



# Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission

Quarterly Meeting / BIA SW Regional Office – Albuquerque, NM / Nov. 3, 2006

**Meeting Convened at 9:20AM**

## **Membership Attendance (Tribe / Rep)**

- |                             |                                      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Mescalero Apache Tribe   | Butch Blazer (Chairman)              |
| 2. Pyramid Lake Tribe       | Albert John (Vice-Chairman)          |
| 3. Southern Ute Tribe       | Steve Whiteman (Secretary-Treasurer) |
| 4. Santa Clara Pueblo       | Mel Tafoya                           |
| 5. Navajo Nation            | Jeff Cole                            |
| 6. Sandia Pueblo            | Paul Holmes                          |
| 7. Laguna Pueblo            | Adrienne Tiller                      |
| 8. Picuris Pueblo           | Francine Yazza                       |
| 9. Isleta Pueblo            | Jackie Keryte                        |
| 10. Zuni Pueblo             | not present                          |
| 11. Cochiti Pueblo          | not present                          |
| 12. Okay Owingeh            | not present                          |
| 13. Northern Ute Tribe      | not present                          |
| 14. Jicarilla Apache Nation | not present                          |
| 15. San Carlos Apache Tribe | not present                          |

## **Other Guests:**

Acoma Pueblo – Norman Torvio (sp?)  
BIA / SW Regional Office – Joe Jojola  
BIA / Southern Pueblos Agency - Lawrence Abeita  
BIA / Northern Pueblos Agency – Norman Jojola  
BIA / Mescalero Agency – Jennifer Smith  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – John Antonio, Chris Kitcheyan, Bernard Lujan  
Student Conservation Association – Jennifer Groves  
Holland & Knight – Shenan Atcitty

## **Approval of past minutes / Financial Status (Steve Whiteman)**

As per usual procedure, Steve presented past meeting minutes for consideration and approval  
The past minutes, from August 3<sup>rd</sup> quarterly meeting at Mescalero NM, were emailed out for review/comment  
No substantive changes were brought to Steve's attention by email or at this meeting  
Mel Tafoya motioned to approve the August 3<sup>rd</sup> minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Paul Holmes, Minutes approved by consensus

Steve also gave the financial status, with a brief explanation of the "Service Account", balances, and activity  
Steve provided a handout showing account activity since the last meeting and a summary

Previous Balance (8/3/06): **\$81,902.44**

Total Revenue: **\$25,528.50**

Total Expenses: **\$31,460.25**

Ending Balance (10/2/06): **\$75,970.69**

Steve pointed out that, due to a spreadsheet formula error, the previous reported ending balance was \$5,000 short  
Steve went through all bank records and the spreadsheet and located the formula error

All funds were reconciled with bank statements and are accounted for

Steve also indicated that the SWTFC is separating its funds from Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery( MTFH) O&M  
MTFH is now under mgmt of Mescalero Apache Tribe (MAT) - fish rearing expenses/revenues now belong to MAT  
When tribes purchase fish from MTFH, they're buying from Mescalero directly now, no longer SWTFC

SWTFC tribes still receive priority at MTFH, and there is no indication of MAT plans for commercial pricing

The funds retained by SWTFC - \$20,623.05 – consist mostly of donations from tribes and the 2006 NAFWS conf.

The SWTFC Executive Committee earlier approved the purchase of a \$25K bank CD using all of the SWTFC funds

The \$4,376.95 shortage was carried using MTFH funds – to be paid back through future SWTFC fundraising  
Steve's handout showed a detailed breakdown of the Commission fund sources, as well as membership dues paid  
The handout showed that most member tribes, but not all, have paid their annual \$100 membership fee  
Butch, Paul, and John recommended that dues be collected from all to ensure fairness and for legal reasons  
Mike indicated a letter will be sent out right away requesting dues payment from appropriate tribes

#### **Executive Officer (Mike Montoya)**

All fish at presently on-station at the hatchery are available on a first-come, first-serve basis to SWTFC members  
Mike is working on a funding proposal to NFWF from MAT for continuing the RGC broodstock project at MTFH  
The NFWF grant would fund a RGC restoration project on Ruidoso River on MAT lands  
The project is planned entirely on MAT lands, but has much local support  
Mike is also pursuing NM capital outlay funds (on behalf of MAT) for spring development at MTFH  
At Butch's request, Mike gave an update on his employment status with MAT  
Mike indicates his salary is currently being paid by MAT – not the 638 contract for the SWTFC Executive Director  
MAT still needs to set its FY07 budget – hopefully to include a fish hatchery manager!  
Paul asked about status of SWTFC Executive Director position  
Mike pointed out that – although now an MAT employee – he's continuing on as a “volunteer” Executive Director

#### **Native American Fisheries Fellows Program (Mike Montoya)**

Pat Durham (FWS – D.C.) has worked to develop this training program on national fisheries issues  
Program is currently only in the conceptual phase – no approved funding yet  
Concept is to bring interested NA fisheries personnel to national training center, expose to national issues  
Program should be outstanding opportunity to develop professional skills of tribal fisheries personnel  
Mike will continue to coordinate with Pat, as needed, in development of the program

#### **Chairman Update (Butch Blazer)**

Regarding the RGC project, Butch stated we need to further investigate the NMGF position on this effort  
Butch requested the assistance of Chris Kitcheyan (FWS) on RGC issues  
Butch briefly discussed educational opportunities for youth at MTFH and possibly other reservations  
Funding for youth education programs is available through State of NM, Youth Conservation Corp  
Wendy Kent is Director of NM's YCC program – she can be approached with inquiries about funding support  
Tribes should contact Butch for more information about access to YCC program resources  
Butch wants to convene Exec. Comm. and other interested participants for modification to SWTFC Strategic Plan  
Butch had to leave for another meeting at approx. 1:40PM

#### **Legislative Update (Shenan Atcitty)**

There is limited activity in D.C. right now due to current Congressional elections in process  
Election results could directly impact passage of current pending legislation  
If Democrats take control, expect federal FY07 budgets to be maintained at FY06 levels – then changes in FY08  
Federal Fish & Wildlife appropriations are presently in “limbo”  
Still strong support for SWTFC from Congressional delegations  
If Democrats take control -

Congressman Norm Dicks would be House lead on Interior appropriations

Senator Byron Dorgan will be Senate lead on Interior appropriations

Also, Senator Harry Reid (NV) – a possible strong ally to tribes - may become Senate leader

Domenici no longer a factor on Interior appropriations due to personal health issues

MAT President Chino has requested \$50k (each) from BIA and FWS to support SWTFC

Shenan recommends continued efforts with agency year-end funding requests

Paul expressed concern about direction and progress of Commission

Lack of funding was identified as the key challenge preventing us from continuing on-track

Butch suggested that an update and modification of the Strategic Plan early in 2007 will be needed

The results of the Federal elections may be an important indicator of funding opportunities for us

Shenan provided an update on the fee-to-trust conversion for a Jicarilla-owned ranch with RGC populations

The new tribal trust status will eliminate State jurisdictional control over the RGC resource

#### **FWS Update (Chris Kitcheyan)**

Chris discussed ongoing fish stocking activities on Tribal lands

Chris needs to have tribal fish stocking changes communicated promptly to avoid confusion at delivery time

Largemouth bass will be coming in soon for Zuni and perhaps Acoma (depending on Acomita Lake conditions)  
Catfish stocks have been hit in the past by a parasite at FWS hatcheries  
The smaller the catfish size at stocking (e.g. 9"), the less risk of loss to parasites  
FWS wants feedback from Tribes on whether the smaller size is acceptable –

Take full count of smaller fish VS. wait for larger sizes but potentially reduced numbers... any comments?  
Chris notified tribes of Partners for Wildlife opp. – Proposal deadline is Jan 19. Focus is on habitat restoration work  
Chris re-iterated importance of getting Tribal fisheries management plans prepared  
Mgmt plans are needed to help FWS justify allocations of fish to tribes  
MTFH also needs to have a plan prepared for FWS  
Chris is working with BIA to assist tribes with updating mgmt plans  
Chris estimates approximately 12 updated plans are needed  
Paul suggested that plans are difficult to prepare because what actually happens is dictated by what FWS supplies  
Chris indicates it's important to identify specific goals and objectives in order to have something to work toward  
Butch pointed out that having a plan to follow leads to successes and justification for even more resources  
Chris suggested that a tribe's lack of a fisheries mgmt plan COULD jeopardize future fish allocations for that tribe!  
John suggested that Chris develop a workshop for tribes on how to develop plans, with support from SWTFC  
Chris agrees with this and also wants to hold a workshop on creel census/data for tribal fisheries managers  
FWS (national fisheries program) is in process of reviewing regional proposals for project funding  
FWS SW Regional proposals include Gila trout work and Native fish restoration projects  
Chris notified membership about a new RGC workgroup to protect/conserv RGC  
Participants in group include USFS, FWS, NMGF, TU, CDOW  
The RGC group would very much like to work with tribal partners on implementing projects  
Chris emphasized importance of tribal / SWTFC planning for upcoming RGC group meeting with NMGF  
The Group may be a strong ally to tribes and help in confronting NMGF with sovereignty concerns  
Steve, and perhaps others, will plan to attend the RGC workgroup meeting (waiting on specific location/date)  
Albert discussed PLP native fish restoration efforts and issues w/ State of Nevada; possible similarities with NM

#### **TWG – TLIP Update (John Antonio)**

John gave an update on the FWS' Tribal Wildlife Grants (TWG) and Tribal Landowner Incentive Program (TLIP)  
The 5<sup>th</sup> Round of the grant program is now underway; have already started distribution of FY07 announcements  
Grant writing workshops are planned for Tues Nov 28 at BIA Regional Office in Albuquerque; also in AZ and OK  
Written notices to be sent to tribes regarding the grant programs and workshops  
SW region is extremely active and competitive with TWG and TLIP grant proposals  
A total of 30 grant-funded projects, estimated at \$6 million in value, are currently active in the SW region  
Max for a TWG proposal has been lowered to \$200k, and \$120K for TLIP. Goal is to expand participation.

**[ Lunch Break at 12:00PM – Reconvened at 1:20PM ]**

#### **Presentation on Student Conservation Association (SCA) (Jennifer Groves)**

Jennifer offered a PowerPoint discussing the work-education goals of SCA and her involvement at MTFH  
At MTFH, she helps Mike with day-to-day operations of the hatchery  
Activities include water quality monitoring, feeding, cleaning tank houses and raceways, spring maintenance, fish  
grading and sampling, deliveries, and community education/outreach  
Mike and Jennifer are planning to soon start mentoring efforts with local high school students  
Information is available over the Internet for interested students and prospective sponsors  
Biggest challenge is for sponsors to provide housing; A student stipend is provided by SCA

#### **NAFWS Conference Planning Update (Albert John)**

Albert offered a brief introduction of himself and fisheries work at Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe  
PLPT will be hosting the 2007 NAFWS National Conference in Reno, NV – May 20-24  
Draft agenda is currently in the works; As usual, conference planning meetings will be ongoing – next one in Dec.  
Conference announcements/invitations expected to go out in November 2006

#### **BIA Update (Joe Jojola)**

Joe contacted Bob Gardner (BIA-D.C.) re. SWTFC's hatchery maintenance needs report – still under review by DOI  
Hatchery maintenance funding RFPs to go out this month (Nov 06) – Joe encourages tribal participation  
Available funds presently unknown, but generally fairly limited. Requests shouldn't exceed \$10K  
Arch Wells (BIA-D.C.) to retire soon; Arch has been very supportive of SWTFC  
May be timely for a funding request to BIA-D.C. before Arch leaves

BIA SW Regional continues to support SWTFC and will pursue federal funding opportunities where possible  
BIA FY07 funding presently doesn't appear strong, "but don't give up!"

**Fundraising Committee Update (Jeff Cole)**

Committee consists of several long-time SWTFC participants; several meetings held already  
A main goal is to identify "champions" at each tribe to help generate tribal support at respective tribes  
Would like to incorporate SWTFC fundraising efforts through tribal events and activities  
Mike wants to promote exchange of tribal/commission patches  
Paul suggests manning a SWTFC booth at a local, upcoming hunting/fishing show – possible raffle opportunity?

**Meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM**

**Next meeting: January 2007 (Date/Location to be determined)**

**Meeting Minutes taken by:**

Steve Whiteman, Secretary-Treasurer  
Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission  
[swhitema@southern-ute.nsn.us](mailto:swhitema@southern-ute.nsn.us)