



Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission

Annual Meeting Minutes / April 7, 2005 / BIA SW Regional Office, Albuquerque NM

- **Meeting convened by Mike Montoya and Butch Blazer at 9:15AM**

- **SWTFC member tribes / representatives in attendance:**

Jicarilla Apache Nation	Jim White
Southern Ute Tribe	Steve Whiteman
Mescalero Apache Tribe	Frederick Chino
Santa Clara Pueblo	Mel Tafoya
Navajo Nation	Earl Chicharello
Laguna Pueblo	Adrienne Tiller (late arrival; missed morning votes)
Sandia Pueblo	Paul Holmes (late arrival; missed morning votes)

(Members not present: Northern Ute Tribe, Isleta Pueblo, San Juan Pueblo)

- **Other representation at the meeting:**

Picuris Pueblo	Fisheries Forever
San Carlos Apache Tribe	FishPro / HDR
White Mountain Apache Tribe	New Mexico Game & Fish
BIA Mescalero Agency	USFWS Region 2
BIA Northern Pueblos Agency	
BIA Southern Pueblos Agency	

- **Opening Comments from Visiting Dignitaries:**

Michelle Brown-Yazzie Deputy Cabinet Secretary of Indian Affairs, State of New Mexico

Newly formed cabinet-level Department in NM State government

Goal / mission is to improve lives of NM Indian citizens

Funding has more than doubled and is now more than \$61 million for Indian programs in NM

Recent legislation was passed to build stronger Tribal economies through

avenues such as utilities improvements on tribal lands ("Tribal Infrastructure Fund")

Tribes have been strongly supportive of projects under the Tribal Infrastructure Fund

Michelle hopes to see future expansion of program and services, possibly including natural resources

Larry Morin, BIA SW Regional Director

Acknowledged the funding and budget challenges the BIA and tribes face

Larry provided a brief overview of the re-organization within the BIA SW region

Efforts are being made to identify BIA funding priorities in the southwest, including fisheries

Many programs, including natural resources, must be evaluated and prioritized by BIA

In the southwest, BIA fisheries support is still considered very important

Larry believes some opportunities for additional support may develop through the re-organization

Additional comments from Butch

Butch wants to pursue Federal, State, and non-profit funding opportunities

This is reflected in the draft SWTFC Strategic Plan

SWTFC has demonstrated its positive contribution to tribes

SWTFC has received strong support of tribes, BIA, USFWS, and others

• **Past Minutes Approval and Financial Update (Steve Whiteman)**

1. Need approval on past SWTFC meeting minutes from:
 - January 27, 2005 San Juan Pueblo / Northern Pueblos Agency
 - October 29, 2004 BIA SW Regional Office
 Motion to approve past minutes from Frederick Chino, and 2nd from Mel Tafoya
 Past minutes approved by unanimous vote.

2. *SWTFC Service Account*

Starting Balance on 12/08/04	\$4,460.85
Ending Balance on 03/07/05	\$3,159.07

DEP / WDL	Note
- \$197.04	Payment to Apollo Hosting for SWTFC website hosting
+ \$740.80	Feed & transportation deposit from Laguna
+ \$197.04	Reimbursement from NAFWS for SWTFC website hosting
- \$1,312.20	Feed payment to Nelson and Sons, Inc.
+ \$100.00	Membership fee from Northern Ute
+ \$648.80	Feed & transportation deposit from San Juan Pueblo
+ \$1,327.20	Feed & transportation deposit, membership fee from Sandia Pueblo
- \$687.68	Capital One credit card payment
+ \$100.00	Membership fee from San Juan Pueblo
- \$3,718.70	Feed payment to Nelson and Sons, Inc.
+ \$1,500.00	Transportation payment from Jicarilla Apache

• **Vice-Chairman Election (Mike Montoya)**

Mike discussed election process for the SWTFC Vice-Chairman position
 Mike requested nominations for Vice-Chairman
 Steve Whiteman (Southern Ute) nominated Jim White (Jicarilla Apache).
 A nomination for Jim White had also been sent in to the BOD by email from Paul Holmes (Sandia Pueblo).
 With ample opportunity for nominations, and Jim White as the only nominee, we proceeded with voting
 Steve's (and Paul's) nomination of Jim White was seconded by Frederick Chino
 The vote was taken, with unanimous support of the voting members to re-elect Jim White for the 2-year seat

• **Media Campaign Update (Steve Whiteman and John Antonio)**

The SWTFC's DVD production was played for the group
 Steve and John gave a brief status report on progress with the website and brochure projects
 Expected project expenditures (from Southern Ute grant):

Video Project (completed)	\$6,818.30
Website Project (in progress)	\$1,397.04
Brochure Project (in progress)	\$1,784.66
Total	\$10,000.00

• **FWS TWG & TLIP Grant Programs Update (John Antonio)**

The deadline recently passed for submitting TLIP/TWG's; proposals have been/are being received
 Program budget at FWS has experienced major cuts; grant training programs were limited
 17 TWGs and 4 TLIPs have been received, with possibly numerous more expected
 The SWTFC/Mescalero proposal was submitted before the deadline
 John suggests that tribal lobbying efforts to increase TWG/TLIP funding should be considered
 SWTFC and other Tribes might consider developing a strategy to lobby for more funding
 Award announcements expected by June 30th
 John described some past funded Tribal projects

Break at 10:30AM

Reconvened at 10:55AM

• **Draft SWTFC Strategic Plan (Jim White)**

Jim offered a PowerPoint presentation (overview) of the draft strategic plan

Approval of the plan is important for guiding SWTFC progress and ensuring we're all "on the same page"

Topics in Jim's PowerPoint presentation summarizing the Plan included:

- Who We Are (mission and vision statements)
- Guiding Principles
- Five Year Goals
- Our Strategy
- Long-term Strategic Vision
- Plan Format
- Staff and Operating Budgets, Project Expenses

Concerns from Butch, Pete Stine, and others that the graph of SWTFC funding into the future is misleading (appears from graph that SWTFC presence, rather than federal funding support, "dies out" over time)

The graph needs to show growth and continuity of SWTFC "forever"

John also suggested that long-term federal funding should NOT "zero-out" in the long-term, as represented

Several suggested adding multiple lines to the graph to separate federal support from SWTFC growth

Mel Tafoya made a motion to approve the strategic plan with amendments to the graph as discussed

Frederick Chino seconded the motion; A unanimous vote of approval was given.

(Anyone interested in receiving a copy of the final SWTFC Strategic Plan should contact Jim or Steve)

• **Mescalero Hatchery Operations Update (Mike Montoya)**

Frederick Chino and Mescalero Tribe were instrumental in providing critical assistance with MTFH operation

Mike expressed his strong appreciation to Mr. Chino and the Mescalero Tribe

In excess of 56K fish have been stocked out on tribal lands so far

Several hundred thousand 2-3" fish and approx. 7K catchable fish are on station now

No tribal request has been un-filled so far, but demand might exceed production potential in the future

Requests for sub-catchables are much easier to fill than requests for catchable or trophy fish

The Mescalero Tribe's FY06 Federal assistance request included support of SWTFC and operation of MTFH

Ken Ferjancic offered a brief overview on FishPro's work on business/engineering plan for MTFH

MTFH continues to operate with great success on a shoestring budget

Fish distribution capacity continues to be a MAJOR challenge at this time; the TWG proposal is crucial

• **Three Species Conservation Agreement Presentation (Stephanie Carman)**

Stephanie is the Aquatic Species Recovery Coord. with NMGF and a representative on the "3 Species" team

Stephanie offered a PowerPoint presentation as an overview of the inter-state conservation agreement

The Agreement is a non-binding set of commitments from the 4 corner states, Wyoming, and Nevada to work together on the conservation of native roundtail chub, flannelmouth sucker, and bluehead sucker.

The intent is to recover/stabilize populations so as to avoid federal listing under ESA

States now recognize the need for other jurisdictions to help (e.g., tribes, TNC, other private, etc.)

Non-State partners, such as tribes, are encouraged to assist with species conservation

Tribes do not have to sign the agreement to participate, if they don't want to

The species are native to the Colorado R. basin only; Effort is not pertinent to most NM pueblos and MAT

Some potentially important partners include: the 3 Ute tribes, Navajo, Zuni, White Mt, San Carlos, Hualapai

Copies of the Conservation Agreement and contact information for State reps are available – contact Steve

The Agreement is not very old; some implementation issues still need to be figured out

Break for Lunch at 12:20PM

Reconvened at 1:35PM

• **Fisheries Forever Update (Pete Stine)**

Pete gave brief overview of Fisheries Forever, how it was started, current status, and future direction

Fisheries Forever is focused on increasing funding support for the federal Fisheries Program

Pete commented on current administration push to out-source federal jobs

Federal FWS positions at risk have included biotechnicians and animal caretakers

Fish Hatchery biotechs and animal caretakers are now “safe” (but cuts may be seen elsewhere)

Biotechnicians for FROs, Eco-Services, and NWR’s *are* still vulnerable

FY06 will see a \$1.2 million increase for NFH’s, but FRO’s to be cut dramatically

Pete is encouraging grassroots support, including Tribal and SWTFC support, of the National Fish Habitat

Initiative (NFHI) and Fish Passage Project (programs of FRO’s), and the Fish Hatchery System

For more information, email Pete at stine4@flash.net

• **Overview of FWS TWG Grant Submitted (Jim White)**

The proposal was prepared by SWTFC (Jim White, primarily) on behalf of Mescalero Apache Tribe

Proposal calls for a Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Broodstock program at MTFH

Proposal would also include acquisition of regional distribution truck, which would greatly assist SWTFC

For detailed information on proposal, contact Jim or Steve for a copy of the document

• **BIA Funding Update (Joe Jojola)**

Joe Acknowledged past assistance and support of BIA’s Gary Rankel, who is now retired

Bob Gartner, in D.C., is now handling functions previously held by Gary

BIA hatchery maintenance funds (\$7,000) have come in for operating MTFH; this helps but more is needed

Joe indicated that timing is right to start Tribal lobbying efforts for BIA year-end funding

SWTFC member tribes that lobby in D.C. could be especially important

Letters should go to the Asst. Secretary, with CCs to Bob Gartner and Regional Director Larry Morrin

• **Non-Profit Status, Legislative, and Funding Update (Butch Blazer; Shenan Atcitty absent)**

Shenan has processed important Congressional letters of support for SWTFC / MTFH

Funding continues to be a major challenge; will require dedicated effort of SWTFC

Butch expecting to make a trip to D.C. soon to gain Congressional funding support

• **USFWS Update (Chris Kitcheyan and Jim Brooks)**

No changes in fish allotments to Tribes; 10 tribes to receive fish from Alchesay-William’s Creek NFH

Chris would like to host a creel survey workshop for tribes

Creel surveys are an important part of tribal fisheries mgmt plans

FWS Lynn Starnes would like to know if tribe’s would like to have an annual FWS coordination meeting

Chris acknowledged that budget-wise, FRO’s are in trouble; future of FRO’s is unpredictable

Jim Brooks is predicting FRO’s may be “out of business” in 2 years

Jim encourages tribes to lobby in support of maintaining FRO’s

At national level, Jim believes effort is underway to merge FRO’s with Ecological Services offices

Within FWS, despite recent support of NFH’s, the Fisheries Program is the most impacted by politics/cuts

Tribal lobbying efforts are best focused at Regional Director Dale Hall, or higher levels

• **Bylaws Amendment (Steve Whiteman)**

Steve described the need to amend bylaws (Article VIII, 8.1) to add flexibility in scheduling meetings

Greater flexibility in scheduling will be important for improving attendance at meetings

Current language was read, whereby quarterly meetings are to occur on the “second Wednesday of each January, April, July, and October of each year....”

The proposed amendment was read, whereby quarterly meetings are to occur “during the months of January, April, July, and October of each year, at times and places designated in a written notice....”

Paul Holmes made a motion to approve the amendment to the bylaws as described
Frederick Chino seconded the motion; A unanimous vote of approval was given

• **Membership Resolutions (Jim White)**

Jim provided brief overview of how tribes can become members of SWTFC
For info on becoming a member, contact Mike Montoya or any of the BOD members

No planning took place for the next SWTFC meeting. The Commission will be notified when a date and location are determined.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00PM

Minutes taken by:

Steve Whiteman, Secretary-Treasurer
Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission
Email: swhitema@southern-ute.nsn.us