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Attached is the daily news report for August 3.

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DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

UTAH – TOP STORIES – AUGUST 3, 2017

1. Trekking through history at Dead Horse Point

Moab Sun News, Aug. 3 | Sharon Sullivan

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2. Mayor urges county to reject Rally on the Rocks permits

Moab Sun News, Aug. 3 | Rudy Herndon

If he didn’t have the Grand County Council’s attention last year, Moab Mayor Dave Sakrison likely has it by now.

In a letter to the council, Sakrison is urging the county not to renew the permit for the second-largest special event of the year, the Rally on the Rocks UTV and side-by-side off-road vehicle gathering.

E&E/NATIONAL NEWS – TOP STORIES

1. Interior Dept. Reaffirms Protection of National Monument in Montana

New York Times, Aug. 2 | Eric Lipton

WASHINGTON — The Interior Department announced on Wednesday that the Upper Missouri River Breaks, a famous chunk of river in central Montana that holds a national monument designation, would remain fully protected by federal land-use restrictions.

2. Man planning bike trail finds dinosaur bones instead

KUSA 9 Colorado News, Aug. 2 | Miles Moraitis

Imagine hiking on a trail and stumbling upon dinosaur bones. Well that's exactly what happened to a Colorado land management official when he was walking and planning out the new Palisade Plunge bike trail near Grand Junction.



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3. Study Shows Breeding Sage Grouse Not Effective Approach

Wyoming Public Media, Aug. 2 | Melodie Edwards

A new report called "[The Sage Grouse White Papers](#)" released last month by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies shows that captive breeding methods have a long way to go before they can help bring up sage grouse numbers.

4. Animal Images In Prehistoric Rock Art: Looking Beyond Europe

NPR News, Aug. 3 | Barbara King

Rock art images of bulls, bison, horses, lions, rhinoceros, and other animals from caves like Lascaux and Chauvet in France and Altamira in Spain have become popular icons showcasing the antiquity of human-animal relationships, as well as human creativity.

5. Argonne uses digital tools to preserve Southwestern cultural heritage

Phys.org, Aug. 3 | Steve Koppes

Hollywood's Indiana Jones gained fame for wielding his pistol and bullwhip, but researchers at the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Argonne National Laboratory prefer to equip themselves with something far more sophisticated: Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis.

6. AIR POLLUTION: Pruitt about-faces, won't delay Obama-era ozone regs

E & E News, Aug. 3 | Sean Reilly

Two months after abruptly delaying a key milestone to implement U.S. EPA's 2015 ground-level ozone standard, agency Administrator Scott Pruitt just as suddenly yesterday reversed that decision.

7. INTERIOR: Bernhardt warns employees not to 'parrot' special interests

E & E News, Aug. 3 | Kellie Lunney

Interior Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt told department employees this week that he expects respectful and healthy disagreement from them, but also an adherence to facts rather than "special interests."



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8. **INTERIOR: Zinke, Murkowski share beers, tweet selfie**

E & E News, Aug. 3 | Hannah Northey

In a sharp pivot from last week's health care tumult, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Alaska Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski this morning appeared together in a selfie posted on Twitter, smiling and drinking beers.

9. **PUBLIC LANDS: Greens debut website showcasing oil and gas data**

E & E News, Aug. 3 | Kellie Lunney

Two conservation groups hope oil and gas development data housed in a central location online will demystify the leasing and drilling process on public lands.



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UTAH – FULL STORY

1. Trekking through history at Dead Horse Point

Moab Sun News, Aug. 3 | Sharon Sullivan

Members of the Navajo Nation referred to the peaks as “the mountains whose name is missing,” for they were unnamed until relatively recently – the 1970s or 80s – when the rugged, remote range southwest of Moab was named the Henry Mountains.

“The Henrys were one of the last mountain ranges to be named,” said Saige Culbertson, a seasonal park ranger at Dead Horse Point State Park.

Almon Thompson, who was one of the founders of the National Geographic Society, named the mountains in honor of Joseph Henry, the first secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Culbertson said. That’s just one of the many interesting tidbits that Culbertson discovered while researching the Moab area for a presentation she will give on Saturday, Aug. 5, at 8 p.m. at Dead Horse Point State Park.

Culbertson spent two months researching the different people and cultures that settled in the Moab area.

She said she will share stories about the original inhabitants – the Native Americans, as well as later arrivals, such as the Spaniards, and then the Mormons.

“I’ll talk about how they made this place their home, and what brought them here,” Culbertson said. “And how places got their names.”

As a member of the Cherokee Tribe, Culbertson said she was most interested in learning about the Ancestral Puebloans who lived in the area. The Utes continued to trade with one another after some of the tribe broke off from the original group, she said.

Native Americans, as a whole, banded together to resist the Spanish invasion, she said. People of the Mormon faith entered the area in the 1850s to establish settlements in Moab and other areas of southeastern Utah, Culbertson added.



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Visitors can drive to and park at Dead Horse Point, where the ranger talk will take place. Culbertson recommends that attendees bring water, sunscreen and a camera.

“We’ll all be enjoying the sunset together – it’s a great view – after learning all this great history,” she said.

Dead Horse Point is a peninsula of rock atop sheer sandstone cliffs, located 2,000 feet above a gooseneck in the Colorado River. Ancient Indian hunters, and cowboys of the late 1800s, hung out in the area.

Later this month, Saturday, Aug. 12, is Military Appreciation Day, when active-duty military and service veterans can enter Dead Horse Point and all other Utah state parks for free. Those currently serving as well as veterans will also get a 20 percent discount on any purchases at the visitor center gift shop.

“Military Appreciation Day is a statewide annual event that every state park celebrates in mid-August,” park manager Megan Blackwelder said. “It’s also our 60th anniversary.”

“While this is a day to celebrate those who served, it is also a chance to reflect on part of what they served for, something very prevalent in the Moab area, our public lands, including Dead Horse Point State Park,” Blackwelder noted.

A special flag-lowering ceremony will take place at 6 p.m. at the visitor center. Afterward, at 6:30 p.m., visitors are invited to join rangers for a mile-long, “easy hike” starting at the Dead Horse Point parking lot.

On the following evening, Sunday, Aug. 13, seasonal park ranger Brendan Westley will lead a 1-mile, approximately one-hour hike across “easy terrain,” starting at the visitor center.

“I’ll basically be talking about how plants and animals of Dead Horse Point are able to survive in desert conditions, through adaptations,” Westley said.

Participants are encouraged to bring a liter of water and wear sturdy shoes.

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2. Mayor urges county to reject Rally on the Rocks permits

Moab Sun News, Aug. 3 | Rudy Herndon

If he didn't have the Grand County Council's attention last year, Moab Mayor Dave Sakrison likely has it by now.

In a letter to the council, Sakrison is urging the county not to renew the permit for the second-largest special event of the year, the Rally on the Rocks UTV and side-by-side off-road vehicle gathering.

The mayor made a similar request in 2016, although it never gained any traction. He renewed his calls last month, citing some residents' concerns about UTV noise and "extreme" disruptions to the community, as UTV riders travel between the event headquarters at the Old Spanish Trail Arena and trailheads on surrounding public lands.

Sakrison told the Moab Sun News that his latest letter could be a starting point to hold discussions with event organizers about ways they can address the issues that some residents have brought to the city's attention.

"I don't think that this is an insurmountable deal," Sakrison said. "I just think that there needs to be some additional guidelines."

It's a conversation that they need to have, he said, because of the "significant" and "negative" criticisms that local residents have voiced about Rally on the Rocks.

"It's impacting neighborhoods," Sakrison said. "I think that people have a right to peace and quiet."

As far as Rally on the Rocks owner and event promoter Lanse Chournos is concerned, though, the event is in good standing with the community.

Chournos said that no one from the city has contacted him to discuss the issues that Sakrison raised in his letter to the county council, and to date, he said he has read just one documented complaint from a local resident.

Until he sees additional comments in writing, Chournos questions whether concerns about the event are widespread, or limited to a handful of critics.



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“It’s easy to say, ‘A whole bunch of people called us to complain,’ but to me, I need to have more proof,” he said.

Now in its seventh year, Rally on the Rocks continues to grow each spring. In 2017, the event drew an estimated 1,200 registered participants to the Moab area in mid-May for group rides along world-famous trails like Hell’s Revenge and Fins-N-Things.

For 12 of the event’s 29 guided trail routes, UTV riders follow a paid Grand County Sheriff’s Office escort for about an hour each morning over the course of five days per year. In order to reach the remaining 17 trails, registered participants are required to haul their UTVs in trailers to the trailheads, according to the event’s website.

“To me, that’s not an excessive amount of noise, given the amount of time that we’re on the roads,” Chournos said.

Putting aside that question, Sakrison said the sheer numbers of participants – as well as others who are drawn to town by the event – place a strain on community resources, from law enforcement to Emergency Medical Services to fire protection.

“The traffic impacts, the extreme noise levels, and the ancillary negative effects associated with the (Rally on the Rocks) event are all unacceptable,” the mayor’s letter says.

But Moab Side X Side Adventures owner and founder Jason Minasian, who has been involved with the event since 2012 as a guide, calls Rally on the Rocks a good way to showcase Moab for all of the activities that are available in the surrounding area.

“It teaches people how to be respectful towards the trails and the land that surrounds us,” Minasian said in a letter to the city. “I hope that this opportunity for the city of Moab is not wasted.”

Council member says residents’ comments skew against event

Moab City Council member Kalen Jones said that he has not received any comments from local residents in support of Rally on the Rocks. On the other side of the issue, however, Jones said that citizens have voiced their concerns about what they say are negative effects on city neighborhoods, from Mill Creek Drive to the east and the Mountain View subdivision to the west.



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“Over the genesis of this event, we have received numerous complaints, both (verbally) and in writing, about how this impacts individuals who live here, with the traffic volumes and the noise,” Jones said. “It’s impacted their ability to get around town, and to enjoy their private property peacefully.”

In one case, Jones said, a resident reportedly had trouble getting to a doctor’s appointment because that person was stuck behind an escorted group of UTV riders.

Moab resident Kelly Mike Green said he suspects that city officials aren’t hearing from local UTV riders and others who support Rally on the Rocks because they don’t have the trust of those residents.

“(City officials) don’t represent all of the people in the city – they only represent a select few,” Green said. “So I’m not surprised that they don’t contact (city officials), because they know it falls on deaf ears.”

Green has attended several city meetings where issues related to UTVs were discussed, and he said the consensus at those meetings was that the community needs to educate UTV riders about traffic laws that are already on the books. The “Throttle Down in Town” campaign that followed those meetings was a success, he said, leading to noticeable changes in UTV riders’ behavior.

“What I’ve seen is a vast improvement of how riders are behaving, but I don’t think the city council or the mayor even know what the folks do out there with this Rally on the Rocks event,” he said.

As Green sees it, a small group of people who don’t like UTVs are behind the opposition to Rally on the Rocks.

Green is concerned that city officials are targeting a particular event, when the mayor’s letter could just as easily apply to any other event, from the April Action Car Show to the Moab Music Festival or Moab Half Marathon’s races.

“All of these create different kinds of problems, but we’ve learned to adjust to them, and just singling out this particular event seems very foolish and discriminatory to me,” Green said.

Sakrison counters that he welcomes people with different perspectives into his office at any time.



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"I've always been willing to listen to anybody, and to say that, 'Nobody's going to listen to us,' I don't think that's right, either," the mayor said. "We listen to all of the people."

Organizer sees economic benefit to event

Chournos said that event organizers work to teach Rally on the Rocks attendees the proper trail etiquette, and try to bolster their understanding of Utah's UTV laws.

"We spend a lot of time training our people and educating them," he said.

Attendees also fill up local hotel and motel rooms, he said, and they pump a still-undetermined – but significant – amount of money into the local economy.

Event organizers, meanwhile, pay for the law enforcement escorts to and from the Old Spanish Trail Arena, while attendees and vendors come forward with their own charitable contributions.

In 2016, Chournos said, well over \$30,000 was donated to Grand County Search and Rescue. This year, event organizers gave more than \$16,000 to the BEACON Afterschool Program and Helen M. Knight Elementary School's backpack lunch program, thanks to the proceeds from a donated UTV that they auctioned off.

Chournos noted that thousands of dollars in fees also go to the county-owned Old Spanish Trail Arena, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Utah's School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA).

Green said that fees to the Old Spanish Trail Arena alone total about \$11,000, and while that might not sound like much, he said that every little bit helps fund services in the community.

"(City officials) don't really see the big picture as far as how does that translate into paying for local services like the aquatic center," he said, especially as revenues from mineral leases and federal Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) decline.

In the event that Grand County denied the event's permit, Green said that event organizers would still retain their state and federal permits, so they would likely move their event headquarters across the county line, while continuing to draw participants to Moab.

"They'll go to San Juan County, and nothing will be solved," he said. "And we'll lose the revenue from the (Old Spanish Trail Arena) funding."



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Sakrison said that if the county council opted to discontinue the event's permit, it's unlikely to discourage visitors – including UTV or ATV riders – from coming to Moab.

“We’re becoming an event community, and I still think people are going to come,” he said. “I don’t think this is going to stop anybody from driving their ATVs up and down the street, or whatever.”

As Moab’s tourism-based economy continues to grow, Jones said that city officials may be in a position to pick and choose the kinds of events they’d like to see.

“I think that we can be more selective about the events we want here,” he said. “We felt this event was just moving too far away from what residents want.”

Sakrison said he realizes that his written recommendation to the county could have a potentially significant impact on the event.

“But come and talk to us,” he said. “That’s the logical thing to do, rather than saying, ‘Oh my gosh, oh my gosh.’”

“Let’s sit down and work something out,” he added. “We’re not unreasonable people.”

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E&E/NATIONAL NEWS – FULL STORY

1. Interior Dept. Reaffirms Protection of National Monument in Montana

New York Times, Aug. 2 | Eric Lipton

WASHINGTON — The Interior Department announced on Wednesday that the Upper Missouri River Breaks, a famous chunk of river in central Montana that holds a national monument designation, would remain fully protected by federal land-use restrictions.

The Montana site, which Lewis and Clark first explored in 1808, is the fourth so far among 21 land-based sites being evaluated at the request of President Trump by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke that has been removed from consideration for changes — such as reduction in size or elimination.



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The others no longer at risk are Craters of the Moon National Monument in Idaho, Hanford Reach National Monument in Washington and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in Colorado.

Mr. Zinke, who was born and raised in Montana, said in a statement on Wednesday that he essentially agreed with local environmentalists in Montana that the Upper Missouri River Breaks is too important of a national treasure and so it should not be touched.

“The monument is one of the only free-flowing areas of the Missouri that remains as Lewis and Clark saw it more than 200 years ago,” Mr. Zinke said.

The Missouri Breaks — named after the small hills known as breaks, which are odd-looking humps of land carved eons ago when the river ran a different course — was set aside as a national monument in 2001 by President Bill Clinton, who invoked the so-called Antiquities Act, a 1906 law that gives presidents the authority to protect areas of historic, prehistoric or scientific interest.

In April, Mr. Trump directed the Interior Department to examine whether presidents going back to Mr. Clinton had abused their authority by expanding national monuments beyond what the law allowed. Mr. Trump, in signing the order, said his goal was to “end another egregious abuse of federal power, and to give that power back to the states and to the people, where it belongs.”

In total, the national monuments that were put under review by Mr. Trump encompass 12 million acres of land. Another 218 million acres’ worth of marine national monuments in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans are also being re-examined by Mr. Zinke. These are only monuments under reviews, and not all national monuments.

The order by Mr. Trump had set off a debate in Montana — and other spots around the United States — over the fate of these national monuments, which once they are set up limit how the land can be used for energy development or other commercial purposes.

Matthew Knox, a Montana rancher who lives in the Upper Missouri Breaks area, supported an effort to shrink the size of the national monument so that it would exclude the area he uses, including some leased from the Interior Department, to grow hay. That way he would not need to worry about some future president or government official deciding to discontinue hay leases.



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“Monuments are created by executive order,” said Mr. Knox, who was busy welding a beam on a tractor that had snapped while his wife was cutting hay. “Presidents down the line should be able to review those orders and reconsider them.”

But many others were vehemently opposed to any changes, wanting to protect an area that is now accessible mostly only by canoe.

“It is such a big powerful thing,” said Mary Frieze, 71, a retired teacher, who spent a recent afternoon hiking the Upper Missouri River Breaks area, first along a series of cliffs and then gradually down right to the edge of the muddy river’s waters. “It is a dense quiet. Almost a religious moment, it is so strong and smooth — one that enhances your soul.”

Mr. Zinke expects to complete his review of the national monuments by Aug. 24. Already, he has indicated he is likely to recommend changes at Bears Ears National Monument in Utah, suggesting that it needs to be “right-sized.”

“There is no doubt that it is drop-dead gorgeous country and that it merits some degree of protection,” Mr. Zinke said in June, before adding that the Bears Ears site seemed too large and that different kinds of uses of the land are too restricted, meaning it is “not the best use of the land.”

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2. **Man planning bike trail finds dinosaur bones instead**

KUSA 9 Colorado News, Aug. 2 | Miles Moraitis

Imagine hiking on a trail and stumbling upon dinosaur bones. Well that's exactly what happened to a Colorado land management official when he was walking and planning out the new Palisade Plunge bike trail near Grand Junction.

In April, Chris Pipkin of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) was surveying the new Palisade trail. He saw something strange in a boulder about five feet off the trail. Curious, he took a photo and sent it to his colleague Eric Eckberg. He confirmed it was indeed a dinosaur bone.



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Eckberg is a geologist and paleontology coordinator for the BLM in Grand Junction. Upon receiving the photo, he mobilized a group of local paleontologists and even some BLM interns to help excavate the bone.

"It's in remarkably good shape for something that's roughly 80 million years old," Eckberg said.

The bone is two feet long and about two inches around.

Eckberg says it likely belonged to a hadrosaur -- a group of dinosaur known for their duck-bills. Their bones have been found before in this area.

"It's kind of one of those career defining moments for me in a way," Eckberg said. "You don't get to go and extract a dinosaur bone that often."

The bone will now head to the Museum of West Denver. Experts will take a look at it and try to determine exactly what dinosaur it came from. They could even figure out how the dinosaur died.

That process takes a while though. The museum doesn't expect the bone to go on display for at least a couple months.

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3. **Study Shows Breeding Sage Grouse Not Effective Approach**

Wyoming Public Media, Aug.2 | Melodie Edwards

A new report called "[The Sage Grouse White Papers](#)" released last month by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies shows that captive breeding methods have a long way to go before they can help bring up sage grouse numbers.

The Wyoming Legislature recently approved a project to allow private breeding of sage grouse chicks in hopes of building their population in Wyoming. The Association's San Stiver worked on the study and said Colorado, Idaho and Utah have tried captive breeding but found the eggs didn't hatch well and not many of the chicks survived.



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“The exceptions to that are birds that happen to be cross fostered into a wild hen's brood while they're still young and impressionable -- two, three, four, five, six days old,” Stiver said. “Once they get older than that then they tend to disperse widely, they tend to have very high mortality.”

Stiver said sage grouse captive breeding efforts are in the early stages of development but could be useful down the road if the bird declines in numbers any further. It was considered for endangered species listing in 2015.

Stiver said releasing birds works best paired with other techniques. For example, he said, in Utah, “We went in and controlled the red foxes in number and we augmented that population with some additional birds and that particular combination of predator control along with augmentation seemed to work where we built that population back up.”

Stiver said killing predators like foxes and ravens isn't a quick fix either since they are immediately replaced by another predator, and the reason predators move in is because of human disturbance to the habitat.

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4. **Animal Images In Prehistoric Rock Art: Looking Beyond Europe**

NPR News, Aug. 3 | Barbara King

Rock art images of bulls, bison, horses, lions, rhinoceros, and other animals from caves like Lascaux and Chauvet in France and Altamira in Spain have become popular icons showcasing the antiquity of human-animal relationships, as well as human creativity.

Recent finds in two rock shelters in France of engraved aurochs, ibex, horse and mammoth dated to 38,000 years ago — longer ago than the images in the caves — underscore the long tradition of artistic representation of animals on that continent.

But the geographic breadth and imaginative richness of faunal rock art is much greater than what is found only in Europe — a fact brought home by reading a chapter by archaeologist Iain Davidson, an emeritus professor at Australia's University of New England, in the forthcoming edited volume Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology and Anthropology of Rock Art.



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Animal images, Davidson writes, are "the most abundant of all images made on rock surfaces around the world, occurring in more than 100 countries."

Animals have mattered to us as people and as artists deeply, for many millennia and right across the globe.

"One of the things I am adamant about," Davidson told me via email, "is that the impression that European cave art is the beginning of anything is a wrong impression. It is not as early as art in Sulawesi, and probably in Australia, [and] the evidence from South Africa is compelling that paint making and mark making appeared much earlier there than anywhere."

In Sulawesi, Indonesia, people made hand-stencil marks at 39,900 years ago, and depicted a type of pig called the babirusa at around 35,000.

Recent evidence suggests the peopling of Australia may have happened as long ago as 65,000 years, meaning that archaeologists may well find quite old dates for faunal rock art there. As it is, the oldest securely dated rock art (at least according to some experts, as some of these dates are quite vigorously debated within archaeology) in Australia — a charcoal drawing at the site of Nawarla Gabarnmang dated to 28,000 years ago — does not depict an animal. Animal images, including fish, turtles, emu, wallabies, dingoes, and crocodiles, are widely found in Australian rock art, but more recently than that.

And in South Africa at a site called Blombos, a discovery of a prehistoric paint factory rocked the world of paleoanthropology because of its date: around 100,000 years ago.

Davidson's main focus, as he put it to me, is "the interpretation of rock art in spatial and chronological sets." One fascinating conclusion he reaches is that contrary to traditional interpretation, there may indeed be, in rare instances, "landscape" represented in rock art.

"Landscape" here is taken to mean the artists' depiction of some environmental features in rock art — sometimes including animals themselves and sometimes not. The possibilities range from huts depicted at a rock art site in Spain — the kind in which fisher-hunter-gatherer peoples would have lived — to a depiction of a volcanic eruption at Chauvet Cave in France, to geometric marks in Australian sand paintings such as a circle that might represent anything from a circle or hole to a yam or a dog.



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Davidson isn't arguing for straightforward representational art here or, indeed, for definite interpretations of any kind; he means, instead, to ask rock-art scholars to consider that "it might be worth looking again" at the possibility of landscapes.

In fact, another big emphasis in the article is precisely the difficulty of coming to rock images today and trying to decide what they may have meant in long-ago cultural context.

"Any meaning of a particular image," Davidson writes, "other than its form or resemblance to something identifiable, was lost the moment the convention within which it was created was lost or changed."

I think this lesson is perhaps harder to grasp than it might first appear. When we gaze at paintings or sculpture in a present-day art museum, we're taught, yes, to think about what we see in terms of the artistic conventions of the day — but often we have written, historical context to help us, and sometimes the artist's own words.

Those aids to interpretation are often absent with faunal rock art.

Consider the rock art from Arnhem Land, Australia known as the Dynamic Figure emu hunt, in which a male human figure is depicted stalking and spearing an emu.

Because people may associate particular groups with animal totems, Davidson asks in his article if this scene might not be as straightforward as it first appears:

"It is even possible that a scene purporting to represent a man hunting an emu is actually a representation of a conflict between a man and a member of another social group with a symbolic association with emus."

When I told him that I found this example enlightening, Davidson advised caution:

"I invented the 'violence' hypothesis for the emu scene to draw attention to the need to acknowledge that, whatever else we know, we know that the images on rocks are symbolic."

In other words, he intends here something of a thought experiment rather than an attempt at deep interpretation of the man-and-emu scene. Yet the outcome of that experiment is important: We



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cannot rightly impose our own culture-bound interpretations on symbolic creations when the artists are not here to guide us.

One thing is certain, from talking with Davidson: Rock art these days is in trouble and in need of protection.

Davidson's recent focus is on the impact of industrial development on large rock art assemblages, so that he visits places in Australia such as Burrup Peninsula, now known as Murujuga and, here in the United States, Utah's Nine Mile Canyon, both of which contain, he says, "some of the most remarkable images and groups of images."

"My question is," Davidson said, "how do we convince the world that these images are sufficiently important that industry will not contemplate contributing to their destruction?"

It's the right question, and I would underscore that it holds true as much for the United States as it does for, say, Australia. In last Sunday's The New York Times travel section, Stephen Nash wrote about the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah, an area rich with Native American archaeological sites, some of which include rock art. Nash describes the growing threat to this region under the Trump administration.

Rock art is a thrilling part of our species' evolutionary history, and of indigenous peoples' cultural history. Even when the meaning of the animal images remain unknowable to us, those images move us with their beauty and with the questions they raise about a diversity of human ways of looking at the natural world.

Across the globe, rock art and its animal images deserve our notice and our protection.

Barbara J. King is an anthropology professor emerita at the College of William and Mary. She often writes about the cognition, emotion and welfare of animals, and about biological anthropology, human evolution and gender issues. Barbara's new book is Personalities on the Plate: The Lives and Minds of Animals We Eat.

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5. Argonne uses digital tools to preserve Southwestern cultural heritage

Phys.org, Aug. 3 | Steve Koppes

Hollywood's Indiana Jones gained fame for wielding his pistol and bullwhip, but researchers at the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Argonne National Laboratory prefer to equip themselves with something far more sophisticated: Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis.

Instead of conducting their investigations snake pit by snake pit, temple by temple, cavern by cavern, these archaeologists and their colleagues aggregated their GIS data by grids of one square kilometer (nearly four-tenths of a square mile) of a study area that encompasses 9,786 square miles of the San Luis Valley-Taos Plateau area of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. The grids are packed with data pertaining to the presence of sites and landmarks that are archaeologically, historically, culturally and scenically important, and the potential threats to and opportunities for their future.

These findings are documented in the cultural heritage values and risk assessment report for the study area that Argonne completed last year for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The multi-faceted study is one of the first to portray how Spanish and Mexican settlers of the area, the recipients of land grants from their governments, related to the land before the U.S. government assumed jurisdiction.

"It's getting away from the project-specific, site-specific types of analysis into this broader landscape to look more at patterns and distribution of the archaeological sites and the cultural significance areas," said Konnie Wescott, who heads Argonne's Natural and Sociocultural Systems Department. "That larger landscape perspective is what really makes this different from a lot of activities that we as archaeologists tend to do."

The cultural assessment was a pilot project that stemmed from a Solar Energy Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Solar PEIS) covering six Southwestern states that Argonne's Environmental Sciences Division had completed for BLM in 2012. Argonne's charge was to determine which public lands within those states would be technically and environmentally suitable for solar energy development. In addition, during that time the BLM was conducting Rapid Ecoregional Assessments (REAs) across the West to evaluate the condition and trends of the natural environment.



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The Solar PEIS resulted in the designation of four solar energy zones in the San Luis Valley, and strategies for mitigating the environmental impact of any utility-scale solar energy development that may ensue. Largely unaddressed, however, was the potential cultural impact of such development.

"All those things that drive change in the natural environment—human development, fire, invasive species and climate change—they affect the cultural environment as well," noted Wescott, the cultural assessment's lead author. That's why she and her colleagues designed their pilot project to see if the REA framework for assessing ecological resources that had already been implemented elsewhere in the West could be applied to a cultural environment.

"Quite frankly, it worked pretty well," Wescott said.

Participants in the project included the BLM, the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Native American tribes and representatives from the National Heritage Areas for descendants of the Hispano community that had migrated into the area from Mexico.

"We talked with all these groups to figure out what in the area was important to them and their stakeholders," said Emily Zvolanek, a GIS senior analyst at Argonne and co-author of the report.

The Native American tribes, for example, hold sacred various sites in the San Luis Valley. Tsisnaasjini' (or Blanca Peak) in Colorado's Sangre de Cristo Mountains, is the eastern sacred mountain of the Navajo.

Members of the Hispano community have also established their own distinctive lifeways in the area.

"They have their very own culture that doesn't really exist anywhere else," Zvolanek said.

An important characteristic of the Hispano community is its practice of long-lot agriculture. Under this system, farms are laid out in long, thin plots so that each one has access to water, crop land and grazing land.

"It's very strategic and it's not practiced in many places anymore," Zvolanek said.



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The Old Spanish National Historic Trail that runs through the San Luis Valley on route to Los Angeles includes culturally significant features along its path. Argonne's research team plotted those points of interest on a map, then ran viewsheds of those spots, as well as other places with important views and settings.

The viewshed analyses take into account the physiography and topography of an area to determine what parts of the valley would be visible from a particular point of interest. This would reveal whether a potential new solar facility or transmission line could be seen from those viewpoints, thus detracting from the area's beauty and cultural significance.

"We identified areas that have what we termed high cultural resource value," Zvolanek said. "The most important thing is to look at archaeological and historical resources that are unique to these areas. How can we keep them protected?"

Especially helpful to the Argonne team was an ethnographic study completed in 2013 that identified sacred landscapes and traditional cultural properties that could be negatively affected by solar energy development.

Nancy Keohane and Joseph Vieira, both of BLM's Rocky Mountain District Office, were among the federal land managers who contributed to Argonne's cultural assessment. The final report has become a valuable public resource that BLM has shared with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife and other agencies, said Keohane, a project manager for BLM's Colorado Renewable Energy Team.

"We've had a lot of interest around the state of Colorado in doing more of these assessments," said Keohane, a project manager for BLM's Colorado Renewable Energy Team. "It's really nice to be able to pick up one document and understand that whole landscape."

The project also has helped federal land managers to better appreciate how people have moved through and interacted with the landscape over the centuries and even the millennia, said Vieira, a national monument project manager and a co-author of the final report.

"In renewable energy but also other land uses, these types of studies across the West benefit the peoples who live there now so they have a greater respect and understanding about the peoples who lived there before," he said.



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A case in point is the land-grant heritage of the area's Spanish and Mexican settlers.

"It's a heritage that preceded the American era and is the source, unfortunately, of conflict between members of the public and the Hispanic Americans from that area who have felt disenfranchised from their land," Vieira said.

Although the report is publicly available, it does not include the exact locations of lawfully protected archaeological sites. More detailed data that Argonne turned over to BLM is only available to credentialed researchers.

The benefits of the cultural assessment led to a second such study that Argonne is conducting in Utah, another state where the BLM has established solar energy zones.

The southwest Utah study area contains different cultural resources from Colorado and New Mexico, but similar methods still apply. For example, the Hispano community is absent from Utah, but Mormon history and culture loom large. And so does water scarcity, which Utah has in common with Colorado and New Mexico. Water quality and availability affects the cultural environment in multiple ways, Wescott noted.

"Human habitation has always gravitated toward water, so there's always been a strong correlation between water and areas of cultural sensitivity and significance," she said.

Water is a risk factor, as well. A reliable water supply will affect the long-term sustainability of the Hispano culture's long-lot agriculture. And its erosional and flash-flood effects in dry environments also pose a threat to archaeological sites.

"It's a very complex problem," Wescott said.

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6. **AIR POLLUTION: Pruitt about-faces, won't delay Obama-era ozone regs**

E & E News, Aug. 3 | Sean Reilly

Two months after abruptly delaying a key milestone to implement U.S. EPA's 2015 ground-level ozone standard, agency Administrator Scott Pruitt just as suddenly yesterday reversed that decision.



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He said late yesterday that states must begin implementing the standard by this October as originally planned.

EPA "now understands that the information gaps that formed the basis of the extension may not be as expansive as we previously believed," Pruitt said in a [notice](#) posted online after the close of normal business hours. While leaving open the possibility of future delays, EPA "is not making such a determination at this time," the notice said.

The about-face represented a striking reversal for Pruitt, who had announced in early June that he was pushing back the statutory deadline for the state attainment designations for the 70-parts-per-billion standard until October 2018. At the time, he cited a Clean Air Act waiver that permits a one-year extension in situations where more information is needed to make the compliance decisions.

The delay was applauded by industry groups and some members of Congress, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), but denounced by environmental and public health organizations who sued last month to stop it.

For those groups, which have seen little to celebrate amid the Trump administration's efforts to roll back regulations on a variety of fronts, Pruitt's turnabout represented a welcome victory.

"To protect the health of Americans, EPA must move forward quickly," the American Lung Association and two other groups said in a joint statement today voicing satisfaction with the decision. With 2016 data showing unhealthy ozone levels in cities across the nation, cleanup work "must immediately begin" once EPA decides which areas are not in attainment, they said.

McConnell's office had no immediate comment. A spokeswoman for Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), who also backed the postponement, said she will keep working to advance [S. 263](#), a bill that would push back implementation of the 2015 ozone threshold until the middle of the next decade.

Congress "must provide a permanent fix to the broken process of reviewing and implementing ozone standards," the spokeswoman, Ashley Berrang, said in an email. A companion bill, [H.R. 806](#), won House approval last month.



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Pruitt was not available for an interview this morning, and employees in EPA's press office did not respond to written questions by today's publication deadline. But the reversal came shortly before today's deadline for the agency to respond in court to a motion by the public health and environmental groups to stay or vacate the delay.

"I would say it's not coincidental," said Ann Weeks, one of the lawyers representing those organizations in the suit, which is pending before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Weeks also speculated that EPA had taken note of the court's refusal to go along with an implementation delay for another Obama administration rule limiting methane emissions from the oil and gas industry.

After a three-judge panel in that case last month rebuked Pruitt for trying to use a Clean Air Act reconsideration process to stall key provisions of the methane rule for 90 days, the court's full complement of active judges this week ruled 9-2 that EPA must enforce the restrictions for now.

"This is an agency that has gone kind of rogue, and they [the judges] are going to make sure that the rule of law is followed," Weeks said.

EPA also faces a separate legal challenge filed this week by a coalition made up of New York and 14 other states as well as Washington, D.C., that similarly seeks to void the implementation delay. In a news release today, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman (D), the lead plaintiff in that suit, also hailed Pruitt's reversal and said the coalition "will continue to take the legal action needed" to ensure EPA finalizes the attainment designations by this October.

Tightening the standard

Ozone, a lung irritant that is the main ingredient in summertime smog, is produced by the reaction of chemicals tied to fossil fuel production and combustion in sunshine. It is linked to asthma attacks in children and added breathing problems in people with emphysema and other chronic respiratory diseases.

Under the Obama administration, then-EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy had tightened the standard from 75 ppb to 70 ppb in October 2015, citing the Clean Air Act's requirement to protect public health based on continuing research on ozone's effects.



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The attainment designations, which are supposed to be put in place two years later under the act's timetable, are important because they start the clock on cleanup efforts for areas that are out of compliance. Over time, that process can lead to stricter emissions limits for industries and vehicles. States had turned in their attainment recommendations last fall.

At the Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies, whose members include 20 state regulators, Executive Director Clint Woods said in an email that they now look forward to working with EPA "to ensure there is adequate information and time to accurately address" the designations.

But the energy industry and other business interests have been lobbying for a delay, on the grounds that some areas of the country are still implementing the previous 75 ppb standard, set in 2008, and that air quality is continuing to improve regardless.

"Implementing both the 2008 and 2015 standards creates unnecessary complexity and inefficiency, in addition to needlessly burdening the states and businesses with potentially enormous costs," Howard Feldman, the American Petroleum Institute's senior director for regulatory and scientific affairs, said in a statement.

But in filing suit this week, Schneiderman pointed to EPA forecasts that the tighter standard will annually prevent hundreds of premature deaths by 2025 and yield net health benefits worth up to \$4.5 billion. Those estimates excluded California, which is expected to need more time to comply.

In June, Pruitt had announced the delay with no advance notice and no attempt to gather public feedback. Among other issues, he said, EPA needed to fully understand the impact of background ozone as well as ozone that wafts into the United States from other countries.

At Congress' direction, Pruitt said, he had also created an Ozone Cooperative Compliance Task Force to develop "additional flexibilities" for compliance. Under the provision creating the task force — which was tacked on to a fiscal 2017 spending bill signed in early May — Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) had ordered it to report back in 90 days.

In an interview last week, Hatch said he was uncertain whether the task force would meet that deadline, adding that he had "kind of lost track" of its status. EPA has released little information



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about the task force or its members, saying only that it is "an internal working group of key EPA staff who have relevant expertise" and that its report will be made public.

Agency spokespeople did not reply to an email today asking when the report will be released.

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7. **INTERIOR: Bernhardt warns employees not to 'parrot' special interests**

E & E News, Aug. 3 | Kellie Lunney

Interior Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt told department employees this week that he expects respectful and healthy disagreement from them, but also an adherence to facts rather than "special interests."

Bernhardt, a former oil and gas industry lobbyist who weathered a controversial Senate confirmation process, pledged a commitment to public service and sought to align himself with the career employees he now leads in his first departmentwide email as Interior's No. 2.

"Given the hyperbole of today's public discourse, you and I, and everyone else within the Interior, really are in the soup together," he wrote in the email sent Tuesday to all Interior employees and obtained by E&E News. "We may not like it. But it is the way it is. This means my conduct will reflect on you. Yours will reflect on me and your other colleagues. All of our conduct reflects on the Secretary."

He added that some people have "forgotten" their oath to public service and instead "parrot comments of special interests rather than carry out their governmental duties to move the country forward," calling such actions "arbitrary" and "lazy." Bernhardt, who served eight years at Interior during the Bush administration, exhorted employees to "refrain" from taking that route.

"The decisions we make here have consequences. We must understand the factual setting and our actual decision space. Our conclusions must be connected to the facts that exist, not to the facts or the law that we might wish existed to fit our preferred outcome," he wrote.

He included in the email a list of 14 principles of ethical conduct for executive branch employees as a reminder of their collective oath to faithfully perform their duties.



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Late last month, senators voted 53-43, mostly along party lines, to confirm Bernhardt. All Republicans present, four Democrats and one independent voted in favor (E&E Daily, July 25).

Bernhardt's nomination attracted strong support because of his extensive public policy experience in the executive and legislative branches, but also robust opposition from Democrats and green groups alarmed by his ties to oil and gas lobbyists.

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee's top Democrat, Sen. Maria Cantwell of Washington, led the opposition to Bernhardt.

"I've made no secret that I have concerns with this nomination," Cantwell said in July during floor debate on the nomination, citing Bernhardt's work as a lobbyist for the oil and gas industry as well as other groups he will oversee as Interior deputy secretary.

"I'm not suggesting that just working for the private sector disqualifies someone," Cantwell said, "but when you have a wide range of issues that you worked on in the private sector, and now you are going to be on the other side of the table, it brings up concerns."

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), ENR chairwoman, has praised Bernhardt, saying that as a Westerner, he "understands the management of federal lands" and the "balance between conservation and development." Murkowski also touted the Coloradoan's experience and "strong reputation as a manager," which she said is particularly important for a deputy secretary.

In his email to employees, which was first reported by Politico, Bernhardt also mentioned several times his regard for senators, even those who disagree with him; his respect for the law; and his belief that "there are bounds" to Interior's authority.

"To the extent such bounds exist, we should not try to stretch the law like a fraying rubber band to fit a particular policy vision," he wrote. "Instead, we should ask Congress for the authority we want or need — if it's so important for us to have."

Bernhardt indicated he is open to disagreement on "important issues" as long as it's civil.

He provided an example of an unnamed senator during his confirmation hearing "who clearly does not agree with the Administration's policy vision" and "questioned my policy views."



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The deputy secretary added: "He stated his position. He asked me the questions he wanted to ask. He challenged my responses where he disagreed. Although we see things differently, he was not challenging my motivations, my intentions, or my morality because of this difference in opinion. I left with respect for him. His actions were precisely what I believe our public policy discourse should be."

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8. **INTERIOR: Zinke, Murkowski share beers, tweet selfie**

E & E News, Aug. 3 | Hannah Northey

In a sharp pivot from last week's health care tumult, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Alaska Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski this morning appeared together in a selfie posted on Twitter, smiling and drinking beers.

Zinke, who hosted the senator last night at his private residence, is shown holding an Alaskan Brewing Co. IPA, with a cowboy hat hanging on a cabinet in the background.

"I say dinner, she says brews. My friends know me well. Thanks @lisamurkowski #Alaska #IPA #MadeInAmerica," the secretary tweeted.

The tweet drew a chuckle from environmental groups and commenters, with Aaron Weiss, a spokesman for the Center for Western Priorities, writing, "Decided you need your nominees confirmed after all?"

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which Murkowski chairs, vets Interior Department nominees and is set to hear testimony from Joseph Balash on his nomination to be assistant Interior secretary for land and minerals management on Sept. 7 (E&E Daily, Aug. 3).

The panel later today will vote on three Interior nominees: Brenda Burman to lead the Bureau of Reclamation; Susan Combs to be Interior's assistant secretary of policy, management and budget; and Douglas Domenech to be Interior's assistant secretary of insular affairs (E&E Daily, July 25). That vote was rescheduled from last week.



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The dinner took place after a week of political turmoil on Capitol Hill surrounding a failed attempt at health care reform in which President Trump — and then Zinke — called Murkowski about a critical vote that helped sink the measure (Greenwire, July 27).

Murkowski has yet to discuss the details of her call with Zinke but has characterized her discussion with Trump as "hard." Alaska Republican Sen. Dan Sullivan was more candid, telling reporters that Zinke told him Murkowski's vote could threaten energy development on federal land in the Last Frontier State.

Some experts have suggested Zinke's call has already raised the bar for keeping politics out of agency decisions, a situation that could trigger lawsuits and gum up Interior matters.

Escaping the media spotlight earlier this week, Murkowski retreated to Alaska to spend time salmon fishing with family and friends on an island off the state's southeast coast (E&E Daily, Aug. 2).

Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift, who has called reporting of Zinke's phone call "sensational," said today's Twitter photo reflects an ongoing and warm relationship between the secretary and Murkowski.

"They talk and meet often in both a professional and friendly capacity," she said in an email.

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9. **PUBLIC LANDS: Greens debut website showcasing oil and gas data**

E & E News, Aug. 3 | Kellie Lunney

Two conservation groups hope oil and gas development data housed in a central location online will demystify the leasing and drilling process on public lands.

The Center for Western Priorities and Wilderness Society today debuted RiggingTheSystem.org to counter the "noise" around leasing and drilling on federal lands, said CWP Deputy Director Greg Zimmerman. The site intends to provide facts and statistics on drilling and development as well as analyses of policy proposals from Congress and the administration.



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"What we want to do with this website is help clear up the confusion and provide a resource for everyone to better understand the issues," Zimmerman said. "The fact is oil and gas production in the United States has reached new heights, and public lands have played an important role."

He added that the Trump administration "is looking to throw the baby out with the bathwater, undermining common-sense safeguards that protect public lands and communities from the impacts of drilling."

The White House and Interior Department in the last six months have issued several executive and secretarial orders that could affect oil and gas development and conservation management on public lands, as well as offshore. The administration also is looking to modify, delay and rescind several Obama-era regulations, including those related to methane flaring on public lands and hydraulic fracturing (Greenwire, July 20).

Nada Culver, senior counsel at the Wilderness Society, said Interior's mission includes much more than energy development. The department "is required by law to manage public lands for many different uses — not just oil and gas — including outdoor recreation, conservation, wildlife and clean water."

The website includes information on the leasing process for oil and gas development on public lands, the economics involved in decisions to drill, and a section dubbed "On the Chopping Block," which lists parks and public lands "currently threatened by development."

Earlier this week, the Western Values Project, an environmental advocacy group, unveiled Department of Influence, a site the organization said seeks to identify "the revolving door between special interest lobbyists and political appointees at the Department of the Interior" (Greenwire, Aug. 2).

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