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**From:** Hommel, Scott  
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From: **Scott Hommel** <[scott\\_hommel@ios.doi.gov](mailto:scott_hommel@ios.doi.gov)>  
Date: Tue, Aug 15, 2017 at 6:29 PM  
Subject: DOI Look Ahead  
To: Cabinet Affairs <[CabinetAffairs@who.eop.gov](mailto:CabinetAffairs@who.eop.gov)>  
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FYI

Scott

Scott C. Hommel  
Chief of Staff  
Department of the Interior

MEMORANDUM FOR THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF SECRETARY AND CABINET SECRETARY  
August 15, 2017

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

SUBJECT: Interior Department Weekly Update for the Week of August 14, 2017

**DOI 30-Day Policy Look Ahead**

**Presidential Initiatives and Awareness**

1. **MONUMENT REVIEW:** We are preparing the report to comply with Executive Order 13792 of April 26, 2017 calling for a review of National Monuments. The Secretary has visited 5 states and met with countless stakeholders to conduct the review. The report will give general recommendations. Specific recommendations will be submitted separately as draft proposals for the President's consideration. The Secretary has briefed White House staff on preliminary recommendations.  
**Timing:** August 24, 2017  
**Contact:** Downey Magallanes, Acting Deputy Chief of Staff
2. **CRITICAL MINERALS REPORT:** USGS will release a new report presenting resource and geologic information for 23 critical mineral commodities important to our national economy and national security, many of which are sourced entirely outside of the United States. This is the first update since the last assessment undertaken in 1973. The Department has proposed to the White House consideration of a draft Executive Order directing Interior to help coordinate the appropriate agencies to undertake a government-wide approach to facilitate the domestic mining and processing of critical minerals. Discussion on the contents of the E.O. is continuing. Interior is hosting a roundtable with mining executives on August 24 to discuss the issue.  
**Timing:** August 2017  
**Contact:** Dr. Andrea Travnicek, Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science
3. **NPS FUNDING INITIATIVE:** On the 101st anniversary of the National Park System (August 25), the Secretary plans to announce an initiative to tackle the infrastructure maintenance backlog of \$12 billion at Smokey Mountains National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway, which is managed by NPS. Interior has proposed legislative language to OMB that would use revenue generated to fund the park and refuge billion dollar maintenance backlog.  
**Timing:** August 25, 2017  
**Contact:** Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
4. **NPS SENIOR PASS INCREASE:** The Department announced in July that beginning August 28, federal agencies would begin selling the new America the Beautiful Senior Pass, which allows lifetime access to certain federal lands. The new price for the Lifetime Senior Pass will be \$80, which is an increase from \$10. The annual senior pass will be \$20. This increase is mandated by the National Park Service Centennial Act, passed in December of 2016. Existing passes will be grandfathered.  
**Timing:** August 28, 2017

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

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

**Timing:** August 2017

**Contact:** Vincent DeVito, Counselor to the Secretary for Energy Policy

### **Reports to Congress and Congressional Testimony**

1. **HILL NOTIFICATIONS FOR UPCOMING REPROGRAMMING REQUEST:** Pending OMB approval, the Department intends to notify the relevant authorizing and appropriating Committees (Senate Energy and Natural Resources, House Natural Resources, Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee) about the reorganization and realignment of the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST). DOI's Program Management and Budget office and OMB are currently coordinating to secure approval. Notification to the Hill will entail formal letters and briefings for Committee staff, which OCL will coordinate.

**Timing:** September 2017

**Contact:** Amanda Kaster, Policy Adviser, Congressional Affairs

2. **SENIOR FWS OFFICIAL TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE SENATE HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE:** Gary Frazer (Assistant Director for Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) will testify before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations regarding implementation of FAST-41. This provision was part of the FAST Act, which passed December 2015. The intent of the legislation is to coordinate the review process for infrastructure projects between all of the involved government agencies. This hearing is intended to highlight the reform and remind the Administration that this review process already exists as we seek to expedite/streamline the environmental review process. This hearing was previously scheduled for July 26, 2017 but was postponed and has now rescheduled.

**Timing:** 10 am, September 7, 2017

**Contact:** Micah Chambers, Deputy Director, Congressional Affairs

3. **DOI NOMINEES IN PROGRESS:** Mr. Bernhardt was confirmed by the Senate on July 24, 2017 with a bipartisan vote of 53-43. Five Democrats voted in favor along with all Republicans. Four Republicans missed the vote. Brenda Burman (BOR), Susan Combs (A/S PMB) and Doug Domenech (A/S Insular Areas) had their confirmation on Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup> before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources committee and they were passed out of committee August 3, 2017. Joe Balash (Assistant Secretary, Land & Minerals) was officially nominated and is set to appear before the Committee for his nomination hearing on September 7, 2017. Ryan Nelson (Solicitor) was officially nominated Wednesday August, 2nd. His committee paperwork has been

submitted and we are working with Committee to have him included in the hearing on the 7<sup>th</sup> with Mr. Balash.

### **Other/Awareness Only**

1. **CNN ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD STORY:** CNN will be at Antietam National Battlefield to film a features story about the battle, the upcoming 150th anniversary of Antietam National Cemetery on September 17, and projects that will be completed using President Trump's first quarter salary with additional funds from the National Park Foundation, Civil War Trust, and Save Historic Antietam Foundation.  
**Timing:** August 24, 2017  
**Contact:** Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
2. **SECRETARY ZINKE INVITED TO THE EVERGLADES BY BIPARTISAN FLORIDA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION:** Sen. Rubio led a letter to Sec. Zinke inviting him to tour the Everglades as soon as possible. No policy position touted within the letter, other than the importance of the Everglades to Florida. No date has been confirmed, but the Secretary has made it a priority. He would like to discuss the issue with Sen. Rubio over the phone in the immediate future before any trip is scheduled.  
**Timing:** TBD, Early November or December dates have been proposed  
**Contact:** Micah Chambers, Deputy Director, Congressional Affairs
3. **SECRETARY ZINKE HAS BEEN INVITED BY SENATOR CASSIDY TO VISIT LOUISIANA AND THE GULF STATES:** Official invite was received July 28, 2017 from Senator Cassidy's staff for the Secretary to tour the Gulf States and personally see the offshore oil industry, restoring the coast and the benefits of GOMESA. This is in reaction to the FY18 Budget proposal to eliminate state revenue sharing for the Gulf States. Secretary Zinke had two exchanges on this topic during his House and Senate budget hearings with Sen. Cassidy and Rep. Graves. In addition, he hosted members of the Louisiana and Texas delegations to discuss GOMESA, and they reiterated the issue and reaffirmed their invite to the Secretary.  
**Timing:** Fall 2017  
**Contact:** Micah Chambers, Deputy Director, Congressional Affairs
4. **DOI POSTPONES ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS.** The Department is continuing to review the charter and charge of the more than 200 boards, committees, and advisory panels to ensure they are structured to receive maximum public input and comply with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The Department spends more than \$10 million to facilitate these boards and many are not meeting their charter obligations, are not meeting regularly, and have little turnover or numerous unfilled positions. Meetings have been postponed until September 2017 following the Department's review unless justified on a case-by-case basis.  
**Timing:** May-September 2017  
**Contact:** Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison

### **Other Significant Rulemakings and Actions**

1. **PHOENIX MINE DEIS:** BLM this week announced the draft EIS for Newmont Mining's expansion of the Phoenix Mine, which is a gold and copper mine in Nevada. The public comment period will last 45 days. The Nevada Governor's office has been following this action closely as Newmont cautioned it might have to lay off 500 workers as a result of the delay. The proposal would extend the life of the Phoenix Mine from 2040 to 2063, and expand the mine boundary from 8,228 acres to 18,839 acres.  
**Timing:** August 18, 2017  
**Contact:** Kathy Benedetto, BLM
  
2. **REVOCATION OF DIRECTOR'S ORDER #100:** Director's Order #100 was developed as an internal guidance document for NPS employees to shape resource stewardship in the 21st century and was put in place at the very end of the last Administration. As Secretary Zinke leads a new, comprehensive initiative to identify Departmental priorities and to reorganize the agency for the next 100 years, Director's Order #100 has become obsolete.  
**Timing:** August 18, 2017  
**Contact:** Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
  
3. **RESCINDING WATER BOTTLE BAN AT NATIONAL PARK SITES.** The Department of Interior is overturning Policy Memorandum 11-03 "Water Bottle Ban." The ban removed the healthiest beverage choice at a variety of parks while leaving sugary drinks available through concessionaires, as well as limited hydration options for recreationalists and hikers resulting in possible impacts to visitor safety. Currently, 23 of the 417 National Park Sites had implemented the policy.  
**Timing:** August 18, 2017  
**Contact:** Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
  
6. **IMPORTS OF AFRICAN ELEPHANT TROPHIES FROM ZIMBABWE:** The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) plans to publish in the *Federal Register* a change to the permitting status for imports of African elephant trophies from Zimbabwe. After receiving information from Zimbabwe on a number of substantial improvements to their management program and elephant conservation efforts, FWS has determined that taking of African elephant trophy animals in Zimbabwe on or after January 21, 2016 (the date that Zimbabwe's new management plan was officially adopted) through 2017 would enhance the survival of African elephants, and import permits can be issued for these trophies.  
**Timing:** August 2017  
**Contact:** Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
  
4. **GATEWAY WEST TRANSMISSION LINE:** BLM plans to issue a Notice of Intent for an Environmental Assessment to propose an alternate route for the Gateway West Transmission Line in Idaho. The line's current route cuts through neighborhoods and populated areas in order to avoid a National Conservation Area. The FY2017 funding bill included legislation rerouting the line away from the current controversial route.  
**Timing:** August 2017

**Contact:** Kathy Benedetto, BLM

5. **OFFSHORE OIL LEASE SALE:** On August 16, BOEM will hold Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 249, the first scheduled lease sale under the 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil & Gas Program and the first region-wide sale held on the OCS. Juan Carlos Zepeda Molina, the President Commissioner of Mexico's National Hydrocarbons Commission, will attend the lease sale with a delegation of Mexican government leadership and staff that work on offshore energy issues.

**Timing:** August 16, 2017

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

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

**Timing:** Early September

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

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

**Timing:** August/September 2017

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

### **Release of High-Profile Grants**

1. **STATE WILDLIFE GRANT PROGRAM:** FWS will announce it has apportioned \$50 million to state fish and wildlife agencies for developing and implementing programs that benefit wildlife and their habitats. The funding is provided through the FWS's State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program and is distributed through an apportionment formula in accordance with appropriations. FWS will issue a press release in each applicable state announcing the awarding of the grants on Tuesday, August 15.

**Timing:** August 15, 2017

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

2. **NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION GRANTS:** On August 17, the NPS will announce \$21 million in grants from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) to States and Territories. Grants will be awarded to 59 State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), based on

the amounts available under Consolidated Appropriations Act 115-31. NPS will also announce \$4.5 million in grants from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) to Indian Tribes. Grants will be awarded to 169 Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), based on the amounts available under Consolidated Appropriations Act PL115-31.

**Timing:** August 17, 2017

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

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

**Timing:** August 2017

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

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

**Timing:** September 6, 2017

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

#### **Key Events for Upcoming 30-Days**

August 16-August 18

**Deputy Secretary Bernhardt** will be traveling to Billings Montana to give a speech at a reclaimed gold mine site to tout the important work undertaken, the donation of the company's water rights to a conservation group, and the conversion of the land to an elk migration corridor.

#### **Travel by Secretary**

August 5-August 20

**Secretary Zinke** on personal leave until August 20