

**To:** Reynolds, David[dlreyns@sso.org]  
**From:** Cameron, Scott  
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Thanks,  
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On Tue, Jan 24, 2017 at 2:44 PM, Reynolds, David <[dlreyns@sso.org](mailto:dlreyns@sso.org)> wrote:

Good to catch up today. DR

David L. Reynolds

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**Subject:** RE: Trump admin moves political team into place

## INTERIOR

### Trump admin moves political team into place

Scott Streater, E&E News reporter

Published: Monday, January 23, 2017

The Trump administration is moving a "political team" composed of dozens of appointees into key Interior Department offices to help guide the transition of power, including two top officials working with Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-Mont.), President Trump's Interior secretary nominee.

The list includes longtime Republican operatives and several former Interior Department officials under the George W. Bush administration, including James Cason, who will serve as assistant Interior deputy secretary. Cason was Interior associate deputy secretary in the Bush administration, and also served stints at Interior under Republican Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

It also includes Doug Domenech, the leader of Trump's Interior transition team and an Interior official during the Bush administration, who is moving in as assistant secretary of insular affairs.

E&E News' ongoing coverage of the new administration and the changes taking place on Capitol Hill. [Click here](#) to view the continuing coverage.

Edward Keable, Interior's deputy solicitor for general law, distributed the list of 30 names via an internal email to Interior officials late yesterday under the subject line "Political Officials' First-cut Office Assignments."

The positions listed are not permanent appointments but represent a first wave of political staff, some of whom began making visits to various Interior agencies late Friday, sources said.

"Please keep in mind that these are preliminary assignments," Keable wrote. "You should expect that some of these assignments may change. Please be flexible."

He added, "These new political officials will work with you to provide guidance on policy and management decisions ... for the Department and your organization for the new administration. Please be prepared to welcome these new colleagues on Monday morning and to ease their transition into the Department."

Doug Domenech. Photo courtesy of the Texas Public Policy Foundation.

Keable invited Interior employees "to attend a meet-and-greet for the new political team and the career leadership" today at the Interior Operations Center.

Keable's email also included an attached chart of initial Interior leadership roles, with Kevin "Jack" Haugrud as acting Interior secretary. The names are also included on the agency's website.

But as of this morning, Interior's "key officials" page still said that "the Department of the Interior is managed by Sally Jewell" and incorrectly listed as directors many of the career employees who are leading Interior bureaus until political appointees are named and confirmed by the Senate. That page was corrected after E&E News contacted the agency, but several other webpages still list Jewell as the secretary.

Still, the list of political officials provides insight into how the Trump administration will guide the Interior Department, which includes 10 agencies that handle public lands, natural resources and Native American issues.

Trump has made no secret about his intent to expand oil and gas development and mining activity on public lands, and he is already turning to industry groups and George W. Bush-era officials to fill key positions within Interior, particularly those with roles in energy management, such as the Bureau of Land Management.

Some of the names on the latest list, including Cason, have met resistance from environmental groups and Democrats. In 1989, President George H.W. Bush sought to elevate Cason to assistant secretary of Agriculture for natural resources and environment, but his nomination was withdrawn in the face of objections from the Senate and environmental groups.

Melissa Simpson Photo courtesy of LinkedIn.

Others include Melissa Simpson, former deputy undersecretary for natural resources and environment in the Bush administration, for a position in the agency's Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs.

A significant number of top officials working for Zinke's congressional office are among the political staff members moving to Interior.

Included among the names are Scott Hommel, Zinke's chief of staff, for a position in the Office of the Secretary, and Micah Chambers, the deputy chief of staff to Zinke, in Interior's Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs.

In addition, Heather Swift, a Zinke spokeswoman, is listed for a position on Interior's communications team.

The Senate is expected to vote to approve Zinke as Interior secretary this week

*(E&E News PM, Jan. 20).*

Tucker Davis, a young Virginia GOP operative, was listed for a role within the federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.

Davis recently served as a Trump campaign field director in western Virginia. During the 2012 election cycle, Davis served as director of the Federation for American Coal, Energy and Security. According to his LinkedIn profile, Davis is currently a field director for Republican Ed Gillespie, who recently announced he is running for governor in Virginia.

Deputy Director Glenda Owen has stepped in as acting director. Names floated for that job include J. Steven Gardner, CEO of Kentucky-based science and engineering consulting firm ECSI LLC, and Earl Bandy, director of OSMRE's Knoxville Field Office, according to a source within the environmental community.

Other notable names on the latest list include:

- ⌞ Kate MacGregor, a former House Natural Resources Committee aide, for a position with the office of the assistant secretary for land and minerals management.
- ⌞ Rick Puckett and Christine Bauserman for positions at the office of the assistant secretary for policy, management and budget. Bauserman served as Arizona regional field director for the Trump campaign. And social media profiles show that Bauserman has previously worked as a political consultant in the Copper State for Republican candidates for state Legislature. She is also the chairwoman of United Republican Alliance of Principled Conservatives, which sought to stop Medicaid expansion in the state.
- ⌞ Tom Dickens for an unspecified position at the National Park Service. NPS declined to provide information on him.
- ⌞ Ben Keel for assistant secretary of Indian Affairs.
- ⌞ Kathy Benedetto, Marshall Crutchfield and Casey Hammond for unspecified positions at BLM.
- ⌞ Russell Roddy for an unspecified position at the Fish and Wildlife Service.
- ⌞ Scott Cameron for the office of the assistant secretary of water and science. Cameron served as Interior deputy assistant secretary in the George W. Bush administration. Cameron comes from his post as president of the nonprofit Reduce Risks from Invasive Species Coalition, which promotes "non-regulatory solutions" to invasive species.

*Reporters Dylan Brown, Corbin Hiar, Jennifer Yachnin and Emily Yehle contributed.*

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