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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 12/15/17

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

STATUS OF THE SECRETARY

THIS WEEK:

- 12/15 DC Internal Meetings
- 12/16 DC Participate in National Wreaths Across America Day at Arlington Memorial Cemetery

NEXT WEEK:

- 12/18 DC Meeting with Treasury Secretary Mnuchin
 - o National Security Strategy Event at Reagan Building
 - o Interview with Mike Coleman, Albuquerque Journal
 - o Meeting with National Congress of American Indians
- 12/19 DC Meeting with Senator Ted Cruz
 - o TENT. Meeting with Education Secretary DeVos
- 12/20 DC Cabinet Meeting
- 12/21 DC Internal Meetings
- 12/22 CA Personal Day

NOTE: The Secretary will be away on personal travel 12/22-1/5.

STATUS OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

TODAY: The DepSec is in DC

- Regulatory Reform Task Force Meeting at EEOB
- Meeting with Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

WH COMMS REPORT

N/A

AGENCY MEDIA (submitted 12/14)

WEEK AHEAD December 13 thru December 21, 2017

Announcements/Releases/Events

Secretarial-level Announcements/Events/Interviews

- **December 18-22:** Rollout of our 2017 DOI accomplishments.
- **December 20:** release Secretary's Holiday/Christmas video to employees.
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DOI politicals on board = 65

5 PAS confirmed as of 12/7/17

5 nominated awaiting confirmation:

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

Overall:

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

SECRETARY SPEAKING INVITATIONS

Accepted:

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

1/22 Alaska Federation of Natives - Challenges at America's Northernmost Border

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

3/6-7 CERA Week (Houston, Texas)

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

Open (date TBC)- Detroit Economic Club

Outstanding Invitations in Process:

1/12-13 Montana Outfitters and Guides Association Winter Convention (Helena, MT)
1/13 Battle of Cowpens 237th Anniversary Event
1/23-26 National Shooting and Sports Foundation Annual SHOT Show (Las Vegas, NV)
1/26-28 Houston Safari Club Annual Meeting (Houston, TX)
1/29 Society of Range Management Annual Meeting (Reno, Nevada)
1/31-2/3 Safari Club International Annual Meeting (Las Vegas, NV)
2/8- Texas Public Policy Foundation Policy Orientation (Austin, TX)
2/12 The Corps Network National Conference (Washington, DC)

Declining

1/4 Dallas Safari Club Annual Meeting (Dallas, TX)
1/11/18 EEI CEO and Board Conference (Phoenix, AZ)
2/9-10 Associated General Contractors Western Chapter Annual Meeting (La Jolla, CA)
2/23/18 West Slope Colorado Oil and Gas Association Annual Meeting (Grand Junction, CO)

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Interagency Hurricane response and recovery efforts:

OEPC, USFWS, and NPS continue to coordinate efforts with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) to assess the removal and salvage of displaced vessels throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Florida. USFWS personnel are providing best practices and technical assistance in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, while NPS is providing archaeological resource monitoring services for certain vessels in Florida.

An interagency team consisting of personnel from the NPS, the National Archives and Records Administration, the Smithsonian, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have deployed under a FEMA Mission Assignment to provide assistance to the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture and General Archives. This mission is expected to be completed by December 16.

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

Three OEPC Field Coordinators (1 in Texas, 2 in Florida) have completed Mission Scoping Assessments for both states and draft recovery strategies have been completed for Texas. NPS has provided two additional personnel to support OEPC efforts in Texas. Field Coordinators are also deployed to Puerto Rico (1 OEPC, 1

USFWS) and the U.S. Virgin Islands (1 OEPC, 1 NPS). Their efforts are currently focused on developing recovery strategies for both territories. OEPC Field Coordinators are also working with NPS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to investigate damage to coral reef sites.

DOI has 23 employees supporting the Small Business Administration (SBA). The group is comprised of volunteers from BIA, BLM, BOEM, BOR, USFWS, IBC, NPS, ONRR, and USGS. The Office of Emergency Management is working with the SBA to deploy additional personnel as needed.

Internal bureau and office-specific Hurricane response and recovery activities:

Effective December 12, commercial power was restored to the USGS Caribbean-Florida Water Science Center in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. This ended an almost 90-day stretch without commercial power that began with the landfall of Hurricane Maria on September 20. USGS continues to work with GSA to assess long-term impacts to the facility.

Wildfire Activity – California:

A CAL Fire Engineer from the San Diego Unit was fatally injured yesterday on the Thomas Fire. The details of the incident are still under review and additional information will be provided as they are verified. The Thomas Fire (being managed by CAL Fire) in southern California has burned approximately 249,500 (+11,000) acres and is 35-percent (+5) contained. The fire is being managed by a Type-1 Incident Management Team (IMT) with 8,316 (+233) personnel assigned, including 177 (+17) DOI personnel. The fire continues to threaten multiple critical habitats in the area and is burning on some BLM land parcels. USBR reports that fire activity has surrounded the Lake Casitas Dam and Reservoir, which is operated by a non-USBR entity. Red Flag Warnings for portions of Ventura and Los Angeles counties are set to expire this morning; however, Santa Ana winds are in the forecast over the weekend and the potential for extreme fire behavior will remain. Full containment of this fire has been pushed back from December 24 to January 7.

USGS is coordinating with FEMA, other federal partners, and state agencies on post-fire data collection and assessments. They do not have any impacts to their facilities, stream gages, or field instruments in the area to report at this time.

OUTSIDE MEDIA OF INTEREST (new)

Thousands Of Interior Dept. Employees Report Harassment And Intimidation At Work.

The New York Times (12/14, Cochrane) reports that around 35 percent of 30,000 Interior Department employees who responded to a recent department-wide survey “reported that they had experienced harassment or intimidation at work.” Over “85 percent of those employees said they had to continue to interact with the person responsible for the mistreatment.” Additionally, “8 percent of employees reported

sexual harassment, 20 percent reported negative treatment based on their age and 16 percent based on their sex.”

The AP (12/14, DALY, BROWN) reports that “the Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Park Service reported the most incidents, with 40 percent of BIA workers and 39 percent of parks workers reporting some form of harassment.” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said in a statement Thursday he has “zero tolerance for any type of workplace harassment,” adding that he has directed agency heads to move quickly “to improve accountability and transparency with regard to this absolutely intolerable behavior.”

CNN (12/14, Green) reports that “Zinke said that he has already fired ‘a number of predators,’ actions he said previous administrations were too scared to take.” He said, “From day one, I made it clear that I have zero tolerance for any type of workplace harassment, and I have directed leadership across the entire Department to move rapidly to improve accountability and transparency with regard to this absolutely intolerable behavior. All employees have the right to work in a safe and harassment-free environment. I’ve already fired a number of predators who other administrations were too afraid to remove or just turned a blind eye to. Under my leadership we don’t protect predators. When I say ‘zero tolerance’ I mean that these people will be held accountable for their abhorrent actions.”

The Hill (12/14, Cama) reports that Deputy Interior Secretary David Bernhardt “also blamed the Obama administration for not taking care of the problem.” Bernhardt said in a statement, “The previous administration failed to aggressively address these problems and it shows. The culture across the department will change.” Bernhardt “asked each bureau within the department to submit plans within 45 days to address the findings, Interior said.”

Conservation Group Launches \$1M Ad Campaign Hitting Trump Monument Decision.

The Hill (12/14, Henry) reported that the “conservation group” Western Values Project “is launching a \$1 million television and radio advertisement campaign targeting three House Republicans over President Trump’s decision to shrink monument protections in Utah.” The spots target “Reps. Greg Walden (R-Ore.), Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-Wash.) and Martha McSally (R-Ariz.). The ads tell viewers about Trump’s executive order shrinking the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments in Utah, and highlights potential public land policy changes in the three states it is set to air in. The group calls on viewers to tell” the GOP lawmakers “to ‘stop the attacks on public lands because your American birthright is not for sale.”

Bennet Backs BLM Move To Western State.

The Grand Junction (CO) Daily Sentinel (12/14, Harmon) reports that “moving the Bureau of Land Management headquarters out of Washington, D.C., has the conditional support” of Sen.. Michael Bennet. His office said in a statement that

Bennet could support any move out of DC “as long as the move is more than symbolic and includes resources to better manage our public lands.”

Dam Construction Bill Puts Washington Senator In Tough Spot.

Bloomberg BNA (12/14, Schultz) reports that House Republicans are pushing “a years-in-the-making bill that would speed up federal approvals of dam projects in the West,” and, “in doing so, they could also force Pacific Northwest Democrats into a tough spot.” According to the article, “for years, Republicans have been trying to pass legislation that would put a cap on the amount of money and time the Bureau of Reclamation can spend studying the environmental impact of proposed dam projects.” However, “these bills have always been thwarted in the Senate by a united Democratic opposition, led primarily by Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.).” This time, however, the legislation’s “backers have a trick up their sleeve: They’ve added a measure to the legislation that would give the green light to a \$737 million water resources project in Cantwell’s home state, a project she’s been championing for years.” But “Cantwell said the Republicans’ tactics won’t work on her.”

Here’s What Oil Drilling Looks Like In The Arctic Refuge, 30 Years Later.

The New York Times (12/15, Fountain) reports that “satellite images of a small part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge show the site of what, so far, is the only oil well ever drilled in the refuge, an exploratory well known as KIC-1 that was completed in the mid-1980s.” The well was “plugged and abandoned, and the drilling equipment and a special timber pad it sat on have long since been removed,” but “even after three decades, the well’s footprint — about 600 feet long on its longest side — is easily distinguishable from the undisturbed tundra around it.” The drillers “took care to protect the tundra,” but “KIC-1 shows how even when care is taken, the delicate landscape of northern Alaska can be damaged by drilling activities, and that the damage can persist.”

US And Canada Struggle With Status Of Grizzly Bears.

Courthouse News (12/14, Lundquist) reports that “at its year-end meeting this week, the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee reviewed the status of six Northwestern grizzly bear populations and discussed what’s needed for the species to recover over the next five years.” The binational committee “recently oversaw the process of delisting the Yellowstone subpopulation of grizzly bears after the population had reached the goals of 500 bears total and 48 females with cubs.” Grizzly Bear Study Team ecologist Frank Van Manen was “fairly confident Wednesday that the Yellowstone population was doing fine, estimating that the population has grown to 718 grizzlies bears, including 57 females with cubs.”

Wolf Decision Could Undermine Plan To Remove Grizzly Bears From Endangered List. The Helena (MT) Independent Record (12/14, Chaney) reports that “an appeals court ruling in a federal lawsuit challenging how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed Great Lakes gray wolves from the Endangered Species Act

list could unravel plans to delist grizzlies in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.” FWS grizzly recovery coordinator Hillary Cooley said during a meeting of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee in Missoula on Tuesday, “We had put our final delisting rule out in July and within a week we got the court opinion. The Great Lakes wolves were listed for the entire Lower 48 states, and then they carved out a DPS (Distinct Population Segment) and tried to delist them. That’s what we’ve done with the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, as well, so we thought we should take a look.”

U.S. Fish And Wildlife Service Requests Public Comment On Yellowstone Grizzly Delisting. Wyoming Public Radio (12/14, Kudelska) reports that “federal officials are reviewing the June decision to take grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem off the endangered species list.” The FWS will “review how the delisting of grizzlies in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem could affect the bear’s population in its historical range throughout the lower 48.”

Palau Compact Renewed But Awaits Funding Approval.

The Guam Daily Post (12/14) reports that “after years of delay, the Compact agreement between Palau and the United States has finally been renewed, but approval of the funds promised in the agreement is still pending.” The Palau Compact was included in the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act that President Trump signed into law Wednesday in Washington. Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Doug Domenech said, “Finalization of this agreement with Palau is long overdue. We look forward to final action from Congress to provide the appropriations necessary to finalize this important U.S. government commitment to Palau.” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke “underscored the need to approve the funding, saying, ‘it’s an important element of the Pacific national security strategy to maintain stability in the Western Pacific Region.’”

FEDERAL REGISTER LISTINGS:

REG0007268 BLM Final Supplementary Rules for Guffey Gorge in Park County, Colorado -- The BLM announces supplementary rules to regulate certain activities on public lands within Guffey Gorge in Park County, Colorado. The supplementary rules implement the Guffey Gorge Management Plan approved in June 2015 to protect persons, property, and public lands and resources within the 80-acre site. Final Rule 12/14/2017

REG0007641 BLM Notice of Realty Action: Proposed Non-Competitive (Direct) Sale of Public Land in Santa Barbara County, CA -- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to sell 5.93 acres of public land in Santa Barbara County, California, to Arc Vineyards, LLC, to resolve an inadvertent unauthorized use and occupancy. The BLM requests comments over 45 days. Notice 12/14/2017

REG0007656 FWS Availability of Proposed Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Sand Skink; Lennar Corporation, Orange County, FL -- Lennar Corporation has requested a permit for take of the federally threatened sand skink incidental to the

planned construction of residential development in Orange County, Florida. Notice
12/14/2017

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

Overall:

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

SECRETARY SPEAKING INVITATIONS

Accepted:

12/16 - National Wreaths Across America Day (Arlington National Cemetery)
1/22 – Alaska Federation of Natives - Challenges at America’s Northernmost Border
2/9 – Western Hunting & Conservation Expo (Salt Lake City, Utah)
3/6-7 – CERA Week (Houston, Texas)
Open (date TBC)- Americans for Tax Reform (DC)
Open (date TBC)- Detroit Economic Club

Outstanding Invitations in Process:

1/12-13 – Montana Outfitters and Guides Association Winter Convention (Helena, MT)
1/13 – Battle of Cowpens 237th Anniversary Event
1/23-26 National Shooting and Sports Foundation Annual SHOT Show (Las Vegas, NV)
1/26-28 – Houston Safari Club Annual Meeting (Houston, TX)
1/29 – Society of Range Management Annual Meeting (Reno, Nevada)
1/31-2/3 Safari Club International Annual Meeting (Las Vegas, NV)
2/8- Texas Public Policy Foundation Policy Orientation (Austin, TX)
2/12 – The Corps Network National Conference (Washington, DC)

Declining

1/4 – Dallas Safari Club Annual Meeting (Dallas, TX)
1/11/18 – EEI CEO and Board Conference (Phoenix, AZ)
2/9-10 Associated General Contractors Western Chapter Annual Meeting (La Jolla, CA)
2/23/18 – West Slope Colorado Oil and Gas Association Annual Meeting (Grand Junction, CO)

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Interagency Hurricane response and recovery efforts:

OEPC, USFWS, and NPS continue to coordinate efforts with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) to assess the removal and salvage of displaced vessels throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Florida. USFWS personnel are providing best practices and technical assistance in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, while NPS is providing archaeological resource monitoring services for certain vessels in Florida.

An interagency team consisting of personnel from the NPS, the National Archives and Records Administration, the Smithsonian, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have deployed under a FEMA Mission Assignment to provide assistance to the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture and General Archives. This mission is expected to be completed by December 16.

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

Three OEPC Field Coordinators (1 in Texas, 2 in Florida) have completed Mission Scoping Assessments for both states and draft recovery strategies have been completed for Texas. NPS has provided two additional personnel to support OEPC efforts in Texas. Field Coordinators are also deployed to Puerto Rico (1 OEPC, 1 USFWS) and the U.S. Virgin Islands (1 OEPC, 1 NPS). Their efforts are currently focused on developing recovery strategies for both territories. OEPC Field Coordinators are also working with NPS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to investigate damage to coral reef sites.

DOI has 23 employees supporting the Small Business Administration (SBA). The group is comprised of volunteers from BIA, BLM, BOEM, BOR, USFWS, IBC, NPS, ONRR, and USGS. The Office of Emergency Management is working with the SBA to deploy additional personnel as needed.

Internal bureau and office-specific Hurricane response and recovery activities:

Effective December 12, commercial power was restored to the USGS Caribbean-Florida Water Science Center in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. This ended an almost 90-day stretch without commercial power that began with the landfall of Hurricane Maria on September 20. USGS continues to work with GSA to assess long-term impacts to the facility.

Wildfire Activity – California:

A CAL Fire Engineer from the San Diego Unit was fatally injured yesterday on the Thomas Fire. The details of the incident are still under review and additional information will be provided as they are verified. The Thomas Fire (being managed by CAL Fire) in southern California has burned approximately 249,500 (+11,000) acres and is 35-percent (+5) contained. The fire is being managed by a Type-1 Incident Management Team (IMT) with 8,316 (+233) personnel assigned, including 177 (+17) DOI personnel. The fire continues to threaten multiple critical habitats in the area and is burning on some BLM land parcels. USBR reports that fire activity has surrounded the Lake Casitas Dam and Reservoir, which is operated by a non-USBR entity. Red Flag Warnings for portions of Ventura and Los Angeles counties are set to expire this morning; however, Santa Ana winds are in the forecast over the weekend and the potential for extreme fire behavior will remain. Full containment of this fire has been pushed back from December 24 to January 7.

USGS is coordinating with FEMA, other federal partners, and state agencies on post-fire data collection and assessments. They do not have any impacts to their facilities, stream gages, or field instruments in the area to report at this time.

OUTSIDE MEDIA OF INTEREST (new)

Thousands Of Interior Dept. Employees Report Harassment And Intimidation At Work.

The New York Times (12/14, Cochrane) reports that around 35 percent of 30,000 Interior Department employees who responded to a recent department-wide survey “reported that they had experienced harassment or intimidation at work.” Over “85 percent of those employees said they had to continue to interact with the person responsible for the mistreatment.” Additionally, “8 percent of employees reported sexual harassment, 20 percent reported negative treatment based on their age and 16 percent based on their sex.”

The AP (12/14, DALY, BROWN) reports that “the Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Park Service reported the most incidents, with 40 percent of BIA workers and 39 percent of parks workers reporting some form of harassment.” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said in a statement Thursday he has “zero tolerance for any type of workplace harassment,” adding that he has directed agency heads to move quickly “to improve accountability and transparency with regard to this absolutely intolerable behavior.”

CNN (12/14, Green) reports that “Zinke said that he has already fired ‘a number of predators,’ actions he said previous administrations were too scared to take.” He said, “From day one, I made it

clear that I have zero tolerance for any type of workplace harassment, and I have directed leadership across the entire Department to move rapidly to improve accountability and transparency with regard to this absolutely intolerable behavior. All employees have the right to work in a safe and harassment-free environment. I've already fired a number of predators who other administrations were too afraid to remove or just turned a blind eye to. Under my leadership we don't protect predators. When I say 'zero tolerance' I mean that these people will be held accountable for their abhorrent actions."

The Hill (12/14, Cama) reports that Deputy Interior Secretary David Bernhardt "also blamed the Obama administration for not taking care of the problem." Bernhardt said in a statement, "The previous administration failed to aggressively address these problems and it shows. The culture across the department will change." Bernhardt "asked each bureau within the department to submit plans within 45 days to address the findings, Interior said."

Conservation Group Launches \$1M Ad Campaign Hitting Trump Monument Decision.

The Hill (12/14, Henry) reported that the "conservation group" Western Values Project "is launching a \$1 million television and radio advertisement campaign targeting three House Republicans over President Trump's decision to shrink monument protections in Utah." The spots target "Reps. Greg Walden (R-Ore.), Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-Wash.) and Martha McSally (R-Ariz.). The ads tell viewers about Trump's executive order shrinking the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments in Utah, and highlights potential public land policy changes in the three states it is set to air in. The group calls on viewers to tell "the GOP lawmakers "to 'stop the attacks on public lands because your American birthright is not for sale.'"

Bennet Backs BLM Move To Western State.

The Grand Junction (CO) Daily Sentinel (12/14, Harmon) reports that "moving the Bureau of Land Management headquarters out of Washington, D.C., has the conditional support" of Sen. Michael Bennet. His office said in a statement that Bennet could support any move out of DC "as long as the move is more than symbolic and includes resources to better manage our public lands."

Dam Construction Bill Puts Washington Senator In Tough Spot.

Bloomberg BNA (12/14, Schultz) reports that House Republicans are pushing "a years-in-the-making bill that would speed up federal approvals of dam projects in the West," and, "in doing so, they could also force Pacific Northwest Democrats into a tough spot." According to the article, "for years, Republicans have been trying to pass legislation that would put a cap on the amount of money and time the Bureau of Reclamation can spend studying the environmental impact of proposed dam projects." However, "these bills have always been thwarted in the Senate by a united Democratic opposition, led primarily by Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.)." This time, however, the legislation's "backers have a trick up their sleeve: They've added a measure to the legislation that would give the green light to a \$737 million water resources project in Cantwell's home state, a project she's been championing for years." But "Cantwell said the Republicans' tactics won't work on her."

Here's What Oil Drilling Looks Like In The Arctic Refuge, 30 Years Later.

The New York Times (12/15, Fountain) reports that "satellite images of a small part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge show the site of what, so far, is the only oil well ever drilled in the refuge, an exploratory well known as KIC-1 that was completed in the mid-1980s." The well was "plugged and abandoned, and the drilling equipment and a special timber pad it sat on have long since been removed," but "even after three decades, the well's footprint — about 600 feet long on its longest side — is easily distinguishable from the undisturbed tundra around it." The drillers "took care to protect the

tundra,” but “KIC-1 shows how even when care is taken, the delicate landscape of northern Alaska can be damaged by drilling activities, and that the damage can persist.”

US And Canada Struggle With Status Of Grizzly Bears.

Courthouse News (12/14, Lundquist) reports that “at its year-end meeting this week, the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee reviewed the status of six Northwestern grizzly bear populations and discussed what’s needed for the species to recover over the next five years.” The binational committee “recently oversaw the process of delisting the Yellowstone subpopulation of grizzly bears after the population had reached the goals of 500 bears total and 48 females with cubs.” Grizzly Bear Study Team ecologist Frank Van Manen was “fairly confident Wednesday that the Yellowstone population was doing fine, estimating that the population has grown to 718 grizzlies bears, including 57 females with cubs.”

Wolf Decision Could Undermine Plan To Remove Grizzly Bears From Endangered List. The Helena (MT) Independent Record (12/14, Chaney) reports that “an appeals court ruling in a federal lawsuit challenging how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed Great Lakes gray wolves from the Endangered Species Act list could unravel plans to delist grizzlies in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.” FWS grizzly recovery coordinator Hillary Cooley said during a meeting of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee in Missoula on Tuesday, “We had put our final delisting rule out in July and within a week we got the court opinion. The Great Lakes wolves were listed for the entire Lower 48 states, and then they carved out a DPS (Distinct Population Segment) and tried to delist them. That’s what we’ve done with the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, as well, so we thought we should take a look.”

U.S. Fish And Wildlife Service Requests Public Comment On Yellowstone Grizzly Delisting. Wyoming Public Radio (12/14, Kudelska) reports that “federal officials are reviewing the June decision to take grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem off the endangered species list.” The FWS will “review how the delisting of grizzlies in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem could affect the bear’s population in its historical range throughout the lower 48.”

Palau Compact Renewed But Awaits Funding Approval.

The Guam Daily Post (12/14) reports that “after years of delay, the Compact agreement between Palau and the United States has finally been renewed, but approval of the funds promised in the agreement is still pending.” The Palau Compact was included in the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act that President Trump signed into law Wednesday in Washington. Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Doug Domenech said, “Finalization of this agreement with Palau is long overdue. We look forward to final action from Congress to provide the appropriations necessary to finalize this important U.S. government commitment to Palau.” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke “underscored the need to approve the funding, saying, ‘it’s an important element of the Pacific national security strategy to maintain stability in the Western Pacific Region.’”

FEDERAL REGISTER LISTINGS:

REG0007268 BLM Final Supplementary Rules for Guffey Gorge in Park County, Colorado -- The BLM announces supplementary rules to regulate certain activities on public lands within Guffey Gorge in Park County, Colorado. The supplementary rules implement the Guffey Gorge Management Plan approved in June 2015 to protect persons, property, and public lands and resources within the 80-acre site. Final Rule 12/14/2017

REG0007641 BLM Notice of Realty Action: Proposed Non-Competitive (Direct) Sale of Public Land in Santa Barbara County, CA -- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to sell 5.93 acres of

public land in Santa Barbara County, California, to Arc Vineyards, LLC, to resolve an inadvertent unauthorized use and occupancy. The BLM requests comments over 45 days. Notice 12/14/2017

REG0007656 FWS Availability of Proposed Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Sand Skink; Lennar Corporation, Orange County, FL -- Lennar Corporation has requested a permit for take of the federally threatened sand skink incidental to the planned construction of residential development in Orange County, Florida. Notice 12/14/2017