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Subject: Zinke to unveil Interior 'century' reorganization plan

By Esther Whieldon and Annie Snider

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Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said today he will begin releasing proposals in the next couple of months to reorganize the agency.

"I view this as a century reorganization to look at how best to manage, protect, use our public lands in the next 100 years given that we have a number of challenges," Zinke said in a conference call about the fiscal 2018 budget proposal.

Zinke said the reorganization will be aimed at coordinating on issues like wildlife corridors, watersheds and trail systems that span multiple federal agencies, as well as state and local ones.

He said his staff has already begun exploring ways of applying military models, he said, and for natural resources, the concept could be based around different watersheds to push more authority down to the "front lines."

Zinke has met with White House officials and interest groups including from the energy industry and environmental sectors about a reorganization options. And he met with Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to discuss fighting forest fires. POLITICO in January reported Zinke was mulling proposing congress move USDA's Forest Service to the Interior.

WHAT'S NEXT: With a few exceptions, Zinke will need congressional approval for any major reorganization of the Interior's nine bureaus or for bringing over bureaus from other agencies.

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