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[DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 10-24-17.docx](#)

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 10/24/17

Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison
Natalie Davis, Special Assistant to the Secretary

STATUS OF THE SECRETARY

TODAY: Bat Week Proclamation Signing

- Quarterly Meeting with Majority Members of U.S. House Natural Resources Committee & separate meeting with Minority Members
- Remarks at OTR Conservative Dinner

THIS WEEK:

10/25 DC – Meeting with USAID Administrator

- Remarks to Weyrich Lunch
- Meeting with Representative Cramer (ND)
 - o Red River Valley Water Supply Project
- Meeting with Education Secretary Betsy DeVos

10/26 DC – Meeting with Danish Minister for Energy, Utilities, and Climate, Mr. Lars Christian

- American Heroes Roundtable
- Meeting with Tom Hutchison

10/27 DC – Call with Governor Mary Fallin (OK)

- Meeting with the President

STATUS OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

TODAY: The Deputy Secretary is in DC conducting internal meetings

MEDIA TODAY

Secretary Zinke Announces Largest Oil & Gas Lease Sale in U.S. History

March 2018 sale to offer 76.9 million acres in Gulf of Mexico

New Orleans – U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke today announced that the Department is proposing the largest oil and gas lease sale ever held in the United States --76,967,935 acres in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico, offshore Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. The proposed region-wide lease sale, offering an area about the size of New Mexico, is scheduled for March 2018 and includes all available unleased areas on the Gulf's Outer Continental Shelf, surpassing last year's region-wide lease sale by about one million acres.

"In today's low-price energy environment, providing the offshore industry access to the maximum amount of opportunities possible is part of our strategy to spur local and regional economic dynamism and job creation and a pillar of President Trump's plan to make the United States energy dominant," **Secretary Zinke said**. "And the economic terms proposed for this sale include a range of incentives to encourage diligent development and ensure a fair return to taxpayers."

Proposed Lease Sale 250, which will be livestreamed from New Orleans, will be the second offshore sale under the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2017-2022. Lease Sale 249, held in New Orleans last August, received \$121 million in high bids. In addition to the high bids and rental payments, the Department will receive royalty payments on any future production from these leases. Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) lease revenues are directed to the U.S. Treasury, Gulf Coast states, the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Historic Preservation Fund.

"In order to strengthen America's energy dominance, we must anticipate and plan for our needs for decades to come," **said Senator Lisa Murkowski, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources**. "The administration's decision to move forward with the largest offshore lease sale in our nation's history is a key part of that effort. Whether in Alaska or the Gulf of Mexico, we should all support responsible development because it creates high-paying jobs, strengthens national security, and keeps energy affordable for our families and businesses."

"President Trump's team is following through on their commitment to advancing America's energy independence," **said Senator Roger Wicker**. "Unlike the previous administration, this one understands that expanded offshore energy development benefits working families, consumers, and our national security. This is a win for Mississippi and the entire country."

"President Trump and his administration are following through on their promise to end the war on American energy," **said Senator Bill Cassidy**. "Investing in energy creates better jobs with better benefits for working families, strengthens our national security and strengthens our energy independence."

"This is great news that our oil and gas industry in Louisiana sorely needs. This is the largest sale in U.S. history, and it will create jobs and bolster our state and national economy," **said Senator John Kennedy**. "Our Louisiana workers are ready to go back to work."

"President Donald Trump made clear his desire to ensure Americans can use our own natural resources to produce the energy vital to our economy and national security," **said Alabama Governor Kay Ivey**. "As he has done time and again, President Trump has proven to the people of Alabama that he is a man of his word, and we are grateful to him and to Secretary Ryan Zinke for their determination to open a vast tract of American waters to oil and gas exploration. This decision is not only in the best interest of all Americans, it allows Gulf Coast states, like Alabama, to utilize our natural resources not only to provide energy for our nation, but increased economic opportunities for our people."

"Mississippi welcomes Secretary Zinke's action to carry out the president's vision for American energy dominance," **said Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant**. "This will strengthen our state's status as a leader in oil and gas exploration and create good jobs for hardworking Mississippians."

"If we're serious about energy dominance and long-term energy affordability, we must create certainty about future access in the Outer Continental Shelf," **said Congressman Rob Bishop, Chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources**. "Secretary Zinke should be commended for his leadership to create that certainty and realign Interior as a partner for industry to advance responsible energy development. This is a welcomed announcement on that front. Congressionally, we will continue to move forward on a comprehensive overhaul of onshore and offshore federal lands energy policy to help Interior expand even greater access, streamline permitting and increase revenues to both states and the U.S. Treasury."

"Secretary Zinke's announcement is welcome news and I look forward to continuing to work with the administration to put consumer's interests first while promoting job creation and modernizing our nation's energy infrastructure," **said Congressman Greg Walden, Chairman of the House Committee on Energy & Commerce**. "The president and his administration have placed energy independence and security at the top of their agenda, and this committee has been leading the way in examining policies that seek to streamline siting and permitting of the nation's oil and gas pipelines."

"President Trump has stated that he wants our country to exert 'energy dominance' throughout the world, and this lease sale is another bold step in that direction," **said House Majority Whip Steve Scalise**. "I applaud today's announcement by Secretary Ryan Zinke to offer the largest offshore oil and gas lease sale in U.S. history. My constituents in Southeast Louisiana will be leading the way in this exploration and development that will create good jobs and kickstart more economic growth. This bold action helps us continue fighting for the responsible development of our natural resources that bring critical dollars to restore our coast."

"As a long-time advocate for opening up more of the Gulf of Mexico, it's refreshing to work with an Administration that understands it's true energy potential," **said**

Congressman Pete Olson. "Oil production, when done safely and responsibly, is a win for Texas and the Gulf Coast economy, and adds to America's energy security. I applaud Secretary Zinke for moving forward with this lease sale and hope these opportunities to tap into our energy potential continue."

"Secretary Zinke's announcement of the largest oil and gas lease sale in our country's history is welcome news. The oil and gas industry provides thousands of direct and indirect jobs to the people of Mississippi," **said Congressman Gregg Harper.** "This lease sale has the potential to create new opportunities for our state and nation as advances in technology continue to make the United States a world leader in natural resource production."

"I applaud Secretary Zinke and the Department of Interior for their efforts to spur energy production and support communities along the Gulf Coast. Revenue from these leases will be a huge boost for Gulf states, like Alabama, and will help us continue conservation and preservation of our treasured coastal areas," **said Congressman Bradley Byrne.** "Through developments like this, we can ensure American energy dominance and make life better for Gulf Coast families."

The estimated amount of resources projected to be developed as a result of the proposed region-wide lease sale ranges from 0.21 to 1.12 billion barrels of oil and from 0.55 to 4.42 trillion cubic feet of gas. Most of the activity (up to 83% of future production) from the proposed lease sale is expected to occur in the Central Planning Area.

Proposed Lease Sale 250 includes 14,375 unleased blocks, located from 3 to 230 miles offshore, in the Gulf's Western, Central and Eastern planning areas in water depths ranging from 9 to more than 11,115 feet (three to 3,400 meters). Excluded from the lease sale are blocks subject to the Congressional moratorium established by the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006; blocks that are adjacent to or beyond the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone in the area known as the northern portion of the Eastern Gap; and whole blocks and partial blocks within the current boundary of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary.

"American energy production can be competitive while remaining safe and environmentally sound," **said Vincent DeVito, Counselor for Energy Policy at Interior.** "People need jobs, the Gulf Coast states need revenue, and Americans do not want to be dependent on foreign oil. We have heard their message loud and clear."

The lease sale terms include stipulations to protect biologically sensitive resources, mitigate potential adverse effects on protected species, and avoid potential conflicts associated with oil and gas development in the region. The terms and conditions for Lease Sale 250 in the Proposed Notice of Sale are not final. Different terms and conditions may be employed in the Final Notice of Sale, which will be published at least 30 days before the sale.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) estimates that the OCS contains about 90 billion barrels of undiscovered technically recoverable oil and 327 trillion cubic feet of undiscovered technically recoverable gas. The Gulf of Mexico OCS,

covering about 160 million acres, has technically recoverable resources of over 48 billion barrels of oil and 141 trillion cubic feet of gas.

All terms and conditions for Gulf of Mexico Region-wide Sale 250 are detailed in the Proposed Notice of Sale (PNOS) information package, which is available at: <http://www.boem.gov/Sale-250/>. Copies of the PNOS maps can be requested from BOEM's Gulf of Mexico Region's Public Information Unit at [1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, LA 70123](#), or at 800-200-GULF (4853).

The Notice of Availability of the PNOS will be available for inspection in the Federal Register on October 26, 2017 at: <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/public-inspection>.

WH COMMS REPORT (submitted Monday, 10/23)

Press Inquiries:

- E&E News: (Brittany Patterson)—**REQUEST**—Various questions about the future of the coal power plant Navajo Generating Station and a meeting the Secretary had with Patrick Soon-Shiong.—**RESPONSE**—TBD
- POLITICO (Esther Whieldon)—**REQUEST**--I'm writing a short story on how the Interior appears to be moving forward with a number of Murkowski's/Alaska's priorities despite Zinke's call with Murkowski in July over her vote on the healthcare bill. Examples include Sweeney nomination, movement to allow seismic testing on ANWR, work on the land swap for Izembek, the call for nominations on the NPR-A and work on the five-year offshore drilling plan. To what extent are these actions meant to butter up Murkowski to win her support on key issues on the hill vs the extent to which the priorities of the admin and Murkowski align? A response today by 5 would be appreciated. —**RESPONSE**--
The Secretary works with a number of Senators on both sides of the aisle to advance shared priorities, such as the restoration of the Everglades (Sen. Rubio), ensuring Swayne County received long-overdue funds from the Department (Sen. Tillis), and opening access to the Sabinoso Wilderness Area (Senator Udall).
- POLITICO (Esther Whieldon) – **REQUEST** – Update on USFWS seismic work on drilling in ANWR – **RESPONSE** – Nothing new to report on ANWR
- POLITICO (Ben Lefebvre) & E&E – **REQUEST** - I saw this letter from Louisiana Gov. Edwards that raises the question of whether GOMESA disbursements for FY 2017 may be about half of what the state originally expected. Can anyone at Interior discuss whether those estimates are correct and, if so, why? – **RESPONSE** – TBD
- POLITICO (Ben Lefebvre) – **REQUEST** - Chief of Staff Scott Hommel indicated on his OGE form 278 that his wife makes no income over \$1,000 a year, correct? How much money does Lucretia Hommel make, if any, from doing interior design work for Kimberly Bellissimo's homes in New Jersey and downtown Washington D.C.? Is it a non-profit, or does she make more than \$1,000 a year

from this business? How much money does Lucretia Hommel make a year overall doing interior design for her business, Snobz? How much does she make selling furniture from her Web site, snobz.co? Is there a way to break that down to see how much money she makes, if any, selling Bellissimo's furniture on the Web site? Did anyone in Interior's ethics office discuss with Hommel how to fill out OGE form 278? Official DOI business would be to see whether the DOI Chief of Staff has a false statement on his OGE form. - **RESPONSE** – The Department cannot comment on personal or business matters. No, he didn't (referring to allegations of false statements).

- NBC (Clark Dartunorro) – **REQUEST** - I want to know about the process regarding the program and what and where exactly those resources have been dispersed following the President's Aug. 28 executive order on the department's program (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/08/28/presidential-executive-order-restoring-state-tribal-and-local-law>) that provides resources to local law enforcement agencies. Also, I wanted to know how many applications, if any, have been received total and how many approved and rejected and background on the application process. – **RESPONSE** – TBD

Top Stories

- **Washington Examiner:** [Trump administration scrambles to save largest coal plant in the West](#)
- **NY Times:** [Where Did The Napa Fire Begin? Investigators Scour The Ashes.](#)
- **KQED-FM:** [Federal Agency Promoted Ranger Five Months After His Gun Was Stolen And Used In Steinle Killing.](#)

Top Issues and Accomplishments

- This week, Interior will announce oil and gas lease sale #250. This will be the largest acreage sale in the history of the Gulf of Mexico
- This week, Interior will release the Energy Burdens Report
- This week, Interior will announce an oil and gas lease sale in Alaska at the National Petroleum Reserve
- Tuesday Secretary Zinke will host two hour-long meetings with the House Natural Resources Committee Rs and Ds
- Tuesday Secretary Zinke will join conservative reporters for an off the record dinner
- Thursday Interior will host an event with VSOs to improve coordination with and services for veterans (open press)
- Friday the Secretary meets with POTUS

AGENCY MEDIA

WEEK AHEAD October 18 thru October 26, 2017 (Submitted 10/18)

Secretarial-level Announcements/Events/Interviews

- **October 24:** Secretary Zinke is speaking at the OTR Conservative Reporter Dinner, a dinner with leading conservative journalists hosted by Jamie Weinstein and Michelle Fields.
- **October 24:** Secretary Zinke is signing a proclamation declaring October 24-31 “Bat Week.” 2017 marks the 3rd annual international Bat Week, when federal and state agencies and NGO partners raise awareness about the importance of bats to a healthy environment and economy. Secretary Purdue has also signed a proclamation.
- **October 25:** Secretary Zinke is addressing the Weyrich Lunch meeting, a weekly forum for reporting to conservative leaders. He will speak about DOI priorities and achievements.
- **October 26:** Secretary Zinke is hosting and American Heroes Roundtable discussion and listening session with disabled veterans who are sportsmen and sportswomen. Focus will be on providing better access to public lands for hunting, fishing, and recreation.
- **October 27:** Secretary Zinke is recording a Veterans Day video message for DOI employees.

Department-level Release

- **October 24: DOI/USDA Joint Release:** DOI and USDA will issue joint releases and Secretarial Proclamations kicking off Bat Week. Other events: FWS will join USGS, USFS and Organization for Bat Conservation, and other partners at two congressional events on Capitol Hill to commemorate BatWeek 2017. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and FWS will also announce funding up to \$1 million for the first round of grants to fight white-nose syndrome under the Bats for the Future Fund (BFF).

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- **October TBD: National FWS Release:** FWS will announce the 2017-18 Refuge-Specific Hunting and Sport Fishing Regulations. Final rule will 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
- **October TBD: FWS News Bulletin:** FWS will issue a news bulletin regarding a NEPA Environmental Assessment related to lethal take permits for cormorants for aquaculture facilities.

Bureau of Land Management

- **October 23 – 25:** BLM-CO Royal Gorge Field Office, CO Parks and Wildlife and the U.S. Forest Service will hold three public meetings to discuss plans to

revise the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area River Management Plan. Discussion will focus on current boating capacities and existing facilities along the Arkansas River, from Leadville to Lake Pueblo State Park.

- **October 23 – 24:** The Sage Grouse Task Force is scheduled to meet in Denver to discuss any additional issues or concerns raised by stakeholders, specific proposed policy changes, and any remaining issues that may require a plan amendment in connection with Secretarial Order 3353.
- **October 24: National BLM Release:** BLM-NV will host a competitive geothermal lease sale for 20 parcels, located in the Battle Mountain, Carson City, Elko and Winnemucca districts, containing 38,208.46 acres for geothermal leasing. This will be the first online geothermal lease sale for Nevada. This lease sale is not expected to be controversial. At this time, the BLM cannot predict the level of bidding interest.
- **October 24:** BLM-WY Worland Field Office will host a public meeting in Hyattville, Wyoming, in support of the 30-day scoping period for the Alkali Creek Reservoir Project Environmental Impact Statement.
- **October 24:** BLM-WY Cody Field Office will host public meetings in Cody and Lovell, Wyoming, to gather input for a cave and karst management plan that will address the natural, undisturbed ecosystems within caves, recreational caving, scientific research and surface uses above caves. Local media may attend.
- **October 24:** BLM-CA State Director Jerry Perez and Desert District Manager Beth Ransel will meet with Brigadier General Kevin Killea, Commanding General, Marine Corps Installations West, at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. Meeting topics will include implementation of base expansion and land transfer, renewable energy, desert tortoises, recreation and off-highway vehicle access.
- **October 25:** BLM-CA State Director Jerry Perez, Desert District Manager Beth Ransel and Barstow Field Manager Katrina Symons will meet with officials at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms and Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range. Issues to be discussed include implementation of base expansion and land transfer, renewable energy, desert tortoises, recreation and off-highway vehicle access.
- **October 26:** BLM-AK Acting State Director Karen Mouritsen will attend the Alaska Mapping Executive Committee meeting at the U.S. Geological Survey Alaska Science Center, in Anchorage.
- **October 26:** BLM-WY Cody Field Office will host a public meeting in Shell, Wyoming, in support of the 45-day scoping period for the Leavitt Reservoir Expansion Project Environmental Impact Statement.
- **October 26:** BLM-WY Casper Field Office will hold a public meeting about tribal consultation for oil and gas permits in Converse County, Wyoming

U.S. Geological Survey

- **October 24: National News Release: USGS will issue a release regarding** a new web-based tool that provides users with unprecedented detail of mountains worldwide. USGS partnered with the University of Bern (Switzerland)

and ESRI Group on Earth Observations. Tool will be unveiled at GEO conference.

Bureau of Reclamation

- **October 26 - November 1:** A six-member team from the Bureau of Reclamation will visit Taipei, Taiwan, to participate in the 30th anniversary meeting between Reclamation and Taiwan's Water Resources Agency. Reclamation serves as the designated technical representative of the American Institute in Taiwan, the official arm of the U.S. Department of State in Taiwan.

CONGRESSIONAL

UPCOMING SCIA HEARING: The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs is holding a legislative hearing on S. 1870, Securing Urgent Resources Vital to Indian Victim Empowerment Act 2017; S. 1953, Reauthorization of the Tribal and Law Order Act of 2010; and S. __, Native Youth and Tribal Officer Protection Act. Witness will Bryan Rice, Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Timing: October 25, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Policy Adviser, Congressional Affairs

UPCOMING HNRC HEARING: The House Natural Resources Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs Subcommittee is set to host a legislative hearing on Rep. Don Young's H.R. 215, American Indian Empowerment Act of 2017. Witness is John Tahsuda, Acting Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.

Timing: October 25, 2017

Contact: Amanda Kaster, Policy Adviser, Congressional Affairs

POLITICAL APPOINTEE UPDATE

DOI politicals on board = 61

3 PAS confirmed as of 9/18.

4 nominated awaiting confirmation:

- Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.
- Pending Senate floor vote: Brenda Berman, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation.
- Pending Senate floor vote: Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals
- Pending Senate floor vote: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor

Overall:

- Schedule C: 34 of 68 onboard; 2 starting; 7 in process

- NC-SES: 24 of 44 onboard; 2 starting; 3 in process
- PAS: 3 Confirmed; 4 Announced; 15 of 17 Submitted to PPO

SECRETARY SPEAKING INVITATIONS

Accepted:

Open (date TBC)- Americans for Tax Reform (DC)

Open (date TBC)- Detroit Economic Club

Event Postponed by organizers due to fire - 10/21 – DEPA BOD Meeting (CA)

Outstanding Invitations in Process:

10/28 Remarks at Washington International Horse Show DC)

10/29 Friends of Theodore Roosevelt Island (DC)

11/7-9 National Ranger Council Annual Meeting (Gettysburg, PA)

11/9 – National WWI Memorial at Pershing Park (DC)

11/13 Montana Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting (Billings, MT)

11/29 Association of California Water Agencies 2017 Fall Conference and Exhibition
(Anaheim, CA)

12/5-7 America Outdoors Association's 29th Annual Marketing and Management
Conference for Outfitters and Adventure Resorts (Reno, NV)

12/6 American Exploration and Mining Association Annual Meeting (Reno, NV)

12/8 - Valley Industry and Commerce Association Annual Meeting (Los Angeles, CA)

Declining

10/26 - Montana Chamber Annual Meeting (Great Falls, MT)

10/28 – Cattle Producers of Washington Annual Meeting (Airway Heights, WA)

10/30-11/3 – International Mining and Resources Conference (Melbourne, Australia)

10/31 - George B. Hartzog, Jr. Awards and Speaker Program Clemson University (SC)

11/1 - 2017 SHIFT (Shaping How we Invest For Tomorrow) Festival (Jackson Hole,
WY)

11/4 Governor Reynolds Annual Pheasant Hunt

11/8 – WY Governor Annual Business Forum (Cheyenne, WY)

11/9 - America First Energy Conference hosted by Heartland Institute (Houston, TX)

11/9 - Bass Fishing Hall of Fame Induction Dinner at the Wonders of Wildlife
(Springfield, MO)

11/14 – George Rogers Clark National Historical Park Quarter Launch (Vincennes, Indiana)

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (new)

Hurricane Response/Recovery:

USGS had 22 (+9) personnel in the field assessing damage and repairing gages under their own authorities. Under Mission Assignments, USGS had four (+3) personnel performing data analysis and one additional person performing remote analysis of imagery to identify significant landslide impacts in Puerto Rico. USGS has five personnel that will deploy to Puerto Rico on October 25 to provide site analysis and technical assistance under a Mission Assignment. USGS also reports that 10 of the 12 streamgages that were destroyed during Hurricane Maria have been rebuilt.

OEPC is coordinating with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), NPS, USFWS, the Office of the Solicitor, and OEM to resolve issues surrounding stranded vessels on DOI land in the Caribbean. The primary issue of concern is salvage and removal of vessels on federal land that are not eligible for ESF #10 (Oil and Hazardous Materials Response) funding through FEMA.

The Department of Homeland Security reports that, in Puerto Rico, power has been restored to approximately 18 (-4)-percent of customers and the expectation is that 95-percent of Puerto Rico will be restored by December 15. Potable water has been restored to more than 72 (no change)-percent of clients served by the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority. Approximately 3,800 personnel from the Puerto Rico National Guard and Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) are concentrating on commodity distribution, debris clearance, and medical missions. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, there has been no change in the number of residents being serviced by grid power (St. Thomas 29-percent, St. Croix 1.6-percent, St. John 0-percent); however, restoration efforts will begin on St. John next week. The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority estimates 90-percent of the power will be restored by November 23.

Port Aransas, Texas Fatal Barge Fire and Oil Spill:

The USCG, the Texas General Land Office, and Bouchard Transportation representatives continue to respond to a barge that caught fire on October 20, three miles off the jetties of Port Aransas, Texas. The barge has been lightened of some cargo, which has raised the bow of the vessel, and while the pipe previously leaking remains open, there is no leakage occurring. There is some sheen near the vessel, but none in, or north, of the ship channel, which has been reopened to outbound traffic. The total volume of oil discharged to the water remains unknown at this time. Approximately 2,000 barrels were accounted for, but it is uncertain what remains in the void space, what was contained around the barge, and what was transported away from the site. Combined observations from Shoreline Cleanup Assessment

Technique (SCAT) teams, cleanup teams, and bird surveys show oiling on the southern end of Mustang Island extending to portions of North Padre Island. The Incident Command Post (ICP) is establishing an operational tempo and focusing on improved information flow as various subject area specialists arrive.

Fatal Shooting, Standing Rock Reservation, ND:

Overnight, on the Standing Rock Reservation of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North and South Dakota, a fatal shooting was reported. Around 9:00 p.m. EDT, an individual called the BIA dispatch office from a local gas station stating a suspect had fired a shotgun in an unknown direction and fled the scene in a vehicle. BIA Law Enforcement personnel executed a felony stop on the vehicle and reported shots fired. The suspect was wounded and later pronounced deceased. No BIA Law Enforcement personnel were injured in this incident. This incident remains under investigation and no additional information is available at this time.

OUTSIDE MEDIA OF INTEREST (new)

GOP Senators Propose Wildfire Management Bill.

The Hill (10/23, Cama) reports that draft legislation unveiled Monday by Republican "Sens. John Barrasso (Wyo.), Orrin Hatch (Utah), John Thune (S.D.) and Steve Daines (Mont.)" is "aimed at preventing and mitigating wildfires by making it easier to cut down and remove trees and brush." The Hill says that "Republicans have long complained that when land management agencies like the Forest Service have to go through the arduous process of consulting with the Fish and Wildlife Service to allow logging in areas where endangered species live or are nearby, it delays the process of removing wood and brush that contributes to fires." The Hill adds that "provisions of the bill would reduce the obligations of the Forest Service to consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service," and "direct the Forest Service and Interior Department to create certain exclusions from environmental review for wood and brush removal."

Zinke's 'Scam Pac' Pals: Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has worked for years with a group of Washington political operatives who have been accused by fellow conservatives of raising money on false pretenses, Pro's Ben Lefebvre and Nick Juliano report. Their investigation sheds new light on Zinke's fundraising practices as a member of Congress and since joining Interior. In his first month on the job, Zinke flew to the Virgin Islands at taxpayers' expense for a series of official events tied to the 100th anniversary of the territory's handover to the U.S. — and while there he squeezed in a personal detour to attend a fundraiser for the Virgin Islands Republican Party. That group, known as VIGOP, is one of several "scam PACs" run by Washington-area political consultant Scott Mackenzie, according to numerous critics that include some Republicans in the Virgin Islands. **Prominent GOP politicians have recoiled** from working with Mackenzie and firms that have been linked to him, such as ForthRight Strategy, formerly known as Base Connect and BMW Direct before that. Texas Rep. Will Hurd says they "are preying on seniors," and former Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli filed a lawsuit accusing Mackenzie and

others of running a "national fundraising scam." ForthRight CEO Kimberly Bellissimo introduced Zinke to the VIGOP in 2015, when she accompanied him on a trip to the island chain. **But not Zinke.** He substantially increased his spending on firms linked to ForthRight between his first race for Montana's sole House seat in 2014 and his re-election two years later, when he spent nearly \$3 million on direct mail fundraising firms operating out of the same address as ForthRight between his congressional campaign and leadership political action committee, SEAL PAC. And he provided a testimonial for the firm's website praising the "professional as well as personal relationship we have developed over many years." **SEAL PAC seemed to operate on the same model** as VIGOP and other groups Mackenzie has run, raising huge sums from small donors and spending the vast majority of its money on fundraising consultants. The group raised \$2 million of its \$3 million haul last cycle in increments of \$200 or less, and it spent \$2.6 million on overhead, far more than the \$118,000 it sent to other congressional committees. That made it an outlier among other leadership PACs, which typically court high-dollar donors and allow lawmakers to spread contributions among their colleagues. **There is no evidence Zinke did anything illegal**, but his relationship with the consultants and PACs is raising eyebrows. "To say the least, this is highly unusual," said Karl Sandstrom, a former Democratic FEC commissioner now at the law firm Perkins Coie.

Zinke's Super Secret Hill Meeting: Zinke is scheduled to meet this afternoon with House Natural Resources Committee members in a room typically reserved for issues involving a high-security clearance. Zinke will meet separately with committee Democrats and Republicans and copies of invitations obtained by ME say he will be "raising a confidential matter" and only members and staff with top-secret level clearance may attend.

Deputy Takes Bigger Role While Department Awaits Nominee.

Greenwire (10/23, Brown, Yachnin) reports Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift indicated that "Casey Hammond, the current deputy assistant secretary for fish and wildlife and parks, will temporarily help Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Katharine MacGregor oversee various Interior agencies." Greenwire says Hammond will be "pulling double duty as the Senate has yet to confirm a permanent assistant secretary for land and minerals management." By "signing secretarial order No. 3357 on Tuesday, Deputy Interior Secretary David Bernhardt declared 'an immediate need for additional executive-level supervision and direction with respect to'" the BLM, BOEM, BSEE, and the OSMRE. Swift said, "The Senate minority is dragging its feet on getting qualified nominees like Joe Balash in leadership roles here at Interior. Rather than let that slow our progress, we are utilizing team members across the bureaus to move the ball forward for the American people."

Offshore Oil Drilling May Be Coming To A Coastline Near You.

In EcoWatch (10/23, Stauffer), Surfrider Foundation Environmental Director Pete Stauffer predicted the expansion of offshore oil drilling in the US. Stauffer cites how

“following an executive order earlier this year, Interior Sec. Ryan Zinke announced plans to revise the nation’s Five-Year Offshore Drilling Plan, threatening the Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf of Mexico and Arctic Ocean with the prospect of new offshore oil rigs.” Stauffer attacks these plans, writing, “The drilling, rigs and transportation tankers required for offshore drilling release a brew of toxic chemicals and leaked oil.” Stauffer urges readers to “submit comments to the Department of the Interior and boldly voice their opposition to offshore drilling.”

Signed, Sealed, Delivered.

The Politico Morning Energy (10/23, Adragna) briefing reports that BOEM “approved a key step of Deepwater Wind’s 144-megawatt Revolution Wind project that will enable the company to collect the biological and wind performance data it needs to file a construction plan.” The briefing adds, “Massachusetts is slated to pick the winning contracts in July, and Deepwater Wind has said it could bring the project online by the end of 2023.”

Spending The President’s Money.

Greenwire (10/23, Hotakainen) reports that maintenance mechanic “Kenny Klipp appreciates that President Trump donated his first-quarter salary to the National Park Service,” and hopes it will enable him “to join the team of construction workers that will restore the historic Newcomer House at the Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg using the president’s donation of \$78,333 to pay for part of the project.” NPS Historic Preservation Training Center Superintendent Moss Rudley “said the renovation project originally set for 2019 has moved to a faster track, with work scheduled to begin next spring and some windows getting removed as early as February.” The article outlines the history of the Newcomer House.

Smithsonian Museum To Display Post From Dakota Access Pipeline Protests.

The AP (10/23, Nicholson) reports that the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC will be displaying a 12-foot-tall mile-maker post, which was built by Dakota Access pipeline protesters to show how far people traveled to protest the project. Hickory Edwards donated the post to the museum, which he erected in September of 2016.

BLM Seeks Public Comment On Greater Sage-Grouse.

The Elko (NV) Daily Free Press (10/23) reports that the BLM “announced opportunities for the public to comment and share issues on the agency’s consideration of potential amendments to its Nevada and California land use plans, specifically elements of land use plans that address greater sage-grouse conservation.” The BLM announced meetings in “Northern Nevada, including one slated for Elko on Nov. 8.”

Plan Will Keep Most Of Arizona National Monument Open To Shooters.

KTAR-FM Glendale, AZ (10/23) reports online that the BLM “last week recommended closing 53,300 acres of the Sonoran Desert National Monument to recreational shooting, but keeping the remaining 443,000 open to shooters.” The latest plan, published “Friday in the Federal Register, calls for making 11 percent of the monument’s land off-limits to shooting,” although “hunting is not affected by any of the proposals considered by the bureau, and would be allowed anywhere in the monument with the proper permits.” BLM Arizona spokesman Adam Eggers said, “This is by no means the end of the process. ... Nothing has been finalized.” He is paraphrased as indicating “Friday started a 30-day protest period for the public to voice concerns or support for the proposal, as well as a 60-day legal review by the governor.”

Murder Trial Starts For Man Who Stoked US Immigration Debate.

The AP (10/23, Elias) reports that alleged murderer “Garcia Zarate’s trial began Monday with Deputy District Attorney Diana Garcia showing jurors the handgun that is accused of firing and said a ballistics expert will testify that the only way to fire it is to pull the trigger.” The AP notes that the handgun belonged to a BLM “ranger who reported that it had been stolen from his parked car in San Francisco a week before Steinle was shot.” The AP says the “shooting touched off a political furor during last year’s presidential race, with President Donald Trump citing the killing of 32-year-old Kate Steinle as a reason to toughen U.S. immigration policies.”

Tribes Seek Reparations Over Oregon Site Destroyed For Highway Expansion.

The AP (10/23) reports that Justice Department attorneys “asked a federal judge Monday to dismiss a lawsuit filed by tribal elders who say a sacred site was destroyed to expand a highway near Oregon’s Mount Hood.” Justice Department attorney Ben Schifman “said in a telephone hearing that the elders were not substantially burdened by the expansion of U.S. 26 and lacked standing to sue.” According to the AP, “the elders from Yakama Nation and the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde claim the Federal Highway Administration violated the Religious Freedom Restoration Act,” and “their attorney Stephanie Barclay said the government in 2008 could have widened the road without bulldozing a site that included a stone altar and medicinal plants.” The AP notes that “rather than money, the Native Americans are asking for a historical marker, a rebuilt altar and for the planting of new trees and plants.”

FEDERAL REGISTER LISTINGS:

Notices submitted to the Federal Register for Monday, October 23rd:

REG0007558 BIA Indian Gaming; Tribal-State Class III Gaming Compact Taking Effect in the State of New Mexico -- This Notice announces that the Tribal-State Gaming Compact between the Pueblo of Pojoaque and the State of New Mexico is taking effect. Notice 10/23/2017

REG0007460 FWS Removing Textual Descriptions of Critical Habitat Boundaries for Plants on the Hawaiian Islands (50 CFR 17.99) -- This rule will remove the textual

descriptions of the critical habitat boundaries from certain entries at 50 CFR 17.99 (plants on the Hawaiian Islands) that have maps sufficient to stand as the official delineation of the critical habitat designation. Final Rule 10/23/2017

REG0007487 FWS Receipt of Application for Incidental Take Permit; Draft Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the California Tiger Salamander; Phillips 66 Line 300 Project, Santa Barbara County, California -- FWS has received an application from Phillips 66 Pipeline, LLC for an incidental take permit under the Endangered Species Act. The permit would authorize take of the federally endangered California tiger salamander (Santa Barbara distinct population segment), incidental to otherwise lawful activities associated with the Phillips 66 Line 300 Project draft low-effect habitat conservation plan. Notice 10/23/2017

REG0007523 FWS 12-Month Finding on a Petition to List the Western Glacier Stonefly; Proposed Threatened Species Status for Meltwater Lednian Stonefly and Western Glacier Stonefly -- FWS is reopening the comment period on the October 4, 2016, proposed rule in order to accept comment on new information about the range and genetics of the species. Proposed Rule 10/23/2017

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