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[DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 09-28-17.docx](#)

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 9/28/17**

Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison

**STATUS OF THE SECRETARY**

9/27-9/28 – Travel to Gateway National Recreation Area in New Jersey, various National Park Assets in Philadelphia (including Valley Forge), meeting with County Commissioners.

9/29 DC – Remarks at Heritage Foundation on “A Vision for Energy Dominance”

Meeting regarding Shawnee Trust

**STATUS OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY**

TODAY: The Deputy Secretary is in Santa Fe, NM.

9/27-9/28 Santa Fe, NM – Deliver Remarks and Sign the Minute 323 Agreement with Mexico

9/29 – DC – Various meetings

**MEDIA TODAY**

N/A

**WH COMMS REPORT**

**N/A**

**AGENCY MEDIA**

**WEEK AHEAD September 27 thru October 5, 2017**

**U.S. Department of the Interior**

*Secretarial-level Announcements/Events/Interviews*

- **September TBD: Department-level Release:** DOI and BLM will announce the totals from all September oil and gas lease sales.

- **October 5: Department-level Release:** DOI and BOEM press release on Proposed Notice of Sale for Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 250.

### **National Park Service**

- **September 27 (tent.): Local NPS Release:** NPS will issue a news release regarding the independent review panel findings that Golden Gate National Recreation Area dog rule process was unaffected by inappropriate personal email use.
- **September 29: National NPS Release:** NPS will issue a release regarding National Public Lands Day that will highlight the upcoming entrance fee-free day and volunteer service projects.
- **October 2 (tent.): National NPS Release:** NPS will announce the Director's Partnership Awards, which recognizes 17 NPS partners who supported six different complex, multi-year projects, including historic building rehab and trail construction projects.
- **September/October TBD: National NPS Release:** Historic Preservation Tax Credits: NPS and/or DOI announcement of annual Rutgers report on NPS Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program economic impact. Tax credits 2016 contributed \$12.3 billion in output to the U.S. economy, added \$6.2 billion in GDP. Historic preservation tax incentives encourage investments in historic preservation and revitalization of communities small and large across the country.

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

- **September TBD: Local FWS Release:** By September 29, FWS plans to send to the Federal Register a final listing determination for the Kenk's amphipod, a crustacean from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. This action is not controversial. Stakeholders are the Center for Biological Diversity, Friends of the Capital Crescent Trail, Fort A.P. Hill, and the NPS.
- **September TBD: Local FWS Release:** FWS will announce a six-month extension of the final determination of list the Louisiana pine snake, found in Louisiana and Texas. While the Louisiana pine snake listing is controversial, the six-month extension is not expected to be controversial.
- **September TBD: Local FWS Release:** FWS will announce the Candy darter, a fish found in Virginia and West Virginia, proposed ESA listing. This action is not expected to be controversial.
- **September TBD: Local FWS Release:** FWS will announce the proposed listings of three Southeast darters. FWS plans to propose ESA listing determinations for the bridled darter, holiday darter and trispot darter, three fish found in Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee. This action is not controversial.
- **September TBD: Local FWS Release:** FWS will announce the final listing of four Everglades plants the Everglades bully, Florida pineland crabgrass, pineland sandmat and Florida prairie-clover, plants that occur in south Florida.

This action is not controversial.

- **September TBD: Local FWS Release(s):** FWS will send 12-month findings on 25 species, finding that none warrant ESA protections. These findings are for 14 Nevada springsnail species, Barbour's map turtle, Big Blue Springs cave crayfish, Bicknell's thrush, black-backed woodpecker, boreal toad, fisher, Florida Keys mole skink, Great Sand Dunes tiger beetle, Kirtland's snake, Pacific walrus and San Felipe gambusia. Outreach will be conducted on a region-by-region basis, including news releases with supporting FAQs where appropriate, to be sent to stakeholders and members of Congress. Some findings may be controversial. The Bicknell's thrush, fisher and Pacific walrus will likely attract significant media attention.
- **October 2: National FWS Release:** FWS will announce National Wildlife Refuge Week, which will take place October 8-14. Refuge Week is an annual celebration of the nation's wildlife conservation heritage and the national wildlife refuges that protect it. The timing provides notice for print and online media to announce the annual celebration and regional events for the public to plan ahead, as well as for the regions and refuges to begin preparing additional promotional information.

#### **Bureau of Land Management**

- **September 28 (tent.): National BLM Release:** BLM will issue a release regarding their announcement to seek nominations for 18 of their 36 Resource Advisory Councils.
- **October 2:** The 30-day comment period for the public to submit suggestions for priorities not yet considered for Round 11 of the Lincoln County Archaeological Initiative concludes. Existing priorities include use of innovative technology for preserving and interpreting archaeological resources; public outreach and education on archaeology; development and application of archaeological contexts; and archaeological identification and evaluation research.
- **October 2:** BLM-NM Acting State Director Aden Seidlitz and Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Kate MacGregor will speak at the annual New Mexico Oil and Gas Association conference.

#### **Bureau of Reclamation**

- **September 27-29:** Reclamation will join the Colorado River Basin States and other stakeholders in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for collaborative discussions of Colorado River issues, challenges and solutions, at the biennial Colorado River Symposium.

#### **Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement**

- **October 3 (tent.): National BSEE Release:** BSEE will put out a read-out highlighting BSEE Director Angelle's activities and meetings in Anchorage, Alaska. Social media platforms will be used to amplify News Brief.

### **Bureau of Indian Affairs**

- **October 2:** Gavin Clarkson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Energy and Economic Development will lead a consultation on revisions of the “Licensed Indian Traders” regulations at the Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA) 2017 Fall Finance & Tribal Economies Conference, River Spirit Casino Resort, 8330 Riverside Pkwy, Tulsa, OK.

### **CONGRESSIONAL**

**UPCOMING SCIA ROUNDTABLE:** The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs is hosting a roundtable on “Best Practices in Tribal Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement: Federal Permitting and Infrastructure Project Review in Indian Country.” The federal panel is set to include USACE, FCC, and DOT. A DOI participant is pending but will likely discuss permitting and ROWs.

**Timing:** 2:30 pm, September 28, 2017

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

**UPCOMING SCIA HEARING:** The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs is holding an oversight hearing on “Doubling Down on Indian Gaming: Examining New Issues and Opportunities for Success in the Next 30 Years.” The Department has been asked to speak to the challenges of off reservation gaming and any new policies on the overall issue. Witness is set to be John Tahsuda, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. Chairman of the NIGC, Jonodev Osceola Chaudhuri, has also been asked to testify on the federal panel.

**Timing:** 2:30 pm, October 4, 2017

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

### **POLITICAL APPOINTEE UPDATE**

DOI politicals on board = 56

3 confirmed as of 9/18.

4 nominated awaiting confirmation:

Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.

Pending Senate floor vote: Brenda Berman, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation.

Pending Senate floor vote: Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals (Voted out of Committee 9/19)

Pending Senate floor vote: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor (Voted out of Committee 9/19)

Overall:

Schedule C: 32 of 68 onboard; 4 starting; 7 in process

NC-SES: 21 of 44 onboard; 4 starting; 3 in process

PAS: 3 Confirmed; 4 Announced; 15 of 17 Submitted to PPO

### **SECRETARY SPEAKING INVITATIONS**

Accepted

9/29 – Heritage Public Event (DC)  
11/9 - America First Energy Conference hosted by Heartland Institute (Houston, TX)  
Oct (TBC date) - Weyrich Lunch (DC)  
Open (date TBC)- Americans for Tax Reform (DC)  
Open (date TBC)- Detroit Economic Club

Outstanding Invitations in Process

10/11 - Remarks at 2nd National Wildlife Refuge System Expo co-hosted by the Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus and the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) (DC)  
  
10/15 - National Congress of American Indians 74 Annual Convention (Milwaukee, WI)  
  
10/26 - Montana Chamber Annual Meeting (Great Falls, MT)

Declining

9/28-30 - Council for National Policy  
10/1-3 - New Mexico Oil and Gas Association (Santa Fe)  
10/2 - IOGCC Annual Meeting (Pittsburgh PA)  
10 /3 12th Annual Government to Government Violence Against Women Tribal Consultation (DC)  
10/3 – ShaleTech Permian (Odessa, Texas)  
10/4 - NOIA Fall Meeting (Cody, WY)  
10/5 – Alamocita Creek Land Protection and Access Project Celebration and Tour (Pie Town, NM)  
10/13 - Public Land & Resources Law Review's Public Land Law Conference (Missoula, MT)  
10/15-17 – Heritage Annual President's Club Meeting (DC)  
10/16 - Carlsbad Mayor's Energy Summit (Carlsbad, NM)  
10/20 - TXOGA Lone Star Energy Forum (Woodlands, TX)  
11/14 – George Rogers Clark National Historical Park Quarter Launch (Vincennes, Indiana)  
10-16-17 Americans For Tax Reform Coalition Leaders Summit (Miami Beach, FL)  
10/17 – Folsom Dam Joint Federal Project Completion Ceremony (Folsam, CA)  
10/17 - National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers (San Antonio, TX)  
10/31 - George B. Hartzog, Jr. Awards and Speaker Program Clemson University (SC)  
11/4 Governor Reynolds Annual Pheasant Hunt

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT** (new)

As of 5:00 a.m. EDT, Tropical Storm Maria was located approximately 275 miles to the east-northeast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and moving toward the east-northeast at 8 miles per hour (mph). The storm is expected to accelerate eastward through tonight and then turn back toward the east-northeast on Friday. On the

forecast track, Maria will move away from the eastern coast of the U.S. and pass well to the south of Canada during the next couple of days.

The National Weather Service is reporting that all coastal watches and warnings associated with Tropical Storm Maria have been discontinued; however, swells generated by Maria continue to affect the eastern coast of the U.S., portions of Canada, and Bermuda.

As of 4:00 a.m. EDT this morning, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) National Operations Center (NOC) reports the following critical infrastructure updates:

Puerto Rico: Sixteen confirmed fatalities have been reported in Puerto Rico, and approximately 44-percent of the population remains without drinking water services. A Boil Water Notice is in effect. Nineteen (19) wastewater treatment facilities are closed, and 24 are in an unknown operational status. Thirty-seven (37) of 69 hospitals had assessments conducted, and 29 are operational at time of report. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will deploy five 250-bed Federal Medical Stations and two Disaster Medical Assistance Team caches by September 29.

The Guajataca Dam's reservoir pool continues to decline, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is providing 900 "super" sandbags to assist in the dam's stability. Assessments of roads indicate more than 18 bridges are damaged, and at least 7 of those are National Highway System bridges. One Incident Response Coordination team, eight Health and Medical Task Forces, one Service Access Team, one Disaster Mortuary Operations Response Team, and two Joint Patient Assessment Tracking Teams are engaged in San Juan. Fifteen U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) National Strike Force personnel are expected to arrive in Puerto Rico today to conduct post-storm assessments and recovery operations. A USCG Mobile Medical Unit deployed from Travis Air Force Base in California and is expected to arrive in Borinquen today.

U.S. Virgin Islands: Media sources report one fatality in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Three (3) of 9 water systems in St. Croix tested positive for E.coli bacteria and will require disinfection of their cistern-based systems. Incident Support Bases (ISBs) are being established at the Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas and at Limetree Bay on St. Croix. The Department of Defense is working to fulfill a request by St. Croix for a mobile medical facility. Power has been restored to the Cyril E. King Airport, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) tower is operational. The airport is expected to open with limited commercial operations today. Major debris and sinkholes are impacting roads and bridges, making some impassable.

#### Other Federal Reporting:

The FEMA National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) advised of an explosion that occurred yesterday at the Techno Gas Company in Corozal, Puerto Rico. The explosion resulted in injuries to three workers. According to reports, the resulting fire is under control, but the surrounding area has been evacuated. Communications in the area remain extremely limited.

On September 27, the President approved a Major Disaster Declaration (FEMA-4341-DR) for the Seminole Tribe of Florida as a result of Hurricane Irma beginning on September 4 and continuing. The declaration provides for Individual and Public Assistance for the Seminole Tribe of Florida and associated lands. The Public Assistance is for a period of up to 30 days from the start of the incident period, and FEMA is authorized to provide federal funding for emergency protective measures (Category B), including direct federal assistance, at 100-percent of the total eligible costs. The declaration also provides for Hazard Mitigation.

There are 155 personnel supporting interagency efforts in response to Hurricane's Irma and Maria.

USGS had 30 personnel surveying high water marks (HWMs) and processing data in Florida yesterday, along with 3 personnel in Puerto Rico, Georgia, and South Carolina.

The interagency Federal Search and Rescue Coordination Group (FSARCG) demobilized yesterday afternoon.

NPS reports that the generator for the headquarters building at Virgin Islands National Park was restored yesterday. At the San Juan National Historic Site, the focus has shifted to emergency stabilization efforts, and logistics are being finalized for the arrival of the M/V Fort Jefferson into the Port of San Juan. Security at San Juan remains a concern. A fuel vendor has been identified, and the park is working to secure the funding with the vendor. A Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) is being prepared for shipment to the San Juan National Historic Site to support communications.

In Florida, Big Cypress National Preserve remains closed with 5 buildings reported to have roof and water damage. Saw teams continue to clear roads and debris. Biscayne National Park reports drywall damage at the visitor's center and continues hazard mitigation and debris removal efforts. Everglades National Park continues to locate derelict vessels and clear hazards and debris. The park expects to have teams in the marina basins this week in order to determine the need for dredging. Displaced employees from Flamingo are currently being housed at Pine Island housing. Wastewater and water treatment plants continue to function erratically as repairs are pursued. Further details on specific parks are contained within the attached Emergency Management Daily Situation Report.

As of September 27, the USFWS has accounted for 60 of the 61 USFWS personnel in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The last employee is believed to have been located, but confirmation is pending. To date, the USFWS has mobilized nearly 100 personnel in support of response and recovery operations. USFWS Team 1 continues to complete life and wellness checks in the Cabo Rojo area with a priority of delivering supplies to affected employees. USFWS Team 2, comprised of a 14-person Type-3 Incident Management Team (IMT), assisted with debris removal and parrot cage repair. The team also planned to travel, via aircraft, to Vieques to deliver

supplies during the operational period, while a portion of the team will go to Cabo Rojo to deliver satellite phones and other supplies. USFWS Region 4 is considering rotation of staff to maintain team presence in Puerto Rico in the coming weeks. Four USFWS aircraft are being made available to support USFWS and FEMA missions in Puerto Rico. Aircraft will depart from southern Florida and arrive in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico beginning September 28. The Cabo Rojo National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is conducting inventory and working with local police to continue welfare checks. The Culebra NWR continues clearing operations, debris removal, and assistance to the community. Vieques NWR is working with the Vieques Fire Department to clear roads. The USFWS has cross-trained personnel to operate equipment and chainsaws. All USFWS heavy equipment on Vieques is being used to assist the community with road clearing.

**With respect to Hurricane Harvey recovery:**

There are 15 DOI employees supporting interagency response/recovery including 10 USGS personnel in the field in Texas yesterday flagging and surveying HWMs.

**Wildland Fire Reporting:**

The Sprague Fire in Glacier National Park, Montana, (NPS) has burned 16,927 (+137) acres and is 75 (no change)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-3 IMT with 71 (-4) personnel assigned, including 4 (no change) DOI personnel. There are 252 (no change) residential and 48 (no change) commercial structures threatened. Minimal fire behavior was observed yesterday, but moderate fire behavior is expected over the next 72 hours. A total of 405 structures continue to be threatened by the fire activity, with 149 of these structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Road, trail, and area closures remain in effect. Full containment is expected on November 1.

**OUTSIDE MEDIA OF INTEREST** (new)

**Three Trump Cabinet Secretaries To Visit Pennsylvania This Week.**

The AP (9/27) reports that “the heads of the Interior, Labor and Energy departments under President Donald Trump are coming to Pennsylvania this week for a trio of unrelated events.” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke will “visit Valley Forge National Historical Park in King of Prussia on Thursday to learn about the facility and meet staff.” Also on Thursday, Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta will “tour Signature Building Systems in Moosic to see the modular home builder while Energy Secretary Rick Perry will tour the Jeddo coal mine in Ebervale.”

**Zinke, Pruitt Welcome Aggregates Industry To DC.**

Aggregate Research Industries (9/27) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt “welcomed the aggregates industry to Washington, DC during the National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association’s Legislative & Policy Forum/Fall Board Meeting.” Both officials



commented “on the burden of over-regulation facing businesses in the country.” Zinke said, “If I didn’t think that it could be done, I wouldn’t be the Secretary. We have good people and we have great plans and great assets. We need to put them together and allow industry to innovate, think out of the box and get the job done. That’s not too much to ask for a great country like ours.”

### **New Mexico Gets \$1.1M For Outdoor Recreation Projects.**

The AP (9/27) reports that the US Department of the Interior announced \$1.1 million in federal grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for New Mexico to use on outdoor recreation and conservation projects. All 50 states are obtaining a portion of the \$93 million set for distribution from the fund. Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM) “said the fund in the past has protected places such as Ute Mountain near New Mexico’s northern border and Valles Caldera in the Jemez Mountains.”

### **Yes, Trump Can Revoke National Monuments.**

In an op-ed for the Washington Post (9/27, Wood), Jonathan Wood, an attorney at Pacific Legal Foundation and an adjunct fellow at the Property and Environment Research Center, argues that “nothing in the Antiquities Act forbids the president from revoking or shrinking a national monument.” For support, Wood points to history: “Seven presidents have shrunk national monuments, including President William Howard Taft, who reduced the Navajo National Monument by nearly 90 percent.” Furthermore, Wood argues that “there is a reason we allow presidents to undo the actions of their predecessors. A president who could unilaterally set policy forever would have far too much power and be free of political checks and balances.”

### **Don’t Let Fake Narrative Block Monuments Review.**

In an op-ed for the Flathead (MT) Beacon (9/27, Denowh), Chuck Denowh, the policy director of United Property Owners of Montana, writes that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has “made an admirable attempt to solicit input from Montanans about how national monuments have affected our state.” Denowh is dismayed “that effort has been drowned out by fake advertisements aimed at misleading Montanans and funded by out-of-state environmental groups.” Denowh dismisses the claim that the monuments review will “result in the federal government selling federal land to private entities” as “ridiculous.”

### **Op-Ed: We Must Protect Wild Utah.**

In an op-ed for the Deseret (UT) News (9/27, Abdo), Mike Abdo writes that the Antiquities Act was “rightfully and appropriately invoked in the creation” of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and the Bears Ears National Monument. Abdo calls on citizens to speak out against Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s plan “to eviscerate and exploit our national monuments.”

### **Thomas Mitchell: Zinke’s National Monument Modifications Too Modest.**

In his column for the Elko (NV) Daily Free Press (9/27, Mitchell), Thomas Mitchell calls Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's recommendations on national monuments "far too modest." He notes that "Zinke recommended unspecified changes to the Gold Butte boundaries but totally ignored the massive 700,000-acre Basin and Range National Monument that straddles the border between Nye and Lincoln counties, even though members of the Congressional Western Caucus recommended reducing it to 2,500 acres – 'the smallest area compatible,' as the law says, to protect the Indian petroglyphs there."

### **Obama-Era Fracking Rule May Soon Go Back Into Effect, Or Not.**

Wyoming Public Radio (9/27, McKim) reports that after a federal appellate court vacated a 2015 decision which stopped an Obama Administration Bureau of Land Management (BLM) fracking rule, the March 2015 rule may go into effect. The Sublette (WY) Examiner (9/27, Ufford) reports that Wyoming, among other states, challenged the March 2015 BLM rule by "arguing the BLM does not have regulatory authority over fracking on public lands and that states' regulations provide sufficient guidance." Comments regarding the fracking rule were due to the BLM by Monday, Sept. 25.

· **Independent Oil, Gas Producers Push For The Withdrawal Of Hydraulic Fracturing Rule.** DailyEnergyInsider (9/27, Randolph) reports that Monday the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA), and the Western Energy Alliance presented the Bureau of Land Management with comments urging the end of its March 2015 hydraulic fracturing rule on Native American and federal lands. According to the comments, rescinding the rule would allow the industry to save more than \$220 million each year. The comments come after the BLM's recent proposal to retract the March 2015 rule. The comments also said, "the Associations are grateful that BLM now realizes that the one-size-fits-all solution the agency issued in 2015 was not an appropriate mechanism to address unsubstantiated public concern about hydraulic fracturing."

### **Common Sense Protection For Crooked River Ranch.**

In an op-ed for the Bend (OR) Bulletin (9/27, Walden), Rep. Greg Walden writes that in response to the wildfire threat, residents of Crooked River Ranch have "done their part by thinning and trimming junipers to create defensible space around their homes." However, "encumbered by the red tape of a Wilderness Study Area (WSA), the federal government on the adjacent Bureau of Land Management-managed land has not done its part, leaving the community in harm's way." Walden has introduced legislation the Crooked River Ranch Fire Protection Act that "makes very targeted, common sense changes to allow for practical management of the fire fuels that surround Crooked River Ranch." According to Walden, "this legislation simply moves the WSA boundary a few hundred yards back to the canyon rim, giving firefighters the defensive space they need to help save the Crooked River Ranch community from the potential of a devastating wildfire."

### **US, Mexico Reach Deal To Conserve Colorado River Water.**

The AP (9/27, Lee, Elliott) reports that “the United States and Mexico unveiled an agreement Wednesday to preserve the overtaxed Colorado River, including spending millions of dollars on conservation and environmental projects and drawing up plans to deal with any shortages amid drought and climate change.” The United States “pledged to invest \$31.5 million in water conservation projects in Mexico, such as lining irrigation ditches with concrete to reduce leaks and upgrading irrigation equipment to use less water.” The nine-year agreement is “an amendment to a 1944 treaty that governs how the U.S. and Mexico share and manage the river, which flows through both nations. It expands on a 2012 amendment that expires at the end of this year.”

Also reporting are the Los Angeles Times (9/27, Montero), the Las Vegas Review-Journal (9/27, Brea), the Arizona Republic (9/27, Loomis), the Arizona Republic (9/27), and the Los Angeles Times (9/27, Montero).

### **US Agency To Decide If Pacific Walrus Is Threatened Species.**

The AP (9/27, Joling) reports that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service “faces a deadline this week to decide whether the iconic Pacific walrus will join the polar bear on the threatened species list.” The agency “under a court settlement has until Saturday to decide whether the Pacific walrus should be put on the list because of threats to its sea ice habitat due to climate change.”

### **National Parks Struggle With A Mounting Crisis: Too Many Visitors.**

The New York Times (9/27, Turkewitz) reports that the number of national park visitors has “reached an unprecedented level, leaving many tourists frustrated and many environmentalists concerned about the toll of overcrowding.” In 2016, the National Park Service “tracked a record 331 million visits, and after a busy summer, the system is likely to surpass that number this year.” The article notes that “the crowding problem comes as the system faces the dual threat of a funding shortage and climate change.”

### **Giant Naked Woman Sculpture Planned For National Mall.**

WJLA-TV Washington (9/27, Carter-Conneen) reports that “this fall, National Mall visitors might be surprised to find a giant sculpture of a naked woman near the Washington Monument.” For a third year, organizers of Catharsis on the Mall “plan to bring music, art and activism to the National Mall over Veteran’s Day weekend.” If their “permit is approved, the sculpture would become a temporary fixture, allowed to stand there for four months.” National Park Service spokesperson Mike Litterst said, “They do have the requirement of having at least one person with it at all times. You can’t abandon structures or property as part of the vigil.”

### **Ranger: Yosemite Rock Fall Kills 1, Injures Another.**

The AP (9/27, Press) reports that “a rock fall Wednesday on the granite face of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park killed one person and injured another at the height of climbing season, an official said.” The injured person was transported to a hospital near the park. The article says that “officials didn’t provide details on the size of the rock fall, but climbers posted pictures on social media from hundreds of feet up the wall showing billowing white dust moments after the crash.”

### **Storms Amplified USVI’s Economic Crisis.**

The New York Times (9/27, A1, Peters) reports that “the one-two punch of Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria 14 days later” severely hurt the US Virgin Islands, which even before the storms “had barely enough cash to keep the government funded for three days” and a debt “so large that Wall Street stopped lending it money.” As the islands’ 103,000 residents “wait for doctors, medicine, fuel and manpower to rebuild the flattened communications and power grid, the economic toll from the storms is only starting to come to light.”

**ZINKE WON'T SPEAK TO MINING GROUP:** Zinke dropped out of addressing the National Mining Association's annual fall meeting at the Trump Hotel next week, the group tells ME. "He was scheduled, but is not speaking now," NMA spokesman Luke Popovich said. "He will not be attending." NMA did not give the reason for the cancellation, and Interior did not respond to questions. The meeting, first reported in The Intercept, drew criticism for NMA money flowing into a business of which Trump is still a majority owner. Zinke has also come under fire from public watchdog Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington for addressing the American Petroleum Institute at the hotel and conducting at least one lunch there.

**INTERIOR TO SEEK COMMENT ON SAGE GROUSE PLANS:** The Interior Department could as early as today issue a request for public comment on potential changes to how it manages sage grouse populations in the West, including to make it easier for fossil fuel development and livestock grazing, according to sources familiar with the situation. Zinke in August ordered staff to move forward on internal staff recommendations to change BLM's land-use conservation plans for the bird, revise guidelines for fossil fuel leases and allow states to set population targets.

**CBD SEEKS RECORDS ON BLM DECISION LINKED TO CADIZ:** The Center for Biological Diversity has filed a public records request with the Interior to figure out why the agency earlier this month reversed a legal interpretation it made under the Obama administration that would have required Cadiz Inc. to go through an environmental review process to use a railroad right of way for its controversial water pipeline in California. Interior's second in command, David Bernhardt, was a lobbyist for Cadiz before joining the agency but an Interior spokesman in an emailed statement said Bernhardt was not involved in the decision to revoke the legal finding.

### **FEDERAL REGISTER LISTINGS:**

REG0007379 BOR Draft EIS and Scoping Meetings for the Reinitiation of Consultation on the Coordinated Long-Term Operation of the Central Valley

Project/State Water Project -- Reclamation announces its intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for analyzing potential modifications to the continued long-term operation of the Central Valley Project (CVP) in coordination with the State Water Project (SWP). The modifications are likely to benefit aquatic species listed under the Endangered Species Act in the Central Valley to avoid jeopardy and destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat for those species. Reclamation invites comments on the scope of the EIS by November 24, 2017. Notice 09/27/2017

REG0007453 FWS Migratory Bird Hunting; Supplemental Proposals for Migratory Game Bird Hunting Regulations for the 2018-19 Hunting Season; Notice of Meetings -- This Supplemental Proposed Rule provides alternatives for the 2018-19 waterfowl hunting season, announces the Service's Regulations Committee meeting, and provides Flyway Council recommendations from their March 2017 meetings. Proposed Rule 09/27/2017

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- **September TBD: Department-level Release:** DOI and BLM will announce the totals from all September oil and gas lease sales.
- **October 5: Department-level Release:** DOI and BOEM press release on Proposed Notice of Sale for Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 250.

**National Park Service**

- **September 27 (tent.): Local NPS Release:** NPS will issue a news release regarding the independent review panel findings that Golden Gate National Recreation Area dog rule process was unaffected by inappropriate personal email use.
- **September 29: National NPS Release:** NPS will issue a release regarding National Public Lands Day that will highlight the upcoming entrance fee-free day and volunteer service projects.
- **October 2 (tent.): National NPS Release:** NPS will announce the Director's Partnership Awards, which recognizes 17 NPS partners who supported six different complex, multi-year projects, including historic building rehab and trail construction projects.
- **September/October TBD: National NPS Release:** Historic Preservation Tax Credits: NPS and/or DOI announcement of annual Rutgers report on NPS Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program economic impact. Tax credits 2016 contributed \$12.3 billion in output to the U.S. economy, added \$6.2 billion in GDP. Historic preservation tax incentives encourage investments in historic preservation and revitalization of communities small and large across the country.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

- **September TBD: Local FWS Release:** By September 29, FWS plans to send to the Federal Register a final listing determination for the Kenk's amphipod, a crustacean from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. This action is not controversial. Stakeholders are the Center for Biological Diversity, Friends of the Capital Crescent Trail, Fort A.P. Hill, and the NPS.
- **September TBD: Local FWS Release:** FWS will announce a six-month extension of the final determination of list the Louisiana pine snake, found in Louisiana and Texas. While the Louisiana pine snake listing is controversial, the six-month extension is not expected to be controversial.
- **September TBD: Local FWS Release:** FWS will announce the Candy darter, a fish found in Virginia and West Virginia, proposed ESA listing. This action is not expected to be controversial.
- **September TBD: Local FWS Release:** FWS will announce the proposed listings of three Southeast darters. FWS plans to propose ESA listing determinations for the bridled darter, holiday darter and trispot darter, three fish found in Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee. This action is not controversial.
- **September TBD: Local FWS Release:** FWS will announce the final listing of four Everglades plants—the Everglades bully, Florida pineland crabgrass, pineland sandmat and Florida prairie-clover, plants that occur in south Florida. This action is not controversial.
- **September TBD: Local FWS Release(s):** FWS will send 12-month findings on 25 species, finding that none warrant ESA protections. These findings are for 14 Nevada springsnail species, Barbour's map turtle, Big Blue Springs cave crayfish, Bicknell's thrush, black-backed woodpecker, boreal toad, fisher, Florida Keys mole skink, Great Sand Dunes tiger beetle, Kirtland's snake, Pacific walrus and San Felipe gambusia. Outreach will be conducted on a region-by-region basis, including news releases with supporting FAQs where appropriate, to be sent to stakeholders and members of Congress. Some findings may be controversial. The Bicknell's thrush, fisher and Pacific walrus will likely attract significant media attention.
- **October 2: National FWS Release:** FWS will announce National Wildlife Refuge Week, which will take place October 8-14. Refuge Week is an annual celebration of the nation's wildlife conservation heritage and the national wildlife refuges that protect it. The timing provides notice for print and online media to announce the annual celebration and regional events for the public to plan ahead, as well as for the regions and refuges to begin preparing additional promotional information.

#### **Bureau of Land Management**

- **September 28 (tent.): National BLM Release:** BLM will issue a release regarding their announcement to seek nominations for 18 of their 36 Resource Advisory Councils.
- **October 2:** The 30-day comment period for the public to submit suggestions for priorities not yet considered for Round 11 of the Lincoln County Archaeological Initiative concludes. Existing priorities include use of innovative technology for preserving and interpreting archaeological resources; public outreach and education on archaeology; development and application of archaeological contexts; and archaeological identification and evaluation research.
- **October 2:** BLM-NM Acting State Director Aden Seidlitz and Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Kate MacGregor will speak at the annual New Mexico Oil and Gas Association conference.

#### **Bureau of Reclamation**

- **September 27-29:** Reclamation will join the Colorado River Basin States and other stakeholders in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for collaborative discussions of Colorado River issues, challenges and solutions, at the biennial Colorado River Symposium.

#### **Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement**

- **October 3 (tent.): National BSEE Release:** BSEE will put out a read-out highlighting BSEE Director Angelle's activities and meetings in Anchorage, Alaska. Social media platforms will be used to amplify News Brief.

#### **Bureau of Indian Affairs**

- **October 2:** Gavin Clarkson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Energy and Economic Development will lead a consultation on revisions of the "Licensed Indian Traders" regulations at the Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA) 2017 Fall Finance & Tribal Economies Conference, River Spirit Casino Resort, 8330 Riverside Pkwy, Tulsa, OK.

#### **CONGRESSIONAL**

**UPCOMING SCIA ROUNDTABLE:** The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs is hosting a roundtable on "Best Practices in Tribal Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement: Federal Permitting and Infrastructure Project Review in Indian Country." The federal panel is set to include USACE, FCC, and DOT. A DOI participant is pending but will likely discuss permitting and ROWs.

**Timing:** 2:30 pm, September 28, 2017

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

**UPCOMING SCIA HEARING:** The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs is holding an oversight hearing on "Doubling Down on Indian Gaming: Examining New Issues and Opportunities for Success in the Next 30 Years." The Department has been asked to speak to the challenges of off reservation gaming and any new policies on the overall issue. Witness is set to be John Tahsuda, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. Chairman of the NIGC, Jonodev Osceola Chaudhuri, has also been asked to testify on the federal panel.

**Timing:** 2:30 pm, October 4, 2017

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

#### **POLITICAL APPOINTEE UPDATE**

DOI politicals on board 56

3 confirmed as of 9/18.

4 nominated awaiting confirmation:

Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.

Pending Senate floor vote: Brenda Berman, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation.

Pending Senate floor vote: Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals (Voted out of Committee 9/19)

Pending Senate floor vote: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor (Voted out of Committee 9/19)

Overall:

Schedule C: 32 of 68 onboard; 4 starting; 7 in process

NC-SES: 21 of 44 onboard; 4 starting; 3 in process

PAS: 3 Confirmed; 4 Announced; 15 of 17 Submitted to PPO

#### **SECRETARY SPEAKING INVITATIONS**

Accepted



9/29 – Heritage Public Event (DC)  
11/9 - America First Energy Conference hosted by Heartland Institute (Houston, TX)  
Oct (TBC date) - Weyrich Lunch (DC)  
Open (date TBC)- Americans for Tax Reform (DC)  
Open (date TBC)- Detroit Economic Club

Outstanding Invitations in Process

10/11 - Remarks at 2nd National Wildlife Refuge System Expo co-hosted by the Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus and the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) (DC)  
10/15 - National Congress of American Indians 74 Annual Convention (Milwaukee, WI)  
10/26 - Montana Chamber Annual Meeting (Great Falls, MT)

Declining

9/28-30 - Council for National Policy  
10/1-3 - New Mexico Oil and Gas Association (Santa Fe)  
10/2 - IOGCC Annual Meeting (Pittsburgh PA)  
10 /3 12th Annual Government to Government Violence Against Women Tribal Consultation (DC)  
10/3 – ShaleTech Permian (Odessa, Texas)  
10/4 - NOIA Fall Meeting (Cody, WY)  
10/5 – Alamocita Creek Land Protection and Access Project Celebration and Tour (Pie Town, NM)  
10/13 - Public Land & Resources Law Review's Public Land Law Conference (Missoula, MT)  
10/15-17 – Heritage Annual President's Club Meeting (DC)  
10/16 - Carlsbad Mayor's Energy Summit (Carlsbad, NM)  
10/20 - TXOGA Lone Star Energy Forum (Woodlands, TX)  
11/14 – George Rogers Clark National Historical Park Quarter Launch (Vincennes, Indiana)  
10-16-17 Americans For Tax Reform Coalition Leaders Summit (Miami Beach, FL)  
10/17 – Folsom Dam Joint Federal Project Completion Ceremony (Folsam, CA)  
10/17 - National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers (San Antonio, TX)  
10/31 - George B. Hartzog, Jr. Awards and Speaker Program Clemson University (SC)  
11/4 Governor Reynolds Annual Pheasant Hunt

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT** (new)

As of 5:00 a.m. EDT, Tropical Storm Maria was located approximately 275 miles to the east-northeast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and moving toward the east-northeast at 8 miles per hour (mph). The storm is expected to accelerate eastward through tonight and then turn back toward the east-northeast on Friday. On the forecast track, Maria will move away from the eastern coast of the U.S. and pass well to the south of Canada during the next couple of days.

The National Weather Service is reporting that all coastal watches and warnings associated with Tropical Storm Maria have been discontinued; however, swells generated by Maria continue to affect the eastern coast of the U.S., portions of Canada, and Bermuda.

As of 4:00 a.m. EDT this morning, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) National Operations Center (NOC) reports the following critical infrastructure updates:

Puerto Rico: Sixteen confirmed fatalities have been reported in Puerto Rico, and approximately 44-percent of the population remains without drinking water services. A Boil Water Notice is in effect. Nineteen (19) wastewater treatment facilities are closed, and 24 are in an unknown operational status. Thirty-seven (37) of 69 hospitals had assessments conducted, and 29 are operational at time of report.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will deploy five 250-bed Federal Medical Stations and two Disaster Medical Assistance Team caches by September 29.

The Guajataca Dam's reservoir pool continues to decline, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is providing 900 "super" sandbags to assist in the dam's stability. Assessments of roads indicate more than 18 bridges are damaged, and at least 7 of those are National Highway System bridges. One Incident Response Coordination team, eight Health and Medical Task Forces, one Service Access Team, one Disaster Mortuary Operations Response Team, and two Joint Patient Assessment Tracking Teams are engaged in San Juan. Fifteen U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) National Strike Force personnel are expected to arrive in Puerto Rico today to conduct post-storm assessments and recovery operations. A USCG Mobile Medical Unit deployed from Travis Air Force Base in California and is expected to arrive in Borinquen today.

U.S. Virgin Islands: Media sources report one fatality in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Three (3) of 9 water systems in St. Croix tested positive for E.coli bacteria and will require disinfection of their cistern-based systems. Incident Support Bases (ISBs) are being established at the Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas and at Limetree Bay on St. Croix. The Department of Defense is working to fulfill a request by St. Croix for a mobile medical facility. Power has been restored to the Cyril E. King Airport, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) tower is operational. The airport is expected to open with limited commercial operations today. Major debris and sinkholes are impacting roads and bridges, making some impassable.

#### Other Federal Reporting:

The FEMA National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) advised of an explosion that occurred yesterday at the Techno Gas Company in Corozal, Puerto Rico. The explosion resulted in injuries to three workers. According to reports, the resulting fire is under control, but the surrounding area has been evacuated. Communications in the area remain extremely limited.

On September 27, the President approved a Major Disaster Declaration (FEMA-4341-DR) for the Seminole Tribe of Florida as a result of Hurricane Irma beginning on September 4 and continuing. The declaration provides for Individual and Public Assistance for the Seminole Tribe of Florida and associated lands. The Public Assistance is for a period of up to 30 days from the start of the incident period, and FEMA is authorized to provide federal funding for emergency protective measures (Category B), including direct federal assistance, at 100-percent of the total eligible costs. The declaration also provides for Hazard Mitigation.

There are 155 personnel supporting interagency efforts in response to Hurricane's Irma and Maria.

USGS had 30 personnel surveying high water marks (HWMs) and processing data in Florida yesterday, along with 3 personnel in Puerto Rico, Georgia, and South Carolina.

The interagency Federal Search and Rescue Coordination Group (FSARCG) demobilized yesterday afternoon.

NPS reports that the generator for the headquarters building at Virgin Islands National Park was restored yesterday. At the San Juan National Historic Site, the focus has shifted to emergency stabilization efforts, and logistics are being finalized for the arrival of the M/V Fort Jefferson into the Port of San Juan. Security at San Juan remains a concern. A fuel vendor has been identified, and the park is working to secure the funding with the vendor. A Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) is being prepared for shipment to the San Juan National Historic Site to support communications.

In Florida, Big Cypress National Preserve remains closed with 5 buildings reported to have roof and water damage. Saw teams continue to clear roads and debris. Biscayne National Park reports drywall damage at the visitor's center and continues hazard mitigation and debris removal efforts. Everglades National Park continues to locate derelict vessels and clear hazards and debris. The park expects to have teams in the marina basins this week in order to determine the need for dredging. Displaced employees from Flamingo are currently being housed at Pine Island housing. Wastewater and water treatment plants continue to function erratically as repairs are pursued. Further details on specific parks are contained within the attached Emergency Management Daily Situation Report.

As of September 27, the USFWS has accounted for 60 of the 61 USFWS personnel in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The last employee is believed to have been located, but confirmation is pending. To date, the USFWS has mobilized nearly 100 personnel in support of response and recovery operations. USFWS Team 1 continues to complete life and wellness checks in the Cabo Rojo area with a priority of delivering supplies to affected employees. USFWS Team 2, comprised of a 14-person Type-3 Incident Management Team (IMT), assisted with debris removal and parrot cage repair. The team also planned to travel, via aircraft, to Vieques to deliver supplies during the operational period, while a portion of the team will go to Cabo Rojo to deliver satellite phones and other supplies. USFWS Region 4 is considering rotation of staff to maintain team presence in Puerto Rico in the coming weeks. Four USFWS aircraft are being made available to support USFWS and FEMA missions in Puerto Rico. Aircraft will depart from southern Florida and arrive in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico beginning September 28. The Cabo Rojo National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is conducting inventory and working with local police to continue welfare checks. The Culebra NWR continues clearing operations, debris removal, and assistance to the community. Vieques NWR is working with the Vieques Fire Department to clear roads. The USFWS has cross-trained personnel to operate equipment and chainsaws. All USFWS heavy equipment on Vieques is being used to assist the community with road clearing.

**With respect to Hurricane Harvey recovery:**

There are 15 DOI employees supporting interagency response/recovery including 10 USGS personnel in the field in Texas yesterday flagging and surveying HWMs.

**Wildland Fire Reporting:**

The Sprague Fire in Glacier National Park, Montana, (NPS) has burned 16,927 (+137) acres and is 75 (no change)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-3 IMT with 71 (-4) personnel assigned, including 4 (no change) DOI personnel. There are 252 (no change) residential and 48 (no change) commercial structures threatened. Minimal fire behavior was observed yesterday, but moderate fire behavior is expected over the next 72 hours. A total of 405 structures continue to be threatened by the fire activity, with 149 of these structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Road, trail, and area closures remain in effect. Full containment is expected on November 1.

**OUTSIDE MEDIA OF INTEREST** (new)

**Three Trump Cabinet Secretaries To Visit Pennsylvania This Week.**

The AP (9/27) reports that "the heads of the Interior, Labor and Energy departments under President Donald Trump are coming to Pennsylvania this week for a trio of unrelated events." Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke will "visit Valley Forge National Historical Park in King of Prussia on Thursday to learn about the facility and meet staff." Also on Thursday, Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta will "tour Signature Building Systems in Moosic to see the modular home builder while Energy Secretary Rick Perry will tour the Jeddo coal mine in Ebervale."

### **Zinke, Pruitt Welcome Aggregates Industry To DC.**

Aggregate Research Industries (9/27) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt “welcomed the aggregates industry to Washington, DC during the National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association’s Legislative & Policy Forum/Fall Board Meeting.” Both officials commented “on the burden of over-regulation facing businesses in the country.” Zinke said, “If I didn’t think that it could be done, I wouldn’t be the Secretary. We have good people and we have great plans and great assets. We need to put them together and allow industry to innovate, think out of the box and get the job done. That’s not too much to ask for a great country like ours.”

### **New Mexico Gets \$1.1M For Outdoor Recreation Projects.**

The AP (9/27) reports that the US Department of the Interior announced \$1.1 million in federal grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for New Mexico to use on outdoor recreation and conservation projects. All 50 states are obtaining a portion of the \$93 million set for distribution from the fund. Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM) “said the fund in the past has protected places such as Ute Mountain near New Mexico’s northern border and Valles Caldera in the Jemez Mountains.”

### **Yes, Trump Can Revoke National Monuments.**

In an op-ed for the Washington Post (9/27, Wood), Jonathan Wood, an attorney at Pacific Legal Foundation and an adjunct fellow at the Property and Environment Research Center, argues that “nothing in the Antiquities Act forbids the president from revoking or shrinking a national monument.” For support, Wood points to history: “Seven presidents have shrunk national monuments, including President William Howard Taft, who reduced the Navajo National Monument by nearly 90 percent.” Furthermore, Wood argues that “there is a reason we allow presidents to undo the actions of their predecessors. A president who could unilaterally set policy forever would have far too much power and be free of political checks and balances.”

### **Don’t Let Fake Narrative Block Monuments Review.**

In an op-ed for the Flathead (MT) Beacon (9/27, Denowh), Chuck Denowh, the policy director of United Property Owners of Montana, writes that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has “made an admirable attempt to solicit input from Montanans about how national monuments have affected our state.” Denowh is dismayed “that effort has been drowned out by fake advertisements aimed at misleading Montanans and funded by out-of-state environmental groups.” Denowh dismisses the claim that the monuments review will “result in the federal government selling federal land to private entities” as “ridiculous.”

### **Op-Ed: We Must Protect Wild Utah.**

In an op-ed for the Deseret (UT) News (9/27, Abdo), Mike Abdo writes that the Antiquities Act was “rightfully and appropriately invoked in the creation” of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and the Bears Ears National Monument. Abdo calls on citizens to speak out against Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s plan “to eviscerate and exploit our national monuments.”

### **Thomas Mitchell: Zinke’s National Monument Modifications Too Modest.**

In his column for the Elko (NV) Daily Free Press (9/27, Mitchell), Thomas Mitchell calls Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s recommendations on national monuments “far too modest.” He notes that “Zinke recommended unspecified changes to the Gold Butte boundaries but totally ignored the massive 700,000-acre Basin and Range National Monument that straddles the border between Nye and Lincoln

counties, even though members of the Congressional Western Caucus recommended reducing it to 2,500 acres – ‘the smallest area compatible,’ as the law says, to protect the Indian petroglyphs there.”

#### **Obama-Era Fracking Rule May Soon Go Back Into Effect, Or Not.**

Wyoming Public Radio (9/27, McKim) reports that after a federal appellate court vacated a 2015 decision which stopped an Obama Administration Bureau of Land Management (BLM) fracking rule, the March 2015 rule may go into effect. The Sublette (WY) Examiner (9/27, Ufford) reports that Wyoming, among other states, challenged the March 2015 BLM rule by “arguing the BLM does not have regulatory authority over fracking on public lands and that states’ regulations provide sufficient guidance.” Comments regarding the fracking rule were due to the BLM by Monday, Sept. 25.

- Independent Oil, Gas Producers Push For The Withdrawal Of Hydraulic Fracturing Rule.**  
DailyEnergyInsider (9/27, Randolph) reports that Monday the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA), and the Western Energy Alliance presented the Bureau of Land Management with comments urging the end of its March 2015 hydraulic fracturing rule on Native American and federal lands. According to the comments, rescinding the rule would allow the industry to save more than \$220 million each year. The comments come after the BLM’s recent proposal to retract the March 2015 rule. The comments also said, “the Associations are grateful that BLM now realizes that the one-size-fits-all solution the agency issued in 2015 was not an appropriate mechanism to address unsubstantiated public concern about hydraulic fracturing.”

#### **Common Sense Protection For Crooked River Ranch.**

In an op-ed for the Bend (OR) Bulletin (9/27, Walden), Rep. Greg Walden writes that in response to the wildfire threat, residents of Crooked River Ranch have “done their part by thinning and trimming junipers to create defensible space around their homes.” However, “encumbered by the red tape of a Wilderness Study Area (WSA), the federal government on the adjacent Bureau of Land Management-managed land has not done its part, leaving the community in harm’s way.” Walden has introduced legislation — the Crooked River Ranch Fire Protection Act — that “makes very targeted, common sense changes to allow for practical management of the fire fuels that surround Crooked River Ranch.” According to Walden, “this legislation simply moves the WSA boundary a few hundred yards back to the canyon rim, giving firefighters the defensive space they need to help save the Crooked River Ranch community from the potential of a devastating wildfire.”

#### **US, Mexico Reach Deal To Conserve Colorado River Water.**

The AP (9/27, Lee, Elliott) reports that “the United States and Mexico unveiled an agreement Wednesday to preserve the overtaxed Colorado River, including spending millions of dollars on conservation and environmental projects and drawing up plans to deal with any shortages amid drought and climate change.” The United States “pledged to invest \$31.5 million in water conservation projects in Mexico, such as lining irrigation ditches with concrete to reduce leaks and upgrading irrigation equipment to use less water.” The nine-year agreement is “an amendment to a 1944 treaty that governs how the U.S. and Mexico share and manage the river, which flows through both nations. It expands on a 2012 amendment that expires at the end of this year.”

Also reporting are the Los Angeles Times (9/27, Montero), the Las Vegas Review-Journal (9/27, Brean), the Arizona Republic (9/27, Loomis), the Arizona Republic (9/27), and the Los Angeles Times (9/27, Montero).

#### **US Agency To Decide If Pacific Walrus Is Threatened Species.**

The AP (9/27, Joling) reports that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service “faces a deadline this week to decide whether the iconic Pacific walrus will join the polar bear on the threatened species list.” The agency “under a court settlement has until Saturday to decide whether the Pacific walrus should be put on the list because of threats to its sea ice habitat due to climate change.”

#### **National Parks Struggle With A Mounting Crisis: Too Many Visitors.**

The New York Times (9/27, Turkewitz) reports that the number of national park visitors has “reached an unprecedented level, leaving many tourists frustrated and many environmentalists concerned about the toll of overcrowding.” In 2016, the National Park Service “tracked a record 331 million visits, and after a busy summer, the system is likely to surpass that number this year.” The article notes that “the crowding problem comes as the system faces the dual threat of a funding shortage and climate change.”

#### **Giant Naked Woman Sculpture Planned For National Mall.**

WJLA-TV Washington (9/27, Carter-Conneen) reports that “this fall, National Mall visitors might be surprised to find a giant sculpture of a naked woman near the Washington Monument.” For a third year, organizers of Catharsis on the Mall “plan to bring music, art and activism to the National Mall over Veteran’s Day weekend.” If their “permit is approved, the sculpture would become a temporary fixture, allowed to stand there for four months.” National Park Service spokesperson Mike Litterst said, “They do have the requirement of having at least one person with it at all times. You can’t abandon structures or property as part of the vigil.”

#### **Ranger: Yosemite Rock Fall Kills 1, Injures Another.**

The AP (9/27, Press) reports that “a rock fall Wednesday on the granite face of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park killed one person and injured another at the height of climbing season, an official said.” The injured person was transported to a hospital near the park. The article says that “officials didn’t provide details on the size of the rock fall, but climbers posted pictures on social media from hundreds of feet up the wall showing billowing white dust moments after the crash.”

#### **Storms Amplified USVI’s Economic Crisis.**

The New York Times (9/27, A1, Peters) reports that “the one-two punch of Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria 14 days later” severely hurt the US Virgin Islands, which even before the storms “had barely enough cash to keep the government funded for three days” and a debt “so large that Wall Street stopped lending it money.” As the islands’ 103,000 residents “wait for doctors, medicine, fuel and manpower to rebuild the flattened communications and power grid, the economic toll from the storms is only starting to come to light.”

**ZINKE WON'T SPEAK TO MINING GROUP:** Zinke dropped out of addressing the National Mining Association's annual fall meeting at the Trump Hotel next week, the group tells ME. "He was scheduled, but is not speaking now," NMA spokesman Luke Popovich said. "He will not be attending." NMA did not give the reason for the cancellation, and Interior did not respond to questions. The meeting, first reported in The Intercept, drew criticism for NMA money flowing into a business of which Trump is still a majority owner. Zinke has also come under fire from public watchdog Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington for addressing the American Petroleum Institute at the hotel and conducting at least one lunch there.

**INTERIOR TO SEEK COMMENT ON SAGE GROUSE PLANS:** The Interior Department could as early as today issue a request for public comment on potential changes to how it manages sage grouse populations in the West, including to make it easier for fossil fuel development and livestock grazing, according to sources familiar with the situation. Zinke in August ordered staff to move forward on

internal staff recommendations to change BLM's land-use conservation plans for the bird, revise guidelines for fossil fuel leases and allow states to set population targets.

**CBD SEEKS RECORDS ON BLM DECISION LINKED TO CADIZ:** The Center for Biological Diversity has filed a public records request with the Interior to figure out why the agency earlier this month reversed a legal interpretation it made under the Obama administration that would have required Cadiz Inc. to go through an environmental review process to use a railroad right of way for its controversial water pipeline in California. Interior's second in command, David Bernhardt, was a lobbyist for Cadiz before joining the agency but an Interior spokesman in an emailed statement said Bernhardt was not involved in the decision to revoke the legal finding.

**FEDERAL REGISTER LISTINGS:**

REG0007379 BOR Draft EIS and Scoping Meetings for the Reinitiation of Consultation on the Coordinated Long-Term Operation of the Central Valley Project/State Water Project -- Reclamation announces its intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for analyzing potential modifications to the continued long-term operation of the Central Valley Project (CVP) in coordination with the State Water Project (SWP). The modifications are likely to benefit aquatic species listed under the Endangered Species Act in the Central Valley to avoid jeopardy and destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat for those species. Reclamation invites comments on the scope of the EIS by November 24, 2017. Notice 09/27/2017

REG0007453 FWS Migratory Bird Hunting; Supplemental Proposals for Migratory Game Bird Hunting Regulations for the 2018-19 Hunting Season; Notice of Meetings -- This Supplemental Proposed Rule provides alternatives for the 2018-19 waterfowl hunting season, announces the Service's Regulations Committee meeting, and provides Flyway Council recommendations from their March 2017 meetings. Proposed Rule 09/27/2017