

**To:** Timothy Williams[Timothy\_Williams@ios.doi.gov]; Caminiti, Mariagrazia[Marigrace.Caminiti@sol.doi.gov]; Daniel Jorjani[daniel\_jorjani@ios.doi.gov]; Douglas Domenech[douglas\_domenech@ios.doi.gov]; Edward Keable[edward.keable@sol.doi.gov]; Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; James Cason[james\_cason@ios.doi.gov]; Juliette Lillie[juliette\_lillie@ios.doi.gov]; Kevin Haugrud[jack.haugrud@sol.doi.gov]; Megan Bloomgren[megan\_bloomgren@ios.doi.gov]; Micah Chambers[micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov]; Nancy Guiden[nancy\_guiden@ios.doi.gov]; Scott Hommel[scott\_hommel@ios.doi.gov]  
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Good Morning All,  
Please find attached the weekly report to the Secretary. I have attached both the word and Google Doc versions of the reports. If there are any issues, please let me know.

Thanks and sorry for the delay in distribution.

--

Gareth C. Rees

Office to the Deputy Secretary

U.S. Department of the Interior

Tel: 202 208 6291

Fax: 202 208 1873

Cell: 202 957 8299

Weekly Report to the Secretary 02-24-17

**WEEKLY REPORT TO THE SECRETARY  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**February 23, 2017**

**Office of the Solicitor**

**Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

**U.S.-Mexico Negotiations on Colorado River Cooperative Process**

An informal briefing of Senate staffers by State Department (with DOI attendance) on the status of the Minute 32x negotiations is currently planned for the afternoon of February 27. Since 2015 the United States and Mexico have been working to negotiate an agreement, "Minute 32x," on Colorado River cooperation, addressing operational agreements, water conservation investments and environmental efforts under the framework of the 1944 U.S./Mexico Treaty governing the allocation of Colorado River water. Current are addressed under an agreement known as "Minute 319," which governs current cooperative efforts, expires on December 31, 2017.

**Navajo Generating Station (NGS)**

At the request of the Acting Deputy Secretary, Reclamation is setting up meeting at Main Interior on March 1 with key stakeholder groups, including the Navajo Nation, the Hopi Tribe, Peabody Energy, and the Salt River Project, to discuss potential options to extend operation of NGS beyond December 22, 2019. The Acting Deputy Secretary will participate in this meeting with the goal of developing options for keeping NGS operating beyond 2019.

**Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

**SIGNIFICANT LITIGATION DEADLINES FOR NEXT THREE WEEKS  
SEPARATELY REPORTED**

**NEW CASES:**

***Murphy Company, et al. v. Donald J. Trump, et al. (D. Or.) - Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Expansion***

On February 17, 2017, Plaintiffs, a southern Oregon timber company and its separate timberland owning entity, filed a complaint raising Antiquities Act and Oregon & California Revested Railroad Lands Act (O&C Act) challenges to President Obama's January 12, 2017 Proclamation expanding the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. Plaintiffs argue that the President was without authority to expand the Monument and restrict timber harvest on O&C lands, relying in part upon a 1940 Interior Solicitor's M-Opinion. The answer to the complaint will be due 60-days from date of service, which has not yet occurred.

**SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS:**

Nothing to report.

**OTHER LITIGATION MATTERS:**

***Havasupai Tribe v. Anasazi Water Co. (D. Ariz.)***

On February 17, the Havasupai Tribe sent a letter via email to the Acting Secretary and Acting Solicitor requesting that the United States intervene in this suit brought by the Tribe last December for declaratory judgment and injunctive relief against a collection of private parties, located off-Reservation, that are withdrawing groundwater from an aquifer that feeds the on-Reservation Havasu Creek as well as seeps and springs both on-Reservation and in Grand Canyon National Park. The United States is not currently a party to the action, and various defendants have filed motions to dismiss asserting that the United States is a necessary and indispensable party. The Tribe responded to those motions on February 6, and the defendants' replies are due February 21. In its letter to the Department, the Tribe invokes the trust responsibility and resource-protection obligations imposed on the Department in the Grand Canyon Enlargement Act. Solicitor's Office and other DOI offices have been in communication with the Tribe about its concerns, and we continue to assess the legal issues associated with this matter.

***Katzins v. U.S. (CFL)***

This complaint for damages for infringement and interference with title to a 10.01-acre peninsula on Culebra Island, Puerto Rico, was tried in Washington, D.C. & San Juan, Puerto Rico over a 2-week period in 2015. In 2016, the court found the United States liable for a permanent physical taking of the land at the heart of the complaint, and awarded plaintiffs compensation based on fair market value of approximately \$611,000, plus interest, compounded quarterly from June 2006 to the date judgment is paid – approximately \$400,000. The opinion also invited plaintiffs to claim attorney fees and costs. The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) initially recommended against appeal in September 2016, preferring instead to accept the decision because of the benefit of establishing clear title to the land. The Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a protective notice of appeal to keep all litigation options open. Circumstances have now changed as plaintiffs have appealed the amount of compensation awarded by the court. (b) (5) DPP AWP ACP

[REDACTED]

***U.S. v. South Florida Water Management District (S.D. Fla.)--Everglades Water Quality Consent Decree***

The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has informed the Department of Justice that it wishes to vacate the 25 year-old consent decree in this case, which governs water quality/pollution control efforts that affect Everglades National Park and A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. (b) (5) DPP AWP ACP

***Franconia Minerals v. United States* (D. Minn.) – Challenge to Twin Metals M-Opinion, Non-consent Determination, and Lease Renewal Denials**

Twin Metals filed an amended complaint with the court on January 3. Plaintiffs have agreed to a 60-day extension of the deadline for the government to file a response. The government's current deadline to respond is May 5, 2017.

**NON-LITIGATION MATTERS:**

**Body-Worn Cameras, Implicit Bias Training, and Guns in Parks**

Branch of National Parks is working with its Rangers and U.S. Park Police (USPP) clients to address emerging issues in law enforcement within our nation's parks. For example, we are continuing to work with the National Park Service (NPS) as it develops a system wide Body-Worn Cameras policy for park superintendents; we recently attended a USPP sponsored implicit bias training for USPP and Rangers management; and we are drafting a memo to USPP concerning the interplay between the Coburn Amendment (allowing guns in certain National Parks), NPS regulations and permit conditions.

**Upcoming ESA Listing Actions from February 6 – April 14, 2017**

The dates in the "Deadline" column are FWS's internal targets for delivery to the *Federal Register*. If there are statutory deadlines ("Stat."), or deadlines required by court orders or court-approved settlement agreements ("CO"), they are indicated in parentheses after the species name.

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Action</u>
Feb. 17	5 Species	Batch of 90-Day Petition Findings
Feb. 22	Western Glacier and Meltwater Lednian Stoneflies (10/4 FL, Stat.)	Proposed Critical Habitat; Comment Reopening for Proposed Listing
Feb. 28	2 Australian Parrakeets (Scarlet-Chested, Turquoise) (asap, Stat.)	Final Delisting Determination
Feb. 28	Bone Cave Harvestman (3/30, CO)	90-Day Finding on Petition to Delist
Feb. 28	Suwanee Moccasinshell	Proposed Critical Habitat
Mar. 3	Deseret Milk-Vetch (Utah)	Proposed Delisting
Mar. 3	Manatee (1/8, Stat.)	Final Downlisting Determination

Mar. 10	Slickspot Peppergrass	Revised Proposed Critical Habitat
Mar. 15	Hualapai Mexican Vole (asap, Stat.)	Final Delisting Determination
Mar. 15	Eastern Cougar (asap, Stat.)	Final Delisting Det. Due to Extinction
Mar. 23	Headwaters and Roundtail Chubs (4/17, Stat.)	Final Listing Determination
Mar. 30	Woodland Caribou (Selkirk pop.) (asap, Stat.)	Final Amendment to Listing
Mar. 31	Florida Bristle Fern	Proposed Critical Habitat
Mar. 31	Black Pine Snake (asap, Stat.)	Final Critical Habitat Determination
Mar. 31	Spring Pygmy Sunfish (FCH asap, Stat.)	Reopening Comment on Proposed CH
Mar. 31	Island Marble Butterfly	Proposed Listing
Mar. 31	Southwestern Willow Flycatcher	12-Month Finding
Mar. 31	4 Florida Keys Plants (Blodgett's Silverbush, Wedge Spurge, Big Pine Partridge Pea, Sand Flax)	Proposed Critical Habitat
Mar. 31	Texas Hornshell	Proposed Critical Habitat
Mar. 31	Yellow Lance and Atlantic Pigtoe (3/31, CO)	12-Month Finding
Apr. 1	Beaverpond Marstonia (4/1, CO)	12-Month Finding
Apr. 14	Sonoyta Mud Turtle	Proposed Critical Habitat
TBD	3 Big Island Plants	Final Critical Habitat Determination; and CH corrections for 4 species
TBD	7 Species	Tech. Corrections, Where Listed
TBD	40 Species	Tech. Corrections, Scientific Names

## **Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

No meetings, hearings, or travel scheduled for Maureen Foster or Virginia Johnson.

FWS Acting Director Jim Kurth has no travel planned through March 3.

Until February 24, NPS Acting Director Michael Reynolds will visit Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and Coronado National Monument in Arizona and meet with NPS staff and regional partners to better understand park operations and border management issues.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

On February 23, the NPS will host an opening event for the Selma Interpretive Center, a part of the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. The Selma Interpretive Center has been expanded to include two additional floors and new exhibits. Congresswoman Terri Sewell (D-AL-7) and Alabama State Representative Darrio Melton are expected to attend.

FWS has advised that on February 23, FWS will post its recently completed status review of the polar bear. After a thorough review of new and updated scientific information on the polar bear's biology and threats, FWS concluded that it continues to meet the definition of a threatened species under the ESA. A news bulletin will be posted to regional website, otherwise no outreach planned. (Note: We are trying to confirm that the date is still good; we are awaiting word from FWS.)

On February 24, fifth grade students from the District of Columbia Watkins Elementary School will take turns reciting a portion of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial. This annual program is associated with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday.

On February 24, the Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument will host an annual Black History Month event at Kiser Elementary School in Dayton, Ohio. Former NFL player Darryl Haley is a featured participant, as are members of the ROTC program at Central State University that is named after Colonel Young. Congresswoman Joyce Beatty (D-3-OH) will attend and a representative from Congressman Turner's (R-10-OH) office will attend.

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

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

On March 2, FWS Pacific Region leadership will take part in the Oregon Zoo Education Center Grand Opening ceremonies. The Service is a working partner in this innovative state-of-the-art facility and has an interpretive specialist on staff working with the zoo to communicate our shared conservation messages. Media and dignitaries will be in attendance.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

### **Marine Mammal Protection Act Actions**

On February 23, FWS will post its recently completed status review of the polar bear. After a thorough review of new and updated scientific information on the polar bear's biology and threats, FWS concluded that it continues to meet the definition of a threatened species under the ESA. A news bulletin will be posted to regional website, otherwise no outreach planned.

In March, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* draft population assessment reports for the Southern Beaufort Sea and Chukchi-Bering seas populations of polar bear in Alaska, and open a 90-day public comment period. Outreach is planned.

### **National Park Service**

#### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

On February 25, Acting Director Michael Reynolds will attend the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) Luncheon in Washington, D.C., including a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signing ceremony with ASALH President Dr. Evelyn Higginbotham. The NPS has a long-standing relationship with ASALH, and the MOU is part of on-going effort to consolidate multiple joint agreements with the organization. Founded by African American historian Carter G. Woodson, the ASALH organization works to promote, research, preserve, and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture. Congressman James E. Clyburn (D-SC) will attend the luncheon and make remarks.

#### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

On February 23, Golden Gate National Recreation Area will open the new Presidio Visitor Center in partnership with the Presidio Trust and Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi has tentatively accepted an invitation from the Presidio Trust to speak at the ribbon-cutting that morning.

On February 23, Galápagos and Joshua Tree National Parks will enter into a sister park agreement. In addition to similar resource issues related to tortoises and desert ecosystems, the two parks are dealing with capacity issues, the effects of climate change, and the effects of ecotourism on park resources and visitor enjoyment. Local and national conservation groups will be on hand for the ceremony as well as staff from Representatives Cook and Ruiz's offices.

On February 24, Nez Perce National Historical Park anticipates announcing a Finding of No Significant Impact for the Environmental Assessment: Improve Visitor Services at Bear Paw Battlefield (EA). The EA considers alternatives for replacement of existing structures to provide work space for staff, and rehabilitation of culturally sensitive areas.

On February 26, Denali National Park marks its 100th anniversary. Events will be held throughout the year, and statewide media coverage is anticipated. The Alaska Congressional Delegation and media are being kept apprised of events and opportunities for participation.

On February 26, there will be a special preview of the Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site to celebrate the completion of phase one of restoration. Dignitaries expected to

attend include Delegate Norton, Washington D.C. Mayor Bowser, Superintendent Tara Morrison, former NPS Director Robert Stanton, the President of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), and the Grand Basileus of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. The event includes a media tour, tours of the home, and a ceremony and reception. Public tours (on weekends) are expected to begin after Memorial Day.

During the week of February 27, several NPS law enforcement rangers and U.S. Park Police officers are scheduled to testify in the trial of several Cliven Bundy supporters related to the April 2014 round up of Mr. Bundy's trespassing cattle on Bureau of Land Management and NPS Land near Bunkerville, Nevada. The U.S. Attorney's Office is the lead for the case with assistance from the Department of the Interior's Solicitor's Office. The NPS anticipates media coverage of the trial.

During the week of February 27, Rock Creek Park anticipates announcing the closure of the Carter Barron Amphitheatre for 2017 due to structural concerns. A recent structural assessment identified major structural and safety concerns. Notification for District of Columbia Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton and interested local council members is underway. Several options for repair are being investigated, as well as alternative locations for performances, including Fort Dupont Park's Summer Theatre. The NPS anticipates some local media interest.

On February 27, the criminal trial for Gil Gaxiola is slated to begin. Gaxiola is charged with attempted murder of an NPS employee at Ciricahua National Monument on August 28, 2013, as well as, armed robbery, aggravated assault, kidnapping and theft as a means of transportation. The assaulted employee was found unconscious in a restroom. Gaxiola was arrested several months later by U.S. Border Patrol agents in Douglas, Arizona. Due to the complexities of the case, the trial been delayed several times. Cochise County is the lead prosecuting agency.

On or about February 27, the NPS will announce a Prospectus for concession operations opportunity at Carlsbad Caverns National Park. The current concession operation is located in the Visitor Center and underground in the Cavern, which includes food services and a gift shop. The gift shop offers clothing, a variety of small gifts, and Native American jewelry and pottery. The concession contract will be awarded for a 10-year period starting January 1, 2018.

On February 28, the NPS will participate in the annual meeting of the Garden Club of America (GCA). The GCA and the NPS recently signed an MOU to work together on conservation and education programs. Discussions at the meeting will include background on the history of cooperation between GCA and the NPS, the value of volunteer efforts such as GCA's Partners for Plants program, and projects that illustrate progress on addressing invasive species or assist with habitat restoration.

On February 28, the Superintendent of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area and U.S. Corps of Engineers staff will meet with 11 people from China's Hunan Water Transportation Construction & Investment Group Corporation who have been brought to the USA by the America-China Cultural and Educational Foundation (ACCEF) for a Hunan State sanctioned visit. The purpose of the trip is to learn more about the U.S. navigation system on the Mississippi River. There is a potential for media coverage.

On February 28, Stones River National Battlefield Superintendent Brenda Waters will visit the offices of Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN), and Rep. Scott DeJarlais (R-TN-4) to provide them with an update on issues at the park as a courtesy visit. She will be accompanied by staff from the NPS Office of Legislative and Congressional Affairs.

On February 28, Rock Creek Park will host a tour for a Special American Business Internship Training (SABIT) group at the request of the Department of Commerce. The NPS will provide an orientation to the rehabilitation project on Beach Drive for a delegation of international road construction executives from Russia, the Ukraine and several other countries.

## **Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs and the Bureaus of Indian Affairs and Indian Education**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Nothing to report.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

Indian Affairs has made selections for the 2017 Indian Affairs Student Leadership Summer Institute. Launched in summer 2016, the 10 week paid internship placed 17 Native undergraduate and graduate students in leadership offices across Indian Affairs. The program's mission is to engage and support the next generation of Native leaders in the federal government through an introduction to the government-to-government relationship between tribal nations and the United States. Indian Affairs received more than 60 applications for summer 2017. Hiring of the interns is currently on hold during the hiring freeze.

On February 22, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Special Rapporteur (SR) on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, will meet with DOI officials as part of the SR mandate to promote indigenous rights. DOI Office of International Affairs is the lead for organizing the meeting and is working with Dept. of State. The meeting will include representatives from the AS-IA Office, Office of the Solicitor, Office of the Special Trustee, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, the Secretary's Indian Water Rights Office, the National Park Service, and the US Geological Survey. The SR will then be meeting at the offices of EPA, ACHP, HHS, USACE on Feb. 22 and 23 in DC, will then travel to AZ, NM, and ND to meet with tribes, local officials, and federal field staff until her trip concludes on March 3.

On February 23, 2017, the Interior Department will hold the first of seven tribal consultation sessions on its advanced notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) to solicit oral and written comments on whether to propose an administrative rule that would comprehensively update 25 CFR Part 140 (Licensed Indian Traders), 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. PST, Anacortes, WA at Swinomish Casino & Lodge, per the Federal Register notices dated 12/9/16 and 2/8/17. On February 28, the second consultation will be held in Miami, Florida.

## **Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST)**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Acting Special Trustee, Deb DuMontier will be in Albuquerque, NM February 21-24, 2017, meeting with IBC leadership, the Deputy Special Trustee Governance Committee and OST senior leadership to prioritize initiatives at OST Headquarters-West.

### **Week Ahead Announcements - Presidential and Department/Agency Priorities**

OST continues to work with both Gila River and San Carlos Tribes regarding their respective withdrawal requests pursuant to the American Indian Trust Fund Management Reform Act of

1994.

## **Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

Acting ASLM Rich Cardinale will be in Washington, DC attending regularly scheduled meetings.

ASLM Special Assistant Kate MacGregor will be in Washington, DC attending regularly scheduled meetings.

BLM Acting Director Kristin Bail will be in Washington, DC attending regularly scheduled meetings.

BLM Acting Deputy Director Jerry Perez will travel to Sacramento, CA on February 24 and will remain at BLM's CA State Office in Sacramento through February 28. He will travel to the BLM's National Operations Center on March 1 to participate in an all-hands meeting and to meet with NOC leadership; he will return to DC on March 3.

OSMRE Acting Director Glenda Owens will be in Washington, DC attending regularly scheduled meetings.

BSEE Acting Director Margaret Schneider will be in Washington, DC attending regularly scheduled meetings.

BOEM Acting Director Walter Cruickshank will be in Washington, DC attending regularly scheduled meetings.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

On February 22 - 25, the Mineral Resources Report of the Sagebrush Focal Areas in ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, and WY will be available. BLM received 600 copies of the report from the USGS, and plans to distribute the report at eight public meetings in February. Remaining meetings include Lakewood, OR (2/22), Elko, NV (2/23), and Boise, ID (2/24). This topic is controversial.

On February 22 - March 9, BLM-AK will hold Central Yukon Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) public meetings in Anchorage (Feb. 22); Fairbanks (Feb. 27); Venetie (Feb. 28); Coldfoot and Wiseman (March 2); and Nenana (March 9). The RMP/EIS will provide future direction for approximately 13 million acres of BLM-managed land in central and northern AK, including the Dalton Highway Corridor and central Yukon River watershed.

On February 23, majority staff from the House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee Majority Staff will meet with Amy Lueders, BLM-NM State Director, to tour the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument.

On February 23, the BLM-CO White River Field Office will meet with representatives of the Ute

Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation in Vernal to discuss the Tribe's proposal to purchase 2,452 acres of BLM-administered land near Dinosaur, CO to build a casino. A resource management plan (RMP) amendment would be needed before the land could be sold.

On February 23, BLM-OR/WA will present at the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council in Jacksonville, OR. The presentation will address upcoming agency projects, including the Pickett West Timber Sale proposal and forest resiliency. Medford District Manager Elizabeth Berghard will present for BLM.

On February 23, BOEM plans to meet with the Danish Energy Agency to discuss and plan initiatives for 2017 in several key areas of BOEM's renewable energy program. In 2016, BOEM executed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Danish Government that provides a mechanism for bilateral information and research initiatives to inform BOEM's renewable energy program, including programmatic streamlining efforts.

On or before February 24, BOEM and DoD will hold a kickoff meeting for an interagency working group that was chartered following high-level meetings held on February 2 and 9, pertaining to Geological and Geophysical (G&G) activities in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico (EGoM). The purpose of the working group is to formalize procedures governing coordination for G&G permitting activities east of the military mission line in the EGoM.

On February 25, the Northern Nevada Correctional Center (NNCC) will offer fifteen to twenty wild horses for competitive-bid adoption. These horses were gathered from ranges on BLM-administered public lands in NV and CA and have been saddle-trained by inmate trainers in the NNCC program. In October 2016, the program held a similar competitive-bid adoption with successful bidders paying a total of \$38,950 for fifteen horses.

On February 25 – March 1, the National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Legislative Conference will be held in Washington, DC. Cynthia Moses-Nedd, Acting Division Chief, BLM Intergovernmental and External Affairs, will attend the meeting.

On February 25 - March 6, Brian St. George, BLM Colorado DSD for Resources and Fire, will travel to Kenya to participate in a Department of the Interior- International Technical Assistance Program project to combat wildlife trafficking. Discussion topics will include governance and peace, security and illegal wildlife trade, rangelands, marine and forest management, wildlife, and enterprise development.

Beginning the week of February 26, the BLM-ID Challis Field Office plans to capture up to 150 wild horses through bait trapping and remove up to 50 within the Challis Herd Management Area (HMA) to reach the Appropriate Management Level (AML) of 185 - 253. The current population estimate is 285. The gather is expected to be completed by mid-April.

On February 27, the annual America Outdoors Association (AOA) meeting will be held in Washington, D.C. AOA representatives will visit land management agencies during this meeting. AOA represents over 550 companies that provide a wide range of outdoor recreation services. Any Tenney, Chief of the BLM's Division of Recreation & Visitor Services will represent the BLM.

On February 27, the BLM-WY Casper Field Office Manager Tim Wilson, and Stephanie Connolly, the High Plains District Manager, will be briefing local staff of the WY Congressional delegation. Topics will include the Bates Hole Travel and Transportation Management Plan, the oil and gas permitting workload, and a recent trespass by the Bummer Ranch onto BLM-administered public lands.

On February 28, an Indefinite Delivery and Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract to inventory and monitor lands with wilderness characteristics will be developed for review and posting by the BLM National Operations Center. Each inventory is a snapshot of the existing character of the landscape at a particular time. The BLM will continue to update the inventories as inventoried conditions on the ground change over time in response to both human activities and natural environmental changes.

By February 28, the BLM-UT Price Field Office will release for public review an Environmental Assessment that analyzes a recreation management plan for the Joe's Valley Bouldering Area. The Joe's Valley Extensive Resource Management Area (ERMA) encompasses 24,930 acres located in north-central Emery County, Utah. Over one million people live within driving distance of Joe's Valley, and the area receives many visitors.

On February 28, BOEM plans to publish the Proposed Notice of Sale for the Cook Inlet Lease Sale 244. The lease sale is tentatively scheduled for June 21, 2017.

By February 28, BLM-AK anticipates publishing a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Road. The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority submitted an application for a proposed right-of-way to allow the construction of a 211-mile-long, all-season industrial access road. The proposed road would cross approximately 24 miles of BLM-managed lands and 26 miles of the Gates of the Arctic National Preserve. The portion of the road that would traverse the Preserve was authorized statutorily under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

In late February, provided the BLM receives Departmental approval to proceed, BLM-UT anticipates issuing a Record of Decision (ROD) on an Environmental Assessment (EA) of mixed trail use in the Recapture Canyon area, located east of Blanding and San Juan County. The ROD would lift an 1871-acre closure order in Recapture Canyon that was issued in 2007, and designate certain trails for all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use, while protecting important riparian and cultural areas. This area became the focus of national media attention in May 2014 when a group staged an unauthorized ATV ride to protest the closure of Recapture Canyon to AVTs.

In late February, BSEE anticipates receiving a report from the National Academy of Public Administration detailing its assessment of BSEE's organization, strategic direction, policy and process development, infrastructure, systems, and technology. Acting ASLM Rich Cardinale and Special Kate MacGregor joined BSEE Acting Director Margaret Schneider at a briefing by Joe Mitchell, NAPA's Director of Academy Programs, and Pam Haze, NAPA Senior Advisor, regarding the substance of the report and NAPA's recommendation. NAPA anticipates transmitting the final report to BSEE on March 15, 2017.

In late February, BLM-NV plans to issue the final Dixie Meadows Geothermal Project EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The project area consists of approximately 22,021 acres of public land. The project proponent (Ormat) seeks approval to drill several types of wells (temperature gradient wells, test observation wells, and production wells) at up to 20 specific locations located approximately 75 miles northeast of the Fallon, NV.

In late February, BSEE will submit required renewals for Information Collection Notices for publication in the *Federal Register* to renew approval for Federal information collection related to Applications for Permit to Drill (APD), Applications for Permit to Modify (APM), platform and structure information submittals, and pipeline access information submittals.

In late February or early March, BOEM plans to publish a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Draft Supplemental EIS for the Cape Wind Energy Project. The U.S. Court of Appeals vacated the 2009 Final EIS due to a deficiency in the determination that the sea floor could support wind turbine structures. BOEM is preparing a Draft Supplemental EIS that reanalyzes this issue. BOEM plans to follow publication of the NOI with a Notice of Availability of the Draft Supplemental EIS on March 14. BOEM agreed to publish the Final Supplemental EIS by August 2017.

In February, the BLM-UT Moab Field Office will release for public review an EA for the Needles and Anticline Overlook (Canyon Rims) Road Improvement Project to improve public access and safety. The area is near the Bears Ears National Monument.

On March 1, BOEM tentatively plans to sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) authorizing the use of Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) sand for the Mississippi Coastal Improvements Program Comprehensive Barrier Island Restoration Project (MsCIP) in the Gulf of Mexico. BOEM was a cooperating agency during the preparation of the 2009 Programmatic EIS and the 2016 Supplemental EIS. BOEM independently reviewed the SEIS and found that it adequately evaluates the environmental effects of the proposed action.

On March 2, Kristin Bail, Acting BLM Director, will meet with Rep. Chris Stewart (R-UT) regarding the proposed Utah Water Development Project.

On March 2 - 4, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation National Convention will be held in Nashville, TN. The agenda includes a Conservation Partners Meeting, with a sage-grouse panel discussion planned for March 2. BLM, Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and state agency partners will participate. Karen Kelleher, BLM's Acting Deputy Assistant Director for Resources and Planning, will represent the BLM.

On March 2 - 5, the Mint 400 Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) race will take place on a 100-mile existing race course located outside of Las Vegas NV. The race course is located within approximately 140,000 acres of BLM-managed lands.

On March 3, BOEM plans to publish the Proposed Notice of Sale and Notice of Availability of the Final EIS for Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Lease Sale 249. The lease sale is scheduled to take place on August 16, 2017, and will be the first sale under the 2017 - 2022 OCS Oil and Gas Program.

On March 3, BOEM plans to publish a *Federal Register* Notice announcing the availability of three revised Supplemental Official Block Diagrams along with the two associated revised Official Protraction Diagrams that reflect the lateral boundaries through state waters that divide the Commonwealth of Virginia from North Carolina and Maryland.

On March 3, BOEM plans to publish the Notice of Availability of the Final GOM Multi-Sale EIS for 2017 - 2022 Lease Sales. The Final EIS analyzes 10 region-wide lease sales scheduled in the GOM.

On March 3, BSEE will host its Second Annual Youth Technology Challenge in Houston, TX. BSEE will also hold inaugural youth events in California and Louisiana following the Houston event. The California event will take place at Bakersfield College in Bakersfield, CA on April 5 and the New Orleans event will occur in mid-April at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, LA.

## **Assistant Secretary Policy, Management and Budget**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

- Who: REO Portland, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey, State Department, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Columbia Basin Tribes, Public Utility Districts (PUDs), State Natural Resource Agencies, and British Columbia Representatives
- What: Columbia River Treaty Collaborative Modeling Workgroup (CMW) meeting
- When: February 27, 2017
- Where: Portland, OR
- Press: Closed
- Topic: Hydro system modeling support capabilities and scenarios for the Columbia River Treaty negotiations. Hosted by the State Department.
  
- Who: REO Portland, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), State Department
- What: Columbia River Treaty briefing
- When: February 27, 2017
- Where: Portland, OR
- Press: Closed
- Topic: State Department to provide update on the Columbia River Treaty.
  
- Who: REO Portland, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), State Department, Columbia Basin Tribes' elected leaders/representatives
- What: State Department's meeting with Columbia Basin Tribes' elected leaders/representatives
- When: February 28, 2017
- Where: Portland, OR
- Press: Closed
- Topic: Columbia Basin Tribes' interests and expectations of the Columbia River Treaty negotiation process.
  
- Who: Deputy Assistant Secretary Public Safety, Resource Protection, & Emergency Services (PRE) Harry Humbert and Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) Director Bryan Rice
- What: Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC)
- When: March 2, 2017
- Where: Main Interior Building (MIB), Interior Operations Center in Washington, D.C.
- Press: Closed
- Topic: The purpose of the meeting is to collectively discuss: key engagement points with new administration and federal WFLC Members; approaches to common set of expectations around the strategic activities; an understanding of the 2016 fire season and the upcoming 2017 forecast from predictive services as well as regional activities

contributing towards collaboration across the country.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

**Dakota Access Pipeline and Keystone Pipelines.** Office of Law Enforcement and Security (OLES) continues to work closely with Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and other stakeholders to prepare for anticipated demonstrations on federal lands, as a result of Administration's recent decision regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) and Keystone Pipelines. Demonstrators remain encamped at Standing Rock in North Dakota and additional participants are expected. OLES special agents are being dispatched to Bismarck ND as DAPL begins to proceed with the final portion of the pipeline.

**Regional Biosecurity Plan Briefing.** The Office of Policy Analysis (PPA) is coordinating with the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCL) and bureaus to prepare for an upcoming briefing on March 10 convened by Senator Mazie Hirono's staff. The focus will be on implementation of the Regional Biosecurity Plan for Hawaii and Micronesia and efforts to address priority invasive species such as the brown tree snake and coconut rhinoceros beetle.

**Internal Control and Audit Follow-up.** The Department has an annual goal of closing 85% of corrective actions scheduled for closure in the current FY to address issues raised in OIG and GAO engagements. As of February 7, 2017, the Department has closed 19 percent of open audit recommendations scheduled for closure in FY 2017.

**Year 2017 Small Business Accomplishments to Date:** As of February 15, 2017, the Department has awarded 52.46% of its contract award dollars to small businesses. The Department-wide small business goal, which was negotiated with the Small Business Administration, is 53.5%. The Department awarded 23.74% of its contract award dollars to small disadvantaged businesses and 15.04% of its contract award dollars to women-owned small businesses, exceeding the statutory goal of 5% for each. The Department awarded 2.70% of its contract award dollars to historically underutilized business zone small businesses and 3.20% of its contract award dollars to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses. The statutory goal is 3% for each of these categories.

### **New Government Accountability Office (GAO) Audits**

#### **Long Island Sound Restoration Efforts (Job Code 101350)**

In response to a request by the Chair and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, GAO will review the following key issues: (1) roles of Federal, state, and other groups in restoring the Long Island Sound, (2) Federal funds spent to date, and (3) progress in restoring the Long Island Sound and work remaining. The entrance conference with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Geological Survey staff is scheduled for March 16, 2017.

**Implementation of the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Process (Job Code 101221)** In response to requests made by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, GAO will review the: (1) FedRAMP process and the extent to which agencies use FedRAMP for obtaining cloud services; (2) whether FedRAMP's authorization process is effective in providing controls

necessary for securing selected agencies' data in cloud environments; and (3) benefits and challenges for FedRAMP stakeholders. This work is government-wide and includes the 24 agencies covered by the Chief Financial Officers Act, as well as the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The entrance conference with the OCIO staff is scheduled for February 28, 2017.

### **Tribal Consultation Practices (Job Code 101433)**

In response to its authority under 31 U.S.C. § 717 after receiving a request from Ranking Member Raúl M. Grijalva of the House Committee on Natural Resources, former Ranking Member Raul Ruiz of the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs, and 23 other individual House members, GAO will review: (1) Federal agencies' compliance with government-to-government consultation and coordination responsibilities under Executive Order 13175; (2) tribal consultation practices used by Federal agencies during permitting and development processes; (3) definition and consistent application of "meaningful tribal consultations" by Federal agencies; and (4) opportunities for tribal input into contiguous, off-reservation developments that may result in pollution or other impacts on tribal land; and appeal options, if any, available to tribes. The entrance conference with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) staff has not been scheduled.

### **Recent Draft GAO Reports (Per GAO, distribution is highly restricted.)**

On February 9, 2017, GAO issued a proposed draft submission of a second new item on GAO's 2017 Duplication Report - Federal Grant Awards based on GAO-17-113, which includes a Departmental recommendation to develop guidance requiring all competitive grant programs to clarify, in the public notice of funding opportunity, all review criteria. The response is due to GAO February 24, 2017.

### **Recent Final GAO Reports**

#### **Government Purchase Cards: Little Evidence of Potential Fraud Found in Small Purchases, but Documentation Issues Exist (GAO-17-276, Job Code 192455)**

In response to the Chair and Ranking Member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Government Operations, GAO reviewed actions taken by OMB and the General Services Administration (GSA) to enhance purchase card program controls. GAO recommends that GSA reemphasize OMB guidance to obtain and retain complete documentation and issued a recommendation that DOI require cardholders to document purchase request and preapproval for card (self-generated) purchases. The response is due to GAO April 14, 2017.

**High-Risk Series: Progress on Many High-Risk Areas, While Substantial Efforts Needed on Others (GAO-17-317).** Every two years at the start of each new Congress, GAO updates and issues the "High Risk List" focusing attention on government activities vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement or in need of broad-based transformation. The 2017 update added three new programs namely, 2020 Census, the Government's environmental liabilities, and Federal efforts on Indian Tribal programs and removed terrorism related information sharing. According to the Comptroller General, the ineffective management of programs serving Indian tribes, the federal government's soaring liabilities associated with environmental cleanups, and the rising cost of the decennial census resulted in the addition of these programs to the High Risk List. GAO notes that while Interior has taken some steps to strengthen how it

manages federal oil and gas resources, it has not met the criteria for removal from the High-Risk List and therefore the management of Federal oil and gas resources high-risk area is being expanded to include a segment on Interior's restructuring of offshore oil and gas oversight.

**60-Day Letter: DOI Response to GAO Report, *Government Purchase Cards: Little Evidence of Potential Fraud Found in Small Purchases, but Documentation Issues Exist* (Report No. GAO-17-276).** GAO issued the final report on Government Purchase Cards on February 14. The report was prepared in response to a request by the Chair and Ranking Member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Government Operations. GAO examined the actions GSA and OMB have taken since 2008 to enhance program controls over micro-purchases; and sampled purchase card data from agencies across the government to evaluate processes for micro-purchase approvals. GAO issued one recommendation to the Department. The Department's 60-day letter addressing the recommendation is due to GAO and the congressional requesters by April 14, 2017.

**60-Day Letter: DOI Response to GAO Report, *Grants Management: Selected Agencies Should Clarify Merit Based Award Criteria and Provide Guidance for Reviewing Potentially Duplicative Awards* (Report No. GAO-17-113).** The report was prepared in response to requests from Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Carper of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Chairman Lankford, Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. GAO reviewed the extent to which agencies followed certain practices for evaluating competitive awards; whether agencies had processes to identify duplicative grant funding; and progress the government-wide Council on Financial Assistance Reform (COFAR) has made in developing an implementation schedule for achieving its priorities. The report contains two recommendations for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. The Department's 60-day letter addressing the recommendations is due to GAO and the congressional requesters by March 12, 2017.

## **Assistant Secretary for Water and Science**

### **Week Ahead Schedule of Meetings, Hearings, and Travel**

**Kerry Rae** - From February 22 - March 3, Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Kerry Rae will be in Washington, DC, and participating in routine internal briefings. In addition, numerous stakeholder meetings are scheduled as a result of national-level association meetings bringing irrigation districts and cities to Washington DC the week of Feb 27.

**Scott Cameron** - From February 22 - March 3, Special Assistant to the Secretary Scott Cameron will be in Washington, DC, and participating in routine internal briefings. In addition, numerous stakeholder meetings are scheduled as a result of national-level association meetings bringing irrigation districts and cities to Washington DC the week of Feb 27.

On **March 1**, Scott Cameron will participate in the National Invasive Species Awareness Week federal agency fair and reception held in conjunction with the Congressional Invasive Species Caucus. The event in the Rayburn building will feature exhibits by several DOI bureaus.

On **March 1**, Water & Science will join the Acting Deputy Secretary and other DOI officials in a meeting with stakeholders of the Navajo Generating Station.

On **March 2**, Scott Cameron will be the breakfast speaker at the annual meeting of the Association of California Water Agencies.

### **Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

**Ongoing hazard response:** Bogoslof volcano, in the Aleutian Island chain, remains at a heightened state of unrest and in an unpredictable condition. Explosive eruptions producing high-elevation ash clouds occurred on February 19-20, and may recur at any time. The volcano does not have direct ground-based monitoring instrumentation, but USGS scientists are using remote sensing technologies to provide data informing NOAA ash advisories for air traffic safety.

On **February 22**, Reclamation will announce the award of a Design/Build contract on the Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System. The contract for the project, which is part of the Aamodt Indian Water Rights Settlement, will be for \$91.9 million. Reclamation will issue a news release on the contract award. [UPDATED]

On **February 22**, Reclamation is tentatively planning to launch the Estimating Reservoir Water Storage Capacity prize challenge that seeks new methods to indirectly and cost effectively estimate storage capacity and/or sedimentation volume of reservoirs managed by Reclamation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The best solution that meets the technical requirements for this prize competition will receive \$50,000. [UPDATED]

On **February 23**, W&S will meet with representatives from the Building Industry Association and The Mission Continues, a non-partisan NGO that works with veterans adjusting to life at

home to find purpose through community impact. These two entities wish to work with Interior and the Urban Waters Federal Partnership to clean up, make safe, and restore one of the National Park Service's urban parks in Washington DC.

On **February 27**, an informal briefing for Senate staffers is planned by the State Department (with DOI attendance) on the status of the Minute 32x U.S.-Mexico Negotiations on Colorado River Cooperative Process negotiations. Since 2015 the U.S. and Mexico have been working to negotiate an agreement (known as “Minute 32x”) on Colorado River cooperation, addressing operational agreements, water conservation investments and environmental efforts under the framework of the 1944 U.S./Mexico Treaty governing the allocation of Colorado River water. Current cooperative efforts are addressed under an agreement known as “Minute 319” – which expires on Dec. 31, 2017.

On or about **February 27**, Reclamation’s Mid-Pacific Region will make an initial announcement of how much water will be made available under the terms of contracts to water users in the Central Valley Project. This initial announcement is generally updated on a monthly basis until about June. The amount of water to be made available is expressed as a percentage of the full contract amount. [UPDATED]

On **March 2**, new USGS research will be published analyzing livestock grazing records from Wyoming to investigate broad-scale responses of greater sage-grouse populations to livestock management. Scientists used 11 years of annual population counts of greater sage-grouse coupled with grazing records from BLM allotments across Wyoming. Researchers discovered that grazing can have both positive and negative effects on greater sage-grouse population trends, depending on the level of grazing and when it occurred during the growing season. The paper will be published in *Ecological Applications* and a news release is planned.

## **30-60 DAY LOOK-AHEAD**

### **Office of the Solicitor**

Significant Litigation Deadlines reported separately in 100-day report.

### **Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks**

On March 4 and 5, Selma to Montgomery National Historical Trail staff will participate in annual commemorations for Bloody Sunday – the 1965 march led by Rep. John Lewis when protesters were attacked by law enforcement. Events are scheduled at the NPS Selma Interpretive Center and Brown Chapel AME Church in Selma, and at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery. Previous events included marches across the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

Approximately 50-75 members of Congress have been invited by local organizers to attend.

On March 6, FWS' Supervisor of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office will provide an update to attendees at the Oregon Cattlemen's Association Spring Quarterly Meeting in Salem, Oregon. This forum provides an opportunity to reinforce our message that FWS is dedicated to continued collaborative conservation. This is potentially controversial; the meeting is open press.

On March 7, the NPS and the Boy Scouts of America will participate in an event in President's Park (the White House) at the Boy Scout Memorial celebrating the renewal of the two organizations' partnership. Acting Director Michael Reynolds and Chief Scout Executive Michael Surbaugh will give remarks. Invitations will also be extended to the incoming Secretary and members of Congress.

On or around March 7, FWS will release preliminary conservation planning targets for the monarch butterfly. The targets are separate from the ongoing species status assessment for the monarch, which will inform FWS's determination on whether to propose the monarch for listing under the ESA. The targets are acreages for habitat needed to reverse the downward trend in monarch numbers for eastern and western populations. The preliminary estimate for suitable new or restored habitat needed to reverse the decline of monarchs is a range of 18-39 million acres in the eastern population. FWS plans to formally release these targets at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference on March 7. Outreach is planned.

On March 10, the NPS and partners will hold the grand opening of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center in Church Creek, Maryland. The event will be public and open to media. The Maryland Congressional Delegation, leaders in the African American community, DOI leadership, and partners will be invited.

On March 18, the NPS will host a community dedication ceremony with local partners for the recently designated Reconstruction Era National Monument in Beaufort, South Carolina. Informal invitations have been extended to Congressman Clyburn and NPS leadership. An invitation to the Secretary of the Interior is forthcoming. This event is still in the planning stage and official notification is expected soon.

In March, FWS and the State of Nebraska will announce that it is the 30th state with confirmed presence of white-nose syndrome, a fungal disease that has been devastating hibernating bats.

This information is close hold. FWS will coordinate a joint news release. Outreach is planned.

In March, the NPS anticipates publishing the annual report on the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program (HTC). The HTC provides a 20 percent federal tax credit to property owners who undertake a substantial rehabilitation of income-producing historic buildings, while maintaining historic character. The report includes summary information about the program and projects reviewed (e.g., total number of projects broken down by state and rehabilitation cost, by new use, and by project size), as well as photos and short descriptions of some representative projects. This year a total of 1,039 certified projects were completed - the highest in recent program history – and an estimated 108,528 jobs were created as a result.

In March, the FWS will publish a notice of intent that the bureau will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in conjunction with a proposed rule to revise the existing nonessential experimental population designation of red wolves in North Carolina. This notice announces FWS' intention to revise the designation under section 10(j) of the ESA and the initiation of a public scoping process to identify issues and concerns, potential impacts, and possible alternatives to the proposed action. This will be controversial; the FWS communications office will coordinate outreach with the Secretary's office.

In March, the FWS will post its recently completed status review of the polar bear. After a thorough review of new and updated scientific information on the polar bear's biology and threats, the FWS concluded that it continues to meet the definition of a threatened species under the ESA. A news bulletin will be posted to regional website, otherwise no outreach planned.

In mid-March, FWS will announce \$1.1 billion in revenues generated by the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration acts to states, territories and District of Columbia. The funding, which supports critical state wildlife conservation and recreation projects throughout the nation, is generated by excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, fishing equipment and motorboat fuels paid by the hunting, shooting, boating and angling industries. Department-level outreach planned.

In March, the FWS will publish a final determination on a proposed rule that published January 8, 2016, to reclassify the West Indian manatee from endangered to threatened under the Endangered Species Act. A notice of intent to sue was filed by the Pacific Legal Foundation January 9 for failure to finalize the proposal to reclassify the manatee from endangered to threatened. This is controversial because the manatee is a large, docile sea mammal that engenders passionate advocacy in the Southeast. There were a record number of boat strikes in 2016, and some conservation groups do not want to see the species' protections diminished.

On April 15, the NPS will hold a community dedication ceremony with local partners for the recently established Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument. Informal invitations have been extended to NPS leadership and an invitation to the Secretary of the Interior is forthcoming. This event is still in the planning stage and official notification is expected soon.

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

### **Hot Topics**

**White-Nose Syndrome**

In March, FWS and the State of Nebraska will announce that it is the 30th state with confirmed presence of white-nose syndrome, a fungal disease that has been devastating hibernating bats. This information is close hold. FWS will coordinate a joint news release. Outreach is planned.

**Monarch Butterfly Conservation**

On or around March 7, FWS will release preliminary conservation planning targets for the monarch butterfly. The targets are separate from the ongoing species status assessment for the monarch, which will inform FWS's determination on whether to propose the monarch for listing under the ESA. The targets are acreages for habitat needed to reverse the downward trend in monarch numbers for eastern and western populations. The preliminary estimate for suitable new or restored habitat needed to reverse the decline of monarchs is a range of 18-39 million acres in the eastern population. FWS plans to formally release these targets at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference on March 7. Outreach is planned.

**Funding to States**

In mid-March, FWS will announce \$1.1 billion in revenues generated by the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration acts to states, territories and District of Columbia. The funding, which supports critical state wildlife conservation and recreation projects throughout the nation, is generated by excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, fishing equipment and motorboat fuels paid by the hunting, shooting, boating and angling industries. Department-level outreach planned.

**Endangered Species Act Recovery Actions**

In mid-March, FWS will publish a Notice of Availability for the second revised draft recovery plan for the giant garter snake. Outreach is planned.

In mid-March, FWS will publish a notice of intent that the bureau will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in conjunction with a proposed rule to revise the existing nonessential experimental population designation of red wolves in North Carolina. The proposed rule, and the preferred action in the EIS, would revise the existing experimental population rule to apply only to the Dare County Bombing Range and Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, where stable packs exist on federal lands. FWS expects to make a final decision on the proposed action, which will change the scope of and goals for the experimental population, by December 2017. The notice announces FWS's intention to revise the designation under section 10(j) of the ESA and the initiation of a public scoping process to identify issues and concerns, potential impacts, and possible alternatives to the proposed action. Outreach planned upon Reading Room publication. This will be controversial.

**Endangered Species Act Listing Actions**

In mid-March, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* 90-day petition findings for five species: desert tortoise (Mojave population), sturgeon chub, sicklefin chub, Florida black bear and tricolored bat. The tricolored bat is found in 35 states, Canada, Mexico and Guatemala, is being threatened by white nose syndrome and loss of habitat. As such, it will likely garner public attention. The not substantial finding for the bear may also garner media attention, since it was petitioned by two dozen state and national conservation groups, largely upset about a regulated

hunting season for the bear. Outreach is planned upon Reading Room publication.

In March, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a final rule to delist two Australian parrot species (scarlet-chested parakeet and the turquoise parrot) due to recovery. Both parrots are native to Australia. No outreach is planned.

No later than March 8, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on a proposed rule that published January 8, 2016, to reclassify the West Indian manatee from endangered to threatened under the Endangered Species Act. A notice of intent to sue was filed by the Pacific Legal Foundation January 9 for failure to finalize the reclassification proposal. To avoid litigation, the rule needs to be delivered to the *Federal Register* by March 8. Controversial because the manatee is a large, docile sea mammal that engenders passionate advocacy in the Southeast; there were a record number of boat strikes in 2016, and some conservation groups do not want to see the species' protections diminished. Outreach is planned.

No later than March 31, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a revised 90-day finding on a petition to delist the Bone Cave harvestman (a cave invertebrate) found in Texas. In June 2015, FWS published a not-substantial 90-day finding on the petition, but a disc of supplemental information was overlooked and not considered in that finding. This revised finding results from a voluntary court-ordered remand and settlement agreement; the court-ordered date is March 31. This issue has received media attention in recent months; outreach is planned.

In mid- to late- March, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a 12-month finding on the status of two freshwater mussel species, yellow lance, and Atlantic pigtoe. The species are located in North Carolina and Virginia. Outreach is planned.

No later than April 1, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* 12-month findings on petitions to list the Beaver Pond marstonia a freshwater snail found in Georgia, and the San Felipe gambusia, a Texas fish. FWS will also make a 12-month finding on a petition to delist the southwestern willow flycatcher from the list of threatened and endangered wildlife, based on the bird's taxonomic status. This issue involves ranchers and private landowners, grazing and riparian issues, and will likely generate local media coverage and stakeholder interest. FWS is required by settlement agreement to submit the finding for the Beaver Pond marstonia to the *Federal Register* by April 1. Outreach is planned.

No later than April 7, FWS will publish a final listing determination on the Headwater chub and roundtail chub, both native to Arizona and New Mexico. Target to the *Federal Register* is March 23. FWS has a court-ordered settlement agreement to publish the final determination by April 7. Outreach is planned.

In early April, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a final rule to delist the Hualapai Mexican vole, located in Arizona, due to the fact that the original classification is no longer appropriate. Outreach is planned.

In early April, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a proposal to delist the Deseret milkvetch, found in Utah, due to recovery. Outreach is planned.

In mid-April, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a proposal to list the island marble butterfly

as endangered. Outreach is planned.

In mid-April, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a notice amending the current listing of the southern Selkirk Mountains population of woodland caribou to include the entire Southern Mountain Caribou population as a Distinct Population Segment (DPS). The revised DPS includes the currently listed southern Selkirk Mountains population of woodland caribou, which is a transboundary species between British Columbia, Canada, and northern Idaho and northeastern Washington. The revised DPS would remain listed as endangered under the ESA. Outreach is planned.

### **Endangered Species Act Critical Habitat Actions**

In mid-March, FWS will announce a proposal to designate critical habitat for approximately 36 stream miles of occupied habitat and 3,100 acres of unoccupied habitat in Montana for the meltwater lednian stonefly and approximately 1.5 stream miles of occupied habitat and 204 acres of unoccupied habitat for the western glacier stonefly. FWS will also reopen the public comment period for the proposed listing of western glacier stonefly and meltwater lednian stonefly as threatened species. Outreach is planned upon Reading Room publication.

In late March, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a notice reopening the comment period on a proposed critical habitat designation for the black pine snake. FWS will also hold two public information meetings during the open comment period. Outreach is planned.

In late March, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a proposal to designate critical habitat for the Florida bristle fern in Florida. The proposed designation includes approximately 10,937 acres. Outreach is planned.

In early April, as a result of new information available, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a revision of the 2014 revised proposed critical habitat rule, and will request new information regarding population status, trends or threats, and on additional areas that meet FWS criteria for critical habitat. Outreach is planned.

In mid-April, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a proposal to designate 463 river miles of critical habitat for the Texas hornshell (a freshwater mussel) in New Mexico and Texas. Outreach is planned.

In mid-April, FWS will send to the *Federal Register* a proposal to designate 12.28 acres as critical habitat for the Sonoyta mud turtle in Arizona. Outreach is planned.

### **National Wildlife Refuge Actions**

The Bear River watershed has received above-normal snowpack (172 percent) and weather conditions have accelerated spring runoff during the last two weeks. Most of the surrounding areas are saturated with water. As a result, Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge near Brigham City, Utah, has coordinated with Box Elder County to close West Forest Street two miles west of I-15 due to unsafe travel conditions. There currently is no access to the Refuge or the Auto Tour Loop. Recent rains coupled with early snow melt have resulted in record flows in the Bear River, which have been over 9,000 cubic feet per second instead of the typical flow of 2,100 cfs at this time of the year. The refuge will remain closed to the public until flooding conditions subside and roads can be traveled on safely.

In mid-March, FWS will announce the *Banking on Nature* report that demonstrates America's national wildlife refuges are economic powerhouses for local communities across the country. This report highlights two of the many local economic benefits of refuges: the impact of recreational visits (e.g., ecotourism) and the economic payback from National Wildlife Refuge System spending within neighboring communities. The peer-reviewed report, which examined national wildlife refuges in 2015, found every \$1 million spent by the Refuge System created about 13 jobs in the United States. Spending by the 48.5 million visitors generated nearly \$2.7 billion in consumer spending. This supported 39,149 full-time and seasonal jobs, providing more than \$885 million in income to people living in local communities. Outreach is planned.

In March, FWS anticipates making a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Valle de Oro NWR in Albuquerque, New Mexico, available for public comment. Currently FWS is consulting with vested partners to develop the draft EA. As the urban refuge is in close proximity to the Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB) flight path, KAFB has concerns about potential bird strikes on aircraft. Of primary concern are proposed habitat restoration plans for seasonal wetlands. KAFB believes restored habitat may attract more large birds (geese, cranes and ducks) and increase collision risks. FWS is meeting with KAFB and intends to continue coordinating with the Federal Aviation Administration and KAFB throughout this process to minimize these concerns. Of interest to Senator Heinrich (D-NM) and Representative Michelle Lujan-Grisham (D-NM-1) and potentially to Senator Udall (D-NM)

Through March 6, FWS will be conducting ground and aerial operations to eradicate feral swine at Havasu NWR, in Arizona and California (near Needles). During this time, FWS will temporarily close portions of the refuge. No portions of the Colorado River are expected to be closed. Swine are known to damage natural resources and property, impact agricultural lands, and pose a human health risk due to diseases they may carry. The eradication plan and environmental assessment were developed as part of a national priority to eliminate or reduce the risks and damages inflicted by feral swine to agriculture, natural resources, property and human health. Media and Congressional interest is high. On-site media opportunities will be arranged when possible, if deemed safe and do not interfere with operations.

In late March or early April, FWS will publish a notice in the *Federal Register* announcing the Record of Decision for the final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Impact Statement for the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in Vermont. The approved CCP will guide long-term management decisions for the refuge. Local outreach is planned.

In late March or early April, FWS will publish a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register* to announce the release of Massasoit NWR (part of the Eastern Massachusetts Complex) draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for public comment. When finalized, the CCP will guide long-term management decisions for the refuge. Local outreach is planned.

### **Migratory Bird Management Actions**

Cormorant control for 2017: In May 2016, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia vacated two depredation orders for double-crested cormorants until FWS prepares an adequate

Environmental Assessment (EA), pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. FWS has in the past granted permits to aquaculture facilities for lethal control of cormorants found to be consuming large numbers of fish. FWS is unable to issue permits for the lethal take of cormorants until the EA process is complete. It is uncertain when the EA will be completed. When cormorants migrate to the Midwest and Northeast this spring, there may be no legal way for cormorants to be lethally controlled. A communications strategy to inform states, partners and members of Congress is being drafted. Lethal control of cormorants is controversial.

Great Lakes Indian Commission waterfowl hunting regulations: The Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission represents 11 tribes in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan in the administration of hunting, fishing and gathering rights under several Treaties. Annually the commission submits a request for special migratory bird hunting rights. These rights have been adjudicated in several court opinions. FWS has been working with the commission for many years on a suite of hunting requests. This year's proposal is expected to be released through the *Federal Register* in the next 30-60 days. FWS is holding informational call with the Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan DNR to inform them of its proposed support of these hunting regulations. A final decision will not be made until after public comments are reviewed and would not take effect until the fall 2017 hunting season. This issue is expected to be controversial due to the proposal including several new techniques for tribal members to take waterfowl.

## **National Park Service**

On or about March 1, Wrangell-St. Elias will release an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Snag Creek/Kuskulana Land Exchange. A private land owner within the park boundaries proposes a land exchange for the purposes of expanding an airstrip for non-public use; it is not expected to be controversial.

On March 2, the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission will meet in Mentasta Lake Village, Alaska. The commission is authorized under Section 808 of the Alaska Lands Act and advises the NPS and the Secretary on subsistence program requirements. The meetings do not typically yield media coverage or congressional delegation interest.

On March 6, Golden Gate National Recreation Area will begin a repair project of the Crissy Field Promenade, one of the most highly-trafficked trails in the State of California. The \$5 million project will close sections of the waterfront trail in phases over six months.

On or about March 8, the NPS anticipates issuing a Finding of No Significant Impact for the Crystal Cave Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Plan at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks in California. The project has widespread support and is a partnership effort with the Sequoia Parks Conservancy, which oversees the cave interpretation and public tours. The project includes updated interpretive media and a redesigned tour introduction area in one of the most popular areas of the park.

On March 8, 2017, First State National Historical Park will hold a public meeting in New Castle, Delaware, regarding the Sheriff's House Rehabilitation Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect (EA/AoE). The EA/AoE proposes solutions to resolve accessibility issues for the structure and determines appropriate uses, including use by the NPS and partners as a proposed

visitor contact station and office space.

On March 9, the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) will host a public event at Stonewall National Monument in New York City to informally celebrate the new national monument. The NPCA has invited partners that were integral in the establishment of the monument and the NPS will provide an update on the progress of the development the site. On March 9, Visit Philadelphia will hold a media lunch in Philadelphia that will cover the opening of the Museum of the American Revolution and other topics related to Philadelphia's Historic District. Both Independence National Historical Park and Valley Forge National Historical Park will attend and speak.

On March 10, the First Amendment permit for David's Tent on the National Mall will expire. David's Tent is a religious organization that has held permits for a prayer vigil in park at various locations since September 2015. The current vigil location at Constitution Gardens (north of the WWII Memorial) will no longer be available due to an upcoming construction project. No other hardscape locations are currently available within the park, and use of any grass locations would require the vigil to move every 10 days due to the park's turf management guidelines. Due to the inconvenience, David's Tent is seeking permits from other organizations, including the city and the Architect of the Capitol. The park has received congressional inquiries on this permit in the past.

On March 15, North Cascades NPS Complex anticipates starting a pilot reservation program for backcountry camping permits for a percentage of the campsites in some of the most popular areas of the park complex. The permit reservation system, which was proposed in the 2012 Ross Lake General Management Plan, is in response to increased visitation and visitor comments and requests for a reservation system. A cost recovery application fee of \$20 will be charged for the permit reservation application. Public engagement on the reservation system was conducted as part of the GMP planning process.

In March, the NPS will announce the final 2016 visitation numbers. For the third consecutive year, visitation to the National Park System reached record numbers. A total of 330,971,689 recreation visits occurred across parks in 2016, a 7.7 percent (23.7 million) increase from 2015.

In March, the NPS anticipates signing two Tribal Historic Preservation Office Memoranda of Agreement with the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes (Oklahoma), and the Oklahoma and the Burns-Paiute Tribe (Oregon). These agreements do not automatically confer federal funds, but give Tribes standing to take on certain responsibilities pursuant to 54 USC 302702 (commonly known as Section 101 of the National Historic Preservation Act). The NPS has the responsibility under 54 USC to administer the Tribal Historic Preservation Program and certify Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.

In March, the NPS anticipates awarding \$623,038 in Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to government sponsors in partnership with nonprofits for battlefield protection through fee simple and easement purchase, pending NPS review and approval of a proposed grant apportionment package. Grants will be used to protect 145 acres of Civil War battlefields in Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland. The NPS

works with private landowners, battlefield friends groups, interested community groups, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, local, state, and tribal governments and Federal agencies for preservation projects and local acquisition of Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War battlefield land. Grants are awarded several times throughout the year.

In March, the NPS and U.S. Forest Service Learning Review Board will release the Strawberry Fire Fatality and Safety Review Report. The Strawberry Fire was started by lightning strike and burned 4,700+ acres in Great Basin National Park in August of 2016. The Fatality and Safety Review Report is scheduled for review on February 15 by the Board.

By mid-March, Rocky Mountain National Park anticipates acquiring a 42.28 acre tract of land known as "Cascade Cottages." The property is being sold by The Trust for Public Land (TPL), which acquired the land from the previous landowners in 2016. Prior to TPL's acquisition, this property was a family-run vacation cottage business for several decades. Rocky Mountain Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land worked together to raise the funds to purchase the property and hold it until NPS funding became available. This property is the largest remaining commercial inholding in the park.

During the week of March 19, and in April, five Kentucky superintendents will participate in meet-and-greets with all of their consulting Tribal Nations. The five superintendents represent Mammoth Cave National Park, Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park, Fort Donelson National Battlefield, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Obed Wild and Scenic River, Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, and the Manhattan Site at Oak Ridge. The First Nations they are meeting with are: Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, The Chickasaw Nation, Eastern Shawnee Tribe, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma, Cherokee Nation, Shawnee Tribe, and the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation. These are not formal consultation meetings about specific projects.

On or about March 30, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park (Seattle, WA location) will commemorate the 75th anniversary of the forced evacuation of 276 Japanese Americans from Bainbridge Island, Washington under Executive Order 9066. The park will commemorate the day through social media and participation in events at the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial, which is administered as part of the NPS in conjunction with Minidoka National Historic Site. Regional media attention and attendance by local, state, and federal elected officials is expected.

On March 31, the Virgin Islands will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the sale and transfer of the islands from Denmark to the United States for \$25 million in gold. On March 31, 1917, the sale and transfer took place at the site now designated as Christiansted National Historic Site. The NPS anticipates invitations for the Secretary and NPS leadership from the Governor of the Virgin Islands, the Honorable Kenneth E. Mapp through the Virgin Islands Centennial Commission,

In March, the NPS will begin a 30-day internal review period on a draft Policy Memorandum to develop and communicate guidance on conducting body-worn camera programs. The goal is to enhance transparency in police-community contacts, to provide evidence, and to document the actions of officers while performing their duties.

In late March, the Record of Decision on the Platte River Mouth Restoration and Access Plan/Environmental Assessment will be released by Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The Plan/EA evaluates the environmental impacts of three alternatives addressing the dredging and/or restoration of the riverbanks.

In late March, the NPS will release a peer-reviewed report on projections of sea level rise and storm surge for 118 and 79 coastal parks (respectively). The results are intended to inform park planning, and adaptation and mitigation strategies for lands managed by the NPS. In recent years, the NPS has provided data to parks on a case-by-case basis for localized planning, but this report is a summary of the full analysis that is now complete.

In late March, the NPS expects to release the Grand Canyon National Park Bison Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for public comment. The draft EA considers options - including capture/removal, localized fencing of sensitive resources, and sharpshooting by skilled volunteers in conjunction with Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) - for reduction in the size of the bison herd on the North Rim of the park causing damage to sensitive natural and cultural resources. The AGFD, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, and the InterTribal Bison Council are cooperating agencies on this effort.

On April 4 or April 11, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, in conjunction with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), will hold a reopening ceremony for the Carl Hayden Interagency Visitor Center at Glen Canyon Dam. Invitations will be forthcoming for the Secretary of the Interior, as well as NPS and the BOR agency leadership.

On and about April 15, the NPS will issue a Solicitation of Request for Proposals to modernize the primary elevator system at Carlsbad Caverns National Park. The modernization will replace the motors and controllers, hoistway equipment, elevator cars, guide rails and steel hoist cables. In addition, an emergency rescue apparatus, which includes an auxiliary motor, auxiliary battery backup and a single car rescue system, will be installed to improve elevator safety operations. The contract is expected to be awarded in May 2017 and be completed in May 2018.

On April 15, the NPS will hold a community dedication ceremony with local partners for the recently established Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument. Informal invitations have been extended to NPS leadership and an invitation to the Secretary of the Interior is forthcoming. This event is still in the planning stage and official notification is expected soon.

On April 19 - 21, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park will host the Council of American Maritime Museums (CAMM) annual conference. CAMM is an organization of 88 institutions across the United States working toward the preservation and interpretation of North America's maritime heritage.

On or about April 22, Glacier National Park, along with its sister peace park Waterton Lakes National Park (Canada), will announce its provisional designation as the world's first transboundary dark sky park. The dark sky designation overlays the entire International Peace Park (est.1932), and there is interest from the Canadian government to participate in the announcement. This year also marks Canada's national 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The park is

coordinating with Waterton Lakes National Park for event planning. Invitations will be extended to DOI and NPS leadership.

On May 13, the NPS will hold a community dedication ceremony with local partners for the recently established Freedom Riders National Monument in Anniston, Alabama. Informal invitations have been extended to the NPS leadership, and an invitation to the Secretary of the Interior is forthcoming. This event is still in the planning stage and official notification is expected soon.

### **Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs and the Bureaus of Indian Affairs and Indian Education**

On March 21-23, the Tribal Interior Budget Council (TIBC) will meet at the Washington Plaza Hotel, Washington, DC. TIBC provides a forum and process for tribes and federal officials to work together in developing annual budget requests for Indian programs in the Department of the Interior.

On March 21-24, the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes (MAST) Impact Week Meeting will be held in Washington, DC.

On Wednesday, March 29, and Thursday, March 30, 2017, the Self-Governance Advisory Committee March quarterly meeting will take place at the Embassy Suites Convention Center in Washington, DC.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs' National Tiwahe Coordinator (NTC) will be hosting a series of conference calls with all Tiwahe tribes to discuss the upcoming Tiwahe conference. The conference is set to take place in Tucson, Arizona at the Pascua Yaqui Reservation, one of the Tiwahe Initiative sites, on April 18 - 20. The NTC will confirm agenda items and will extend invitations to federal partners from the Indian Health Service (IHS), Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA). The NTC will also coordinate with partners from New Zealand's Te Whanau O Waipareira Trust to confirm John Tamihere, Chief Executive Officer for the Te Whanau O Waipareira Trust, as keynote speaker for the conference.

The Division of Energy and Mineral Development (DEMD) has received 13 projects for Phase 1 of the 2017 Youth Energy Challenge and has started the judging process. Students from the Navajo Nation, Cherokee Nation, Mescalero Apache, Nez Perce Tribe, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, Quinault, Yakama, and Comanche Tribes are participating, as well as one Native Hawaiian student. Projects include geothermal energy, wind energy, a hydrogen powered Sterling Generator, microbial fuel cell energy generation, and solar energy for water and home heating. Teams who make it to Phase 2 will receive up to \$2,000 to build and implement their design solutions. Phase 2 began on February 20.

**BIE Leasing and Fundraising (25 CFR 48):** This final rule would implement authority for the Director of BIE to enter into agreements with third parties to lease the land or facilities of a Bureau-operated school in exchange for funding that benefits the school. The comment period on this proposed rule ended August 22; the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action (RACA) is continuing to work with Solicitors Office (SOL) and BIE on the necessary

Privacy Act documentation in preparation for publication of the final rule.

**Appraisals and Valuations Regulation (CFR part TBD):** This rule establishes minimum qualifications for appraisers of Indian trust property, as required by the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act of 2016 (ITARA). The comment period on the proposed rule ended on November 21, 2016. RACA is in the process of preparing a draft of the final rule to incorporate workgroup discussions.

**Indian Electric Power Utilities (25 CFR 175):** This proposed rule would not make any substantive changes to the regulations, but would revise the regulations to be in plain language. The regulations affect only a limited number of Tribes because there are only three BIA electric power utilities: Colorado River (serving the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation), Mission Valley Power (serving the Salish & Kootenai Tribes, Flathead Indian Reservation), and San Carlos Irrigation Project (serving Gila River Indian Community). The proposed rule is awaiting AS-IA signature.

**Indian Trader Regulations (25 CFR 140):** This rule would comprehensively update Part 140 to modernize the implementation of the Indian Trader statutes consistent with the Federal policies of Tribal self-determination and self-governance. The advance notice of proposed rulemaking to solicit comments on potential regulatory revisions and announcing consultation for February and March 2017 was published on Friday, December 9. A notice with details on the venues for Tribal consultations was published in the Federal Register February 8. Tribal consultations are being held throughout the country from February 23 through March 16.

**School Facilities Design Handbook Updates (25 CFR 36):** The IA Office of Facilities Property and Safety Management (OFPSM) will be conducting four consultation sessions to obtain comments on the revision of the “School Facilities Design Handbook,” dated March 30, 2007, which has been incorporated by reference into 25 CFR 36. This proposed rule would update the incorporation by reference and allow for the 120-day comment period. The handbook updates are highly technical as they merely bring design standards to current industry standards. A proposed rule to incorporate the new Handbook version by reference is in surname. The Federal Register document also announces four Tribal consultation on the Handbook updates to be held across the country.

**Revisions to Leasing of Osage Lands for Oil & Gas Mining (25 CFR 226):** BIA published a final rule in 2015 that it voluntarily withdrew pending completion of a Regulatory Impact Analysis as a result of litigation. BIA is currently undertaking a Regulatory Impact Analysis at this time in anticipation of proposing revisions to this regulation. A Tribal consultation was held October 27 in Oklahoma regarding whether to revise the regulations; BIA and SOL are developing an initial draft of the regulations for distribution to the Osage Nation as soon as possible.

**Potential Revisions to Probate Regulations (25 CFR 15, 25 CFR 40):** BIA and SOL identified some discrete revisions to probate regulations that may help streamline processes. Consultation on these revisions were completed in August. The comment period ended on January 4, 2017. OHA will be getting input from judges at its March probate conference and then a workgroup consisting of representatives from OHA, BIA, and SOL will convene to prepare a

discussion draft of the proposed rule.

**BIE Negotiated Rulemaking on Accountability (25 CFR 30):** The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires BIE to use a negotiated rulemaking process to develop regulations for implementation no later than the 2017-2018 academic year and to define the standards, assessments, and accountability system consistent with Section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for the schools funded by BIE on a national, regional, or tribal basis. A Federal Register notice to establish the committee is in surname. All proposed members have been vetted for the committee.

**Update to O&M Formula for School Facilities:** The current allocation formula for O&M funding was implemented in 1990 and relies upon very granular, up-to-date and accurate inventory for each site, but many sites have not had resources to update their data. This update would instead rely on accepted industry standard benchmarks to allocate O&M funds across all sites and buildings based on actual functional use and program needs. The IA Office of Facilities Property and Safety Management (OFPSM) will be conducting four consultation sessions to obtain comments on the new O&M Formula in conjunction with consultations on the School Facilities Design Handbook revisions. A Federal Register notice announcing the consultation is in surname.

### **Office of the Special Trustee for American Indian (OST)**

March 6: Navajo Nation tour of the American Indian Records Repository

March 6-8: Executive Management Group Meeting, (DST-TS, Doug Lords)

March 7-9: Indian Energy and Minerals Steering Committee Meeting, Denver, CO (DST-FO, Jim James)

March 21: BIA Regional Directors Meeting, Washington, D.C.

March 27: Native Youth Empowerment Symposium, Isleta Pueblo, New Mexico

March 28-29: National Indian Land Conference, Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico

April 25-26: Land Buy Back Program Listening Session and Partners Meeting, Tulalip, Washington (DST-FO, Jim James)

### **Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management**

On March 4-11, the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference will be held in Spokane, Washington. This year's BLM partners meeting will be held on March 7. Nikki Moore/BLM Deputy Division Chief NLCS and Sally Butts/Deputy Division Chief NLCS will attend and present an update on BLM and NLCS.

By March 5, BSEE must file its response to a draft management report it received from the GAO on February 3 entitled, *Oil and Gas Management – Stronger Leadership Commitment Needed at Interior to Improve Offshore Oversight and Internal Management*. ASLM is currently reviewing BSEE's draft response to the report.

On March 6, OSMRE's Western Region plans to forward a Mining Plan Decision Document to OSMRE Headquarters for Canyon Fuel Company's Skyline Mine, Flat Canyon Lease

Modification. Skyline is an underground longwall mining complex located in Carbon County, UT. Canyon Fuels employs 320 people, producing 3 to 4.5 million tons of coal per year at the Skyline Mine.

On March 6 - 7, the BOEM - National Academies of Sciences Committee on Offshore Science and Assessment (COSA) will hold its next meeting. Topics will include the National Studies Program Strategic Framework review, and science topics on air quality and the use of a Determination of NEPA Adequacy for monitoring and assessment of the environment. COSA provides independent, scientifically credible and objective information on issues relevant to BOEM's environmental studies and assessment activities.

On March 7 - 9, BOEM plans to host a three-day "Best Management Practices Workshop for Atlantic Offshore Wind Facilities." The workshop will discuss best management practices for preventing, reducing, and monitoring impacts to marine protected species from the development of offshore wind on the Atlantic OCS.

On March 9, BLM-CO will hold an on-line oil and gas lease sale, offering 16,449.68 acres in the Archuleta, Dolores, Montezuma, and San Miguel counties (SW Colorado).

On March 10, BOEM plans to publish the Notice of Availability of the Draft Supplemental Environmental for GOM Lease Sales 250 - 251. The Draft Supplemental EIS will analyze two region-wide lease sales scheduled for 2018 in the GOM.

On March 13-16, the American Petroleum Institute (API) will hold its semi-annual meeting of industry members in Dallas, TX. API is a leader in the development of petroleum and petrochemical equipment and operating standards, covering topics that range from drill bits to environmental protection. Rich Estabrook, a BLM Petroleum Engineer for BLM-CA's Ukiah Field Office, will represent BLM.

On March 14, BLM-NV will hold an on-line oil and gas lease sale. BLM-NV will offer 67 parcels totaling almost 116,000 acres in the Elko District.

On March 14 - 16, BLM-CA's Central Coast Field Office (CCFO) will host public meetings to gather comments on the Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for oil and gas leasing and development for lands managed by the CCFO. Meetings will be held in Hollister, Coalinga, and Salinas, CA.

In mid-March, the BLM-UT Price Field Office plans initiate a second comment period regarding the EA for the Deer Creek Coal Mine in Emery County, UT. Total disturbance is estimated to be fewer than seven acres on U.S. Forest Service lands and five acres on BLM managed public lands.

On March 16, BLM's Eastern States Office (ESO) will hold a public meeting in Duluth, MN regarding the BLM's application to withdraw ecologically significant lands within the Superior National Forest in northern Minnesota from new mining claims by segregating the lands for two years.

On March 16, BOEM will hold a commercial wind lease sale offshore NC. Nine companies have qualified to participate in the auction. The lease sale area is located 24 nautical miles (nm) offshore Kitty Hawk, NC and extends 25.7 nm in a southeasterly direction. BOEM announced the publication of the Final Sale Notice on January 17; a mock auction will be held on March 14.

On or before March 17, Congress may respond to a proposed donation of private land to a BLM wilderness area in NM. On January 17, then-ASLM Janice M. Schneider signed letters notifying Senate and House leadership that DOI intends to accept a gift of approximately 3,590 acres from The Wilderness Land Trust and add those acres to the adjacent Sabinoso Wilderness, consistent with Section 6 of the Wilderness Act.

On March 17, the BLM-OR/ WA Coos Bay District Woodward 11 Commercial Thin Timber Sale will be held. The BLM to offer 170 acres, yielding 3.3 million board feet, for thinning treatment.

On March 18, Rep. Steve Pearce (R-NM) and New Mexico Deputy Commissioner of Public Lands Laura Riley will conduct a field visit with BLM-NM State Director Amy Lueders and BLM Las Cruces District Manager Bill Childress to discuss issues of concern to Rep. Pearce.

On March 20-21, the North Slope Science Initiative (NSSI) Science Technical Advisory Panel will meet in Fairbanks, AK to discuss recommendations for the NSSI Oversight Group. The NSSI works to provide resource managers with the data and analyses needed to help evaluate simultaneous goals and objectives related to each agency's mission on AK's North Slope. Agency partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Geological Survey, BOEM, BSEE, United States Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service, Department of Energy, AK Department of Natural Resources, AK Department of Fish and Game, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, North Slope Borough, Arctic Research Commission, and the National Weather Service. The NSSI facilitates information sharing among agencies, non-governmental organizations, industry, academia, international programs and members of the public to increase communication and reduce redundancy among science program.

On March 21, OSMRE's Western Region (WR) plans to publish a Notice of Availability in local newspapers for the Bridger Mine (WY) Mining Plan Modification Draft EA. OSMRE will receive comment on the EA for 30 days.

On March 21, OSMRE's WR plans to publish a notice of availability in local newspapers for the Dry Fork Mine (WY) Mining Plan Modification Draft EA. OSMRE will receive comment on the EA for 30 days.

On March 21 - 23, BSEE Acting Director Margaret Schneider will deliver remarks at the BSEE National Inspector's Meeting to be held in Lafayette, LA.

On March 22, BOEM will hold Lease Sale 247 for the Central Planning Area (CPA) in the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) in New Orleans, LA via livestream. CPA Lease Sale 247 will make 9,118 blocks in the GOM available for leasing consisting of approximately 48.53 million acres.

On March 23, the public comment period will end for the scoping period for a natural gas development proposal located approximately 12 miles north of Paonia, CO. Gunnison Energy,

LLC's North Fork Mancos Master Development Plan proposal is adjacent to the BLM Bull Mountain Master Development Plan and includes drilling up to 35 horizontal wells from four new well pads and one existing well pad over the next three years.

On March 23, BLM-ESO and BLM-UT will hold an on-line oil and gas lease sale. BLM-ESO will offer 21 parcels totaling 1186 acres in Monroe County, in the Marietta Unit of the Athens Ranger District in Wayne National Forest (OH), and BLM-UT will offer four parcels totaling 4174 acres in San Juan County

On March 24, the BLM's rule requiring online filing permits for oil and gas drilling will become effective. The rule, which updates Onshore Order 1, was initially scheduled to become effective on February 9. It was delayed 60 days per the January 20 Executive Order instructing Federal agencies to temporarily postpone any regulation that had published in the Federal Register, but had not taken effect.

On March 25 - 26, the Arizona Outdoor Expo will be held in Phoenix. Staff from BLM-AZ's Phoenix District Office will host a booth with Firewise information, an Off-Highway Vehicle trailer and other recreation information. District staff will likely participate in the Expo's Youth Day activities, with specific details yet to be planned.

On March 29 - April 1, the Project Archaeology National Meeting/Society for American Archaeology Annual Meeting will take place in Vancouver, B.C. Project Archaeology focuses on teaching scientific and historical inquiry, cultural understanding, and the importance of protecting America's cultural resources. The Society for American Archaeology is dedicated to the research, interpretation, and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. Various BLM Archaeologists are tentatively scheduled to attend. BLM Archaeologist Jeanne Moe will chair a research symposium on archaeology education.

In March, the BLM plans to issue the Boardman to Hemingway Record of Decision (ROD). The Biological Opinion (BO), which is being drafted by the National Marine Fisheries Service, is a necessary precursor to the ROD. The BO is targeted for completion on February 28. Oregon Plan amendments are being handled concurrently and that decision will be issued simultaneously with the ROD for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Approval to issue a grant.

In early April, OSMRE's WR plans to publish a Notice of Availability in local newspapers for the Cordero Rojo Mine (WY) Mining Plan Modification Draft EA, initiating a 30-day public comment period.

## **Assistant Secretary Policy, Management and Budget**

**DOI National Preparedness Report.** In March of 2017, the DOI National Preparedness Report (NPR) will be shared with the President. The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) coordinated a department-wide review of the draft NPR on January 28 with the expectation of receiving the final draft for review in late February from the National Security Council Disaster Resilience Group.

**ONRR Civil Penalties.** The Office of Enforcement (OE) anticipates issuing a civil penalty of

about \$5,472 to Dudley & Associates (Dudley) the week of February 19, 2017. OE investigated Dudley's failure to submit production reports (Forms ONRR-4054) and found 12 violations on multiple Federal leases for production months of September, 2011 through August, 2012. This civil penalty resulted from a referral to OE from ONRR's Production Reporting and Verification group. ONRR issued a NONC to Dudley detailing the outstanding reports and provided a 30-day cure period to correct the violations. Dudley failed to comply during the cure period. However, as Dudley is a small company with no prior violations, OE computed the civil penalty assessment using the standard rates of \$2 per day, per violation for the first 40 days and \$4 per day, per violation thereafter.

The Office of Enforcement (OE) anticipates issuing a civil penalty of about \$4,680 to Salt Creek Oil, LLC (Salt Creek) the week of March 6, 2017. OE investigated Salt Creek's failure to submit sales of royalty and remittance reports and found three violations on one Federal lease for the months of September 2012, January 2014, and February 2015. This civil penalty resulted from an OE collateral case. ONRR issued a NONC to Salt Creek detailing the outstanding reports and provided a 30-day cure period to correct the violations. Salt Creek failed to comply during the cure period. Since Salt Creek is a very small company without a prior violation of the same type, OE computed the civil penalty assessment using the standard rates of \$3 per day, per violation for the first 40 days and \$5 per day, per violation thereafter.

**Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) 36th Board Meeting, March 7-9, 2017.**

The Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) Deputy Director and the US Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (USEITI) Secretariat will travel to attend the EITI Board Meeting in Bogota, Columbia. Report-outs of the Board Finance, Validation, and Governance and Oversight Committees are of particular interest to all implementing countries for this meeting. USEITI also expects feedback on the USEITI 2017 Work Plan, the Beneficial Ownership Roadmap, and the USEITI Request to Extend Partial Adapted Implementation for USEITI Subnational Revenues.

**The FY 2016 DOI Solid Waste Report is due to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) on March 31, 2017.** This report includes data on amounts of non-hazardous waste disposal and recycling to establish an annual waste diversion rate. Bureau and office FY 2016 Solid Waste and Chemicals Management Reports were due to OEPC on Friday, February 17, 2017. Solid waste data had previously been reported to the Office of Management and Budget and CEQ in the annual Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan but CEQ requested this as a separate report this year.

**Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Settlement.** On April 4, 2017, per the terms of the 2016 Deepwater Horizon Consent Decree, BP is scheduled to make the first of 15 annual payments to the DOI Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) Fund. This \$489,655,172 payment will be allocated among seven sub-accounts - Open Ocean, Region-wide, and one for each affected State (AL, FL, LA, MS, and TX). These and all future settlement funds will be disbursed as directed by the co-trustees in accordance with publicly-reviewed restoration plans.

**DOI Economics Conference, April 5-7, 2017.** The conference, organized by the Office of Policy Analysis (PPA), is an opportunity for the Interior economics community to convene on

current issues of interest, collaborate across bureaus, identify key economics research challenges that are important to DOI's programs and activities, and build community. This meeting is not open to the press.

### **Assistant Secretary for Water and Science**

On **March 8**, USGS will release an updated status assessment for Florida manatee populations. The Scientific Investigations Report describes how this subspecies of the West Indian manatee is faring and the probability for population declines over the next 100 years. In January 2016 the FWS published a proposed rule to reclassify West Indian manatees from endangered to threatened under the Endangered Species Act. A final rule is due to be issued in March 2017. This report provides critical supporting information for the FWS determination for manatees. FWS has been briefed on the report's findings. A news release is planned.

In **early March**, USGS will announce a new report on critical minerals for the United States. This publication presents resource and geologic information for 23 mineral commodities currently viewed as important to the national economy and national security of the United States, many of which are sourced entirely outside of the United States. The report provides information on mineral environmental issues, as well an in-depth look at each commodity's use, distribution of deposit types, and current status of production, resources, and reserves. The individual commodity chapters serve as an update to the 1973 commodity chapters of USGS Professional Paper 820, United States Mineral Resources. A news release is planned.

On **March 21-22**, a meeting of the National Geospatial Advisory Committee federal advisory committee is planned at Main Interior. This meeting will be followed by a March 23 meeting of the Federal Geographic Data Committee Steering Committee, also at Main Interior.

In **March or April**, USGS will announce a new national-scale assessment of the distribution, occurrence, and character of brackish groundwater resources. Brackish groundwater can serve as a potential resource to help water-stressed regions stretch their limited freshwater supplies. The last national-scale map of brackish groundwater was completed in the 1960s. A news release is planned.

In **April**, USGS will announce a new Scientific Investigation Report which explores drought frequency and intensity in the U.S. over the past half century. Responding to concerns that climate change will lead to deeper or longer droughts, and perceptions of worsening droughts in the western U.S., scientists compared streamgage data from 1951-1982 with data from the same gages in 1983-2014. Changes in drought frequency, duration or severity were identified in 4 of 9 ecoregions. Parts of the Southeastern U.S., Texas and California had more frequent droughts from the 1980s onward, while the Central Plains and the Northeast had less frequent droughts. A news release is planned.

In the first two weeks of **April**, Reclamation and the National Park Service will have a reopening ceremony at Glen Canyon Dam Carl Hayden Visitor Center to highlight all new museum exhibits in the visitor center, which were completed late last fall. Reclamation is preparing an event invitation for the Department.

TBD: In the coming weeks, Reclamation anticipates releasing a press release announcing the signing of the Record of Decision for the Long-Term Plan to Protect Adult Salmon in the Lower Klamath River Project located in Humboldt County, California. The selected alternative (Alternative 1) includes supplemental flows from Lewiston Dam to prevent a disease outbreak in the lower Klamath River in years when the flow is projected to be less than 2,800 cubic feet per second. The project will establish a 13-year direction through 2030.

TBD: In the coming weeks, Reclamation and Sites Project Authority anticipate releasing a press release recognizing Sites Project Authority as the new partner for the North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage (NODOS) Investigation. The press release will also announce Sites Project Authority's Notice of Preparation and upcoming scoping meetings to be conducted in February. Reclamation issued a 2013 Progress Report, but will not issue a new Notice of Intent, and will be present at the scoping meetings to inform the public of Reclamation's role in the NODOS Investigation. Media interest is anticipated. [THIS WAS IN LAST WEEK'S REPORT]

In the coming weeks, a USGS-authored paper will be released about the potential release of mercury into the environment from thawing permafrost. The embargoed paper will be published in the journal *Nature*, and a news release is planned. *Nature* may also issue a news release.

In the coming weeks, USGS will announce a new Scientific Investigation Report that presents monitoring data collected by 74 organizations at almost 1,400 sites to provide a nationwide look at changes in the quality of our rivers and streams in the 40 years since passage of the Clean Water Act. For the first time, these data can be viewed and analyzed side-by-side, giving users a comprehensive, nationwide view of changes in water quality based on 51 water-quality constituents and 38 aquatic-life metrics and spanning four decades. A news release with possible Secretary rollout is being planned.

## **Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs**

### **Wednesday, March 8 through Tuesday, March 14, 2017**

AS-IN Nikolao Pula will travel to Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands for the dedication of the \$25 million Puerto Rico dump closure and replacement park, financed with OIA funds; and for meetings with Governor Ralph Torres as follow-up to the Covenant Section 902 Consultations.

### **Tuesday, April 3 - 7, 2017**

AS-IN Nikolao Pula will travel to San Francisco (tentative venue) for four semi-annual meetings with representatives of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands:

- Joint Economic Management Committee (JEMCO), which analyzes and considers the spending of Compact of Free Association funds in the Federated States of Micronesia - 1½ days.
- Joint Economic Management and Financial Accountability Committee (JEMFAC), which analyzes and considers the spending of Compact of Free Association funds in the Marshall Islands – 1½ days.
- Trust Fund Committee, which makes investment decisions for the Trust Fund for the People of the Federated States of Micronesia. The Trust Fund has an approximate valuation of \$410 million.

- Trust Fund Committee, which makes investment decisions for the Trust Fund for the People of the Marshall Islands. The Trust Fund has an approximate valuation of \$260 million.

**Friday, March 31, 2017**

The Secretary or other significant official is expected to be present in the United States Virgin Islands for the centennial celebration of the transfer of the Virgin Islands from Denmark to the United States.