

**From:** Rees, Gareth  
**To:** [Todd Willens](#); [Amy Holley](#); [Andrea Travnicek](#); [Aurelia Skipwith](#); [Caminiti, Mariagrazia](#); [Daniel Jorjani](#); [David Bernhardt](#); [Douglas Domenech](#); [Downey Magallanes](#); [Edward Keable](#); [Heather Swift](#); [James Cason](#); [Juliette Lillie](#); [Katharine Macgregor](#); [Kerry Rae](#); [Kevin Haugrud](#); [Maureen Foster](#); [Micah Chambers](#); [Michael Black](#); [Nikolao Pula](#); [Richard Cardinale](#); [Scott Cameron](#); [Scott Hommel](#); [Timothy Williams](#); [Vincent Devito](#)  
**Subject:** Weekly Report to the Secretary - August 3, 2017  
**Date:** Thursday, August 03, 2017 2:54:31 PM  
**Attachments:** [Weekly Report to the Secretary 080317.docx](#)

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Good Afternoon 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

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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 08/03/17](#)

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

**August 03, 2017**

**Office of the Solicitor**

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

Nothing to report.

**Week Ahead Announcements and Actions**

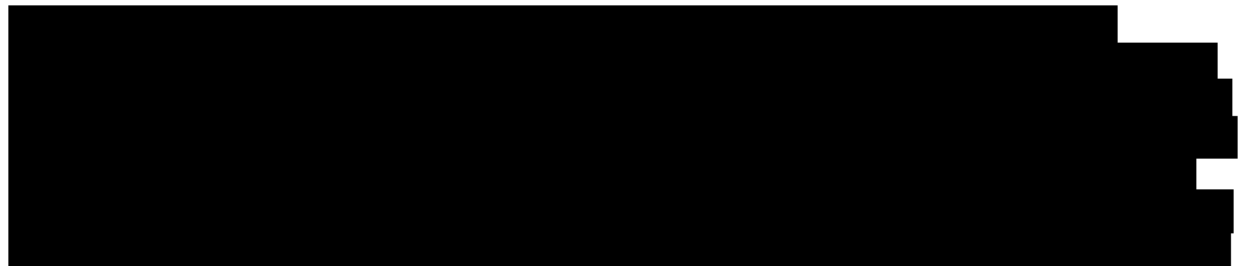
**SIGNIFICANT LITIGATION DEADLINES FOR NEXT TWO WEEKS SEPARATELY  
REPORTED**

**NEW CASES:**

Nothing to report.

**SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS:**

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**OTHER LITIGATION MATTERS:**

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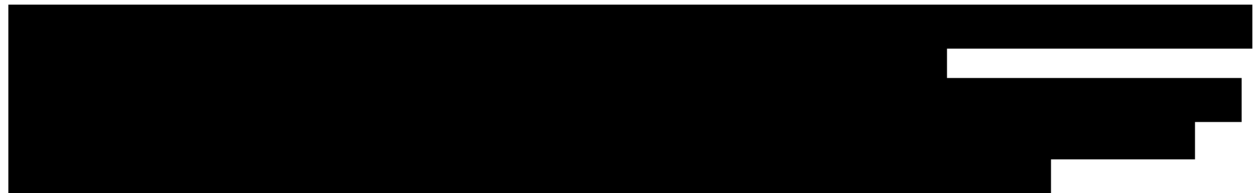
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**NON-LITIGATION MATTERS:**

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

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

On August 3, Deputy Assistant Secretary Skipwith will speak at the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Leadership and Careers Workshop at the Main Interior Building.

Through 15, Special Assistant Casey Hammond will be on annual leave.

From August 9 to 12, Marshall Critchfield will attend the Coral Reef Task Force meeting in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

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

Nothing additional to report.

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

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

From August 2- 9, FWS Acting Director Greg Sheehan will be in Jackson, Wyoming, for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Board Meeting.

On August 8, FWS is meeting with Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and U.S. Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service regarding fever tick treatment at the Laguna Atascosa NWR. FWS is committed to continuing discussions and proactive actions in cooperation with the USDA, TAHC, private ranchers and others to aid in the battle to combat the fever tick. The fever tick is detrimental to the Texas cattle industry and can be spread by cattle and deer. It may also potentially be spread by an invasive exotic species (the nilgai, an Asian antelope). Laguna Atascosa NWR remains under quarantine at this time, with livestock, cattle and equine, and live or hunted wildlife such as nilgai antelope and white-tailed deer that can host fever ticks subject to movement restrictions, inspections and treatment as prescribed by TAHC. Proactive measures to combat the fever tick include a Nilgai herd reduction plan and prescribed burns in select areas. Additionally, in January 2016, FWS, in consultation with the USDA, issued a biological opinion (BO) for use of Ivermectin-laced corn outside of FWS Refuge lands. The BO discusses potential effects to ocelots, jaguarundis, and aplomado falcons from use of Ivermectin-laced corn in deer feeders to treat ticks on deer on private property. Local media interest remains high. High Congressional interest from Senator Cornyn (R-TX), Representatives Conaway (R-TX) and Vela (D-TX), and the House Agriculture Committee. Members have requested periodic updates.

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

In early August, FWS will publish a proposed rule and open a 30-day public comment period on the 2017-18 Refuge-Specific Hunting and Sport Fishing Regulations. The proposed rule would open various national wildlife refuges to hunting and/or sport fishing for the first time (new

hunts) and expand hunting and fishing opportunities at others. Outreach is planned to include a national news release when the *Federal Register* notice is published and notifications to members of Congress in affected districts, with some stakeholder outreach.

In early August, FWS will deliver to the *Federal Register* a proposal to establish annual hunting regulations for certain migratory game birds for the 2018-19 hunting season to fulfill our responsibilities to the four international conventions to protect and manage migratory game birds. FWS annually prescribes outside limits (frameworks) within which states may select hunting seasons. This proposed rule provides the regulatory schedule, announces the Service Migratory Bird Regulations Committee (SRC) and Flyway Council meetings; describes the proposed regulatory alternatives for the 2018-19 duck hunting seasons; and requests proposals from Indian tribes that wish to establish special migratory game bird hunting regulations on Federal Indian reservations and ceded lands. A prepared statement will be provided on our website with a link to the proposed rule. This is not controversial.

In early August, FWS plans to make a 12-month finding and proposed delisting determination on the Deseret milkvetch, found in Utah. FWS concluded that the threats (residential development, highway widening, livestock grazing, and small population size) either have not occurred to the extent anticipated; are being adequately managed; or the species is more tolerant of the stressors than originally known. Interested stakeholders include the petitioner, Western Area Power Administration, entities that own lands occupied by the species, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and Utah Division of Transportation. Planned outreach will include a regional news release, emailing the news release to relevant congressional offices, and phone calls to the respective state wildlife directors. This is not expected to garner national attention.

On August 7 and 8, FWS staff will hold public meetings to discuss a new Hanalei Valley scenic viewpoint at Hanalei NWR on Kauai, Hawaii. The viewpoint is being designed in cooperation with the County of Kauai and the Hawaii Department of Transportation; input received from public scoping meetings will be considered as part of the plan. The public meetings will provide the community with an update on the timeline for the project and listen to feedback. For the two public meetings, FWS will be doing several PSAs on the radio, newspaper articles and announcements, internet updates, fliers, emails to community members as well as announcements at other community association meetings to get the word out. FWS and the County of Kauai have also engaged with the local congressional offices.

Before August 10, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final listing determination for the Texas hornshell, a mussel that occurs in New Mexico, Texas and Mexico. This action is not controversial. Stakeholders include the Center for Biological Diversity, the States of Texas and New Mexico, the Bureau of Land Management, and local landowners. Planned outreach will include notifications to stakeholders and relevant members of Congress and a news release to local media. FWS is required by statute and settlement agreement to publish the finding in the *Federal Register* by August 10.

In early August, FWS plans to announce \$4,254,638 in Tribal Wildlife Grant awards to federally recognized tribes for 25 projects in 14 states to fund a wide range of fish and wildlife conservation efforts. Tribal Wildlife Grants are used to provide technical and financial assistance

to tribes for the development and implementation of programs that benefit fish and wildlife resources and their habitats. Through congressional notifications and media outreach via a national news release and accompanying social media, FWS will reach out to tribes, key members of Congress and media interested in tribal issues and wildlife and natural resource conservation.

In early August, FWS will announce it has apportioned nearly \$50 million to state fish and wildlife agencies for developing and implementing programs that benefit wildlife and their habitats. The funding is provided through FWS's State Wildlife Grants program and is distributed through an apportionment formula in accordance with the Appropriations Act. These funds have been approved by the FWS Acting Director and by DOI for disbursement and are presently being made available to the states. FWS has drafted a communications strategy and news release that it hopes to distribute as soon as possible, pending DOI review, to avoid potential leaks from grant recipients eager to conduct public outreach. Recipient states have been asked to hold off on outreach until the national announcement is made. FWS will reach out to key members of Congress, states, tribes, partners, non-government organizations and media interested in wildlife and natural resource conservation through congressional notifications and media outreach via a national news release and accompanying social media.

In August, FWS will release preliminary results of the 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. The survey, conducted every five years since 1955 in partnership with state wildlife agencies and the Census Bureau, surveyed more than 7,000 households nationwide. Participants were given detailed interviews about their participation and expenditures in 2016 related to hunting, angling, wildlife watching and other wildlife-associated recreational pursuits. Release of the preliminary report is eagerly awaited by the conservation community and the outdoor recreation industry, because of the detailed snapshot it provides of public engagement with wildlife and the outdoors. A final, more detailed National Report will be issued in January 2018. Significant media and congressional interest is also expected. Outreach is planned.

## **Hot Topics**

The sagebrush ecosystem is experiencing severe wildlife impacts this year. To date, more than 1.3 million acres of sagebrush habitat has burned, with more than half of that in Nevada. Large acreages have also burned in Washington and Montana. While only part way through the 2017 fire season, the amount of habitat impacted by wildfires is already more than double that of the past two years combined. As we enter the hotter months and fuels continue to dry, it is likely additional sagebrush habitat will burn. FWS continues to work closely with its partners during wildfire suppression and post-fire restoration efforts.

Two separate wildfires are burning around Charles M. Russell NWR Complex in Montana. The larger of the two, the Lodgepole Fire, has burned a total of 226,000 acres, about 6,000 acres on the refuge. The second wildfire, the Crying Fire, has burned a total of about 8,000 acres, about 700 acres on the refuge. Charles M. Russell fire staffs are assisting suppression efforts and will open parts of the refuge to grazing for those producers that lost their pasture to the fire and have no other grazing options.

FWS has been, and continues to be, in close contact with the Loup Power District in Nebraska during implementation of its new hydropower license. As part of an ongoing discussions, FWS supported a temporary suspension of diversions into the Loup Power Canal during periods of low flow and high temperatures in the Loup River. On July 11, FWS issued a letter to Loup Power District suspending the measure to limit diversions; FERC granted this temporary variance to the hydropower license on July 17. Unfortunately, due to high temperatures and low water levels in the canal, a fish kill occurred before the variance was granted. No federally protected or state conservation priority species were identified among the dead fish. Water is once again being diverted into the power canal and FWS continues to work with both FERC and Loup Power District on managing river flows to support the pallid sturgeon while also providing for ongoing power generation.

A grazing cooperator's cow was found dead on a grazing unit at Medicine Lake NWR in Montana. There is a chance that this animal died from ingesting cyanotoxin which can be produced by blue/green algae blooms that occur in the water source. Blue/green algae blooms have been occurring on Medicine Lake NWR over the past month and in recent history are common occurrences during the summer months. While no necropsy was performed on this cow and the cause of death remains unknown, preliminary testing has identified low levels of cyanotoxin in the proximity of the blue/green algae bloom on the refuge. All grazing cooperators have been notified of this potential hazard and warning signs have been posted on the refuge at public use areas. FWS will collect water samples that will be sent in for laboratory testing and additional verification.

## **National Park Service**

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

No scheduled travel for the upcoming week. Acting NPS Director Michael Reynolds will be on annual leave.

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

From late July into August, approximately 20 athletic fields that are administered by the NPS at National Capital Parks-East, the National Mall and Memorial Parks, and Rock Creek Park have been proposed for an expanded amenity recreation fee, which would allow the NPS to charge locally comparable rates; currently the NPS does not receive any revenue from the fields. A civic engagement period may include an online campaign in late July and two public meetings held in late August to present this proposal and hear feedback from the community.

On August 3 and 7, Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett will hold public meetings with Regional Director Stan Austin in St. John and St. Croix, Virgin Islands, respectively, to update the community on the administrative realignment of national park superintendents in the Caribbean to now report to the Caribbean parks group superintendent.

On August 8, Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument will hold a public meeting to discuss the Elliottsville Plantation, Inc. (EPI) reserved rights for the construction of docks and related infrastructure holds in the Lower Shin Pond area. The issue of these Reserved Rights came up repeatedly at the listening sessions as a very local issue to the residents and camp owners around Shin Pond. This contributes to the effort to have a Management Plan for the monument completed by 2019 as per the language in the Proclamation of the monument.

Through August 14, the Army Corps of Engineers is accepting comments on the Alaska Stand Alone Pipeline project Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) during a public review period. The NPS is a cooperating agency on the SEIS as an agency with jurisdiction and as an agency with special expertise. The 800-mile proposed pipeline would run within one mile of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve (NPP) and Denali NPP, and one alternative to the proposed route runs through approximately seven miles of the front country of Denali NPP.

Through September, preparations are underway for a major rehabilitation project at Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial, in Virginia. There will be periodic, partial closures of the house and site to accommodate the work. The site is expected to close completely in September for the major construction, expected to last 18 months.

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

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

On August 3, BIE Director Dearman will be meeting with Senate Indian Affairs Committee staff to provide an update on BIE's progress meeting GAO recommendations since the May 17, 2017 SCIA oversight hearing.

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

August 8 will be the launch of the new Indian Affairs website.

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

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

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

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

On August 7, BSEE Director Angelle will conduct an All Employees Meeting in the Anchorage office and receive a briefing by BSEE AK/Pacific Regional Director, Mark Fesmire, on the 2015 Arctic Drilling Season, the Arctic Rule, and Alaska Native relations and stakeholder engagement as well as meetings with the BOEM Alaska regional Director.

On August 8, BLM-AK will hold its monthly cooperating agency meeting, which now includes the Northwest Arctic Borough, to continue work on the Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a proposed 211-mile controlled access road in the southern foothills of the Brooks Range. The public scoping period will end on January 31, 2018.

On August 8 - 12, BSEE Director Angelle will be in Alaska for meetings with DOI personnel and various Alaska region stakeholders. Director Angelle will also visit the BSEE Regional Office in Camarillo, CA and meet with various CA stakeholders on the return trip.

On August 11 - 25, the United States Marine Corps (USMC) will close BLM-CA's 56,000-acre Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Shared Use Area to the public, while the USMC Air Ground Combat Center at Twenty-nine Palms conducts an annual large-scale training exercise in accordance to the National Defense Authorization Act of 2014. The adjacent 43,000-acre Recreation Area will remain open to the public during the closure of the Shared Use Area.

On August 12, BLM-NV Ely District expects to issue a Special Recreation Permit for the 2017 Silver State Trailblazers Muley Run National Hare and Hound, a motorcycle-only competitive off-road race scheduled in Caliente, Nev. The Muley Run is Round 7 of the Kenda/SRT AMA Hare & Hound National Championship Series. Approximately 250-300 participants and 100-200 spectators are expected.

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

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

- August 7-11, 2017 PMB Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Cameron will be in Washington, DC, and participating in routine internal briefings.
- Who: Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) Director Bryan Rice
- What: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Hearing on Wildland Fire Oversight
- When: August 3, 2017
- Where: 366 Dirksen Senate Office Building
- Press: Open
- Topic: Director Rice will provide testimony before the Committee covering the 2016 and 2017 fire seasons, fuels management and forest health, veteran employment, collaboration and communication, and use of emerging technologies in wildland fire management.

#### **Congressional Travel**

- Who: Rachael Taylor, Ryan Hunt, Melissa Zimmerman, Senate Appropriations Staff
  - What: Site Visits in Vermont
  - When: Week of August 7
  - Where: Vermont
  - Press: Not applicable
  - Topic: Details are still to be determined
  - Hearings: Not applicable
- 
- Who: Office of Policy Analysis (PPA)
  - What: U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting
  - When: August 7-12, 2017
  - Where: Washington, DC
  - Press: Closed
  - Topic: The meeting theme is “Healthy Reefs for a Healthy Economy” and the focus of the discussion will be on the value of coral reefs and local actions taken to address key issues in the Florida reef tract. The meeting will include several progress reports on implementation of the USCRTF Strategy and FY16-20 Framework for Action.

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

**Year 2017 Small Business Accomplishments to Date.** As of July 27, 2017, the Department has awarded 54.97% of its contract award dollars to small businesses. The Department-wide small business goal, which was negotiated with the Small Business Administration (SBA), is 53.5%. The Department awarded 21.78% of its contract award dollars to small disadvantaged businesses and 13.43% of its contract award dollars to women-owned small businesses, exceeding the statutory goal of 5% for each. The Department awarded 3.72% of its contract award dollars to historically underutilized business zone small businesses and 3.60% of its

contract award dollars to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses. The statutory goal is 3% for each of these categories.

**Internal Control and Audit Follow-up.** The Department has an annual goal of closing 85 percent of corrective actions scheduled for closure in the current FY to address issues raised in OIG and GAO engagements. As of July 28, 2017, the Department has closed 48 percent of open audit recommendations scheduled for closure in FY 2017. The Office of Financial Management (PFM) is reaching out to Bureau leadership to focus attention on the remaining 52 percent.

**Interior Borderlands Coordinator.** The new Interior Borderlands Coordinator, Brent Range, will begin work at Main Interior on August 7. The current coordinator, Jon Andrew, is scheduled to retire on August 22. In recent weeks a series of transition meetings have been convened along the southwest border with DOI Bureaus and the U.S. Border Patrol.

**Suspension and Debarment Actions.** On July 24, 2017, DOI debarred Kevin David McGovern, following initial suspension, based upon his guilty plea to charges of defrauding the Chippewa Cree Tribe (CCT) through wire fraud and theft from an Indian tribal organization; and a jury verdict in a separate proceeding on charges of conspiracy to defraud, wire fraud, and bribery of an Indian tribal official. This is one of a series of actions following the criminal investigation and prosecutions of individuals and entities at the CCT Rocky Boy Reservation in Montana.

On July 24, DOI debarred Quad Trade, Inc., TCI Technologies, Inc., and KLA International, Inc., as affiliates of Keith Brian Fisher, Sr. DOI previously proposed Fisher's debarment on May 16, 2017 following initial suspension, based on his guilty plea to the charge of conspiracy. Fisher conspired to contract with various Federal agencies including USGS and BIA, subcontract out all performance, and not pay the subcontractors after receiving full payment from the Government.

On July 26, DOI proposed to debar Karla Marie McCatherine, based upon her conviction for embezzlement from an Indian tribal organization. The Crow Tribe retained McCatherine to serve as the Tribe's Comptroller with duties including preparation of accurate accounting records necessary to complete Tribal financial audits in a timely manner, preparation of accurate financial reports to Federal and state agencies, and to act as a signatory on the Tribe's bank accounts. During the time of her employment McCatherine stole at least \$30,000 in tribal funds.

On July 27, DOI debarred Keith Brian Fisher, following initial suspension, based upon his guilty plea to commission of conspiracy to defraud the United States. Fisher conspired with others to contract with various Federal agencies including the USGS and the BIA, subcontract out performance to various companies, and not pay the subcontractors after receiving full payment from the Government.

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

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

During the week of August 7, Acting Assistant Secretary Andrea Travnicek will be in Washington, DC, and participating in routine internal briefings.

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

On August 7, the USGS will announce a new paper that finds U.S. rivers are becoming more salty, which increases the potential for corrosion of water infrastructure and the likelihood that lead concentrations in drinking water may increase. Last year the USGS published a study on groundwater corrosivity. This paper is the companion assessment on surface water corrosivity. The paper will be published in *Science of the Total Environment* and a news release is planned.

On August 9, the USGS will announce a new paper that examined the presence of pesticides in Midwest streams. An analysis of streams in 11 Midwestern states found over 180 pesticides, some at levels that could cause harm to aquatic insects. On average, 54 pesticide compounds were detected in each stream. This study is one of the most extensive assessments of pesticides in streams to date, with 12 weekly water samples collected at 100 Midwest streams during the 2013 growing season. The paper will be published in *Total Science of the Environment* and a news release is planned.

On August 14, pending Departmental approval, Reclamation will announce the Notice of Availability for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) on the Sites Reservoir Project. The project is a proposed above-ground water storage facility off-stream of the Sacramento River near the town of Maxwell. There will be a comment period and two public meetings are tentatively scheduled—September 26 in Maxwell and September 28 in Sacramento. [UPDATED]

On August 15, pending Departmental approval, Reclamation will announce the Notice of Availability for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) on the San Luis Low Point Improvement Project (SLLPIP). The project would address water supply reliability and schedule certainty issues associated with low water levels in San Luis Reservoir. The SLLPIP would help maintain a high quality, reliable, and cost-effective water supply for Santa Clara Valley Water District, and ensure they receive their annual Central Valley Project (CVP) contract allocations at the time and at the level of quality needed to meet their existing water supply commitments. There will be a comment period and two public meetings are tentatively scheduled—August 30 in San Jose and August 31 in Sacramento.

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

### **Office of the Solicitor**

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

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

During the week of September 11, Mary Josie Blanchard, Director of Gulf of Mexico Restoration, will represent DOI at the annual Deep Water Horizon (DWH) Natural Resources Damages Trustee Council (TC) public meeting in Mobile Alabama and TC's subgroup meeting of the regionwide Trustee Implementation Group. In addition, she will attend the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Council RESTORE meeting in Mobile which is involved in implementing restoration pursuant to the Consent Decree on DWH oil spill.

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

Pending Departmental advisement, FWS will approve more than \$6.3 million in grant funding for 16 projects under the Competitive State Wildlife Grants program. Grant funds will be matched by more than \$3.6 million in non-federal funds, making total available funding of over \$10 million. This slate is different from, but complementary to, the apportioned State Wildlife Grants (see above). The projects focus on “species of greatest conservation need” identified in State Wildlife Action Plans. Funds for this program are appropriated annually by Congress. FWS regional offices will submit individual grants for DOI approval prior to award. This is not controversial. No outreach is planned.

#### **Endangered Species Act Recovery Actions**

On or around September 8, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice of availability of a draft post-delisting monitoring plan and reopen the public comment period on the proposed rule to delist the black-capped vireo. The post-delisting monitoring plan will be finalized in concert with the decision on the final delisting rule in January 2018. This action may become controversial. Stakeholders include the petitioners, Pacific Legal Foundation, the Office of Travis Co. Judge, Big Bend National Park and others. There have been a number of public comments opposing the delisting of the black-capped vireo, and a number of partner agencies concerned about having the necessary funds to implement the ongoing management needs (cowbird removal) and monitoring identified for their lands, which may also result in concerns about the viability of both the delisting and the post-delisting monitoring plan. Planned outreach will include notifications to local stakeholders, a press release to local media and social media posts.

On or around September 22, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice reopening the comment period on the proposed rule to list the San Fernando Valley spineflower to allow for public notice and comment on a Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) as it applies to our listing determination. The spineflower listing is locally controversial, but the reopening of

comment period is not expected to be controversial. Interested stakeholders are Newhall Ranch, who developed the CCA with FWS, the City of Calabasas and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (the petitioners), Wild Earth Guardians (MDL Settlement Agreement), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the State of California. A communications plan including congressional/stakeholder notifications and local press release to Santa Barbara County media is planned.

### **Endangered Species Act Listing/Delisting Actions**

Pending clearance by the Director and Department, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final listing determination for the i'iwi, a Hawaiian bird. This action is not controversial. The only interested stakeholder groups are the petitioners, Center for Biological Diversity and Life Net. FWS is required by settlement agreement to submit the finding for the i'iwi to the *Federal Register* by September 20. Outreach is planned to Hawaiian media and to national conservation and bird-centric media.

Pending clearance by the Department, FWS plans to announce the reopening for public comment the proposed listing of western glacier stonefly and meltwater lednian stonefly, located in Montana and Wyoming, as threatened species. The reopening will allow the public to comment on new range information regarding western glacier stonefly. This action is not expected to be controversial. Interested stakeholders include WildEarth Guardians and the states of Montana and Wyoming. A regional news release is planned.

On or around August 14, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice of availability of the final Stock Assessment Report (SAR) for the southern sea otter population in California. This report is not controversial. No outreach is planned.

On or around August 24, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice to remove the endangered Tonkin snub-nosed monkey from certain regulations that apply to primates. These regulations apply only to threatened species, and Tonkin snub-nosed monkeys were reclassified as endangered species in 1990. Therefore, the provisions of the regulations for threatened primates do not apply to this species. This action is not controversial. Since this is a technical correction, minimal outreach is planned.

On or around August 30, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final rule to remove the eastern cougar (historically known to exist in southeastern Ontario, southern Quebec and New Brunswick in Canada and a region bounded from Maine to Michigan, Illinois, Kentucky and South Carolina in the eastern United States) from the list of endangered and threatened species due to extinction. Although FWS does not anticipate major public controversy with regard to the final rule, opposition to the agency's determination of extinction may be expressed by advocates and advocacy organizations for puma and large predator conservation who maintain that eastern cougars still exist. However, the best available information indicates that sightings of cougars in the east are cases of mistaken identity (with bobcats) or escaped captive animals or, rarely, cougars from western populations dispersing eastwards. Interested parties include eastern U.S. states, the Humane Society of the United States, the Animal Legal Defense Fund and the Cougar Network. National news bulletin and Congressional emails are planned.

On or around August 31, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice removing the textual descriptions of the critical habitat boundaries from certain plants on the Hawaiian Islands that have maps sufficient to stand as the official delineation of the critical habitat designation. This rule does not increase, decrease or in any other way change the critical habitat designations from which FWS is removing the textual descriptions of boundaries. This action will save taxpayer resources by reducing the cost of printing the Code of Federal Regulations. No outreach is planned.

On or around September 1, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* 90-day petition findings for six species: the oblong rocksnail, sicklefin chub, sturgeon chub, tricolored bat and Venus flytrap. FWS is publishing a correction to the 90-day finding for leopards which clarifies the range and the entity the agency is evaluating in our status review. Ninety-day findings are not typically controversial; however, a substantial 90-day finding might be the first time stakeholders become aware that FWS is assessing the status of a species. All stakeholders will have ample opportunity to provide input into our eventual 12-month findings. A national news bulletin and Congressional notifications are planned.

On or around September 1, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice designating critical habitat for three plant species on Hawaii Island and correct the maps for existing designations for an additional four species there. FWS intends to exclude lands owned or managed by the Queen Liliuokalani Trust, the Department of Hawaiian Homelands and other private landowners under Section 4(b)(2) of the Act. This action is not controversial. Interested stakeholders include the State of Hawaii and multiple state agencies, the County of Hawaii and various private landowners. Outreach includes a news release, social media, emails and phone calls to Congressional offices and stakeholders mentioned above.

Before September 9, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final listing determination and designate 7,815 acres of critical habitat for the Guadalupe fescue in Texas. Because the critical habitat designation is entirely within the Big Bend National Park, the costs of critical habitat are expected to be very low. Few economic activities in Big Bend National Park affected listed plant habitats. This is not expected to be controversial. Outreach will include an email to stakeholders. To meet our settlement agreement deadline of publication by September 9, FWS needs to submit the action to the *Federal Register* by September 2.

On or around September 14, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final listing determination for the pearl darter, a fish located in the Pascagoula River drainages of Mississippi. This action is not controversial. Stakeholders include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the State of Mississippi, the Weyerhaeuser Company, and Genesis Energy. A communications plan includes regional outreach and news release, local media release, proactive outreach to members of Congress, state partners, and other stakeholders. To meet the settlement agreement deadline of publication by September 21, 2017, FWS needs to submit the action to the *Federal Register* by September 14, 2017.

On or around September 15, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a proposal to downlist the Borax Lake chub, which occurs in Oregon, from endangered to threatened. The primary

threats to the species have been ameliorated; however, there is the potential for geothermal development in the vicinity. Potential stakeholders include the state of Oregon, TNC, BLM and U.S. Department of Agriculture, APHIS. FWS does not anticipate negative reaction from environmental groups. There will be a news release, social media posts, web page updates, and outreach to local and state Congressionals. Trusted media outlets, such as Oregon Public Broadcasting, Capital Press, and Eastern Oregonian, will be contacted for pre-announcement interviews with an embargo until the announcement date. Phone calls and emails will be made/sent to the partners, such as Bureau of Land Management, The Nature Conservancy, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and others.

### **National Wildlife Refuge Actions**

On August 25, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) will award over \$2 million in grants under their Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program. The grants fund multiple federal initiatives, including new and existing Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnerships and Urban Bird Treaty cities. NFWF will make their initial announcement and FWS will follow the next day. Outreach is planned.

### **Migratory Bird Management Actions**

On August 15, FWS will release the 2017 Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey. In North America, the process of establishing hunting regulations for waterfowl is conducted annually. In the United States the process involves a number of scheduled meetings in which information regarding the status of waterfowl is presented to individuals within the agencies responsible for setting hunting regulations. This report includes the most current breeding population and production information available for waterfowl in North America and is a result of cooperative efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service, various state and provincial conservation agencies, and private conservation organizations. This report is intended to aid the development of waterfowl harvest regulations in the United States for the 2018-2019 hunting season. Outreach TBD.

In August, FWS will hold two public meetings seeking public input for studying the environmental impacts of issuing eagle take permits to a gold mine. Hycroft Resource and Development Incorporated is requesting non-lethal eagle take permits for golden eagles associated with their mining operations and proposed expansion activities at their mine in Northern Nevada. Golden eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. FWS intends to prepare a joint environmental impact statement (EIS) with BLM and is seeking public comments on the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the EIS. Outreach is planned. This is not controversial.

Pending clearance by the Department, in August, FWS will deliver to the *Federal Register*, a proposal to approve corrosion-inhibited copper shot, a new type of non-toxic shot for hunting waterfowl and coots. FWS has concluded that this type of shot left in the terrestrial or aquatic environments is unlikely to adversely affect fish, wildlife, or their habitats. Approving this shot formulation would increase the nontoxic shot options for hunters. Interested stakeholders include the Flyway Councils, state wildlife agencies, non-governmental organizations and hunters. A

prepared statement will be provided on our website with a link to the proposed rule. This is not controversial.

On September 6, FWS will announce the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, chaired by Secretary Zinke, is approving funding for the first round of FY 2018 North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grants, as well as land acquisitions and lease agreements for national wildlife refuges using Migratory Bird Conservation Fund money. The MBCC will also hear a report on NAWCA small grants, which were approved by the North American Wetlands Conservation Council earlier this year. The announcement will coincide with the MBCC meeting taking place at Main Interior Building. Outreach, including a news release, is planned.

On September 15-16, FWS will hold at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point the 2017 Duck Stamp art contest. The winner's artwork will be featured on the 2018-2019 stamp. Secretary Zinke, Senators Ron Johnson and Tammy Baldwin, Representative Ron Kind, and Wisconsin DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp will be invited. Coordination continues among partners for events leading up to the contest and the contest itself. Waterfowl hunters created the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp – commonly known as the Duck Stamp – in 1934 as a way to ensure a funding source to protect habitats for ducks and geese. The Duck Stamp is one of the most successful conservation programs ever initiated and is a highly effective way to conserve America's natural resources. For every dollar spent on Duck Stamps 98 cents go towards acquiring vital habitat that benefits birds and other wildlife, as well as hunters, anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts. Since 1934, sales of the Duck Stamp have raised more than \$950 million to conserve nearly 6 million acres.

## **National Park Service**

In August, the NPS will announce the award of \$18 million in Centennial Challenge projects. Many of the projects accomplish deferred maintenance projects, and all represent public-private partnerships, since each project requires a minimum 50/50 match with non-federal funds. The NPS is coordinating with DOI Communications on the public announcement and notification to the recipients.

In August, the NPS will announce the apportionment of \$1,635,742 in Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act grants to fund repatriation and reburial projects. The grants will assist in consultation, documentation, and repatriation of ancestors and sacred objects, objects of cultural patrimony, and funerary objects back to Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations. Enacted in 1990, NAGPRA requires museums and Federal agencies to inventory and identify Native American human remains and cultural items in their collections, and to consult with Indian tribes, Alaska Native villages, and Native Hawaiian organizations regarding repatriation. Section 10 of the Act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award grants to assist in implementing provisions of the Act. The NPS will coordinate with DOI Communications on the public announcement and notification to the recipients

In August, the NPS will announce \$21 million in grants from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) to States and Territories. Grants will be awarded to 59 State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), based on the amounts available under Consolidated Appropriations Act 115-31. SHPO

grants receive minor press coverage when the awards are announced. Several SHPOs have contacted the NPS about their inability to meet payroll because of the late appropriation.

In August, the NPS will announce \$4.5 million in grants from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) to Indian Tribes. Grants will be awarded to 169 Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), based on the amounts available under Consolidated Appropriations Act PL115-31. THPO grants receive minor press coverage when the awards are announced. Several THPOs have contacted us about inability to meet payroll because of the late appropriation.

In August, the NPS anticipates the announcement of \$500,000 in Tribal Heritage grants from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) to Indian Tribes. Grants will be awarded to 14 Tribes, based on the amounts available under Consolidated Appropriations Act PL 115-31 and reappropriated funding from PL 114-113. Tribal Heritage grants receive press coverage when the awards are announced.

In August, the National Park Service will begin public scoping for an Environmental Assessment (EA) of a nonnative fish management plan for the Colorado River and Tributaries below the Glen Canyon Dam. The need for this action is due to the increase of green sunfish, brown trout and potential expansion or invasion of other harmful nonnative fish that threaten downstream native or endangered fish or the Lees Ferry recreational rainbow trout fishery. These species have become an increasing threat due to changing infestation conditions since the completion of the 2013 Comprehensive Fish Management Plan and the 2016 Long Term Experimental and Management Plan (LTEMP) and existing measures may be inadequate to address the new species and other potentially harmful nonnative fish. The management plan will include a monitoring plan and a response implementation plan with additional measures to address harmful nonnative species in the action area. The action area for this plan will be from the Glen Canyon Dam to Lake Mead including the Colorado River and its tributaries in Grand Canyon National Park, and the Glen Canyon Reach of the Colorado and Paria Rivers in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. The Park Service is coordinating closely with the Bureau of Reclamation, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department and many other partners on this process.

In August, Mojave National Preserve will begin a 60-day public comment period on the Water Resources Plan and draft Environmental Impact Statement (WRP/DEIS). The plan will manage both developed (diverted springs and wildlife guzzlers) and undeveloped water resources in the park. The process is being closely watched by local hunting groups interested in the management of wildlife guzzlers (large basins which catch rainwater and provide a watering source for wildlife and cattle), which are viewed as necessary to maintaining a healthy bighorn sheep population for hunting.

In August, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park fire assessment review will be released. In February, a team of fire experts (federal and state) convened at Great Smoky Mountains National Park to conduct an independent review of the 2016 Chimney Tops 2 fire that started in the park on November 23. The purpose of the review is to assess the facts leading up to and during the Chimney Tops 2 fire within the boundaries of the park, as well as make recommendations on any planning, operational, or managerial issues which can be addressed locally, regionally, and/or

nationally to reduce the chances of a similar incident in the future. The NPS has received tort claims related to this incident and expects additional lawsuits soon.

On August 18, Olympic National Park will host a special event at Hurricane Ridge celebrating the renaming of the Olympic Wilderness to the Daniel J. Evans Wilderness by a 2016 act of Congress. Evans, a former Washington state governor and U.S. Senator, was the lead sponsor of the Washington Park Wilderness Act of 1988. Evans will speak at the event and various Congress members and/or staff are expected to among the estimated 150 participants. The NPS is working on a communications plan and will coordinate with DOI Communications.

On August 19, the NPS anticipates a first amendment demonstration adjacent to the Humpback Rocks Visitor Center of the Blue Ridge Parkway in protest to the proposed Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley pipelines. The Hands Across the Appalachian Trail permit application has been submitted by the Sierra Club with a proposed participation of up to 100 people. The proposed pipeline projects would cross the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and US Forest Service lands. Both proposed pipelines are currently under environmental review and consideration by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission with final decisions anticipated later in 2017.

On August 23, Representative Jared Huffman's office is interested in hosting a mock hearing on the National Marine Sanctuaries Act at Cavallo Point–The Lodge at Golden Gate, a concessioner located in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area's Fort Baker. Democratic House Leader Nancy Pelosi and Governor Jerry Brown will be invited to participate in the mock hearing, which will be open to the public. The office for Representative Huffman, whose district includes Fort Baker, is seeking a venue that can accommodate about 200 people. Huffman's office is expecting national media coverage and is working directly with the lodge to reserve the venue.

On August 24, CNN will be at Antietam National Battlefield to film a features story about the battle, the upcoming 150th anniversary of Antietam National Cemetery on September 17, and projects that will be completed using President Trump's first quarter salary with additional funds from the National Park Foundation, Civil War Trust, and Save Historic Antietam Foundation.

In late August, the NPS intends to initiate a 30-day public review period for the Morristown National Historical Park Vegetation and White-tailed Deer Management Plan Environmental Assessment. During the public review period, the NPS plans to hold two public meetings at the park. The environmental assessment analyzes the impacts of invasive plant control, deer browse control via sharpshooting, and other management strategies (e.g., selective forest thinning) to encourage forest regeneration.

In late August or early September, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore (national lakeshore) will begin a 30-day public comment period on a Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) that reevaluates personal watercraft (PWC) use at the national lakeshore. In 2005 the national lakeshore issued a special regulation allowing limited use of PWCs. In July 2010, a federal judge ordered NPS to re-examine environmental assessments justifying PWC use at the national lakeshore, but did not overturn existing regulations. The preferred alternative in this Draft EA calls for the continued implementation of the 2005 special regulation amended to include a

requirement that all PWCs operating in the national lakeshore meet the 2010 EPA air quality emissions standards within two years.

In September, Golden Gate National Recreation Area is expected to release the Record of Decision for the Alcatraz Ferry Embarkation Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. The selected alternative will rehabilitate historic structures for visitor use and ferry operations at Pier 31½ in San Francisco, supporting a commercial services concession that will begin in 2019.

In late September, the NPS anticipates publishing a notice of intent (NOI) in the Federal Register to prepare a General Management Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement (GMP Amendment/EIS) including all lands currently leased for ranching within Point Reyes National Seashore and the north district of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The NOI will initiate a 30-day public comment period during which public meetings will be held in the local community and Bay Area region. The NOI presents the National Park Service's proposed action as well as other draft alternative concepts for consideration by the public. The NPS is required by a settlement agreement and court order to complete the GMP Amendment/EIS and issue a record of decision by July 14, 2021.

By October 1, Lake Mead National Recreation will, under an agreement and with the support of additional funding from the Bureau of Reclamation, assume responsibility for law enforcement patrol, response, search and rescues, and emergency medical services for the Hoover Dam. Physical security of the dam will continue to be managed by BOR.

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

August 12 is the deadline for proposals from Tribes for the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development's (IEED's) FY 2017 Native American Business Development Institute (NABDI) economic development feasibility study grant program. This grant program has, among other successes, enabled the Citizen Potawatomi Nation to build an industrial park and restore a 66-mile rail line that opens an east-west connection to four major north-south rail corridors for regional commerce.

The week of August 14, BIE Director Dearman plans to meet with Rep. O'Halleran, at his request, at BIE-funded schools in Arizona.

On August 17, Interior will hold the first of five tribal consultation sessions on the need to update the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Licensed Indian Trader regulations, per the Dear Tribal Leader letter dated July 28, 2017, at the Bureau of Indian Affairs Southwest Regional Office, 1001 Indian School Rd. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87104, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. MDT. Additional consultations will be held August 22 in Portland, Oregon; August 24 in Anchorage, Alaska; August 28 in Salamanca, New York; and August 29 in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

September 1 is the deadline for the Indian Energy Service Center (IESC)'s response to the Senate inquiries regarding how the IESC is progressing toward facilitating energy development in Indian Country.

On October 5, a representative from the IESC will be attending the Bakken Federal Executive Group (BFEG) meeting in Billings, MT. The BFEG was established in April 2012 to provide a forum for senior-level Federal executives to exchange information, identify common issues, and seek solutions to ongoing and emerging challenges associated with the Bakken energy boom. One of the goals in the upcoming meeting is to update the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to revise roles and responsibilities and include additional Federal offices.

### **Items of Note/Expected Legislative, Legal, Policy Issues**

#### ***Regulations Ready for OS Review***

- **Proposed rules pending publication:**
  - **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).
    - *Status:* The proposed rule has been signed and is pending approval of the Counselor to the Secretary for Energy Issues.

#### ***Upcoming FACA Committee Notices***

- **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.
  - *Status:* A new notice of intent to establish the committee and solicitation for membership is expected to be presented for Departmental approval during this reporting period.

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

On August 14, BOEM is scheduled to participate in the Annual Meeting of the Council of State Governments (CSG) Eastern Regional Conference. Jim Bennett, Chief of the Office of Renewable Energy Programs, will represent the Bureau in a panel discussion that will be hosted by the CSG Energy & Environment Committee, which is comprised of 50 officials from 11 Northern Atlantic states, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and five Eastern Canadian provinces.

In mid- to late August, OSMRE's Western Region (WR) plans to submit the Belle Ayr Mine's Mining Plan decision document to OSMRE headquarters for review and approval by the ASLM. Contura Coal West, LLC's Belle Ayr Coal Mine is a surface coal mine located in Campbell

County, WY. The mine employs 259 people and produces approximately 20 million tons of coal per year.

On August 16, BOEM will hold Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 249, the first scheduled lease sale under the 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil & Gas Program; it will also be the first region-wide sale held on the OCS. Juan Carlos Zepeda Molina, the President Commissioner of Mexico's National Hydrocarbons Commission, will attend the lease sale with a delegation of Mexican government leadership and staff that work on offshore energy issues.

On August 17, OSMRE's WR plans to publish a Notice of Availability in local newspapers for the Kayenta Mine renewal EA and unsigned Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), initiating a 30-day public comment period. Peabody Western Coal Company's Kayenta Mine is a surface mine located on the Navajo Indian Reservation, AZ that employs 340 people. Estimated production per year is 5.8 million tons.

On August 20, BSEE Director Angelle will travel to New Orleans to speak at the Deepwater Technology Symposium.

On August 22, BLM-AK State Director Bud Cribley will attend the Alaska Mapping Executive Committee meeting held at the BLM-AK Campbell Creek Science Center. The committee coordinates critical mapping activities, including acquisition of key map data layers in Alaska. Executive level managers from 15 Federal agencies and the State of Alaska serve as committee members.

On August 17, OSMRE's WR plans to publish a Notice of Availability in local newspapers for the Kayenta Mine renewal EA and unsigned Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), initiating a 30-day public comment period. Peabody Western Coal Company's Kayenta Mine is a surface mine located on the Navajo Indian Reservation, AZ that employs 340 people. Estimated production per year is 5.8 million tons.

On August 21, NV Senator Catherine Cortez-Masto will tour the Indian Lakes corral, a privately owned, contracted off-range wild horse corral in Fallon, NV. Currently, 2,210 wild horses and 2 burros are housed at the facility, which has the capacity to house up to 3,200 wild horses and burros.

On August 22, BSEE Director Angelle will speak at the Deepwater Technology Symposium in New Orleans, and subsequently hold various stakeholder meetings in the Gulf region.

On August 22 – 24, Acting ASLM Kate MacGregor and BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program staff will participate in the National Wild Horse and Burro Summit in Salt Lake City, UT. Participants will discuss science, policy, resource impacts, and management options for on- and off-range populations. Secretary Zinke has been invited to speak. Other participants may include State partners, Members of Congress, and interest groups.

On August 23 - 24, 2017, OSMRE's Mid-Continent Region (MCR) will hold an All-States Meeting in Kansas City, MO. The meeting will enable the MCR, which encompasses 11 states,

to exchange information on updates to regulations, policies, trends, technology, grants, personnel and budget issues.

On August 24, the Final Report required under Executive Order 13792 will be submitted by Secretary Zinke to the President regarding the Antiquities Act and National Monuments. From April 2017 to present, BLM's Washington Office has been coordinating with BLM state offices, Monument Managers, and the DOI Office of Policy Analysis, and will continue to provide any requested reviews and/or additional information in support of the Final Report.

On August 27, the Burning Man event begins at the Black Rock Desert in Northern Nevada. The event, which is expected to draw up to 70,000 people, is the largest Special Recreation Permit managed by BLM. It concludes on September 4.

On August 28, the 30-day public comment period for the Egan and Johnson Basin Restoration Project Preliminary Environmental Assessment closes. The project goal is to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and improve Greater sage-grouse habitat through manual and mechanical pinion-juniper tree-thinning, invasive plant treatments and prescribed fire use. The project would treat up to 24,375 acres in 21 treatment units. The BLM would also manually thin pinion-juniper in specified areas outside the treatment units, but within the total 84,675-acre project area.

In late August, OSMRE's WR plans to submit the Dry Fork Mine Mining Plan decision documents to OSMRE headquarters for review and approval by the ASLM. Western Fuels' Dry Fork mine is a surface mining complex located in Campbell County, WY that employs 82 people. If approved, annual production is estimated to be 6 million tons.

In late August, OSMRE's WR anticipates submitting a draft EIS for Western Energy Company's Rosebud Coal Mine Area F, located near Colstrip, MT, to OSMRE headquarters for review. The proposed permit area would add 6,746 acres to the 25,576-acre surface coal mine. The mine currently employs 400 people and produces 12.3 million tons per year. OSMRE anticipates EIS publication in early October.

In September, BOEM plans to publish a Request for Feedback (RFF) in the Federal Register seeking input on a proposed Path Forward for renewable energy leasing offshore the Atlantic Coast. The RFF describes the process and factors used by BOEM to identify and forecast areas along the Atlantic Coast where future development is most likely and future leasing should be focused.

In early September, BOEM plans to publish the Record of Decision for the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Cape Wind Project. The Final SEIS will supplement the 2009 Final EIS and is being prepared pursuant to a remand order from the D.C. Circuit Court.

In early September, OSMRE's WR plans to submit the Bridger Mine Mining Plan decision documents to OSMRE Headquarters for review and approval by the ASLM. The Bridger Coal Company's Bridger Mine is an underground mine located in Sweetwater County, WY that

employs 540 people. If the modification is approved, production is estimated to be 2.24 million tons per year.

In early September, OSMRE's WR plans to submit the Cordero Rojo Mine's Mining Plan decision documents to OSMRE Headquarters for review and approval by the ASLM. Cloud Peak Energy's Cordero Rojo Mine is a surface mine located in Campbell County, WY. The mine employs 383 people and produces approximately 20 million tons of coal per year. On September 7, BLM-CO will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 10 parcels totaling 1,227 acres in Cheyenne, Baca, Kiowa, Yuma, Morgan, and Weld Counties, CO. The sale is not controversial. The bidding is not expected to be robust.

On September 7, BLM-NM will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 62 parcels totaling 15,731 acres in Eddy, Chaves, Quay, Curry, Roosevelt, and Lea Counties, NM. The sale is not expected to be controversial. The bidding is not expected to be robust.

On September 11, the BLM will unveil its new Travel and Tourism plan, which is currently under agency review, at the annual American Indian and Alaska Native Tourism Association's meeting in Green Bay, WI.

On September 12, BLM-NV will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 3 parcels totaling 3,680 acres in Nye County, NV. The sale is not controversial. The bidding is not expected to be robust.

On September 12, BOEM is scheduled to brief congressional staff on Capitol Hill regarding the development process for the new Five Year Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program. Topics will include the steps required for program development and the related NEPA analysis. Participants will include member staff for authorizing and appropriations committees and member staff for coastal states and districts without membership on the committees.

On September 12, BLM-MT will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 15 parcels totaling 4,438 acres in Juab County, UT. The sale is not controversial. The bidding is not expected to be robust.

On September 12, BLM-UT will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 9 parcels totaling 14,943 acres in Nye County, NV. The sale is not controversial. The bidding is not expected to be robust.

On September 14, OSMRE's WR plans to publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) in a local newspaper for the John Henry Mine Mining Plan Modification draft EA and unsigned FONSI, initiating a 30-day public comment period. Pacific Coast Coal Company's John Henry Mine is a surface mine located in King County, WA, that has been inactive since 1999.

On September 18 - 21, BLM-AK State Director Bud Cribley and the BOEM-AK Region will attend the OCEANS 17 conference/exhibition, in Anchorage. The event will focus on the use of modern technology and traditional knowledge to address resource management issues, including energy development and increased vessel traffic in Arctic waters. Sponsored by the Marine

Technology Society, the IEEE Oceanic Engineering Society, and BOEM, the OCEANS conferences/exhibits draw an international audience of more than 2,000.

On September 18, 19 and 20, BSEE Director Scott Angelle will speak at the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) meeting, the Louisiana Oil and Gas Commission's annual meeting, both in Lafayette, LA, and the Center for Offshore Safety's Annual Forum in Houston, TX, respectively.

On September 22, BOEM plans to publish the Record of Decision for the Gulf of Mexico Geological and Geophysical Final EIS (Final EIS) and associated Notices of Availability. This will follow the August 4 publication of the Final EIS and Marine Mammal Protection Act Petition.

On September 29, BOEM plans to publish the NOA for the Proposed Notice of Sale for OCS Oil and Gas Lease Sale 250. This will be the second GOM region-wide sale scheduled in the 2017-2022 Five Year Program.

On September 30, BOEM plans to execute a three-party Memorandum of Agreement with Brevard County, FL and the US Army Corps of Engineers for 1,700,000 cubic yards of OCS sand to nourish 13.4 miles of shoreline that experienced severe erosion during Hurricane Matthew in October 2016.

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

**OMB Travel, Oregon, August 14-18, 2017.** Craig Crutchfield, Interior Branch Chief, will travel to Oregon to visit FWS, NPS, and BLM sites. Olivia Ferriter, DAS-BFPA, will accompany him on the trip.

**OMB Travel, Alaska, August 18-25, 2017.** Emma Roach, Interior Branch Examiner, will conduct site visits with FWS in Alaska. Steven Farrell, Budget Analyst with the Office of Budget, will accompany her on the trip.

**OMB Travel, Colorado, August 20-25, 2017.** Mary Fischietto, Interior Branch Examiner, will conduct site visits with NPS in Colorado. Cindy Ryberg, Budget Analyst with the Office of Budget, will accompany her on the trip.

**OMB Travel, Montana & Dakotas, dates TBD.** Mike Hagan and Ben Burnett, Interior Branch Examiners, are planning to travel to Montana and the Dakotas to review BLM energy programs. The Office of Budget is working on details and travel dates. Kathy Benedetto, Office of ASLM and a staff member from the Office of Budget will accompany them.

**Congressional Travel, Alaska, August 13-18, 2017.** Jocelyn Hunn, House Appropriations Staff, will be traveling to Alaska to participate in site visits with USGS. Jeff Lang, Budget Analyst with the Office of Budget, will accompany her on the trip.

**Congressional Travel, Hawaii, Week of August 14, 2017.** Chris Tomassi, Emy Lesofski, and Betsy Bina, Senate and House Appropriations Staff, will be traveling to Hawaii for site visits the week of August 14. Details are forthcoming. Office of Budget Deputy Director, Adrienne Moss, will accompany the group.

**Congressional Travel, Alaska, Week of August 19, 2017.** Chris Tomassi and Emy Lesofski, Senate Appropriations Staff, will travel to Alaska for site visits the week of August 19. Details are forthcoming.

**U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Tribal Consultation, August 15, 2017.**

Borderlands Coordinator Range will facilitate a meeting between Bureau of Indian Affairs leadership and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The purpose of the meeting is to assist CBP with tribal consultation on the southwest border related to proposed construction or replacement of wall and fence on or near tribal lands.

**Bog Creek Site visit, Idaho, August 30-31, 2017.** DAS/PRE Harry Humbert and Borderlands Coordinator Brent Range will participate in a site visit to Bog Creek on the Panhandle National Forest in Idaho. The U.S. Border Patrol is seeking improved access on a National Forest road that has been closed. A meeting to discuss the DOI role in completing the environmental review will be conducted after the site visit.

**Australian and New Zealand National Council for fire, emergency services and land management, Sydney, Australia, September 1-9, 2017.** Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) Director Bryan Rice and Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Director Lisa Brantum will travel to Sydney, Australia, to attend the 4 day AFAC17. AFAC is the Australian and New Zealand National Council for fire, emergency services and land management, which attracts delegates and visitors from emergency and wildland fire management agencies, all levels of government, non-government organizations from Australia and worldwide.

**Association of Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) “Hill Day,” September 12, 2017.** Office of Aviation Services (OAS) Director Mark Bathrick will participate in this event, to include a panel on UAS, moderated by AUVSI CEO Brian Wynne.

**State and Tribal Royalty Audit Committee Meeting, East Glacier, Montana, September 19-21, 2017.** The State and Tribal Royalty Audit Committee (STRAC) meeting is scheduled in East Glacier, Montana, with States, Tribes, Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) representatives, and representatives from Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Solicitors office, and the OIG office.

**Royalty Policy Committee, Week of October 2, 2017.** The current committee nominees were received and will be vetted by the White House before the Secretary makes appointments. The Department is planning to hold the first Committee meeting during the first week of October 2017, but this date is subject to change.

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

**Inventory Controls and Purchases of Firearms, Ammunition, and Tactical Equipment at Federal Agencies (Job Code 102139).** Per request made by Representative Jason Chaffetz, Chairman, House Oversight and Government Reform Committee; Representative Mark

Meadows, Chairman, Subcommittee on Government Operations; Representative Ron DeSantis, Chairman, Subcommittee on National Security; Representative Richard L. Hudson; Representative Vicky Hartzler; Representative Jim Bridenstine; and Senator James M. Inhofe, GAO will review: (1) The annual purchases of firearms, ammunition, and tactical/military-style equipment for Federal use by type and quantity since 2010 for federal agencies with 250 or more law enforcement officers; (2) The law enforcement roles, responsibilities, and missions for these agencies; (3) Trends in firearms, ammunition, and tactical/military-style equipment purchases at each agency since 2010; and (4) Agency use of firearms, ammunition, and tactical/military-style equipment codes to accurately account for purchases since 2010. Because this review will include agencies with 250 or more law enforcement officers since 2010 and GAO protocols for work that is cross cutting, GAO will send a data collection instrument on the annual cost of firearms and related equipment purchases, law enforcement functions, and number of firearms and related equipment purchased.

Unless specifically requested, GAO will not hold an entrance conference with the Department and only plans to hold an entrance conference with the Department of Health and Human Services, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Internal Revenue Service. The Department's law enforcement officials are requesting a separate entrance conference not yet scheduled.

### **GAO Entrance Conferences**

**Federal Shellfish Aquaculture Permitting (Job Code 102106) – August 2, 2017, with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).** Per request from the Chairs and Ranking Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and the House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, GAO will review: (1) Federal and state laws and regulations regarding shellfish aquaculture across U.S. Corps of Engineers (Corps) districts; (2) number and types of shellfish aquaculture leases, verifications, and permits issued by relevant Corps districts; (3) shellfish aquaculture permitting procedures, policies, and practices in relevant Corps districts; and (4) experiences of the private sector in applying for shellfish aquaculture permits.

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

**Personal Firearms: Programs that Promote Safe Storage and Research on Their Effectiveness (GAO-17-665).** Per requests from Ranking Member Patty Murray of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions and Senators Tammy Baldwin, Richard Blumenthal, Sherrod Brown, Benjamin Cardin, Thomas Carper, Richard Durbin, Dianne Feinstein, Kirsten Gillibrand, Mazie Hirono, Tim Kaine, Edward Markey, Robert Menendez, Christopher Murphy, Jack Reed, Charles Schumer, Elizabeth Warren, Sheldon Whitehouse, and Ron Wyden, GAO reviewed: (1) what is known about public and nonprofit programs that promote the safe storage of personal firearms at the national and local levels; and (2) the extent to which safe storage programs have been studied and the results of the research. GAO issued the draft report July 24 with no recommendations. The response is due August 23.

### **Recent Final GAO Reports**

**Human Trafficking: Information on Cases in Indian Country or that Involved Native Americans (GAO-17-624).** Per request from the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate

Committee on Indian Affairs, GAO reviewed: (1) the extent to which tribal and major city law enforcement agencies (LEAs) have encountered human trafficking in Indian country or of Native Americans; (2) factors affecting the ability of LEAs to identify and investigate this specific human trafficking; and (3) availability of services to Native American victims of human trafficking. GAO conducted surveys of all known tribal LEAs (203) as identified by the Bureau of Indian Affairs; 86 major city LEAs; and 315 victim service provider organizations that received fiscal year 2015 Department of Justice or Department of Health and Human Services grants that could be used to assist human trafficking victims. Survey response rates for tribal LEAs, major city LEAs, and victim service providers were 65 percent, 71 percent, and 51 percent, respectively. The web-based surveys were deployed in September 2016 that asked about human trafficking investigations initiated or services provided from 2014 to 2016. GAO issued the final report July 24 and is not making recommendations. No further action is required.

### **OIG Entrance Conferences**

**Summary of OIG's Hurricane Sandy Reporting Between April 2013 and July 2017 (2017-FIN-057) – August 9, 2017, with the Office of Acquisition and Property Management, the FWS, and the National Park Service.** The OIG is initiating a summary of all OIG Hurricane Sandy audits, inspections, and management advisories initiated or completed between April 2013 and July 2017 of the U.S. Department of the Interior's (DOI's) Hurricane Sandy contract and grant related procurements. The OIG plans to compile any frequently identified improper practices or weaknesses in DOI contracting identified in those previously issued products. The OIG also plans to interview Department and Bureau personnel about the status of the findings and recommendations in their reports to determine whether any changes have been made that will improve the contracting process in case of any future natural disasters.

### **Recent Draft OIG Reports**

**Stronger Internal Controls Needed Over Indian Affairs Loan Guarantee Program (2016-CR-036).** The OIG evaluated the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development's (IEED) controls to effectively manage the Loan Guaranty, Insurance, and Interest Subsidy Program. The OIG issued the draft report July 24 with 13 recommendations to assist IEED with improving its internal controls and clarify responsibilities of its staff. The response is due September 14.

### **Recent Final OIG Reports.**

**Verification Review of Recommendations for the Report Titled “U.S. Geological Survey’s Ethics Program” (CR-IS-GSV-0006-2014), Report No. 2017-EAU-035.** The OIG completed a verification review July 24. The objective of this review was to determine whether the U.S. Geological Survey implemented the six recommendations as reported to the Office of Financial Management, and the Office of Policy, Management and Budget. The OIG concurs that all six recommendations are resolved and implemented.

### **Rules and Regulations for Publication in 2017**

**(Update) AA20: Repeal of Consolidated Federal Oil & Gas and Federal & Indian Coal Valuation Reform final rule.** The Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) published the proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register on April 4, 2017, and the comment period closed May 4, 2017. ONRR received and posted 95 public comments for the proposed rulemaking.

Also, ONRR received approximately 2,269 “standard form” public comments. ONRR plans to work with Executive Secretariat to have the rule in the reading room on Friday, August 4, 2017, and to publish the Repeal rule in the Federal Register on Monday, August 7, 2017.

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

In August, Northern Arizona University (NAU) and the USGS will announce a new paper that examines long-term trends in restoration using vegetation treatments on BLM lands across the southwestern U.S. The results document shifts in treatment practices on public lands over 70 years (1940-2010) and suggest that treatments are increasingly large, expensive, and related to wildfire and invasive species control. USGS data are associated with this study. The paper will be published in *Restoration Ecology*, and NAU is leading the local press effort.

In the coming weeks, the Department will release a new USGS report on critical minerals for the United States. This publication presents resource and geologic information for 23 mineral commodities currently viewed as important to our national economy and national security, many of which are sourced entirely outside of the United States. The report provides 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 DOI news release is planned.

In the coming weeks, the USGS will announce the award of \$3.7 million to advance the ShakeAlert earthquake early warning system. Institutions receiving the grant award include California Institute of Technology, Central Washington University, University of California, Berkeley, University of Oregon, University of Washington and University of Nevada, Reno and UNAVCO. ShakeAlert has been in co-development by the USGS with public and private partners over the last 10 years. In April, the ShakeAlert “production prototype” was in place for the entire West coast creating an integrated system that can support pilot uses of alerts. A USGS news release is planned.

In August, USGS and W&S will select projects for four Urban Waters Federal Partnership locations. In the 2017 budget omnibus, Congress dedicated \$717K of USGS funds for Urban Waters-focused projects. USGS has been working with local city partners to identify high priority, water-related projects to implement.

Reclamation agreed to grant a 30-day extension to the comment period for the Shasta Fish Passage Evaluation Pilot Study. The comment period will be extended to August 28. If unable to submit a timely notice through the Federal Register, Reclamation may let the public know by emailing the project distribution list and through a press release.

In the coming weeks, the USGS will release a new Fact Sheet examining over a century of American mineral use. This publication will provide a broad overview of the quantity (weight) of nonfood and nonfuel materials used in the economy and illustrate the use and significance of raw nonfuel minerals in particular as building blocks of society. These data have been compiled to help the public and policymakers understand the annual and changing flow of raw materials used

in the United States. The publication will be available on the USGS website and a news release is planned.

In the coming weeks, the USGS will announce a new assessment of undiscovered potash resources of the Pripyat Basin of Belarus and the Dnieper-Donets Basin of Ukraine. The study was undertaken because potash is a critical mineral resource for agricultural production, and these deposits are in a geopolitically sensitive area of interest. A technical announcement is planned.

In the coming weeks, Reclamation anticipates it will announce \$2.2 million in funding for nine projects selected for the water marketing strategy grants. Through this program, Reclamation provides grants to conduct planning activities in developing a water marketing strategy to establish or expand water markets or water marketing transactions.

In the coming weeks, Reclamation anticipates it will announce the selected projects for \$20.9 million in WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency Grants. Water and energy efficiency grants focus on larger scale projects that result in quantifiable and sustained water savings and that may have several components intended to address a significant water management concern.

In the coming weeks, Reclamation will announce the selected ideas for the Arsenic Sensor Challenge that sought ideas for a rapid, low-cost monitoring of arsenic that would benefit water treatment plant operations, wastewater monitoring, contaminated site remediation, private well owners, scientific research and other interested parties.

In the coming weeks, Reclamation will launch a new prize challenge that seeks innovative, interactive and user-driven visualizations to improve understanding in the Colorado River Basin to support analysis and decision-making by users. Media interest is expected to be low.

In the coming weeks, Reclamation will announce the selected projects to commence a WaterSMART Basin Study. Basin Studies are collaborative studies, cost-shared with non-Federal partners, to help ensure sustainable water supplies by identifying strategies to address imbalances in water supply and demand.

In August, Reclamation is proposing to seek designation of Lake Berryessa as a Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) site and begin implementation of REA at the Reclamation-operated facilities located at Lake Berryessa. REA enables a percentage of fees to be retained at the site collected for use in providing enhanced recreation experiences to the public. Public comment period and meetings are tentatively scheduled for August.

In September, Congressman Jim Costa (D-CA) is planning to visit Shasta Dam, Red Bluff Fish Passage Improvement Project, the Sites Reservoir location and the State of California's Oroville Dam.

Mid-August to early September: U.S.-Mexico Cooperative Process - Colorado River ("Minute 323"). On June 12, the Governor's Representatives from the seven Colorado River Basin States indicated their goal to finish drafting the necessary U.S. (domestic) agreements needed to allow

the U.S. and Mexico to finalize a cooperative agreement by mid-July. Completion of these draft agreements would put the U.S. and Mexico in position to finalize a successor agreement to the current plan (known as Minute 319) later this fall. The states have now completed all drafting work on the domestic agreements and anticipate all clearances to be complete by mid-September. The State Department expects be finalizing consultations with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in early August. The DOI approval process is anticipated to take place in the mid-August time-frame, and complete in early September.