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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
TRIBAL CONSULTATION

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SECRETARIAL ORDER 3336  
Rangeland and Fire Prevention, Management, and Restoration

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Taken at 911 Northeast 11th Avenue  
Portland, Washington

DATE: Thursday February 19, 2015

REPORTED BY: Kristin M. Vickery, CCR, CLR 3125

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5 MR. GIDNER: Good morning, everybody. My name is  
6 Jerry Gidner. And I'm going to introduce myself and others  
7 more in just a moment. But, first, I'm going to turn it  
8 over to Stan Speaks, the regional director for the BIA just  
9 to make some welcoming comments.

10 MR. SPEAKS: Thank you, Mr. Gidner.

11 And good morning and welcome. It's by tradition  
12 and by way of life for us, is that when we -- we begin a  
13 session with our Tribes, we always call upon the Great  
14 Spirit. So in order to do that and make sure we set things  
15 straight in this room to get things off appropriately, I  
16 call on Ms. Lankford from Salish-Kootenai to lead us in a  
17 prayer.

18 Ms. Lankford.

19 MS. LANKFORD: Thank you, Stan.

20 Creator, (in native language), today we just ask  
21 you for your love and your guidance and your wisdom.

22 And we just ask you to watch over all of us as  
23 we -- as we travel to these meetings to take care of issues  
24 that affect our home and our homeland and our people. We  
25 just ask you to also watch over our elders and our children

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1 to keep them safe and strong.

2 We ask for a special prayer today for our military  
3 and our armed forces. We just ask you to be with them and  
4 their families and just keep them safe and strong.

5 We ask for a prayer for our elders. We also ask  
6 for a prayer for all the individuals that are traveling all  
7 over the world. We just ask you that we have some craziness  
8 going on. We just ask you to be with them and keep us safe.

9 (In native language.)

10 MR. SPEAKS: Thank you, Ms. Lankford.

11 And again, people, welcome. Welcome to this very  
12 special consultation session. And I think you're going to  
13 find the subject very important. It will give you a great  
14 opportunity in which to have dialogue with some very key  
15 people. And I think you're going to feel comfortable being  
16 able to do just that.

17 This is a consultation session that -- initiated  
18 by the Department. And I do think that the Secretary of the  
19 Interior -- I believe it's one of her initiatives. If not,  
20 she certainly supports it.

21 So with that, I'm going to introduce Mr. Jerry  
22 Gidner. He has some comments and is going to make some very  
23 special introductions, some people that we have -- some  
24 guests we have from the Department of Interior and also the  
25 Bureau of Indian Affairs.

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1 So, Mr. Gidner?

2 MR. GIDNER: Thank you.

3 Good morning. So my name is Jerry Gidner. I'm  
4 the Tribal Liaison Officer for the Office of Policy,  
5 Management, and Budget in the Department of Interior. I'm a  
6 member of the Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa Tribe from Michigan.  
7 Excuse me.

8 We're here today for a consultation on the  
9 Secretarial Order 3336. I won't be able to remember the  
10 whole name of it. It says, Rangeland fire prevention,  
11 management, and restoration. And it was signed January 5th  
12 of this year by Secretary Jewell of the Department of the  
13 Interior.

14 So we are having a series of sessions to talk with  
15 Tribes about the Secretarial Order. I'm going to introduce  
16 our DOI speakers here in just a second.

17 First, I do want to say, as you can see, we have a  
18 court reporter here. So we're -- our session is being  
19 recorded and there will be a transcript. And it will be up  
20 on the Web site that we've set up for this probably by next  
21 week. So when you do give comments, please state your name  
22 so the court reporter can get that. Otherwise, we won't  
23 know who said what. Hopefully everybody signed in up front.

24 And if you do have any written comments, please  
25 feel free to turn those in. One Tribe already did. And

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1 just give those to the court reporter, and we'll get copies  
2 of those where they need to be here in a little bit.

3 I will say the -- a logistical matter, the  
4 restrooms are back down the hallway toward the entrance door  
5 about halfway up the ramp on the left. So if you need to  
6 use those, that's where you'll find that.

7 All right. So let me introduce the folks  
8 that are here today. First, at the table, is Janice  
9 Schneider, the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals  
10 with DOI. To her right is Jim Lyons, Deputy Assistant

11 Secretary for Land and Minerals. And here on my immediate  
12 right is Jerry Perez, the BLM state director for Oregon.

13 Over here -- and just raise your hand as I  
14 call your name -- Paul Steblein, who's the Deputy Director  
15 of the Office of Wildland Fire for the Department of  
16 Interior. Joe [sic] Fedrizzi is a state fire management  
17 officer for BLM for the State of Oregon. Behind him is  
18 Helen Riggs, who's the Deputy Bureau Director for the BIA  
19 for Trust Services. Next to her, David Koch, who's the  
20 acting forestry manager for BIA from Washington.

21 In the front row, we have Lauren Bogard,  
22 who's a special assistant or adviser to the assistant  
23 secretary. Mr. Speaks, everybody knows, the BIA Regional  
24 Director. Bodie Shaw is the Deputy Regional Director.  
25 Jesse Delia, who is the -- he told me his title, but it's --

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1 he's the sage-grouse coordinator. He's a Candidate Species  
2 Coordinator for Fish and Wildlife for this region.

3 If there's anybody else from DOI here who I  
4 have forgotten, I apologize.

5 Well, I need to talk about Linda Brisbane,  
6 who helped with the logistics, from Mr. Speaks's office. So  
7 without her, we would not be doing this at all. So thank  
8 you for that.

9 And I'm sorry. Erin Darboven sitting in the  
10 back is the -- working on Tribal consultation for the Office  
11 of Wildland Fire.

12 So we have a lot of folks here to talk to you  
13 today about this and into the future.

14 And let me, before I turn it over to  
15 Ms. Schneider, we have a -- I'll just give kind of the  
16 overview of the process of this.

17 The Secretarial Order came out January 5th  
18 and had some very tight timelines in it. And we understand  
19 we've already heard from Tribes, there's not a lot of time  
20 to comment, and we understand that. There's not a lot of  
21 time for us either. But we're doing the best we can.

22 We had to do an implementation plan within  
23 DOI which was just an internal plan on how we're going to  
24 organize this. It's up on the Web site, which I'll give the  
25 Web site in a minute. It's out there at the back table, so

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1 hopefully you have that. We do talk in there about how we  
2 plan to do consultation moving forward. So that came out  
3 February 1st, I think.

4 March 1st we have to have a report in place  
5 talking about how -- what we will do to implement the  
6 Secretarial Order for the 2015 fire season.

7 The Secretarial Order has nine tasks that we  
8 have to work on. There's only four of those reflected in  
9 this first report. And the draft report that we want your  
10 comments on is also outside and also on our Web site.

11 So there are four tasks in there, numerous  
12 action items but four main tasks. And it's really for the  
13 2015 fire season.

14 Coming up -- and comments for that, we would  
15 like by next Monday, the 23rd. There's a number of ways to  
16 submit comments, which I'll talk about in just a second.

17 The second report is for 2016 fire seasons  
18 and beyond. It will talk about all of the nine tasks. We  
19 have a consultation in Reno, Nevada, April 7th for that, to  
20 take comments on that -- or to have a consultation on that.  
21 Comments will be due April 21st. So there will be two weeks  
22 from the consultation until comments are due.

23 And we also will have that, I think -- I  
24 can't remember. We -- we were saying, I think, March 31st  
25 we'd have comment -- or the draft out. I think we moved

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1 that forward. I'll check while we're having our discussion.  
2 We will have that report out as soon as we can get it done,  
3 the draft, for Tribes to look at. So for that one, which  
4 has a much broader sweep than the -- this one that's out  
5 today, Tribes will have a much greater time to comment on  
6 that. And it's still only a couple weeks. We understand  
7 that. But it is more time.

8 Let me tell you -- make sure you know how  
9 to -- how to comment.

10 Of course, if you have something prepared,  
11 we'll take it today. We have a Web site dedicated to this  
12 topic. And it's [www.forestsandrangelands.gov/rangeland](http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/rangeland).  
13 Forests and rangelands is all one word, and forests and  
14 rangelands are both plural. And if anybody needs me to  
15 write that down for you, later on I will.

16 So that's the Web site where all these  
17 documents are.

18 We can take comments several ways. First, on  
19 that Web site, there's a link to a Web form. You can type

20 Secretarial Order 3336\_Feb 19\_TC Transcript  
21 your comments into that form. And that actually is our  
22 preferred way because that will automatically aggregate  
23 those comments for us and it will just help us process those  
24 on our end.

25 But we have an e-mail that you can send  
comments to, rangelandfire@ios.doi.gov. Or we have a fax

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1 number. You can fax comments, (202) 478-5091.

2 So with that introduction -- and if anybody  
3 wants me to write -- like I said, if anybody wants me to  
4 write down any of that information, I'll be happy to as the  
5 day goes on.

6 So with no other introduction, I'm going to  
7 turn it over to Assistant Secretary Janice Schneider.

8 MS. SCHNEIDER: Jerry, thanks so much.

9 Can you folks hear me? Good. All right.  
10 Excellent.

11 Thank you, everyone, for participating today.  
12 It's really an honor for me to be here and to have this  
13 dialogue with you. I also love being in Portland. I went  
14 to Lewis and Clark, so it's great to be back for a few days  
15 at the very least.

16 As Jerry indicated, the reason we're here today  
17 is, we want to seek your input on how we go about  
18 implementing Secretarial Order 3336, which is the rangeland  
19 fire order that Jerry was just discussing. We are at the  
20 early stages of the process, so there's a lot of opportunity  
21 for input in terms of how we go about implementing it.

22 We recognize that things are moving very quickly.

23 I, myself, just this week, got a copy of the draft as well.  
24 So we're all a little bit in the same boat. These deadlines  
25 are being driven by the Secretarial Order itself, and we're

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10

1 trying to be -- we're trying to move this as quickly as we  
2 can while having as many opportunities for input as is  
3 possible.

4 The -- the order that tasks the Department to  
5 develop a landscape-scale, comprehensive strategy to reduce  
6 the threat of fire in the rangeland, primarily in the Great  
7 Basin area of the United States. And this is to be done  
8 pursuant to the order in collaboration with partners. And  
9 the order also recognizes that this effort is now a critical  
10 priority for the Department.

11 I thought it would be helpful, just by way of  
12 background, to give you a little bit of information on how  
13 the order came to be, like why are we doing this right now.

14 I think it's pretty uncontrovertible, at this  
15 point in time, that the threat of rangeland fire in the  
16 Great Basin is very, very significant. There is a cycle  
17 that's been created in the environment where you have this  
18 accelerated invasion of nonnative, annual grasses -- like  
19 cheatgrass -- that are moving in, coupled with drought and  
20 with climate change, what we're seeing is that fires in that  
21 part of the country are burning longer. They're burning  
22 hotter.

23 And after the burn, cheatgrass is -- medusahead  
24 rye and some other invasives are moving in and just creating  
25 a cycle that is not the normal cycle for that part of the

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1 country. And it's repeating again and again and again. And  
2 we're -- we're losing millions of acres of sagebrush-steppe  
3 habitat which is an incredibly important ecosystem, not only  
4 to the communities that live in the area; the ranchers; the  
5 Tribal communities; you know, other folks who have -- you  
6 know, have their living in that ecological system, but there  
7 are also hundreds of other -- of birds and plants species  
8 that are affected as well on an annual basis.

9           Now, clearly, the threat of rangeland fire also  
10 plays a very, very significant threat to the greater  
11 sage-grouse which, as I'm sure everyone knows, we are in an  
12 11-state effort right now to try to potentially avoid a  
13 listing of that bird.

14           The Fish and Wildlife Service, in 2010, determined  
15 that the listing of the sage-grouse was warranted but  
16 precluded by other priorities. And so the bird was made a  
17 candidate species under the Endangered Species Act. And  
18 under court order, the Department, the Fish and Wildlife  
19 Service, specifically, is required to make another  
20 determination in September of this year.

21           And so Jim Lyons and other members of the  
22 Department are working very, very hard with a lot of our  
23 partners to try to develop a comprehensive strategy to  
24 avoid -- potentially avoid a listing.

25           And that includes revising the Bureau of Land

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1 Management plans. There are 98 different plans that we're  
2 in the process of revising right now to put stronger  
3 conservation measures into place. We're working very  
4 closely with the states to make sure that they are doing  
5 their part from a conservation perspective. And the third  
6 leg of the stool is fire in the Great Basin.

7 Fish and Wildlife Service has said, very  
8 unequivocally to us that we have to address the fire risk  
9 and find ways to work together, to work smarter, to be more  
10 efficient with the resources that we have, and really put  
11 into place a long-term strategy to minimize the risk to fire  
12 in the Great Basin region specifically.

13 And so that's what the order does. It -- it tries  
14 to put into place and put us on a path of developing an  
15 enhanced strategy. We all know that there's a lot of great  
16 work that's already being done. We're going to build on  
17 that. And the way we see it, and as it is articulated in  
18 the -- in the Secretarial Order, this is a multi-pronged  
19 approach. We're going to look at all facets of the fire  
20 question.

21 Can we do a better job, pre-fire, from a fuels  
22 treatment perspective? Can we use our fire suppression  
23 assets and money smarter? Can we enhance capabilities for  
24 folks who are locally situated to help with initial attack  
25 from a training perspective? Can we address our post-fire

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1 restoration work in a much more effective way that is  
2 measurable so that we can actually focus on those areas that  
3 are most resilient and resistant to fire and also very

4 important to the sage-grouse itself?

5 So we're looking at the question holistically.

6 How can we improve our policies and strategies before,

7 during, and after fire?

8 We started this question back in -- it feels like

9 a long time ago, but it really wasn't -- back in November

10 where we brought together a -- almost 300 people in Boise to

11 just start the conversation. How can we do this better?

12 How can we work better together? And that was at a

13 conference called The Next Steppe, S-T-E-P-P-E -- I thought

14 it was a clever name; Jim didn't like it -- but -- but to

15 really kind of look at, you know, what can we be doing

16 together.

17 We had some Tribal participation, including from

18 Warm Springs and Shoshone-Paiute, which was terrific. We

19 wanted to try to engage Tribal communities; make sure that

20 we have more Tribal participation; and have an understanding

21 of what your views are going forward, how could we be doing

22 things better; and also to understand any concerns that --

23 that you may have. So the conference was great. It kicked

24 off a lot of good ideas and -- and that actually resulted in

25 the issuance of the Secretarial Order.

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14

1 Couple of key tenets that I just want to stress

2 from the order that we're looking at because this is really

3 going to be a comprehensive strategy. We're looking at

4 improving our coordination and collaboration, as I mentioned

5 earlier. That is paramount to this effort.

6 Secondly, we are very focused on the importance

7 of initial attack and how can we enhance the capability and  
8 the capacity of State, Tribal, and local governments, as  
9 well as range and fire protection associations, volunteer  
10 fire departments to help with the initial attack. We want  
11 to make sure that folks are properly trained and available  
12 to participate in protecting the communities that they live  
13 in.

14 And we're also very focused on developing  
15 additional technologies to identify these areas that we  
16 should protect, i.e., where are the right places to be  
17 putting our money; where are the right places to be put our  
18 fire prevention assets so we're not just wasting money, as  
19 sometimes may be the case. We're looking at piloting new  
20 strategies. So we're interested in your ideas along those  
21 lines. And overall, we just want to improve our  
22 effectiveness and our efficiency.

23 So I'm looking forward to working with you as we  
24 move forward. You know, things, as I mentioned, are moving  
25 quickly. But there is opportunity to provide us with your

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1 ideas so that we can take them into consideration before we  
2 finalize our reports.

3 And I think, at that point, I'm going to stop  
4 talking now. And I might turn it over to Jim who's going to  
5 provide a little bit more granularity to what's in the  
6 current draft. And we'll be happy to take any questions you  
7 may have.

8 MR. LYONS: Well, thank you, Janice.

9 And I, too, want to thank you for the opportunity

10 to meet with you today and begin the conversation about this  
11 important priority for the Department and, I think, for all  
12 of us concerned about the fate and future of the Great  
13 Basin.

14 I would emphasize, as it's been said a number of  
15 times, that we're -- we're attempting to do this at a rapid  
16 pace so we can be responsive to what we heard. We've heard  
17 it before but heard it amplified at The Next Steppe  
18 conference that Janice referenced.

19 There, we pulled together a wide range of people  
20 with a wide range of expertise including members of various  
21 Tribes. And the overriding concern was, Is this going to be  
22 another one of those government conferences that leads to  
23 nothing?

24 And I think we wanted to, "A," demonstrate that  
25 that is, in fact, not the case; and, B, demonstrate that we

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1 have the capacity, if we're smart about how we manage our  
2 assets, to do a better job of addressing the threat of  
3 rangeland fire in the Great Basin. And that led, soon  
4 after, to the creation of the Secretarial Order which was  
5 issued in January which put us on a very, very tight time  
6 frame to respond.

7 So if you go to the Web site that Jerry  
8 referenced, [forestsandrangelands.gov](http://forestsandrangelands.gov), you will see the  
9 Executive Order; you can find the implementation plan, which  
10 was first the product that we needed to generate for the  
11 Secretary; and you will see the draft of this initial plan.

12 And I emphasize the "initial" because the focus

13 here is really on the actions and activities that we can  
14 undertake in advance of or during the 2015 fire season,  
15 again, just to get ahead of things. The larger, longer-term  
16 plan will be delivered -- is due to be delivered to the  
17 Secretary, May 1. And we want to provide more time for  
18 input and comment, but we certainly want to get your views,  
19 your thoughts, about the 2015 plan as well.

20 As I said, this is a priority for a number of  
21 reasons, but I think if -- it also, in some respects, you  
22 know, is a priority for everyone who cares about these lands  
23 and landscapes; is concerned about the impacts on natural  
24 resources, on communities; the potential threat to life and  
25 property.

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1 And it's the piece of the fire puzzle, if you  
2 will, that never has gotten a great deal of attention. I  
3 worked in the Clinton administration for eight years and  
4 worked on fire policy, worked in this region quite a bit on  
5 those issues. And forest fires are always going to be the  
6 dominant concern. But rangeland fire is an increasing  
7 concern, and I think it has been amplified by the impacts of  
8 climate change and drought. And we're starting to see that  
9 now. And so we want to make sure we address both  
10 effectively -- I think that's the -- that's the message --  
11 so we can manage all lands, to protect and restore them to a  
12 healthy landscape.

13 So I just want to highlight a couple of things  
14 that are in the initial plan. And we'll go into detail, but  
15 this will give you some sense of what we're trying to

16 accomplish in the short term.

17           So you'll see, when you get a chance to look at  
18 the initial plan, that it focuses on a few areas of  
19 priority. The first is integrated response. And there,  
20 we've -- we've gone through an effort, working with the  
21 forest service, BLM, Fish and Wildlife Service, and others  
22 to actually map out the -- the areas of high resistance and  
23 resilience to fire in the Great Basin region. And -- and we  
24 intend to use that information and the technology to have a  
25 better target on the work that we do with regard to

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1 rangeland and fire.

2           Some of those areas we refer to as the FIAT areas,  
3 the Fire and Invasives Assessment Tool areas, do affect  
4 reservations. There's about 400,000 acres actually in the  
5 Great Basin that coincide with these FIAT areas. And those  
6 will certainly be areas of focus.

7           A second area that we've dealt with that Janice  
8 already eluded to was to try to improve our ability to train  
9 local firefighters, rural fire protection associations,  
10 volunteer fire companies to better equip them to help us,  
11 particularly with initial attack.

12           As with all fire, the challenge is to get on the  
13 fire quickly. Rangeland fires have a capacity to burn many  
14 acres fast. And -- and since these areas are so widespread,  
15 we don't have the resources and the assets to cover them.  
16 We never will. So we want to be able to train people within  
17 the communities near these areas of high potential for fire  
18 so that they can help us get on top of the fire quickly and

19 hopefully increase our capacity to limit the spread of fire  
20 to affect an initial attack. And -- and you'll see, in the  
21 plan, a strategy to try to accelerate and expand the  
22 training for that purpose.

23 Part of our goal here is to look across a wider  
24 landscape and take a risk-based approach to wildfire  
25 response. And that links back to targeting to those areas

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1 that are most resistant and resilient as well as recognizing  
2 the areas that are significant from the standpoint of  
3 sage-grouse and other important species. And part of this  
4 is driven by the fact that we are working across 11 states,  
5 with governors, with our colleagues in the federal agencies,  
6 and with others to try to avoid the need to list the species  
7 as threatened and endangered.

8 And one critical element to that is to try to do  
9 an effective job -- a more effective job, I should say, in  
10 dealing with rangeland fire. And so focusing in on areas of  
11 high risk and attempting to deal with those areas as a  
12 priority, both from a prevention standpoint and a suppression  
13 standpoint. I should say also, as a firefighter response,  
14 postfire is going to be critically important.

15 Part of this challenge here I think is improving  
16 our ability to get information to people working on the  
17 ground, and that includes the FMOs and others involved in  
18 fire. But it also includes the communities, the volunteers,  
19 and the people we hope to train. And so part of that is  
20 helping them understand where these priority areas are,  
21 again, trying to take limited assets and really focusing on

22 the places that matter most.

23           And so one of the things we want to pilot this  
24 year -- and this could have, I think, implications for what  
25 we do with forest fire as well in this region -- is we want

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1 to get more tools and technology in the hands of the -- of  
2 the teams who are going to be fighting fire so that the maps  
3 that delineate these areas and the information that's  
4 provided as part of a -- the fire fighting system is readily  
5 available. So we're going to -- we're going to press that  
6 to see if we can, in fact, start to explore the use of  
7 better technology to be more efficient and more effective in  
8 how we go about this.

9           Just going to skip over some of the other issues  
10 before us. Just touch on a few more.

11           In the postfire restoration area, I think one of  
12 the things that we want to focus in on some degree on is how  
13 we can effectively use the ES and BAR programs to restore  
14 areas postfire. That's important, I think, again, across  
15 the range but I think most important because of the cycle  
16 that Janice eluded to.

17           The invasion of nonnative grasses in these areas  
18 can quickly lead to exclusion of sagebrush and other native  
19 grasses and, in essence, accelerates or increases the  
20 likelihood that we're going to see additional rangeland fire  
21 in those particular areas. And we need to find a way to get  
22 on top of that more quickly. So this is one of the  
23 short-term things from the response that we need to explore  
24 and are having conversations about. And your input on that,

25 in particular, would be most helpful, I think.

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1 In addition, we're trying to look at -- at the  
2 issues that -- that make our ability to apply assets more  
3 effectively -- whether it's NEPA process, it's financial  
4 matters, it's management issues, some of the things that  
5 we've kind of put in our way in terms of trying to get  
6 assets out quickly -- and try to determine where we can  
7 shortcut those processes, meet our legal obligations, our  
8 due diligence, but not have the perfect be the enemy of the  
9 good in terms of trying to move the process forward.

10 It was an issue that was raised by a number of the  
11 firefighters and FMOs at The Next Steppe conference, as  
12 should be no surprise to any of you, and it's one we want to  
13 get on top of. And so that's one of our priorities in this  
14 initial effort. And we want to accelerate the schedule for  
15 improving rehab projects, particularly under BAR, so we can  
16 get the dollars committed and recourses out in the field  
17 much, much more quickly.

18 Lastly, I want to focus on restoring  
19 rangeland help. Important part of the postfire restoration  
20 efforts is to try to restore these landscapes to their  
21 native grasses, to sagebrush, and to do so in a way that  
22 both increases their resilience over time, increases the  
23 native habitat, and restores a natural landscape that has  
24 been manipulated and changed dramatically because of a  
25 number of factors. And so we are going to invest heavily in

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1 working with colleagues across the federal family of the  
2 states and with Tribal governments on its efforts to try to  
3 increase our ability to produce a native seed, to produce  
4 sagebrush seedlings, and to learn better how to restore  
5 these landscapes to a state that more mimics what nature  
6 would have left without the changes that have come about  
7 over the decades.

8                   And I'll stop there and simply emphasize  
9 three things. And that is, you know, we are committed to  
10 addressing rangeland fire as effectively and efficiently as  
11 we can. We recognize that resources are limited. Although,  
12 I think in our work with governors' offices -- and we've  
13 gotten very good support from the Western Governors'  
14 Association and from the four state governors that are in  
15 the Great Basin region -- you know, we hope we can secure  
16 additional resources and support. But given limited  
17 resources, we've got to be efficient and we've got to be  
18 kind of targeted where we put resources.

19                   The second thing I want to emphasize is that  
20 this is an initial report. And we recognize that the  
21 comment periods are quite short in the short-term. But this  
22 will begin a process of conversation and dialogue leading to  
23 development of a final report and a much broader look at  
24 what we need to achieve and want to achieve. But we thought  
25 essential to demonstrate that we have the ability to move

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1 forward and not forgo another fire season without trying to

2 put in place some of the practices and the policies that we  
3 think will make a difference from -- make things more better  
4 and certainly demonstrate that we can be more efficient and  
5 effective in what we do.

6 And, finally, I'd just say that I think your  
7 comments, the comments that we'll receive in the subsequent  
8 consultation session, will be critically important as part  
9 of this process. You live on the landscape. You know those  
10 landscapes better than most people. And so I think that  
11 input is essential in helping guide us as we put together a  
12 final set of recommendations for the Secretary, again, which  
13 are due on or about May 1.

14 And so I appreciate the opportunity to be  
15 here. I've always enjoyed the opportunity to work with  
16 Tribes, and I look forward to continuing the collaboration  
17 in the future.

18 MR. GIDNER: All right. Thank you.

19 We're going to open it up for comments now. But,  
20 first, all the contact information that I was reading out,  
21 we now have typed up on form. And it's back at the sign-in  
22 table, so you can grab that on your way out so you'll have  
23 that written down. You don't have to rely on hearing me say  
24 it properly.

25 So we're going to open it up for any comments. If

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1 you would like to make comments, please come up to the  
2 microphones and state your name so the court reporter can  
3 get it down. And the floor is yours.

4 MS. LANKFORD: Good morning. My name is Carol e

5 Secretarial Order 3336\_Feb 19\_TC Transcript  
Lankford, C-A-R-O-L-E, L-A-N-K-F-O-R-D.

6 I am vice chairman of the Confederated Salish and  
7 Kootenai Tribes. On behalf of the Tribe, I would like to  
8 thank Madame Secretary and Assistant Secretary and Deputy  
9 Secretaries for this opportunity to hear the concerns we  
10 have today.

11 I would also like to introduce Darrell Clairmont,  
12 Ron Swaney who's the FMO from Salish-Kootenai, and Bob  
13 McCrea who has accompanied me in case you have any  
14 questions.

15 I want to also mention that, about a year and a  
16 half ago, myself, Secretary Jewell, and President Obama and  
17 12 other Tribal Leaders sat in a room at the White House.  
18 And my concern at that time was about wildfire and about  
19 consultation. So I really appreciate the opportunity that  
20 you provide us, an opportunity to have consultation on this  
21 very important and critical issue that effects us all.

22 I have a detailed letter for the record, and then  
23 I have some general comments.

24 The CSKT has an active timber and fire management  
25 program that meets objectives and goals outlined in our

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25

1 forest management plan and our fire management plan,  
2 respectively. Our strategic management plan recognizes the  
3 importance of Tribal cultural values and practices within  
4 our forest landscape.

5 Our plan also recognizes the -- the significant  
6 role that fire has played in shaping our forest. Our forest  
7 management goals include management of the Tribal forest in

8 Secretarial Order 3336\_Feb 19\_TC Transcript  
9 a manner that provides for forest health, long-term  
10 resources, sustainability protection, and cultural  
11 resources. The revenue from the sale of forest products  
12 also play a critical role in meeting the Tribe's social and  
13 economic goals of employment and self-sufficiency.

14 The CSKT understand that protection of the  
15 sage-grouse is a priority to the mission of the BLM. The  
16 CSKT realizes that each of the agencies within the DOI have  
17 agency-specific priorities that drive how and why they do  
18 business.

19 This being said, CSKT hopes that the Secretary  
20 also realizes and does not forget those priorities that are  
21 important to the BIA and Tribes. We are asking that the  
22 Office of Wildl and Fire and the Secretary of Interior honor  
23 the Trust priorities that make them as important as other  
24 agencies within the DOI.

25 With the issuance of Secretarial Order 3336, we  
want to express our initial concerns in how implementation

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1 of the Secretarial Order may effect Tribes. We are very  
2 concerned about suppression resources will be diverted away  
3 from the Trust resources to suppress fires in sage-grouse  
4 habitat. We are very concerned that prioritizing  
5 sage-grouse ecosystem restoration will negatively affect the  
6 allocation of preparedness and fuels funding to the Bureau  
7 and Tribes in the future. We urge that you do not diminish  
8 the resources allocated to the Tribes. We are already  
9 underfunded.

10 In closing, CSKT would like to thank Madame

11 Secretary for continuing assurance, as the Deputy Secretary  
12 of Interior's letter to the Tribal Leaders dated January 16,  
13 2015, of the DOI and BIA's commitment to maintaining the  
14 sacred trust responsibility to Tribes, our communities, and  
15 our Trust resources.

16 It is our hope that the Trust resources of the  
17 Tribes are valued as equally as sage-grouse. We are  
18 requesting you and the DOI make a long-term commitment to  
19 all Tribes that sage-grouse efforts will not diminish the  
20 resources that Tribes have available for caring for a forest  
21 that employs people and meets our spiritual and cultural  
22 needs.

23 Thank you for this opportunity.

24 MR. GIDNER: Thank you.

25 Would anybody else like to comment or ask

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1 questions?

2 MR. DANZUKA: Good morning. My name is Orvie  
3 Danzuka with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. My  
4 name is O-R-V-I-E, D-A-N-Z-U-K-A.

5 I'd like to also thank you for taking the time to  
6 come here today to speak with us.

7 Many concerns that we have mirror what the  
8 Salish-Kootenai has eloquently spoken here today and  
9 presented. But we will have a formal letter that will be  
10 forthcoming. I'd like to introduce one of our staff, Bobby  
11 Brunoe. He's our general manager for our natural resources  
12 program.

13 I just wanted to share something with you real

14 Secretarial Order 3336\_Feb 19\_TC Transcript  
14 quick from last year. We've had several fires as is  
15 prevalent throughout the entire country. We've hosted  
16 Type II and Type I teams for several years running now. And  
17 we expect the same this year with 5 percent snowpack  
18 currently. We're expecting a pretty busy fire season.

19 Well, just last year, we had two teams on our  
20 reservation at once. It's a 640,000-acre reservation. We  
21 had a Type II team -- well, we had two Type II teams. And  
22 then as a transition with complexity to a Type I, we got  
23 word that our Type I team was going to get pulled from us  
24 because of another fire over in Eastern Oregon that they  
25 were saying was because of sage-grouse.

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1 And so we replied back to them that we have  
2 several listed ESA species. The sage-grouse has not been  
3 listed. We had summer steelhead in the area. We had bull  
4 trout in the area. And we had spotted owl -- or the spotted  
5 owl nests in the area. And we've -- some of other areas --  
6 some of the other homes -- fire were near homes. So we had  
7 imminent danger to homes. We lost one structure last year.

8 So you know, we had a lot of concern about that,  
9 and we pushed back. And, you know, we finally did get our  
10 Type I team. And we're thankful for that. It was very  
11 helpful in getting resources that we needed to combat the  
12 fires. So we're thankful for that.

13 But I wanted to share that with you because, as  
14 was stated, you know, by CSKT, sometimes our values are not  
15 put on an equal level, we feel. We have -- some of our  
16 first foods fall within the BLM lands, which are within the

17 Tribe's ceded areas. We have reserved rights to gather in  
18 those ceded areas.

19 So we have concerns about how are those going  
20 to -- how are some of the plans going to affect our first  
21 foods. We have traditional roots that we gather. And in  
22 some areas, we've already seen -- when some grass was  
23 brought in and propagated, we saw a huge decrease and  
24 sometimes complete removal or -- or taking over of the grass  
25 versus our traditional roots. So we have concerns, and we

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1 will definitely be making comments on some of those  
2 projects.

3 But you know, we're -- like I said, we have  
4 different values. We have timber. We have a sawmill. It  
5 employs 140 Tribal members. And so it's also a huge, big  
6 part of our economy within our reservation.

7 And when we get concerns about some of the fuels  
8 allocations, like the Hazardous Fuel Priority Allocation  
9 System, that was brought out in 2007, it wasn't until 2012  
10 that the Tribes were finally brought in to have a discussion  
11 about it. And the discussion at our table has been that  
12 it's not consultation when you come several years after the  
13 plan has already been in place.

14 So I appreciate that you're here now talking with  
15 us. It's on a rather expedited time schedule. But you  
16 know, we at least appreciate the effort, you know.

17 Several of the elder statesmen on our Tribal  
18 Council have stated that, in the past, consultation has  
19 always been when the federal agencies come to a Tribal

20 Council, to our lands, and speak with us in our chambers. I  
21 realize the -- the economy the way it is, money -- money is  
22 tight, so it's a lot -- lot more prudent for you to meet as  
23 a group. However, we would like to extend that invitation  
24 for -- for you people to come to our place and talk with us  
25 and meet with more of our technical staff.

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1 We have a lot of -- we have a lot of good plans  
2 that we put in place. We've done pretty well with the  
3 moneys that we've been given. And we'd like to be able to  
4 show that we can be a model that can be used throughout the  
5 other federal agencies.

6 As was mentioned, the -- all the federal agencies  
7 have a Trust responsibility to the tribes. So I'm  
8 interested in hearing how those Trust responsibilities are  
9 going to be met, how our values are going to be at least on  
10 an equal footing as the values of the other agencies.

11 Like I said, we'll have a formal letter  
12 forthcoming, but I just wanted to share a few of our -- a  
13 few of our concerns. Thank you.

14 MR. GIDNER: Thank you.

15 Are there any other comments or questions?

16 MR. SWANEY: I'm going to speak one time or  
17 another. I might as well right now. I've got to get out of  
18 my desk.

19 Good morning. My name's Ron Swaney, S-W-A-N-E-Y.  
20 I'm fire management officer for the Confederated Salish and  
21 Kootenai Tribes. And appreciate the opportunity to be here  
22 to speak with folks on this -- on this issue.

23 Just a general comment is, you know, reading the  
24 order and it talks about client change and larger fires,  
25 more frequent fires, more damaging fires, cheatgrass,

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1 medusahead, non-native grasses or weeds, noxious weeds  
2 moving into areas, impacting those, and that the habitats  
3 are getting impacted.

4 And I'd add to that urban growth and other things.  
5 Those are going on in other areas as well. Global warming's  
6 cultural -- or climate change is affecting all of us not  
7 just the Great Basin. All of our ecosystems are getting  
8 threatened by a number of things. And I understand the  
9 Bureau of Land Management, in their emphasis, you know, all  
10 of their land -- a lot of their land is within that  
11 ecosystem.

12 And if that's where their focus is going to be --  
13 suppression, fuels, if that's where they're going to pump  
14 their funding, that's fine. I'm not going to tell them how  
15 to manage their lands. They have an obligation to those  
16 lands.

17 We also have an obligation to our lands. And  
18 there's a Trust responsibility that other federal agencies  
19 owe us. And what we're afraid of is that this is going to  
20 start driving funding allocations within the Department of  
21 Interior, fire programs, preparedness, fuels, prevention.  
22 And that's a concern.

23 We have the same situation occurring on our lands  
24 and the same obligation to our folks, to our kids,  
25 ancestors, cultural sites that we protect, commercial timber

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1 that we protect with our fuels and preparedness budgets and  
2 our prevention efforts.

3 Now, I listened to Jerry -- and not to throw you  
4 under the bus, Jerry. But I was just listening to a few of  
5 your comments. And you said under this Executive Order we  
6 will develop an effective approach to fuels, initial attack,  
7 and our rehab program.

8 And I just -- I'm curious as to why it would take  
9 an Executive Order for us to look at an effective approach  
10 to fuels, initial attack, and rehab. I mean, that's every  
11 manager's responsibility to -- to do that without this  
12 order.

13 And then talking about the cohesive strategy and  
14 how we're implementing that, and you eluded to your  
15 cooperators that you folks work with, rural fire districts  
16 and providing them training and giving them -- we do that  
17 anyway. That's -- that's an SOP.

18 So just another general comment, how a lot of the  
19 things that I read that are within this Executive Order are  
20 just normal business for fire folks. And I just hope this  
21 order doesn't start driving budget allocations.

22 Couple other things with consultation. It's  
23 always interesting for us. We're really not sure who  
24 receives the comments, who is going to respond to the  
25 comments, and what the timelines are for that response.

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1           And I guess, to elaborate, a few of us met with --  
2 it was Eric Christensen, Office of Wildlife and Fire, and others  
3 at Spokane. I think it was in '12 or '13, March. And we  
4 had all of our Tribal leaders. Carole was there. We all  
5 showed up. Everybody had a leader, Warm Springs, Spokane.  
6 We were all at that table. And we spoke, and the office of  
7 wild -- Eric said, You have this deadline to comment. Your  
8 comments aren't in by this deadline, then we're not going to  
9 take any more.

10           So we all went back and drafted them. And we all  
11 presented these comments, right? We've never received any  
12 response yet.

13           Then the Office of Wildlife and Fire formed these task  
14 groups to work on a fuels allocation system. And these  
15 tasks groups had Tribal representation. And Task Group 1A  
16 was supposed to identify attributes that are important to  
17 the fuels program that would be important to -- an important  
18 attribute to a fuels project that would drive the funding, I  
19 guess, identify which projects were really important.

20           So within that system, the Tribes got to put their  
21 priorities, as best we could. You know, the Tohono O'odham  
22 live on the Mexican border. We live close to Canada.  
23 There's Tribes in Oklahoma. And we all have a  
24 government-to-government relationship and are owed a Trust  
25 responsibility. So for us to -- other than the BLM. The

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1 BLM's safe. You're awesome. I'm glad you have your -- your  
2 marching orders. You're going that direction.

3           We don't have one attribute that fits us all. And  
Page 30

4 that's where the difficulty is. When we get into these  
5 systems, to try and capture our -- our values in a way  
6 that's consistent across all Tribes.

7           So we tried to throw in Indian Country Trust --  
8 Trust lands as one. And the other one that we tried to  
9 throw in was commercial timber. You know, it takes a  
10 hundred years to grow a hundred-year-old tree. And if a  
11 fire takes it out, that's a big setback for a group that  
12 only has a small portion of land that they're managing. If  
13 you lose a cultural resource, it's gone.

14           So we threw those in and -- to that task group in  
15 several conference calls. And then, at one point, James  
16 Douglas announced that they disbanded those task groups.  
17 And then I got this paper from IFEC that identified what  
18 Task Group 1A had identified as attributes. Indian Country  
19 was not going to go to the next level nor was commercial  
20 timber.

21           And if anyone would like that, I still have  
22 that -- I could e-mail it to you. But that's -- so when we  
23 see that as -- as the Indian people or the Bureau of Indian  
24 Affairs looking at how, I guess, in those -- those arenas,  
25 how we get treated. And then to start hearing this --

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1 this -- this order come out, it really raises a level of  
2 concern for us.

3           And so Indian Country was here. And it had a big  
4 no from IFEC. Commercial timber here had a big no. And  
5 right in between it was sage-grouse. And it was going  
6 forward.

7           Then we had this risk-based fire management  
8 program that we were supposed to report to. And we did  
9 that. We -- we submitted the letter. I think January 15th  
10 was the deadline, or the 11th. Anyway, we submitted that.  
11 We haven't heard anything. Not sure how this Executive  
12 Order is going to impact those comments.

13           But I think I would summarize a lot of folks'  
14 concern is, we don't want this to be EMDS on steroids. We  
15 don't want this to throw all of our moneys towards the  
16 Bureau of Land Management's -- and this Executive Order.  
17 We -- we still have needs and we still want to be respected.

18           MR. GIDNER: Thank you.

19           And I will say, on the point about what's going to  
20 happen to the comments, in our implementation plan, the part  
21 that talks about consultation, we did commit to put  
22 something out to let Tribes know how the documents are  
23 changed or what we've done with the comments. And we will  
24 do that for this first -- for this first report. That will  
25 be fairly soon because we're going to process -- be

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1 processing all those comments next week, so we can change  
2 the report if needed in response to those.

3           The substance of that will be this whole group,  
4 which is getting to know each other quite well, I can tell  
5 you, because we've been meeting a lot. But if you need a  
6 point of contact for that, you can get in touch with me and  
7 I'll give you my card when we're done. So if you want to  
8 know, I -- where are we with the -- you know, what's  
9 happening with the comments on this first report, you can

10 get in touch with me.

11 I -- I won't be the one, probably, deciding the  
12 substance of that. That will be these folks and a lot of  
13 other folks. But I can be a point of contact for that. So  
14 we have committed to do that. And if we don't, you can call  
15 me, throw me under the bus for that one.

16 Other comments?

17 MR. BRUNOE: My name is Bobby Brunoe, B-O-B-B-Y,  
18 B-R-U-N-O-E, with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.  
19 I'm the general manager of natural resources for the Tribes  
20 and also the Tribal historic preservation officer for the  
21 Tribes there.

22 And you've heard a little bit about funding. I'll  
23 just go straight to -- to that. You know, we really are  
24 concerned about funding and how it's going to be allocated.  
25 And with -- you know, we don't get a lot of funding right

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1 now as it is. What's going to happen with suppression  
2 dollars for funding? What's going to happen for any of the  
3 fuels work that we're doing right now? What's going to  
4 happen postfire when we bring a BAER team -- we had a BAER  
5 team in on our fire last year; it seems like a yearly thing  
6 any more -- and make sure we have the proper funding.

7 And I think about, you know, it's honorable that  
8 you're trying to do something with sage-grouse, so they  
9 don't get listed. But let's be equitable with the other  
10 species and the funding.

11 And as you heard, our Tribal Council person talked  
12 about it. We have ESA species. And last year we had one

13 spotted owl nest burn. We have a population of spotted owls  
14 in -- east of the Cascades, all across the Cascades that are  
15 dwindling drastically. We also have, as you heard, bull  
16 trout that run in four different tributaries -- five  
17 different tributaries off the Warm Springs into the  
18 Deschutes River and also summer steel head.

19 In the past, we have not always received the  
20 funding -- proper funding for ESA. And, in fact, we've had  
21 zero funding for ESA species in the past. And right now, we  
22 don't get a lot of -- a lot of funding for that.

23 So kind of just the bottom line is, you know, the  
24 funding piece. And really, I think all of our folks are  
25 very concerned about that in -- in all the fire -- Indian

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1 fire world.

2 The -- the Tribes -- Warm Springs, we've been  
3 involved in the sage-con and what the State of Oregon has  
4 going on right now. So we've been participating in that.  
5 They did hear the story about the -- our fire last year  
6 and -- and the sage-grouse and the Type I team. So I told  
7 that story at -- at one of those forums. So we're active  
8 there.

9 We have met with the Governor's Office also on  
10 this and what's going on with the sage-grouse and fire.

11 So we're being very active in this, participating,  
12 and want to participate with you all. And you'll be  
13 receiving comments from us in writing also for that.

14 So thank you.

15 MR. GIDNER: Thank you.  
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16           Would anybody else like to make any comments or  
17 ask any questions?

18           Let me ask: Is there anybody on the phone line?

19           We did have an open phone line. I'm not sure if  
20 there's anybody on the line.

21           MS. SCHNEIDER: I just wanted to respond to the  
22 comments. I mean, these are incredibly important issues  
23 that you're raising. And that's why we're here, because we  
24 recognize that all of the federal agencies within the  
25 Interior Department have a Trust responsibility, including,

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1 and in particular, to protect Trust assets like timber  
2 resources.

3           The Bureau of Indian Affairs obviously is very  
4 focused on that because they provide direct services. But  
5 we all recognize that the responsibility that we have to  
6 Tribal communities is a Departmentwide and governmentalwide  
7 responsibility.

8           So when we think about all of the values that we  
9 have to balance, our Trust responsibility is one of the  
10 highest responsibilities that we have. Obviously, safety to  
11 the firefighters, public safety is a critically important  
12 value as well.

13           And I hear you loud and clear about the concerns  
14 about funding. We have made no decisions yet on how we're  
15 going to handle those issues. My understanding is that most  
16 of the money for 2015 has already actually been allocated.  
17 So that's -- there'll be some limited -- there should not be  
18 much impact associated with that.

19 But we do want to have a dialogue about, you know,  
20 where is the right positioning, you know, for some of our  
21 resources and some of our assets and what makes the most  
22 amount of sense and have an active and robust discussion  
23 with you that takes into consideration all of these  
24 important values that we need to consider.

25 Sage-grouse is now a critical priority for the

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1 Department, Departmentwide. It's not just a BLM priority at  
2 this point because of the issuance of the Secretarial Order.  
3 But we do recognize that it -- that's it's not the only and  
4 the top priority, that -- that there are critical priorities  
5 across the Department that we need to balance. And  
6 that's -- that's why we're here today, to understand more  
7 precisely where your concerns lie and how we might be able  
8 to strike a balance that helps to protect those in Trusts  
9 but still provides opportunity for us to work on some of our  
10 other critical priorities as well, so...

11 MR. LYONS: So Ron? Is that correct?

12 MR. SWANEY: Yeah.

13 MR. LYONS: Now, if you want to -- I'll give you  
14 my card if you want to send me those letters, those comment  
15 letters. We'll respond.

16 MS. SCHNEIDER: Yeah. We'll be interested in  
17 seeing those.

18 MR. SWANEY: Sure.

19 MR. LYONS: And you know, and furthermore, as I  
20 eluded to earlier, back in my former days, the Clinton  
21 administration spent a lot of time out here working on

22 salmon issues.

23           And I think the issues you raised about  
24 allocations for bull trout and steelhead and salmon and the  
25 rays, in particular, you know, important. We don't want to

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1 trade one species off for another. We want to be more  
2 efficient on how we deal with the threats that face species.  
3 And we want to do a better job, I think, in our restoration  
4 work to ensure that native plants, you know, the -- the  
5 resources that are important historically and culturally for  
6 the Tribes, are recognized and respected. And hopefully  
7 those resources are improved where there's been an impact.

8           So I think that's all part of our thinking. And  
9 the input from all of you is going to be critically  
10 important in helping form, you know, those outcomes.

11           As Jan said, no decisions have been made. And  
12 that's why we wanted you to get out here before we got to  
13 that point, so we could start to have that conversation  
14 because these assets are critical, we know, for you.

15           So -- but certainly, give me those letters and  
16 we'll find out where the responses are and we'll get you  
17 one.

18           MR. SWANEY: Okay.

19           MR. GIDNER: Paul, do you want to say something?  
20 Could we have you just state your name?

21           MR. STEBLEIN: I'm Paul Steblein, S-T-E-B-L-E-I-N,  
22 with the Office of Wildlife and Fire. Just want to respond to a  
23 couple of your comments, Ron. I appreciate the comments as  
24 well.

25                   The -- I only joined about six months ago. So I

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1    can't speak to what took place with Eric Christensen in  
2    2012, but we can look into it and find out why now.

3                   Regarding response to consultation, we did do a  
4    consultation process on our Tribal consultation policy last  
5    year. We received a number of comments. We responded to  
6    each of the commenters with how we addressed their comments.

7                   We also initiated consultation on risk-based  
8    wildland fire management that you were speaking of as well.  
9    And we received a number of comments. We're reviewing and  
10   analyzing those and developing the response to the comments.  
11   And each of the commenters will be responded to directly, as  
12   well as we're considering putting up a general summary of  
13   the comments as well so that it becomes part of the public  
14   record as well. And we appreciate the input that we get in  
15   the commenting process.

16                  Regarding -- and we can talk, after, more  
17   specifically of the specific values. But through the  
18   consultation process on the risk-based wildland fire with  
19   commercial timber, we actually included a value for forest  
20   and woodlands based upon comments we received from some of  
21   the Tribal discussions that we had. And so we have to have  
22   forests and woodland values to represent that as an  
23   important priority for Tribal lands.

24                  We also have had discussions of Tribal lands for  
25   values that represent Tribal interests on those lands. And

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1 the discussion has gone back and forth. And -- and Tribal  
2 lands are represented as the base lands that we're  
3 responsible for to start with. But we have a number of  
4 values. And again, we can talk about it more specifically.

5 But we think that a lot of the values and  
6 priorities for the Tribes are represented in the value data  
7 set that we are preliminarily incorporating into the overall  
8 process. And the teams that -- that had Tribal  
9 representation was critically important to informing the  
10 process to start with. So that -- and, in fact, most of the  
11 values identified currently with the risk-based wildland  
12 fire management actually came from the input that we  
13 received -- those teams with Tribal representation as well.

14 But again, glad to discuss more. And we will be  
15 providing a specific response to your comments in the near  
16 future.

17 MR. GIDNER: Thank you, everyone.

18 Are there more comments or questions from Tribal  
19 representatives?

20 Is there anybody on the phone? I'm not sure that  
21 there is.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: Let me get to the safety piece.

23 MR. GIDNER: Yeah. Please do.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: Good morning, everybody. My name  
25 is Darron Williams. And I am the fire management officer

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1 for the Umatilla Agency, which is a -- the Confederated

2 Tribe of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is -- are the  
3 people -- the Tribe that we work with.

4 Just a few comments. I'm, you know, grateful for  
5 time which I, you know, had been able to be here. I'm  
6 currently filling in at the fuels position for the BIA  
7 upstairs. And filling in behind a person who's gone to  
8 Boise to another position.

9 But my comments -- I'll be brief -- are that I was  
10 working with the BLM pretty much through my entire career.  
11 I started my career in 1991 in wildland fire. At that time,  
12 I worked with Idaho Falls BLM and worked there for many,  
13 many years. My grandparents grew up, and they have a ranch  
14 up in Kilgore, Idaho, which is just west of Island Park and  
15 West Yellowstone.

16 When I was a kid and we would drive up to my  
17 grandparents' house, the desert was just littered,  
18 literally, with sage-grouse. And you know, now when we go  
19 up -- you know, I don't get to go up as much as I used to.  
20 But when we would go up now, you know, the opportunity to  
21 see those sage-grouse are far and few between.

22 As I have worked through my career and the  
23 experiences that I've had, you know, I've always looked at  
24 things through the BLM, Department of the Interior  
25 framework. And since I've come and took -- taken the

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1 position with the -- the BIA and working with the other  
2 Confederated Tribes, it's opened my eyes to a different path  
3 and different priorities which other agencies have.

4 With the BIA, I've noticed that, you know, the

5 Tribes, a lot of their -- their focus -- you know, which is  
6 my focus, you know, has become more on, you know, the timber  
7 industry. I didn't realize that that was such a large  
8 component of -- of their focus and efforts.

9 The other thing that I recognized wholeheartedly  
10 was the first foods concept of their -- of the culture of  
11 Indian Country. And I think, as part of, you know, working  
12 with BLM and the Department of the Interior all those years,  
13 you know, I was really not aware or made aware because I had  
14 not worked with the BIA in that respect.

15 And so my comment for the group and the panel is  
16 that, you know, these are real issues. And you know,  
17 hopefully, I am ingrained more and more with the issues of  
18 the BIA, you know, in helping, you know, protect these  
19 things. You know, we've talked about, you know, bull trout  
20 you know, species that are listed currently. And with the  
21 sage-grouse, I can -- I can see the -- the Secretary's  
22 concern about, you know, the decimation, you know, of  
23 habitat for sage-grouse.

24 But I would just like to comment that -- you know,  
25 which has been echoed here earlier, that as a whole, you

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1 know, we take a more holistic look, you know, at not only  
2 the sage-grouse but the other species that are also listed  
3 that are important to Indian Country as well as the other  
4 resource values, such as timber.

5 And I thank you for taking the time to come here  
6 today.

7 MR. GIDNER: Thank you.

8 MR. ISAAC: Good morning. My name is Everett

9 Isaac, E-V-E-R-E-T-T, I-S-A-A-C.

10 I'm a Tribal forest manager with Yakama Nation. I  
11 would just like to say thanks to everybody that's spoken for  
12 me. There's a lot of great issues and concerns that have  
13 been brought forward. And there's not a lot more that I can  
14 add to this.

15 And -- but recognizing that this is dealing with  
16 the 2015 fire season, one of the concerns that we have for  
17 us is how is this going to affect resources and priorities  
18 of those resources from our GACC level recognizing that --  
19 that, you know, we all have life and property that are at  
20 risk to fires. And we'd hate to see resources relocated or  
21 reassigned to other areas based on -- on concerns with the  
22 Secretarial Order.

23 There's a lot that I'd like to say, but I just  
24 would like to put that in words. And we'll submit our  
25 written comments. But there has just been -- we have a lot

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1 of concerns.

2 I was involved in the task group this last year  
3 for the DOI in determining values at risk. And this, and as  
4 Ron stated, was one of the issues that we've discussed  
5 and -- at length. And where does our priorities and our  
6 management fit into the DOI, and how does that relate to the  
7 other agencies with the DOI and their -- their issues and  
8 concerns and their priorities?

9 And, like was mentioned earlier, we are a  
10 bottom-up management organization and Tribes are all

11 different. We all have our responsibilities and our -- to  
12 our people and our land. And we have -- we can't be fit  
13 into a box. And so each of us manage differently within our  
14 region, within Northwest Region, as well as across all the  
15 Indian Country.

16 And this is -- this is going to be a huge  
17 undertaking. And like I said, it's in short order to  
18 address all the concerns and issues that we will bring  
19 forward as a result of this.

20 So thank you.

21 MR. GIDNER: Thank you.

22 Anybody else like to make any other comments or  
23 ask any other questions?

24 MR. SHAW: So Bodie Shaw, B-O-D-I-E, S-H-A-W,  
25 Deputy Regional Director.

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1 I want to thank Everett for his comments.

2 And I just want to add, real quickly, the Federal  
3 Executive Team met yesterday. And we simulated a fire  
4 season, much as we had last year, PL 5. So we ran a --  
5 again, I think everyone knows where snowpack levels are  
6 currently. And this was really a major topic of how we're  
7 going to assess our values at risk and -- and how we place  
8 our human resources, our most valuable asset.

9 So I just want to let the team know -- at least in  
10 the Pacific Northwest coordinating group, but I'm hoping the  
11 Rocky Mountain geographic area as well as the Great Basin,  
12 Eastern and Western -- run these simulations with their  
13 federal executives level.

14 Jerry Perez's deputy was there -- great to have  
15 her -- the Region 6 forester; Governor Inslee's Office;  
16 Oregon's new governor, Sue [sic] Brown's office was  
17 represented; as well as the Oregon and Washington State Fire  
18 Marshal's Office. So this is of great concern to the group.

19 And we've simulated that. And we -- we -- it  
20 really boils down to the values at risk, property -- life,  
21 property being first priorities because, unfortunately, I  
22 think we're going to be at Planning Level 5 here, probably  
23 like we did last year. We -- we entered it early. And we  
24 were there for over 60 days in this geographic area.

25 So -- and we will share that with our partners.

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1 There's 12 partners in that Northwest coordinating group.  
2 And it is important that leadership push that information  
3 down as to how we're going to be allocating resources.

4 So anyway, Everett, I thank you for that comment  
5 because that's primary in a lot of our -- the land manage --  
6 state and private, Tribal and federal, so anyway...

7 MR. GIDNER: Thank you.

8 Would anybody else like to ask any questions or  
9 make any comments?

10 While we're waiting for anybody to take the last  
11 bite of that, I will just say the -- as I said, all the  
12 contact information we now have put on the sheet that's out  
13 at the sign-in table, so you can grab that on your way out.  
14 So it has the Web sites and the e-mail addresses and the fax  
15 number for comments.

16 I will make a reminder that comments for this

17 Secretarial Order 3336\_Feb 19\_TC Transcript  
18 draft report, to be the March 1st report, are due Monday, so  
19 the 23rd. And the draft report that's going to come out for  
20 the May report for 2016 and beyond, the draft report will be  
21 posted on March 31st on the Web site listed on that sheet.

22 We will have a consultation in Reno at the  
23 Reno-Sparks Indian health center on April 7th from 9 to 12.  
24 And comments on that report will be due April 21st. And  
25 that will be for the May report.

And if there's no other comments, we will be here

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1 for a little bit. We can have conversations about whatever  
2 you want to talk about.

3 Stan? Go ahead.

4 MR. SPEAKS: I just want to take a moment to thank  
5 our Tribal Leaders and Tribal representatives for coming and  
6 certainly want to thank you for your comments.

7 Also, I want to thank Mr. Gidner, and I want to  
8 thank our staff from the Department and also from the  
9 central office for coming and being a part of this.

10 Also, I'm sure that if you want to comment, do so  
11 quickly. You have that opportunity and -- and certainly  
12 that option is yours.

13 And so with that, again, I want to thank all of  
14 you for coming. It's a pleasure having you here. Thank  
15 you.

16 MR. GIDNER: All right. So we will be concluded  
17 for today. And we'll be here to have private conversations  
18 if you so desire.

19 Thank you very much.

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1 C E R T I F I C A T E

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3 STATE OF WASHINGTON )  
4 COUNTY OF KING ) ss.

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7 I, the undersigned officer of the Court and  
8 Washington Certified Court Reporter, hereby certify that the  
9 foregoing proceeding was taken stenographically before me  
10 and transcribed under my direction;

11 That the witness before the examination was  
12 first duly sworn to testify truthfully; that the transcript  
13 of the proceeding is a full, true, and correct transcript of  
14 the testimony, including questions and answers and all  
15 objections, motions, rulings and exceptions of counsel made  
16 and taken at the time of the foregoing proceeding;

17 That I am neither attorney for nor a relative  
18 or employee of any of the parties to the action; further,  
19 that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or  
20 counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially  
21 interested in its outcome.

22 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand  
and seal this day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2015.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kristin M. Vickery  
Certified Court Reporter, 3125

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