

News!

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PRESIDENT OBAMA NOMINATES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DIRECTOR

On July 10, President Obama's announced that he intends to nominate Jonathan Jarvis to be director of the National Park Service. Jarvis, a 30-year veteran of the Park Service, currently is the regional director of the agency's Pacific West Region.

"President Obama has made an outstanding choice for director of the National Park Service," according to Secretary of Interior, Ken Salazar. "There is no substitute for experience, and Jon Jarvis has three decades of hands-on experience in our parks that will be invaluable as we seek to reinvigorate and improve our National Park System in time for its 100th anniversary in 2016."

As regional director of the Pacific West Region, Jarvis is currently responsible for the 54 units of the National Park System in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands of Guam, Saipan and American Samoa. He oversees 3,000 employees with a \$350 million annual budget.

For more background on Jarvis visit: http://www.doi.gov/news/09_News_Releases/071009b.html



SENATOR OPPOSES DOI NOMINEES

During a confirmation hearing for Bob Abbey, Bureau of Land Management director nominee, and Wilma Lewis, assistant secretary for land and minerals management nominee, Senator John McCain (R-AZ) indicated that he would oppose moving the nominations forward until the Obama administration takes a position on his legislation

that would make way for a copper mine in an Arizona national forest.

The Bush administration had supported the bill, but Obama administration officials have expressed concern about the measure and need more time to assess it. According to Forest Service deputy chief, Joel Holtrop, the bill would preclude the Forest Service from reviewing the land exchange under the National Environmental Policy Act, instead allowing only for review of the mining activities that followed the exchange. Holtrop indicated that NEPA review should precede the land exchange, which he acknowledged would exceed the one-year deadline set out by the bill.

During the hearing, Abbey also discussed the difficulty of transmission siting on public lands and pledged to bring in all stakeholders early in the process in order to understand what the conflicts might be. Abbey believes that the BLM is the right agency to handle locating transmission lines and that it has everything needed to do the proper planning, analysis of impacts and come up with the appropriate mitigation measures. Abbey also said one of the biggest challenges facing BLM is the large footprints of solar and wind projects.



TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION UPDATE

As the highway bill nears its September 30 expiration date, the Senate and House are taking opposing ap-

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proaches to the bill. On Wednesday, the Senate Environment and Public Works committee passed an 18 month extension of the current legislation, while two weeks ago the House Highways and Transit subcommittee began marking-up a committee print (draft version) of a new transportation bill. The Obama Administration supports an 18 month extension.

While the future of the bill is murky at best, the proposed House bill appears to hold harmless preservation activities. The bill would create a new Office of Livability designed to increase modal choice and enhance livability and sustainable modes of transportation; including approaching transportation planning in a way that “preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources.” The Transportation Enhancements program would continue and be administered through the new Office of Livability.

The bill also proposes to create an Office of Expedited Project Delivery to speed the process for highway construction projects and focus on incorporating NEPA early in the project planning process.



CONGRESS PROVIDES \$4 BILLION FOR HIGH SPEED RAIL

On Monday, the House Transportation and HUD Appropriations subcommittee cleared its 2010 spending which includes an additional \$4 billion to help finance a nationwide high-speed rail system. The \$4 billion for the high-speed and intercity passenger rail is four times the total Obama had sought. The economic stimulus included \$8 billion to jumpstart a high-speed rail network and the White House requested an additional \$1 billion annually over the next five years.

Subcommittee Chairman John Over (D-MA) said given the large amount of interest in high-speed rail that the stimulus investment has generated, the committee decided to inject additional funding

beyond the president’s request. “Clearly there is pent-up demand to move in this area.” Olver said.



SENATE RESOURCES HEARING ON NPS BILLS

Wednesday the Senate National Parks Subcommittee received testimony on a variety of NPS and public lands bill. Katherine Stevenson, acting deputy director for support services at the NPS testified on behalf of the Administration and offered support for all bills except S.1117 which would authorize the DOI to appropriate up to \$1 million annually to assist in conservation of the Connecticut River watershed in New Hampshire and Vermont. The Administration believes that the proposal is unnecessary given existing funding mechanisms within the NPS, FWS and other federal agencies.

A complete list of bills considered at the hearing includes:

- S.227 to establish the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park and the Harriet Tubman National Underground Railroad National Historical Park (Cardin D-MD);
- S.625 to authorize the Secretary of Interior to establish the Waco Mammoth National Monument (Cornyn R-TX);
- S.853 to designate additional segments and tributaries White Clay Creek as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (Kaufman D-DE);
- S.1053 to amend the National Law Enforcement Museums Act to extend the termination date (Murkowski R-AK);
- S.1117 to authorize the Secretary of Interior to provide assistance in implementing cultural heritage, conservation and recreational activities in the Connecticut River watershed (Leahy D-VT);
- S.1168 and H.R.1694 to authorize the acquisition and protection of nationally significant battlefields and associated sites of the Revolutionary War and War of 1812 (Schumer D-NY);
- H.R.714 to authorize the Secretary of Interior to lease certain lands in Virgin Islands National Park (Rep. Christensen D-VI).

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- October 13-17, 2009 – National Preservation Conference, Nashville, TN
- October 13-15, 2009 – NCSHPO Winter Board Meeting, Nashville, TN

