

To: BLM_UT_All[blm_ut_all@blm.gov]
From: Sutherland, Ryan
Sent: 2017-05-26T16:28:55-04:00
Importance: Normal
Subject: Daily News Report - May 26
Received: 2017-05-26T16:29:10-04:00
Daily News Report May 26.docx

Attached is the daily news report for May 26.

In honor of the veterans who have laid down their lives for our nation, and in celebration of the veterans who stand with us today, enjoy the Memorial Day weekend.

Ryan Sutherland
Bureau of Land Management Utah
Public Affairs Specialist
rrsutherland@blm.gov
801 539 4089



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

UTAH – TOP STORIES – MAY 26, 2017

1. **Rescues in Utah backcountry could cost recreators \$25 instead of \$10,000**

The Salt Lake Tribune, May 25 | Tiffany Frandsen

Getting rescued in Utah's backcountry could cost thousands of dollars. Or just \$25.

On Thursday, Utah launched a program to let outdoor enthusiasts buy yearlong subscription services in lieu of paying expensive rescue costs.

2. **Groups team up to take blind military veterans on 275-mile bike tour**

The Moab Times Independent, May 25 | Molly Marcello

This Memorial Day weekend, a group of veterans will honor those who have served in the U.S. armed forces by loading up mountain bikes and traversing 275 miles of incredible terrain in a "tribute tour." The tour will travel from southwestern Colorado to southeastern Utah, passing through Unaweep Canyon, the Paradox Valley and the Colorado River corridor in Moab. Although the trip will honor military service in general, with both blind and sighted veterans participating, organizers say the tour is also intended to raise awareness of outdoor recreation as a form of healing for those dealing with physical and emotional post-war trauma.

3. **Utah law professors challenge President Trump's right to rescind Bears Ears**

Fox 13 News, May 25 | Max Roth

SALT LAKE CITY -- A growing list of law professors around the country are weighing in on a president's power under the Antiquities Act, including professors from the S.J. Quinney College of Law at the University of Utah.

4. **Bears Ears Monument designation draws thousands of comments**

The Deseret News, May 25 | Amy Joi O'Donoghue

SALT LAKE CITY — There's still time to weigh in on the Bears Ears National Monument designation, but online comments must be received by the U.S. Department of Interior by 10 p.m. Thursday, while mailed comments have to be postmarked by Friday and received no later than June 1.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

5. Op-ed: Coal is a dead man walking; recreation is alive and well

The Salt Lake Tribune, May 25 | Alexander Lee, Ph.D., and Sarah Rogers

Last month, President Trump signed an executive order calling for the Department of Interior to review 56 of the most recently designated national monuments. These national monuments, designated under the 1906 Antiquities Act, aim to protect lands with natural, historic or scientific significance.

6. Secretary Zinke: Please Leave Our National Monuments Alone

The Huffington Post, May 25 | Will Rogers

Today, on behalf of The Trust for Public Land and its many volunteers and supporters, I am registering our concern with President Trump's executive order to review certain monument designations.

7. OHV safety for the summer season, 'nobody is invincible'

The St George News, May 25 | Julie Applegate

ST. GEORGE – With the arrival of warm weather, many Utahns are headed outdoors with their off-highway vehicles and officials are warning that no one is immune from the risk of injury.

8. Op-ed: The unintended consequences of Bears Ears National Monument

The Salt Lake Tribune, May 25 | Bruce Adams, Rebecca Benally, Phil Lyman & Stan Summers

Both sides of the Bears Ears National Monument argument tend to use the same talking points. Each expresses their desire to protect, preserve and recreate.

9. BLM employee honored for volunteer efforts

The Deseret News, May 25 | Press Release

SALT LAKE CITY — Bureau of Land Management employee Clay Stewart of southern Utah has received the Making a Difference Award for his contributions to the agency's volunteer program.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

E&E/NATIONAL NEWS – TOP STORIES

1. **Retrial in Bunkerville standoff case postponed until July**

The Las Vegas Review-Journal, May 25 | Jenny Wilson

The retrial in the first Bunkerville standoff case is scheduled to open with jury selection July 10.

2. **Opinion: Good management starts with science**

High Country News, May 25 | Dave Stalling

Last year, a group of Montanans, including wildlife biologists and hunters, launched a ballot initiative that would have banned trapping on public lands. They called trapping barbaric because people's pets, as well as threatened and endangered wildlife, inadvertently get killed in traps.

3. **Wild horses could be sold for slaughter or euthanized under Trump budget**

The Washington Post, May 26 | Karin Brulliard and Juliet Eilperin

The Bureau of Land Management spends about \$50 million a year to house and feed more than 46,000 wild horses and burros in corrals. Another 73,000 of the animals roam freely across the western states, producing foals and grazing on public lands that conservation groups say are quickly deteriorating.

4. **PUBLIC LANDS: Murkowski vows to fight proposed Trump cut to county payments**

E & E News, May 26 | Kellie Lunney

A top Senate GOP appropriator said she plans to fight a White House proposal to cut fiscal 2018 funding for a popular tax program that helps communities with federal lands.

5. **FORESTS: Appropriators mull drastic measures against wildfires**

E & E News, May 26 | Marc Heller

For members of Congress worried about the rising cost of forest fires, a tone of desperation may be settling in.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

6. **COAL: McKinley offers House bill to rescue miner pensions**

E & E News, May 26 | Dylan Brown

Rep. David McKinley rolled out legislation yesterday that would rescue pensions for more than 120,000 retired union coal miners.

7. **PIPELINES: Bills would shore up permitting, safety**

E & E News, May 26 | Sam Mintz

Democratic lawmakers in both chambers unleashed a flurry of legislation this week aimed at oil and gas pipelines in their regions.

8. **SECURITY: Gas industry says 'trust us' on tracking cyberthreats**

E & E News, May 26 | Peter Behr, Blake Sobczak and Hannah Northey

At the end of a Senate hearing last month, Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) challenged Dave McCurdy, president of the American Gas Association, to say how Congress and the public can be confident about the cybersecurity defenses of the nation's natural gas infrastructure when no one is keeping score.

9. **METHANE: Groups warn EPA against pausing oil and gas standards**

E & E News, May 26 | Ellen M. Gilmer

A coalition of environmental groups is urging the Trump administration to maintain upcoming deadlines for oil and gas operators to cut emissions of methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

10. **COURTS: Top oil and gas lobby wants out of climate case**

E & E News, May 26 | Benjamin Hulac

The American Petroleum Institute, an influential lobbying and advocacy group for the oil and gas industry, is trying to exit a climate change lawsuit a group of children brought against the federal government.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

11. TECHNOLOGY: Scientists say CO2 is better than steam for power production

E & E News, May 26 | Umair Irfan

Engineers are working to turn carbon dioxide from a climate pollutant into an energy workhorse, potentially spurring some of the biggest changes in electricity production in more than a century.

12. NATIONAL MONUMENTS: Comments on Interior review heavily favor status quo — group

E & E News, May 26 | Jennifer Yachnin

Public comments on an Interior Department review of the status of dozens of national monuments is skewing heavily in favor of retaining existing designations, including the Bears Ears National Monument in southeastern Utah, according to a new analysis by the Center for Western Priorities.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

UTAH – FULL STORY

1. **Rescues in Utah backcountry could cost recreators \$25 instead of \$10,000**

The Salt Lake Tribune, May 25 | Tiffany Frandsen

Getting rescued in Utah's backcountry could cost thousands of dollars. Or just \$25.

On Thursday, Utah launched a program to let outdoor enthusiasts buy yearlong subscription services in lieu of paying expensive rescue costs.

The Utah Search and Rescue Assistance is \$25 for one year for an individual and \$35 for one year for a family. A five-year subscription is \$100 for individuals and \$140 for families.

A search that takes less than a few hours may cost less than \$1,000, according to Joe Dougherty, spokesman for the Department of Public Safety. The longer the search, the heavier the cost.

"It's not hard for a search to get up to around \$10,000," Dougherty said, "especially if you're employing helicopters to help with your search."

People might not find out until they get home, but counties can choose to charge rescued hikers for the search effort.

After a search, counties charge those they rescue, absorb the costs themselves or request reimbursement from the state.

The state reimburses sheriff's offices for searches and training to ease the pressure on tourist-rich counties with relatively small tax bases, such as Grand County, which conducted 125 searches in 2015.

"You have a big intensive search in a rural community, and that can be devastating to [a county's] search and rescue budget," said Tom Adams, director of the state's Office of Outdoor Recreation.

If someone enrolled in the new program were to get lost, the state would reimburse the county for the search and the subscriber would avoid footing the bill.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

The county can still opt to charge someone for a search if the sheriff deems the incident reckless. The program also doesn't cover dogs or medical expenses.

Counties are eligible to request reimbursements from the state board that oversees search and rescue if they search for someone who isn't enrolled in the program.

Those who aren't enrolled in the program still risk being charged by the county if they are rescued in Utah's backcountry.

"No one wants to do that," Dougherty said. "They don't want to have to go charge people that needed help."

The subscription cost of the program will supplement the state's Search and Rescue Financial Assistance Program, which is otherwise funded by fees from off-road vehicles and licenses for hunting and fishing. In 2016, the state reimbursed sheriffs' offices \$99,418 for searches, \$101,158 for training and \$89,135 for equipment from the fund.

With the subscription money, the state plans to cover more of the equipment costs for counties, Dougherty said.

Utah Search and Rescue Assistance cards are available at rescue.utah.gov.

[BACK](#)

2. **Groups team up to take blind military veterans on 275-mile bike tour**

The Moab Times Independent, May 25 | Molly Marcello

This Memorial Day weekend, a group of veterans will honor those who have served in the U.S. armed forces by loading up mountain bikes and traversing 275 miles of incredible terrain in a "tribute tour." The tour will travel from southwestern Colorado to southeastern Utah, passing through Unaweep Canyon, the Paradox Valley and the Colorado River corridor in Moab. Although the trip will honor military service in general, with both blind and sighted veterans participating, organizers say the tour is also intended to raise awareness of outdoor recreation as a form of healing for those dealing with physical and emotional post-war trauma.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

“Movement and nature is one of the most successful and therapeutic strategies to deal with PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder],” said Anne Ryan, founder of LEADS Serves, a group that co-organized of the trip. “We know therapeutically, that movement is the best way to unleash that...Most of the participants in our programs would rather be in nature than in a counselor’s office.”

LEADS – which stands for “leadership, education, adventure, and development” – partnered with nonprofit Blind Endeavors to make the Memorial Day weekend ride a reality. Through programming and advocacy, both Colorado-based nonprofits encourage veterans and individuals of all abilities to get outside.

“I think it’s important for veterans and everyone to move and experience life and get the blood circulating,” said Steve Baskis, founder of Blind Endeavors. “The more you move the more you can experience.”

In 2008, while serving in the U.S. Military in Iraq, Baskis lost his sight after suffering a trauma-related injury. As an active person and athlete, Baskis said he had to adjust to a “new normal” in order to continue participating in the activities he loves.

He found that it was those very activities — getting out, “getting the blood flowing,” being part of a team — that helped him feel a part of the world again. He hopes the Memorial Day trip will inspire that same feeling in the veterans who participate.

“From my perspective, I have no light perception so I’m someone that’s completely blind,” Baskis said. “The world seems still and dark. Getting out and moving is another reason I think this ride is important.”

Baskis says Blind Endeavors encourages adventure and exploration in people of all abilities, and advocates for adaptive devices to make such activity possible.

“Whether it’s climbing mountains or kayaking a river, we’re using those activities to bring more awareness of how we can make adaptive devices that assist someone who’s missing an arm or who lost their sight,” Baskis said.

The Memorial Day weekend ride will challenge participants in both terrain and distance, organizers said. Blind and sighted veterans will be paired on tandem bicycles, with the rider in front serving as the “pilot” and the other rider serving as “stoker.” Last fall, Ryan and Baskis



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

completed a mountain bike trip from Telluride, Colorado, to Moab on a tandem bicycle in order to test the feasibility of such an adventure.

"I had never piloted a blind individual and [Baskis] had never been on a mountain bike as a sighted or blind athlete," Ryan said. "It was a powerful experience for both of us."

That trip resulted in many emotional highs and lows and solidified the need for both Ryan and Baskis to pull together a larger group to experience the journey and the challenges that can come with a long-distance cycling trip.

"[The ride] is not only celebrating what service members do for the country," Baskis said, "but when we ride we get a feel of the terrain underneath us, we're visiting communities. It's refreshing and quite fun."

"We won't be able to see the beautiful, majestic wild backcountry that exists between Grand Junction and Moab but we'll definitely feel it," he added.

The riders will depart from Montrose, Colorado, on May 26, making their way across Paradox and through Brown's Hole and Pole Canyon before entering Moab via Spanish Valley on May 28. There, at around 4 p.m., the group will receive an escort from the Grand County Sheriff's Department to the Veterans Memorial on Center Street.

"Talk about courageous," said Grand County Sheriff Steve White, of the trip's participants. "Three of them are blind and are riding bikes that far. They made a huge sacrifice serving their country and they continue to do so."

Ryan says any interested community members are welcome to contact the group at the Apache Inn, where they will be staying on May 28. The riders plan to leave Moab and trek alongside the Colorado River on Memorial Day on their way back to Loma, Colorado, where the tour will conclude with a barbecue.

For more information about both organizations, call LEADS Serves at 970-318-0885, or Blind Endeavors at 970-765-5377.

[BACK](#)



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

3. Utah law professors challenge President Trump's right to rescind Bears Ears

Fox 13 News, May 25 | Max Roth

SALT LAKE CITY -- A growing list of law professors around the country are weighing in on a president's power under the Antiquities Act, including professors from the S.J. Quinney College of Law at the University of Utah.

Eight professors from the school were among 71 law professors who signed a letter to Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. The letter outlined the argument that President Trump does not have the authority to rescind or reduce the size of national monuments.

John Ruple, Associate Professor and Stegner Fellow at the Quinney School, said the basis of their argument is constitutional: Article 4, Section 3 of the Constitution says only Congress can make decisions regarding public lands.

Under the Antiquities Act of 1906, Congress gave presidents the authority to protect land, but they didn't grant the authority to rescind the protection.

"Before the president can act with respect to our public lands, Congress has to delegate to the president that power to act," Ruple said.

Matt Anderson, a policy analyst with the Sutherland Institute's Coalition for Self Government in the West, disagrees with Ruple, saying what one president can do, another president can undo.

"Numerous presidents have undone the executive actions of previous ones," Anderson said.

"Elections matter, and that's really what it comes down to."

The online public comment period for the Interior Secretary's National Monument review ends at midnight on May 25. If you would like to speak your mind, [click here](#).

[BACK](#)



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

4. Bears Ears Monument designation draws thousands of comments

The Deseret News, May 25 | Amy Joi O'Donoghue

SALT LAKE CITY — There's still time to weigh in on the Bears Ears National Monument designation, but online comments must be received by the U.S. Department of Interior by 10 p.m. Thursday, while mailed comments have to be postmarked by Friday and received no later than June 1.

More than 85,000 comments have been logged by the agency, with an estimated 41,000 that specifically mention the San Juan County monument.

Information about submitting comments to the Interior Department is available online.

Written comments may be mailed to Monument Review, MS-1530, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW., Washington, DC 20240.

The Trump administration ordered a review by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke of 27 national monuments of 100,000 acres or more designated since 1996 to determine if they comply with provisions of the 1906 Antiquities Act.

That law gives U.S. presidents the ability to make monument designations to protect antiquities or objects of special historical significance, but critics say designations have become increasingly sweeping over time, particularly with the Obama administration.

The Bears Ears monument, at 1.35 million acres, is a source of contention and divisiveness in San Juan County, Utah's largest but poorest county.

Local elected officials, Utah's governor and Utah's congressional delegation are opposed to the monument, but a coalition of five Native American tribes — including the Navajo Nation with chapters in the region — sought its designation to help protect the estimated 100,000 cultural artifacts within its footprint.

President Barack Obama made the designation late last year, in the final month of his administration, and following a listening tour earlier that summer by then-Secretary Sally Jewell.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

The designation set off a storm of protests by conservative Utah leaders, with the Legislature passing resolutions to undo the monument, as well as the introduction of federal legislation seeking to rein in the use of the Antiquities Act.

Behind the scenes pressure by Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, helped culminate in President Donald Trump's issuance of an executive order on April 26 calling for the monument review.

The executive order directed another visit to Utah by the Interior secretary, this time newly appointed Ryan Zinke, a former Navy Seal team commander and GOP congressman from Montana.

Zinke's visit to Utah earlier this month included an aerial tour of Bears Ears, a hike to ancient ruins and a horseback ride through a Forest Service grazing allotment on a mountaintop.

The four-day trip also featured a meeting with the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, Friends of Cedar Mesa, ranchers, lawmakers, county commissioners, multiple federal agency representatives and paleontologists and other field experts who work with resources at the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, which is also part of the review.

Bears Ears is part of an expedited review with an earlier comment deadline, while the monument review in general has a comment deadline that runs until July 10.

[BACK](#)

5. **Op-ed: Coal is a dead man walking; recreation is alive and well**

The Salt Lake Tribune, May 25 | Alexander Lee, Ph.D., and Sarah Rogers

Last month, President Trump signed an executive order calling for the Department of Interior to review 56 of the most recently designated national monuments. These national monuments, designated under the 1906 Antiquities Act, aim to protect lands with natural, historic or scientific significance.

Trump vows to do something that has never been done before, kill protection for these significant places. The current review could open the door to transferring these lands out of the national public trust, and into state, private, or individual hands.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

Preservation evokes economic insecurity in areas of the West historically dependent upon resource extraction, however the economic diversification that national monuments create offers a solution to economic anxiety.

For example, Utah's Bears Ears National Monument — recently designated by President Obama — is being reconsidered under Trump's review as some push to open the area to coal development. Yet, busting trends in the Four Corners region have placed three coal mines and numerous coal power plants in turmoil. Within the next few years, even more coal power plants are predicted to shut down.

There are less than 10,000 coal jobs in Western states combined. The nation as a whole has lost over 60,000 coal jobs in the last six years. Local economies must diversify. One way of doing this is to promote recreational activities in scenic areas. National monuments offer such an opportunity.

In the past year, coal usage was surpassed by natural gas for the first time since the Industrial Revolution, and the trend is only continuing. Economies that have relied on the coal boom are going bust with their main source of income dying.

The most recent Western boom, in the 1990s and early 2000s, was not a result of natural resource extraction, but was a result of the stunning landscapes and close proximity to outdoor recreation. Because of this, Western economic infrastructure has shifted, resulting in diversified economies.

With the freedom of economic diversity, most Western states' GDP no longer rely on mining. Outdoor recreation now employs 6.1 million people nationally, and supports one of the fastest growing job markets in the West.

The battle over recreation and environmental preservation of our public lands is a major issue for the millions of Westerners who live in close proximity to scenic trails and unspoiled forests. The rural Western U.S. contains most of the nation's federal lands, totaling almost 226 million acres from Montana to Arizona. These are lands that support hunting, fishing, hiking, rafting, climbing and unlimited opportunities for diversification of the economy from outdoor recreation. Overlapping much of these federal lands is also a cauldron of pristine headwaters, ecosystem services and rich minable geology. Much of the federally owned lands in the West were



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

protected with the dual intention of protecting consumptive uses, like extraction, and non-consumptive uses, like recreation.

Recreation is currently at an all-time high, and rising. Parks bring millions of visitors from around the nation and the world, booming local economies. Towns like Moab, that were originally settled for cattle ranching and farming until the 1950s uranium boom and bust, are now alive and well because of outdoor recreation. Recreation opportunities support local jobs in outfitting, guiding, lodging and bring people to town. Recreation also supports a growing equipment industry in regional hubs like Salt Lake City, Denver and Boulder.

With increasing political tension, National Monuments such as Bears Ears need to be seen as a way to diversify local economies in the West instead of sinking into the continuous boom and bust cycles we've seen around the West for over a century. The coal market is dead, while public recreation is sprouting green.

Signed by Alexander Lee, Ph.D., and Sarah Rogers, faculty members of the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and by environmental studies students Kristina Cowell, Becca Ingwers, Jordan Erdie and Kenny Prior.

[BACK](#)

6. **Secretary Zinke: Please Leave Our National Monuments Alone**

The Huffington Post, May 25 | Will Rogers

Today, on behalf of The Trust for Public Land and its many volunteers and supporters, I am registering our concern with President Trump's executive order to review certain monument designations.

Our public lands and waters help define who we are as a nation by telling the story of our historical, cultural, and natural heritage. This attempt to roll back protections for national monuments is unprecedented and terribly misguided. Secretary Zinke, we strongly urge you to reject efforts to eliminate or shrink our national monuments.

The Trust for Public Land has worked over many years to protect important conservation lands at several national monuments currently under review and we have worked to ensure public land protection at other recently created monuments including California Coastal, Stonewall, Charles



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

Young Buffalo Soldiers and Pullman. Our experience was always positive, with strong community support and engagement. In California, for example, the impetus for the Mojave Trails and Sand to Snow national monuments came from Mojave Desert residents and business leaders, who organized for years in support of them.

The Antiquities Act has been used well by Presidents throughout our history for important and lasting public land protection. This current review is clearly aimed at undermining presidential authority under the Act. Should this result lead to reversals of current protection, those steps will have a lasting negative impact and threaten many protected areas for generations to come.

Regarding the expedited review of the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah, we question the need for this condensed timeline but urge you, Secretary Zinke, to retain the monument's current status. That area's priceless historic, cultural and natural wonders are exactly the places and values which should be permanently protected. Monument status for Bears Ears protects 100,000 archaeological and cultural sites as well as stunning mesas, canyons and arches and the incredible outdoor recreation, hunting, fishing and general solitude and peace they contain — treasures which are irreplaceable. It is clear the area has deep and important meaning to several Native American tribes, given their involvement in the long-standing protection effort and recent vocal opposition to rolling back protections. The boundaries of the monument clearly honor the voices of five sovereign tribal nations who joined together to seek protection of their shared ancestral lands and traditions.

We strongly believe rolling back the Bears Ears protections would threaten all our monument areas by setting a terrible precedent. Once that door is open, where might it stop? Such actions would discourage business investment and community growth around national monuments while also sending the signal that our history and natural wonders are negotiable. This already seems to be the case in Maine where a review of the Katahdin Woods and Waters national monument has caused uncertainty about the area's economic future, halting positive signs of economic growth following the August 2016 designation.

National monuments are tremendous drivers of the \$887 billion outdoor recreation economy. Businesses in gateway communities rely on the permanency of these protections when making decisions about local investments. Visitation has doubled at Organ Mountains National Monument since its designation. At the nearby Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, the Bureau of Land Management saw a 40% increase in visitors within a year after that land was designated a monument. A report by the Green Taos (N.M.) Chamber of Commerce said that



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

within just a year after that designation, the town's lodging revenue increased 21% in the second half of 2013 compared to the same period in 2012. This experience has been repeated over and over at other sites.

Our system of national parks, many of which began as monuments, has been called "America's best idea" and they are enormously popular with the American people. Our public lands provide thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic impact. They ensure permanent access to America's unique cultural and natural history. The judicious use of the Antiquities Act, by presidents of both parties, has been a key tool in protecting that legacy of special places. There should be no rollbacks of protections, at Bears Ears or other monuments.

And we urge everyone to make their views [known here](#).

[BACK](#)

7. **OHV safety for the summer season, 'nobody is invincible'**

The St George News, May 25 | Julie Applegate

ST. GEORGE – With the arrival of warm weather, many Utahns are headed outdoors with their off-highway vehicles and officials are warning that no one is immune from the risk of injury.

Utah Division of Parks and Recreation officials are reminding the public of the importance of wearing a helmet while using off-highway vehicles.

It is also illegal for children under 8 years old to operate an off-highway vehicle or snowmobile while on public lands.

For youth ages 8 to 15, the Southwest Utah Public Health Department is offering an all-terrain vehicle safety class in Panguitch at a significantly reduced fee.

See below for details on how to have your child attend this training and save \$20.

With over 80,000 miles of all-terrain vehicle trails available in Utah, it's important to ride safely, according to information from the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

Safety is a primary concern of the state park off-highway vehicle program. In Utah, riders ages 8-15 are required to pass an off-highway vehicle safety education course before they are allowed to operate on public land.

State park officials recommend off-highway vehicle users wear a helmet and other safety gear, encourage youth to take the online education course, never drink and ride, and remember 'Nobody is Invincible.'

More adults than children are injured in off-highway vehicle-related accidents, officials said.

In Utah, only 58 percent of off-highway vehicle riders report they frequently wear helmets.

This raises concerns regarding future generations of off-highway vehicle riders who look to these adults to lead by example, state park officials said.

Off-road license required for youths

Utah law requires youth ages 8 to 15 to complete a Utah Division of Parks and Recreation off-highway vehicle or snowmobile education course before operating on public lands, roads or trails.

The online youth education course fee is \$30 per student and must be passed only once.

The off-highway vehicle certification covers all-terrain vehicles, off-highway motorcycles, and side-by-sides vehicles including type II all-terrain vehicles and utility vehicles, or UTVs.

When the test has been passed, a temporary operator license permit can be printed out that will be valid immediately; the permanent operator license will be mailed.

Education classes teach safe riding, proper machine sizing, weight distribution, responsible and ethical riding, proper handling and shifting and riding within your ability

Panguitch youth class

There will be a reduced-rate ATV safety training class in Panguitch at the Garfield County Fairgrounds Tuesday, May 30. The class is sponsored by the Southwest Utah Public Health Department.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

What: ATV training class for youths age 8-15.

When: 4-8 p.m. Tuesday May 30.

Where: Garfield County Fairgrounds, 750 North Main, Highway 89 in Panguitch.

Cost: \$10; which is \$20 less than taking the safety class online.

Attendees will receive a free dinner and helmet. Call Clint at 435-676-8800 to register.

[BACK](#)

8. **Op-ed: The unintended consequences of Bears Ears National Monument**

The Salt Lake Tribune, May 25 | Bruce Adams, Rebecca Benally, Phil Lyman & Stan Summers

Both sides of the Bears Ears National Monument argument tend to use the same talking points. Each expresses their desire to protect, preserve and recreate.

However, when the final effects of a national monument are considered, there are dire unintended consequences to further locking up more than 1.3 million acres of public lands.

Currently, there are at least 12 regulations and policies enforced by the Bureau of Land Management and United States Forest Services to protect and preserve the land. Thus far, the local people have been good stewards of the land.

The creation of a monument of this size would hurt the economy of San Juan County by limiting future economic development opportunities. Healthy economies require diversity allowing them to maneuver through inevitable industry trends. Locking up 1.3 million acres of land further restricts the county's already severely limited ability to build an economy outside of the narrow tourism months. As history has shown, economies which rely on tourism face a rocky and unpredictable future.

Currently, San Juan County contains all or part of one national park, three national monuments, a national recreation area and a national forest. It is one of the poorest, largest and most frontier counties in the state of Utah and one of the most economically depressed counties in the nation.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

On the contrast, a county with responsible access to the land can build a vibrant economy based in part on agriculture, mining, forestry and recreation.

Many large out-of-state groups and Washington, D.C., bureaucrats advocated for the monument and had made numerous empty promises of increased land access and use. However, history shows that lands designated as monuments are dotted with more "Area Closed" signs and other restrictions than ever before.

These empty promises ring of hollowness and their history is not comforting to the people of San Juan. Especially when these pivotal decisions are being made by bureaucrats over a thousand miles away.

For example, despite grazing being expressly authorized and guaranteed to remain at historic levels in some presidential proclamations, ranchers across the West have seen a decline in the number of grazing livestock and increased management restrictions within national monuments.

Currently, the federal government owns on average more than 50 percent of the land in each of the Western United States. In Utah, the number is significantly higher at more than 65 percent. In comparison, the federal government owns only an average of 5 percent of the land in each of the eastern states. With every monstrous monument designation, the Western United States lose more of their ability to build a diverse economy. If President Trump moves forward with the Bears Ears National Monument at the current size of 1.35 million acres, land approximately the same size as the state of Delaware will be locked away. This is a dangerous precedent and substantial overreach of power.

We recommend Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke rescind the Bears Ears Monument and encourage him to strongly consider the unintended consequences of such a significant and unnecessary national monument designation. Moving forward, we ask that the Department of the Interior work with local officials to find a responsible and locally based means to protect and preserve the valuable historical areas that exist within the boundaries of the current monument — while limiting the economic impact to Utah communities.

We want access and balanced, respectful multiple use. We respect cultural artifacts, cultural, burial and sacred sites. Together can manage such areas.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

Signed by San Juan County Commissioners Bruce Adams, Rebecca Benally and Phil Lyman and by Box Elder County Commissioner Stan Summers, who is also chairman of the board of the Foundation for Integrated Resource Management.

[BACK](#)

9. **BLM employee honored for volunteer efforts**

The Deseret News, May 25 | Press Release

SALT LAKE CITY — Bureau of Land Management employee Clay Stewart of southern Utah has received the Making a Difference Award for his contributions to the agency's volunteer program.

Stewart was among five individuals, one couple, one sibling pair, and one group from across the country honored nationally for outstanding volunteer service or leadership on BLM public lands.

Stewart manages a committed cadre of community volunteers who have patrolled one of the BLM's most-recognized and popular recreation sites, the Wave, for the past four years.

The Wave is located in the remote Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness area along the Utah and Arizona border, and it is only accessible by permit. The volunteers provide seven-day coverage during the hottest months of May to September, offering water to visitors, locating lost or late hikers, and performing life-saving measures to those who suffer accidents and health crises in the unforgiving backcountry.

Last summer, the volunteers provided life-saving assistance to over 100 visitors.

The BLM presents the awards once a year to recognize the bureau's most exceptional volunteers, whose efforts include trail repair, visitor services, habitat restoration and many other duties. Recipients received recognition during an event via a live video conference hosted at the BLM headquarters in Washington, D.C.

[BACK](#)



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

E&E/NATIONAL NEWS – FULL STORY

1. **Retrial in Bunkerville standoff case postponed until July**

The Las Vegas Review-Journal, May 25 | Jenny Wilson

The retrial in the first Bunkerville standoff case is scheduled to open with jury selection July 10.

A mistrial was declared in the case in April, after jurors deadlocked on 50 of the 60 counts against six defendants. Federal prosecutors decided this month to retry four of the men, who are accused of providing the firepower in a mass assault against federal agents. The agents were in Bunkerville to seize rancher Cliven Bundy's cattle after decades of unpaid grazing fees.

Initially, the retrial was scheduled to open June 26. U.S. District Judge Gloria Navarro on Thursday postponed the start date due to potential attorney and juror conflicts the week of Independence Day. The defendants who will stand trial are Montana resident Ricky Lovelien and Idaho residents Scott Drexler, Eric Parker and Steven Stewart.

[BACK](#)

2. **Opinion: Good management starts with science**

High Country News, May 25 | Dave Stalling

Last year, a group of Montanans, including wildlife biologists and hunters, launched a ballot initiative that would have banned trapping on public lands. They called trapping barbaric because people's pets, as well as threatened and endangered wildlife, inadvertently get killed in traps.

Trappers responded with outrageous claims, charging that the initiative was backed by "out-of-state animal-rights extremists," who were "uninformed about wildlife." Opponents of trapping, they claimed, were "trying to destroy our way of life." And this was just the beginning: "Once they stop trapping, they will come after hunting, and fishing, and ranching, and logging." Many of my fellow hunters also defended trapping, repeating the same arguments.

When it comes to predators like wolves or bears, it's all black-and-white to some people. You're either "one of us" or "one of them," and there is little room for rational discussion; if you don't agree with them, they attack with fervor.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

During the trapping debate, hunting organizations dusted off the “ballot-box biology” defense, saying that such decisions should be made by wildlife professionals whose opinions are based on science, not by citizens who are acting out of emotion. We hunters love to claim that our approach to wildlife management is based on science. And, of course, it should be, but too often it’s not.

The Idaho Fish and Game Department conducts aerial shooting of wolves and sends bounty hunters into wilderness areas to eliminate wolf packs despite what we know about wolf behavior, ecology and biology. That’s not management based on science.

Throughout the West, we continue to carry out a war on coyotes and wolves despite overwhelming scientific evidence that such actions disrupt the social and breeding behavior of these animals and can, ironically, result in even larger numbers of coyotes and wolves. That’s not management based on science.

Colorado proposed a ban on the baiting of bears, based on scientific evidence that the baiting of bears was having negative impacts by habituating bears to human handouts and changing their natural habits. The state’s chief bear biologist penned a piece in support of the baiting ban for Outdoor Life. Before it was published (and before anyone even read it) hunters and hunting organizations rallied against Outdoor Life and successfully prevented the publication of the piece. Two editors left their jobs over the incident. That’s not management based on science.

Wildlife management decisions are often based on public needs and desires, and that should be part of the process. But sometimes those needs and desires go against science. Trappers, hunters and the agricultural industry have a lot of power over state legislatures and wildlife management. One consequence is that other citizens feel left out of the decision-making, and are often ridiculed and attacked by hunters and trappers. Our system, with all its tremendous achievements, has flaws, and those flaws can lead us closer to animal husbandry than science-based wildlife management.

A report from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service about the flaws of the North American model of wildlife management summed it up this way: “Wildlife management conducted in the interest of hunters can lead to an overabundance of animals that people like to hunt, such as deer, and the extermination of predators that also provide a vital balance to the ecosystem.”



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

I recently heard a hunter who makes hunting videos criticize the “animal rights extremists” who file lawsuits to protect wolves, claiming such lawsuits go against “sound, scientific management” and our “North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.” Those citizens filed those lawsuits in response to states doing things such as gunning down wolves from helicopters and sending in bounty hunters to eliminate packs in wilderness areas. That’s not management based on science.

The executive director of a large, influential hunting organization has repeatedly called wolves “the worst ecological disaster since the decimation of bison,” and claims wolves and grizzly bears are “annihilating” our elk herds. That’s also not promoting management based on science.

That leads me to think that some of these ballot initiatives are, indeed, “ballot-box biology,” in the sense that they defend and demand good science when state wildlife agencies won’t.

Hunters and trappers are their own worst enemies. When they defend the indefensible — the deaths of family pets and threatened and endangered species from traps set on public lands — and attack other citizens for having legitimate concerns, they just the way lead to more ballot-box biology.

[BACK](#)

3. **Wild horses could be sold for slaughter or euthanized under Trump budget**

The Washington Post, May 26 | Karin Brulliard and Juliet Eilperin

The Bureau of Land Management spends about \$50 million a year to house and feed more than 46,000 wild horses and burros in corrals. Another 73,000 of the animals roam freely across the western states, producing foals and grazing on public lands that conservation groups say are quickly deteriorating.

It’s an escalating equine-population problem, and the fiscal 2018 budget President Trump proposed this week suggests a solution: using “humane euthanasia and unrestricted sale of certain excess animals.”

The change could lead to sales of wild horses to slaughterhouses in Mexico or Canada, as well as to the culling of herds, to address what the bureau calls an “unsustainable” situation. But it has been condemned by horse and other animal advocacy groups, some of which have consistently



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

resisted efforts to impose limits on an icon of the American West that has been federally protected since 1971.

“President Trump promised to return government to the people, and we trust that he meant it,” said Suzanne Roy, executive director of the American Wild Horse Campaign. “America can’t be great if these national symbols of freedom are destroyed.”

The Trump proposal notes that the BLM’s wild horse and burro budget has quadrupled since 2000, from \$20.4 million then to \$80.4 million in 2017, and that most of the money goes to care for animals that reside in taxpayer-funded corrals. The proposed budget anticipates saving \$10 million annually by selling some of those animals and by reducing roundups and horse and burro birth-control programs.

The use of euthanasia and sales to manage the population is not a new idea: The 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act permits the interior secretary to remove older and unadoptable animals by those methods. But for much of the past three decades, Congress has used annual appropriations bill riders to prohibit the killing of healthy animals or “sale that results in their destruction for processing into commercial products.” While it is unclear whether lawmakers would now be willing to lift the prohibition, an aide on the House Appropriations Committee said the request would be considered.

Although the last U.S. horse slaughterhouse closed in 2007, meat processing plants in Mexico and Canada slaughter tens of thousands of domestic American horses each year for export to Europe and Asia. And despite the congressional ban, some wild horses sold to private buyers have been slaughtered anyway. In November 2015, federal investigators found that a Colorado rancher to whom the government had sold 1,794 mustangs turned around and sold them to slaughterhouses in Mexico.

As the wild horses and burros, which have no natural predators, have increased in numbers, officials and conservation groups say they have depleted the amount of forage food and water available to native species in the West. That, in turn, has increased the risk of widespread starvation and thirst among these herds and wild animals on public lands.

Wild horse advocates counter that the bureau is pandering to ranchers who view the horses as competition on public range land also used for cattle grazing.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

Meanwhile, adoptions by the public — the bureau’s primary program for reducing the population in government corrals — have not increased with the population. Last year, 2,912 wild horses and burros were adopted, up from 2,583 in 2012, according to agency figures.

The budget proposal comes eight months after the bureau’s wild horse and burro advisory board, a volunteer body that makes no binding decisions, sparked an uproar among wild horse advocates by recommending euthanasia or sales for the animals. Subsequent false reports about a looming government plan to kill 45,000 wild horses prompted the BLM, then under the Obama administration, to say it “does not and will not euthanize healthy animals.”

Some board members said their recommendation was made, in part, to shock Congress into doing something about a problem they believe is spiraling out of control.

“All these horses in long-term holding are eating up 60 percent of the wild horse and burro budget. Other things can’t be done well or thoroughly because we’re feeding a lot of stockpiled horses that no one wants,” Julie Weikel, a large-animal veterinarian on the advisory committee, said in an interview this week. “I fully expect a full-court press from the advocates to put the rider back on. But I assure you that will not solve the problem.”

The question of how to address the problem appeared on Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s radar not long after he was confirmed. According to his personal schedule, he held a video call on the topic on March 24 with the BLM’s acting director, Michael Nedd, and several other senior officials.

For more than 40 years, past administrations have tried but failed to control the animals’ numbers. In 2009, then-Interior Secretary Ken Salazar proposed that the U.S. government spend roughly \$96 million to buy land in the Midwest and East to create two preserves that could each support 3,600 horses. He also suggested that federal officials partner with nonprofit organizations and other private groups to create five additional preserves, so that 25,000 animals would be living on preserves within five years. The government also would aggressively sterilize the horses and burros to keep them from reproducing.

At the time of Salazar’s proposal, about 37,000 horses and burros were roaming and another 32,000 were in holding pens. But the money did not materialize, and the number of animals on public range lands increased sharply. It now is about three times more than officials say is sustainable.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

Some animal advocacy groups say the BLM has not proactively pursued horse and burro birth control, though other activist groups have sued the agency over the use of injectable contraception and the spaying of mares. In a statement this week, Matt Bershadker, president and chief executive of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said the animals could be “humanely” managed with fertility control, but the BLM “would rather make these innocent animals pay for draconian budget cuts with their very lives.”

Weikel said she hopes Trump’s budget proposal prompts Congress to consider lifting its usual rider. Considering the proposal, along with the advisory board’s recommendation, “maybe thoughtful people...would realize we have a true problem out there. And we are not using all the tools.” In addition to euthanasia and sales, she said, permanent sterilization should be utilized more.

In a statement, the BLM said its goal “is always to find good homes for the thousands of wild horses and burros gathered from overpopulated herds on our country’s public lands.” It continued, “With an expanded suite of management tools, the BLM can strengthen its efforts to reverse the declining health of our nation’s wild horse and burro herds and manage the public lands on which they and so many other species depend.”

[BACK](#)

4. PUBLIC LANDS: Murkowski vows to fight proposed Trump cut to county payments

E & E News, May 26 | Kellie Lunney

A top Senate GOP appropriator said she plans to fight a White House proposal to cut fiscal 2018 funding for a popular tax program that helps communities with federal lands.

"Absolutely, absolutely," Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska said of her intention to oppose a recommended 15 percent cut to the payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) program the Trump administration embedded in its [\\$4.1 trillion fiscal 2018 budget request](#).

Murkowski is chairwoman of the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over the Interior Department's budget — where PILT resides.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

The Alaska Republican, who also leads the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, pays close attention to the PILT program because of its significant impact on her state, where the federal government owns 62 percent of the land.

"And, you know, it's within my budget, within Interior appropriations, so yeah, we've got an eagle eye on that one," Murkowski told E&E News on Wednesday, a day after the White House unveiled its detailed fiscal 2018 budget (Greenwire, May 23).

She's not the only lawmaker opposed to PILT cuts. Western Republicans and Democrats generally don't have an appetite for slashing a program that since 1977 has paid more than \$7.5 billion to roughly 2,000 local governments.

PILT requires the federal government to pay localities that have public lands within their boundaries to offset financial losses. Those communities cannot tax public lands within their jurisdictions, which means they're losing an important source of revenue. PILT was created to make up for that tax revenue loss.

Federal money for each locality depends on a formula that incorporates various factors, including a community's population and eligible acres of land. Jurisdictions use the funds for services like law enforcement and road maintenance.

Trump's budget blueprint requests \$397 million for PILT in fiscal 2018, \$68 million less than the \$465 million the program received in the fiscal 2017 omnibus passed this spring. The budget proposal actually reflects pre-omnibus funding numbers because the budget was prepared before Congress passed the package funding the government through the end of fiscal 2017. The \$465 million figure, about \$14 million more than the fiscal 2016 enacted level, fully funded the program.

House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah) said Wednesday that he didn't know about the PILT cut when E&E News asked him about it.

"Hmm. That becomes problematic," Bishop said of the proposed cut, "and it becomes problematic for the [Interior] secretary because the reason PILT is there in the first place is because the federal government owns the land, and therefore they [localities] can't use that for any tax base development."



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

Asked if he planned to oppose the administration's recommended PILT cut, Bishop said he didn't know. "I haven't looked at it yet."

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke supported fully funding PILT when he was a Republican congressman representing Montana from 2015 to March, when he officially became a member of the Trump administration. The Interior Department did not respond yesterday to questions about the proposed cut.

Arizona Rep. Raúl Grijalva, the top Democrat on the Natural Resources Committee, said he thought the proposed cut was "contrived" and only "a ruse to set up other kinds of discussions about public lands." The ranking member said Democrats could work across the aisle with Republicans in Congress, given the broad bipartisan support for PILT, to make sure funding for the program is a "permanent allocation instead of a year-to-year, every-two-year kind of an agony."

Lawmakers have treated PILT as both mandatory and discretionary spending over the years, depending on the fiscal year and the funding vehicle.

According to a [2015 report](#) from the Congressional Research Service, increases in spending authorization for the program based on inflation have outpaced actual funding in recent years.

"The growing discrepancy between appropriations and the rising authorization levels led to even greater levels of frustration among many local governments and prompted intense interest among some members in increasing appropriations," the report said.

'Skinny budget' foreshadowing

The White House request for less PILT money is not a surprise. The administration's "skinny budget" included one sentence about the program, proposing to support it "at a reduced level," but "in line with average funding ... over the past decade."

After the skinny budget was released, 34 senators — including nine Republicans — sent a [letter](#) to the chairman and ranking member of the Appropriations Committee asking them to fully fund PILT in fiscal 2018.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

"As counties across the country work to balance their own budgets," members wrote, "enacting full-funding for PILT is essential to provide certainty that the federal government will continue to uphold its long-standing commitment to public lands counties."

Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman John Barrasso of Wyoming, Senate Budget Chairman Mike Enzi of Wyoming, and Sens. Cory Gardner of Colorado and Steve Daines of Montana were among the Republicans who signed the letter.

Democratic signers included Energy and Natural Resources ranking member Maria Cantwell of Washington and several lawmakers who sit on the Appropriations Committee.

Daines, an appropriator who leads the Western Caucus in the Senate, said at the time that he would continue fighting for full PILT funding. "We need to make government more efficient and effective without reducing funding for important programs," he said.

The Secure Rural Schools factor

Another county payment program known as Secure Rural Schools is tied to PILT's fortunes — figuratively and literally.

The SRS program compensates counties in states like Washington, Oregon and Utah that have withstood massive timber sale losses as well as a downturn in logging and milling jobs. Congress allowed the program to expire in 2015, and Trump's budget doesn't propose reinstating it.

Without congressional action, SRS counties revert to a less lucrative law that entitles them to 25 percent of revenues from national forests.

The formula for PILT payments is intertwined with SRS, so counties that receive SRS money receive a lower PILT payment. Without SRS money, PILT funding will have to stretch further, which will be difficult with fewer overall funds.

"If Congress does not reauthorize SRS, many rural counties receiving PILT payments could face reduced payments because the previous year's SRS payments would no longer be deducted under the PILT formula," Mark Whitney, a Utah county commissioner and representative of the National Association of Counties, said during a Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing earlier this month (E&E Daily, May 3).



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

"This would completely change the PILT funding calculation from Interior, leaving the same amount of PILT funds to effectively cover both programs. Counties would be fighting for slices of a smaller pie."

Counties are looking at a "double whammy" if SRS is not reauthorized and fiscal 2018 PILT funding is cut, said Mike Anderson, a senior policy analyst with the Wilderness Society who is based in Seattle.

The interrelationship between PILT and SRS is "somewhat abstruse," Anderson said, but it soon could become very real to people.

"It could suddenly have a much bigger impact, a life impact, on counties' finances," he said. "It's going to come out of the blue to a lot of people."

Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), along with several co-sponsors including Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Cantwell and Murkowski, introduced [legislation](#) in early May reviving the SRS program. The bill would fund SRS through 2018 and authorize the federal government to pay any shortfalls in 2016 payments due to the program's expiration.

[BACK](#)

5. **FORESTS: Appropriators mull drastic measures against wildfires**

E & E News, May 26 | Marc Heller

For members of Congress worried about the rising cost of forest fires, a tone of desperation may be settling in.

A sense of urgency — and unconventional thinking — around tackling wildfires on federal land were on display yesterday at a House Appropriations subcommittee hearing on the Forest Service budget.

Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho), a senior appropriator, said he may try to block the agency's practice of borrowing funds from other programs to fight the blazes.

And Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), whose state has one national forest, said she would be willing to engage one of progressives' sworn enemies — investment bankers on Wall Street — in the effort to thin forests filled with dead wood ready to ignite.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

"We're not taking care of this problem for the country, we simply aren't, and it's not true to our heritage," Kaptur said.

"If we have to beg the private sector, go to Goldman Sachs and all these people that ripped off the people of the United States and beg the money, I'm willing to do it."

Behind the rhetoric is a crisis that's only growing. Fire management used to account for less than one-fifth of the Forest Service's budget but climbed to 50 percent a few years ago and is slated to consume 60 percent in the administration's fiscal 2018 spending blueprint.

The proposal includes \$1.06 billion for fire suppression, fully funding the 10-year average cost, and it would boost forest management overall by 16 percent, said Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, who appeared at the hearing with Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell.

But the budget reflects decreased funding for removing hazardous fuels from forests, and a bad fire year could put the agency in a financial bind.

Limiting the Forest Service's ability to borrow from other accounts would draw attention to the problem, said Simpson, who's struggled to push through a more comprehensive bill to establish a disaster fund for wildfires.

'Nuclear option'

Lawmakers without forests in their districts see the fires put out and they miss the budgeting implications, a frustrated Simpson said.

Blocking borrowing would change that, he said, by putting an emergency spending bill in front of Congress. "It would force the Forest Service to come to Congress for a supplemental, and then people would understand what the true costs of fighting these wildfires are," he said.

Such spending bills used to be an annual affair, but congressional interest has soured in recent years, with members seeing them as a sign of irresponsible budgeting.

Still, Simpson said he's thinking about proposing bill language to Rep. Ken Calvert (R-Calif.), the subcommittee's chairman.

Perdue urged lawmakers not to take that route.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

"I hope that we will be able to prevail on your best choice, which is the fire budget, rather than the nuclear option of preclusion, because that would put the chief and us in a pretty untenable position having a fire," Perdue said.

Legislation establishing an emergency fund for wildfires nearly passed Congress last year as part of a broader energy measure.

But the energy package stumbled at the end of the year, in part because Congress ran out of time before adjourning. The measure would have treated wildfires similarly to tornadoes, floods and other natural disasters, helping the Forest Service plan for them, said a chief proponent, Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.).

"I think we got awfully close in the last Congress," Daines told E&E News. "We're getting closer every Congress."

The legislation could also boost timber production, an issue pro-timber lawmakers pressed at the hearing. In some areas, timber sales by the Forest Service are barely 15 percent of what regulations allow, said Rep. Evan Jenkins (R-W.Va.).

"Good neighbor" authority in the 2014 farm bill is helping increase timber harvests in some places by encouraging work with nonfederal partners, Tidwell said. But Perdue said he's not fully satisfied.

"These are not good statistics here," Perdue said. "These are crops. Those are crops there that ought to be harvested for the benefit of the American public."

"A breath of fresh air, Mr. Secretary," Jenkins said.

[BACK](#)

6. **COAL: McKinley offers House bill to rescue miner pensions**

E & E News, May 26 | Dylan Brown

Rep. David McKinley rolled out legislation yesterday that would rescue pensions for more than 120,000 retired union coal miners.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

It is the third straight Congress that the West Virginia Republican and Congressional Coal Caucus chairman is offering the bill.

McKinley did secure a partial victory for the United Mine Workers of America with a retiree health care deal in the most recent omnibus spending bill.

While miner pension reform has some bipartisan support, McKinley's "Coal Healthcare and Pension Protection Act" must overcome opposition from conservative lawmakers who see no difference between the UMWA's fund and other imperiled private pension funds.

The union contends a series of federal actions dating back to 1946 constitute a "promise" to prop up benefits.

McKinley and Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio), a sponsor of Senate companion bill S. 1105, have argued that it makes more fiscal sense to keep the UMWA funds solvent in order to prevent placing an untenable burden on the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp.

"The longer we wait to tackle this problem the harder it will be to solve," McKinley said in a statement. "Our coal miners deserve the peace of mind to know their financial security will not be threatened."

[BACK](#)

7. PIPELINES: Bills would shore up permitting, safety

E & E News, May 26 | Sam Mintz

Democratic lawmakers in both chambers unleashed a flurry of legislation this week aimed at oil and gas pipelines in their regions.

In the House, Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-N.J.) reintroduced legislation that takes aim at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's reputation for "rubber-stamping" pipeline applications.

In the past 10 years, FERC has approved more than 250 natural gas pipelines while denying only three, and 90 percent of applications are approved within a year, said Watson Coleman.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

H.R. 2649, the "SAFER Pipelines Act," would require FERC to hold hearings on challenges to projects' public necessity.

It would also direct FERC to monitor the environmental impacts of approved and constructed projects for five years after they are completed.

At a news conference earlier this month in her home state, Watson Coleman singled out the PennEast Pipeline, a proposed natural gas line that would run from Pennsylvania to New Jersey. FERC is set to make a final decision on PennEast once it regains a quorum (E&E News PM, April 7).

"This PennEast proposal continues to be an example of FERC's lack of diligence and narrow review process: 110 miles of this proposed pipeline would slice through land, green spaces and even the backyards of New Jersey taxpayers," Watson Coleman said May 10, according to prepared remarks provided to E&E News by her staff.

"Moreover, the New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel and independent energy experts have found no evidence of public need for the project."

She went on to add that FERC staff has also yet to show any recommendations, data or analysis on the need for the pipeline.

In the Senate, Michigan Democrats Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow introduced a package of bills they say would increase pipeline safety in the Great Lakes region.

The three pieces of legislation would increase liability caps for pipelines in and near the lakes, which are currently classified as "onshore" despite crossing miles of open water.

The legislation would also expand Department of Transportation authority to suspend or shut down pipelines and strengthen oil spill response and cleanup plans.

"The Great Lakes ecosystem is unlike any other in the world, and many existing pipeline safety rules and regulations do not adequately protect this precious resource from a disastrous oil spill," said Peters in a statement.

"Senator Stabenow and I are working together to hold Great Lakes pipeline operators to the highest standards and help protect against the catastrophic consequences of a worst-case spill



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

that would endanger our environment and the multi-billion shipping, tourism and fishing industries supported by the Great Lakes."

The two lawmakers touted their bills as building on provisions that became law as part of the PIPES Act signed by President Obama last year.

None of the Democratic legislation is likely to pass the House or Senate without support from Republicans, who have focused legislative efforts on streamlining regulations and making it easier to develop infrastructure projects.

[BACK](#)

8. **SECURITY: Gas industry says 'trust us' on tracking cyberthreats**

E & E News, May 26 | Peter Behr, Blake Sobczak and Hannah Northey

At the end of a Senate hearing last month, Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) challenged Dave McCurdy, president of the American Gas Association, to say how Congress and the public can be confident about the cybersecurity defenses of the nation's natural gas infrastructure when no one is keeping score.

"We still don't have the metrics needed to measure the relative cybersecurity of our pipeline systems," Cantwell said, citing assessments by the Government Accountability Office.

The Transportation Security Administration and other agencies under the Department of Homeland Security were directed by the Obama administration in October 2014 to create those metrics, so the government can measure the strength of its defense against efforts to sabotage the United States' critical infrastructure. For its part, TSA is responsible for overseeing the security of more than 300,000 miles of natural gas pipelines.

In February, GAO told Congress that the agencies under DHS had not provided those metrics.

The Department of Energy revealed in January that it was in the dark, too. Although gas pipeline cybersecurity is not DOE's responsibility, DOE officials in the departing Obama administration surprisingly called for an audit of gas pipeline cybersecurity to determine whether mandatory regulations were needed. The safety of the nation's electric power grid is a national security



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

priority, DOE said, and the grid is increasingly dependent on natural gas to fuel generators (Energywire, Jan. 11).

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the chief regulator of interstate gas pipelines, is also flying blind about the risks, which prompted Norman Bay, who was FERC chairman at the time, to ask DOE to request the pipeline audit, according to informed sources. Since then, FERC has offered to conduct voluntary cybersecurity audits of gas pipelines.

Industry officials interviewed by E&E News said they also are not systematically tracking the cybersecurity posture of interstate natural gas pipelines and local distributors.

AGA, which represents local distributors of natural gas, does not have a comprehensive scorecard of pipelines' cybersecurity performance, according to an association official authorized to comment but not by name. Nor does the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America, whose members are the large, long-haul pipelines. Terry Boss, senior vice president for security at INGAA, was asked how many pipeline companies received TSA reviews on cybersecurity, and he replied: "We are just not sure. However, I do know of some audits that did include cybersecurity."

Inside the borders

The threat of a cyberattack against pipeline and power grid control centers was hammered home in 2014 by DHS's Industrial Control Systems Cyber Emergency Response Team (Energywire, July 1, 2014). It held meetings at FBI field offices around the country to brief infrastructure operators about malware that secretly breaks into inventory network systems, like bank robbers casing a target.

Joseph McClelland, director of FERC's Office of Energy Infrastructure Security, said the supply of gas to the nation's power generators is becoming ever more critical. "Don't think our adversaries aren't well-aware of that fact," he told state regulators earlier this year.

"They are already inside our borders. We can assume they're already here," AGA's McCurdy said in an interview with E&E News, confirming warnings of cybersecurity professionals. "The major [cyberthreat] players are doing a lot of mapping. They have the capability. But do they have the intent?"



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

At last month's hearing of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, McCurdy said the industry is on top of the cybersecurity threats, citing pledges by industry leaders. AGA companies' chief executives have signed a voluntary commitment to protect gas pipeline infrastructure, McCurdy said. "We have every investor-owned [gas] utility as a member of AGA," he told E&E News. "If they are holding out, they wouldn't be a member" (Energywire, April 5).

Shannon Bañaga, an energy industry attorney and member of the Trump energy transition team, said the companies fully understand that all of their necks are on the line.

"If a security event happens to one company, it happens to all of us, and it's up to us to make sure that doesn't happen," she added. "To believe that additional federal oversight is necessary simply because it isn't required misses the point. It isn't required because there hasn't been a demonstrated need."

The gas and pipeline industry repeatedly points to its close relationship with TSA as the foundation of its cybersecurity preparation. "The TSA does regular audits; they do cooperate and work closely [with the industry]," McCurdy told Cantwell at the hearing. "They are the subject matter experts."

But TSA has only six career staff members on duty for pipeline cybersecurity oversight, and not all of them are cyber experts. Congressional researchers have questioned the effectiveness of a voluntary system overseen by an underfunded and undermanned sliver of DHS. During a House committee hearing last year, the industry acknowledged TSA was operating on a shoestring. Speaking for AGA, National Grid security director Kathy Judge criticized a 2014 reorganization by TSA that "dismantled effective programs" on pipeline cybersecurity and said that TSA capabilities were "slowly recovering."

AGA conducts "peer reviews" of pipelines' security practices patterned after those in the nuclear power industry. "We did 25 peer reviews this year alone," McCurdy said, describing a weeklong visit to pipeline companies. AGA is concluding a three-year cycle of reviews that will have covered utilities that supply three-quarters of the nation's gas customers.

But how companies defend against cyberattacks is not part of the review, and there is no plan to add cyber questions, McCurdy said. The distribution utilities' threat-sharing organization, the



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

Downstream Natural Gas Information Sharing and Analysis Center (DNG-ISAC), has a fraction of the capabilities of its grid counterpart, the Electricity ISAC, officials confirm.

E-ISAC, dating back to 1999, has a score of full-time staff on watch duty, threat analysis and response, and training for cyber and physical threats. Suspected cyberthreats are channeled to the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory for state-of-the-art screening. Some security-cleared E-ISAC personnel are assigned to DHS's National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center, a top-secret hub in the Washington, D.C., area where analysts investigate cyberthreats and vulnerabilities to critical infrastructure.

A single threat analyst is on duty at DNG-ISAC. Around-the-clock staffing is not yet considered essential. "Our staff size does not dictate our effectiveness. Through partnerships we can scale to meet threats head on," said the AGA official. The official added that DNG-ISAC sprang into action when the WannaCry ransomware cyberattack spread across the country earlier this month. The ISAC said it worked with DHS, TSA, DOE and intelligence agencies to collect and share software patches, attack signatures and other data with its members. It confirmed within hours that the U.S. natural gas sector had not been compromised, the AGA official said.

Still, even as the natural gas ISAC binds more closely to the electricity sector's ISAC, the AGA official acknowledged that the threat-sharing process "is still in its infancy."

Mandatory standards? 'No'

FERC's unusual audit offer to gas pipelines — over which it has no regulatory authority — is also voluntary: The FERC teams must be invited in.

"We go out and work with some of the largest owners and operators of interstate natural pipelines, and we do a comprehensive [information technology] review," FERC's McClelland said at a regulatory conference this year.

"It takes two days to get through that, and we look at everything," he said. "At the end of the two-day review, we give them the results and tell them every place we think there are vulnerabilities, and we assist them to fix those problems. And without fail, they fix them."

But like TSA, FERC's capacity to do on-site reviews is limited, he told state regulators. "We have a significant backlog of folks who have asked for these reviews," McClelland said.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

For more than a year, the natural gas industry has been digging in to oppose any suggestion of mandatory federal regulation of its cybersecurity readiness. In contrast to the gas industry's preference for a voluntary approach, operators on the high-voltage electric power grid must meet FERC's highly specific, mandatory Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) rules backed by potential fines of up to \$1 million a day per violation.

National Grid's Judge praised TSA for having "strategically refrained from executing its regulatory authority" to adopt mandatory cyber rules. "TSA is to be commended for choosing the more constructive path, partnering with owners [and] operators."

TSA's inability to create a cybersecurity assessment for gas pipelines is partly the result of pushback from the industry. It said the industry and other companies operating critical infrastructure have been reluctant to share information TSA needs to monitor companies' cybersecurity performance "because they fear regulation," GAO reported in 2015.

McCurdy had a one-word answer ready on the issue during last month's Senate hearing.

"On the gas side, do you think the industry would be better with mandatory standards?" committee Chairwoman Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) asked McCurdy.

"No," McCurdy replied.

Since President Trump's victory, a gas industry that raised many millions of dollars to support him and then helped fill out his White House transition team is calling in its chits to defend voluntary cybersecurity standards and oppose any version of the federal rules for power grids drawn up by the North American Electric Reliability Corp. (NERC) and acted on by FERC.

The Obama DOE's recommendation for an audit of pipeline cybersecurity readiness, with mandatory cyber rules to follow if needed, made in DOE's Quadrennial Energy Review 1.2 report in January, was dead on arrival in a Trump administration committed to wiping out regulations affecting oil and gas production.

"I don't think anyone wants to raise a hand for more regulation," said Bañaga, the Trump transition team member.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

"I don't know of anyone in those [downstream gas] companies saying we need to apply NERC CIP to this. We don't think that actually provides the confidence that we think is needed for us to do what we do," McCurdy said.

NERC CEO Gerry Cauley, on the same Senate hearing panel with McCurdy, disagreed. "I think mandatory requirements have a place. What was done in the bulk power system is an appropriate mix. We want to make sure everyone is meeting a threshold set of requirements," he said. "We can be harmed by the weakest link."

Paul Stockton, former assistant secretary of Defense for homeland defense and managing director of consulting firm Sonecon LLC, said regulation doesn't bar companies from going further than rules require. "Mandatory standards [in the electricity sector] have provided a valuable baseline for security initiatives, but many utilities, thank goodness, have gone beyond those minimal standards ... investing in their own resources to provide for additional resilience against cyberattack."

INGAA's Boss noted that U.S. pipeline infrastructure is much less interconnected and thus much less vulnerable to a cascading failure than the tightly synchronized electric grid. Power travels at near light speed, while gas moves at 20 miles an hour, giving gas system operators much more time to respond, Boss said.

But pipeline systems' vulnerabilities increase as the industry adopts more automated controls, said Sam Visner, senior vice president and general manager of cybersecurity at ICF International, a consulting firm that has analyzed gas system vulnerabilities.

"For better or worse, and hopefully for better, the nation's gas pipeline infrastructure is going to be increasingly IT-enabled, with more and more devices having internet protocol addresses used to manage this infrastructure," Visner said, referring to pipelines' supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems.

"If a SCADA system is in fact internet-facing, and if it were not protected properly, then certainly it could be vulnerable," he said.

Weak links

As last month's Senate hearing wound down, Cantwell asked McCurdy to join committee staff in creating a process for assessing pipeline cybersecurity defenses.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

"Now, I know when you say something like that, people will tell you, 'Wait, wait. We don't want any new regulation,'" Cantwell said. "But at the same time, I'm for the collaborative effort, I am. But I think that we have to have some measurables here that we need to put in place. So we'll be looking at that."

Cantwell said she hoped she could count on the industry's support in creating benchmarks of cybersecurity performance. McCurdy didn't respond directly to Cantwell's request. Later, an AGA official reiterated the industry group's position that government mandates should be off the table.

"The best assurance is [for members of Congress] to get off the dais and actually see what is happening, and dig more deeply than five-minute testimony," McCurdy said. "They will learn. And I think they will have more confidence in us."

"I don't lay awake at night worrying about Southern Co.'s cybersecurity programs, ConEd [Consolidated Edison], Mid-American," three of the largest electric power companies that also have gas systems, he added. "They have the capabilities."

But officials in the electricity industry worry about power-sector and pipeline operators that fall short on cyber defense, particularly when so much of the nation's energy backbones are connected.

The elevated risk to natural gas and electricity supplies stems from their reliance on interconnected delivery networks where a sophisticated attack could have cascading effects. As the 2003 Northeast electric power blackout and other widespread outages showed, a company that cuts corners on reliability puts its neighbors in danger. A wide-ranging cyberattack on part of the power grid in Ukraine in 2015 did not take down all of its targets, just the weakest links.

[BACK](#)

9. **METHANE: Groups warn EPA against pausing oil and gas standards**

E & E News, May 26 | Ellen M. Gilmer

A coalition of environmental groups is urging the Trump administration to maintain upcoming deadlines for oil and gas operators to cut emissions of methane, a potent greenhouse gas.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

More than 60 conservation, health, labor and faith groups yesterday sent a letter to U.S. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt urging him to keep in place Obama-era standards that require oil and gas companies to address methane leaks from new and modified sources.

EPA is currently reviewing the New Source Performance Standards as part of a broad reconsideration of several Obama administration rules. Pruitt wrote a letter to industry last month promising to postpone a June 3 deadline for the methane rule.

The agency is expected to formalize that pledge as soon as today. Environmental groups are likely to challenge that action in court.

The advocacy groups signing on to yesterday's letter argue that postponing the compliance deadlines will harm the climate, taxpayers and communities near oil and gas facilities.

"This stay will increase health risks for numerous Americans living in close proximity to wells and other facilities, which will emit significant amounts of additional hazardous and smog-forming pollution that would otherwise have been reduced," the groups wrote. "The stay will also add thousands of tons of methane, a highly potent greenhouse gas, to an atmosphere already overburdened with heat-trapping pollutants.

"Further," they added, "the stay will cause the waste of substantial volumes of valuable natural gas."

Opponents who took the Obama administration to court over the standards have denounced the rule as expensive and duplicative of existing state and industry efforts to reduce methane emissions. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit recently paused the litigation while the Trump administration rethinks the rule.

"American businesses should have the opportunity to review new requirements, assess economic impacts and report back, before those new requirements are finalized," Pruitt told industry last month (Greenwire, April 19).

The environmental coalition pushed back yesterday, saying that oil and gas companies would incur "expenditures that represent a tiny fraction of these companies' tens of billions of dollars in annual revenues."



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

The letter's signatories include the Natural Resources Defense Council, Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Fund and many other national groups, as well as local organizations including PennFuture, the Ohio Environmental Council and the Wyoming Outdoor Council.

Several health, labor and faith groups also signed on, including Physicians for Social Responsibility, Interfaith Power & Light and the Utility Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO.

[BACK](#)

10. **COURTS: Top oil and gas lobby wants out of climate case**

E & E News, May 26 | Benjamin Hulac

The American Petroleum Institute, an influential lobbying and advocacy group for the oil and gas industry, is trying to exit a climate change lawsuit a group of children brought against the federal government.

API is the second trade group involved in the case that wants out of it, following a similar announcement by the National Association of Manufacturers on Monday.

Joined by the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, the trio intervened against the plaintiffs in 2015, arguing that the suit is a threat to their financial lifeblood. AFPM has not indicated if it wants to withdraw from the case.

As E&E News reported this week, there has been unease among the industry groups, in part due to the possibility that the plaintiffs could force them to turn over internal climate change records, and as many as all three were considering departing the suit (Climatewire, May 23).

The 21 plaintiffs, led by the nonprofit legal group Our Children's Trust, are demanding that the U.S. government admit it has violated their constitutional rights to a safe environment by knowingly exacerbating climate change, in part through subsidizing fossil fuel emissions and extraction.

The judge must grant parties permission before they can leave the case.

In court papers filed yesterday, API said neither of the other industry groups opposed its decision to pull out.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

"API no longer seeks to pursue its right to participate as an intervenor in the district court proceedings at this time," the court motion reads.

Yesterday was the deadline for the intervening groups to respond to a series of questions about climate change posed by the plaintiffs. The answers to those questions, called requests for admissions, would carry legal weight of their own. And leaving the case would allow the intervenors, essentially defendants in the case, to avoid the discovery process.

"What is noticeably absent from these withdrawal motions is the reason why the fossil fuel industry wants to leave the case," Philip Gregory, co-lead counsel for the plaintiffs, said in an emailed statement.

"After these youths sued the government, the trade associations pleaded their members' interests would be destroyed if they weren't allowed to be in the case, but now they are running for the hills," said Julia Olson, co-lead counsel for the plaintiffs and the director of Our Children's Trust. "Now, they've decided they're better off being on the sidelines than subjecting themselves to discovery."

Lawyers for the trade groups have argued that addressing climate change should be reserved for Congress, and industry spokespeople agreed.

"This case is about separation of powers among the three branches of government," an API spokesman said by email. "We have full confidence that the courts will recognize that Congress and the Executive branch have the constitutional authority to write and execute the laws of the U.S."

Linda Kelly, general counsel for NAM, said the group assesses its involvement in lawsuits after elections.

"We fully support the efforts of the remaining defendants to push back against the plaintiffs' ill-conceived legal theory of regulation by court decree," Kelly said.

In its court papers, API said the federal government had not said if it supported API's request to withdraw.

[BACK](#)



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

11. **TECHNOLOGY: Scientists say CO2 is better than steam for power production**

E & E News, May 26 | Umair Irfan

Engineers are working to turn carbon dioxide from a climate pollutant into an energy workhorse, potentially spurring some of the biggest changes in electricity production in more than a century.

Roughly 80 percent of the world's electricity comes from steam turbines, whether fired with fossil fuels, nuclear fission or concentrated sunlight.

These turbines are almost identical across different energy sources, but they are hitting the upper limits of their performance, so scientists are looking for ways to continue to squeeze out more electrons using the same amount of fuel, a necessary step to driving down costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

In an article published online yesterday in the journal *Science*, researchers laid out an approach for using a greenhouse gas to curb greenhouse gases.

In particular, researchers are looking at supercritical carbon dioxide. "Supercritical" refers to the conditions where a substance has the density of a liquid but fills containers like a gas. For carbon dioxide, this occurs at pressures above 73 atmospheres and 31 degrees Celsius.

Researchers say this confers important advantages over steam turbines.

"The critical point of CO₂ is near room temperature and allows efficient input of compressive work; steam's high critical point prohibits this and actually acts as a heat sink, decreasing cycle efficiency," wrote researchers Levi Irwin, principal scientist at ManTech SRS Technologies, and Yann Le Moullec, chief engineer at Électricité de France, China R&D.

What that means is that a supercritical turbine can extract more work from heat than conventional turbines. Already, some power plants are using supercritical steam to drive generators, which can yield a 30 percent increase in efficiency.

Switching from water to carbon dioxide adds other advantages.

"The molecular weight of CO₂ is nearly 2.5 times that of water, and its bonding is drastically different; consequently, it offers a supercritical fluid with nearly 50% higher density, and turbines can be smaller," the authors wrote.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

So why isn't every power plant running on supercritical carbon dioxide

The big problem is that supercritical carbon dioxide is difficult to work with and the technology hasn't yet caught up. Maintaining a supercritical state inside a turbine requires precise and accurate pressure controls, and carbon dioxide can be corrosive if water leaks in.

But the benefits are immense, and fossil, nuclear and renewable energy sources can all benefit from turbines that take up less space and extract more work to make electricity.

Researchers say that retrofitting existing steam turbine power plants with supercritical carbon dioxide turbines could yield a 30 percent efficiency gain, which would pay back the investment in as little as four years.

On a coal or natural gas power plant, upgrading to supercritical carbon dioxide would halve the cost of sequestering carbon dioxide.

Now, some steam is building up.

The Department of Energy last year launched an \$80 million test facility for a 10-megawatt supercritical carbon dioxide turbine, pooling resources from the agency's offices of fossil energy, nuclear energy and renewable energy.

"The selection of this test facility will help to further our nation's climate goals by bringing us one step closer to deploying this exciting technology on a commercial scale," Franklin Orr, former DOE undersecretary for science and energy, said in a press release last year.

[BACK](#)

12. **NATIONAL MONUMENTS: Comments on Interior review heavily favor status quo — group**

E & E News, May 26 | Jennifer Yachnin

Public comments on an Interior Department review of the status of dozens of national monuments is skewing heavily in favor of retaining existing designations, including the Bears Ears National Monument in southeastern Utah, according to a new analysis by the Center for Western Priorities.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

Ahead of tonight's deadline for comments on whether the Trump administration should pursue changes to Bears Ears monument, Interior reported collecting more than 100,000 submissions on the website Regulations.gov.

According to its analysis, the Center for Western Priorities reported yesterday that 96 percent of those submissions "expressed support for national monument designations," with 3 percent opposing current designations.

At the time of its survey, approximately 90,000 comments had been collected, and the center randomly sampled 500 submissions. The survey had a margin of error of 4 percentage points.

More than half of the submissions examined also specifically referenced the Bears Ears monument, with a similar level of support for maintaining the existing site.

"The overwhelming support for Bears Ears should come as no surprise," said CWP Executive Director Jennifer Rokala. "National monuments are monuments to America's heritage and history. They're wildly popular across the country, and Bears Ears is no exception."

President Trump issued an executive order in late April directing the Interior Department to review the status of dozens of monuments created since 1996, with a particular focus on those sites comprising more than 100,000 acres.

The final review will include an assessment of 27 monuments, with a particular focus on the 1.35-million-acre Bears Ears site, which President Obama designated in his final weeks in office.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is set to issue an interim report on the review by June 10, at which time he could make recommendations about whether to reduce the boundaries of the Utah monument or rescind its status entirely.

A final report on all monuments under review is due by late August.

During a recent visit to Utah to tour both Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, created during the Clinton administration, Zinke stressed the importance of the comment collection at Regulations.gov as a key indicator of public sentiment about the monuments (Greenwire, May 11).



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

"This is the first time ever a formal comment period has been set up in order to give local communities a voice in Antiquities Act monument designations, and advocates for all sides of the issue took advantage of the opportunity to have their voices heard," said Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift. The Antiquities Act of 1906 is the law under which presidents may designate federal lands as monuments to protect areas of scientific, cultural or historical value.

Swift added: "Advocates can be confident that a team here at the Department will review every single comment that was submitted. The Secretary met with advocates on all sides of the issue and is encouraged by the public's participation in the process."

In a statement, Zinke echoed comments he made during his visit to Utah, in which he said he remains an "optimist" about the review process and its outcome.

"After being on the ground for a few days and talking to people on all sides I think everyone has a lot more in common than previously thought. Everyone wants to preserve the important areas, the question is what vehicle of land management," Zinke said. During his tour of Bears Ears, Zinke told E&E News all options remained on the table but did discount the idea of national park status.

But groups like the Utah Diné Bikéyah, a Navajo environmental group that supports the Bears Ears monument, criticized Zinke for failing to hold public forums during his visit, arguing that many Native Americans do not have access to internet or cellular service in the San Juan County area.

"We're really concerned about the lack of sensitivity to what the conditions are in southern San Juan County. There's very little internet down there; there's very little cell service; there's also huge language barriers," Utah Diné Bikéyah Executive Director Gavin Noyes told E&E News. "We feel like this 15-day comment period ... really just leaves out all of the local Native American supporters and the community members that have worked so hard to keep the area protected."

The Utah Diné Bikéyah, which has gathered nearly 20,000 comments for submission, held its own listening session Wednesday night, Noyes said, during which it videotaped submissions from tribal elders that it plans to submit to the Interior Department.

"DOI should have been more sensitive to the structure of how they're doing this," Noyes said.



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

Dozens of other organizations likewise opted to solicit and bundle feedback about the monument process — the 15-day comment period is shorter than the standard window for public feedback on most regulatory processes — which CWP reported total about 685,000 additional comments.

Among those collecting feedback are Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Earthjustice, NextGen Climate, the National Parks Conservation Association, the Center for American Progress, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the National Audubon Society, the Outdoor Industry Association and the National Wildlife Federation.

Earthjustice told E&E News that it had collected more than 69,000 comments via its own online action center, including nearly 16,000 personalized missives.

"Though they were only given a brief window to do so, the public has roared its support for Bears Ears National Monument," said Earthjustice managing attorney Heidi McIntosh.

"Americans everywhere are urging Secretary Zinke to stand with the Native American tribes with sacred ties to these lands, documenting the economic benefits of national monuments, quoting Teddy Roosevelt, and sharing their experiences exploring this special landscape. By the end of the comment period, we expect Secretary Zinke will receive over a half-million comments in support of Bears Ears National Monument, solidifying its importance as a national treasure."

Democratic leaders weigh in

Democratic leaders in Congress issued their own letter to Zinke yesterday, urging the Interior secretary to "reject efforts" to alter any of the national monuments.

"These treasured landscapes and cultural and historic landmarks are woven into the fabric of our country," wrote Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York, Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin of Illinois, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California and House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer of Maryland.

"That is why we are deeply troubled by the President's April 26th executive order establishing a process that could lead to the diminishment or outright repeal of national monuments designated by his predecessors," the letter continued. "It is unconscionable to think that this Administration would sell out America's outdoor heritage to benefit corporate interests in the oil, gas, and mining industries."



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

DAILY NEWS REPORT - UTAH

The missive follows a letter from House Natural Resources Committee ranking member Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and 85 other Democrats yesterday that cautioned Zinke that only Congress has the authority to reduce the boundaries or revoke the status of national monuments (Greenwire, May 25).

[BACK](#)