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[DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 12-07-17.docx](#)

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 12/07/17

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

STATUS OF THE SECRETARY

THIS WEEK:

Today: Internal meetings

- ☐ 12/8 – Meeting with Governor Martinez

STATUS OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

12/7-12/8 : The Dep Sec is at a policy planning session in Shepherdstown, WV with Senior Leadership.

WH COMMS REPORT

Press Inquiries:

Many small and logistical inquiries.

- ☐ **The HILL: (Devin Henry)— REQUEST--** I'm writing a story for tomorrow's newspaper about the outdoors industry's reaction to the monuments declaration (Patagonia in particular, REI and others along the way). I plan to use Secretary Zinke's response from yesterday's press call, but I wanted to see if you have anything else you'd like to add. When writing the monuments plan, how much stock did Interior put into opposition from outdoors retailers? What's the response to such confrontational statements from an industry that highlights its economic impact on the US? And one that endorsed Secretary Zinke back from his House days, and for the Interior spot?—**RESPONSE--** There's certainly a separation between the many honest people in the outdoor industry and those who spend millions of dollars to lie to the American people in a shameful effort to boost the sales of their foreign-made products. The Secretary has always valued the outdoor rec economy and continues to work with the industry to expand access for hunting, fishing, motorized and nonmotorized

recreation, and traditional uses. Further, much like Tribes, the industry is not monolithic in its position on the monument modifications.

□ **KXLH-Montana: (Jonathan Ambarian)— REQUEST--** Today, the Natural Resources Defense Council Action Fund has announced a TV advertising campaign in Montana, accusing Secretary Zinke and Republicans in Congress of proposing substantial cuts to funding for the National Park Service, and criticizing the proposal to increase entrance fees at parks like Glacier and Yellowstone. I wanted to ask if the secretary or the department wanted to make a statement in response to these ads.—**RESPONSE--** The people of Montana understand better than anyone that government should balance its budget. By contrast, the NRDC has launched several expensive and frivolous lawsuits against the Department wasting valuable taxpayer funds. The increase in week-long admission for a carload during peak season at some national parks is still more affordable than taking a family of four to see a 3D movie. Further, the vast majority of funds from the fees goes directly to fixing our parks.

□ **PBS: (Hannah Grabenstein)— REQUEST--** I'm writing a story for the PBS NewsHour about the next steps for the two national monuments now that the President has reduced their size. I'd like to know what happens to the land now, who maintains it or leases it, what the possible uses for it are, and a few other logistical questions like that. I'm also looking to see if BLM has any comment on the lawsuits filed by the Native American Rights Fund and The Wilderness Society or on the claims they're making regarding the legality of the proclamations.—**RESPONSE--** The land will be managed by the US Forest Service or BLM for multiple use management or under wilderness designation, depending on what it was prior to the monument. Multiple uses include grazing, motorized and nonmotorized recreation, traditional tribal uses, research, hunting, minerals, etc. there is however very very little if any mineral energy assets in Bears Ears and we do not believe there is industry interest in the area. The point of restoring multiple use designation is to restore public access and traditional uses to the land. Wilderness uses are extremely limited. For instance, groups of 12 are not permitted (think Tribal ceremony or a boyscout troop) and wheels are not allowed (like bikes or game carts). Motor vehicles and mineral energy development are not permitted in wilderness areas. Additionally, all federal land (not just monument) carries certain laws that protect against the removal of fossils and Native American artifacts, and development projects on federal land are subject to rigorous environmental assessments. Please contact DOJ for comment on litigation.

□ **WGME-Maine: (Matt Curren)— REQUEST--** We have read the Interior Secretary's report on recommendations for the National Monuments. In reference to the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, one of the Secretary's recommendations says that the proclamation should be amended "to ensure compliance with the provisions and intent of the Act while also prioritizing promote a healthy forest through active timber management." Can you tell us specifically what "promote a healthy forest through active timber management" means?—**RESPONSE--** Active timber management means actively managing the forest to ensure there isn't a lot of thick underbrush or dead and dying timber which does things like impedes access for recreation and puts the health of the forest at risk.

Top Stories

□ **The Spokesman-Review:** Zinke backs shrinking more national monuments, shifting

management of 10 others

- ☐ **Denver Post:** Interior head says Patagonia claim about public land “a lie”
- ☐ **ABC News:** Zinke, Patagonia trade harsh words over national monuments
- ☐ **TIME:** Patagonia CEO: This Is Why We're Suing President Trump

Top Issues and Accomplishment

- ☐ Yesterday, Interior was named the 9th best large agency to work at in the federal government according to bestplacestowork.org (18 total). Interior was formerly ranked 11th, and DOI issued a press release on the news. The press release can be seen [HERE](#).
 - ☐ Yesterday, Secretary Zinke participated in a tele-town hall with SES employees regarding departmental reorganization.
 - ☐ Friday, Interior will publish a notice of delayed compliance with the Venting and Flaring rule.
 - ☐ Friday, Interior will announce that it will remove certain overly regulative and overreaching mitigation policies to continue to further American energy dominance.

AGENCY MEDIA (submitted 12/1)

U.S. Department of the Interior

Secretarial-level Announcements/Events/Interviews

- Today the Secretary attended the Cabinet Meeting as well as conducted a planning call with career leadership about the re-org plan.
- **December 8:** Secretary Zinke will have a meeting with Governor Martinez to discuss several DOI issues. No pro-active press planned.
- **December 7: Note:** We expect the FOIA office to post more documents about travel information from this year as well as documents from past Secretaries.
- **December 8 (tent): Department-level Release:** DOI will announce that it will remove certain overly regulative and overreaching mitigation policies to continue to further American energy dominance. Press release is forthcoming.
- **December 11:** Secretary Zinke is scheduled to have lunch with POTUS and VPOTUS as well as attend the White House Christmas Reception later in the day.
- **December 12: Department-level Release:** DOI will issue a release announcing the 2019-2024, Draft Proposed Program (for oil and gas exploration on the OCS). Comms materials will be sent shortly tonight. Comms call tomorrow.
- **December 14: Department-level Release:** DOI will announce the results from its Work Environment Survey. This will also include a variety of internal messaging to employees. Comms materials are forthcoming.

National Park Service

- **December 6:** DOI Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Cameron, members of the Western Governors' Association and the states of Idaho and Nevada will visit Lake Mead National Recreation Area to discuss the parks aquatic invasive species program.
- **December 7: Local NPS Release:** NPS will announce the new superintendent of Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site in Stanton, North Dakota.
- **December 9:** Up to 12 U.S. senators and representatives will tour Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument. The tour is part of a local excursion coordinated as part of the Congressional Western Caucus being held in Las Vegas.

- **December 11 (tent.): Local NPS Release:** The NPS Pacific West Region plans to publicly announce the business opportunity to operate overnight accommodations, food and beverage, retail, horse services, campground, and other visitor services at Lassen Volcanic National Park.
- **December 11:** Washington State University will publish an advertisement in Seattle and Portland area newspapers to solicit oral history narrators for a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) project titled "Documenting African American Migration, Segregation, and Civil Right History at Manhattan Project National Historical Park, Hanford." The advertisement is intended to encourage African Americans who worked at the Hanford site or resided in the Tri-Cities area of central Washington from 1943-1970 to volunteer to share stories that can help illuminate the project's themes.
- **December 12 (tent.): Local NPS Release:** Glen Canyon National Recreation Area will release the Air Tour Management Voluntary Agreement for a 30-day public comment period. The NPS, the Federal Aviation Administration, and seven commercial air tour operators intend to sign the agreement, once complete, to manage air tours over Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Rainbow Bridge National Monument.
- **December 11-13:** Catoctin Mountain Park Visitor Center will be temporarily closed while the National Park Service replaces insulation in public areas of the building. The building will be thoroughly cleaned before it reopens at 9 a.m. Saturday, November 18. During the closure, public restrooms and a contact station will be available at park headquarters.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- **December 7: Local FWS Release:** FWS will publish a Notice of Regulatory Review (NORR) in the Federal Register requesting public comment on any potential effects a recent D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling may have on the Service's June 30, 2017 final rule delisting the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly bear Distinct Population Segment.
- **December 11: Local FWS Release:** FWS will announce the solicitation of input from

the scientific community and the broader public on draft criteria set for the eventual recovery of the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) grizzly bear. The NCDE region encompasses Glacier National Park and other parts of northwestern Montana.

Bureau of Land Management

- **December 6: National BLM Release:** BLM-AK will hold an oil and gas lease sale for 900 tracts totaling 10.3 million acres in the NPR-A. There have been 12 previous NPR-A lease sales since 1999, but this one will be the first NPR-A lease to take place using livestream video. In addition, this is the first time that all available tracts will be offered for lease, which is a potential source of controversy. Bidding is expected to be moderate.
- **December 7: Local BLM Release:** BLM-CO will hold an oil and gas lease sale for 28 parcels totaling 27,284 acres in Garfield and Mesa counties. The sale is not expected to be controversial due to the lack of a significant number of protests received and lack of media coverage.
- **December 7: Local BLM Release:** BLM-NM will hold an oil and gas lease sale for 7 parcels totaling 2,104 acres in Eddy and Lea Counties. The sale is expected to be controversial and is likely to be protested by environmental groups concerned with the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on air and water quality. The bidding is expected to be robust.
- **December 7: National BLM Release:** BLM will publish a final rule delaying or suspending certain requirements of the Waste Prevention Rule (also known as the venting and Flaring Rule).
- **December 7:** BLM-CO Colorado River Valley Field Office will provide an update on its inspection and enforcement program at the quarterly Northwest Colorado Oil and Gas Forum in Rifle, CO. The BLM will then provide the update at the monthly Garfield County Energy Advisory Board, also in Rifle. Updates will focus on the status of current projects, permitting and leasing.
- **December 11:** BLM Office of Law Enforcement and Security Director William Woody will begin visits to members and staff of the Utah congressional delegation to discuss law enforcement issues in Utah. BLM Deputy Director for Policy Brian Steed and DOI Director of the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs John Tanner also plan to attend.
- **December 12: Local BLM Release:** BLM-NV will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 208 parcels totaling 388,959.402 acres in White Pine, Lincoln and Nye Counties. The sale will likely be controversial.

- **December 12: Local BLM Release:** BLM-MT will hold an oil and gas lease sale for 204 parcels totaling 98,889 acres in Big Horn, Custer, Carter, Fallon, Garfield, Powder River, Richland, and Rosebud Counties. BLM-MT expects minimal controversy with this sale. Bidding is not expected to be robust.
- **December 12: Local BLM Release:** BLM-UT will hold an oil and gas lease sale for 75 parcels totaling 94,000 acres in Duchesne, Uintah and Emery counties. The sale is expected to be controversial due to the nomination of parcels near Dinosaur National Monument. However, two of the three parcels nominated by industry for consideration near the boundary of the Dinosaur National Monument have been deferred by the BLM Utah State Director for further consultation with the National Park Service. The remaining parcel contains both BLM and split estate land, and has a small portion within view of the Monument. The portion of land within view of the Monument is privately owned, however, the BLM has applied stipulations for light and noise pollution, and to minimize impacts to air quality and the scenic viewshed. Bidding is expected to be robust.
- **December 13:** BLM-CA Bakersfield Field Office will host an informational meeting and site visit for tribes regarding a Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act case at the San Joaquin River Gorge. Last year, human remains were discovered due to erosion on the slope of trail. The site has been stabilized to prevent further erosion. The meeting will discuss the tribes' wishes regarding this discovery and any future discoveries that may be made in the area.
- **December 13:** The BLM-CA El Centro Field Office will conduct a public scoping open-house meeting as a first step in the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for United States Gypsum Company's (USG) proposed mine expansion/modernization project near the city of El Centro.
- **December 14: Local BLM Release:** BLM-Eastern States will hold an oil and gas lease sale for seven parcels totaling 1,185 acres in OH and LA. The sale will include five parcels totaling 350.06 acres in the Wayne National Forest, Monroe County, OH; and two parcels totaling 834.70 acres in the Kisatchie National Forest, Natchitoches and Winn Parishes, LA. The parcels being offered in the Wayne National Forest are expected to be controversial as several environmental groups are attempting to prohibit hydraulic fracturing in the area.
- **December 14:** BLM-CA's Bakersfield Field Office will host a public scoping meeting in Three Rivers to gather comments on a draft of a vegetation/forest health plan for the BLM's only giant sequoia grove on Case Mountain. The BLM manages approximately 444 acres on Case Mountain, which supports the Giant Sequoia Complex and the Case Mountain Extensive Recreation Management Area.
- **December 14:** BLM-AK Associate State Director Ted Murphy will provide an update to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group on development activities within the NPRA-A. The group brings a broad range of stakeholders together who are actively involved in the management of caribou and includes subsistence users, other hunters, reindeer herders, hunting guides, transporters and conservationists.
- **December 14: Local BLM Release:** BLM WY will host an online oil and gas lease sale. The sale will offer 45 parcels totaling 72,884.37 acres located in Laramie, Lincoln, Sweetwater, and Uinta counties. BLM received three protests for this oil and gas lease sale that will be dismissed because the issues raised in the protest are adequately analyzed in the supporting NEPA documents and Resource Management Plans.

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Bureau of Reclamation

- **December 7:** On December 7 in Portland, Oregon, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Reclamation and Bonneville Power Administration will hold a public meeting on the Columbia River System Operations EIS to discuss the results of public scoping and provide a status update on progress made on the EIS and to further educate attendees on the NEPA process. A draft biological opinion is due in 2020, final environmental impact statement/record of decision in 2021. The two Reclamation facilities included in this process are Grand Coulee Dam and Hungry Horse Dam (both include hydropower facilities).
- **December 11:** NBC Nightly News is expected to air a segment relating to ongoing efforts to find an economically-viable solution to continuing operations of the Navajo Generating Station, near Page, Arizona. NBC News (Los Angeles) producer Jim Rainey has been tracking NGS developments for months, gathering multiple interviews and attending public comment sessions that were held in May in Phoenix, as well as the Navajo and Hopi reservations. Last week, Interior agencies (Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Indian Affairs) announced an extension lease to allow the Federal and non-Federal stakeholders' ongoing search for a post-2019 operator to continue. Coverage is expected to be neutral.

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Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- **December 13 (tent.):** NOA FSEIS for 2018 Gulf Region-wide Sales 250 and 251 NTS

Office of Natural Resources Revenue

- **December TBD:** ONRR issued a civil penalty in the amount of \$19,736 to Mid-Con

Energy Operating, LLC, (Mid-Con) (formerly RDT Properties, Inc) on November 17, 2017. ONRR investigated Mid-Con's failure to submit production reports (form ONRR-4054) and found 68 violations on multiple Indian leases for the production months of September 2011 through January 2013.

- **December TBD:** ONRR anticipates issuing a civil penalty of about \$840 to Eight Round Inc., (Eight Round) the week of November 5, 2017. ONRR investigated Eight Round's failure to submit production reports (Forms ONRR-4054) and found 12 violations on one Indian agreement for production months of April, 2012 through September, 2013.

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CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE (updated 12/4)

UPCOMING SCIA HEARING: The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs will host a legislative hearing on two Indian water rights settlement bills: S. 664 (Senator Hatch), the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act of 2017 and S. 1770 (Senator Flake), the Hualapai Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2017. Alan Mikkelsen, the Chair of the Indian Water Rights Office Working Group, will be the witness on behalf of the Department.

Timing: Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Advisor, Congressional Affairs

UPCOMING HNR SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING REGARDING FISH RECOVERY PROGRAMS: The House Natural Resources subcommittee on Water Power and Oceans will hold a legislative hearing on HR.4465 which has impacts on Bureau of Reclamation and Fish Wildlife Service. DOI will not be testifying but will provide a statement for the record.

Timing: Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Advisor, Congressional Affairs

EXPECTED HEARING: The Senate Energy Committee is expected to hold a hearing on December 12 regarding permitting reform. Details regarding the specifics the committee plans to emphasize are still being put together; however, James Cason (Associate Dep. Sec.) is tentatively scheduled to testify.

Timing: Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Advisor, Congressional Affairs

DOI NOMINEES IN PROGRESS: Susan Combs (A/S PMB) passed out of committee August 3, 2017 and still awaits a vote. Joe Balash (Assistant Secretary, Land & Minerals) and Ryan Nelson (Solicitor) appeared before the SENR committee on September 7, 2017. Both passed and now await full Senate approval. DOI OCL is working with OGE and the White House to get final approval for Asst. Sec. Indian Affairs nominee, Tara Sweeney before submitting her paperwork to the Senate. The White House nominated Steve Gardner for OSM. His Senate questionnaire is currently under review. Tim Petty's (Asst. Secretary, Water & Science Nominee) was nominated November 14, 2017 and his nomination hearing will be held on 12/5/17.

Contact: John Tanner, Director, Congressional Affairs

NOTE: A vote for Balash is scheduled for today

POLITICAL APPOINTEE UPDATE

DOI politicals on board 65

4 PAS confirmed as of 11/16

6 nominated awaiting confirmation:

- ☐ Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.
- ☐ Pending Senate floor vote: Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals
 - o **NOTE: A vote for Balash is scheduled for today**
- ☐ Pending Senate floor vote: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor
- ☐ Pending Hearing: Tara Sweeney, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs
- ☐ Pending Hearing: Steve Gardner, Director, Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation
- ☐ Pending Hearing: Tim Petty, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science

Overall:

- ☐ Schedule C: 36 of 68 onboard; 2 starting; 6 in process
- ☐ NC-SES: 26 of 44 onboard; 3 starting; 1 in process
- ☐ PAS: 4 Confirmed; 6 Announced; 14 of 17 Submitted to PPO

SECRETARY SPEAKING INVITATIONS

Accepted:

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

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:

- 1/4 – Dallas Safari Club Annual Meeting (Dallas, TX)
- 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

- 12/5-7 America Outdoors Association's 29th Annual Marketing and Management Conference for Outfitters and Adventure Resorts (Reno, NV)
- 12/5 – NY Stock Exchange Ringing of the Bell & remarks at Wells Fargo Financial Symposium Event (NYC)
- 12/6 American Exploration and Mining Association Annual Meeting (Reno, NV)
- 12/8 - Valley Industry and Commerce Association Annual Meeting (Los Angeles, CA)
- 12/11 – Veterans Day Commemoration (Prussia, PA)
- 12/14 – Leadership Missoula (Missoula, Montana)
- 12/8 – DOI Toastmasters event (Washington, DC)
- 12/9 – Western Caucus Foundation Winter Policy Meeting (Las Vegas, NV)
- 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

The Thomas Fire (being managed by CAL Fire) in southern California continues to actively burn with extreme rates of spread due to erratic wind activity. The fire has burned approximately 90,000 (+35,000) acres and is 5-percent (+5) contained. The fire is being managed by a Type-1 Incident Management Team with 2,497 (+721) personnel assigned, none of which are DOI personnel. The fire is burning on some BLM land parcels and is approaching the Lake Casitas Dam (USBR), which is approximately 1.5 miles west-northwest of the current fire perimeter. There are 12,000 structures threatened (no change) by this fire and 150 (no change) structures have been destroyed. The fire is also threatening power transmission lines, oil resources, high-pressure gas lines, communications infrastructure, and local crops. The low relative humidity values and high winds in the area remain a challenge for response personnel, and Extremely Critical Fire Weather is forecast for the region again today. Full containment of this fire is expected December 24.

Although the Pacific Regional Office located in Camarillo, California, is not currently threatened by fire activity and remains open, some DOI personnel who live in the area have been impacted due to ongoing evacuations, power outages, and school closures. All DOI

personnel are accounted for and efforts to maintain accountability are ongoing.

To the east of the Thomas Fire and north-northwest of Los Angeles, the Rye Fire (CAL Fire) and Creek Fire (CAL Fire) are also actively burning. Environmental conditions are conducive for additional perimeter growth over the next 24 to 48 hours for both fires. They are being managed by Type-1 IMTs and have resulted in significant evacuations in the area. The Creek Fire has burned 12,605 acres, is 5-percent contained, and has 1,559 personnel assigned, 19 of which are DOI personnel. Full containment is expected December 23. The Rye Fire has burned 7,000 acres, is 10-percent contained, and has 901 personnel assigned, none of which are DOI personnel. Full containment is expected December 15. There are no DOI assets currently impacted by these fires; however, there are some BLM land parcels in the vicinity.

OUTSIDE MEDIA OF INTEREST (new)

BLM finalizes delay of methane waste rule.

The Bureau of Land Management will finalize a long-term delay of its methane waste rule in a notice to be published in Friday's Federal Register. The rule's key provisions, including leak detection and repair requirements, will not be enforced until Jan. 17, 2019, according to the notice. That will give BLM enough time to repeal the rule. "The BLM has concerns regarding the statutory authority, cost, complexity, feasibility, and other implications of the 2016 final rule, and therefore intends to avoid imposing likely considerable and immediate compliance costs on operators for requirements that may be rescinded or significantly revised in the near future," the agency wrote in the notice.

The Interior Department issued a hasty delay last year, but it was struck down by a federal judge who said the agency failed to follow administrative procedure, in particular collecting public comment on a delay. BLM subsequently went through notice-and-comment rulemaking to produce this new delay. BLM said on Monday that it will appeal that judge's ruling, despite the newly finalized delay. If that appeal succeeds, it would make it easier for Interior to stop rules in the future.

WHAT'S NEXT: It is unclear how long it will take BLM to complete its review and potential repeal of the methane waste rule, also known as the venting and flaring rule.

Lawsuits Address Whether Presidents Can Modify Monuments.

The AP (12/6, McCombs, Price) reports that "a flurry of lawsuits" President Trump's move to shrink the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments "could finally bring an answer to the much-debated question of whether presidents have the legal authority to undo or change monuments created by past presidents." Already, four lawsuits have been filed, "and more are expected – especially if Trump follows Zinke's recommendations to shrink two other monuments – Gold Butte in Nevada and Cascade Siskiyou in Oregon." But "legal experts disagree on whether the 1906 Antiquities Act – allowing presidents to create a monument – also lets them reduce one."

Additional coverage was provided by the Washington Post (12/6, Grandoni).

Patagonia Sues To Prevent Trump Administration From Shrinking Bears Ears Monument. The Washington Examiner (12/6, Correll) reports that "outdoor recreation company Patagonia sued Wednesday to block President Trump from shrinking Bears Ears

National Monument in Utah.” Patagonia called Trump’s decision to reduce the size of the Bears Ears monument an “extreme overreach in authority.” The [Huffington Post](#) (12/6, Madani) reports that Patagonia President and CEO Rose Marcario said in a statement, “The Administration’s unlawful actions betray our shared responsibility to protect iconic places for future generations and represent the largest elimination of protected land in American history. We’ve fought to protect these places since we were founded and now we’ll continue that fight in the courts.”

Patagonia, Interior Department Trade Twitter Barbs Over ‘Special Interests’. [CNN](#) (12/6, Green) reports the Interior Department and outdoor retailer Patagonia “continued their public spat over US national monuments Tuesday on Twitter, trading barbs over each others’ ties to ‘special interests.’” In a tweet, Patagonia referred to “a back-and-forth over” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s “travel on behalf of the agency: ‘It’s odd that @SecretaryZinke has no problem with special interests when they’re paying for his private jets. We have been fighting for these lands for decades, so that hunters, fisherman, hikers and everyone else can use them and help us protect them.’” Following Patagonia’s tweet, “the official Interior spokesperson account piped in, calling aspects of Patagonia’s statement ‘fake news.’” Another tweet a few minutes later said, “Not a jet. Not paid by spec interest. Same prop that prev secs used. selected by career officials.”

Patagonia CEO On Trump Shrinking Monuments: ‘This Is Not About Politics’. In it’s “Blog Briefing Room” blog, [The Hill](#) (12/6, Delk) reports that Patagonia CEO Rose Marcario “denied the company having any political motivations in its website’s statement condemning President Trump’s ‘illegal’ move to shrink two national monuments in Utah.” In an op-ed for [TIME](#) (12/6, Marcario), Marcario wrote, “This is not about politics; it’s about protecting the places we love and keeping the great promise of this country for our children and grandchildren. We won’t let President Trump tear down our heritage and sell it to the highest bidder.” Marcario also “defended the company’s claim that Trump’s move was illegal, citing the Antiquities Act of 1906 that allows presidents to designate national monuments but noted it does ‘not give the President the power to undo a prior president’s monument designations.’”

Additional Coverage. Also reporting are [AP](#) (12/6, McCOMBS), [NBC News](#) (12/6, Rainey), [PBS NewsHour](#) (12/6, Grabenstein), [The New Yorker](#) (12/6, Nijhuis), and the [Santa Fe \(NM\) Reporter](#) (12/6, Paskus).

Alaskan Oil Lease Sale Brings Few Bids Despite Vast Territory Offered.

[Reuters](#) (12/6, Rosen) reports the Trump Administration’s oil and gas lease sale in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska only received seven bids. The bids covered about 80,000 acres, less than 1 percent of the 10.3 million acres offered in the sale. ConocoPhillips Alaska submitted all seven bids, worth \$1.16 million, in partnership with Anadarko. Ted Murphy, associate director of the BLM’s Alaska office, said, “Lease sale interest is unpredictable. ... We don’t know what industry, ultimately, will be interested in getting from year to year.” The [AP](#) (12/6, Joling) reports Kristen Miller, conservation director of the Alaska Wilderness League, said the sale shows that any drilling in the Arctic Refuge will not bring in the expected revenue. The bids on Wednesday brought in \$14.99 an acre, leading Miller to say, “At that price, leasing the entirety of the Arctic Refuge coastal plain’s 1.5 million acres would

raise slightly more than \$11 million in revenue for the federal government, a far cry from the billion dollar lie that Trump and Republicans are feeding the American public.”

Additional coverage was provided by UPI (12/6, Graeber) and the Alaska Public Radio Network (12/6, Harball).

Conservation Group Takes After Zinke Over Park Fees; Praises Tester.

KRTV-TV Great Falls, MT (12/6, Dennison) reports that the political arm of the Natural Resources Defense Fund, has launched a “five-figure” ad campaign in Montana opposing the Trump Administration proposal to hike “entrance fees to national parks – and praising Democratic U.S. Sen. Jon Tester for his stand on the issue.” Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said “Wednesday that the increase is ‘still more affordable than taking a family of four to see a 3-D movie,’ and that the majority of the increased funds will pay for park maintenance.” Swift “also noted that NRDC has filed several ‘expensive and frivolous lawsuits’ against the Interior Department, wasting ‘valuable taxpayer funds.’” The campaign by NRDC Action Fund is “the latest of several efforts by conservation groups either taking” after Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, “or boosting Tester, who is up for re-election in 2018.”

Additional coverage was provided by KTVQ-TV Billings, MT (12/6, Dennison) and KPAX-TV Missoula, MT (12/6, Dennison).

Sea Level Rise Could Drown More Than 2,500 Louisiana Historic Sites.

The New Orleans Times-Picayune (12/6, Sneath) reports that “more than 19,600 historically significant sites along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts could be lost to sea level rise, according to a new peer-reviewed study published in PLUS ONE.” The study examined “records of archaeological sites and the National Register of Historic Places from nine states and overlays that information with projected sea level rise over the next century.” The study said, “Tens of thousands of historic and prehistoric archaeological sites, and thousands of properties currently designated eligible for inclusion on the (National Register of Historic Places), which include archaeological sites, standing structures, and other cultural property types, will be submerged and hence lost or damaged, as well as underwater resources that will be effected by changes in ocean acidification, currents, and shipping patterns.”

Vietnam Wall Brings Healing.

The Nevada Appeal (12/6, Ranson) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke was among the speakers on Veterans Day at the Vietnam Wall Zinke “said the wall is a tribute to remembering Vietnam veterans.” He said, “We should never run away from the history of our country. We should learn. When I served in the seal teams for 23 years, 1985, most of my instructors were SEALs that had served in Vietnam. They cut their teeth in the jungles and the rivers. I learned a lot from those fine warriors. I have learned a lot from you, those that have fought. I’ve learned commitment, dedication, sacrifice.”

Heller Bill Protects Special Federal Lands Without Using Taxpayer Funds.

The Ripon Advance (12/6) reports that Sen. Dean Heller on Monday “introduced bipartisan

legislation to enable protecting and preserving iconic Western federal lands with special conservation importance without using taxpayer funds.” The bill “reauthorizes the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA), which expired in 2011.” Heller said, “This bipartisan program provides a fiscally responsible way to protect and manage important public lands in Nevada and throughout the West. Not only will it spur economic growth and development, it will also keep conservation at the forefront of the region’s needs.”

Area Of Protected Land Larger Than California At Risk From Drilling.

The MintPress News (12/6, Carter) reports that “an area of protected land larger than California could be at risk from fossil fuel development, as the Trump administration looks to ramp up drilling on federal lands – according to a new investigation by Unearthed.” The analysis “mapped the overlap between every protected park in the US and potentially major reserves of oil, gas and coal.” The report “shows how much protected land – and which iconic landscapes – could be affected by the Trump administration’s goal of opening up more land for energy development than ever before.”

US To Review End Of Protections For Yellowstone Grizzlies.

The AP (12/6, Brown) reports that federal officials “said Wednesday they’ll review the recent lifting of protections for Yellowstone-area grizzly bears in light of a court ruling that retained protections for gray wolves in the Great Lakes.” According to the article, “in its response to the appeals court ruling, the Fish and Wildlife Service said it’s now seeking public comment on the potential implications for Yellowstone bears.” The FWS “plans to release its conclusions by March 31.”

Additional coverage was provided by Reuters (12/6), MLive (MI) (12/6, Raven), the WyoFile (12/6, Thuermer), and KTVH-TV Helena, MT (12/6, Jochim).

House Panel Considers Extending Endangered Fish Recovery Programs.

Courthouse News (12/6, Buchman) reports that “the House Natural Resources Committee considered legislation Wednesday that will extend endangered fish recovery programs in the Upper Colorado and San Juan rivers and direct the Interior Department to conduct an in-depth review of the success of the program to date.” Rep. John Curtis’ bill, the Endangered Fish Recovery Programs Extension Act of 2017, “would do two things: first, it would allow for the continued annual collection of fees from water and power users to continue funding the collaborative restoration efforts involving state and federal agencies, tribes and other stakeholders.” Second, the legislation “directs the Interior Department to assess how well the programs are working and how they can be improved.”

National Park Service Awards \$18,000 Grant To Aid Restoration Of Topeka’s Historic Constitution Hall.

The Topeka (KS) Capital-Journal (12/6, Hrenchir) reports the National Park Service recently awarded \$18,000 “to help restore the front doors and windows of Topeka’s Constitution Hall, which was the site of events in the 1850s that helped shape this nation’s history.” Diane Miller, national program manager for the National Underground Railroad Network to

Freedom, noted that “the effort to restore the front doors and front windows at Constitution Hall, 427-429 S. Kansas Ave., was among only 16 projects chosen to receive funding from 41 applications nationwide.” In a letter to Grant Glenn, president of the not-for-profit Friends of the Free State Capitol, Inc., Miller wrote, “We found your project to be very exciting and feel that it will advance the goals of preserving the history of the Underground Railroad and informing the public. We commend your creativity in developing the proposal and your dedication to this important part of our heritage.”

Town Clock Church Gets Network To Freedom Grant.

The Jefferson (IN) News & Tribune (12/6) reports that the National Park Service awarded a Network to Freedom grant of \$15,940 to the Friends of the Town Clock Church. The application sought funds for “tuck-pointing the historic Town Clock Church at Second Baptist Church in New Albany.” The article notes that “the federal grant requires a dollar for dollar match” and “the Friends of the Town Clock Church will need to raise \$15,940 to match the grant.”

In Oklahoma, The National Park Service Estimates There Are \$19.9 Million In Deferred Maintenance.

The Oklahoma Gazette (12/6, Eastes) reports that “according to National Park Service, Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Washita Battlefield National Historic Site and Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum welcomed 1.6 million visitors, who spent an estimated \$27 million in OKC and across the state.” However, the article notes that Chickasaw National Recreation Area “requires \$19.7 million in repairs” and Washita Battlefield National Historic Site “lists \$196,027 in needed repairs.”

FEDERAL REGISTER LISTINGS:

REG0007679 FWS Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Permit Applications (Ohio Department of Natural Resources): This is a batched notice announcing the receipt of applications received by FWS for Endangered Species Act permits. Notice 12/06/2017

REG0007530 OSM Oklahoma Regulatory Program (OK-037-FOR): The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) is approving an amendment to the Oklahoma regulatory program under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). Oklahoma submitted the proposed amendment on its own initiative in 2015. Final Rule 12/06/2017

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Natalie Davis
Special Assistant to the Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 12/07/17

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

STATUS OF THE SECRETARY

THIS WEEK:

Today: Internal meetings

- 12/8 – Meeting with Governor Martinez

STATUS OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

12/7-12/8 : The Dep Sec is at a policy planning session in Shepherdstown, WV with Senior Leadership.

WH COMMS REPORT

Press Inquiries:

Many small and logistical inquiries.

- **The HILL: (Devin Henry)— REQUEST--** I'm writing a story for tomorrow's newspaper about the outdoors industry's reaction to the monuments declaration (Patagonia in particular, REI and others along the way). I plan to use Secretary Zinke's response from yesterday's press call, but I wanted to see if you have anything else you'd like to add. When writing the monuments plan, how much stock did Interior put into opposition from outdoors retailers? What's the response to such confrontational statements from an industry that highlights its economic impact on the US? And one that endorsed Secretary Zinke back from his House days, and for the Interior spot?—**RESPONSE--** There's certainly a separation between the many honest people in the outdoor industry and those who spend millions of dollars to lie to the American people in a shameful effort to boost the sales of their foreign-made products. The Secretary has always valued the outdoor rec economy and continues to work with the industry to expand access for hunting, fishing, motorized and nonmotorized recreation, and traditional uses. Further, much like Tribes, the industry is not monolithic in its position on the monument modifications.
- **KXLH-Montana: (Jonathan Ambarian)— REQUEST--** Today, the Natural Resources Defense Council Action Fund has announced a TV advertising campaign in Montana, accusing Secretary Zinke and Republicans in Congress of proposing substantial cuts to funding for the National Park Service, and criticizing the proposal to increase entrance fees at parks like Glacier and Yellowstone. I wanted to ask if the secretary or the department wanted to make a statement in response to these ads.—**RESPONSE--** The people of Montana understand better than anyone that government should balance its budget. By contrast, the NRDC has launched several expensive and frivolous lawsuits against the Department wasting valuable taxpayer funds. The increase in week-long admission for a carload during peak season at some national parks is still more affordable than taking a family of four to see a 3D movie. Further, the vast majority of funds from the fees goes directly to fixing our parks.
- **PBS: (Hannah Grabenstein)— REQUEST--** I'm writing a story for the PBS NewsHour about the next steps for the two national monuments now that the President has reduced their size. I'd like to know what happens to the land now, who maintains it or leases it, what the possible uses for it are, and a few other logistical questions like that. I'm also looking to see if BLM has any comment on the lawsuits filed by the Native American Rights Fund and The Wilderness Society

or on the claims they're making regarding the legality of the proclamations.—**RESPONSE--** The land will be managed by the US Forest Service or BLM for multiple use management or under wilderness designation, depending on what it was prior to the monument. Multiple uses include grazing, motorized and nonmotorized recreation, traditional tribal uses, research, hunting, minerals, etc. there is however very very little if any mineral energy assets in Bears Ears and we do not believe there is industry interest in the area. The point of restoring multiple use designation is to restore public access and traditional uses to the land. Wilderness uses are extremely limited. For instance, groups of 12 are not permitted (think Tribal ceremony or a boyscout troop) and wheels are not allowed (like bikes or game carts). Motor vehicles and mineral energy development are not permitted in wilderness areas. Additionally, all federal land (not just monument) carries certain laws that protect against the removal of fossils and Native American artifacts, and development projects on federal land are subject to rigorous environmental assessments. Please contact DOJ for comment on litigation.

- **WGME-Maine: (Matt Curren)— REQUEST--** We have read the Interior Secretary's report on recommendations for the National Monuments. In reference to the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, one of the Secretary's recommendations says that the proclamation should be amended "to ensure compliance with the provisions and intent of the Act while also prioritizing promote a healthy forest through active timber management." Can you tell us specifically what "promote a healthy forest through active timber management" means?—**RESPONSE--** Active timber management means actively managing the forest to ensure there isn't a lot of thick underbrush or dead and dying timber which does things like impedes access for recreation and puts the health of the forest at risk.

Top Stories

- **The Spokesman-Review:** Zinke backs shrinking more national monuments, shifting management of 10 others
- **Denver Post:** Interior head says Patagonia claim about public land "a lie"
- **ABC News:** Zinke, Patagonia trade harsh words over national monuments
- **TIME:** Patagonia CEO: This Is Why We're Suing President Trump

Top Issues and Accomplishment

- Yesterday, Interior was named the 9th best large agency to work at in the federal government according to bestplacetowork.org (18 total). Interior was formerly ranked 11th, and DOI issued a press release on the news. The press release can be seen [HERE](#).
- Yesterday, Secretary Zinke participated in a tele-town hall with SES employees regarding departmental reorganization.
- Friday, Interior will publish a notice of delayed compliance with the Venting and Flaring rule.
- Friday, Interior will announce that it will remove certain overly regulative and overreaching mitigation policies to continue to further American energy dominance.

AGENCY MEDIA (submitted 12/1)

U.S. Department of the Interior

Secretarial-level Announcements/Events/Interviews

- Today the Secretary attended the Cabinet Meeting as well as conducted a planning call with career leadership about the re-org plan.
- **December 8:** Secretary Zinke will have a meeting with Governor Martinez to discuss several DOI issues. No pro-active press planned.
- **December 7:** *Note:* We expect the FOIA office to post more documents about travel information from this year as well as documents from past Secretaries.
- **December 8 (tent): Department-level Release:** DOI will announce that it will remove certain overly regulative and overreaching mitigation policies to continue to further American energy dominance. Press release is forthcoming.
- **December 11:** Secretary Zinke is scheduled to have lunch with POTUS and VPOTUS as well as attend the White House Christmas Reception later in the day.
- **December 12: Department-level Release:** DOI will issue a release announcing the 2019-2024, Draft Proposed Program (for oil and gas exploration on the OCS). Comms materials will be sent shortly tonight. Comms call tomorrow.
- **December 14: Department-level Release:** DOI will announce the results from its Work Environment Survey. This will also include a variety of internal messaging to employees. Comms materials are forthcoming.

National Park Service

- **December 6:** DOI Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Cameron, members of the Western Governors' Association and the states of Idaho and Nevada will visit Lake Mead National Recreation Area to discuss the parks aquatic invasive species program.
- **December 7: Local NPS Release:** NPS will announce the new superintendent of Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site in Stanton, North Dakota.
- **December 9:** Up to 12 U.S. senators and representatives will tour Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument. The tour is part of a local excursion coordinated as part of the Congressional Western Caucus being held in Las Vegas.
- **December 11 (tent.): Local NPS Release:** The NPS Pacific West Region plans to publicly announce the business opportunity to operate overnight accommodations, food and beverage, retail, horse services, campground, and other visitor services at Lassen Volcanic National Park.
- **December 11:** Washington State University will publish an advertisement in Seattle and Portland area newspapers to solicit oral history narrators for a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) project titled "Documenting African American Migration, Segregation, and Civil Right History at Manhattan Project National Historical Park, Hanford." The advertisement is intended to encourage African Americans who worked at the Hanford site or resided in the Tri-Cities area of central Washington from 1943-1970 to volunteer to share stories that can help illuminate the project's themes.
- **December 12 (tent.): Local NPS Release:** Glen Canyon National Recreation Area will release the Air Tour Management Voluntary Agreement for a 30-day public comment period. The NPS, the Federal Aviation Administration, and seven commercial air tour operators intend to sign the agreement, once complete, to manage air tours over Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Rainbow Bridge National Monument.
- **December 11-13:** Catoctin Mountain Park Visitor Center will be temporarily closed while the National Park Service replaces insulation in public areas of the building. The building will be

thoroughly cleaned before it reopens at 9 a.m. Saturday, November 18. During the closure, public restrooms and a contact station will be available at park headquarters.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- **December 7: Local FWS Release:** FWS will publish a Notice of Regulatory Review (NORR) in the Federal Register requesting public comment on any potential effects a recent D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling may have on the Service's June 30, 2017 final rule delisting the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly bear Distinct Population Segment.
- **December 11: Local FWS Release:** FWS will announce the solicitation of input from the scientific community and the broader public on draft criteria set for the eventual recovery of the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) grizzly bear. The NCDE region encompasses Glacier National Park and other parts of northwestern Montana.

Bureau of Land Management

- **December 6: National BLM Release:** BLM-AK will hold an oil and gas lease sale for 900 tracts totaling 10.3 million acres in the NPR-A. There have been 12 previous NPR-A lease sales since 1999, but this one will be the first NPR-A lease to take place using livestream video. In addition, this is the first time that all available tracts will be offered for lease, which is a potential source of controversy. Bidding is expected to be moderate.
- **December 7: Local BLM Release:** BLM-CO will hold an oil and gas lease sale for 28 parcels totaling 27,284 acres in Garfield and Mesa counties. The sale is not expected to be controversial due to the lack of a significant number of protests received and lack of media coverage.
- **December 7: Local BLM Release:** BLM-NM will hold an oil and gas lease sale for 7 parcels totaling 2,104 acres in Eddy and Lea Counties. The sale is expected to be controversial and is likely to be protested by environmental groups concerned with the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on air and water quality. The bidding is expected to be robust.
- **December 7: National BLM Release:** BLM will publish a final rule delaying or suspending certain requirements of the Waste Prevention Rule (also known as the venting and Flaring Rule).
- **December 7:** BLM-CO Colorado River Valley Field Office will provide an update on its inspection and enforcement program at the quarterly Northwest Colorado Oil and Gas Forum in Rifle, CO. The BLM will then provide the update at the monthly Garfield County Energy Advisory Board, also in Rifle. Updates will focus on the status of current projects, permitting and leasing.
- **December 11:** BLM Office of Law Enforcement and Security Director William Woody will begin visits to members and staff of the Utah congressional delegation to discuss law enforcement issues in Utah. BLM Deputy Director for Policy Brian Steed and DOI Director of the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs John Tanner also plan to attend.
- **December 12: Local BLM Release:** BLM-NV will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 208 parcels totaling 388,959.402 acres in White Pine, Lincoln and Nye Counties. The sale will likely be controversial.
- **December 12: Local BLM Release:** BLM-MT will hold an oil and gas lease sale for 204 parcels totaling 98,889 acres in Big Horn, Custer, Carter, Fallon, Garfield, Powder River, Richland, and Rosebud Counties. BLM-MT expects minimal controversy with this sale. Bidding is not expected to be robust.

- **December 12: Local BLM Release:** BLM-UT will hold an oil and gas lease sale for 75 parcels totaling 94,000 acres in Duchesne, Uintah and Emery counties. The sale is expected to be controversial due to the nomination of parcels near Dinosaur National Monument. However, two of the three parcels nominated by industry for consideration near the boundary of the Dinosaur National Monument have been deferred by the BLM Utah State Director for further consultation with the National Park Service. The remaining parcel contains both BLM and split estate land, and has a small portion within view of the Monument. The portion of land within view of the Monument is privately owned, however, the BLM has applied stipulations for light and noise pollution, and to minimize impacts to air quality and the scenic viewshed. Bidding is expected to be robust.
- **December 13:** BLM-CA Bakersfield Field Office will host an informational meeting and site visit for tribes regarding a Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act case at the San Joaquin River Gorge. Last year, human remains were discovered due to erosion on the slope of trail. The site has been stabilized to prevent further erosion. The meeting will discuss the tribes' wishes regarding this discovery and any future discoveries that may be made in the area.
- **December 13:** The BLM-CA El Centro Field Office will conduct a public scoping open-house meeting as a first step in the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for United States Gypsum Company's (USG) proposed mine expansion/modernization project near the city of El Centro.
- **December 14: Local BLM Release:** BLM-Eastern States will hold an oil and gas lease sale for seven parcels totaling 1,185 acres in OH and LA. The sale will include five parcels totaling 350.06 acres in the Wayne National Forest, Monroe County, OH; and two parcels totaling 834.70 acres in the Kisatchie National Forest, Natchitoches and Winn Parishes, LA. The parcels being offered in the Wayne National Forest are expected to be controversial as several environmental groups are attempting to prohibit hydraulic fracturing in the area.
- **December 14:** BLM-CA's Bakersfield Field Office will host a public scoping meeting in Three Rivers to gather comments on a draft of a vegetation/forest health plan for the BLM's only giant sequoia grove on Case Mountain. The BLM manages approximately 444 acres on Case Mountain, which supports the Giant Sequoia Complex and the Case Mountain Extensive Recreation Management Area.
- **December 14:** BLM-AK Associate State Director Ted Murphy will provide an update to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group on development activities within the NPRA-A. The group brings a broad range of stakeholders together who are actively involved in the management of caribou and includes subsistence users, other hunters, reindeer herders, hunting guides, transporters and conservationists.
- **December 14: Local BLM Release:** BLM WY will host an online oil and gas lease sale. The sale will offer 45 parcels totaling 72,884.37 acres located in Laramie, Lincoln, Sweetwater, and Uinta counties. BLM received three protests for this oil and gas lease sale that will be dismissed because the issues raised in the protest are adequately analyzed in the supporting NEPA documents and Resource Management Plans.

Bureau of Reclamation

- **December 7:** On December 7 in Portland, Oregon, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Reclamation and Bonneville Power Administration will hold a public meeting on the Columbia River System Operations EIS to discuss the results of public scoping and provide a status update

on progress made on the EIS and to further educate attendees on the NEPA process. A draft biological opinion is due in 2020, final environmental impact statement/record of decision in 2021. The two Reclamation facilities included in this process are Grand Coulee Dam and Hungry Horse Dam (both include hydropower facilities).

- **December 11:** NBC Nightly News is expected to air a segment relating to ongoing efforts to find an economically-viable solution to continuing operations of the Navajo Generating Station, near Page, Arizona. NBC News (Los Angeles) producer Jim Rainey has been tracking NGS developments for months, gathering multiple interviews and attending public comment sessions that were held in May in Phoenix, as well as the Navajo and Hopi reservations. Last week, Interior agencies (Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Indian Affairs) announced an extension lease to allow the Federal and non-Federal stakeholders' ongoing search for a post-2019 operator to continue. Coverage is expected to be neutral.

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- **December 13 (tent.):** NOA FSEIS for 2018 Gulf Region-wide Sales 250 and 251 NTS

Office of Natural Resources Revenue

- **December TBD:** ONRR issued a civil penalty in the amount of \$19,736 to Mid-Con Energy Operating, LLC, (Mid-Con) (formerly RDT Properties, Inc) on November 17, 2017. ONRR investigated Mid-Con's failure to submit production reports (form ONRR-4054) and found 68 violations on multiple Indian leases for the production months of September 2011 through January 2013.
- **December TBD:** ONRR anticipates issuing a civil penalty of about \$840 to Eight Round Inc., (Eight Round) the week of November 5, 2017. ONRR investigated Eight Round's failure to submit production reports (Forms ONRR-4054) and found 12 violations on one Indian agreement for production months of April, 2012 through September, 2013.

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE (updated 12/4)

UPCOMING SCIA HEARING: The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs will host a legislative hearing on two Indian water rights settlement bills: S. 664 (Senator Hatch), the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act of 2017 and S. 1770 (Senator Flake), the Hualapai Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act of 2017. Alan Mikkelsen, the Chair of the Indian Water Rights Office Working Group, will be the witness on behalf of the Department.

Timing: Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Advisor, Congressional Affairs

UPCOMING HNR SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING REGARDING FISH RECOVERY PROGRAMS: The House Natural Resources subcommittee on Water Power and Oceans will hold a legislative hearing on HR.4465 which has impacts on Bureau of Reclamation and Fish Wildlife Service. DOI will not be testifying but will provide a statement for the record.

Timing: Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Advisor, Congressional Affairs

EXPECTED HEARING: The Senate Energy Committee is expected to hold a hearing on December 12 regarding permitting reform. Details regarding the specifics the committee plans to emphasize are still being put together; however, James Cason (Associate Dep. Sec.) is tentatively scheduled to testify.

Timing: Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Advisor, Congressional Affairs

DOI NOMINEES IN PROGRESS: Susan Combs (A/S PMB) passed out of committee August 3, 2017 and still awaits a vote. Joe Balash (Assistant Secretary, Land & Minerals) and Ryan Nelson (Solicitor) appeared before the SENR committee on September 7, 2017. Both passed and now await full Senate approval. DOI OCL is working with OGE and the White House to get final approval for Asst. Sec. Indian Affairs nominee, Tara Sweeney before submitting her paperwork to the Senate. The White House nominated Steve Gardner for OSM. His Senate questionnaire is currently under review. Tim Petty's (Asst. Secretary, Water & Science Nominee) was nominated November 14, 2017 and his nomination hearing will be held on 12/5/17.

Contact: John Tanner, Director, Congressional Affairs

NOTE: A vote for Balash is scheduled for today

POLITICAL APPOINTEE UPDATE

DOI politicals on board 65

4 PAS confirmed as of 11/16

6 nominated awaiting confirmation:

- Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.
- Pending Senate floor vote: Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals
 - **NOTE: A vote for Balash is scheduled for today**
- Pending Senate floor vote: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor
- Pending Hearing: Tara Sweeney, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs
- Pending Hearing: Steve Gardner, Director, Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation
- Pending Hearing: Tim Petty, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science

Overall:

- Schedule C: 36 of 68 onboard; 2 starting; 6 in process
- NC-SES: 26 of 44 onboard; 3 starting; 1 in process
- PAS: 4 Confirmed; 6 Announced; 14 of 17 Submitted to PPO

SECRETARY SPEAKING INVITATIONS

Accepted:

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

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:

1/4 – Dallas Safari Club Annual Meeting (Dallas, TX)

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

12/5-7 America Outdoors Association's 29th Annual Marketing and Management Conference for Outfitters and Adventure Resorts (Reno, NV)

12/5 – NY Stock Exchange Ringing of the Bell & remarks at Wells Fargo Financial Symposium Event (NYC)

12/6 American Exploration and Mining Association Annual Meeting (Reno, NV)

12/8 - Valley Industry and Commerce Association Annual Meeting (Los Angeles, CA)

12/11 – Veterans Day Commemoration (Prussia, PA)

12/14 – Leadership Missoula (Missoula, Montana)

12/8 – DOI Toastmasters event (Washington, DC)

12/9 – Western Caucus Foundation Winter Policy Meeting (Las Vegas, NV)

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

The Thomas Fire (being managed by CAL Fire) in southern California continues to actively burn with extreme rates of spread due to erratic wind activity. The fire has burned approximately 90,000 (+35,000) acres and is 5-percent (+5) contained. The fire is being managed by a Type-1 Incident Management Team with 2,497 (+721) personnel assigned, none of which are DOI personnel. The fire is burning on some BLM land parcels and is approaching the Lake Casitas Dam (USBR), which is approximately 1.5 miles west-northwest of the current fire perimeter. There are 12,000 structures threatened (no change) by this fire and 150 (no change) structures have been destroyed. The fire is also threatening power transmission lines, oil resources, high-pressure gas lines, communications infrastructure, and local crops. The low relative humidity values and high winds in the area remain a challenge for response personnel, and Extremely Critical Fire Weather is forecast for the region again today. Full containment of this fire is expected December 24.

Although the Pacific Regional Office located in Camarillo, California, is not currently threatened by fire activity and remains open, some DOI personnel who live in the area have been impacted due to ongoing evacuations, power outages, and school closures. All DOI personnel are accounted for and efforts to maintain accountability are ongoing.

To the east of the Thomas Fire and north-northwest of Los Angeles, the Rye Fire (CAL Fire) and Creek Fire (CAL Fire) are also actively burning. Environmental conditions are conducive for additional perimeter growth over the next 24 to 48 hours for both fires. They are being managed by Type-1 IMTs and have resulted in significant evacuations in the area. The Creek Fire has burned 12,605 acres, is 5-percent contained, and has 1,559 personnel assigned, 19 of which are DOI personnel. Full containment is expected December 23. The Rye Fire has burned 7,000 acres, is 10-percent contained, and has 901 personnel assigned, none of which are DOI personnel. Full containment is expected December 15. There are no DOI assets currently impacted by these fires; however, there are some BLM land parcels in the vicinity.

OUTSIDE MEDIA OF INTEREST (new)

BLM finalizes delay of methane waste rule.

The Bureau of Land Management will finalize a long-term delay of its methane waste rule in a notice to be published in Friday's Federal Register. The rule's key provisions, including leak detection and repair requirements, will not be enforced until Jan. 17, 2019, according to the notice. That will give BLM enough time to repeal the rule. "The BLM has concerns regarding the statutory authority, cost, complexity, feasibility, and other implications of the 2016 final rule, and therefore intends to avoid imposing likely considerable and immediate compliance costs on operators for requirements that may be rescinded or significantly revised in the near future," the agency wrote in the notice.

The Interior Department issued a hasty delay last year, but it was struck down by a federal judge who said the agency failed to follow administrative procedure, in particular collecting public comment on a delay. BLM subsequently went through notice-and-comment rulemaking to produce this new delay. BLM said on Monday that it will appeal that judge's ruling, despite the newly finalized delay. If that appeal succeeds, it would make it easier for Interior to stop rules in the future.

WHAT'S NEXT: It is unclear how long it will take BLM to complete its review and potential repeal of the methane waste rule, also known as the venting and flaring rule.

Lawsuits Address Whether Presidents Can Modify Monuments.

The AP (12/6, McCombs, Price) reports that "a flurry of lawsuits" President Trump's move to shrink the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments "could finally bring an answer to the much-debated question of whether presidents have the legal authority to undo or change monuments created by past presidents." Already, four lawsuits have been filed, "and more are expected – especially if Trump follows Zinke's recommendations to shrink two other monuments – Gold Butte in Nevada and Cascade Siskiyou in Oregon." But "legal experts disagree on whether the 1906 Antiquities Act – allowing presidents to create a monument – also lets them reduce one."

Additional coverage was provided by the Washington Post (12/6, Grandoni).

Patagonia Sues To Prevent Trump Administration From Shrinking Bears Ears

Monument. The Washington Examiner (12/6, Correll) reports that "outdoor recreation company Patagonia sued Wednesday to block President Trump from shrinking Bears Ears National Monument in Utah." Patagonia called Trump's decision to reduce the size of the Bears Ears monument an "extreme overreach in authority." The Huffington Post (12/6, Madani) reports that Patagonia President and CEO Rose Marcario said in a statement, "The Administration's unlawful actions betray our shared responsibility to protect iconic places for future generations and represent the largest elimination of protected land in American history. We've fought to protect these places since we were founded and now we'll continue that fight in the courts."

Patagonia, Interior Department Trade Twitter Barbs Over 'Special Interests'. CNN (12/6, Green) reports the Interior Department and outdoor retailer Patagonia "continued their public spat over US national monuments Tuesday on Twitter, trading barbs over each others' ties to 'special interests.'" In a tweet, Patagonia referred to "a back-and-forth over" Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's "travel on behalf of the agency: 'It's odd that @SecretaryZinke has no problem with special interests when they're paying for his private jets. We have been fighting for these lands for decades, so that hunters, fisherman, hikers and everyone else can use them and help us protect them.'" Following Patagonia's tweet, "the official Interior spokesperson account piped in, calling aspects of Patagonia's statement 'fake news.'" Another tweet a few minutes later said, "Not a jet. Not paid by spec interest. Same prop that prev secs used. selected by career officials."

Patagonia CEO On Trump Shrinking Monuments: 'This Is Not About Politics'. In its "Blog Briefing Room" blog, The Hill (12/6, Delk) reports that Patagonia CEO Rose Marcario "denied the company having any political motivations in its website's statement condemning President Trump's 'illegal' move to shrink two national monuments in Utah." In an op-ed for TIME (12/6, Marcario), Marcario wrote, "This is not about politics; it's about protecting the places we love and keeping the great promise of this

country for our children and grandchildren. We won't let President Trump tear down our heritage and sell it to the highest bidder." Marcario also "defended the company's claim that Trump's move was illegal, citing the Antiquities Act of 1906 that allows presidents to designate national monuments but noted it does 'not give the President the power to undo a prior president's monument designations.'"

Additional Coverage. Also reporting are [AP](#) (12/6, McCOMBS), [NBC News](#) (12/6, Rainey), [PBS NewsHour](#) (12/6, Grabenstein), [The New Yorker](#) (12/6, Nijhuis), and the [Santa Fe \(NM\) Reporter](#) (12/6, Paskus).

Alaskan Oil Lease Sale Brings Few Bids Despite Vast Territory Offered.

[Reuters](#) (12/6, Rosen) reports the Trump Administration's oil and gas lease sale in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska only received seven bids. The bids covered about 80,000 acres, less than 1 percent of the 10.3 million acres offered in the sale. ConocoPhillips Alaska submitted all seven bids, worth \$1.16 million, in partnership with Anadarko. Ted Murphy, associate director of the BLM's Alaska office, said, "Lease sale interest is unpredictable. ... We don't know what industry, ultimately, will be interested in getting from year to year." The [AP](#) (12/6, Joling) reports Kristen Miller, conservation director of the Alaska Wilderness League, said the sale shows that any drilling in the Arctic Refuge will not bring in the expected revenue. The bids on Wednesday brought in \$14.99 an acre, leading Miller to say, "At that price, leasing the entirety of the Arctic Refuge coastal plain's 1.5 million acres would raise slightly more than \$11 million in revenue for the federal government, a far cry from the billion dollar lie that Trump and Republicans are feeding the American public."

Additional coverage was provided by [UPI](#) (12/6, Graeber) and the [Alaska Public Radio Network](#) (12/6, Harball).

Conservation Group Takes After Zinke Over Park Fees; Praises Tester.

[KRTV-TV](#) Great Falls, MT (12/6, Dennison) reports that the political arm of the Natural Resources Defense Fund, has launched a "five-figure" ad campaign in Montana opposing the Trump Administration proposal to hike "entrance fees to national parks – and praising Democratic U.S. Sen. Jon Tester for his stand on the issue." Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said "Wednesday that the increase is 'still more affordable than taking a family of four to see a 3-D movie,' and that the majority of the increased funds will pay for park maintenance." Swift "also noted that NRDC has filed several 'expensive and frivolous lawsuits' against the Interior Department, wasting 'valuable taxpayer funds.'" The campaign by NRDC Action Fund is "the latest of several efforts by conservation groups either taking" after Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, "or boosting Tester, who is up for re-election in 2018."

Additional coverage was provided by [KTVQ-TV](#) Billings, MT (12/6, Dennison) and [KPAX-TV](#) Missoula, MT (12/6, Dennison).

Sea Level Rise Could Drown More Than 2,500 Louisiana Historic Sites.

The [New Orleans Times-Picayune](#) (12/6, Sneath) reports that "more than 19,600 historically significant sites along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts could be lost to sea level rise, according to a new peer-reviewed study published in PLUS ONE." The study examined "records of archaeological sites and the National Register of Historic Places from nine states and overlays that information with projected sea level rise over the next century." The study said, "Tens of thousands of historic and prehistoric archaeological sites, and thousands of properties currently designated eligible for inclusion on the (National Register of Historic Places), which include archaeological sites, standing structures, and other cultural property types, will be submerged and hence lost or damaged, as well as underwater resources that will be effected by changes in ocean acidification, currents, and shipping patterns."

Vietnam Wall Brings Healing.

The [Nevada Appeal](#) (12/6, Ranson) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke was among the speakers on Veterans Day at the Vietnam Wall Zinke “said the wall is a tribute to remembering Vietnam veterans.” He said, “We should never run away from the history of our country. We should learn. When I served in the seal teams for 23 years, 1985, most of my instructors were SEALs that had served in Vietnam. They cut their teeth in the jungles and the rivers. I learned a lot from those fine warriors. I have learned a lot from you, those that have fought. I’ve learned commitment, dedication, sacrifice.”

Heller Bill Protects Special Federal Lands Without Using Taxpayer Funds.

The [Ripon Advance](#) (12/6) reports that Sen. Dean Heller on Monday “introduced bipartisan legislation to enable protecting and preserving iconic Western federal lands with special conservation importance without using taxpayer funds.” The bill “reauthorizes the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA), which expired in 2011.” Heller said, “This bipartisan program provides a fiscally responsible way to protect and manage important public lands in Nevada and throughout the West. Not only will it spur economic growth and development, it will also keep conservation at the forefront of the region’s needs.”

Area Of Protected Land Larger Than California At Risk From Drilling.

The [MintPress News](#) (12/6, Carter) reports that “an area of protected land larger than California could be at risk from fossil fuel development, as the Trump administration looks to ramp up drilling on federal lands – according to a new investigation by Unerthed.” The analysis “mapped the overlap between every protected park in the US and potentially major reserves of oil, gas and coal.” The report “shows how much protected land – and which iconic landscapes – could be affected by the Trump administration’s goal of opening up more land for energy development than ever before.”

US To Review End Of Protections For Yellowstone Grizzlies.

The [AP](#) (12/6, Brown) reports that federal officials “said Wednesday they’ll review the recent lifting of protections for Yellowstone-area grizzly bears in light of a court ruling that retained protections for gray wolves in the Great Lakes.” According to the article, “in its response to the appeals court ruling, the Fish and Wildlife Service said it’s now seeking public comment on the potential implications for Yellowstone bears.” The FWS “plans to release its conclusions by March 31.”

Additional coverage was provided by [Reuters](#) (12/6), [MLive \(MI\)](#) (12/6, Raven), the [WyoFile](#) (12/6, Thuermer), and [KTVH-TV](#) Helena, MT (12/6, Jochim).

House Panel Considers Extending Endangered Fish Recovery Programs.

[Courthouse News](#) (12/6, Buchman) reports that “the House Natural Resources Committee considered legislation Wednesday that will extend endangered fish recovery programs in the Upper Colorado and San Juan rivers and direct the Interior Department to conduct an in-depth review of the success of the program to date.” Rep. John Curtis’ bill, the Endangered Fish Recovery Programs Extension Act of 2017, “would do two things: first, it would allow for the continued annual collection of fees from water and power users to continue funding the collaborative restoration efforts involving state and federal agencies, tribes and other stakeholders.” Second, the legislation “directs the Interior Department to assess how well the programs are working and how they can be improved.”

National Park Service Awards \$18,000 Grant To Aid Restoration Of Topeka’s Historic Constitution Hall.

The [Topeka \(KS\) Capital-Journal](#) (12/6, Hrenchir) reports the National Park Service recently awarded \$18,000 “to help restore the front doors and windows of Topeka’s Constitution Hall, which was the site of events in the 1850s that helped shape this nation’s history.” Diane Miller, national program manager

for the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, noted that “the effort to restore the front doors and front windows at Constitution Hall, 427-429 S. Kansas Ave., was among only 16 projects chosen to receive funding from 41 applications nationwide.” In a letter to Grant Glenn, president of the not-for-profit Friends of the Free State Capitol, Inc., Miller wrote, “We found your project to be very exciting and feel that it will advance the goals of preserving the history of the Underground Railroad and informing the public. We commend your creativity in developing the proposal and your dedication to this important part of our heritage.”

Town Clock Church Gets Network To Freedom Grant.

The Jefferson (IN) News & Tribune (12/6) reports that the National Park Service awarded a Network to Freedom grant of \$15,940 to the Friends of the Town Clock Church. The application sought funds for “tuck-pointing the historic Town Clock Church at Second Baptist Church in New Albany.” The article notes that “the federal grant requires a dollar for dollar match” and “the Friends of the Town Clock Church will need to raise \$15,940 to match the grant.”

In Oklahoma, The National Park Service Estimates There Are \$19.9 Million In Deferred Maintenance.

The Oklahoma Gazette (12/6, Eastes) reports that “according to National Park Service, Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Washita Battlefield National Historic Site and Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum welcomed 1.6 million visitors, who spent an estimated \$27 million in OKC and across the state.” However, the article notes that Chickasaw National Recreation Area “requires \$19.7 million in repairs” and Washita Battlefield National Historic Site “lists \$196,027 in needed repairs.”

FEDERAL REGISTER LISTINGS:

REG0007679 FWS Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Permit Applications (Ohio Department of Natural Resources): This is a batched notice announcing the receipt of applications received by FWS for Endangered Species Act permits. Notice 12/06/2017

REG0007530 OSM Oklahoma Regulatory Program (OK-037-FOR): The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) is approving an amendment to the Oklahoma regulatory program under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). Oklahoma submitted the proposed amendment on its own initiative in 2015. Final Rule 12/06/2017