

To: Frost, Herbert[bert_frost@nps.gov]
Cc: Foley, Mary[mary_foley@partner.nps.gov]
From: Leslie, Elaine
Sent: 2017-05-16T16:37:09-04:00
Importance: Normal
Subject: Re: U.S. Department of the Interior News Briefing for Tuesday, May 16, 2017
Received: 2017-05-16T16:37:17-04:00

confirms her gut feeling

On Tue, May 16, 2017 at 2:30 PM, Frost, Herbert <bert_frost@nps.gov> wrote:

She could always call Bob K.;

- - - -

Herbert C. Frost, Ph.D.
Acting Deputy Director, Operations
National Park Service

202-208-3818 - Office

On Tue, May 16, 2017 at 4:17 PM, Foley, Mary <mary_foley@partner.nps.gov> wrote:

Ditto that.

Called Kathy this morning and encouraged her to call you Elaine. She seemed a bit concerned that she was somehow going around the region. She then thought about it for a few seconds and concluded that there was no one there to get around at least at the moment. With Mary Hake and Bob Cook moving on, the park is a bit thin as well.

Also Nancy Finley was the NRM at the time of the Hunting EIS so may be a useful contact for background.

Mary K. Foley, Ph.D.
National Park Service, Emerita
617 784 4728 (c)

On Tue, May 16, 2017 at 11:25 AM, Leslie, Elaine <elaine_leslie@nps.gov> wrote:

The acting supt just got a hold of me so will be chatting...bert we need you in dc for issues of sanity there, but for personal sanity and because we love you AK looking pretty good.

On Tue, May 16, 2017 at 9:24 AM, Frost, Herbert <bert_frost@nps.gov> wrote:

Agree with EFL - it would be interesting to know how many are taken each year on the Cape.

Life is better as I am in AK this week but headed back to DC on Sat.

Herbert C. Frost, Ph.D.
Acting Deputy Director, Operations
National Park Service

202-208-3818 - Office

On Tue, May 16, 2017 at 9:27 AM, Leslie, Elaine <elaine_leslie@nps.gov> wrote:

yes I read that too CACO is a may hunt meaning it doesnt have to they have that pheasant hunting that needs to stop in regards to exotics...I think the time limit is coming up pretty soon...and yes each supt should be weighing in on what where when how...they are in control but generally dont exercise their control Coyotes are a native spp no matter what some easterners want to say but that doesnt mean they cant control from a predation on at risk spp perspective...and the park should consult with the state and that doesnt mean concur happy to help if they want it...

On Tue, May 16, 2017 at 7:16 AM, Mary Foley <mary_foley@partner.nps.gov> wrote:

Hey hi. How are you?

Just read CACO story on coyote hunting. Although park legislation says hunting is allowed-- not sure if it is a may or a shall allow-- can't the park decide who, what, where, when, and how hunting will be managed? Sure Kathy as Acting Supt doesn't want to open this can of worms with the State who will surely oppose any move to limit any hunting.

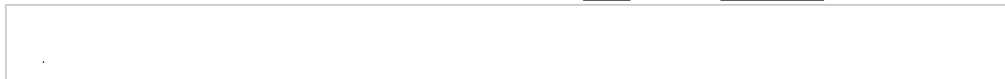
What do you think?

Mary K. Foley, Ph.D.
Emerita
National Park Service
mary_foley@partner.nps.gov
617 784 4728 (c)

Begin forwarded message:

From: Bulletin Intelligence <Interior@bulletinintelligence.com>
Date: May 16, 2017 at 7:00:28 AM EDT
To: <Interior@BulletinIntelligence.com>
Subject: U.S. Department of the Interior News Briefing for Tuesday, May 16, 2017

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DOI In The News

Secretary Zinke Announces \$23.6M For Water Conservation.

TriplePundit (5/15, Casey) reports that on Friday, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke “announced a \$26.3 million round of funding aimed at boosting water supplies in seven western states.” The \$23.6 million comes through the Bureau of Reclamation. Zinke said, “This funding provides essential tools for stretching limited water supplies by helping communities reclaim and reuse wastewater and impaired ground or surface waters ...These tools are just part of the toolkit for bridging the gap between water supply and demand and thus making water supplies more drought-resistant.”

More Time For Public Comment Urged On Bears Ears National Monument.

The Salt Lake (UT) Tribune (5/15, Maffly) reports that “the 15-day window for public comment on Utah’s Bears Ears National Monument is closing fast, prompting calls on the Department of Interior to expand the comment period beyond May 26 and to add ways for interested residents to weigh in on the controversial designation and 26 other large monuments.” The article also points out that “Interior officials are soliciting input on the matter online through the federal website www.regulations.gov, despite the lack of internet access among some American Indians affiliated with the tribes that either proposed or support the 1.3-million-acre monument.” Monument advocates also say “they were largely excluded from engaging with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke during his four-day swing through Utah last week on a ‘listening tour’ organized by Gov. Gary Herbert’s staff.”

Additional coverage was provided by Utah Public Radio (5/15, Kovash).

Trump Administration Urged To Let Bears Ears National Monument Stand. For the “Pundits” blog of The Hill (5/15, Van Dam, Contributor), Paul Van Dam, the former Salt Lake County District Attorney, if

President Trump follows through on “a plan to eliminate or significantly shrink” the Bears Ears National Monument, “Trump who prides himself as a dealmaker would be undermining America’s national heritage for little more than short-sighted politics.” He warns that “eliminating Bears Ears would be an unprecedented decision that would trigger serious legal challenges and cement President Trump’s legacy as the most anti-conservation president in American history.” Such a move “would set a dangerous precedent, enabling this and future presidents to alter or eliminate America’s protected public lands on a whim or at the behest of partisan political delegations or special interests like oil, gas, coal or uranium mining companies. It might endanger all national monuments in the U.S.”

Secretary Zinke Criticized For Not Giving Enough Access During Listening Tour. The editorial board of the Ogden (UT) Standard-Examiner (5/15) gives a “thumbs down” to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke “for not spending enough time with Native American stakeholders and pro-monument parties when he visited Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments last week.” The board says “it’s disappointing that Zinke’s ‘listening tour’ was apparently crafted with selective hearing.”

Additional Coverage. Additional coverage of the monument was provided by the Nation Sun News (5/15) and ARTFIXdaily (5/15).

Industries Clash Over Review Of National Monuments.

CNBC (5/15, Tausche) reports that the Trump Administration’s review of national monuments has “created a tug-of-war between industries like fishing, ranching and logging, arguing the creation of monuments comes at the cost of jobs, and the Main Street businesses that get foot traffic from visitors to the monuments.” According to the article, “since the window for public comments period opened Friday, more than 10,000 letters have been posted on the Interior Department’s landing page.” The article says that “some support the review; others support keeping the monuments as they are.”

RV Industry Stresses Importance Of Public Land Access. In a piece for RVBusiness (5/15, Friesen), Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association Chairman Darrell Friesen “stresses the need for the RV industry to promote access to national parks.” Friesen writes that “by adopting policies championed by the Outdoor Recreation Industry Roundtable (ORIR), which includes members of the RV industry, the federal land management agencies can unlock private investment that can improve RV campgrounds and the overall visitor experience.”

Additional Coverage. Additional coverage of the review was provided by the Lompoc (CA) Record (5/15) and the Toledo (OH) Blade (5/16).

Interior Deputy Secretary Nominee Bernhardt To Face Senate.

The Hill (5/15, Cama, Henry) reports that Interior Deputy Secretary nominee David Bernhardt is scheduled to testify before the Energy and Natural Resources Committee on Thursday. The article notes that "the former George W. Bush administration veteran was unanimously confirmed to the No. 3 spot at Interior in 2006, a fact likely to come up from Bernhardt's supporters at the hearing." However, "greens and conservation groups, not to mention some Democrats, oppose Bernhardt's nomination on conflict of interest grounds, raising the prospect of a more bitter confirmation process than for other nominees who went through the energy panel." But "Bernhardt is likely to find strong support among Republicans: Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has praised his 'extensive experience' and 'legal career' as 'exactly what is needed to help streamline government and make the Interior and our public lands work for the American economy.'"

AT&T Helps Interior Department With Mobile Device Management.

The Washington Exec (5/14, Knauth) reports that AT&T will help the Interior Department in "securing and managing the agency's inventory of mobile devices." AT&T will "act as an authorized reseller of an application that gives near real-time visibility into 27,000 mobile devices used by DOI employees." The application, IBM Maas360 Mobile Device Management Solution, "allows DOI to remotely control and support mobile device use for employees, and AT&T says the centralized oversight will increase productivity and reduce security and compliance risks."

Rep. Amodei Won't Revive Bill To Transfer Federal Land In Nevada.

The Reno (NV) Gazette-Journal (5/16, Spillman) reports that Rep. Mark Amodei, "who introduced a massive lands bill last session," won't be "reviving it." Amodei said the a proposal for the federal government to transfer millions of acres of land in Nevada is "not something I think the majority of people think is a good idea." According to the article, "widespread public support for the idea...materialized."

Study Says US Will Fall "Far Short" Of Climate Goals Under Trump Policies.

The Washington Post (5/15, Harvey) reports that a new analysis from the Climate Action Tracker says the U.S. will "fall far short of its Paris climate goals, thanks to the environmental policy rollbacks carried out under the Trump administration." Meanwhile, the study finds China and India are "on track to overachieve on their climate pledges...meaning their efforts may help make up for shortcomings in the U.S."

Op-Ed: Secretary Zinke Is “Promoting True Conservation”.

For the “Pundits” blog of [The Hill](#) (5/15, Hoffman, Contributor), Gabriella Hoffman, a conservative media strategist and consultant, writes that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s “reverence for angling, hunting and the outdoors means that he is promoting true conservation in his new post instead of preservation.” Hoffman draws a distinction between conservation, which is “seen as the proper use of nature,” and preservation, which “aims to protect nature from any use.” According to Hoffman, “the latter philosophy has prevented Americans from fully enjoying opportunities in nature.”

America’s Great Outdoors

National Park Service

Oregon Won’t Endorse Eastmoreland Historic District Proposal.

The [Oregonian](#) (5/15, Njus) reports that “state historic preservation officials said Monday they’ll oppose forming a national historic district in the Eastmoreland neighborhood of Southeast Portland, dealing a significant blow to an effort to curb development there.” The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office “said it is withholding its earlier endorsement, citing discrepancies in the count of property owners within the proposed district’s boundaries.” Chris Havel, associate director of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, said, “It has the historic character to qualify. But there’s a process problem.”

Additional coverage was provided by the [Willamette \(OR\) Week](#) (5/15, Monahan) and [KOIN-TV Portland \(OR\)](#) Portland, OR (5/15, Hewitt).

Yellowstone Addressing Hostile Workplace Environment Claims.

The [Cody \(WY\) Enterprise](#) (5/15, Freedman) reports that “Yellowstone National Park’s maintenance division has been accused in an official federal government report of fostering a sexually hostile atmosphere for female workers.” Since then, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has “visited the Park and told employees he will tolerate no sexual harassment in the workplace.” Also, Yellowstone Superintendent Dan Wenk was “technically given 90 days from April 12 to address the charges in writing but said Monday in Cody before addressing Cody Club, he is on pace to finish by mid-June.”

Drakes Bay Oyster Cleanup Marred By Claims Of Worker Endangerment..

The [SFist](#) (5/15, Kukura) reports that the National Park Service is “now cleaning up the 2,500-acre natural estuary known as Drakes Estero and restoring it to wilderness land.” However, “a former cleanup employee is claiming unsafe working conditions at Drakes Estero, including hazardous chemicals, lack of proper safety

equipment, and not providing a toilet for employees for who were simply forced to do their business right into the waters of Drakes Bay." The article says that whistleblowing employee Matthew Zucksberger's "claims resulted in numerous OSHA citations, and also resulted in that employee promptly being fired." Zucksberger also "claims he hasn't been paid by Galindo Construction, the firm hired by National Park Service to clean up the Drakes Estero Marine Conservation Area site."

NPS Plans Improvements At Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area.

The Marietta (GA) Daily Journal (5/15, Catts) reports that the National Park Service "intends to spend millions of dollars over the next five years to improve three components of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in metro Atlanta, as part of a 25-year overall plan." According to the article, "the proposal calls for improving three more parts of the 16.5-mile set of 15 parks along the river in metro Atlanta until all are refurbished." Bill Cox, the area's superintendent said, "And what makes us unique at this park is the fact that we can still put people on some fairly lengthy trails (both land and water trails) in some really beautiful natural areas next to a metro area of almost 5.5 million (residents). We need to continue to capitalize on that uniqueness and enhance it."

Everglades National Park Removes Endangered Crocodile From Dry Tortugas.

The Miami Herald (5/15, Staletovich) reports that "more than 14 years after it mysteriously appeared in the remote islands of the Dry Tortugas National Park, a solitary crocodile dubbed the loneliest in the world is gone." On Sunday, "after getting too chummy with visitors bearing food, park staff and state wildlife officials lassoed the threatened American croc, nicknamed Cleatus, and pulled it from the moat where it frequently hunkered under a bridge leading to Fort Jefferson." On Monday, "after recovering from a tranquilizer, the croc was released in Everglades National Park in West Lake, just off the Main Park Road." Park manager Glenn Simpson said, "It wasn't a rash decision. There were two considerations we held highest and that's visitor safety and the safety of the crocodile and it's general health."

Petition Seeks Halt To Cape Cod National Seashore Coyote Hunts.

The Cape Cod (MA) Times (5/15, List) reports that "nearly 3,000 people have signed a petition calling for the Cape Cod National Seashore to ban the hunting of carnivores, such as coyotes, shorten the hunting season for other animals and fund the research of carnivores in the park." The petition "also asks the Seashore to hire

Jonathan Way, who currently works as a part-time ranger, for a full-time or term position as a biologist to study Eastern coyotes in the Seashore."

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Seeks Teacher To Work As Temporary Summer Ranger.

The [New Jersey Herald](#) (5/16) reports that the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is "looking for a teacher to work this summer as a temporary ranger as part of the National Park Service's professional development program." Park Superintendent John J. Donahue said, "As a Teacher-Ranger-Teacher, you will learn about the park's rich natural and cultural resources, help develop the park's education program, present programs for park visitors and have the opportunity to share your experiences with your students and fellow teachers when you return to the classroom."

Man Held On Murder Charge In Lake Mead National Recreation Area Case.

The [AP](#) (5/15) reports that "police in Las Vegas say a 54-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of murder after the discovery of what officials believe were human remains encased in concrete in a remote part of Lake Mead National Recreation Area." According to the article, "the concrete and suspected remains were found May 2, covered with a tarp and dirt after park employees noticed a foul smell in a desert area near the Colorado River cliff-jumping site Nelson's Landing."

Name Of Delaware's Only National Park Criticized.

In an op-ed for the [Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#) (5/15, Hemphill), Ken Hemphill, communications coordinator for Neighbors for Crebilly, calls for changing the name of Delaware's only national park. Hemphill says "First State National Historical Park" is "a ten syllable word salad that rolls off the tongue like construction adhesive." He adds that "aside from being an unwieldy name which is confusing, difficult to remember, and frequently misnamed in print, it hardly summons the kinds of associations that other parks' names do."

Joshua Trees' Survival Threatened By Climate Change.

In his column for the [Inland Valley \(CA\) Daily Bulletin](#) (5/15, Elias), Thomas Elias writes that climate change threatens Joshua Tree National Park's namesake trees. Elias is concerned that under the Trump Administration, "the ethereal Joshua trees can expect little help from federal agencies, despite their main habitat's promotion from national monument to national park status in 1994." Elias bemoans that "the current supposed stewards of the national park system and its multitude of plants and animals do not appear serious about that duty, though, as indicated by shutting down their advisory

panels or loading them up with representatives of industries that contribute to climate change.”

Fish and Wildlife Service

Opponents Want To Prevent Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge From Opening To Public.

The [Denver Post](#) (5/15, Aguilar) reports that those opposed to opening the former nuclear weapons manufacturing site Rocky Flats to the public “hope to make their voices heard” at a final “‘sharing session’ on the future of the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge on Monday night.” Those that oppose public access to the wildlife refuge “say that the 5,000-acre site is not safe and that buried plutonium there could be exposed by burrowing animals or heavy floods,” while government officials maintain that testing has shown there is no hazard to visitors. An updated article from the [Denver Post](#) (5/15, Aguilar) reports, “For many who turned out Monday...recreation is not suitable for a site that was given over to intensive industrial and military-related activities for four decades.” Sandy Pennington, mayor pro tem of Superior asked, “Why are we, in health-conscious Colorado, even entertaining the notion of opening up what was one of the dirtiest sites for radiation for recreational use?”

Additional coverage was provided by the [Broomfield \(CO\) Enterprise](#) (5/15, Brennan), [KUSA-TV Denver \(CO\)](#) Denver (5/15), and [KMGH-TV Denver \(CO\)](#) Denver (5/16, Gelardi).

New Frontline Documentary On Bundy Standoff Shows FBI Agents Posing As Documentary Crew.

The [Oregonian](#) (5/15, Turnquist) reports that “the case of Ammon Bundy and the group of followers who staged an armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge” beginning in January 2016 is “explored again in a new ‘Frontline’ documentary called ‘American Patriot: Inside the Armed Uprising Against the Federal Government,’ which airs at 10 p.m. Tuesday, May 16 on PBS.” The Oregonian reports that “near the end of ‘American Patriot,’ we see portions of undercover video filmed by FBI agents who posed as documentary filmmakers in an effort to infiltrate the Bundy family.” The Oregonian adds, “As a post on the ‘Frontline’ (5/15, Ellis) website explains, the FBI began the undercover ‘documentary’ investigation in 2014, not long after the first standoff in which the Bundys were key players.”

Study: Drug Trafficking Destroying Swaths Of Forest In Central America.

The [Guardian \(UK\)](#) (5/15, Taylor) reports that “cocaine traffickers attempting to launder their profits are responsible for the disappearance of millions of acres of tropical forest across large

swaths of Central America, according to a report.” The study, “published on Tuesday in the journal *Environmental Research Letters*, found that drug trafficking was responsible for up to 30% of annual deforestation in Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala, turning biodiverse forest into agricultural land.” The study’s lead author, Dr Steven Sesnie from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, said: “Most of the ‘narco-driven’ deforestation we identified happened in biodiverse moist forest areas, and around 30-60% of the annual loss happened within established protected areas, threatening conservation efforts to maintain forest carbon sinks, ecological services, and rural and indigenous livelihoods.”

Bureau of Land Management

BLM Participating In “Every Kid In A Park” Program.

The [Ruidoso \(NM\) News](#) (5/15) reports that “to expose 4th graders across the country to America’s public lands,” officials with the Bureau of Land Management is participating in the Every Kid in a Park program again. According to the article, “the effort to create the next generation of public land visitors was a big success and is continuing for a second year.”

Additional coverage was provided by the [Farmington \(NM\) Daily Times](#) (5/15, Irvin).

Four Colorado Counties Plan Suit Over Greater Sage-grouse Protection.

The [Grand Junction \(CO\) Daily Sentinel](#) (5/16, Webb) reports that “four northwestern Colorado counties plan to sue the federal government over its plan for protecting greater sage-grouse in the state.” Garfield County commissioners on Monday “unanimously agreed to lead the litigation effort, which also will involve Rio Blanco, Moffat and Jackson counties.” Garfield County is “particularly concerned because of the potential for hindering oil and gas development.”

Wild Horse Populations Increase In Oregon.

[Oregon Public Broadcasting](#) (5/15, Peacher) reports that “new numbers from the Bureau of Land Management show Oregon’s wild horse and burro populations are on the rise.” According to the article, “there are an estimated 4,351 wild horses and burros on Oregon’s rangelands.” The figure is “up more than 13 percent from last year’s population” and “it’s far more than the number of horses the BLM says the rangelands can handle in balance with other public land uses.”

Securing America’s Energy Future

Offshore Energy Development

Over 100 Congress Members Push Back Against Offshore Drilling Review.

The Hill (5/15, Henry) reports more than 100 members of Congress are pressing the Trump Administration to not open the Atlantic or Pacific for oil and gas drilling as part of the Interior Department's review of offshore policies. The letter said that drilling would harm local economies that rely on fishing and tourism for revenue, which would be threatened by a potential oil spill. The members wrote, "We do not believe that new oil and gas exploration or production activity in the Atlantic and Pacific Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) is compatible with the sustainable coastal economies on which so many of our constituents and communities depend."

Panetta Warns Drilling In Arctic Undermines National Security.

The Hill (5/15, Cama) reports former Secretary of Defense and CIA Director Leon Panetta said President Trump's executive order to expand drilling in the Arctic could threaten national security. Panetta wrote a piece for CNN saying, "It is a fact that expanding oil and gas development in the Arctic would add further stress to the climate, not to mention damage to the area's fragile species and ecosystems. It also would be an invitation to other nations to engage in the same kind of exploitation." Panetta said that drilling in the Arctic could further endanger the global climate, leading to refugee flows and undermining the stability of weak nations.

Onshore Energy Development

Navajo Nation President Promises Deal On Navajo Generating Station.

The Arizona Republic (5/16, Randazzo) reports that "dozens of coal miners cheered Monday when Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye told them a deal to keep a coal plant on the reservation running through 2019 would come this week." Speaking "in Phoenix at the first of four public forums on the future of the Navajo Generating Station this week," Begaye "said he and Salt River Project, one of the plant's owners and its operator, have reached a temporary lease-extension agreement and will announce a deal this week." The agreement "would keep the plant open until 2020, and he hopes to find new owners to run the plant at least another nine years after that. Coal plant threatened with closure."

Additional coverage was provided by NBC News (5/16, Rainey) and the Navajo Times (AZ) (5/15, Allen).

Pence Tells Crow Tribe: "War On Coal Is Over."

Montana Public Radio (5/15, Yamanaka) reports Vice President Pence told the Crow Tribe on Friday in Montana, "On behalf of the President

of the United States I am here to announce the war on coal is over.” Crow Tribe Vice Chairman Carlson Goes Ahead told Pence during the visit that the tribe’s coal mine is “the lifeblood of the Crow,” but he said the recent downturn in the coal market and EPA regulations have hurt their economy. Goes Ahead advocated for the Administration having coal export terminals built on the Pacific Northwest coast to link US coal markets to Asia and for Congress making permanent the Indian Coal Production Tax Credit.

Divestment Campaign Not Impacting Pipeline Financing.

The Daily Caller (5/15, White) reports that while environmental activists have claimed a “moral victory” with the fact that their divestment campaign has made financial institutions more aware of American Indian rights, developers behind major pipeline projects have not had their funding affected. A handful of firms, along with the city of Seattle, did withdraw funding from the Dakota Access pipeline, but Energy Transfer Partners spokeswoman Vicki Granado said, “We do not have a concern about our current or future financing options.”

Standing Rock Protests About Indigenous Religion. Peter B. Campbell writes for The Guardian (UK) (5/15, Campbell) saying that the Standing Rock protests center on indigenous religion. Many Native American cultures consider rivers as sacred entities, so the demonstrators at Standing Rock “are not anti-industry protesters, but practitioners of religious elements that may predate Judaism, Christianity, and Islam by centuries.” The religious traditions “provide the context for Standing Rock’s opposition to the pipeline.”

Cloud Computing Could Fix A Management Issue At BLM.

In a piece for Federal News Radio (DC) (5/15, Temin), Tom Temin advises the Bureau of Land Management to turn to cloud computing to help with “a major shortcoming in the agency’s management.” Namely, the BLM “doesn’t keep records of who asks for exceptions to or waivers from regulations on how they mine and drill, nor on what the decision is.” According to Temin, “by hosting their tracking application whether a giant spreadsheet or a real database in a cloud, BLM officials could establish a framework for uniformity and thoroughness.”

Renewable Energy

Offshore Wind Planning Meeting In Falmouth To Be Held Tuesday.

Cape Cod (MA) Today (5/15) reports that the Department of Energy Resources and the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center on Tuesday will “host a public informational meeting to provide updates on the emerging offshore wind industry and the development process of

federal offshore wind planning areas off Massachusetts.” State officials are hosting the meeting together with the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management’s Massachusetts Task Force on Offshore Renewable Energy meeting. BOEM officials will “provide updates on the permitting and leasing process, and offshore wind developers will provide project specific updates.”

Empowering Native American Communities

Interior Department Reaffirms View Of Tribes’ Third-casino Plan.

The [Hartford \(CT\) Courant](#) (5/15, GOSSELIN) reports that the Interior Department has “reaffirmed guidance issued last year that Connecticut’s revenue-sharing agreement with the tribal operators of Foxwoods Resort Casino and Mohegan Sun would not be affected if the tribes partner in a casino off their reservations.” In a letter Friday to the chairmen of the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan tribes, the DOI “said the change in presidential administrations from Barack Obama to Donald Trump does not change the department’s position.”

Additional coverage was provided by the [Connecticut Mirror](#) (5/15, Pazniokas) and the [New London \(CT\) Day](#) (5/15, Hallenbeck).

Office Of Insular Affairs

Marshalls Holds Education Summit.

[Marianas Variety](#) (5/15) reports that “a first of its kind, the Kwajalein Atoll Education Summit took place April 26 and 27 on Ebeye Island, Kwajalein Atoll, in the Republic of the Marshall Islands or RMI.” The summit was “themed ‘Charting our Course: Our Child, Our Hope’” and “funded through Compact of Free Association, as Amended, grant assistance provided by the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Office of Insular Affairs.” According to the article, “the summit’s aim was to empower local communities, enabling them to begin their children’s education at home and continuing in the classroom, leading towards post-secondary and vocational education.”

Tackling America’s Water Challenges

BOR Announces Safety Of Dams Drilling Program At Prosser Creek Dam.

[Hydroworld](#) (5/15, Poindexter) reports that the Bureau of Reclamation “announced on Friday it will perform a Safety of Dams drilling program at Prosser Creek Dam, located just above Prosser Creek’s confluence with the Truckee River in Truckee, Calif., to evaluate the ability of the dam to resist large earthquakes.” The BOR “said the drilling program will help analyze the potential loss of strength, known as liquefaction that could result in a dam failure during an extreme earthquake.”

Top National News

Administration Rebuts Report Trump Revealed Classified Information To Russians.

Administration officials on Monday night denied a [Washington Post](#) report which began to dominate media coverage after it was posted online earlier that night that says "current and former US officials" indicated President Trump revealed "highly classified information" to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Ambassador Sergey Kislyak during a White House meeting last week. The Post says the sources said the information "jeopardized a critical source of intelligence on the Islamic State." Reporting which repeats the facts stated in the Post's story includes the Administration's denial of the allegation and analysis of the potential impact. Some coverage characterizes the development as throwing the Administration into more uncertainty in the aftermath of the President's decision to fire former FBI Director Comey. Jim Sciutto said on [CNN's Anderson Cooper 360](#) (5/15), "Two former intelligence officials knowledgeable with the situation tell myself and Jake Tapper that the main points of the Washington Post story are accurate."

The [AP](#) (5/15) reports the Post's sources said Trump provided the Russians with details about an ISIS terror threat related to the use of laptop computers on US-bound aircraft. The AP adds the information was given to the US by a partner through an intelligence-sharing arrangement. According to the AP, the information "was considered so sensitive that details have been withheld from allies and tightly restricted even within the US government." The [New York Post](#) (5/15, Fredericks) reports the Post quoted a source as saying, "This is code-word information," which refers to a phrase that describes one of the highest levels of classification used by intelligence agencies. The official added that Trump "revealed more information to the Russian ambassador than we have shared with our own allies." The [New York Daily News](#) (5/15, Joseph) reports Trump "seemed to be bragging about his inside knowledge." An "insider," according to the Daily News, said Trump told Russian officials he "get[s] great intel." The source said the President added that "people brief me on great intel every day."

[McClatchy](#) (5/15, Miller, Jaffe) reports that following the meeting, "senior White House officials took steps to contain the damage, placing calls to the CIA and National Security Agency." [Fox News' Special Report](#) (5/15) reported that "the CIA and NSA had to play clean up on this to some degree in order to call the intelligence partner and tell them what happened."

Disclosing the information, according to the [New York Times](#) (5/15, A1, Rosenberg, Schmitt), "does not appear to have been illegal" as the President "has the power to declassify almost

anything." However, the Times adds that "sharing the information without the express permission of the ally who provided it represented a major breach of espionage etiquette" and risks "a crucial intelligence-sharing relationship." The Times says the ally that provided the information has provided the US with information in the past "only to see it leaked" and "has repeatedly warned American officials that it would cut off access to such sensitive information if it were shared too widely." US News & World Report (5/15, Levy) reports "national security experts are troubled" by the report "in part because Russia could identify and disrupt the source of the intelligence." On the CBS Evening News (5/15, story 2, 1:30, Pelley), former Deputy CIA Director Michael Morell said the revealing of this information is "highly damaging" because Russia "could well disrupt the source" and "countries who provide the United States with intelligence information will now have pause to do so."

CNN's Situation Room (5/15) reported that the White House press office released a statement denying the report and the Washington Times (5/15, Boyer) says National Security Adviser McMaster and Secretary of State Tillerson "pushed back against" the Post's story. McMaster, the Wall Street Journal (5/15, Stokols, Ballhaus) says, told reporters the Post report was "false." Reuters (5/15, Mason, Zengerle) reports McMaster added that Trump and Lavrov "reviewed common threats from terrorist organizations to include threats to aviation." McMaster continued, "At no time were any intelligence sources or methods discussed and no military operations were disclosed that were not already known publicly." McMaster, according to The Hill (5/15, Williams, Fabian), said "two other senior officials" including Tillerson were present during the talks and "remember the meeting the same way and have said so." McMaster added, "Their on-the-record accounts should outweigh those of anonymous sources."

The Washington Examiner (5/15, Giaritelli) reports Tillerson said in a statement that the meeting included discussions on "a broad range of subjects," including "common efforts and threats regarding counter-terrorism." Bloomberg Politics (5/15, Sink, Kapur) quotes Tillerson as saying in the statement, "During that exchange the nature of specific threats were discussed, but they did not discuss sources, methods or military operations." Politico (5/15, Staff) reports Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategy Dina Powell said in a statement that the Post story "is false." Powell added, "The president only discussed the common threats that both countries faced."

Both Republican, Democratic Lawmakers Express Concern. ABC World News Tonight (5/15, story 2, 0:55, Muir) reported "members on both sides of the aisle" expressed serious concern about the report if true, with some calling it "troubling," "disturbing," and "shocking." USA Today (5/15, Estepa) reports Sen. Bob Corker said, "To

compromise a source is something that you just don't do," adding, "That's why we keep the information that we get from intelligence sources so close...to prevent that from happening." The Los Angeles Times (5/15, Mascaro) quotes Sen. Richard Durbin as saying, "This conduct by the president is not only dangerous, it's reckless." Durbin added, "That disclosure may not only jeopardize our troops and our people, but the security of those who risk their lives to tell us what is actually happening." NBC Nightly News (5/15, lead story, 2:25, Holt) showed Sen. John McCain saying, "It's disturbing and let's find out what the details are and whether or not it happened. We just have an initial report so it's very difficult to comment until we get all the facts." Sen. Lindsey Graham said, "I don't know if it's accurate. It'd be troubling. I have no idea."

Politico (5/15, Wright) reports under the headline "Republicans concerned about report Trump shared secrets with Russia" that House Speaker Ryan's spokesman "also expressed concern about the Post report." Doug Andres the spokesman said, "We have no way to know what was said, but protecting our nation's secrets is paramount. The speaker hopes for a full explanation of the facts from the administration." Amber Phillips writes for the Washington Post (5/15) that Ryan may "regret" his critical comments about Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server. Phillips says Ryan and other Republicans will have to "explain" how this situation "is somehow less careless and less reckless and less dangerous than the one they lambasted Democrats for just a few months ago."

The Washington Post (5/15, Viebeck, Debonis, O'Keefe) quotes Senate Minority Leader Schumer as saying in a statement, "Revealing classified information at this level is extremely dangerous and puts at risk the lives of Americans and those who gather intelligence for our country. The President owes the intelligence community, the American people, and Congress a full explanation." House Minority Leader Pelosi said during a previously scheduled town hall meeting on CNN (5/15) that it "is a very serious matter." Later in the town hall, Pelosi said, "There's just something wrong with this picture. All at the same time as people are saying this you have to be careful because this is its own incident but it's about Russia. And every day I ask the question, what do the Russians have on Donald Trump, financially, politically or personally that he is always catering to them?"

Sen. Patrick Leahy told CNN's Situation Room (5/15) that "it would be almost inconceivable, that any President would allow something of that nature out, anything that would disclose sources and methods." He also said "there are bigger questions here and that is, what is the influence of Russia." Rep. Eric Swalwell said on CNN's Anderson Cooper 360 (5/15) that "the President is alleged to have given classified information to a foreign adversary." Swalwell said he "would ask that why were the Russians even in the Oval Office after

the attack they carried out." He said he hopes "that the Administration comes to Congress this week, particularly to our committee, and updates us as to exactly what was revealed. And is this a change in policy on how we communicate with Russians." Sen. Richard Blumenthal said on [CNN's Out Front](#) (5/15), "What needs to happen is for a full explanation from President Trump. He owes the American people an explanation, not just a flat denial, which is really a nondenial that fails to address the details of this story." Blumenthal added that "the truth needs to be uncovered and anyone responsible for this violation of the norms, if not the law of intelligence, has to be held accountable."

Still, some lawmakers and media defended Trump or said more information is needed. Sen. Ben Sasse said on [Fox News The Story](#) (5/15) that "a lot of the media will hyperventilate really quickly and there is the distinction that we should bear in mind between illegality and imprudence. Really difficult for a president to do something illegal in a space like this because he as commander of chief in the military, is the ultimate declassifier. That's a different question as to whether or not something is imprudent."

Catherine Herridge said on [Fox News' Special Report](#) (5/15) "that if Russia is a partner in the fight against the Islamic State, it's not clear how much of a breach it would be." Britt Hume also said at [Fox News' Special Report](#) (5/15) that the story is "based entirely on anonymous sources." He said this disclosure "may have offended our intelligence partner, but that does not mean sensitive sources and methods have been disclosed." Martha McCallum said on [Fox News The Story](#) (5/15), "This is sort of the next narrative that you would want to employ, right? If you are trying to take this President down or make him look bad, it's bad enough that the pictures, the only pictures from this meeting were taken from Russian media. Now, the story is that he was in there revealing intelligence that he should not have been revealing."

The [Daily Beast](#) (5/15, Markay, Mak, Suebsaeng, Winter) reports White House and Administration officials "are reeling at reports" that Trump revealed classified information to Russia. A "senior Trump aide," according to the Daily Beast, said communications staff and senior staffers "were literally 'hiding in offices'" as White House press officials entered the hallways after the Post story broke. A "senior aide" said, "Do not ask me about how this looks, we all know how this looks." Kirsten Powers of USA Today said on [CNN's Anderson Cooper 360](#) (5/15) that "we have different controversies with Donald Trump, and sometimes people will think, 'Well, this is the worst thing that's ever happened.' This is the worst, right here, by far. The reason that it's the worst, is because he's put people's lives in jeopardy. In the immediate and in the long-term because when you think about this, not only has he harmed relationships currently, you have to

wonder what any other ally is going to think about in the future in terms of working with us."

Media Analyses: Administration "Reeling" After "Latest Episodes." Politico (5/15, Dawsey, Johnson) says the "latest episodes" within the Administration the reported revealing of classified information and Comey's firing "reveal what senior aides and advisers privately say: The problems often come from the top." A White House official said by text message, "It never stops. Basically chaos at all times." Gloria Borger said on CNN's Anderson Cooper 360 (5/15) that "this goes to a larger question...which is the question of the competency of the President. I think you hear a lot of people whispering about it here in Washington and I think now they're starting to talk about it out loud because if you have a President who doesn't know how to handle or talk about highly classified information to one of our adversaries, there is a problem."

In the Washington Post (5/15), Aaron Blake writes "hubris and rank amateurism are killing President Trump when it comes to his Russia problem." Blake says Trump "made the very questionable decision to meet with top Russian officials a day after making the very questionable decision to fire the man leading the FBI's Russia investigation." Blake adds that sharing intelligence with Russia "that isn't even being shared with allies is a big blunder." Blake argues, "It's a series of tightly packed-together errors that can only be accomplished with an extraordinary amount of ego and a lack of a better angel."

Media Connects Report To Trump's Criticism Of Clinton's Use Of Private Email Server. According to CNN's Situation Room (5/15), the report "is going to recall all sorts of questions and flashbacks to the campaign of last year when the President time and again hammered Hillary Clinton, accusing her of revealing classified information through her private e-mail practices." The CBS Evening News (5/15, lead story, 2:30, Pelley) reported Trump's "relentless criticism of Hillary Clinton's handling of classified information may be the main reason that he's President today." Philip Bump writes in the Washington Post (5/15) that "the sticking point for conservative critiques of Clinton's behavior was that her use of a private server included the transmission of classified information," which placed the "information at risk of being intercepted by foreign agents, should her server have been compromised."

Phillips: Trump Has "Track Record" Of Upsetting Intelligence Professionals. Amber Phillips writes for the Washington Post (5/15) that Trump "has had a track record of questioning, worrying, and even directly upsetting, the thousands of men and women who collect and analyze the nation's top secrets." Phillips provides a "rundown" of these instances.

Both Parties Press White House For Answers On Possible Recordings Of Conversations.

While it was eclipsed by the breaking news regarding President Trump's possible disclosing of intelligence to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Ambassador Sergey Kislyak, coverage of the aftermath of Trump's firing of FBI Director Comey, and on whether the President possesses recordings of his conversations with Comey, continues, with members of both parties pressing the White House for answers and threatening subpoenas. Trump also said Monday that the search for Comey's replacement is proceeding "rapidly."

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (5/15, story 3, 3:10, Muir) reported, "Republicans and Democrats are now demanding to know: Are conversations being recorded with the President? And if so, they now want them." ABC's Jonathan Karl: "The White House is defying congressional demands for answers on whether the President has been secretly recording his conversations." Senate Minority Leader Schumer: "If there are tapes as the President has suggested, he should turn them over immediately." Karl: "Even Republicans are saying if there are tapes, they need to be preserved and turned over." Sen. Lindsey Graham: "You can't be cute about tapes. If there are any tapes of this conversation, they need to be turned over." Sen. Mike Lee: "If, in fact, there are such recordings, I think those recordings will be subpoenaed, and I think they will probably have to turn them over." Karl: "But the White House is refusing to answer any questions on this whatsoever."

On the [CBS Evening News](#) (5/15, story 3, 1:50, Pelley), Major Garrett reported, "The White House will not confirm or deny President Trump tape records his conversations. Press secretary Sean Spicer has only one thing to say." Spicer: "I made it clear what the President's position is on that issue." Garrett: "But the President has made nothing clear." Trump: "That I can't talk about. I won't talk about that." [USA Today](#) (5/15, Jackson) also says that "the president's actual position is not that clear," and "senators who are seeking more details about Comey's dismissal say that Trump must preserve and turn over tapes, if they exist. Former associates are also saying that the real estate mogul does have a history of taping his conversations." The [New York Daily News](#) (5/15, Joseph) reports that Spicer "stonewall[ed] questions about whether Trump taped" Comey.

[Fox News Special Report](#) (5/15) reported that some Republicans have joined the call for a special prosecutor "and some Democrats have upped the ante, warning they won't consider Comey's replacement unless and until a special prosecutor is in place," and [CNN's Situation Room](#) (5/15) reported that lawmakers from both parties "are making it clear any...recordings could be subpoenaed." But the [Washington Post](#) (5/15, Phillips) writes that "almost no one in Congress seems willing to take that step. ... Issuing

a subpoena is a serious thing, and it requires both Democrats and Republicans to agree to it." So far, Lee "appears to be the only Senate Republican open to a subpoena."

Sen. Chris Coons was asked on [CNN's Situation Room](#) (5/15) if he believes the tapes exist. Coons said, "I don't know. This is yet another bombshell thrown into this conversation by President Trump. He was known to have widely taped conversations when he was a businessman." Coons added that if they exist, the tapes "would be subject to subpoena because they would be critical to what is now an ongoing investigation both a counterintelligence and criminal investigation by the FBI."

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[Message clipped]

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