

STAFF SUMMARY FOR APRIL 26-27, 2017

31C. OTHER INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – FEDERAL AGENCIES REPORT**Today's Item**Information Action

Standing agenda item to receive reports on any recent federal agency activities of interest not otherwise addressed under other agenda items.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background**

New Administration: As of Apr 14, 2017, appointments had not yet been made for the NOAA administrator or assistant administrator for fisheries (National Marine Fisheries Service), director of the National Park Service, or director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

U.S. Secretary for Commerce: On Feb 28, 2017, Wilbur L. Ross was sworn in as the Secretary of Commerce. Secretary Ross is the former Chairman and Chief Strategy Officer of WL Ross & Co. LLC and has over 55 years of investment banking and private equity experience. There is no news release available announcing his appointment; his full biography can be found at <https://www.commerce.gov/directory/wilburross>.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): Between Oct 2011 and Sep 2015, California saw its driest four-year period in the instrumental record, which dates back to 1895, creating a recovery challenge against multi-century odds (Exhibit 1).

U.S. Secretary for Interior: On Mar 1, 2017, Ryan Zinke was sworn in as secretary for the U.S. Department of the Interior (Exhibit 2). On his first day, Secretary Zinke signed orders to expand access to public lands and increase hunting, fishing, and recreation opportunities nationwide (Exhibit 3).

Significant Public Comments (N/A)**Recommendation (N/A)****Exhibits**

1. [DOI: California Dryness and Recovery Challenge Multi-Century Odds, dated Apr 10, 2017](#)
2. [DOI: Ryan Zinke Sworn In as 52nd Secretary of the Interior, dated Mar 1, 2017](#)
3. [DOI: Day One: Secretary Zinke Signs Orders to Expand Access to Public Lands, dated Mar 2, 2017](#)

Motion/Direction (N/A)

California Dryness and Recovery Challenge Multi-Century Odds



([LINK:https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/san-luis-reservoir-in-gustine-california-on-august-19-2014_1200x480-california-department-of-water-resources-florence-low.jpg](https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/san-luis-reservoir-in-gustine-california-on-august-19-2014_1200x480-california-department-of-water-resources-florence-low.jpg))

Courtesy of California Department of Water Resources - Florence Low

Between October 2011 and September 2015, California saw its driest four-year period ([LINK:https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/temp-and-precip/climatological-rankings/index.php?periods%5B%5D=48¶meter=pcp&state=4&div=0&month=9&year=2015#ranks-form](https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/temp-and-precip/climatological-rankings/index.php?periods%5B%5D=48¶meter=pcp&state=4&div=0&month=9&year=2015#ranks-form)) in the instrumental record, which dates back to 1895. Parts of the state lost more than two full years of precipitation during the prolonged, severe dry spell. But, a new study by NOAA NCEI scientists ([LINK:http://journals.ametsoc.org/doi/abs/10.1175/JCLI-D-16-0423.1](http://journals.ametsoc.org/doi/abs/10.1175/JCLI-D-16-0423.1)) suggests that from the longer-term view of paleoclimate records ([LINK://www.ncei.noaa.gov/news/what-is-paleoclimatology](http://www.ncei.noaa.gov/news/what-is-paleoclimatology)), the southern Central Valley and South Coast parts of the state saw their worst dry spell in nearly 450 years.

Published in the *Journal of Climate*

([LINK:http://journals.ametsoc.org/toc/clim](http://journals.ametsoc.org/toc/clim)

/current), this study also looked at how long it would take the state to recover from its current precipitation deficits. And, the scientists found

that California's hardest hit areas would likely need several decades for their long-term average precipitation to recover back to normal levels, starting from the 2012–2015 deficits. "The odds of the state completely recovering from its extreme dryness within two years are estimated at less than 1 percent," said Dr. Eugene R. Wahl, NCEI paleoclimatologist and lead author of the study. "But, the state is moving a good way towards recovery if very wet conditions continue into spring."

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The extreme El Niño conditions between 2015 and 2016 helped jumpstart recovery in the northern half of the state. And, the scientists found that when very strong or extreme El Niño events followed a similar deep dryness, California's full recovery time was nearly cut in half. The high amounts of

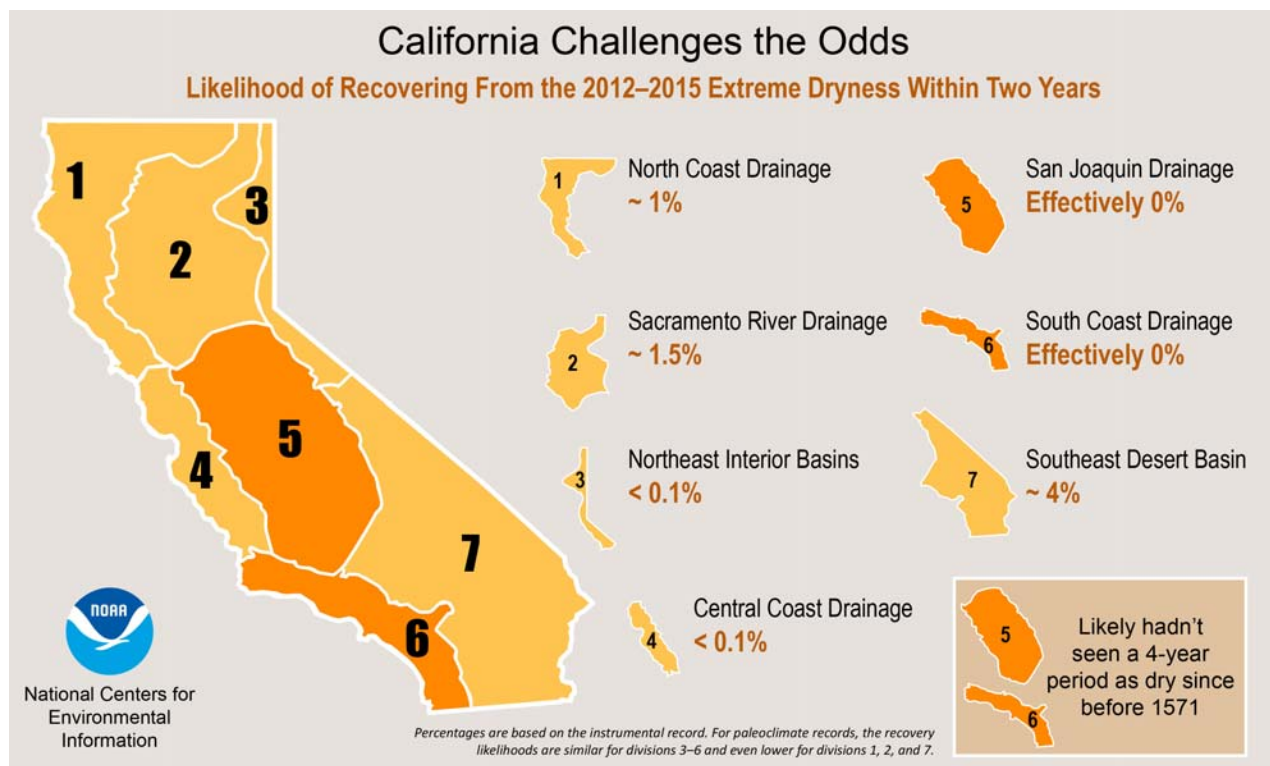
precipitation California has received during the current wet season have already set the state up for a faster recovery time than 80 percent of similar events. If it continues to be an extremely wet year for the state, like fall 1982 through summer 1983 ([LINK:https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/temp-and-precip/climatological-rankings/index.php?periods%5B%5D=12¶meter=pcp&state=4&div=0&month=9&year=1983#ranks-form](https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/temp-and-precip/climatological-rankings/index.php?periods%5B%5D=12¶meter=pcp&state=4&div=0&month=9&year=1983#ranks-form)), California would be looking at an even shorter recovery time.

Different Strokes for Different Climate Divisions

But, different parts of the state have felt the impacts of the dryness differently, and they will likely recover at different rates. To get a better view of these regional differences, the scientists also looked at each of the seven standard climate divisions ([LINK:https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/monitoring-references/maps/us-climate-divisions.php](https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/monitoring-references/maps/us-climate-divisions.php)) in California and their histories of extreme dry spells.

In most of these regions, the scientists found that similar very dry events had occurred since the late 16th century. However, two of the state's hardest hit regions—the San Joaquin Drainage and the South Coast Drainage—likely hadn't seen a four-year period as dry since at least before 1571. “These two regions include the agriculturally important Central Valley and the densely populated greater Los Angeles and San Diego metropolitan areas,” said Dr. Wahl, “So, the social and economic impacts are of particular importance there.”

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According to analysis of instrumental data, the Southeast Desert Basin division had the highest likelihood of recovering within two years at around 4 percent. The San Joaquin Drainage and the South Coast Drainage divisions effectively had a zero percent chance of recovery within two years.

And, the state's other four climate divisions ranged from a less than 0.1 percent to around a 1.5 percent chance. With the paleoclimate records, the results were similar for the Northeast Interior Basins, Central Coast Drainage, San Joaquin Drainage, and South Coast Drainage divisions. But, the likelihood of recovering within two years dropped even lower for the North Coast Drainage, Sacramento River Drainage, and Southeast Desert Basin divisions.

Megadroughts Could Be on the Way

By looking at precipitation alone, this study provides a unique view of California's past climate as well as insights into its future. Under current conditions, the scientists found that precipitation patterns alone are capable of producing unprecedented dry conditions such as occurred in the San Joaquin Drainage and the South Coast Drainage regions during 2012–2015, without the compounding factor of increasing temperatures.

In a warming world, higher temperatures could combine with and amplify severe precipitation deficits. If temperatures continue to rise as they have ([LINK:http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report/our-changing-climate/observed-change#narrative-page-16564](http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report/our-changing-climate/observed-change#narrative-page-16564)), the U.S. Southwest could be facing “megadroughts” ([LINK:http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/wcc.394](http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/wcc.394))—worse than any droughts in the region since medieval times—by the second half of the 21st century.

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U.S. Department of the Interior

Ryan Zinke Sworn In as 52nd Secretary of the Interior

Office of the Secretary



5th-generation Montanan pledges to uphold President Theodore Roosevelt's legacy

Date: March 1, 2017

Contact:

Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

WASHINGTON – Today, Ryan Zinke (pronounced Zink-EE) was confirmed and sworn in as the 52nd Secretary of the Interior. The Senate voted 68-31 to confirm Zinke the morning of March 1, 2017, and he was sworn in by Vice President Mike Pence at a ceremony in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building later that evening. Zinke is the first Montanan to serve as a cabinet secretary and also the first U.S. Navy SEAL in the cabinet.

“I am honored and humbled to serve Montana and America as Secretary of the Interior,” Zinke said. “I shall faithfully uphold Teddy Roosevelt’s belief that our treasured public lands are ‘for the benefit and enjoyment of the people’ and will work tirelessly to ensure our public lands are managed and preserved in a way that benefits all Americans for generations to come. This means responsible natural resource development, increased access for recreation and sportsmen, and conservation that makes the land more valuable for our children’s children. Importantly, our sovereign Indian Nations and territories must have the respect and freedom they deserve.”

In nominating Congressman Zinke, President Donald Trump said, “Ryan has built one of the strongest track records on championing regulatory relief, forest management, responsible energy development and public land issues in Congress. As a former Navy SEAL, he has incredible leadership skills and an attitude of doing whatever it takes to win. America is the most beautiful country in the world and he is going to help keep it that way with smart management of our federal lands. At the same time, my

administration's goal is to repeal bad regulations and use our natural resources to create jobs and wealth for the American people, and Ryan will explore every possibility for how we can safely and responsibly do that."

"Our public lands can once again be economic engines for our nation by creating jobs in energy, recreation, and conservation," continued Zinke. "By working with President Trump and Congress to reevaluate and fix flawed regulations that are barriers to job creation, we will unleash the economic opportunity within our borders. Creating jobs on public lands can and will be done in an environmentally responsible way during my tenure."

About Ryan Zinke

As a fifth-generation Montanan who grew up in a logging and rail town near Glacier National Park, Zinke has had a lifelong appreciation for conserving America's natural beauty while upholding Teddy Roosevelt's vision of multiple-use on our public lands. He has consistently led the efforts to renew the Land and Water Conservation Fund in Congress, and has also been a firm advocate for our nation's sportsmen and women to gain access to our public lands. Zinke also co-authored the 2015 Resilient Federal Forest Act, which initiated new reforms for revitalizing America's timber areas and preventing wildfires by emphasizing local collaboration on responsible timber harvest projects.

As Secretary of the Interior, Zinke leads an agency with more than 70,000 employees who serve as steward for 20 percent of the nation's lands, including national parks, monuments and wildlife refuges, as well as other public lands. The department oversees the responsible development of conventional and renewable energy supplies on public lands and waters; is the largest supplier and manager of water in the 17 Western states; and upholds trust responsibilities to the 567 federally recognized American Indian tribes and Alaska Natives.

Ryan Zinke represented the state of Montana in the U.S. House of Representatives since 2014, building an impressive portfolio on Interior issues ranging from federal mineral leases to tribal affairs to public lands conservation. Zinke is widely praised for his voting record that supports the Teddy Roosevelt philosophy of managing public lands, which calls for multiple-use to include economic, recreation and conservation aspects.

Before being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, Zinke served in the Montana State Senate from 2009 to 2011, but the bulk of Zinke's public service was his 23 years as a U.S. Navy SEAL officer.

Zinke enlisted in the Navy in 1985 and was soon selected to join the elite force where he would build an honorable career until his retirement in 2008. He retired with the rank of Commander after leading SEAL operations around the globe, including as the Deputy and Acting Commander of Joint Special Forces in Iraq and two tours at SEAL Team Six. Zinke was the first Navy SEAL elected to the U.S. House and is the first SEAL to serve as a cabinet secretary.

Zinke holds a Geology degree from the University of Oregon, where he was an All-PAC 10 football player; a Master's degree in Business Finance from National University; and a Master's degree in Global Leadership from the University of San Diego. Ryan and his wife Lolita (Lola) have three children and two granddaughters. Zinke is proud to be an adopted member of the Assiniboine Sioux Tribe at the Fort Peck Reservation in Northeast Montana.

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U.S. Department of the Interior

Day One: Secretary Zinke Signs Orders to Expand Access to Public Lands

Office of the Secretary

Orders Strengthen America's Outdoor Heritage & Restore Opportunities for Sportsmen and Anglers

Last edited 3/3/2017

Date: March 2, 2017

Contact: Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

WASHINGTON - Today, on his first day on duty, Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke (pronounced ZINK-ee) issued two secretarial orders which expand access to public lands and increase hunting, fishing, and recreation opportunities nationwide. These orders deliver on promises made by both President Donald J. Trump and Secretary Zinke to expand access to America's public lands. The action was hailed by representatives from sportsmen, conservation, and recreation organizations.

"Outdoor recreation is about both our heritage and our economy. Between hunting, fishing, motorized recreation, camping and more, the industry generates thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic activity," said Zinke. "Over the past eight years however, hunting, and recreation enthusiasts have seen trails closed and dramatic decreases in access to public lands across the board. It worries me to think about hunting and fishing becoming activities for the land-owning elite. This package of secretarial orders will expand access for outdoor enthusiasts and also make sure the community's voice is heard."

The two secretarial orders include:

[Secretarial Order No. 3346](#) overturns the recent ban of lead ammunition and fish tackle used on Fish and Wildlife Service lands, waters, and facilities. The order highlights the need for additional review and consultation with local stakeholders.

[Secretarial Order No. 3347](#) advances conservation stewardship, improves game and habitat management, and increases outdoor recreation opportunities by directing bureaus and agencies to immediately identify areas where recreation and fishing can be expanded. The order also requests input from the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council and Sport Fishing and Boating

Partnership Council to provide recommendations on enhancing and expanding access on public lands and improving habitat for fish and wildlife.

Secretary Zinke was joined by representatives from the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, National Shooting Sports Foundation, Boone and Crockett Club, Wild Sheep Foundation, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, National Rifle Association, Safari Club International, National Wild Turkey Federation, Archery Trade Association, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, American Recreation Council, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, Mule Deer Foundation, National Wildlife Federation, Wildlife Management Institute, American Sportfishing Association, and National Marine Manufacturers Association.

Photos of the signing ceremony for media use can be [downloaded here](#).

Follow Secretary Zinke on Twitter [@SecretaryZinke](#).

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