

To: Scott Hommel[scott_hommel@ios.doi.gov]; Downey Magallanes[downey_magallanes@ios.doi.gov]
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Elinor Renner
U.S. Department of the Interior
Immediate Office of the Secretary
Special Assistant to the Secretary
Washington, DC 20240
202-208-6087

MEMORANDUM FOR THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF SECRETARY AND CABINET SECRETARY
August 22, 2017

FROM: Scott Hommel, Chief of Staff, U.S. Department of the Interior

SUBJECT: Interior Department Weekly Update for the Week of August 22, 2017

DOI 30-Day Policy Look Ahead

Presidential Initiatives and Awareness

1. **MONUMENT REVIEW:** We are preparing the report to comply with Executive Order 13792 of April 26, 2017 calling for a review of National Monuments. The Secretary has visited 5 states and met with countless stakeholders to conduct the review. The report will give general recommendations. Specific recommendations will be submitted separately as draft proposals for the President's consideration. The Secretary has briefed White House staff on preliminary recommendations and advised the White House Chief of Staff on the Department's rollout plan.
Timing: August 24, 2017
Contact: Downey Magallanes, Acting Deputy Chief of Staff
2. **NAITONAL PARK SERVICE FUNDING INITIATIVE:** August 25th is the 101st birthday of the National Park Service. The Secretary has submitted a funding initiative to OMB to create a maintenance account to address the \$11.5 billion in backlog maintenance. Addressing the backlog is critical to the park experience of over 300 million people every year. Secretary Zinke will announce his commitment to the parks on August 25th and requests POTUS involvement in the weeks after the event to announce a funding/restore our parks initiative.
Timing: August 25, 2017
Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
3. **NPS SENIOR PASS INCREASE:** The Department announced in July that beginning August 28, federal agencies would begin selling the new America the Beautiful Senior Pass, which allows lifetime access to certain federal lands. The new price for the Lifetime Senior Pass will be \$80, which is an increase from \$10. The annual senior pass will be \$20. This increase is mandated by the National Park Service Centennial Act, passed in December of 2016. Existing passes will be grandfathered.
Timing: August 28, 2017
Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
4. **CRITICAL MINERALS REPORT:** USGS will release a new report presenting resource and geologic information for 23 critical mineral commodities important to our national economy and national security, many of which are sourced entirely outside of the United States. This is the first update since the last assessment undertaken in 1973. The Department has proposed to the White House consideration of a draft Executive Order directing Interior to help coordinate the appropriate agencies to undertake a government-wide approach to facilitate the domestic mining and processing of critical minerals. Discussion on the contents of the E.O. is continuing. Interior is hosting a roundtable with mining executives on August 24 to discuss the issue.

Timing: August 2017

Contact: Dr. Andrea Travnicek, Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science

5. **VENTING AND FLARING RULE:** BLM will publish a proposed rule to suspend or delay requirements from the “Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties and Resources Conservation” (Venting and Flaring) for 18 months until July 17, 2018. BLM is currently reviewing the final rule and wants to avoid imposing temporary or permanent compliance costs on operators for requirements that may be rescinded or significantly revised in the near future. The rule was sent to OMB on August 15, 2017.

Timing: Late August 2017 / Early September 2017

Contact: Vincent DeVito, Counselor to the Secretary for Energy Policy

Reports to Congress and Congressional Testimony

1. **DOI RECEIVED TWO PERTINENT MINORITY OVERSIGHT REQUESTS:** The Department received two politically-driven requests from Minority members. One is from the House, the other from the Senate. The House letter from five Maryland Democrats requests the Secretary to remove the statue of Gen. Lee from Antietam National Battlefield. The Secretary recently visited Antietam to announce NPS Battlefield grants where he made comments specific to the statue. Three Democrat Senators (Carper, Heitkamp, and Udall) sent an oversight letter to Secretary Zinke requesting information on the Secretary’s decision to reassign SES staffers, how it aligns with Congressional intent, and whether or not tribes were consulted.

Timing: August 21, 2017

Contact: Micah Chambers, Deputy Director, Congressional Affairs

2. **HILL NOTIFICATIONS FOR UPCOMING REPROGRAMMING REQUEST:** Pending OMB approval, the Department intends to notify the relevant authorizing and appropriating Committees (Senate Energy and Natural Resources, House Natural Resources, Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee) about the reorganization and realignment of the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST). DOI’s Program Management and Budget office and OMB are currently coordinating to secure approval. Notification to the Hill will entail formal letters and briefings for Committee staff, which OCL will coordinate.

Timing: September 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Policy Adviser, Congressional Affairs

3. **SENIOR FWS OFFICIAL TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE SENATE HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE:** Gary Frazer (Assistant Director for Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) will testify before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations regarding implementation of FAST-41. This provision was part of the FAST Act, which passed December 2015. The intent of the legislation is to coordinate the review process for infrastructure projects between all of the involved government agencies. This hearing is intended to highlight the reform and remind the Administration that this review process already exists as we seek to expedite/streamline the

environmental review process. This hearing was previously scheduled for July 26, 2017 but was postponed and has now rescheduled.

Timing: 10 am, September 7, 2017

Contact: Micah Chambers, Deputy Director, Congressional Affairs

4. **DOI NOMINEES IN PROGRESS:** Brenda Burman (BOR), Susan Combs (A/S PMB) and Doug Domenech (A/S Insular Areas) had their confirmation on Thursday the 20th before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources committee and they were passed out of committee August 3, 2017. Joe Balash (Assistant Secretary, Land & Minerals) was officially nominated and is set to appear before the Committee for his nomination hearing on September 7, 2017. Ryan Nelson (Solicitor) was officially nominated Wednesday August, 2nd. His committee paperwork has been submitted and Committee plans to include him in the hearing on the 7th with Mr. Balash.

Other/Awareness Only

1. **DOI POSTPONES ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS.** The Department is continuing to review the charter and charge of the more than 200 boards, committees, and advisory panels to ensure they are structured to receive maximum public input and comply with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The Department spends more than \$10 million to facilitate these boards and many are not meeting their charter obligations, are not meeting regularly, and have little turnover or numerous unfilled positions. Meetings have been postponed until September 2017 following the Department's review unless justified on a case-by-case basis.
Timing: September 1, 2017
Contact: Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison
2. **COORDINATED LONG-TERM OPERATION OF THE CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT (CVP) AND THE CALIFORNIA STATE WATER PROJECT (SWP)**
 Reclamation will announce a Notice of Intent (NOI) and Public Meetings for Reinitiation of Consultation under the ESA of the Coordinated Long-Term Operation of the Central Valley Project and the California State Water Project, based on new information regarding multiple years of drought and low populations of listed species. It is anticipated this joint NEPA and Endangered Species Act process will take three to five years to complete. This will dictate the operations of the CVP and SWP. In mid-September, pending Department approval, Reclamation will announce through a Federal Register publication the NOI and Public Meetings to be held in October.
Timing: August 2017
Contact: Dr. Andrea Travnicek, Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science
3. **CNN ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFILED STORY:** CNN will be at Antietam National Battlefield to film a features story about the battle, the upcoming 150th anniversary of Antietam National Cemetery on September 17, and projects that will be completed using President Trump's first quarter salary with additional funds from the National Park Foundation, Civil War Trust, and Save Historic Antietam Foundation.
Timing: August 24, 2017
Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

4. **DANEROUS URANIUM MINE DECISION:** BLM-UT's Monticello Field Office intends to issue a decision approving a modification to the plan of operations for the Daneros Uranium Mine in San Juan County. The proposed modification could increase ore production from 100,000 tons over seven years, to 500,000 tons over 20 years, and could generate up to 40 jobs. The mine is located just outside the current boundary of the Bears Ears National Monument.

Timing: August 28 – End of August

Contact: Kate MacGregor, Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals

5. **ONSHORE OIL AND GAS PERMITTING ON FEDERAL LAND:** Throughout June, the Bureau of Land Management will hold online oil and gas lease sales.

- Colorado. On September 7, BLM-CO will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 10 parcels totaling 1,227 acres in Cheyenne, Baca, Kiowa, Yuma, Morgan, and Weld Counties, CO.
- New Mexico. On September 7, BLM-NM will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 62 parcels totaling 15,731 acres in Eddy, Chaves, Quay, Curry, Roosevelt, and Lea Counties, NM.
- Nevada. On September 12, BLM-NV will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for three parcels totaling 3,680 acres in Nye County, NV.
- Utah. On September 12, BLM-UT will hold an online oil and gas lease sale for 15 parcels totaling 4,438 acres in Juab County, UT.

Timing: August 15 – September 12, 2017

Contact: Kate MacGregor, Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals

6. **ROSEBUD MINE ADDITION:** In mid-September, OSMRE anticipates publishing an NOA of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Western Energy Company's Rosebud Mine proposed Permit Area F. The proposed permit area, which is located near Colstrip, MT, would add 6,746 acres to the 25,576-acre surface coal mine. The mine currently employs 400 people and produces 12.3 million tons per year.

Timing: Mid-September 2017

Contact: Kate MacGregor, Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals

7. **SECRETARY ZINKE INVITED TO THE EVERGLADES BY BIPARTISAN FLORIDA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION:** Sen. Rubio led a letter to Sec. Zinke inviting him to tour the Everglades as soon as possible. No policy position touted within the letter, other than the importance of the Everglades to Florida. No date has been confirmed, but the Secretary has made it a priority. He would like to discuss the issue with Sen. Rubio over the phone in the immediate future before any trip is scheduled.

Timing: TBD, Early November or December dates have been proposed

Contact: Micah Chambers, Deputy Director, Congressional Affairs

8. **SECRETARY ZINKE HAS BEEN INVITED BY SENATOR CASSIDY TO VISIT LOUISIANA AND THE GULF STATES:** Official invite was received July 28, 2017 from Senator Cassidy's staff for the Secretary to tour the Gulf States and personally see the offshore oil industry, restoring the coast and the benefits of GOMESA. This is in reaction to the FY18

Budget proposal to eliminate state revenue sharing for the Gulf States. Secretary Zinke had two exchanges on this topic during his House and Senate budget hearings with Sen. Cassidy and Rep. Graves. In addition, he hosted members of the Louisiana and Texas delegations to discuss GOMESA and they reiterated the issue and reaffirmed their invite to the Secretary.

Timing: TBD

Contact: Micah Chambers, Deputy Director, Congressional Affairs

Other Significant Rulemakings and Actions

1. PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP/RECREATION TASK FORCE:

Secretary Zinke will visit Great Smokey Mountains National Park with Senator Lamar Alexander (TN) on Friday August 25th to celebrate the 101th Birthday of the National Park Service. The secretary will announce the formation of a new task force dedicated to recreational access on public lands. Sec. Zinke will also discuss plans to address the maintenance backlog.

Timing: August 25, 2017

Contact: Marshall Critchfield, Advisor, Assistant Secretary of Fish and Wildlife and Parks

2. IMPORTS OF AFRICAN ELEPHANT TROPHIES FROM ZIMBABWE: The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) plans to publish in the *Federal Register* a change to the permitting status for imports of African elephant trophies from Zimbabwe. After receiving information from Zimbabwe on a number of substantial improvements to their management program and elephant conservation efforts, FWS has determined that taking of African elephant trophy animals in Zimbabwe on or after January 21, 2016 (the date that Zimbabwe's new management plan was officially adopted) through 2017 would enhance the survival of African elephants, and import permits can be issued for these trophies.

Timing: August 2017

Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

3. GATEWAY WEST TRANSMISSION LINE: This week BLM will issue a Notice of Intent for an Environmental Assessment to propose an alternate route for the Gateway West Transmission Line in Idaho. The line's current route cuts through neighborhoods and populated areas in order to avoid a National Conservation Area. The FY2017 funding bill included legislation rerouting the line away from the current controversial route.

Timing: August 24, 2017

Contact: Kathy Benedetto, Senior Advisor, Bureau of Land Management

4. MINUTE 323 – U.S./MEXICO COOPERATION ON THE COLORADO RIVER.

The Colorado River is shared among seven states in the U.S., and is also shared between the U.S. and Mexico. The Colorado is experiencing an extended period of historic drought since 2000 and a Drought Contingency Plan is being developed amongst states. Negotiations have been underway for a 9-year agreement with Mexico to provide operation certainty regarding deliveries to Mexico, referred to as "Minute 323," to include reductions and water savings at specific Lake Mead elevations, investment to conserve Colorado River water supplies, and enhancement of environmental and riparian resources. The U.S. State Department is proceeding with their

clearance process so that DOI can proceed with review and clearance of the domestic agreements, to finalize and adopt the domestic agreements that are necessary to implement Minute 323 by the end of September 2017.

Timing: September 2017

Contact: Dr. Andrea Travnicek, Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science

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

Timing: Early September

Contact: James Schindler, Special Assistant Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

6. **NAVAJO GENERATING STATION.** On July 2, the Navajo government approved a two-year lease extension for continuing operation of the Navajo Generating Station through 2019. The Department's Bureau of Reclamation is a part owner of the power generated by the plant and thus the Administration has a role in the ultimate decision associated with the plant. Interior is helping to identify a possible future owner to keep the plant generating power indefinitely, since the current owners will exit the plant at the end of 2019. On July 19, Navajo representatives met with the Bureau of Reclamation and requested another stakeholder meeting. A multiple stakeholder meeting is being discussed for September. On July 28, Peabody Energy and Lazard (investment banking) met with representatives from DOI to discuss potential of investors. Initial discussions sound positive and Lazard hopes to have initial bid proposals by mid-September.

Timing: September 2017

Contact: Dr. Andrea Travnicek, Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science

Release of High-Profile Grants

1. **URBAN PARTNERSHIP GRANTS:**

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

Timing: August 31, 2017

Contact: Marshall Critchfield, Advisor, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

2. **CENTENNIAL CHALLENGE PROJECTS:** The NPS will announce the award of \$18 million in Centennial Challenge projects. Many of the projects accomplish deferred maintenance projects, and all represent public-private partnerships, since each project requires a minimum 50/50 match with non-Federal funds.

Timing: August 2017

Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

3. **NORTH AMERICAN WETLANDS CONSERVATION ACT (NAWCA) GRANTS:** The FWS will announce the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC), chaired by

Secretary Zinke, that will approve funding for the first round of FY 2018 NAWCA grants, as well as land acquisitions and lease agreements for national wildlife refuges using Migratory Bird Conservation Fund money. The MBCC will also hear a report on NAWCA small grants, which were approved by the North American Wetlands Conservation Council earlier this year.

Timing: September 6, 2017

Contact: Todd Willens, Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

Key Events for Upcoming 30-Days

Travel by Secretary

- August 24 **Secretary Zinke** tentatively traveling to Montana with Secretary Purdue to visit forest fire at Lolo National Forest.

- August 25 **Secretary Zinke** traveling to Tennessee and on to North Carolina to visit Smoky Mountains National Park and Blue Ridge Parkway National Park to give Founders Day remarks.

- September 9-10 **Secretary Zinke** will attend the Cabinet Meeting.

- September 10-11 **Secretary Zinke** will travel to Pennsylvania to visit Flight 93 National Memorial.

- September 12 **Secretary Zinke** will travel to Pennsylvania to visit Valley Forge National Battlefield.

- September 13 **Secretary Zinke** will travel to Pennsylvania to visit Independence National Historic Park.

- September 14-15 **Secretary Zinke** will travel to New York and New Jersey to visit New York City and the Gateway National Recreation Area.

- September 20-21 **Secretary Zinke** will travel to Missouri to attend the Johnny Morris Wonders of Wildlife Museum Celebration.

- September 22 **Secretary Zinke** will travel to Texas to attend the National Rifle Association's Women's Leadership Forum Summit.