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**Subject:** Weekly Report to the Secretary - June 8, 2017  
**Date:** Thursday, June 08, 2017 12:07:31 PM  
**Attachments:** [WeeklyReporttotheSecretary06-08-17.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

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Gareth C. Rees

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[Weekly Report to the Secretary 06-08-17](#)

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

**June 08, 2017**

**Office of the Solicitor**

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**OTHER LITIGATION MATTERS:**

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

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

Acting Assistant Secretary Virginia Johnson will be out of the office on June 9. Acting NPS Director Michael Reynolds has no travel planned. From June 12 to 15, FWS Acting Director Jim Kurth will travel to St. Paul Island, Alaska, to participate in a ceremony acknowledging the FWS's role during World War II of the internment of the Aleut people from the Pribilof Islands.

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

On June 12, the National Parks of New York Harbor Conservancy will be holding a special event at Federal Hall National Memorial, NY. The event is titled *The American Presidency, Understanding Trump-- An Evening at Federal Hall with Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich*. Sam Roberts of the New York Times will be interviewing Former Speaker Gingrich about his new book *Understanding Trump*. The book has a foreword by Eric Trump, the President's son. This event is invitation only and the President's family has been invited to attend.

On June 14, the NPS will hold a public meeting for Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, Maine, in East Millinocket, Maine, on winter use activities. This meeting is a part of an on-going effort to fulfill the requirement outlined in the Proclamation of the monument to complete a Management Plan for the monument by 2019.

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

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

Nothing to Report

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

By mid-June, FWS and USGS will jointly release a published paper titled *Restoring Monarch Butterfly Habitat in the Midwestern U.S.: All Hands on Deck*. One of the key conclusions of the paper is that the agricultural, public, rights of way, and urban sectors in the U.S. are needed in order to reverse the decline of monarch butterflies. The paper developed 218 scenarios for amending the Midwestern U.S. landscape with milkweed. Scenarios for milkweed restoration were developed for protected area grasslands, Conservation Reserve Program land, powerline, rail and roadside rights of way, urban/suburban lands, and land in agricultural production. The USGS is handling the communications with DOI; it is not expected to be controversial.

On June 15, FWS anticipates announcing the availability of the Mexican Wolf Draft Recovery Plan, First Revision (draft recovery plan). The Mexican wolf is listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The draft recovery plan includes specific recovery criteria to be met to enable FWS to remove this species from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. FWS will seek review and comment on the revised plan from tribes, the public, and state and federal

agencies in both the United States and Mexico. As there is significant Congressional interest, FWS will provide advance notification to Members prior to announcing availability of the recovery plan. FWS will host public meeting on the updated Mexican wolf recovery plan in late July.

In mid-June, through the Secretary, 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 the 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. Outreach through the Department is planned.

In mid-June, through the Secretary, FWS plans to announce nearly \$15.4 million in grants to 20 states for projects to support clean water and recreational boating through the Service's Clean Vessel Act Grant (CVA) program. The CVA program provides grant funds to the states, the District of Columbia and insular areas for the construction, renovation, operation, and maintenance of pumpout stations and waste reception facilities for recreational boaters and also for educational programs that inform boaters of the importance of proper disposal of their sewage. Funding is generated through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund by excise taxes on sport fishing and boating equipment and tackle, motorboat fuels and import duties on fishing tackle, yachts and pleasure craft. Outreach is planned.

### **Hot Topics**

FWS is considering changing the language in the current federal regulation regarding eagle permits for Indian religious purposes. Because any change to the current regulation could affect federally recognized tribes or their members, FWS is offering government-to-government consultations to solicit information from tribes on how best to proceed. This regulation change is intended to formalize the U.S. government's position that the National Eagle Repository facilitates tribes and their member's acquisition of eagles and eagle parts, but not other members of the public. During consultation, FWS intends to consider how to accomplish any permitting changes and application processes in a manner that best meets the needs of all tribes. FWS would also like to discuss whether the repository should continue to be accessible to only tribes and their members, or whether access to non-tribal persons is acceptable or desirable. Lastly, FWS intends to discuss whether the repository should be operated by a tribe, or whether continuing operation by FWS is desirable. This item was included in the Unified Agenda.

FWS has met with representatives from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to identify future infrastructure and management capability requirements by CBP on Cabeza Prieta NWR, located in southwest Arizona, to improve operational success and efficiency. This includes the capability to maintain existing roads, the development and maintenance of new roads, the potential expansion of existing facilities (i.e., Camp Grip), installation of new infrastructure such as radio towers, and the deployment of mobile surveillance systems. In July, FWS and CBP will discuss processes requirements for CBP's proposals including NEPA compliance, compatibility determinations, minimum requirements analyses, and how these processes will be funded, recognizing that the proposals mostly lie within designated wilderness,

and may be inconsistent with the Cabeza Prieta's existing comprehensive conservation plan.

Pending Departmental advisement, FWS will approve a slate of projects for funding under the Competitive State Wildlife Grants program. 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. No outreach is planned.

FWS plans to 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. This action is not controversial. Interested stakeholder groups are the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the North Slope Borough. Pending clearance by the Department. No outreach is planned.

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

Pending clearance, 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. In mid-June, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final rule to remove the Hualapai Mexican vole, located in Arizona, from the list of endangered and threatened species due to the fact that the original taxonomic classification is no longer appropriate. This action is not controversial. Interested stakeholder groups are Arizona Game and Fish Department and Mohave County Board of Supervisors. Outreach is planned.

In mid-June, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a final determination on the bureau's March 11, 2016, proposal to identify the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) grizzly bear population of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming as a distinct population segment (DPS) and revise the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife by removing grizzly bears within the GYE DPS due to recovery. This action is controversial. Interested stakeholder groups include the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (including federal, tribal, state, and local government entities), agricultural producers, hunting groups, and environmental groups. Outreach is planned.

## **National Park Service**

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

Nothing to report.

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

On June 10, the Sons of Confederate Veterans will hold a *100 Year Re-dedication Ceremony for the Virginia Memorial* within Gettysburg National Military Park. An audience of 200 people is expected and speeches could be controversial.

On June 10, National Mall and Memorial Parks, Washington, DC, will begin a project to improve the walkways in Constitution Gardens. During the construction (expected to be completed on June 12), portions of the walkways will be closed to the public. Circulation and access to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, Lincoln Memorial and World War II Memorial will be affected until the work is completed.

On June 12, the National Parks of New York Harbor Conservancy will be holding a special event at Federal Hall National Memorial, NY. The event is titled *The American Presidency, Understanding Trump-- An Evening at Federal Hall with Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich*. Sam Roberts of the New York Times will be interviewing Former Speaker Gingrich about his new book *Understanding Trump*. The book has a foreword by Eric Trump, the President's son. This event is invitation only and the President's family has been invited to attend.

On June 14, the NPS will hold a public meeting for Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, Maine, in East Millinocket, Maine, on winter use activities. This meeting is a part of an on-going effort to fulfill the requirement outlined in the Proclamation of the monument to complete a Management Plan for the monument by 2019.

Last week, Yosemite National Park concessioner, Yosemite Hospitality, LLC, began informing High Sierra Camps reservation holders that they will not open for the 2017 visitor season. The decision is based on the huge snowpack (still at 200% of normal) and the challenges associated with getting the camps open. The decision was previously made that the camps would not open in June, and visitors with reservations were notified that their reservations can be moved to 2018. Approximately 3,265 people in 906 parties will be affected and those already contacted have been understanding of the situation.

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

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

On June 7, BIA Director Loudermilk is scheduled to testify before the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs on H.R. 1074 (Rep. Rod Blum), to repeal “An Act to confer jurisdiction on the State of Iowa over offenses committed by or against Indians on the Sac and Fox Indian Reservation,” and S. 249 (Sen. Tom Udall), a bill to provide that the Pueblo of Santa Clara may lease for 99 years certain restricted land, and for other purposes.

Indian Affairs leadership and staff continue to lead Tribal listening sessions on E.O. 13792 and E.O. 13871; the remaining sessions are:

#### ***Listening Sessions on E.O. 13792: Interior’s Review of National Monuments***

- June 12, 3:00pm–5:00 pm, Mohegan Sun  
1 Mohegan Sun Boulevard, Uncasville, CT 06382

#### ***Listening Sessions on E.O. 13871: Reorganization of the Executive Branch***

- June 12, 1:00 pm – 2:45 pm, Mohegan Sun  
1 Mohegan Sun Boulevard, Uncasville, CT 06382
- June 27, 8:30 am – 12 pm, Tulsa Convention Center  
100 Civic Center Tulsa, OK 74103

On June 12-15, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) 2017 Mid-Year Conference and Marketplace will take place at the Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, CT. Acting AS-IA Black and BIA director Loudermilk will be in attendance.

June 12-14, Indian Affairs Congressional and Legislative Affairs staff and BIA Tribal Roads Program staff will be participating in a Tribal-County Roads Forum in Gallup, New Mexico, with New Mexico Congressional staff on rights-of-way issues.

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

June 9 is the end of the scoping period and deadline for public comments on an Environmental Assessment (EA) concerning a proposed action by the **Bureau of Reclamation** and the **Bureau of Indian Affairs** that would allow the Navajo Generating Station near Page, Arizona, to operate until the end of 2019 followed by retirement. The public may also comment on other alternatives that should be considered to enable retirement of the NGS to begin after 2019 and other concerns and issues that should be addressed in the EA.

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

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

During the week of June 12-17, Acting ASLM Kate MacGregor will travel to Casper, WY and Carlsbad, NM to meet with OSMRE (Casper) and BLM (Casper and Carlsbad) field and state office staff to discuss coal and oil and gas operations. While on travel, she will participate in site visits and meet with industry representatives and state coal regulators.

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

On June 12, the BLM will participate in a tribal listening session regarding E.O. 13792 hosted by the BIA in Uncasville, CT. The session, which is being held in conjunction with the National Congress of American Indians Mid-Year Conference, will allow tribal members the opportunity to provide input on Antiquities Act monuments prior to issuance of the Secretary's interim report to the President on June 15.

During the week of June 12, OSMRE plans to publish a Notice of Availability for the Cordero Rojo Mine Mining Plan Modification Draft EA, initiating a 30-day public comment period. 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 June 12, OSMRE headquarters expects to receive the Bull Hill # 2 mine plan decision documents from its Mid-Continent Region. Located in Latimer County, OK, the mine is owned by Farrell-Cooper Mining and contains approximately 384,000 tons of recoverable Federal coal, employing 36 people.

During the week of June 12, OSMRE anticipates publishing a Notice of Availability for the Bridger Mine Mining Plan Modification Draft Environmental Assessment (EA), initiating a 30-day comment period. The 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.

During the week of June 12, BSEE will issue a press release announcing its revision of 30 C.F.R. § 250.180, increasing the continuous operations requirement from 180 days to 365 days as required by Congress in the 2017 Consolidated Appropriations Act. The rule was submitted to the *Federal Register* and is a publication date.

On June 12 – 16, Acting BLM-MT State Director Jon Raby plans to conduct courtesy visits with members and staff of the MT, ND and SD delegations in Washington, DC to discuss public land issues, including energy development, pipelines, grazing and rangeland, mining, and fire management.

On June 13, BLM-MT will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 156 parcels totaling 69,056 acres in Custer, Garfield, Fallon, Carter, Rosebud, Big Horn, and Powder River Counties. All of the parcels are located in the Miles City area. The sale is not expected to be controversial. The

bidding is not expected to be particularly robust.

On June 13, BLM-UT will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 20 parcels covering 23,733 acres in Sevier, Piute, Garfield, and Sanpete Counties. While approximately half of the parcels are within Sage-Grouse Priority Habitat Management Areas, the sale is not expected to be controversial. The bidding may be robust on a few parcels that are proximate to a producing field.

On June 14, BLM-CA Bakersfield Field Manager Gabe Garcia will meet with CA's Division of Oil and Gas to discuss the State's new permitting process for BLM wells. The Division is asking for a state permit from BLM operators.

On June 14, BLM-WY State Director Mary Jo Rugwell will speak at the Wyoming Mining Association Annual Convention in Sheridan, WY. Her remarks will include coal leasing and permitting on BLM-administered lands, addressing coal and oil and gas conflicts, and locatable minerals.

On June 14, BLM-NV will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 106 parcels totaling 195,732 acres in Nye, Eureka, and Lander Counties. The sale is expected to be controversial based on public reaction to the EA prepared in connection with the lease sale, which included concerns regarding the proximity of the parcels to wetland areas and cultural sites. Bidding has the potential to be robust.

On June 14, BSEE Director Scott Angelle is scheduled to meet with representatives Lowes and Diamond Offshore to discuss the BSEE-Approved Verification Organization (BAVO) requirement in the Well Control Rule.

On June 14, BSEE Director Scott Angelle is scheduled to meet with representatives of the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation in Washington, DC to discuss pending lease suspension requests for oil and gas leases in the Beaufort Sea.

On June 15, BLM plans to publish in the *Federal Register* a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS for the West Antelope 3 Lease-by-Application for approximately 3,508.31 acres (containing approximately 441 million tons of in-place coal). The acreage is a tract of Federal coal adjacent to the Antelope Mine in Campbell and Converse Counties, WY, and is necessary to maintain production at the existing mine. The notice will also announce the date of a public scoping meeting to be held in Wright, WY.

On June 15, BSEE Director Scott Angelle will meet with Randall Luthi and Dave Welch of the National Ocean Industries Association via phone for an introductory meeting to discuss stakeholder issues.

In mid-June, the BLM-CO Colorado River Valley Field Office anticipates public scoping to begin for the Balzac Gulch Master Development Plan in western Colorado. Terra Rocky Mountain LLC proposes to drill up to 66 new oil and gas wells directionally from three existing pads over the next two years.

In mid-June, BOEM, through its contractor, plans to conduct detailed geological surveys of specific areas off two mid-Atlantic states. These surveys, coupled with already-underway geophysical surveys, are being conducted to determine potential volumes and the extent of new sand resources. This is a continuation of work initiated for the Atlantic Sand Assessment Project following Hurricane Sandy to identify new potential sand resources for future beach and coastal protection and restoration projects.

In mid-June, the BLM tentatively plans to publish the final Section 368 Energy Corridor Region 1 recommendations, initiating a 30-day public comment period. Final approval by the Section 368 Executive Team is anticipated in early September 2017.

On June 16, BSEE Director Angelle will conduct an all-hands video teleconference with the BSEE Alaska Regional Office.

On June 19, BLM plans to publish a Notice of Intent to Prepare a Supplemental EIS for the Mount Hope Project, a new molybdenum mine, in Eureka County, NV. The project encompasses approximately 8,355 acres of new surface disturbance, 8,092 of which are on public lands administered by the BLM. The Supplemental EIS is being prepared following a decision by the Ninth Circuit that found the justification for the air quality analysis insufficient. The SEIS will also supplement the analysis of public water reserves.

In June, BSEE Director Scott Angelle will conduct Capitol Hill visits with majority and minority staff for relevant Congressional committees and offices. Office calls with certain individual members may also be scheduled. BSEE Congressional Affairs will coordinate with OCL prior to scheduling office visits.

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

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

- Who: Secretary Zinke, DAS-PRE Harry Humbert and Office of Emergency Management Director Lisa Branum
- What: Senior Officials Exercise
- When: June 12, 2017 (Date tentative)
- Where: FEMA National Response Coordination Center
- Press: Closed
- Topic: Secretary Zinke will be invited to participate with other Cabinet officials in this Administration's first Senior Officials Exercise (SOE) at FEMA HQ. The SOE will focus on policy issues surrounding a response to a simulated hurricane. Secretary Kelly will lead the exercise with the White House National Security Council.
  
- Who: Office of Restoration and Damage Assessment (NRDAR Program)
- What: House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Staff FY18 Budget Briefing
- When: June 12, 2017
- Where: Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2007
- Press: Closed
- Topic: Two new appropriations subcommittee staff have requested a briefing to cover both a general NRDAR overview as well as a discussion of the FY 2018 President's Budget Request.
  
- Who: DAS-PRE Harry Humbert and Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) Director Bryan Rice
- What: Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) Conference Call
- When: June 15, 2017
- Where: OWF Conference Room
- Press: Closed
- Topic: The WFLC members will discuss key transition updates, the Western Governors' Association Forest and Rangeland Initiative, and the USGS Science Plan.

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

#### **Border Security Infrastructure Coordination with U.S Customs and Border Protection.**

Borderlands Coordinator Jon Andrew is working with U.S. Customs and Border Protection to coordinate proposed additional security infrastructure on the U.S. Mexico border. Coordination efforts include a review of the need for tribal consultation and possible permitting for preconstruction planning work on DOI lands. A synopsis of border security actions anticipated by U.S. Customs and Border Protection is being prepared and will be shared with DOI when completed.

**Columbia River Treaty.** Discussions and coordination for the Columbia River Treaty are continuing with various meetings this week to include the Columbia River Treaty Collaborative Modeling Workgroup Meeting on June 16, 2017 in Vancouver, British Columbia. Attendees include Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC), Bureau of Reclamation

(BOR), US Geological Survey (USGS), and other representatives from state, federal, and tribal government agencies, Public Utility Districts. Information from this meeting is anticipated to help inform the negotiations between the United States and Canada to modernize the Columbia River Treaty when those formal negotiations are approved to begin.

**Suspension and Debarment Actions.** On May 30, 2017, DOI debarred Brian Kelly Eagleman based on his convictions on charges of embezzlement, theft of tribal funds, and tax evasion. This is one of a series of suspension and debarment actions arising out of the criminal investigation and ensuing prosecutions at the Chippewa Cree Tribe (CCT) of the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation. The CCT is a federally recognized tribe in Montana that receives significant Federal funding from DOI and other agencies. Eagleman was, at relevant times, an elected member of the CCT Business Committee and co-Chairman of the CCT Roads Division Oversight Committee.

**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 June 2, 2017, the Department has closed 34% of open audit recommendations scheduled for closure in FY 2017.

**Year 2017 Small Business Accomplishments to Date:** As of May 31, 2017, the Department has awarded 54.22% 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 21.72% of its contract award dollars to small disadvantaged businesses and 14.11% of its contract award dollars to women-owned small businesses, exceeding the statutory goal of 5% for each. The Department awarded 3.38% of its contract award dollars to historically underutilized business zone small businesses and 3.53% of its contract award dollars to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses. The statutory goal is 3% for each of these categories.

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

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

Acting AS/WS Scott Cameron will be in the office in DC June 12-16. On June 12 Scott will participate in the Secretary's call with the Colorado River Basin States representatives; on June 14 he will be the Department's witness on a variety of Reclamation bills in a Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee hearing. In addition, routine briefings and a few stakeholder meetings are scheduled.

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

On **June 8**, USGS will announce a recently published report detailing changes of groundwater levels in the High Plains Aquifer. The report presents water-level change data in the aquifer for two separate periods: from 1950 – the time prior to significant groundwater irrigation development – to 2015, and from 2013 to 2015. The report is available on the USGS website and a technical announcement to partners and regional localities is being planned.

**Upper Colorado Reclamation Reform Act of 1982 (RRA) Records FedEx Breach (NM):** On April 27, a box containing RRA documents arrived in Memphis, Tennessee, sorting hub but never reached the destination of the Regional Office in Salt Lake City, Utah. The hub found the box had been ripped open and the retrieved contents were placed in a lost-and-found. FedEx has been sending contents as they are identified back to the Regional Office. Since the documents may involve the collection of personally identifiable information for evaluation and documentation, the region's Policy Officer has been involved. Currently, Reclamation is working to secure credit monitoring for the affected individuals. There will be a call made to all individuals affected by the breach followed by a letter with detailed information containing the credit monitoring information. A press release will be issued.

**Week of June 12 - California WaterFix (CA):** Reclamation is anticipating a draft Biological Opinion for the California WaterFix from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in preparation for finalizing a Record of Decision on the project. The final ROD is anticipated to be signed before the end of June.

**June 12: Secretary to Host Call with Colorado River Basin States:** On June 12, Secretary Zinke will host a call with the seven Colorado River Basin States. The primary purpose of the call will be to meet and greet, and establish a working relationship with the Basin States Governors representatives in his role as Watermaster of the Lower Colorado River Basin. On June 14, USGS and partners will use load data and modeling to forecast the size of the hypoxic—or oxygen-deprived—zone in the Chesapeake Bay. For years, the USGS has partnered with NOAA and other organizations to estimate the size of the area of low to no oxygen in Chesapeake Bay. The actual size of the dead zone will be announced in early August.

On **June 20**, USGS and partners will use nutrient load data and modeling to forecast the size of the hypoxic zone in the Gulf of Mexico this year. For several years, the USGS has partnered with NOAA and other organizations to estimate the size of the area of low to no oxygen in the Gulf of

Mexico. The actual size of the dead zone will be announced in early August.

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.

## **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**

In mid-June, FWS plans to issue the Final Biological Opinion for the first phase of California WaterFix to the Bureau of Reclamation, the Corps of Engineers, and the California Department of Water Resources. The consultation covers 16 species. On the same day, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is expected to issue its Final Biological Opinion for California WaterFix. Interagency coordinated outreach with NMFS, Reclamation, FWS, and the California Natural Resources Agency (includes the California Department of Water Resources and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife). Outreach will include: Congressional telephone briefing, media telephone briefing, possible stakeholder (water users) and NGO/tribes telephone briefing, all briefings would be interagency. A joint press release from all the involved agencies is planned.

In July, FWS will host four public scoping meetings (dates not chosen yet) in Central Oregon to gather information to prepare a draft Environmental Impact Statement related to the Deschutes Basin Habitat Conservation Plan. The Deschutes Basin Board of Control and the City of Prineville are the permit applicants for the incidental take of three listed species - Oregon spotted frog, bull trout, and steelhead. Media expected. Stakeholders include local farmers, irrigators, and recreationists. WaterWatch of Oregon, Center for Biological Diversity, Coalition for the Deschutes, Trout Unlimited, and the Deschutes River Conservancy will likely get involved in the NEPA process. This will be controversial.

In mid-July, 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. This will be controversial as there have been many cougar sightings reported by the public. However, these are cases of mistaken identity and escaped captive animals, and rarely dispersers from western puma populations. Interested parties include numerous eastern states, the Humane Society of the United States, the Animal Legal Defense Fund, and the Cougar Network.

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

#### **Asian Carp**

In late June, FWS plans to send the 2016 Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) report to Congress. WRRDA includes direction from Congress to FWS to lead a multiagency effort to slow the spread of Asian carp in the Upper Mississippi River and Ohio River basins, in coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service

and the U.S. Geological Survey. Specifically, WRRDA calls for FWS to develop and deliver a report to Congress summarizing all activities and expenditures (both federal and non-federal) related to Asian carp prevention efforts in the two watersheds, as well as describe any observed changes in the range of Asian carp in Upper Mississippi River and Ohio River basins. Notable changes from the 2015 report include updates on a slight range expansion of silver carp, the movement of juvenile Asian carp in the sub-basins and additional information on the status of black carp. As in previous years, the 2016 report will be made available to the public on AsianCarp.us. The report also outlines research that could improve the ability to control the spread of Asian carp and quantitative measures proposed for use in documenting progress in controlling the spread of Asian carp. Potentially controversial due to the slight range expansion of silver carp. No public outreach is planned. FWS will conduct outreach to Congress.

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

Once cleared, FWS will send to the Federal Register a notice of availability of the revised draft recovery plan for the Giant Garter Snake located in California. We note the cost of certain actions pertaining to habitat acquisition, restoration, and management as “To be decided” which reflects the considerable uncertainty around what the actual cost of those actions will be once completed. Stakeholders may include Federal and State agencies, conservation organizations, the local agricultural communities, and local municipalities as it concerns water usage.

FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a notice designating two areas in northwest Oregon as nonessential experimental population areas for the reintroduction of Oregon silverspot butterfly. The butterfly is listed as threatened under the ESA. This action is not controversial. Stakeholders include the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, Oregon State Parks and Recreation, Oregon Zoo, and The Nature Conservancy. Outreach is planned. Pending clearance by the Department.

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

On June 24, FWS expects to publish a notice announcing consideration of a draft Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA), draft Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA), and draft environmental assessment for the Texas hornshell (proposed for listing) and other covered species (Rio Grande River cooter, gray redbhorse, blue sucker and Pecos springsnail), and an enhancement of survival permit application under the Endangered Species Act submitted by the Center of Excellence. The covered area would include portions of Eddy County, New Mexico, and Culberson County, Texas.

In late June, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* 12-month findings on petitions to list Kirtland's snake found in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, and Tennessee, and the Mohave shoulderband snail found in southern Kern County, California. FWS is required by settlement agreement to submit the finding for the Mohave shoulderband snail to the *Federal Register* by June 30 and the finding for Kirtland's snake to the *Federal Register* by September 30. These actions are not expected to be controversial. Stakeholders include the Center for Biological Diversity, the litigants/petitioners, and Gold Queen Mine (for Mohave shoulderband snail). Outreach is planned.

In mid-July, FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* a 12-month finding and proposed delisting determination on the Deseret milkvetch, found in Utah. This action is not controversial. Stakeholders include Western Area Power Administration, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Utah Division of Transportation and entities that own lands occupied by the species. Outreach is planned.

### **National Wildlife Refuge Actions**

In June, 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.

### **Migratory Bird Management Actions**

FWS plans to send to the *Federal Register* its annual proposal for administering tribal hunting, fishing, and gathering rights under multiple treaties for several federally recognized tribes in the Great Lakes region. The proposal has been compiled in consultation with the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, which represents 11 tribes in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. FWS has informed the Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan DNRs of the agency's support for these proposed 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. The proposal is expected to be controversial due to the inclusion of several new techniques for tribal members to take waterfowl. No outreach is planned. Pending clearance by the Department.

Through the Department, FWS will announce the approval of around \$4 million in grants for 32 projects throughout the Americas as part of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act grant program. Exact date and award amount are not yet determined. Outreach through the Department is planned.

### **National Park Service**

On June 17, a Confederate Flag Rally will be held in the First Amendment-designated area at Hot Springs National Park. 150 people are expected to participate. Counter protests have occurred during similar events in the past.

In mid-June, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are expecting to begin a two-year road construction project during the summer seasons along a 1-mile portion of the Generals Highway in Sequoia National Park and the Wolverton Road. Visitors could see up to one-hour delays when traveling through Sequoia National Park en route to the General Sherman Tree - the primary destination in the park. Construction will cease upon winter weather as the project is above 5,000 feet.

In mid-June, when the Half Dome Cables are in place, Yosemite National Park is increasing the permit fees to hike to the summit of Half Dome. The nominal fee increase is due to the increased

fees associated with the national bridge contract and passing these fees to the users. Public notification of the fee increase will be announced via a news release, and the cables are expected to go up later than usual this year due to the heavy snowpack.

On June 25, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Crow Agency, Montana, will host an annual anniversary event honoring all who fought in the Battle of Little Bighorn. The Acting NPS Director has been invited to speak along with Tribal leaders from 17 associated nations. The Montana Congressional delegation will be invited to attend. Local media will be present.

On June 26, the NPS plans to initiate a 30-day public scoping on a plan to replace Grand Canyon National Park's trans-canyon pipeline. The trans-canyon pipeline serves the park's South Rim, which supplies water to facilities serving more than 5 million visitors and 2,500 residents annually. The pipeline reached the end of its serviceable life and experiences frequent breaks. The cost to replace the pipeline is estimated at \$131.8 million and construction is expected to begin in 2019. The NPS plans to hold public meetings at the park's South Rim and in Flagstaff, Arizona, and will consult with the park's 11 associated tribes.

In mid-June, the NPS anticipates the announcement of the \$1.75 million in available Maritime Heritage project grant funding. These grants will be used for maritime heritage education and preservation projects related to the maritime heritage of the United States. The National Maritime Heritage Act established the National Maritime Heritage Grants Program within the Department of the Interior. The grants program is administered in partnership with the Maritime Administration (MarAd). It provides funding for education and preservation projects designed to preserve historic maritime resources and is funded through a percentage of the proceeds from the sale or scrapping of obsolete vessels of the National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF). All grants awarded must be matched on a 1-to-1 basis with non-Federal assets.

In mid-June, the NPS anticipates the announcement of the \$3,623,162 in available Battlefield Land Acquisition grant funding. Grants will be used to protect 999 acres of Revolutionary and Civil War battlefields in Virginia, Mississippi, New York, 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. The NPS is working with the Secretary's office on an event and the communications plan.

In late June, the NPS anticipates the announcement of \$15 million in Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grant funding for approximately 25 projects. A total of 51 projects were submitted by states to acquire and develop outdoor recreation spaces. This competitive program supplements the annual Land and Water Conservation Fund apportionment to states by supporting projects for disadvantaged populations in urban areas.

In mid-July, 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 July, 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.

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

On July 19 and July 20, the Self-Governance Advisory Committee quarterly meeting will be held at the Embassy Suites DC Convention Center, 900 10th St NW, Washington, DC 20001. The Acting Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs is invited to attend on Thursday, July 20, 2017.

On July 24, the Department's Office of Policy Analysis will hold an Indian Economic Development Data Workshop, preceding the Tribal/Interior Budget Council meeting.

On July 25 through July 27, the Tribal/Interior Budget Council meeting will take place at the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort, located at 22181 Resort Boulevard, Flagstaff, AZ 86004.

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

Dr. Nader Vadiee, an instructor at the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI), was selected as the *WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) and GlobalMindED Digital Inclusion Award Winner for 2017* for his actions to advance the digital inclusion of students in STEM fields.

SIPI received notification that its proposal for "Developing STEM Education Capacity for Partnerships in Advanced Technology Workforce Training" will be funded (approximately \$550,000) by the Department of Defense (DoD) Research and Education Program.

The Dove Fire, caused by lightning on May 9, has burned 10,970 acres on the San Carlos Apache Reservation and is being managed by over 80 firefighters to achieve ecological goals, such as reducing forest litter, increasing forage for wildlife and cattle, and improving watershed health.

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

- None at this time.

### ***Regulations Pending Departmental Review, Then Ready for AS-IA Signature***

- **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 will be presented to the AS-IA transition contact in preparation for AS-IA signature.
- **Final rules pending publication:**
  - **Appraisals and Valuations of Indian Property (43 CFR 100):** This final rule would meet the requirement in the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (ITARA) to establish minimum qualifications for third-party appraisers and valuations of Indian property by June 22, 2017.
    - *Status:* The final rule will be presented to the AS-IA transition contact in preparation for AS-IA signature.

#### *Federal Register Notices Ready for OS Review*

- **Paperwork Reduction Act notices:**
  - Renewal of Agency Information Collection for Tribal Energy Development Capacity Program (60-day notice)
- **Draft Programmatic EIS for the 2015 Integrated Resource Management Plan for the Colville Indian Reservation, Nespelem, Washington:** This notice announces the availability of the draft programmatic environmental impact statement for public review and comment.
- **Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community; Amendment to Liquor Ordinance:** This notice announces that BIA certifies that the Tribe has amended its liquor control ordinance.

#### *Federal Register Notices Ready for AS-IA Signature*

- **Liquor Control Ordinances: Pueblo of Santa Clara:** This notice announces that BIA certifies that the Tribe has amended its liquor control ordinance.
- **Advisory Board for Exceptional Children:** The request for nominations of individuals to serve on the Advisory Board is ready for OS review. As of September 2017, there will be eight slots available; members serve staggered two-year terms. The notice of an upcoming meeting of the Advisory Board has been withdrawn in accordance with the May 5, 2017, memorandum directing postponement of meetings until September 2017.
- **Trust Acquisitions for Cherokee Nation, Chickasaw Nation, and Wilton Rancheria:** Five Federal Register notices announcing trust acquisitions that were finalized in the last Administration are pending approval for publication. The Department's regulations require publication of notice of the acquisitions in the Federal Register.

#### *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:* [No Change] BIE is preparing a new notice of intent to establish the committee and solicitation for membership.

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

During the week of June 19, BLM-UT is scheduled to begin a second 15-day public comment period for the Gunnison Valley Seismic Project Environmental Assessment, analyzing Dawson Geophysical's three-dimensional geophysical seismic survey proposal. The proposed project is located 26 miles northwest of Moab, UT and encompasses approximately 38,700 acres.

On June 20 or June 27, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining tentatively plans to hold a hearing on "Restoring Watersheds and Large Landscapes Across Boundaries Through State and Federal Partnerships." BLM witness TBD.

On June 20, BSEE Director Angelle will meet with Hilcorp at the company's request, to discuss of offshore operations in general.

On June 21, BOEM plans to hold Lease Sale 244 in Cook Inlet, AK. The lease sale will offer 224 blocks, consisting of approximately 1.09 million acres. Though interest in lease sales in the Cook Inlet have been lower historically than in other areas of the OCS, the Bureau believes that there is potential to receive bids for this sale.

On June 22, BLM-Eastern States will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 2 parcels totaling 160 acres in AR. Bidding is not expected to be robust, and the sale is not expected to be controversial.

On June 22, BLM-WY will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 26 parcels totaling 31,975 acres in Laramie, Carbon, Sweetwater, Sublette, and Uinta Counties. Bidding is not expected to be robust, and the sale is not expected to be controversial.

On June 22 - 25, BLM-AK will partner with Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing to host an annual fly-fishing event for wounded veterans in the Delta Wild and Scenic River corridor.

On June 23, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) expects to release the Final EIS for the Proposed Mountain Valley Pipeline Right of Way. The pipeline would cross 3.4 miles of the Jefferson National Forest in Monroe County, WV and Giles and Montgomery Counties, VA. The U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and BLM are cooperating agencies. FERC is the lead agency in preparing the Final EIS. The BLM is the Federal agency responsible for issuing right-of-way (ROW) grants, with concurrence from the USFS and the COE,

On June 23, BLM-OR's Myrtlewood Field Office will hold the Crystal Clear Timber Sale (116 acres; 5,605 mbf) and First Floras Timber Sale (25 acres; 1,295 mbf). These sales may be controversial due to ongoing conflicts between conservation interests and the logging/timber industry.

On June 26 - 28, the Western Governors' Association (WGA) will hold its annual meeting in Whitefish, MT, during which Secretary Zinke is scheduled to speak (June 27). BLM's participants have not yet been determined. During the WGA meeting, the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) will present a strategic plan that has been integrated with Federal, State and Tribal commitments. The NISC membership consists of senior leadership from the Departments of State, Treasury, Agriculture and the Interior, OMB, and EPA, among others. The purpose of the Council is to provide high-level vision and leadership to sustain and expand Federal efforts to prevent, eradicate, and control invasive species.

On June 26 - 30, BLM-CA State Director Jerry Perez plans to conduct courtesy visits with members and staff of the CA Congressional delegation in Washington, DC to discuss public land management issues, including oil and gas development, planning efforts, wildfire, renewable energy, and recreation.

On June 28, BSEE will hold a workshop with NASA on Probabilistic Risk Assessment (PRA). NASA will introduce its guide to PRA to industry stakeholders and solicit input on its potential application to offshore oil and gas projects.

On June 30, BOEM plans to publish a final rule to address the use of OCS sand, gravel, and shell resources for shore protection, beach restoration, and coastal wetlands restoration projects by Federal, state, and local government agencies for construction projects authorized by or funded in whole or part by the Federal Government. The rule will describe the negotiated noncompetitive agreement process and codify new and existing procedures.

On June 30, BOEM plans to announce the implementation of a 12.5% royalty rate for oil and gas production on the OCS in waters less than 200 meters offered for lease in GOM Lease Sale 249. The Bureau will publish the rate change in the *Federal Register* and affected governors will be notified via correspondence.

On June 30, BOEM plans to publish the Record of Decision for a project to rehabilitate 4 miles of shoreline damaged by Hurricane Matthew in Martin County, FL. The Bureau will enter into a 3-party agreement with Martin County and USACE to dredge up to 1,000,000 cubic yards of OCS sand.

In late June, pending approval, BOEM plans to initiate the process of developing a new Five Year Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Program, with publication of a Request for Information and Comments. Notification letters will also be sent to all 50 Governors and several Federal agencies, as required under section 18 of the OCS Lands Act. This action will be taken pursuant to the direction provided in the April 28, 2017, Executive Order entitled, "Implementing an America-First Offshore Energy Strategy" and Secretary's Order 3350, issued on May 1, 2017.

In late June/early July, BLM plans to issue the Boardman to Hemingway Record of Decision. On February 28, BLM received the Biological Opinion from the National Marine Fisheries Service. BLM-OR land use plan amendments are being handled concurrently and the decision will be issued simultaneously with the ROD for the EIS and approval to issue a right-of-way grant. The ROD will be set up for ASLM approval and will be submitted in advance for review.

In late June/early July, BOEM plans to hold a New York Offshore Renewable Energy Intergovernmental Task Force meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the status of current offshore renewable energy leases, receive lessee updates on future activities, and discuss the new unsolicited lease requests offshore Massachusetts and New York.

In July, proposed revisions to the BLM Waste Prevention Rule are expected to publish in the Federal Register.

On July 7, BOEM will publish a Notice of Availability of the Final Supplemental EIS for the Cape Wind Project. The EIS will supplement the 2009 Final EIS and is being prepared pursuant to a remand order from the D.C. Circuit Court. The ROD will publish on August 11.

On July 10, four individuals charged with various crimes during the 2014 Gold Butte cattle impoundment are scheduled to be re-tried following the declaration of a mistrial on April 24, 2017. BLM-NV communications are being coordinated with BLM-WO and the Department of Justice.

On July 11, BSEE Director Angelle is scheduled to speak at the American Petroleum Institute (API) Safe Lifting Conference in Houston, TX.

In mid-July, OSMRE's Western Region plans to publish a Notice of Availability 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.

On July 13, the BLM-AK's Glennallen Field Office will begin issuing permits for the 2017 - 2018 Unit 13 Federal subsistence moose and caribou hunting seasons. The BLM issues nearly 3,500 Federal subsistence permits annually and provides permitting opportunities to rural residents in Delta Junction, Cantwell, Slana, and Glennallen.

On July 13, BOEM plans to hold an Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force meeting in San Luis Obispo, CA to discuss the results of the collaborative data and information collection efforts and the potential areas identified for the Call for Information and Nominations (Call). Development of the Call was necessitated by an application for a commercial lease submitted by Trident Wind offshore Morrow Bay, CA in January 2016 and competitive interest indicated by Statoil in its response to the subsequent Request for Information in August 2016.

On July 17, BOEM plans to publish the Final Notice of Sale and Record of Decision for GOM Lease Sale 249. The sale is scheduled for August 16 and will be the first lease sale under the

2017-2022 OCS Oil & Gas Program as well as the first region-wide sale.

On July 18 – 20, Acting ASLM Kate MacGregor will participate in the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Governor’s Trail Ride hosted by the Idaho Cattle Association and Idaho Governor Butch Otter. The event, which will take place on historic ranchland in the Upper Snake River Valley, is designed to provide an opportunity to explore natural resource issues first-hand, and will include discussions about improvements to the Federal grazing permit process and sustainable land use.

On July 19 BLM plans to hold an auction of Federally-owned crude helium. Under the Helium Stewardship Act of 2013, the BLM must offer for auction and sale annually a portion of the helium reserves stored underground at the Cliffside Gas Field, near Amarillo, TX. The BLM anticipates auctioning 500 MMcf in a total of 30 lots for delivery in FY 2018. Following the auction, the BLM will offer an allocated sale in which helium is offered to refiners, and a non-allocated sale in which the helium is offered to non-refiners.

On July 22, the BLM-OR/WA Lakeview Resource Area plans to hold an open house to discuss ongoing work with a private, non-profit partner to develop a multi-prong approach to managing the Beatty Butte Herd Management Area. For the first time, an external partner will work with BLM staff to bait trap horses, administer PZP to mares, and gentle horses considered good candidates for adoption.

On or before July 31, the Record of Decision (ROD) for the BLM-ID Craters of the Moon Proposed Monument Management Plan Amendment/Final Environmental Impact Statement must be signed.

On August 3, BLM-NV Las Vegas Field Office will hold the spring land sale under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) in Las Vegas. The BLM proposes to offer 81.25 acres of public land in 17 parcels for competitive sale. In accordance with SNPLMA, funds generated by this proposed sale will be used for projects such as the development of parks, trails, and natural areas, capital improvements on Federal lands, acquisition of environmentally sensitive land, and Lake Tahoe restoration projects.

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

**FY 2018 Budget.** The Secretary is scheduled to testify in support of the President’s FY 2018 Budget on the following upcoming dates: June 21, Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee and June 22, House Natural Resources Committee. Olivia B. Ferriter, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget, Finance, Performance, and Acquisition, and Denise Flanagan, Director, Office of Budget will be supporting witnesses at these hearings.

**Eagle Horizon Exercise, Site C, June 21, 2017.** The entire Department of the Interior COOP team will participate in the interagency Continuity of Operations (COOP) Exercise EAGLE HORIZON 17 (EH-17) to provide incoming senior leadership insight into the operational aspects of the Department’s COOP and Devolution plans, to include the functionality of the Department’s alternate sites, and a review of the Department’s Primary Mission Essential Functions (PMEFs), Mission Essential Functions (MEFs) and Essential Supporting Activities (ESAs) which are the primary focus during catastrophic emergencies.

**41st Annual National Indian Timber Symposium in Yakima, Washington, June 25-29,**

**2017.** DAS-PRE Humbert and Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) Director Rice will be attending this conference. Director Rice will speak on two panels on June 26 and 27 and DAS-PRE Humbert will provide the DOI Wildland Fire Update on June 29.

**Border Security Meetings, Santa Ana, TX, June 28-29, 2017.** Interagency Borderlands Coordinator Jon Andrew and new Coordinator Brent Range will attend a planning meeting with National Wildlife Refuge staff and U.S. Customs and Border Protection facilities personnel at the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters. Pre-planning activities will be reviewed, including proposed geotechnical surveys. Visits to possible construction sites may also be conducted. An orientation tour for Range will take place on June 28.

**Border Security Forum, Tucson, AZ, June 29, 2017.** A mini-Border Forum will be convened with DOI land managers, USDA Forest Service personnel, and U.S. Border Patrol from the Yuma and Tucson sectors in attendance. A border-wide leadership meeting on southwest border security and environmental protection is still expected to take place in September 2017 (date TBD) in Tucson, AZ. Planning for possible new border security infrastructure is expected to be the main focus of the meeting. Senior officials at DOI, CBP, U.S. Border Patrol and USDA Forest Service are expected to attend.

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

**Implementation of the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 (DATA Act) (Job Code 101902).** GAO will assess (1) the completeness, timeliness, and accuracy of selected data elements submitted by agencies under the DATA Act for display on USASpending.gov or a successor system; and (2) OMB and Treasury's progress toward addressing issues related to implementation of the DATA Act. An entrance conference has not been scheduled.

**North American Energy Integration and Security (Job Code 102037).** Per request made by the Chair and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, GAO will review: (1) the actions relevant U.S. agencies have taken in regards to North American energy integration and the extent to which these agencies coordinate their efforts; (2) how U.S. agencies communicate and interact with industry and civil society and take into account their input regarding North American energy integration; and (3) the options stakeholders have identified in infrastructure, border processing, and labor collaboration that the U.S. government could implement to better integrate the North American energy market. The entrance with the Office of International Affairs is not scheduled.

#### **GAO Exit Conference/Pending Reports**

**Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Coordination (Job Code 100758) – June 1, 2017, with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement staff.** Per requests from Ranking Member Grace Napolitano, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, U.S. House of Representatives; Jared Huffman, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans, Committee on Natural Resources, U.S. House of Representatives; and Paul Tonko, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy, Committee on Energy and Commerce, U.S. House of Representatives, GAO reviewed the agencies that provide funding or planning assistance to states or communities for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.

## **Recent Final GAO Reports**

**Indian Affairs: Further Actions Needed to Improve Oversight and Accountability for School Safety Inspections (GAO-17-421).** Per requests from the Chair and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, GAO reviewed the extent to which the Department has taken action to address weaknesses with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) school safety program and the extent to which BIA monitors the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) school safety inspection reports and uses timeliness information to evaluate employee performance. GAO issued the final report May 24 with six recommendations to the Department to address previously identified weaknesses in the safety program, establish processes to monitor the quality and timeliness of BIE school inspection reports. The Department's response addressing the recommendations is due July 24.

**Indian Affairs: Actions Needed to Better Manage Indian School Construction Projects (GAO-17-447).** Per request from the Chair and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, GAO reviewed BIA's plan to maintain, repair, or replace schools while ensuring funds used efficiently and with sufficient accountability throughout the school construction process. GAO issued the final report May 24 with six recommendations including that BIA develop a capital asset plan for school facility construction and repair, develop and implement guidance on how to use accountability measures and improve oversight of projects. The Department's response addressing the recommendations is due July 24.

## **New Office of Inspector General (OIG) Audits**

**National Park Service (NPS) Centennial Challenge Projects (2017-CR-044).** The OIG initiated an audit of the NPS Centennial Challenge Program. The audit will assess whether NPS received and verified the full non-Federal partner match for the Centennial Challenge projects and programs and manages them in accordance with the partnership agreements and applicable policies and regulations. This audit may include site visits to NPS regional offices and park units. The OIG requested NPS provide preliminary information by June 16.

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

In early June, 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-quality/quantity related projects to implement.

**June 26-28: Multi-Agency National Invasive Species Council Meeting (MT):** From June 26-28, Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Scott Cameron and Reclamation will participate in a meeting sponsored by the National Invasive Species Council (NISC). The meeting will be held concurrent with the June 26-28 Western Governors' Association Meeting in Whitefish, MT. Several DOI agencies and the DOI Office of Policy Analysis will also participate. The meeting aims to integrate policy among federal and state (and possibly tribal)

partners that will improve the prevention, eradication, and containment of aquatic invasive species in the Pacific Northwest. In addition, the group will study ways to reduce the risk of zebra/quagga mussel introduction into the Columbia River Basin.

**June 28: Mikkelsen to Testify on Reclamation Budget:** On June 28, Acting Commissioner Alan Mikkelsen will testify before the Senate Energy and Water Development Appropriations Committee, in a joint hearing with the Army Corps of Engineers, on the Bureau of Reclamation's fiscal year 2018 budget.

**June: Funding Opportunity Posted for Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act Section 4009:** In June, Reclamation will post a funding opportunity seeking proposals for projects under WIIN Section 4009. The Act provides a path for new desalination and water recycling projects to become eligible to compete for federal funding under a competitive process. Projects are eligible if the project sponsor has a Reclamation-reviewed desalination or water recycling feasibility study and Reclamation has notified Congress stating the feasibility study meets Reclamation's requirements. Reclamation is planning on notifying Congress in June.

In June, FEMA will release a report on estimated annual losses from earthquakes in the United States. USGS science on earthquake hazards was a critical component to this analysis. The report concludes that earthquakes are estimated to cost the nation \$6.1 billion annually in building stock losses. The last report was published in 2008, and the new estimate incorporates the most recent USGS earthquake hazard maps. USGS will work with FEMA on coordinated outreach on the report.

**By the end of June: Reclamation Announces Winners for Stage I of the Arsenic Sensor Challenge:** 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.

**By the end of June: Funding Announced for Drought Contingency Planning Funding:** Dependent on departmental approval, Reclamation will announce the selected funding for Drought Contingency Planning. Through drought contingency planning, Reclamation provides financial assistance on a competitive basis for applicants to develop a drought contingency plan or to update an existing plan.

**By the end of June: Funding Announced for Cooperative Watershed Management Program:** Dependent on departmental approval, Reclamation will announce the selected funding for Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP). The CWMP provides funding to watershed groups to encourage diverse stakeholders to develop local solutions to address their water management needs.

**July 6-7: Congressman Costa's Northern California Tour (CA):** On July 6-7, Congressman Jim Costa is planning to visit the Bureau of Reclamation's Shasta Dam, Red Bluff Fish Passage Improvement Project, the sites reservoir location and the state of California's Oroville Dam. More

information to come.

**July: Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Draft Supplement to the FEIS NOA (CA):** In July, Reclamation will publish a Notice of Availability for the Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Draft Supplement to the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

In the coming weeks, 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.