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MEMORANDUM FOR THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF SECRETARY AND CABINET SECRETARY
August 29, 2017

FROM: Scott Hommel, Chief of Staff, U.S. Department of the Interior

SUBJECT: Interior Department Weekly Update for the Week of August 29, 2017

DOI 30-Day Policy Look Ahead

Presidential Initiatives and Awareness

1. **MONUMENT REVIEW:** We prepared the report to comply with Executive Order 13792 of April 26, 2017 calling for a review of National Monuments. The Secretary visited 5 states and met with countless stakeholders to conduct the review. The report gives general recommendations. Specific recommendations will be submitted separately as draft proposals for the President's consideration. The Secretary has briefed White House staff on preliminary recommendations and advised the White House Chief of Staff on the Department's rollout plan.
Timing: Ongoing
Contact: Downey Magallanes, Acting Deputy Chief of Staff
2. **NPS SENIOR PASS INCREASE:** The Department announced in July that beginning August 28th, federal agencies would begin selling the new America the Beautiful Senior Pass, which allows lifetime access to certain federal lands. The new price for the Lifetime Senior Pass is \$80, which is an increase from \$10. The annual senior pass is \$20. This increase is mandated by the National Park Service Centennial Act, passed in December of 2016. Existing passes will be grandfathered.
Timing: August 28, 2017
Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
3. **NEPA STREAMLINING ORDER:** The Deputy Secretary will sign a Secretarial Order directing the Department to comply with the EO on Establishing Discipline and Account in the Environmental Review and Permitting Process for Infrastructure. It will establish the Department's own NEPA review and put in place parameters to limit page numbers and time limits on reviews.
Timing: August 30, 2017
Contact: Todd Willens, Assistant Deputy Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
1. **GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN FIRE REPORTS:** The Great Smoky Mountains National Park Chimney Tops 2 Fire Report is tentatively scheduled for public release. The purpose of the review is to assess the facts leading up to and during the Chimney Tops 2 fire within the boundary of the park, as well as make recommendations on any planning, operational, or managerial issues to better handle future issues.
Timing: August 31, 2017
Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

4. **NATIONAL PARK AND WILDLIFE REFUGES FUNDING INITIATIVE:** August 25th was the 101st birthday of the National Park Service. The Secretary has submitted a funding initiative to OMB to create a maintenance account to address the \$11.5 billion in backlog maintenance. Addressing the backlog is critical to the park experience of over 300 million people every year. Secretary Zinke announced his commitment to the parks recently and has requested POTUS involvement in the weeks after the event to announce a funding/restore our parks initiative.
Timing: Ongoing
Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

5. **HURRICANE HARVEY RESPONSE:** The Bureau of Reclamation continues to monitor Choke Canyon Dam and Reservoir (Nueces River Project, TX) and drainage basin; based on current forecast and conditions, the Choke Canyon Dam Emergency Action Plan (EAP) has not been activated. USGS activities for the hurricane response include: Fifteen 2 person crews making discharge measurements at stream gages, a crew is on standby with 10 rapid deployment gages if gages are damaged, water quality samples will be completed as contingent on flows within in areas, USGS Geospatial Response Team will be supporting distribution of CAP and NOAA imagery that will be flown as soon as safe, and USGS is facilitating the International Charter activation, including cataloging of multiple space-based imagery products. DOI has received 5 FEMA Mission Assignments spanning Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) support to search and rescue (SAR) operations, direct SAR operations, real-time flood measurements, 3 liaison positions within the National Response Coordination Center and the initial deployment of 50 law enforcement officers.
Timing: August 2017
Contact: Scott Hommel, Chief of Staff

6. **VENTING AND FLARING RULE:** BLM will publish a proposed rule to suspend or delay requirements from the “Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties and Resources Conservation” (Venting and Flaring) for 18 months until July 17, 2018. BLM is currently reviewing the final rule and wants to avoid imposing temporary or permanent compliance costs on operators for requirements that may be rescinded or significantly revised in the near future. The rule was sent to OMB on August 15, 2017.
Timing: Late August 2017 / Early September 2017
Contact: Vincent DeVito, Counselor to the Secretary for Energy Policy

7. **CRITICAL MINERALS REPORT:** USGS will release a new report presenting resource and geologic information for 23 critical mineral commodities important to our national economy and national security, many of which are sourced entirely outside of the United States. This is the first update since the last assessment undertaken in 1973. The Department has proposed to the White House consideration of a draft Executive Order directing Interior to help coordinate the appropriate agencies to undertake a government-wide approach to facilitate the domestic mining and processing of critical minerals. A draft EO is being submitted to the Staff Secretary.
Timing: Early September 2017
Contact: Jim Cason, Associate Deputy Secretary

Reports to Congress and Congressional Testimony

1. **DOI RECEIVED TWO PERTINENT MINORITY OVERSIGHT REQUESTS:** The Department received two politically-driven requests from Minority members. One is from the House, the other from the Senate. The House letter from five Maryland Democrats requests the Secretary to remove the statue of Gen. Lee from Antietam National Battlefield. The Secretary recently visited Antietam to announce NPS Battlefield grants where he made comments specific to the statue. Three Democrat Senators (Carper, Heitkamp, Udall) sent an oversight letter to Secretary Zinke requesting information on the Secretary's decision to reassign SES staffers, how it aligns with Congressional intent and whether or not tribes were consulted.
Timing: August 2017
Contact: Micah Chambers, Deputy Director, Congressional Affairs
2. **SENIOR FWS OFFICIAL TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE SENATE HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE:** Gary Frazer (Assistant Director for Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) will testify before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations regarding implementation of FAST-41. This provision was part of the FAST Act, which passed December 2015. The intent of the legislation is to coordinate the review process for infrastructure projects between all of the involved government agencies. This hearing is intended to highlight the reform and remind the Administration that this review process already exists as we seek to expedite/streamline the environmental review process. This hearing was previously scheduled for July 26, 2017, but was postponed and has now rescheduled.
Timing: September 7, 2017
Contact: Micah Chambers, Deputy Director, Congressional Affairs
3. **UPCOMING SCIA HEARING:** The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs is set to host a hearing to discuss progress made in implementing recommendations related to Indian Programs as identified in the 2017 GAO High Risk List Report. This is a follow up from the May 2017 hearing on the same subject. The Department will discuss completed and pending recommendations regarding improvements to the Indian Energy Development and the Bureau of Indian Education. Witness(es) for the hearing remain pending.
Timing: September 13, 2017
Contact: Amanda Kaster, Policy Adviser, Congressional Affairs
4. **UPCOMING SENR HEARING:** The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks will hold a hearing on Encouraging the Next Generation to Visit National Parks. The hearing has been officially noticed, but DOI has not been invited to testify yet. Committee is still debating whether or not to invite a Department witness.
Timing: September 27, 2017
Contact: Micah Chambers, Deputy Director, Congressional Affairs
5. **HILL NOTIFICATIONS FOR UPCOMING REPROGRAMMING REQUEST:** Pending OMB approval, the Department intends to notify the relevant authorizing and appropriating Committees (Senate Energy and Natural Resources, House Natural Resources, Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee) about the

reorganization and realignment of the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST). DOI's Program Management and Budget office and OMB are currently coordinating to secure approval. Notification to the Hill will entail formal letters and briefings for Committee staff, which OCL will coordinate.

Timing: September 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Policy Adviser, Congressional Affairs

6. **DOI NOMINEES IN PROGRESS:** Brenda Burman (BOR), Susan Combs (A/S PMB) and Doug Domenech (A/S Insular Areas) were passed out of committee August 3, 2017. Joe Balash (Assistant Secretary, Land & Minerals) was officially nominated and is set to appear before the Committee for his nomination hearing on September 7, 2017. Ryan Nelson (Solicitor) was officially nominated Wednesday August, 2nd. His committee paperwork has been submitted and Committee plans to include him in the hearing on the 7th with Mr. Balash.
7. **USFWS REPORT TO CONGRESS:** Fish Wildlife Service will be sending a report to Congress on Federal and State Endangered and Threatened Species Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2015. This is statutorily required, reoccurring report on two years prior. It is still making its way through the approval process.

Timing: TBD

Contact: Micah Chambers, Deputy Director, Congressional Affairs

Other/Awareness Only

2. **DANEROS URANIUM MINE DECISION:** BLM-UT's Monticello Field Office intends to issue a decision approving a modification to the plan of operations for the Daneros Uranium Mine in San Juan County. The proposed modification could increase ore production from 100,000 tons over seven years, to 500,000 tons over 20 years, and could generate up to 40 jobs. The mine is located just outside the current boundary of the Bears Ears National Monument and may be controversial with several conservation groups based on location and groundwater concerns near the processing facility, White Mesa Mill.

Timing: August 28 – End of August

Contact: Kate MacGregor, Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals

3. **COORDINATED LONG-TERM OPERATION OF THE CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT (CVP) AND THE CALIFORNIA STATE WATER PROJECT (SWP):** Reclamation will announce a Notice of Intent (NOI) and Public Meetings for Reinitiation of Consultation under the ESA of the Coordinated Long-Term Operation of the Central Valley Project and the California State Water Project, based on new information regarding multiple years of drought and low populations of listed species. It is anticipated this joint NEPA and Endangered Species Act process will take three to five years to complete. This will dictate the operations of the CVP and SWP. In mid-September, pending Department approval, Reclamation will announce through a Federal Register publication the NOI and Public Meetings to be held in October.

Timing: Mid-September 2017

Contact: Dr. Andrea Travnicek, Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science

4. **DOI POSTPONES ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS:** The Department is continuing to review the charter and charge of the more than 200 boards, committees, and advisory panels to ensure they are structured to receive maximum public input and comply with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The Department spends more than \$10 million to facilitate these boards and many are not meeting their charter obligations, are not meeting regularly, and have little turnover or numerous unfilled positions. Meetings have been postponed until September 2017 following the Department's review unless justified on a case-by-case basis.
Timing: September 1, 2017
Contact: Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison

5. **CNN ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFILED STORY:** CNN will be at Antietam National Battlefield to film a features story about the battle, the upcoming 150th anniversary of Antietam National Cemetery on September 17, and projects that will be completed using President Trump's first quarter salary with additional funds from the National Park Foundation, Civil War Trust, and Save Historic Antietam Foundation.
Timing: September 17, 2017
Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

6. **ONSHORE OIL AND GAS PERMITTING ON FEDERAL LAND:** Throughout September, the Bureau of Land Management will hold online oil and gas lease sales.
 - Colorado. On September 7, BLM-CO will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 10 parcels totaling 1,227 acres in Cheyenne, Baca, Kiowa, Yuma, Morgan, and Weld Counties, CO.
 - New Mexico. On September 7, BLM-NM will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 62 parcels totaling 15,731 acres in Eddy, Chaves, Quay, Curry, Roosevelt, and Lea Counties, NM.
 - Nevada. On September 12, BLM-NV will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for three parcels totaling 3,680 acres in Nye County, NV.
 - Utah. On September 12, BLM-UT will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 15 parcels totaling 4,438 acres in Juab County, UT.**Timing:** Throughout September
Contact: Kate MacGregor, Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals

7. **ROSEBUD MINE ADDITION:** In mid-September, OSMRE anticipates publishing an NOA of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Western Energy Company's Rosebud Mine proposed Permit Area F. The proposed permit area, which is located near Colstrip, MT, would add 6,746 acres to the 25,576-acre surface coal mine. The mine currently employs 400 people and produces 12.3 million tons per year.
Timing: Mid-September 2017
Contact: Kate MacGregor, Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals

8. **SECRETARY ZINKE INVITED TO THE EVERGLADES BY BIPARTISAN FLORIDA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION:** Sen. Rubio led a letter to Sec. Zinke inviting him to tour the Everglades as soon as possible. No policy position touted within the letter, other than the

importance of the Everglades to Florida. No date has been confirmed, but the Secretary has made it a priority.

Timing: TBD October 2017

Contact: Micah Chambers, Deputy Director, Congressional Affairs

9. **SECRETARY ZINKE HAS BEEN INVITED BY SENATOR CASSIDY TO VISIT LOUISIANA AND THE GULF STATES:** Official invite was received July 28, 2017, from Senator Cassidy's staff for the Secretary to tour the Gulf States and personally see the offshore oil industry, restoring the coast and the benefits of GOMESA. This is in reaction to the FY18 Budget proposal to eliminate state revenue sharing for the Gulf States. Secretary Zinke had two exchanges on this topic during his House and Senate budget hearings with Sen. Cassidy and Rep. Graves. In addition, he hosted members of the Louisiana and Texas delegations to discuss GOMESA and they reiterated the issue and reaffirmed their invite to the Secretary.

Timing: Possibly November

Contact: Micah Chambers, Deputy Director, Congressional Affairs

Other Significant Rulemakings and Actions

1. **IMPORTS OF AFRICAN ELEPHANT TROPHIES FROM ZIMBABWE:** The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) plans to publish in the Federal Register a change to the permitting status for imports of African elephant trophies from Zimbabwe. After receiving information from Zimbabwe on a number of substantial improvements to their management program and elephant conservation efforts, FWS has determined that taking of African elephant trophy animals in Zimbabwe on or after January 21, 2016 (the date that Zimbabwe's new management plan was officially adopted) through 2017 would enhance the survival of African elephants, and import permits can be issued for these trophies.
Timing: August 2017
Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
2. **UTAH LEASE SALE:** On August 31, BLM-UT will post a Notice of Competitive Lease Sale, EA, and unsigned Finding of No Significant Impact, for parcels to be offered in the December 2017 Quarterly Lease Sale. Seventy-five parcels totaling 94,040 acres in the Vernal and Price Field Offices will be proposed for sale. Several parcels have been controversial due to their proximity to Dinosaur National Monument.
Timing: August 31, 2017
Contact: Kate MacGrigor, Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals
3. **MINUTE 323 – U.S./MEXICO COOPERATION ON THE COLORADO RIVER.** The Colorado River is shared among seven states in the U.S., and is also shared between the U.S. and Mexico. The Colorado is experiencing an extended period of historic drought since 2000 and a Drought Contingency Plan is being developed amongst states. Negotiations have been underway for a 9-year agreement with Mexico to provide operation certainty regarding deliveries to Mexico, referred to as "Minute 323," to include reductions and water savings at specific Lake Mead elevations, investment to conserve Colorado River water supplies, and enhancement of environmental and riparian resources. The U.S. State Department is proceeding with their

clearance process so that DOI can proceed with review and clearance of the domestic agreements, to finalize and adopt the domestic agreements that are necessary to implement Minute 323 by the end of September 2017.

Timing: September 2017

Contact: Dr. Andrea Travnicek, Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science

4. **JOB OPENINGS AT WHITE HOUSE PARK UNIT:** The National Park Service is announcing the following two positions at the White House and President's Park. One is for a design-build construction supervisor and the other is for a horticulturalist.

Timing: September 1, 2017

Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

5. **CAPE WIND:** In early September, BOEM plans to publish the Record of Decision for the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Cape Wind Project. The Final SEIS will supplement the 2009 Final EIS and is being prepared pursuant to a remand order from the D.C. Circuit Court.

Timing: Early September

Contact: James Schindler, Special Assistant Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

6. **NAVAJO GENERATING STATION:** On July 2nd, the Navajo government approved a two-year lease extension for continuing operation of the Navajo Generating Station through 2019. The Department's Bureau of Reclamation is a part owner of the power generated by the plant and thus the Administration has a role in the ultimate decision associated with the plant. Interior is helping to identify a possible future owner to keep the plant generating power indefinitely, since the current owners will exit the plant at the end of 2019. On July 19th, Navajo representatives met with the Bureau of Reclamation and requested another stakeholder meeting. A multiple stakeholder meeting is being discussed for September. On July 28th, Peabody Energy and Lazard (investment banking) met with representatives from DOI to discuss potential of investors. Initial discussions sound positive and Lazard hopes to have initial bid proposals by mid-September. Meetings have been scheduled for September 6th in DC and a follow up meeting September 21st in Flagstaff, AZ.

Timing: September 2017

Contact: Dr. Andrea Travnicek, Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science

Release of High-Profile Grants

1. **URBAN PARTNERSHIP GRANTS:** National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in cooperation with US Fish & Wildlife, will award over \$2 million in grants under their Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program. The grants fund multiple federal initiatives, including new and existing Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships and Urban Bird Treaty cities. NFWF will make its initial announcement and FWS will follow the next day.

Timing: August 31, 2017

Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

2. **CENTENNIAL CHALLENGE PROJECTS:** The NPS will announce the award of \$18 million in Centennial Challenge projects. Many of the projects accomplish deferred maintenance projects, and all represent public-private partnerships, since each project requires a minimum 50/50 match with non-Federal funds.

Timing: September 2017

Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

3. **NORTH AMERICAN WETLANDS CONSERVATION ACT (NAWCA) GRANTS:** The FWS will announce the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC), chaired by Secretary Zinke, which will approve funding for the first round of FY 2018 NAWCA grants, as well as land acquisitions and lease agreements for national wildlife refuges using Migratory Bird Conservation Fund money. The MBCC will also hear a report on NAWCA small grants, which were approved by the North American Wetlands Conservation Council earlier this year.

Timing: September 6, 2017

Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

Key Events for Upcoming 30-Days

Travel by Secretary

September 9-10	Secretary Zinke will travel to Maryland to attend the Cabinet Meeting at Camp David.
September 10	Secretary Zinke will travel to Pennsylvania to visit the Flight 93 National Memorial.
September 11-13	Secretary Zinke will travel to New York to attend Ground Zero ceremony and visit the Statue of Liberty.
September 20-21	Secretary Zinke will travel to Missouri to attend the Johnny Morris Wonders of Wildlife Museum Celebration.
September 21-23	Secretary Zinke will travel to Texas to attend the National Rifle Association's Women's Leadership Forum Summit.
September 27-29	Secretary Zinke will travel to Pennsylvania and New Jersey to visit Valley Forge National Battlefield, Independence National Historic Park, and the Gateway National Recreation Area.