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Sent: 2017-02-24T10:31:05-05:00
Importance: Normal
Subject: Fwd: U.S. Department of the Interior News Briefing for Friday, February 24, 2017
Received: 2017-02-24T10:31:34-05:00

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DATE: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2017 7:00 AM EST

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DOI In The News

Retiring Interior Lawyer Encourages Resistance To Trump.

McClatchy (2/23, Leavenworth) reports that "in the latest sign of defiance to President Donald Trump among federal environmental employees, a retiring Interior Department lawyer sent an email to hundreds of colleagues this month, urging them to 'stand your ground' and resist being pressured into signing off on legally indefensible environmental decisions." Eric W. Nagle, "a 22-year veteran of the Interior Department's solicitor's office, sent the email on Feb. 16, just

before he departed his office to attend his retirement party." The message "prompted a rebuke from a superior, but in an interview Thursday, Nagle said he felt compelled to speak out after Trump's recent Twitter criticism of a federal judge in Seattle." He said that "that incident, combined with Trump's rejection of climate change, left him convinced that 'this administration is not going to respect law or science.'"

Bloomberg BNA (2/23, Dlouhy) reports that Nagle "emphasized that he remains hopeful the Trump administration's Interior Department will 'follow the law,' but he fears political pressure will be brought to bear on the government's career civil servants." In urging "his former colleagues in the Interior Department's solicitor office to keep up the scrutiny," Nagle said, "Don't allow your name to be placed on a document that you know to be legally indefensible or scientifically unsound. Document your objections for the record. And remember that you're not alone. The Department of the Interior's independent Inspector General is there to protect you. And so far, we still have a free and vigorous press."

Statement Released On Zinke's Recent Voting Record.

KULR-TV Billings, MT (2/22, Modersitzki, Nantz) reports that "a person close" to Rep. Ryan Zinke has released "a statement on the background as to why Zinke has not voted since January." The statement said: "The Congressman is following the same protocol that all presidential nominees have followed since being nominated. He is working hard to prepare so he can take the reins and be effective at Interior on day one. With all the big issues facing Montana at the Department - whether through National Parks, the BLM or BIA - there is absolutely no doubt that Zinke's work now is preparing him to serve Montana at a higher level once the Senate votes to confirm him."

Trump May Drastically Alter Plans For Sage Grouse.

Greenwire (2/23) reports that the election of President Trump has "federal and state officials, conservation groups, and others expecting big changes in how" federal plans aimed at saving the greater sage grouse are "carried out if they are ever fully implemented." Trump has "not publicly addressed the federal sage grouse plans." However, Interior nominee Ryan Zinke has "been a vocal critic, comparing them at one time to Obamacare and saying he wants 'state-driven solutions' for managing grouse."

Republicans Expected To Use Congressional Review Act To Repeal Obama Agency Rules.

Roll Call (2/23, Mejdrich) reports that congressional Republicans "are expected to send a stream of bills...to President Donald Trump's desk, using a process to repeal agency rules known as the Congressional Review Act," which "allows Congress to repeal certain rules of the previous administration under a fast-track process that requires only a simple majority in the Senate." The Act also "states that a rule 'may not be reissued in substantially the same form, and a new rule that is substantially the same as such a rule may not be issued, unless the

reissued or new rule is specifically authorized by a law enacted after the date of the joint resolution disapproving the original rule.”

New Mexico Ranchers Upset Over Latest Wilderness Plans.

The [AP](#) (2/23, Bryan) reports that “New Mexico’s two senators have introduced legislation they say has been years in the making to set aside tens of thousands of acres as wilderness on opposite ends of the state in areas already designated as national monuments.” However, “ranchers from some rural communities fear the new designations will amount to another layer of bureaucracy aimed at pushing them from the land.” The Northern New Mexico Stockman’s Association has “passed a resolution against future wilderness and monument designations, and its members along with groups representing ranchers from elsewhere in the state are standing up to the latest wilderness proposal.”

Initial Comment Period Concludes For Paradise Valley Mining Ban.

The [Bozeman \(MT\) Daily Chronicle](#) (2/23, Wright) reports that “an initial public comment period on a potential mineral withdrawal in the Paradise Valley ended Wednesday, and while supporters of the withdrawal say they sent in thousands of comments, federal officials aren’t sure what the number is.” Marna Daley, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Forest Service, “said comments on a proposed mineral withdrawal near two gold mining proposals north of Yellowstone National Park were sent to both the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.” Daley “couldn’t offer a specific number for the comments or give an estimate, and she said more will likely arrive in the coming days.”

Backers Seek State Money For January 8th Memorial.

The [Arizona Republic](#) (2/23, Pitzl) reports that a memorial proposed for downtown Tucson will “celebrate how the tragic events” in 2011 “brought together not only the Tucson community, but a nation, supporters of the January 8th Memorial say.” On Wednesday, backers “sought \$2.5 million in support from the state Legislature to help make the planned memorial a reality.” They received “an initial approval, with a 12-0 vote from the House Appropriations Committee.”

California Democrats Introduce Measures To Protect Obama-Era Environmental Policy.

According to [Reuters](#) (2/23, Carroll), Democratic state senators in California introduced the “Preserve California” package of bills Thursday that would ensure future federal policies do not “encroach on our far-reaching progressive [environmental] policies,” said state Senate Leader Kevin de Leon in a press conference. The measures will make existing Obama-era federal regulations on clean air, water, and endangered species enforceable by state law and prevent the sale of federal lands to oil companies.

Additional coverage was provided by [Politico](#) (2/23, Siders), the [Los Angeles \(CA\) Times](#) (2/23, Megerian), the [San Francisco \(CA\) Chronicle](#) (2/23, Gutierrez), and the [Sacramento \(CA\) Bee](#) (2/23, Koseff).

Trump Urged To Make “The Rural American West Great Again”.

In commentary for the Investor’s Business Daily (2/23, Francois), Tony Francois, an attorney with Pacific Legal Foundation, draws attention to the “‘forgotten’ Americans whose jobs, families and communities have suffered...setbacks: the Western rural towns who depend on the productive economic use of federal land.” According to Francois, “these Americans have seen their livelihoods sacrificed for another coastal elite priority: radical environmentalism.” Francois offers a list of suggestions “on how President Trump can use environmental and other regulatory reforms to reduce the role of government in Americans’ lives and get the economy moving again.”

Public Lands Issue Offer Democrats A Chance To Win Over Rural Gun Owners.

In an op-ed for U.S. News & World Report (2/23, Rotherham), Andrew J. Rotherham writes that “America’s anglers, hunters and conservationists won a victory in Congress this month when a bill intended to facilitate the transfer of federal land to states was pulled by its sponsor.” The land was strongly opposed by hunters and anglers, and Rotherham argues that the episode shows how Democrats can win over new constituents. He notes that “many of the members of these groups care deeply about gun rights, but they also care about a variety of other issues related to outdoor pursuits, too.” According to Rotherham, “that’s an opportunity for Democrats struggling to get traction with rural voters and gun owners.”

Public Lands Issue Unites Diverse Interests.

In an op-ed for the Missoulian (MT) (2/23, Lukas), Jeff Lukas, the coordinator for Montana Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, writes that “on Jan. 30, more than 1,000 Montanans squeezed into the Capitol building to tell our elected officials in Helena and Washington, D.C.: Keep public lands in public hands.” According to Lukas, “anglers, hikers, skiers, campers, hunters, kayakers and other Montanans who enjoy the outdoors have united to ensure that America’s legacy of public lands will stay public.” He vows that “we will continue fighting any attempts to take public lands out of our hands.”

Movement To Turn Over Public Lands Criticized.

In an editorial, the Albany (OR) Democrat-Herald (2/23) dismisses the effort to turn over public lands to state control. According to the paper, “even if the federal government is willing to transfer the lands which seems unlikely Oregon does not have the necessary resources to properly manage the land, especially at a time when it’s facing a \$1.8 billion shortfall.”

Zinke Urged To Support Bears Ears National Monument.

In an op-ed for the Moab (UT) Sun News (2/23, Larsen), Brooke Larsen, a student in the University of Utah Environmental Humanities Graduate Program, urges Interior Secretary-designate Ryan Zinke to “stand with the Bears Ears

National Monument and object to the Utah delegation's disgraceful behavior toward Native people." According to Larsen, Zinke has said that "he will prioritize working with Native Americans." She urges Zinke to "rise above the political partisanship and listen to the Native people of this sacred desert landscape."

Column: Undoing Bears Ears Designation Could Have Positive Consequences.

In his column for the Deseret (UT) News (2/23, Evensen), Jay Evensen examines the consequences should President Trump rescind the designation of the Bears Ears National Monument. An important question is: "If the president succeeds in undoing a monument designation which never has been done how would that change the way future presidents use the Antiquities Act, which grants them unilateral power to create monuments?" According to Evensen, "Presidents would retain the power to create monuments, but the threat that a future president might change everything could make them more careful, even as it might force all parties to negotiate settlements on lands issues." He concludes that "maybe that wouldn't be such a bad thing."

America's Great Outdoors

National Park Service

NPS To Spend \$149,927 Studying Paranormal Activity.

The Washington Free Beacon (2/23, Harrington) reports that the National Park Service is "spending \$149,927 researching Bigfoot, sea monsters, unexplained lights, and other paranormal activity." Kawerak Inc., "a nonprofit group that serves people of Eskimo, Aleut, or American-Indian descent in the Bering Strait region between Alaska and Russia, received the grant last year." A spokesperson for the NPS "said the grant is part of the Shared Beringian Heritage Program, which dates back to the George H. W. Bush presidency, and receives \$650,000 each year."

Additional coverage was provided by the Daily Caller (2/23, Phippen).

Park Near White House To Reopen In March.

The Washington Post (2/23, Stein) reports that "the sidewalk and park in front of the White House, which is typically open to the public, has been closed and fenced off since before the inauguration in January." The National Park Service "said that workers are still dismantling structures from the inaugural parade and that the spaces should reopen by March 1." Mike Litterst, a spokesman for the National Park Service, "said that the extended closure is standard practice after an inauguration."

Vandalism Spotted In Boston Similar To Messages Written On National Monuments In DC.

WRC-TV Washington (2/23) reports that "days after several war memorials and national monuments were vandalized with strange messages in D.C., similar graffiti has been spotted on landmarks in Boston." Richard Rudnickas, "a

photographer, told News4 he spotted what appears to be the same message near the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum." United States Park Police said it was "aware of the vandalism in Boston, which some people posted on social media." It is "working with the Boston Police Department to investigate."

NPS Denies Port Angeles' Claim On Elwha Water Facilities.

The [Peninsula \(WA\) Daily News](#) (2/24, Major) reports that the National Park Service has "denied Port Angeles' \$60 million claim regarding the Elwha River Surface Water Intake and treatment facilities, continuing the impasse between the city and Park Service." Barb Maynes, Olympic National Park spokeswoman, said, "We are still in very close discussions with the city. We're working very hard, as is the city, to come to a successful resolution."

Elkmont Demolition To Start March 6 In Smokies.

The [Knoxville \(TN\) News Sentinel](#) (2/23, Ahillen) reports that "work on demolishing 29 structures at Elkmont Historic District in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park will begin March 6 and is expected to be completed May 26, according to the National Park Service." Spokeswoman Dana Soehn said that "the demolition, to be performed by an as yet unnamed company under contract, is part of a project to renovate the former logging and resort community off Fighting Creek Gap Road." Soehn said, "We are in the final stages of the contract process so we should have that (company name) soon. We are trying very hard to accomplish the work before the firefly season and we want to give the public plenty of time to learn about the anticipated closures."

Bent's Old Fort Launches Second Year Of "Every Kid In A Park" Program.

The [Prowers Journal \(CO\)](#) (2/23, Baldwin) reports that Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site is inviting "all fourth graders to visit the park for free this year as part of the Every Kid in a Park program." Chief of Interpretation Rick Wallner said, "There's a world of history to discover at Bent's Old Fort, and we're excited to welcome fourth graders and their families throughout the year. We hope that our young visitors learn and have fun at the fort while building connections to our country's heritage."

Additional Coverage: Report Says Maintenance Backlog Is No Excuse To Sell Public Land.

Additional coverage of the recent report from the Center for American Progress which casts doubt on the argument that the NPS' maintenance backlog is reason to sell off public land was provided by [Outside](#) (2/23, Ferry).

Fish and Wildlife Service

Effort Seeks To Get Young People Outdoors.

The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (2/23, Hennessy) reports that "hunters and anglers are the primary source of funding for wildlife conservation through license fees," but "their numbers...are declining." Dan Ashe, former director of the U.S. Fish

and Wildlife Service, has "started an urban initiative to try to improve on recruitment." His goal is to "get people out of the city and visiting national parks, wildlife refuges and forests." , who is now the chief executive of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, said, "What we need to do, at a professional level, is to make a commitment to diversify our ranks."

States Dispute Efforts To Regulate Fishing On Upper Mississippi River National Fish And Wildlife Refuge.

The La Crosse (WI) Tribune (2/23, Hubbuch) reports that "federal wildlife officials have released new policies governing more than a dozen activities on the Upper Mississippi River and surrounding refuge lands, but attorneys continue reviewing controversial updates governing commercial uses." According to the article, "at issue is a longstanding jurisdictional dispute between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state governments over the 240,000-acre Upper Mississippi River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge." Earlier this month the FWS "released 16 finalized documents covering noncommercial uses such as camping, boating and swimming, as well as foraging, archaeological surveys and livestock grazing along more than 261 miles of the river between Wabasha, Minn., and Rock Island, Ill." Although "the plans generated few public comments," the article says that "seven compatibility determinations covering commercial uses remain under review after outcry by stakeholders and state governments objecting to the federal government's control of navigable waters."

FWS Seeks Input On Plans For Plum Tree Island.

The Newport News (VA) Daily Press (2/23, Reyes) reports that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking public in put on a draft of a conservation plan for the Plum Tree Island National Wildlife Refuge. The FWS is proposing to open up nearby Cow Island "for greater public access and increased monitoring of the ecosystem." The agency "presented a draft of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan in two sessions at Poquoson City Hall Thursday and encouraged attendees to submit comments."

Yaqui Catfish Faces Extinction.

Yale University (CT) Environment 360 (2/23, Conniff) reports that the remaining U.S. population of the Yaqui catfish, "in and around the San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge in southeastern Arizona, has been declining by 15 percent a year, according to a new study in the journal Biological Conservation." According to the article, "that decline has continued even as a cooperative restoration effort by federal officials and private landowners has proved highly successful at protecting other aquatic species there." However, "for the catfish, with population recruitment 'essentially zero' (meaning no younger generations surviving), the co-authors conclude that the last few elderly individuals still hanging on represent the end of the species in this country."

Bureau of Land Management

Environmental Groups Reach Agreement On Idaho Wolf Derby Lawsuit.

The [AP](#) (2/23, Ridler) reports that “a federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit by environmental groups involving a wolf- and coyote-shooting contest in Idaho as part of a settlement agreement that requires federal officials to notify the groups if another contest is planned.” It “follows several years of court skirmishes between the groups and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management involving Idaho for Wildlife’s Predator Hunting Contest.” In the settlement on Wednesday, “the BLM agrees that it rescinded the permit as well as various decisions in an environmental process leading up to the permit.” The agreement also requires the bureau “to notify the groups during the next three years if the agency receives a permit application at its Idaho Falls district office for another predator hunting contest.”

Coverage by the AP was also picked up by [U.S. News & World Report](#) (2/23, Ridler) and [KBOI-TV Boise \(ID\)](#) Boise, ID (2/23, Ridler).

Additional coverage was provided by [Law360](#) (2/23, Lidgett).

US Geological Survey

USGS Study Finds Unusually Early Spring Across America.

The [Daily Mail](#) (2/23, Macdonald) reports that for some in the US, “spring has already begun well ahead of schedule, a new study led by the US Geological Survey reveals.” According to the article, “maps from the USGS-led USA National Phenology Network show spring has begun three weeks early in some places.” However, “while many may be rejoicing in the onset of warmer weather, researchers warn the changing climate could affect health, society, and the economy.”

Securing America’s Energy Future

Offshore Energy Development

DOJ Orders Wood Group To Pay \$9.5M In Fines For Gulf Incidents.

The [AP](#) (2/23, McGill) reports DOJ announced \$9.5 million in fines against Wood Group PSN for “falsely reported for several years that personnel had performed safety inspections on offshore [oil] facilities in the Gulf of Mexico.” The fine also includes payment ordered for Wood’s role in a 2012 oil platform explosion that killed three Filipino welders and Gulf Coast community service projects. [ABC News](#) (2/24) reports in an emailed statement, Wood Group said, “We deeply regret these incidents occurred and we cooperated fully with the government and relevant regulatory bodies throughout both investigations.”

Additional coverage was provided by the [Baton Rouge \(LA\) Advocate](#) (2/23).

Onshore Energy Development

Authorities Arrest Nearly Three Dozen To Clear Out Dakota Access Protest Camp.

The [AP](#) (2/23) reports authorities cleared out and raze remaining buildings from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest camp in an operation that took about 3.5

hours. "Nearly three dozen" were arrested, though the [CBS Evening News](#) (2/23, story 11, 0:25, Pelley) puts the tally closer to two dozen. The [New York Times](#) (2/23, Smith) says North Dakota State Highway Patrol Lt. Tom Iverson expressed dismay at having authorities enforce the deadline because it "puts us in harm's way. It puts others in harm's way," though there were no reports of injured parties. The Indigenous Environmental Network Executive Director Tom Goldtooth called the evacuation a "violent and unnecessary infringement" on protesters' constitutional rights. According to the [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/23, Connors), police in riot gear with weapons drawn entered the federal land on Humvees with a Customs and border Protection helicopter overhead Thursday morning to clear out remaining the camp.

Dakota Access Protest Camp Cleared Out. The [AP](#) (2/23, Macpherson, Nicholson) reports police in full riot gear, accompanied by eighteen National Guardsmen, entered the protest camp in North Dakota to begin arresting those who remain in defiance of orders to leave. Police were joined by a helicopter and airplane, along with SWAT vehicles. Officers began moving in shortly after US Army Corps of Engineer officials met with camp leaders. Gov. Doug Burgum gave those remaining at the camp the opportunity to leave without facing charges by sending a bus at midday to transport anyone left to Bismarck. The [AP](#) (2/23) reports authorities declared the camp clear shortly before 3 local time after arresting the last remaining holdouts. Nearly three dozen people were arrested in the three and a half hour operation. Officers methodically checked buildings and arrested anyone left in the camp. Cleanup crews began demolishing buildings on federal land.

ETP CEO Warren Says He Underestimated Power Of Social Media In Protests. [The Hill](#) (2/23, Henry) reports Energy Transfer Partners CEO Kelcy Warren said he "underestimated the power of social media" in the protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline. Warren said, "There was no way we can defend ourselves. ... That was a mistake on my part." [Bloomberg News](#) (2/23, Loh) reports Warren "was surprised that people were able to spread messages – including falsehoods – so widely and quickly over the Internet and 'get away with it.'"

Additional Coverage Of Decision To Close Navajo Generating Station.

Additional coverage of the decision to close the Navajo Generating Station was provided by [USA Today](#) (2/23, Randazzo), the [Arizona Republic](#) (2/23, Randazzo), and [Circle of Blue WaterNews](#) (2/23, Walton).

Renewable Energy

Offshore Wind Energy Faces Hurdles Under Trump.

[Bloomberg News](#) (2/24, Ryan, Dlouhy) reports offshore wind energy companies "have spent years struggling to convince skeptics that the future of U.S. energy should include giant windmills at sea" and "their job just got a lot harder with the election of Donald J. Trump," who has "has mocked wind farms as ugly, overpriced and deadly to birds." Companies attempting to build in the United States "are hoping to change Trump's mind" and "they plan to argue that

installing Washington Monument-sized turbines along the Atlantic coast will help the president make good on campaign promises by creating thousands of jobs, boosting domestic manufacturing and restoring U.S. energy independence." Bloomberg points out that "the industry may already have a few key allies" in the administration, including Rick Perry, who "oversaw a record expansion of wind energy during his time as Texas governor."

Empowering Native American Communities

BIE Schools Exempt From Hiring Freeze.

Politico Morning Education (2/23, Wermund) reports that the Trump Administration is "in the process of authorizing exemptions to the federal hiring freeze to fill more than 100 teaching vacancies in Bureau of Indian Education schools," according to an Interior Department official. In addition to the teaching positions, the administration is "looking at a number of BIE positions" for exemptions, a spokeswoman said.

Court Urged To Toss Claims By Mdewakanton Sioux Indians.

Law360 (2/23, Westney) reports that the Interior Department has "urged a D.C. federal judge to toss a suit by descendants of a Native American group seeking to take hold of a Minnesota land parcel, saying the group's claims come too late and have already failed in two previous suits." The Mdewakanton Sioux Indians of Minnesota, "who claim to be comprised of lineal descendants of the Mdewakanton band of the Sioux tribe, hit the DOI with a Nov. 23 complaint."

Office Of Insular Affairs

Interior Transmits An Adjustment Of \$18.2 Million To USVI.

The Virgin Islands Consortium (VIR) (2/23) reports that Acting Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Nikolao Pula has "approved an adjustment payment of \$18,173,711 million to the G.V.I. for fiscal year 2016 rum excise tax actuals." Pula said, "We recognize these funds are critical to government operations in the USVI and are working closely with Governor Kenneth Mapp and his staff to ensure the funds are transferred as quickly as possible."

Track Star Mentoring Youth In Sports.

The Pacific (GUM) Daily News (2/22, Raymundo) reports that "former Chuuk track star John Howard is hoping to keep teens away from underage drinking by inspiring them to engage in a life of sports." According to the article, "for the past six months, Howard, through the local group Big Brothers Big Sisters and its affiliate, Micronesia Resource Center, has been mentoring teens who live at Hemlani's Harmon Apartments." Howard "said wanted to use his own experience as a representative of the Federated States of Micronesia." In his weekly address on Monday, Gov. Eddie Calvo "highlighted Howard's commitment to help the kids at Hemlani's."

Eni Faleomavaega, American Samoa's Longest-Serving Rep., Dies At 73.

The [AP](#) (2/23) reports American Samoa's longest-serving delegate to the House of Representatives Eni F. H. Faleomavaega died at 73 at his Provo, Utah home on Wednesday, said his sister-in-law. The Democrat, who could only vote in a committee, served consecutively from 1989 to 2014, including stints on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the House Committee on Natural Resources. The AP notes Faleomavaega's participation in the 1996 boycott of President Jacques Chirac over controversial nuclear tests.

Tackling America's Water Challenges

BOR Awards Contract For Work On Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System.

The [AP](#) (2/23) reports that the Bureau of Reclamation has "awarded a nearly \$92 million contract for design and construction of portions of a regional water system in north-central New Mexico." The BOR "says the four-year contract with Boston-headquartered CDM Smith is for parts of the Pojoaque (PO'-ah-key) Basin Regional Water System." According to the BOR, "the project includes diversion works, storage, a treatment plant, pipelines, pumping plants and other facilities."

Additional coverage was provided by the [Santa Fe New Mexican](#) (2/23, Cole).

Coverage by the AP was also picked up by [U.S. News & World Report](#) (2/23) and the [Wilmington \(DE\) News Journal](#) (2/23).

BOR's Bountry Named Federal Engineer Of The Year.

[WaterWorld](#) (2/23) reports that Bureau of Reclamation engineer Jennifer Bountry, P.E. is the 2017 Federal Engineer of the Year. Her selection was "announced at the National Society of Professional Engineers awards luncheon on Feb. 17, 2017, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C." In addition to Federal Engineer of the Year, she was selected as the Reclamation Engineer of the Year. Acting Commissioner David Murillo said, "Jennifer is an outstanding and well-rounded engineer who has made key achievements in river restoration and I would like to congratulate her on her selection as Federal Engineer of the Year. Reclamation engineering expertise is known throughout the world and this expertise is developing tools to guide a sustainable water and power future."

Additional Coverage: Study Links Climate Change To Reduction In Colorado River Flows.

Additional coverage that "global warming is already shrinking the Colorado River" was provided by the [AP](#) (2/23, Elliott) and the [Las Vegas \(NV\) Sun](#) (2/23, Davis).

Additional Coverage: Shasta Dam Gates Opened For First Time In 19 Years.

Additional coverage that "for the first time in almost two decades, water was released Wednesday from the topmost gates of the dam impounding Lake Shasta" was provided by the [Los Angeles Times](#) (2/23, Serna) and [KTLA-TV Los](#)

Angeles (2/23).

Top National News

Media: Trump Calls Deportations “A Military Operation”; Kelly Quickly “Contradicts” Him.

President Trump’s comment at a White House meeting of business executives that under his immigration policy, “we’re getting really bad dudes out of this country at a rate that nobody’s ever seen before” in “a military operation” draws considerable critical media attention, with every major story on the comment stating that DHS Secretary Kelly quickly followed by saying that no military force is being used. While the White House said the President was using the term figuratively, several sources use the contradiction between Trump and Kelly to highlight the difficulties the Administration has had with immigration policy.

ABC World News Tonight (2/23, lead story, 3:40, Muir) reported that the President called his “immigration crackdown...‘a military operation’ at the border.” But “his own Homeland Security secretary had very different words about the operation.” ABC’s Matt Gutman: “At the White House today, President Trump declaring his new immigration crackdown” a success. Trump: “We’re getting really bad dudes out of this country, and at a rate that nobody’s ever seen before, and they are the bad ones, and it’s a military operation.” Gutman: “A military operation? Not according to Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly.” Kelly: “No. Repeat, no use of military force in immigration operations. None.” The CBS Evening News (2/23, story 2, 1:00, Pelley) said “there was some confusion today on immigration.” CBS’ Margaret Brennan: “The White House later tried to clarify, saying the President meant ‘military operation’ as an adjective to describe what they say is an efficient rate of deportation.”

NBC Nightly News (2/23, story 4, 1:35, Alexander) reported that Trump was “contradicted quickly” by Kelly, who is in Mexico with Secretary of State Tillerson. USA Today (2/23, Agren) reports that Kelly “addressed an anxious audience of Mexican migrants living in the USA and Mexican officials preparing to receive an influx of deportees.” Kelly said, “Everything that we do will be done in a legal way and with respect for human rights and the US justice system.” The Wall Street Journal (2/23, Schwartz, Whelan, De Córdoba) reports that Kelly also said there would be “no mass deportations.” The AP (2/23, Lederman) reports that while Kelly and Tillerson “tried to alleviate Mexico’s concerns, Trump was fanning them further,” offering “an altogether different message from Kelly and Tillerson, who traveled here to meet with top Mexican officials at a time of intense turbulence for US-Mexico relations.”

The Washington Post (2/23, Rucker) says the President “celebrated what he called ‘a military operation’ to round up and deport undocumented immigrants who have committed crimes or caused violence.” The Post says the phrasing “could raise eyebrows among immigrant rights advocates and even within” DHS. The Post says “a leaked DHS proposal last week to deploy Army National Guard troops to help apprehend undocumented immigrants was quickly denied by DHS leadership and the White House as being under consideration.”

The Los Angeles Times (2/23, Memoli) writes that while Trump “speaks in

terms of unadulterated success" on immigration policy, "few others in the administration go so far," and "a muddled picture has emerged on where the Trump administration is headed. Thursday offered a clear example of the problems that arise when Trump and his top aides send different messages." The Hill (2/23, Fabian) reports that White House press secretary Sean Spicer said Trump "wasn't speaking literally." Spicer said, "The President was using that as an adjective. It is happening with precision."

The New York Times (2/23, A1, Ahmed, Harris, Nixon) writes that Trump "has a penchant for dropping unwelcome surprises during visits between the United States and Mexico. Last month, on the first day of a trip to Washington by Mexico's foreign minister, Mr. Trump signed an executive order to build a wall between the two countries," and earlier this week, just before the trip by the two secretaries, the Administration "released policies that vastly expanded the potential for deportation of undocumented immigrants." The Washington Post (2/23, Olivo) says "the visit by Tillerson and Kelly comes a month after a heated volley of tweets between President Trump and Mexico's president, Enrique Peña Nieto, over who should pay for a wall on the southern US border prompted Peña Nieto to cancel a White House visit."

The Washington Times (2/23, Boyer) says Trump "praised" DHS efforts "to arrest and deport more illegal immigrants Thursday, calling it 'a military operation' that is getting 'really bad dudes' out of the US." The New York Post (2/23, Halper) also reports that Trump "likened the removal of illegal immigrants in the US to a 'military operation.'" Politico (2/23, Nussbaum) says "the comment was surprising given that ICE and the border patrol are civilian, not military, organizations." Business Insider (2/23, Woody) says the comments "appear to contradict some White House efforts to downplay the scope and scale of his deportation plans."

The TIME (2/23, Beckwith) and Vanity Fair (2/22, Nguyen) websites also highlight the President's use of the term "military operation," while the Washington Times (2/23, Dinan) and Politico (2/23, McCaskill) have brief items focused on Kelly's remarks.

CBS Fact-Checks Trump's Deportation "Boasting." The CBS Evening News (2/23, story 3, 0:40, Pelley) reported, "The President's boasting go the better of him today. He said the US is deporting drug dealers and gang members 'for the first time.' And as you heard, he said they're being deported at a rate nobody has ever seen before. For the record, our research department spoke to an official at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency. In January of last year, there were 17,649 deportations. Last month, it was one thousand fewer. And last year, 58 percent had been convicted of serious crimes, such as drug dealing."

The Intercept (2/23, Devereaux) headlines a report "Donald Trump Plans To Bypass The Courts To Deport As Many People As Possible." Tennessee-based immigration attorney Greg Siskind said, "I see now what the plan is. Their plan is basically to have everybody thrown out of the country without ever going to court."

Newsweek Analysis: Trump's Deportation Policies Could Cost "Billions."

Newsweek (2/23, Cadei) under the headline "Trump's Deportation Plans Would Cost Billions" that Trump's "plans to dramatically increase deportations are causing panic in immigrant communities across the country" and are also "likely to add billions of dollars to the tab for Trump's immigration crackdown, on top of the \$21 billion that DHS officials have estimated it could cost to build the president's desired wall on the border with Mexico." Last year, Ben Gitis of the "center-right" American Action Forum estimated that it would cost \$400 billion to \$600 billion to deport all of those in the US illegally within two years. While Trump has not called for that, Newsweek says the additional staffing needs for increased enforcement could cost more than \$1.5 billion.

CNN: FBI Rejected White House Request To Contest Stories On Russia Contacts.

According to USA Today (2/23, Cummings), CNN reported Thursday that unnamed US officials indicated that the FBI "refused a White House request to comment" on media reports that President Trump's campaign had contact with Russians known to US intelligence. Jim Sciutto said on CNN's Situation Room (2/23) that the White House "sought the help of the Bureau and other agencies investigating the Russian matter to say that the reports were wrong and that there had been no contacts." Evan Perez reported on CNN's Situation Room (2/23) that US law enforcement officials say the White House request began when Chief of Staff Priebus met with FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe the day after those media reports broke. However, White House officials dispute that account, "saying that McCabe called Priebus that morning" and said a New York Times story on the matter "vastly overstated what the FBI knows about these Russia contacts."

Perez later said on CNN's Situation Room that communication between the White House and the FBI is "unusual because of a decade-old restriction on such contacts. The request from the White House is a violation of those procedures to limit communications with FBI on pending investigations." The New York Post (2/23, Perez) reports a White House official told CNN the request was only made after the FBI approached the Administration and indicated the media reports were not true.

Rep. Andre Carson said on CNN's Situation Room (2/23), "The fact that the Administration is using its authority to impose on the FBI in a way that is unlawful and unethical, quite frankly, disturbs me." Carson was later asked if the White House contact with the FBI should be investigated, to which he replied, "Without a question. I think it goes along the lines of other questionable acts not only the violation of the emolument clause and other violations and general Flynn speaking to Russian diplomats." Sciutto said on CNN's Anderson Cooper 360 (2/23) that the FBI is still investigating the communications between Trump associates and Russian officials, as are the House and Senate Intelligence Committees, according to several members of those panels.

Ignatius: US, Allies Must Resist Russia Influence Efforts Or "Post-West Era" May "Be Next." In his Washington Post (2/23) column, David Ignatius says "we may be missing the forest for the trees" in the story about Russia allegedly

attempting to influence the US election as the effort "is part of a much bigger tale of Russian covert action" that used Trump's campaign as a "witting" or "unwitting" "tool." Ignatius urges Americans to "pay attention" because "this is how the Russians try to subvert politics – boldly, secretly and often corruptly." Ignatius adds that if the US and its allies "don't resist, a post-West era may indeed be next."

DOJ Reverses Obama Order Phasing Out Private Contractors To Run Prisons.

Reuters (2/23, Beech) and the New York Times (2/23, Lichtblau) report the Justice Department has reversed an Obama Administration order that called for the phasing out of using private contractors to run federal prisons. Reuters says that Attorney General Sessions wrote in a memo made public Thursday that former President Obama's policy harmed the government's ability to meet possible needs of the prison system. Sessions said, according to Bloomberg News (2/23, Strohm), "The memorandum changed long-standing policy and practice, and impaired the Bureau's ability to meet the future needs of the federal correctional system." Politico (2/23, Ocasio) reports a Justice Department spokesman indicated that the new memo provides the Federal Bureau Of Prisons with more flexibility. The spokesman said in a statement, "This will restore BOP's flexibility to manage the federal prison inmate population based on capacity needs."

The Washington Post (2/23, Zapotosky) says that while the change is "a significant policy shift" from the Obama Administration, "the practical impact might be somewhat muted." The Post indicates that "most inmates are housed in state prisons, rather than federal ones" and the Obama Administration's decision to no longer use private facilities "only affected 13,000 prisons" that "hous[ed] a little more than 22,000 inmates." The Post adds that the original order "also did not apply to Immigration and Customs Enforcement and US Marshals Service detainees."

Media: Private Prison Sector Supported Trump During Election. Eamon Javers said on CNBC's Closing Bell (2/23) that the private prison sector has been "very close" to Trump and "saw something they very much liked in Donald Trump's administration." USA Today (2/23, Schouten) reports private prison companies "have contributed big sums to pro-Trump groups" and now "stand to make big gains under President Trump's new immigration orders." USA Today says private prison companies "see the potential for significant growth" with Trump and some GOP lawmakers "pushing to toughen penalties for undocumented immigrants who are deported and then re-enter the country illegally." USA Today highlights that GEO Group donated \$250,000 to support Trump's inauguration and a subsidiary of the company gave \$225,000 to a super PAC that spent about \$22 million to help Trump. CoreCivic provided \$250,000 to support Trump's inauguration.

Editorial Wrap-Up

New York Times.

"President Trump Breaks A Promise On Transgender Rights." In an editorial, the New York Times (2/23) cites President Trump's campaign promise "to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans from violence and oppression," and says it is not surprising he has sided with Attorney General Sessions on rescinding the transgender bathroom guidance, because "has demonstrated time and again that his stated personal convictions are malleable."

"Twinkle, Twinkle Little Trappist." A New York Times (2/24) editorial.

Washington Post.

"When Nature Is A Terrorist." In an editorial, the Washington Post (2/23) says that Bill Gates' address at the Munich Security Conference Saturday "should have caught everyone's attention" because he says world leaders should equate the urgency of public health issues with the urgency of national security threats. While it may be impossible to anticipate the next "fast-moving [wave] of peril," Gates argued that more support should go toward research on speeding up vaccine development with genomics and more time and resources should be spent on surveillance to identify the outbreak of diseases before epidemics spread. A third priority should be exercises and training "the way the military prepares for war," said Gates.

"The District's New Police Chief Brings Experience To The Job." The Washington Post (2/23) editorializes that Mayor Muriel Bowser's Thursday announcement that Peter Newsham will succeed Cathy Lanier as D.C. police chief, pending D.C. Council approval, "makes sense" for his help "transforming the department into a model agency." Noting his 28-year commitment to the D.C. force, the Post says he worked closely with police chiefs in the reform and professionalization of the force that has led to "a declining crime rate, the pioneering use of data and a department held out as a national example of how to make community policing work." The Post estimates that Newsham will survive inquiry into the "blemishes on his record" because he has learned lessons that put "him in good stead" to fulfill police chief responsibilities.

"The White House Just Told Transgender Students They're On Their Own." A Washington Post (2/23) editorial criticizes the Administration's decision to rescind Obama Administration transgender bathroom guidance, saying that while President Trump once "seemed able to see through this hysteria, expressing support for the rights of transgender people to 'use the bathroom that they feel is appropriate' and saying Caitlyn Jenner was welcome to use whatever bathroom at Trump Tower she wanted," his endorsement of "the rollback of protections will inflict needless suffering on transgender students, a vulnerable population already subjected to harassment and bullying."

Wall Street Journal.

"North Korean Terror Notice." A Wall Street Journal (2/23) editorial urges the Trump Administration in the wake of Kim Jong-Nam's assassination to label North Korea a state sponsor of terrorism.

"Waiting For Justice Gorsuch." The Wall Street Journal (2/23) editorializes that the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals' ruling this week upholding Maryland's ban

on military-style weapons underscores the importance of confirming Judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, arguing that with Gorsuch on the court, a new majority will soon be in place to reinforce the court's ruling in *DC v. Heller*, in which it upheld the individual right to bear arms.

"The ObamaCare Holdouts." A [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/23) editorial cites the millions of people who remain on grandfathered and grandmothers health insurance plans four years into the ACA as evidence that a one-size-fits-all approach from Washington does not work for everyone.

Big Picture

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[China Shakes Up Top Economic Team Ahead Of Power Shuffle](#)

[US Talks With Mexico Clouded By Mixed Message](#)

[Where Are The Toilets? Order Glut Stretches Giant Jet Makers To Limit](#)

[America's Rowdy Town Halls: More Organic Than Organized](#)

New York Times:

[Weakened Democrats Bow To Voters, Opting For Total War On Trump](#)

[Stephen Bannon Reassures Conservatives Uneasy About Trump](#)

[Trump Vowed To Protect The Safety Net. What If His Appointees Disagree?](#)

[As Kelly And Tillerson Visit Mexico, Their Reassurances Differ From Trump's Stance](#)

[Bathroom Case Puts Transgender Student On National Stage](#)

[South Korea, Next Olympics Host, Went Shopping In North America To Build Its Hockey Teams](#)

Washington Post:

[Extremists Gain Strength In Syria As Rebels Falter](#)

[Few Homes Available For Millennials Ready To Buy](#)

[Cancer Patients Fear Possible Repeal Of Health Act](#)

[New Bethesda Project Stirs Up Old Ghosts](#)

[Bannon Presses "Deconstruction"](#)

Financial Times:

[Geert Wilders Suspends Dutch Election Appearances](#)

[Electric Carmakers On Alert As Funds Hoard Cobalt](#)

[Trump Appointee Gary Cohn To Stay Clear Of Goldman Matters](#)

[US Retreats From Trump Pledge On China Currency](#)

Washington Times:

[Advisers Assure Conservatives Trump Will Press On "Promises" That Got Him Elected](#)

[Mexico Chides US Immigration Policies, Admits Route For Illegal Immigrants](#)

[Trump's Order Gives A Boost To Bathroom Bills In 12 States](#)

[CPAC Expels "Alt-Right" Leader, Declares War On Movement](#)

[As Other Countries Eye Exit, Iceland Debates Joining EU](#)

Mood In Benghazi Optimistic As Authorities Slowly Defeat Militants

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: Trump-Immigration Crackdown; Trump-Nuclear Arsenal; Bannon-Trump Comment; Trump-LGBT Bathroom Guidelines; Kansas Racial Shooting; California Officer-Teen Feud; Teenage Hikers Murder Investigation; Chicago Deadliest Day; Iraq Mosul Offensive; Severe Weather; Landing Gear Failure; Female Jogger Murder Investigation; Whale Sighting; Powerball Lottery; Oscars Award.

CBS: Bannon CPAC Appearance; Trump-Immigration Crackdown; Deportation Rate; Town Hall Protests; Wall Street-Trump Rally; US Farming Crisis; Iraq Mosul Offensive; Gymnastics Team Doctor Sexual Abuse; Georgia Teacher Murder Investigation; Teenage Hikers Murder Investigation; North Dakota Pipeline Protest; Alan Colmes Dies; NCAA Basketball News; Civil Rights Photographer.

NBC: California Officer-Teen Feud; Conservative Political Action Conference; Trump-Nuclear Arsenal; Trump-Immigration Crackdown; Treasury Secretary-Tax Reform; US Manufacturing Jobs; Iraq Mosul Offensive; Severe Weather; Powerball Lottery; Health-Migraines; Alan Colmes Dies; Landing Gear Failure; Tiger Drone Attack; Grey Garden For Sale.

Network TV At A Glance:

Trump-Immigration Crackdown – 6 minutes, 15 seconds

Iraq Mosul Offensive – 4 minutes, 40 seconds

California Officer-Teen Feud – 4 minutes, 20 seconds

Bannon CPAC Appearance – 4 minutes, 20 seconds

Teenage Hikers Murder Investigation – 3 minutes, 35 seconds

Trump-Nuclear Arsenal – 2 minutes, 10 seconds

Severe Weather – 1 minute, 25 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Trump-Nuclear Arsenal; DC Officers Shot; Conservative Political Action Conference; Kansas Racial Shooting.

CBS: Trump-Nuclear Arsenal; Kim Jung-Nam Assassination; Marijuana Legalization; Trump-Immigration Crackdown; Private Prison; Wall Street News.

FOX: Conservative Political Action Conference; Trump-Manufacturing Meeting; Trump-LGBT Bathroom Guidelines; DC Officers Shot.

NPR: Conservative Political Action Conference; Trump-Immigration Crackdown; Marijuana Legalization; Kim Jung-Nam Assassination.

Washington Schedule

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

PRESIDENT TRUMP Makes remarks at CPAC; signs an Executive Order; meets with Governor John Kasich of Ohio; meets with President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski of Peru.

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE Hosts the Governors Luncheon; delivers keynote

remarks at the Republican Jewish Coalition Annual Shabbat Dinner.

US Senate: On recess from 17 Feb – 27 Feb.

US House: 9:30 AM House of Representatives convenes for pro forma session
Location: Washington, DC <http://www.house.gov/>

On recess from 17 Feb – 27 Feb.

Other: 8:30 AM POLITICO State Solutions Conference – POLITICO Seventh Annual State Solutions Conference, featuring conversations with governors on approaches their states have taken to address complex problems. Speakers at morning session (8:30 AM EST) are Puerto Rico Governor Ricky Rossello, Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper, Alaska Governor Bill Walker, Utah Governor Gary Herbert, and Kansas Governor Sam Brownback. Speakers at afternoon session (1:30 PM EST) are Florida Governor Rick Scott, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu, Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy, Montana Governor Steve Bullock, and Idaho Governor Butch Otter Location: Microsoft Innovation & Policy Center, 901 K St NW, Washington, DC www.politico.com <https://twitter.com/POLITICOEvents> #POLGOvs

Republican Governors Association Winter Meeting – Republican Governors Association Winter Meeting, with speakers including U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. and former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley and Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker Location: Fairmont Hotel, Washington, DC www.rga.org https://twitter.com/The_RGA

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

Stephen Colbert: "In fact, [Trump has] had only four tweets the last two days. I'm starting to worry. Did someone cut off his thumbs? What is happening?"

James Corden: "Conservative Political Action Conference, CPAC, kicked off today. ... This year they'll have guest speakers, Kellyanne Conway and Donald Trump, right? It's basically two days of speeches followed by 19 days of fact-checking."

James Corden: "Other speakers attending the [CPAC] include Betsy DeVos, Reince Priebus, Steve Bannon, Mike Pence. At least that's who's speaking. The schedule just says white lady, white guy, white supremacist guy, white-haired guy, and Ben Carson."

Jimmy Fallon: "And get this. I saw that Pope Francis has actually been tweeting Bible references that opposed President Trump's travel ban. You know you're doing something wrong when you're getting cyber-bullied by the Pope."

Jimmy Fallon: "Actually, there are rumors that Russia's compiling a psychological

profile on Trump to help Putin get inside his head. Yeah. You know, it's so hard to get Trump to open up and talk about himself."

Jimmy Fallon: "I saw that Apple is criticizing Trump after he overturned the rule that lets transgender students use the bathroom of their choice. Apple says that regardless of your gender, everyone should be able to drop an iPhone into whichever toilet they want."

Jimmy Fallon: "But Trump is still working hard to build relationships with businesses. In fact, this morning he held a meeting with a group of CEOs at the White House. Trump said he wants to replace robots with human workers. Then Mike Pence says, 'I'll show myself out.'"

Jimmy Fallon: "John McCain actually praised Trump's new National Security Adviser, H.R. McMaster, calling him an outstanding choice and a man of genuine intellect, character, and ability. Then Trump said, 'In that case, forget it. Get me Steven Seagal.'"

Seth Meyers: "There's apparently this fear that transgender kids are using it as a ruse to sneak into restrooms and grab people by the genitals, but if you're looking for the kind of person who would do that, you need to look no further than the Oval Office."

Seth Meyers: "A new poll has found that despite President Trump's claims, only 24 percent of people see his White House as a fine-tuned machine. Well, it may not be fine-tuned, but it is well-oiled."

Seth Meyers: "You played golf six times in one month? Are you the President of the United States or a San Diego dentist?"

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