



Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission

Meeting Minutes / October 29, 2004 / BIA SW Regional Office, Albuquerque, NM

Meeting convened by Joe Jojola and Butch Blazer at 9:00AM, Introductions
Bob Gartner (BIA – Washington DC) in attendance; will be filling in for Gary Rankel, who's retiring in March

Butch Blazer Opening Remarks / Agenda Overview

BIA's attention and recent funding support for SWTFC has been extremely important to SWTFC
Butch's trip to D.C. resulted in \$78,000 in year-end funding from BIA
Need to avoid similar 11th-hour funding crises in the future
SWTFC Executive Committee plans to meet later in November to further develop funding strategies
Butch expects that NA Fish & Wildlife Foundation will be an important funding source for us
FishPro's business plan has been finalized and is being reviewed by Mescalero Tribe
If o.k., plan will be submitted to EDA for obtaining needed renovation funds

Bob Gartner (BIA – D.C. Central Office)

Two-person staff; Bob and Gary Rankel
Office has chosen to 638-contract services directly with tribes rather than employ BIA biologists
Currently \$28M annual budget – all contracted to tribes, amount varies based on Congressional allocations
SWTFC may become a component of the program's annual base-budget – could be very important fund source
Bob recommends that SWTFC pursue BIA funding in July or August, if not earlier (esp. if new Administration)
Treaty off-reservation hunting & fishing rights protection / litigation support is biggest portion of budget (\$18M)
Fish Hatchery Operations (10 tribal hatcheries, mainly in Pacific NW) is another budget item (\$1.1M)
Fish Hatchery Maintenance program – Another account that SWTFC can consider
Tribal Mgmt & Development program – Various tribal conservation programs such as bison mgmt
SWTFC should consider these various programs for funding, esp. FH Operations and/or Tribal Mgmt.

Mike Montoya Update on Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery (MTFH) Operations

Reliable O&M funding continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing MTFH operation
Mike has been very impressed with generosity and support of other agencies/tribes, e.g., sharing of equipment
Mike has been experimenting with equipment/facilities to achieve optimum water chemistry and max. production
Currently, stockable fish are on-station; however, need to make sure fish are disease-free
USFWS has provided assistance in the form of disease testing (currently waiting on results)
Also need to ensure stocking destinations have acceptable conditions
Mike is striving to raise high-quality, disease-free fish
Only tribes that are contributing toward feed costs will get fish; Member tribes need to contact Mike re. fish orders
Mike has been improvising with fish distribution capabilities; new stocking tank (on trailer) has been developed
Distribution capability is limited at this time – 250 gal. tank
Mike feels that SWTFC has a critical need for USFWS grant funding for distribution equipment (i.e., TWG app)
SWTFC/MTFH expect to offer catchable trout at \$2/lb. at this time, NOT including transportation
Fish distribution assistance MAY be available through USFWS
Paul Holmes inquired about potential of contracting an SWTFC-selected fish distributor
Mike feels contracting distribution to private vendor might be an option – would need to research
SWTFC's QA/QC on purchased fish will end when fish are first loaded into private/tribal stocking vehicles
Paul Holmes suggested we should look into funding opportunities for stocking truck(s), in addition to our TWG app
Butch: Need more discussions with USFWS on partnering to meet tribal fish supply, distribution, and testing needs
Lynn Starnes: Suggested that an MOU/MOA be est. between SWTFC and USFWS to avoid year-to-year problems

Lynn Starnes (USFWS) - USFWS Funding Update, Working with SWTFC

USFWS trying to ensure immediate hatchery needs are met at MTFH
USFWS has been dealing with declining budgets while trying to maintain staffing levels
FY05 fishery program figures look much better than previous years (still need approval)

Previously proposed staffing cuts at WC/Alchesay NFH off-the-table – Now looking at two NEW positions planned
Increased staffing should improve production capability
WC/Alchesay assistance and cooperation with MTFH should be good in FY05
Lynn strongly believes an MOU needs to be developed, esp. addressing fish health standards/annual certification
May be able to reflect USFWS-SWTFC relationship in SWTFC Strategic Plan
Tribal fish management plans will be important for ensuring continued USFWS assistance
Lynn says that tribal assistance/support is Priority-1, above T&E (Dale Hall directive, according to Lynn)
Endangered species recovery could provide funding opportunities if incorporated into SWTFC work

Shenan Atcitty – Legislative Update / Fund-raising Strategies

Butch: Shenan was extremely important in securing FY05 BIA operational funding for SWTFC
Congress recessed presently; returns Nov. 16; expected to fast-track appropriations bills (including Interior)
Tribal letters of appreciation should be sent to BIA officials
Bob Gartner: Agrees that appreciation letter(s) for BIA funding would be helpful
Jicarilla, Mescalero, S. Ute sent SWTFC support letters requesting continued BIA support and funding
Strong support for SWTFC continues with Congressional, BIA, and USFWS reps in D.C.
NM non-profit status has been secured – Timeline for receiving Federal status is uncertain
Federal Tax-Exempt Status: 501c(3) paperwork is mostly complete, should be sent in by end of year
Receiving 501c(3) status will probably require approx. 1-year (+/-) of financial monitoring by IRS
May need to consider an accountant to setup account(s) and ensure proper record-keeping

Norman Jojola – Native American Fish & Wildlife Foundation Update

Butch: Foundation possesses funds that may be accessible and important to SWTFC
Re-organization with NAFWS has been underway (Tie between NAFWS and Foundation has been severed)
Foundation was officially “dissolved” in Sept 04; Foundation is now re-organized with same name
Asset distribution (after dissolving of old Foundation) – BOD voted to move all funds into new Foundation
Currently re-doing bylaws and submitting necessary 501c(3) paperwork for incorporating
Foundation expects to be operational again in Jan 05
Many private donors, supporters still interested in supporting Foundation
May be able to talk about specific SWTFC funding opportunities with Foundation early in 2005

Meeting adjourned for lunch at approx. 11:30AM

Meeting re-convened at 12:45PM

John Antonio – Update on Media Campaign

Offered brief overview of S. Ute grant and 3-pronged approach to media outreach effort
S. Ute funding for this project is being funneled through SW NAFWS due to pending non-profit status for SWTFC
John is providing cuff-account updates to BOD
\$10,000 to be utilized as follows: \$5,000 for video; \$2,500 for website; \$2,500 for brochure
Video production has included footage from Sandia, Isleta, and Mescalero
Final video should be approx. 5-6 minutes, including Mescalero dignitaries and SWTFC officials
Expecting website to be less than \$2,000, resulting in some savings for video effort
“Draft” website will be provided to BOD for review & approval
Hope to finish up entire media campaign in December 2004

Mike Montoya – Presented draft video, including statements from Mescalero President Mark Chino, Councilman Alfred LaPaz,

Ferris Palmer – V.P. of Mescalero Tribe

Tribes and Pueblos need to work together to supply fish needs
Mescalero committed to cooperation with other tribes and pueblos, including supply of fish from MTFH

Steve Whiteman – Non-profit Filing and Financial Status Update

Received recognition as NM Nonprofit Corporation on August 31st from NM Public Regulation Commission
In process of registering as a Charitable Organization through NM Attorney General’s office
Registration in NM required in order for SWTFC to accept charitable donations

Federal 501c(3) status still pending; see Shenan Atcitty update

Offered summary of 3 funds utilized/benefiting SWTFC:

1. Mescalero BIA-638 Contract – FY05 at \$78K, pays Exec. Dir. salary, travel, and other misc. expenses
2. S. Ute Grant Funds (Media project @ \$10K) – through SW NAFWS due to our pending 501c3 status
3. SWTFC “Services” Account – Tribal fees (income) and expenditures for trout feed needed at MTFH.

The Services Account is a Free Checking Account opened by BOD on May 14 @ Wells Fargo in Albuquerque
Services Account activity between May and October, 2004 is as follows:

<u>DEP / WDL</u>	<u>Note</u>
+ \$100.00	Account opened
+ \$8,392.00	Feed deposits from Sandia, Jicarilla, Mescalero, Isleta
- \$3,311.95	Feed payments to Nelson and Sons, Inc.
\$5,180.05	BALANCE AS OF 10/28/04

Invoices, monthly statements, and DEPs by tribe are available to SWTFC participants upon request, see Steve

Jim White – Tribal Membership Update

Hope to focus more effort on increasing membership this winter

SWTFC officials prepared to meet with Tribes, provide resolutions

Various Reps - Closing Remarks

Mike needs tribal egg requests by end of November

Tribes currently ordering fish: Laguna, San Juan, Sandia, Mescalero, Isleta, Jicarilla, Southern Ute

MTFH does not have capacity to meet all demand; BOD needs to discuss allocation issues

John Antonio recommends submitting TWG application again for SWTFC fish distribution

Butch inquired about SWTFC application through NM for PR-DJ funding; John says this is feasible

Joe advised that NEPA compliance may be needed for use of 638-funds to raise/distribute fish from MTFH

EPA requirements for hatchery discharge needs to be considered (Tribal 401 permitting authority possible?)

Question: Is NEPA applicable to raising AND distribution of fish from MTFH? (consider uses of our 638 funding)

Mike suggests that NEPA compliance (via Cat. Exclusion) would be good from a practical, sound mgmt. standpoint

Shenan is concerned about applicability of NEPA and legal ramifications. Not necessarily fed. funding-dependent

Mike, Joe, Shenan to research potential NEPA/EPA requirements for SWTFC/MTFH stocking fish on tribal lands

Full Commission Meeting adjourned at 2:00PM

SWTFC Board of Directors Meeting / Convened at 2:05PM

Reviewed non-profit registration application to be submitted to New Mexico Attorney General’s office

Mike to submit application forms for NM registration

Shenan to look into obtaining an EIN# for SWTFC

Discussed draft SWTFC strategic plan contents, approach, issues, challenges

Plan is a component of the BIA 638 final report; has been submitted to fulfill 638 reporting requirements

Strategic plan needs further development, refinement – To be addressed in Nov. BOD work session

SWTFC should plan on ANA funding application in April 2005

Nov. 18 BOD meeting to start at 9:00AM, continue into Nov. 19, at BIA SW Regional Office

Meeting adjourned at 3:00PM

Minutes taken by:

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