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**Sent:** 2017-02-16T13:12:52-05:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Weekly Report to the Secretary - February 16, 2017  
**Received:** 2017-02-16T13:13:00-05:00  
[DOI Weekly Report to the Secretary 02-17-17.docx](#)

Good Afternoon All,  
Please find attached the weekly report to the Secretary. I have attached both the word and Google Doc versions of the reports. If there are any issues, please let me know.

Thanks

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DOI Weekly Report to the Secretary 02-17-17

**WEEKLY REPORT TO THE SECRETARY  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**February 17, 2017**

**Office of the Solicitor**

**Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Nothing to report.

**Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

**SIGNIFICANT LITIGATION DEADLINES FOR NEXT TWO WEEKS SEPARATELY  
REPORTED**

**NEW CASES:**

***Beaver County, Utah v. U.S. Department of the Interior, et al. (D. Utah)***

On February 7, Plaintiff Beaver County filed a complaint and motion for preliminary injunction, arguing that BLM failed to comply with its duties under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act to remove excess horses from the Sulphur Herd Management Area (HMA) in southwestern Utah, and requesting that the court issue an injunction prohibiting BLM from releasing any horses back to the HMA. On February 10, Plaintiff agreed to withdraw its motion for preliminary injunction. The United States response is due April 10.

**SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS:**

***Lenker v. Haugrud (N.D. Okla.)***

This case challenged Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance regarding oil and gas lease operations on the Osage Mineral Estate. *See* 25 C.F.R. Part 226. On February 9, 2017, the court granted the Federal defendants' motion to dismiss for failure to exhaust administrative remedies.

**OTHER LITIGATION MATTERS:**

***Natural Resources Defense Council v. Jewell (E.D. Cal.)***

The parties continue to negotiate stipulations to address the Plaintiffs' motion for reconsideration or, in the alternative, motion for leave to file a Fifth Supplemental Complaint ("5SC") alleging that the Bureau of Reclamation violated Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act by relying on a Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) letter of concurrence. In that letter, the FWS confirmed that all of the effects to delta smelt from the delivery of water under the Sacramento River Settlement and Delta-Mendota Canal Unit contracts were addressed in the FWS' 2008 Biological Opinion for the long-term operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project. The

(b) (5) DPP AWP ACP

***Western Energy Alliance et al. v. DOI (Greater Sage-Grouse plan litigation -Rocky Mountain and Great Basin Plan Amendments/Revisions and Records of Decision (RODs)***

Plaintiffs challenge the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) plan amendments and revisions in Nevada, Utah, Northwest Colorado, North Dakota, and Montana. On February 10, 2017, pursuant to the parties' filing of a joint stipulation of voluntary dismissal, the court dismissed Plaintiffs' challenge to the Nevada plan amendments.

***Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town (AQTT) v. U.S., et al. (10<sup>th</sup> Cir.) – Mediation Conference Call***

Pursuant to Rule 33.1, Rules of the Tenth Circuit, a mediation conference has been to explore any possibilities for settlement and to resolve procedural problems. In the proceedings below, the AQTT requested a declaratory judgment that the Defendants failed to fulfill their legal obligations and duties as trustees and an order compelling Defendants: (1) to assign the Wetumka Project lands to the AQTT, and (2) to provide the AQTT with a full and complete accounting of all the AQTT's trust funds and assets. The first claim was dismissed in 2010, however, the district court remanded the matter to the agency for further consideration of the ownership of the trust account. On remand, the IBIA again concluded that the account did not belong to AQTT. AQTT challenged the agency decision under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA). On December 30, 2016, the district court affirmed the agency decision and granted Defendant's motion for summary judgment. Plaintiff appealed.

***WildEarth Guardians v. United States Bureau of Reclamation and United States Army Corps of Engineers (D.N.M.)***

This suit alleges violations by Reclamation and the Corps of Sections 7 and 9 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for their respective dam and reservoir operations in the middle Rio Grande, New Mexico. On December 2, 2016, FWS issued the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) a new biological opinion (BO) that covered the water management actions of BIA, the State of New Mexico and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. The new BO mooted all of WildEarth Guardians' (WEG's) claims against Reclamation. On February 13, 2017, WEG informed the Department of Justice that it would NOT pursue its claims against Reclamation and it would NOT amend its complaint to add FWS and challenge the new BO. WEG will wait until the court rules on its claims against the Corps before it considers any future claims against Reclamation or FWS.

***Havasupai Tribe v. Anasazi Water Co., et al. (D. Ariz.)***

The Havasupai Tribe seeks declaratory and injunctive relief against private parties, alleging that their groundwater pumping is infringing on the Tribe's federal reserved water rights to groundwater in the Redwall-Muav aquifer (R-aquifer). Several defendants submitted motions to order joinder of required parties or dismissal, naming the United States as an indispensable party, and the Tribe filed a response in opposition on February 6. (Despite its opposition to motions for

joinder or dismissal, the Tribe has requested the United States to join or intervene in the case.) A case management conference is scheduled for April 7. The Division of Indian Affairs is considering a draft litigation referral.

***United States v. Roberts (D.V.I.)***

The National Park Service (NPS) officials discovered several privately-owned structures within the Bordeaux Mountain area of Virgin Islands National Park. After several attempts to resolve the trespass failed, NPS brought this action in 2014 to evict the private owners, which are all members of the same extended family. The owners filed a counterclaim to quiet title to the lands, claiming ownership through deed and in the alternative through adverse possession (from which title vested before the United States acquired the property). Discovery and summary judgment briefing were completed in 2016, and mediation in November 2016 was unsuccessful. The case is on the trial calendar for the week of April 3, 2017.

***Wild Fish Conservancy v. Irving (E.D. Wash.)***

This is a challenge under the ESA to operation of the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery. On November 22, 2016, the court issued a decision on summary judgment denying all of plaintiff's claims with one exception; it determined that the BO prepared by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) had inadequately analyzed the effects of climate change on hatchery operations and remanded the BO to NMFS. NMFS expects to issue a new BO this spring. On February 1, the court entered judgment along the lines of its prior opinion. Any appeal must be filed by April 3 and the Department of Justice has asked for the Department's views no later than March 1.

**NON-LITIGATION MATTERS:**

**Marfork Coal Co. Ten Day Notice – Informal Review Process**

Pursuant to a court order, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) has to issue a new informal review decision expeditiously. In litigation before the U.S District Court for the District of Columbia, a citizen's group challenged an OSMRE informal review decision that was issued as part of a ten day notice process. OSMRE's informal review decision found that a coal mining permit issued by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) to Marfork Coal Co. did not terminate automatically when operations did not begin within three years of permit issuance. The court granted the government's motion for vacatur and voluntary remand and remanded the matter to OSMRE for reconsideration in light of a decision from the District of Alaska in a similar case. As part of the current informal review process, OSMRE sent a letter to WVDEP allowing WVDEP to provide supplemental information, and WVDEP responded on February 10. Although the OSMRE letter was addressed only to WVDEP, a law firm representing the new permittee – Republic Energy, Inc. – also sent a response to OSMRE on February 10. Given that OSMRE's regulations do not give permittees the opportunity to participate in the informal review process, OSMRE is evaluating how to deal with the letter.

**Waiver of Homeliving Staff Qualifications at Bureau of Indian Education-Funded Schools**

A number of Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) –funded, tribally-controlled boarding schools are having difficulty recruiting and retaining staff meeting the minimum “homeliving” program staff qualifications at 25 C.F.R. 36.75. The regulation authorizes a tribal governing body or school board to waive the qualification requirements, but do not provide criteria for doing so. For instance, a tribal chairman recently sent a waiver request to BIE asking to waive the 32 post-secondary semester hours training requirement, in lieu of a single 42-hour course ending in a certification for residential staff who would monitor students overnight. We are working with BIE to determine how best to evaluate such waivers.

**Central Arizona Project System Use Agreement**

On February 2, Reclamation and the Central Arizona Water District (CAWCD) entered into the Central Arizona Project (CAP) System Use Agreement (Agreement). The Agreement creates scheduling priorities in the event the operational capability of the CAP is constrained, and provides a framework for using the CAP to transport new water supplies, exchange water supplies among users, and recover stored water. The Agreement took two years to negotiate and is one in a series of documents under negotiation as a part of the Arizona Drought Contingency Plan Plus.

**Keystone XL Pipeline Right-of-Way Application (ROW)**

On February 8, 2017, Keystone submitted an updated application to BLM-Montana for a Mineral Leasing Act right-of-way (ROW) across federal lands in Montana. BLM anticipates issuing a decision on the application by the end of April.

## **Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

No meetings, hearings, or travel scheduled for Maureen Foster or Virginia Johnson; FWS Acting Director Jim Kurth has no travel planned through February 24.

On February 21 -24, NPS Acting Director Michael Reynolds will visit Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and Coronado National Monument in Arizona and meet with NPS staff and regional partners to better understand park operations and border management issues.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

During the weeks of February 13 and February 20, the NPS will be hosting eight public open houses and webinars regarding the draft Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan/EIS in the North Cascades Ecosystem (NCE). These will be held across Washington State. The purpose of the EIS is to determine how to restore grizzly bears to the NCE. The draft EIS was released on January 13, 2017, and the public comment period is open until March 14, 2017. This is controversial because all but one of the alternatives involves relocating this large apex predator to the region, sparking human safety concerns.

During the week of February 20, the NPS will announce the final 2016 visitation numbers. For the third consecutive year, visitation to the National Park System reached record numbers. A total of 330,971,689 recreation visits occurred across parks in 2016, a 7.7 percent (23.7 million) increase from 2015.

On or about February 20, the National Park of American Samoa will host Representative Robert Bishop, Chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources, and up to eight other members of Congress and additional staff for a tour of the park visitor center in Pago Pago and a tour of the Tutuila unit of the park by boat. While on the islands, Representative Bishop will also visit War in the Pacific National Historical Park. He will lay a wreath on the Memorial at the Asan Bay Overlook and meet with WWII survivors and island leaders. They also plan to visit the T. Stell Newman Visitors Center including a tour of the museum collections.

## **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Acting Director Jim Kurth has no travel planned through February 24.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

#### **Monarch butterfly**

Eastern and Western monarch overwintering numbers released -- On February 9, the World Wildlife Fund, Mexico released its results of the overwintering numbers for the eastern migratory population of monarchs. The eastern population occupied 7.91 acres of forest, which is

a 27 percent decrease from the last year's occupied area of 9.91 acres. On February 8, Xerces announced the results of its Western Monarch Thanksgiving Count, which shows that the population has not rebounded. That survey was slightly higher than last year, but the difference is due to a large increase in volunteers. R3 (Midwest Region)

Final conservation planning targets on the monarch butterfly -- In early March, FWS will release preliminary conservation planning targets for the monarch butterfly. The targets are separate from the ongoing species status assessment for the monarch, which will inform the Service's determination on whether to propose the monarch for listing under the ESA. The targets are acreages for habitat needed to reverse the downward trend in monarch numbers for Eastern and Western populations. The preliminary estimate for suitable new or restored habitat needed to reverse the decline of monarchs is a range of 18-39 million acres in the Eastern population. FWS plans to formally release these targets at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference on March 7. Outreach planned. R3 (Midwest Region)

### **Funding to States**

WSFR funding to states -- In February, FWS will distribute \$1.1 billion in revenues generated by the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration acts to states, territories and District of Columbia. The funding, which supports critical state wildlife conservation and recreation projects throughout the nation, is generated by excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, fishing equipment and motorboat fuels paid by the hunting, shooting, boating and angling industries. Outreach is planned. HQ

### **Endangered Species Act Recovery Actions**

Giant garter snake draft recovery plan -- In February, FWS will publish a Notice of Availability for the second revised draft recovery plan for the giant garter snake. Target to the *Federal Register* is February 27. Outreach planned. HQ

Results of the annual Mexican wolf population survey -- At the end of February, FWS and the Arizona Game and Fish Department will announce the results of the annual Mexican wolf population survey. Conducted by FWS and partners the annual wolf population survey and capture took place from January 23 through February 4. During the survey, a nuisance wolf involved in multiple depredations was removed to Sevilleta NWR pens. Joint outreach planned. R2 (Southwest Region)

North Cascades Grizzly Bear Recovery -- In February (13-24), NPS and FWS will hold eight open houses across the state of Washington to discuss the proposed alternatives for the restoration of grizzly bears to the North Cascades Ecosystem. The alternatives are described in the draft Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, released in January 2017. Controversial because all but one of the alternatives involves relocating this large apex predator to the region, sparking human safety concerns. R1 (Pacific Region)

Rodent control in Hawaii -- During the week of February 23, FWS will request public comment on a draft environmental assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of hand broadcast application of two rodenticides to control mice in native Hawaiian conservation areas. Mice and other rodents are primary factors limiting the recovery of ESA-listed plants and animals in the

Hawaiian Islands. The comment period will last two weeks and is a follow-up to meetings with stakeholders on the Big Island. This research will inform the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Rodent and Mongoose Control currently under development. Potentially controversial due to the use of rodenticides, which are controversial in Hawaii. R1 (Pacific Region)

### **Endangered Species Act Listing Actions**

90-day Batched Petition Finding -- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* 90-day petition findings for five species: desert tortoise (Mojave population), sturgeon chub, sicklefin chub, and tricolored bat. The tricolored bat is found in 35 states, Canada, Mexico and Guatemala, is being threatened by white nose syndrome and loss of habitat. As such, it will likely garner public attention. Target to the *Federal Register* is February 24. Outreach planned upon Reading Room publication. HQ

Two Australian Parrots delisting -- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a final rule to delist two Australian parrot species (scarlet-chested parakeet and the turquoise parrot) due to recovery. Both parrots are native to Australia. Target to the *Federal Register* is February 28. Outreach planned. HQ

### **Endangered Species Act Critical Habitat Actions**

Western glacier stonefly and meltwater lednian stonefly proposed critical habitat -- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a proposal to designate critical habitat for approximately 36 stream miles of occupied habitat and 3,100 acres of unoccupied habitat in Montana for the meltwater lednian stonefly and approximately 1.5 stream miles of occupied habitat and 204 acres of unoccupied habitat for the western glacier stonefly. FWS will also reopen the public comment period for the proposed listing of western glacier stonefly and meltwater lednian stonefly as threatened species. Target to the *Federal Register* is late February. Outreach planned upon Reading Room publication. R6 (Mountain-Prairie Region)

### **National Wildlife Refuge Actions**

Banking on Nature -- In mid-February, FWS will announce the *Banking on Nature* report that demonstrates America's national wildlife refuges are economic powerhouses for local communities across the country. This report highlights two of the many local economic benefits of refuges: the impact of recreational visits (e.g. ecotourism) and the economic payback from National Wildlife Refuge System spending within neighboring communities. The peer-reviewed report, which examined national wildlife refuges in 2015, found every \$1 million spent by the Refuge System created about 13 jobs in the United States. Spending by the 48.5 million visitors generated nearly \$2.7 billion in consumer spending. This supported 39,149 full-time and seasonal jobs, providing more than \$885 million in income to people living in local communities. Outreach planned. HQ and regions

2017 Cooperative Recovery Initiative -- In late February, FWS will announce nine projects on 12 national wildlife refuges across the United States are receiving more than \$3.74 million through the Cooperative Recovery Initiative (CRI). The CRI funds on-the-ground conservation projects

to help recover threatened or endangered species on national wildlife refuges and surrounding lands. These projects often provide related conservation benefits to other imperiled species and encourage partnerships with state and private groups. Outreach planned. HQ and regions

Valle de Oro EA -- In late February or early March, FWS anticipates making a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Valle de Oro NWR in Albuquerque, NM, available for public comment. Currently FWS is consulting with vested partners to develop the draft EA. As the urban refuge is in close proximity to the Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB) flight path, KAFB has concerns about potential bird strikes on aircraft. Of primary concern are proposed habitat restoration plans for seasonal wetlands. KAFB believes restored habitat may attract more large birds (geese, cranes and ducks) and increase collision risks. FWS is meeting with KAFB and intends to continue coordinating with the Federal Aviation Administration and KAFB throughout this process to minimize these concerns. Of interest to Senator Heinrich (D-NM) and Representative Michelle Lujan-Grisham (D-NM-1) and potentially to Senator Udall (D-NM). R2 (Southwest Region)

## **National Park Service**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

On February 21 -24, Acting Director Michael Reynolds will visit Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and Coronado National Monument in Arizona and meet with NPS staff and regional partners to better understand park operations and border management issues.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

Beginning February 13, 2017, the Petroglyph National Monument visitor center at will be closed for approximately two-three months. The temporary closure will allow for rehabilitation of the 100+ year-old adobe structure. Replacement of HVAC systems and ductwork, pest-proofing, and other work will also take place. A temporary visitor contact station will operate in the existing Visitor Center parking area. No other visitor services will be disrupted.

On February 13-17, the Southern Campaign of the American Revolution Parks (Cowpens National Battlefield, Kings Mountain National Memorial Park, Ninety Six National Historic Site, & Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail) Group Superintendent, John Slaughter, and Chief of Planning and Partnerships, Ben Richardson, will be visiting the offices of Representatives Virginia Foxx (R-NC-5), Mark Walker (R-NC-6), Patrick McHenry (R-NC-10), Mark Meadows (R-NC-11), Phil Roe (R-TN-1), Jeff Duncan (R-SC-3), Mick Mulvaney (R-NC-5), and Morgan Griffith (R-VA-9) as a courtesy. They will be accompanied by staff from the headquarters Office of Legislative and Congressional Affairs.

On February 13 - 17, Blue Ridge Parkway Superintendent Mark Woods will provide courtesy updates to congressional members and staff regarding parkway operations, projects and issues. Members include: Senator Mark Warner (D-VA), Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA), Congressman Morgan Griffith (R-VA-9), Congressman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA-6), Congressman Thomas Garrett (R-VA-5), Senator Richard Burr (R-NC), Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC), Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC-5), Congressman Patrick McHenry (R-NC-10), Congressman Mark

Meadows (R-NC-11), and Congressman Mark Walker (R-NC-6). He will be accompanied by staff from the headquarters Office of Legislative and Congressional Affairs.

On February 14 – 21, Isle Royale National Park will host two public meetings in Duluth and Houghton, Michigan, to discuss a draft plan and Environmental Impact Statement to address the recently declining population of wolves on Isle Royale and the possible need to supplement this population. In conjunction with the meetings, Isle Royale will conduct tribal consultations with Lake Superior Ojibwa tribes.

On or about February 15, escrow is set to close on 96 tracts of vacant land, totaling 3,065 acres, at Mojave National Preserve. A Land and Water Conservation Fund appropriation in FY 2015 is being used to purchase the land from the Mojave Desert Land Trust. The proceeds of the sale will be used by the trust to acquire additional conservation lands within the preserve.

On or about February 15, Glacier National Park anticipates easing current watercraft restrictions to allow non-motorized watercraft with inspections only on NPS-managed waters for summer 2017. All park waters are currently closed to boating due to the detection of invasive mussels in Montana. The announcement includes a continued prohibition on private motorized watercraft. The park's ability to safely allow any boats on NPS-managed waters is tied to the availability of seasonal boat inspectors. Depending on state issuance additional wash station protocols, and state water testing efforts this summer, the NPS may revisit motorized watercraft prohibition on some/all lakes. The NPS will be scheduling a briefing for the DOI leadership on this issue.

On February 15 - 16, Natchez National Historical Park Superintendent Kathleen Bond will visit the offices of Sen. Cochran (R-MS), Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS), and Rep. Gregg Harper (R-3-MS) to provide them with an update on issues at the park as a courtesy visit. She will be accompanied by staff from the headquarters Office of Legislative and Congressional Affairs.

On February 19, Manzanar National Historic Site will offer a special program for the 75th Anniversary of President FDR signing Executive Order 9066. This annual Day of Remembrance marks the incarceration of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II.

On February 19, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway will grant an extension until September 1, 2017, for 15 property owners to remove personal property and improvements (i.e., boat docks and ramps, sheds, and gardens) from and across federal land. The NPS acquired the waterfront property in 1992 and the following year began purchasing scenic easements from willing landowners; however, nine landowners refused to sell their scenic easements. In 1996, the court extended exclusive waterfront access rights to the nine property owners until 2002, followed by non-exclusive access rights until February 18, 2017.

On February 20, Former President and Mrs. Carter will hold a Presidents Day program at Plains High School at the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site. The topic will be the Camp David Accords. A book signing is also scheduled during the program.

On or about February 21, Glacier Bay National Park will hold a preliminary meeting with State of Alaska fisheries biologists and the state employees focused on Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) compliance to explore a cooperative fisheries management plan.

The meeting is in line with the legislative requirement (PL-105-277 Sec. 123) to develop a plan focused on avoiding future conflict.

On February 22, the NPS and DOI Solicitors will meet with the Friends of Riverfront Park (FORP) citizens group in Peoria, Illinois, to discuss a proposed conversion of property originally purchased through a Land Water and Conservation Fund grant. The proposed action would allow for development by the City of Peoria; however, FORP is opposed to the development. Representative Darin LaHood (R-18- IL) is interested in the project and has been kept informed through the NPS Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs.

On February 22, the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail will be the topic at a Prince William County Department of Parks & Recreation open house. At the meeting participants can review the status of the trail in the county, ask questions, and make comments. Representatives of county departments, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission and the NPS will participate.

On February 22, 2017, staff from the House Appropriations Committee, Interior Subcommittee will visit Bandelier National Monument and Valles Caldera National Preserve as part of a planned trip to New Mexico. The superintendents from both parks are coordinating the visits with DOI.

In late February, Rock Creek Park will announce the closure of the Carter Barron Amphitheatre for 2017 due to structural concerns. A recent structural assessment identified major structural and safety concerns. The park is working to notify Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton and interested local council members. Several options for repair are being investigated, as well as alternative locations for performances, including Fort Dupont Park's Summer Theatre. The NPS anticipates some local media interest.

## **Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs and the Bureaus of Indian Affairs and Indian Education**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Nothing to report.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

Indian Affairs has made selections for the 2017 Indian Affairs Student Leadership Summer Institute. Launched in summer 2016, the 10 week paid internship placed 17 Native undergraduate and graduate students in leadership offices across Indian Affairs. The program's mission is to engage and support the next generation of Native leaders in the federal government through an introduction to the government-to-government relationship between tribal nations and the United States. Indian Affairs received more than 60 applications for summer 2017. Hiring of the interns is currently on hold during the hiring freeze.

On February 6-15, BIA will be consulting across the country and by teleconference with Tribes and meeting with members of the public to discuss implementation of the dam safety and irrigation provisions of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN), which passed in December 2016.

On February 13-16, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) will hold its 2017 Executive Council Winter Session in Washington, DC.

On February 15, the National Indian Education Association will hold their annual legislative summit in Washington, DC.

On February 15, the House Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy, and Environment will hold a hearing titled "Examining Federal Programs That Serve Tribes and Their Members."

On February 16, 2017, the Tribal Interior Budget Council (TIBC) meeting will be held in Washington, DC 20036. TIBC provides a forum and process for tribes and federal officials to work together in developing annual budget requests for Indian programs in the Department of the Interior.

## **Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST)**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Acting Special Trustee, Deb DuMontier will be in Washington, D.C. February 13-15, 2017, attending the National Congress for American Indians Executive Council meeting and the Tribal Interior Budget Council Meeting.

Deputy Special Trustee-Field Operations, Jim James will be in Washington, D.C. February 14, 2017, attending the NCAI Conference and Financial Literacy and Education Commission

meeting.

Regional Trust Administrator-Navajo/Southwest will be meeting with Pueblo of San Ildefonso February 15, 2017, to deliver a portfolio review, general OST updates and to clarify conflicting investment instructions from the Tribe.

Acting Special Trustee, Deb DuMontier will be in Albuquerque, NM February 21-24, 2017, meeting with IBC leadership, the Deputy Special Trustee Governance Committee and OST senior leadership to prioritize initiatives at OST Headquarters-West.

**Week Ahead Announcements - Presidential and Department/Agency Priorities**

OST continues to work with both Gila River and San Carlos Tribes regarding their respective withdrawal requests pursuant to the American Indian Trust Fund Management Reform Act of 1994.

## **Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Acting ASLM Rich Cardinale will be in Washington, DC attending regularly scheduled meetings.

ASLM Special Assistant Kate MacGregor will be in Washington, DC attending regularly scheduled meetings.

BLM Acting Director Kristin Bail will be in Washington, DC attending regularly scheduled meetings.

BLM Acting Deputy Director Jerry Perez will in Washington, DC attending regularly scheduled meetings.

OSMRE Acting Director Glenda Owens will be in Washington, DC attending regularly scheduled meetings.

BSEE Acting Director Margaret Schneider will be in Washington, DC attending regularly scheduled meetings.

BOEM Acting Director Walter Cruickshank will be in Washington, DC attending regularly scheduled meetings.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

Upon review and approval by the Department, BOEM plans to publish a *Federal Register* Notice announcing three revised Supplemental Official Block Diagrams along with the two associated revised Official Protraction Diagrams that reflect the lateral boundaries through state waters that divide the Commonwealth of Virginia from North Carolina and Maryland.

On February 12 - 16, the BLM will participate in the Public Lands Alliance Convention and Trade Show in Arlington, VA. Nikki Moore, Deputy Division Chief for BLM's National Landscape Conservation System, and Janey Ady of BLM's Education, Interpretation and Partnerships will present on the mutual benefits of partnerships.

On February 13, the OSMRE Western Region made available for public comment a determination of NEPA adequacy and unsigned finding of no significant impact for the Twentymile Coal Company's Foidel Creek Mine, Colorado, prior to making a recommendation on the mining plan modification. This mine has approximately 300 employees. Continued operation of the Foidel Creek Mine is of importance to the local and regional community.

On February 13 - 17, the National Native Seed Conference is being held in Washington, D.C. This year's conference is focused on implementing the National Seed Strategy, which is part of a comprehensive, science-based strategy to address the threat of wildfire across the west. Peggy Olwell, BLM's Native Plants program leader, is attending the conference.

On February 13 - 25, the Mineral Resources Report of the Sagebrush Focal Areas in ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, and WY will be available. BLM received 600 copies of the report from the USGS, and plans to distribute the report at eight public meetings in February. Public meetings will be held for the proposed SFA Withdrawal EIS at 8 locations: Malta, MT; Salt Lake City, UT; Rock Springs, WY; Idaho Falls, ID; Reno, NV; Lake View, OR; Elko, NV, and Boise, ID from 2/13-2/16 and 2/21-2/24. This topic is controversial.

On or about February 15, the GAO will issue its biennial High Risk Report. The Department anticipates remaining on the report due to certain aspects of its oil and gas program and the hiring and retention of certain key oil and gas positions.

On February 15, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will hold its monthly cooperating agency meeting for the proposed Donlin Gold mine in the Kuskokwim River Valley, AK. The Corps of Engineers is the lead agency. The project would include a natural gas pipeline crossing approximately 97 miles of BLM-managed public lands. One of the primary purposes of the meeting is to obtain an update from the Corps on the project and to discuss the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which was issued in November 2015. Laurie Thorpe, the BLM Donlin Project Manager, will attend as well as staff from the Anchorage Field Office.

On February 15, BLM-OR/WA will hold the Blue Mule Timber Sale, which will make available 5,500 MBF of thinning harvest on 324 acres. The BLM will also hold the Quarry 5 Timber Sale, which will make available 7,358 MBF of regeneration and thinning harvest on 283 acres.

On February 15 - 19, the 41st Annual National Wild Turkey Federation Convention and Sport Show will be held in Nashville, TN. The event includes a National Technical Committee meeting and partner awards ceremony. The BLM, U.S. Forest Service, and state agency partners will participate.

On February 17, BLM-OR/WA will hold the Six One Timber Sale, which will make available 68 acres of regeneration harvest and one acre of right-of-way clearing. This project is expected to be controversial as it is a regeneration harvest.

On February 17, Ocean Energy Safety Institute (OESI), in conjunction with BSEE, will hold a public forum in Houston, TX to discuss recently completed BSEE research projects. The Technology Assessment Program Forum will highlight issues related to offshore research and best industry practices, with opportunities for questions from industry, government, and the public.

On February 20, BLM-UT State Director Ed Roberson is tentatively scheduled to meet with Sen. Hatch in Washington, D.C. This will be a general meeting, with no specific topics, at the request of the Senator.

Throughout the week of February 20, BOEM plans to conduct multiple outreach meetings with fisheries groups and constituents regarding offshore renewable energy. This is part of an effort by BOEM and the California Energy Commission (CEC) to hold a series of regional outreach meetings. Additional stakeholder outreach being organized by BOEM and the CEC will consist of monthly stakeholder sub-teams to coordinate outreach related to data collection and science,

fishing, and coastal communities.

On February 23, staff from the office of Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA) will meet with the BLM, U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss efforts to combat illegal marijuana cultivation on public lands. This meeting follows a request from Rep. LaMalfa for detailed budget information about illegal marijuana eradication, enforcement and environmental cleanup on public lands.

On February 25 – March 1, the National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Legislative Conference will be held in Washington, DC. Cynthia Moses-Nedd, Acting Division Chief, BLM Intergovernmental and External Affairs, will attend the meeting.

On February 25 - March 6, Brian St. George, BLM Colorado DSD for Resources and Fire, will travel to Kenya to participate in a Department of the Interior- International Technical Assistance Program project to combat wildlife trafficking. Discussion topics will include governance and peace, security and illegal wildlife trade, rangelands, marine and forest management, wildlife, and enterprise development.

## **Assistant Secretary Policy, Management and Budget**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

#### **Congressional Travel:**

- Who: House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee Staff (majority) Darren Benjamin, Jason Gray, Kristin Richmond, and Jackie Kilroy
- What: Site visits
- When: February 20-24, 2017
- Where: DOI sites (still being determined) in Santa Fe, NM area
- Press: None
- Topic: The Office of Budget is working on the details of the trip.

#### **Congressional Travel:**

- Who: House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee staff (majority) Betsy Bina.
  - What: Site Visit
  - When: February 21-23, 2017
  - Where: FWS and NPS sites in New Jersey
  - Press: None
  - Topic: The Office of Budget is working with the Bureaus on the details of the trip.
- 
- Who: Members of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF), including DOI and NOAA as co-chairs, 10 other Federal agencies, and the coral reef states and territories
  - What: 37th Meeting of the USCRTF
  - When: February 21-23, 2017
  - Where: Washington, DC, Main Interior Building, with the public Business Meeting in the South Interior Auditorium
  - Press: Open, Press release to be sent by NOAA (as lead for this meeting)
  - Topic: Discuss actions undertaken to implement the USCRTF Framework and the economic value of coral reef ecosystems.
- 
- Who: Office of International Affairs (OIA), with Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Office of the Special Trustee for the American Indian Trust, and Office of the Solicitor
  - What: Visit from UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples
  - When: February 22, 2017, 10:30 - 1:30
  - Where: Washington, DC (MIB)
  - Press: Closed
  - Topic: DOI policies and activities that relate to the rights of indigenous peoples, with a particular focus on energy development and extractive industries.
- 
- Who: National Invasive Species Awareness Week
  - What: Events on Capitol Hill and across the Nation to raise awareness and identify solutions to invasive species issues at local, state, tribal, regional, national and international scales.
  - When: February 27 - March 3, 2017

- Where: Capitol Hill and online
- Press: Open
- Topic: Various invasive species topics such as prevention, early detection and rapid response, control and management, research, education and outreach and more.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

**Dakota Access Pipeline and Keystone Pipelines.** Office of Law Enforcement and Security (OLES) continues to work closely with Bureau of Indian Affairs and other stakeholders to prepare for anticipated demonstrations on Federal lands, as a result of recent Administration's decision regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) and Keystone Pipelines. Demonstrators remain encamped at Standing Rock in North Dakota and additional participants are expected. OLES Special Agents are being dispatched to Bismarck, ND as DAPL begins to proceed with the final portion of the pipeline.

**Indictments for Violations of the Indian Arts and Crafts Act.** On February 8, a Federal grand jury sitting in Albuquerque, NM, returned an indictment charging five individuals with violating the Indian Arts and Crafts Act (IACA) by conspiring to import and fraudulently sell Filipino-made jewelry as Native American-made. This is the second indictment resulting from an investigation led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, initiated in 2015, that targeted an international scheme to violate the IACA.

**New Executive Order in Support of Strengthened Federal Law Enforcement.** On February 9, President Trump signed the Executive Order (EO) *Enforcing Federal Law with Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations and Preventing International Trafficking*. The EO supports strengthening Federal law enforcement to address, among other elements, organized crime, fraud, financial crimes, theft of intellectual property, and the illegal concealment or transfer of proceeds derived from such illicit activities. The provisions of the EO cover key aspects of cases investigated by DOI that involve trafficking and misrepresentations in the marketing of Native American arts and crafts products.

**Internal Control and Audit Follow-up.** The Department has an annual goal of closing 85% of corrective actions scheduled for closure to address issues raised in OIG and GAO engagements. As of February 7, 2017, the Department has closed 17 percent of open audit recommendations scheduled for closure in FY 2017.

**Year 2017 Small Business Accomplishments to Date:** As of February 9, 2017, the Department has awarded 51.50% of its contract award dollars to small businesses. The Department-wide small business goal, which was negotiated with the Small Business Administration, is 53.5%. The Department awarded 22.83% of its contract award dollars to Small Disadvantaged Businesses and 14.45% of its contract award dollars to Women-Owned Small Businesses, exceeding the statutory goal of 5% for each. The Department awarded 2.73% of its contract award dollars to Historically Underutilized Business Zone Small Businesses and 2.92% of its contract award dollars to Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses. The statutory goal is 3% for each of these categories.

**Recent Draft GAO Reports (Per GAO, distribution is highly restricted.): Additional**

**Opportunities to Reduce Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication and Achieve Other Financial Benefits (Spring Tracker).** As statutorily required by Public Law No. 111-139 to identify and report annually to Congress on Federal programs, agencies, offices, and initiatives (either within departments or government-wide) that have duplicative goals or activities, GAO issued a draft submission of focus areas that will be included in GAO's 2017 Fragmentation, Overlap and Duplication Report for review. GAO plans to issue the final report in April 2017. The Department's comments are due February 15.

**Human Trafficking: Action Needed to Identify the Number of Native Americans Receiving Federally-funded Services (GAO-17-325).** Per request by the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, GAO reviewed the extent of human trafficking in Indian country and the Federal efforts to combat human trafficking and assist American Indian and Alaska Native victims. GAO recommends that the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women, Office for Victims of Crimes, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention require their grantees to report the number of human trafficking victims served and the Native American status of those victims. GAO issued the draft report on February 6, with no recommendations to the Department. Comments, if any, are due to GAO on March 6.

**New Office of Inspector General (OIG) Audits: Evaluation of National Park Service Deferred Maintenance (2017-WR-013).** On February 2, 2017, the OIG notified NPS of its decision to defer its evaluation of NPS' deferred maintenance given similar work by GAO in report No. GAO-17-136, "National Park Service: Process Exists for Prioritizing Asset Maintenance Decisions, but Evaluation Could Improve Efforts." In the review, GAO recommended the NPS Director evaluate the Capital Investment Strategy and its results to determine if it is achieving the intended outcomes or if changes are necessary. After NPS has implemented GAO's report recommendation, the OIG anticipates reviewing the progress made in addressing deferred maintenance at NPS. Accordingly, OIG is closing out Assignment No. 2017-WR-013.

**Recent Final OIG Reports: Audit of Task Agreement Nos. P13AC00279, P13AC01094, and P14AC00445 Between the National Park Service and the Student Conservation Association Under Cooperative Agreement No. P09AC00402 (2015-ER-061).** The OIG audited the Student Conservation Association (SCA) costs under a National Park Services (NPS) cooperative agreement and its three task agreements. The NPS issued the agreements for the program coordination, debris cleanup, and support work that the SCA Resiliency Corps performed for National Parks of New York Harbor. The OIG issued 13 recommendations, identifying: (1) a total of \$740,681 in questioned costs; (2) noncompliance with contractual and regulatory requirements; (3) insufficient support for in-kind matches claimed; (4) inappropriate use of program management, training, and technology cost pools; (5) inadequate internal controls, including late and inaccurate reporting; (6) inconsistent identification of work crews/labor categories; and (7) inadequate structuring and monitoring of volunteers to prevent the conversion of volunteers to employees. The OIG closed four recommendations based on NPS' response to the final report, but is referring the remaining nine for implementation.

## **Assistant Secretary for Water and Science**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

**Kerry Rae** - From February 15-24, Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Kerry Rae will be in Washington, DC, and participating in routine internal briefings, and transition-related meetings.

**Scott Cameron** - From February 15-24, Special Assistant to the Secretary Scott Cameron will be in Washington, DC, and participating in routine internal briefings and transition-related meetings.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

**Ongoing hazard response:** Bogoslof volcano, in the Aleutian Island chain, remains at a heightened state of unrest and in an unpredictable condition. A significant increase in seismicity was observed on February 13, likely indicating explosive eruptive activity. However, no ash clouds have been observed. Additional explosive eruptions producing high-elevation ash clouds could occur at any time. The volcano does not have direct ground-based monitoring instrumentation, but USGS scientists are using remote sensing technologies to provide data informing NOAA ash advisories for air traffic safety.

As early as **February 15**, the USGS will install two temporary rapid deployment streamgages on the Cannonball River south of Bismarck, North Dakota, at the request of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The installations may be postponed depending on security clearance since the installations will occur near the Dakota Access Pipeline protest camps. The USGS will send a public affairs specialist to the event to assist with media and address science-specific questions. The Morton County, ND, Sheriff's Department will distribute a news release during the week of the installations, and USGS will issue a local media advisory.

On or before **February 15**, Reclamation plans to make a critical water year announcement in its Central Valley Project. Reclamation is contractually bound to announce whether Reclamation anticipates a "critical" water year in 2017 based on inflows to Shasta Reservoir. A "critical year" designation, where inflows at Shasta Dam are below 3.2 million acre-feet, would trigger the shortage provisions of senior water rights contractors and refuges served by the Central Valley Project. Fortunately, it is *not* looking likely that there will be a "critical year" designation in 2017.

On **February 15**, Reclamation's Four Corners Construction Office will provide a tour of select features of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project to representatives from the Government Accountability Office. The tour is part of a review by GAO of federal coordination of tribal drinking water and wastewater needs, the extent to which federal programs meet these needs, and the extent to which federal agencies coordinate to identify and meet tribal water needs.

On **February 15-16**, a meeting of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group federal advisory committee is planned in Tempe, AZ. Major topics will include the Long-Term

Experimental and Management Plan Record of Decision and implementation; current basin hydrology, operations, and the 2018 hydrograph; progress in revitalizing the Science Advisors Program; science results from the USGS Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center; and progress on the Fiscal Year 2018-20 Budget and Work Plan.

On or about **February 20**, Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region will make an initial announcement of how much water will be made available under the terms of our contracts to water users in the Central Valley Project. This initial announcement is generally updated on a monthly basis until about June. The amount of water to be made available is expressed as a percentage of the full contract amount.

As soon as **February 21**, USGS will announce a new study new USGS research will be published analyzing livestock grazing records from Wyoming to investigate broad-scale responses of greater sage-grouse populations to livestock management. Scientists used 11 years of annual population counts of greater sage-grouse coupled with grazing records from BLM allotments across Wyoming to assess sage-grouse population trends relative to differences in livestock management. Researchers discovered that grazing can have both positive and negative effects on greater sage-grouse population trends, depending on the level of grazing and when it occurred during the growing season. The paper will be published in *Ecological Applications* and a news release is planned.

In the **coming weeks**, USGS will announce a new Scientific Investigation Report that presents monitoring data collected by 74 organizations at almost 1,400 sites to provide a nationwide look at changes in the quality of our rivers and streams in the 40 years since passage of the Clean Water Act. For the first time, these data can be viewed and analyzed side-by-side, giving users a comprehensive, nationwide view of changes in water quality based on 51 water-quality constituents and 38 aquatic-life metrics and spanning four decades. A news release with possible Secretary rollout is being planned.

## **30-60 DAY LOOK-AHEAD**

### **Office of the Solicitor**

Significant Litigation Deadlines reported separately in 100-day report.

### **Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks**

During the week of February 27, several NPS law enforcement rangers and U.S. Park Police officers are scheduled to testify in the trial of several Cliven Bundy supporters related to the April 2014 round up of Mr. Bundy's trespassing cattle on Bureau of Land Management and NPS Land near Bunkerville, Nevada. The U.S. Attorney's Office is the lead for the case with assistance from the Department of the Interior's Solicitor's Office. The NPS anticipates media coverage of the trial.

In February/early March, the FWS will distribute \$1.1 billion in revenues generated by the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration acts to states, territories and District of Columbia. The funding, which supports critical state wildlife conservation and recreation projects throughout the nation, is generated by excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, fishing equipment and motorboat fuels paid by the hunting, shooting, boating and angling industries. The FWS communications office will coordinate outreach with the Secretary's office.

In February, the FWS will announce the *Banking on Nature* report that demonstrates America's national wildlife refuges are economic powerhouses for local communities across the country. This report highlights two of the many local economic benefits of refuges: the impact of recreational visits (e.g., ecotourism) and the economic payback from National Wildlife Refuge System spending within neighboring communities. The peer-reviewed report, which examined national wildlife refuges in 2015, found every \$1 million spent by the Refuge System created about 13 jobs in the United States. Spending by the 48.5 million visitors generated nearly \$2.7 billion in consumer spending. This supported 39,149 full-time and seasonal jobs, providing more than \$885 million in income to people living in local communities. The FWS communications office will coordinate outreach with the Secretary's office.

In late February, the FWS will announce nine projects on 12 national wildlife refuges across the United States are receiving more than \$3.74 million through the Cooperative Recovery Initiative (CRI). The CRI funds on-the-ground conservation projects to help recover threatened or endangered species on national wildlife refuges and surrounding lands. These projects often provide related conservation benefits to other imperiled species and encourage partnerships with state and private groups. The FWS communications office will coordinate outreach with the Secretary's office.

In late February or early March, the FWS will publish a notice of intent that the bureau will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in conjunction with a proposed rule to revise the existing nonessential experimental population designation of red wolves in North Carolina. This notice announces FWS' intention to revise the designation under section 10(j) of the ESA and

the initiation of a public scoping process to identify issues and concerns, potential impacts, and possible alternatives to the proposed action. This will be controversial; the FWS communications office will coordinate outreach with the Secretary's office.

In late February, the FWS will post its recently completed status review of the polar bear. After a thorough review of new and updated scientific information on the polar bear's biology and threats, the FWS concluded that it continues to meet the definition of a threatened species under the ESA. A news bulletin will be posted to regional website, otherwise no outreach planned.

In late February, the FWS and the Arizona Game and Fish Department will announce the results of the annual Mexican wolf population survey. Conducted by FWS and partners, the annual wolf population survey and capture took place from January 23 through February 4. During the survey, a nuisance wolf involved in multiple depredations was removed to Sevilleta NWR pens in La Joya, New Mexico.

On March 4 and 5, Selma to Montgomery National Historical Trail staff will participate in annual commemorations for Bloody Sunday – the 1965 march led by Representative John Lewis when protesters were attacked by law enforcement. Events are scheduled at the NPS Selma Interpretive Center and Brown Chapel AME Church in Selma, Alabama, and at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. Previous events included marches across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Approximately 50-75 members of Congress have been invited by local organizers to attend.

On March 6, FWS' Supervisor of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office will provide an update to attendees at the Oregon Cattlemen's Association Spring Quarterly Meeting in Salem, Oregon. This forum provides an opportunity to reinforce our message that FWS is dedicated to continued collaborative conservation. This is potentially controversial; the meeting is open press.

On March 7, the NPS and the Boy Scouts of America will participate in an event in President's Park (the White House) at the Boy Scout Memorial celebrating the renewal of the two organizations' partnership. Acting Director Michael Reynolds and Chief Scout Executive Michael Surbaugh will give remarks. Invitations will also be extended to the incoming Secretary and members of Congress.

On March 9, the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) will host a public event at Stonewall National Monument to informally celebrate the new national monument. NPCA has invited partners that were integral in the establishment of the monument and the NPS will provide an update on the progress of the development the site.

In March, the NPS anticipates awarding \$623,038 in Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to government sponsors in partnership with nonprofits for battlefield protection through fee simple and easement purchase, pending NPS review and approval of a proposed grant apportionment package. Grants will be used to protect 145 acres of Civil War battlefields in Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland. The NPS works with private landowners, battlefield friends groups, interested community groups, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, local, state, and tribal governments and Federal agencies for preservation projects and local acquisition of Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and

Civil War battlefield land. Grants are awarded several times throughout the year.

In March, the FWS will release the conservation strategy on the monarch butterfly. The conservation strategy is separate from the ongoing species status assessment for the monarch, which will inform FWS' determination on whether to propose the monarch for listing under the ESA. The strategy includes target acreages for habitat needed to reverse the downward trend in monarch numbers for eastern and western populations. The strategy's preliminary estimate for suitable new or restored habitat needed to reverse the decline of monarchs is 29 million acres in the eastern population. It also defines monarch habitat, which includes overwintering habitat in Mexico and California. The FWS communications office will coordinate outreach with the Secretary's office.

In March, the NPS anticipates publishing the annual report on the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program (HTC). The HTC provides a 20 percent federal tax credit to property owners who undertake a substantial rehabilitation of income-producing historic buildings, while maintaining historic character. The report includes summary information about the program and projects reviewed (e.g., total number of projects broken down by state and rehabilitation cost, by new use, and by project size), as well as photos and short descriptions of some representative projects. This year a total of 1,039 certified projects were completed - the highest in recent program history – and an estimated 108,528 jobs were created as a result.

In early March, the FWS will publish a final determination on a proposed rule that published January 8, 2016, to reclassify the West Indian manatee from endangered to threatened under the Endangered Species Act. A notice of intent to sue was filed by the Pacific Legal Foundation January 9 for failure to finalize the proposal to reclassify the manatee from endangered to threatened. This is controversial because the manatee is a large, docile sea mammal that engenders passionate advocacy in the Southeast. There were a record number of boat strikes in 2016, and some conservation groups do not want to see the species' protections diminished.

In March, the NPS will begin a 30-day internal review period on a draft Policy Memorandum to develop and communicate guidance on conducting body-worn camera programs. The goal is to enhance transparency in police-community contacts, to provide evidence, and to document the actions of officers while performing their duties.

## **U.S. Fish And Wildlife Service**

### **Endangered Species Act Recovery Actions**

Red wolf notice – On or around March 2, FWS will publish a notice of intent that the bureau will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in conjunction with a proposed rule to revise the existing nonessential experimental population designation of red wolves in North Carolina. The proposed rule, and the preferred action in the EIS, would revise the existing experimental population rule to apply only to the Dare County Bombing Range and Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, where stable packs exist on federal lands. FWS expects to make a final decision on the proposed action, which will change the scope of and goals for the experimental population, by December 2017. The notice announces FWS' intention to revise the designation under section 10(j) of the ESA and the initiation of a public scoping process to identify issues

and concerns, potential impacts, and possible alternatives to the proposed action. Outreach planned upon Reading Room publication. Controversial. R4 (Southeast Region)

### **Endangered Species Act Listing Actions**

Final rule to reclassify manatee -- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on a proposed rule that published January 8, 2016, to reclassify the West Indian manatee from endangered to threatened under the Endangered Species Act. A notice of intent to sue was filed by the Pacific Legal Foundation January 9 for failure to finalize the reclassification proposal. Target to the *Federal Register* is March 6. To avoid litigation, the rule needs to be delivered to the *Federal Register* by March 8. Outreach planned. Controversial because the manatee is a large, docile sea mammal that engenders passionate advocacy in the Southeast, there were a record number of boat strikes in 2016, and some conservation groups don't want to see the species' protections diminished. R4 (Southeast Region)

Final delisting of the Hualapai Mexican vole -- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a final rule to delist the Hualapai Mexican vole, located in Arizona, due to the fact that the original classification is no longer appropriate. Target to the *Federal Register* is March 30. Outreach planned. R2 (Southwest Region)

Southern Selkirk Mountains population of woodland caribou -- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a notice amending the current listing of the southern Selkirk Mountains population of woodland caribou to include the entire Southern Mountain Caribou population as a Distinct Population Segment (DPS). The revised DPS includes the currently listed southern Selkirk Mountains population of woodland caribou, which is a transboundary species between British Columbia, Canada, and northern Idaho and northeastern Washington. The revised DPS would remain listed as endangered under the ESA. Target to the *Federal Register* is March 30. Outreach planned. R1 (Pacific Region)

Bone Cave harvestman petition finding -- By the end of March, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a revised 90-day finding on a petition to delist the Bone Cave harvestman (a cave invertebrate) found in Texas. In June 2015, FWS published a not-substantial 90-day finding on the petition to delist the Bone Cave harvestman. A disc of supplemental information submitted with the petition was overlooked and not considered in that finding. This revised finding results from a voluntary court-ordered remand and settlement agreement; the court-ordered date is March 31. This issue has received media attention in recent months. It involves a rancher who has taken issue with the species' listing on his land and a conservative think tank. It will likely generate media coverage and stakeholder engagement. Outreach planned. R2 (Southwest Region)

Proposed rule to delist the Deseret milkvetch -- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a proposal to delist the Deseret milkvetch, found in Utah, due to recovery. Target to the *Federal Register* is March 31. Outreach planned. R6 (Mountain-Prairie Region)

Island marble butterfly proposed listing -- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a proposal to list the island marble butterfly as endangered. Target to the *Federal Register* is March 31. Outreach planned. R1 (Pacific Region)

Southwest willow flycatcher 12-month finding -- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a 12-month finding on a petition to delist the southwestern willow flycatcher from the list of threatened and endangered wildlife, based on the bird's taxonomic status. This issue involves ranchers and private landowners, grazing and riparian issues, and will likely generate local media coverage and stakeholder interest. Target to the *Federal Register* is March 31. R2 (Southwest Region)

Yellow lance and Atlantic pigtoe petition findings -- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a 12-month finding on the status of two freshwater mussel species, yellow lance, and Atlantic pigtoe. The species are located in North Carolina and Virginia. Target to the *Federal Register* is March 31. Outreach planned. R4 (Southeast Region)

Beaver pond marstonia 12 month finding-- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a 12 month finding on the status of the Beaver Pond marstonia, a freshwater snail, found in Georgia. FWS is required by a court-ordered settlement agreement to submit the finding to the *Federal Register* by April 1. R4 (Southeast Region)

Two Lower Colorado River fishes final listing determination -- By April 7, FWS will publish a final listing determination on the Headwater chub and roundtail chub, both native to Arizona and New Mexico. Target to the *Federal Register* is March 23. Outreach planned. FWS has a court-ordered settlement agreement to publish the final determination by April 7. R2 (Southwest Region)

### **Endangered Species Act Critical Habitat Actions**

Black pine snake proposed critical habitat -- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a notice reopening the comment period on a proposed critical habitat designation for the black pine snake. FWS will also hold two public information meetings during the open comment period. Target to the *Federal Register* is March 31. Outreach planned. R4 (Southeast Region)

Texas hornshell proposed critical habitat -- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a proposal to designate 463 river miles of critical habitat for the Texas hornshell (a freshwater mussel) in New Mexico and Texas. Target to the *Federal Register* is March 31. Outreach planned. R2 (Southwest Region)

Florida bristle fern proposed critical habitat -- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a proposal to designate critical habitat for the Florida bristle fern in Florida. The proposed designation includes approximately 10,937 acres. Target to the *Federal Register* is March 31. Outreach planned. R4 (Southeast Region)

Slickspot peppergrass revised proposed critical habitat -- As a result of new information available, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a revision of the 2014 revised proposed critical habitat rule, and will request new information regarding population status, trends or threats, and on additional areas that meet FWS criteria for critical habitat. Target to the *Federal Register* is April 7. Outreach planned. R1 (Pacific Region)

Sonoyta mud turtle proposed critical habitat -- FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a proposal to designate 12.28 acres as critical habitat for the Sonoyta mud turtle in Arizona. Target to the *Federal Register* is April 14. Outreach planned. R2 (Southwest Region)

### **National Wildlife Refuge Actions**

Silvio O. Conte Refuge final Comprehensive Conservation Plan -- By the end of March, FWS will publish a notice in the *Federal Register* announcing the Record of Decision for the final CCP and Environmental Impact Statement for the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in Vermont. The approved CCP will guide long-term management decisions for the refuge. Local outreach is planned. R5 (Northeast Region)

Massasoit Refuge draft CCP -- In the next 30-60 days, FWS will publish a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register* to announce the release of Massasoit NWR (part of the Eastern Massachusetts Complex) draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for public comment. When finalized, the CCP will guide long-term management decisions for the refuge. Local outreach planned. R5 (Northeast Region)

### **Migratory Bird Management Actions**

Cormorant control for 2017 -- In May of 2016, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia vacated two depredation orders for double-crested cormorants until FWS prepares an adequate Environmental Assessment (EA), pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. FWS has in the past granted permits to aquaculture facilities for lethal control of cormorants found to be consuming large numbers of fish. FWS is unable to issue permits for the lethal take of cormorants until the EA process is complete. It is uncertain when the EA will be completed. When cormorants migrate to the Midwest and Northeast this spring, there may be no legal way for cormorants to be lethally controlled. The Midwest Region is drafting a communications strategy to inform states, partners and members of Congress and coordinating with Southwest, Southeast, and Northeast Regions. Lethal control of cormorants is controversial as some groups believe they are not a major source of fish declines and are being made a scape-goat by the commercial fish and fishing industries. R3 (Midwest Region)

Great Lakes Indian Commission waterfowl hunting regulations -- The Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission represents 11 tribes in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan in the administration of hunting, fishing and gathering rights under several Treaties. Annually the commission submits a request for special migratory bird hunting rights. These rights have been adjudicated in several court opinions. FWS has been working with the commission for many years on a suite of hunting requests. This year's proposal is expected to be released through the *Federal Register* in the next 30-60 days. FWS is holding informational call with the Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan DNR to inform them of its proposed support of these hunting regulations. A final decision will not be made until after public comments are reviewed and would not take effect until the fall 2017 hunting season. Potentially controversial due to proposed regulation changes for the use of electronic calls and net hunting. R3 (Midwest Region)

### **Marine Mammal Protection Act Actions**

Polar bear 5-year status review -- In late February, FWS will post its recently completed status review of the polar bear. After a thorough review of new and updated scientific information on the polar bear's biology and threats, FWS concluded that it continues to meet the definition of a threatened species under the ESA. A news bulletin will be posted to regional website, otherwise no outreach planned. R7.

Marine Mammal population assessment reports for polar bears -- In March, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* draft population assessment reports for the Southern Beaufort Sea and Chukchi-Bering seas populations of polar bear in Alaska, and open a 90-day public comment period. Target to the *Federal Register* is early March. Outreach is planned. R7 (Alaska Region)

U.S.- Russia Polar Bear Commission Determination on Annual Taking Limit for the Alaska-Chukotka Polar Bear Population: FWS will publish a notice of the Commission's determination to maintain the harvest limit adopted in 2010. The Marine Mammal Protection Act directs the Secretary to publish a notice no later than 60 days after receiving notice of the Commission's determination.

### **Other Issues**

License Agreement Request – FWS is evaluating a request from the South Florida Water Management District to enter into a license agreement with a third party to allow construction and operation of an array of radio towers on land acquired with Land and Water Conservation Fund grant funds. The land in question, Bird Drive Basin in Miami-Dade County, was acquired for Everglades Restoration. R4 (Southeast Region)

Oregon Cattlemen's Association Spring Quarterly Meeting -- On March 6, FWS' Supervisor of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office will provide an update to attendees at the Oregon Cattlemen's Association Spring Quarterly Meeting in Salem, Oregon. This forum provides an opportunity to reinforce our message that FWS is dedicated to continued collaborative conservation. Potentially controversial. Open to Press. R1 (Pacific Region)

Honeywell Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) case -- In the next 30-60 days, DOI, DOJ and the State of New York expect to announce a settlement with Honeywell for the Onondaga Lake Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration case. The trustees plan to release a draft restoration plan for a 30-day public comment period and hold a public meeting. Hazardous substances (primarily mercury) were discharged into the lake for decades by Honeywell and its predecessor companies, impacting fish and wildlife resources. Coordinated outreach planned. R5 (Northeast Region)

### **National Park Service**

On February 23, the NPS will host an opening event for the Selma Interpretive Center, a part of the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. The Selma Interpretive Center has been expanded to include two additional floors and new exhibits. Congresswoman Terri Sewell (D-AL-7) and Mayor Darrio Melton are expected to attend.

During the week of February 23, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

Superintendent Kevin Hendricks will be meeting with local congressional staffers to brief them on the Municipal Pier project and legislative updates for the park. The historic pier is a local landmark and requires reconstruction with an estimated cost of \$68 million. NPS and local leaders are working to identify joint funding opportunities for the future. Planning and design have not yet been initiated. The project is not controversial, but of strong local interest. The superintendent will also be meeting with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters staff on the Municipal Pier project.

On February 23, Golden Gate National Recreation Area will open the new Presidio Visitor Center in partnership with the Presidio Trust and Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. Rep. Nancy Pelosi has tentatively accepted an invitation from the Presidio Trust to speak at the ribbon-cutting that morning.

On February 23, Galápagos and Joshua Tree National Parks will enter into a sister park agreement. In addition to similar resource issues related to tortoises and desert ecosystems, the two parks are dealing with capacity issues, the effects of climate change, and the effects of ecotourism on park resources and visitor enjoyment. Local and national conservation groups will be on hand for the ceremony as well as staff from Representatives Cook and Ruiz's offices.

On February 24, the Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument will host an annual Black History Month event at Kiser Elementary School in Dayton, Ohio. Former NFL player Darryl Haley is a featured participant, as are members of the ROTC program at Central State University that is named after Colonel Young. Congresswoman Joyce Beatty (D-3-OH) will attend and a representative from Congressman Turner's (R-10-OH) office will attend.

On February 26, Denali National Park marks its 100th anniversary. Events will be held throughout the year, and statewide media coverage is anticipated. The Alaska Congressional Delegation and media are being kept apprised of events and opportunities for participation. On February 26, there will be a special preview of the Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site to celebrate the completion of phase one of restoration. Dignitaries expected to attend include Delegate Norton, Washington D.C. Mayor Bowser, Superintendent Tara Morrison, former NPS Director Robert Stanton, President of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), and the Grand Basileus of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. The event includes a media tour, tours of the home, and a ceremony and reception. Public tours (on weekends) are expected to begin after Memorial Day.

On or about February 27, the NPS will announce a Prospectus for concession operations opportunity at Carlsbad Caverns National Park. The current concession operation is located in the Visitor Center and underground in the Cavern, which includes food services and a gift shop. The gift shop offers clothing, a variety of small gifts, and Native American jewelry and pottery. The concession contract will be awarded for a 10-year period starting January 1, 2018.

On February 28, the NPS will participate in the annual meeting of the Garden Club of America (GCA). The GCA and the NPS recently signed an MOU to work together on conservation and education programs. Discussions at the meeting will include background on the history of cooperation between GCA and the NPS, the value of volunteer efforts such as GCA's Partners for Plants program, and projects that illustrate progress on addressing invasive species or assist

with habitat restoration.

On February 28, Stones River National Battlefield Superintendent Brenda Waters will visit the offices of Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN), and Rep. Scott DeJarlais (R-TN-4) to provide them with an update on issues at the park as a courtesy visit. She will be accompanied by staff from the NPS Office of Legislative and Congressional Affairs.

On February 28, Rock Creek Park will host a tour for a Special American Business Internship Training (SABIT) group at the request of the Department of Commerce. The NPS will provide an orientation to the rehabilitation project on Beach Drive for a delegation of international road construction executives from Russia, the Ukraine and several other countries.

In March 2017, the NPS anticipates signing two Tribal Historic Preservation Office Memoranda of Agreement with the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes (Oklahoma), and the Oklahoma and the Burns-Paiute Tribe (Oregon). These agreements do not automatically confer federal funds, but give Tribes standing to take on certain responsibilities pursuant to 54 USC 302702 (commonly known as Section 101 of the National Historic Preservation Act). The NPS has the responsibility under 54 USC to administer the Tribal Historic Preservation Program and certify Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.

In early March, the NPS and U.S. Forest Service Learning Review Board will release the Strawberry Fire Fatality and Safety Review Report. The Strawberry Fire was started by lightning strike and burned 4,700+ acres in Great Basin National Park in August of 2016. The Fatality and Safety Review Report is scheduled for review on February 15 by the Board.

In March, the NPS anticipates awarding \$623,038 in Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to government sponsors in partnership with nonprofits for battlefield protection through fee simple and easement purchase, pending NPS review and approval of a proposed grant apportionment package. Grants will be used to protect 145 acres of Civil War battlefields in Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland. The NPS works with private landowners, battlefield friends groups, interested community groups, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, local, state, and tribal governments and Federal agencies for preservation projects and local acquisition of Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War battlefield land. Grants are awarded several times throughout the year.

On or about March 1, Wrangell-St. Elias will release an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Snag Creek/Kuskulana Land Exchange. A private land owner within the park boundaries proposes a land exchange for the purposes of expanding an airstrip for non-public use.

In early March, the NPS anticipates publishing the annual report on the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program (HTC). The HTC provides a 20 percent federal tax credit to property owners who undertake a substantial rehabilitation of income-producing historic buildings, while maintaining historic character. The report includes summary information about the program and projects reviewed (e.g., total number of projects broken down by state and rehabilitation cost, by new use, and by project size), as well as photos and short descriptions of some representative projects. This year a total of 1,039 certified projects were completed - the

highest in recent program history – and an estimated 108,528 jobs were created as a result.

On March 2, the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission will meet in Mentasta Lake Village, Alaska. The commission is authorized under Section 808 of the Alaska Lands Act and advises the NPS and the Secretary on subsistence program requirements. The meetings do not typically yield media coverage or congressional delegation interest.

On March 6, Golden Gate National Recreation Area will begin a repair project of the Crissy Field Promenade, one of the most highly-trafficked trails in the State of California. The \$5 million project will close sections of the waterfront trail in phases over six months.

On or about March 8, the NPS anticipates issuing a Finding of No Significant Impact for the Crystal Cave Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Plan at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. The project has widespread support and is a partnership effort with the Sequoia Parks Conservancy, which oversees the cave interpretation and public tours. The project includes updated interpretive media and a redesigned tour introduction area in one of the most popular areas of the park.

On March 9, Visit Philadelphia will hold a media lunch in Philadelphia that will cover the opening of the Museum of the American Revolution and other topics related to Philadelphia's Historic District. Both Independence National Historical Park and Valley Forge National Historical Park will attend and speak.

On March 10, the NPS and partners will hold the grand opening of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center in Church Creek, Maryland. The event will be public and open to media. The Maryland Congressional Delegation, leaders in the African American community, DOI leadership, and partners will be invited.

During the week of March 19, and in April, five Kentucky superintendents will participate in meet-and-greets with all of their consulting Tribal Nations. The five superintendents represent Mammoth Cave National Park, Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park, Fort Donelson National Battlefield, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Obed Wild and Scenic River, Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, and the Manhattan Site at Oak Ridge. The First Nations they are meeting with are: Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, The Chickasaw Nation, Eastern Shawnee Tribe, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma, Cherokee Nation, Shawnee Tribe, and the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation. These are not formal consultation meetings about specific projects.

On March 31, the Virgin Islands will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the sale and transfer of the islands from Denmark to the United States for \$25 million in gold. On March 31, 1917, the sale and transfer took place at the site now designated as Christiansted National Historic Site. The NPS anticipates invitations for the Secretary and NPS leadership from the Governor of the Virgin Islands, the Honorable Kenneth E. Mapp through the Virgin Islands Centennial Commission,

In March, North Cascades NPS Complex anticipates starting a pilot reservation program for backcountry camping permits for a percentage of the campsites in some of the most popular

areas of the park complex. The permit reservation system, which was proposed in the 2012 Ross Lake General Management Plan, is in response to increased visitation and visitor comments and requests for a reservation system. A cost recovery application fee of \$20 will be charged for the permit reservation application. Public engagement on the reservation system was conducted as part of the GMP planning process.

In late March, the NPS will release a peer-reviewed report on projections of sea level rise and storm surge for 118 and 79 coastal parks (respectively). The results are intended to inform park planning, and adaptation and mitigation strategies for lands managed by the NPS. In recent years, the NPS has provided data to parks on a case-by-case basis for localized planning, but this report is a summary of the full analysis that is now complete.

On and about April 15, the NPS will issue a Solicitation of Request for Proposals to modernize the primary elevator system at Carlsbad Caverns National Park. The modernization will replace the motors and controllers, hoistway equipment, elevator cars, guide rails and steel hoist cables. In addition, an emergency rescue apparatus, which includes an auxiliary motor, auxiliary battery backup and a single car rescue system, will be installed to improve elevator safety operations. The contract is expected to be awarded in May 2017 and be completed in May 2018.

On April 19 - 21, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park will host the Council of American Maritime Museums (CAMM) annual conference. CAMM is an organization of 88 institutions across the United States working toward the preservation and interpretation of North America's maritime heritage.

On or about April 22, Glacier National Park, along with its sister peace park Waterton Lakes National Park (Canada), will announce its provisional designation as the world's first transboundary dark sky park. The dark sky designation overlays the entire International Peace Park (est.1932), and there is interest from the Canadian government to participate in the announcement. This year also marks Canada's national 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The park is coordinating with Waterton Lakes National Park for event planning. Invitations will be extended to DOI and NPS leadership.

### **Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs and the Bureaus of Indian Affairs and Indian Education**

The Bureau of Indian Affairs's National Tiwahe Coordinator (NTC) will be hosting a series of conference calls with all Tiwahe tribes to discuss the upcoming Tiwahe conference. The conference is set to take place in Tucson, Arizona at the Pascua Yaqui Reservation, one of the Tiwahe Initiative sites, on April 18 - 20. The NTC will confirm agenda items and will extend invitations to federal partners from the Indian Health Service (IHS), Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA). The NTC will also coordinate with partners from New Zealand's Te Whanau O Waipareira Trust to confirm John Tamihere, Chief Executive Officer for the Te Whanau O Waipareira Trust, as keynote speaker for the conference.

On February 23, 2017, the Interior Department will hold the first of seven tribal consultation

sessions on its advanced notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) to solicit oral and written comments on whether to propose an administrative rule that would comprehensively update 25 CFR Part 140 (Licensed Indian Traders), 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. PST, Anacortes, WA at Swinomish Casino & Lodge, per the Federal Register notices dated 12/9/16 and 2/8/17.

On March 21-24, the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes (MAST) Impact Week Meeting will be held in Washington, DC.

On Wednesday, March 29, and Thursday, March 30, 2017, the Office of Self Governance will be attending the Self-Governance Advisory Committee March quarterly meeting. This meeting takes place at the Embassy Suites Convention Center Washington, DC, located at 900 10th St NW, Washington, DC 20001.

The Division of Energy and Mineral Development (DEMD) has received 13 projects for Phase 1 of the 2017 Youth Energy Challenge and has started the judging process. Students from the Navajo Nation, Cherokee Nation, Mescalero Apache, Nez Perce Tribe, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, Quinault, Yakama, and Comanche Tribes are participating, as well as one Native Hawaiian student. Projects include geothermal energy, wind energy, a hydrogen powered Sterling Generator, microbial fuel cell energy generation, and solar energy for water and home heating. Teams who make it to Phase 2 will receive up to \$2,000 to build and implement their design solutions. Phase 2 will begin February 20.

**BIE Leasing and Fundraising (25 CFR 48):** This final rule would implement authority for the Director of BIE to enter into agreements with third parties to lease the land or facilities of a Bureau-operated school in exchange for funding that benefits the school. The comment period on this proposed rule ended August 22; the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action (RACA) is continuing to work with Solicitors Office (SOL) and BIE on the necessary Privacy Act documentation in preparation for publication of the final rule.

**Appraisals and Valuations Regulation (CFR part TBD):** This rule establishes minimum qualifications for appraisers of Indian trust property, as required by the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act of 2016 (ITARA). The comment period on the proposed rule ended on November 21, 2016. RACA continues to host workgroup sessions to review the comments and prepare the final rule.

**Indian Electric Power Utilities (25 CFR 175):** This proposed rule would not make any substantive changes to the regulations, but would revise the regulations to be in plain language. The regulations affect only a limited number of Tribes because there are only three BIA electric power utilities: Colorado River (serving the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation), Mission Valley Power (serving the Salish & Kootenai Tribes, Flathead Indian Reservation), and San Carlos Irrigation Project (serving Gila River Indian Community). The proposed rule is awaiting AS-IA signature.

**Indian Trader Regulations (25 CFR 140):** This rule would comprehensively update Part 140 to modernize the implementation of the Indian Trader statutes consistent with the Federal policies of Tribal self-determination and self-governance. The advance notice of proposed rulemaking to solicit comments on potential regulatory revisions and announcing consultation

for February and March 2017 was published on Friday, December 9. A notice with details on the venues for Tribal consultations was published in the Federal Register February 8. A representative from AS-IA will speak at NCAI on the ANPRM and the first Tribal consultation will be held on February 23, 2017, at Swinomish in Anacortes, Washington.

**School Facilities Design Handbook Updates (25 CFR 36):** The IA Office of Facilities Property and Safety Management (OFPSM) will be conducting four consultation sessions to obtain comments on the revision of the “School Facilities Design Handbook,” dated March 30, 2007, which has been incorporated by reference into 25 CFR 36. This proposed rule would update the incorporation by reference and allow for the 120-day comment period. The handbook updates are highly technical as they merely bring design standards to current industry standards. A proposed rule to incorporate the new Handbook version by reference is in surname. The Federal Register document also announces four Tribal consultation on the Handbook updates to be held across the country.

**Revisions to Leasing of Osage Lands for Oil & Gas Mining (25 CFR 226):** BIA published a final rule in 2015 that it voluntarily withdrew pending completion of a Regulatory Impact Analysis as a result of litigation. BIA is currently undertaking a Regulatory Impact Analysis at this time in anticipation of proposing revisions to this regulation. A Tribal consultation was held October 27 in Oklahoma regarding whether to revise the regulations; BIA and SOL are developing an initial draft of the regulations for distribution to the Osage Nation as soon as possible.

**Potential Revisions to Probate Regulations (25 CFR 15, 25 CFR 40):** BIA and SOL identified some discrete revisions to probate regulations that may help streamline processes. Consultation on these revisions were completed in August. The comment period ended on January 4, 2017. BIA and SOL are examining whether a proposed rule is appropriate.

**BIE Negotiated Rulemaking on Accountability (25 CFR 30):** The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires BIE to use a negotiated rulemaking process to develop regulations for implementation no later than the 2017-2018 academic year and to define the standards, assessments, and accountability system consistent with Section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for the schools funded by BIE on a national, regional, or tribal basis. A Federal Register notice to establish the committee is in surname. All proposed members have been vetted for the committee.

**Update to O&M Formula for School Facilities:** The current allocation formula for O&M funding was implemented in 1990 and relies upon very granular, up-to-date and accurate inventory for each site, but many sites have not had resources to update their data. This update would instead rely on accepted industry standard benchmarks to allocate O&M funds across all sites and buildings based on actual functional use and program needs. The IA Office of Facilities Property and Safety Management (OFPSM) will be conducting four consultation sessions to obtain comments on the new O&M Formula in conjunction with consultations on the School Facilities Design Handbook revisions. A Federal Register notice announcing the consultation is in surname.

**Office of the Special Trustee for American Indian (OST)**

February 27-March 31: Acting Special Trustee will be in Washington, D.C.  
 March 6: Navajo Nation tour of the American Indian Records Repository  
 March 7-9: Indian Energy and Minerals Steering Committee Meeting, Denver, CO  
 March 21: BIA Regional Directors Meeting, Washington, D.C.

## **Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management**

Beginning the week of February 26, the BLM-ID Challis Field Office plans to capture up to 150 wild horses through bait trapping and remove up to 50 within the Challis Herd Management Area (HMA) to reach the Appropriate Management Level (AML) of 185 - 253. The current population estimate is 285. The gather is expected to be completed by mid-April.

By February 28, the BLM-UT Price Field Office will release for public review an EA analyzing a recreation management plan for the Joe's Valley Bouldering Area. The Joe's Valley Extensive Resource Management Area (ERMA) encompasses 24,930 acres located in north-central Emery County, Utah). Over one million people live within driving distance of Joe's Valley, and the area receives many visitors.

On February 28, BOEM plans to publish the Proposed Notice of Sale for the Cook Inlet Lease Sale 244. The lease sale is tentatively scheduled for June 21, 2017.

By February 28, BLM-AK anticipates publishing a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Road. The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority submitted an application for a proposed right-of-way to allow the construction of a 211-mile-long, all-season industrial access road. The proposed road would cross approximately 24 miles of BLM-managed lands and 26 miles of the Gates of the Arctic National Preserve. The portion of the road that would traverse the Preserve was authorized statutorily under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

In late February, BLM-UT anticipates issuing a Record of Decision (ROD) on an Environmental Assessment of mixed trail use in the Recapture Canyon area, located east of Blanding and San Juan County. The ROD would lift an 1871-acre closure order in Recapture Canyon that was issued in 2007, and designate certain trails for all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use, while protecting important riparian and cultural areas. This area became the focus of national media attention in May 2014 when a group staged an unauthorized ATV ride to protest the closure of Recapture Canyon to AVTs.

In late February, BSEE anticipates receiving a report from the National Academy of Public Administration detailing its assessment of BSEE's organization, strategic direction, policy and process development, infrastructure, systems, and technology.

In late February, BLM-NV plans to issue the final Dixie Meadows Geothermal Project Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The project area consists of approximately 22,021 acres of public land. The project proponent (Ormat) seeks approval to drill several types of wells (temperature gradient wells, test observation wells, and production wells) at up to 20 specific locations.

In February, the BLM-UT Moab FO will release for public review an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Needles and Anticline Overlook (Canyon Rims) Road Improvement Project to improve public access and safety. The area is near the Bears Ears National Monument.

In early March, OSMRE's Western Region (WR) is planning to publish a notice of availability in local newspapers for the Bridger Mine (WY) Mining Plan Modification Draft Environmental Assessment (EA). OSMRE will receive comment on the EA for 30 days.

In early March, OSMRE's WR is planning to publish a notice of availability in local newspapers for the Dry Fork Mine (WY) Mining Plan Modification Draft EA. OSMRE will receive comment on the EA for 30 days.

On March 1, BOEM tentatively plans to sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) authorizing the use of Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) sand for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration Project (MsCIP) in the Gulf of Mexico. BOEM was a cooperating agency during the preparation of the 2009 Programmatic EIS and the 2016 Supplemental EIS. BOEM independently reviewed the SEIS and found that it adequately evaluates the environmental effects of the proposed action.

On March 3, BOEM plans to publish the Proposed Notice of Sale and Notice of Availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Lease Sale 249. The lease sale is scheduled to occur on August 16, 2017, and will be the first sale under the 2017-2022 OCS Oil and Gas Program.

On March 3, BOEM plans to publish the Notice of Availability of the Final GOM Multi-sale Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for 2017-2022 Lease Sales. The Final EIS analyzes 10 region-wide lease sales scheduled in the GOM.

On March 3, BSEE will host its Second Annual Youth Technology Challenge in Houston, TX. BSEE will also hold inaugural youth events in California and Louisiana following the Houston event.

By March 5, BSEE must file its response to a draft management report it received from the GAO on February 3 entitled, *Oil and Gas Management – Stronger Leadership Commitment Needed at Interior to Improve Offshore Oversight and Internal Management*. BSEE is currently reviewing the report and plans to discuss the findings and recommendations with ASLM.

On March 6, OSMRE's Western Region plans to forward a Mining Plan Decision Document to OSMRE Headquarters for Canyon Fuel Company's Skyline Mine, Flat Canyon Lease Modification for review and submission to the Acting ASLM for signature. Skyline is an underground longwall mining complex located in Carbon County, UT. Canyon Fuels employs 320 people, producing 3 to 4.5 million tons of coal per year at the Skyline Mine.

On March 7 - 8, the BOEM-National Academies of the Sciences Committee on Offshore Science and Assessment (COSA) will hold its next meeting. COSA provides independent, scientifically credible and objective information on issues relevant to BOEM's environmental studies and

assessment activities.

On March 7 - 9, BOEM plans to host a three-day “Best Management Practices Workshop for Atlantic Offshore Wind Facilities.” The workshop will discuss best management practices for preventing, reducing, and monitoring impacts to marine protected species from the development of offshore wind on the Atlantic OCS.

On March 9, BLM-CO will hold an on-line oil and gas lease sale, offering 16,449.68 acres in the Archuleta, Dolores, Montezuma, and San Miguel counties (SW Colorado).

On March 10, BOEM plans to publish the Notice of Availability of the Draft Supplemental Environmental for GOM Lease Sales 250 - 251. The Draft Supplemental EIS will analyze two region-wide lease sales scheduled for 2018 in the GOM.

On March 14, BLM-NV will hold an on-line oil and gas lease sale. BLM-NV will offer 67 parcels totaling almost 116,000 acres in the Elko District.

On March 14, BOEM plans to publish a Notice of Intent to prepare a Draft Supplemental EIS for the Cape Wind Energy Project. The U.S. Court of Appeals vacated the 2009 Final EIS due to a deficiency in the determination that the sea floor could support wind turbine structures. BOEM is preparing a Draft Supplemental EIS that reanalyzes this issue. BOEM agreed to publish the Final Supplemental EIS by August 2017.

On March 14 - 16, BLM-CA’s Central Coast Field Office (CCFO) will host public meetings to gather comments on the Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for oil and gas leasing and development for lands managed by the CCFO. Meetings will be held in Hollister, Coalinga, and Salinas, CA.

On March 16, BOEM will hold a commercial wind lease sale offshore NC. Nine companies have qualified to participate in the auction. The lease sale area is 24 nautical miles (nm) offshore Kitty Hawk, NC and extends 25.7 nm in a southeasterly direction. BOEM announced the publication of the Final Sale Notice on January 17; a mock auction will be held on March 14.

On or before March 17, Congress may respond to a proposed donation of private land to a BLM wilderness area in NM. On January 17, then-ASLM Janice M. Schneider signed letters notifying Senate and House leadership that DOI intends to accept a gift of approximately 3,590 acres from The Wilderness Land Trust and add those acres to the adjacent Sabinoso Wilderness, consistent with Section 6 of the Wilderness Act.

On March 22, BOEM will hold Lease Sale 247 for the Central Planning Area (CPA) in the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) in New Orleans, LA via livestream. CPA Lease Sale 247 will make 9,118 blocks in the GOM available for leasing; approximately 48.53 million acres.

On March 21 - 23, BSEE Acting Director Margaret Schneider will deliver remarks at the BSEE National Inspector’s Meeting to be held in Lafayette, LA.

On March 23, the public comment period will end for the scoping period for a natural gas development proposal located approximately 12 miles north of Paonia, CO. Gunnison Energy,

LLC's North Fork Mancos Master Development Plan proposal is adjacent to the BLM Bull Mountain Master Development Plan and includes drilling up to 35 horizontal wells from four new well pads and one existing well pad over the next three years. The comment period was initially scheduled to end on February 21, but was extended 30 days at the request of Gunnison County.

On March 23, BLM-Eastern States Office (ESO) and UT will hold an on-line oil and gas lease sale. BLM-ESO will offer 1,186.06 acres in Monroe County (within the Wayne National Forest) and BLM-UT will offer 4,174.46 acres in San Juan County.

On March 25 - 26, the Arizona Outdoor Expo will be held in Phoenix. Staff from BLM-AZ's Phoenix District Office will host a booth with Firewise information, an Off-Highway Vehicle trailer and other recreation information. District staff will likely participate in the Expo's Youth Day activities, with specific details yet to be planned.

On March 29 - April 1, the Project Archaeology National Meeting/Society for American Archaeology Annual Meeting will take place in Vancouver, B.C. Project Archaeology focuses on teaching scientific and historical inquiry, cultural understanding, and the importance of protecting America's cultural resources. The Society for American Archaeology is dedicated to the research, interpretation, and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. Various BLM Archaeologists are tentatively scheduled to attend. BLM Archaeologist Jeanne Moe will chair a research symposium on archaeology education.

In March, the BLM plans to issue the Boardman to Hemingway Record of Decision (ROD). The Biological Opinion (BO), which is being drafted by the National Marine Fisheries Service, is a necessary precursor to the ROD. The BO is targeted for completion on February 28. Oregon Plan amendments are being handled concurrently and that decision will be issued simultaneously with the ROD for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Approval to issue a grant.

In early April, OSMRE's WR plans to publish a Notice of Availability in local newspapers for the Cordero Rojo Mine (WY) Mining Plan Modification "draft" Environmental Assessment. OSMRE will receive comment on the EA for 30 days.

## **Assistant Secretary Policy, Management and Budget**

**DOI National Preparedness Report.** In March of 2017, the DOI National Preparedness Report (NPR) will be shared with the President. The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) coordinated a department-wide review of the draft NPR on January 28 with the expectation of receiving the final draft for review in late February from the National Security Council – Disaster Resilience Group.

**Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC), March 2, 2017.** Deputy Assistant Secretary Public Safety, Resource Protection and Emergency Services (PRE) Harry Humbert and Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) Director Rice will host the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) meeting at the Interior Operations Center. The meeting will provide awareness of ongoing transition activities and pre-fire season readiness.

**Arctic Council's Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) Meeting, March 7-9, 2017.** The last SAO meeting of the U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council will take place in Juneau, Alaska. Several U.S. Chairmanship deliverables will be put forth for approval, including the Arctic Resilience Action Framework.

**The FY 2016 DOI Solid Waste Report is due to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) on March 31, 2017.** This report includes data on amounts of non-hazardous waste disposal and recycling to establish an annual waste diversion rate. Bureau and office FY 2016 Solid Waste and Chemicals Management Reports are due to the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) on Friday, February 17, 2017. Solid waste data had previously been reported to the Office of Management and Budget and CEQ in the annual Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan but CEQ requested this as a separate report this year.

**DOI Economics Conference, April 5-7, 2017.** This conference, organized by the Office of Policy Analysis (PPA), is an opportunity for the Interior economics community to convene on current issues of interest, collaborate across bureaus, identify key economics research challenges that are important to DOI's programs and activities, and build community. This meeting is not open to the press.

**National Adaptation Forum, May 9-11, 2017.** This forum, organized by BIA and PPA, will showcase the BIA natural resources program across the 12 regions at the National Adaptation Forum.

**UCLA Indian Data Governance Workshop, May 18-19, 2017, Los Angeles, CA.** The Office of Policy Analysis (PPA) is working with UCLA and others to develop an agenda and invitation list for a workshop to address Indian data issues.

## **Assistant Secretary for Water and Science**

In **early March**, Reclamation's Albuquerque Area Office expects to announce the award of a Design/Build contract on the Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System. The contract for the project, which is part of the Aamodt Indian Water Rights Settlement, will be between \$75 and \$100 million.

In **early March**, USGS will announce a new report on critical minerals for the United States. This publication presents resource and geologic information for 23 mineral commodities currently viewed as important to the national economy and national security of the United States, many of which are sourced entirely outside of the United States. The report provides information on mineral environmental issues, as well an in-depth look at each commodity's use, distribution of deposit types, and current status of production, resources, and reserves. The individual commodity chapters serve as an update to the 1973 commodity chapters of USGS Professional Paper 820, United States Mineral Resources. A news release is planned.

On **March 21-22**, a meeting of the National Geospatial Advisory Committee federal advisory committee is planned at Main Interior. This meeting will be followed by a March 23 meeting of the Federal Geographic Data Committee Steering Committee, also at Main Interior.

In **March or April**, USGS will announce a new national-scale assessment of the distribution, occurrence, and character of brackish groundwater resources. Brackish groundwater can serve as a potential resource to help water-stressed regions stretch their limited freshwater supplies. The last national-scale map of brackish groundwater was completed in the 1960s. A news release is planned.

In **April**, USGS will announce a new Scientific Investigation Report which explores drought frequency and intensity in the U.S. over the past half century. Responding to concerns that climate change will lead to deeper or longer droughts, and perceptions of worsening droughts in the western U.S., scientists compared streamgage data from 1951-1982 with data from the same gages in 1983-2014. Changes in drought frequency, duration or severity were identified in 4 of 9 ecoregions. Parts of the Southeastern U.S., Texas and California had more frequent droughts from the 1980s onward, while the Central Plains and the Northeast had less frequent droughts. A news release is planned.

In the first two weeks of **April**, Reclamation and the National Park Service will have a reopening ceremony at Glen Canyon Dam Carl Hayden Visitor Center to highlight all new museum exhibits in the visitor center, which were completed late last fall. Reclamation is preparing an event invitation for the Department.

In the coming weeks, Reclamation anticipates releasing a press release announcing the signing of the Record of Decision for the Long-Term Plan to Protect Adult Salmon in the Lower Klamath River Project located in Humboldt County, California. The selected alternative (Alternative 1) includes supplemental flows from Lewiston Dam to prevent a disease outbreak in the lower Klamath River in years when the flow is projected to be less than 2,800 cubic feet per second. The project will establish a 13-year direction through 2030.

In the coming weeks, Reclamation and Sites Project Authority anticipate releasing a press release recognizing Sites Project Authority as the new partner for the North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage (NODOS) Investigation. The press release will also announce Sites Project Authority's Notice of Preparation and upcoming scoping meetings to be conducted in February. Reclamation issued a 2013 Progress Report, but will not issue a new Notice of Intent, and will be present at the scoping meetings to inform the public of Reclamation's role in the NODOS Investigation. Media interest is anticipated.

In the coming weeks, a USGS-authored paper will be released about the potential release of mercury into the environment from thawing permafrost. The embargoed paper will be published in the journal *Nature*, and a news release is planned. *Nature* may also issue a news release.