



Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission

Quarterly Meeting Minutes / January 20, 2006

BIA Southwest Regional Headquarters / Albuquerque, NM

- Meeting convened at 1:45 by Mike Montoya
- SWTFC member tribes/representatives in attendance:

1. Picuris Pueblo	Richard Mermejo
2. Jicarilla Apache Nation	Jim White
3. Southern Ute Tribe	Steve Whiteman
4. Mescalero Apache Tribe	Butch Blazer
5. Santa Clara Pueblo	Mel Tafoya
6. Laguna Pueblo	Adrienne Tiller
7. Cochiti Pueblo	Donald Suina
8. Sandia Pueblo	Paul Holmes
9. Isleta Pueblo	Jackie Keryte

(Members not present: Northern Ute, San Carlos Apache, Navajo, Okay Owingeh)

- **Other Representatives present:**

Holland and Knight	Shenan Atcitty
US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS)	Chris Kitcheyan
Bureau of Indian Affairs / SW Regional Office	Joe Jojola
Bureau of Indian Affairs / S. Pueblos Agency	Lawrence Abeita
Bureau of Indian Affairs / Mescalero Agency	Jennifer Smith
NM Game & Fish (Hatcheries)	David Costas
Fisheries Forever	Pete Stine

- **Approval of Past Minutes/Financial Status (Steve Whiteman)**

Steve indicated need to approve past SWTFC meeting minutes from:

October 20, 2005 Quarterly Meeting @ Mescalero Apache

November 11, 2005 Exec. Com. Meeting @ NM Forestry Office in Santa Fe

The minutes were distributed via email for review/comment by the membership

No new comments/edits brought forward

Motion to approve past minutes from Richard Mermejo, with 2nd from Jim White – Unanimous approval

Steve gave an update on the SWTFC Service Account

The Service Account activity consists of:

Deposits – Tribal payments to purchase SWTFC-raised fish from Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery

Withdrawals – SWTFC expenses to cover primarily fish feed, fuel, travel, and incidentals

Current balance (as per 12/22/05 bank statement) is \$38,997.73

Account activity details are available to member Tribes by request – Contact Steve or Mike

Tribes recently purchasing fish have included:

Southern Ute, Santa Clara, San Ildefonso, Okay Owingeh, Mescalero, Picuris, Laguna

- **SWTFC Executive Director Update (Mike Montoya)**

Cooperative Agreement with FWS

Mike provided an overview of the draft Agreement and its purpose

A draft review and revisions process has been underway between SWTFC and FWS

The draft is currently in the FWS Regional Office

Chris Kitcheyan (FWS) indicated only minor FWS concerns, including:

Some redundancy in language

Need for SWTFC to abide by FWS disease control standards, incl. certification prior to stocking

Chris recommends that a standard date be set for annual disease testing at SWTFC hatchery facilities

Chris indicated that these FWS comments will be submitted in writing to SWTFC very soon

Once SWTFC and FWS agree on final document, Agreement will go to Federal Solicitor for approval

Status of Tribal Wildlife Grant (TWG) - Rio Grande Cutthroat (RGC) Project

FWS and NMSU provided assistance with RGC collection from Indian Cr on Mescalero Reservation

RGC were doing well, but a power failure at MTFH resulted in unfortunate death of all fish

Concern arose that fish from Indian Cr were not pure RGC, possibly Yellowstone/Snake R cut hybrids

Chris K (FWS) reports that genetic testing shows Indian Cr fish are indeed Yellowstone/Snake R hybrids

Mescalero Apache Tribe and SWTFC will need to decide if other pure native sources should be located

One option is to utilize UNM as a source – however, full disclosure on work would be required

Chris thinks pure RGC don't occur in Indian Cr (even above barriers) and recommends looking elsewhere

Both Jim White and Butch Blazer agree that another source should be found

Jim suggests that Indian Creek might be a good candidate for an RGC restoration project

Butch suggests a presentation be given to MAT leadership explaining the situation, presenting options

Butch suggests SWTFC offer to MAT to locate pure RGC source and implement restoration on Indian Cr

Chris offered to provide the genetic report for the Indian Cr fish to interested SWTFC participants

SWTFC Proposal to Mescalero Apache Tribe for 2006 TWG Program

Overview given: SWTFC/MAT-run training program for those interested in fisheries mgmt, related work

Program would be hands-on education, available to all tribal members/employees with southwest tribes

Proposed initially as a DEMONSTRATION - hopefully successful so future funding will come in

Program needs to be setup so it works well for variety of students/participants with limited schedules

Program is envisioned as a series of 1 week workshops in the field/hatchery/classroom

Each week would be combination of lecture and hands-on work

Might also work with student interns assigned for summer sessions at Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery

Some possible topics to teach: fisheries mgmt planning, limnology, fish culture, creel surveys

Could be an internship as part of a degree program in limnology, fisheries mgmt, aquaculture, etc.

Steve suggested including electro fishing and boating (as suggested by Anna at San Carlos)

Butch suggested that ideal classrooms are available in Mescalero

Program would be sponsored by Mescalero Apache Tribe, which has already offered tentative approval

A letter from Mark Chino approving this project has been received, including offer of housing

Letter from UNM president supporting proposal has also been received

A MAT Council resolution will be needed later, if grant is awarded

Jim and Steve like the concept, but are concerned about over-extending Mike with current job duties

A Program Coordinator / Instructor is needed to administer the program – would be MAT employee

Total TWG request is approx \$ 170K

Butch asked if other member tribes present are submitting TWG (fisheries) proposals: Apparently no one

Pete Stine questioned if there was sufficient demand by sw tribes for a year-round program

David Costas (NMGF Hatcheries) expressed willingness to assist with training efforts

Mike reminded group of San Carlos paper about training ideas-contact Anna Tryfonas at SCAT!!!!

Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery (MTFH) Fish Production Update

SWTFC is scaling back on future fish production at MTFH due to uncertain funding

No January 2006 egg orders have been made

No "extra" fish will be raised - only advance-notice fish orders can be guaranteed

Tribal requests must be 5-months in advance for 4" fish

Tribal requests must be 1-year in advance for 8" fish

Tribal requests must be 1-year + for trophy fish, but this also depends on size of fish provided by FWS

Tribal requests for catchable rainbow trout for 2007 should be in by April for April egg purchase
Some sub-catchables are available on-station now
Mike will be contacting Tribes soon to check on fish stocking needs.
FWS assistance with MTFH fish production so far has been outstanding
Excellent working relationship w/FWS R2 fisheries staff has developed
Mike reminded group of SWTFC's intention to eventually turn over MTFH back to MAT

Upcoming SWTFC Officer Elections

Mike reminded group of upcoming officer elections at SWTFC annual meeting in April
Terms ending are: Butch Blazer (Chairman) and Steve Whiteman (Sec-Treasurer)
Mike explained process of election, presented procedures as follows:

Send Nominations to:

Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission
ATTN: Mike Montoya, Executive Director
P.O. Box 190
Mescalero, New Mexico 88340

Nominations can also be emailed to Mike at: mmontoya@matisp.net
Mike encouraged all nominees to provide written background info/statement of interest
Nominees can only be representatives from SWTFC member tribes
Each SWTFC member tribe will have one vote for each open office seat.
Election information will again be sent out via email to the membership prior to the April meeting
Annual meeting will take place in Albuquerque to ensure sufficient member presence for voting
San Carlos Apache has expressed an interest in hosting a follow-up meeting
*** At the end of this meeting, Paul Holmes (Sandia) nominated Butch Blazer (Mescalero) for Chairman
*** Also, Jim White (Jicarilla) nominated Steve Whiteman (Southern Ute) for Sec-Treasurer

• **SWTFC Chairman Update (Butch Blazer)**

Butch mentioned new BIA facility in Albuq, and wants it available for SWTFC meetings, teleconferences
Tele-conferencing will enable distant tribes to remain in touch with SWTFC

BIA's SW Regional Director Larry Morrin has been helpful in trying to secure year-end BIA funding
Larry has identified SWTFC as one of his top funding priorities and has requested \$78K
Unfortunately, funding is presently "caught up" in D.C.
A request for allocating the funding needs to go from Senator Domenici to BIA
Shenan Atcitty is preparing this letter, which is expected to go out next week

SWTFC is still waiting on \$25K in FWS funding - still in Regional contracting office
Over \$26K in EDA surplus grant funding was received and has already been expended by SWTFC
Butch gave a brief history on fund raising for NAFWS through NAFWS Foundation ("NAFWF")
NAFWF is still in re-organization, so Tribes/SWTFC still can not access funds

National F&W Foundation (NFWF) was approached last year about funding SWTFC – very supportive
National Director at NFWF has unfortunately moved to a new job at National Zoo
Likelihood of NFWF funding is still there, but we need to work with the new Director and staff
Pete Stine indicated the new Director is Jeff Trandahl; more info is at <http://www.nfwf.org/contact.cfm> .
Butch has a NFWF contact in Denver and will be meeting early in 2006 about supporting SWTFC

MAT has agreed to host NAFWS SW Regional conference - SWTFC will participate in the conf. also
1st planning meeting is on Friday, January 27th at 10:30 AM at Mescalero's Inn of Mtn. Gods

Contact Jennifer Smith, Joe Jojola, or John Antonio if you need more info on the planning meeting

Jeff Cole (Navajo) has agreed to organize/participate in an SWTFC fund raising group
Strong potential for Tribe-sponsored fund raisers such as: concerts, package hunts, fish derby, etc.
Butch and Shenan reminded group of our ongoing funding challenges and need for members to step up
We need to generate at least some funding support from members in order to continue providing services
SWTFC fish sales to member tribes are made *at-cost*, not for SWTFC profit!
As we all know, we can't rely on the Federal government to carry us the whole way.
THANKS TO JICARILLA FOR THEIR RECENT \$5K DONATION TO SWTFC!!!!
Steve expects Southern Ute will also be donating \$5K very soon
Butch will soon be presenting a request for a similar donation to Mescalero
THIS IS A CHALLENGE TO ALL OTHER SWTFC MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS TO HELP OUT!

Dave Costas was introduced to the group as the new NMGF Hatchery Chief. He offered these comments:
Dave is new to the area but has worked with some tribes in past jobs
He is still learning about tribes locally, and wants to develop strong working cooperation with tribes
Dave is also very interested in natural environment fish rearing facilities
Dave is very supportive of the proposed tribal fisheries training program (i.e., proposed 2006 MAT TWG)

Pete Stine, Fisheries Forever, offered a few comments:

A FWS retiree meeting is coming up in Albuquerque – contact Pete for more info
Dale Hall is now FWS Nat'l Director, Dr. Benjamin N Tuggle is the new FWS regional director
More information on Ben Tuggle is at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/sentinel/RD%20Corner.htm>
Lynn Starnes has retired as FWS R2 ARD (Fisheries); no replacement announced yet
Reporter from Santa Fe NM is looking for story ideas – PR opportunity for SWTFC
Jim is following up with Santa Fe NM reporter using contact info provided by Pete
Pete is still waiting to receive the Federal FY06 budget for FWS (expected Feb 6)

[BREAK at 3:25 PM, Reconvened at 3:45PM]

• **Legislative Update (Shenan Atcitty)**

Shenan gave a brief bio on herself, the Holland & Knight law practice, and involvement with SWTFC
In terms of funding, Senator Domenici has been extremely supportive of SWTFC – should help in future
\$1.5M hatchery construction funding request to EDA has been completed and submitted
Obtaining DOI funding has been extremely difficult and will require a dedicated lobbying effort
Funding requests typically are submitted in spring
No pertinent legislative actions to report at this time
Shenan gave a brief explanation of the recent Jack Abramoff scandal
Unfortunately, the Abramoff scandal is expected to negatively impact future tribal legislation

• **US BIA Update (Joe Jojola)**

Hatchery Needs Assessment report is being prepared by BIA in response to a U.S Senate request
SWTFC has assisted with collecting information - including Navajo, Mescalero, and Cochiti
Bob Gartner (BIA in D.C.) is presently working on report for submittal in February
Federal appropriations MIGHT come out of the hatchery assessment project, via BIA
Presently no one holds the BIA-D.C. position on Fish, Wildlife, Parks (former Gary Rankel position)
Bob Gartner is temporarily filling in at BIA Fish, Wildlife, Parks
Annually, \$651K is available nationwide for tribal hatcheries maintenance
The BIA hatchery funding allocations are expected possibly in March 2006
Unfortunately, SW is “low priority” for hatchery maintenance and very little funds ever make it here
Joe re-iterated support of BIA SW Regional Director for SWTFC - problem really is in D.C.
Pete Stine suggested that maintaining a log of hatchery maintenance needs might be helpful

Pete also suggested photo documentation of hatchery facilities could be helpful

• **US FWS Update (Chris Kitcheyan)**

FWS will be starting rainbow trout and catfish stocking efforts on tribal lands soon

Chris is concerned about impending water quality problems and will contact tribal reps soon

Chris requests patience with deliveries, assistance from tribal reps is appreciated

Reminder that Pinetop Fish Health Center has moved to Dexter, NM

The Health Center move should provide more convenience with fish health testing for tribes

Chris gave a reminder to continue working on and updating tribal fisheries mgmt plans

Chris gave a brief discussion on what can be included in a fisheries mgmt plan – contact him for help

Butch asked about transmission of aquatic diseases via helicopter bucketing for wildfires

Chris said transmission is possible; FWS would have to work with fire agencies to address the issue

Some additional discussions took place on surplus fish, costs of raising fish, profit vs. non-profit, etc.

Some closing reminders.....

Mike requests that any tribes wanting to purchase fish for stocking 2006 should contact him soon

Mike would like to empty the station of its current supplies by Feb 5th to avoid re-testing the same fish

The next SWTFC meeting will be our Annual Meeting (with elections!)

The meeting will be held on Friday, April 28th 9:00-3:00 at BIA SW Regional Office in Albuquerque

Meeting adjourned at 4:45PM

Meeting Minutes taken by:

Steve Whiteman, Secretary-Treasurer

Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission

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