and expedited restoration of the area after wildfires in recent years. The Mill Creek Campground is a popular area for the communities of Battle Mountain and Austin, Nevada, and receives heavy visitation from traveling campers. (2/21/18) DTS 1774

[NEW] April 17 – 19. BLM-WY High Plains District Manager Stephanie Connolly, Acting Casper Field Manager Chris Durham and supporting staff are tentatively scheduled to meet with Oglala Sioux tribal council in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, for a consultation on the Converse County Oil and Gas Project Draft EIS. The tribe previously sent BLM-WY a letter in opposition to the project. Five energy companies submitted the proposal to drill approximately 5,000 oil and natural gas wells on 1.5 million acres over 10 years. The project has the potential to contribute about 94 million barrels of oil and 5.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas to America's independent energy reserves. Over 8,000 jobs could be created with approximately \$18-\$28 billion in revenues and economic activity. The public and media are not expected to attend. (3/30/18)

April 17. BLM-AZ will publish a Notice of Realty Action in the *Federal Register* announcing a planned lease renewal/amendment for the Mesquite (Nevada) Airport. The new lease will enable the City of Mesquite to meet Federal Aviation Administration safety requirements to replace perimeter fencing around the airport safety zone, portions of which extend across the state line onto public lands in Arizona. The fencing was identified as the most critical need in the City's Airport Master Plan. Maintaining airport infrastructure is vital to the local economy, as more than 1.3 million visitors travel to Mesquite each year. The Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/7/18) DTS 1997

April 18. BLM-WY. The Rawlins Field Office will host a public meeting on the Continental Divide-Creston Natural Gas Development Area, which just added nearly 9,000 natural gas wells to the project area in south-central Wyoming. The open house meeting is mandated by the September 2016 Record of Decision for the project, which requires the public be informed about progress and future plans for development. The public, industry, and media are invited to attend. The meeting is not expected to be controversial. (3/7/18)

[NEW] April 19. BLM-MT/DK. South Dakota Field Office Fire Management Specialist will attend the Fire Management Wildfire Awareness Month meeting at the South Dakota State Wildland Fire Office in Rapid City, S.D. Representatives from the BLM, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and state and county firefighting departments will discuss interagency Wildfire Awareness Month programs and events for May. This is not a meeting where media or public have been invited to attend. Low/no controversy expected. (3/30/18)

April 19. BLM-CA Barstow Field Office will host a San Bernardino County Range Improvement Advisory Committee (RIAC) meeting at the Barstow Field Office. The RIAC is comprised of five federal grazing lessees and one wildlife representative who are appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The RIAC recommends various grazing improvement projects for funding to the board. The BLM reviews the environmental impact of projects on public lands. Funding for these projects comes from fees paid to the federal government for grazing privileges by ranchers under the provisions of the Federal Taylor Grazing Act of 1934. A portion of the grazing fees is distributed back to the county to fund improvements on federal lands. The county acts in a trustee capacity for these funds. (3/23/18)

April 18-19. BLM-AZ. The Lower Sonoran Field Office will hold two public meetings in mid-April to gather public input on the draft Buckeye Hills Travel Management Plan and Environmental Assessment. The Travel Management Plan Project Area is 572,159 acres, of which 163,951 acres are BLM-managed. This is in the Phoenix District Office, Lower Sonoran Field Office.

April 20. BLM-ID. Pending Idaho State Office approval, the Pocatello Field Office plans to provide a 30-day public review and comment period for the draft EA for the June 11, 2018, online oil and gas lease sale. The lands nominated for leasing involve one parcel totaling 836.23 acres of split estate lands (private surface with federal mineral estate) in Bonneville County. The Field Office expects multiple comments as well as opposition. If additional coordination is needed to respond to comments, the sale may be postponed until September. (3/23/18)

April 20 – 30. BLM-CO will issue the sale notice and 10-day protest period for the June 7, 2018, oil and gas lease sale for 64 parcels totaling approximately 58,694 acres in Jackson, Moffatt, Rio Blanco and Routt counties. Approximately 30,898 acres on 45 parcels are on Greater Sage-Grouse habitat, which could generate controversy. The announcement date and length of the protest period follows guidance provided in IM 2018-034. (3/20/18)

April 20. BLM-UT expects to approve a Final Environmental Impact Statement for Alton Coal, which seeks to expand its existing mine by leasing federal coal on 3,581 acres of public and private lands near Alton, Utah. The Alton Coal Tract contains 59.6 million tons of bituminous coal, and the proposed action could extend mining operations by 25 years. The lease sale needs to occur by summer 2018 for continuous operations. (2/21/18)

April 23 – 30. BLM-NV expects to publish a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with mineral segregation for the proposed Yellow Pine Solar Project in Clark County. The proposed project includes 9,290 acres of BLM-managed public lands 32 miles west of Las Vegas and 10 miles southeast of Pahrump, Nev. (2/21/2018)

April 23 – 30. BLM-AK has received requests from three Alaska Native Villages in northwest Alaska for consultation on possible mine development of the Graphite One prospect. The villages include the Native villages of Teller, Brevig Mission, and Mary's Igloo. Graphite One Resources, Inc. is exploring federal claims on a federal inholding in lands transferred to the State of Alaska. These claims are on lands slated for transfer to the State of Alaska, possibly before

the end of the fiscal year. The consultation is tentatively scheduled for late April. To date, the BLM has not received an application from Graphite One Resources for a permit to mine. (3/7/18)

[UPDATED] April 23 – 27. BLM-NM. The Oklahoma Field Office expects to distribute a news release announcing issuance of a coal lease modification to Georges Colliers, Inc., to expand the active Pollyanna No. 8 coal mine. From March 19 -23, 2018, public notices were posted in three area newspapers, with one more pending, and Dear Reader letters were sent to interested parties; a news release is planned to announce the lease issuance. Colliers submitted the application in April 2015; the Decision Record was signed March 19 and posted to ePlanning on March 20, 2018. The mine is located just south of Spiro, Okla., and the lease modification would include 520 acres of additional federal coal reserves at a depth of 1,000 – 1,200 feet, adjacent to the existing mine/lease boundary that would be accessed by underground mining methods using existing infrastructure. The additional acreage contains an estimated 5,616,000 tons of coal and would extend the life of the mine by about eight years and continue to support 80 existing jobs. (3/16/18)

April 23. BLM-ID. The Owyhee Field Office is finalizing its assessment/evaluation of Idaho's Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for the Rockville Allotment and plans to initiate public scoping the week of April 23. The Rockville Allotment is part of the Battle Creek litigation in U.S. District Court of Idaho. Some standards are not being met, and the Boise District is finalizing the assessment/evaluation. Controversy is expected on all permit renewals but no more than usual for Owyhee County. (3/23/18)

April 23. BLM-CA. Bakersfield Field Office staff will participate in a U.S. Forest Service-led public meeting on four Applications for Permit to Drill in the Sespe oilfield in Fillmore, Calif. The Forest Service is the lead federal agency conducting the NEPA and the meeting is expected to generate much public interest, including previous interest from U.S. Rep. Julia Brownley's (CA-26-D) office, due to the wells being in a national forest and near a California condor sanctuary. (2/9/18)

[NEW] April 25. BLM-MT/DK. The North Dakota venting and flaring outreach coordination meeting will take place in Bismarck, North Dakota. This is a follow up meeting proposed at the Fort Berthold Federal Partners Meeting in Denver, held March 13, 14. Discussions will center on improved public outreach between tribal entities and industry. Invited agencies include Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara (MHA-Three Affiliated Tribes), State of North Dakota, BLM, Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Natural Resources Revenue, and the North Dakota Industrial Commission. Assistant Field Manager Matt Warren will represent the BLM North Dakota Field Office. Low controversy expected as this is a coordination meeting in purpose. (3/30/18)

[NEW] April 26. BLM-WY Pinedale Field Office will host an annual public meeting on oil and gas projects occurring in the Pinedale Anticline area. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department and area operators will also be in attendance. Agency and operator staff will provide summaries of past year activities and current proposals for future activities. BLM has reviewed all the projects that will be presented. No controversy is expected. The media may attend. (3/30/18).

[NEW] April 27. BLM-NV. A *Federal Register* Notice regarding the amended application for withdrawal expansion associated with the Naval Air Station Fallon Range Training Complex Modernization will publish no later than April 27, 2018. The Department of the Navy submitted an amended withdrawal application; the amendment is related to the Navy's original withdrawal expansion application. The expansion area consists of 769,724.34 acres of BLM-managed lands adjacent to the Fallon Range Training Complex in Churchill, Mineral, Nye, and Pershing Counties, Nevada.

[UPDATED] April 30. BLM-NM. The public comment period ends for the Talavera Substation and Distribution Project Draft Environmental Assessment (EA), which was released by the Las Cruces District on March 26, 2018. The EA analyzes potential environmental effects from the construction, operation, and maintenance of a proposed new, permanent El Paso Electric substation and associated transmission, and 10.4 miles of distribution lines in Doña Ana County. The EA was prepared in response to right-of-way (ROW) applications submitted by El Paso Electric on October 19, 2016. The proposed ROWs are on BLM-managed public lands and will support the increasing need for energy in the City of Las Cruces and surrounding southern New Mexico communities. Public scoping for the EA began on July 17, 2017 and ended on August 17, 2017. The Las Cruces District hosted a public meeting on April 5, 2018 at the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces. A news release announcing the public meeting and start of the comment period was distributed on March 26, 2018. (3/16/18)

[NEW] April/May. BLM MT/DK. The Butte Field Office is making preparations to conduct a prescribed burn this spring as part of the vegetation restoration project in the Iron Mask Planning Area of Broadwater County, Mont. This effort continues despite a recent story in the Helena Independent Record that Native Ecosystem Council and Alliance for the Wild Rockies have filed a Complaint for Injunctive Relief in U.S. District Court seeking to halt the project. As of the date of this submission, the BLM had not been formally served with the complaint. Both NEC and AWR filed administrative protests and appeals with OHA and IBLA on these same actions, but did not prevail in that review process. (3/30/18)

In April or May. BLM-CO will celebrate the naming of the Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum in April or May. The center, which was previously called the Anasazi Heritage Center, is part of the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and the new name reflects this location. The local community, tribal representatives and elected officials have expressed interest in participating in the event. BLM-CO submitted a request for the BLM Director and the Secretary of the Interior to attend. (3/23/18)

In April or May. BLM-CA is preparing an Environmental Assessment and Resource Management Plan Amendment for a proposed transmission and water pipeline right-of-way (ROW) associated with the Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Project in Riverside County. In 2014, the Eagle Crest Energy Company obtained a 50-year license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to construct, operate, and maintain the Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Hydroelectric Project. The BLM is processing a ROW application associated with the 1,300-megawatt hydroelectric project that includes a 500-kV transmission line and a 12-inch water pipeline energy transmission. The project is estimated to create 4,300 jobs during construction and will contribute to the state's energy portfolio. The City of Palm Springs and Cathedral City,

environmental groups, and Colorado River Indian Tribes have voiced concern over the project, including its proximity to Joshua Tree National Park, impacts to critical or endangered desert species, and potential impacts to water, and cultural and historic resources. The project is under review in Washington, D.C. (2/21/18)

In May. BLM-UT is considering the non-competitive, direct sale to PacifiCorp of 200 acres of public land in Emery County, Utah, at not less than the appraised fair market value. The proposed sale is in conformance with the October 2008 Price Field Office Resource Management Plan. The lands would be offered to PacifiCorp non-competitively due to the lack of public access and their ownership of the surrounding lands, pursuant to 43 CFR 2711.3-3(a)(4). Conveyance of the identified public lands would be subject to valid existing rights and encumbrances of record. (3/7/18)

In May. BLM-UT is considering the modified competitive sale of 160 acres of public land in Emery County, Utah, at not less than the appraised fair market value to the adjacent landowners Hunter Prep Plant LLC, Ross Huntington, and Clinton Price. The proposed sale is in conformance with the October 2008 Price Field Office Resource Management Plan. The lands would be offered to the adjoining land owners on a modified competitive basis, with Hunter Prep Plant, LLC as the designated bidder, giving them the right to meet the highest bid pursuant to 43 CFR 2711.3-2(a)(1). Conveyance of the identified public land would be subject to valid existing rights and encumbrances of record. (3/7/18)

In May. BLM-UT. The Moab Field Office intends to issue a decision authorizing a Special Recreation Permit to Pinnacle Helicopters LLC for a shuttle service for river clients from the Canyonlands Field Airport to Mineral Bottom Airstrip. The proposal has been controversial due to potential impacts to other visitors' experiences, and an unrelated proposal from the same company to also conduct helicopter shuttles in Blue John Canyon, immediately south of Canyonlands National Park and near the Horseshoe Canyon Wilderness Study Area managed by the BLM Richfield Field Office. That request garnered regional media attention. (3/7/18)

In Mid-May. BLM-ID. Boise District Fire and Aviation expects to sign the Record of Decision for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Bruneau-Owyhee Sage-Grouse Habitat (BOSH) Project. The Final EIS was released for a 30-day public availability period on Feb. 9. The Final EIS, which was developed in cooperation with several state and federal agencies, analyzes the removal of encroaching Western juniper on 726,000 acres of sagebrush steppe habitat in Owyhee County. This juniper treatment project builds on proactive land management policies and practices to conserve the region's remaining sagebrush habitat, which supports significant economic activity, such as ranching and recreation, as well as abundant wildlife, including mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope and golden eagles. The public availability period closed on March 11. The BLM received ten comments, including comments addressing roughly three issues that will be documented in the ROD. The district is currently completing tribal consultation on the Final EIS and estimates signing the ROD in mid-May. (2/21/18)

May 3. BLM-NV is requesting Secretarial approval of funding for the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 17 projects. In the event the Secretary would like to

approve the funding at an event in Nevada, there are two signing event options: (1) Southern Nevada at Bureau of Reclamation for their Round 17 Capital Improvement Program (more than \$10 million at the dam); or (2) Northern Nevada at BLM-NV land acquisition (\$4.5 million - providing new recreation opportunity) and nearby fuels projects (\$5 million). The Executive Committee for SNPLMA requests the Secretary of the Interior approve \$78,002,276 of funding, including \$5 million for a Special Account Reserve and an additional \$3.2 million for SNPLMA Round 16B Craig Ranch Regional Park—a 20.57-acre acquisition project. SNPLMA funding advances the Secretary's priorities by creating a conservation stewardship legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt; sustainably developing our energy and natural resources; restoring trust and being a good neighbor; protecting our people; striking a regulatory balance; modernizing our infrastructure; achieving our goals; and leading our team forward. (3/23/18)

May 5. BLM-NV. The Carson City District proposes announcing a temporary closure of 450 acres of public lands adjacent to and north of Stead Airport in Washoe County due to the National Championship Air Races. This action will be taken in the interest of safety for both spectators and participants for qualifying and competition events during the Air Races on June 7 through June 10, 2018, and Sept. 8-16, 2018. This closure is put in place each year in support of this popular event. (DTS 1956) (3/1/18)

May 7. BLM-MT/DK. The North Central Montana District is in the process of renewing the grazing permits on 114 grazing allotments in the Bears Paw to Missouri River Breaks planning area. This planning area contains 298,668 acres of public land that is mainly located in the southern portion of Phillips, Blaine and Chouteau Counties in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (Monument) and the Havre Field Office. Western Watersheds Project recently a new public policy consultant and Montana Coordinator. The Acting Monument Manager and members of his staff will take the new coordinator on a field trip of the Monument to provide him with an on-the-ground understanding of the opportunities and challenges the BLM intends to address with these grazing permit renewals while working to develop a better working relationship with the organization. (3/23/18)

May 7. BLM-WY published the [Notice of Availability](#) (NOA) for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Riley Ridge to Natrona Project on March 23, 2018. Publication of the NOA announced the availability of the Draft EIS and opened a 45-day public comment period that closes on May 7. Denbury Green Pipeline-Riley Ridge, LLC is proposing to construct a 16- and 24- inch carbon dioxide pipeline and associated facilities along a 243-mile linear right-of-way through Fremont, Sublette, Sweetwater and Natrona Counties in central and western Wyoming. The project would create approximately 380 direct jobs and generate \$1.7 million in state and local tax revenue during construction. (2/21/18) DTS 1749

May 16 – 17. BLM-AK. The Resource Advisory Council will meet in Fairbanks. The agenda will include updates on the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, the Greater Moose's Tooth Unit 2 project, and the proposed Willow Development. There will be updates on current planning efforts, such as the Road to Ambler Mining District Environmental Impact Statement and the Bering Sea-Western Interior and Central Yukon Resource Management Plans. Five of the council's subcommittees will present their reports on placer mining, recreation, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. Council members

will receive an overview on Alaska subsistence; Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) including the Northwest Boreal LCC, Western Alaska LCC, and Aleutian Bering Sea Islands LCC; and explore partnership opportunities with local, regional, state, and federal entities. The council will also hear intertribal coalition presentations from the Tanana Chiefs Conference, Kuskokwim Fish Intertribal Commission, and Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission. The *Federal Register* meeting Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/7/18) DTS 1939

May 21 – 22. BLM-UT will host a Resource Advisory Council meeting in Salt Lake City. Agenda items include BLM updates from the State Director, fire dispatch study implementation, 2018 fire season outlook, updates on planning process Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments, Watershed Protection Task Force, Mountain Accord, Washington County issues, Lake Powell pipeline project, recreation fee proposals, and planning updates. The public comment period will take place on May 22. The *Federal Register* meeting Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/7/18) DTS 1945

Spring 2018. BLM-CO. The Tres Rios Field Office is preparing a Notice of Availability and an Environmental Assessment for a draft amendment to its 2015 Resource Management Plan (RMP) and is evaluating 17 nominated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). The effort addresses an error in the Tres Rios RMP, which did not adequately address nominated ACECs. The field office is working toward Spring 2018 publication in the *Federal Register*. The key issues include potential impacts to solid minerals exploration and production, as well as possible restrictions on access and rights-of-way. (3/23/18)

Bureau of Offshore Energy Management

By April 20, BOEM expects to publish a Request for Competitive Interest for an area proposed to be used for a right-of-way (ROW) project called Atlantic Link. Clean Power Northeast Development, Inc. filed an application on May 31, 2017 (revised August 22, and September 26), for a ROW grant in support of a proposed project connecting onshore wind and hydro power in Canada to the Massachusetts market via a 350 mile HvDC submarine cable traversing the OCS. Emera, parent company to Clean Power Northeast Development, Inc., has recently expressed an interest in slowing down their project timetable. The notice is in surnaming with ASLM.

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

[UPDATE] By April 30, 2018, OSMRE expects the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to complete a lease for the Oklahoma Federal Lands: Pollyanna #8 coal mine permit revision. The applicant's existing coal reserves are expected to be depleted in less than 12 months; therefore, the additional coal reserve is needed to ensure continuous operations. BLM has finalized the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the coal lease on the expansion of the underground mine and is expected to have the draft lease completed by April 6, 2018. With finalization of the leasing documents, MCR will be working on the development of a Mine Plan Decision Document (MPDD). Based upon OSMRE's close coordination with BLM during the development of the EA for the lease, we anticipate being able to adopt large portions of their EA for our MPDD. Future steps will include evaluation of the BLM EA for determination of NEPA adequacy, developing a Notice of Intent to Prepare an EA, if needed, expected to be completed

by within 2 weeks following draft lease, followed by developing the EA and posting it for public review. Depending upon how much of the BLM EA that is adopted, the MPDD is expected to be completed by July 31, 2018. (3/26/2018)

[UPDATE] By April 30, 2018, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is expected to have an Interdisciplinary Development Team meeting for the development of the NEPA document and coal lease package for Liberty #8. The new lease by application covers 1,620 acres of surface mining activities. OSMRE is expected to be a cooperating agency on the NEPA document. The purpose of the meeting would be to discuss with the mining company processing procedures, outline NEPA responsibilities, the development of a schedule associated with leasing and the process of a mining plan decision document. As BLM is the lead on arranging this meeting we will report further on this issue when we become aware of more specific details. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] On March 6, 2018, OSMRE was notified by BLM of a new lease by application for Federal coal in Haskell County, Oklahoma. Evans-McCurtain Mine would include approximately 1,300 acres. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is expected to have an Interdisciplinary Development Team meeting for the development of the NEPA document and coal lease package for Evans-McCurtain by April 30, 2018. The remaining reserves on the proposed lease are recoverable only by underground methods. Coal thickness will dictate the use of continuous miner units or possibly a plow longwall. As BLM is the lead on arranging this meeting we will report further on this issue when we become aware of more specific details. (3/26/2018)

On May 11, 2018, Federal Defendants will respond to the Plaintiff's motion for summary judgment in the U.S. District Court of Montana. On June 8, 2017, Wild Earth Guardians and Montana Environmental Information Center submitted a Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief claiming that OSMRE failed to adequately analyze the indirect impacts of transportation, failed to adequately analyze greenhouse gases and impacts to the air from coal combustion, failed to consider cumulative actions, and failed to prepare an EIS for the October 2016 mining plan modification decision at the Spring Creek Mine. Petitioners also allege that the mining plan modification approval was unauthorized because the lease was invalid due to an alleged delegation of authority violation. (2/15/2018)

[UPDATE] On or about May 15, 2018, OSMRE plans to submit the Falkirk Mine's mining plan decision document to headquarters for review and approval by the ASLM. Falkirk Mining Company's Falkirk Coal Mine is a surface coal mine located in McLean County, ND. The mine employs 412 full-time employees and 118 temporary employees and produces approximately 8 – 8.5 million tons of coal per year. (3/15/2018)

On or about May 18, 2018, OSMRE plans to submit the Bull Mountains Mine No. 1's mining plan decision document to headquarters for review and approval by the ASLM. Signal Peak Energy's Bull Mountains Mine No. 1 is an underground coal mine located in Musselshell and Yellowstone Counties, MT. The mine employs 260 people and produces approximately 6 – 10 million tons of saleable coal per year. (3/15/2018)

[NEW] On or about May 25, 2018, OSMRE plans to publish a notice of availability for the San Juan Mine Deep Lease Extension mining plan modification Draft Environmental Impact Statement in the *Federal Register*. The San Juan Mine is located approximately 4 miles northeast of Waterflow and 15 miles west of Farmington in San Juan County, New Mexico. The mine employs 360 people and currently produces approximately 6 million tons of saleable coal per year. (3/28/2018)

Awareness

Bureau of Offshore Energy Management

[NEW] On April 10, BOEM's Acting Director will give a keynote presentation at the Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation's course on Federal Offshore Oil & Gas Leasing and Development in New Orleans.

[NEW] On April 13, BOEM's Acting Director will speak at the National Ocean Industries Association annual meeting in Washington DC.

[UPDATE] On March 22, BOEM approved US Wind's Site Assessment Plan (SAP) proposing the installation of a meteorological tower in the company's wind lease offshore Maryland. (2/20/18)

By late March, BOEM would like to publish the 2017 Comprehensive Inventory of OCS Oil and Natural Gas Resources Report to Congress. This report is required by Section 357 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. It directs the Secretary of the Interior to provide a report to Congress within 6 months of the date of enactment (i.e., Aug. 8, 2005), with updates of at least every 5 years. This report is an update to the 2013 report. It is currently in surnaming with ASLM.

[UPDATE] On March 9, the public comment period for the BOEM DPP closed. As of March 22, BOEM has received over one million comment letters, although comment letters continue to be counted at this time. BOEM is currently reviewing comments and working on the analyses for both the upcoming Proposed Program document and the associated Environmental Impact Statement. (3/9/18)

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement

In progress Alaska Suspensions: The Arctic Slope Regional Corporation has requested a suspension of operations (SOO) for 21 leases previously held by Shell. BSEE made an initial determination to unitize 20 of the 21 leases. A communications plan was submitted to ASLM on March 1 with two possible scenarios, a fact sheet, and a draft press release. The two scenarios are disapproval and approval depending on the final decision. The final decision will be returned to AEX in a letter signed by the BSEE Alaska regional director. (3/22/18)

As of March 15, 2018, Eni U.S. Operating Co. Inc. continues drilling operations on their NN-01 exploration well, seeking to drill directionally from Spy Island Drillsite (an existing artificial production and drilling island in state waters) north to reach a reservoir target on the U.S. OCS. Though Eni has experienced setbacks in the form of equipment failures and drilling

complications, they continue to make overall progress. Currently they are working issues stemming from last weekend's well control problems, and are focused on ensuring the health of their downhole tooling and equipment and overall stability of the well bore before making plans to continue drilling. The hole remains at the approximately 1.5 mile measured depth (gross length along the wellbore not considering changes in direction and inclination) it has been at since late last week. There are no immediate safety concerns, but the drilling situation downhole remains technically challenging, requiring a careful and methodical approach, which Eni appears to be taking. (3/22/18)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLICY, MANAGEMENT, AND BUDGET

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

From April 9-10, Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, Scott Cameron will be in Washington, DC, and participating in routine internal briefings. From April 11-13, Scott is anticipated to travel with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Program Associate Director Jim Herz and OMB Interior Branch Examiners Ben Burnett and Mike Hagan to the Gulf of Mexico to meet with Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement staff on a variety of topics. (04/04/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Policy and Environmental Management (DAS PEM)

On April 9-12, the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management will be held in Shepherdstown, WV. The National Invasive Species Council Secretariat, USGS and FWS will work with Canadian and Mexican delegations and other colleagues to address issues of data mobilization and prioritization of islands for invasive species control and eradication in the context of developing a North American Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan. Activities will include a formal presentation to the Ecosystem Conservation Working Table and a sidebar working session to assess activities to date, agree on shared objectives, and identify next steps. Formal communications or outreach is not anticipated (Closed press). (03/21/2018)

[NEW] On April 10, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance's (OEPC) Director will attend the Spill of National Significance (SONS) Executive Committee meeting to sign that group's executive charter at the US Coast Guard's (USCG's) Headquarters. The purpose of the charter is to formalize the roles and responsibilities of this long standing USCG lead group, responsible for directing and approving the design, development, conduct and evaluation of SONS exercises and to assure that each Department is appropriately represented at SONS exercises. (04/04/2018)

From April 10-11, the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) Secretariat Chief Scientist will participate on a review panel on the NASA Earth System Science Fellowship Program in Bethesda, MD (closed press). (03/28/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Management (DAS PRE)

From April 9-13, Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) Director Jeff Rupert will be in Boise, ID, to meet with the Intertribal Timber Council, National Wildland Fire Coordinating Council, and Fire Management Board (no press). (03/28/2018)

[NEW] During the week of April 9-13, at the request of the Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Law Enforcement and Security (OLES) Senior Special Agent Darryl Ward, detailed to the FBI/National Joint Terrorism Task Force, will participate at a high-level DOJ meeting to discuss the worsening of Direct Actionist activities in the Pacific Northwest. SSA Ward is the FBI lead in the “National Pipeline Initiative” and is working with DOJ to address federal prosecutorial consideration on crimes against the pipeline sector, which has a direct link to DOI lands. (04/04/2018)

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Budget, Finance, Performance and Acquisition (DAS BFPA)

On April 11, Secretary Zinke will testify in support of the FY 2019 President’s Budget before the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee. The Secretary is scheduled to testify before the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee on May 9. Deputy Assistant Secretary Olivia Ferriter and Office of Budget Director Denise Flanagan will support the Secretary at the table. (3/07/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Policy and Environmental Management (DAS PEM)

On April 17-18, the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) Philadelphia Office will participate in this bi-annual meeting on oil spill and hazardous substance release contingency planning and preparedness in Grand Rapids, MI. On April 19-20, the Denver Office will participate in the Regional Response Team 8 Meeting, led by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Coast Guard. Participants will include DOI bureaus, state agencies, and industry partners. These meetings are held bi-annually to facilitate the effective organization of preparedness and response efforts used by federal and bureau partners in the event of an oil spill or hazardous substance release through contingency planning, training and resource coordination. (03/28/2018)

On April 19, DOI bureaus and offices, including the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) Anchorage, and other Federal agencies will participate in an Alaska Energy Permitting Interagency Working Group (IWG) staff call. The Alaska Energy Permitting IWG staff calls provide a forum for sharing information on energy exploration and development in Alaska. (03/28/2018)

15-60 Day Look Ahead

Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR)

During the week of April 23, 2018, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) intends to disburse the first qualified Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (GOMESA) Phase II

revenues to the four Gulf producing States and their eligible coastal political subdivisions (CPS). The total disbursement that the States and their CPS will share is over \$200 million, prior to sequestration. ONRR is drafting a communications plan and press release, and coordinating with the Department's Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, Communications Office, and the Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management. (03/28/2018)

During the week of April 23, Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) Director Greg Gould will attend and participate in the Council of Petroleum Accountants Societies (COPAS) spring 2018 meeting in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Director Gould will discuss a high level overview of ONRR's reorganization and projects; (no press). (03/14/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Policy and Environmental Management (DAS PEM)

On April 25 (Rain Date: April 26), DOI is Celebrating the 2018 Earth Day Event in Rawlins Park. This year theme is "End Plastic Pollution." We are expected to have at least 40 vendors (combined with DOI, Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the General Services Administration (GSA) and non-profit organizations). DOI will have a truck parked on the E Street side of the Main Interior Building for people to drop off their unusable/unwanted personal (home) computers and other types of electronic equipment. DOI will schedule a photo-op and walk thru in Rawlins Park with the Interior Secretary, GSA Administrator and OPM Director (12:00-12:30p). (03/28/2018)

From May 30-31, the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) will participate in the annual national meeting for Emergency Support Function (ESF) - Protection of Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties (ESF #11) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Patriot's Plaza Building in Washington, DC. The meeting will focus on updates from each of the agencies that comprise ESF #11, as well as discussions on how to improve support to States, Tribes, and Territories during FEMA-led activations. The OEPC and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) will be presenting on DOI's programs and capabilities that provide support to ESF #11. (03/28/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Management (DAS PRE)

From April 25-27, Office of Aviation Services (OAS) Director will be in Seattle, WA where he will be a featured speaker at Nextgov's "*Limitless Government: Technology as a Force for Change*" event, part of a nationwide series (previous one in LA, future events in Denver, Atlanta). His tentative presentation title: "*Drones for Good: A Government Technology Success Story & Road Map for Success in Other Areas.*" (Open to press). (03/14/2018)

From April 30 - May 4, Office of Aviation Services (OAS) Director Mark Bathrick will attend the Association of Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) annual conference in Denver, CO (03/07/2018).

From April 30 - May 10, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) will be facilitating the National Level Exercise (NLE) 2018. NLE 2018 will examine the ability of all levels of

government, private industry, and nongovernmental organizations to protect against, respond to, and recover from a major Mid-Atlantic hurricane. Several building block activities within DOI will occur leading up to the functional and full-scale portions of NLE 2018, culminating in the activation of DOI alternate Site Charlie on May 7-8. Upcoming related events include COOP training for political appointees on March 29 and COOP Training for all team members on April 3. (03/28/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Budget, Finance, Performance and Acquisition (DAS BFPA)

On May 9, a report of the initial allocations of Hurricane Supplemental funding is due to Congress. Draft Operating Plans have been submitted for review by the Deputy Secretary. Once approved, they will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) after which the Office of Budget will prepare an allocation plan for Congress. (03/21/2018)

[NEW] On May 22, the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) will present the Department a Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR) Award for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Agency Financial Report (AFR), at an awards ceremony in Washington, DC (no press). The AGA noted that the Department again produced an attractive and informative AFR with exemplary elements throughout the document. This is the 16th year in which AGA has awarded the Department a certificate. (04/04/2018)

Awareness

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Management (DAS PRE)

[NEW] On March 28th, Office of Law Enforcement and Security (OLES) Director Darren Cruzan and staff, Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) Personnel Security Branch Chief Kelly Willems met with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) Security Executive Agent National Assessment Program (SNAP) Team regarding their assessment of BSEE's DOI/OS Personnel Security Program, to determine whether the performance goals and measures identified by the statute of the Performance Accountability Council (PAC) and the 2008 Suitability and Security Clearance Reform Effort were being efficiently and effectively implemented and maintained. The SNAP Team indicated that of the 40+ program assessments that they have performed to date, BSEE's DOI/OS Personnel Security Program stands out as the model, and exemplifies the very best practices for personnel security programs. (04/04/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Budget, Finance, Performance and Acquisition (DAS BFPA)

[UPDATE] As of FY18 Quarter 2, the Department has closed 25 percent of open audit recommendations scheduled for closure in FY 2018. The Department has an annual goal of closing 85 percent of corrective actions scheduled for closure in the current FY to address issues raised in Office of Inspector General (OIG) and Government Accountability Office (GAO) engagements. (04/04/2018)

[UPDATE] As of FY18 Quarter 2, the Department has awarded 52.09% of its contract award dollars to small businesses. The Department-wide small business goal, which was negotiated with the Small Business Administration, is 51.1%. The Department awarded 24.44% of its contract award dollars to Small Disadvantaged Businesses and 14.03% of its contract award dollars to Women-Owned Small Businesses, exceeding the statutory goal of 5% for each. The Department awarded 3.76% of its contract award dollars to Historically Underutilized Business Zone Small Businesses and 4.17% of its contract award dollars to Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses. The statutory goal is 3% for each of these categories. (04/04/2018)

[NEW] Recently the Office of Acquisition and Property Management (PAM) introduced the Acquisition Flash, a format to widely communicate and disseminate procedures, guidance, and other relevant information to DOI's acquisition workforce. Acquisition Flashes are housed on a Google site and communicate useful information such as Class Deviations, Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) and Office of Management Budget Guidance, Federal Acquisition Regulation Cases, and other information that has the potential to impact day-to-day procurement operations within the Department of the Interior. (04/04/2018)

[NEW] The Government Accountability Office initiated a new audit "Fiscal Year 2016 and 2017 Compliance under the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act of 2010 (IPERA)" (Job Code 102476) pursuant to the GAO's own initiative under its authority in 31 U.S.C. §717. GAO will update its May 2017 report to include FY 2016 and FY 2017 data. GAO recently met with the Office of Financial Management (PFM) in an entrance conference to discuss. (04/04/2018)

[NEW] The Government Accountability Office initiated a new audit "Wildland Fire Fuel Management Activities" (Job Code 102653) in response to requests from the Chair and Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Chair and Ranking Member of its Subcommittee on Federal Spending Oversight and Emergency Management. GAO will review: (1) mechanism Federal land management agencies used to identify and prioritize fuel reduction projects and collaborate with communities to identify and carry out fuel reduction activities; (2) agencies' self-assessment of their efforts to enhance community resilience; and (3) lessons recent wildland fire events offer agencies on contributing to community resilience. (04/04/2018)

[NEW] The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently met with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education to discuss as an exit conference/pending report the "Native American Youth and Justice Systems" (Job Code 101232) in response to a request from the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. The GAO reviewed: (1) the number and proportion of Indian youth in Federal, state and tribal custody and the primary reasons for their detention; (2) programs Federal agencies fund to prevent and treat juvenile delinquency among Indian youth and the extent agencies have assessed the effectiveness of these initiatives; and (3) Federal agencies' implementation of the juvenile justice-related recommendations from the Indian Law and Order Commission and the Attorney General's Task Force on American Indian/Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence (Washington DC; no press). (04/04/2018)

[NEW] A new Office of Inspector General (OIG) audit is “Flight Services Contract for the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement’s (BSEE) Gulf of Mexico Region Inspection Activities” (2018-EAU-034). The OIG will evaluate BSEE’s contract to provide flight services in the Gulf of Mexico Region. The evaluation will assess whether the current contract of providing helicopter flight services is the best mechanism for conducting safe and efficient inspections. (04/04/2018)

[NEW] A new Office of Inspector General (OIG) audit is “National Park Service (NPS) Contract Nos. INP17PC00513, INP17PC00515, and INP17PC00516 for Grand Canyon River Logistics” (2018-FIN-032). The OIG will audit subject contracts with Ceiba Adventures, Inc.; Colorado River and Trail Expedition, Inc.; and Grand Canyon Whitewater, LLC. The objectives of this audit are to determine whether the contracts awarded by the NPS complied with Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) and NPS policies. Specifically, the OIG will determine whether NPS personnel complied with FAR pre-award requirements, awarded task orders in accordance with FAR Part 16, and provided contract monitoring and oversight during contract performance. (04/04/2018)

[NEW] The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) recently issued the recent draft report “U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Grants Awarded to the State of Florida, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, From July 1, 2014 Through June 30, 2016” (2017-EXT-021). The OIG issued the State one recommendation to improve its controls. The response is due May 7. (04/04/2018)

[NEW] The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) recently issued the draft report “The Wind River Tribes Misapplied Federal Funds for the Tribal Transportation Program” (2017-CG-042). The OIG audited the Joint Programs of the Wind River Tribes’ Tribal Transportation Program, identifying \$6.2 million in questioned costs and issuing the Wind River Tribes eight recommendations to improve its internal controls. The response is due May 10. (04/04/2018)

[NEW] The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) recently issued the draft report “Bureau of Reclamation’s Cooperative Agreement No. R16AC00087 with the Panoche Drainage District” (2017-WR-048). This agreement was awarded under the statutory authority of the San Luis Act of 1960 to fund operations and maintenance of the San Luis Demonstration Treatment Plant located in the San Luis Unit of California's Central Valley Project. The OIG identified \$213,891 in questioned costs and issued four recommendations for the Panoche Drainage District to improve its controls. (04/04/2018)

[NEW] The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) recently issued the final report “U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Grants Awarded to the Government of Guam, Department of Agriculture, From October 1, 2014, through September 30, 2016” (2017-EXT-006). The OIG identified \$139,764 in capital expenditures that may no longer benefit the grant program and issued the Government of Guan six recommendations to improve its internal controls. The response is due June 25. (04/04/2018)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR WATER AND SCIENCE

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Tim Petty will be in DC the week of April 9-13. As the National Water Resources Association is holding its annual DC Conference April 9-11, a number of Reclamation and CUPCA water contractors have requested brief stakeholder meetings with the ASWS to discuss their local topics of interest or concern.

On April 12, Tim will testify before the House Natural Resources Committee Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee during a budget oversight hearing on “*Examining the Proposed Fiscal Year 2019 Spending, Priorities and Missions of the Bureau of Reclamation and the Four Power Marketing Administrations.*” (This was previously postponed from March 21).

From April 9-13, USGS Deputy Director Bill Werkheiser will be in Reston, Va./Washington, D.C.

April 9, Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman will be the keynote speaker at the National Water Resources Association Conference in Washington, DC. April 9 – 11, Commissioner Burman and senior Reclamation staff will be attending the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation annual leadership meeting in Boulder City, NV. Commissioner Burman will be on leave the remainder of the week.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

[NEW] On April 9, Reclamation will issue a news release notifying the public of an environmental document proposing to provide \$732,930 from the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Habitat Restoration Program to the Bureau of Land Management. The funding will be used to purchase four private parcels of land, totaling 290 acres, which are inholdings surrounded by lands within the Carrizo Plain National Monument. The project would help Reclamation mitigate impacts of the CVP on threatened and endangered species and help minimize future impacts. The project also helps Reclamation meet mitigation required by the California State Water Resources Control Board Decision 1641. (04/02/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 9 and April 10, Reclamation’s Albuquerque Area Office will be presenting to the Pecos River Commission at their annual meeting. Reclamation provides its annual water accounting report in print and provides a presentation on any items that have been requested for discussion. The Pecos River Commission is scheduled to meet in Midland, Texas, on April 9-10. The meeting is open to the public but rarely have public or media attendance. (03/12/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 9-April 13, Reclamation’s Upper Colorado Region will award a grant to the Navajo Nation Tribal Government in the amount of \$1,100,000 for a 5-year agreement to operate the Public Service Company of New Mexico’s Fish Passage facility on the San Juan River to help protect endangered fish under the Recovery Program. This structure is located on

the San Juan River downstream from Farmington, New Mexico, near the town of Fruitland. A press release will go out when the grant has been awarded. (3/26/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 9 – April 13, Reclamation’s Western Colorado Area Office will send out a press release awarding a \$50 million cultural resource contract. The contract will allow the Western Colorado Area Office and Upper Colorado Region to obtain cultural resource-related services for various projects, including the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project. The contractors will closely coordinate activities with Western Colorado Area Office archeologists who will conduct field inspections and review all documents under this contract. It is anticipated that project specific cultural resource work will be awarded under this contract through 2023. Open press. (2/16/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 4 and 11, Reclamation’s San Joaquin River Restoration Program will release a Final EA and a FONSI for the installation of a well as a replacement water supply for the Merced National Wildlife Refuge as part of the Eastside Bypass Improvements Project. The remaining project components would be addressed by a separate FONSI in the coming months. The full project has the primary purpose of facilitating fish migration and increasing restoration flow capacity in the Eastside Bypass by 2020. (3/26/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 9 and 13, Reclamation expects to release the Funding Constrained Framework for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program along with a joint press release from the five implementing agencies (Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Department of Water Resources). The Framework will provide the foundation for shaping program direction into the next decade. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 9 – April 13, Reclamation’s Upper Colorado Region will award a \$6.6 million contract for a 5-year agreement to provide agency-wide professional photogrammetry services. This contract will provide sufficient quality in evaluating areas of interest for Reclamation in design, construction, and operation and maintenance studies for current projects. A press release will go out once the contract has been awarded. (4/2/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 9 and April 13, Reclamation will release its scoping report as part of the re-initiation of consultation on long-term operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project (ROC on LTO). This report will outline the proposed NEPA scoping process for the ROC on LTO EIR/EIS. (3/20/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 9 and April 30, the Bureau of Reclamation will distribute a press release notifying the public of the availability of a draft environmental assessment for Financial Assistance for the Klamath Basin Sucker Rearing Program. The draft EA was developed by Reclamation’s Klamath Basin Area Office in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Some media and or interest from the Klamath Tribes is possible. (3/12/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 9 and April 20, Reclamation is planning to launch the Pathogen Monitoring for Potable Reuse – State 1 Prize Competition. Reclamation and Xylem, Inc., in collaboration with the Water Environment & Reuse Foundation, the State of California and the

Environmental Protection Agency are seeking the development of improved monitoring techniques to protect public health and optimize the operations at water treatment facilities. Success could facilitate public and regulatory acceptance of direct potable reuse systems. (1/9/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 9 and 11, Reclamation will release final environmental documents on the proposed approval of annual transfers of up to 15,000 acre-feet per year of available Central Valley Project water supplies over a nine-year period. Transfers of CVP water would be from CVP contractors to Harris Farms and Shows Family Farms either for direct agricultural use on their lands located within Westlands Water District, San Luis Water District, and Semitropic Water Storage District or for banking in Semitropic and/or the Kern Water Bank for later use on their lands within those same districts. (3/26/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 9 and April 11, Reclamation will release draft environmental documents on the proposed issuance of a five-year Warren Act Agreement to Ivanhoe Irrigation District for the introduction and conveyance of up to 6,500 acre-feet per year of Kaweah River water in the Friant-Kern Canal. (3/26/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 9 and April 13, 2018, the Montana Area Office has developed a Press Release titled, "Reclamation Announces Yellowtail Dam/Bighorn Lake Spring Operations and Bighorn River System Issues Group Meeting." The release is intended to convey information to the public and stakeholders information regarding a public meeting to be held on April 24, 2018, in Billings, Montana, to inform the public and stakeholders about spring operations at Yellowtail Dam. (03/23/2018)

[NEW] Between April 9 and April 13, R&G Excavating, contractor for Klamath Irrigation District on the C Flume Replacement project, will complete preparation for water delivery through the C Siphon. Ditch bank improvement and access road work will continue. The C Flume/C Siphon is located in Klamath Falls, Oregon. The new C Siphon will be ready to convey water for the irrigation season, beginning in April. Media interest is expected. (4/2/2018)

Between April 9 and April 16, Reclamation's Albuquerque Area Office is scheduled to host three public meetings to roll out its annual operating plans for the Rio Grande and Pecos River. The Pecos meeting is tentatively scheduled for the morning of April 9 at the Bureau of Land Management Office in Roswell, New Mexico. The Rio Grande meetings are scheduled for the afternoon of April 12 at the Albuquerque Area Office and the afternoon of April 16 at the Elephant Butte Irrigation District in Las Cruces, New Mexico. These meetings are generally well attended, especially in extremely dry years like this one. A news advisory announcing the meetings is planned for the first week in April. (3/05/2018)

[NEW] Between April 9 and 30, Reclamation expects to distribute a press release notifying the public of the availability of a draft environmental assessment for two funded projects from the 2016 Klamath River Coho Habitat Restoration Grant. The projects are located in California on tributaries to the Klamath River. One project is near Klamath, California, along McGarvey Creek on and near the Yurok Tribal lands. The other project is on Beaver Creek on the Klamath National Forest. Media interest is not expected. (4/2/2018)

[UPDATE] On March 29, Reclamation's Albuquerque Area Office (AAO) presented to the Rio Grande Compact Commission at its annual meeting in Austin, Texas. Reclamation provided its annual water accounting report and provided a presentation on any items that have been requested for discussion. The Commission, comprised of representatives of Colorado, Texas and New Mexico, was particularly concerned with the development of a groundwater model for the Rio Grande Project area by U.S. Geological Survey for Reclamation. The publication of the model has been delayed and it is now scheduled to be released May 31. Reclamation staff from the Upper Colorado Region and AAO will also lead/participate in a tour of the Rio Grande Project for Department of Justice and Department Solicitors working on the Texas v. New Mexico Supreme Court Case. They will tour the project in Southern New Mexico, West Texas and the Mexico border on April 5-6. The Pecos River Commission is scheduled to meet in Midland, Texas, on April 9-10. The meeting is open to the public but rarely has public or media attendance. (03/12/2018)

On April 10, Reclamation's Hydraulic Lab in Denver will host eight teams from three universities to test a scaled prototype of a trash removal device in a custom flume in the lab. The trash removal device is for Cherry Creek that flows through Denver. There is a potential for media to attend, but none have confirmed at this time. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] On Wednesday morning, April 11, the non-profit Water Education Foundation's bus tour of the lower Colorado River will depart from Las Vegas, Nevada. This 3-day, 2-night tour, co-hosted by Reclamation's Lower Colorado Region, travels along the lower Colorado River from Hoover Dam to the Salton Sea and Imperial and Coachella valleys and profiles how the States of California, Arizona and Nevada work with Reclamation to use and manage this river's precious water supplies to meet agricultural, urban, environmental and industrial needs. Along the way, experts discuss the challenges related to what is among the most contested, beloved for recreation, and meticulously managed rivers in the nation. During this tour, participants learn about the ongoing drought conditions and contingency planning in the Lower Basin, Bi-National water management, agricultural water use, drainage and salinity, the Colorado River Basin Study, the Endangered Species Act and the Multi-Species Conservation Program, and the current Salton Sea restoration efforts. This annual tour typically has modest press coverage following the tour.

[NEW] On April 11, Reclamation's Montana Area Office, accompanied by the Solicitor's office, will meet with the Wyoming State Engineer's Office and Attorney General's Office on Bighorn Lake/Yellowtail Dam operations. (03/30/2018)

[NEW] On April 11, the United States District Court for Northern District of California will hold a hearing to review the Klamath Water Users Association's March 7, 2018 motion, as well as replies from the United States and Plaintiffs. In the United States' reply, Reclamation submitted a 2018 operations proposal that allows for implementation of a surface flushing flow while foregoing emergency dilution flows. These proposals are based on new scientific information. The proposal includes a Klamath Project supply of 252,000 acre-feet with deliveries beginning in mid-April with charging of major project canals. Klamath Basin Area Office has shared the 2018 operations proposal with the Hoopa, Yurok, and Klamath Tribes, as well as the Klamath Water

Users Association in advance of filing with the Court. Reclamation believes this proposal allows Reclamation to protect important Tribal Trust Resources while also allowing for water supply certainty and economic stability for agricultural communities in the Klamath Basin. Media interest is expected. (4/2/2018)

[NEW] On April 12, Alan Mikkelsen, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior for Water and Western Resource Issues, will be the guest speaker at the Klamath Water Users Association annual meeting in Klamath Falls, Oregon. Mid-Pacific Region Director David Murillo and Deputy Director Ali Forsythe will attend. Pending court ruling on April 11, irrigation start date and water allocation may be announced by Klamath Basin Area Office Manager Jeff Nettleton at the meeting. A news release will be issued when the start date, allocation and operations plan are released. Media interest is expected. (4/2/2018)

[NEW] On April 12, Reclamation will host a public meeting in Weaverville, California, to present the 2018 spring restoration flow releases from Lewiston Dam and gravel augmentation plans for the Trinity River. (4/2/2018)

On April 12, the Glen Canyon Dam Experimental Technical Team is meeting with the Experimental Leadership Team and the Department of the Interior to recommend that Macroinvertebrate Production Flows, also known as “Bug Flows,” be tested between May 1 and August 31, 2018. Bug Flows consist of steady weekend releases from Glen Canyon Dam and normal fluctuating releases during the weekdays. The steady weekend flows are expected to provide favorable conditions for insects to lay eggs along the Colorado River downstream of Glen Canyon Dam, while the fluctuating flows during the weekdays are designed to be slightly higher, thus preventing the eggs from drying out. This experiment is expected to have positive benefits to the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems in Glen, Marble and Grand Canyons. The purpose of the experimental flow is to test the effectiveness of Bug Flows on improving insect production and to increase the availability of food for aquatic and terrestrial life. This experiment, if approved by the Department, will be conducted under the Long-Term Experimental Management Plan (LTEMP). Communication efforts will include press releases. (3/27/2018)

On April 13, Reclamation will publish a Notice of Availability, followed by a 90 day public comment period for Supplemental Draft EIS for Two Water Projects in Washington State. Reclamation, with co-lead Washington State Department of Ecology in cooperation with the Yakama tribe; U.S. Forest Service and Bonneville Power Administration have prepared a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant and Keechelus Reservoir-to-Kachess Reservoir Conveyance Projects.

On April 13, Reclamation’s South-Central California Area Office representatives will meet in Fresno with Cachuma Project Member Units to discuss Operation and Maintenance deficits owed to Reclamation. (3/26/2018)

[UPDATED] On March 12, Reclamation’s Western Colorado Area Office released a draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Environmental Assessment (EA) on the Fire Mountain Canal Salinity Reduction Piping Project located in Delta, Colorado. The purpose of the

project will replace approximately 3.67 miles of open irrigation ditch with buried pipeline which will prevent seepage and reduce salinity loading in the Colorado River Basin. A press release was sent to local media. On March 28, a modification to obligate \$1,400,000 to Fire Mountain Canal Company for the project should be awarded. On April 13, comments on the draft EA and FONSI are due to Reclamation. A press release will go out announcing the final EA and FONSI. (3/26/2018)

On Monday, April 16, Reclamation's Lower and Upper Colorado Regions will co-host a webinar to apprise water officials from the basin States and Mexico on the results of the most probable April 2018 24-Month Study water use projections. The April 24-Month study is annually developed by Reclamation hydrologists to alert these organizations about the most probable water storage and hydrological conditions that are predicted to occur during the Colorado River Basin's upcoming water year. Following the webinar, the most probable April 2018 24-Month Study will be distributed and posted online. A PDF of the presentation will also be provided after the webinar. Media interest in the April 2018 24-Month Study report is usually extensive with Western journalists requesting a copy of the report and/or requesting interviews with Reclamation hydrologists regarding predicted conditions. (3/27/2018)

U.S. Geological Survey

[NEW] This week, the USGS began soliciting project proposals for Fiscal Year 2019 grants on earthquake hazards science with an authorization to award up to \$7 million. Every year the USGS invites innovative earthquake research proposals from colleges and universities, state and local offices, non-profit organizations, private institutions, unaffiliated scientists, engineers, and foreign organizations. Applications are due May 22, 2018 and can be submitted at grants.gov. (4/2/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 10, the USGS plans to highlight a new paper entitled, "North American Net Import Reliance of Mineral Materials for Advanced Technologies." The USGS and Natural Resources Canada conducted a study on the net import reliance of the United States, Canada, and Mexico as individual countries and as a single trading bloc for twelve nonfuel mineral commodities that are associated with advanced technology products. The minerals are cadmium, cobalt, gallium, germanium, graphite, indium, lithium, nickel, rare earths, selenium, silver, and tellurium. The results indicate that, as a single entity, North America is much less dependent on other nations for the supply of these commodities than its constituent countries are individually. This is because value chains between the three countries are tightly integrated such that various materials commonly cross continental borders multiple times, as value is added at each step. This study highlights the mitigation of potential supply risk for critical minerals that results from trade within the North American bloc. The paper will be published in *Mining Engineering* will be highlighted via social media. (3/22/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 11, the USGS will announce a new web application that provides real-time water-quality, streamflow and water height information for Lake Houston and the surrounding San Jacinto watershed. Lake Houston is the primary drinking-water source for Houston, Texas. Real-time data is required to evaluate the effects of watershed influences, such as land-use change and storm events, on Lake Houston water quality. These data will help water treatment

facility operators make informed decisions about adjusting treatment methods in response to changing water-quality conditions. A local news release is planned. (3/19/2018)

[**UPDATE**] On April 12, the USGS will post a Top Story about a paper published last December highlighting differences between east and west coast earthquakes. Focus will be placed on a new USGS study investigating earthquake ground shaking in the Washington, DC, area. The story will also draw attention to the recent magnitude 4.1 earthquake in Delaware. USGS scientists recently deployed 27 temporary seismometers throughout DC and found that shaking is amplified in the area due to the thin layer of sediments under parts of the city compared to areas build on more solid, harder bedrock. Regarding eastern and western earthquakes, the major differences are that in the East, earthquakes are felt much more widely, most structures are not designed to endure earthquakes and earthquakes radiate more energy at higher frequencies. The paper will be published in *Geophysical Research Letters*. (12/28/2017)

In April, the USGS will announce three “storm trackers” showing where floodwaters of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria possibly carried non-native and invasive freshwater plants and animals into new habitat. 2017 hurricane floodwaters inundated large expanses of state and federal conservation land likely carrying non-native plants and animals into new habitats. Some of these species are invasive and able to disrupt native food webs or damage landscapes. Since field surveys over such large areas are impractical, the storm trackers can help land managers target potential hot spots for newly arrived invasive species and take early, cost-effective steps to manage them. (3/5/2018)

In April, the USGS plans to announce a new paper that confirms a new established population of the invasive Cuban treefrog in New Orleans, La. This is the first breeding population to occur outside the state of Florida. Cuban treefrogs can drive out native frogs and be a nuisance to homeowners. They are invasive in Florida, where they have successfully bred since at least 1951. The findings will be published in *Biological Invasions* and a national news release is planned. (3/12/2018)

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

From April 16 to April 22 Reclamation's International Affairs Program will host the International Reservoir Sedimentation and Sustainability Workshop in Denver, Colorado. The primary goal is to provide participants with important information about reservoir sediment management for long-term sustainability. Participants at this workshop, who come from water resources entities from all over the world, will gain an understanding about reservoir sedimentation processes and rates, as well as how to analyze and develop conceptual designs of reservoir sediment management systems. The cost of the workshop is fully reimbursable to Reclamation. (3/26/2018)

Between April 15 and 30, Reclamation is planning to announce the selected ideas submitted under the data app prize competition. Reclamation, in collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey, is seeking the development of an application framework to support electronic data

collection and capture using mobile devices across a diverse range of data collection situations. (3/26/2018)

Between April 15 and 30, Reclamation is planning to announce the selected ideas submitted under the Long-Term Corrosion Protection of Existing Hydraulic Steel Structures prize competition. This prize competition sought ideas for long-term corrosion protection for large, hydraulic steel structures beyond the protection provided by available coatings and cathodic protection. (3/25/2018)

[NEW] On April 17, Reclamation's Snake River Area Office Manager Roland Springer will be the luncheon speaker for Boise State University's Andrus Center for Public Policy one day conference on Idaho water issues. Springer will focus on Reclamation's role in western water. (4/2/2018)

[NEW] On April 19, there will be a Summary Hearing in Federal District Court (Judge Morris, Great Falls, Montana) for the Lower Yellowstone Fish Passage Project. The proposed project is to improve passage for endangered pallid sturgeon and other native fish at the Intake Diversion Dam in the lower Yellowstone River while continuing the operation of the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project (03/30/2018)

[NEW] On April 24, Reclamation's Montana Area Office will hold an annual spring operations and Issues Group public meeting on Yellowtail Dam operations in Billings, Montana. (4/3/2018)

On April 23 and 24, the Glen Canyon Dam Technical Work Group meeting will be held at the Arizona Department of Water Resources in Phoenix, Arizona. Topics of discussion will include the Adaptive Management Program budget and workplan for fiscal year 2019, the Arizona Game and Fish Department's planned stocking in Lees Ferry, National Park Service nonnative aquatics Environmental Assessment, possible experiments at Glen Canyon Dam in 2018, planning for future springtime High-Flow Experiment's, current basin hydrology, updates from Annual Reporting meeting, and other administrative items as needed. The meeting is open to media and the public. (3/26/2018)

On April 26 and April 27, Reclamation's Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program will hold a Management Committee meeting in Denver, Colorado. Topics will include review and approval of the recovery implementation action plan and discussion of program structure and scope following Recovery Program sunset in 2023. The meeting is open to the public. (2/20/2018)

Between May 1 and May 11, Reclamation is planning to publish the remaining completed Rural Water Supply Program Appraisal Reports. Timing is based on when the notice is published in the Federal Register. A news release will be issued in conjunction with the Federal Register Notice. (1/9/2018)

[NEW] On May 3, Reclamation's Snake River Area Office Deputy Area Manager, Lanie Paquin, will present at the Idaho and Oregon Bankers Associations 2018 Agricultural Banks Conference

in Meridian, ID. She will focus on Reclamation's mission and role in irrigated agriculture, highlighting projects in southern Idaho and eastern Oregon. (4/2/2018)

[NEW] On May 14, Reclamation's Western Colorado Area Office and the City of Durango will hold a celebration/dedication for opening Lake Nighthorse for recreation. On April 1, the City of Durango had a soft opening of Lake Nighthorse for a couple hours to non-motorized use. Lake Nighthorse is located near Durango, Colorado, and is part of the Animas-La Plata Project. The Western Colorado Area Office is working closely with the City on preparing to open to motorized use on May 15 and construction of additional basic recreation facilities. Local media is interested in Lake Nighthorse and coordination between Reclamation and the media will continue. (3/09/2018)

On May 16-17, Reclamation's Upper Colorado Region's Salinity Control staff will participate at the Colorado River Basin Salinity Council (Council) and Forum meetings at the Washington County Water Conservancy District Office in St. George, Utah. Upper Colorado Regional Director Brent Rhees, and Lower Colorado Regional Director Terry Fulp have been invited to both meetings. The purpose of the Council meeting is to discuss and take appropriate actions regarding the following: Basin States Program created by Public Law 110-246, which amended the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974; responses to the Advisory Council Report; and other items within the jurisdiction of the Council. Meetings are open to the public, media generally does not attend. A federal register notice announcing the meeting is currently routing for Departmental review and approval. The notice is expected to publish on or near Thursday, April 26, 2018. (03/19/2018)

On May 21 through May 24, Reclamation's Lower Colorado Region will host a bi-annual Power Operations and Maintenance Workshop with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Tennessee Valley Authority. Discussion topics will include technical subjects related to hydro powerplant and pumping facilities operations, maintenance, and engineering activities; best practices; and lessons learned. The event will be held at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas, Nevada. No press is expected. (3/12/2018)

On May 22, the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work (AMWG) Group will host a webinar/conference call. A Federal Register Notice is currently routing for Departmental review and approval and is expected to be published around May 4. Topics of discussion will include updates on current basin hydrology, the Adaptive Management Program budget and workplan for fiscal year 2019, possible experiments at Glen Canyon Dam this water year, the status of AMWG membership appointments, and other administrative items as needed. The webinar is open to media and the public. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] On May 23, members of the Lower Clearwater Exchange Project will be leading a tour of the Lewiston Orchards Water Exchange Project for Trout Unlimited and the Resources Legacy Fund with support from the Nez Perce Tribe, Reclamation and the Lewiston Orchards Irrigation District (LOID). Invitations have been extended to representatives from the offices of Sen. Risch, Sen. Crapo and Rep. Labrador. The water exchange and title transfer is intended to benefit Snake River steelhead, protect natural and cultural resources important to the Nez Perce Tribe, and provide a reliable water supply for the LOID patrons. (4/02/2018)

U.S. Geological Survey

[**UPDATE**] On April 18, the USGS will participate in the release of the HayWired Earthquake Scenario in Oakland, Calif.. The HayWired Earthquake Scenario is a scientific, realistic and quantitative depiction of a future M7.0 earthquake on the Hayward Fault with an epicenter in Oakland, California. In addition to the scenario documents, a California state campaign to improve business resilience will be launched as part of the rollout. USGS is also planning to release a new Fact Sheet and post a Top Story. (3/7/2018)

[**UPDATE**] In late April, USGS, DOE and the American Wind Energy Association will announce an updated map and database of all onshore and offshore wind turbines in the United States. This new resource will serve as a replacement for the current WindFarm Mapping tool maintained by the USGS Energy Resources Program. (3/7/2018)

In April, the USGS will publish an online Science Snippet about a trio of recently published papers that show how fish, macroinvertebrates, and algae are affected by chemical and physical stressors in streams. The studies are based on the 2013 Midwest Stream Quality Assessment, which focused on 11 Midwestern states, and show that there are no pristine streams in the region. Chemical stressors, primarily nutrients and pesticides, and physical stressors, primarily excessive fine sediment and a disturbed riparian zone, have altered small streams and affected the number and diversity of fish, algae, and macroinvertebrates that call these streams home. (3/12/2018)

[**UPDATE**] In April, a new paper will be published in *Science Advances* that finds many atolls will become uninhabitable by the mid-21st century due to wave-driven flooding exacerbated by sea-level rise. The paper projects the impact of sea-level rise and wave-driven flooding on atoll infrastructure and freshwater availability under a variety of climate-change scenarios finding that, based on current greenhouse gas emission rates, the nonlinear interactions between sea-level rise and wave dynamics over reefs will lead to the annual wave-driven overwash of many atoll islands by the mid-21st century. A similar paper was published in 2015 and a recent report “The Impact of Sea-Level Rise and Climate Change on Department of Defense Installations on Atolls in the Pacific Ocean” was completed last fall. The research was funded by the U.S. Department of Defense’s Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program. A news release for this paper is planned. (3/12/2018)

In April, the USGS will release a Scientific Investigation Report co-authored with the Bureau of Reclamation that compares and contrasts the two agencies’ water-use information programs in the Colorado River Basin. The report also describes the legal drivers for each program, clarifies confusing terminology, compares the methods used, and contrasts the information reported by each agency. This detailed comparison demonstrates that these two Federal agencies have different missions, different programmatic drivers, and different user communities, all of which lead to different approaches to water-use data collection, analysis, and reporting. Despite the differences, the program comparison presented in this report identifies opportunities for closer coordination and sharing of information between the USGS and Reclamation, as well as program components where agency collaboration can improve water-use estimate methodologies. (3/6/2018)

On May 12, the USGS Cascades Volcano Observatory (Vancouver, Wash.) will hold a one-day public open house. USGS scientists will take a break from their day-to-day work to set up volcano displays and prepare science demonstrations to share with the public. The event is free and all ages are welcome. A local media advisory will be distributed. (3/27/2018)

[**UPDATE**] In May, the USGS will release a new Circular entitled “Estimated Use of Water in the United States in 2015.” This report documents the national compilation of water use data compiled by USGS once every 5 years for the entire U.S. The report will present state-level water use data for the year 2015 and discuss long-term trends in water use. An accompanying data release of county-level data will be released concurrently with the Circular. Also, a data visualization for the Circular and county-level data is being created. All three products will be released concurrently, and a news release is planned. (3/14/2018)

Awareness

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

[**UPDATE**] In April, a *Federal Register* Notice of Availability for the final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement prepared by Reclamation and the City of San Diego for the North City Project is scheduled to be issued. This project is the first phase of the Pure Water San Diego Program—a water and wastewater facilities plan to produce potable water from recycled water. A draft EIR/EIS was issued for public review and comment in late November 2017. Under the proposed action, the existing North City Water Reclamation Plant would be expanded and an adjacent North City Pure Water Facility would be constructed with a purified water pipeline to Miramar Reservoir, located in the Scripps Miramar Ranch community of San Diego, California. Reclamation will not make a decision on the proposed project until at least 30 days after the NOA is published by the Environmental Protection Agency. (1/12/2018)

[**UPDATE**] Reclamation’s Dakotas Area Office is preparing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Reclamation and the Province of Manitoba regarding the development of the Adaptive Management Plan for the Northwest Area Water Supply Biota Water Treatment Plant. The draft MOU has been reviewed by the region, Solicitor’s Office, and Department of Justice. Presently, the draft MOU has been provided to the Commissioner’s office and Water & Science. Comments from the State of North Dakota have been received by Reclamation and are currently under review. (3/27/2018)

[**UPDATE**] Reclamation is waiting for comments on the Central North Dakota Environmental Assessment (EA) by the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District. A briefing for Water and Science was scheduled 4/5 to discuss comments received and changes made since the first public release. We anticipate a second public comment period on the draft EA will be announced in April. (3/26/2018)

The March 2018 24-Month Study indicates that Lake Powell releases for water year 2018 continue to be projected at 9.0 million-acre feet (maf). The determination of this year’s releases will be finalized with the April 2018 24-Month Study. Based on the current inflow forecast and

projected releases, the March 24-Month Study projects Lake Powell elevation will end water year 2018 near 3,601 feet, with approximately 11.8 maf in storage (49 percent of capacity). Currently, Lake Powell is 54 percent full, with a live storage content of 13.1 maf. Water Year 2018 conditions in the Upper Colorado River Basin have been very dry, and little time remains for significant improvement prior to spring runoff. According to the Colorado Basin River Forecast Center, the forecasted inflow to Lake Powell is 3.1 million acre-feet (43 percent of average) for the 2018 April-July runoff period. Current conditions in the Lower Colorado River Basin are very dry, with record low precipitation and snowpack being reported at many sites throughout the Lower Basin. As of March 27, 2018, Lake Mead's elevation was 1,088.2 feet with 10.7 million acre-feet in storage (41% of live capacity). With a projected release of 9.0 million acre-feet from Lake Powell in water year 2018, Lake Mead is projected to decline to a seasonally low elevation of 1,076.2 feet with 9.7 million acre-feet in storage (37% of live capacity) in July 2018 and to end calendar year 2018 at an elevation of 1,077.24 feet with 9.8 million acre-feet in storage (37% of live capacity). Releases from Lake Powell account for approximately 90% of the total inflow into Lake Mead, with the other 10% derived from intervening flows between Glen Canyon Dam and Hoover Dam. The observed intervening flows for January and February 2018 were 80% of average. (3/27/2018)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently published a press release (3/22/2018) announcing completion of a Species Status Assessment and 5-Year Review, which proposes down-listing the humpback chub from "endangered" to "threatened." The humpback chub is still classified as endangered and, at this time, it is only proposed for down-listing. If the classification of the species is officially changed to threatened, as the 5-Year Review recommends, it will remain fully protected under the Endangered Species Act. The Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program have been key contributors in the recovery of this native fish. Reclamation's modification of flow regimes from large dams, provision of flows to support native fish, and participation in and funding of the conservation and recovery programs is a central reason this species is able to be considered for down-listing. Collaborative partnerships and management of resources have protected the species from extinction. (3/27/2018)

The Department and Reclamation are currently working with the Council of Environmental Quality on development of a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act for select types of title transfers. In cases where the transfer of title from Reclamation to a willing entity is non-controversial, non-complicated and would not result in a change in the operations or management of the facilities, establishment of a categorical exclusion could decrease the time required for Reclamation to complete title transfers. (3/20/2018)

Reclamation is proposing to publish a notice in the Federal Register to begin charging fees at Lake Berryessa in Napa County, California. The fees will be used to upgrade facilities and pay for costs associated with recreation. Reclamation will ensure that visitors are aware of the proposed plan by holding public scoping meetings, press releases, posting it on the Lake Berryessa website at www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/berryessa/index.html and posting announcements at day use areas. During public scoping meetings and the public comment period, Reclamation will seek input from the public regarding the possible use of funds collected. Public scoping meetings

and public outreach will ensure that the public is aware of all proposed fees and passes available to them. (2/26/2018)

Legislation authorizing the Westlands Settlement (“Settlement”) (H.R. 1769) is pending before the House of Representatives. The current stay of the *Firebaugh* injunction expired on January 15, 2018 and the district court did not grant an additional stay. As a result, Reclamation is preparing to expend significant funds to implement the Control Schedule of drainage measures for Westlands as approved by the court and could face additional litigation. The January 2018 Revised Control Schedule identifies a funding need of about \$3 million in FY 2018. Based on Congressional action to date on the fiscal year 2018 budget, upon final passage Reclamation expects to be able to accommodate the \$3 million identified in the Control Schedule. If required, it also identifies a funding need of over \$12.2 million in FY 2019, which is not currently included in the fiscal year 2019 President’s budget; over \$13.8 million in FY 2020, over \$29.7 million in FY 2021 – ramping up to a need of over \$101 million in FY 2023. The funding needs to implement drainage are significant and represent a substantial financial obligation for the Department of the Interior. (2/9/2018)

Reclamation is proposing to publish a Notice of Intent (NOI) in June 2018 to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on the New Mexico Unit (NM Unit) Project (Project). The proposed Project is part of the Central Arizona Project, authorized by the Colorado River Basin Project Act of 1968, Pub. L. 90-537, 43 U.S.C. Ch. 32 (1968 Act), as amended by the Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA, Pub. L. 108-451). Pursuant to the AWSA, the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) is authorized to contract with water users in New Mexico for water from the Gila River, its tributaries and underground water sources. Use of Gila River water under the AWSA is conditioned on satisfying a variety of laws and agreements related to the use and exchange of Gila River water in New Mexico and Arizona. The NM Unit will divert Gila River water in New Mexico for this purpose. The AWSA provided funding to construct the NM Unit or, to develop other alternatives in southwestern New Mexico to meet demand. Reclamation and the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC) are joint lead agencies for complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other related environmental regulations regarding the proposed Project. Issuance of the NOI will initiate the formal public scoping process associated with NEPA compliance. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] The Middle Rio Grande is experiencing early drying due to drought. The reach of the Rio Grande passing through Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge started drying on April 1. The Fish and Wildlife Service has started efforts to rescue endangered Rio Grande silvery minnow from pools in the drying river. The 2016 Biological Opinion allows for adaptive management and sets standards on fish numbers, instead of flow targets. Colorado has started irrigating so flows will continue to be reduced from Colorado on the mainstem of the Rio Grande. The snowpack forecast for all basins feeding the Rio Grande is extremely low so the runoff is not expected to provide much relief. Reclamation is coordinating closely with the Fish and Wildlife Service and Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District on operations to try to minimize the effects of the drying. (04/02/2018)

U.S. Geological Survey

[**UPDATE**] Delayed until September 2018, the USGS plans to distribute a public notice to news outlets in Ellsworth and New Richmond, Wisconsin, and Red Wing, Minnesota, announcing a public open comment period for proposed USGS field trials of a white-nose syndrome vaccine in the area. The field trials, part of an Environmental Assessment that is being developed by the USGS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, will evaluate methods of vaccine delivery and their effectiveness in reducing or preventing white-nose syndrome (WNS) in wild bats under field conditions. The comment period will be open for 30 days following approval of the Public Notice. The Public Notice will be submitted to the outlets by a USGS Environmental Manager and is not meant to be a formal news release. (3/23/2018)

[**UPDATE**] USGS Associate Director Environmental Health and Acting Associate Director Energy and Minerals, Geoff Plumlee, is scheduled to participate in two meetings at the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM). On April 12th, Dr. Plumlee will give a 20-minute presentation on contaminants and pathogens from natural sources in the subsurface to the NASEM Spring Series on Subsurface Contaminants co-sponsored by the NASEM Boards on Chemical Sciences and Technology, Environmental Studies and Toxicology, Earth Sciences and Resources, and Water Science and Technology. On April 26th, Dr. Plumlee will attend a morning subsurface contaminants series session and then in the afternoon join other USGS leaders at the Board of Earth Sciences and Resources sponsors session. (3/27/2018)

Executive Order 13817 (December 2017) inaugurated a government-wide effort to strengthen and sustain the Nation's critical mineral supply chains, with significant USGS responsibilities in four areas. (1) The USGS, in conjunction with BLM and other Federal agencies, developed a draft list of 35 critical minerals, published on February 16, 2018, in the Federal Register. Public comment closed on March 19, 2018, and the USGS is preparing a short summary of comments. (2) The USGS is leading development of a plan to better assess the Nation's subsurface mineral potential through new collection of geophysical, geologic, and topographic data. The draft plan will be transmitted to the Secretary by April 19, 2018. In the coming months, the USGS anticipates additional review and input from other Federal agencies and external partners, and ongoing revisions as required to inform the government-wide strategy to be published by the Department of Commerce in August 2018. (3) The USGS will provide technical input to Commerce on the potential to better use above-ground sources of critical minerals, including by recycling, reprocessing, and substituting alternative materials. (4) USGS will provide technical input to Commerce on existing trade dependencies for critical minerals. (2/9/2018)

[**NEW**] On April 25, Assistant Secretary for Water & Science, Tim Petty, will co-chair the Alaska Mapping Executive Committee (AMEC) meeting to be held at Main Interior. RDML Tim Gallaudet, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere at NOAA serves as the other co-chair. The AMEC was formed in November, 2012, to coordinate critical mapping activities in the State of Alaska. Executive level managers from 15 Federal agencies and the State of Alaska serve on the AMEC. The Committee cooperatively focuses on acquisition of key statewide map data layers, and meets regularly to discuss Alaska mapping activities, agencies' requirements, and program status. (4/2/2018)

Upcoming USGS Publications

[**NEW**] In April, a new USGS paper entitled “Quantifying functional connectivity: the role of breeding habitat, abundance, and landscape features on range-wide gene flow in sage-grouse,” will be published in *Evolutionary Applications*. Quantifying how landscapes influence the movement of individuals between habitat patches can help inform conservation initiatives when landscape genetics is able to identify factors linking genetic structure to landscape mechanisms. Using genetic material from 6,844 Greater Sage-Grouse collected from across their range, USGS scientists and their colleagues used breeding habitat metrics, landscape attributes and indices of grouse abundance, to compare fit between connectivity and genetic differentiation within five Sage Grouse Management Zones (MZ). Connectivity of breeding habitat was impeded when probability of lek occurrence dropped below 0.25 (MZs I, IV) and 0.5 (II) with these thresholds being lower than those previously identified for the formation of breeding leks, suggesting individuals are willing to travel through undesirable habitat. The individual landscape results suggested terrain roughness and steepness shaped connectivity across all MZs, and across MZs, sagebrush availability, tree canopy cover, and cultivation each impeded movement. On top of the identified thresholds, resulting maps that depict the strength and redundancy of connectivity can help inform conservation actions that maintain and restore functional connectivity for sage-grouse. (4/2/2018)

[**NEW**] In April, a new USGS paper entitled “The genetic network of greater sage-grouse: range-wide identification of keystone hubs of connectivity,” will be published in *Molecular Ecology*. Genetic networks can characterize complex genetic relationships among groups of individuals. Relationships within a network can be used to rank locations that are most important to the overall connectivity of a system allowing scarce resources to be guided towards locations integral to connectivity. Scientists from University of Montana, USGS, USFS, and University of Waterloo collected genetic data from 5,950 greater sage-grouse across the entire species’ geographic range to quantify connectivity and identify the leks most essential to maintaining connectivity. Genetic connectivity in the network was primarily influenced by geographic distance between leks. The leks and connections that were of high importance were located toward the center of the species’ range. Leks near the northern periphery had characteristics indicative genetic connectivity is high. The team found that certain leks could be identified as keystone leks, defined as those leks that have a greater influence on the overall network relative to the size of the lek. The loss of these keystone leks could result in the disintegration of the network into smaller, isolated sub-networks. Protecting these important leks and their connections could maintain network connections to ensure a resilient and viable population over time. (4/2/2018)

[**NEW**] In April, a new USGS Fact Sheet entitled “Assessment of Continuous Gas Resources in the Phosphoria Formation of the Wyoming Thrust Belt Province, Wyoming, Idaho, and Utah, 2017,” will be available online from the USGS Publications Warehouse. Using a geology-based assessment methodology, the USGS estimated mean undiscovered, technically recoverable resources for continuous gas in the Phosphoria Formation of the Wyoming Thrust Belt Province, Wyoming, Idaho, and Utah. (4/2/2018)

[**NEW**] In April, a new USGS Fact Sheet entitled “Assessment of Undiscovered Continuous Gas Resources in Upper Devonian Shales of the Appalachian Basin Province, 2017,” will be

available online from the USGS Publications Warehouse. Using a geology-based assessment methodology, the USGS estimated mean undiscovered, technically recoverable continuous resources of natural gas in Upper Devonian shales of the Appalachian Basin Province. (4/2/2018)

[**NEW**] On April 16, a new USGS Fact Sheet entitled “Assessment of Undiscovered Continuous Oil and Gas Resources of Upper Cretaceous Shales in the Songliao Basin of China, 2017,” will be available online from the USGS Publications Warehouse. Using a geology-based assessment methodology, the USGS estimated mean undiscovered, technically recoverable resources of oil and gas in shale reservoirs of the Upper Cretaceous Qingshankou and Nenjiang Formations in the Songliao Basin of northeastern China. (4/2/2018)

[**NEW**] On April 23, a new USGS Fact Sheet entitled “Assessment of Undiscovered Conventional Oil and Gas Resources in the Downdip Paleogene Formations, U.S. Gulf Coast, 2017,” will be available online from the USGS Publications Warehouse. Using a geology-based assessment methodology, the USGS estimated mean undiscovered, technically recoverable conventional resources of oil and gas in the downdip Paleogene formations in onshore lands and State waters of the U.S. Gulf Coast region. (4/2/2018)

[**NEW**] In April/May, a new USGS paper entitled “An objective road risk assessment method for multiple species: ranking 166 reptiles and amphibians in California,” will be published in *Springer Nature*. Transportation and wildlife agencies must consider the need for barrier structures and safe wildlife road-crossings to maintain the long-term viability of wildlife populations. In order to prioritize these efforts, it is important to identify species that are most at risk of extirpation from road-related impacts. (4/2/2018)

[**NEW**] In April, a new USGS and NPS report entitled “Olympic National Park Natural Resource Condition Assessment,” will be released. This publication will be the first Natural Resource Condition Assessment for Olympic National Park (OLYM). The Natural Resource Condition Assessment, or NRCA, is a nearly 400-page evaluation report concentrated on 12 focal resources in OLYM, each aligned with one of five guiding questions of primary interest to park managers. Social media is being considered. (4/2/2018)

Conversation Contents

UPDATED Weekly Report to the Secretary, April 1-7 2018

Attachments:

/48. UPDATED Weekly Report to the Secretary, April 1-7 2018/1.1 Weekly Report to the Secretary April 1-7.docx

"Dermody, Matthew" <matthew_dermody@ios.doi.gov>

From: "Dermody, Matthew" <matthew_dermody@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Fri Mar 30 2018 05:46:08 GMT-0600 (MDT)
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Subject:

UPDATED Weekly Report to the Secretary, April 1-7 2018

Attachments:

Weekly Report to the Secretary April 1-7.docx

All,

Attached is the revised version of the report. Please use this version and disregard the non-revised Word version sent last night.

I apologize for any confusion.

Thanks,

Matthew Dermody
Special Assistant
Office of the Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior

1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240
202-513-7778

 [Weekly Report to the Secretary April 1-7.docx](#)

**WEEKLY REPORT
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
APRIL 1-7, 2018**

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

No updates to report at this time.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt will be in Colorado Thursday April 5 and Friday April 6 at the request of Senators Gardner, Bennett and Representative Tipton regarding the recently announced Anvil Points distribution. While in Colorado he will also meet with press, local leaders, and BLM and BOR employees in Grand Junction and Denver.

Assistant Deputy Secretary Todd Willens will be out on personal leave all week.

Associate Deputy Secretary Jim Cason will be in the office all week.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

No updates to report at this time.

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

No updates to report at this time.

Awareness

Between April 1-7, the Department will be reinstating two mineral leases on the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota, which were first obtained by Twin Metals Minnesota, LLC (TMM) in 1966. This action follows a DOI Solicitor opinion issued December 22, 2017. More details on this action can be found in the ASLM section of this report.

OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Congressional Hearings, and Travel

No updates to report.

Week Ahead Announcements and Actions

In our continuing efforts to strengthen and improve the Department and its agencies review, response, and coordination of ethics matters and promote the highest level of ethical principles,

our Ethics Office is bringing on two new senior ethics professional managers. On April 15th, Scott de la Vega will join the Ethics Office team as the Designated Agency Ethics Officer and Director of the Ethics Office and Heather Gottry will join our Ethics Office staff as an SL manager and serve as the Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Officer. The addition of these two quality hires will continue to reinforce our commitment to and our requirement for the application of the highest ethical standards at the Department of the Interior. It also reflects the first hiring of full time additional seasoned ethics officials to complement the existing team in nearly nine years.

NEW CASES:

Friends of Animals v. Silvey and BLM (D. Nev.)

On January 25, Plaintiff filed a complaint challenging a wild horse gather plan for the Antelope Valley and Triple B Complexes. The 10-year gather plan includes removal of excess wild horses, application of fertility vaccines, and gelding. Plaintiff alleges that the application of reproductive controls is a violation of the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burrow Act (WFRHBA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). On March 12, the United States filed the Administrative Record (AR). On March 21, Plaintiffs requested that additional documents be added the Administrative Record and the Government has agreed to file a Supplemental AR by March 30. Plaintiffs have also requested the Government provide a privilege log. The Department of Justice (DOJ) has filed a joint motion to modify the scheduling order to allow for supplementation of the record.

East Columbia Basin Irrigation District, et al. v. United States, et al. (E.D. Wash.)

On March 19, the three Columbia Basin Project irrigation districts (East, South, and Quincy) filed a complaint against the United States, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), Secretary Zinke, Commissioner Burman, and Reclamation's Regional Director, Lorri Gray, each in their official capacities, alleging breach of contract and breach of the duties to act in good faith and fair dealing. Specifically, the districts allege that Reclamation wrongly asserted that, under the 1968 repayment contracts between Reclamation and the districts, the districts are obligated to pay for the costs of third party power transmission service. The districts claim the United States is responsible to pay these operations costs.

SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS:

United States v. Oregon (D. Or.)

United States v. Oregon is a treaty fishing rights case that allocates harvest between treaty Indian tribes and non-treaty fishers, and oversees hatchery production in the Columbia River basin. The Parties (three Federal agencies, four NW states and five NW Tribes) negotiated a 2018-2027 Management Agreement that replaces the previous 2008-2017 Management Agreement. On February 26, the parties submitted a *Joint Motion and Stipulated Order* to the court for approval of the Management Agreement. On March 19, the court held a telephonic hearing and approved the Management Agreement and adopted the Agreement as an Order of the Court. The judge then terminated the court's continuing jurisdiction of this longstanding treaty rights case and dismissed the case without prejudice to re-opening in the event a dispute arises concerning the parties' Management Agreement that requires judicial review.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe v. United States Army Corps of Engineers and Dakota Access, LLC (D.D.C. March 19) - Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) On March 19, the Court ruled on the Yankton Sioux Tribe's (YST's) Motion for Partial Summary Judgment. The YST's Complaint concerning the Dakota Access Pipeline was consolidated with the suits brought by the Standing Rock Sioux and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribes regarding the same pipeline. The YST Complaint was the only one of the consolidated cases that named the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as a Defendant. Of the YST's seven claims for relief, two were raised against FWS and were based upon FWS' issuance of a special use permit (SUP) in connection with the pipeline's crossing of certain private lands encumbered by FWS wetland easements. Plaintiffs claimed that USFWS, along with United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), violated NEPA by improperly segmenting the DAPL components, failing to adequately consider indirect and cumulative impacts, and failing to meaningfully involve the Tribe on a Government-to-Government basis to achieve environmental justice obligations. In addition, Plaintiffs claimed that FWS, along the USACE, violated the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, federal trust responsibilities, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) by enabling the pipeline's construction without first obtaining the Tribe's free, prior, and informed consent. After DOJ filed their initial brief, the YST withdrew their claims based on alleged violations of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, federal trust responsibilities, and the UNDRIP. The Court ruled in favor of the Federal Defendants and against the YST on their NEPA claims. The Court also dismissed the YST's claims under the National Historic Preservation Act as moot.

Powder River Basin Resource Council, Northern Plains Resource Council, Sierra Club, and Natural Resources Defense Council v. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, et al. (D. Mont.) In March 2016, plaintiffs filed an action challenging the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) approval of RMPs for two field offices in the Powder River Basin (Miles City, MT and Buffalo, WY). Plaintiffs alleged that BLM violated NEPA in making available approximately 2 million acres of land for federal coal leasing and 10 million acres of land for federal oil and gas leasing without adequately addressing environmental consequences. On March 23, the court granted in part the United States' cross-motion for summary judgment. The court held that BLM was not required to consider alternatives that would mandate specific methane measures on all oil and gas leases, specifically rejected the need to use the social cost of carbon protocol when considering cumulative impacts of climate change, and held that BLM took a hard look at cumulative impacts of the resource management plan (RMPs) on air quality. But, the court found that BLM violated NEPA because it failed to include an alternative that would decrease the amount of coal available for leasing, it did not take a hard look at downstream combustion of the coal, and it failed to adequately explain some of its global warming calculations. The court ordered BLM to supplement the RMPs, but declined to enjoin lease- or permit-level coal, oil, or gas developments "at this juncture." The parties have 60 days to confer on appropriate remedies.

Challenges to Critical Habitat Regulations and Definition of "Destruction or Adverse Modification" (*State of Alabama v. NMFS* (S.D. Ala.) and *Utility Water Act Group v. NMFS* (S.D. Ala.))

The court has granted plaintiffs' motions to dismiss in both cases.

OTHER LITIGATION MATTERS:

City of Fresno v. U.S. (Fed. Cl.) - U.S. Filing in Response to Proposed Intervention

On October 5, 2016, the City of Fresno and seventeen water districts (Friant Parties) sued the United States, seeking approximately \$350,000,000.00 in just compensation for alleged Fifth Amendment "takings" of Plaintiffs' property interest in water impounded by the Central Valley Project's Friant Dam during drought operations in 2014. On January 30, the court granted Plaintiffs unopposed motion to amend their complaint, originally filed on October 5, 2016, in order to more fully address Defendant's standing argument. The United States filed an answer on February 26. Proposed Intervenor, San Luis & Delta Mendota Water Authority (SLDMWA) and the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors (Exchange Contractors) have requested rulings on pending motions to intervene that were deferred pending proceedings on the United States' Motion to Dismiss. On March 23, Plaintiff's filed a response opposing the interventions. On March 28, the United States will file a response stating that it does not oppose the Proposed Intervenor's request that the court issue a ruling on the pending motions to intervene, however, the United States has not changed its position on the underlying motions. In its October 2017 Response to the Proposed Intervenor's motions to intervene, the United States opposed intervention by SLDMWA, but did not oppose intervention by the Exchange Contractors.

Firebaugh, et al. v. U.S. (E.D. California)

The United States remains subject to an injunction requiring the filing of bi-annual status reports updating the Court on implementation of the drainage obligation in the San Luis Unit of the Central Valley Project. The next status report will be filed on March 30.

Save the Colorado, et al. v. United States Bureau of Reclamation (D. Colo.) - Windy Gap FIRMING Project NEPA Litigation

This case is a NEPA-based challenge to Reclamation's 2014 decision to execute contracts for the Windy Gap FIRMING Project, a private water project that connects to and utilizes facilities from the federal Colorado-Big Thompson reclamation project in Northern Colorado. The general nature of the NEPA allegations is that the purpose and need is too narrow because the water demand does not exist and that the NEPA analysis was not sufficiently thorough. The administrative record has been filed, and briefing will begin as soon as April depending on whether plaintiffs challenge the scope of the record.

Texas v. New Mexico & Colorado (No. 141 Original) (U.S. Supreme Court) - Meet and Confer; Filing of Draft Case Management Plan

In 2013, the State of Texas brought an Original Action in the U.S. Supreme Court, in which the United States intervened as a plaintiff, against the States of New Mexico and Colorado, alleging violations of the Rio Grande Compact by New Mexico. New Mexico filed a Motion to Dismiss Texas' Complaint and the United States' Complaint in Intervention, which the Supreme Court referred to Special Master A. Gregory Grimsal. Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) and El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 (EPCWID) moved to intervene. On February 9, 2017, the Special Master issued a final report and recommendations. The Special Master's recommendations to the Supreme Court were to (1) deny New Mexico's Motion to Dismiss Texas's complaint; (2) deny in part New Mexico's Motion to Dismiss the United States (ruling that the United States' claims will lie under federal Reclamation law but not under the Compact),

and (3) deny EBID and EPCWID's motions to intervene. After the Supreme Court heard oral argument in January 2018 on exceptions related to the United States' interests as set forth in the Special Master's report, the Court issued an opinion on March 5, finding that the United States has "distinctively federal interests" that favor allowing it to pursue its compact claims. Following a status conference with the Special Master on March 23, New Mexico has 60 days to file its answer and counter-claims. Parties agreed to meet and confer on April 4, with the intent of filing a draft Case Management Plan on April 13.

Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians v. Coachella Valley Water District, et al. (C.D. Cal.)
On February 28, at the invitation of the Ninth Circuit after the U.S. Supreme Court's denial of *certiorari* in November 2017, the parties to this litigation involving the Agua Caliente Band's reserved right to groundwater had an initial mediation meeting with retired Circuit Judge Edward Leavy. Each party provided a statement of issues prior to the meeting. During the initial session, the water districts outlined a proposal for consideration, and Coachella Valley Water District circulated a term sheet to the mediator and other parties on March 23. A follow-up session has been scheduled for April 25, in Palm Springs. Meanwhile, the federal district court has postponed oral arguments regarding Phase II issues from March 12, until sometime in late April, likely April 26. Phase II addresses three legal issues: whether the Tribe owns pore space underlying its Reservation; whether the Tribe's federal reserved water right includes a water quality component; and the appropriate standard to quantify the Tribe's water right. The water districts also raised justiciability arguments, including standing and ripeness. As part of its postponement order, the court indicated that it will only hear argument concerning standing and water quality issues.

United States v. Bd. of Dir. of Truckee-Carson Irrigation Dist., et al. (D. Nev.) - Newlands Project "Recoupment" Case Response to Rule 60(b)(6) Motion
On March 13, the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District (TCID) filed a Rule 60(b)(6) motion seeking relief from judgment based on the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Kokesh v. SEC*, 137 S. Ct. 1635 (2017), which involved disgorgement of profits under SEC enforcement actions. This longstanding "Recoupment" case was specifically authorized by a 1990 statute that directed the United States to recover water illegally diverted by TCID from 1973 to 1987, willfully exceeding diversion limits by diverting water away from the Truckee River's natural terminus at Pyramid Lake and into the Newlands Project instead, which TCID operates and maintains under contract with Reclamation. After years of litigation and appeals, TCID owes the United States and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe approximately 344,000 acre-feet of water, and proceedings are currently underway to determine how TCID will repay the water. TCID's motion asserts that *Kokesh* establishes a statute of limitations period that expired before the Recoupment litigation was filed by the US. The US response is due April 27.

United States v. Fallbrook Public Utility Dist. (S.D. Cal.) - Santa Margarita River Basin Adjudication

The United States, Pechanga Band of Luiseño Mission Indians, and Rancho California Water District filed documents associated with the Band's water rights settlement with the federal district court on January 24. In addition to the 2016 Settlement Act and associated settlement agreement, which the Secretary and the other parties signed on November 29, 2017, the settlement parties filed a Joint Motion for Consent Judgment and Decree Adopting Settlement

Agreement, a Joint Memorandum in support of the motion, and a proposed Judgment and Decree. No hearing date has been set by the court.

Kvasnikoff v. U.S. (D.Alaska) – Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) Coverage Based on Self-Governance Compact

On March 26, there is a meeting with DOJ to discuss concerns about the Order in this case. The Judge concluded that there can be FTCA coverage for a premises liability claim involving a tribal entity's building based on a self-governance compact. The judge granted the Bristol Bay Native Association's (BBNA's) motion for Certification and Dismissal of BBNA as a Defendant. The judge also denied the U.S. motion to dismiss the Complaint. The deadlines for filing a motion for reconsideration or a motion seeking an interlocutory appeal, if applicable, fall during the second week of April.

Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges, Wilderness Society, et al. v. Zinke (D. Alaska) On April 2, the government's answer is due in response to a complaint seeking declaratory and injunctive relief to stop the Secretary's planned land exchange within the Izembeck National Wildlife Refuge with King Cove Corporation. Plaintiffs, a consortium of environmental organizations, allege that the exchange is invalid because it does not further the purposes of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), violates Title XI of ANILCA, and violates NEPA.

Northern Alaska Environmental Center et al. v. Zinke (D. Alaska) – National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) 2017 Lease Sale Challenge

Petitioners, a consortium of national and Alaska-based environmental organizations, challenge the BLM's December 2017, NPR-A lease sale, alleging that additional NEPA analysis was required. The BLM relied on a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) which concluded that the November 2012, National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement remained adequate for purposes of holding the sale notwithstanding recent new information and circumstances including recent large oil and gas discoveries in and near NPR-A. Answer is due April 3.

Natural Resources Defense Council et al. v. Zinke (D. Alaska) – NPR-A 2016 and 2017 Lease Sales Challenge

Petitioners, a consortium of national environmental organizations, challenge the BLM's December 2016 and December 2017 NPR-A lease sales, alleging that additional NEPA analysis of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions was required and that BLM failed to consider tract specific lease sale configurations. The BLM relied on Determinations of NEPA Adequacy (DNAs) for each lease sale which concluded that the November 2012 National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement remained adequate for purposes of holding the sales. The environmental impact statement (EIS) had not analyzed the impacts of GHG emissions from the end consumption of the oil and gas that might be produced as a result of the lease sales, and did not consider tract-specific lease sale configurations. Answer is due April 6.

Sturgeon v. Frost (Supreme Court)

The United States' response to plaintiff's petition for writ of cert is due April 6, though an extension could be requested. At issue is a Ninth Circuit decision affirming National Park Service's (NPS's) authority to regulate hovercraft use on certain waters within ANILCA Conservation System Units in Alaska. Citing the *Katie John* precedent, the Ninth Circuit held that the United States has an implied reservation of water rights in the Nation River, rendering it "public lands" for purposes of ANILCA.

Save America's Mustangs (SAM) v. BLM (D. Nev.)

Plaintiff filed a Quiet Title Action (QTA) to dispute the United States' reservation of a road through patented parcels. Plaintiff installed a gate blocking access to the road and asked for a declaratory judgment that there is no public access to the road. On December 19, 2017, Plaintiffs filed a Notice of Appeal from the District Court's November 20, 2017 Order granting the United States' motion to dismiss Plaintiff's Quiet Title Act (QTA) litigation for lack of jurisdiction due to the statute of limitations for bringing a QTA action. On March 22, after several mediation discussions, the parties agreed they have reached an impasse and that briefing on Plaintiff's appeal should proceed. Plaintiff's opening brief is due June 25.

M.L. Johnson Family Properties v. Zinke ("Johnson Family II") (E.D. Ky.)

When mining companies seek to develop coal mining operations on split estate lands, where the surface is owned by a party who is different from the party who owns the subsurface, the Surface Mining Reclamation and Control Act of 1977 (SMCRA) requires the mining company to obtain a right of entry from the surface owner. In this case, the surface was originally owned by multiple members of the M.L. Johnson family. Some members of the family sold or otherwise granted entry to a company affiliated with Premier Elkhorn, the mining company, and others objected to entry. When Kentucky authorized the mining operation, the family members who objected sued OSM, contending that Kentucky was not properly implementing SMCRA because Premier Elkhorn did not have a valid right of entry (Johnson Family I). As a result of Johnson Family I, OSM issued a cessation order to Premier Elkhorn, but later terminated the cessation order when Premier Elkhorn demonstrated an alternative right of entry. We filed a motion for summary judgment in this case arguing that the alternative right of entry was valid under Kentucky's co-tenancy law, and OSM properly terminated the cessation order. On March 21, the Court issued a decision granting our motion for summary judgment. The Court determined that Premier Elkhorn had demonstrated a valid right of entry based on the application of Kentucky's co-tenancy law. It found that SMCRA unambiguously permits a right of entry based on all relevant state law.

League of Conservation Voters v. Trump (D. Alaska)

On March 19, the court denied the government's motion to dismiss a complaint brought by the League of Conservation Voters, and others, challenging President Trump's 2017 order reversing President Obama's orders withdrawing areas of the outer continental shelf (OCS) from leasing (Beaufort, Chukchi and areas of the Atlantic) under section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA). In the motion to dismiss, the government argued: (1) sovereign immunity (the United States is immune from suit except to the extent Congress unequivocally and expressly waives that immunity); (2) no private right of action (plaintiffs fail to identify any statute that provides them a right of action to enforce their alleged rights under OCSLA and the Property Clause); (3) declaratory relief (courts may not issue declaratory relief

against co-equal branches of government); and, (4) Article III standing (plaintiffs lack Article III standing because they have not alleged an imminent, geographically specific, and particularized harm). The Judge nevertheless decided against the government on each argument for dismissing the case. The Judge ordered the parties to submit a proposed schedule or schedules for summary judgment briefing within 14 days.

California v. BLM and Sierra Club v. Zinke - (N.D. Cal.) - Challenge to BLM's Hydro-fracturing (HF) Rescission Rule

On March 16, the State of Wyoming filed a motion to intervene. On March 20, DOJ and the *Sierra Club* plaintiffs filed a stipulation that the environmental plaintiffs will amend their complaint to add counts under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by April 6, thereby extending BLM's Answer due date until May 7. The Answer in the *California* case is due on April 9. On March 21, DOJ filed a Motion to Transfer venue in both cases to the District of Wyoming.

EDC v. BOEM (C.D. Cal.)

This case challenges Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)/Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement's (BSEE's) issuance of a joint Programmatic Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for well stimulation activities on the outer continental shelf in the Pacific and alleges that the Bureaus failed to comply with the Endangered Species Act and the Coastal Zone Management Act. Federal Defendants' Cross-Motion for Summary Judgment is due March 29. We have requested a two week extension of the deadline.

Taylor Energy Co. LLC v. United States (Ct. Fed. Cl.)

In 2004, Hurricane Ivan caused a subsea landslide that destroyed a platform and 28 wellbores on Taylor Energy's lease on the Gulf of Mexico outer continental shelf. Since that time, Taylor and the government have been working to resolve issues related to the decommissioning of those facilities, including ongoing releases of hydrocarbons into the marine environment. Taylor established a trust to fund the decommissioning efforts, which has a current balance of \$432 million. Taylor asserts that any additional efforts to permanently abandon the remaining wells and remove contaminated sediment are technically impossible and/or more environmentally harmful than beneficial. Accordingly, Taylor requested the release of the remaining trust funds. The government denied that request, asserting that the funds may be necessary for future actions, and Taylor filed suit seeking monetary damages and rescission of the Trust agreement. The government filed a motion to dismiss this case in May 2016, but the case was stayed for settlement negotiations. The court has since lifted the stay. Taylor filed its response brief on March 19 and government filed its reply on March 26.

Petro-Hunt, L.L.C. v. United States (U.S. Supreme Court) - Judicial taking

The government's brief in opposition to Petro-Hunt's petition for writ of certiorari is due April 4. The petition presents the question whether a claimant may obtain compensation in the Court of Federal Claims for an asserted Fifth Amendment taking of private property by a federal court of appeals decision. The draft brief is currently under review in the Solicitor General's Office.

Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA) v. U.S. Dep't of the Interior (D. Utah)

SUWA seeks to set aside a BLM decision approving a large-scale vegetation treatment project in Hamlin Valley, Utah. SUWA contends that BLM violated NEPA by relying on a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) to approve two smaller projects (Indian Peak and Stateline) within Hamlin Valley. The DNA relies on a valley-wide programmatic environmental assessment (EA), FONSI, and decision record (DR). BLM's response is due on April 6. BLM is considering filing a motion to dismiss on the basis of mootness in lieu of filing a response brief.

Mesa Country Club v. United States (D. Ariz.)

Plaintiff in this Quiet Title Act (QTA) case claims ownership to certain real property along the Tempe Canal, which is operated by the Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District under an operations and maintenance agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation. Plaintiff, whose property abuts both sides of the Canal, seeks to exclude public access to the country club. The United States' answer is due April 11, and a case management conference is set for June 1.

In re Waters of the Klamath River Basin, (Klamath Co. Cir. Ct.) - Water Rights Adjudication Involving Water Rights for the Klamath Tribes and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
On March 20, the County Circuit Court issued a letter opinion (which will be followed by an order) on the Phase 1C motions. The adjudication has been broken down into Phases 1-3. Phase 1 was further broken down into Phase 1A, 1B, and 1C to deal with various procedural issues that impact the entire proceeding. Phase 1C dealt with upward claim amendments that Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) ruled had been late and other procedural issues. The court affirmed OWRD and did not disturb OWRD's disallowance of various upward claim amendments. A few Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and FWS water rights claims are affected by this ruling. Once this order is issued, it will mark the completion of Phase 1 of the adjudication.

Board of County Commissioners of the County of San Miguel, Colorado v. U.S. Bureau of Land Management (D. Colo.) - NEPA, ESA, and Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA)
Challenge to Oil and Gas Leasing

Federal defendants filed a partial motion to dismiss the Endangered Species Act claims on December 15, 2017; Plaintiffs' response was filed on January 19, and defendants' response was filed February 14. The court has scheduled a hearing on the partial motion to dismiss, to be held on May 2.

Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation v. BLM

In May 2017, the Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation (MHA Nation) filed an Interior Board of Land Appeal (IBLA) appeal and Petition for Stay seeking review of BLM's decision approving Slawson Exploration's applications for permit to drill eight federal wells into federal, fee, and state minerals underlying Lake Sakakawea on the Fort Berthold Reservation. In August, the Board granted the stay request after the automatic stay expired. In October 2017, the federal district court in North Dakota enjoined BLM from enforcing the Board's stay order. BLM filed a petition for Director's review of the stay and asked the Director to assume jurisdiction over the appeal and render a final decision on the merits. The Director assumed jurisdiction over the appeal on October 13, 2017. On March 22, the Director determined that the Stay Order was

decided in error, strongly disapproved of the Stay Order's untimeliness, and affirmed the BLM decision on the merits.

Chippewa Cree Tribe v. United States ("Pembina") (Fed. Cl.)

On January 4, Chief Judge Patricia E. Campbell-Smith issued an order granting the parties' request to continue the assignment of the case to Judge Bruggink under the court's Alternative Dispute Resolution program. A joint status report is due on or before June 29. The Parties continue to finalize settlement agreements with Tribal plaintiffs in the Court of Federal Claims and with individual plaintiffs in a proposed class action lawsuit to be filed in the District Court for the District of Columbia.

Fletcher, et al. v. U.S. (N.D. OK)

On November 1, the Court granted the Government's request to extend the time to file its response to Plaintiffs' EAJA brief to 30 days from the date that the Government receives completed discovery responses from Plaintiffs. On December 4, the Government filed a Motion to Compel Plaintiffs' response to the discovery requests. Plaintiffs moved to strike the motion and in turn the Government filed a motion to quash. On January 22, the Court denied Plaintiffs' motion to strike and set a date for a telephonic hearing regarding the Government's motions. The hearing took place on January 26. The Court granted the Government's motion to compel in part, and granted the motion to quash. The Court stated that the Government's response brief would be due 30 days from the date the Government receives the outstanding bank statements from Plaintiffs. Upcoming filing deadlines: - March 30 Government's Response Brief re: EAJA Fees - April 13 Plaintiffs' Reply Brief re: EAJA Fees.

Bassett, New Mexico LLC v. U.S. (Fed. Cl.)

On March 23, Plaintiff appealed to the Federal Circuit the dismissal of his complaint by the Federal Court of Claims. Plaintiff asserted a physical taking of his patented mine claim inholding in the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument near Las Cruces, NM because he believed the BLM would deny any right-of-way (ROW) application he would make to access his property. On January 26, the court dismissed Plaintiff's complaint upon DOJ's motion, holding that Plaintiff in fact asserted a regulatory taking that was unripe for review because the Plaintiff never completed his ROW application to the BLM and such application would not be futile.

Upcoming Hearings in Cases That Include Facial Challenges to the Significant Portion of the Range (SPR) Policy (March 26 – May 30, 2018)

In the coming weeks two courts will preside over hearings that include facial challenges to FWS's Policy defining "significant portion of its range" under the ESA (SPR Policy). The cases are *Desert Survivors v. U.S. DOI*, No. 16-cv-01165 (N.D. Cal.) (bi-state sage-grouse), and *Defenders of Wildlife v. Ashe*, No. 15-cv-00910 (D. D.C.) (northern long-eared bat). Briefing on the same issue is ongoing or scheduled to begin soon in two other cases that include challenges to the SPR Policy.

Blazek v. Town of Sanborn and Generally All Persons Who It May Concern (Wis. Cir. Ct., Ashland County)

The Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians (the Band) filed its Statement of Reasons (SOR) with BLM that supplements its protest of BLM's Notice of Filing of Plat

Survey published in the Federal Register on January 16. The SOR alleges that the original 1858 cadastral survey (approved in 1864) and the 1926 supplemental survey cannot be relied upon as an accurate representation of the lands and that the land in question was in existence at the time of another cadastral survey conducted in 1852. BLM will review the SOR and the State Director of BLM will issue a decision to the Band. A dependent resurvey was executed by BLM at the request of the BIA. The land in question is Chequamegon Point (a/k/a Long Island) located in Lake Superior.

FTCA Claims (USGS – Louisiana) – \$182.5 Million in Claims Based on Allegedly Faulty Bridge Design

On March 13, US Geological Survey (USGS), Lower Mississippi Gulf Water Science Center, Baton Rouge Office received 294 administrative FTCA claims for property damage, personal injury, mental anguish, emotional distress, stress, PTSD, and wrongful death totaling \$182,552,380.42. Claimants allege that the USGS and the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) negligently designed the I-12 Bridge over Tangipahoa River flood plain. In March 2016, major flooding was reported at Roberts, Louisiana and south of Highway 190 with flooding 4-5 feet at the intersection of LA 445 and Highway 190. It is alleged that the extensive flooding was the result of the backwater caused by the construction of the I-12 Bridge. It is further alleged that 75% of the floodplain was blocked leaving only 25% of the original flow cross section for the main bridge and the relief structures.

NON-LITIGATION MATTERS:

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA)

The Executive Committee for the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act requests the Secretary of the Interior approve \$78,002,276 of funding, including \$5,000,000 for a Special Account Reserve, from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Special Account for Round 17, an additional \$3,200,000 for the SNPLMA Round 16B, Craig Ranch Regional Park 20.57-Acre Acquisition project, and waive the requirements of the Department of the Interior Guidance for Financial Assistance Actions Effective in Fiscal Year 2018 memorandum dated December 28, 2017. The SNPLMA (Public Law 105-263, as amended) authorizes specific uses for revenues from the sale of public lands identified for disposal in the Las Vegas Valley. The SNPLMA created a Special Account into which 85 percent of the revenues generated by eligible land sales are deposited. As of December 31, 2017, the Special Account holds an available balance of \$333,776,978 for new authorized purposes. The SNPLMA authorizes the Secretary to expend the revenue in the Special Account for enumerated kinds of environmental projects benefitting Southern Nevada and the Lake Tahoe Region. This recommendation was developed through a collaborative effort involving the Federal agencies identified in the SNPLMA, the States of Nevada and California, local governments, and interested parties in Nevada and California. The proposed expenditures were made available for public review. The Executive Committee requests expedited review of the recommendation, in order that time-sensitive projects can begin during the coming field season.

Liberty Development and Production Plan (Liberty DPP)

SOL continues to advise BOEM on how to analyze impacts from lifecycle GHG emissions associated with the proposed Liberty DPP. In the Draft EIS, BOEM estimated potential impacts

using the Social Cost of Carbon protocol. However, the technical documents upon which the SCC protocol relied were rescinded by Executive Order 13783, which further instructed agencies to use methods consistent with OMB Circular A-4 when monetizing the value of changes in GHG emissions. Proposed new text for incorporation into the Final EIS has been submitted to DMR for review. BOEM will need to be provided with SOL-approved text soon, as BOEM will need to perform additional quantitative analysis to implement the new approach, and the Final EIS is scheduled to be completed by June.

Production Safety Systems Rule Revisions

The BSEE Director has requested a draft of the Final Rule package by this week. We expect it to enter SOL review shortly thereafter, with the aim of a mid-April surnaming session.

Well Control Rule Proposed Revisions

BSEE is finalizing its final passback to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in response to its last round of edits and comments and input from reviewing agencies. The Solicitor's Office (b)(5)acp [REDACTED]

Civil Penalty AR Policy Manual Chapter

BSEE has completed drafting of a new manual chapter addressing policies for compilation of administrative records for civil penalty assessments. The Solicitor's Office is reviewing the chapter.

BLM-Forest Service Oil & Gas Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

On March 20-22, a Solicitor's Office attorney met with the BLM, Forest Service (FS), and USDA's Office of General Counsel to update the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding between BLM and the FS concerning oil and gas leasing and operations on National Forest System lands. The team identified several issues that need to be resolved before the revised MOU will be ready for surname. Among these issues (b)(5) dpp [REDACTED]

Ojo Encino Chapter, 192 IBLA 269 (2018)

Ojo Encino Chapter appealed and sought a stay of the denial of their protest of the January 25, 2017, Notice of Competitive Oil and Gas Internet based Lease Sale offering four parcels of public land in Rio Arriba and Sandoval counties, New Mexico. The BLM filed a motion to dismiss the appeal based on lack of standing. The IBLA granted the BLM's motion to dismiss, holding that although the Chapter satisfied the first element of proving standing, that it is a party to the case; it failed to show the second element of standing, that it or its members are adversely affected by the decision. Specifically, the Chapter is a party to the case because it participated in the NEPA scoping process, consultation process according to the National Historic Preservation Act, and attended various meetings with the BLM. The Chapter, however, failed to show it had a legally cognizable interest substantially likely to be injured by the lease sale. Rather, the Chapter merely supplied non-specific, general, vague, and speculative allegations of potential harm to it or its members which the IBLA held to be insufficient to establish a causal relationship between the alleged injury and legally cognizable interest. Accordingly, the IBLA dismissed the Chapter's appeal and denied its request for a stay as moot.

George Washington Memorial Parkway - Dyke Marsh Permitting Issue

George Washington Memorial Parkway, a National Park System unit, is undertaking a wetlands restoration project at Dyke Marsh, an area of eroded marshland along the Potomac River. The marsh continues to erode and will ultimately be lost absent restoration. The Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) is asserting jurisdiction over the project based on its claim that Virginia owns a strip of submerged lands that eroded after a period of dredging at the site. NPS appeared before VMRC at a hearing on March 27, where VMRC granted the permit in part. This action does not provide NPS with a viable path forward as Virginia continues to assert ownership of much of the project area. DPW has advised that the NPS has a strong claim to ownership of Dyke Marsh and, after consultation with DOJ, has advised that a VMRC permit is not legally required in order for NPS to proceed with the project. NPS is finalizing a letter formally advising VMRC of this position. SOL will continue to keep lines of communication open with the Virginia Attorney General's Office.

30-60 Day Look-Ahead

Significant Litigation Deadlines are reported separately.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE AND PARKS

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

On April 2-6, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, exercising the authority of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Susan Combs will be in the office.

On April 2-6, Deputy Assistant Secretary Aurelia Skipwith will be in the office.

On April 2-6, FWS Principal Deputy Director Greg Sheehan and senior FWS leadership will attend the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Norfolk, Virginia.

On April 2-6, NPS Deputy Director Dan Smith will be in the office.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

[NEW] On April 12, the RESTORE Council staff will meet to finalize the planning grant for 2018 for RESTORE monies from the Deepwater Horizon spill. The Fairhope Alabama, meeting will include staff from ASFWP, FWS, USGS, and BOEM.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

[NEW] During the week of April 2, FWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service (collectively, the Services) expect to transit two proposed rules to OMB. The Services are proposing revisions to 50 CFR part 424, which implements listing and critical habitat provisions found in section 4 of the Act. The proposed revisions would add a framework for interpreting foreseeable future; clarify that the standards for delisting, reclassification, and listing are the

same; re-define and expand considerations determining that designating critical habitat is not prudent; and require that occupied habitat be evaluated before unoccupied habitat when designating critical habitat. In the second, the Services are proposing revisions to 50 CFR part 402, which implements consultation provisions found in section 7 of the Act. The proposed revisions would address alternative consultation mechanisms, clarify the phrase "effects of the action," revise the definition of "destruction or adverse modification," address certainty of mitigation proposed by action agencies, and otherwise improve the consultation process. In a third submission to OMB, FWS will transmit a proposed rule for 50 CFR part 17 to remove the blanket 4(d) rule, which currently applies the endangered species protections to threatened species. The proposed regulations would require FWS to determine what, if any, protective regulations are appropriate for species that the Service in the future determines to be a threatened species on a case-by-case basis.

[UPDATE] On April 2, FWS will share preliminary findings of Asian carp barge entrainment work conducted in 2017 with partners and industry. FWS worked with the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to undertake large-scale field studies to examine two potential techniques to reduce the accidental movement of fish across electric dispersal barriers by barges; and to assess the potential entrainment and transport of silver carp by commercial barges transiting downstream in the Illinois Waterway (IWW). Prior research conducted by FWS found that commercial barge traffic can inadvertently entrain and move fish several miles upstream, toward Lake Michigan. Preliminary 2017 findings show that small silver carp can be trapped and transported upstream by barge tows travelling at typical operating speeds. Findings are of concern because there is the potential risk that barge traffic could accidentally facilitate the introduction of Asian carp to areas of the waterway that connect to Lake Michigan. Early field trials indicate that water jet flushing systems shows potential for reducing the likelihood that small fish become trapped and transported by barges. (Updated 03/28/2018)

On or before April 3, FWS plans to announce it is seeking public review and comment on a draft environmental assessment (EA) describing the potential effects of issuing a proposed incidental take permit (ITP) for construction and development activities in Thurston County, Washington. The project development site is 127 acres, and the conservation site is 64 acres. Species covered in the HCP include the threatened Olympia subspecies of the Mazama pocket gopher and the threatened Oregon spotted frog. UPC, LLC developed a draft Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and applied for a 15-year ITP. This is not controversial. This HCP is a single-site developer and independent from the HCP that FWS briefed ASFWP about on November 17. This applicant would like to move forward with development in advance of the completion of the Thurston County HCP. Targeted outreach to local and state officials and stakeholders is planned. (Updated 02/28/2018)

On or before April 4, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on the proposal to reclassify Kuenzler hedgehog cactus, a plant species endemic to New Mexico, from endangered to threatened. This reclassification is not expected to be controversial. Primary stakeholders include the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service. Planned outreach includes a regional news release, emails to stakeholders, social media and web postings. Target date for submitting to the *Federal Register* is April 4, 2018. (Updated 03/21/18)

[UPDATE] On or around April 5, FWS plans to make a minor map correction in the final rule designating critical habitat for two butterflies: the Poweshiek skipperling and Dakota skipper. One map incorrectly labeled Poweshiek skipperling critical habitat as Dakota skipper critical habitat in Minnesota. FWS does not expect any opposition to this. A regional news release is planned. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] By April 5, FWS will make a final determination on the proposal to list the yellow lance as threatened. The yellow lance is a freshwater mussel that occurs in North Carolina, Maryland, and Virginia. A listing will likely be opposed by the City of Raleigh due to a proposed reservoir project on the Little River. FWS has been working with the city on this potential project for over nine years, and because other listed species occur in that location, ESA requirements are unlikely to change. Other stakeholders include the Lower Neuse Basin Association, Neuse River Compliance Association, Tar Pamlico Basin Association, North Carolina Water Quality Association, and the Center for Biological Diversity (petitioner). Planned outreach includes a regional news press release and notification to stakeholders. The statutory deadline for publication of the final determination in the *Federal Register* is April 5; therefore, FWS plans to submit it by March 29. This item is pending clearance by Exec Sec. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] By April 6, FWS will make a final listing determination for the Louisiana pinesnake as threatened. The pinesnake occurs in Louisiana and Texas. The Louisiana pinesnake listing is controversial due to concerns about the potential impacts on forestry activities, which is why FWS is simultaneously proposing a 4(d) rule that will allow routine forest management activities to proceed without need for permitting. Stakeholders include the timber industry, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of the Army, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas A&M Forest Service, Center for Biological Diversity, and WildEarth Guardians. Planned outreach includes a regional news release and notification to stakeholders and members of Congress. FWS is required by settlement agreement to publish the final determination in the *Federal Register* by April 6; therefore, FWS plans to submit both rules by March 30. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] In early April, FWS will make a proposed listing determination and proposed critical habitat designation for the island marble butterfly, found in Washington. The proposed critical habitat designation includes approximately 812 acres. This action is not expected to be opposed and media coverage is expected to be neutral. Interested stakeholders include the Xerces Society (the petitioner), federal partners including National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management, and state partners including Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Washington Department of Natural Resources, San Juan County Land Bank, the San Juan Preservation Trust, and local landowners. A regional news release to all interested parties and the media is planned. Pending clearance by Exec Sec. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] In early April, pending approval by the Department, FWS plans to propose to downlist the Hawaiian goose (nēnē) from endangered to threatened. FWS will also propose to establish special regulations for the conservation of the species under section 4(d) of the ESA to allow for flexibility in managing lands. Landowners of resort, golf course, agricultural, residential and recreational properties are likely to support the reclassification and associated

4(d) rule while conservation groups may be opposed. Interested stakeholders include the State of Hawaii, federal agencies, conservation, and bird groups, various private landowners, and the public. Outreach includes a regional news release, social media, emails and phone calls to congressional offices and stakeholders. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] In early April, pending approval by the Department, FWS plans to make 90-day findings on petitions to delist or downlist the Cape mountain zebra, and delist the Preble's meadow jumping mouse. For substantial 90-day findings, this is the first step in a longer process and tends not to get significant media attention; however, this action might be the first time stakeholders become aware that FWS is assessing the status of a species. All stakeholders will have ample opportunity to provide input into the eventual 12-month findings. FWS anticipates local media coverage and interest from livestock and home building industries in Wyoming and Colorado regarding the finding on the petition to delist the Preble's meadow jumping mouse. A national news bulletin and congressional notifications are planned. (Updated 03/28/2018).

Between April 1 and 15, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final rule removing regulations setting forth the provisions for two depredation orders for double-crested cormorants. FWS had used these standing orders to allow for lethal control of cormorants where they impact aquaculture and public resources; however, on May 25, 2016, the District Court for the District of Columbia ordered that both the Aquaculture Depredation Order and the Public Resources Depredation Order be vacated until FWS performs a new and legally adequate environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement for national cormorant management orders in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This final rule administratively implements the court's decision. While the depredation orders no longer exist, on November 15, 2017, FWS provided some measure of relief to aquaculture facilities. It issued a final EA under NEPA, which allows aquaculture facility managers and property owners across 37 central and eastern states and the District of Columbia to apply for individual permits for lethal take of cormorants where they are impacting resources. This latest action is not controversial. If-asked talking points will be planned for outreach. (Updated 02/28/2018)

Through April 9, public comments will be open for four compatibility determinations that evaluate various economic and/or commercial uses of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Based on comments received during the 2016 review period, these compatibility determinations have been revised to address comments and concerns from the public and stakeholders. One of the lead critics of the earlier draft, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, is satisfied with the revisions. This is controversial because it involves changes to fees normally paid by guides for various outdoor recreation services. (03/21/2018)

[UPDATE] On or around April 9, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a rule removing the textual descriptions of the critical habitat boundaries from certain wildlife entries that have maps sufficient to stand as the official delineation of the critical habitat designation. This rule does not increase, decrease, or in any other way change the critical habitat designations from which we are removing the textual descriptions of boundaries. This action will save taxpayer resources. FWS is taking this action in accordance with the May 1, 2012, revision of the regulations related

to publishing textual descriptions of critical habitat boundaries. No outreach is planned. (Updated 03/14/2018)

On April 10, FWS will join the New York Historical Society for a reception that celebrates a new exhibit honoring the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The exhibit is open from April 6 - July 15 and focuses on three themes: history of the act, the connection between the act and the women's suffrage movement, and profiles and Audubon watercolors of 13 bird species that are currently protected under the act. FWS has partnered with the society to provide technical advice and loan historical items for the exhibit. FWS regional leadership will attend the reception and the agency will coordinate with HQ and the Society on media pitches, social media outreach and storytelling. (Updated 02/28/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 13, FWS plans to celebrate the final determination on the proposal to delist the black-capped vireo. Representatives from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Fort Hood (TX), Fort Sill (OK), USDA's NRCS, the Texas Comptroller's office, congressional offices and other partners are invited. Media will be invited. Stakeholders include the petitioners, Pacific Legal Foundation, New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association, New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau, New Mexico Federal Lands Council, Texas Farm Bureau, Department of the Army, The Nature Conservancy, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. A Communications Plan has been developed that includes congressional offices, local and state officials and stakeholders. A news release and FAQs have been drafted. Outreach, including issuing the news release and FAQs to media, congressionals and partners, as well as posting information on social media, is planned to occur at time of publication in the *Federal Register*. This action is a Secretarial priority. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] In early April, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice of issuance for letters of authorizations issued in 2015, 2016 and 2017 under regulations authorizing the non-lethal, unintentional take of marine mammals in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas. This is an administrative action and is noncontroversial. No news release will be issued. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] In mid-April, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a proposed delisting determination on the Kirtland's warbler, located in 31 states and the District of Columbia. The Michigan Governor's Office has expressed some interest in partnering with FWS on an announcement. Other planned outreach includes a regional news bulletin, emails to stakeholders, social media and web postings. Stakeholders include Michigan Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Forest Service and Huron Pines, along with other conservation groups working as part of the Kirtland's Warbler Alliance. The proposal is not expected to be controversial, as partners have been transitioning from recovery to conservation management for more than a year. FWS expects a moderate level of interest among birders and conservation groups. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] In April, pending approval by the Department, FWS will award nearly \$19 million in grants to coastal states to conserve and restore coastal wetlands and their fish and wildlife habitat. Each year, the Service supports coastal wetland conservation through the National

Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program and the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. The grant funds are derived from excise taxes on fishing tackle and motorboat and small engine fuels. The grants will support 22 projects in 13 coastal states to protect, restore or enhance more than 30,000 acres of coastal wetlands and adjacent upland habitats, including 287 miles of shoreline. Over \$21 million in additional matching funds will be provided by partner contributions from state and local governments, private landowners and conservation groups. Conservation of this habitat will help recover coastal-dependent federal trust species, enhance flood protection and water quality, provide economic benefits to coastal communities and increase recreational opportunities for hunters and anglers. The grant recipients (states) have not yet been informed that they will be receiving funds. Planned outreach includes congressional and stakeholder notifications and a news release. (Updated 03/28/2018)

National Park Service

[UPDATE] By April 1, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) seeks approval for a new right-of-way permit from Natchez Trace Parkway to begin construction of an aerial 161-kV transmission line across the Parkway at milepost 159.1 as part of a 43-mile upgrade of electrical service. Discussions with DOI, however, have resulted in the necessity to amend the EA and FONSI, which will delay the issuance of the FONSI and permit. In addition, TVA has failed to provide a legal description of the proposed ROW, which further delays its issuance. (Updated 3/27/2018).

[UPDATE] By April 1, (embargoed until public announcement) Cape Hatteras National Seashore plans to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to lease Oregon Inlet Marina. The marina is operated under a concession contract, which has been extended on an annual basis since 2000. A lease has been determined to be the appropriate method for managing the property in order to provide for facility maintenance and continued public use of this locally-important and internationally-known charter fishing marina. The RFP is expected to garner attention from multiple interested parties, including the current operator, the local media, and elected officials. (Updated 3/27/2018).

Around April 1-15, Death Valley National Park and Mojave National Preserve will begin efforts to relocate up to 2,500 feral burros from each park. Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue (a nonprofit partner) will fund and carry out the roundups, test burros for disease, relocate them to holding facilities, and domesticate the animals for adoption. This is anticipated to generate public interest and has already triggered a FOIA request. (3/7/2018).

Between April 1-15, Death Valley National Park anticipates releasing the final Scotty's Castle Flood Rehabilitation Environmental Assessment and FONSI. This document analyzes repair work planned for historic structures, the cultural landscape, utilities, parking, and walkways to recover from damage from a flash flood in October 2015. The historic district is scheduled to reopen to the public in 2020. (3/7/2018)

[NEW] Between April 1-15, 2018, the NPS will request approval for the apportionment of \$2,631,610 in Maritime Heritage Grants to fund 34 projects in 14 states and 1 commonwealth. The grants will be awarded based on the National Maritime Heritage Act of 1994, enacted as

Public Law 103-451, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award preservation and education grants to assist to foster a greater awareness and appreciation of the role of maritime endeavors in our nation's history and culture.(03/27/2018)

Before April 3, the NPS will request approval for the partial apportionment of \$1,346,818 in JACS grants to fund nine projects. The grants will be awarded based on the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, enacted as Public Law 115-123, and pursuant to the Preservation of Japanese American Confinement Sites Act, P.L. 109-441, 120 Stat.3288, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award grants to assist in preserving historic Japanese American confinement sites and their history. (Updated 03/14/2018).

[NEW] During the week of April 2, the Northeast Regional Director will sign the Morristown National Historical Park's Vegetation and Deer Management Plan Finding of No Significant impact. As the final approved vegetation and deer management plan for Morristown National Historical Park, NJ, the plan will promote conditions for the regeneration of the native hardwood forest through a combination of forest management and deer management actions to control invasive plants and reduce deer density by sharpshooting. Implementation may begin once the availability of the signed Finding of No Significant Impact has been announced through local media outlets and on the park's website. (3/27/2018)

By April 2, 2018, the NPS plans to release a prospectus for five concession contracts to provide cruise ship services at Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve; however, two of the contracts are set aside for the two historic operators identified through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) legislation. Concession contracts have been awarded since 1980 on a 10 year basis. New contract terms are similar to previous contracts, shaped in accordance with both Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve-specific legislation and NPS law and policy. It is anticipated the contracts will be awarded in October, 2019. (3/14/2018).

On or after April 2, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks will begin a 30-day public scoping period for a proposed wireless telecommunications facility (cell tower) proposed by Verizon Wireless. The proposed location is near the Wuksachi Village in Sequoia National Park. An environmental assessment will be prepared for the project, which will be released for public review in July. (03/14/18).

On or after April 2, Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve will open 90-day comment periods for the Draft Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve Wild and Scenic River Study and the Draft Oregon Caves Preserve Management Plan/Environmental Assessment. Joint public meetings for the two plans are planned for the week of April 16. The Wild and Scenic River study finds that two creeks are suitable and eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. The Preserve Plan will provide management guidance for national preserve lands added to the park in 2014. (3/20/2018)

[NEW] From April 2-4, Grand Canyon National Park will install test/monitoring wells near Bright Angel Creek that will help determine sustainable well production rates (how much water a well can produce) and water quality characteristics which the NPS will consider as it looks at replacing the transcanyon waterline. On March 29, the NPS began mobilizing a drill rig, supplies and equipment to Phantom Ranch via helicopter. The park is currently in the preliminary design

phase to replace the transcanyon waterline, and planning is underway. The work being done will be used to help determine the range of alternatives. (3/27/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 2-30, 2018, the NPS will request the apportionment of \$18,735 in Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act grants to fund three repatriation and reburial projects. The grants will be awarded based on the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, enacted as Public Law 115-123, and pursuant to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Public Law 101-601, 25 U.S.C. 3001, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award grants to assist in implementing provisions of the Act. This grant program generally creates minimal press and Congressional interest. (03/27/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 3, Glacier National Park plans to issue a press release briefly summarizing public scoping comments received for the Sperry Chalet, Next 100 Years project. The project proposes four concepts to restore the Sperry experience after the dormitory building was burned in the Sprague Fire in 2017. In the same release, the park will announce a modified environmental assessment schedule for the project. The accelerated schedule will allow the park to complete project compliance in advance of the summer field season, and give the park the option of completing more extensive stabilization to prepare the structure for the 2018-19 winter season, and to prepare the site for future construction activities in 2019. (Updated 3/27/2018)

On April 4, Grand Canyon Association with logistic support from Grand Canyon National Park will host an event to honor Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and the late Senator Morris Udall for their notable contributions to Grand Canyon National Park and the nation. The celebration, at Mather Point Amphitheater, will include the donation of an interpretive plaque from the Association to the Park highlighting Senator McCain's and Senator Udall's contributions to the park and their dedication to conservation efforts. There will also be an announcement of the establishment of a Native American Fellowship program. Event organizers expect Senator McCain and up to 120 family members, friends, colleagues, and VIPs to attend. Invitations from Grand Canyon Association have gone out to the 29 Native American Indian tribes in Arizona, the Intertribal Council of Arizona, current and former Arizona Congressional members and Arizona governors. (03/14/18).

On April 4-9, the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historical Park (GA) will observe the 50th Anniversary of Dr. King's assassination with special programming including a Remembrance Day commemorative program in the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church and the opening of an exhibit entitled *From Memphis to Atlanta: 50 Forward*. On April 4 there is an exhibit opening and on April 9 the park will host the March for Humanity, a commemorative march that will start at the Ebenezer Baptist Church and conclude at the campus of Morehouse College. (Updated 3/13/2018)

[NEW] On April 4, the National Capital Region's (NCR) National Historic Landmarks Program and the Organization of American Historians will host an educational workshop on LGBTQ History & Interpretation. The thirty workshop attendees include representatives from NCR parks, regional State Historic Preservation Offices, and local governments and preservation and history organizations. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] On April 4 and 5, the National Parks Conservation Association will hold public meetings in Seattle, Washington, to talk about its experience in getting Stonewall National Monument designated as a unit of the national park system and to spread the word about the public comment period for the foundation document. The NPS will **not** participate in these meetings. The link to PEPC for the foundation document comment period is <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=75123> . The National Parks Conservation Association held a similar meeting in Wilton Manors, Florida, on March 20. (3/27/2018)

On April 6, the 15-day public comment period ends for the Bureau of Land Management Colorado September 2018 oil and gas lease sale. The BLM is considering opening 18,000 acres to oil and gas development less than one mile east of Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. On March 9, *The Denver Post* published a story that highlighted potential impacts if those acres are developed. The park has been working with the BLM to address potential impacts in the analysis. The park is referring the public to the BLM's designated public information office for information on the sale. (3/20/2018)

[UPDATE] By April 6, the NPS anticipates finalizing Alaska park compendiums for 2018. Public comments on proposed changes to draft compendia are being analyzed at this time. Most of the comments received were on provisions specifying where vehicles may park along the Denali National Park and Preserve Road. Denali continues implementation through its compendium of the Clean Mountain Can (CMC) pack out program used by mountaineers to improve sanitation along the Park's most popular climbing routes. It has been the practice of the NPS Alaska Region for the past 15 years to publish proposed changes to compendia yearly, and to accept comments on those proposed changes. Following analysis of the public comments and considering changes based on public input, the NPS publishes final Alaska parks' compendia around April 1 each year. (Updated 03/27/2018).

[UPDATE] By April 6 (pending Departmental approval), Olympic National Park anticipates issuing a news release announcing that a Notice of Availability NOA is to be published in the Federal Register for its Mountain Goat Management Plan/Final EIS (Updated 3/27/2018).

[NEW] During the week of April 9, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve will host its annual pre-season meeting for commercial use permittees (CUAs). A number of the eighty plus (80+) CUA's operating commercial businesses in the park are expected to meet with staff in Anchorage or Homer, Alaska. The meetings will provide CUAs with an overview of minor compendium changes for 2018, and will include discussions on development of an aviation safety working group for the park's outer coast. (3/27/18)

[NEW] On or after April 9, John Muir National Historic Site will announce an upcoming public comment period on initial concepts for the Mt. Wanda Comprehensive Site Management Plan. The comment period will be open from April 21 through June 15. Public meetings/open houses will be held April 21 and May 19. The plan will outline appropriate uses and functions for the park's Mount Wanda Unit. (3/27/2018)

On April 10, American Rivers will announce its 10 Most Endangered Rivers List to include an 8.5-mile reach of the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities (the Gorge) located entirely within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area's 72-mile corridor. American Rivers is advocating removal of two locks and dams in this reach and is notifying Minnesota's Congressional delegation of their recommendation. American Rivers' announcement is closely tied to the initiation of a Disposition Study by the Corps of Engineers that is evaluating the future of the locks and dams in the Gorge. Both endeavors have the potential for profound changes to the park and are controversial; a communications plan is being drafted. (03/14/18).

Between April 10-20 (pending Departmental approval), Death Valley National Park anticipates publishing a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Federal Register for the Draft Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Saline Valley Warm Springs (plan/DEIS). The NOA will initiate a 60-day public comment period on the document during which public meetings will be held in the vicinity of the park. The plan/DEIS is intended to provide a framework for natural and cultural resource management, administration and operations, and managing visitor use. [PEPC link](#) (Updated 3/7/2018)

[NEW] From April 10-12, the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training is holding a three-day symposium that will focus on the preservation of roadside buildings and features which catered to tourists who traveled American roads during the 1920s-1970s. Michael Wallis, journalist and actor, and Dylan Thuras, founder of Atlas Obscura, are keynote speakers. (3/27/18)

[NEW] By April 11, the NPS will request apportionment of \$252,626 in Preservation Technology and Training grants to fund seven projects. The grants will be awarded based on the 54 U.S.C. §305304 Preservation grants, enacted as Public Law P.L. 113-287, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award grants to ensure an effective and efficient system of research, information distribution, and skills training in all the related historic preservation fields. This grant program generally creates minimal press and congressional interest. (3/22/18)

On April 11, Lake Clark National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) will hold a public meeting in Newhalen, Alaska. The purpose of an SRC is to devise and recommend to the Governor of Alaska and the Secretary a program for subsistence hunting within Alaska national parks where subsistence is authorized. The SRCs were established under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. (3/7/2018)

[NEW] On April 11, the NPS will host the second in a series of public meetings to develop a management plan for Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. Winter and summer uses in the north end of the monument will be the focus of the public meeting. The meeting will be announced in late March via press release and e-newsletter. The PEPC link is <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/KAWWManagementPlan>. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] (Law Enforcement Sensitive - Not for Public Release) Between April 11 and 13, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks will host a press event with the U.S. Department of Justice, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California to announce the results of a two-week marijuana

interdiction operation. U.S. Attorney Greg Scott and Acting Assistant Attorney General Jeffrey Wood of the DOJ's Environmental and Natural Division will participate. The intent is to bring national attention to the environmental hazards and public safety threats posed by marijuana cultivation on public lands. (3/27/2018)

From April 12 to 18, the National Safety Council (NSC) will open the *Prescribed to Death* exhibit on the Ellipse in President's Park. The NPS is supporting the traveling exhibit that raises awareness about opioid abuse, and will provide information about the Healthy Parks Healthy People program and the Park Rx program. The NSC will host an invitation-only media preview and an invitation-only special guest preview on April 11. The public exhibition will run April 12-18. (3/20/2018)

By April 13, responses to a prospectus seeking proposals for marina services at James Creek Marina in Washington, D.C., for the next 10 years, will be due. These services include wet slip rentals, fuel service, marine sanitation, parking lot operations, and retail and vending sales. Accepting contract offers is the next step in the process. (Prior to 02/14/2018).

[UPDATE] On April 13, pending DOI approval of the *Federal Register* Notice of Availability, the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve plans to release the Ungulate Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for a 45-day public comment period. The plan and DEIS were developed with input from the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as formal cooperating agencies. The DEIS addresses two key issues: the need for active elk management; and the future of bison management at the park. Interested parties include affiliated tribes; Colorado Department of Natural Resources; local Habitat Partnership Program committees; Colorado Congressional offices; The Nature Conservancy; and the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. The DEIS was shared with formal cooperators on Sept. 1, 2017, and the park is currently finalizing the Draft EIS for release. <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=25517>

[NEW] By April 13, the NPS will submit comments to the Regional Environmental Officer/Department on the Railroad Control House Replacement Project, Substation #42 - Hackensack, North Bergen Township in New Jersey. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) submitted a draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for review of this project because the project will need to use Section 4(f) resources, the Pennsylvania Railroad New York to Philadelphia Historic District and specifically Substation Building #3, which is a contributing resource within the district and eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Department of Interior is required to respond and concur that there is no prudent or feasible alternative to this 4(f) resource use. The Department of Interior has delegated drafting their response to the National Park Service. (3/27/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 13, responses to a prospectus seeking proposals for marina services at James Creek Marina in Washington, D.C., for the next 10 years, were originally due. The prospectus, however, has been rescinded and will be reissued when necessary updates have been made. The services include wet slip rentals, fuel service, marine sanitation, parking lot operations, and retail and vending sales. Accepting contract offers is the next step in the process. (Updated 3/27/2018)

[NEW] On April 14, Greenbelt Park and the Student Conservation Association (SCA) with up to 300 volunteers will clean up trash along roadways and streams and remove invasive plants in the park. This effort to help improve the Anacostia River watershed is one of many across the country that SCA is leading in celebration of Earth Day. (3/27/2018)

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

On April 24-25, Mary Josie Blanchard will meet with States and other Federal agency representatives on the RESTORE Steering Committee in Pensacola, Florida. The primary purpose of the meeting is to discuss future planning and project grants dealing with Deepwater Horizon spill. (3/12/18)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

By April 27, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between FWS and Monsanto will be signed along with a joint news release announcing the partnership. A field-based demonstration event is being planned for late summer/early fall. FWS Midwest Region has been exploring the possibility of a partnership with Monsanto, and its subsidiaries, to use modern agriculture data tools to help landowners voluntarily manage their land to enhance pollinator habitat while maximizing production in their fields. Monsanto and FWS developed the MOU to outline how we will work together to: 1) provide accurate and useful information to farmers; 2) analyze data to determine the outcomes of conservation actions and make it easy for landowners to have access to conservation programs should they choose to participate; and 3) to explore the possibilities to use these tools for other cooperative conservation efforts across the country. Midwest Region is working closely with HQ on this open press event and a communications plan, which will include active national outreach. (Updated 03/21/2018)

On or around April 30, pending approval by DOI, FWS expects publication in the *Federal Register* of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to conduct a 30-day public scoping period and prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Skookumchuck Wind Energy Project Habitat Conservation Plan. The EIS will evaluate the issuance of an incidental take permit for marbled murrelet, bald eagle and golden eagle at a proposed wind energy project in Lewis County, Washington. The project is expected to be controversial with conservation organizations (*e.g.*, American Bird Conservancy, National Audubon Society, Washington Forest Law Center). FWS has received two Freedom of Information Act requests related to the project. A communications plan has been shared with FWS HQ; outreach announcing the public scoping period is planned for Washington media, congressional office, local and state officials, tribes, and stakeholders. (03/07/2018)

On or around April 30, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on a proposed rule to list the hyacinth macaw as threatened. To address concerns raised by the pet trade industry, FWS is including a 4(d) rule that will allow for the import and export of parrots that meet certain criteria, as well as interstate commerce in this species without a permit. Stakeholders include the bird breeding community, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, and World Wildlife Fund. Planned outreach will include a national news release, and web updates. (Updated 03/07/2018)

In April, pending approval by the Department, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a Notice of Intent to prepare a draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) addressing the potential impacts from four similar wind energy project habitat conservation plans in Hawaii. The HCPs were submitted to the Service in support of requests for permits authorizing the take of endangered or threatened species, under the Endangered Species Act. Due to similarities in the geography, impact, covered species, and proposed mitigation measures between these four wind energy projects the Service has determined that a combined PEIS is the most efficient and comprehensive approach for considering the cumulative impacts of these actions on the human environment. When the PEIS publishes, outreach is planned to include local public notifications through the web and social media, and notifications to members of Congress in Hawaii, with targeted stakeholder outreach. (03/21/2018)

In May or June, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice as a follow-up to the *Federal Register* notice published on December 7 where we asked for public comments on the impact of the recent D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling on our final rule designating the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem population of grizzly bears as a distinct population segment and delisting it. Interested stakeholder groups include the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (including federal, tribal, state and local government entities), agricultural producers, hunting groups, and environmental groups. Plaintiffs in the current litigation over the delisting of the Greater Yellowstone grizzly bear population may strongly oppose this action. Planned outreach includes individual congressional, state and tribal notifications and a regional news release. (Updated 03/14/2018)

[NEW] On or before May 1, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a proposed rule and open a 30-day public comment period on the 2018-19 Refuge-Specific Hunting and Sport Fishing Regulations. The proposed rule would open up to 28 various national wildlife refuges to hunting and/or sport fishing for the first time and expand hunting and fishing opportunities at others. Outreach is planned to include a national news release when the *Federal Register* notice is published and notifications to members of Congress in affected districts, with some stakeholder outreach. (03/28/2018)

On or around May 4, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on the proposal to list five Sri Lankan tarantula species as endangered. The species are in decline due to ongoing habitat loss, degradation, and the cumulative effects of this and other threat factors. This action is not expected to be controversial. Planned outreach will include web updates. (Updated 03/14/2018)

On or around May 9, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on the proposal to delist the Hidden Lake bluecurls, a plant in California, due to recovery. FWS does not expect opposition to the delisting. Primary stakeholders include California Department of Parks and Recreation Mount San Jacinto State Park. Planned outreach will include a national news release and notifications to stakeholders and members of Congress. (03/21/2018)

On or around May 15, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* an action designating critical habitat for three plant species on Hawaii Island and is correcting the maps for existing

designations for an additional four species. FWS intends to exclude lands owned or managed by the Queen Liliuokalani Trust, the Department of Hawaiian Homelands, and other private landowners under 4(b)(2) of the Act. This action is not controversial. Interested stakeholders include the state of Hawaii and multiple state agencies, the County of Hawaii and various private landowners. Outreach includes a regional news release, social media, emails and phone calls to congressional offices and stakeholders mentioned above. (03/21/2018)

[UPDATE] On or around June 1 or later, the FWS anticipates the draft supplemental environmental impact statement for expanded public access to Rattlesnake Mountain on Hanford Reach National Monument will be available for public review and comment. This is part of the required regulatory processes to provide public access to Rattlesnake Mountain, consistent with a mandate in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA; P.L. 113-291). Section 3081 of the NDAA states “the Secretary of the Interior shall provide public access to the summit of Rattlesnake Mountain for educational, recreational, historical, scientific, cultural, and other purposes, including (1) motor vehicle access; and (2) pedestrian and other nonmotorized access.” The FWS established a Tribal Working Group with four local tribes and held public scoping meetings to address cultural concerns and to work through the process of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The FWS is addressing National Environmental Policy Act compliance by drafting a supplement to the 2008 Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Monument. Expanded public access will be controversial with tribes. FWS will continue outreach efforts to the tribes, media, and the public. A local news release is planned to alert public to comment period. (Updated 03/28/2018)

National Park Service

By April 15, Death Valley National Park anticipates releasing the final Bonnie Clare Road Reconstruction Environmental Assessment and FONSI. Reconstruction work is scheduled to start in August 2018 and be completed by May 2019. This will allow reopening of the northeast entrance to the park and restore public access to Scotty's Castle after massive damage from flooding in October 2015. PEPC link (Updated 3/20/2018)

Between April 15-30, Death Valley National Park and the Ridgecrest BLM office anticipate opening a public comment period on the Keystone Mine Plan of Operations Amendment and accompanying Environmental Assessment. The mine is on BLM land near the park's western border, but the mining plan includes the use of water rights within the park. (updated 2/28/18).

[NEW] From April 16-20, Catoctin Mountain Park is hosting staff from Germany's Black Forest National Park. The visit will mark the beginning of a Sister Park Arrangement between the two parks, with the document signing scheduled for April 19 at the Main Interior Building. The State Department and the NPS reviewed and approved the arrangement. (3/27/2018)

On April 17-18, Gates of the Arctic National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) will hold a public meeting in Allakaket, Alaska. The purpose of an SRC is to devise and recommend to the Governor of Alaska and the Secretary a program for subsistence hunting within Alaska national parks where subsistence is authorized. The SRCs were established under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. (3/7/2018)

Between April 18-27, Golden Gate National Recreation Area is expected to release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a competitive business opportunity to establish a waterfront community center at the Fort Baker Historic Boat Shop and Marina as an affordable recreational and gathering place. The purpose of the RFQ is to identify both private- and public-sector entities interested in operating the facility, which is currently operated by the U.S. Air Force as a military recreation facility open to the public. NPS is seeking a long-term lease that will enable an offeror to make necessary investments in historic rehabilitation of deteriorating facilities, and the provision of public services and programs at the site. The park has kept the USAF informed throughout the lead up to this announcement, and they have express interest in participating in the RFQ process. (Updated 3/7/2018)

On April 24 - 25, Cape Krusenstern National Monument Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) will hold a public meeting in Kotzebue, Alaska. The purpose of an SRC is to devise and recommend to the Governor of Alaska and the Secretary a program for subsistence hunting within Alaska national parks where subsistence is authorized. The SRCs were established under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. (3/7/2018).

On April 26 - 27, Kobuk Valley National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) will hold a public meeting in Kotzebue, Alaska. The purpose of an SRC is to devise and recommend to the Governor of Alaska and the Secretary a program for subsistence hunting within Alaska national parks where subsistence is authorized. The SRCs were established under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. (3/7/2018).

[UPDATE] By April 30, George Washington Memorial Parkway will release the Theodore Roosevelt Island Cultural Landscape Report & Environmental Assessment (CLR/EA) for a 30-day public review period. The preferred alternative includes rehabilitating the comfort station, better defining and improving the islands trail system, and establishing soft landings and a floating dock on the island for non-motorized boats. A date for a public meeting has not been set. (Updated 3/27/2018)

[NEW] By April 30, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson is expected to sign an amendment to Arkansas code, changing the permit conditions for large animal feeding stations like C&H Hog Farm near a tributary of the Buffalo National River. The Farm is authorized to hold 6,503 pigs. Currently, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality provides a 30 day comment period when a permit change involves retaining and then disposing of liquid animal waste. On March 15, the Arkansas House and Senate approved identical bills that would make it so that third parties cannot raise complaints following a 30-day comment period if the farm remains in "good standing" with state regulators. The NPS has not been consulted in connection with this measure. (3/27/2018)

In April, it is anticipated that the NPS will publish a Federal Register notice announcing that the Department has authorized the preparation of a World Heritage nomination for the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks in Ohio. With nine component properties including those that form Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, and others managed by the State of Ohio, this series of geometric mounds is approximately 2,000 years old. The nomination file, which will take more than a year to draft, will be developed by local proponents in Ohio with guidance from the NPS. Upon completion and review, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife

and Parks will determine whether the nomination will be submitted to the World Heritage Committee.

Through May 11, Katmai National Park and Preserve and Alagnak Wild River will host public listening sessions and collect comments related to the Katmai National Park and Preserve and the Alagnak Wild River Wilderness and Backcountry Management Plan. During the public comment period, four open house events will be held in Kodiak, Anchorage, Homer, and Naknek, Alaska, to inform the public on the planning process and solicit public feedback. Public input on key planning issues and initial management considerations will help the park develop a proposed action and preliminary alternatives, which will eventually be incorporated in the draft wilderness and backcountry management plan. (2/28/17).

[NEW] On May 15, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore expects to host public meetings and online engagement related to uses and crowding at the most heavily visited portions of the park. This public input will be used to guide the development of a visitor use management plan for the park. (3/27/2018)

[UPDATE] By May 31, the NPS intends to award multiple concession contracts for mountaineering guide services at Denali National Park and Preserve. Applicant submissions have been scored and rated. The selection process is currently in the matching phase where, one by one, prospective concessioners with ANILCA preferences have an opportunity to match the best offer. New contracts will have a term of 10 years, beginning January 1, 2019. (Updated 3/27/2018)

On June 15, Yosemite National Park's Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias will reopen to the public, following a 3-year \$40 million project funded through the NPS and Yosemite Conservancy matching funds. A new parking lot and welcome center has been constructed at the South Entrance, a shuttle bus will take visitors to the big trees, a handicap accessible boardwalk has been constructed, trails have been improved, and new restrooms have been installed. The dedication ceremony to mark the completion of the project is slated for June 14. <https://www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/mariposagrove.htm> (3/7/2018)

[NEW] A June 16 proposed triathlon at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore will be declined on March 30. The permit application came from the Munising Visitors Bureau. In review of the application received on February 9, 2018, the park has determined the event as proposed would have substantial impacts to visitors and administrative functions and cannot be approved at this time. Because the application included letters of support from Congressman Jack Bergman (R-MI-1) and State Senator Tom Casperson (R-MI-38) as well as inquiries from the offices of Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Senator Gary Peters (D-MI) and the City of Munising, the park superintendent will contact those offices to inform them and answer questions. The park will continue to work with the permit requester to determine if modifications to the request can allow for a permit to be issued for this event. (3/27/2018)

By August 2018, the NPS and the National Park Foundation (NPF) will complete their joint Impact Investment Study. The Impact Investing Study is being funded by the NPF and will

analyze how federal agencies have developed third-party financed infrastructure construction, operations, revitalization, and recapitalization programs over the past 20 years. The study will also identify potential new or modified authorities or policies required to implement alternative financing strategies to help the NPS move forward with the construction, repair, and ongoing maintenance of bureau infrastructure. (03/14/2018).

Awareness

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

[NEW] On March 30, FWS signed a Finding of No Significant Impact authorizing an exchange of land between FWS and the East Improvement District (EID) in Oregon. Land to be divested is 19.28 acres of McNary NWR in return for 14.6 acres of privately owned riparian and wetland habitat adjacent to Cold Springs NWR. The exchange is prompted by the EID's proposal to install buried irrigation pipelines and associated infrastructure through the lands to be divested. The project will bring irrigation water to approximately 38 farms comprising 47,000 acres of farmland in an area impacted by groundwater shortage. So construction can begin this year, FWS will issue a temporary right-of-way permit to the EID to allow construction to proceed as the land exchange is finalized. This project has the support of Senator Merkley, the Governor of Oregon, and the local irrigation district. No FWS-initiated outreach is planned. (03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] On March 16, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) transmitted a draft of the bull trout biological assessment of the Hecla Mines in Northwest Montana for review and feedback by FWS. Note that the consultation is split into aquatic (bull trout) and terrestrial portions. FWS biologists have been working closely with staffs of USFS, Hecla mining company, and private consultants to expedite the environmental planning for this project. To the extent possible, the FWS is concurrently drafting the Biological Opinion with as much existing information as possible; while waiting for the full description of the proposed action and its related actions so that FWS may develop our analysis.(Updated 03/28/2018)

On March 13, the U.S. Court of Claims finalized and made public its finding that the United States was liable for flooding and resulting damage caused to lands as a result of the Army Corps of Engineer's (ACE) operation of the Missouri River system, in light of its statutory mandates and a Biological Opinion issued by FWS. The original finding was February 22. However, it was sealed until the parties could seek clarification. In this initial phase of the litigation, the court evaluated the claims of 44 of 400 plaintiffs to determine if they had a property interest and if flooding of that property interest was a foreseeable event of the ACE's operational regime. The next phase of the litigation will address any defenses that the United States may have with respect to the claims, and other legal and factual issues associated with providing entitlement to just compensation. The order is now public and several news outlets have picked up the story. ACE and FWS been contacted by the media but have not offered comment. (03/21/2018)

[UPDATE] Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) is seeking to draw down Lake Alamo (in western Arizona) in order to conduct a dam safety inspection and maintenance. A resulting flushing flow from the reservoir into the Bill Williams River may inadvertently benefit the downstream riparian area and is scheduled for as early as March. The event was fully put forward and

developed by ACE and does not take place on refuge land; however, the release would impact Bill Williams River NWR. (ACE has completed section 7 consultation on the proposed activity.) FWS does not have authority over the release. Reservoir angler and recreational community, and downstream ATV groups have registered concern/opposition to the flows, and the Arizona Game and Fish Commission passed a resolution opposing drawdown of Alamo Reservoir and filed for a temporary restraining order, which was denied in Federal Court on March 9. Release of water began March 12, peaking at 5000 cfs on March 14 and will continue to be released in decreasing volumes through April 1. Representative Paul Gosar (R-AZ) and county elected officials have weighed in on the project, including flushing flows. (Update 03/28/2018)

Complex, multi-year litigation at Grays Lake NWR in Idaho involving Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), FWS and private landowners is reaching a potential decision point. Over the past six years the United States has successfully resolved past disputes with numerous landowners in the basin. The current litigation involves claims that the Federal government flooded private parties' land, along with a dispute over land ownership. The plaintiffs claim damages due to flooding between 2009 and 2011. The U.S. Attorney's Office has scheduled a Settlement Conference with all parties on April 27 to potentially avoid costly litigation. Settlement options may necessitate that BIA and FWS enter into a multi-million dollar settlement that includes acquisition of lakebed over the course of two years. We do not expect any media interest, and we will not do outreach. (03/21/2018)

The states of Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska, and FWS and BOR, collectively the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP), are working cooperatively to extend the program. The primary focus of the PRRIP is restoring, protecting, and enhancing habitat for the whooping crane, Interior least tern, piping plover, and pallid sturgeon. The PRRIP is nearing the end of its first phase of implementation. BOR, with technical assistance from FWS, is evaluating the environmental impacts of extending implementation. BOR has released a draft Environmental Assessment for 45 day public review; they have also requested formal consultation from the FWS under the Endangered Species Act. FWS's Nebraska Ecological Services Field Office is working with the partners and states to provide a Supplemental Biological Opinion to BOR. (03/21/2018)

National Park Service

[NEW] On March 12, Wyoming Governor Matt Mead signed a joint resolution that passed the Wyoming legislature calling for Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park to collect a fee to fund wildlife conservation efforts in the states surrounding the parks. Because Wyoming does not have the authority to impose this fee, the resolution calls for an agreement between the DOI, the NPS, and the surrounding states. This issue has received significant regional media coverage. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] On March 26, a final action was made by the Keeper of the National Register to deny a nomination for listing for the Eastmoreland Historic District in Portland, Oregon, per 36 CFR 60.12(c). On May 18, 2017, the Keeper received a nomination for the Eastmoreland Historic District in Portland, Oregon, from the Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). On June 30, 2017, the Keeper returned the nomination to the SHPO for correction of a procedural

error by the SHPO regarding property-owner notification. On February 9, 2018, an appeal was filed with the Keeper by the Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association pursuant to 36 CFR 60.12, alleging that the SHPO has failed/refused to nominate the District for listing in the National Register. On February 23, 2018, the Keeper sent the SHPO a written request asking for the SHPO's comments on the appeal by March 10, 2018. (03/27/2018)

[UPDATE] On March 29, Burnett Oil Company resumed seismic operation within Big Cypress National Preserve and will continue through the dry season (which ended last year in early June). The Nobles Grade 3D Seismic Survey — a proposal that the National Park Service and Burnett examined and refined for more than two years before it was approved in May 2016 — originally began the project in March 2017 and suspended operations by June 2, 2017, when conditions became too wet to continue. Burnett is using a vibroseis technique to acquire geologic data to assess the potential for oil drilling within Big Cypress National Preserve. (Updated 3/27/2018)

[NEW] In March, *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (better known as *Movi*) was detected for the first time in Alaska's Dall's sheep and mountain goat populations by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. *Movi* is a respiratory bacterium known to cause potentially devastating pneumonia outbreaks in bighorn sheep in the lower 48 states. Wild sheep and goats in Alaska that tested positive for this pathogen have thus far appeared healthy and there have been no signs of disease in any populations being monitored. Despite no known connection with *Movi*, recent large (50-80%) declines in some Dall's sheep populations are enhancing the concern about *Movi*. Some Alaska parks were established in part to help protect Dall's sheep and their habitats, and encompass a large proportion of the species' world-wide range. *Movi*-infected Dall's sheep have been detected adjacent to the following park units: Denali National Park and Preserve, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Wrangell-Saint Elias National Park and Preserve, and Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. Dall's sheep populations in these park units, as well as in Noatak National Preserve, Kobuk Valley National Park, and Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, could be impacted by *Movi* in the future, as well as goat populations in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Kenai Fjords National Park, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, and Wrangell-Saint Elias National Park and Preserve. (3/27/18)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INDIAN AFFAIRS

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (PDAS) John Tahsuda will be in the office April 2-4. On April 5, PDAS Tahsuda will travel to Scottsdale, Arizona, where, on April 6, he will speak on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) at the Federal Bar Association Indian Law conference.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Director Bryan Rice will be in the office this week.

Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) Director Tony Dearman will be on travel status this week, participating in budget and travel training sessions for the BIE Associate Deputy Directors and Education Program Administrators in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

[NEW] On April 11, PDAS Tahsuda will testify at the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs' hearing on the President's FY19 budget request for Indian Affairs. This hearing was rescheduled due to the inclement weather on the originally scheduled date of March 21.

[UPDATE] April 12, PDAS Tahsuda will be hosting a Tribal consultation session on potential revisions to the fee-to-trust regulations at 25 CFR 151 in Mashantucket, Connecticut. This session is rescheduled from the March 15 session that was cancelled due to inclement weather and again rescheduled from April 11 to accommodate the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs' rescheduled hearing.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

[NEW] This week, BIA Deputy Director for Justice Services, Charles Addington, will be traveling to Navajo Nation to meet with Navajo Nation staff regarding their law enforcement and detention programs.

[NEW] On April 17, BIA Deputy Director Addington will be a panelist at the Conference on Crimes Against Women in Dallas Texas, along with the FBI Indian Country Program Chief and DOJ staff.

Bureau of Indian Education

[NEW] BIE anticipates submitting the State Systemic Improvement Plan Phase II, Year 2, to the U.S. Department of Education by the April 1 deadline.

BIE expects the Federal Register notice announcing proposed membership of the Standards, Assessments, and Accountability System negotiated rulemaking committee to be ready for Departmental approval. This negotiated rulemaking is required by statute and in accordance with an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education.

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

The week of April 16, Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, Division of Energy and Mineral Development (IEED-DEMD) staff will be traveling to Blue Lake Rancheria in California for its micro-grid project ribbon-cutting ceremony. IEED-DEMD's Tribal Energy Development Capacity program grant provided funding to assist with this project.

April 22-26 is the 2018 Tribal Self-Governance Annual Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Department of the Interior's sessions will take place on Wednesday, April 25, and Thursday, April 26, with a Self-Governance Program orientation session on Sunday, April 22. PDAS Tahsuda is invited to speak on Wednesday, April 25, during the welcoming remarks and plenary session.

[NEW] On May 3, the 27th Annual Indian Law Enforcement Officer's Ceremony will be at the United States Indian Police Academy Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Artesia, New Mexico. PDAS Tahsuda has been invited to speak.

[NEW] On May 18, PDAS Tahsuda will be the keynote speaker at the Haskell Indian Nations University 2018 commencement in Lawrence, Kansas.

May 23-24 will be the Tribal-Interior Budget Council (TIBC) meeting. The location and times are to be determined.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

[NEW] On April 19, BIA Deputy Director for Indian Services, Hankie Ortiz, has been invited by the Honorable Tim Groser, New Zealand Ambassador to the United States, and Whānau Tahī, a New Zealand-based enterprise owned by indigenous persons, to the New Zealand Embassy to attend a presentation on the development, framework, and evolution of cross-agency family-centered New Zealand Government policy.

[NEW] On May 2-4, the BIA Office of Indian Services, Division of Transportation, will hold the quarterly Tribal Transportation Program Coordinating Committee (TTPCC) meeting in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The TTPCC was established by federal regulations (25 CFR 170.135) to provide input and recommendations to the BIA and Federal Highway Administration concerning the Tribal Transportation Program.

Bureau of Indian Education

[NEW] BIE's Third Quarterly Corrective Action Plan (CAP) is due to the U.S. Department of Education on April 30. The report will reflect the requirements discussed during the meeting on the first and second quarterly CAP reports.

April 30 - May 18, BIE will host a Strategic Management Plan Face-to-Face meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to address Goals 4-6.

Awareness

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

June 3-6, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) will host its mid-year conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

[NEW] PDAS Tahsuda issued a directive on Improving Home Mortgaging Process on Tribal Trust and Restricted Fee Lands, tasking BIA with streamlining the process of review and approval of land and leasehold mortgages and issuance of certified Titles Status Reports (TSRs) and recording of mortgages. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S.

Department of Agriculture (USDA), Veterans Administration, and their lenders use TSRs for mortgage purposes.

[NEW] BIA's Office of Indian Services, Division of Human Services, is working with the Office of Self-Governance to discuss how to incorporate Tribal standards of placement under the Native American Children's Safety Act into to Self-Governance Compact/Annual Funding Agreements (AFA) for Fiscal Year/Calendar Year 2019.

[NEW] The Federal Register notice providing the 2018 list of Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Designated Agents List is in surname. ICWA requires State courts and child welfare agencies to provide a notice to Indian tribes whenever an Indian child (as defined in the Act) is involved in a child custody proceeding. The Federal Register notice lists the agents that each Tribe has designated to receive that notice.

May 7 is the deadline for written comments on the BIA's request for comments on its categorical exclusions (CATEXs) under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), per the Federal Register notice published on March 6.

Fee-to-Trust: As of Mar. 14, 2018, a total of one completed case for one Tribe, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate was approved by the Agency Superintendent under the Fee-to-Trust acquisition process for a total of 157.24 acres into trust. To date for calendar year 2018, 13 cases have been completed totaling 1,894 acres.

June 3 is the deadline for issuance of final BIA guidance for Tribes on how to conduct background checks of foster care parents and employees under the Native American Children's Safety Act (NACSA). BIA is currently reviewing comments received by the March 16 deadline and revising the draft guidance as appropriate.

June 30 is the deadline for written comments on whether and how to revise BIA's fee-to-trust regulations at 25 CFR 151, per the Dear Tribal Leader letter dated February 15, 2018.

Bureau of Indian Education

[NEW] Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute's Culinary Arts Instructor was selected as the American Culinary Federation Chef of the Year for the Western Region at the annual region meeting that took place in Newport Beach, CA on March 18-20.

On April 22, the U.S. Department of Education is planning to hold a Tribal consultation in Albuquerque, New Mexico, regarding set-aside funding for the BIE (\$1.5 million). Education notified BIE on March 12, 2018, that it is withholding 1.5 percent of the total Title I, Part A set-aside to BIE, an amount normally included for BIE's administration of the program under ESEA section 8204(b).

[NEW] May 21 is the deadline for comments on the Bureau of Indian Affairs' proposed rule updating the regulation regarding when Indian students are eligible for benefits of education under the Johnson-O'Malley Act (JOM), per the Federal Register notice published on March 21, 2018.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY INSULAR AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

Insular Affairs

AS Domenech Meeting with Veterans Affairs Re: Insular Area Veterans: *[UPDATE]* On April 4, AS Domenech will meet with Brigadier General Henry Huntley, U.S. Army (Ret.) and other Veterans Affairs officials to discuss veterans concerns in the Insular Areas.

AS Domenech will attend the FEMA Recovery Support Function Leadership Group (RSFLG) Undersecretaries Meeting: On Tuesday, April 3. Recurring every two weeks. 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. (EST) FEMA Headquarters.

International Affairs

Marine Protected Area Planning and Operations in Indonesia: *[UPDATE]* Through April 6, DOI-ITAP will have three DOI marine protected area Senior Advisors with expertise in the planning and operations of marine national parks, wildlife refuges, and national monuments serve on six week, in-country details as senior advisers to the Indonesian provincial governments in North Maluku, Maluku, and West Papua provinces. The advisors include one FWS and NPS retiree and one current NPS employee. A DOI-ITAP Project Manager was on-site through March 9 to introduce the Advisors to key stakeholders. The advisors just completed some field assessments and will now conduct stakeholder workshops. This effort is funded by USAID.

Oceans & Fisheries Partners' Meeting in Indonesia: From April 2-3 DOI-ITAP will join a USAID-organized meeting of partners engaged in regional marine and fisheries activity in Southeast Asia and the Coral Triangle region. The goal is to ensure all partners are working in a complementary fashion, and that the various partners can leverage each other's strengths to build stronger programs. Participants will include USAID/RDMA; USAID/Indonesia; NOAA, the Coral Triangle Initiative for Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security; and several major USAID contractors working on oceans and fisheries issues in the region. This effort is funded by USAID.

Oceans, Great Lakes, and Coasts

DOI Senior Ocean Policy Team and Regional Ocean Contacts Meeting: On April 4, the DOI Senior Ocean Policy Team and the Regional Ocean Contacts will meet jointly to discuss upcoming National Ocean Council meetings, implementation of federal ocean policy, DOI presence at Capitol Hill Ocean Week, and bureau ocean, Great Lakes, and coastal initiatives. (Washington, DC; no press)

Hurricane Recovery

HURRICANE RESPONSE/RECOVERY OPERATIONS: [UPDATE] DOI core teams are deployed in Puerto Rico and the USVI to work with the Territorial government representatives and local partners on developing recovery priorities and long term recovery strategies. Personnel, including curators/archivists, historic architects, and archaeologists, from across the Bureaus, the Smithsonian Institution, and the National Archives and Records Administration completed damage assessments of cultural resources on both Puerto Rico and the USVI. The Department received an additional \$1.7 million on its FEMA Mission Assignment to primarily conduct natural resource damage assessments in Puerto Rico in support of the RAND Recovery Plan. As part of this effort, five Bureau of Land Management engineers/recreational planners are mobilizing next week for one month to assist the Territory in assessing damage to more than 800 impacted recreational structures, ranging from sports arenas to trailheads. These assessments are being done in collaboration with FEMA's Public Assistance Program and Territorial staff. The Department's headquarters staff continue to focus on processing and extending agreements with the Bureaus and our inter-agency partners to initiate the assessments to provide results by FEMA's May 10 deadline.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

Insular Affairs

Press Releases Planned for Following:

- **[UPDATE]** March 24 – Secretary Zinke Praises U.S. Congress and President Trump for Funding Palau Compact Agreement in the 2018 Omnibus Funding Bill, Provides \$123 Million through 2024
- **[UPDATE]** March 26 – Marshall Islands Compact Trust Funds and Budget Meetings in San Francisco
- **[UPDATE]** March 28 – Federated States of Micronesia Compact Trust Funds and Budget Meetings in San Francisco
- April 17 - FY2018 CIP announcement for American Samoa; AS Travel to American Samoa for 118th Annual Flag Day Ceremonies - April 17 – 19.
- April or May - FY2018 CIP funding announcements for the CNMI and Guam; AS proposed travel to Guam and CNMI in April or May.

International Affairs

Knowledge, Network and Learning Exchange Visit in Hawaii: From April 9 – 15, DOI-ITAP is coordinating a technical visit to Hawaii for a delegation of eight Filipino Provincial Governors, University Presidents, and Fisheries legal experts. The goal is to help the delegation improve fisheries protection and efficient fish processing techniques through exchanges with USFWS, commercial fisheries, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Law Enforcement. This effort is funded by the State Department.

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

Insular Affairs

AS Planned Travel to American Samoa for 118th Annual Flag Day Ceremonies: April 17 - 19, – AS Domenech and OIA Director Pula are tentatively scheduled to travel to American Samoa to participate in the 118th annual celebration of the day that the Chiefs of Tutuila decided to cede authority and become a U.S. territory.

AS Planned Travel to Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam: April 23 – 27, - AS Domenech is considering travel to CNMI and Guam for the Micronesian Islands Forum and other courtesy visits with Guam and CNMI

International Affairs

MOU with Israel on Biodiversity Conservation, National Protected Areas, and Cultural and Historical Heritage: *[UPDATE]* In late May, an official from Israel's Nature and Parks Authority (INPA) will be in the U.S. for a signing ceremony between the Secretary and the Israeli Ambassador to the United States. (This is a postponement from Israel's previous request for a meeting and signing in late March) The MOU is intended to strengthen cooperation on biodiversity conservation, national protected areas, and cultural and historical heritage. Decisions will need to be made about whether to host an event at DOI or at the Israeli Embassy, as well as regarding whether and what type of press or other public announcements should be made in conjunction with the signing. Israel's lawyers are reviewing comments on the Hebrew text by State Department translators, while DOI and State are reviewing a new set of comments from Israel.

Oceans, Great Lakes, and Coasts

World Oceans Day and Capitol Hill Ocean Week: World Oceans Day is June 8 and Capitol Hill Ocean Week (CHOW) will be held June 5-8. The Ocean, Great Lakes, and Coastal Program Coordinator, along with the DOI Senior Ocean Policy Team, are coordinating the Department's participation in CHOW, which is hosted annually by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. June has also historically been proclaimed as National Oceans Month, including by President Trump in 2017. Two new issues of the DOI NEWSWAVE newsletter are expected to be released in June for these events.

Awareness

Omnibus Spending Bill Impacts on U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States

Impact on Insular Areas of Omnibus Spending Bill for 2018 Signed by the President on Friday, March 23:

- \$123.8 million fully funds the 2010 Palau Compact Review Agreement between the U.S. and the Republic of Palau. This was long overdue and assures U.S. continued commitment and national security interests in the Western Pacific region.
- \$3,363,000 million reinstated in Compact Impact funding for distribution to Guam, Hawaii, American Samoa, and Northern Mariana Islands for impacts of migrants from freely associated states. Originally cut from President's budget, Guam leadership has praised the reinstatement of this discretionary funding.
- Authorizes the Secretary of the Army allow Army medical facilities located in Hawaii to provide medical services to civilians from the U.S. territories in the Pacific: American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands and the freely associated states of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Palau.
- Fish and Wildlife Grants at ¼ of 1% for Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- FY2018 Funding for the Office of Insular Affairs.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR LAND AND MINERALS MANAGEMENT

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

ASLM Joe Balash will travel to New Orleans from April 2-6.

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Kate MacGregor will be in Washington, D.C. attending regularly scheduled meetings.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Casey Hammond will be in Washington, D.C. attending regularly scheduled meetings.

BSEE Director Scott Angelle will be in Washington, D.C. attending regularly scheduled meetings.

BLM Deputy Director Brian Steed will be in Washington, D.C. attending regularly scheduled meetings.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

Bureau of Land Management

[UPDATE] April 1-7. BLM-ES will be reinstating two mineral leases on the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota, which were first obtained by Twin Metals Minnesota, LLC in 1966. This action follows a DOI Solicitor opinion issued December 22, 2017, stating that the original leases gives Twin Metals a non-discretionary, or automatic, right to a third lease renewal to develop copper, nickel and associated minerals on the Superior National Forest. In December 2016, the Forest Service proposed that approximately 234,000 acres of the Forest be withdrawn from disposition under mineral leasing laws. These lands were segregated for a two-year period while the Forest Service completes environmental analysis to inform the decision-making

process. Currently, there are 48 mining leases, permits, and applications in the proposed withdrawal area. This action is expected to be controversial. (3/1/18)

In April BLM intends to complete a report to Congress detailing legislative and administrative options, including partnerships, to bring Wild Horse and Burro populations to appropriate management levels. The current population and program are unsustainable resulting in vast resource impacts and unhealthy herds. In the past year, the Department has requested the restoration of statutory tools to manage herd levels, which includes humane destruction, and others to facilitate sales of excess animals. (2/14/18)

In Early April, a scoping report on Sage Grouse habitat management is set to be completed and released to the public outlining responses from the states and the public regarding potential management plan changes. In the coming weeks, the Department will determine whether to proceed with plan amendments and initiate a public process on the 68 Sage Grouse Resources Management Plans. BLM plans to share the Draft EIS with cooperating partners in April (2/14/18)

March 19 – May 1. BLM-MT/DK. The Butte Field Office is beginning to identify issues for a project to establish a Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) in the Scratchgravel Hills area near Helena, Montana. The Field Office plans to send out a scoping letter to stakeholders and issue a news release soliciting public scoping comments as early as March 19. The RAMP proposes to improve and enhance recreational opportunities and experiences in the Special Recreation Management Area by: formally developing a purpose-built trail system, open to a variety of non-motorized uses, including mountain biking, hiking, and equestrians; identifying specific trail use zones; improving signage and visitor information; and, providing sustainable options for existing trails. Though the initial proposed plan has drawn widespread support from recreation user groups, there is a potential for controversy among some local landowners. (3/7/18)

March 11 – 31. BLM-AK has submitted a *Federal Register* Notice for revocation of five different Public Land Orders (PLOs), which will open approximately 229,632 acres in the Goodnews Bay region for surface entry, mineral exploration and mining; it will also make the state selections effective, and allow the BLM to move forward in conveying lands to the State under their Statehood entitlement. The PLOs were issued in 1972, pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Sec. 17(d)(1), and were recommended for revocation in the 2008 Bay Resource Management Plan. The Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/1/18)

[UPDATED] March 19 – April 17. BLM-CO. The Royal Gorge Field Office will announce a 30-day public comment period for an Environmental Assessment analyzing the Head Full of Hope Claim—a placer gold mining proposal along the East fork of the Arkansas River northeast of Leadville. The public comment period was announced March 19 and will run through April 17. Local governments in Colorado expect 30-day public comment periods for actions like this. (3/7/18)

March 22 – April 6. BLM-CO will release the Environmental Assessment for the upcoming September 2018 oil and gas lease sale for public comment. Twenty-five parcels totaling approximately 21,762 acres are proposed for leasing in Huerfano, Kiowa, Lincoln, Washington

and Weld counties in the Royal Gorge Field Office. Three parcels totaling approximately 413 acres in Baca County have been deferred for leasing. These parcels contain cultural resources and Lesser Prairie Chicken habitat, and consultations with National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office have not been completed. After the consultations, the parcels may be offered in a future sale. Eleven parcels totaling approximately 18,358 acres in Huerfano County outside and east of Great Sand Dunes National Park's boundary have received significant statewide media coverage. (3/7/18)

[UPDATE] March 23 – May 7. BLM-AK. The EPA published a Notice of Availability (NOA) on the Greater Moose's Tooth 2 (GMT2) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the March 23 *Federal Register*. Publication opened a 45-day public comment period, which closes on May 7, 2018. The Draft Supplemental EIS analyzes an application for oil and gas development of the GMT2 production pad in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) and supplements an earlier analysis of the project in the 2004 Alpine Satellite Development Plan. Under the preferred alternative identified in the Draft Supplemental EIS, the associated pipeline and access road would cross both Kuukpik Corporation-owned lands and federally-managed lands within the NPR-A. The infrastructure would also connect to the Greater Moose's Tooth 1 development, which is eight miles away. Public meetings will be held during the 45-day comment period from April 9-20 in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and the North Slope communities of Anaktuvuk Pass, Atkasuk, Utqiagvik, and Nuiqsut. The BLM is also required to publish an NOA; the BLM Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. The BLM's NOA will not affect the comment period, which will still close on May 7. (2/28/18)

[UPDATE] May 7. BLM-WY published the [Notice of Availability](#) for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Riley Ridge to Natrona Project on March 23, 2018. Publication of the Notice announced the availability of the Draft EIS and opened a 45-day public comment period. Denbury Green Pipeline-Riley Ridge, LLC is proposing to construct a 16- and 24- inch carbon dioxide pipeline and associated facilities along a 243-mile linear right-of-way through Fremont, Sublette, Sweetwater and Natrona Counties in central and western Wyoming. The project would create approximately 380 direct jobs and generate \$1.7 million in state and local tax revenue during construction. (2/21/18) DTS 1749

March 26 – April 6. BLM-MT/DK. Montana Tunnels Mine is a relic from the 1998 Pegasus bankruptcy. Located south of Helena, Mont., the mine mined lead and zinc with secondary silver and gold from an open pit for approximately 20 years before financing difficulties halted operations. The entire facility is in general disrepair and includes extremely serious geotechnical issues east/southeast and west/northwest of the pit walls. The Butte Field Office and Montana Department of Environmental Quality forwarded a revised bond calculation of \$34.9 million to Montana Tunnels on Feb. 5, 2018, with a reply expected in March 2018. If Montana Tunnels cannot post the required bond amount, the agencies could begin the bond forfeiture process. A bond forfeiture would be the subject of media interest, but it is unclear whether it would generate any controversy. (3/16/18)

March 26 – April 30. BLM-NM. The Las Cruces District expects to release the Talavera Substation and Distribution Project Draft Environmental Assessment (EA), which will start a public comment period that runs through April 30, 2018. The EA analyzes potential environmental effects from the construction, operation, and maintenance of a proposed, new,

permanent El Paso Electric substation and associated transmission, and 10.4 miles of distribution lines in Doña Ana County. The EA was prepared in response to right-of-way (ROW) applications submitted by El Paso Electric on October 19, 2016. The proposed ROWs are on BLM-managed public lands and will support the increasing need for energy in the City of Las Cruces and surrounding southern New Mexico communities. Public scoping for the EA began on July 17, 2017, and ended on August 17, 2017. During the public comment period, the Las Cruces District plans to host an informational meeting on April 5, 2018, at the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces. A news release announcing the public meeting and start of the comment period will be distributed on March 26. (3/16/18)

March 26 – April 30. BLM-AK. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has delayed its planned March release of the Donlin Gold Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) due to a BLM consistency review of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act Section 810 analysis, which is an appendix to the Final EIS. Donlin Gold LLC applied for permits for an open-pit, hardrock gold mine in southwest Alaska. The mine site will also include waste treatment and waste rock facilities, a mill facility and a natural gas-powered power plant. BLM-AK has been participating as a cooperating agency on the project and is responsible for a right-of-way (ROW) authorization. Donlin Gold submitted a ROW application for one-third of the 316-mile proposed natural gas pipeline. The ROW would cross approximately 92 miles and 4,322 acres of largely remote and undisturbed BLM-managed public lands. The affected public lands are under a 1981 Management Framework Plan and the area is also included in the Bering Sea/Western Interior Resource Management Plan, currently under development. <http://www.DonlinGoldEIS.com>. (3/1/18)

March 26 – April 30. BLM-CO. The BLM White River Field Office plans to release an Environmental Assessment of the proposed Buffalo Horn Land Exchange for a 30-day public review period. The preferred alternative would convey the surface estates of 14 parcels of Federal lands totaling approximately 2,815 acres in Rio Blanco and Moffat Counties for one non-Federal parcel in Rio Blanco County totaling 1,835 acres. Most parcels are within the White River Field Office, with one Federal parcel that includes lands in the Little Snake Field Office. The feasibility review found that disposal of the selected Federal lands and acquisition of the non-Federal lands would improve the management efficiency of public land resources, provide greater public access to recreation lands, and result in protection of important wildlife habitat and cultural landscapes. A news release has been prepared and will be distributed once the BLM Washington Office completes congressional notifications. (1/10/18)

March 26 – April 30. BLM-CA intends to renew the site license for Calpine's Sonoma Power Plant, which is located at The Geysers geothermal area in Sonoma County. The 30-year license required for operations has expired. The Ukiah Field Office posted an unsigned Categorical Exclusion (CX) for public review on ePlanning on Jan. 24 and the CX was signed Feb. 1. Once the proponent signs the license, BLM-CA will finalize the process and issue the site license.

[NEW] March 28. BLM-OR/WA. Pursuant to concurrence from the Office of the Regional Solicitor, the Prineville District will proceed with the offer to purchase 8,200 acres of private land adjacent to the John Day River from Western Rivers Conservancy and Rattray Highland, LLC. The purchase is in line with the January 2018 John Day River and Thirtymile Creek Acquisitions Environmental Assessment. The sale is expected to be completed on March 28,

2018. On Feb. 9, 2018, the district received a Notice of Appeal from the Oregon Cattlemen's Association and Shaun Robertson without a Statement of Reasons; they did not ask for a stay, and the 30-day period to file the statement closed on March 9, 2018. The Prineville District received the Statement of Reasons from Oregon Cattlemen's Association postmarked on March 12, 2018. Per the Solicitor, the Statement of Reasons was postmarked after the close of the 30-day period and does not affect or change the district's ability to move forward with the sale. (3/23/2018)

[NEW] March 29 – April 6. BLM-AK. The Glennallen Field Office staff will conduct annual face-to-face consultation efforts in Southeast Alaska as part of the ongoing effort to improve communication and cooperation between the BLM and federally recognized tribes. Topics will include BLM-managed cultural resources around Haines and Juneau, and informing and seeking input on the development of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Ring of Fire Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment. The Field Office will conduct face-to-face visits with Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, Sealaska, Sealaska Heritage for Auke Bay, Skagway Traditional Council, Chilkat Indian Village, and Chilkoot Indian Association. (3/23/18)

[UPDATE] March 29 – April 6. BLM-WY. The Cody Field Office will issue a decision to authorize a proposed bentonite mining expansion project in Big Horn County near Lovell. The Environmental Assessment analyzed American Colloid Company's proposal to expand its current mining operations by 1,175.5 acres, including 954.7 acres on BLM-managed federal land. The proposed expansion would provide an estimated 3,000,000 tons of bentonite from public lands over the life of the project and would continue to employ approximately 15 mine employees, 100 mill employees and additional subcontractors. The project is not expected to be controversial as the BLM routinely authorizes bentonite mining projects in the Bighorn Basin and bentonite mining is a traditional use that continues to contribute to local economies. (2/15/18)

April 1. BLM-CO. The BLM is considering renewing a royalty rate reduction (RRR) at the Trapper Mine in northwest Colorado to reduce royalty payments for 19.4 million tons of coal on of the mine's leases from 12.5 percent to 8 percent. Trapper Mining Inc. requested an RRR renewal for coal in two other leases. The identified coal in one lease is not within an approved mine plan and the BLM does not believe the other lease contains any more recoverable coal. As such, the proposal is to approve an RRR for one lease only. The request is for 11 years. If granted, the RRR would be effective May 1, 2015. BLM-CO sent notification to the Governor of Colorado on Dec. 22, 2017. The State of Colorado declined to comment. BLM-CO will notify the state after the decision. The target date for the decision is April 1. (3/7/18)

[NEW] April 2-27: BLM-MT/DK. The Montana/Dakotas State Office is working with several agencies to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning rangeland monitoring. The MOU will increase the level of cooperation among the parties and provide a framework for landowners/permittees/lessees to collect data on grazing lands using methods that are collectively agreed upon by the parties. Other parties include Montana Rangelands Partnership, a program coordinated by the Montana Department of Natural Resources Rangeland Resources Program; Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; Division of Trust Lands Management; Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the U.S. Forest Service; and the

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service/Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge. The MOU will help restore trust with local communities and improve dialogue and relationships. (3/23/18)

[UPDATE] April 2-6. BLM-NM. The BLM Oklahoma Field Office expects to distribute a news release announcing the issuance of a coal lease modification to Georges Colliers, Inc., to expand the existing, active Pollyanna No. 8 coal mine. Colliers submitted the application in April 2015; the Decision Record was signed March 19, 2018, and posted to ePlanning on March 20, 2018. The mine is located just south of Spiro, Okla., and the lease modification would include 520 acres of additional federal coal reserves at a depth of 1,000 -1,200 feet, adjacent to the existing mine/lease boundary that would be accessed by underground mining methods using existing infrastructure. The additional acreage contains an estimated 5,616,000 tons of coal and would extend the life of the mine by about eight years and continue to support 80 existing jobs. (3/16/18)

April 2 – 11. BLM-AK. The Glennallen Field Office staff is planning public open house meetings seeking public input in Haines, Skagway, and Juneau, Alaska as it begins the development of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Ring of Fire draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment. The information garnered from this outreach will be used to develop supplemental alternatives to the previous “Ring of Fire” Draft RMP amendment for the Haines area. Management options to be evaluated include retaining or changing special land area designations, retaining a monitor and control area for wildlife studies, and potentially establishing a maximum number of annual helicopter landings on these BLM-managed public lands. (3/16/18)

[NEW] April 2. BLM-CO. The Royal Gorge Field Office will issue an annual coordination letter to the U.S. Army Fort Carson for the temporary use of public lands for the Army’s High Altitude Mountain Environment Training (HAMET). Since 2010, the HAMET program has provided pilots with experience flying and landing helicopters in mountainous, high-elevation terrain. (3/23/18)

[NEW] April 3-5. BLM-CO. Representatives from the Uncompahgre Field Office and the Department of Energy will tour the West End uranium mines in southwestern Colorado. The now-abandoned mines were active during the uranium boom that began in the 1940s. The Southwest District’s Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Program has worked cooperatively with state and industry partners to improve safe public access to these areas. All of the mines are closed, but reclamation efforts are ongoing. BLM-CO staff will also deliver a presentation about AML and defense-related uranium mine decision processes. (3/23/18)

[NEW] April 3-5. BLM-NM. Acting BLM-NM State Director Aden Seidlitz will meet with U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM), in Roswell, N.M., to brief the Senator about general land management issues in the Pecos District. The meeting will be informational and there has not been any indication of interest in any one subject or project. The meeting will take place while the BLM New Mexico Executive Management Team meeting is underway at Ft. Stanton. (3/23/18)

[UPDATE] April 3. BLM-CA. The Palms Springs-South Coast Field Office will host a public scoping meeting for the proposed Crimson Solar Project in Palm Desert. On April 12, an

additional scoping meeting will be held in Blythe. BLM-CA intends to prepare a Joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report and Possible Land Use Plan Amendment for the Proposed RE Crimson Solar Project in Riverside County. Sonoran West Holding, LLC has requested a right-of-way authorization to construct, operate, maintain and decommission the project—an up to 350 megawatt photovoltaic facility along with the ancillary facilities, including up to eight project substations, access roads, operations and maintenance buildings, and lay-down areas. The project area consists of approximately 2,700-acres of BLM-administered lands within the Riverside East Solar Energy Zone and within the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan Development Focus Area. (3/16/18)

April 3. The BLM anticipates the *Federal Register* publication of the 2018 National Call for Nominations for Resource Advisory Councils (RACs). The BLM is seeking public nominations for open positions on 30 RACs and will consider nominations for 45 days. The Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/1/18) DTS 1964

April 3. BLM-UT. The Price Field Office will release for public review and comment an Environmental Assessment analyzing XTO Energy Inc.'s proposal to develop natural gas resources in the Horse Bench Project area. XTO Energy Inc. proposes building 19 well pads and drilling up to 175 natural gas wells on 6,565 acres of public lands located approximately 36 miles northeast of Price. (3/7/18)

April 3. BLM-UT. The Vernal Field Office will begin scoping for the Dinosaur Travel Management Plan (TMP). Scoping meetings will be held in Manila and Vernal, Utah, on April 3 and 4, respectively. The scoping period will run through May 3. This TMP will cover approximately 850 miles of routes across 220,324 acres of BLM-managed land in portions of Daggett and Uintah counties. The TMP is scheduled to be completed on or before Nov. 30, 2020, as required by the May 31, 2017 Resource Management Plan Settlement Agreement. Signatories to the settlement agreement include Jenna Whitlock for the BLM; Steve Bloch for SUWA; Robin Cooley for Earthjustice; and Paul Turcke for BlueRibbon Coalition, Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition, and Trails Preservation Alliance. BLM-UT distributed a press release announcing the meetings on March 16, 2018. (3/1/18)

[NEW] April 4. BLM-CO. The Royal Gorge Field Office will announce its decision approving a hardrock mineral sampling proposal near the Parkdale area in Fremont County. The sampling is part of a mineral materials sale application. Mineral materials are typically used in the aggregate industry and are a vital ingredient in concrete and asphalt products. (3/23/18)

April 4. BLM-ID. Boise District Resource Advisory Council meeting will be in Boise. Agenda items include review of scoping topics for the Four Rivers Resource Management Plan, wild horse update, Soda Fire grazing status, user conflicts and general Field Office updates. (3/1/18)

[NEW] April 5. BLM-CO. The Royal Gorge Field Office intends to send letters to livestock grazing permittees to notify them about current and projected drought conditions, and potential adjustments in livestock authorizations at the local allotment level. Colorado is experiencing record low precipitation across the state that may reduce forage growth. Adjustments may include fewer animals on allotments or shorter grazing seasons. Ideally, all adjustments, if

needed, would be voluntary. In the event voluntary adjustments are not taken by permittees, the BLM would need to render an adjustment decision. (3/23/18).

[NEW] In Spring. BLM-UT. BLM-UT has updated the 2011 Air Resource Management Strategy (ARMS) and will begin a public review and comment period (as provided for by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, et al. v. U.S. Department of the Interior, et al. settlement agreement). The agreement requires that BLM-UT update the ARMS by May 31, 2018. Additionally, the agreement requires that the public be given an opportunity to comment and that the BLM provide written responses to any substantive comments on the updated strategy. The updated strategy will be posted to the BLM-UT ePlanning page and the public will have a two-week comment period. Parties to the settlement agreement, as well as all identified interested parties will also be notified via mail. Per Solicitor guidance, BLM-UT will not issue a press release. (3/23/18)

[UPDATE] April 6. BLM-UT. The Cedar City Field Office will release for public review and comment the Milford Flats South Solar Energy Zone Environmental Assessment (EA). This EA analyzes the effects of leasing approximately 5,564 acres of public lands for solar energy development in Beaver County, Utah. The Milford Flats South Solar Energy Zone was designated in the 2012 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. The comment period will run for 30 days. (2/21/18)

April 6. BLM-UT will release five Draft Recreation Business Plans for a 30-day public comment period. The Draft Plans will propose to establish new or increase existing fees at various recreation sites in the Vernal, Cedar City, Moab, and Salt Lake Field Offices. These sites include campgrounds, day-use sites, and specialized off-highway vehicle areas. In accordance with Federal Land Recreation Enhancement Act, the Field Offices will present the results of the public feedback on the Draft Plans to Utah's Recreation Resource Advisory Committee on May 22, and then publish a *Federal Register* Notice prior approving any new recreation fees. The approval of these Business plans is expected to increase the amount of revenue BLM-UT will have to re-invest in local recreation programs to rebuild aging infrastructure, increase and improve recreational access to the public lands, and enhance the Utah Recreation and Visitor Services Program's ability to support local rural economies. (3/7/18)

[NEW] April 6. BLM-NV. The Nevada State Legislature Committee on Public Lands has requested a BLM presentation on the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act and National Monuments in Nevada, including Gold Butte National Monument. The meeting is scheduled to occur in Laughlin, Nevada; the BLM participant has not been determined. (3/23/18)

[UPDATE] In April. BLM-ID expects to have Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary Land and Minerals Management sign the decision Record for the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No New Significant Impact (FONNSI) for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project. A decision package with concurrence memo and Notice of Availability for *Federal Register* publication is under review in Washington, D.C. A request for Secretarial-level signature of the Decision Record is being considered, along with a possible signing event in early- or mid-April either Boise or Washington, D.C., with the Idaho Governor, congressional delegation and local government officials (City of Kuna, Idaho, and Owyhee County Commissioners). The Final EA and FONNSI were published on Jan. 5, 2018, beginning a

protest period on the proposed land use plan amendments. The protest period closed on Feb. 5, 2018. The three-year construction phase of segments 8 and 9 of the Gateway West transmission line will create an estimated 1,360 jobs for a total labor income of \$23.1 million. Construction of all 10 segments of the transmission line is projected to support nearly 3,100 jobs with labor income of \$55.7 million. If a right-of-way for segments 8 and 9 is not granted, there would likely be adverse impacts to economic growth, including loss of jobs, in the Pacific Northwest transmission region, which encompasses Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Montana, and several Canadian provinces. Gateway West is one of several grid-modernization projects underway to improve transmission capacity in the Mountain West and Pacific Northwest. The project is expected to deliver enough power to supply 975,000 homes. The Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (2/22/18) DTS 1973

Bureau of Offshore Energy Management

By April 6, BOEM expects to publish a Proposed Sale Notice (PSN) for two wind leases offshore Massachusetts. The PSN is in surnaming with the Department. This notice is expected to be announced no later than when the Secretary speaks at the International Wind Partnering Forum on April 6 in Princeton, NJ.

By April 6, BOEM expects to publish a Call for Information and Nominations that identifies areas of the OCS offshore New York and New Jersey for potential future wind leasing. The Call requests nominations from companies interested in commercial wind energy leases within four proposed areas of the OCS within the New York Bight region. The Call is in surnaming with ASLM. This notice is expected to be announced when the Secretary speaks at the International Wind Partnering Forum on April 6 in Princeton, NJ.

By March 30, BOEM expects to publish the Atlantic Renewable Energy Path Forward – Request for Feedback (RFF). The document seeks input on BOEM’s proposed path forward for renewable energy leasing offshore the Atlantic Coast. The RFF describes the process and factors used by BOEM to identify Forecast Areas along the Atlantic Coast where future development is most likely and where future leasing should be focused. This notice is expected to be announced before the Secretary speaks at the International Wind Partnering Forum on April 6 in Princeton, NJ.

[UPDATE] On March 30, BOEM is targeting publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the Vineyard Wind (Massachusetts) Construction and Operations Plan (COP). On Dec. 19, 2017, BOEM received a COP for Vineyard Wind’s proposed 800 MW wind project, which is approximately 14 miles offshore and south of Martha’s Vineyard. On March 15, Vineyard submitted an updated COP to BOEM and on March 20, an interagency meeting to discuss the plan and review strategy incorporating the requirements of E.O. 13807 was held at EPA Region 1’s HQ office in Boston, MA with approximately 50 individuals from various Federal and State agencies in attendance. Public scoping meetings are being scheduled for the week of April 16-20 in New Bedford, MA; Martha’s Vineyard, MA; Nantucket, MA; Hyannis, MA, and Kingston, RI.

BOEM is prepared to publish a Beaufort Sea Call for Information and Nominations as soon as clearance is received from ASLM. The BOEM DPP includes a proposed lease sale in the

Beaufort Sea in 2019. In order to hold the lease sale by the target date of Dec. 18, 2019, BOEM needed to initiate the formal sale planning process by publishing the Call in early March. The Call was approved by the Department on March 5. A draft press release has been submitted to DOI Communications.

As soon as possible, BOEM needs to publish the Proposed Notice of Sale for Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 251. The package is surnaming with the Department. The sale is scheduled for August 2018.

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement

The Well Control Rule (WCR) (AA39) was submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on December 7. OIRA also hosted listening sessions with industry on the Revised WCR in February. OMB reviewed the WCR and submitted comments to BSEE which BSEE addressed. Once all OMB and interagency comments are resolved, the rule will be finalized within the Department for submission to the *Federal Register* for publication. BSEE understands that the public comment period is currently expected to last at least 30 days, after which the team will begin working on the Final Rule. Comments are 100 pages and will be sent up separately.

The Proposed Production Safety Systems Rule (PSSR) (AA37) was published in the *Federal Register* on December 29. The public comment period ended on January 29. Fewer than 60,000 bulk identical comments were received from three environmental groups. A little over 700 regular comments were received as separate submissions and approximately 40 of these were comments with attachments, i.e. substantive comments. The PSSR Revision Team is in the process of drafting a Final Rule for surnaming prior to going to the *Federal Register* for final publication. The original deadline to begin surnaming has been revised to the end of March due to additional time needed to review the large volume of comments and to resolve legal issues raised by commenters. A meeting to brief Kate MacGregor was held on March 16.

Since both of these rules are scheduled to be ready for submission to the Federal Register by the end of-March, we have agreed on a simultaneous submission to the Federal Register for both rules.

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

Bureau of Land Management

[NEW] In April. BLM-AK will submit a *Federal Register* Notice providing constructive Notice of a decision approving 424.35 acres for conveyance to Sivuqaq, Inc., and Kukulget, Inc., for the Native villages of Gambell and Savoonga. Gambell and Savoonga are located on the former St. Lawrence Island Reindeer Reserve and will receive title to the surface and subsurface estates under Sec. 19(b) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Conveyance of these lands will fulfill Gambell's and Savoonga's entitlements under ANCSA, and will complete U.S. obligation to the Alaska Native people pursuant to Sec. 19(b) of ANCSA.

[UPDATE] In April. BLM-NM. The Carlsbad Field Office expects to publish the Notice of Availability for the Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS). The management plan outlines the BLM's long-term, "landscape-level" plans and goals for public lands in Lea, Chaves, and Eddy Counties. The planning area includes

approximately 2.1 million acres of Federal surface land and 3 million acres of BLM-managed mineral estate in Chaves, Eddy, and Lea Counties. The Notice of Availability for the Draft RMP/EIS is under review in Washington D.C. (3/7/18)

[UPDATE] In April. BLM-AK expects to publish a Notice of Intent to initiate public scoping on the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Environmental Impact Statement. As directed by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, the BLM is working toward an oil and gas lease sale in the Coastal Plain. This work includes conducting outreach to our partners and stakeholders, and conducting consultation with affected Alaska Native Tribes and Corporations, as well as laying the groundwork for an environmental analysis that is required before a lease sale can be held. Because it is a major unexplored, but potentially productive geologic onshore basin, oil and gas from the Coastal Plain is an important resource for meeting our nation's energy demands and achieving energy dominance. The Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/16/18) DTS 1966

In April. BLM-UT expects to publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Enfit American Oil Utility Corridor Project in northeastern Uintah County. Publication of the NOA initiates a 45-day public waiting period pursuant to NEPA requirements of NEPA. The Final EIS analyzes Enfit American Oil's proposal to construct five utility right-of-ways along 40 miles south of Vernal, Utah. The Notice under review in Washington, D.C. (2/21/18)

In April. BLM-AZ will announce its Record of Decision (ROD) for Recreational Target Shooting in the Sonoran Desert National Monument, as well as plans to reopen 57 miles of travel routes for motorized access in the most heavily used portion of the monument. A March 2015 federal court order required the BLM to re-analyze impacts of recreational target shooting on the Monument. The forthcoming decision, which was developed after extensive public outreach and analysis, preserves access for target shooting on nearly 90% of the monument, while ensuring public safety in the area of heaviest family recreation use—the Juan Bautista de Anza Recreation Management Zone (RMZ). Many routes in the RMZ were closed in 2008 due to damage to natural and cultural resources caused by off-highway vehicle travel. The BLM subsequently reclaimed illegal routes and completed a Travel Management Plan that designated 57 miles of RMZ routes for motorized use. Future plans for the RMZ include developing recreation facilities to enhance visitors' experience. The ROD was filed with U.S. District Court in Phoenix on March 5, 2018, and the announcement will coincide with publication of the Notice of the Availability in the *Federal Register*. (3/7/18) DTS 1976

In April. BLM-CA. The Central Coast Field Office will publish the Final Supplementary Rules related to dog management on public lands at Fort Ord National Monument (Monument) this spring. These rules also clarify some of the existing rules that have been in place on the Monument since 1996, and that are consistent with the BLM Resource Management Plan. The rules are responsive to hazards from munitions and explosives from the former Army base and conflicts between visitors on a high-use recreation area. The Proposed Supplementary Rules were published in November 2016 and no comments were received. These Final rules are the final step in the rulemaking process. The rules are not expected to be controversial. The Notice is pending approval in Washington, D.C. (3/1/18)

[UPDATE] In April. BLM-AK staff will hold informational meetings on cleanup of the Red Devil Mine. These meetings will update residents on the findings of remedial investigations and feasibility studies related to contamination at the mine site and in groundwater and river sediment. BLM-AK personnel and representatives of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and Alaska Department of Natural Resources will participate in the meetings. Scheduled meetings include: April 2, Village of Red Devil; April 12, Chugathbaluk; April 16, Aniak; April 17, Akiak; April 18, Upper and Lower Kalskag; and, April 19, Georgetown (held in Anchorage at the BLM Anchorage Field Office). Additional meetings may be scheduled. The Red Devil Mine is an abandoned cinnabar mine and mercury production facility 250 miles west of Anchorage on 10 acres of BLM-managed land. The land has been selected by The Kuskokwim Corporation, an Alaska Native corporation. (3/7/18)

In April. BLM-WY. The Buffalo Field Office is working to complete the 1-90 Corridor Travel Management Draft Environmental Assessment. On March 8, the BLM began issuing letters to affected landowners and grazing lessees, informing them of the BLM's desire to obtain easements and/or exchanges. The BLM has briefed county commissioners and congressional representatives in routine meetings. The goal of these letters is to open dialogue regarding potential easements/exchanges and come to mutually beneficial agreements with affected landowners. (3/1/18)

April 9-12. BLM-MT/DK. The North Central Montana District will hold public scoping meetings in Malta, Glasgow, Winifred and Winnett, Mont., about the bison conservation organization American Prairie Reserve's proposed grazing permit change. The BLM authorized American Prairie to hire an approved contractor to conduct the environmental analysis of multiple grazing allotments in the Glasgow, Lewistown and Malta Field Offices, and the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. The analysis is being conducted in anticipation that the American Prairie will request a change of grazing use from cattle to bison. American Prairie owns or leases more than 351,000 acres of deeded and public lands in the area, with 800 bison pastured on some of that land. The BLM proposes analyzing all of the grazing allotments in one Environmental Assessment (EA) to consolidate efforts across the district and be responsive to concerns raised by local stakeholders. Subsequent public meetings will be held in the same communities once the Draft EA is released for public review and comment. (3/16/18)

[UPDATE] April 10. BLM-CO. The Royal Gorge Field Office will announce a 15-day public scoping period for the New Elk Coal Lease by Application (LBA). The LBA is for approximately 15 tons of coal in place of 1,279 acres of federal coal on split estate federal coal only. The lease parcel is adjacent to a privately owned coal under lease held by New Elk Coal, LLC. If approved, New Elk Coal, LLC will add this lease to its existing mine permit for the New Elk Mine near Weston. (3/16/18)

[NEW] April 10. BLM-NM. Acting BLM-NM State Director Aden Seidlitz will provide the opening remarks at the New Mexico Fire Summit. Additional details to follow when available.

April 9-13. BLM-WY State Director Mary Jo Rugwell plans to conduct visits with members and staff of the Wyoming congressional delegation in Washington, D.C. to discuss public land management issues in Wyoming. (2/21/18)

[UPDATE] April 12. BLM-WY. The Pinedale Field Office will hold a public open house meeting for the Boulder Travel Management Plan on April 12, 2018. The meeting will be held as part of a public comment period for the plan that began on March 15. The public and media will attend. Additional open houses may be scheduled at a later time. The project has the potential to be controversial due to the possibility of route closures within the Boulder Travel Management Area. However, no decision will be made until all public comments are considered and appropriate NEPA analysis is complete. (2/28/18)

April 12. BLM-UT. At the request of Department of Justice, the West Desert District will participate in a meeting of the note-holders to discuss a draft settlement agreement for the bankruptcy claims on MagCorp. The BLM has a \$6 million claim; these funds would be used to rehabilitate public lands that MagCorp abandoned at their declaration of bankruptcy. In 2001, MagCorp filed for bankruptcy and walked away from right-of-ways and leases on BLM lands in the Salt Lake Field Office. The abandonment left behind significant resource damage due to the company's failure to conduct reclamation and remove structures. The U.S. Attorney's Office is representing the BLM and EPA in this case. Settlement is necessary due to insufficient funds to settle the debts left behind by the bankrupt MagCorp. (3/7/18)

[NEW] April 13. BLM-CO. Acting BLM-CO State Director Greg Shoop will participate in an annual wildland fire briefing for Governor John Hickenlooper on April 13. The Director of the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control will brief the Governor on the Wildfire Potential for 2018 and the level of state preparedness. The USFS and BLM will add remarks specific to their agencies. After the agency briefing, the Governor will hold a press conference on state resources, interagency cooperation and the 2018 fire potential, including a tour of fire equipment. (3/23/18)

April 13. BLM-UT. The Salt Lake Field Office will finalize the Diamond Fork Phosphate Environmental Assessment to authorize Falcon Isle's Mining and Reclamation Plan in the Little Diamond Fork area of Utah County. The mining is proposed on surface lands in the Uinta National Forest managed by the Forest Service. However, the BLM administers the phosphate lease. The BLM is coordinating with the Forest Service to sign the respective decisions at the same time. This project consists of 8.58 acres of BLM minerals, 3.5 acres of U.S. Forest Service surface, plus upgrades to a few Forest Service roads. Minimal economic impact will result from this action as the mine is small. (2/21/18)

[NEW] April 14. BLM-CA. The Barstow Field Office and the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base will host a Resource Management Group meeting to discuss land use in the Shared Use Area of Johnson Valley. The BLM will discuss the Marine Corps plan to conduct a large-scale exercise August 1-30, 2018, including information concerning temporary land closures of the Johnson Valley Shared Use Area and public safety. This annual meeting is being conducted pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act of 2014. (3/23/18)

[UPDATE] April 16 – 20. BLM-WY expects to publish the Notice of Availability for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Normally Pressured Lance (NPL) Project pending NEPA review and clearance of the *Federal Register* Package. The Final EIS is currently under review by Washington and BLM-WY needs approval of the NEPA before advancing the *Federal Register* package in compliance with WO IM-2018-028. The proposed project includes drilling

up to 3,500 directional natural gas wells over a 10-year period on approximately 140,000 acres. The NPL project is projected to yield between 3.5 to 7 Trillion Cubic Feet of natural gas and between 17.5 to 140 million barrels of oil over the estimated 40-year life of the project. Project revenues are estimated at \$17.8 billion with federal royalties amounting to about \$2.2 billion, of which about \$1.1 billion would go to the State of Wyoming. The project would also bring about 954 full time jobs to the region during development. (2/21/18)

[UPDATE] In Spring. BLM-NV. The Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) proposes to hold a meeting in Ely, Nev. Agenda items include wild horse and burro population/health issues, drought conditions and targeted/outcome based grazing. During the meeting, RAC members will take a field trip to a wild horse and burro Herd Management Area that historically has overpopulation issues, which are compounded by the lack of important resources like water. The meeting Notice is pending approval in Washington, D.C. (3/1/18)

April 16. BLM-NV. On April 16, 30 days after publication in the *Federal Register*, the Battle Mountain District may implement a 60-day temporary closure and restrictions for the Mill Creek Campground located 30 miles south of Battle Mountain. The proposed temporary closure and restrictions will help ensure public safety and an expedited restoration of the area after wildfires in recent years. The Mill Creek Campground is a popular area for the communities of Battle Mountain and Austin, Nevada. The area also receives heavy visitation from traveling campers. (2/21/18) DTS 1774

April 17. BLM-AZ will publish a Notice of Realty Action in the *Federal Register* announcing a planned lease renewal/amendment for the Mesquite (Nevada) Airport. The new lease will enable the City of Mesquite to meet Federal Aviation Administration safety requirements to replace perimeter fencing around the airport safety zone, portions of which extend across the state line onto public lands in Arizona. The fencing was identified as the most critical need in the City's Airport Master Plan. Maintaining airport infrastructure is vital to the local economy, as more than 1.3 million visitors travel to Mesquite each year. The Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/7/18) DTS 1997

April 18. BLM-WY. The Rawlins Field Office will host a public meeting on the Continental Divide-Creston Natural Gas Development Area, which just added nearly 9,000 natural gas wells to the project area in south-central Wyoming. The open house meeting is mandated by the September 2016 Record of Decision for the project, which requires the public be informed about progress and future plans for development. The public, industry, and media are invited to attend. The meeting is not expected to be controversial. (3/7/18)

[NEW] April 19. BLM-CA Barstow Field Office will host a San Bernardino County Range Improvement Advisory Committee (RIAC) meeting at the Barstow Field Office. The RIAC is comprised of five federal grazing lessees and one wildlife representative who are appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The RIAC recommends various grazing improvement projects for funding to the board. The BLM reviews the environmental impact of projects on public lands. Funding for these projects comes from fees paid to the federal government for grazing privileges by ranchers under the provisions of the Federal Taylor Grazing Act of 1934. A portion of the grazing fees is distributed back to the county to fund improvements on federal lands. The county acts in a trustee capacity for these funds. (3/23/18)

[NEW] April 20. BLM-ID. Pending Idaho State Office approval, the Pocatello Field Office plans to provide a 30-day public review and comment period for the draft EA for the June 11, 2018, online oil and gas lease sale. The lands nominated for leasing involve one parcel totaling 836.23 acres of split estate lands (private surface with federal mineral estate) in Bonneville County. The Field Office expects multiple comments as well as opposition. If additional coordination is needed to respond to comments, the sale may be postponed until September. (3/23/18)

[NEW] April 20-30. BLM-CO will issue the sale notice and 10-day protest period for the June 7, 2018, oil and gas lease sale for 64 parcels totaling approximately 58,694 acres in Jackson, Moffatt, Rio Blanco and Routt counties. Approximately 30,898 acres on 45 parcels are on Greater Sage-Grouse habitat, which could generate controversy. The announcement date and length of the protest period follows guidance provided in IM 2018-034. (3/20/18)

April 20. BLM-UT expects to approve a Final Environmental Impact Statement for Alton Coal, which seeks to expand its existing mine by leasing federal coal on 3,581 acres of public and private lands near Alton, Utah. The Alton Coal Tract contains 59.6 million tons of bituminous coal, and the proposed action could extend mining operations by 25 years. The lease sale needs to occur by summer 2018 for continuous operations. (2/21/18)

April 23-30. BLM-NV expects to publish a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with mineral segregation for the proposed Yellow Pine Solar Project in Clark County. The proposed project includes 9,290 acres of BLM-managed public lands 32 miles west of Las Vegas and 10 miles southeast of Pahrump, Nev., at the intersection of Nevada State Route 160 and Tecopa Road. (2/21/2018)

April 23 – 30. BLM-AK has received requests from three Alaska Native Villages in northwest Alaska for consultation on possible mine development of the Graphite One prospect. The villages include the Native villages of Teller, Brevig Mission, and Mary's Igloo. Graphite One Resources, Inc. is exploring federal claims on a federal inholding in lands transferred to the State of Alaska. These claims are located on lands slated for transfer to the State of Alaska, possibly before the end of the fiscal year. The consultation is tentatively scheduled for late April. To date, BLM has not received an application from Graphite One Resources for a permit to mine. (3/7/18)

[NEW] April 23. BLM-ID. The Owyhee Field Office is finalizing its assessment and evaluation of Idaho's Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for the Rockville Allotment and is planning to initiate public scoping during the week of April 23. The Rockville Allotment is part of the Battle Creek litigation in U.S. District Court of Idaho. Some standards are not being met, and the Boise District is finalizing the assessment/evaluation. Controversy is expected on all permit renewals but no more than usual for Owyhee County. (3/23/18).

April 23. BLM-CA. Bakersfield Field Office staff will participate in a U.S. Forest Service-led public meeting about four Applications for Permit to Drill in the Sespe oilfield in Fillmore, California. The Forest Service is the lead federal agency conducting the NEPA and the meeting is expected to generate a lot of public interest, including previous interest from U.S. Cong. Julia

Brownley's (CA-26-D) office, due to the wells being in a national forest and near a California condor sanctuary. (2/9/18)

[NEW] In April or May. BLM-CO will celebrate the naming of the Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum in April or May. The center, which was previously called the Anasazi Heritage Center, is part of the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and the new name reflects this location. The local community, tribal representatives and elected officials have expressed interest in participating in the event. BLM-CO submitted a request for the BLM Director and the Secretary of the Interior to attend. (3/23/18)

In April or May. BLM-CA is preparing an Environmental Assessment and Resource Management Plan Amendment for a proposed transmission and water pipeline right-of-way (ROW) associated with the Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Project in Riverside County. In 2014, the Eagle Crest Energy Company obtained a 50-year license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to construct, operate, and maintain the Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Hydroelectric Project. The BLM is processing a ROW application associated with the 1,300-megawatt hydroelectric project that includes a 500-kV transmission line and a 12-inch water pipeline energy transmission. The project is estimated to create 4,300 jobs during construction and will contribute to the state's energy portfolio. The City of Palm Springs and Cathedral City, environmental groups, and Colorado River Indian Tribes have voiced concern over the project, including its proximity to Joshua Tree National Park, impacts to critical or endangered desert species, and potential impacts to water, and cultural and historic resources. The project is under review in Washington, D.C. (2/21/18)

In May. BLM-UT is considering the non-competitive, direct sale to PacifiCorp of 200 acres of public land in Emery County, Utah, at not less than the appraised fair market value. The proposed sale is in conformance with the October 2008 Price Field Office Resource Management Plan. The lands would be offered to PacifiCorp non-competitively due to the lack of public access and their ownership of the surrounding lands, pursuant to 43 CFR 2711.3-3(a)(4). Conveyance of the identified public lands would be subject to valid existing rights and encumbrances of record. (3/7/18)

In May. BLM-UT is considering the modified competitive sale of 160 acres of public land in Emery County, Utah, at not less than the appraised fair market value to the adjacent landowners Hunter Prep Plant LLC, Ross Huntington, and Clinton Price. The proposed sale is in conformance with the October 2008 Price Field Office Resource Management Plan. The lands would be offered to the adjoining land owners on a modified competitive basis, with Hunter Prep Plant, LLC as the designated bidder, giving them the right to meet the highest bid pursuant to 43 CFR 2711.3-2(a)(1). Conveyance of the identified public land would be subject to valid existing rights and encumbrances of record. (3/7/18)

In May. BLM-UT. The Moab Field Office intends to issue a decision authorizing a Special Recreation Permit to Pinnacle Helicopters LLC for a shuttle service for river clients from the Canyonlands Field Airport to Mineral Bottom Airstrip. The proposal has been controversial due to potential impacts to other visitors' experiences, and an unrelated proposal from the same company to also conduct helicopter shuttles in Blue John Canyon, immediately south of

Canyonlands National Park and near the Horseshoe Canyon Wilderness Study Area managed by the BLM Richfield Field Office. That request garnered regional media attention. (3/7/18)

In Mid-May. BLM-ID. Boise District Fire and Aviation expects to sign the Record of Decision for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Bruneau-Owyhee Sage-Grouse Habitat (BOSH) Project. The Final EIS was released for a 30-day public availability period on Feb. 9. The Final EIS, which was developed in cooperation with several state and federal agencies, analyzes the removal of encroaching Western juniper on 726,000 acres of sagebrush steppe habitat in Owyhee County. This juniper treatment project builds on proactive land management policies and practices to conserve the region's remaining sagebrush habitat, which supports significant economic activity, such as ranching and recreation, as well as abundant wildlife, including mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope and golden eagles. The public availability period closed on March 11. The BLM received ten comments, including comments addressing roughly three issues that will be documented in the ROD. The district is currently completing tribal consultation on the Final EIS and estimates signing the ROD in mid-May. (2/21/18)

[NEW] May 3. BLM-NV is requesting Secretarial approval of funding for the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 17 projects. In the event the Secretary would like to approve the funding at an event in Nevada, there are two signing event options: (1) Southern Nevada at Bureau of Reclamation for their Round 17 Capital Improvement Program (more than \$10 million at the dam); or (2) Northern Nevada at BLM-NV land acquisition (\$4.5 million - providing new recreation opportunity) and nearby fuels projects (\$5 million). The Executive Committee for SNPLMA requests the Secretary of the Interior approve \$78,002,276 of funding, including \$5 million for a Special Account Reserve and an additional \$3.2 million for SNPLMA Round 16B Craig Ranch Regional Park—a 20.57-acre acquisition project. SNPLMA funding advances by creating a conservation stewardship legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt); sustainably developing our energy and natural resources; restoring trust and being a good neighbor; protecting our people; striking a regulatory balance; modernizing our infrastructure); achieving our goals; and leading our team forward. (3/23/18)

May 5. BLM-NV. The Carson City District proposes announcing a temporary closure of 450 acres of public lands adjacent to and north of Stead Airport in Washoe County due to the National Championship Air Races. This action will be taken in the interest of safety for both spectators and participants for qualifying and competition events during the Air Races on June 7 through June 10, 2018, and Sept. 8-16, 2018. This closure is put in place each year in support of this popular event. (DTS 1956) (3/1/18)

[NEW] May 7. BLM-MT/DK. The North Central Montana District is in the process of renewing the grazing permits on 114 grazing allotments in the Bears Paw to Missouri River Breaks planning area. This planning area contains 298,668 acres of public land that is mainly located in the southern portion of Phillips, Blaine and Chouteau Counties in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (Monument) and the Havre Field Office. Western Watersheds Project recently a new public policy consultant and Montana Coordinator. The Acting Monument Manager and members of his staff will take the new coordinator on a field trip of the Monument to provide him with an on-the-ground understanding of the opportunities and challenges the BLM intends to address with these grazing permit renewals while working to develop a better working relationship with the organization. (3/23/18)

May 16 – 17. BLM-AK. The Resource Advisory Council will meet in Fairbanks. The agenda will include updates on the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, the Greater Moose's Tooth Unit 2 project, and the proposed Willow Development. There will be updates on current planning efforts, such as the Road to Ambler Mining District Environmental Impact Statement and the Bering Sea-Western Interior and Central Yukon Resource Management Plans. Five of the council's subcommittees will present their reports on placer mining, recreation, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. Council members will receive an overview on Alaska subsistence; Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) including the Northwest Boreal LCC, Western Alaska LCC, and Aleutian Bering Sea Islands LCC; and explore partnership opportunities with local, regional, state, and federal entities. The council will also hear intertribal coalition presentations from the Tanana Chiefs Conference, Kuskokwim Fish Intertribal Commission, and Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission. The *Federal Register* meeting Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/7/18) DTS 1939

May 21-22. BLM-UT will host a Resource Advisory Council meeting in Salt Lake City. Agenda items include BLM updates from the State Director, fire dispatch study implementation, 2018 fire season outlook, updates on planning process Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments, Watershed Protection Task Force, Mountain Accord, Washington County issues, Lake Powell pipeline project, recreation fee proposals, and planning updates. The public comment period will take place on May 22. The *Federal Register* meeting Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/7/18) DTS 1945

Bureau of Offshore Energy Management

On April 11-12, BOEM will hold a meeting with the National Academies Committee on Offshore Science and Assessment (COSA) in Washington, D.C. The meeting will be open to the press and is to be streamed online for the public. (3/16)

[UPDATE] By April 20, BOEM expects to publish a Request for Competitive Interest for an area proposed to be used for a right-of-way (ROW) project called Atlantic Link. Clean Power Northeast Development, Inc. filed an application on May 31, 2017 (revised August 22, and September 26), for a ROW grant in support of a proposed project connecting onshore wind and hydro power in Canada to the Massachusetts market via a 350 mile HvDC submarine cable traversing the OCS. Emera, parent company to Clean Power Northeast Development, Inc., has recently expressed an interest in slowing down their project timetable. The notice is in surnaming with ASLM.

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

[UPDATE] OSMRE's Western Region expects to issue decision on the permit renewal and significant revision for the John Henry Mine in Washington on or around April 9-13, 2018. (12/20/2017)

By April 30, 2018, OSMRE expects the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to complete a lease for the Oklahoma Federal Lands: Pollyanna #8 coal mine permit revision. This permit revision proposes to expand an existing underground mining operation, with an extension area consisting of Federal and private coal reserves. No new surface disturbance overlying the area to be mined

is expected. The applicant's existing coal reserves are expected to be depleted in less than 12 months; therefore, the additional coal reserve is needed to ensure continuous operations. BLM has finalized the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the coal lease on the expansion of the underground mine. With finalization of the leasing documents, MCR will be working on the development of a Mine Plan Decision Document (MPDD). Based upon OSMRE's close coordination with BLM during the development of the EA for the lease, we anticipate being able to adopt large portions of their EA for our MPDD. Future steps will include evaluation of the BLM EA for determination of NEPA adequacy, developing a Notice of Intent to Prepare an EA expected to be completed by March 16, 2018, followed by developing the EA and posting it for public review. Depending upon how much of the BLM EA that is adopted, the MPDD is expected to be completed by July 31, 2018. (1/17/2018)

By April 30, 2018, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is expected to meet with the Farrell-Cooper Mining Company regarding the processing of a new lease by application for the Liberty #8 surface coal mine in Oklahoma. BLM has specifically requested OSMRE to attend this meeting and is currently seeking input from other Federal agencies for involvement in the process. BLM had previously contacted OSMRE on January 30, 2018, to discuss the new lease by application that covers 1,620 acres of surface mining activities as well as the possibility of OSMRE acting as a co-lead or cooperating agency on the development of the leasing NEPA document, which may likely be an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The purpose of the meeting would be to discuss with the mining company processing procedures, outline NEPA responsibilities, the development of a schedule associated with leasing and the process of a mining plan decision document. As BLM is the lead on arranging this meeting we will be reporting further on this issue when we become more aware of specific details. (3/14/2018)

On May 11, 2018, Federal Defendants will respond to the Plaintiff's motion for summary judgment in the U.S. District Court of Montana. On June 8, 2017, Wild Earth Guardians and Montana Environmental Information Center submitted a Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief claiming that OSMRE failed to adequately analyze the indirect impacts of transportation, failed to adequately analyze greenhouse gases and impacts to the air from coal combustion, failed to consider cumulative actions, and failed to prepare an EIS for the October 2016 mining plan modification decision at the Spring Creek Mine. Petitioners also allege that the mining plan modification approval was unauthorized because the lease was invalid due to an alleged delegation of authority violation. (2/15/2018)

On or about May 18, 2018, OSMRE plans to submit the Bull Mountains Mine No. 1's Mining Plan decision document to headquarters for review and approval by the ASLM. Signal Peak Energy's Bull Mountains Mine No. 1 is an underground coal mine located in Musselshell and Yellowstone Counties, MT. The mine employs 260 people and produces approximately 6 – 10 million tons of saleable coal per year. (3/15/2018)

On or about May 31, 2018, OSMRE plans to submit the Falkirk Mine's Mining Plan decision document to headquarters for review and approval by the ASLM. Falkirk Mining Company's Falkirk Coal Mine is a surface coal mine located in McLean County, ND. The mine employs 412 full-time employees and 118 temporary employees and produces approximately 8 – 8.5 million tons of coal per year. (3/15/2018)

Awareness

Bureau of Offshore Energy Management

[NEW] On April 4-6, BOEM's Acting Director will attend the International Offshore Wind Partnering Forum in Princeton, NJ. He is a speaker on April 4 and will participate in the BOEM listening session on April 6. The Secretary is also scheduled to speak on April 6.

[NEW] On April 10, BOEM's Acting Director will give a keynote presentation at the Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation's course on Federal Offshore Oil & Gas Leasing and Development in New Orleans.

[NEW] On April 13, BOEM's Acting Director will speak at the National Ocean Industries Association annual meeting in Washington DC.

[UPDATE] On March 22, BOEM approved US Wind's Site Assessment Plan (SAP) proposing the installation of a meteorological tower in the company's wind lease offshore Maryland. (2/20/18)

By late March, BOEM would like to publish the 2017 Comprehensive Inventory of OCS Oil and Natural Gas Resources Report to Congress. This report is required by Section 357 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. It directs the Secretary of the Interior to provide a report to Congress within 6 months of the date of enactment (i.e., Aug. 8, 2005), with updates of at least every 5 years. This report is an update to the 2013 report. It is currently in surnaming with ASLM.

[UPDATE] On March 9, the public comment period for the BOEM DPP closed. As of March 22, BOEM has received over one million comment letters, although comment letters continue to be counted at this time. BOEM is currently reviewing comments and working on the analyses for both the upcoming Proposed Program document and the associated Environmental Impact Statement. (3/9/18)

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement

In progress Alaska Suspensions: The Arctic Slope Regional Corporation has requested a suspension of operations (SOO) for 21 leases previously held by Shell. BSEE made an initial determination to unitize 20 of the 21 leases. A communications plan was submitted to ASLM on March 1 with two possible scenarios, a fact sheet, and a draft press release. The two scenarios are disapproval and approval depending on the final decision. The final decision will be returned to AEX in a letter signed by the BSEE Alaska regional director. (3/22/18)

As of March 15, 2018, Eni U.S. Operating Co. Inc. continues drilling operations on their NN-01 exploration well, seeking to drill directionally from Spy Island Drillsite (an existing artificial production and drilling island in state waters) north to reach a reservoir target on the U.S. OCS. Though Eni has experienced setbacks in the form of equipment failures and drilling complications, they continue to make overall progress. Currently they are working issues stemming from last weekend's well control problems, and are focused on ensuring the health of their downhole tooling and equipment and overall stability of the well bore before making plans to continue drilling. The hole remains at the approximately 1.5 mile measured depth (gross

length along the wellbore not considering changes in direction and inclination) it has been at since late last week. There are no immediate safety concerns, but the drilling situation downhole remains technically challenging, requiring a careful and methodical approach, which Eni appears to be taking. (3/22/18)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLICY, MANAGEMENT, AND BUDGET

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

From April 2-6, Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, Scott Cameron will be in Washington, DC, and participating in routine internal briefings.

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Policy and Environmental Management (DAS PEM)

[NEW] On April 2, the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) Anchorage Office will lead a meeting with regional DOI bureaus and offices to discuss National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and environmental review issues, including projects in Alaska. (Anchorage, AK; no press) (03/28/2018)

Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR)

On April 4, Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) Program Director John Mehlhoff will attend and participate in the Bakken Federal Executives Group (BFEG) in Billings, Montana. This group works together to identify and address common issues associated with rapid and widespread changes related to oil and gas development in the Bakken region which encompasses western North Dakota, northwest South Dakota, and eastern Montana; (no press). (02/21/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Management (DAS PRE)

[NEW] On April 6, Deputy Assistant Secretary Humbert will be the guest speaker for DOI Investigator Training Program (ITP) 801 graduation at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Brunswick, GA. The class consists of 24 DOI graduates. (03/28/2018)

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Policy and Environmental Management (DAS PEM)

On April 9-12, the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management will be held in Shepherdstown, WV. The National Invasive Species Council Secretariat (NISC), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) will work with Canadian and Mexican delegations and other colleagues to address issues of data mobilization and prioritization of islands for invasive species control and eradication in the context of developing a North American Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan. Activities will include a formal presentation to the Ecosystem Conservation Working Table and a sidebar working session to assess activities to date, agree on shared objectives, and identify

next steps. PMB is coordinating with the Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs; formal communications or outreach is not anticipated. (03/21/2018)

[NEW] From April 10-11, the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) Secretariat Chief Scientist will participate on a review panel of the NASA Earth System Science Fellowship Program in Bethesda, MD (closed press). (03/28/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Management (DAS PRE)

[NEW] From April 9-13, Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) Director Jeff Rupert will be in Boise, ID to meet with the Intertribal Timber Council, National Wildland Fire Coordinating Council, and Fire Management Board (no press). (03/28/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Budget, Finance, Performance and Acquisition (DAS BFPA)

On April 11, Secretary Zinke will testify in support of the FY 2019 President's Budget before the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee. The Secretary is scheduled to testify before the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee on May 9. Deputy Assistant Secretary Olivia Ferriter and Office of Budget Director Denise Flanagan will support the Secretary at the table. (03/07/2018)

15-60 Day Look Ahead

Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR)

[UPDATE] During the week of April 23, 2018, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) intends to disburse the first qualified Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (GOMESA) Phase II revenues to the four Gulf producing States and their eligible coastal political subdivisions (CPS). The total disbursement that the States and their CPS will share is over \$200 million, prior to sequestration. ONRR is drafting a communications plan and press release, and coordinating with the Department's Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, Communications Office, and the Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management. (03/28/2018)

During the week of April 23, Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) Director Greg Gould will attend and participate in the Council of Petroleum Accountants Societies (COPAS) spring 2018 meeting in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Director Gould will discuss a high level overview of ONRR's reorganization and projects; (no press). (03/14/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Budget, Finance, Performance and Acquisition (DAS BFPA)

[NEW] From May 6-9, 2018, staff from the Office of Acquisition and Property Management (PAM) (Elizabeth Varner, PAM; Diana Warring, DOI Museum; and Bambi Allen and Conor McMahon, Indian Arts and Crafts Board) will participate in the American Alliance of Museum's Conference in Phoenix, Arizona. PAM will participate in a panel, *STEAM (and Social!) Power:*

Educating, Engaging, and Elevating through DOI Collection, in collaboration with panelists from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the National Park Service (NPS). (03/28/2018)

On May 9, a report of the initial allocations of Hurricane Supplemental funding is due to Congress. Draft Operating Plans have been submitted for review by the Deputy Secretary. Once approved, they will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) after which the Office of Budget will prepare an allocation plan for Congress. (03/21/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Management (DAS PRE)

From April 25-27, Office of Aviation Services Director will be in Seattle, WA where he will be a featured speaker at Nextgov's "*Limitless Government: Technology as a Force for Change*" event, part of a nationwide series (previous one in LA, future events in Denver, Atlanta). His tentative presentation title: "*Drones for Good: A Government Technology Success Story & Road Map for Success in Other Areas*" (open to press). (03/14/2018)

From April 30 - May 4, Office of Aviation Services (OAS) Director Mark Bathrick will attend the Association of Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) annual conference in Denver, CO. (03/07/2018)

[NEW] From April 30 - May 10, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) will facilitate the National Level Exercise (NLE) 2018. NLE 2018 will examine the ability of all levels of government, private industry, and nongovernmental organizations to protect against, respond to, and recover from a major Mid-Atlantic hurricane. Several building block activities within DOI will occur leading up to the functional and full-scale portions of NLE 2018, culminating in the activation of DOI alternate Site Charlie on May 7-8. Upcoming related events include COOP training for political appointees on March 29 and COOP Training for all team members on April 3. (03/28/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Policy and Environmental Management (DAS PEM)

[NEW] On April 19, DOI bureaus and offices, including the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) Anchorage, and other Federal agencies will participate in an Alaska Energy Permitting Interagency Working Group (IWG) staff call. The Alaska Energy Permitting IWG staff calls provide a forum for sharing information on energy exploration and development in Alaska. (03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 17-18, the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) Philadelphia Office will participate in this bi-annual meeting on oil spill and hazardous substance release contingency planning and preparedness in Grand Rapids, MI. On April 19-20, the Denver Office will participate in the Regional Response Team 8 Meeting, led by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Coast Guard. Participants will include DOI bureaus, state agencies, and industry partners. These meetings are held bi-annually to facilitate the effective organization of preparedness and response efforts used by federal and

bureau partners in the event of an oil spill or hazardous substance release through contingency planning, training and resource coordination. (03/28/2018)

[NEW] On April 25 (Rain Date: April 26), DOI is Celebrating the 2018 Earth Day Event in Rawlins Park. This year theme is “End Plastic Pollution.” We are expected to have at least 40 vendors (combined with DOI, Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the General Services Administration (GSA) and non-profit organizations). DOI will have a truck parked on the E Street side of the Main Interior Building for people to drop off their unusable/unwanted personal (home) computers and other types of electronic equipment. DOI will schedule a photo-op and walk thru in Rawlins Park with the Interior Secretary, GSA Administrator and OPM Director (12:00-12:30p). (03/28/2018)

[NEW] From May 30-31, the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) will participate in the annual national meeting for Emergency Support Function (ESF) - Protection of Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties (ESF #11) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Patriot’s Plaza Building in Washington, DC. The meeting will focus on updates from each of the agencies that comprise ESF #11, as well as discussions on how to improve support to States, Tribes, and Territories during FEMA-led activations. The OEPC and USGS will be presenting on DOI’s programs and capabilities that provide support to ESF #11. (03/28/2018)

Awareness

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Budget, Finance, Performance and Acquisition (DAS BFPA)

[NEW] The Government Accountability Office (GAO) initiated a new audit “Department of Defense Corrosion Prevention and Mitigation” (Job Code 102285) in response to a congressional mandate within the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. GAO will investigate the extent of the impact of corrosion on the military services’ equipment and facilities. As part of the audit, GAO will determine how the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) received information on electro-osmotic pulse technology from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and how this technology performed after its pilot test at the Trinity River Dam in California. (03/28/2018)

[NEW] The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently met with the National Park Service, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management in a GAO entrance conference to discuss the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) (Job Code 102645), in response to a request from Senator Murkowski. The GAO will review: (1) components of the LWCF and funding for the past ten years; (2) process to develop LWCF Federal land acquisition projects; (3) criteria to recommend LWCF Federal land acquisition projects to Congress; and (4) lands acquired with LWCF funds and the acquisition mechanism (e.g., conservation easements, fee simple title, and condemnation) (Washington, DC; no press). (03/28/2018)

[NEW] (Per GAO, distribution is highly restricted) - The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently issued the draft GAO report “Data Center Optimization: Continued Agency Actions Needed to Meet Goals and Address Prior Recommendations (GAO-18-264) as required

by a Congressional mandate within the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform provisions of the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act. The GAO reviewed 24 Federal agencies' data center inventories, their reported cost savings documentation, data center optimization strategic plans to assess progress against the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) established optimization targets. GAO found that the 24 agencies reported limited progress in meeting OMB's five data center optimization targets for server utilization and automated monitoring, energy metering, power usage effectiveness, facility utilization, and virtualization. In 2016 and 2017, GAO made a number of recommendations to the various agencies including the Department, some of which continue to be implemented. There are no new recommendations in this report. The response is due April 16, 2018. (03/28/2018)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR WATER AND SCIENCE

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

April 3-4, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Tim Petty will speak to the National Geospatial Advisory Committee's spring meeting, to be held at Department of the Interior (open to the public). On April 5, he will chair a meeting of the Federal Geographic Data Committee Executive Committee, also at DOI (closed). Tim will be in the office all week for other routine meetings and briefings.

From April 2-4, USGS Deputy Director Bill Werkheiser, Associate Director Cline, Delaware Rivermaster Robert Mason and Deputy Delaware River Master Kendra Russell will participate in a series of meetings with officials from the states of PA, NY, NJ, and DE, and NYC (parties to the 1954 Supreme Court Decree adjudicating use of the waters of the Delaware and charging the USGS with establishing the Office of Delaware River Master (ODRM)). The purpose of the meetings is to review plans and priorities for the ODRM for modeling and operational improvements and implementation of studies agreed to by the parties in October 2017.

Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman will be in the office all week attending various meeting and events.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

[UPDATE] Between March 28 and April 10, Reclamation's Albuquerque Area Office will be presenting to the Rio Grande Compact Commission and the Pecos River Commission at their annual meetings. The Rio Grande Compact Commission is scheduled to meet March 28-29 in Austin, Texas. Reclamation provides its annual water accounting report in print and provides a presentation on any items that have been requested for discussion. Reclamation staff from the Upper Colorado Region and Albuquerque will also lead/participate in a tour of the Rio Grande Project for Department of Justice and DOI Solicitors working on the Texas v. New Mexico Supreme Court Case. They will tour the Project in Southern New Mexico, West Texas and the Mexico border on April 5-6. The Pecos River Commission is scheduled to meet in Midland,

Texas, on April 9-10. Both meetings are open to the public but rarely have public or media attendance. (03/12/2018)

[NEW] On April 1, the City of Durango will hold a soft opening of Lake Nighthorse near the city for non-motorized use. Lake Nighthorse is part of the Animas-La Plata Project. Reclamation's Western Colorado Area Office continues to work closely with the City on this opening and on plans to open to motorized use in May. Local media interest likely. (3/26/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 2, Reclamation's Wyoming Area Office to announce Bighorn Basin Snowmelt Forecast. (3/20/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 2, Reclamation's Wyoming Area Office to announce North Platte Basin Snowmelt Forecast. (3/20/2018)

Between April 2 and April 6, Reclamation's Wyoming Area Office plans to announce Boysen Water Users Meeting and Buffalo Bill Water Users Meeting. (3/20/2018)

[NEW] On April 2, Reclamation will issue a news release announcing \$542,926 to be provided to the Bureau of Land Management for the purchase of 1,387 acres within BLM's Ciervo-Panoche Natural Area in Fresno County. Proposed funding is from the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Habitat Restoration Program and the Central Valley Project Conservation Program to help mitigate CVP impacts and minimize future impacts on threatened and endangered species. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 2 and 13, Reclamation's San Joaquin River Restoration Program will release a Final EA/FONSI for the Eastside Bypass Improvements Project. The project has the primary purpose of facilitating fish migration and increasing restoration flow capacity in the Eastside Bypass by 2020. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 2 and 13, Reclamation expects to release the Funding Constrained Framework for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program along with a joint press release from the five implementing agencies (Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Department of Water Resources). The Framework will be monumental in shaping program direction into the next decade. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] On April 2, Reclamation will issue a news release proposing to enter into an agreement with San Luis and Grassland Water Districts to provide south of Delta refuges with additional Level 4 water in exchange with SLWD for Level 2 water. The proposed agreement is five years from the date of execution and may be extended to 25 years. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 2 and April 4, Reclamation will issue a news release announcing six winners of the more-water, less concentrate prize competition. The competition sought innovative concepts to expand usable water supplies by maximizing fresh water production from inland desalination systems in a cost effective and environmentally sound manner. (3/26/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 2 and April 13, Reclamation will release its scoping report as part of the re-initiation of consultation on long-term operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project (ROC on LTO). This report will outline the proposed NEPA scoping process for the ROC on LTO EIR/EIS. (3/20/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 2 and April 6, Reclamation will issue a news release announcing the availability of the draft Environmental Assessment for Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District's proposal to transfer up to 45,000 acre-feet of water (up to 30,000 acre-feet Project Water and 15,000 acre-feet Base Supply) to the Colusa Drain Mutual Water Company annually from June through September, commencing with contract year 2018 and continuing through contract year 2022. There will be a 30-day public comment period for the draft EA. (3/19/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 2 and April 30, the Bureau of Reclamation will distribute a press release notifying the public of the availability of a draft environmental assessment for Financial Assistance for the Klamath Basin Sucker Rearing Program. The draft EA was developed by Reclamation's Klamath Basin Area Office in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Some media and or interest from the Klamath Tribes is possible. (3/12/2018)

On April 2, Reclamation will issue a news release announcing the availability of the Environmental Assessment/Initial Study and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Boca Dam Safety of Dams Modification Project. The project will reduce seismic risks and meet Reclamation's interim public protection guidelines. (3/19/2018)

Between April 2 and 6, Reclamation will issue a news release announcing the availability of the draft environmental document for public review on a Long-Term Warren Act contract for the Sacramento Suburban Water District. Execution of the "wet-year only" contract would enable the delivery of up to 29,000 acre-feet/per year of Middle-Fork Project water through Folsom Reservoir for municipal and industrial uses in northern Sacramento and southwestern Placer Counties. Potential media interest. (3/19/2018)

Between April 2 and April 20, Reclamation is planning to launch the Pathogen Monitoring for Potable Reuse – State 1 Prize Competition. Reclamation and Xylem, Inc., in collaboration with the Water Environment & Reuse Foundation, the State of California and the Environmental Protection Agency are seeking the development of improved monitoring techniques to protect public health and optimize the operations at water treatment facilities. Success could facilitate public and regulatory acceptance of direct potable reuse systems. (1/9/2018)

On April 2 and April 3, Reclamation's Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program will hold a biology committee meeting in Grand Junction, Colorado. The Recovery Program is comprised of federal, state and local agencies with a common goal of endangered fish recovery and continued water development in the Upper Colorado River Basin. The biology committee provides technical recommendations to the Recovery Program management committee. Topics include review and approval of the recovery implementation recovery action plan. The meeting is open to the public. (02/20/2018)

[NEW] On April 3, Mid-Pacific Regional Director David Murillo will discuss water issues and perspectives on a panel for the California Department of Food and Agriculture in Sacramento. Other panelists include representatives from the California Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board. The California State Board of Food and Agriculture is a 15-member board to the governor and secretary advising on agricultural and consumer issues that impact the state's farmers and ranchers. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] On April 3-5, Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region will host the Reclamation Associated Facility Workshop in Sacramento. Regional Director David Murillo will provide opening remarks on Tuesday, April 3. (3/26/2018)

On April 3, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Sonoma County Water Agency, acting as administrator for the North Bay Water Reuse Authority, will release a joint draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for Phase 2 of the North Bay Water Recycling Program. Phase 2 includes building upon the existing regional wastewater reuse network to provide additional opportunities for recycled water for agricultural, urban and environmental uses for treated wastewater currently discharged to San Pablo Bay. Reclamation may provide funding assistance, through a competitive process, to help finance the proposed Phase 2. The Sonoma County Water Agency will hold four public meetings in April to solicit public input on alternatives, concerns and issues to be addressed in the final EIR/EIS. (3/12/2018)

[NEW] On April 5, the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program's Implementation Committee will host a webinar. Topics covered will include reports from the Recovery Program Director's Office, capital project updates, status of funding legislation, species status assessments and post-2023 planning activities. Meetings are open to the public. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] On April 6, Mid-Pacific Regional Director David Murillo will host a Government-to-Government meeting in Sacramento with the Chicken Ranch Rancheria, Me-Wuk Indians of California to discuss water supply needs. (3/26/2018)

From April 6-8, Reclamation staff will attend the USA Science and Engineering Festival in Washington, D.C. It is estimated that more than 400,000 people will be in attendance, with students being the primary audience. We will be there to discuss Reclamation's role in water management throughout the Western United States, and to discuss future career needs in an effort to generate interest in our agency from students. (3/19/2018)

Before April 6, a *Federal Register* Notice of Availability for the final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) prepared by Reclamation and the City of San Diego for the North City Project is scheduled to be issued. This project is the first phase of the Pure Water San Diego Program—a water and wastewater facilities plan to produce potable water from recycled water. A draft EIR/EIS was issued for public review and comment in late November 2017. Under the proposed action, the existing North City Water Reclamation Plant would be expanded and an adjacent North City Pure Water Facility would be constructed with a purified water pipeline to Miramar Reservoir, located in the Scripps Miramar Ranch community

of San Diego, California. Reclamation will not make a decision on the proposed project until at least 30 days after the NOA is published by the Environmental Protection Agency. (1/12/2018)

[NEW] Between April 6 and 11, Reclamation will release final environmental documents on the proposed approval of annual transfers of up to 15,000 acre-feet per year of available Central Valley Project water supplies over a nine-year period. Transfers of CVP water would be from CVP contractors to Harris Farms and Shows Family Farms either for direct agricultural use on their lands located within Westlands Water District, San Luis Water District, and Semitropic Water Storage District or for banking in Semitropic and/or the Kern Water Bank for later use on their lands within those same districts. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 6 and 11, Reclamation will release draft environmental documents on the proposed issuance of a five-year Warren Act Agreement to Ivanhoe Irrigation District for the introduction and conveyance of up to 6,500 acre-feet per year of Kaweah River water in the Friant-Kern Canal. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 9 and April 13, Reclamation's Montana Area Office will issue a press release announcing a public meeting scheduled on April 24 in Billings, MT to present spring operations information for Yellowtail Dam. (03/23/2018)

Between April 9 and April 16, Reclamation's Albuquerque Area Office is scheduled to host three public meetings to roll out its annual operating plans for the Rio Grande and Pecos River. The Pecos meeting is tentatively scheduled for the morning of April 9 at the Bureau of Land Management Office in Roswell, NM. The Rio Grande meetings are scheduled for the afternoon of April 12 at the Albuquerque Area Office and the afternoon of April 16 at the Elephant Butte Irrigation District in Las Cruces, NM. These meetings are generally well attended, especially in extremely dry years like this one. A news advisory announcing the meetings is planned for the first week in April. (3/05/2018)

[NEW] On April 10, Reclamation's Hydraulic Lab in Denver will host eight teams from three universities to test a scaled prototype of a trash removal device in a custom flume in the lab. The trash removal device is for Cherry Creek that flows through Denver. There is a potential for media to attend, but none have confirmed at this time. (3/26/2018)

On April 11, Reclamation's Montana Area Office staff have been invited to meet with the Wyoming State Engineer and the Attorney for the Wyoming Attorney General's Office on Yellowtail/Bighorn Lake Operations. More details to follow. (3/13/2018)

[NEW] On April 12, the Glen Canyon Dam Experimental Technical Team is meeting with the Experimental Leadership Team and the Department of the Interior to recommend that Macroinvertebrate Production Flows, also known as "Bug Flows," be tested between May 1 and August 31, 2018. Bug Flows consist of steady weekend releases from Glen Canyon Dam and normal fluctuating releases during the weekdays. The steady weekend flows are expected to provide favorable conditions for insects to lay eggs along the Colorado River downstream of Glen Canyon Dam, while the fluctuating flows during the weekdays are designed to be slightly higher, thus preventing the eggs from drying out. This experiment is expected to have positive

benefits to the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems in Glen, Marble and Grand Canyons. The purpose of the experimental flow is to test the effectiveness of Bug Flows on improving insect production and to increase the availability of food for aquatic and terrestrial life. This experiment, if approved by the Department, will be conducted under the Long-Term Experimental Management Plan. Communication efforts will include press releases. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] On April 13, Reclamation will publish a Notice of Availability, followed by a 90 day public comment period for Supplemental Draft EIS for Two Water Projects in Washington State. Reclamation, with co-lead Washington State Department of Ecology in cooperation with the Yakama tribe; U.S. Forest Service and Bonneville Power Administration have prepared a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant and Keechelus Reservoir-to-Kachess Reservoir Conveyance Projects.

[NEW] On April 13, Reclamation's South-Central California Area Office representatives will meet in Fresno with Cachuma Project Member Units to discuss Operation and Maintenance deficits owed to Reclamation. (3/26/2018)

U.S. Geological Survey

[NEW] On April 1, the USGS plans to distribute a public notice to news outlets in Ellsworth and New Richmond, Wisconsin, and Red Wing, Minnesota, announcing a public open comment period for proposed USGS field trials of a white-nose syndrome vaccine in the area. The field trials, part of an Environmental Assessment that is being developed by the USGS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, will evaluate methods of vaccine delivery and their effectiveness in reducing or preventing white-nose syndrome (WNS) in wild bats under field conditions. The comment period will be open for 30 days starting on April 1, 2018, pending approval of the Public Notice. The Public Notice will be submitted to the outlets by a USGS Environmental Manager and is not meant to be a formal news release. (3/23/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 2, a USGS will announce a new article that examines how much warning times are physically possible from earthquake early warning systems. This study examines warning times for different alerting levels of ground shaking, from light shaking to very strong shaking. It finds that users who are alerted at lower ground motion thresholds (e.g., warnings of impending light shaking) will receive more robust warnings with longer average warning times than users who are alerted for higher ground motion thresholds (e.g., warnings of impending very strong shaking). The article will be published in *Science Advances* and a regional news release is planned. (3/12/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 2, the USGS will announce a new web application that provides real-time water-quality, streamflow and water height information for Lake Houston and the surrounding San Jacinto watershed. Lake Houston is the primary drinking-water source for Houston, Texas. Real-time data is required to evaluate the effects of watershed influences, such as land-use change and storm events, on Lake Houston water quality. These data will help water treatment facility operators make informed decisions about adjusting treatment methods in response to changing water-quality conditions. A local news release is planned. (3/19/2018)

On April 3, the USGS will announce a new technique to identify whether or not insulation contains expanded vermiculite insulation. The goal of this study was to determine if in situ near-infrared reflectance measurements could be used to reliably identify the source of vermiculite ore and therefore its potential to contain asbestos. Commercially produced vermiculite insulation from Libby, Montana, contains trace levels of asbestiform amphibole, which is known to cause asbestos-related diseases. The paper will be published in *American Mineralogist*. (3/5/2018)

[**NEW**] This week, the USGS will highlight a recently published paper that investigates potential impacts to bat habitat following timber harvests. Timber harvests are being conducted in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley to create healthier habitat for migratory birds and other species such as deer and bear. Scientists recently investigated the impacts to bat habitat and found no evidence that these treatments had negative effects to bat activity within the study area. The research was done by scientists at Stephen F. Austin State University, the USFWS and the USGS. The paper is published in *Forest Ecology and Management* and social media alerts are planned. (3/23/2018)

[**NEW**] This week, the USGS will announce the installation of water quality and weather monitoring equipment for Bear Lake, Utah. The new equipment will provide near real-time information to the public, partners and water managers. A local news release and social media are planned. (3/23/2018)

[**UPDATE**] In April, the USGS plans to highlight a new paper entitled, “North American Net Import Reliance of Mineral Materials for Advanced Technologies.” The USGS and Natural Resources Canada conducted a study on the net import reliance of the United States, Canada, and Mexico as individual countries and as a single trading bloc for twelve nonfuel mineral commodities that are associated with advanced technology products. The minerals are cadmium, cobalt, gallium, germanium, graphite, indium, lithium, nickel, rare earths, selenium, silver, and tellurium. The results indicate that, as a single entity, North America is much less dependent on other nations for the supply of these commodities than its constituent countries are individually. This is because value chains between the three countries are tightly integrated such that various materials commonly cross continental borders multiple times, as value is added at each step. This study highlights the mitigation of potential supply risk for critical minerals that results from trade within the North American bloc. The paper will be published in *Mining Engineering* will be highlighted via social media. (3/22/2018)

[**UPDATE**] In April, the USGS will announce three “storm trackers” showing where floodwaters of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria possibly carried non-native and invasive freshwater plants and animals into new habitat. 2017 hurricane floodwaters inundated large expanses of state and federal conservation land likely carrying non-native plants and animals into new habitats. Some of these species are invasive and able to disrupt native food webs or damage landscapes. Since field surveys over such large areas are impractical, the storm trackers can help land managers target potential hot spots for newly arrived invasive species and take early, cost-effective steps to manage them. (3/5/2018)

In April, the USGS plans to announce a new paper that confirms a new established population of the invasive Cuban treefrog in New Orleans, La. This is the first breeding population to occur outside the state of Florida. Cuban treefrogs can drive out native frogs and be a nuisance to

homeowners. They are invasive in Florida, where they have successfully bred since at least 1951. The findings will be published in *Biological Invasions* and a national news release is planned. (3/12/2018)

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

[NEW] On Monday, April 16, Reclamation's Lower and Upper Colorado Regions will co-host a webinar to apprise water officials with Basin States and Mexico regarding the results of the most probable April 2018 24-Month Study water use projections. The April 24-Month study is developed by Reclamation hydrologists annually to alert these organizations about the most probable water storage and hydrological conditions that are predicted to occur during the Colorado River Basin's upcoming water year. Following the webinar, the most probable April 2018 24-Month Study will be distributed and posted online. A PDF of the presentation will also be provided after the webinar. Media interest in the April 2018 24-Month Study report is usually extensive with Western journalists requesting a copy of the report and/or requesting interviews with Reclamation hydrologists regarding predicted conditions. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] From April 16 to April 22 Reclamation's International Affairs Program will host the International Reservoir Sedimentation and Sustainability Workshop in Denver, Colorado. The primary goal is to provide participants with important information about reservoir sediment management for long-term sustainability. Participants at this workshop will gain an understanding about reservoir sedimentation processes and rates, as well as how to analyze and develop conceptual designs of reservoir sediment management systems. The cost of the workshop is fully reimbursable to Reclamation. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 15 and 30, Reclamation is planning to announce the selected ideas submitted under the data app prize competition. Reclamation, in collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey, is seeking the development of an application framework to support electronic data collection and capture using mobile devices across a diverse range of data collection situations. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 15 and 30, Reclamation is planning to announce the selected ideas submitted under the Long-Term Corrosion Protection of Existing Hydraulic Steel Structures prize competition. This prize competition sought ideas for long-term corrosion protection for large, hydraulic steel structures beyond the protection provided by available coatings and cathodic protection. (3/25/2018)

[NEW] On April 23 and 24, the Glen Canyon Dam Technical Work Group meeting will be held at the Arizona Department of Water Resources in Phoenix, Arizona. Topics of discussion will include the Adaptive Management Program budget and workplan for fiscal year 2019, the Arizona Game and Fish Department's planned stocking in Lees Ferry, National Park Service nonnative aquatics Environmental Assessment, possible experiments at Glen Canyon Dam in 2018, planning for future springtime High-Flow Experiment's, current basin hydrology, updates

from Annual Reporting meeting, and other administrative items as needed. The meeting is open to media and the public. (3/26/2018)

On April 26 and April 27, Reclamation's Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program will hold a Management Committee meeting in Denver, Colorado. Topics will include review and approval of the recovery implementation action plan and discussion of program structure and scope following Recovery Program sunset in 2023. The meeting is open to the public. (2/20/2018)

Between May 1 and May 11, Reclamation is planning to publish the remaining completed Rural Water Supply Program Appraisal Reports. Timing is based on when the notice is published in the Federal Register. A news release will be issued in conjunction with the Federal Register Notice. (1/9/2018)

On May 16-17, Reclamation's Upper Colorado Region's Salinity Control staff will participate at the Colorado River Basin Salinity Council (Council) and Forum meetings at the Washington County Water Conservancy District Office in St. George, Utah. Commissioner Brenda Burman, Upper Colorado Regional Director Brent Rhees, and Lower Colorado Regional Director Terry Fulp have been invited to both meetings. The purpose of the Council meeting is to discuss and take appropriate actions regarding the following: Basin States Program created by Public Law 110-246, which amended the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974; responses to the Advisory Council Report; and other items within the jurisdiction of the Council. Meetings are open to the public, media generally does not attend. A federal register notice announcing the meeting is currently routing for Departmental review and approval. The notice is expected to publish on or near Thursday, April 26, 2018. (03/19/2018)

On May 21 through May 24, Reclamation's Lower Colorado Region will host a bi-annual Power Operations and Maintenance Workshop with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Tennessee Valley Authority. Discussion topics will include technical subjects related to hydro power plant and pumping facilities operations, maintenance, and engineering activities; best practices; and lessons learned. The event will be held at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas, Nevada. No press is expected. (3/12/2018)

[NEW] On May 22, the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work (AMWG) Group will host a webinar/conference call. A Federal Register Notice is currently routing for Departmental review and approval and is expected to be published around May 4. Topics of discuss will include updates on current basin hydrology, the Adaptive Management Program budget and workplan for fiscal year 2019, possible experiments at Glen Canyon Dam this water year, the status of AMWG membership appointments, and other administrative items as needed. The webinar is open to media and the public. (3/26/2018)

U.S. Geological Survey

In April, the USGS will publish an online Science Snippet about a trio of recently published papers that show how fish, macroinvertebrates, and algae are affected by chemical and physical stressors in streams. The studies are based on the 2013 Midwest Stream Quality Assessment,

which focused on 11 Midwestern states, and show that there are no pristine streams in the region. Chemical stressors, primarily nutrients and pesticides, and physical stressors, primarily excessive fine sediment and a disturbed riparian zone, have altered small streams and affected the number and diversity of fish, algae, and macroinvertebrates that call these streams home. (3/12/2018)

On April 10, USGS, DOE and the American Wind Energy Association will announce an updated map and database of all onshore and offshore wind turbines in the United States. This new resource will serve as a replacement for the current WindFarm Mapping tool maintained by the USGS Energy Resources Program. (3/7/2018)

On April 18, the USGS will participate in the release of the HayWired Earthquake Scenario in Oakland, Calif.. The HayWired Earthquake Scenario is a scientific, realistic and quantitative depiction of a future M7.0 earthquake on the Hayward Fault with an epicenter in Oakland, California. In addition to the scenario documents, a California state campaign to improve business resilience will be launched as part of the rollout. (3/7/2018)

In April, a new paper will be published in *Science Advances* that finds most atolls will become uninhabitable by the mid-21st century due to wave-driven flooding exacerbated by sea-level rise. The paper projects the impact of sea-level rise and wave-driven flooding on atoll infrastructure and freshwater availability under a variety of climate-change scenarios finding that, based on current greenhouse gas emission rates, the nonlinear interactions between sea-level rise and wave dynamics over reefs will lead to the annual wave-driven overwash of most atoll islands by the mid-21st century. A similar paper was published in 2015 and a recent report “The Impact of Sea-Level Rise and Climate Change on Department of Defense Installations on Atolls in the Pacific Ocean” was completed last fall. The research was funded by the U.S. Department of Defense’s Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program. A news release for this paper is planned. (3/12/2018)

In April, the USGS will release a Scientific Investigation Report co-authored with the Bureau of Reclamation that compares and contrasts the two agencies’ water-use information programs in the Colorado River Basin. The report also describes the legal drivers for each program, clarifies confusing terminology, compares the methods used, and contrasts the information reported by each agency. This detailed comparison demonstrates that these two Federal agencies have different missions, different programmatic drivers, and different user communities, all of which lead to different approaches to water-use data collection, analysis, and reporting. Despite the differences, the program comparison presented in this report identifies opportunities for closer coordination and sharing of information between the USGS and Reclamation, as well as program components where agency collaboration can improve water-use estimate methodologies. (3/6/2018)

[**NEW**] On May 12, the USGS Cascades Volcano Observatory (Vancouver, Wash.) will hold a one-day public open house. USGS scientists will take a break from their day-to-day work to set up volcano displays and prepare science demonstrations to share with the public. The event is free and all ages are welcome. A local media advisory will be distributed. (3/27/2018)

[UPDATE] On May 15, the USGS will release a new Circular entitled “Estimated Use of Water in the United States in 2015.” This report documents the national compilation of water use data compiled by USGS once every 5 years for the entire U.S. The report will present state-level water use data for the year 2015 and discuss long-term trends in water use. An accompanying data release of county-level data will be released concurrently with the Circular. Also, a data visualization for the Circular and county-level data is being created. All three products will be released concurrently, and a news release is planned. (3/14/2018)

Awareness

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

[NEW] The revised Central North Dakota Environmental Assessment (EA) that is being prepared by Reclamation’s Great Plains Region is being reviewed by the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District. A briefing for Water and Science is being scheduled prior to release. Reclamation anticipates a second public comment period on the draft EA in April.

[NEW] Reclamation’s Dakotas Area Office is preparing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Reclamation and Manitoba regarding the development of the Adaptive Management Plan for the Northwest Area Water Supply (NAWS) Biota Water Treatment Plant. The draft MOU has been reviewed by the region, Solicitor’s Office, and DOJ. Presently, the draft MOU has been provided to the Commissioner’s office and Water & Science as well as the State of North Dakota for review and approval. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] The March 2018 24-Month Study indicates that Lake Powell releases for water year 2018 continue to be projected at 9.0 million-acre feet (maf). The determination of this year’s releases will be finalized with the April 2018 24-Month Study. Based on the current inflow forecast and projected releases, the March 24-Month Study projects Lake Powell elevation will end water year 2018 near 3,601 feet, with approximately 11.8 maf in storage (49 percent of capacity). Currently, Lake Powell is 54 percent full, with a live storage content of 13.1 maf. Water Year 2018 conditions in the Upper Colorado River Basin have been very dry, and little time remains for significant improvement prior to spring runoff. According to the Colorado Basin River Forecast Center, the forecasted inflow to Lake Powell is 3.1 million acre-feet (43 percent of average) for the 2018 April-July runoff period. Current conditions in the Lower Colorado River Basin are very dry, with record low precipitation and snowpack being reported at many sites throughout the Lower Basin. As of March 27, 2018, Lake Mead’s elevation was 1,088.2 feet with 10.7 million acre-feet in storage (41% of live capacity). With a projected release of 9.0 million acre-feet from Lake Powell in water year 2018, Lake Mead is projected to decline to a seasonally low elevation of 1,076.2 feet with 9.7 million acre-feet in storage (37% of live capacity) in July 2018 and to end calendar year 2018 at an elevation of 1,077.24 feet with 9.8 million acre-feet in storage (37% of live capacity). Releases from Lake Powell account for approximately 90% of the total inflow into Lake Mead, with the other 10% derived from intervening flows between Glen Canyon Dam and Hoover Dam. The observed intervening flows for January and February 2018 were 80% of average. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently published a press release (3/22/2018) announcing completion of a Species Status Assessment and 5-Year Review, which proposes down-listing the humpback chub from "endangered" to "threatened." The humpback chub is still classified as endangered and, at this time, it is only proposed for down-listing. If the classification of the species is officially changed to threatened, as the 5-Year Review recommends, it will remain fully protected under the Endangered Species Act. The Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program have been key contributors in the recovery of this native fish. Reclamation's modification of flow regimes from large dams, provision of flows to support native fish, and participation in and funding of the conservation and recovery programs is a central reason this species is able to be considered for down-listing. Collaborative partnerships and management of resources have protected the species from extinction. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] Reclamation is proposing to publish a Notice of Intent (NOI) in June 2018 to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on the New Mexico Unit (NM Unit) Project (Project). The proposed Project is part of the Central Arizona Project, authorized by the Colorado River Basin Project Act of 1968, Pub. L. 90-537, 43 U.S.C. Ch. 32 (1968 Act), as amended by the Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA, Pub. L. 108-451). Pursuant to the AWSA, the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) is authorized to contract with water users in New Mexico for water from the Gila River, its tributaries and underground water sources. Use of Gila River water under the AWSA is conditioned on satisfying a variety of laws and agreements related to the use and exchange of Gila River water in New Mexico and Arizona. The NM Unit will divert Gila River water in New Mexico for this purpose. The AWSA provided funding to construct the NM Unit or, to develop other alternatives in southwestern New Mexico to meet demand. Reclamation and the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC) are joint lead agencies for complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other related environmental regulations regarding the proposed Project. Issuance of the NOI will initiate the formal public scoping process associated with NEPA compliance. (3/27/2018)

The Department and Reclamation are currently working with the Council of Environmental Quality on development of a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act for select types of title transfers. In cases where the transfer of title from Reclamation to a willing entity is non-controversial, non-complicated and would not result in a change in the operations or management of the facilities, establishment of a categorical exclusion could decrease the time required for Reclamation to complete title transfers. (3/20/2018)

Reclamation is proposing to publish a notice in the Federal Register to begin charging fees at Lake Berryessa in Napa County, California. The fees will be used to upgrade facilities and pay for costs associated with recreation. Reclamation will ensure that visitors are aware of the proposed plan by holding public scoping meetings, press releases, posting it on the Lake Berryessa website at www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/berryessa/index.html and posting announcements at day use areas. During public scoping meetings and the public comment period, Reclamation will seek input from the public regarding the possible use of funds collected. Public scoping meetings and public outreach will ensure that the public is aware of all proposed fees and passes available to them. (2/26/2018)

Legislation authorizing the Westlands Settlement (“Settlement”) (H.R. 1769) is pending before the House of Representatives. The current stay of the *Firebaugh* injunction expired on January 15, 2018 and the district court did not grant an additional stay. As a result, Reclamation is preparing to expend significant funds to implement the Control Schedule of drainage measures for Westlands as approved by the court and could face additional litigation. The January 2018 Revised Control Schedule identifies a funding need of about \$3 million in FY 2018. Based on Congressional action to date on the fiscal year 2018 budget, upon final passage Reclamation expects to be able to accommodate the \$3 million identified in the Control Schedule. If required, it also identifies a funding need of over \$12.2 million in FY 2019, which is not currently included in the fiscal year 2019 President’s budget; over \$13.8 million in FY 2020, over \$29.7 million in FY 2021 – ramping up to a need of over \$101 million in FY 2023. The funding needs to implement drainage are significant and represent a substantial financial obligation for the Department of the Interior. (2/9/2018)

U.S. Geological Survey

[**NEW**] USGS Associate Director Environmental Health and Acting Associate Director Energy and Minerals, Geoff Plumlee, has been invited to participate in three meetings at the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM). On April 4th, Dr. Plumlee will participate in a panel of Federal agency representatives (FDA, DOE, DOD, USGS) in a meeting of the NASEM Environmental Health Matters Initiative. On April 12th, Dr. Plumlee will give a 20-minute presentation on contaminants and pathogens from natural sources in the subsurface to the NASEM Spring Series on Subsurface Contaminants co-sponsored by the NASEM Boards on Chemical Sciences and Technology, Environmental Studies and Toxicology, Earth Sciences and Resources, and Water Science and Technology. On April 26th, Dr. Plumlee will attend a morning subsurface contaminants series session and then in the afternoon join other USGS leaders at the Board of Earth Sciences and Resources sponsors session.

Executive Order 13817 (December 2017) inaugurated a government-wide effort to strengthen and sustain the Nation’s critical mineral supply chains, with significant USGS responsibilities in four areas. (1) The USGS, in conjunction with BLM and other Federal agencies, developed a draft list of 35 critical minerals, published on February 16, 2018, in the Federal Register. Public comment closed on March 19, 2018, and the USGS is preparing a short summary of comments. (2) The USGS is leading development of a plan to better assess the Nation’s subsurface mineral potential through new collection of geophysical, geologic, and topographic data. The draft plan will be transmitted to the Secretary by April 19, 2018. In the coming months, the USGS anticipates additional review and input from other Federal agencies and external partners, and ongoing revisions as required to inform the government-wide strategy to be published by the Department of Commerce in August 2018. (3) The USGS will provide technical input to Commerce on the potential to better use above-ground sources of critical minerals, including by recycling, reprocessing, and substituting alternative materials. (4) USGS will provide technical input to Commerce on existing trade dependencies for critical minerals. (2/9/2018)

Upcoming USGS Publications

[**NEW**] On April 10, a newly accepted USGS article that discusses the domestic potential to reduce net import reliance for mineral commodities in *Eos Earth and Space Science News*. Net import reliance measures the dependence of the United States on imports to meet domestic consumption. This article explains how net import reliance for mineral commodities is calculated from individual components using examples of specific mineral commodities. The USGS National Minerals Information Center compiles and publishes production, consumption, and net import reliance data for more than 90 nonfuel minerals and materials. (3/28/2018)

[**NEW**] In the coming weeks, a recently accepted paper that describes the effects of fuel treatments on forest resistance to drought will be published in *Forest Ecology and Management*. The research, a collaboration between the USGS and Humboldt State University tests the efficacy of forest management tools in the wake of California's severe, years-long drought. Researchers examined tree-growth response to climatic stress and the use of fuel treatments, such as "mastication," or the shredding of low-lying vegetation by machine, within forests of the Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, California. (3/28/2018)

[**NEW**] In April, a new USGS paper entitled "Effects of contemporary land-use and land-cover change on the carbon balance of terrestrial ecosystems in the United States" will be published in *Environmental Research Letters*. For this study, USGS researchers analyzed how 40 years of change in land use, land cover, and disturbance affected the amount of carbon stored and sequestered in ecosystems of the conterminous United States. (3/23/2018)

[**NEW**] In May, a new USGS paper entitled "Geochemistry and mineralogy of late Quaternary loess in the upper Mississippi River valley, USA: Provenance and correlation with Laurentide Ice Sheet history," will be published in *Quaternary Science Reviews*. For this study, researchers applied new geochemical methods to test the hypothesis that sources of loess (windblown silt) in the upper Mississippi River valley varied over the period of accumulation. The findings confirm that dominance of loess sources varied several times during the period of accumulation changing as the positions of ice lobes of the Laurentide Ice Sheet shifted during the last glacial period. (3/23/2018)

Conversation Contents

Weekly Report to the Secretary, April 1-7, 2018

Attachments:

/49. Weekly Report to the Secretary, April 1-7, 2018/1.1 Weekly Report to the Secretary April 1-7.docx

"Dermody, Matthew" <matthew_dermody@ios.doi.gov>

From: "Dermody, Matthew" <matthew_dermody@ios.doi.gov>
Sent: Thu Mar 29 2018 15:32:10 GMT-0600 (MDT)
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Subject:

Weekly Report to the Secretary, April 1-7, 2018

Attachments:

Weekly Report to the Secretary April 1-7.docx

All,

Attached is the weekly report to the Secretary, in both Google Doc and Word formats.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Matthew Dermody
Special Assistant
Office of the Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior

1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240
202-513-7778

 [Weekly Report to the Secretary April 1-7.docx](#)

**WEEKLY REPORT
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
APRIL 1-7, 2018**

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

No updates to report at this time.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt will be in Colorado Thursday April 5 and Friday April 6 presenting \$18 million in unused Anvil Point funds to the state of Colorado. He will also meet with press, local leaders, and BLM and BOR employees in Grand Junction and Denver.

Assistant Deputy Secretary Todd Willens will be out on personal leave all week.

Associate Deputy Secretary Jim Cason will be in the office all week.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

Between April 1-7, the Deputy Secretary's office will be approving the reinstatement of two mineral leases on the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota, which were first obtained by Twin Metals Minnesota, LLC (TMM) in 1966. This action follows a DOI Solicitor opinion issued December 22, 2017. In December 2016, the Forest Service proposed that approximately 234,000 acres of the Forest be withdrawn from disposition under mineral leasing laws.

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

No updates to report at this time.

Awareness

No updates to report at this time.

OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Congressional Hearings, and Travel

No updates to report.

Week Ahead Announcements and Actions

In our continuing efforts to strengthen and improve the Department and its agencies review, response, and coordination of ethics matters and promote the highest level of ethical principles, our Ethics Office is bringing on two new senior managers. On April 15th, Scott de la Vega will join the Ethics Office team as the Designated Agency Ethics Officer and Director of the Ethics Office and Heather Gottry will join our Ethics Office staff as an SL manager and serve as the Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Officer. The addition of these two quality hires will continue to reinforce our commitment to and our requirement for the highest ethical standards at the Department of the Interior.

NEW CASES:

Friends of Animals v. Silvey and BLM (D. Nev.)

On January 25, Plaintiff filed a complaint challenging a wild horse gather plan for the Antelope Valley and Triple B Complexes. The 10-year gather plan includes removal of excess wild horses, application of fertility vaccines, and gelding. Plaintiff alleges that the application of reproductive controls is a violation of the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burrow Act (WFRHBA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). On March 12, the United States filed the Administrative Record (Ar). On March 21, Plaintiffs requested that additional documents be added the Administrative Record and the Government has agreed to file a Supplemental AR by March 30. Plaintiffs have also requested the Government provide a privilege log. The Department of Justice (DOJ) has filed a joint motion to modify the scheduling order to allow for supplementation of the record.

East Columbia Basin Irrigation District, et al. v. United States, et al. (E.D. Wash.)

On March 19, the three Columbia Basin Project irrigation districts (East, South, and Quincy) filed a complaint against the United States, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), Secretary Zinke, Commissioner Burman, and Reclamation's Regional Director, Lorri Gray, each in their official capacities, alleging breach of contract and breach of the duties to act in good faith and fair dealing. Specifically, the districts allege that Reclamation wrongly asserted that, under the 1968 repayment contracts between Reclamation and the districts, the districts are obligated to pay for the costs of third party power transmission service. The districts claim the United States is responsible to pay these operations costs.

SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS:

United States v. Oregon (D. Or.)

United States v. Oregon is a treaty fishing rights case that allocates harvest between treaty Indian tribes and non-treaty fishers, and oversees hatchery production in the Columbia River basin. The Parties (three Federal agencies, four NW states and five NW Tribes) negotiated a 2018-2027 Management Agreement that replaces the previous 2008-2017 Management Agreement. On February 26, the parties submitted a *Joint Motion and Stipulated Order* to the court for approval of the Management Agreement. On March 19, the court held a telephonic hearing and approved the Management Agreement and adopted the Agreement as an Order of the Court. The judge then terminated the court's continuing jurisdiction of this longstanding treaty rights case and dismissed the case without prejudice to re-opening in the event a dispute arises concerning the parties' Management Agreement that requires judicial review.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe v. United States Army Corps of Engineers and Dakota Access, LLC (D.D.C. March 19) - Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) On March 19, the Court ruled on the Yankton Sioux Tribe's (YST's) Motion for Partial Summary Judgment. The YST's Complaint concerning the Dakota Access Pipeline was consolidated with the suits brought by the Standing Rock Sioux and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribes regarding the same pipeline. The YST Complaint was the only one of the consolidated cases that named the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as a Defendant. Of the YST's seven claims for relief, two were raised against FWS and were based upon FWS' issuance of a special use permit (SUP) in connection with the pipeline's crossing of certain private lands encumbered by FWS wetland easements. Plaintiffs claimed that USFWS, along with United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), violated NEPA by improperly segmenting the DAPL components, failing to adequately consider indirect and cumulative impacts, and failing to meaningfully involve the Tribe on a Government-to-Government basis to achieve environmental justice obligations. In addition, Plaintiffs claimed that FWS, along the USACE, violated the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, federal trust responsibilities, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) by enabling the pipeline's construction without first obtaining the Tribe's free, prior, and informed consent. After DOJ filed their initial brief, the YST withdrew their claims based on alleged violations of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, federal trust responsibilities, and the UNDRIP. The Court ruled in favor of the Federal Defendants and against the YST on their NEPA claims. The Court also dismissed the YST's claims under the National Historic Preservation Act as moot.

Powder River Basin Resource Council, Northern Plains Resource Council, Sierra Club, and Natural Resources Defense Council v. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, et al. (D. Mont.) In March 2016, plaintiffs filed an action challenging the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) approval of RMPs for two field offices in the Powder River Basin (Miles City, MT and Buffalo, WY). Plaintiffs alleged that BLM violated NEPA in making available approximately 2 million acres of land for federal coal leasing and 10 million acres of land for federal oil and gas leasing without adequately addressing environmental consequences. On March 23, the court granted in part the United States' cross-motion for summary judgment. The court held that BLM was not required to consider alternatives that would mandate specific methane measures on all oil and gas leases, specifically rejected the need to use the social cost of carbon protocol when considering cumulative impacts of climate change, and held that BLM took a hard look at cumulative impacts of the resource management plan (RMPs) on air quality. But, the court found that BLM violated NEPA because it failed to include an alternative that would decrease the amount of coal available for leasing, it did not take a hard look at downstream combustion of the coal, and it failed to adequately explain some of its global warming calculations. The court ordered BLM to supplement the RMPs, but declined to enjoin lease- or permit-level coal, oil, or gas developments "at this juncture." The parties have 60 days to confer on appropriate remedies.

Challenges to Critical Habitat Regulations and Definition of "Destruction or Adverse Modification" (*State of Alabama v. NMFS* (S.D. Ala.) and *Utility Water Act Group v. NMFS* (S.D. Ala.))

The court has granted plaintiffs' motions to dismiss in both cases.

OTHER LITIGATION MATTERS:

City of Fresno v. U.S. (Fed. Cl.) - U.S. Filing in Response to Proposed Intervention

On October 5, 2016, the City of Fresno and seventeen water districts (Friant Parties) sued the United States, seeking approximately \$350,000,000.00 in just compensation for alleged Fifth Amendment "takings" of Plaintiffs' property interest in water impounded by the Central Valley Project's Friant Dam during drought operations in 2014. On January 30, the court granted Plaintiffs unopposed motion to amend their complaint, originally filed on October 5, 2016, in order to more fully address Defendant's standing argument. The United States filed an answer on February 26. Proposed Intervenor, San Luis & Delta Mendota Water Authority (SLDMWA) and the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors (Exchange Contractors) have requested rulings on pending motions to intervene that were deferred pending proceedings on the United States' Motion to Dismiss. On March 23, Plaintiff's filed a response opposing the interventions. On March 28, the United States will file a response stating that it does not oppose the Proposed Intervenor's request that the court issue a ruling on the pending motions to intervene, however, the United States has not changed its position on the underlying motions. In its October 2017 Response to the Proposed Intervenor's motions to intervene, the United States opposed intervention by SLDMWA, but did not oppose intervention by the Exchange Contractors.

Firebaugh, et al. v. U.S. (E.D. California)

The United States remains subject to an injunction requiring the filing of bi-annual status reports updating the Court on implementation of the drainage obligation in the San Luis Unit of the Central Valley Project. The next status report will be filed on March 30.

***Save the Colorado, et al. v. United States Bureau of Reclamation* (D. Colo.) - Windy Gap Firming Project NEPA Litigation**

This case is a NEPA-based challenge to Reclamation's 2014 decision to execute contracts for the Windy Gap Firming Project, a private water project that connects to and utilizes facilities from the federal Colorado-Big Thompson reclamation project in Northern Colorado. The general nature of the NEPA allegations is that the purpose and need is too narrow because the water demand does not exist and that the NEPA analysis was not sufficiently thorough. The administrative record has been filed, and briefing will begin as soon as April depending on whether plaintiffs challenge the scope of the record.

Texas v. New Mexico & Colorado (No. 141 Original) (U.S. Supreme Court) - Meet and Confer; Filing of Draft Case Management Plan

In 2013, the State of Texas brought an Original Action in the U.S. Supreme Court, in which the United States intervened as a plaintiff, against the States of New Mexico and Colorado, alleging violations of the Rio Grande Compact by New Mexico. New Mexico filed a Motion to Dismiss Texas' Complaint and the United States' Complaint in Intervention, which the Supreme Court referred to Special Master A. Gregory Grimsal. Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) and El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 (EPCWID) moved to intervene. On February 9, 2017, the Special Master issued a final report and recommendations. The Special Master's recommendations to the Supreme Court were to (1) deny New Mexico's Motion to Dismiss Texas's complaint; (2) deny in part New Mexico's Motion to Dismiss the United States (ruling that the United States' claims will lie under federal Reclamation law but not under the Compact), and (3) deny EBID and EPCWID's motions to intervene. After the Supreme Court heard oral

argument in January 2018 on exceptions related to the United States' interests as set forth in the Special Master's report, the Court issued an opinion on March 5, finding that the United States has "distinctively federal interests" that favor allowing it to pursue its compact claims. Following a status conference with the Special Master on March 23, New Mexico has 60 days to file its answer and counter-claims. Parties agreed to meet and confer on April 4, with the intent of filing a draft Case Management Plan on April 13.

Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians v. Coachella Valley Water District, et al. (C.D. Cal.)
On February 28, at the invitation of the Ninth Circuit after the U.S. Supreme Court's denial of *certiorari* in November 2017, the parties to this litigation involving the Agua Caliente Band's reserved right to groundwater had an initial mediation meeting with retired Circuit Judge Edward Leavy. Each party provided a statement of issues prior to the meeting. During the initial session, the water districts outlined a proposal for consideration, and Coachella Valley Water District circulated a term sheet to the mediator and other parties on March 23. A follow-up session has been scheduled for April 25, in Palm Springs. Meanwhile, the federal district court has postponed oral arguments regarding Phase II issues from March 12, until sometime in late April, likely April 26. Phase II addresses three legal issues: whether the Tribe owns pore space underlying its Reservation; whether the Tribe's federal reserved water right includes a water quality component; and the appropriate standard to quantify the Tribe's water right. The water districts also raised justiciability arguments, including standing and ripeness. As part of its postponement order, the court indicated that it will only hear argument concerning standing and water quality issues.

United States v. Bd. of Dirs. of Truckee-Carson Irrigation Dist., et al. (D. Nev.) - Newlands Project "Recoupment" Case Response to Rule 60(b)(6) Motion
On March 13, the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District (TCID) filed a Rule 60(b)(6) motion seeking relief from judgment based on the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Kokesh v. SEC*, 137 S. Ct. 1635 (2017), which involved disgorgement of profits under SEC enforcement actions. This longstanding "Recoupment" case was specifically authorized by a 1990 statute that directed the United States to recover water illegally diverted by TCID from 1973 to 1987, willfully exceeding diversion limits by diverting water away from the Truckee River's natural terminus at Pyramid Lake and into the Newlands Project instead, which TCID operates and maintains under contract with Reclamation. After years of litigation and appeals, TCID owes the United States and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe approximately 344,000 acre-feet of water, and proceedings are currently underway to determine how TCID will repay the water. TCID's motion asserts that *Kokesh* establishes a statute of limitations period that expired before the Recoupment litigation was filed by the US. The US response is due April 27.

United States v. Fallbrook Public Utility Dist. (S.D. Cal.) - Santa Margarita River Basin Adjudication

The United States, Pechanga Band of Luiseño Mission Indians, and Rancho California Water District filed documents associated with the Band's water rights settlement with the federal district court on January 24. In addition to the 2016 Settlement Act and associated settlement agreement, which the Secretary and the other parties signed on November 29, 2017, the settlement parties filed a Joint Motion for Consent Judgment and Decree Adopting Settlement

Agreement, a Joint Memorandum in support of the motion, and a proposed Judgment and Decree. No hearing date has been set by the court.

Kvasnikoff v. U.S. (D.Alaska) – Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) Coverage Based on Self-Governance Compact

On March 26, there is a meeting with DOJ to discuss concerns about the Order in this case. The Judge concluded that there can be FTCA coverage for a premises liability claim involving a tribal entity's building based on a self-governance compact. The judge granted the Bristol Bay Native Association's (BBNA's) motion for Certification and Dismissal of BBNA as a Defendant. The judge also denied the U.S. motion to dismiss the Complaint. The deadlines for filing a motion for reconsideration or a motion seeking an interlocutory appeal, if applicable, fall during the second week of April.

Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges, Wilderness Society, et al. v. Zinke (D. Alaska) On April 2, the government's answer is due in response to a complaint seeking declaratory and injunctive relief to stop the Secretary's planned land exchange within the Izembeck National Wildlife Refuge with King Cove Corporation. Plaintiffs, a consortium of environmental organizations, allege that the exchange is invalid because it does not further the purposes of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), violates Title XI of ANILCA, and violates NEPA.

Northern Alaska Environmental Center et al. v. Zinke (D. Alaska) – National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) 2017 Lease Sale Challenge

Petitioners, a consortium of national and Alaska-based environmental organizations, challenge the BLM's December 2017, NPR-A lease sale, alleging that additional NEPA analysis was required. The BLM relied on a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) which concluded that the November 2012, National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement remained adequate for purposes of holding the sale notwithstanding recent new information and circumstances including recent large oil and gas discoveries in and near NPR-A. Answer is due April 3.

Natural Resources Defense Council et al. v. Zinke (D. Alaska) – NPR-A 2016 and 2017 Lease Sales Challenge

Petitioners, a consortium of national environmental organizations, challenge the BLM's December 2016 and December 2017 NPR-A lease sales, alleging that additional NEPA analysis of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions was required and that BLM failed to consider tract specific lease sale configurations. The BLM relied on Determinations of NEPA Adequacy (DNAs) for each lease sale which concluded that the November 2012 National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement remained adequate for purposes of holding the sales. The environmental impact statement (EIS) had not analyzed the impacts of GHG emissions from the end consumption of the oil and gas that might be produced as a result of the lease sales, and did not consider tract-specific lease sale configurations. Answer is due April 6.

Sturgeon v. Frost (Supreme Court)

The United States' response to plaintiff's petition for writ of cert is due April 6, though an extension could be requested. At issue is a Ninth Circuit decision affirming National Park Service's (NPS's) authority to regulate hovercraft use on certain waters within ANILCA Conservation System Units in Alaska. Citing the *Katie John* precedent, the Ninth Circuit held that the United States has an implied reservation of water rights in the Nation River, rendering it "public lands" for purposes of ANILCA.

Save America's Mustangs (SAM) v. BLM (D. Nev.)

Plaintiff filed a Quiet Title Action (QTA) to dispute the United States' reservation of a road through patented parcels. Plaintiff installed a gate blocking access to the road and asked for a declaratory judgment that there is no public access to the road. On December 19, 2017, Plaintiffs filed a Notice of Appeal from the District Court's November 20, 2017 Order granting the United States' motion to dismiss Plaintiff's Quiet Title Act (QTA) litigation for lack of jurisdiction due to the statute of limitations for bringing a QTA action. On March 22, after several mediation discussions, the parties agreed they have reached an impasse and that briefing on Plaintiff's appeal should proceed. Plaintiff's opening brief is due June 25.

M.L. Johnson Family Properties v. Zinke ("Johnson Family II") (E.D. Ky.)

When mining companies seek to develop coal mining operations on split estate lands, where the surface is owned by a party who is different from the party who owns the subsurface, the Surface Mining Reclamation and Control Act of 1977 (SMCRA) requires the mining company to obtain a right of entry from the surface owner. In this case, the surface was originally owned by multiple members of the M.L. Johnson family. Some members of the family sold or otherwise granted entry to a company affiliated with Premier Elkhorn, the mining company, and others objected to entry. When Kentucky authorized the mining operation, the family members who objected sued OSM, contending that Kentucky was not properly implementing SMCRA because Premier Elkhorn did not have a valid right of entry (Johnson Family I). As a result of Johnson Family I, OSM issued a cessation order to Premier Elkhorn, but later terminated the cessation order when Premier Elkhorn demonstrated an alternative right of entry. We filed a motion for summary judgment in this case arguing that the alternative right of entry was valid under Kentucky's co-tenancy law, and OSM properly terminated the cessation order. On March 21, the Court issued a decision granting our motion for summary judgment. The Court determined that Premier Elkhorn had demonstrated a valid right of entry based on the application of Kentucky's co-tenancy law. It found that SMCRA unambiguously permits a right of entry based on all relevant state law.

League of Conservation Voters v. Trump (D. Alaska)

On March 19, the court denied the government's motion to dismiss a complaint brought by the League of Conservation Voters, and others, challenging President Trump's 2017 order reversing President Obama's orders withdrawing areas of the outer continental shelf (OCS) from leasing (Beaufort, Chukchi and areas of the Atlantic) under section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA). In the motion to dismiss, the government argued: (1) sovereign immunity (the United States is immune from suit except to the extent Congress unequivocally and expressly waives that immunity); (2) no private right of action (plaintiffs fail to identify any statute that provides them a right of action to enforce their alleged rights under OCSLA and the Property Clause); (3) declaratory relief (courts may not issue declaratory relief

against co-equal branches of government); and, (4) Article III standing (plaintiffs lack Article III standing because they have not alleged an imminent, geographically specific, and particularized harm). The Judge nevertheless decided against the government on each argument for dismissing the case. The Judge ordered the parties to submit a proposed schedule or schedules for summary judgment briefing within 14 days.

California v. BLM and Sierra Club v. Zinke - (N.D. Cal.) - Challenge to BLM's Hydro-fracturing (HF) Rescission Rule

On March 16, the State of Wyoming filed a motion to intervene. On March 20, DOJ and the *Sierra Club* plaintiffs filed a stipulation that the environmental plaintiffs will amend their complaint to add counts under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by April 6, thereby extending BLM's Answer due date until May 7. The Answer in the *California* case is due on April 9. On March 21, DOJ filed a Motion to Transfer venue in both cases to the District of Wyoming.

EDC v. BOEM (C.D. Cal.)

This case challenges Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)/Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement's (BSEE's) issuance of a joint Programmatic Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for well stimulation activities on the outer continental shelf in the Pacific and alleges that the Bureaus failed to comply with the Endangered Species Act and the Coastal Zone Management Act. Federal Defendants' Cross-Motion for Summary Judgment is due March 29. We have requested a two week extension of the deadline.

Taylor Energy Co. LLC v. United States (Ct. Fed. Cl.)

In 2004, Hurricane Ivan caused a subsea landslide that destroyed a platform and 28 wellbores on Taylor Energy's lease on the Gulf of Mexico outer continental shelf. Since that time, Taylor and the government have been working to resolve issues related to the decommissioning of those facilities, including ongoing releases of hydrocarbons into the marine environment. Taylor established a trust to fund the decommissioning efforts, which has a current balance of \$432 million. Taylor asserts that any additional efforts to permanently abandon the remaining wells and remove contaminated sediment are technically impossible and/or more environmentally harmful than beneficial. Accordingly, Taylor requested the release of the remaining trust funds. The government denied that request, asserting that the funds may be necessary for future actions, and Taylor filed suit seeking monetary damages and rescission of the Trust agreement. The government filed a motion to dismiss this case in May 2016, but the case was stayed for settlement negotiations. The court has since lifted the stay. Taylor filed its response brief on March 19 and government filed its reply on March 26.

Petro-Hunt, L.L.C. v. United States (U.S. Supreme Court) - Judicial taking

The government's brief in opposition to Petro-Hunt's petition for writ of certiorari is due April 4. The petition presents the question whether a claimant may obtain compensation in the Court of Federal Claims for an asserted Fifth Amendment taking of private property by a federal court of appeals decision. The draft brief is currently under review in the Solicitor General's Office.

Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA) v. U.S. Dep't of the Interior (D. Utah)

SUWA seeks to set aside a BLM decision approving a large-scale vegetation treatment project in Hamlin Valley, Utah. SUWA contends that BLM violated NEPA by relying on a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) to approve two smaller projects (Indian Peak and Stateline) within Hamlin Valley. The DNA relies on a valley-wide programmatic environmental assessment (EA), FONSI, and decision record (DR). BLM's response is due on April 6. BLM is considering filing a motion to dismiss on the basis of mootness in lieu of filing a response brief.

Mesa Country Club v. United States (D. Ariz.)

Plaintiff in this Quiet Title Act (QTA) case claims ownership to certain real property along the Tempe Canal, which is operated by the Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District under an operations and maintenance agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation. Plaintiff, whose property abuts both sides of the Canal, seeks to exclude public access to the country club. The United States' answer is due April 11, and a case management conference is set for June 1.

In re Waters of the Klamath River Basin, (Klamath Co. Cir. Ct.) - Water Rights Adjudication Involving Water Rights for the Klamath Tribes and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
On March 20, the County Circuit Court issued a letter opinion (which will be followed by an order) on the Phase 1C motions. The adjudication has been broken down into Phases 1-3. Phase 1 was further broken down into Phase 1A, 1B, and 1C to deal with various procedural issues that impact the entire proceeding. Phase 1C dealt with upward claim amendments that Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) ruled had been late and other procedural issues. The court affirmed OWRD and did not disturb OWRD's disallowance of various upward claim amendments. A few Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and FWS water rights claims are affected by this ruling. Once this order is issued, it will mark the completion of Phase 1 of the adjudication.

Board of County Commissioners of the County of San Miguel, Colorado v. U.S. Bureau of Land Management (D. Colo.) - NEPA, ESA, and Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA)
Challenge to Oil and Gas Leasing

Federal defendants filed a partial motion to dismiss the Endangered Species Act claims on December 15, 2017; Plaintiffs' response was filed on January 19, and defendants' response was filed February 14. The court has scheduled a hearing on the partial motion to dismiss, to be held on May 2.

Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation v. BLM

In May 2017, the Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation (MHA Nation) filed an Interior Board of Land Appeal (IBLA) appeal and Petition for Stay seeking review of BLM's decision approving Slawson Exploration's applications for permit to drill eight federal wells into federal, fee, and state minerals underlying Lake Sakakawea on the Fort Berthold Reservation. In August, the Board granted the stay request after the automatic stay expired. In October 2017, the federal district court in North Dakota enjoined BLM from enforcing the Board's stay order. BLM filed a petition for Director's review of the stay and asked the Director to assume jurisdiction over the appeal and render a final decision on the merits. The Director assumed jurisdiction over the appeal on October 13, 2017. On March 22, the Director determined that the Stay Order was

decided in error, strongly disapproved of the Stay Order's untimeliness, and affirmed the BLM decision on the merits.

Chippewa Cree Tribe v. United States ("Pembina") (Fed. Cl.)

On January 4, Chief Judge Patricia E. Campbell-Smith issued an order granting the parties' request to continue the assignment of the case to Judge Bruggink under the court's Alternative Dispute Resolution program. A joint status report is due on or before June 29. The Parties continue to finalize settlement agreements with Tribal plaintiffs in the Court of Federal Claims and with individual plaintiffs in a proposed class action lawsuit to be filed in the District Court for the District of Columbia.

Fletcher, et al. v. U.S. (N.D. OK)

On November 1, the Court granted the Government's request to extend the time to file its response to Plaintiffs' EAJA brief to 30 days from the date that the Government receives completed discovery responses from Plaintiffs. On December 4, the Government filed a Motion to Compel Plaintiffs' response to the discovery requests. Plaintiffs moved to strike the motion and in turn the Government filed a motion to quash. On January 22, the Court denied Plaintiffs' motion to strike and set a date for a telephonic hearing regarding the Government's motions. The hearing took place on January 26. The Court granted the Government's motion to compel in part, and granted the motion to quash. The Court stated that the Government's response brief would be due 30 days from the date the Government receives the outstanding bank statements from Plaintiffs. Upcoming filing deadlines: - March 30 Government's Response Brief re: EAJA Fees - April 13 Plaintiffs' Reply Brief re: EAJA Fees.

Bassett, New Mexico LLC v. U.S. (Fed. Cl.)

On March 23, Plaintiff appealed to the Federal Circuit the dismissal of his complaint by the Federal Court of Claims. Plaintiff asserted a physical taking of his patented mine claim inholding in the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument near Las Cruces, NM because he believed the BLM would deny any right-of-way (ROW) application he would make to access his property. On January 26, the court dismissed Plaintiff's complaint upon DOJ's motion, holding that Plaintiff in fact asserted a regulatory taking that was unripe for review because the Plaintiff never completed his ROW application to the BLM and such application would not be futile.

Upcoming Hearings in Cases That Include Facial Challenges to the Significant Portion of the Range (SPR) Policy (March 26 – May 30, 2018)

In the coming weeks two courts will preside over hearings that include facial challenges to FWS's Policy defining "significant portion of its range" under the ESA (SPR Policy). The cases are *Desert Survivors v. U.S. DOI*, No. 16-cv-01165 (N.D. Cal.) (bi-state sage-grouse), and *Defenders of Wildlife v. Ashe*, No. 15-cv-00910 (D. D.C.) (northern long-eared bat). Briefing on the same issue is ongoing or scheduled to begin soon in two other cases that include challenges to the SPR Policy.

Blazek v. Town of Sanborn and Generally All Persons Who It May Concern (Wis. Cir. Ct., Ashland County)

The Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians (the Band) filed its Statement of Reasons (SOR) with BLM that supplements its protest of BLM's Notice of Filing of Plat

Survey published in the Federal Register on January 16. The SOR alleges that the original 1858 cadastral survey (approved in 1864) and the 1926 supplemental survey cannot be relied upon as an accurate representation of the lands and that the land in question was in existence at the time of another cadastral survey conducted in 1852. BLM will review the SOR and the State Director of BLM will issue a decision to the Band. A dependent resurvey was executed by BLM at the request of the BIA. The land in question is Chequamegon Point (a/k/a Long Island) located in Lake Superior.

FTCA Claims (USGS – Louisiana) – \$182.5 Million in Claims Based on Allegedly Faulty Bridge Design

On March 13, US Geological Survey (USGS), Lower Mississippi Gulf Water Science Center, Baton Rouge Office received 294 administrative FTCA claims for property damage, personal injury, mental anguish, emotional distress, stress, PTSD, and wrongful death totaling \$182,552,380.42. Claimants allege that the USGS and the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) negligently designed the I-12 Bridge over Tangipahoa River flood plain. In March 2016, major flooding was reported at Roberts, Louisiana and south of Highway 190 with flooding 4-5 feet at the intersection of LA 445 and Highway 190. It is alleged that the extensive flooding was the result of the backwater caused by the construction of the I-12 Bridge. It is further alleged that 75% of the floodplain was blocked leaving only 25% of the original flow cross section for the main bridge and the relief structures.

NON-LITIGATION MATTERS:

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA)

The Executive Committee for the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act requests the Secretary of the Interior approve \$78,002,276 of funding, including \$5,000,000 for a Special Account Reserve, from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Special Account for Round 17, an additional \$3,200,000 for the SNPLMA Round 16B, Craig Ranch Regional Park 20.57-Acre Acquisition project, and waive the requirements of the Department of the Interior Guidance for Financial Assistance Actions Effective in Fiscal Year 2018 memorandum dated December 28, 2017. The SNPLMA (Public Law 105-263, as amended) authorizes specific uses for revenues from the sale of public lands identified for disposal in the Las Vegas Valley. The SNPLMA created a Special Account into which 85 percent of the revenues generated by eligible land sales are deposited. As of December 31, 2017, the Special Account holds an available balance of \$333,776,978 for new authorized purposes. The SNPLMA authorizes the Secretary to expend the revenue in the Special Account for enumerated kinds of environmental projects benefitting Southern Nevada and the Lake Tahoe Region. This recommendation was developed through a collaborative effort involving the Federal agencies identified in the SNPLMA, the States of Nevada and California, local governments, and interested parties in Nevada and California. The proposed expenditures were made available for public review. The Executive Committee requests expedited review of the recommendation, in order that time-sensitive projects can begin during the coming field season.

Liberty Development and Production Plan (Liberty DPP)

SOL continues to advise BOEM on how to analyze impacts from lifecycle GHG emissions associated with the proposed Liberty DPP. In the Draft EIS, BOEM estimated potential impacts

using the Social Cost of Carbon protocol. However, the technical documents upon which the SCC protocol relied were rescinded by Executive Order 13783, which further instructed agencies to use methods consistent with OMB Circular A-4 when monetizing the value of changes in GHG emissions. Proposed new text for incorporation into the Final EIS has been submitted to DMR for review. BOEM will need to be provided with SOL-approved text soon, as BOEM will need to perform additional quantitative analysis to implement the new approach, and the Final EIS is scheduled to be completed by June.

Production Safety Systems Rule Revisions

The BSEE Director has requested a draft of the Final Rule package by this week. We expect it to enter SOL review shortly thereafter, with the aim of a mid-April sunaming session.

Well Control Rule Proposed Revisions

BSEE is finalizing its final passback to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in response to its last round of edits and comments and input from reviewing agencies. The Solicitor's Office is assisting BSEE in strengthening its discussion of the safe drilling margin in the preamble.

Civil Penalty AR Policy Manual Chapter

BSEE has completed drafting of a new manual chapter addressing policies for compilation of administrative records for civil penalty assessments. The Solicitor's Office is reviewing the chapter.

BLM-Forest Service Oil & Gas Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

On March 20-22, a Solicitor's Office attorney met with the BLM, Forest Service (FS), and USDA's Office of General Counsel to update the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding between BLM and the FS concerning oil and gas leasing and operations on National Forest System lands. The team identified several issues that need to be resolved before the revised MOU will be ready for surname. Among these issues is coordinating compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act and ESA, as well as coordinating tribal consultation for leasing.

Ojo Encino Chapter, 192 IBLA 269 (2018)

Ojo Encino Chapter appealed and sought a stay of the denial of their protest of the January 25, 2017, Notice of Competitive Oil and Gas Internet based Lease Sale offering four parcels of public land in Rio Arriba and Sandoval counties, New Mexico. The BLM filed a motion to dismiss the appeal based on lack of standing. The IBLA granted the BLM's motion to dismiss, holding that although the Chapter satisfied the first element of proving standing, that it is a party to the case; it failed to show the second element of standing, that it or its members are adversely affected by the decision. Specifically, the Chapter is a party to the case because it participated in the NEPA scoping process, consultation process according to the National Historic Preservation Act, and attended various meetings with the BLM. The Chapter, however, failed to show it had a legally cognizable interest substantially likely to be injured by the lease sale. Rather, the Chapter merely supplied non-specific, general, vague, and speculative allegations of potential harm to it or its members which the IBLA held to be insufficient to establish a causal relationship between the alleged injury and legally cognizable interest. Accordingly, the IBLA dismissed the Chapter's appeal and denied its request for a stay as moot.

George Washington Memorial Parkway - Dyke Marsh Permitting Issue

George Washington Memorial Parkway, a National Park System unit, is undertaking a wetlands restoration project at Dyke Marsh, an area of eroded marshland along the Potomac River. The marsh continues to erode and will ultimately be lost absent restoration. The Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) is asserting jurisdiction over the project based on its claim that Virginia owns a strip of submerged lands that eroded after a period of dredging at the site. NPS appeared before VMRC at a hearing on March 27, where VMRC granted the permit in part. This action does not provide NPS with a viable path forward as Virginia continues to assert ownership of much of the project area. DPW has advised that the NPS has a strong claim to ownership of Dyke Marsh and, after consultation with DOJ, has advised that a VMRC permit is not legally required in order for NPS to proceed with the project. NPS is finalizing a letter formally advising VMRC of this position. SOL will continue to keep lines of communication open with the Virginia Attorney General's Office.

30-60 Day Look-Ahead

Significant Litigation Deadlines are reported separately.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE AND PARKS

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

On April 2-6, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, exercising the authority of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Susan Combs will be in the office.

On April 2-6, Deputy Assistant Secretary Aurelia Skipwith will be in the office.

On April 2-6, FWS Principal Deputy Director Greg Sheehan and senior FWS leadership will attend the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Norfolk, Virginia.

On April 2-6, NPS Deputy Director Dan Smith will be in the office.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

[NEW] On April 12, the RESTORE Council staff will meet to finalize the planning grant for 2018 for RESTORE monies from the Deepwater Horizon spill. The Fairhope Alabama, meeting will include staff from ASFWP, FWS, USGS, and BOEM.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

[NEW] During the week of April 2, FWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service (collectively, the Services) expect to transit two proposed rules to OMB. The Services are proposing revisions to 50 CFR part 424, which implements listing and critical habitat provisions found in section 4 of the Act. The proposed revisions would add a framework for interpreting foreseeable future; clarify that the standards for delisting, reclassification, and listing are the

same; re-define and expand considerations determining that designating critical habitat is not prudent; and require that occupied habitat be evaluated before unoccupied habitat when designating critical habitat. In the second, the Services are proposing revisions to 50 CFR part 402, which implements consultation provisions found in section 7 of the Act. The proposed revisions would address alternative consultation mechanisms, clarify the phrase "effects of the action," revise the definition of "destruction or adverse modification," address certainty of mitigation proposed by action agencies, and otherwise improve the consultation process. In a third submission to OMB, FWS will transmit a proposed rule for 50 CFR part 17 to remove the blanket 4(d) rule, which currently applies the endangered species protections to threatened species. The proposed regulations would require FWS to determine what, if any, protective regulations are appropriate for species that the Service in the future determines to be a threatened species on a case-by-case basis.

[UPDATE] On April 2, FWS will share preliminary findings of Asian carp barge entrainment work conducted in 2017 with partners and industry. FWS worked with the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to undertake large-scale field studies to examine two potential techniques to reduce the accidental movement of fish across electric dispersal barriers by barges; and to assess the potential entrainment and transport of silver carp by commercial barges transiting downstream in the Illinois Waterway (IWW). Prior research conducted by FWS found that commercial barge traffic can inadvertently entrain and move fish several miles upstream, toward Lake Michigan. Preliminary 2017 findings show that small silver carp can be trapped and transported upstream by barge tows travelling at typical operating speeds. Findings are of concern because there is the potential risk that barge traffic could accidentally facilitate the introduction of Asian carp to areas of the waterway that connect to Lake Michigan. Early field trials indicate that water jet flushing systems shows potential for reducing the likelihood that small fish become trapped and transported by barges. (Updated 03/28/2018)

On or before April 3, FWS plans to announce it is seeking public review and comment on a draft environmental assessment (EA) describing the potential effects of issuing a proposed incidental take permit (ITP) for construction and development activities in Thurston County, Washington. The project development site is 127 acres, and the conservation site is 64 acres. Species covered in the HCP include the threatened Olympia subspecies of the Mazama pocket gopher and the threatened Oregon spotted frog. UPC, LLC developed a draft Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and applied for a 15-year ITP. This is not controversial. This HCP is a single-site developer and independent from the HCP that FWS briefed ASFWP about on November 17. This applicant would like to move forward with development in advance of the completion of the Thurston County HCP. Targeted outreach to local and state officials and stakeholders is planned. (Updated 02/28/2018)

On or before April 4, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on the proposal to reclassify Kuenzler hedgehog cactus, a plant species endemic to New Mexico, from endangered to threatened. This reclassification is not expected to be controversial. Primary stakeholders include the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service. Planned outreach includes a regional news release, emails to stakeholders, social media and web postings. Target date for submitting to the *Federal Register* is April 4, 2018. (Updated 03/21/18)

[UPDATE] On or around April 5, FWS plans to make a minor map correction in the final rule designating critical habitat for two butterflies: the Poweshiek skipperling and Dakota skipper. One map incorrectly labeled Poweshiek skipperling critical habitat as Dakota skipper critical habitat in Minnesota. FWS does not expect any opposition to this. A regional news release is planned. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] By April 5, FWS will make a final determination on the proposal to list the yellow lance as threatened. The yellow lance is a freshwater mussel that occurs in North Carolina, Maryland, and Virginia. A listing will likely be opposed by the City of Raleigh due to a proposed reservoir project on the Little River. FWS has been working with the city on this potential project for over nine years, and because other listed species occur in that location, ESA requirements are unlikely to change. Other stakeholders include the Lower Neuse Basin Association, Neuse River Compliance Association, Tar Pamlico Basin Association, North Carolina Water Quality Association, and the Center for Biological Diversity (petitioner). Planned outreach includes a regional news press release and notification to stakeholders. The statutory deadline for publication of the final determination in the *Federal Register* is April 5; therefore, FWS plans to submit it by March 29. This item is pending clearance by Exec Sec. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] By April 6, FWS will make a final listing determination for the Louisiana pinesnake as threatened. The pinesnake occurs in Louisiana and Texas. The Louisiana pinesnake listing is controversial due to concerns about the potential impacts on forestry activities, which is why FWS is simultaneously proposing a 4(d) rule that will allow routine forest management activities to proceed without need for permitting. Stakeholders include the timber industry, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of the Army, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas A&M Forest Service, Center for Biological Diversity, and WildEarth Guardians. Planned outreach includes a regional news release and notification to stakeholders and members of Congress. FWS is required by settlement agreement to publish the final determination in the *Federal Register* by April 6; therefore, FWS plans to submit both rules by March 30. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] In early April, FWS will make a proposed listing determination and proposed critical habitat designation for the island marble butterfly, found in Washington. The proposed critical habitat designation includes approximately 812 acres. This action is not expected to be opposed and media coverage is expected to be neutral. Interested stakeholders include the Xerces Society (the petitioner), federal partners including National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management, and state partners including Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Washington Department of Natural Resources, San Juan County Land Bank, the San Juan Preservation Trust, and local landowners. A regional news release to all interested parties and the media is planned. Pending clearance by Exec Sec. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] In early April, pending approval by the Department, FWS plans to propose to downlist the Hawaiian goose (nēnē) from endangered to threatened. FWS will also propose to establish special regulations for the conservation of the species under section 4(d) of the ESA to allow for flexibility in managing lands. Landowners of resort, golf course, agricultural, residential and recreational properties are likely to support the reclassification and associated

4(d) rule while conservation groups may be opposed. Interested stakeholders include the State of Hawaii, federal agencies, conservation, and bird groups, various private landowners, and the public. Outreach includes a regional news release, social media, emails and phone calls to congressional offices and stakeholders. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] In early April, pending approval by the Department, FWS plans to make 90-day findings on petitions to delist or downlist the Cape mountain zebra, and delist the Preble's meadow jumping mouse. For substantial 90-day findings, this is the first step in a longer process and tends not to get significant media attention; however, this action might be the first time stakeholders become aware that FWS is assessing the status of a species. All stakeholders will have ample opportunity to provide input into the eventual 12-month findings. FWS anticipates local media coverage and interest from livestock and home building industries in Wyoming and Colorado regarding the finding on the petition to delist the Preble's meadow jumping mouse. A national news bulletin and congressional notifications are planned. (Updated 03/28/2018).

Between April 1 and 15, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final rule removing regulations setting forth the provisions for two depredation orders for double-crested cormorants. FWS had used these standing orders to allow for lethal control of cormorants where they impact aquaculture and public resources; however, on May 25, 2016, the District Court for the District of Columbia ordered that both the Aquaculture Depredation Order and the Public Resources Depredation Order be vacated until FWS performs a new and legally adequate environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement for national cormorant management orders in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This final rule administratively implements the court's decision. While the depredation orders no longer exist, on November 15, 2017, FWS provided some measure of relief to aquaculture facilities. It issued a final EA under NEPA, which allows aquaculture facility managers and property owners across 37 central and eastern states and the District of Columbia to apply for individual permits for lethal take of cormorants where they are impacting resources. This latest action is not controversial. If-asked talking points will be planned for outreach. (Updated 02/28/2018)

Through April 9, public comments will be open for four compatibility determinations that evaluate various economic and/or commercial uses of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Based on comments received during the 2016 review period, these compatibility determinations have been revised to address comments and concerns from the public and stakeholders. One of the lead critics of the earlier draft, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, is satisfied with the revisions. This is controversial because it involves changes to fees normally paid by guides for various outdoor recreation services. (03/21/2018)

[UPDATE] On or around April 9, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a rule removing the textual descriptions of the critical habitat boundaries from certain wildlife entries that have maps sufficient to stand as the official delineation of the critical habitat designation. This rule does not increase, decrease, or in any other way change the critical habitat designations from which we are removing the textual descriptions of boundaries. This action will save taxpayer resources. FWS is taking this action in accordance with the May 1, 2012, revision of the regulations related

to publishing textual descriptions of critical habitat boundaries. No outreach is planned. (Updated 03/14/2018)

On April 10, FWS will join the New York Historical Society for a reception that celebrates a new exhibit honoring the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The exhibit is open from April 6 - July 15 and focuses on three themes: history of the act, the connection between the act and the women's suffrage movement, and profiles and Audubon watercolors of 13 bird species that are currently protected under the act. FWS has partnered with the society to provide technical advice and loan historical items for the exhibit. FWS regional leadership will attend the reception and the agency will coordinate with HQ and the Society on media pitches, social media outreach and storytelling. (Updated 02/28/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 13, FWS plans to celebrate the final determination on the proposal to delist the black-capped vireo. Representatives from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Fort Hood (TX), Fort Sill (OK), USDA's NRCS, the Texas Comptroller's office, congressional offices and other partners are invited. Media will be invited. Stakeholders include the petitioners, Pacific Legal Foundation, New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association, New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau, New Mexico Federal Lands Council, Texas Farm Bureau, Department of the Army, The Nature Conservancy, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. A Communications Plan has been developed that includes congressional offices, local and state officials and stakeholders. A news release and FAQs have been drafted. Outreach, including issuing the news release and FAQs to media, congressionals and partners, as well as posting information on social media, is planned to occur at time of publication in the *Federal Register*. This action is a Secretarial priority. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] In early April, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice of issuance for letters of authorizations issued in 2015, 2016 and 2017 under regulations authorizing the non-lethal, unintentional take of marine mammals in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas. This is an administrative action and is noncontroversial. No news release will be issued. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] In mid-April, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a proposed delisting determination on the Kirtland's warbler, located in 31 states and the District of Columbia. The Michigan Governor's Office has expressed some interest in partnering with FWS on an announcement. Other planned outreach includes a regional news bulletin, emails to stakeholders, social media and web postings. Stakeholders include Michigan Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Forest Service and Huron Pines, along with other conservation groups working as part of the Kirtland's Warbler Alliance. The proposal is not expected to be controversial, as partners have been transitioning from recovery to conservation management for more than a year. FWS expects a moderate level of interest among birders and conservation groups. (Updated 03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] In April, pending approval by the Department, FWS will award nearly \$19 million in grants to coastal states to conserve and restore coastal wetlands and their fish and wildlife habitat. Each year, the Service supports coastal wetland conservation through the National

Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program and the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. The grant funds are derived from excise taxes on fishing tackle and motorboat and small engine fuels. The grants will support 22 projects in 13 coastal states to protect, restore or enhance more than 30,000 acres of coastal wetlands and adjacent upland habitats, including 287 miles of shoreline. Over \$21 million in additional matching funds will be provided by partner contributions from state and local governments, private landowners and conservation groups. Conservation of this habitat will help recover coastal-dependent federal trust species, enhance flood protection and water quality, provide economic benefits to coastal communities and increase recreational opportunities for hunters and anglers. The grant recipients (states) have not yet been informed that they will be receiving funds. Planned outreach includes congressional and stakeholder notifications and a news release. (Updated 03/28/2018)

National Park Service

[UPDATE] Between April 1-15, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is seeking approval for a right-of-way permit from Natchez Trace Parkway to begin construction of an aerial 161-kV transmission line across the Parkway at milepost 159.1 as part of a 43-mile upgrade of electrical service. The NPS and the State Historical Preservation Office determined the transmission line will adversely affect the cultural landscape and scenic vista of the Parkway, under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. TVA proposed to transfer funds to the NPS to cover the cost to underground non-TVA transmission lines crossing the Parkway to mitigate the adverse effect. The Parkway is drafting two general agreements to manage the funds, which will undergo complete DOI legal review of mitigation framework and agreements. (Updated 3/27/2018).

[UPDATE] By April 1, (embargoed until public announcement) Cape Hatteras National Seashore plans to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to lease Oregon Inlet Marina. The marina is operated under a concession contract, which has been extended on an annual basis since 2000. A lease has been determined to be the appropriate method for managing the property in order to provide for facility maintenance and continued public use of this locally-important and internationally-known charter fishing marina. The RFP is expected to garner attention from multiple interested parties, including the current operator, the local media, and elected officials. (Updated 3/27/2018).

Around April 1-15, Death Valley National Park and Mojave National Preserve will begin efforts to relocate up to 2,500 feral burros from each park. Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue (a nonprofit partner) will fund and carry out the roundups, test burros for disease, relocate them to holding facilities, and domesticate the animals for adoption. This is anticipated to generate public interest and has already triggered a FOIA request. (3/7/2018).

Between April 1-15, Death Valley National Park anticipates releasing the final Scotty's Castle Flood Rehabilitation Environmental Assessment and FONSI. This document analyzes repair work planned for historic structures, the cultural landscape, utilities, parking, and walkways to recover from damage from a flash flood in October 2015. The historic district is scheduled to reopen to the public in 2020. (3/7/2018)

[NEW] Between April 1-15, 2018, the NPS will request approval for the apportionment of \$2,631,610 in Maritime Heritage Grants to fund 34 projects in 14 states and 1 commonwealth. The grants will be awarded based on the National Maritime Heritage Act of 1994, enacted as Public Law 103-451, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award preservation and education grants to assist to foster a greater awareness and appreciation of the role of maritime endeavors in our nation's history and culture.(03/27/2018)

Before April 3, the NPS will request approval for the partial apportionment of \$1,346,818 in JACS grants to fund nine projects. The grants will be awarded based on the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, enacted as Public Law 115-123, and pursuant to the Preservation of Japanese American Confinement Sites Act, P.L. 109-441, 120 Stat.3288, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award grants to assist in preserving historic Japanese American confinement sites and their history. (Updated 03/14/2018).

[NEW] During the week of April 2, the Northeast Regional Director will sign the Morristown National Historical Park's Vegetation and Deer Management Plan Finding of No Significant impact. As the final approved vegetation and deer management plan for Morristown National Historical Park, NJ, the plan will promote conditions for the regeneration of the native hardwood forest through a combination of forest management and deer management actions to control invasive plants and reduce deer density by sharpshooting. Implementation may begin once the availability of the signed Finding of No Significant Impact has been announced through local media outlets and on the park's website. (3/27/2018)

By April 2, 2018, the NPS plans to release a prospectus for five concession contracts to provide cruise ship services at Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve; however, two of the contracts are set aside for the two historic operators identified through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) legislation. Concession contracts have been awarded since 1980 on a 10 year basis. New contract terms are similar to previous contracts, shaped in accordance with both Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve-specific legislation and NPS law and policy. It is anticipated the contracts will be awarded in October, 2019. (3/14/2018).

On or after April 2, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks will begin a 30-day public scoping period for a proposed wireless telecommunications facility (cell tower) proposed by Verizon Wireless. The proposed location is near the Wuksachi Village in Sequoia National Park. An environmental assessment will be prepared for the project, which will be released for public review in July. (03/14/18).

On or after April 2, Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve will open 90-day comment periods for the Draft Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve Wild and Scenic River Study and the Draft Oregon Caves Preserve Management Plan/Environmental Assessment. Joint public meetings for the two plans are planned for the week of April 16. The Wild and Scenic River study finds that two creeks are suitable and eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. The Preserve Plan will provide management guidance for national preserve lands added to the park in 2014. (3/20/2018)

[NEW] From April 2-4, Grand Canyon National Park will install test/monitoring wells near Bright Angel Creek that will help determine sustainable well production rates (how much water a

well can produce) and water quality characteristics which the NPS will consider as it looks at replacing the transcanyon waterline. On March 29, the NPS began mobilizing a drill rig, supplies and equipment to Phantom Ranch via helicopter. The park is currently in the preliminary design phase to replace the transcanyon waterline, and planning is underway. The work being done will be used to help determine the range of alternatives. (3/27/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 2-30, 2018, the NPS will request the apportionment of \$18,735 in Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act grants to fund three repatriation and reburial projects. The grants will be awarded based on the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, enacted as Public Law 115-123, and pursuant to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Public Law 101-601, 25 U.S.C. 3001, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award grants to assist in implementing provisions of the Act. This grant program generally creates minimal press and Congressional interest. (03/27/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 3, Glacier National Park plans to issue a press release briefly summarizing public scoping comments received for the Sperry Chalet, *Next 100 Years* project. The project proposes four concepts to restore the Sperry experience after the dormitory building was burned in the Sprague Fire in 2017. In the same release, the park will announce a modified environmental assessment schedule for the project. The accelerated schedule will allow the park to complete project compliance in advance of the summer field season, and give the park the option of completing more extensive stabilization to prepare the structure for the 2018-19 winter season, and to prepare the site for future construction activities in 2019. (Updated 3/27/2018)

On April 4, Grand Canyon Association with logistic support from Grand Canyon National Park will host an event to honor Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and the late Senator Morris Udall for their notable contributions to Grand Canyon National Park and the nation. The celebration, at Mather Point Amphitheater, will include the donation of an interpretive plaque from the Association to the Park highlighting Senator McCain's and Senator Udall's contributions to the park and their dedication to conservation efforts. There will also be an announcement of the establishment of a Native American Fellowship program. Event organizers expect Senator McCain and up to 120 family members, friends, colleagues, and VIPs to attend. Invitations from Grand Canyon Association have gone out to the 29 Native American Indian tribes in Arizona, the Intertribal Council of Arizona, current and former Arizona Congressional members and Arizona governors. (03/14/18).

On April 4-9, the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historical Park (GA) will observe the 50th Anniversary of Dr. King's assassination with special programming including a Remembrance Day commemorative program in the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church and the opening of an exhibit entitled *From Memphis to Atlanta: 50 Forward*. On April 4 there is an exhibit opening and on April 9 the park will host the March for Humanity, a commemorative march that will start at the Ebenezer Baptist Church and conclude at the campus of Morehouse College. (Updated 3/13/2018)

[NEW] On April 4, the National Capital Region's (NCR) National Historic Landmarks Program and the Organization of American Historians will host an educational workshop on LGBTQ History & Interpretation. The thirty workshop attendees include representatives from NCR parks,

regional State Historic Preservation Offices, and local governments and preservation and history organizations. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] On April 4 and 5, the National Parks Conservation Association will hold public meetings in Seattle, Washington, to talk about its experience in getting Stonewall National Monument designated as a unit of the national park system and to spread the word about the public comment period for the foundation document. The NPS will **not** participate in these meetings. The link to PEPC for the foundation document comment period is <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=75123> . The National Parks Conservation Association held a similar meeting in Wilton Manors, Florida, on March 20. (3/27/2018)

On April 6, the 15-day public comment period ends for the Bureau of Land Management Colorado September 2018 oil and gas lease sale. The BLM is considering opening 18,000 acres to oil and gas development less than one mile east of Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. On March 9, *The Denver Post* published a story that highlighted potential impacts if those acres are developed. The park has been working with the BLM to address potential impacts in the analysis. The park is referring the public to the BLM's designated public information office for information on the sale. (3/20/2018)

[UPDATE] By April 6, the NPS anticipates finalizing Alaska park compendiums for 2018. Public comments on proposed changes to draft compendia are being analyzed at this time. Most of the comments received were on provisions specifying where vehicles may park along the Denali National Park and Preserve Road. Denali continues implementation through its compendium of the Clean Mountain Can (CMC) pack out program used by mountaineers to improve sanitation along the Park's most popular climbing routes. It has been the practice of the NPS Alaska Region for the past 15 years to publish proposed changes to compendia yearly, and to accept comments on those proposed changes. Following analysis of the public comments and considering changes based on public input, the NPS publishes final Alaska parks' compendia around April 1 each year. (Updated 03/27/2018).

[UPDATE] By April 6 (pending Departmental approval), Olympic National Park anticipates issuing a news release announcing that a Notice of Availability NOA is to be published in the Federal Register for its Mountain Goat Management Plan/Final EIS (Updated 3/27/2018).

[NEW] During the week of April 9, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve will host its annual pre-season meeting for commercial use permittees (CUAs). A number of the eighty plus (80+) CUA's operating commercial businesses in the park are expected to meet with staff in Anchorage or Homer, Alaska. The meetings will provide CUAs with an overview of minor compendium changes for 2018, and will include discussions on development of an aviation safety working group for the park's outer coast. (3/27/18)

[NEW] On or after April 9, John Muir National Historic Site will announce an upcoming public comment period on initial concepts for the Mt. Wanda Comprehensive Site Management Plan. The comment period will be open from April 21 through June 15. Public meetings/open houses

will be held April 21 and May 19. The plan will outline appropriate uses and functions for the park's Mount Wanda Unit. (3/27/2018)

On April 10, American Rivers will announce its 10 Most Endangered Rivers List to include an 8.5-mile reach of the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities (the Gorge) located entirely within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area's 72-mile corridor. American Rivers is advocating removal of two locks and dams in this reach and is notifying Minnesota's Congressional delegation of their recommendation. American Rivers' announcement is closely tied to the initiation of a Disposition Study by the Corps of Engineers that is evaluating the future of the locks and dams in the Gorge. Both endeavors have the potential for profound changes to the park and are controversial; a communications plan is being drafted. (03/14/18).

Between April 10-20 (pending Departmental approval), Death Valley National Park anticipates publishing a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Federal Register for the Draft Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Saline Valley Warm Springs (plan/DEIS). The NOA will initiate a 60-day public comment period on the document during which public meetings will be held in the vicinity of the park. The plan/DEIS is intended to provide a framework for natural and cultural resource management, administration and operations, and managing visitor use. [PEPC link](#) (Updated 3/7/2018)

[NEW] From April 10-12, the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training is holding a three-day symposium that will focus on the preservation of roadside buildings and features which catered to tourists who traveled American roads during the 1920s-1970s. Michael Wallis, journalist and actor, and Dylan Thuras, founder of Atlas Obscura, are keynote speakers. (3/27/18)

[NEW] By April 11, the NPS will request apportionment of \$252,626 in Preservation Technology and Training grants to fund seven projects. The grants will be awarded based on the 54 U.S.C. §305304 Preservation grants, enacted as Public Law P.L. 113-287, which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award grants to ensure an effective and efficient system of research, information distribution, and skills training in all the related historic preservation fields. This grant program generally creates minimal press and congressional interest. (3/22/18)

On April 11, Lake Clark National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) will hold a public meeting in Newhalen, Alaska. The purpose of an SRC is to devise and recommend to the Governor of Alaska and the Secretary a program for subsistence hunting within Alaska national parks where subsistence is authorized. The SRCs were established under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. (3/7/2018)

[NEW] On April 11, the NPS will host the second in a series of public meetings to develop a management plan for Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. Winter and summer uses in the north end of the monument will be the focus of the public meeting. The meeting will be announced in late March via press release and e-newsletter. The PEPC link is <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/KAWWManagementPlan>. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] (Law Enforcement Sensitive - Not for Public Release) Between April 11 and 13, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks will host a press event with the U.S. Department of Justice, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California to announce the results of a two-week marijuana interdiction operation. U.S. Attorney Greg Scott and Acting Assistant Attorney General Jeffrey Wood of the DOJ's Environmental and Natural Division will participate. The intent is to bring national attention to the environmental hazards and public safety threats posed by marijuana cultivation on public lands. (3/27/2018)

From April 12 to 18, the National Safety Council (NSC) will open the *Prescribed to Death* exhibit on the Ellipse in President's Park. The NPS is supporting the traveling exhibit that raises awareness about opioid abuse, and will provide information about the Healthy Parks Healthy People program and the Park Rx program. The NSC will host an invitation-only media preview and an invitation-only special guest preview on April 11. The public exhibition will run April 12-18. (3/20/2018)

By April 13, responses to a prospectus seeking proposals for marina services at James Creek Marina in Washington, D.C., for the next 10 years, will be due. These services include wet slip rentals, fuel service, marine sanitation, parking lot operations, and retail and vending sales. Accepting contract offers is the next step in the process. (Prior to 02/14/2018).

[UPDATE] On April 13, pending DOI approval of the *Federal Register* Notice of Availability, the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve plans to release the Ungulate Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for a 45-day public comment period. The plan and DEIS were developed with input from the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as formal cooperating agencies. The DEIS addresses two key issues: the need for active elk management; and the future of bison management at the park. Interested parties include affiliated tribes; Colorado Department of Natural Resources; local Habitat Partnership Program committees; Colorado Congressional offices; The Nature Conservancy; and the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. The DEIS was shared with formal cooperators on Sept. 1, 2017, and the park is currently finalizing the Draft EIS for release. <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=25517>

[NEW] By April 13, the NPS will submit comments to the Regional Environmental Officer/Department on the Railroad Control House Replacement Project, Substation #42 - Hackensack, North Bergen Township in New Jersey. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) submitted a draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for review of this project because the project will need to use Section 4(f) resources, the Pennsylvania Railroad New York to Philadelphia Historic District and specifically Substation Building #3, which is a contributing resource within the district and eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Department of Interior is required to respond and concur that there is no prudent or feasible alternative to this 4(f) resource use. The Department of Interior has delegated drafting their response to the National Park Service. (3/27/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 13, responses to a prospectus seeking proposals for marina services at James Creek Marina in Washington, D.C., for the next 10 years, were originally due. The prospectus, however, has been rescinded and will be reissued when necessary updates have been

made. The services include wet slip rentals, fuel service, marine sanitation, parking lot operations, and retail and vending sales. Accepting contract offers is the next step in the process. (Updated 3/27/2018)

[NEW] On April 14, Greenbelt Park and the Student Conservation Association (SCA) with up to 300 volunteers will clean up trash along roadways and streams and remove invasive plants in the park. This effort to help improve the Anacostia River watershed is one of many across the country that SCA is leading in celebration of Earth Day. (3/27/2018)

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

On April 24-25, Mary Josie Blanchard will meet with States and other Federal agency representatives on the RESTORE Steering Committee in Pensacola, Florida. The primary purpose of the meeting is to discuss future planning and project grants dealing with Deepwater Horizon spill. (3/12/18)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

By April 27, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between FWS and Monsanto will be signed along with a joint news release announcing the partnership. A field-based demonstration event is being planned for late summer/early fall. FWS Midwest Region has been exploring the possibility of a partnership with Monsanto, and its subsidiaries, to use modern agriculture data tools to help landowners voluntarily manage their land to enhance pollinator habitat while maximizing production in their fields. Monsanto and FWS developed the MOU to outline how we will work together to: 1) provide accurate and useful information to farmers; 2) analyze data to determine the outcomes of conservation actions and make it easy for landowners to have access to conservation programs should they choose to participate; and 3) to explore the possibilities to use these tools for other cooperative conservation efforts across the country. Midwest Region is working closely with HQ on this open press event and a communications plan, which will include active national outreach. (Updated 03/21/2018)

On or around April 30, pending approval by DOI, FWS expects publication in the *Federal Register* of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to conduct a 30-day public scoping period and prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Skookumchuck Wind Energy Project Habitat Conservation Plan. The EIS will evaluate the issuance of an incidental take permit for marbled murrelet, bald eagle and golden eagle at a proposed wind energy project in Lewis County, Washington. The project is expected to be controversial with conservation organizations (*e.g.*, American Bird Conservancy, National Audubon Society, Washington Forest Law Center). FWS has received two Freedom of Information Act requests related to the project. A communications plan has been shared with FWS HQ; outreach announcing the public scoping period is planned for Washington media, congressional office, local and state officials, tribes, and stakeholders. (03/07/2018)

On or around April 30, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice as a follow-up to the *Federal Register* notice published on December 7 where we asked for public comments on the impact of the recent D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling on our final rule designating the

Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem population of grizzly bears as a distinct population segment and delisting it. Interested stakeholder groups include the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (including federal, tribal, state and local government entities), agricultural producers, hunting groups, and environmental groups. Plaintiffs in the current litigation over the delisting of the Greater Yellowstone grizzly bear population may strongly oppose this action. Planned outreach includes individual congressional, state and tribal notifications and a regional news release. Target date for submitting to the *Federal Register* is April 30, 2018. (Updated 03/14/2018)

On or around April 30, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on a proposed rule to list the hyacinth macaw as threatened. To address concerns raised by the pet trade industry, FWS is including a 4(d) rule that will allow for the import and export of parrots that meet certain criteria, as well as interstate commerce in this species without a permit. Stakeholders include the bird breeding community, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, and World Wildlife Fund. Planned outreach will include a national news release, and web updates. (Updated 03/07/2018)

In April, pending approval by the Department, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a Notice of Intent to prepare a draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) addressing the potential impacts from four similar wind energy project habitat conservation plans in Hawaii. The HCPs were submitted to the Service in support of requests for permits authorizing the take of endangered or threatened species, under the Endangered Species Act. Due to similarities in the geography, impact, covered species, and proposed mitigation measures between these four wind energy projects the Service has determined that a combined PEIS is the most efficient and comprehensive approach for considering the cumulative impacts of these actions on the human environment. When the PEIS publishes, outreach is planned to include local public notifications through the web and social media, and notifications to members of Congress in Hawaii, with targeted stakeholder outreach. (03/21/2018)

[NEW] On or before May 1, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a proposed rule and open a 30-day public comment period on the 2018-19 Refuge-Specific Hunting and Sport Fishing Regulations. The proposed rule would open up to 28 various national wildlife refuges to hunting and/or sport fishing for the first time and expand hunting and fishing opportunities at others. Outreach is planned to include a national news release when the *Federal Register* notice is published and notifications to members of Congress in affected districts, with some stakeholder outreach. (03/28/2018)

On or around May 4, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on the proposal to list five Sri Lankan tarantula species as endangered. The species are in decline due to ongoing habitat loss, degradation, and the cumulative effects of this and other threat factors. This action is not expected to be controversial. Planned outreach will include web updates. (Updated 03/14/2018)

On or around May 9, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on the proposal to delist the Hidden Lake bluecurls, a plant in California, due to recovery. FWS does not expect opposition to the delisting. Primary stakeholders include California Department of

Parks and Recreation Mount San Jacinto State Park. Planned outreach will include a national news release and notifications to stakeholders and members of Congress. (03/21/2018)

On or around May 15, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* an action designating critical habitat for three plant species on Hawaii Island and is correcting the maps for existing designations for an additional four species. FWS intends to exclude lands owned or managed by the Queen Liliuokalani Trust, the Department of Hawaiian Homelands, and other private landowners under 4(b)(2) of the Act. This action is not controversial. Interested stakeholders include the state of Hawaii and multiple state agencies, the County of Hawaii and various private landowners. Outreach includes a regional news release, social media, emails and phone calls to congressional offices and stakeholders mentioned above. (03/21/2018)

[UPDATE] On or around June 1 or later, the FWS anticipates the draft supplemental environmental impact statement for expanded public access to Rattlesnake Mountain on Hanford Reach National Monument will be available for public review and comment. This is part of the required regulatory processes to provide public access to Rattlesnake Mountain, consistent with a mandate in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA; P.L. 113-291). Section 3081 of the NDAA states “the Secretary of the Interior shall provide public access to the summit of Rattlesnake Mountain for educational, recreational, historical, scientific, cultural, and other purposes, including (1) motor vehicle access; and (2) pedestrian and other nonmotorized access.” The FWS established a Tribal Working Group with four local tribes and held public scoping meetings to address cultural concerns and to work through the process of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The FWS is addressing National Environmental Policy Act compliance by drafting a supplement to the 2008 Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Monument. Expanded public access will be controversial with tribes. FWS will continue outreach efforts to the tribes, media, and the public. A local news release is planned to alert public to comment period. (Updated 03/28/2018)

National Park Service

By April 15, Death Valley National Park anticipates releasing the final Bonnie Clare Road Reconstruction Environmental Assessment and FONSI. Reconstruction work is scheduled to start in August 2018 and be completed by May 2019. This will allow reopening of the northeast entrance to the park and restore public access to Scotty's Castle after massive damage from flooding in October 2015. PEPC link (Updated 3/20/2018)

Between April 15-30, Death Valley National Park and the Ridgecrest BLM office anticipate opening a public comment period on the Keystone Mine Plan of Operations Amendment and accompanying Environmental Assessment. The mine is on BLM land near the park's western border, but the mining plan includes the use of water rights within the park. (updated 2/28/18).

[NEW] From April 16-20, Catoctin Mountain Park is hosting staff from Germany's Black Forest National Park. The visit will mark the beginning of a Sister Park Arrangement between the two parks, with the document signing scheduled for April 19 at the Main Interior Building. The State Department and the NPS reviewed and approved the arrangement. (3/27/2018)

On April 17-18, Gates of the Arctic National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) will hold a public meeting in Allakaket, Alaska. The purpose of an SRC is to devise and recommend to the Governor of Alaska and the Secretary a program for subsistence hunting within Alaska national parks where subsistence is authorized. The SRCs were established under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. (3/7/2018)

Between April 18-27, Golden Gate National Recreation Area is expected to release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a competitive business opportunity to establish a waterfront community center at the Fort Baker Historic Boat Shop and Marina as an affordable recreational and gathering place. The purpose of the RFQ is to identify both private- and public-sector entities interested in operating the facility, which is currently operated by the U.S. Air Force as a military recreation facility open to the public. NPS is seeking a long-term lease that will enable an offeror to make necessary investments in historic rehabilitation of deteriorating facilities, and the provision of public services and programs at the site. The park has kept the USAF informed throughout the lead up to this announcement, and they have express interest in participating in the RFQ process. (Updated 3/7/2018)

On April 24 - 25, Cape Krusenstern National Monument Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) will hold a public meeting in Kotzebue, Alaska. The purpose of an SRC is to devise and recommend to the Governor of Alaska and the Secretary a program for subsistence hunting within Alaska national parks where subsistence is authorized. The SRCs were established under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. (3/7/2018).

On April 26 - 27, Kobuk Valley National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) will hold a public meeting in Kotzebue, Alaska. The purpose of an SRC is to devise and recommend to the Governor of Alaska and the Secretary a program for subsistence hunting within Alaska national parks where subsistence is authorized. The SRCs were established under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. (3/7/2018).

[UPDATE] By April 30, George Washington Memorial Parkway will release the Theodore Roosevelt Island Cultural Landscape Report & Environmental Assessment (CLR/EA) for a 30-day public review period. The preferred alternative includes rehabilitating the comfort station, better defining and improving the islands trail system, and establishing soft landings and a floating dock on the island for non-motorized boats. A date for a public meeting has not been set. (Updated 3/27/2018)

[NEW] By April 30, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson is expected to sign an amendment to Arkansas code, changing the permit conditions for large animal feeding stations like C&H Hog Farm near a tributary of the Buffalo National River. The Farm is authorized to hold 6,503 pigs. Currently, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality provides a 30 day comment period when a permit change involves retaining and then disposing of liquid animal waste. On March 15, the Arkansas House and Senate approved identical bills that would make it so that third parties cannot raise complaints following a 30-day comment period if the farm remains in "good standing" with state regulators. The NPS has not been consulted in connection with this measure. (3/27/2018)

In April, it is anticipated that the NPS will publish a Federal Register notice announcing that the Department has authorized the preparation of a World Heritage nomination for the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks in Ohio. With nine component properties including those that form Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, and others managed by the State of Ohio, this series of geometric mounds is approximately 2,000 years old. The nomination file, which will take more than a year to draft, will be developed by local proponents in Ohio with guidance from the NPS. Upon completion and review, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks will determine whether the nomination will be submitted to the World Heritage Committee.

Through May 11, Katmai National Park and Preserve and Alagnak Wild River will host public listening sessions and collect comments related to the Katmai National Park and Preserve and the Alagnak Wild River Wilderness and Backcountry Management Plan. During the public comment period, four open house events will be held in Kodiak, Anchorage, Homer, and Naknek, Alaska, to inform the public on the planning process and solicit public feedback. Public input on key planning issues and initial management considerations will help the park develop a proposed action and preliminary alternatives, which will eventually be incorporated in the draft wilderness and backcountry management plan. (2/28/17).

[NEW] On May 15, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore expects to host public meetings and online engagement related to uses and crowding at the most heavily visited portions of the park. This public input will be used to guide the development of a visitor use management plan for the park. (3/27/2018)

[UPDATE] By May 31, the NPS intends to award multiple concession contracts for mountaineering guide services at Denali National Park and Preserve. Applicant submissions have been scored and rated. The selection process is currently in the matching phase where, one by one, prospective concessioners with ANILCA preferences have an opportunity to match the best offer. New contracts will have a term of 10 years, beginning January 1, 2019. (Updated 3/27/2018)

On June 15, Yosemite National Park's Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias will reopen to the public, following a 3-year \$40 million project funded through the NPS and Yosemite Conservancy matching funds. A new parking lot and welcome center has been constructed at the South Entrance, a shuttle bus will take visitors to the big trees, a handicap accessible boardwalk has been constructed, trails have been improved, and new restrooms have been installed. The dedication ceremony to mark the completion of the project is slated for June 14. <https://www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/mariposagrove.htm> (3/7/2018)

[NEW] A June 16 proposed triathlon at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore will be declined on March 30. The permit application came from the Munising Visitors Bureau. In review of the application received on February 9, 2018, the park has determined the event as proposed would have substantial impacts to visitors and administrative functions and cannot be approved at this time. Because the application included letters of support from Congressman Jack Bergman (R-MI-1) and State Senator Tom Casperson (R-MI-38) as well as inquiries from the offices of Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Senator Gary Peters (D-MI) and the City of Munising, the

park superintendent will contact those offices to inform them and answer questions. The park will continue to work with the permit requester to determine if modifications to the request can allow for a permit to be issued for this event.

(3/27/2018)

By August 2018, the NPS and the National Park Foundation (NPF) will complete their joint Impact Investment Study. The Impact Investing Study is being funded by the NPF and will analyze how federal agencies have developed third-party financed infrastructure construction, operations, revitalization, and recapitalization programs over the past 20 years. The study will also identify potential new or modified authorities or policies required to implement alternative financing strategies to help the NPS move forward with the construction, repair, and ongoing maintenance of bureau infrastructure. (03/14/2018).

Awareness

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

[NEW] On March 30, FWS signed a Finding of No Significant Impact authorizing an exchange of land between FWS and the East Improvement District (EID) in Oregon. Land to be divested is 19.28 acres of McNary NWR in return for 14.6 acres of privately owned riparian and wetland habitat adjacent to Cold Springs NWR. The exchange is prompted by the EID's proposal to install buried irrigation pipelines and associated infrastructure through the lands to be divested. The project will bring irrigation water to approximately 38 farms comprising 47,000 acres of farmland in an area impacted by groundwater shortage. So construction can begin this year, FWS will issue a temporary right-of-way permit to the EID to allow construction to proceed as the land exchange is finalized. This project has the support of Senator Merkley, the Governor of Oregon, and the local irrigation district. No FWS-initiated outreach is planned. (03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] On March 16, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) transmitted a draft of the bull trout biological assessment of the Hecla Mines in Northwest Montana for review and feedback by FWS. Note that the consultation is split into aquatic (bull trout) and terrestrial portions. FWS biologists have been working closely with staffs of USFS, Hecla mining company, and private consultants to expedite the environmental planning for this project. To the extent possible, the FWS is concurrently drafting the Biological Opinion with as much existing information as possible; while waiting for the full description of the proposed action and its related actions so that FWS may develop our analysis.(Updated 03/28/2018)

On March 13, the U.S. Court of Claims finalized and made public its finding that the United States was liable for flooding and resulting damage caused to lands as a result of the Army Corps of Engineer's (ACE) operation of the Missouri River system, in light of its statutory mandates and a Biological Opinion issued by FWS. The original finding was February 22. However, it was sealed until the parties could seek clarification. In this initial phase of the litigation, the court evaluated the claims of 44 of 400 plaintiffs to determine if they had a property interest and if flooding of that property interest was a foreseeable event of the ACE's operational regime. The next phase of the litigation will address any defenses that the United States may have with respect to the claims, and other legal and factual issues associated with providing entitlement to

just compensation. The order is now public and several news outlets have picked up the story. ACE and FWS been contacted by the media but have not offered comment. (03/21/2018)

[UPDATE] Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) is seeking to draw down Lake Alamo (in western Arizona) in order to conduct a dam safety inspection and maintenance. A resulting flushing flow from the reservoir into the Bill Williams River may inadvertently benefit the downstream riparian area and is scheduled for as early as March. The event was fully put forward and developed by ACE and does not take place on refuge land; however, the release would impact Bill Williams River NWR. (ACE has completed section 7 consultation on the proposed activity.) FWS does not have authority over the release. Reservoir angler and recreational community, and downstream ATV groups have registered concern/opposition to the flows, and the Arizona Game and Fish Commission passed a resolution opposing drawdown of Alamo Reservoir and filed for a temporary restraining order, which was denied in Federal Court on March 9. Release of water began March 12, peaking at 5000 cfs on March 14 and will continue to be released in decreasing volumes through April 1. Representative Paul Gosar (R-AZ) and county elected officials have weighed in on the project, including flushing flows. (Update 03/28/2018)

Complex, multi-year litigation at Grays Lake NWR in Idaho involving Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), FWS and private landowners is reaching a potential decision point. Over the past six years the United States has successfully resolved past disputes with numerous landowners in the basin. The current litigation involves claims that the Federal government flooded private parties' land, along with a dispute over land ownership. The plaintiffs claim damages due to flooding between 2009 and 2011. The U.S. Attorney's Office has scheduled a Settlement Conference with all parties on April 27 to potentially avoid costly litigation. Settlement options may necessitate that BIA and FWS enter into a multi-million dollar settlement that includes acquisition of lakebed over the course of two years. We do not expect any media interest, and we will not do outreach. (03/21/2018)

The states of Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska, and FWS and BOR, collectively the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP), are working cooperatively to extend the program. The primary focus of the PRRIP is restoring, protecting, and enhancing habitat for the whooping crane, Interior least tern, piping plover, and pallid sturgeon. The PRRIP is nearing the end of its first phase of implementation. BOR, with technical assistance from FWS, is evaluating the environmental impacts of extending implementation. BOR has released a draft Environmental Assessment for 45 day public review; they have also requested formal consultation from the FWS under the Endangered Species Act. FWS's Nebraska Ecological Services Field Office is working with the partners and states to provide a Supplemental Biological Opinion to BOR. (03/21/2018)

National Park Service

[NEW] On March 12, Wyoming Governor Matt Mead signed a joint resolution that passed the Wyoming legislature calling for Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park to collect a fee to fund wildlife conservation efforts in the states surrounding the parks. Because Wyoming does not have the authority to impose this fee, the resolution calls for an agreement

between the DOI, the NPS, and the surrounding states. This issue has received significant regional media coverage. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] On March 26, a final action was made by the Keeper of the National Register to deny a nomination for listing for the Eastmoreland Historic District in Portland, Oregon, per 36 CFR 60.12(c). On May 18, 2017, the Keeper received a nomination for the Eastmoreland Historic District in Portland, Oregon, from the Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). On June 30, 2017, the Keeper returned the nomination to the SHPO for correction of a procedural error by the SHPO regarding property-owner notification. On February 9, 2018, an appeal was filed with the Keeper by the Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association pursuant to 36 CFR 60.12, alleging that the SHPO has failed/refused to nominate the District for listing in the National Register. On February 23, 2018, the Keeper sent the SHPO a written request asking for the SHPO's comments on the appeal by March 10, 2018. (03/27/2018)

[UPDATE] On March 29, Burnett Oil Company resumed seismic operation within Big Cypress National Preserve and will continue through the dry season (which ended last year in early June). The Nobles Grade 3D Seismic Survey — a proposal that the National Park Service and Burnett examined and refined for more than two years before it was approved in May 2016 — originally began the project in March 2017 and suspended operations by June 2, 2017, when conditions became too wet to continue. Burnett is using a vibroseis technique to acquire geologic data to assess the potential for oil drilling within Big Cypress National Preserve. (Updated 3/27/2018)

[NEW] In March, *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (better known as *Movi*) was detected for the first time in Alaska's Dall's sheep and mountain goat populations by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. *Movi* is a respiratory bacterium known to cause potentially devastating pneumonia outbreaks in bighorn sheep in the lower 48 states. Wild sheep and goats in Alaska that tested positive for this pathogen have thus far appeared healthy and there have been no signs of disease in any populations being monitored. Despite no known connection with *Movi*, recent large (50-80%) declines in some Dall's sheep populations are enhancing the concern about *Movi*. Some Alaska parks were established in part to help protect Dall's sheep and their habitats, and encompass a large proportion of the species' world-wide range. *Movi*-infected Dall's sheep have been detected adjacent to the following park units: Denali National Park and Preserve, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Wrangell-Saint Elias National Park and Preserve, and Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. Dall's sheep populations in these park units, as well as in Noatak National Preserve, Kobuk Valley National Park, and Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, could be impacted by *Movi* in the future, as well as goat populations in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Kenai Fjords National Park, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, and Wrangell-Saint Elias National Park and Preserve. (3/27/18)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INDIAN AFFAIRS

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (PDAS) John Tahsuda will be in the office April 2-4. On April 5, PDAS Tahsuda will travel to Scottsdale, Arizona, where, on April 6, he

will speak on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) at the Federal Bar Association Indian Law conference.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Director Bryan Rice will be in the office this week.

Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) Director Tony Dearman will be on travel status this week, participating in budget and travel training sessions for the BIE Associate Deputy Directors and Education Program Administrators in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

[NEW] On April 11, PDAS Tahsuda will testify at the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs' hearing on the President's FY19 budget request for Indian Affairs. This hearing was rescheduled due to the inclement weather on the originally scheduled date of March 21.

[UPDATE] April 12, PDAS Tahsuda will be hosting a Tribal consultation session on potential revisions to the fee-to-trust regulations at 25 CFR 151 in Mashantucket, Connecticut. This session is rescheduled from the March 15 session that was cancelled due to inclement weather and again rescheduled from April 11 to accommodate the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs' rescheduled hearing.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

[NEW] This week, BIA Deputy Director for Justice Services, Charles Addington, will be traveling to Navajo Nation to meet with Navajo Nation staff regarding their law enforcement and detention programs.

[NEW] On April 17, BIA Deputy Director Addington will be a panelist at the Conference on Crimes Against Women in Dallas Texas, along with the FBI Indian Country Program Chief and DOJ staff.

Bureau of Indian Education

[NEW] BIE anticipates submitting the State Systemic Improvement Plan Phase II, Year 2, to the U.S. Department of Education by the April 1 deadline.

BIE expects the Federal Register notice announcing proposed membership of the Standards, Assessments, and Accountability System negotiated rulemaking committee to be ready for Departmental approval. This negotiated rulemaking is required by statute and in accordance with an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education.

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

The week of April 16, Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, Division of Energy and Mineral Development (IEED-DEMD) staff will be traveling to Blue Lake Rancheria in California for its micro-grid project ribbon-cutting ceremony. IEED-DEMD's Tribal Energy Development Capacity program grant provided funding to assist with this project.

April 22-26 is the 2018 Tribal Self-Governance Annual Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Department of the Interior's sessions will take place on Wednesday, April 25, and Thursday, April 26, with a Self-Governance Program orientation session on Sunday, April 22. PDAS Tahsuda is invited to speak on Wednesday, April 25, during the welcoming remarks and plenary session.

[NEW] On May 3, the 27th Annual Indian Law Enforcement Officer's Ceremony will be at the United States Indian Police Academy Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Artesia, New Mexico. PDAS Tahsuda has been invited to speak.

[NEW] On May 18, PDAS Tahsuda will be the keynote speaker at the Haskell Indian Nations University 2018 commencement in Lawrence, Kansas.

May 23-24 will be the Tribal-Interior Budget Council (TIBC) meeting. The location and times are to be determined.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

[NEW] On April 19, BIA Deputy Director for Indian Services, Hankie Ortiz, has been invited by the Honorable Tim Groser, New Zealand Ambassador to the United States, and Whānau Tahi, a New Zealand-based enterprise owned by indigenous persons, to the New Zealand Embassy to attend a presentation on the development, framework, and evolution of cross-agency family-centered New Zealand Government policy.

[NEW] On May 2-4, the BIA Office of Indian Services, Division of Transportation, will hold the quarterly Tribal Transportation Program Coordinating Committee (TTPCC) meeting in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The TTPCC was established by federal regulations (25 CFR 170.135) to provide input and recommendations to the BIA and Federal Highway Administration concerning the Tribal Transportation Program.

Bureau of Indian Education

[NEW] BIE's Third Quarterly Corrective Action Plan (CAP) is due to the U.S. Department of Education on April 30. The report will reflect the requirements discussed during the meeting on the first and second quarterly CAP reports.

April 30 - May 18, BIE will host a Strategic Management Plan Face-to-Face meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to address Goals 4-6.

Awareness

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

June 3-6, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) will host its mid-year conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

[NEW] PDAS Tahsuda issued a directive on Improving Home Mortgaging Process on Tribal Trust and Restricted Fee Lands, tasking BIA with streamlining the process of review and approval of land and leasehold mortgages and issuance of certified Titles Status Reports (TSRs) and recording of mortgages. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Veterans Administration, and their lenders use TSRs for mortgage purposes.

[NEW] BIA's Office of Indian Services, Division of Human Services, is working with the Office of Self-Governance to discuss how to incorporate Tribal standards of placement under the Native American Children's Safety Act into to Self-Governance Compact/Annual Funding Agreements (AFA) for Fiscal Year/Calendar Year 2019.

[NEW] The Federal Register notice providing the 2018 list of Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Designated Agents List is in surname. ICWA requires State courts and child welfare agencies to provide a notice to Indian tribes whenever an Indian child (as defined in the Act) is involved in a child custody proceeding. The Federal Register notice lists the agents that each Tribe has designated to receive that notice.

May 7 is the deadline for written comments on the BIA's request for comments on its categorical exclusions (CATEXs) under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), per the Federal Register notice published on March 6.

Fee-to-Trust: As of Mar. 14, 2018, a total of one completed case for one Tribe, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate was approved by the Agency Superintendent under the Fee-to-Trust acquisition process for a total of 157.24 acres into trust. To date for calendar year 2018, 13 cases have been completed totaling 1,894 acres.

June 3 is the deadline for issuance of final BIA guidance for Tribes on how to conduct background checks of foster care parents and employees under the Native American Children's Safety Act (NACSA). BIA is currently reviewing comments received by the March 16 deadline and revising the draft guidance as appropriate.

June 30 is the deadline for written comments on whether and how to revise BIA's fee-to-trust regulations at 25 CFR 151, per the Dear Tribal Leader letter dated February 15, 2018.

Bureau of Indian Education

[NEW] Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute's Culinary Arts Instructor was selected as the American Culinary Federation Chef of the Year for the Western Region at the annual region meeting that took place in Newport Beach, CA on March 18-20.

On April 22, the U.S. Department of Education is planning to hold a Tribal consultation in Albuquerque, New Mexico, regarding set-aside funding for the BIE (\$1.5 million). Education notified BIE on March 12, 2018, that it is withholding 1.5 percent of the total Title I, Part A set-aside to BIE, an amount normally included for BIE's administration of the program under ESEA section 8204(b).

[NEW] May 21 is the deadline for comments on the Bureau of Indian Affairs' proposed rule updating the regulation regarding when Indian students are eligible for benefits of education under the Johnson-O'Malley Act (JOM), per the Federal Register notice published on March 21, 2018.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY INSULAR AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

Insular Affairs

AS Domenech Meeting with Veterans Affairs Re: Insular Area Veterans: **[UPDATE]** On April 4, AS Domenech will meet with Brigadier General Henry Huntley, U.S. Army (Ret.) and other Veterans Affairs officials to discuss veterans concerns in the Insular Areas.

AS Domenech will attend the FEMA Recovery Support Function Leadership Group (RSFLG) Undersecretaries Meeting: On Tuesday, April 3. Recurring every two weeks. 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. (EST) FEMA Headquarters.

International Affairs

Marine Protected Area Planning and Operations in Indonesia: **[UPDATE]** Through April 6, DOI-ITAP will have three DOI marine protected area Senior Advisors with expertise in the planning and operations of marine national parks, wildlife refuges, and national monuments serve on six week, in-country details as senior advisers to the Indonesian provincial governments in North Maluku, Maluku, and West Papua provinces. The advisors include one FWS and NPS retiree and one current NPS employee. A DOI-ITAP Project Manager was on-site through March 9 to introduce the Advisors to key stakeholders. The advisors just completed some field assessments and will now conduct stakeholder workshops. This effort is funded by USAID.

Oceans & Fisheries Partners' Meeting in Indonesia: From April 2-3 DOI-ITAP will join a USAID-organized meeting of partners engaged in regional marine and fisheries activity in Southeast Asia and the Coral Triangle region. The goal is to ensure all partners are working in a complementary fashion, and that the various partners can leverage each other's strengths to build stronger programs. Participants will include USAID/RDMA; USAID/Indonesia; NOAA, the Coral Triangle Initiative for Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security; and several major USAID contractors working on oceans and fisheries issues in the region. This effort is funded by USAID.

Oceans, Great Lakes, and Coasts

DOI Senior Ocean Policy Team and Regional Ocean Contacts Meeting: On April 4, the DOI Senior Ocean Policy Team and the Regional Ocean Contacts will meet jointly to discuss upcoming National Ocean Council meetings, implementation of federal ocean policy, DOI presence at Capitol Hill Ocean Week, and bureau ocean, Great Lakes, and coastal initiatives. (Washington, DC; no press)

Hurricane Recovery

HURRICANE RESPONSE/RECOVERY OPERATIONS: [UPDATE] DOI core teams are deployed in Puerto Rico and the USVI to work with the Territorial government representatives and local partners on developing recovery priorities and long term recovery strategies. Personnel, including curators/archivists, historic architects, and archaeologists, from across the Bureaus, the Smithsonian Institution, and the National Archives and Records Administration completed damage assessments of cultural resources on both Puerto Rico and the USVI. The Department received an additional \$1.7 million on its FEMA Mission Assignment to primarily conduct natural resource damage assessments in Puerto Rico in support of the RAND Recovery Plan. As part of this effort, five Bureau of Land Management engineers/recreational planners are mobilizing next week for one month to assist the Territory in assessing damage to more than 800 impacted recreational structures, ranging from sports arenas to trailheads. These assessments are being done in collaboration with FEMA's Public Assistance Program and Territorial staff. The Department's headquarters staff continue to focus on processing and extending agreements with the Bureaus and our inter-agency partners to initiate the assessments to provide results by FEMA's May 10 deadline.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

Insular Affairs

Press Releases Planned for Following:

- **[UPDATE]** March 24 – Secretary Zinke Praises U.S. Congress and President Trump for Funding Palau Compact Agreement in the 2018 Omnibus Funding Bill, Provides \$123 Million through 2024
- **[UPDATE]** March 26 – Marshall Islands Compact Trust Funds and Budget Meetings in San Francisco
- **[UPDATE]** March 28 – Federated States of Micronesia Compact Trust Funds and Budget Meetings in San Francisco
- April 17 - FY2018 CIP announcement for American Samoa; AS Travel to American Samoa for 118th Annual Flag Day Ceremonies - April 17 – 19.
- April or May - FY2018 CIP funding announcements for the CNMI and Guam; AS proposed travel to Guam and CNMI in April or May.

International Affairs

Knowledge, Network and Learning Exchange Visit in Hawaii: From April 9 – 15, DOI-ITAP is coordinating a technical visit to Hawaii for a delegation of eight Filipino Provincial Governors, University Presidents, and Fisheries legal experts. The goal is to help the delegation improve fisheries protection and efficient fish processing techniques through exchanges with USFWS, commercial fisheries, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Law Enforcement. This effort is funded by the State Department.

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

Insular Affairs

AS Planned Travel to American Samoa for 118th Annual Flag Day Ceremonies: April 17 - 19, – AS Domenech and OIA Director Pula are tentatively scheduled to travel to American Samoa to participate in the 118th annual celebration of the day that the Chiefs of Tutuila decided to cede authority and become a U.S. territory.

AS Planned Travel to Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam: April 23 – 27, - AS Domenech is considering travel to CNMI and Guam for the Micronesian Islands Forum and other courtesy visits with Guam and CNMI

International Affairs

MOU with Israel on Biodiversity Conservation, National Protected Areas, and Cultural and Historical Heritage: *[UPDATE]* In late May, an official from Israel's Nature and Parks Authority (INPA) will be in the U.S. for a signing ceremony between the Secretary and the Israeli Ambassador to the United States. (This is a postponement from Israel's previous request for a meeting and signing in late March) The MOU is intended to strengthen cooperation on biodiversity conservation, national protected areas, and cultural and historical heritage. Decisions will need to be made about whether to host an event at DOI or at the Israeli Embassy, as well as regarding whether and what type of press or other public announcements should be made in conjunction with the signing. Israel's lawyers are reviewing comments on the Hebrew text by State Department translators, while DOI and State are reviewing a new set of comments from Israel.

Oceans, Great Lakes, and Coasts

World Oceans Day and Capitol Hill Ocean Week: World Oceans Day is June 8 and Capitol Hill Ocean Week (CHOW) will be held June 5-8. The Ocean, Great Lakes, and Coastal Program Coordinator, along with the DOI Senior Ocean Policy Team, are coordinating the Department's participation in CHOW, which is hosted annually by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. June has also historically been proclaimed as National Oceans Month, including by President Trump in 2017. Two new issues of the DOI NEWSWAVE newsletter are expected to be released in June for these events.

Awareness

Omnibus Spending Bill Impacts on U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States

Impact on Insular Areas of Omnibus Spending Bill for 2018 Signed by the President on Friday, March 23:

- \$123.8 million fully funds the 2010 Palau Compact Review Agreement between the U.S. and the Republic of Palau. This was long overdue and assures U.S continued commitment and national security interests in the Western Pacific region.
- \$3,363,000 million reinstated in Compact Impact funding for distribution to Guam, Hawaii, American Samoa, and Northern Mariana Islands for impacts of migrants from freely associated states. Originally cut from President's budget, Guam leadership has praised the reinstatement of this discretionary funding.
- Authorizes the Secretary of the Army allow Army medical facilities located in Hawaii to provide medical services to civilians from the U.S. territories in the Pacific: American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands and the freely associated states of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Palau.
- Fish and Wildlife Grants at ¼ of 1% for Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- FY2018 Funding for the Office of Insular Affairs.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR LAND AND MINERALS MANAGEMENT

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

ASLM Joe Balash will travel to New Orleans from April 2-6.

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Kate MacGregor will be in Washington, D.C. attending regularly scheduled meetings.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Casey Hammond will be in Washington, D.C. attending regularly scheduled meetings.

BSEE Director Scott Angelle will be in Washington, D.C. attending regularly scheduled meetings.

BLM Deputy Director Brian Steed will be in Washington, D.C. attending regularly scheduled meetings.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

Bureau of Land Management

[UPDATE] April 1-7. BLM-ES will be reinstating two mineral leases on the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota, which were first obtained by Twin Metals Minnesota, LLC in 1966. This action follows a DOI Solicitor opinion issued December 22, 2017, stating that the original leases gives Twin Metals a non-discretionary, or automatic, right to a third lease renewal to develop copper, nickel and associated minerals on the Superior National Forest. In December 2016, the Forest Service proposed that approximately 234,000 acres of the Forest be withdrawn from disposition under mineral leasing laws. These lands were segregated for a two-year period while the Forest Service completes environmental analysis to inform the decision-making process. Currently, there are 48 mining leases, permits, and applications in the proposed withdrawal area. This action is expected to be controversial. (3/1/18)

In April BLM intends to complete a report to Congress detailing legislative and administrative options, including partnerships, to bring Wild Horse and Burro populations to appropriate management levels. The current population and program are unsustainable resulting in vast resource impacts and unhealthy herds. In the past year, the Department has requested the restoration of statutory tools to manage herd levels, which includes humane destruction, and others to facilitate sales of excess animals. (2/14/18)

In Early April, a scoping report on Sage Grouse habitat management is set to be completed and released to the public outlining responses from the states and the public regarding potential management plan changes. In the coming weeks, the Department will determine whether to proceed with plan amendments and initiate a public process on the 68 Sage Grouse Resources Management Plans. BLM plans to share the Draft EIS with cooperating partners in April (2/14/18)

March 19 – May 1. BLM-MT/DK. The Butte Field Office is beginning to identify issues for a project to establish a Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) in the Scratchgravel Hills area near Helena, Montana. The Field Office plans to send out a scoping letter to stakeholders and issue a news release soliciting public scoping comments as early as March 19. The RAMP proposes to improve and enhance recreational opportunities and experiences in the Special Recreation Management Area by: formally developing a purpose-built trail system, open to a variety of non-motorized uses, including mountain biking, hiking, and equestrians; identifying specific trail use zones; improving signage and visitor information; and, providing sustainable options for existing trails. Though the initial proposed plan has drawn widespread support from recreation user groups, there is a potential for controversy among some local landowners. (3/7/18)

March 11 – 31. BLM-AK has submitted a *Federal Register* Notice for revocation of five different Public Land Orders (PLOs), which will open approximately 229,632 acres in the Goodnews Bay region for surface entry, mineral exploration and mining; it will also make the state selections effective, and allow the BLM to move forward in conveying lands to the State under their Statehood entitlement. The PLOs were issued in 1972, pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Sec. 17(d)(1), and were recommended for revocation in the 2008 Bay Resource Management Plan. The Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/1/18)

[UPDATED] March 19 – April 17. BLM-CO. The Royal Gorge Field Office will announce a 30-day public comment period for an Environmental Assessment analyzing the Head Full of

Hope Claim—a placer gold mining proposal along the East fork of the Arkansas River northeast of Leadville. The public comment period was announced March 19 and will run through April 17. Local governments in Colorado expect 30-day public comment periods for actions like this. (3/7/18)

March 22 – April 6. BLM-CO will release the Environmental Assessment for the upcoming September 2018 oil and gas lease sale for public comment. Twenty-five parcels totaling approximately 21,762 acres are proposed for leasing in Huerfano, Kiowa, Lincoln, Washington and Weld counties in the Royal Gorge Field Office. Three parcels totaling approximately 413 acres in Baca County have been deferred for leasing. These parcels contain cultural resources and Lesser Prairie Chicken habitat, and consultations with National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office have not been completed. After the consultations, the parcels may be offered in a future sale. Eleven parcels totaling approximately 18,358 acres in Huerfano County outside and east of Great Sand Dunes National Park’s boundary have received significant statewide media coverage. (3/7/18)

[UPDATE] March 23 – May 7. BLM-AK. The EPA published a Notice of Availability (NOA) on the Greater Moose’s Tooth 2 (GMT2) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the March 23 *Federal Register*. Publication opened a 45-day public comment period, which closes on May 7, 2018. The Draft Supplemental EIS analyzes an application for oil and gas development of the GMT2 production pad in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) and supplements an earlier analysis of the project in the 2004 Alpine Satellite Development Plan. Under the preferred alternative identified in the Draft Supplemental EIS, the associated pipeline and access road would cross both Kuukpik Corporation-owned lands and federally-managed lands within the NPR-A. The infrastructure would also connect to the Greater Moose’s Tooth 1 development, which is eight miles away. Public meetings will be held during the 45-day comment period from April 9-20 in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and the North Slope communities of Anaktuvuk Pass, Atkasuk, Utqiagvik, and Nuiqsut. The BLM is also required to publish an NOA; the BLM Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. The BLM’s NOA will not affect the comment period, which will still close on May 7. (2/28/18)

[UPDATE] May 7. BLM-WY published the [Notice of Availability](#) for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Riley Ridge to Natrona Project on March 23, 2018. Publication of the Notice announced the availability of the Draft EIS and opened a 45-day public comment period. Denbury Green Pipeline-Riley Ridge, LLC is proposing to construct a 16- and 24- inch carbon dioxide pipeline and associated facilities along a 243-mile linear right-of-way through Fremont, Sublette, Sweetwater and Natrona Counties in central and western Wyoming. The project would create approximately 380 direct jobs and generate \$1.7 million in state and local tax revenue during construction. (2/21/18) DTS 1749

March 26 – April 6. BLM-MT/DK. Montana Tunnels Mine is a relic from the 1998 Pegasus bankruptcy. Located south of Helena, Mont., the mine mined lead and zinc with secondary silver and gold from an open pit for approximately 20 years before financing difficulties halted operations. The entire facility is in general disrepair and includes extremely serious geotechnical issues east/southeast and west/northwest of the pit walls. The Butte Field Office and Montana Department of Environmental Quality forwarded a revised bond calculation of \$34.9 million to Montana Tunnels on Feb. 5, 2018, with a reply expected in March 2018. If Montana Tunnels

cannot post the required bond amount, the agencies could begin the bond forfeiture process. A bond forfeiture would be the subject of media interest, but it is unclear whether it would generate any controversy. (3/16/18)

March 26 – April 30. BLM-NM. The Las Cruces District expects to release the Talavera Substation and Distribution Project Draft Environmental Assessment (EA), which will start a public comment period that runs through April 30, 2018. The EA analyzes potential environmental effects from the construction, operation, and maintenance of a proposed, new, permanent El Paso Electric substation and associated transmission, and 10.4 miles of distribution lines in Doña Ana County. The EA was prepared in response to right-of-way (ROW) applications submitted by El Paso Electric on October 19, 2016. The proposed ROWs are on BLM-managed public lands and will support the increasing need for energy in the City of Las Cruces and surrounding southern New Mexico communities. Public scoping for the EA began on July 17, 2017, and ended on August 17, 2017. During the public comment period, the Las Cruces District plans to host an informational meeting on April 5, 2018, at the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces. A news release announcing the public meeting and start of the comment period will be distributed on March 26. (3/16/18)

March 26 – April 30. BLM-AK. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has delayed its planned March release of the Donlin Gold Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) due to a BLM consistency review of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act Section 810 analysis, which is an appendix to the Final EIS. Donlin Gold LLC applied for permits for an open-pit, hardrock gold mine in southwest Alaska. The mine site will also include waste treatment and waste rock facilities, a mill facility and a natural gas-powered power plant. BLM-AK has been participating as a cooperating agency on the project and is responsible for a right-of-way (ROW) authorization. Donlin Gold submitted a ROW application for one-third of the 316-mile proposed natural gas pipeline. The ROW would cross approximately 92 miles and 4,322 acres of largely remote and undisturbed BLM-managed public lands. The affected public lands are under a 1981 Management Framework Plan and the area is also included in the Bering Sea/Western Interior Resource Management Plan, currently under development. <http://www.DonlinGoldEIS.com>. (3/1/18)

March 26 – April 30. BLM-CO. The BLM White River Field Office plans to release an Environmental Assessment of the proposed Buffalo Horn Land Exchange for a 30-day public review period. The preferred alternative would convey the surface estates of 14 parcels of Federal lands totaling approximately 2,815 acres in Rio Blanco and Moffat Counties for one non-Federal parcel in Rio Blanco County totaling 1,835 acres. Most parcels are within the White River Field Office, with one Federal parcel that includes lands in the Little Snake Field Office. The feasibility review found that disposal of the selected Federal lands and acquisition of the non-Federal lands would improve the management efficiency of public land resources, provide greater public access to recreation lands, and result in protection of important wildlife habitat and cultural landscapes. A news release has been prepared and will be distributed once the BLM Washington Office completes congressional notifications. (1/10/18)

March 26 – April 30. BLM-CA intends to renew the site license for Calpine's Sonoma Power Plant, which is located at The Geysers geothermal area in Sonoma County. The 30-year license required for operations has expired. The Ukiah Field Office posted an unsigned Categorical

Exclusion (CX) for public review on ePlanning on Jan. 24 and the CX was signed Feb. 1. Once the proponent signs the license, BLM-CA will finalize the process and issue the site license.

[NEW] March 28. BLM-OR/WA. Pursuant to concurrence from the Office of the Regional Solicitor, the Prineville District will proceed with the offer to purchase 8,200 acres of private land adjacent to the John Day River from Western Rivers Conservancy and Rattray Highland, LLC. The purchase is in line with the January 2018 John Day River and Thirtymile Creek Acquisitions Environmental Assessment. The sale is expected to be completed on March 28, 2018. On Feb. 9, 2018, the district received a Notice of Appeal from the Oregon Cattlemen's Association and Shaun Robertson without a Statement of Reasons; they did not ask for a stay, and the 30-day period to file the statement closed on March 9, 2018. The Prineville District received the Statement of Reasons from Oregon Cattlemen's Association postmarked on March 12, 2018. Per the Solicitor, the Statement of Reasons was postmarked after the close of the 30-day period and does not affect or change the district's ability to move forward with the sale. (3/23/2018)

[NEW] March 29 – April 6. BLM-AK. The Glennallen Field Office staff will conduct annual face-to-face consultation efforts in Southeast Alaska as part of the ongoing effort to improve communication and cooperation between the BLM and federally recognized tribes. Topics will include BLM-managed cultural resources around Haines and Juneau, and informing and seeking input on the development of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Ring of Fire Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment. The Field Office will conduct face-to-face visits with Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, Sealaska, Sealaska Heritage for Auke Bay, Skagway Traditional Council, Chilkat Indian Village, and Chilkoot Indian Association. (3/23/18)

[UPDATE] March 29 – April 6. BLM-WY. The Cody Field Office will issue a decision to authorize a proposed bentonite mining expansion project in Big Horn County near Lovell. The Environmental Assessment analyzed American Colloid Company's proposal to expand its current mining operations by 1,175.5 acres, including 954.7 acres on BLM-managed federal land. The proposed expansion would provide an estimated 3,000,000 tons of bentonite from public lands over the life of the project and would continue to employ approximately 15 mine employees, 100 mill employees and additional subcontractors. The project is not expected to be controversial as the BLM routinely authorizes bentonite mining projects in the Bighorn Basin and bentonite mining is a traditional use that continues to contribute to local economies. (2/15/18)

April 1. BLM-CO. The BLM is considering renewing a royalty rate reduction (RRR) at the Trapper Mine in northwest Colorado to reduce royalty payments for 19.4 million tons of coal on of the mine's leases from 12.5 percent to 8 percent. Trapper Mining Inc. requested an RRR renewal for coal in two other leases. The identified coal in one lease is not within an approved mine plan and the BLM does not believe the other lease contains any more recoverable coal. As such, the proposal is to approve an RRR for one lease only. The request is for 11 years. If granted, the RRR would be effective May 1, 2015. BLM-CO sent notification to the Governor of Colorado on Dec. 22, 2017. The State of Colorado declined to comment. BLM-CO will notify the state after the decision. The target date for the decision is April 1. (3/7/18)

[NEW] April 2-27: BLM-MT/DK. The Montana/Dakotas State Office is working with several agencies to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning rangeland monitoring. The MOU will increase the level of cooperation among the parties and provide a framework for landowners/permittees/lessees to collect data on grazing lands using methods that are collectively agreed upon by the parties. Other parties include Montana Rangelands Partnership, a program coordinated by the Montana Department of Natural Resources Rangeland Resources Program; Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; Division of Trust Lands Management; Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the U.S. Forest Service; and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service/Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge. The MOU will help restore trust with local communities and improve dialogue and relationships. (3/23/18)

[UPDATE] April 2-6. BLM-NM. The BLM Oklahoma Field Office expects to distribute a news release announcing the issuance of a coal lease modification to Georges Colliers, Inc., to expand the existing, active Pollyanna No. 8 coal mine. Colliers submitted the application in April 2015; the Decision Record was signed March 19, 2018, and posted to ePlanning on March 20, 2018. The mine is located just south of Spiro, Okla., and the lease modification would include 520 acres of additional federal coal reserves at a depth of 1,000 -1,200 feet, adjacent to the existing mine/lease boundary that would be accessed by underground mining methods using existing infrastructure. The additional acreage contains an estimated 5,616,000 tons of coal and would extend the life of the mine by about eight years and continue to support 80 existing jobs. (3/16/18)

April 2 – 11. BLM-AK. The Glennallen Field Office staff is planning public open house meetings seeking public input in Haines, Skagway, and Juneau, Alaska as it begins the development of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Ring of Fire draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendment. The information garnered from this outreach will be used to develop supplemental alternatives to the previous “Ring of Fire” Draft RMP amendment for the Haines area. Management options to be evaluated include retaining or changing special land area designations, retaining a monitor and control area for wildlife studies, and potentially establishing a maximum number of annual helicopter landings on these BLM-managed public lands. (3/16/18)

[NEW] April 2. BLM-CO. The Royal Gorge Field Office will issue an annual coordination letter to the U.S. Army Fort Carson for the temporary use of public lands for the Army’s High Altitude Mountain Environment Training (HAMET). Since 2010, the HAMET program has provided pilots with experience flying and landing helicopters in mountainous, high-elevation terrain. (3/23/18)

[NEW] April 3-5. BLM-CO. Representatives from the Uncompahgre Field Office and the Department of Energy will tour the West End uranium mines in southwestern Colorado. The now-abandoned mines were active during the uranium boom that began in the 1940s. The Southwest District’s Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Program has worked cooperatively with state and industry partners to improve safe public access to these areas. All of the mines are closed, but reclamation efforts are ongoing. BLM-CO staff will also deliver a presentation about AML and defense-related uranium mine decision processes. (3/23/18)

[NEW] April 3-5. BLM-NM. Acting BLM-NM State Director Aden Seidlitz will meet with U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM), in Roswell, N.M., to brief the Senator about general land management issues in the Pecos District. The meeting will be informational and there has not been any indication of interest in any one subject or project. The meeting will take place while the BLM New Mexico Executive Management Team meeting is underway at Ft. Stanton. (3/23/18)

[UPDATE] April 3. BLM-CA. The Palms Springs-South Coast Field Office will host a public scoping meeting for the proposed Crimson Solar Project in Palm Desert. On April 12, an additional scoping meeting will be held in Blythe. BLM-CA intends to prepare a Joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report and Possible Land Use Plan Amendment for the Proposed RE Crimson Solar Project in Riverside County. Sonoran West Holding, LLC has requested a right-of-way authorization to construct, operate, maintain and decommission the project—an up to 350 megawatt photovoltaic facility along with the ancillary facilities, including up to eight project substations, access roads, operations and maintenance buildings, and lay-down areas. The project area consists of approximately 2,700-acres of BLM-administered lands within the Riverside East Solar Energy Zone and within the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan Development Focus Area. (3/16/18)

April 3. The BLM anticipates the *Federal Register* publication of the 2018 National Call for Nominations for Resource Advisory Councils (RACs). The BLM is seeking public nominations for open positions on 30 RACs and will consider nominations for 45 days. The Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/1/18) DTS 1964

April 3. BLM-UT. The Price Field Office will release for public review and comment an Environmental Assessment analyzing XTO Energy Inc.'s proposal to develop natural gas resources in the Horse Bench Project area. XTO Energy Inc. proposes building 19 well pads and drilling up to 175 natural gas wells on 6,565 acres of public lands located approximately 36 miles northeast of Price. (3/7/18)

April 3. BLM-UT. The Vernal Field Office will begin scoping for the Dinosaur Travel Management Plan (TMP). Scoping meetings will be held in Manila and Vernal, Utah, on April 3 and 4, respectively. The scoping period will run through May 3. This TMP will cover approximately 850 miles of routes across 220,324 acres of BLM-managed land in portions of Daggett and Uintah counties. The TMP is scheduled to be completed on or before Nov. 30, 2020, as required by the May 31, 2017 Resource Management Plan Settlement Agreement. Signatories to the settlement agreement include Jenna Whitlock for the BLM; Steve Bloch for SUWA; Robin Cooley for Earthjustice; and Paul Turcke for BlueRibbon Coalition, Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition, and Trails Preservation Alliance. BLM-UT distributed a press release announcing the meetings on March 16, 2018. (3/1/18)

[NEW] April 4. BLM-CO. The Royal Gorge Field Office will announce its decision approving a hardrock mineral sampling proposal near the Parkdale area in Fremont County. The sampling is part of a mineral materials sale application. Mineral materials are typically used in the aggregate industry and are a vital ingredient in concrete and asphalt products. (3/23/18)

April 4. BLM-ID. Boise District Resource Advisory Council meeting will be in Boise. Agenda items include review of scoping topics for the Four Rivers Resource Management Plan, wild horse update, Soda Fire grazing status, user conflicts and general Field Office updates. (3/1/18)

[NEW] April 5. BLM-CO. The Royal Gorge Field Office intends to send letters to livestock grazing permittees to notify them about current and projected drought conditions, and potential adjustments in livestock authorizations at the local allotment level. Colorado is experiencing record low precipitation across the state that may reduce forage growth. Adjustments may include fewer animals on allotments or shorter grazing seasons. Ideally, all adjustments, if needed, would be voluntary. In the event voluntary adjustments are not taken by permittees, the BLM would need to render an adjustment decision. (3/23/18).

[NEW] In Spring. BLM-UT. BLM-UT has updated the 2011 Air Resource Management Strategy (ARMS) and will begin a public review and comment period (as provided for by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, et al. v. U.S. Department of the Interior, et al. settlement agreement). The agreement requires that BLM-UT update the ARMS by May 31, 2018. Additionally, the agreement requires that the public be given an opportunity to comment and that the BLM provide written responses to any substantive comments on the updated strategy. The updated strategy will be posted to the BLM-UT ePlanning page and the public will have a two-week comment period. Parties to the settlement agreement, as well as all identified interested parties will also be notified via mail. Per Solicitor guidance, BLM-UT will not issue a press release. (3/23/18)

[UPDATE] April 6. BLM-UT. The Cedar City Field Office will release for public review and comment the Milford Flats South Solar Energy Zone Environmental Assessment (EA). This EA analyzes the effects of leasing approximately 5,564 acres of public lands for solar energy development in Beaver County, Utah. The Milford Flats South Solar Energy Zone was designated in the 2012 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. The comment period will run for 30 days. (2/21/18)

April 6. BLM-UT will release five Draft Recreation Business Plans for a 30-day public comment period. The Draft Plans will propose to establish new or increase existing fees at various recreation sites in the Vernal, Cedar City, Moab, and Salt Lake Field Offices. These sites include campgrounds, day-use sites, and specialized off-highway vehicle areas. In accordance with Federal Land Recreation Enhancement Act, the Field Offices will present the results of the public feedback on the Draft Plans to Utah's Recreation Resource Advisory Committee on May 22, and then publish a *Federal Register* Notice prior approving any new recreation fees. The approval of these Business plans is expected to increase the amount of revenue BLM-UT will have to re-invest in local recreation programs to rebuild aging infrastructure, increase and improve recreational access to the public lands, and enhance the Utah Recreation and Visitor Services Program's ability to support local rural economies. (3/7/18)

[NEW] April 6. BLM-NV. The Nevada State Legislature Committee on Public Lands has requested a BLM presentation on the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act and National Monuments in Nevada, including Gold Butte National Monument. The meeting is scheduled to occur in Laughlin, Nevada; the BLM participant has not been determined. (3/23/18)

[UPDATE] In April. BLM-ID expects to have Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary Land and Minerals Management sign the decision Record for the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No New Significant Impact (FONNSI) for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project. A decision package with concurrence memo and Notice of Availability for *Federal Register* publication is under review in Washington, D.C. A request for Secretarial-level signature of the Decision Record is being considered, along with a possible signing event in early- or mid-April either Boise or Washington, D.C., with the Idaho Governor, congressional delegation and local government officials (City of Kuna, Idaho, and Owyhee County Commissioners). The Final EA and FONNSI were published on Jan. 5, 2018, beginning a protest period on the proposed land use plan amendments. The protest period closed on Feb. 5, 2018. The three-year construction phase of segments 8 and 9 of the Gateway West transmission line will create an estimated 1,360 jobs for a total labor income of \$23.1 million. Construction of all 10 segments of the transmission line is projected to support nearly 3,100 jobs with labor income of \$55.7 million. If a right-of-way for segments 8 and 9 is not granted, there would likely be adverse impacts to economic growth, including loss of jobs, in the Pacific Northwest transmission region, which encompasses Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Montana, and several Canadian provinces. Gateway West is one of several grid-modernization projects underway to improve transmission capacity in the Mountain West and Pacific Northwest. The project is expected to deliver enough power to supply 975,000 homes. The Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (2/22/18) DTS 1973

Bureau of Offshore Energy Management

By April 6, BOEM expects to publish a Proposed Sale Notice (PSN) for two wind leases offshore Massachusetts. The PSN is in surname with the Department. This notice is expected to be announced no later than when the Secretary speaks at the International Wind Partnering Forum on April 6 in Princeton, NJ.

By April 6, BOEM expects to publish a Call for Information and Nominations that identifies areas of the OCS offshore New York and New Jersey for potential future wind leasing. The Call requests nominations from companies interested in commercial wind energy leases within four proposed areas of the OCS within the New York Bight region. The Call is in surname with ASLM. This notice is expected to be announced when the Secretary speaks at the International Wind Partnering Forum on April 6 in Princeton, NJ.

By March 30, BOEM expects to publish the Atlantic Renewable Energy Path Forward – Request for Feedback (RFF). The document seeks input on BOEM’s proposed path forward for renewable energy leasing offshore the Atlantic Coast. The RFF describes the process and factors used by BOEM to identify Forecast Areas along the Atlantic Coast where future development is most likely and where future leasing should be focused. This notice is expected to be announced before the Secretary speaks at the International Wind Partnering Forum on April 6 in Princeton, NJ.

[UPDATE] On March 30, BOEM is targeting publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the Vineyard Wind (Massachusetts) Construction and Operations Plan (COP). On Dec. 19, 2017, BOEM received a COP for Vineyard Wind’s proposed 800 MW wind project, which is approximately 14 miles offshore and south of Martha’s Vineyard. On March 15,

Vineyard submitted an updated COP to BOEM and on March 20, an interagency meeting to discuss the plan and review strategy incorporating the requirements of E.O. 13807 was held at EPA Region 1's HQ office in Boston, MA with approximately 50 individuals from various Federal and State agencies in attendance. Public scoping meetings are being scheduled for the week of April 16-20 in New Bedford, MA; Martha's Vineyard, MA; Nantucket, MA; Hyannis, MA, and Kingston, RI.

BOEM is prepared to publish a Beaufort Sea Call for Information and Nominations as soon as clearance is received from ASLM. The BOEM DPP includes a proposed lease sale in the Beaufort Sea in 2019. In order to hold the lease sale by the target date of Dec. 18, 2019, BOEM needed to initiate the formal sale planning process by publishing the Call in early March. The Call was approved by the Department on March 5. A draft press release has been submitted to DOI Communications.

As soon as possible, BOEM needs to publish the Proposed Notice of Sale for Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 251. The package is in surnaming with the Department. The sale is scheduled for August 2018.

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement

The Well Control Rule (WCR) (AA39) was submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on December 7. OIRA also hosted listening sessions with industry on the Revised WCR in February. OMB reviewed the WCR and submitted comments to BSEE which BSEE addressed. Once all OMB and interagency comments are resolved, the rule will be finalized within the Department for submission to the *Federal Register* for publication. BSEE understands that the public comment period is currently expected to last at least 30 days, after which the team will begin working on the Final Rule. Comments are 100 pages and will be sent up separately.

The Proposed Production Safety Systems Rule (PSSR) (AA37) was published in the *Federal Register* on December 29. The public comment period ended on January 29. Fewer than 60,000 bulk identical comments were received from three environmental groups. A little over 700 regular comments were received as separate submissions and approximately 40 of these were comments with attachments, i.e. substantive comments. The PSSR Revision Team is in the process of drafting a Final Rule for surnaming prior to going to the *Federal Register* for final publication. The original deadline to begin surnaming has been revised to the end of March due to additional time needed to review the large volume of comments and to resolve legal issues raised by commenters. A meeting to brief Kate MacGregor was held on March 16.

Since both of these rules are scheduled to be ready for submission to the Federal Register by the end-of-March, we have agreed on a simultaneous submission to the Federal Register for both rules.

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

Bureau of Land Management

[NEW] In April. BLM-AK will submit a *Federal Register* Notice providing constructive Notice of a decision approving 424.35 acres for conveyance to Sivuqaq, Inc., and Kukulget, Inc., for the

Native villages of Gambell and Savoonga. Gambell and Savoonga are located on the former St. Lawrence Island Reindeer Reserve and will receive title to the surface and subsurface estates under Sec. 19(b) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Conveyance of these lands will fulfill Gambell's and Savoonga's entitlements under ANCSA, and will complete U.S. obligation to the Alaska Native people pursuant to Sec. 19(b) of ANCSA.

[UPDATE] In April. BLM-NM. The Carlsbad Field Office expects to publish the Notice of Availability for the Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS). The management plan outlines the BLM's long-term, "landscape-level" plans and goals for public lands in Lea, Chaves, and Eddy Counties. The planning area includes approximately 2.1 million acres of Federal surface land and 3 million acres of BLM-managed mineral estate in Chaves, Eddy, and Lea Counties. The Notice of Availability for the Draft RMP/EIS is under review in Washington D.C. (3/7/18)

[UPDATE] In April. BLM-AK expects to publish a Notice of Intent to initiate public scoping on the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Environmental Impact Statement. As directed by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, the BLM is working toward an oil and gas lease sale in the Coastal Plain. This work includes conducting outreach to our partners and stakeholders, and conducting consultation with affected Alaska Native Tribes and Corporations, as well as laying the groundwork for an environmental analysis that is required before a lease sale can be held. Because it is a major unexplored, but potentially productive geologic onshore basin, oil and gas from the Coastal Plain is an important resource for meeting our nation's energy demands and achieving energy dominance. The Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/16/18) DTS 1966

In April. BLM-UT expects to publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Enfit American Oil Utility Corridor Project in northeastern Uintah County. Publication of the NOA initiates a 45-day public waiting period pursuant to NEPA requirements of NEPA. The Final EIS analyzes Enfit American Oil's proposal to construct five utility right-of-ways along 40 miles south of Vernal, Utah. The Notice under review in Washington, D.C. (2/21/18)

In April. BLM-AZ will announce its Record of Decision (ROD) for Recreational Target Shooting in the Sonoran Desert National Monument, as well as plans to reopen 57 miles of travel routes for motorized access in the most heavily used portion of the monument. A March 2015 federal court order required the BLM to re-analyze impacts of recreational target shooting on the Monument. The forthcoming decision, which was developed after extensive public outreach and analysis, preserves access for target shooting on nearly 90% of the monument, while ensuring public safety in the area of heaviest family recreation use—the Juan Bautista de Anza Recreation Management Zone (RMZ). Many routes in the RMZ were closed in 2008 due to damage to natural and cultural resources caused by off-highway vehicle travel. The BLM subsequently reclaimed illegal routes and completed a Travel Management Plan that designated 57 miles of RMZ routes for motorized use. Future plans for the RMZ include developing recreation facilities to enhance visitors' experience. The ROD was filed with U.S. District Court in Phoenix on March 5, 2018, and the announcement will coincide with publication of the Notice of the Availability in the *Federal Register*. (3/7/18) DTS 1976

In April. BLM-CA. The Central Coast Field Office will publish the Final Supplementary Rules related to dog management on public lands at Fort Ord National Monument (Monument) this spring. These rules also clarify some of the existing rules that have been in place on the Monument since 1996, and that are consistent with the BLM Resource Management Plan. The rules are responsive to hazards from munitions and explosives from the former Army base and conflicts between visitors on a high-use recreation area. The Proposed Supplementary Rules were published in November 2016 and no comments were received. These Final rules are the final step in the rulemaking process. The rules are not expected to be controversial. The Notice is pending approval in Washington, D.C. (3/1/18)

[UPDATE] In April. BLM-AK staff will hold informational meetings on cleanup of the Red Devil Mine. These meetings will update residents on the findings of remedial investigations and feasibility studies related to contamination at the mine site and in groundwater and river sediment. BLM-AK personnel and representatives of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and Alaska Department of Natural Resources will participate in the meetings. Scheduled meetings include: April 2, Village of Red Devil; April 12, Chugathbaluk; April 16, Aniak; April 17, Akiak; April 18, Upper and Lower Kalskag; and, April 19, Georgetown (held in Anchorage at the BLM Anchorage Field Office). Additional meetings may be scheduled. The Red Devil Mine is an abandoned cinnabar mine and mercury production facility 250 miles west of Anchorage on 10 acres of BLM-managed land. The land has been selected by The Kuskokwim Corporation, an Alaska Native corporation. (3/7/18)

In April. BLM-WY. The Buffalo Field Office is working to complete the 1-90 Corridor Travel Management Draft Environmental Assessment. On March 8, the BLM began issuing letters to affected landowners and grazing lessees, informing them of the BLM's desire to obtain easements and/or exchanges. The BLM has briefed county commissioners and congressional representatives in routine meetings. The goal of these letters is to open dialogue regarding potential easements/exchanges and come to mutually beneficial agreements with affected landowners. (3/1/18)

April 9-12. BLM-MT/DK. The North Central Montana District will hold public scoping meetings in Malta, Glasgow, Winifred and Winnett, Mont., about the bison conservation organization American Prairie Reserve's proposed grazing permit change. The BLM authorized American Prairie to hire an approved contractor to conduct the environmental analysis of multiple grazing allotments in the Glasgow, Lewistown and Malta Field Offices, and the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. The analysis is being conducted in anticipation that the American Prairie will request a change of grazing use from cattle to bison. American Prairie owns or leases more than 351,000 acres of deeded and public lands in the area, with 800 bison pastured on some of that land. The BLM proposes analyzing all of the grazing allotments in one Environmental Assessment (EA) to consolidate efforts across the district and be responsive to concerns raised by local stakeholders. Subsequent public meetings will be held in the same communities once the Draft EA is released for public review and comment. (3/16/18)

[UPDATE] April 10. BLM-CO. The Royal Gorge Field Office will announce a 15-day public scoping period for the New Elk Coal Lease by Application (LBA). The LBA is for approximately 15 tons of coal in place of 1,279 acres of federal coal on split estate federal coal only. The lease parcel is adjacent to a privately owned coal under lease held by New Elk Coal,

LLC. If approved, New Elk Coal, LLC will add this lease to its existing mine permit for the New Elk Min near Weston. (3/16/18)

[NEW] April 10. BLM-NM. Acting BLM-NM State Director Aden Seidlitz will provide the opening remarks at the New Mexico Fire Summit. Additional details to follow when available.

April 9-13. BLM-WY State Director Mary Jo Rugwell plans to conduct visits with members and staff of the Wyoming congressional delegation in Washington, D.C. to discuss public land management issues in Wyoming. (2/21/18)

[UPDATE] April 12. BLM-WY. The Pinedale Field Office will hold a public open house meeting for the Boulder Travel Management Plan on April 12, 2018. The meeting will be held as part of a public comment period for the plan that began on March 15. The public and media will attend. Additional open houses may be scheduled at a later time. The project has the potential to be controversial due to the possibility of route closures within the Boulder Travel Management Area. However, no decision will be made until all public comments are considered and appropriate NEPA analysis is complete. (2/28/18)

April 12. BLM-UT. At the request of Department of Justice, the West Desert District will participate in a meeting of the note-holders to discuss a draft settlement agreement for the bankruptcy claims on MagCorp. The BLM has a \$6 million claim; these funds would be used to rehabilitate public lands that MagCorp abandoned at their declaration of bankruptcy. In 2001, MagCorp filed for bankruptcy and walked away from right-of-ways and leases on BLM lands in the Salt Lake Field Office. The abandonment left behind significant resource damage due to the company's failure to conduct reclamation and remove structures. The U.S. Attorney's Office is representing the BLM and EPA in this case. Settlement is necessary due to insufficient funds to settle the debts left behind by the bankrupt MagCorp. (3/7/18)

[NEW] April 13. BLM-CO. Acting BLM-CO State Director Greg Shoop will participate in an annual wildland fire briefing for Governor John Hickenlooper on April 13. The Director of the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control will brief the Governor on the Wildfire Potential for 2018 and the level of state preparedness. The USFS and BLM will add remarks specific to their agencies. After the agency briefing, the Governor will hold a press conference on state resources, interagency cooperation and the 2018 fire potential, including a tour of fire equipment. (3/23/18)

April 13. BLM-UT. The Salt Lake Field Office will finalize the Diamond Fork Phosphate Environmental Assessment to authorize Falcon Isle's Mining and Reclamation Plan in the Little Diamond Fork area of Utah County. The mining is proposed on surface lands in the Uinta National Forest managed by the Forest Service. However, the BLM administers the phosphate lease. The BLM is coordinating with the Forest Service to sign the respective decisions at the same time. This project consists of 8.58 acres of BLM minerals, 3.5 acres of U.S. Forest Service surface, plus upgrades to a few Forest Service roads. Minimal economic impact will result from this action as the mine is small. (2/21/18)

[NEW] April 14. BLM-CA. The Barstow Field Office and the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base will host a Resource Management Group meeting to discuss land use in the Shared Use

Area of Johnson Valley. The BLM will discuss the Marine Corps plan to conduct a large-scale exercise August 1-30, 2018, including information concerning temporary land closures of the Johnson Valley Shared Use Area and public safety. This annual meeting is being conducted pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act of 2014. (3/23/18)

[UPDATE] April 16 – 20. BLM-WY expects to publish the Notice of Availability for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Normally Pressured Lance (NPL) Project pending NEPA review and clearance of the *Federal Register* Package. The Final EIS is currently under review by Washington and BLM-WY needs approval of the NEPA before advancing the *Federal Register* package in compliance with WO IM-2018-028. The proposed project includes drilling up to 3,500 directional natural gas wells over a 10-year period on approximately 140,000 acres. The NPL project is projected to yield between 3.5 to 7 Trillion Cubic Feet of natural gas and between 17.5 to 140 million barrels of oil over the estimated 40-year life of the project. Project revenues are estimated at \$17.8 billion with federal royalties amounting to about \$2.2 billion, of which about \$1.1 billion would go to the State of Wyoming. The project would also bring about 954 full time jobs to the region during development. (2/21/18)

[UPDATE] In Spring. BLM-NV. The Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) proposes to hold a meeting in Ely, Nev. Agenda items include wild horse and burro population/health issues, drought conditions and targeted/outcome based grazing. During the meeting, RAC members will take a field trip to a wild horse and burro Herd Management Area that historically has overpopulation issues, which are compounded by the lack of important resources like water. The meeting Notice is pending approval in Washington, D.C. (3/1/18)

April 16. BLM-NV. On April 16, 30 days after publication in the *Federal Register*, the Battle Mountain District may implement a 60-day temporary closure and restrictions for the Mill Creek Campground located 30 miles south of Battle Mountain. The proposed temporary closure and restrictions will help ensure public safety and an expedited restoration of the area after wildfires in recent years. The Mill Creek Campground is a popular area for the communities of Battle Mountain and Austin, Nevada. The area also receives heavy visitation from traveling campers. (2/21/18) DTS 1774

April 17. BLM-AZ will publish a Notice of Realty Action in the *Federal Register* announcing a planned lease renewal/amendment for the Mesquite (Nevada) Airport. The new lease will enable the City of Mesquite to meet Federal Aviation Administration safety requirements to replace perimeter fencing around the airport safety zone, portions of which extend across the state line onto public lands in Arizona. The fencing was identified as the most critical need in the City's Airport Master Plan. Maintaining airport infrastructure is vital to the local economy, as more than 1.3 million visitors travel to Mesquite each year. The Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/7/18) DTS 1997

April 18. BLM-WY. The Rawlins Field Office will host a public meeting on the Continental Divide-Creston Natural Gas Development Area, which just added nearly 9,000 natural gas wells to the project area in south-central Wyoming. The open house meeting is mandated by the September 2016 Record of Decision for the project, which requires the public be informed about progress and future plans for development. The public, industry, and media are invited to attend. The meeting is not expected to be controversial. (3/7/18)

[NEW] April 19. BLM-CA Barstow Field Office will host a San Bernardino County Range Improvement Advisory Committee (RIAC) meeting at the Barstow Field Office. The RIAC is comprised of five federal grazing lessees and one wildlife representative who are appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The RIAC recommends various grazing improvement projects for funding to the board. The BLM reviews the environmental impact of projects on public lands. Funding for these projects comes from fees paid to the federal government for grazing privileges by ranchers under the provisions of the Federal Taylor Grazing Act of 1934. A portion of the grazing fees is distributed back to the county to fund improvements on federal lands. The county acts in a trustee capacity for these funds. (3/23/18)

[NEW] April 20. BLM-ID. Pending Idaho State Office approval, the Pocatello Field Office plans to provide a 30-day public review and comment period for the draft EA for the June 11, 2018, online oil and gas lease sale. The lands nominated for leasing involve one parcel totaling 836.23 acres of split estate lands (private surface with federal mineral estate) in Bonneville County. The Field Office expects multiple comments as well as opposition. If additional coordination is needed to respond to comments, the sale may be postponed until September. (3/23/18)

[NEW] April 20-30. BLM-CO will issue the sale notice and 10-day protest period for the June 7, 2018, oil and gas lease sale for 64 parcels totaling approximately 58,694 acres in Jackson, Moffatt, Rio Blanco and Routt counties. Approximately 30,898 acres on 45 parcels are on Greater Sage-Grouse habitat, which could generate controversy. The announcement date and length of the protest period follows guidance provided in IM 2018-034. (3/20/18)

April 20. BLM-UT expects to approve a Final Environmental Impact Statement for Alton Coal, which seeks to expand its existing mine by leasing federal coal on 3,581 acres of public and private lands near Alton, Utah. The Alton Coal Tract contains 59.6 million tons of bituminous coal, and the proposed action could extend mining operations by 25 years. The lease sale needs to occur by summer 2018 for continuous operations. (2/21/18)

April 23-30. BLM-NV expects to publish a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with mineral segregation for the proposed Yellow Pine Solar Project in Clark County. The proposed project includes 9,290 acres of BLM-managed public lands 32 miles west of Las Vegas and 10 miles southeast of Pahrump, Nev., at the intersection of Nevada State Route 160 and Tecopa Road. (2/21/2018)

April 23 – 30. BLM-AK has received requests from three Alaska Native Villages in northwest Alaska for consultation on possible mine development of the Graphite One prospect. The villages include the Native villages of Teller, Brevig Mission, and Mary's Igloo. Graphite One Resources, Inc. is exploring federal claims on a federal inholding in lands transferred to the State of Alaska. These claims are located on lands slated for transfer to the State of Alaska, possibly before the end of the fiscal year. The consultation is tentatively scheduled for late April. To date, BLM has not received an application from Graphite One Resources for a permit to mine. (3/7/18)

[NEW] April 23. BLM-ID. The Owyhee Field Office is finalizing its assessment and evaluation of Idaho's Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management

for the Rockville Allotment and is planning to initiate public scoping during the week of April 23. The Rockville Allotment is part of the Battle Creek litigation in U.S. District Court of Idaho. Some standards are not being met, and the Boise District is finalizing the assessment/evaluation. Controversy is expected on all permit renewals but no more than usual for Owyhee County. (3/23/18).

April 23. BLM-CA. Bakersfield Field Office staff will participate in a U.S. Forest Service-led public meeting about four Applications for Permit to Drill in the Sespe oilfield in Fillmore, California. The Forest Service is the lead federal agency conducting the NEPA and the meeting is expected to generate a lot of public interest, including previous interest from U.S. Cong. Julia Brownley's (CA-26-D) office, due to the wells being in a national forest and near a California condor sanctuary. (2/9/18)

[NEW] In April or May. BLM-CO will celebrate the naming of the Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center and Museum in April or May. The center, which was previously called the Anasazi Heritage Center, is part of the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and the new name reflects this location. The local community, tribal representatives and elected officials have expressed interest in participating in the event. BLM-CO submitted a request for the BLM Director and the Secretary of the Interior to attend. (3/23/18)

In April or May. BLM-CA is preparing an Environmental Assessment and Resource Management Plan Amendment for a proposed transmission and water pipeline right-of-way (ROW) associated with the Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Project in Riverside County. In 2014, the Eagle Crest Energy Company obtained a 50-year license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to construct, operate, and maintain the Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Hydroelectric Project. The BLM is processing a ROW application associated with the 1,300-megawatt hydroelectric project that includes a 500-kV transmission line and a 12-inch water pipeline energy transmission. The project is estimated to create 4,300 jobs during construction and will contribute to the state's energy portfolio. The City of Palm Springs and Cathedral City, environmental groups, and Colorado River Indian Tribes have voiced concern over the project, including its proximity to Joshua Tree National Park, impacts to critical or endangered desert species, and potential impacts to water, and cultural and historic resources. The project is under review in Washington, D.C. (2/21/18)

In May. BLM-UT is considering the non-competitive, direct sale to PacifiCorp of 200 acres of public land in Emery County, Utah, at not less than the appraised fair market value. The proposed sale is in conformance with the October 2008 Price Field Office Resource Management Plan. The lands would be offered to PacifiCorp non-competitively due to the lack of public access and their ownership of the surrounding lands, pursuant to 43 CFR 2711.3-3(a)(4). Conveyance of the identified public lands would be subject to valid existing rights and encumbrances of record. (3/7/18)

In May. BLM-UT is considering the modified competitive sale of 160 acres of public land in Emery County, Utah, at not less than the appraised fair market value to the adjacent landowners Hunter Prep Plant LLC, Ross Huntington, and Clinton Price. The proposed sale is in conformance with the October 2008 Price Field Office Resource Management Plan. The lands would be offered to the adjoining land owners on a modified competitive basis, with Hunter Prep

Plant, LLC as the designated bidder, giving them the right to meet the highest bid pursuant to 43 CFR 2711.3-2(a)(1). Conveyance of the identified public land would be subject to valid existing rights and encumbrances of record. (3/7/18)

In May. BLM-UT. The Moab Field Office intends to issue a decision authorizing a Special Recreation Permit to Pinnacle Helicopters LLC for a shuttle service for river clients from the Canyonlands Field Airport to Mineral Bottom Airstrip. The proposal has been controversial due to potential impacts to other visitors' experiences, and an unrelated proposal from the same company to also conduct helicopter shuttles in Blue John Canyon, immediately south of Canyonlands National Park and near the Horseshoe Canyon Wilderness Study Area managed by the BLM Richfield Field Office. That request garnered regional media attention. (3/7/18)

In Mid-May. BLM-ID. Boise District Fire and Aviation expects to sign the Record of Decision for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Bruneau-Owyhee Sage-Grouse Habitat (BOSH) Project. The Final EIS was released for a 30-day public availability period on Feb. 9. The Final EIS, which was developed in cooperation with several state and federal agencies, analyzes the removal of encroaching Western juniper on 726,000 acres of sagebrush steppe habitat in Owyhee County. This juniper treatment project builds on proactive land management policies and practices to conserve the region's remaining sagebrush habitat, which supports significant economic activity, such as ranching and recreation, as well as abundant wildlife, including mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope and golden eagles. The public availability period closed on March 11. The BLM received ten comments, including comments addressing roughly three issues that will be documented in the ROD. The district is currently completing tribal consultation on the Final EIS and estimates signing the ROD in mid-May. (2/21/18)

[NEW] May 3. BLM-NV is requesting Secretarial approval of funding for the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 17 projects. In the event the Secretary would like to approve the funding at an event in Nevada, there are two signing event options: (1) Southern Nevada at Bureau of Reclamation for their Round 17 Capital Improvement Program (more than \$10 million at the dam); or (2) Northern Nevada at BLM-NV land acquisition (\$4.5 million - providing new recreation opportunity) and nearby fuels projects (\$5 million). The Executive Committee for SNPLMA requests the Secretary of the Interior approve \$78,002,276 of funding, including \$5 million for a Special Account Reserve and an additional \$3.2 million for SNPLMA Round 16B Craig Ranch Regional Park—a 20.57-acre acquisition project. SNPLMA funding advances by creating a conservation stewardship legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt); sustainably developing our energy and natural resources; restoring trust and being a good neighbor; protecting our people; striking a regulatory balance; modernizing our infrastructure); achieving our goals; and leading our team forward. (3/23/18)

May 5. BLM-NV. The Carson City District proposes announcing a temporary closure of 450 acres of public lands adjacent to and north of Stead Airport in Washoe County due to the National Championship Air Races. This action will be taken in the interest of safety for both spectators and participants for qualifying and competition events during the Air Races on June 7 through June 10, 2018, and Sept. 8-16, 2018. This closure is put in place each year in support of this popular event. (DTS 1956) (3/1/18)

[NEW] May 7. BLM-MT/DK. The North Central Montana District is in the process of renewing the grazing permits on 114 grazing allotments in the Bears Paw to Missouri River Breaks planning area. This planning area contains 298,668 acres of public land that is mainly located in the southern portion of Phillips, Blaine and Chouteau Counties in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (Monument) and the Havre Field Office. Western Watersheds Project recently a new public policy consultant and Montana Coordinator. The Acting Monument Manager and members of his staff will take the new coordinator on a field trip of the Monument to provide him with an on-the-ground understanding of the opportunities and challenges the BLM intends to address with these grazing permit renewals while working to develop a better working relationship with the organization. (3/23/18)

May 16 – 17. BLM-AK. The Resource Advisory Council will meet in Fairbanks. The agenda will include updates on the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, the Greater Moose's Tooth Unit 2 project, and the proposed Willow Development. There will be updates on current planning efforts, such as the Road to Ambler Mining District Environmental Impact Statement and the Bering Sea-Western Interior and Central Yukon Resource Management Plans. Five of the council's subcommittees will present their reports on placer mining, recreation, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. Council members will receive an overview on Alaska subsistence; Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) including the Northwest Boreal LCC, Western Alaska LCC, and Aleutian Bering Sea Islands LCC; and explore partnership opportunities with local, regional, state, and federal entities. The council will also hear intertribal coalition presentations from the Tanana Chiefs Conference, Kuskokwim Fish Intertribal Commission, and Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission. The *Federal Register* meeting Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/7/18) DTS 1939

May 21-22. BLM-UT will host a Resource Advisory Council meeting in Salt Lake City. Agenda items include BLM updates from the State Director, fire dispatch study implementation, 2018 fire season outlook, updates on planning process Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments, Watershed Protection Task Force, Mountain Accord, Washington County issues, Lake Powell pipeline project, recreation fee proposals, and planning updates. The public comment period will take place on May 22. The *Federal Register* meeting Notice is under review in Washington, D.C. (3/7/18) DTS 1945

Bureau of Offshore Energy Management

On April 11-12, BOEM will hold a meeting with the National Academies Committee on Offshore Science and Assessment (COSA) in Washington, D.C. The meeting will be open to the press and is to be streamed online for the public. (3/16)

[UPDATE] By April 20, BOEM expects to publish a Request for Competitive Interest for an area proposed to be used for a right-of-way (ROW) project called Atlantic Link. Clean Power Northeast Development, Inc. filed an application on May 31, 2017 (revised August 22, and September 26), for a ROW grant in support of a proposed project connecting onshore wind and hydro power in Canada to the Massachusetts market via a 350 mile HvDC submarine cable traversing the OCS. Emera, parent company to Clean Power Northeast Development, Inc., has recently expressed an interest in slowing down their project timetable. The notice is in surnaming with ASLM.

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

[UPDATE] OSMRE's Western Region expects to issue decision on the permit renewal and significant revision for the John Henry Mine in Washington on or around April 9-13, 2018. (12/20/2017)

By April 30, 2018, OSMRE expects the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to complete a lease for the Oklahoma Federal Lands: Pollyanna #8 coal mine permit revision. This permit revision proposes to expand an existing underground mining operation, with an extension area consisting of Federal and private coal reserves. No new surface disturbance overlying the area to be mined is expected. The applicant's existing coal reserves are expected to be depleted in less than 12 months; therefore, the additional coal reserve is needed to ensure continuous operations. BLM has finalized the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the coal lease on the expansion of the underground mine. With finalization of the leasing documents, MCR will be working on the development of a Mine Plan Decision Document (MPDD). Based upon OSMRE's close coordination with BLM during the development of the EA for the lease, we anticipate being able to adopt large portions of their EA for our MPDD. Future steps will include evaluation of the BLM EA for determination of NEPA adequacy, developing a Notice of Intent to Prepare an EA expected to be completed by March 16, 2018, followed by developing the EA and posting it for public review. Depending upon how much of the BLM EA that is adopted, the MPDD is expected to be completed by July 31, 2018. (1/17/2018)

By April 30, 2018, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is expected to meet with the Farrell-Cooper Mining Company regarding the processing of a new lease by application for the Liberty #8 surface coal mine in Oklahoma. BLM has specifically requested OSMRE to attend this meeting and is currently seeking input from other Federal agencies for involvement in the process. BLM had previously contacted OSMRE on January 30, 2018, to discuss the new lease by application that covers 1,620 acres of surface mining activities as well as the possibility of OSMRE acting as a co-lead or cooperating agency on the development of the leasing NEPA document, which may likely be an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The purpose of the meeting would be to discuss with the mining company processing procedures, outline NEPA responsibilities, the development of a schedule associated with leasing and the process of a mining plan decision document. As BLM is the lead on arranging this meeting we will be reporting further on this issue when we become more aware of specific details. (3/14/2018)

On May 11, 2018, Federal Defendants will respond to the Plaintiff's motion for summary judgment in the U.S. District Court of Montana. On June 8, 2017, Wild Earth Guardians and Montana Environmental Information Center submitted a Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief claiming that OSMRE failed to adequately analyze the indirect impacts of transportation, failed to adequately analyze greenhouse gases and impacts to the air from coal combustion, failed to consider cumulative actions, and failed to prepare an EIS for the October 2016 mining plan modification decision at the Spring Creek Mine. Petitioners also allege that the mining plan modification approval was unauthorized because the lease was invalid due to an alleged delegation of authority violation. (2/15/2018)

On or about May 18, 2018, OSMRE plans to submit the Bull Mountains Mine No. 1's Mining Plan decision document to headquarters for review and approval by the ASLM. Signal Peak Energy's Bull Mountains Mine No. 1 is an underground coal mine located in Musselshell and Yellowstone Counties, MT. The mine employs 260 people and produces approximately 6 – 10 million tons of saleable coal per year. (3/15/2018)

On or about May 31, 2018, OSMRE plans to submit the Falkirk Mine's Mining Plan decision document to headquarters for review and approval by the ASLM. Falkirk Mining Company's Falkirk Coal Mine is a surface coal mine located in McLean County, ND. The mine employs 412 full-time employees and 118 temporary employees and produces approximately 8 – 8.5 million tons of coal per year. (3/15/2018)

Awareness

Bureau of Offshore Energy Management

[NEW] On April 4-6, BOEM's Acting Director will attend the International Offshore Wind Partnering Forum in Princeton, NJ. He is a speaker on April 4 and will participate in the BOEM listening session on April 6. The Secretary is also scheduled to speak on April 6.

[NEW] On April 10, BOEM's Acting Director will give a keynote presentation at the Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation's course on Federal Offshore Oil & Gas Leasing and Development in New Orleans.

[NEW] On April 13, BOEM's Acting Director will speak at the National Ocean Industries Association annual meeting in Washington DC.

[UPDATE] On March 22, BOEM approved US Wind's Site Assessment Plan (SAP) proposing the installation of a meteorological tower in the company's wind lease offshore Maryland. (2/20/18)

By late March, BOEM would like to publish the 2017 Comprehensive Inventory of OCS Oil and Natural Gas Resources Report to Congress. This report is required by Section 357 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. It directs the Secretary of the Interior to provide a report to Congress within 6 months of the date of enactment (i.e., Aug. 8, 2005), with updates of at least every 5 years. This report is an update to the 2013 report. It is currently in surnaming with ASLM.

[UPDATE] On March 9, the public comment period for the BOEM DPP closed. As of March 22, BOEM has received over one million comment letters, although comment letters continue to be counted at this time. BOEM is currently reviewing comments and working on the analyses for both the upcoming Proposed Program document and the associated Environmental Impact Statement. (3/9/18)

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement

In progress Alaska Suspensions: The Arctic Slope Regional Corporation has requested a suspension of operations (SOO) for 21 leases previously held by Shell. BSEE made an initial determination to unitize 20 of the 21 leases. A communications plan was submitted to ASLM on

March 1 with two possible scenarios, a fact sheet, and a draft press release. The two scenarios are disapproval and approval depending on the final decision. The final decision will be returned to AEX in a letter signed by the BSEE Alaska regional director. (3/22/18)

As of March 15, 2018, Eni U.S. Operating Co. Inc. continues drilling operations on their NN-01 exploration well, seeking to drill directionally from Spy Island Drillsite (an existing artificial production and drilling island in state waters) north to reach a reservoir target on the U.S. OCS. Though Eni has experienced setbacks in the form of equipment failures and drilling complications, they continue to make overall progress. Currently they are working issues stemming from last weekend's well control problems, and are focused on ensuring the health of their downhole tooling and equipment and overall stability of the well bore before making plans to continue drilling. The hole remains at the approximately 1.5 mile measured depth (gross length along the wellbore not considering changes in direction and inclination) it has been at since late last week. There are no immediate safety concerns, but the drilling situation downhole remains technically challenging, requiring a careful and methodical approach, which Eni appears to be taking. (3/22/18)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLICY, MANAGEMENT, AND BUDGET

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

From April 2-6, Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, Scott Cameron will be in Washington, DC, and participating in routine internal briefings.

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Policy and Environmental Management (DAS PEM)

[NEW] On April 2, the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) Anchorage Office will lead a meeting with regional DOI bureaus and offices to discuss National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and environmental review issues, including projects in Alaska. (Anchorage, AK; no press) (03/28/2018)

Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR)

On April 4, Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) Program Director John Mehlhoff will attend and participate in the Bakken Federal Executives Group (BFEG) in Billings, Montana. This group works together to identify and address common issues associated with rapid and widespread changes related to oil and gas development in the Bakken region which encompasses western North Dakota, northwest South Dakota, and eastern Montana; (no press). (02/21/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Management (DAS PRE)

[NEW] On April 6, Deputy Assistant Secretary Humbert will be the guest speaker for DOI Investigator Training Program (ITP) 801 graduation at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Brunswick, GA. The class consists of 24 DOI graduates. (03/28/2018)

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Policy and Environmental Management (DAS PEM)

On April 9-12, the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management will be held in Shepherdstown, WV. The National Invasive Species Council Secretariat (NISC), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) will work with Canadian and Mexican delegations and other colleagues to address issues of data mobilization and prioritization of islands for invasive species control and eradication in the context of developing a North American Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan. Activities will include a formal presentation to the Ecosystem Conservation Working Table and a sidebar working session to assess activities to date, agree on shared objectives, and identify next steps. PMB is coordinating with the Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs; formal communications or outreach is not anticipated. (03/21/2018)

[NEW] From April 10-11, the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) Secretariat Chief Scientist will participate on a review panel of the NASA Earth System Science Fellowship Program in Bethesda, MD (closed press). (03/28/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Management (DAS PRE)

[NEW] From April 9-13, Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) Director Jeff Rupert will be in Boise, ID to meet with the Intertribal Timber Council, National Wildland Fire Coordinating Council, and Fire Management Board (no press). (03/28/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Budget, Finance, Performance and Acquisition (DAS BFPA)

On April 11, Secretary Zinke will testify in support of the FY 2019 President's Budget before the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee. The Secretary is scheduled to testify before the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee on May 9. Deputy Assistant Secretary Olivia Ferriter and Office of Budget Director Denise Flanagan will support the Secretary at the table. (03/07/2018)

15-60 Day Look Ahead

Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR)

[UPDATE] During the week of April 23, 2018, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) intends to disburse the first qualified Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (GOMESA) Phase II revenues to the four Gulf producing States and their eligible coastal political subdivisions (CPS). The total disbursement that the States and their CPS will share is over \$200 million, prior to sequestration. ONRR is drafting a communications plan and press release, and coordinating with the Department's Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, Communications Office, and the Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management. (03/28/2018)

During the week of April 23, Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) Director Greg Gould will attend and participate in the Council of Petroleum Accountants Societies (COPAS) spring 2018 meeting in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Director Gould will discuss a high level overview of ONRR's reorganization and projects; (no press). (03/14/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Budget, Finance, Performance and Acquisition (DAS BFPA)

[NEW] From May 6-9, 2018, staff from the Office of Acquisition and Property Management (PAM) (Elizabeth Varner, PAM; Diana Warring, DOI Museum; and Bambi Allen and Conor McMahon, Indian Arts and Crafts Board) will participate in the American Alliance of Museum's Conference in Phoenix, Arizona. PAM will participate in a panel, *STEAM (and Social!) Power: Educating, Engaging, and Elevating through DOI Collection*, in collaboration with panelists from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the National Park Service (NPS). (03/28/2018)

On May 9, a report of the initial allocations of Hurricane Supplemental funding is due to Congress. Draft Operating Plans have been submitted for review by the Deputy Secretary. Once approved, they will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) after which the Office of Budget will prepare an allocation plan for Congress. (03/21/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Management (DAS PRE)

From April 25-27, Office of Aviation Services Director will be in Seattle, WA where he will be a featured speaker at Nextgov's "*Limitless Government: Technology as a Force for Change*" event, part of a nationwide series (previous one in LA, future events in Denver, Atlanta). His tentative presentation title: "*Drones for Good: A Government Technology Success Story & Road Map for Success in Other Areas*" (open to press). (03/14/2018)

From April 30 - May 4, Office of Aviation Services (OAS) Director Mark Bathrick will attend the Association of Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) annual conference in Denver, CO. (03/07/2018)

[NEW] From April 30 - May 10, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) will facilitate the National Level Exercise (NLE) 2018. NLE 2018 will examine the ability of all levels of government, private industry, and nongovernmental organizations to protect against, respond to, and recover from a major Mid-Atlantic hurricane. Several building block activities within DOI will occur leading up to the functional and full-scale portions of NLE 2018, culminating in the activation of DOI alternate Site Charlie on May 7-8. Upcoming related events include COOP training for political appointees on March 29 and COOP Training for all team members on April 3. (03/28/2018)

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Policy and Environmental Management (DAS PEM)

[NEW] On April 19, DOI bureaus and offices, including the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) Anchorage, and other Federal agencies will participate in an Alaska Energy

Permitting Interagency Working Group (IWG) staff call. The Alaska Energy Permitting IWG staff calls provide a forum for sharing information on energy exploration and development in Alaska. (03/28/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 17-18, the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) Philadelphia Office will participate in this bi-annual meeting on oil spill and hazardous substance release contingency planning and preparedness in Grand Rapids, MI. On April 19-20, the Denver Office will participate in the Regional Response Team 8 Meeting, led by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Coast Guard. Participants will include DOI bureaus, state agencies, and industry partners. These meetings are held bi-annually to facilitate the effective organization of preparedness and response efforts used by federal and bureau partners in the event of an oil spill or hazardous substance release through contingency planning, training and resource coordination. (03/28/2018)

[NEW] On April 25 (Rain Date: April 26), DOI is Celebrating the 2018 Earth Day Event in Rawlins Park. This year theme is “End Plastic Pollution.” We are expected to have at least 40 vendors (combined with DOI, Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the General Services Administration (GSA) and non-profit organizations). DOI will have a truck parked on the E Street side of the Main Interior Building for people to drop off their unusable/unwanted personal (home) computers and other types of electronic equipment. DOI will schedule a photo-op and walk thru in Rawlins Park with the Interior Secretary, GSA Administrator and OPM Director (12:00-12:30p). (03/28/2018)

[NEW] From May 30-31, the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) will participate in the annual national meeting for Emergency Support Function (ESF) - Protection of Natural and Cultural Resources and Historic Properties (ESF #11) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Patriot’s Plaza Building in Washington, DC. The meeting will focus on updates from each of the agencies that comprise ESF #11, as well as discussions on how to improve support to States, Tribes, and Territories during FEMA-led activations. The OEPC and USGS will be presenting on DOI’s programs and capabilities that provide support to ESF #11. (03/28/2018)

Awareness

Deputy Assistant Secretary - Budget, Finance, Performance and Acquisition (DAS BFPA)

[NEW] The Government Accountability Office (GAO) initiated a new audit “Department of Defense Corrosion Prevention and Mitigation” (Job Code 102285) in response to a congressional mandate within the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. GAO will investigate the extent of the impact of corrosion on the military services’ equipment and facilities. As part of the audit, GAO will determine how the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) received information on electro-osmotic pulse technology from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and how this technology performed after its pilot test at the Trinity River Dam in California. (03/28/2018)

[NEW] The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently met with the National Park Service, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management in a GAO

entrance conference to discuss the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) (Job Code 102645), in response to a request from Senator Murkowski. The GAO will review: (1) components of the LWCF and funding for the past ten years; (2) process to develop LWCF Federal land acquisition projects; (3) criteria to recommend LWCF Federal land acquisition projects to Congress; and (4) lands acquired with LWCF funds and the acquisition mechanism (e.g., conservation easements, fee simple title, and condemnation) (Washington, DC; no press). (03/28/2018)

[NEW] (Per GAO, distribution is highly restricted) - The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently issued the draft GAO report "Data Center Optimization: Continued Agency Actions Needed to Meet Goals and Address Prior Recommendations (GAO-18-264) as required by a Congressional mandate within the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform provisions of the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act. The GAO reviewed 24 Federal agencies' data center inventories, their reported cost savings documentation, data center optimization strategic plans to assess progress against the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) established optimization targets. GAO found that the 24 agencies reported limited progress in meeting OMB's five data center optimization targets for server utilization and automated monitoring, energy metering, power usage effectiveness, facility utilization, and virtualization. In 2016 and 2017, GAO made a number of recommendations to the various agencies including the Department, some of which continue to be implemented. There are no new recommendations in this report. The response is due April 16, 2018. (03/28/2018)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR WATER AND SCIENCE

Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel

April 3-4, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Tim Petty will speak to the National Geospatial Advisory Committee's spring meeting, to be held at Department of the Interior (open to the public). On April 5, he will chair a meeting of the Federal Geographic Data Committee Executive Committee, also at DOI (closed). Tim will be in the office all week for other routine meetings and briefings.

From April 2-4, USGS Deputy Director Bill Werkheiser, Associate Director Cline, Delaware Rivermaster Robert Mason and Deputy Delaware River Master Kendra Russell will participate in a series of meetings with officials from the states of PA, NY, NJ, and DE, and NYC (parties to the 1954 Supreme Court Decree adjudicating use of the waters of the Delaware and charging the USGS with establishing the Office of Delaware River Master (ODRM)). The purpose of the meetings is to review plans and priorities for the ODRM for modeling and operational improvements and implementation of studies agreed to by the parties in October 2017.

Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman will be in the office all week attending various meeting and events.

Immediate Announcements and Actions (within the next 14 days)

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

[UPDATE] Between March 28 and April 10, Reclamation's Albuquerque Area Office will be presenting to the Rio Grande Compact Commission and the Pecos River Commission at their annual meetings. The Rio Grande Compact Commission is scheduled to meet March 28-29 in Austin, Texas. Reclamation provides its annual water accounting report in print and provides a presentation on any items that have been requested for discussion. Reclamation staff from the Upper Colorado Region and Albuquerque will also lead/participate in a tour of the Rio Grande Project for Department of Justice and DOI Solicitors working on the Texas v. New Mexico Supreme Court Case. They will tour the Project in Southern New Mexico, West Texas and the Mexico border on April 5-6. The Pecos River Commission is scheduled to meet in Midland, Texas, on April 9-10. Both meetings are open to the public but rarely have public or media attendance. (03/12/2018)

[NEW] On April 1, the City of Durango will hold a soft opening of Lake Nighthorse near the city for non-motorized use. Lake Nighthorse is part of the Animas-La Plata Project. Reclamation's Western Colorado Area Office continues to work closely with the City on this opening and on plans to open to motorized use in May. Local media interest likely. (3/26/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 2, Reclamation's Wyoming Area Office to announce Bighorn Basin Snowmelt Forecast. (3/20/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 2, Reclamation's Wyoming Area Office to announce North Platte Basin Snowmelt Forecast. (3/20/2018)

Between April 2 and April 6, Reclamation's Wyoming Area Office plans to announce Boysen Water Users Meeting and Buffalo Bill Water Users Meeting. (3/20/2018)

[NEW] On April 2, Reclamation will issue a news release announcing \$542,926 to be provided to the Bureau of Land Management for the purchase of 1,387 acres within BLM's Ciervo-Panoche Natural Area in Fresno County. Proposed funding is from the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Habitat Restoration Program and the Central Valley Project Conservation Program to help mitigate CVP impacts and minimize future impacts on threatened and endangered species. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 2 and 13, Reclamation's San Joaquin River Restoration Program will release a Final EA/FONSI for the Eastside Bypass Improvements Project. The project has the primary purpose of facilitating fish migration and increasing restoration flow capacity in the Eastside Bypass by 2020. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 2 and 13, Reclamation expects to release the Funding Constrained Framework for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program along with a joint press release from the five implementing agencies (Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Department of Water Resources). The Framework will be monumental in shaping program direction into the next decade. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] On April 2, Reclamation will issue a news release proposing to enter into an agreement with San Luis and Grassland Water Districts to provide south of Delta refuges with additional Level 4 water in exchange with SLWD for Level 2 water. The proposed agreement is five years from the date of execution and may be extended to 25 years. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 2 and April 4, Reclamation will issue a news release announcing six winners of the more-water, less concentrate prize competition. The competition sought innovative concepts to expand usable water supplies by maximizing fresh water production from inland desalination systems in a cost effective and environmentally sound manner. (3/26/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 2 and April 13, Reclamation will release its scoping report as part of the re-initiation of consultation on long-term operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project (ROC on LTO). This report will outline the proposed NEPA scoping process for the ROC on LTO EIR/EIS. (3/20/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 2 and April 6, Reclamation will issue a news release announcing the availability of the draft Environmental Assessment for Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District's proposal to transfer up to 45,000 acre-feet of water (up to 30,000 acre-feet Project Water and 15,000 acre-feet Base Supply) to the Colusa Drain Mutual Water Company annually from June through September, commencing with contract year 2018 and continuing through contract year 2022. There will be a 30-day public comment period for the draft EA. (3/19/2018)

[UPDATE] Between April 2 and April 30, the Bureau of Reclamation will distribute a press release notifying the public of the availability of a draft environmental assessment for Financial Assistance for the Klamath Basin Sucker Rearing Program. The draft EA was developed by Reclamation's Klamath Basin Area Office in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Some media and or interest from the Klamath Tribes is possible. (3/12/2018)

On April 2, Reclamation will issue a news release announcing the availability of the Environmental Assessment/Initial Study and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Boca Dam Safety of Dams Modification Project. The project will reduce seismic risks and meet Reclamation's interim public protection guidelines. (3/19/2018)

Between April 2 and 6, Reclamation will issue a news release announcing the availability of the draft environmental document for public review on a Long-Term Warren Act contract for the Sacramento Suburban Water District. Execution of the "wet-year only" contract would enable the delivery of up to 29,000 acre-feet/per year of Middle-Fork Project water through Folsom Reservoir for municipal and industrial uses in northern Sacramento and southwestern Placer Counties. Potential media interest. (3/19/2018)

Between April 2 and April 20, Reclamation is planning to launch the Pathogen Monitoring for Potable Reuse – State 1 Prize Competition. Reclamation and Xylem, Inc., in collaboration with the Water Environment & Reuse Foundation, the State of California and the Environmental Protection Agency are seeking the development of improved monitoring techniques to protect public health and optimize the operations at water treatment facilities. Success could facilitate public and regulatory acceptance of direct potable reuse systems. (1/9/2018)

On April 2 and April 3, Reclamation's Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program will hold a biology committee meeting in Grand Junction, Colorado. The Recovery Program is comprised of federal, state and local agencies with a common goal of endangered fish recovery and continued water development in the Upper Colorado River Basin. The biology committee provides technical recommendations to the Recovery Program management committee. Topics include review and approval of the recovery implementation recovery action plan. The meeting is open to the public. (02/20/2018)

[NEW] On April 3, Mid-Pacific Regional Director David Murillo will discuss water issues and perspectives on a panel for the California Department of Food and Agriculture in Sacramento. Other panelists include representatives from the California Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board. The California State Board of Food and Agriculture is a 15-member board to the governor and secretary advising on agricultural and consumer issues that impact the state's farmers and ranchers. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] On April 3-5, Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region will host the Reclamation Associated Facility Workshop in Sacramento. Regional Director David Murillo will provide opening remarks on Tuesday, April 3. (3/26/2018)

On April 3, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Sonoma County Water Agency, acting as administrator for the North Bay Water Reuse Authority, will release a joint draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for Phase 2 of the North Bay Water Recycling Program. Phase 2 includes building upon the existing regional wastewater reuse network to provide additional opportunities for recycled water for agricultural, urban and environmental uses for treated wastewater currently discharged to San Pablo Bay. Reclamation may provide funding assistance, through a competitive process, to help finance the proposed Phase 2. The Sonoma County Water Agency will hold four public meetings in April to solicit public input on alternatives, concerns and issues to be addressed in the final EIR/EIS. (3/12/2018)

[NEW] On April 5, the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program's Implementation Committee will host a webinar. Topics covered will include reports from the Recovery Program Director's Office, capital project updates, status of funding legislation, species status assessments and post-2023 planning activities. Meetings are open to the public. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] On April 6, Mid-Pacific Regional Director David Murillo will host a Government-to-Government meeting in Sacramento with the Chicken Ranch Rancheria, Me-Wuk Indians of California to discuss water supply needs. (3/26/2018)

From April 6-8, Reclamation staff will attend the USA Science and Engineering Festival in Washington, D.C. It is estimated that more than 400,000 people will be in attendance, with students being the primary audience. We will be there to discuss Reclamation's role in water management throughout the Western United States, and to discuss future career needs in an effort to generate interest in our agency from students. (3/19/2018)

Before April 6, a *Federal Register* Notice of Availability for the final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) prepared by Reclamation and the City of San Diego for the North City Project is scheduled to be issued. This project is the first phase of the Pure Water San Diego Program—a water and wastewater facilities plan to produce potable water from recycled water. A draft EIR/EIS was issued for public review and comment in late November 2017. Under the proposed action, the existing North City Water Reclamation Plant would be expanded and an adjacent North City Pure Water Facility would be constructed with a purified water pipeline to Miramar Reservoir, located in the Scripps Miramar Ranch community of San Diego, California. Reclamation will not make a decision on the proposed project until at least 30 days after the NOA is published by the Environmental Protection Agency. (1/12/2018)

[NEW] Between April 6 and 11, Reclamation will release final environmental documents on the proposed approval of annual transfers of up to 15,000 acre-feet per year of available Central Valley Project water supplies over a nine-year period. Transfers of CVP water would be from CVP contractors to Harris Farms and Shows Family Farms either for direct agricultural use on their lands located within Westlands Water District, San Luis Water District, and Semitropic Water Storage District or for banking in Semitropic and/or the Kern Water Bank for later use on their lands within those same districts. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 6 and 11, Reclamation will release draft environmental documents on the proposed issuance of a five-year Warren Act Agreement to Ivanhoe Irrigation District for the introduction and conveyance of up to 6,500 acre-feet per year of Kaweah River water in the Friant-Kern Canal. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 9 and April 13, Reclamation's Montana Area Office will issue a press release announcing a public meeting scheduled on April 24 in Billings, MT to present spring operations information for Yellowtail Dam. (03/23/2018)

Between April 9 and April 16, Reclamation's Albuquerque Area Office is scheduled to host three public meetings to roll out its annual operating plans for the Rio Grande and Pecos River. The Pecos meeting is tentatively scheduled for the morning of April 9 at the Bureau of Land Management Office in Roswell, NM. The Rio Grande meetings are scheduled for the afternoon of April 12 at the Albuquerque Area Office and the afternoon of April 16 at the Elephant Butte Irrigation District in Las Cruces, NM. These meetings are generally well attended, especially in extremely dry years like this one. A news advisory announcing the meetings is planned for the first week in April. (3/05/2018)

[NEW] On April 10, Reclamation's Hydraulic Lab in Denver will host eight teams from three universities to test a scaled prototype of a trash removal device in a custom flume in the lab. The trash removal device is for Cherry Creek that flows through Denver. There is a potential for media to attend, but none have confirmed at this time. (3/26/2018)

On April 11, Reclamation's Montana Area Office staff have been invited to meet with the Wyoming State Engineer and the Attorney for the Wyoming Attorney General's Office on Yellowtail/Bighorn Lake Operations. More details to follow. (3/13/2018)

[NEW] On April 12, the Glen Canyon Dam Experimental Technical Team is meeting with the Experimental Leadership Team and the Department of the Interior to recommend that Macroinvertebrate Production Flows, also known as “Bug Flows,” be tested between May 1 and August 31, 2018. Bug Flows consist of steady weekend releases from Glen Canyon Dam and normal fluctuating releases during the weekdays. The steady weekend flows are expected to provide favorable conditions for insects to lay eggs along the Colorado River downstream of Glen Canyon Dam, while the fluctuating flows during the weekdays are designed to be slightly higher, thus preventing the eggs from drying out. This experiment is expected to have positive benefits to the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems in Glen, Marble and Grand Canyons. The purpose of the experimental flow is to test the effectiveness of Bug Flows on improving insect production and to increase the availability of food for aquatic and terrestrial life. This experiment, if approved by the Department, will be conducted under the Long-Term Experimental Management Plan. Communication efforts will include press releases. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] On April 13, Reclamation will publish a Notice of Availability, followed by a 90 day public comment period for Supplemental Draft EIS for Two Water Projects in Washington State. Reclamation, with co-lead Washington State Department of Ecology in cooperation with the Yakama tribe; U.S. Forest Service and Bonneville Power Administration have prepared a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant and Keechelus Reservoir-to-Kachess Reservoir Conveyance Projects.

[NEW] On April 13, Reclamation’s South-Central California Area Office representatives will meet in Fresno with Cachuma Project Member Units to discuss Operation and Maintenance deficits owed to Reclamation. (3/26/2018)

U.S. Geological Survey

[NEW] On April 1, the USGS plans to distribute a public notice to news outlets in Ellsworth and New Richmond, Wisconsin, and Red Wing, Minnesota, announcing a public open comment period for proposed USGS field trials of a white-nose syndrome vaccine in the area. The field trials, part of an Environmental Assessment that is being developed by the USGS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, will evaluate methods of vaccine delivery and their effectiveness in reducing or preventing white-nose syndrome (WNS) in wild bats under field conditions. The comment period will be open for 30 days starting on April 1, 2018, pending approval of the Public Notice. The Public Notice will be submitted to the outlets by a USGS Environmental Manager and is not meant to be a formal news release. (3/23/2018)

[UPDATE] On April 2, a USGS will announce a new article that examines how much warning times are physically possible from earthquake early warning systems. This study examines warning times for different alerting levels of ground shaking, from light shaking to very strong shaking. It finds that users who are alerted at lower ground motion thresholds (e.g., warnings of impending light shaking) will receive more robust warnings with longer average warning times than users who are alerted for higher ground motion thresholds (e.g., warnings of impending very strong shaking). The article will be published in *Science Advances* and a regional news release is planned. (3/12/2018)

[**UPDATE**] On April 2, the USGS will announce a new web application that provides real-time water-quality, streamflow and water height information for Lake Houston and the surrounding San Jacinto watershed. Lake Houston is the primary drinking-water source for Houston, Texas. Real-time data is required to evaluate the effects of watershed influences, such as land-use change and storm events, on Lake Houston water quality. These data will help water treatment facility operators make informed decisions about adjusting treatment methods in response to changing water-quality conditions. A local news release is planned. (3/19/2018)

On April 3, the USGS will announce a new technique to identify whether or not insulation contains expanded vermiculite insulation. The goal of this study was to determine if in situ near-infrared reflectance measurements could be used to reliably identify the source of vermiculite ore and therefore its potential to contain asbestos. Commercially produced vermiculite insulation from Libby, Montana, contains trace levels of asbestiform amphibole, which is known to cause asbestos-related diseases. The paper will be published in *American Mineralogist*. (3/5/2018)

[**NEW**] This week, the USGS will highlight a recently published paper that investigates potential impacts to bat habitat following timber harvests. Timber harvests are being conducted in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley to create healthier habitat for migratory birds and other species such as deer and bear. Scientists recently investigated the impacts to bat habitat and found no evidence that these treatments had negative effects to bat activity within the study area. The research was done by scientists at Stephen F. Austin State University, the USFWS and the USGS. The paper is published in *Forest Ecology and Management* and social media alerts are planned. (3/23/2018)

[**NEW**] This week, the USGS will announce the installation of water quality and weather monitoring equipment for Bear Lake, Utah. The new equipment will provide near real-time information to the public, partners and water managers. A local news release and social media are planned. (3/23/2018)

[**UPDATE**] In April, the USGS plans to highlight a new paper entitled, “North American Net Import Reliance of Mineral Materials for Advanced Technologies.” The USGS and Natural Resources Canada conducted a study on the net import reliance of the United States, Canada, and Mexico as individual countries and as a single trading bloc for twelve nonfuel mineral commodities that are associated with advanced technology products. The minerals are cadmium, cobalt, gallium, germanium, graphite, indium, lithium, nickel, rare earths, selenium, silver, and tellurium. The results indicate that, as a single entity, North America is much less dependent on other nations for the supply of these commodities than its constituent countries are individually. This is because value chains between the three countries are tightly integrated such that various materials commonly cross continental borders multiple times, as value is added at each step. This study highlights the mitigation of potential supply risk for critical minerals that results from trade within the North American bloc. The paper will be published in *Mining Engineering* will be highlighted via social media. (3/22/2018)

[**UPDATE**] In April, the USGS will announce three “storm trackers” showing where floodwaters of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria possibly carried non-native and invasive freshwater plants and animals into new habitat. 2017 hurricane floodwaters inundated large expanses of state and federal conservation land likely carrying non-native plants and animals into new habitats. Some

of these species are invasive and able to disrupt native food webs or damage landscapes. Since field surveys over such large areas are impractical, the storm trackers can help land managers target potential hot spots for newly arrived invasive species and take early, cost-effective steps to manage them. (3/5/2018)

In April, the USGS plans to announce a new paper that confirms a new established population of the invasive Cuban treefrog in New Orleans, La. This is the first breeding population to occur outside the state of Florida. Cuban treefrogs can drive out native frogs and be a nuisance to homeowners. They are invasive in Florida, where they have successfully bred since at least 1951. The findings will be published in *Biological Invasions* and a national news release is planned. (3/12/2018)

15-60 Day Look-Ahead

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

[NEW] On Monday, April 16, Reclamation's Lower and Upper Colorado Regions will co-host a webinar to apprise water officials with Basin States and Mexico regarding the results of the most probable April 2018 24-Month Study water use projections. The April 24-Month study is developed by Reclamation hydrologists annually to alert these organizations about the most probable water storage and hydrological conditions that are predicted to occur during the Colorado River Basin's upcoming water year. Following the webinar, the most probable April 2018 24-Month Study will be distributed and posted online. A PDF of the presentation will also be provided after the webinar. Media interest in the April 2018 24-Month Study report is usually extensive with Western journalists requesting a copy of the report and/or requesting interviews with Reclamation hydrologists regarding predicted conditions. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] From April 16 to April 22 Reclamation's International Affairs Program will host the International Reservoir Sedimentation and Sustainability Workshop in Denver, Colorado. The primary goal is to provide participants with important information about reservoir sediment management for long-term sustainability. Participants at this workshop will gain an understanding about reservoir sedimentation processes and rates, as well as how to analyze and develop conceptual designs of reservoir sediment management systems. The cost of the workshop is fully reimbursable to Reclamation. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 15 and 30, Reclamation is planning to announce the selected ideas submitted under the data app prize competition. Reclamation, in collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey, is seeking the development of an application framework to support electronic data collection and capture using mobile devices across a diverse range of data collection situations. (3/26/2018)

[NEW] Between April 15 and 30, Reclamation is planning to announce the selected ideas submitted under the Long-Term Corrosion Protection of Existing Hydraulic Steel Structures prize competition. This prize competition sought ideas for long-term corrosion protection for large, hydraulic steel structures beyond the protection provided by available coatings and cathodic protection. (3/25/2018)

[NEW] On April 23 and 24, the Glen Canyon Dam Technical Work Group meeting will be held at the Arizona Department of Water Resources in Phoenix, Arizona. Topics of discussion will include the Adaptive Management Program budget and workplan for fiscal year 2019, the Arizona Game and Fish Department's planned stocking in Lees Ferry, National Park Service nonnative aquatics Environmental Assessment, possible experiments at Glen Canyon Dam in 2018, planning for future springtime High-Flow Experiment's, current basin hydrology, updates from Annual Reporting meeting, and other administrative items as needed. The meeting is open to media and the public. (3/26/2018)

On April 26 and April 27, Reclamation's Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program will hold a Management Committee meeting in Denver, Colorado. Topics will include review and approval of the recovery implementation action plan and discussion of program structure and scope following Recovery Program sunset in 2023. The meeting is open to the public. (2/20/2018)

Between May 1 and May 11, Reclamation is planning to publish the remaining completed Rural Water Supply Program Appraisal Reports. Timing is based on when the notice is published in the Federal Register. A news release will be issued in conjunction with the Federal Register Notice. (1/9/2018)

On May 16-17, Reclamation's Upper Colorado Region's Salinity Control staff will participate at the Colorado River Basin Salinity Council (Council) and Forum meetings at the Washington County Water Conservancy District Office in St. George, Utah. Commissioner Brenda Burman, Upper Colorado Regional Director Brent Rhees, and Lower Colorado Regional Director Terry Fulp have been invited to both meetings. The purpose of the Council meeting is to discuss and take appropriate actions regarding the following: Basin States Program created by Public Law 110-246, which amended the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974; responses to the Advisory Council Report; and other items within the jurisdiction of the Council. Meetings are open to the public, media generally does not attend. A federal register notice announcing the meeting is currently routing for Departmental review and approval. The notice is expected to publish on or near Thursday, April 26, 2018. (03/19/2018)

On May 21 through May 24, Reclamation's Lower Colorado Region will host a bi-annual Power Operations and Maintenance Workshop with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Tennessee Valley Authority. Discussion topics will include technical subjects related to hydro power plant and pumping facilities operations, maintenance, and engineering activities; best practices; and lessons learned. The event will be held at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas, Nevada. No press is expected. (3/12/2018)

[NEW] On May 22, the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work (AMWG) Group will host a webinar/conference call. A Federal Register Notice is currently routing for Departmental review and approval and is expected to be published around May 4. Topics of discuss will include updates on current basin hydrology, the Adaptive Management Program budget and workplan for fiscal year 2019, possible experiments at Glen Canyon Dam this water year, the

status of AMWG membership appointments, and other administrative items as needed. The webinar is open to media and the public. (3/26/2018)

U.S. Geological Survey

In April, the USGS will publish an online Science Snippet about a trio of recently published papers that show how fish, macroinvertebrates, and algae are affected by chemical and physical stressors in streams. The studies are based on the 2013 Midwest Stream Quality Assessment, which focused on 11 Midwestern states, and show that there are no pristine streams in the region. Chemical stressors, primarily nutrients and pesticides, and physical stressors, primarily excessive fine sediment and a disturbed riparian zone, have altered small streams and affected the number and diversity of fish, algae, and macroinvertebrates that call these streams home. (3/12/2018)

On April 10, USGS, DOE and the American Wind Energy Association will announce an updated map and database of all onshore and offshore wind turbines in the United States. This new resource will serve as a replacement for the current WindFarm Mapping tool maintained by the USGS Energy Resources Program. (3/7/2018)

On April 18, the USGS will participate in the release of the HayWired Earthquake Scenario in Oakland, Calif.. The HayWired Earthquake Scenario is a scientific, realistic and quantitative depiction of a future M7.0 earthquake on the Hayward Fault with an epicenter in Oakland, California. In addition to the scenario documents, a California state campaign to improve business resilience will be launched as part of the rollout. (3/7/2018)

In April, a new paper will be published in *Science Advances* that finds most atolls will become uninhabitable by the mid-21st century due to wave-driven flooding exacerbated by sea-level rise. The paper projects the impact of sea-level rise and wave-driven flooding on atoll infrastructure and freshwater availability under a variety of climate-change scenarios finding that, based on current greenhouse gas emission rates, the nonlinear interactions between sea-level rise and wave dynamics over reefs will lead to the annual wave-driven overwash of most atoll islands by the mid-21st century. A similar paper was published in 2015 and a recent report “The Impact of Sea-Level Rise and Climate Change on Department of Defense Installations on Atolls in the Pacific Ocean” was completed last fall. The research was funded by the U.S. Department of Defense’s Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program. A news release for this paper is planned. (3/12/2018)

In April, the USGS will release a Scientific Investigation Report co-authored with the Bureau of Reclamation that compares and contrasts the two agencies’ water-use information programs in the Colorado River Basin. The report also describes the legal drivers for each program, clarifies confusing terminology, compares the methods used, and contrasts the information reported by each agency. This detailed comparison demonstrates that these two Federal agencies have different missions, different programmatic drivers, and different user communities, all of which lead to different approaches to water-use data collection, analysis, and reporting. Despite the differences, the program comparison presented in this report identifies opportunities for closer coordination and sharing of information between the USGS and Reclamation, as well as program

components where agency collaboration can improve water-use estimate methodologies. (3/6/2018)

[NEW] On May 12, the USGS Cascades Volcano Observatory (Vancouver, Wash.) will hold a one-day public open house. USGS scientists will take a break from their day-to-day work to set up volcano displays and prepare science demonstrations to share with the public. The event is free and all ages are welcome. A local media advisory will be distributed. (3/27/2018)

[UPDATE] On May 15, the USGS will release a new Circular entitled “Estimated Use of Water in the United States in 2015.” This report documents the national compilation of water use data compiled by USGS once every 5 years for the entire U.S. The report will present state-level water use data for the year 2015 and discuss long-term trends in water use. An accompanying data release of county-level data will be released concurrently with the Circular. Also, a data visualization for the Circular and county-level data is being created. All three products will be released concurrently, and a news release is planned. (3/14/2018)

Awareness

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

[NEW] The revised Central North Dakota Environmental Assessment (EA) that is being prepared by Reclamation’s Great Plains Region is being reviewed by the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District. A briefing for Water and Science is being scheduled prior to release. Reclamation anticipates a second public comment period on the draft EA in April.

[NEW] Reclamation’s Dakotas Area Office is preparing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Reclamation and Manitoba regarding the development of the Adaptive Management Plan for the Northwest Area Water Supply (NAWS) Biota Water Treatment Plant. The draft MOU has been reviewed by the region, Solicitor’s Office, and DOJ. Presently, the draft MOU has been provided to the Commissioner’s office and Water & Science as well as the State of North Dakota for review and approval. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] The March 2018 24-Month Study indicates that Lake Powell releases for water year 2018 continue to be projected at 9.0 million-acre feet (maf). The determination of this year’s releases will be finalized with the April 2018 24-Month Study. Based on the current inflow forecast and projected releases, the March 24-Month Study projects Lake Powell elevation will end water year 2018 near 3,601 feet, with approximately 11.8 maf in storage (49 percent of capacity). Currently, Lake Powell is 54 percent full, with a live storage content of 13.1 maf. Water Year 2018 conditions in the Upper Colorado River Basin have been very dry, and little time remains for significant improvement prior to spring runoff. According to the Colorado Basin River Forecast Center, the forecasted inflow to Lake Powell is 3.1 million acre-feet (43 percent of average) for the 2018 April-July runoff period. Current conditions in the Lower Colorado River Basin are very dry, with record low precipitation and snowpack being reported at many sites throughout the Lower Basin. As of March 27, 2018, Lake Mead’s elevation was 1,088.2 feet with 10.7 million acre-feet in storage (41% of live capacity). With a projected release of 9.0 million acre-feet from Lake Powell in water year 2018, Lake Mead is projected to

decline to a seasonally low elevation of 1,076.2 feet with 9.7 million acre-feet in storage (37% of live capacity) in July 2018 and to end calendar year 2018 at an elevation of 1,077.24 feet with 9.8 million acre-feet in storage (37% of live capacity). Releases from Lake Powell account for approximately 90% of the total inflow into Lake Mead, with the other 10% derived from intervening flows between Glen Canyon Dam and Hoover Dam. The observed intervening flows for January and February 2018 were 80% of average. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently published a press release (3/22/2018) announcing completion of a Species Status Assessment and 5-Year Review, which proposes down-listing the humpback chub from "endangered" to "threatened." The humpback chub is still classified as endangered and, at this time, it is only proposed for down-listing. If the classification of the species is officially changed to threatened, as the 5-Year Review recommends, it will remain fully protected under the Endangered Species Act. The Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program have been key contributors in the recovery of this native fish. Reclamation's modification of flow regimes from large dams, provision of flows to support native fish, and participation in and funding of the conservation and recovery programs is a central reason this species is able to be considered for down-listing. Collaborative partnerships and management of resources have protected the species from extinction. (3/27/2018)

[NEW] Reclamation is proposing to publish a Notice of Intent (NOI) in June 2018 to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on the New Mexico Unit (NM Unit) Project (Project). The proposed Project is part of the Central Arizona Project, authorized by the Colorado River Basin Project Act of 1968, Pub. L. 90-537, 43 U.S.C. Ch. 32 (1968 Act), as amended by the Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA, Pub. L. 108-451). Pursuant to the AWSA, the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) is authorized to contract with water users in New Mexico for water from the Gila River, its tributaries and underground water sources. Use of Gila River water under the AWSA is conditioned on satisfying a variety of laws and agreements related to the use and exchange of Gila River water in New Mexico and Arizona. The NM Unit will divert Gila River water in New Mexico for this purpose. The AWSA provided funding to construct the NM Unit or, to develop other alternatives in southwestern New Mexico to meet demand. Reclamation and the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC) are joint lead agencies for complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other related environmental regulations regarding the proposed Project. Issuance of the NOI will initiate the formal public scoping process associated with NEPA compliance. (3/27/2018)

The Department and Reclamation are currently working with the Council of Environmental Quality on development of a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act for select types of title transfers. In cases where the transfer of title from Reclamation to a willing entity is non-controversial, non-complicated and would not result in a change in the operations or management of the facilities, establishment of a categorical exclusion could decrease the time required for Reclamation to complete title transfers. (3/20/2018)

Reclamation is proposing to publish a notice in the Federal Register to begin charging fees at Lake Berryessa in Napa County, California. The fees will be used to upgrade facilities and pay for costs associated with recreation. Reclamation will ensure that visitors are aware of the

proposed plan by holding public scoping meetings, press releases, posting it on the Lake Berryessa website at www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/berryessa/index.html and posting announcements at day use areas. During public scoping meetings and the public comment period, Reclamation will seek input from the public regarding the possible use of funds collected. Public scoping meetings and public outreach will ensure that the public is aware of all proposed fees and passes available to them. (2/26/2018)

Legislation authorizing the Westlands Settlement (“Settlement”) (H.R. 1769) is pending before the House of Representatives. The current stay of the *Firebaugh* injunction expired on January 15, 2018 and the district court did not grant an additional stay. As a result, Reclamation is preparing to expend significant funds to implement the Control Schedule of drainage measures for Westlands as approved by the court and could face additional litigation. The January 2018 Revised Control Schedule identifies a funding need of about \$3 million in FY 2018. Based on Congressional action to date on the fiscal year 2018 budget, upon final passage Reclamation expects to be able to accommodate the \$3 million identified in the Control Schedule. If required, it also identifies a funding need of over \$12.2 million in FY 2019, which is not currently included in the fiscal year 2019 President’s budget; over \$13.8 million in FY 2020, over \$29.7 million in FY 2021 – ramping up to a need of over \$101 million in FY 2023. The funding needs to implement drainage are significant and represent a substantial financial obligation for the Department of the Interior. (2/9/2018)

U.S. Geological Survey

[**NEW**] USGS Associate Director Environmental Health and Acting Associate Director Energy and Minerals, Geoff Plumlee, has been invited to participate in three meetings at the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM). On April 4th, Dr. Plumlee will participate in a panel of Federal agency representatives (FDA, DOE, DOD, USGS) in a meeting of the NASEM Environmental Health Matters Initiative. On April 12th, Dr. Plumlee will give a 20-minute presentation on contaminants and pathogens from natural sources in the subsurface to the NASEM Spring Series on Subsurface Contaminants co-sponsored by the NASEM Boards on Chemical Sciences and Technology, Environmental Studies and Toxicology, Earth Sciences and Resources, and Water Science and Technology. On April 26th, Dr. Plumlee will attend a morning subsurface contaminants series session and then in the afternoon join other USGS leaders at the Board of Earth Sciences and Resources sponsors session.

Executive Order 13817 (December 2017) inaugurated a government-wide effort to strengthen and sustain the Nation’s critical mineral supply chains, with significant USGS responsibilities in four areas. (1) The USGS, in conjunction with BLM and other Federal agencies, developed a draft list of 35 critical minerals, published on February 16, 2018, in the Federal Register. Public comment closed on March 19, 2018, and the USGS is preparing a short summary of comments. (2) The USGS is leading development of a plan to better assess the Nation’s subsurface mineral potential through new collection of geophysical, geologic, and topographic data. The draft plan will be transmitted to the Secretary by April 19, 2018. In the coming months, the USGS anticipates additional review and input from other Federal agencies and external partners, and ongoing revisions as required to inform the government-wide strategy to be published by the Department of Commerce in August 2018. (3) The USGS will provide technical input to

Commerce on the potential to better use above-ground sources of critical minerals, including by recycling, reprocessing, and substituting alternative materials. (4) USGS will provide technical input to Commerce on existing trade dependencies for critical minerals. (2/9/2018)

Upcoming USGS Publications

[*NEW*] On April 10, a newly accepted USGS article that discusses the domestic potential to reduce net import reliance for mineral commodities in *Eos Earth and Space Science News*. Net import reliance measures the dependence of the United States on imports to meet domestic consumption. This article explains how net import reliance for mineral commodities is calculated from individual components using examples of specific mineral commodities. The USGS National Minerals Information Center compiles and publishes production, consumption, and net import reliance data for more than 90 nonfuel minerals and materials. (3/28/2018)

[*NEW*] In the coming weeks, a recently accepted paper that describes the effects of fuel treatments on forest resistance to drought will be published in *Forest Ecology and Management*. The research, a collaboration between the USGS and Humboldt State University tests the efficacy of forest management tools in the wake of California's severe, years-long drought. Researchers examined tree-growth response to climatic stress and the use of fuel treatments, such as "mastication," or the shredding of low-lying vegetation by machine, within forests of the Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, California. (3/28/2018)

[*NEW*] In April, a new USGS paper entitled "Effects of contemporary land-use and land-cover change on the carbon balance of terrestrial ecosystems in the United States" will be published in *Environmental Research Letters*. For this study, USGS researchers analyzed how 40 years of change in land use, land cover, and disturbance affected the amount of carbon stored and sequestered in ecosystems of the conterminous United States. (3/23/2018)

[*NEW*] In May, a new USGS paper entitled "Geochemistry and mineralogy of late Quaternary loess in the upper Mississippi River valley, USA: Provenance and correlation with Laurentide Ice Sheet history," will be published in *Quaternary Science Reviews*. For this study, researchers applied new geochemical methods to test the hypothesis that sources of loess (windblown silt) in the upper Mississippi River valley varied over the period of accumulation. The findings confirm that dominance of loess sources varied several times during the period of accumulation changing as the positions of ice lobes of the Laurentide Ice Sheet shifted during the last glacial period. (3/23/2018)