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INTERIOR DAILY COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

NEWS TO SHARE:

The State Journal: Rep. Andy Barr: Trump should follow through on Camp Nelson designation

“Kentucky’s 6th Congressional District is most often recognized as the horse capital of the world, as the home of world-famous bourbon distilleries and for having the greatest tradition in the history of college basketball. Though not as well known, the 6th District is also home to a national treasure — the Camp Nelson Civil War Heritage Park — located in scenic Jessamine County. Throughout my time in Congress, I have fought to bring national attention to Camp Nelson, a site that has the ability to unite the community and inspire a greater understanding and appreciation for this period in our nation’s history....This week, we learned that Secretary Zinke recommended in a report to President Donald Trump that Camp Nelson receive a National Monument designation. I greatly appreciate the consideration Secretary Zinke and the Department of Interior have given this request and the process they have undertaken to ensure that sites given this designation have national historic significance and local support, unlike the abuses of this designation undertaken by the previous administration.”

Reno Gazette Journal: Protect Native American antiquities, but stop government overreach: Paher and Cobb

“Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke has mandated an extensive reduction of national monuments in Utah and Nevada promulgated by the Obama administration. Without any real consultation with residents of the two states, the Obama designated land twice as big as the state of Rhode Island as “monuments”, including Utah’s Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, and Basin and Range and Gold Butte in Nevada. While there are pockets of antiquities in these three designations that deserve protection, we maintain that setting aside areas of this magnitude and prohibiting any mineral exploitation there represents serious government overreach. There is no compelling argument that would rationalize restricting 3.2 million acres of southeastern Utah and over 1 million acres in Nevada from development.”

Baton Rouge Business Report: Angelle touts Trump’s six-step approach for jumpstarting Gulf of Mexico oil drilling

“U.S. Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement Director Scott Angelle was back in his native Louisiana on Monday touting the Trump administration’s six-step approach for revitalizing the nation’s offshore oil industry in the Gulf of Mexico. The Courier reports Angelle spoke to a joint meeting of the Bayou Industrial Group and the South Central Industrial Association in Gray. “We’ve gone from an era of scarcity to an era of abundance pretty quick like for any generation of Americans. We have to move from the 1980s goal of energy independence to the 2017 goal and beyond of something called energy dominance,” Angelle said. “We’ve got to follow the path toward that goal.” Angelle described the administration’s “six-step path” to revitalizing the nation’s offshore oil industry through a mix of streamlining regulations and creating a partnership between the federal government and the industry.”

CORRECTING THE RECORD:

E&E News: Questions hover over Zinke's defense of helicopter trip

“Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's defense of his helicopter travel raises questions about a big Virginia power line project and about what he meant by his explanation of a flight. In a combative Saturday statement posted on Twitter, Zinke justified his helicopter usage that included, he wrote, an "aerial survey of power line project which was under scrutiny for possible compensation mitigation corruption from the previous administration." Zinke's statement, while making a mistyped reference to the Obama administration, did not elaborate on the power project overflight or what was meant by a "possible compensation mitigation corruption" inquiry.”

- **DOI Statement:** “Recent articles about official Interior Department helicopter usage are total fabrications and a wild departure from reality. On these instances, I conducted an aerial survey of a million acres of federal monument lands, an aerial survey of a power line project which was under scrutiny for possible compensatory mitigation corruption from the previous administration, and a national command authority directed emergency response exercise. All of these instances were thoroughly vetted and scrutinized before being approved by the department’s career ethics officers and solicitors. Since I took the helm at Interior, the Office of the Secretary reduced the annual cost of non-commercial airfare compared to the previous two secretaries and we will continue to use government resources efficiently.”

Bangor Daily News: Maine has a stake in another national monument due for big changes under Zinke

“Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke may have decided Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument in northern Maine should be left as it is, but he’s proposing major changes to another monument established just last year in the Atlantic ocean, on the far side of the Gulf of Maine. Zinke has recommended that commercial fishing activity resume in the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument and two other marine monuments in the Pacific. The marine monument, which encompasses nearly 5,000 square miles, lies outside the Gulf of Maine, roughly 100 to 200 nautical miles southeast of Cape Cod along the edge of the continental shelf. It was created by then-President Barack Obama in September 2016.”

- ****LINK TO WHITE HOUSE TALKING POINTS ON MONUMENT REPORT****

OTHER TOP STORIES:**USA Today: Court upholds Obama-era ban on uranium mining near Grand Canyon**

“The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on Tuesday upheld a 20-year ban on new uranium mining on public land near the Grand Canyon, while also striking down a challenge to an existing uranium mine south of Grand Canyon National Park. In its opinion, the court ruled that the ban, imposed in 2012 under former president Obama, lines up with the Constitution and federal environmental laws. However, it ruled that a mine 6 miles south of the national park had a right to operate. "We upheld the decision of the secretary of the Interior to withdraw, for 20 years, more than 1 million acres of public lands around Grand Canyon National Park from new mining claims," the opinion states. "That withdrawal did not extinguish 'valid existing rights.'" The ban was put in place by the U.S. Department of the Interior under former secretary Ken Salazar.”

Houston Chronicle: Trump delays offshore drilling announcement

“Plans to announce the Trump administration's offshore drilling plan for the next five years, scheduled for release today, have been delayed. A spokeswoman for the Interior Department said Tuesday the release has been "rescheduled" for a future, unspecified date. She declined to answer the cause of the delay. Plans to announce the Trump administration's offshore drilling plan for the next five years, scheduled for release today, have been delayed. A spokeswoman for the Interior Department said Tuesday the release has been "rescheduled" for a future, unspecified date. She declined to answer the cause of the delay.”

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Alex Hinson

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