



# Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission

Quarterly Meeting Minutes / June 15, 2005 / Laguna Pueblo Admin. Building, NM

- Meeting convened by Mike Montoya and Butch Blazer at 9:30AM

- SWTFC member tribes / representatives in attendance:

Jicarilla Apache Nation	Jim White
Southern Ute Tribe	Steve Whiteman
Santa Clara Pueblo	Mel Tafoya
Navajo Nation	Jeff Cole
Laguna Pueblo	Chuck Schultz
Sandia Pueblo	Paul Holmes
Isleta Pueblo	Cruz Abeita
San Juan Pueblo	Lawrence Cata

*(Members not present: Northern Ute Tribe, Mescalero Apache Tribe)*

- Other representation at the meeting:

Zuni Pueblo	BIA Laguna Agency	Fisheries Forever
Cochiti Pueblo	BIA Mescalero Agency	
Ute Mtn. Ute Tribe	BIA Northern Pueblos Agency	
San Carlos Apache Tribe	USFWS R2 Fisheries	
White Mtn. Apache Tribe	USFWS NM FRO	

Dignitaries: Governor Roland Johnson and Robert Mooney, Laguna Pueblo  
Edward Waconda, Jr., Laguna Pueblo / Pagate Village

Invocation was offered by Mr. Mooney and welcoming remarks by Governor Johnson

- Past Minutes Approval and Financial Update (Steve Whiteman)

Steve presented for formal approval the minutes from the April 7 SWTFC meeting held in Albuquerque, NM

There were no comments, concerns, or suggested edits on the past minutes

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mel Tafoya and seconded by Jennifer Smith

The vote was taken and there was unanimous approval of the April 7 minutes

Steve also gave an update on the SWTFC service acct. (used mainly for fish purchasing, rearing, & distrib.)

The account is a Wells Fargo personal checking account that did not meet non-profit corporation requirements

The account was closed May 9<sup>th</sup> and all funds transferred to a new business account, opened on the same day

Account activity is summarized as follows:

### Wells Fargo Personal Checking Account

Starting Balance on March 8 <sup>th</sup> :	\$3,159.07
Ending Balance on May 9 <sup>th</sup> :	\$0.00 (account closed)

<u>DEP / WDL</u>	<u>Note</u>
+ \$2,395.10	Feed and transport deposit from Isleta Pueblo
+ \$1,309.35	Feed and transport deposit from Sandia Pueblo
+ \$3,000.00	Feed and transport deposit from San Juan Pueblo
+ \$100.00	Membership fee for Picuris Pueblo
+ \$100.00	Membership fee for Santa Clara Pueblo
+ \$1,135.20	Feed and transport deposit from Laguna Pueblo
- \$1,874.30	Feed payment to Nelson and Sons, Inc.
- \$500.00	Capital One credit card payment*
- \$8,824.42	Balance Transfer to Business Checking Account

**Wells Fargo Business Checking Account**

Starting Balance on May 9<sup>th</sup> \$8,824.42 (transferred amount)  
Ending Balance on May 24<sup>th</sup> \$11,380.89

<u>DEP / WDL</u>	<u>Note</u>
+ \$2,107.70	Feed and transport deposit from Southern Ute
- \$1,436.18	Capital One credit card payment*
+ \$1,904.90	Feed and transport deposit from Sandia Pueblo
- \$19.95	Harland Checks (for checking account)

\* Capital One credit card expenses primarily include fuel purchases and truck repair/maintenance work needed for fish deliveries. Detailed account statements are available to members upon request.

**• Review of Washington D.C. Trip (Butch Blazer)**

Purpose of the visit was to advise SWTFC’s Congressional support of our progress  
Another goal was to solicit year-end funding from BIA (and USFWS), which has been critical to our survival  
The visit was coordinated with Mescalero President Chino’s visit  
Having a tribal leader present was very helpful in being able to meet directly with congressmen and senators  
Based on Mescalero’s federal assistance requests, it’s clear that SWTFC is strongly supported by the MAT  
Butch went through his trip agenda and summarized his meetings as follows:

Monday May 23<sup>rd</sup> PM

Meeting with Mike Olsen (BIA Dep. Asst. Secretary)  
Discussed SWTFC progress, provided Strategic Plan and copy of DVD  
Butch requested \$80K from BIA for continued operation of SWTFC (via current Mescalero 638)

Tuesday May 24<sup>th</sup> AM

Meeting with Matt Hogan, Acting Director of USFWS and  
Hannibal Bolton, Division Chief of Fish & Wildlife Mgmt Assistance (USFWS)  
Butch requested \$50K from USFWS, as per R2 Director Dale Hall’s recommendation  
Also met with NM Senator Bingaman and CO Congressman Udall, which went very well  
Also met with BIA’s, Joe Little in Assistant Secretary’s Office  
Also met with Frank (last name?) who works with Domenici on Senate Energy/Resource Committee

Tuesday May 24<sup>th</sup> PM

Meeting with Senator Domenici  
President Chino had 2 issues to discuss with Congressional reps: Indian health issues & SWTFC  
Very effective meeting; Domenici showed direct interest, questions on SWTFC  
Domenici offered assistance with appropriations request

Meeting with John Berry, Executive Director, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation  
John was very interested and impressed in progress of SWTFC  
John provided a copy of the SWTFC Strategic Plan to the NFWF CEO  
John would like to see the plan developed into an actual NFWF funding proposal

Meeting with NM representative Heather Wilson; Heather pledged support for SWTFC

Holland & Knight Reception

Butch spoke about SWTFC with House Speaker Dennis Hastert  
Met with Congressman Pierce (Mescalero is in his district); lengthy talk about SWTFC and progress  
Butch emphasized need for more personnel, funding support

Congressman Pierce would like to tour MTFH; Pledged his support for SWTFC  
Senator Bingaman has also expressed desire to visit MTFH  
Meeting with Charles Taylor, Chairman of House Appropriations Committee  
Mr. Taylor also wants to tour MTFH

Copies of the SWTFC Strategic Plan and DVD were provided and were very helpful  
Shenan will perform follow-up visits with key officials  
Butch may be requesting additional assistance from Tribal leaders with the follow-up efforts

**Other Discussion:**

501(c) Status: The Federal filing still in-process; the app should be submitted soon  
Mike Montoya commented that a “dissolution” clause is needed in our Articles of Incorporation/Bylaws  
This is a requirement of the IRS for our non-profit status  
Mike has prepared a draft clause for the BOD to review  
A vote will likely be needed at an upcoming meeting to adopt the amendment

Heather Wilson and her family were fishing at Sandia Pueblo recently, but only caught a few stockers.

***Break at 10:10AM***

***Re-Convene at 10:40AM***

**• USFWS Listening Session (Lynn Starnes)**

Lynn provided numerous handouts and updated the group on several USFWS-related topics  
*If you would like to receive copies of the handouts, please contact SWTFC Sec-Treasurer Steve Whiteman*  
Topics presented by Lynn included:

*Update on Health Issues with Consumption of Fish Flesh*

EPA and FDA testing has identified contaminant issues in aquaculture facilities throughout parts of U.S.  
One problem area is PCBs in Lahontan cutthroat trout (in Nevada)  
PCB's have also been high in farmed Atlantic Salmon  
Juvenile rainbow trout from a Bozeman, MT hatchery also have elevated PCBs  
2004 Hite Report analyzed commercial facilities and found that virtually all produce PCB-contaminated fish  
USFWS has been, and will continue, monitoring contaminants in fish raised in NFHs, esp. PCBs  
“Acceptable consumption” of fish for PCB levels observed in some areas is “1 meal per month”  
USFWS would like to identify the sources of PCBs; all indications are that feed is the source  
USFWS testing will be performed and advisories will be provided with USFWS fish as needed  
Fortunately, USFWS Region 2 does not appear to have the PCB problems found elsewhere  
Draft guidelines are being developed to address stocking and hatchery mgmt relative to human health  
Discussion followed on standards used in fish testing  
Some concern was expressed by tribal representatives about inadequate notification/coordination with tribes

*Update on USFWS Mitigation Reimbursement Issue*

Current administration wants water project builders to pay for fishery mitigation costs  
Legislation (National Fisheries Mitigation Coordination Act, NFMCA) has been developed to require project builders – BOR, USACE, TVA – to pay for fisheries mitigation costs  
According to Lynn, NFMCA would eliminate unnecessary and costly funding pass-through with the BOR  
Adequate Federal funding would go directly to USFWS to support fishery mitigation needs for projects  
The NFMCA has huge potential to positively impact the USFWS fisheries budget

*Update on Draft USFWS Fisheries Strategic Plan*

Fisheries partners will be invited to an upcoming meeting to discuss and provide input on the draft plan  
At the national level, “tribal issues” have been lowered in priority as “recreational fishery” issues  
The meeting will be an opportunity for tribes to emphasize USFWS obligations/trust responsibility, etc.

Meeting is expected to be 1½ days in Oct or Nov '05 in Missouri or West Virginia  
Lynn anticipates SWTFC receiving an invitation to the partner meeting

#### Update on Fish Habitat Initiative

Major effort has been made by USFWS to gather input on habitat management priorities across the country  
Sportfishing and Boating Partnership Council is a major, politically powerful group backing the initiative  
The initiative goal is “to focus national attention and resources on common priorities to improve aquatic habitat health”

Lynn anticipates another 1-2 years to complete the plan and obtain partner support  
Some tribal representation is on the National Habitat Initiative team, but no one from southwest at this time

#### Update on National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS)

Congress requested update/status check on NFHS

Dr. Maime Parker offered a speech to Congress on status and challenges facing NFHS

Some modest funding was generated as a result; in light of other Federal cuts, any support is good

Region 2 fishery facilities have been faced with potential for significant cuts

A few R2 positions have been cut and salaries modified

Lynn believes R2 fisheries facilities/positions are secure and stable, at least for the present

“Tribes are still receiving fish”

#### Update on Competitive Sourcing

Competitive sourcing is the process of securing service from the private sector to perform functions that have traditionally been held by Federal agencies, mainly to improve efficiency and save money

Federal animal husbandry and bio-technician employees have recently been considered for out-sourcing

An outside report on the current NFHS structure and operation is considered to be highly flawed

The proposal to outsource animal husbandry jobs has been “summarily dismissed” due to the flawed analysis

Lynn thinks bio-techs *might* still be vulnerable

USFWS may still face political pressure to outsource other positions (e.g., secretarial)

There is a major concern that private companies will not have a clue about many government operations

#### Update on Merging USFWS Fisheries with Ecological Services (ES) Offices

Lynn believes that co-locating Fisheries and ES in some locations makes no economic sense

Also, most ES supervisors out-rank Fisheries supervisors - Fisheries project leaders could be eliminated

If merger occurs, ES priorities would likely take priority over Fisheries program priorities

Merger has already occurred in some other regions, and the problem of ES over-running Fisheries is apparent

One potential tribal concern is sensitive tribal info being *insecure* under ES

High staff turn-over in ES makes effective working relationships with Tribes very difficult

ES focus on ESA issues, and frequent lack of recognition of tribal sovereign authority, would be a major issue

Numerous tribal/pueblo representatives expressed concern about ramifications for tribe-Fed relations

ES priorities lie with endangered species; government-to-government relationships could be jeopardized

Some USFWS (Fisheries) and BIA employees expressed similar concern about jeopardizing relationships

John Antonio advised that if Tribes are concerned, they have a right to appeal to the Federal government

The group seemed to agree that SWTFC, individual tribes, and others should consider “weighing-in” with

Dale Hall and other political figures on the problems with a possible ES/Fisheries merger

An inquiry directly from Butch to Dale Hall was suggested by the group

#### **Break for lunch at 12:00PM**

**Re-Convene at 1:30PM (Butch Blazer had to depart on business)**

#### **• Update on Media Campaign and USFWS TLIP/TWG Status (John Antonio)**

John gave a quick update on the media campaign (i.e., DVD, website, and brochure)

The DVD has been completed; the website ([www.SWTFC.org](http://www.SWTFC.org)) is up, but still under construction

A prototype brochure is still under development but should be ready for final review and printing soon

A total of 28 TWG & TLIP proposals have been developed and submitted by tribes to R2  
For R2, the top two TWG proposals and the top one TLIP proposal are “guaranteed” for funding  
Of the remaining 25, nine TWG’s & 2 TLIP’s are to be submitted for review at the national level  
A total of 64 proposals are being considered at the national level  
Announcement of the TWG/TLIP awards is expected sometime in July

• **MTFH Update (Mike Montoya)**

Mike gave an excellent PowerPoint presentation on operations at Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery (MTFH)  
Most of the presentation was a comparison of MTFH operations in June 2004 vs. June 2005, as follows:

	<u>June 2004</u>	<u>June 2005</u>
Fish on-station (all sizes)	26,000	201,650
Fish delivered to tribes	640 lbs.	68,200 lbs.
No. of tribes served	1	7
Tribal financial contributions	\$749	\$32,062

Mike also presented a series of photos showing the transformation of MTFH into the fine facility it is today  
Mike pointed out that the (non-financial) assistance provided by the Service has been extremely important  
The challenge for MTFH continues to be mainly funding. Limited space and predation are also challenges.  
Mike introduced two summer interns provided to MTFH through the Haskell youth extension program  
Kai-T Bluesky (Cochiti Pueblo) and Alisha Antonio (Laguna Pueblo) have been assisting Mike at MTFH  
Kai-T and Alisha are both NMSU students and have been extremely helpful with hatchery operations

• **Laguna Pueblo Fisheries Status (Chuck Schultz)**

Chuck is relatively new to the Laguna Pueblo government; He has been DNR manager for about 6-months  
Fisheries on the Pueblo primarily occur at the lake at Paguete Village  
There is a desire to maintain the coldwater fishery and perhaps explore more cooperation with SWTFC  
A fish rearing facility at the Pueblo may be a possibility  
Laguna DNR continues to work on recreation/fishing related improvements at the lake  
Chuck recognized the assistance of USFWS R2 Fisheries, SWTFC, and Paguete Village

• **USFWS Fisheries Program Update (Chris Kitcheyan)**

Trout stocking has been completed for the year; Contacts will soon take place regarding next year’s stocking  
Final tribal catfish stocking expected during the week of June 20<sup>th</sup>  
MTFH is to receive 40,000 RBT eggs and 50,000 juv. RBT in June  
USFWS recommends that MTFH develop a hatchery mgmt plan as per USFWS broodstock guidelines  
MTFH might be able to use the William’s Creek-Alchesay mgmt plan as a template  
Chris will follow-up with Tribes in late summer/fall on a planned creel survey workshop  
Tribal fisheries management plans will eventually become a firm requirement for all stocking locations

• **Tribal Resolutions / Membership (Jim White)**

Jim provided a brief overview of the importance of tribes becoming members of SWTFC  
SWTFC will provide any needed assistance to tribal reps on becoming members  
Representatives from Zuni, WMAT (and others?) were provided copies of DVD for Council presentations

• **Closing Comments**

John Antonio recognized Daniel Parker (in attendance) for Chief Sealath Award  
Next SWTFC Meeting to be held in conjunction with NAFWS Conference in early August  
Exact schedule forthcoming with NAFWS agenda

**Meeting adjourned at 3:00PM**

Please note: If you would like copies of USFWS hand-outs from the meeting, please contact Steve.

The handouts included:

*Draft Interim National Guidelines for Hatchery Management Decisions Regarding Contaminants in Catchable-Size Fish Produced by the National Fish Hatchery System*

A brief narrative and the actual legislation for the “*National Fisheries Mitigation Coordination Act*”

A meeting proposal and options for national partners and stakeholders to discuss the USFWS Fisheries Program Strategic Plan

Update on the National Fish Habitat Initiative / March 2005

Congressional testimonies on the status of the National Fish Hatchery System, including:

Dr. Mamie A. Parker, Assistant Director for Fisheries and Habitat Conservation, USFWS

D. Robert Lohn, Regional Administrator, NW Region, National Marine Fisheries Service

John Baughman, Executive Vice-President, International Assoc. of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

A brief narrative on Competitive Sourcing

Minutes taken by:

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