



The Mountain Pact

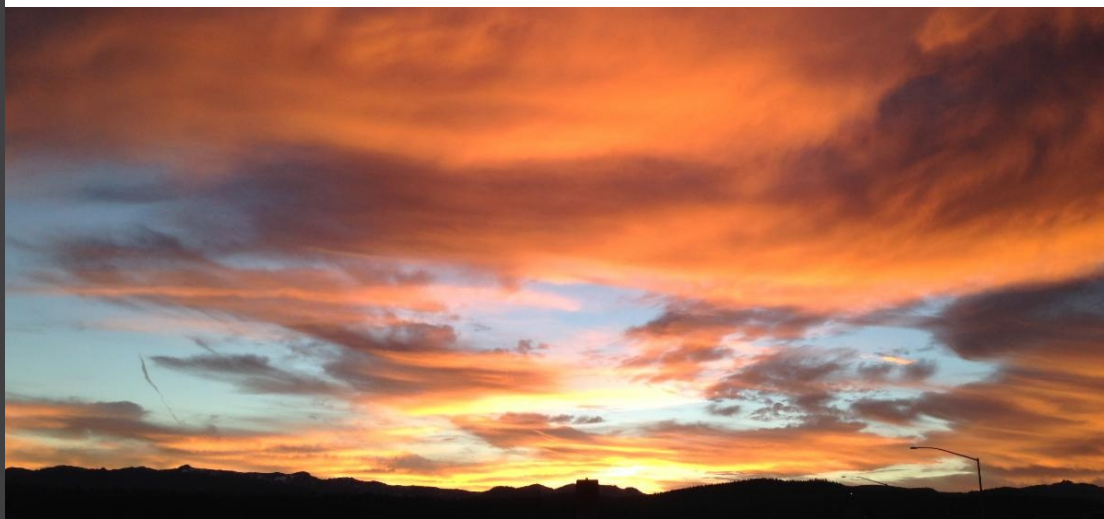
February Conservation Update

The Trump administration has continued to attack public lands in 2020, at times even [ramping up efforts](#). This month's Mountain Pact conservation update covers the latest moves to underfund conservation programs and agencies; repeal rules that protect clean water; keep the public out of the public lands decision-making process; and more.

February Spotlight

This month, President Trump released his proposed Fiscal Year 2021 budget. This year's budget [follows the trend](#) of previous years and proposes deep cuts to conservation and climate-related programs and agencies. [The President suggested](#) a 26 percent cut to the budget of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a 16 percent cut for the Department of Interior (DOI), and an 8 percent cut for the Department of Energy (DOE).

Although Congress is responsible for approving the final budget, the President's budget reflects his [anti-environment values](#). Notably, the President's budget would [cut funding](#) for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) by 97 percent; cut funding for the National Park Service (NPS) by \$581 million dollars creating further distance from the ability to address the NPS deferred maintenance backlog; cut 50 EPA programs; and provide significantly more for fossil fuel development on public lands (\$195.5 million) than for renewable energy resources (\$29.5 million).



Other Conservation Related News

- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is still proceeding with moving its headquarters out of Washington and to Grand Junction, Colorado. **In response to this move, BLM employees are [attempting to unionize](#), an effort that would give them more voice when massive changes are proposed.**

- The BLM move is still highly criticized as an attempt to [dismantle the agency](#) and is the subject of much scrutiny from lawmakers. **A recent study found that political appointees at the BLM are [overriding local input](#) to encourage rampant oil and gas development on BLM lands.**
- The House Committee on Natural Resources has been asking DOI for documents pertaining to the BLM move since it was first announced, however Secretary Bernhardt has yet to pass along certain documents. **Last week, the committee voted to allow the chairman, Rep. Raul Grijalva, to [subpoena DOI](#).**
- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a required environmental review for every federal project. However, **the BLM [has announced plans to make a NEPA review unnecessary in long term land use planning](#).** BLM uses Resource Management Plans to outline the long term management of huge swaths of land and **without a NEPA review, the impacts from the proposed use will not be considered.**
- A [recent investigation](#) revealed that **DOI officials [sought to manipulate wildfire data to encourage more logging](#).** The data was set up to frame thinning as a solution to catastrophic wildfire, ignoring the impacts fossil fuels have in increasing the risk and occurrence of wildfires.
- In late January, **the EPA [published a finalized rule that would remove protections from a significant portion of America's streams and wetlands](#).** This rule is the culmination of a three-year effort to repeal an Obama era rule. It will allow increased pollution by farmers, construction firms, and oil and gas companies. **By removing protections from many small and ephemeral streams and wetlands, the Southwestern U.S. will lose protection for [81% of streams](#).**
- A new Trump administration [proposal](#) would [impose penalties](#) under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act only to the intentional killing of birds by energy companies. **However, unintentional killing, as was seen in the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010, would not be punishable. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill killed an estimated 800,000 birds.**

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