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Attached is the daily news report for March 4 6.

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DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

UTAH – TOP STORIES – MARCH 4-6, 2017

1. Op-ed: Outdoor companies should keep talking with legislators

The Salt Lake Tribune, March 4 | Sarah Lehman

Utah is home. It's where I've chosen to raise my children; it's where our company, ENVE Composites, has grown from a struggling startup to an established player in the cycling industry; and it is home to a growing outdoor business sector.

2. House resolves manage, not own, public lands; Trump considered

St George News, March 5 | Tracie Sullivan

CEDAR CITY – Utah's House of Representatives sent the Senate a resolution it passed seeking to give the state greater control over public land and its resources but scaling back the Legislature's long-standing threat to sue the federal government for ownership of those public lands and resources. The resolution in its current form aims to give Utah's congressional delegation and state leadership a chance to work with the Trump administration.

3. My view: Let the Antiquities Act stand

Deseret News, March 5 | Andy Rasmussen

There is talk recently confirmed Department of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke will soon visit Utah, an important first step in addressing what have become contentious issues of public lands management in our state. Mr. Zinke is a Westerner and a sportsman who appreciates high-quality fish and wildlife habitat and premium hunting and angling opportunities, and I doubt he'll have any difficulty seeing the value of the national public lands and unique landscapes of Utah. He knows these places should not be sold or transferred, and like Theodore Roosevelt, I believe he understands we must turn them over to the next generation "increased, and not impaired in value."

4. Republicans in Utah seek reversal on Bears Ears National Monument

The Durango Herald, March 5 | David Sharp, The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine – Republican leaders in Utah and Maine are asking President Donald Trump to step into uncharted territory and rescind national monument designations made by his predecessor.



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5. Wild Horses Under Siege on Public Lands

EcoWatch, March 6 | Suzanne Roy

America has two long-standing symbols for freedom: the bald eagle and the wild mustang.

6. My view: Utah's federal public lands are our shared heritage

The Deseret News, March 6 | Steve Bloch

The recent op-ed “[Beautiful Utah is — and will stay — a public lands state](#)” (Feb. 27) penned by Reps. Keven Stratton and Mike Noel, with help from the Sutherland Institute, uses sweet words such as “protecting health and accessibility” and “principled restraint” to disguise its true motivations of justifying a state-sponsored land grab. Actions speak louder than words and these representatives’ actions threatening America’s federal public lands in Utah come through loud and clear.

7. San Juan County sheriff offering reward on fake Bears Ears signs

The Deseret News, March 6 | Staff Writer

MONTICELLO, San Juan County — Residents are already pretty tense over the Bears Ears National Monument designation made in December, and someone is deliberately inflaming emotion with bogus signs.

E&E/NATIONAL NEWS – TOP STORIES

1. Op-ed: Public Lands in Private Hands?

New York Times, March 3 | Jimmy Tobias

The Senate’s confirmation this week of the former Montana congressman Ryan Zinke as secretary of the interior has revived concerns about the future of public lands in the Trump administration. While Mr. Zinke has branded himself as a Teddy Roosevelt-style conservationist — and resigned as a delegate to the Republican National Convention last year to protest the party’s support for transferring federal lands to states or private groups — his record is spotty.



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2. In past land cases, Gorsuch has limited environmentalists

WTOP News, March 6 | The Associated Press

Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch has shown a willingness to limit the participation of environmental groups in lawsuits involving public lands, writing in one case that allowing conservationists to intervene could complicate and slow down the judicial process, according to an Associated Press review of his rulings as a federal appeals court judge.

3. REGULATIONS: Vote coming on measure to kill Obama Planning 2.0 rule

E & E News, March 6 | Kellie Lunney

The Senate this evening begins consideration of a measure that would kill a controversial Interior rule revising land management plans for millions of acres of federal lands.

4. PUBLIC LANDS: Western businesses, mayors push outdoor economy study

E & E News, March 6 | Scott Streater

Western chambers of commerce and local government leaders are urging the Trump administration to prioritize a congressionally authorized study designed to measure the significance of outdoor recreation to the U.S. economy, despite looming budget cuts.

5. WHITE HOUSE: Agencies urged to mind Trump's 'deregulatory' agenda

E & E News, March 6 | Arianna Skibell

The White House today issued a memo with requirements and guidelines for agencies to follow when submitting regulatory agenda items.

6. INTERIOR: Zinke to testify on Indian Country issues

E & E News, March 6 | Corbin Hiar

Former Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-Mont.) this week will return to Capitol Hill for the first time as Interior secretary.



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7. **CLEAN POWER PLAN: Executive order coming as early as tomorrow**

E & E News, March 6 | Robin Bravender

An order aimed at killing the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan is still in the pipeline for this week, a White House spokeswoman said today.

8. **PUBLIC LANDS: Top lawmakers introduce legislation to fight invasive species**

E & E News, March 6 | Corbin Hiar

Senate Republicans last week introduced legislation that would encourage the secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to step up the fight against invasive species on public lands.



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UTAH – FULL STORY

1. **Op-ed: Outdoor companies should keep talking with legislators**

The Salt Lake Tribune, March 4 | Sarah Lehman

Utah is home. It's where I've chosen to raise my children; it's where our company, ENVE Composites, has grown from a struggling startup to an established player in the cycling industry; and it is home to a growing outdoor business sector.

Just five years ago, ENVE was looking to expand and evaluated many locations within and around Utah for our new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility and global headquarters. In the end, we deliberately choose to stay in Ogden due to its strong economic environment, its access to public lands and its commitment to creating an outdoor cluster. ENVE has benefitted from many of the state's economic incentives as well as Utah's commitment to striking a balance between economic and environmental forces. We recruit some of the best talent as a result of the active lifestyle these policies afford. I have personally lobbied businesses and conventions to come to Utah.

Historically, Utah lawmakers and the outdoor industry have accomplished a great deal by working together. We've created jobs, built trails, protected thousands of acres of public land, fostered new industries and provided educational opportunities for our children.

At the local level, Utah is fortunate to be represented by people like Ogden Mayor Mike Caldwell, who commuted on his bike for an entire year to highlight his commitment to building a more bike-friendly community. The Utah Department of Transportation rewarded this commitment by approving a Bicycle Master Plan that will overhaul roads and make Ogden more bike-friendly. In leaders like Caldwell, the outdoor industry has committed partners in government.

At the state level, Utah has taken meaningful steps to create a vibrant outdoor recreation culture and business sector, as evidenced by the creation of the Outdoor Recreational Office. Utah was the first state to create such an office and its work has helped bolster an industry that's contributed an estimated \$12 billion and 122,000 jobs to the state (per OIA). And let's not forget that Utah was the only state to reopen its state and national parks when the government shut them down in 2013.



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All of that good work has been jeopardized in recent months to an increasingly polarized conversation between the outdoor industry and the state's legislators. The impact is bigger than Outdoor Retailer leaving Utah. After years of courtship, the North American Handmade Bike Show (NAHBS) chose Salt Lake City for its 2017 location. Sadly, they, too, are now threatening to never come back.

And to what end? No victories have been won. The outdoor industry is no better off. The protection of our public lands remains tenuous. True or not, we have created the perception of an unfriendly environment to public lands, policy and indigenous peoples.

This cannot be how the story ends, and I'm confident we can write a different ending.

I'm not naive; the impasse we find ourselves at is not an easy one to navigate. But I remain optimistic because I know that I'm not alone. Many on both "sides" hold similar beliefs. Instead of coming together we've allowed relatively minor differences and outside influences to divide. We're better than that and we will be moving forward. To my colleagues in the outdoor industry and fellow Utah companies, I hope you will join me in continuing this conversation in a collaborative manner with Utah's legislators.

Sarah Lehman is the CEO of ENVE Composites. ENVE was awarded the 2017 Governor's Medal for Science and Technology. She lives in Salt Lake City with her husband and three children.

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2. **House resolves manage, not own, public lands; Trump considered**

St George News, March 5 | Tracie Sullivan

CEDAR CITY – Utah's House of Representatives sent the Senate a resolution it passed seeking to give the state greater control over public land and its resources but scaling back the Legislature's long-standing threat to sue the federal government for ownership of those public lands and resources. The resolution in its current form aims to give Utah's congressional delegation and state leadership a chance to work with the Trump administration.

With their war chest already topping \$5 million, Republican lawmakers have been threatening for years to try and force the federal government to transfer 31 million acres of Utah's public lands to state ownership.



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But that litigation would be put on hold under Rep. Keven Stratton's nonbinding Concurrent Resolution to Secure the Perpetual Health and Vitality of Utah's Public Lands and its Status as a Premier Public Lands State, designated HCR 1-Second Substitute during this year's general session.

If the concurrent resolution is passed, a petition to the U.S. Supreme Court for transfer of public lands would be available to the state as a last resort only.

"This is a call to all hands on deck," Stratton said to the House Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee.

The resolution was sent to the Senate Feb. 28 after the House passed it 53-14. Southern Utah representatives all voted in favor of the resolution except for Rep. Merrill Nelson, R-Grantsville, who was not present during the vote.

Sen. David Hinkins, R-Orangeville, is carrying the resolution in the Senate where it has already received a favorable recommendation by the Senate Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment Committee and has been calendared for second reading. The measure must go through three readings on the Senate floor before it can be officially passed.

The resolution was initially called "Concurrent Resolution on Public Lands Litigation" and encouraged the state to pursue legal action. The measure underwent some changes however while in the House Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment Committee, and was retitled "Concurrent Resolution to Secure the Perpetual Health and Vitality of Utah's Public Lands and its Status as a Premier Public Lands State."

The second substitute of the proposed resolution is a much more toned-down version. Instead of backing a lawsuit, the substitute now "urges our federal executive agencies to do all that they can to promote the transfer of control over Utah's public lands to state management."

It also urges "our federal delegation and Congress to take necessary legislative steps to ensure the transfer of control of Utah's public lands to state management."

In its revised form, the resolution stresses "Utah's leaders are committed to the protection and improvement of public lands."



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And it maintains that “federal mismanagement has provided Utah communities with increased air pollution, dying forests, decimated wildlife, depressed economies, underfunded public education and blocked recreational opportunities.”

“The state of Utah seeks management and control over the public lands not to sell them off to the highest bidder,” the proposed resolution states, “but to protect them in the way they always should have been protected.”

Stratton told the House Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee, “The intent of this is to say, ‘Look, we treasure our public lands. We have always treasured our public lands. It is the protection of our public lands that we are seeking.’”

Utah’s Congressman Chris Stewart does not believe the Trump administration is going to transfer the public lands to the state. But he remains hopeful that President Trump will allow Utah to have more control in managing the public lands.

“His sons are avid hunters and I just don’t think that he is going to be willing to transfer those public lands to the state,” Stewart said. “But I do think he will be open to working with us and allowing Utah to have more control over the management of the public lands and that’s really what we want.”

Stewart added that he feels the federal government has failed in its care of public lands and pointed to dying forests and starving horses as just two examples of that failure.

Stewart said he is anxious to work with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and plans to now move forward with legislation regarding Utah’s public lands

In a recent interview with St. George News / Cedar City News, Stewart said he is anxious to work with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and plans to now move forward with legislation regarding Utah’s public lands that he was unable to get through under former President Obama and with former Nevada Sen. Harry Reid then still in power.

Some of the first legislation Stewart said he plans on pushing regards wild horses that he argues are in bad condition because of overpopulation on the range.

“We have to do something,” Stewart said. “These horses are starving because the federal government will not take care of them properly and will not allow the state to take care of them.”



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Stewart said he also plans on working with Zinke and Trump on reducing the size of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument so that the state can have the coal reserves inside. He also is going to be talking with the two men about rescinding Bears Ears National Monument or at least scaling back the acreage. The Utah Legislature recently passed two resolutions urging Congress and the president to consider both of these issues.

Ed. notes and resources

From Southern Utah, Rep. Mike Noel sits on the House Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee and was absent from the first two committee votes on the resolution but present for subsequent committee votes passing the second substitute and its subsequent favorable recommendation to the House. All of Southern Utah's representatives except Rep. Merrill Nelson voted in favor of the second substitute resolution, which passed 53-14 with 8 absent or not voting, Nelson among them.

From Southern Utah, Sens. Evan Vickers and David Hinkins sit on the Senate Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee where the second substitute resolution received the committee's favorable recommendation to the Senate, 4-0 with 3 absent. Vickers voted for the recommendation in committee, Hinkins was absent; Hinkins is, though, the resolution's Senate sponsor. The resolution is now on the Senate's second-reading calendar.

- Read the full text of the bill: 2017 HCR 1 – 2nd Substitute – Concurrent Resolution to Secure the Perpetual Health and Vitality of Utah's Public Lands and its Status as a Premier Public Lands State

To contact your legislators:

- Bill sponsor: Rep. Keven Stratton | Senate sponsor: Sen. David Hinkins
- Southern Utah Sens. Ralph Okerlund, Don Ipson, Evan Vickers, David Hinkins | Listing of all senators.
- Southern Utah Reps. Walt Brooks, Merrill Nelson, Brad Last, John Westwood, Mike Noel, V. Lowry Snow and Jon Stanard | Listing of all members of the House of Representatives

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3. **My view: Let the Antiquities Act stand**

Deseret News, March 5 | Andy Rasmussen

There is talk recently confirmed Department of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke will soon visit Utah, an important first step in addressing what have become contentious issues of public lands management in our state. Mr. Zinke is a Westerner and a sportsman who appreciates high-quality fish and wildlife habitat and premium hunting and angling opportunities, and I doubt he'll have any difficulty seeing the value of the national public lands and unique landscapes of Utah. He knows these places should not be sold or transferred, and like Theodore Roosevelt, I believe he understands we must turn them over to the next generation "increased, and not impaired in value."

Public lands belong in public hands, and the protected landscapes where we hunt, fish and camp deserve to remain part of our state — and national — heritage. But our public lands are threatened by a few who wish to do away with some public lands and revoke protections for others. In addition, Congress is considering legislation that would dismantle the Antiquities Act and weaken both the president and local community's ability to protect public lands.

The Antiquities Act authorizes the president to protect landmarks, structures and objects of historic or scientific interest on America's public lands by designating them as national monuments. Since being written by a Republican congressman from Iowa and signed into law by Republican President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906, the Antiquities Act has been used by 16 presidents — eight Republican, eight Democratic — to protect 129 of America's best historical, cultural and natural treasures across 30 states, many home to outstanding fish and wildlife habitat that offer sportsmen and women spectacular fishing and hunting opportunities.

Concerns about the Antiquities Act often arise from a misperception that a national monument "locks up" land and prohibits multiple-use activities or access. In fact, Bureau of Land Management national monuments allow oil and gas development on existing leases, and livestock grazing and other uses continue according to existing rights. In addition, management plans are created for new national monuments with extensive public input from stakeholders, including state and local governments, recreational users, tribes, local business owners and private landowners. Individuals do not automatically lose access to their favorite fishing hole or hunting grounds when national monuments are created. State fish and wildlife agencies retain management authority over fish and wildlife populations.



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Trout Unlimited urges Mr. Zinke not to pursue a protracted legal battle to undo existing national monuments, sell public lands, or weaken the Antiquities Act. Most legal experts agree such attacks would be expensive, divisive, unlikely to succeed, and set a dangerous precedent. Instead, with Mr. Zinke at the helm of the Department of the Interior, we have a unique opportunity to craft strong management plans for newly created monuments to ensure responsible access for hunting, fishing, livestock grazing and other uses, and that a healthy balance is struck between conservation, recreation and other of development activities.

The designation of a monument is just the first step in determining how it will be managed — the last step is the management plan, and this is where Utahns can come together and craft a lasting solution. As Utah's Gov. Gary Herbert said last month, "This latest controversy about Utah's commitment to our public lands is one where rhetoric and posturing from both sides may have outpaced rational thought, productive discussion and civility. We cannot force simplistic solutions to these complex issues through ultimatums, boycotts and press releases."

Utah is a wonderful place for sportsmen and women to live and visit, and I'm sure that after he leaves, Mr. Zinke will want to help keep it this way. We can do that by leaving behind divisiveness and working together to craft collaborative solutions for managing public lands.

Andy Rasmussen is the Utah cCoordinator for Trout Unlimited's Sportsman's Conservation Project. He lives in Logan.

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4. **Republicans in Utah seek reversal on Bears Ears National Monument**

The Durango Herald, March 5 | David Sharp, The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine – Republican leaders in Utah and Maine are asking President Donald Trump to step into uncharted territory and rescind national monument designations made by his predecessor.

The Antiquities Act of 1906 does not give the president power to undo a designation, and no president has ever taken such a step. But Trump isn't like other presidents.

Former President Barack Obama used his power under the act to permanently preserve more land and water using national monument designations than any other president. The land is generally off limits to timber harvesting, mining and pipelines, and commercial development.



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In Utah, the former president created Bears Ears National Monument on 1.3 million acres of land that's sacred to Native Americans and is home to tens of thousands of archaeological sites, including ancient cliff dwellings.

Obama created the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine last summer on 87,500 acres of donated forestland. The expanse includes part of the Penobscot River and stunning views of Mount Katahdin, Maine's tallest mountain.

Trump's staff is now reviewing those decisions by the Obama administration to determine economic impacts, whether the law was followed and whether there was appropriate consultation with local officials, the White House told The Associated Press.

The Utah Legislature approved a resolution signed by the governor calling on Trump to rescind monument status for Bears Ears. Republican leaders in Utah contend the monument designation adds another layer of unnecessary federal control in a state where there's already heavy federal ownership.

Maine Republican Gov. Paul LePage is opposed to the designation, and says federal ownership could stymie industrial development. He asked the president last week to intervene.

Newly sworn-in Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has said he'll fight the sale or transfer of public lands. But he also believes states should be able to weigh in.

The National Parks Conservation Association has vowed to sue if Trump, the Interior Department or Congress tries to remove the special designations.

"Wherever the attack comes from, we're ready to fight, and we know the public is ready to fight if someone comes after our national parks and monuments," National Parks Conservation Association spokeswoman Kristen Brengel said.

In Maine, the prospect of undoing the designation is further complicated by deed stipulations requiring the National Park Service to control the land and a \$40 million endowment to support the monument, said Lucas St. Clair, son of Burt's Bees co-founder Roxanne Quimby, who acquired the land.

Three of the four members of Maine's congressional delegation want the monument to stand to avoid reopening a divisive debate in towns surrounding the property.



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“Rather than re-ignite controversy in a region that is beginning to heal and move on, I hope we can allow the monument to continue to serve as one important part of a multifaceted economic revitalization strategy which is already underway,” said independent Sen. Angus King.

Utah Republicans, however, appear to be ready for a scrap. Rep. Jason Chaffetz raised the issue when he met with Trump, and he asked the House Appropriations Committee to cut funding for the monument.

“Not one elected official in Utah that represents the Bear Ears region supports the designation of a national monument. With the stroke of a pen, President Obama, having never visited the area, created a monument the size of Delaware, Rhode Island and Washington, D.C., combined,” he said.

In the region near Maine’s Mount Katahdin, both supporters and many opponents want to see the monument work. They hope it will help revitalize the economy.

Millinocket Town Council Chairman Michael Madore once described the park as a “foolish dream.” Now, he says, “We have accepted it as part of our landscape. Until such time as it’s overturned, we’re going to work with the people who’re involved with it to help the local economy.”

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5. **Wild Horses Under Siege on Public Lands**

EcoWatch, March 6 | Suzanne Roy

America has two long-standing symbols for freedom: the bald eagle and the wild mustang.

Wild horses are protected by a special law, which was unanimously passed by Congress in 1971 and designates mustangs as "living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West" who "enrich the lives of the American people." You've seen these majestic wild horses in TV or magazine ads, running unbridled across the open range, dust in their wake. They evoke the boundless West and our nation's pioneer spirit.

What you don't see is the helicopters chasing them.

Roundups sound romantic, but in the case of mustangs, the process is cruel and brutal. Despite federal protection, the horses are treated like pests on their native range because, it turns out, the West isn't that open after all.



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Unlike eagles, who enjoy the advantage of an open sky, there's competition for the land on which mustangs roam. Mostly from ranchers, who view these wild horses as competition for cheap, taxpayer-subsidized grazing on public lands. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is in charge of managing wild horses on federal land. They do so with the notion, bolstered by private interests who have their own ideas for the real estate, that there are too many horses on the range. So they round them up.

The roundups start with the helicopters, which swoop down and terrorize the animals, chasing them to awaiting corrals. The pursuit is dangerous and terrifying. Many horses are injured and some die.

Here are some [documented incidents](#) from a recent [BLM roundup](#) in the Cedar Mountain Herd Management in Utah:

- A pinto mare and her lookalike foal chased relentlessly by the helicopter, the foal roped, hogtied and separated from his mother, never to see her again.
- An exhausted colt, limping into a trap after being chased for miles by a helicopter.
- A helicopter coming dangerously close to a group of mustangs as it drives them into the trap.
- A pregnant mare found down and in distress in a holding pen, killed due to foaling complications likely caused by the stress of helicopter stampede and capture.
- A 22-year-old stallion, forced to run for miles with a shoulder injury and clubfoot only to be killed by the BLM after capture.

It's troubling to read about and even more disturbing to see. More than 350,000 people have viewed videos of the roundup posted by the [American Wild Horse Campaign](#) in February. This is one of them:

These roundups are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to wild horse suffering and death. Records obtained by the American Wild Horse Campaign through the Freedom of Information Act show dozens of horses dying after roundups in Nevada and Wyoming in the days, weeks and months after capture. Causes of death include traumatic injuries such as broken necks, sustained when terrified horses crash into fences and gates. Other horses are just found dead in their pens, some painfully perish from colic and others just "fail to thrive." Pregnant mares stampeded by helicopters often abort their foals after capture and some die in the process.

The roundups deprive wild horses of the two things they value most: their freedom and their families. Wild horses live in tight-knit social groups, but once they hit the trap, they never see their families again. Mares are forcibly separated from their stallions; foals are torn from their mothers' sides.

Bad Policy and Bad Science



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But perhaps the cruelest part of the roundups is that they don't work. According to the 2013 report, [Using Science to Improve the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program](#), by the National Academy of Sciences, removing horses from the range just encourages the remaining horses to breed more. So the BLM is actually creating the very problem it complains about.

Yet, the roundups continue even though the BLM doesn't know what to do with the horses it removes from the range. Some mustangs find new homes through a federal adoption program, but thousands more live out their lives in government holding corrals and pastures. The government now warehouses more than 46,000 wild horses in holding facilities.

The entire failing system costs U.S. taxpayers almost \$80 million each year and that amount is growing. Entities from the National Academy of Sciences to the Government Accountability Office to the BLM itself warn that the status quo is unsustainable and yet it promises of reform fade away with each administration.

A Better Way

More humane and effective options exist. In its 2013 report, the National Academy of Sciences also noted that the "appropriate management levels" that BLM uses to justify roundups have no foundation in science. A federal court of appeals last year concurred, noting that the U.S. Wild Horse and Burro Act doesn't define these levels and there's no basis in statute for using them to remove mustangs from their homes.

Wild horses and burros are present on just 17 percent of BLM land grazed by livestock. There's room on the range for these iconic animals and the majority of Americans support preserving them on federal land. Americans are also overwhelmingly opposed to horse slaughter, the preferred management option of the special interest livestock lobby.

We need to decide on fair and sustainable population levels for wild horses. Then they can be humanely managed with birth control vaccine known as PZP, as recommended in the National Academy of Sciences report. Science and the public support this option and it's readily available. Best of all, it also preserves the animals' natural behaviors, the very essence of what makes them wild and distinguish them from their domestic counterparts.

Currently, the BLM spends less than one percent of its \$80 million annual budget on this option. It can do much more. Both wild horses and taxpayers will benefit.



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Last year, the National Advisory Board for Wild Horses and Burros, which ironically is dominated by livestock interests, recommended slaughtering wild horses. The suggestion was met with immediate public outrage and the BLM backed down.

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6. **My view: Utah's federal public lands are our shared heritage**

The Deseret News, March 6 | Steve Bloch

The recent op-ed “[Beautiful Utah is — and will stay — a public lands state](#)” (Feb. 27) penned by Reps. Keven Stratton and Mike Noel, with help from the Sutherland Institute, uses sweet words such as “protecting health and accessibility” and “principled restraint” to disguise its true motivations of justifying a state-sponsored land grab. Actions speak louder than words and these representatives’ actions threatening America’s federal public lands in Utah come through loud and clear.

They contend that Utah loves its public lands and there is little question that this is so. Utahns are rightfully proud of our state’s federal public lands. In this way we stand shoulder to shoulder with Americans from all walks of life and from all parts of the country who have a deep and abiding love of this place and want to see it protected from the machinations of politicians acting at the behest of oil, gas and real estate interests.

As evidence of Utah politicians’ “love of the land” Stratton and Noel point to recent legislative efforts, such as the Utah Wilderness Act and Utah Land Management Act, as proof that they come in peace. Importantly, the premise underlying these examples is that Utah must first take the unprecedented step of wresting control of America’s federal public lands away from their rightful owners — the American people — and only then would these newly enacted laws come into play. And once you get past the pleasant-sounding names, the plain language of these laws makes clear that the playing field is heavily tilted against preservation and in favor of extraction and development.

Turning to national monuments, the legislators acknowledge that many of Utah’s most popular national parks — Zion, Bryce, Arches and Capitol Reef — all began as national monuments, and they concede that these unilateral acts by past presidents “helped preserve some of Utah’s most scenic landscapes.” This is a significant concession, because earlier Utah politicians decried the establishment of these monuments as federal overreach that would bring ruin to southern Utah and its economy. In hindsight we see that these claims were terribly wrong.



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Nevertheless, Stratton and Noel complain that recent national monuments have gotten “too big” for their liking and are, in their view, inconsistent with the Antiquities Act. They assert, without support, that these larger monuments “lock up wide swaths of public lands Utahns rely on — disregarding their opinions on how best to manage these areas.”

The elephant in the room is President Barack Obama's establishment of the Bears Ears National Monument, the first and only national monument to be established at the urging of Native American nations, and only after Herculean efforts by federal officials to meet with and listen to stakeholders from all sides, including local and state elected officials. Stratton and Noel curiously leave off their list of legislative accomplishments a resolution introduced by Noel and signed by Gov. Gary Herbert that calls on President Donald Trump to rescind the Bears Ears monument, an unprecedented act in the 110-year history of the Antiquities Act.

At bottom, Stratton, Noel and their colleagues in the Legislature and in Utah's congressional delegation perpetuate a false and revisionist history in which Utah's federal public lands were always intended to be “ours,” to be disposed of or managed as Utahns see fit and without federal interference. This is flatly incorrect, as the federal courts have made clear for well over a century. America's federal public lands were never Utah's alone, but instead are a part of our nation's collective bounty. It is long past time to set aside this tale and work toward a common goal of strengthening the management and protection of this place we call home.

Steve Bloch is the legal director and an attorney for the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, Utah's oldest and largest non-profit conservation organization.

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7. San Juan County sheriff offering reward on fake Bears Ears signs

The Deseret News, March 6 | Staff Writer

MONTICELLO, San Juan County — Residents are already pretty tense over the Bears Ears National Monument designation made in December, and someone is deliberately inflaming emotion with bogus signs.

The San Juan County Sheriff's Office wants to find out who is posting bogus monument signs on Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service lands advising an entrance fee of \$100 per car per day that must be paid before entering Navajo Tribal Park or Monument Valley, Arizona.

The fake signs also say there is no hunting, no wood cutting or all-terrain vehicle riding.



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"It is something that people are putting up to get people wound up," said San Juan County Sheriff Rick Eldredge. "These are completely false."

Eldredge said there is a \$500 reward to learn the identity of the culprit, even though no crime has been committed.

"It's not against the law, but we want to expose them so people know the truth of where this is coming from," he said.

About 30 of the signs have been posted over the past nine months and discovered by local residents. Many were nailed to trees or found at trailheads, Eldredge said.

Local residents know the signs are bogus, he said, and he suspects they are being posted by someone outside the county.

"We just want to get to the bottom of this," Eldredge said.

Anyone with information about the signs is asked to call 435-587-2237.

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E&E/NATIONAL NEWS – FULL STORY

1. **Op-ed: Public Lands in Private Hands?**

New York Times, March 3 | Jimmy Tobias

The Senate's confirmation this week of the former Montana congressman Ryan Zinke as secretary of the interior has revived concerns about the future of public lands in the Trump administration. While Mr. Zinke has branded himself as a Teddy Roosevelt-style conservationist — and resigned as a delegate to the Republican National Convention last year to protest the party's support for transferring federal lands to states or private groups — his record is spotty.

Just weeks ago, in early January, in one of his last acts as a representative, Mr. Zinke joined fellow House Republicans in voting for a rules package for the new Congress that makes it much easier for the federal government to transfer to state, local or even private control the public lands that rightfully belong to all Americans. According to The Hill, the new rules do this by prohibiting "the Congressional Budget Office from taking into account lost federal revenue from energy production, logging, recreation or other uses" when it analyzes the budgetary implications of proposed legislation.



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By this move, Republicans essentially announced that they see zero value in the lands that this nation has paid and labored to protect for more than a century. They are greasing the skids to dispose of our collective property one chunk at a time.

These common lands are the glory of the continent. For three summers in my mid-20s, beginning in 2011, I worked on trail crews in the wild and rugged national forests of Idaho and Montana. Each morning, my crew would rise at dawn; we'd lace our boots, shoulder backpacks and go to work.

As Forest Service workers, we had a simple duty: to build and repair our country's public trails. Armed with picks, axes and saws, we spent our days chopping trees, hauling rocks, cutting brush, cleaning drains and constructing bridges.

We received little pay or praise, slept under the stars and labored in the sun. Our reward was fresh air, wildlife sightings and campfire camaraderie. When the day was done and we sat down to dinner, our calloused hands and aching backs testified to the exertions of our public service.

Those summers in the woods were the best of my life, and they have left me firmly dedicated to the roughly 600 million acres of national forests, grasslands, wildlife refuges and more that make up this country's conservation heritage. Many of my trail worker friends, meanwhile, still work for agencies like the National Park Service. Public lands conservation is a calling, and young Americans heed it. But for how much longer?

In January, Representative Jason Chaffetz, Republican of Utah, introduced legislation that called for the sale, or "disposal," of 3.3 million acres of public land in Arizona, Colorado, Montana and other Western states. He later withdrew that bill, under pressure from hunting and fishing groups, but another he introduced would eliminate hundreds of law enforcement personnel in the federal land agencies.

These actions are no anomaly. Senior Republicans are equally eager to gut the 110-year-old Antiquities Act, which President Obama used during his tenure to protect important L.G.B.T. and civil rights landmarks, secure sacred Native American sites and conserve vast areas of desert and ocean.

This anti-conservation agenda does not represent the interests of ordinary Americans but the desires of the wealthiest Republican donors. With their constellation of think tanks and advocacy groups, these donors have promoted the so-called land transfer movement, an effort to give Republican state governments control of most, if not all, of our national forests, wildlife refuges



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and Bureau of Land Management parcels. This effort, if successful, would destroy our conservation system and hand over huge tracts of priceless natural habitat to powerful private interests, particularly the fossil-fuel industry.

For a vision of the future these Republican donors hope to bring about, just look at Wisconsin. There, Gov. Scott Walker and the legislature have raised state park user fees, cut conservation budgets and stripped public employees of their protections. Wisconsin is also in the process of selling off thousands of acres of state forest.

My generation and those that follow have much at stake in this battle. We stand to lose our ability to hike and camp, to bike and boat, to hunt and fish and explore freely in these superlative places. We also stand to lose the opportunities for meaningful work, civic engagement and spiritual fulfillment that our public lands provide.

Our forebears fought to create such opportunities. Young trail workers, wilderness rangers, river guides, hunters, anglers, backpackers, outfitters, field scientists and more have a duty to defend and expand them.

On Thursday, Mr. Zinke, wearing jeans and a cowboy hat, rode in to work at his new job in Washington on a horse named Tonto. He looked the part of the great outdoorsman. Now he must act it.

Jimmy Tobias (@JamesCTobias), an environmental reporter, is a contributing writer for Pacific Standard.

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2. In past land cases, Gorsuch has limited environmentalists

WTOP News, March 6 | The Associated Press

Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch has shown a willingness to limit the participation of environmental groups in lawsuits involving public lands, writing in one case that allowing conservationists to intervene could complicate and slow down the judicial process, according to an Associated Press review of his rulings as a federal appeals court judge.

Gorsuch has spent a decade on the Denver-based 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which hears disputes about public lands ranging from energy companies' drilling rights to the use of off-road vehicles in national forests across six Western states.



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With public lands cases and other contentions issues, Gorsuch applied a uniform set of legal principles, said Donald Kochan, associate dean and professor at Chapman University Dale E. Fowler School of Law.

"I think that his record, although the number of cases is quite limited, shows that at times it has led to decisions that one might consider environmentally favorable, and about an equal number of times it has led to decisions some might think are environmentally unfavorable," Kochan said. "For those who think that he will lean toward one outcome or another, I think they'll be surprised on how the more neutral application of his philosophy will often lead to confounding results."

In public lands cases in which he sought to limit environmental groups' participation, Gorsuch at times has favored the position of federal agencies. But his record on such cases is relatively limited considering that the territory the appeals court covers contains vast swaths of national forests and parks.

Denise Grab, a lawyer with New York University Law School's Institute for Policy Integrity, said Gorsuch has a "mixed bag" of rulings related to public lands and the environment, yet seems "unusually eager to throw roadblocks in the way of public interest groups who want their day in court."

In 2013, Gorsuch parted from the two-judge majority on a panel that said environmental groups should have the chance to participate in a particular suit. The New Mexico Off-Highway Vehicle Alliance had challenged a plan that reduced the number of roads and trails available to off-road vehicles in Santa Fe National Forest.

His colleagues on the appeals court said the groups should be allowed to join the case because "there is no guarantee that the Forest Service will make all of the environmental groups' arguments in litigation."

Gorsuch disagreed, saying there was only one issue to consider and no conflict between the groups and government over how to approach it.

"An intervenor becomes a full-fledged party, able to conduct discovery, file motions, and add new issues and complexity and delay to the litigation," Gorsuch wrote.

Grab called that "very unusual," and noted that neither party in the suit had objected to the environmental groups intervening.



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“An environmental group is not the government. It has different goals,” Grab said. “In most cases, intervention is allowed.”

Gorsuch doesn’t always take the road less traveled, and often sides with other members of the 10th Circuit.

When an outdoor group sued the U.S. Forest Service over a temporary order that allowed motorcycles to ride on certain trails inside western Colorado’s San Juan National Forest, Gorsuch wrote a unanimous opinion in May 2015 for the three-judge panel dismissing the case on procedural grounds.

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers could not establish their ability to bring the case because if the order they challenged as being too lenient was struck down, the agency would revert to an earlier, even less-strict version of the trail plan, so the organization’s conservation goal would not be advanced, Gorsuch wrote.

“A further victory for Backcountry in this case promises only more, not fewer, vehicles on forest trails and the group hasn’t offered a timely argument how that turn of events might help its members,” he wrote.

Gorsuch has been sympathetic to outdoor enthusiasts, even when ruling against them, and has shown his Colorado roots in his writings.

“Everyone enjoys a trip to the mountains in the summertime. One popular spot is Mount Evans — a fourteen thousand foot peak just a short drive from Denver and with a paved road that goes right to the summit,” he wrote in a 2011 case.

In that case, Gorsuch was on a panel that found that the Forest Service could legally charge fees to visit the summit because it provided amenities such as a nature center, which thousands of visitors use annually. Those who sued had challenged the fee policy, saying it overstepped the Forest Service’s statutory authority to charge visitors.

Writing for the panel, Gorsuch said the fees were permissible, but he left open the possibility that the fees could be challenged, just not the way the plaintiffs sought to.

“In rejecting the plaintiffs’ facial challenge we hardly mean to suggest that the Service’s policy can’t be attacked at all. It might well be susceptible to a winning challenge as applied to certain particular visitors, perhaps even the plaintiffs themselves. But that’s a path the plaintiffs haven’t asked us to explore and so one we leave for another day,” Gorsuch wrote.



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In 2011, Gorsuch showed his distaste for drawn-out litigation when he sided with a majority of other judges who found The Wilderness Society lacked standing in a suit related to off-road vehicles on federal land, including in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Officials in Kane County, Utah, had asserted rights on roads crossing the federal land and removed U.S. Bureau of Land Management signs prohibiting off-road vehicles. The county put up its own signs and passed an ordinance allowing the vehicles.

The environmental groups sued, saying the county's actions violated federal rules pertaining to public lands. The district judge ruled in favor of the environmental groups, a decision upheld by a three-judge panel of the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

A review by the full appeals court found that the environmental groups had no valid rights of their own in the property and vacated the district court's ruling.

Gorsuch concurred, but wrote that most of the suit was moot by that point, anyway. The county had long ago rescinded its ordinance and removed the signs and decals that had allowed off-road vehicles.

"There are no (off-highway vehicles) left to fight over; the Society won exactly the relief it sought merely by filing its lawsuit; still, this litigation has lumbered on," he wrote. "We don't usually prolong litigation in this way, allowing the fight to continue after one side has thrown in the towel. Especially when carrying on the fight requires us to decide novel and hotly disputed questions of law."

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3. **REGULATIONS: Vote coming on measure to kill Obama Planning 2.0 rule**

E & E News, March 6 | Kellie Lunney

The Senate this evening begins consideration of a measure that would kill a controversial Interior rule revising land management plans for millions of acres of federal lands.

The upper chamber plans to hold a vote after 6 p.m. on a motion to proceed to [H.J. Res. 44](#), a measure that would repeal the so-called Planning 2.0 rule, finalized by the Bureau of Land Management in December. H.J. Res. 44 is one of several disapproval resolutions Republican lawmakers have introduced this session through the Congressional Review Act in an effort to roll back Obama-era regulations.



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The procedural vote on the resolution to repeal the BLM Planning 2.0 rule will follow a 6 p.m. final vote on another CRA disapproval resolution related to an Obama rule affecting federal contractors.

BLM has said that the Planning 2.0 rule, which updates a 34-year-old agency planning rule, creates a more efficient process to modernize and revise the roughly 160 resource management plans for millions of acres of federal lands (E&E Daily, Feb. 8).

But congressional Republicans have said the regulation leaves state and local input out of important federal land management decisions.

"BLM Planning 2.0 is yet one more example of Obama-era federal government overreach," said Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.), the measure's sponsor in the House, during a one-hour floor debate last month. The House passed H.J. Res. 44 by a 234-186 vote on Feb. 8, mostly along party lines. Four Democrats voted for it, and four Republicans against.

"It takes authority away from people and local communities in my home state of Wyoming and all across the West, and it puts Washington bureaucrats in charge of decisions that directly influence and impact our lives," Cheney said at the time. "It significantly dilutes cooperating agency status, and it discounts input from those who are closest to our lands and our resources."

Gene Karpinski, president of the League of Conservation Voters, [sent a March 3 letter](#) to senators urging them to vote against H.J. Res. 44, calling it "radical" legislation that "would prohibit the BLM from developing any similar measure in the future."

The Planning 2.0 rule "was developed over more than two years during which time the agency received more than 6,000 public comments, while this Congress has yet to even hold a hearing on this extreme legislation," Karpinski wrote.

Karpinski said that the BLM rule makes the land-use planning process "more efficient" by engaging local stakeholders early on "to avoid disputes and revisions later that cost time and taxpayer money."

The Senate last week voted to confirm President Trump's nominees for three departments: Energy, Housing and Urban Development, and the Interior, which has freed it up to start tackling several of the House-passed CRA disapproval resolutions.



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Other resolutions pending in the upper chamber that could see action as early as next week include measures that would repeal the previous administration's venting and flaring standards to reduce methane emissions, and predator-killing measures in national wildlife refuges in Alaska (Greenwire, Feb. 20).

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4. **PUBLIC LANDS: Western businesses, mayors push outdoor economy study**

E & E News, March 6 | Scott Streater

Western chambers of commerce and local government leaders are urging the Trump administration to prioritize a congressionally authorized study designed to measure the significance of outdoor recreation to the U.S. economy, despite looming budget cuts.

At issue is the Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act of 2016, approved by Congress last year and signed by former President Obama in December. It directs the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis to coordinate with the Interior and Agriculture departments to conduct the first-ever outdoor economy study.

The legislation, however, included no specific funding for the study. Representatives with 14 chambers of commerce and economic development corporations in the Intermountain West today sent letters to administration officials as well as Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) urging the study be a top priority.

"It's the engine of our local economy and our greatest strength as we seek to attract new entrepreneurs and small businesses to our region," Jon Nicholas, president and CEO of the Estes Park Economic Development Corp., said of neighboring Rocky Mountain National Park.

That's why the congressionally authorized evaluation of "the importance of the public lands on which the outdoor economy relies" is critical, said Diana Madson, executive director of the Mountain Pact, a nonprofit that has organized a letter-writing campaign to the congressional leaders and President Trump.

"Once completed, the [study] will unlock new opportunities for both environmental conservation and economic growth in the Intermountain West," Madson said.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, while a Republican congressman from Montana, co-sponsored the House version of the bill, [H.R. 4665](#), which did not include designated funding for the study.



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It's not clear what Zinke will do concerning the economic study.

But Heather Swift, an Interior spokeswoman, said Zinke "has demonstrated his commitment to outdoor recreation jobs and all jobs on public lands."

She added, "You can expect him to remain committed to creating and protecting public lands jobs."

Representatives with the Commerce Department, where new Secretary Wilbur Ross Jr. was sworn in last week, did not respond to a request for comment in time for publication.

Indications are that Trump intends to slash Interior's fiscal 2018 budget by 10 percent (Greenwire, Feb. 28).

Zinke told Interior employees last week that he was not "happy" about that, and he vowed to fight such steep cuts (Greenwire, March 3).

A fifth-generation Montanan, Zinke grew up hunting and fishing, and on his first day on the job last week he signed secretarial orders to expand access to public lands and revoke restrictions on lead ammunition and fishing tackle (E&E News PM, March 2).

The economic study, the groups touting it say, would once and for all establish that the nation's public lands are economic drivers, contributing significantly to the nation's overall economy, at a time when some GOP congressional leaders have expressed support for selling federal lands.

"For the outdoor economy to continue to thrive, it is crucial that policymakers understand investing in the maintenance and restoration of public lands is an investment into our communities whose economies are inextricably linked," said Richard Hildner, a member of the Whitefish, Mont., City Council.

[Click here](#) to read the letters from the Western chambers and other groups.

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5. **WHITE HOUSE: Agencies urged to mind Trump's 'deregulatory' agenda**

E & E News, March 6 | Arianna Skibell

The White House today issued a memo with requirements and guidelines for agencies to follow when submitting regulatory agenda items.



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The administration will publish the information in what was once called the Unified Agenda of Federal Regulatory Actions, but which the Trump White House has renamed the Unified Agenda of Federal Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions.

Under the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, agencies are required to note all planned federal regulations to be published in the Unified Agenda.

President Trump has made rolling back federal regulations a top priority of his administration. The name change is meant to reflect that.

The memo, issued by Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs acting Administrator Dominic Mancini, tells agencies to pay "careful attention" to the principles and requirements identified in Trump's Jan. 30 executive order on regulations.

The order, E.O. 13771, directs agencies to identify two rules for repeal for every new rule they plans to issue. It also establishes a regulatory budget with a 2017 cap of zero dollars.

The memo references the order's directive that it is "the policy of the executive branch to be prudent and financially responsible in the expenditure of funds" and that "it is essential to manage the costs associated with the governmental imposition of private expenditures required to comply with Federal regulations."

The memo also requests that agencies include fiscal 2018 projections in their submissions "in order to facilitate the fiscal year 2018 regulatory budget planning process."

The new memo notes that the process for designating significant rules, or those with an annual economic impact of \$100 million, has not changed.

While independent agencies are not required to submit major rules to OIRA, the memo encourages those agencies to "identify existing regulations that, if repealed or revised, would achieve cost savings that would fully offset the costs of new significant regulatory actions."

All submissions are due March 31.

[Click here](#) to read the memo.

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6. INTERIOR: Zinke to testify on Indian Country issues

E & E News, March 6 | Corbin Hiar

Former Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-Mont.) this week will return to Capitol Hill for the first time as Interior secretary.

Zinke, in his first full week at his new job, is scheduled to testify before the Senate Indian Affairs Committee on Wednesday about the Trump administration's goals for Indian Country, the panel confirmed today.

"One of the Secretary's top priorities has been and will continue to be tribal sovereignty and self determination," Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said in an email. "He will continue to talk about the fact that the tribes are not monolithic and that a one size fits all model does not work."

As a Montana lawmaker, Zinke supported legislation last Congress that would allow state and tribal leaders a greater say in federal land decisions. The "Certainty for States and Tribes Act" (H.R. 5259) would have re-established a land commission to provide policy recommendations to Interior and limited the length of the agency's moratorium on coal mining on public lands.

That bill cleared the Natural Resources Committee in a party-line vote, but was never taken up by the full House (E&E News PM, Sept. 8, 2016).

During his confirmation process, Zinke pledged to work with Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) to boost renewable energy generation on tribal lands. In another [written response](#) to a question about the route of an oil pipeline opposed by many tribes, Zinke told Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) that, "if we build and then maintain mutual trust, we can build relative consensus around infrastructure siting issues."

Since becoming Interior secretary, Zinke has also repeatedly stressed the importance of tribal rights.

"Sovereignty needs to mean something," he said in an email last week to all Interior employees.

"I will do everything in my power to ensure respect to the sovereign Indian Nations and territories," said the adopted member of the Assiniboiné-Sioux from northeast Montana. "My commitment to the territories and Nations is not lip service" (Greenwire, March 2).

Senators, meanwhile, are likely to ask about how an expected budget reduction of 10 percent and a planned reorganization of Interior will affect federal programs supporting Indian Country.



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In Zinke's first address to the agency's employees, he vowed to fight the cuts.

"I think I'm going to win at the end of the day," he said (Greenwire, March 3).

Although the secretary has offered few details about how he wants to shake up Interior, this morning he shared on Twitter an article from Indianz.com that said the agency's "reorganization will include the Bureau of Indian Affairs."

The committee will also hear the testimony of tribal leaders from across the country.

Schedule: The hearing is Wednesday, March 8, at 2:15 p.m. in 628 Dirksen.

Witnesses: Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke; Alvin Not Afraid Jr., chairman of the Crow Nation; Keith Anderson, vice chairman of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community; Jefferson Keel, lieutenant governor of the Chickasaw Nation; Jamie Azure, tribal councilman of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians; and E. Paul Torres, chairman of the All Pueblo Council of Governors.

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7. **CLEAN POWER PLAN: Executive order coming as early as tomorrow**

E & E News, March 6 | Robin Bravender

An order aimed at killing the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan is still in the pipeline for this week, a White House spokeswoman said today.

President Trump is expected soon to sign an executive order directing U.S. EPA to unravel the Obama administration's signature climate change rule and lifting the moratorium on coal leasing on federal lands.

The order won't be coming today but is slated to be signed this week, White House spokeswoman Kelly Love said today. The White House hasn't offered specifics about the content of the looming directive, but it's been expected after Trump promised repeatedly to undo the controversial Obama-era EPA regulation to cut power plants' greenhouse gas emissions.

Trump was thought to have been waiting for his EPA administrator, Scott Pruitt, to take the helm of the agency before signing major directives for repealing EPA rules. Since Pruitt's confirmation last month, the Trump White House has already moved to repeal the so-called Waters of the U.S., or WOTUS, rule.



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Pruitt and Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke — who took office last week — would be charged with implementing the Trump administration's plans to overhaul the climate rule and the federal coal leasing program.

During his tenure as Oklahoma's attorney general, Pruitt sued the Obama administration over both the WOTUS rule and the Clean Power Plan.

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8. **PUBLIC LANDS: Top lawmakers introduce legislation to fight invasive species**

E & E News, March 6 | Corbin Hiar

Senate Republicans last week introduced legislation that would encourage the secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to step up the fight against invasive species on public lands.

"Worldwide, invasive species are spreading at an alarming rate," said Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman John Barrasso of Wyoming, the author of the "Federal Land Invasive Species Control, Prevention and Management Act," [S. 509](#).

The Bureau of Land Management, he noted in a press release, has estimated that invasives can move across public lands at a rate of nearly 4,600 acres per day.

Wyoming, in particular, is struggling to deal with the threat posed by cheatgrass, Barrasso said. The invasive plant pushes out native grasses, destroys sage grouse habitat and increases the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

"By working together to meet clear reduction targets, we can begin to rein in the spread of invasive species," he said.

The legislation to slow the spread of exotic plants and animals is co-sponsored by Sens. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, James Risch of Idaho and Mike Enzi of Wyoming.

The bill would direct the secretaries to develop a strategic plan with states and other stakeholders "to achieve, to the maximum extent practicable, a substantive annual net reduction of invasive species populations or infested acreage" on the lands they manage.

It would also require Interior and Agriculture to direct at least 75 percent of the dollars they receive for invasive species management toward "on-the-ground control" and would limit the



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share of resources they can direct toward investigations, development activities, outreach and administration.

The only provision of the 15-page package with the potential to be controversial is a section that would categorically exclude many invasive species control or management projects from National Environmental Policy Act requirements.

A standoff over the management of invasive species in a national wildlife refuge in South Florida has pitted Interior against the state, imperiling the broader Everglades restoration effort (Greenwire, Feb. 20).

In the House, Rep. Mark Amodei (R-Nev.) introduced H.R. 1330 on invasive species. Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.) introduced H.R. 1357 and H. Res. 170.

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