



Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission

Meeting Minutes / Oct. 20-21, 2005 / Inn of the Mtn. Gods and Mescalero Hatchery

- **Meeting convened at 1:30 by Mike Montoya**

- **SWTFC member tribes/representatives in attendance:**
 1. Jicarilla Apache Nation Jim White
 2. Sandia Pueblo Paul Holmes
 3. Navajo Nation Jeff Cole
 4. Mescalero Apache Tribe Butch Blazer
 5. San Juan Pueblo Lawrence Cata
 6. Cochiti Pueblo Floyd Pecos
 7. San Carlos Apache Ana Tryfonas
 8. Picuris Pueblo Manuel Archuleta
 9. Santa Clara Pueblo Mel Tafoya

(Members not present: Northern & Southern Ute, Laguna Pueblo)

- **Dignitaries Present**

Mark Chino (Introduction and Welcome Remarks), President, Mescalero Apache Tribe
Ray Kurigan and Oliver Enjady, Mescalero Apache Council Member
Manuel Archuleta, Lt. Governor of Picuris Pueblo
Hannibal Bolton, USFWS

- **Introduction of Tribal Leaders, Federal Officials, and Tribal Representatives (Butch Blazer)**

President Chino started the meeting with a warm welcome and an invitation to host the 2006 NAFWS/SWTFC meeting. Mr. Blazer introduced Hannibal Bolton and Mr. Bolton pledged to support SWTFC efforts with a \$20,000 funding supplement. Other USFWS representatives included John Antonio, Jim Brooks and Chris Kitcheyan. Mr. Joe Jojola, Regional Biologist, represented the BIA.

- **Approval of Past Minutes/Financial Status (Mike Montoya)**

August 4th Special meeting in Hon-Dah Resort, White Mountain Apache Tribe, meetings were approved unanimously. Motion made by Jeff Cole (Navajo) and seconded by Lawrence Cata (San Juan Pueblo). A computer/projector problem prevented the presentation of our financial status.

- **Chairman Update (Butch Blazer)**

Mr. Blazer thanked Hannibal Bolton for his support of the Commission and President Chino for the MAT continued support and offer to host the 2006 NAFWS-SWTFC meeting. No end of the year money from BIA pledged at this point and, because of the war and hurricanes, year-end money is extremely tight. Butch will be attending a regional retreat with top Natural Resource managers representing Federal and State agencies where he will aggressively pursue continued funding of the Commission.

- **2006-07 Legislative Update and Strategy (Shenan Atcitty)**

Shenan expanded upon Butch's remarks regarding a tight funding outlook in Washington. The BIA is holding (either taken back or won't distribute) 5% of all 638 dollars for Gulf Coast rebuilding efforts and the War in Iraq. The SWTFC/EDA requests are included in the 06 appropriations bill but Congressional leaders will be looking close at earmarks and projects are bound to be cut or fought over because of the aforementioned crisis.

On other Tribal issues, the Energy Bill recently past includes money to create a Tribal Energy Office which will authorize grants and low interest loans. The bill also approved Tribal Energy Resource Agreements (TERA) stipulating that tribes now have the ability to do agreements without BIA or the Government “involvement” but after agreements are signed they can not go back and hold the Government responsible if the agreement goes awry. Ms. Atcitty discussed other Tribal issues such as the Roberts and Miers (now off the table) Supreme Court appointments/nominees.

Rep. Pombo (CA) is leading the Resource Committee to reauthorize the ESA. Tribes have not been involved in this reauthorization process (particularly the NAFWS has been absent from the process). The reauthorization has passed the House but not the Senate yet. The SWTFC could take a lead role in the process if NAFWS does not (J. Antonio).

- **NAFWS/SW Regional Issues**

No SW Regional NAFWS BODs attended the meeting.

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

Mr. Montoya did a brief update on the financial status of the Commission’s service account. Basically, the SWTFC has operational funds (for feed, fuel, materials, and supplies). Regarding BIA support, there has been NO 638 contract renewal to pay salary for our Executive Director/Hatchery Manager or other expenses to operate the hatchery. Mike also gave an update on the TWG project funding. FWS has not given final clearance to use TWG funding. Mescalero Tribe has advanced approx. \$33K for the purchase of a new distribution truck. FWS will reimburse Mescalero for this purchase when the TWG funds are finally approved.

Mr. Montoya presented Joe Jojola (BIA) with the final/annual 638 report.

Mr. Paul Holmes brought up a question about how the Commission figures the cost of feed and transportation. After much discussion it was decided that Mike put together a very brief 1-page explanation of the calculations made to figure feed cost and how the end cost of a fish produced by the Commission compares to a fish from the private sector or even the USFWS.

- **BIA Update - Senate Directed Hatchery Assessment (Joe Jojola)**

The purpose of the Senate request is to determine current conditions at Tribal Fish Hatcheries with the intent of using this information for a funding request. However, Tribes need to supply this information (outlined by Mr. Jojola) by November 15th. Mr. Lawrence Cata (San Juan Pueblo) suggested the BIA send a letter to Tribal Leaders formally requesting that information. The Commission will follow that with a letter of support for the effort (completed 10-28-05).

- **USFWS Update (Jim Brooks/Chris Kitcheyan)**

Service committed to MOU including fish health certification for the MTFH. Also, Western Native Trout Initiative could use some tribal representation (Commission BOD will look into this). Other issues: tribes need to get together their management plans and submit them to the NM FRO office (talk to Chris about this).

- **Media Campaign Update (John Antonio)**

Brochures are completed (handed out samples) and S. Whiteman and J. White met and wrote tribal profiles. These were submitted to Amanda Moors for the website.

- **Other Business**

- Fundraising committee needs to be established (strategy to be discussed at Nov. 11th Executive Board Meeting)

- Norman Jojola briefed the group on the NAFW Foundation; independent transfer and re-organization is moving along and may be completed by Jan 06
- 501c3 submitted this week by M. Montoya (can take several years for final approval but we can get a conditional approval to operate as a non-profit in 6mo to 1 yr.-S. Atcity).
- Dale Hall letter of support discussed by B. Blazer. Needed to get letter out ASAP. Best chances of successful support for the Commission will be by someone we know and have a prior relationship with.

- **Tour of Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery**

Mike Torres lead the tour of the hatchery and we had an estimated 30 people attend that tour. Generally, everyone was very impressed (dumbfounded in some cases) at the success we have had with so little resources.

- **Concluded Thursday PM meeting at MTFH at 5:30 PM.**

Meeting Continuation – Friday 8:30AM

- **NAFWS Issues / SWTFC-NAFWS Cooperation (Butch Blazer)**

Butch started discussion on SWTFC coord. with NAFWS, esp. regarding hosting of the 06 conference

Mescalero Tribe has offered to host the conference, but Butch believes that NAFWS has not adequately followed through on that offer. An effort was made but it was not inclusive or well-timed.

There hasn't been enough participation from NAFWS in the SWTFC (including at this meeting), and Butch wants to get started in a good way for Mescalero's conference hosting.

Butch will advise NAFWS regional director of Mescalero's offer. 6-8 months will be needed for adequate planning of the conference. A planning committee is needed and it should be headed up by John Antonio.

John (SW NAFWS Treasurer) voiced concern about National office involvement in SW NAFWS and the fact that he doesn't get monthly statements on the accounts he is spending from. He only keeps cuff accounts and deposit slips but cannot reconcile without monthly statements. He keeps requesting these from the directors but has not received the statements.

Butch expressed more concern about NAFWS - FWS Western Fisheries Initiatives attempted to involve the National NAFWS but received no response. Also, with the Endangered Species Reauthorization, NAFWS should have advocated making Tribes eligible to receive Section 6 funding, but this didn't happen. HazMat and Law Enforcement training seem to be the only priorities of NAFWS.

- **Senate Appropriations Committee / BIA Request for Tribal Hatchery Needs (Joe Jojola)**

Joe summarized the request from the Senate Appropriations Committee for fish hatchery needs in Indian country. BIA is to develop a comprehensive report for the Committee.

Unfortunately, the SW region never does well with fish hatchery appropriations because of treaty commitments in the Great Lakes and northwest regions. Our hatcheries are not mitigation or treaty right hatcheries, but they do provide an economic resource. Mescalero support will be important, but there are other important priorities such as Navajo's facilities, and developing Cochiti's potential.

It is important that SWTFC support tribal requests in the southwest in order to obtain rehab and improvement dollars. This will take a strong lobbying effort in D.C..

Butch wants to be able to review and comment on the final draft before it is sent out, and to develop a lobbying strategy to push this forward. The report needs to be comprehensive and should address support of native species recovery programs, such as RGC and Gila trout.

A support letter from the Commission endorsing this BIA effort is being developed. Hopefully, funding will follow as a result of this effort. Deadline for submittal of the report to Senate Appropriations: November 15th.

- **Outside Funding Update**

Butch described the funding opportunity with the Nat'l. Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Native Fish Restoration Effort and the NM State Capital Outlay Program – no NFWF funding awards to SWTFC to report at this time.

Butch discussed an idea involving the National Congress of American Indians - they have not taken on too many resource issues. There is an opportunity for NCAI to tie into SWTFC / NAFWS / Bison CoOp / NTEC / Great Lakes and Columbia River Fish Commissions for advocacy on natural resource issues. Perhaps the groups can get together to gain the support of each other. How can we draw these groups together to provide a forum and a conduit for the Tribes? Butch is suggesting to invite the above to the table to obtain their support and lobbying credentials to make some big things happen.

Shenen provided a status of SWTFC's 501c3 application - Could take as much as a year to get our conditional status and as much as two years to receive final 501c3. She has received and reviewed the application information and sent it off to the tax attorneys.

Jim discussed potential of an SWTFC fund raising event – Maybe one can be developed in conjunction with an existing event, e.g., a fishing Derby in association with NAFWS Regional? A fundraising banquet that includes an auction for the Commission?

- **Concluded Friday AM meeting at 11:00 AM.**

Minutes taken by:

Jim White & Mike Montoya

(Steve Whiteman, Secretary-Treasurer, was absent)

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