



Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission

Annual Membership Meeting / BIA SW Regional Office, Albuquerque NM

Friday, April 28th, 2006

Meeting Convened at 1:45PM

Membership Attendance

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Jicarilla Apache Nation | Jim White |
| 2. Laguna Pueblo | Adrienne Tiller |
| 3. Mescalero Apache Tribe | Ray Kirgan |
| 4. Sandia Pueblo | Paul Holmes |
| 5. Southern Ute Tribe | Steve Whiteman |
| 6. Santa Clara Pueblo | Mel Tafoya |
| 7. Navajo Nation | Viola Willetto |
| 8. Cochiti Pueblo | Don Suina |
| 9. Okay Owingeh | Charles Lujan |
| 10. Picuris Pueblo | <i>not present</i> |
| 11. Isleta Pueblo | <i>not present</i> |
| 12. San Carlos Apache Tribe | <i>not present</i> |
| 13. Northern Ute Tribe | <i>not present</i> |

Others in Attendance

Butch Blazer – Mescalero Apache Tribe
Nelson Luna – Zuni Pueblo
Daniel Parker – White Mtn Apache Tribe
Dr. Benjamin Tuggle – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Acting Regional Director (SW)
John Antonio – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Tribal Liaison (SW)
Chris Kitcheyan – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, R2 FRO
Joe Jojola – BIA SW Regional Office
Jennifer Smith – BIA Mescalero Agency
Clara ???? – BIA Mescalero Agency
Norman Jojola – BIA Northern Pueblos Agency
Lawrence Abeita – BIA Southern Pueblos Agency
Shenan Atcitty – Holland & Knight

Approval of past minutes / Financial Status (Steve Whiteman)

Steve presented past meeting minutes from January 20th for consideration by the group
Steve indicated that minor edits to the draft were made per comments from Pete Stine
Mel Tafoya motioned for approval of the past minutes, Jim White 2nd
All voting members present voted in favor of past minutes approval; approved.
Steve presented the current balance and recent activity for the SWTFC Service Account
Current balance for the Service Account: \$41,781.93

Steve summarized account activity since the January 20th meeting as follows:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>DEP</u>	<u>WDL</u>
SWTFC Donations (Jicarilla, Southern Ute)	10,000	
Tribal fish orders (Sandia, Jicarilla)	4,389.65	
SUIT grant balance transfer from NAFWS	1,195.52	
Feed payment to vendor		-3,665.50
Website completion to web developer		-500.00
Executive Director loan		-5,000.00
Totals:	15,585.17	-9,165.50

Steve and Mike briefly discussed circumstances around the Executive Director loan

Executive Director Update (Mike Montoya)

Mike brought up San Carlos' proposed training on advanced electrofishing and boating for tribes

At least 15 participants are needed to carry out the training

Participants in the training can, themselves, become certified to train other tribal staff, as needed

Contact Anna Tryfonas (SCAT) or Mike Montoya (SWTFC) for more information on training

Mike provided a draft document on a proposed formation of the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership

DFHP is a grass-roots movement focused on native species conservation in the SW

No official structure yet, but would operate in conjunction with National Fish Habitat Initiative

The document provided is to generate discussion on further development of the group

Potential partners in DFHP include numerous Federal and State agencies, tribes, and NGOs

Related information may be found through the Desert Fishes Council at www.desertfishes.org

For copies of the draft document handed out at the meeting, contact Steve

Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery (MTFH) is now operating at capacity and is "water-limited"

Additional improvements using EDA rehab funding would increase production capacity

240,000 catchable-size (average) rainbow trout currently on station – mostly committed already

Mike re-iterated need to know of new orders well in advance, especially for larger fish

Paul Holmes requested approx. 1,000 lbs. in May (8" as smallest)

Paul is suggested that our current price-per-pound (\$2.35) might be too low for SWTFC's needs

Chairman Update (Butch Blazer)

Butch explained the problems of receiving no end-of-year funding from BIA

The lack of BIA funding at this early stage has been very challenging for SWTFC O&M

Butch summarized the funding that HAS or WILL be coming in – all is immediately spent

Butch has sent letters to member tribes requesting donations to carry us through the end of FY06

Butch indicates that 3 tribes have responded with donations (Jicarilla, Southern Ute, Mescalero)

Mescalero has indicated willingness to pay Exec. Dir. salary through end of FY06 – huge help!!!

Butch also spoke recently with Mike Olson (BIA-D.C.) about critical funding needs

Would like to see BIA subsidize \$55-60K/annually for MTFH operations until transition

FWS financial support has been extremely important

R2 FWS acting Director (Ben Tuggle) is very supportive of SWTFC native RGC work

Butch is enthusiastic about Jeff Cole's SWTFC fundraising ideas

Butch expressed desire to meet with more tribes to expand SWTFC support

Joe Jojola advised NOT to give up on BIA year-end dollars!

Joe says it's a good time to start making contacts in BIA for ending FY06 money

Joe indicated BIA Regional Director Morin's strong support for SWTFC

Paul asked about estimated hand-over of MTFH to MAT – Butch said possibly Oct. 1 2006

Paul asked about future MAT operation of MTFH as a commercial facility

Butch said MAT Council will need to decide on this soon

SWTFC hopes MTFH will be a non-commercial program of MAT govt, still serving SW tribes

Shenan indicates EDA's intent is to see MTFH as economic-development oriented, serving tribes

However, this may not be an "either-or" situation regarding the MTFH operating model

Officer Elections (Mike Montoya)

Mike opened discussion on filling two vacant officer positions: Chairman and Sec-Treas
Mike indicated that only nominations received so far are: Butch and Steve (both incumbents)
Mike asked for any new nominations – none received
Ray Kirgan motioned for vote by acclamation, Mel Tafoya 2nd
All voting members present voted in favor of electing the nominees; none opposed.
Butch and Steve will serve 2 year positions as Chair and Sec-Treas, respectively
Current Vice-Chair term (currently held by Jim White) will be up in April 2007
Butch and Steve thanked the group for support, gave brief statements
Paul thanked the SWTFC leadership for dedication and efforts

NAFWS Conference Planning Update (John Antonio)

Mescalero Apache Tribe (MAT) to host conference at Inn of Mtn. Gods- July 31st - August 3rd
4th planning session has been completed (this morning)
Conference agenda mail-out expected in next few weeks
Planning Team: Jennifer, Clara, Chris, Joe, Norm, Butch, Lawrence, Priscilla, Mike
Former Senator Campbell will be a speaker (*new update: Cancelled due to schedule conflict*)
Band, dance, luncheon, traditional feast, fishing derby, auctions, etc. arrangements underway
A mini-Youth Practicum will be conducted – various fish/wildlife field activities + presentation
Mike indicated an arts/crafts fair will be running concurrently with NAFWS conference
Mike invites any interested participants to fair, as well as banquet and auction

NAFW Foundation Update (Norman Jojola)

Paul asked Norman about status with NAFW Foundation
Norman indicated that group is to be re-organized under NTEC (Nat'l. Tribal Enviro. Council)
Currently facing legal obstacles with transferring funds out of Foundation account
Norman indicated just over \$312,000 still in account
A Foundation board member filed an injunction to block transfer of money – currently in court
Resolution expected in near future

Legislative Update (Shenan Atcitty)

New dynamic this year: lobbying reform (esp. following Abramoff scandal!)
Congressional attention is on “earmark” requests – much more scrutiny now
Scrutiny is really being applied to House Interior appropriations bill
Shenan is optimistic that NM's Heather Wilson may be helpful with Interior bill
In Senate, Domenici is very supportive of SWTFC and was disappointed with no BIA allocation
Funding requests for SWTFC have been submitted – tribes will be approached for letters also
Despite extremely difficult budget environment, SWTFC survives and is supported politically
Shenan thanked the Mescalero Tribe for its support of SWTFC
Shenan thinks that continued work with Domenici's office might help
She also thinks more SWTFC outreach/PR would be helpful
Butch offered that data on SWTFC stocking success could be politically beneficial
Tribal support letters will also be helpful for ongoing lobbying efforts in D.C.

BIA Hatchery Report Update (Joe Jojola)

Report has not reached Congress yet, but is undergoing budget review (OMB)
FWS will also have an opportunity to review the report
Joe expects developments with this soon – will potentially bring some funding to MTFH

Jicarilla Proposal to Supply MAT with Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout (RGC) (Jim White)

Jim gave brief history on restoration of the Poso Creek RGC population
The proposal is to supply the MAT RGC program with starter fish from Jicarilla's Poso Cr.
The Poso Cr. RGC history is known, including genetics, health, population levels, etc.

One complicating factor is the State (NM) jurisdiction over the fish (i.e., Jicarilla FEE land)
A draft of the proposal has been circulated, revised within SWTFC, FWS
Next step is for Jicarilla leadership to review proposal, then to New Mexico Game & Fish
End result: fish would be used for RGC restoration/re-introduction/recreation/education
NMGF Director (Thompson) wants to see a distinct MOU regarding proposal, jurisdiction issue
Butch thanked Jim for preparing the proposal in timely manner

FWS Update 1 (Dr. Ben Tuggle)

Butch introduced Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, FWS acting R2 Director
Dr. Tuggle stated his strong belief in partnerships, esp. with declining federal budgets
Dr. Tuggle is very interested in tribal efforts on their lands and working cooperatively
Two personal priorities: Recovery of gila trout and Apache trout – Needs tribal help!!!
Dr. Tuggle thinks tribes will be vital partners in many conservation efforts
Dr. Tuggle is excited about opportunities and invites tribes to contact him as needed
Dr. Tuggle indicated that tribes WILL be invited to participate in NFH Initiative in the SW
Butch commented on the importance of tribal involvement in high-level decision-making

FWS Update 2 (Chris Kitcheyan)

Coop. Agreement has been turned back over to SWTFC for minor, final edits
Coop. Agreement should be finalized in next couple months when returned by SWTFC (Mike)
Rainbow trout stocking on pueblos is nearly done
Chris requested patience with fish delivery, and make sure a tribal rep is present to meet truck!
If tribes need to change stocking plans, please notify Chris ASAP!
Possibility that future fish will be slightly larger, with total allocation (numbers) slightly reduced
Chris encouraged tribes to continue with mgmt plan development; call him for help

Closing Discussion

Mike indicated Cochiti facilities have been restored – possible future resource for SWTFC
SWTFC/MAT will provide starter fish for Cochiti, free of charge
Butch emphasized difficulty of dual role for SWTFC Exec. Dir / MTFH Manager; funding needs
John Antonio indicated regional and national reviews of TWG/TLP have been completed
John expects announcements “any day now” on grant awards
Viola Willeto (attending for Jeff Cole) spoke about planning for SWTFC fund raising committee
Butch wants to formalize a fund raising effort and invites interested reps to contact him ASAP
Butch would like Jeff to contact him to further discuss planning/strategizing
Charles Lujan said PNM is looking for organizations like SWTFC to make donations to
Shenan volunteers to work with the fund raising committee
Paul commented on importance of fishing as a national pastime

Jim White motioned to adjourn meeting, Paul Holmes 2nd – approved by unanimous vote

Meeting adjourned at 4:00PM

**Next meeting: Thursday, August 3rd (1:30PM); *last day of NAFWS Conference*
Inn of Mt. Gods at Mescalero Apache Reservation**

Meeting Minutes taken by:

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