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From: Davis, Natalie
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DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 12-08-17.docx

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 12/08/17

Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison
Natalie Davis, Special Assistant to the Secretary

STATUS OF THE SECRETARY

THIS WEEK:

Today: Internal meetings

STATUS OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

Today : The Dep Sec is at a policy planning session in Shepherdstown, WV with Senior Leadership. He will be back in DC this evening.

NOTE:

Yesterday, Joe Balash was confirmed by the Senate to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Land Minerals Management at DOI.

WH COMMS REPORT (Submitted 12/7/17)

Press Inquiries:

Many small and logistical inquiries.

- ☐ KXLH-MT: (Jonathan Ambarian)— **REQUEST--** I am a reporter with the Montana Television Network in Helena. Today, the Natural Resources Defense Council Action Fund has announced a TV advertising campaign in Montana, accusing Secretary Zinke and Republicans in Congress of proposing substantial cuts to funding for the National Park Service, and criticizing the proposal to increase entrance fees at parks like Glacier and Yellowstone. I wanted to ask if the secretary or the department wanted to make a statement in response to these ads.—**RESPONSE--** The people of Montana understand better than anyone that government should balance its budget. By contrast, the NRDC has launched several expensive and frivolous lawsuits against the Department wasting valuable taxpayer funds. The increase

in week-long admission for a carload during peak season at some national parks is still more affordable than taking a family of four to see a 3D movie. Further, the vast majority of funds from the fees goes directly to fixing our parks.

□ Earther: (Maddie Stone) — **REQUEST**— I’m the managing editor for the environmental news site Earther.com. I’m reaching out because I’m working on a story about lawsuits the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology announced this week in response to President Trump’s decision to shrink Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante National Monuments. I’ve spoken to several paleontologists for this story who say they left comments for Secretary Zinke during the monument review process, and received no feedback from the DOI. I was hoping the DOI could comment directly on whether it has engaged with paleontologists and the scientific societies representing them during the monument review process for Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante.—**RESPONSE**-- The Secretary and his team absolutely met with paleontologists, which is reflected in the fact that the areas of GSENM that have high concentrations of fossils remain within monument boundaries. Here’s two tweets with photos of the Secretary receiving a briefing from BLM paleontologists.<https://twitter.com/SecretaryZinke/status/862431585823371265>, <https://twitter.com/SecretaryZinke/status/862351766452436994> Regarding any lawsuit, please contact DOJ for response.

□ Courthouse News: (Brandi Buchman)— **REQUEST**-- Why were no members of the Interior Department present to discuss the potential sweeping overhaul? Also, the report for agency reform was due in September – why is there still a delay?—**RESPONSE**-- The Interior Department was not asked to participate in the hearing.

Top Stories

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- NBC News: Patagonia sues to block Trump’s reductions to Utah national monuments
- E&E News: Advisory panel member questions Zinke’s reorganization plan
- Gingrich Productions/Fox News: Trump and Zinke are Right on National Monuments

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Program (for oil and gas exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf).

AGENCY MEDIA (submitted 12/7)

U.S. Department of the Interior

Secretarial-level Announcements/Events/Interviews

- **December 8:** Secretary Zinke will have a meeting with Governor Martinez to discuss several DOI issues. No pro-active press planned.
- **December 8 (tent): Department-level Release:** DOI will announce that it will remove certain overly regulative and overreaching mitigation policies to continue to further American energy dominance. Press release is forthcoming.
- **December 11:** Secretary Zinke is scheduled to have lunch with POTUS and VPOTUS as well as attend the White House Christmas Reception later in the day.
- **December 12: Department-level Release:** DOI will issue a release announcing the 2019-2024, Draft Proposed Program (for oil and gas exploration on the OCS). Comms materials will be sent shortly tonight. Comms call tomorrow.
- **December 14: Department-level Release:** DOI will announce the results from its Work Environment Survey. This will also include a variety of internal messaging to employees. Comms materials are forthcoming.

National Park Service

- **December 9:** Up to 12 U.S. senators and representatives will tour Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument. The tour is part of a local excursion coordinated as part of the Congressional Western Caucus being held in Las Vegas.
- **December 11 (tent.): Local NPS Release:** The NPS Pacific West Region plans to publicly announce the business opportunity to operate overnight accommodations, food and beverage, retail, horse services, campground, and other visitor services at Lassen Volcanic National Park.
- **December 11:** Washington State University will publish an advertisement in Seattle and Portland area newspapers to solicit oral history narrators for a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) project titled "Documenting African American Migration, Segregation, and Civil Right History at Manhattan Project National Historical Park, Hanford." The advertisement is intended to encourage African Americans who worked at the Hanford site or resided in the Tri-Cities area of central Washington from 1943-1970 to volunteer to share stories that can help illuminate the project's themes.
- **December 12 (tent.): Local NPS Release:** Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

will release the Air Tour Management Voluntary Agreement for a 30-day public comment period. The NPS, the Federal Aviation Administration, and seven commercial air tour operators intend to sign the agreement, once complete, to manage air tours over Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Rainbow Bridge National Monument.

- **December 11-13:** Catoctin Mountain Park Visitor Center will be temporarily closed while the National Park Service replaces insulation in public areas of the building. The building will be thoroughly cleaned before it reopens at 9 a.m. Saturday, November 18. During the closure, public restrooms and a contact station will be available at park headquarters.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- **December 11: Local FWS Release:** FWS will announce the solicitation of input from the scientific community and the broader public on draft criteria set for the eventual recovery of the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) grizzly bear. The NCDE region encompasses Glacier National Park and other parts of northwestern Montana.

Bureau of Land Management

- **December 11:** BLM Office of Law Enforcement and Security Director William Woody will begin visits to members and staff of the Utah congressional delegation to discuss law enforcement issues in Utah. BLM Deputy Director for Policy Brian Steed and DOI Director of the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs John Tanner also plan to attend.
- **December 12: Local BLM Release:** BLM-NV will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 208 parcels totaling 388,959.402 acres in White Pine, Lincoln and Nye Counties. The sale will likely be controversial.
- **December 12: Local BLM Release:** BLM-MT will hold an oil and gas lease sale for 204 parcels totaling 98,889 acres in Big Horn, Custer, Carter, Fallon, Garfield, Powder River, Richland, and Rosebud Counties. BLM-MT expects minimal controversy with this sale. Bidding is not expected to be robust.
- **December 12: Local BLM Release:** BLM-UT will hold an oil and gas lease sale for 75 parcels totaling 94,000 acres in Duchesne, Uintah and Emery counties. The sale is expected to be controversial due to the nomination of parcels near Dinosaur National Monument. However, two of the three parcels nominated by industry for consideration near the boundary of the Dinosaur National Monument have been deferred by the BLM Utah State Director for further consultation with the National Park Service. The remaining parcel contains both BLM and split estate land, and has a small portion within

view of the Monument. The portion of land within view of the Monument is privately owned, however, the BLM has applied stipulations for light and noise pollution, and to minimize impacts to air quality and the scenic viewshed. Bidding is expected to be robust.

- **December 13:** BLM-CA Bakersfield Field Office will host an informational meeting and site visit for tribes regarding a Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act case at the San Joaquin River Gorge. Last year, human remains were discovered due to erosion on the slope of trail. The site has been stabilized to prevent further erosion. The meeting will discuss the tribes' wishes regarding this discovery and any future discoveries that may be made in the area.

- **December 13:** The BLM-CA El Centro Field Office will conduct a public scoping open-house meeting as a first step in the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for United States Gypsum Company's (USG) proposed mine expansion/modernization project near the city of El Centro.

- **December 14: Local BLM Release:** BLM-Eastern States will hold an oil and gas lease sale for seven parcels totaling 1,185 acres in OH and LA. The sale will include five parcels totaling 350.06 acres in the Wayne National Forest, Monroe County, OH; and two parcels totaling 834.70 acres in the Kisatchie National Forest, Natchitoches and Winn Parishes, LA. The parcels being offered in the Wayne National Forest are expected to be controversial as several environmental groups are attempting to prohibit hydraulic fracturing in the area.

- **December 14:** BLM-CA's Bakersfield Field Office will host a public scoping meeting in Three Rivers to gather comments on a draft of a vegetation/forest health plan for the BLM's only giant sequoia grove on Case Mountain. The BLM manages approximately 444 acres on Case Mountain, which supports the Giant Sequoia Complex and the Case Mountain Extensive Recreation Management Area.

- **December 14:** BLM-AK Associate State Director Ted Murphy will provide an update to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group on development activities within the NPRA-A. The group brings a broad range of stakeholders together who are actively involved in the management of caribou and includes subsistence users, other hunters, reindeer herders, hunting guides, transporters and conservationists.

- **December 14: Local BLM Release:** BLM WY will host an online oil and gas lease sale. The sale will offer 45 parcels totaling 72,884.37 acres located in Laramie, Lincoln, Sweetwater, and Uinta counties. BLM received three protests for this oil and gas lease sale that will be dismissed because the issues raised in the protest are adequately analyzed in the supporting NEPA documents and Resource Management Plans.

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Bureau of Reclamation

- **December 11:** NBC Nightly News is expected to air a segment relating to ongoing

efforts to find an economically-viable solution to continuing operations of the Navajo Generating Station, near Page, Arizona. NBC News (Los Angeles) producer Jim Rainey has been tracking NGS developments for months, gathering multiple interviews and attending public comment sessions that were held in May in Phoenix, as well as the Navajo and Hopi reservations. Last week, Interior agencies (Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Indian Affairs) announced an extension lease to allow the Federal and non-Federal stakeholders' ongoing search for a post-2019 operator to continue. Coverage is expected to be neutral.

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Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- **December 13 (tent.):** NOA FSEIS for 2018 Gulf Region-wide Sales 250 and 251 NTS

Office of Natural Resources Revenue

- **December TBD:** ONRR issued a civil penalty in the amount of \$19,736 to Mid-Con Energy Operating, LLC, (Mid-Con) (formerly RDT Properties, Inc) on November 17, 2017. ONRR investigated Mid-Con's failure to submit production reports (form ONRR-4054) and found 68 violations on multiple Indian leases for the production months of September 2011 through January 2013.
- **December TBD:** ONRR anticipates issuing a civil penalty of about \$840 to Eight Round Inc., (Eight Round) the week of November 5, 2017. ONRR investigated Eight Round's failure to submit production reports (Forms ONRR-4054) and found 12 violations on one Indian agreement for production months of April, 2012 through September, 2013.

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CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE (updated 12/4)

UPCOMING SCIA HEARING: The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs will host a legislative hearing on two Indian water rights settlement bills: S. 664 (Senator Hatch), the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act of 2017 and S. 1770 (Senator Flake), the Hualapai Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2017. Alan Mikkelsen, the Chair of the Indian Water Rights Office Working Group, will be the witness on behalf of the Department.

Timing: Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Advisor, Congressional Affairs

UPCOMING HNR SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING REGARDING FISH RECOVERY PROGRAMS: The House Natural Resources subcommittee on Water Power and Oceans will hold a legislative hearing on HR.4465 which has impacts on Bureau of Reclamation and Fish Wildlife Service. DOI will not be testifying but will provide a statement for the record.

Timing: Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Advisor, Congressional Affairs

EXPECTED HEARING: The Senate Energy Committee is expected to hold a hearing on December 12 regarding permitting reform. Details regarding the specifics the committee plans to emphasize are still being put together; however, James Cason (Associate Dep. Sec.) is tentatively scheduled to testify.

Timing: Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Advisor, Congressional Affairs

DOI NOMINEES IN PROGRESS: Susan Combs (A/S PMB) passed out of committee August 3, 2017 and still awaits a vote. Ryan Nelson (Solicitor) appeared before the SENR committee on September 7, 2017. He passed and now await full Senate approval. DOI OCL is working with OGE and the White House to get final approval for Asst. Sec. Indian Affairs nominee, Tara Sweeney before submitting her paperwork to the Senate. The White House nominated Steve Gardner for OSM. His Senate questionnaire is currently under review. Tim Petty's (Asst. Secretary, Water & Science Nominee) was nominated November 14, 2017 and his nomination hearing will be held on 12/5/17.

Contact: John Tanner, Director, Congressional Affairs

POLITICAL APPOINTEE UPDATE

DOI politicals on board = 65

5 PAS confirmed as of 12/7/17

5 nominated awaiting confirmation:

- ☐ Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.
- ☐ Pending Senate floor vote: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor
- ☐ Pending Hearing: Tara Sweeney, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs
- ☐ Pending Hearing: Steve Gardner, Director, Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation
- ☐ Pending Hearing: Tim Petty, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science

Overall:

- ☐ Schedule C: 36 of 68 onboard; 2 starting; 6 in process
- ☐ NC-SES: 26 of 44 onboard; 3 starting; 1 in process
- ☐ PAS: 5 Confirmed; 5 Announced; 14 of 17 Submitted to PPO

SECRETARY SPEAKING INVITATIONS

Accepted:

12/16 - National Wreaths Across America Day (Arlington National Cemetery)

2/9 – Western Hunting & Conservation Expo (Salt Lake City, Utah)

3/6-7 – CERA Week (Houston, Texas)

Open (date TBC)- Americans for Tax Reform (DC)

Open (date TBC)- Detroit Economic Club

Outstanding Invitations in Process:

1/4 – Dallas Safari Club Annual Meeting (Dallas, TX)

1/26-28 – Houston Safari Club Annual Meeting (Houston, TX)

1/29 – Society of Range Management Annual Meeting (Reno, Nevada)

1/31-2/3 Safari Club International Annual Meeting (Las Vegas, NV)

2/8- Texas Public Policy Foundation Policy Orientation (Austin, TX)

2/12 – The Corps Network National Conference (Washington, DC)

Declining

12/5-7 America Outdoors Association's 29th Annual Marketing and Management Conference for Outfitters and Adventure Resorts (Reno, NV)

12/5 – NY Stock Exchange Ringing of the Bell & remarks at Wells Fargo Financial Symposium Event (NYC)

12/6 American Exploration and Mining Association Annual Meeting (Reno, NV)

12/8 - Valley Industry and Commerce Association Annual Meeting (Los Angeles, CA)

12/11 – Veterans Day Commemoration (Prussia, PA)

12/14 – Leadership Missoula (Missoula, Montana)

12/8 – DOI Toastmasters event (Washington, DC)

12/9 – Western Caucus Foundation Winter Policy Meeting (Las Vegas, NV)

1/11/18 – EEI CEO and Board Conference (Phoenix, AZ)
2/9-10 Associated General Contractors Western Chapter Annual Meeting (La Jolla, CA)
2/23/18 – West Slope Colorado Oil and Gas Association Annual Meeting (Grand Junction, CO)

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

As DOI recovers from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, updates on progress will be included in the attached DOI EM Daily Situation Report on a weekly basis on Fridays. A summary follows here.

Interagency Hurricane response and recovery efforts:

An interagency team consisting of personnel from the NPS, the National Archives and Records Administration, and the Smithsonian will deploy under a FEMA Mission Assignment on December 10 to provide assistance to the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture and General Archives. This team is replacing the first team that completed their deployment in November.

Under a FEMA Mission Assignment and through coordination with OEPC and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, a six-person NPS team (comprised of archeologists and historic structure specialists) continues to assist the State Historic Preservation Office of Puerto Rico with damage assessments and is providing technical assistance on National Register Properties eligible for the National Register. This mission is expected to continue until December 23.

Three OEPC Field Coordinators (1 in Texas, 2 in Florida) have completed Mission Scoping Assessments for both states and draft recovery strategies have been completed for Texas. NPS has provided two additional personnel to support OEPC efforts in Texas. Field Coordinators are also deployed to Puerto Rico (1 OEPC, 1 USFWS) and the U.S. Virgin Islands (1 OEPC, 1 NPS). Their efforts are currently focused on the development of Mission Scoping Assessments for each territory.

Wildfire Activity – California:

The Thomas Fire (being managed by CAL Fire) in southern California continues to actively burn with extreme rates of spread due to severe fire weather in the area. The fire has burned approximately 115,000 (+25,000) acres and is 5-percent (no change) contained. The fire is being managed by a Type-1 Incident Management Team with 3,216 (+719) personnel assigned, including 11 (+11) DOI personnel. The fire is burning on some BLM land parcels and is approaching the Lake Casitas Dam (USBR). There are 15,000 (+3,000) structures threatened by this fire and 401 (+251) structures have been destroyed. The fire is also threatening power transmission lines, oil resources, high-pressure gas lines, communications infrastructure, and local crops. Contingency planning is underway with local resources to address rapid fire progression, severe weather, and impacts to life and property. Full containment of this fire is expected December 24.

To the east of the Thomas Fire and north-northwest of Los Angeles, the Rye Fire (CAL Fire)

and Creek Fire (CAL Fire) are also actively burning. They are being managed by Type-1 IMTs and have resulted in significant evacuations in the area. The Creek Fire has burned 12,605 (no change) acres, is 10-percent (+5) contained, and has 1,519 (-40) personnel assigned, 19 (no change) of which are DOI personnel. Full containment is expected December 23. The Rye Fire has burned 7,000 (no change) acres, is 25-percent (+15) contained, and has 901 (no change) personnel assigned, none of which are DOI personnel. Full containment is expected December 15. There are no DOI assets currently impacted by these fires; however, there are some BLM land parcels in the vicinity.

USBR continues to monitor wildland fire activity in southern California and all of their facilities located in vicinity are transferred works, operated by non-USBR entities. No USBR staff are directly threatened or impacted by the fire activity. USGS has received accountability for all employees in California and there have been no impacts to USGS facilities or monitoring equipment in the greater Los Angeles area. BOEM continues to maintain accountability of their personnel in the area and while five team members have evacuated due to the Thomas Fire, they do not require assistance at this time.

OUTSIDE MEDIA OF INTEREST (new)

Ryan Zinke: Why We Shrunk The Monuments.

In an op-ed for CNN (12/7, Zinke), Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke explains why he recommended that President Trump shrink the Bears Ears and the Grand Staircase-Escalante monuments. Zinke asserts that in recent years, “presidents have abused the Antiquities Act to lock up vast swaths of public land.” He argues that the Antiquities Act is “not a tool for presidents to use to restrict access for outdoor recreation on land that belongs to all of us.” Zinke writes that “the President’s actions focus on protecting land within the smallest area necessary while restoring traditional uses of these lands and prioritizing the voice of the people over that of the special interest groups.” He also notes that “this action does not transfer one square inch of this land out of federal ownership.” Zinke concludes by pledging to ensure that public lands are used “‘for the benefit and enjoyment of the people,’ as the words above the Roosevelt Arch in Yellowstone National Park so proudly proclaim.”

Spread The Swamp? Trump Administration Wants To Move Government Offices Out Of Washington.

The Los Angeles Times (12/7, Halper) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is “aiming to move the headquarters of the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Reclamation out of Washington as soon as logistically possible.” The plan was examined Thursday during a hearing of the House Natural Resources Committee.

The Huffington Post (12/7, D'Angelo) reports that the hearing titled “Transforming the Department of the Interior for the 21st Century,” examined “goals and policy ideas for reorganizing and relocating parts of the Department of the Interior and its bureaus,” according

to a committee memorandum. In his opening statement, Rep. Bruce Westerman, the subcommittee's chairman, "said that Interior has 'lost touch' with the concerns of the U.S. public, and that 'decades of top-down directives issued from Washington' have rendered the department inefficient and unaccountable." However, Rep. Donald McEachin "dismissed the notion that Interior staffers need to be closer to the people they serve, noting that 90 percent of the department's personnel are already working outside of Washington."

Zinke Spent \$6,250 On A Helicopter Trip To Ride Horses With Pence.

Business Insider (12/7, Choi) reports that according to previously undisclosed travel logs obtained by Politico (12/7, Lefebvre), Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke spent thousands of taxpayer dollars on government helicopter trips, including one trip – costing \$6,250 – to ride horses with Vice President Pence. Travel records showed that the helicopter trips altogether cost more than \$14,000 over the summer.

Senate Confirms Two Interior, EPA Nominees.

The Hill (12/7, Henry) reports the Senate Thursday confirmed Joe Balash "as assistant secretary for land and minerals management at the Interior Department," and Susan Bodine to head "the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, which oversees enforcement of pollution laws." Sen. Sen. Dan Sullivan, for whom Balash worked as chief of staff, called him "probably one of the most qualified people to hold this job in the entire country."

President Trump's National Monument Cuts Draw 5th Lawsuit.

The AP (12/7) reports that a coalition of conservation groups filed a lawsuit Thursday to stop President Trump's cuts to Bears Ears National Monument. The lawsuit filed by "11 organizations including the Sierra Club is the fifth legal challenge to Trump's reductions to Bear Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments" and "it is the third lawsuit focused on Bears Ears." The article notes that "the complaint echoes arguments made in the two previous Bears Ears lawsuits, claiming that Trump exceeded his power and jeopardized protections for 'irreplaceable archaeological sites.'"

Largest Ever' Drilling Lease Sale In Alaska Yields Few Bids.

The Hill (12/7, Henry) reports that despite auctioning 900 tracts of land in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, totaling 10.3 million acres, the BLM only received bids worth \$1.16 million for seven tracts. The Trump Administration pitched the sale as part of its "American Energy Dominance" plan, but the auction brought in fewer bids than other recent NPR-A sales. E&E Publishing (12/7) reports ConocoPhillips Alaska and Anadarko bid in partnership for all seven offerings. The companies selected land directly southwest of Conoco's Willow oil discovery, which is estimated to hold around 300 million barrels of recoverable oil. The state of Alaska held a separate lease sale yesterday, which brought in \$21.1 million in winning bids. The winning bidders purchased most of the remaining blocks of state-owned land on the North Slope.

U.S. Delays Rule On Methane Emissions From Federal Lands.

Reuters (12/7, Gardner) reports that the Bureau of Land Management announced it will delay an Obama-era rule limiting methane emissions from oil and gas operations on federal and tribal lands. The agency said the decision was intended to “avoid imposing likely considerable and immediate compliance costs on operators for requirements that may be rescinded or significantly revised in the near future.” The Washington Examiner (12/7, Siegel) reports that the Trump administration’s delay for Obama-era methane emissions regulations will extend for two years.

BSEE Issues Safety Alert Following Drillship Fatality.

Marine Log (12/7) reports the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement issued a safety alert after a fatality on Transocean’s Petrobras 10,000 drillship. The worker was employed by Spencer Ogden and was working on pipe handling operations at the time of the injury. The BSEE issued the alert because many of the factors in the incident are common to many drilling rigs in the Gulf. The agency is recommending that all operators and drilling contractors review hazardous areas and safe work practices.

FEDERAL REGISTER LISTINGS:

REG0007684 BOE Agency Information Collection Activities; 30 CFR 550, Subpart B, Plans and Information: This Notice, under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), announces that the BOEM will ask the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to renew its approval of an information collection pertaining to the paperwork requirements under 30 CFR part 550, subpart B, Plans and Information. The BOEM requests public comments on the proposed collection for 60 days. Notice 12/07/2017

REG0007680 OSM Agency Information Collection Activities: Submission to the OMB for Review and Approval; Fee Collection and Coal Production Reporting and Form OSM-1, Coal Reclamation Fee Report: This Notice, under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), announces that the OSMRE will ask the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to renew its approval of the collection of information pertaining to the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund - Fee Collection and Coal Production Reporting. The OSMRE is requesting public comments on the renewal for 30 days. Notice 12/07/2017

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Natalie Davis
Special Assistant to the Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
202.208.4928

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 12/08/17

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- **December 8 (tent): Department-level Release:** DOI will announce that it will remove certain overly regulative and overreaching mitigation policies to continue to further American energy dominance. Press release is forthcoming.
- **December 11:** Secretary Zinke is scheduled to have lunch with POTUS and VPOTUS as well as attend the White House Christmas Reception later in the day.
- **December 12: Department-level Release:** DOI will issue a release announcing the 2019-2024, Draft Proposed Program (for oil and gas exploration on the OCS). Comms materials will be sent shortly tonight. Comms call tomorrow.
- **December 14: Department-level Release:** DOI will announce the results from its Work Environment Survey. This will also include a variety of internal messaging to employees. Comms materials are forthcoming.

National Park Service

- **December 9:** Up to 12 U.S. senators and representatives will tour Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument. The tour is part of a local excursion coordinated as part of the Congressional Western Caucus being held in Las Vegas.
- **December 11 (tent.): Local NPS Release:** The NPS Pacific West Region plans to publicly announce the business opportunity to operate overnight accommodations, food and beverage, retail, horse services, campground, and other visitor services at Lassen Volcanic National Park.
- **December 11:** Washington State University will publish an advertisement in Seattle and Portland area newspapers to solicit oral history narrators for a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) project titled "Documenting African American Migration, Segregation, and Civil Right History at Manhattan Project National Historical Park, Hanford." The advertisement is intended to encourage African Americans who worked at the Hanford site or resided in the Tri-Cities area of central Washington from 1943-1970 to volunteer to share stories that can help illuminate the project's themes.
- **December 12 (tent.): Local NPS Release:** Glen Canyon National Recreation Area will release the Air Tour Management Voluntary Agreement for a 30-day public comment period. The NPS, the Federal Aviation Administration, and seven commercial air tour operators intend to sign the agreement, once complete, to manage air tours over Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Rainbow Bridge National Monument.
- **December 11-13:** Catocin Mountain Park Visitor Center will be temporarily closed while the National Park Service replaces insulation in public areas of the building. The building will be thoroughly cleaned before it reopens at 9 a.m. Saturday, November 18. During the closure, public restrooms and a contact station will be available at park headquarters.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- **December 11: Local FWS Release:** FWS will announce the solicitation of input from the scientific community and the broader public on draft criteria set for the eventual recovery of the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) grizzly bear. The NCDE region encompasses Glacier National Park and other parts of northwestern Montana.

Bureau of Land Management

- **December 11:** BLM Office of Law Enforcement and Security Director William Woody will begin visits to members and staff of the Utah congressional delegation to discuss law enforcement issues in Utah. BLM Deputy Director for Policy Brian Steed and DOI Director of the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs John Tanner also plan to attend.
- **December 12: Local BLM Release:** BLM-NV will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 208 parcels totaling 388,959.402 acres in White Pine, Lincoln and Nye Counties. The sale will likely be controversial.
- **December 12: Local BLM Release:** BLM-MT will hold an oil and gas lease sale for 204 parcels totaling 98,889 acres in Big Horn, Custer, Carter, Fallon, Garfield, Powder River, Richland, and Rosebud Counties. BLM-MT expects minimal controversy with this sale. Bidding is not expected to be robust.
- **December 12: Local BLM Release:** BLM-UT will hold an oil and gas lease sale for 75 parcels totaling 94,000 acres in Duchesne, Uintah and Emery counties. The sale is expected to be controversial due to the nomination of parcels near Dinosaur National Monument. However, two of the three parcels nominated by industry for consideration near the boundary of the

Dinosaur National Monument have been deferred by the BLM Utah State Director for further consultation with the National Park Service. The remaining parcel contains both BLM and split estate land, and has a small portion within view of the Monument. The portion of land within view of the Monument is privately owned, however, the BLM has applied stipulations for light and noise pollution, and to minimize impacts to air quality and the scenic viewshed. Bidding is expected to be robust.

- **December 13:** BLM-CA Bakersfield Field Office will host an informational meeting and site visit for tribes regarding a Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act case at the San Joaquin River Gorge. Last year, human remains were discovered due to erosion on the slope of trail. The site has been stabilized to prevent further erosion. The meeting will discuss the tribes' wishes regarding this discovery and any future discoveries that may be made in the area.
- **December 13:** The BLM-CA El Centro Field Office will conduct a public scoping open-house meeting as a first step in the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for United States Gypsum Company's (USG) proposed mine expansion/modernization project near the city of El Centro.
- **December 14: Local BLM Release:** BLM-Eastern States will hold an oil and gas lease sale for seven parcels totaling 1,185 acres in OH and LA. The sale will include five parcels totaling 350.06 acres in the Wayne National Forest, Monroe County, OH; and two parcels totaling 834.70 acres in the Kisatchie National Forest, Natchitoches and Winn Parishes, LA. The parcels being offered in the Wayne National Forest are expected to be controversial as several environmental groups are attempting to prohibit hydraulic fracturing in the area.
- **December 14:** BLM-CA's Bakersfield Field Office will host a public scoping meeting in Three Rivers to gather comments on a draft of a vegetation/forest health plan for the BLM's only giant sequoia grove on Case Mountain. The BLM manages approximately 444 acres on Case Mountain, which supports the Giant Sequoia Complex and the Case Mountain Extensive Recreation Management Area.
- **December 14:** BLM-AK Associate State Director Ted Murphy will provide an update to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group on development activities within the NPRA-A. The group brings a broad range of stakeholders together who are actively involved in the management of caribou and includes subsistence users, other hunters, reindeer herders, hunting guides, transporters and conservationists.
- **December 14: Local BLM Release:** BLM WY will host an online oil and gas lease sale. The sale will offer 45 parcels totaling 72,884.37 acres located in Laramie, Lincoln, Sweetwater, and Uinta counties. BLM received three protests for this oil and gas lease sale that will be dismissed because the issues raised in the protest are adequately analyzed in the supporting NEPA documents and Resource Management Plans.

Bureau of Reclamation

- **December 11:** NBC Nightly News is expected to air a segment relating to ongoing efforts to find an economically-viable solution to continuing operations of the Navajo Generating Station, near Page, Arizona. NBC News (Los Angeles) producer Jim Rainey has been tracking NGS developments for months, gathering multiple interviews and attending public comment sessions that were held in May in Phoenix, as well as the Navajo and Hopi reservations. Last week, Interior agencies (Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Indian Affairs) announced an extension

lease to allow the Federal and non-Federal stakeholders' ongoing search for a post-2019 operator to continue. Coverage is expected to be neutral.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- **December 13 (tent.):** NOA FSEIS for 2018 Gulf Region-wide Sales 250 and 251 NTS

Office of Natural Resources Revenue

- **December TBD:** ONRR issued a civil penalty in the amount of \$19,736 to Mid-Con Energy Operating, LLC, (Mid-Con) (formerly RDT Properties, Inc) on November 17, 2017. ONRR investigated Mid-Con's failure to submit production reports (form ONRR-4054) and found 68 violations on multiple Indian leases for the production months of September 2011 through January 2013.
- **December TBD:** ONRR anticipates issuing a civil penalty of about \$840 to Eight Round Inc., (Eight Round) the week of November 5, 2017. ONRR investigated Eight Round's failure to submit production reports (Forms ONRR-4054) and found 12 violations on one Indian agreement for production months of April, 2012 through September, 2013.

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE (updated 12/4)

UPCOMING SCIA HEARING: The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs will host a legislative hearing on two Indian water rights settlement bills: S. 664 (Senator Hatch), the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act of 2017 and S. 1770 (Senator Flake), the Hualapai Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2017. Alan Mikkelsen, the Chair of the Indian Water Rights Office Working Group, will be the witness on behalf of the Department.

Timing: Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Advisor, Congressional Affairs

UPCOMING HNR SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING REGARDING FISH RECOVERY PROGRAMS: The House Natural Resources subcommittee on Water Power and Oceans will hold a legislative hearing on HR.4465 which has impacts on Bureau of Reclamation and Fish Wildlife Service. DOI will not be testifying but will provide a statement for the record.

Timing: Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Advisor, Congressional Affairs

EXPECTED HEARING: The Senate Energy Committee is expected to hold a hearing on December 12 regarding permitting reform. Details regarding the specifics the committee plans to emphasize are still being put together; however, James Cason (Associate Dep. Sec.) is tentatively scheduled to testify.

Timing: Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Advisor, Congressional Affairs

DOI NOMINEES IN PROGRESS: Susan Combs (A/S PMB) passed out of committee August 3, 2017 and still awaits a vote. Ryan Nelson (Solicitor) appeared before the SENR committee on September 7, 2017. He passed and now await full Senate approval. DOI OCL is working with OGE and the White House to get final approval for Asst. Sec. Indian Affairs nominee, Tara Sweeney before submitting her paperwork to

the Senate. The White House nominated Steve Gardner for OSM. His Senate questionnaire is currently under review. Tim Petty's (Asst. Secretary, Water & Science Nominee) was nominated November 14, 2017 and his nomination hearing will be held on 12/5/17.

Contact: John Tanner, Director, Congressional Affairs

POLITICAL APPOINTEE UPDATE

DOI politicals on board 65

5 PAS confirmed as of 12/7/17

5 nominated awaiting confirmation:

- Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.
- Pending Senate floor vote: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor
- Pending Hearing: Tara Sweeney, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs
- Pending Hearing: Steve Gardner, Director, Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation
- Pending Hearing: Tim Petty, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science

Overall:

- Schedule C: 36 of 68 onboard; 2 starting; 6 in process
- NC-SES: 26 of 44 onboard; 3 starting; 1 in process
- PAS: 5 Confirmed; 5 Announced; 14 of 17 Submitted to PPO

SECRETARY SPEAKING INVITATIONS

Accepted:

12/16 - National Wreaths Across America Day (Arlington National Cemetery)

2/9 – Western Hunting & Conservation Expo (Salt Lake City, Utah)

3/6-7 – CERA Week (Houston, Texas)

Open (date TBC)- Americans for Tax Reform (DC)

Open (date TBC)- Detroit Economic Club

Outstanding Invitations in Process:

1/4 – Dallas Safari Club Annual Meeting (Dallas, TX)

1/26-28 – Houston Safari Club Annual Meeting (Houston, TX)

1/29 – Society of Range Management Annual Meeting (Reno, Nevada)

1/31-2/3 Safari Club International Annual Meeting (Las Vegas, NV)

2/8- Texas Public Policy Foundation Policy Orientation (Austin, TX)

2/12 – The Corps Network National Conference (Washington, DC)

Declining

12/5-7 America Outdoors Association's 29th Annual Marketing and Management Conference for Outfitters and Adventure Resorts (Reno, NV)

12/5 – NY Stock Exchange Ringing of the Bell & remarks at Wells Fargo Financial Symposium Event (NYC)

12/6 American Exploration and Mining Association Annual Meeting (Reno, NV)

12/8 - Valley Industry and Commerce Association Annual Meeting (Los Angeles, CA)

12/11 – Veterans Day Commemoration (Prussia, PA)

12/14 – Leadership Missoula (Missoula, Montana)

12/8 – DOI Toastmasters event (Washington, DC)

12/9 – Western Caucus Foundation Winter Policy Meeting (Las Vegas, NV)

1/11/18 – EEI CEO and Board Conference (Phoenix, AZ)

2/9-10 Associated General Contractors Western Chapter Annual Meeting (La Jolla, CA)
 2/23/18 – West Slope Colorado Oil and Gas Association Annual Meeting (Grand Junction, CO)

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

As DOI recovers from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, updates on progress will be included in the attached DOI EM Daily Situation Report on a weekly basis on Fridays. A summary follows here.

Interagency Hurricane response and recovery efforts:

An interagency team consisting of personnel from the NPS, the National Archives and Records Administration, and the Smithsonian will deploy under a FEMA Mission Assignment on December 10 to provide assistance to the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture and General Archives. This team is replacing the first team that completed their deployment in November.

Under a FEMA Mission Assignment and through coordination with OEPC and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, a six-person NPS team (comprised of archeologists and historic structure specialists) continues to assist the State Historic Preservation Office of Puerto Rico with damage assessments and is providing technical assistance on National Register Properties eligible for the National Register. This mission is expected to continue until December 23.

Three OEPC Field Coordinators (1 in Texas, 2 in Florida) have completed Mission Scoping Assessments for both states and draft recovery strategies have been completed for Texas. NPS has provided two additional personnel to support OEPC efforts in Texas. Field Coordinators are also deployed to Puerto Rico (1 OEPC, 1 USFWS) and the U.S. Virgin Islands (1 OEPC, 1 NPS). Their efforts are currently focused on the development of Mission Scoping Assessments for each territory.

Wildfire Activity – California:

The Thomas Fire (being managed by CAL Fire) in southern California continues to actively burn with extreme rates of spread due to severe fire weather in the area. The fire has burned approximately 115,000 (+25,000) acres and is 5-percent (no change) contained. The fire is being managed by a Type-1 Incident Management Team with 3,216 (+719) personnel assigned, including 11 (+11) DOI personnel. The fire is burning on some BLM land parcels and is approaching the Lake Casitas Dam (USBR). There are 15,000 (+3,000) structures threatened by this fire and 401 (+251) structures have been destroyed. The fire is also threatening power transmission lines, oil resources, high-pressure gas lines, communications infrastructure, and local crops. Contingency planning is underway with local resources to address rapid fire progression, severe weather, and impacts to life and property. Full containment of this fire is expected December 24.

To the east of the Thomas Fire and north-northwest of Los Angeles, the Rye Fire (CAL Fire) and Creek Fire (CAL Fire) are also actively burning. They are being managed by Type-1 IMTs and have resulted in significant evacuations in the area. The Creek Fire has burned 12,605 (no change) acres, is 10-percent (+5) contained, and has 1,519 (-40) personnel assigned, 19 (no change) of which are DOI personnel. Full containment is expected December 23. The Rye Fire has burned 7,000 (no change) acres, is 25-percent (+15) contained, and has 901 (no change) personnel assigned, none of which are DOI personnel. Full containment is expected December 15. There are no DOI assets currently impacted by these fires; however, there are some BLM land parcels in the vicinity.

USBR continues to monitor wildland fire activity in southern California and all of their facilities located in vicinity are transferred works, operated by non-USBR entities. No USBR staff are directly threatened or impacted by the fire activity. USGS has received accountability for all employees in California and there have been no impacts to USGS facilities or monitoring equipment in the greater Los Angeles area. BOEM continues to maintain accountability of their personnel in the area and while five team members have evacuated due to the Thomas Fire, they do not require assistance at this time.

OUTSIDE MEDIA OF INTEREST (new)

Ryan Zinke: Why We Shrunk The Monuments.

In an op-ed for CNN (12/7, Zinke), Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke explains why he recommended that President Trump shrink the Bears Ears and the Grand Staircase-Escalante monuments. Zinke asserts that in recent years, “presidents have abused the Antiquities Act to lock up vast swaths of public land.” He argues that the Antiquities Act is “not a tool for presidents to use to restrict access for outdoor recreation on land that belongs to all of us.” Zinke writes that “the President’s actions focus on protecting land within the smallest area necessary while restoring traditional uses of these lands and prioritizing the voice of the people over that of the special interest groups.” He also notes that “this action does not transfer one square inch of this land out of federal ownership.” Zinke concludes by pledging to ensure that public lands are used “‘for the benefit and enjoyment of the people,’ as the words above the Roosevelt Arch in Yellowstone National Park so proudly proclaim.”

Spread The Swamp? Trump Administration Wants To Move Government Offices Out Of Washington.

The Los Angeles Times (12/7, Halper) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is “aiming to move the headquarters of the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Reclamation out of Washington as soon as logistically possible.” The plan was examined Thursday during a hearing of the House Natural Resources Committee.

The Huffington Post (12/7, D'Angelo) reports that the hearing titled “Transforming the Department of the Interior for the 21st Century,” examined “goals and policy ideas for reorganizing and relocating parts of the Department of the Interior and its bureaus,” according to a committee memorandum. In his opening statement, Rep. Bruce Westerman, the subcommittee’s chairman, “said that Interior has ‘lost touch’ with the concerns of the U.S. public, and that ‘decades of top-down directives issued from Washington’ have rendered the department inefficient and unaccountable.” However, Rep. Donald McEachin “dismissed the notion that Interior staffers need to be closer to the people they serve, noting that 90 percent of the department’s personnel are already working outside of Washington.”

Zinke Spent \$6,250 On A Helicopter Trip To Ride Horses With Pence.

Business Insider (12/7, Choi) reports that according to previously undisclosed travel logs obtained by Politico (12/7, Lefebvre), Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke spent thousands of taxpayer dollars on government helicopter trips, including one trip – costing \$6,250 – to ride horses with Vice President Pence. Travel records showed that the helicopter trips altogether cost more than \$14,000 over the summer.

Senate Confirms Two Interior, EPA Nominees.

The Hill (12/7, Henry) reports the Senate Thursday confirmed Joe Balash “as assistant secretary for land and minerals management at the Interior Department,” and Susan Bodine to head “the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, which oversees

enforcement of pollution laws.” Sen. Sen. Dan Sullivan, for whom Balash worked as chief of staff, called him “probably one of the most qualified people to hold this job in the entire country.”

President Trump’s National Monument Cuts Draw 5th Lawsuit.

The AP (12/7) reports that a coalition of conservation groups filed a lawsuit Thursday to stop President Trump’s cuts to Bears Ears National Monument. The lawsuit filed by “11 organizations including the Sierra Club is the fifth legal challenge to Trump’s reductions to Bear Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments” and “it is the third lawsuit focused on Bears Ears.” The article notes that “the complaint echoes arguments made in the two previous Bears Ears lawsuits, claiming that Trump exceeded his power and jeopardized protections for ‘irreplaceable archaeological sites.’”

Largest Ever’ Drilling Lease Sale In Alaska Yields Few Bids.

The Hill (12/7, Henry) reports that despite auctioning 900 tracts of land in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, totaling 10.3 million acres, the BLM only received bids worth \$1.16 million for seven tracts. The Trump Administration pitched the sale as part of its “American Energy Dominance” plan, but the auction brought in fewer bids than other recent NPR-A sales. E&E Publishing (12/7) reports ConocoPhillips Alaska and Anadarko bid in partnership for all seven offerings. The companies selected land directly southwest of Conoco’s Willow oil discovery, which is estimated to hold around 300 million barrels of recoverable oil. The state of Alaska held a separate lease sale yesterday, which brought in \$21.1 million in winning bids. The winning bidders purchased most of the remaining blocks of state-owned land on the North Slope.

U.S. Delays Rule On Methane Emissions From Federal Lands.

Reuters (12/7, Gardner) reports that the Bureau of Land Management announced it will delay an Obama-era rule limiting methane emissions from oil and gas operations on federal and tribal lands. The agency said the decision was intended to “avoid imposing likely considerable and immediate compliance costs on operators for requirements that may be rescinded or significantly revised in the near future.” The Washington Examiner (12/7, Siegel) reports that the Trump administration’s delay for Obama-era methane emissions regulations will extend for two years.

BSEE Issues Safety Alert Following Drillship Fatality.

Marine Log (12/7) reports the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement issued a safety alert after a fatality on Transocean’s Petrobras 10,000 drillship. The worker was employed by Spencer Ogden and was working on pipe handling operations at the time of the injury. The BSEE issued the alert because many of the factors in the incident are common to many drilling rigs in the Gulf. The agency is recommending that all operators and drilling contractors review hazardous areas and safe work practices.

FEDERAL REGISTER LISTINGS:

REG0007684 BOE Agency Information Collection Activities; 30 CFR 550, Subpart B, Plans and Information: This Notice, under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), announces that the BOEM will ask the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to renew its approval of an information collection pertaining to the paperwork requirements under 30 CFR part 550, subpart B, Plans and Information. The BOEM requests public comments on the proposed collection for 60 days. Notice 12/07/2017

REG0007680 OSM Agency Information Collection Activities: Submission to the OMB for Review and Approval; Fee Collection and Coal Production Reporting and Form OSM-1, Coal Reclamation Fee Report: This Notice, under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), announces that the OSMRE will ask the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to renew its approval of the collection of information pertaining to the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund - Fee Collection and Coal Production Reporting. The OSMRE is requesting public comments on the renewal for 30 days. Notice 12/07/2017