



Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission

Quarterly Meeting / BIA Southwest Regional Office – ABQ / December 7th 2016

Meeting Convened at 9:05 AM

Membership Attendance (Tribe / Rep)

1. Jicarilla Apache Nation	Jacob Mazzone (Chairman)
2. Laguna Pueblo	Adam Ringia (Vice-Chairman)
3. Southern Ute Tribe	Steve Whiteman (Secretary-Treasurer)
4. Mescalero Apache Tribe	Shelley Battiest
5. Ohkay Owingeh	Naomi Archuleta
6. Cochiti Pueblo	Kai-t Blue-Sky
7. Navajo Nation	Glenn Selby
8. Zuni Pueblo	Nelson Luna
9. Sandia Pueblo	Timothy Smith
10. Taos Pueblo	Not present
11. Isleta Pueblo	Not present
12. Picuris Pueblo	Not present
13. Nambe Pueblo	Not present
14. Santa Clara Pueblo	Not present
15. San Ildefonso Pueblo	Not present
16. Ute Tribe (U&O)	Not present
17. San Carlos Apache Tribe	Not present
18. Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe	Not present

Other Attendees:

Stuart Leon, SWTFC Executive Director
Joe Early, USFWS Region 2
Pete Stine, USFWS (retired)
Yvette Paroz, USFS Region 3 Fisheries
Joe Jojola, USBIA Southwest Regional Office
Norman Jojola, USBIA Northern Pueblos Agency
Carlos Trujillo, Isleta Pueblo
Noah Kaniatobe, Ohkay Owingeh
Raymond Lucero, Laguna Pueblo
Tyner Cervantes, Mescalero Apache Conservation
Jacob Mendez, Mescalero Apache Conservation
Tori Marden, Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery
John Salazar, Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery
Jessica Rodriguez, Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery
Houston Fatty, Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery
Earl Conway, New Mexico BASS Nation

Welcome / Opening Comments (Stuart Leon)

Welcome group, introduction of guests, and role call

U.S. Forest Service Update (Yvette Paroz)

Yvette spoke to the group first due to time constraints and having to leave early
Yvette addressed the SWTFC-USFS partnership on youth programming on tribal/USFS lands
We've had good successes with youth programs at White Mountain Apache and Mescalero
Yvette has been awarded \$40K for FY17 native youth programming
Yvette would like to hear which tribes are interested in partnerships for FY17
There appears to be interest at Taos, San Carlos, Southern Ute, but other tribes are encouraged to apply also

USFS hopes to partner with SW Conservation Corp for hiring/supervision of youth
 Hiring can be done by the Tribe OR SWCC – whichever is preferred and easiest
 According to Earl (NM BASS Nation rep), the BLM is also interested in partnering on youth programming

Secretary / Treasurer Report (Steve Whiteman)

Steve presented the minutes from the Aug 8 meeting; no edits were requested
 The group is unable to approve the past minutes due to lack of quorum at the moment.
 The Aug 8 and current minutes will be presented at next meeting for approval
 Steve provided the financial report for the SWTFC Discretionary, Feed/Fuel, and Investment accounts

	Discretionary Fund	Feed & Fuel Account		Investment Account
Last reported Balance (as of 8/1/16)	\$4,242.51	\$197,705.83	Fund Value on 7/29/16	\$533,610.95
Period Revenues	\$76,454.62	\$31,263.40	Fund Value on 11/25/16	\$530,990.03
Period Expenses	\$56,244.14	\$63,013.07	Net Change	[\$2,620.92]
Ending Balance (as of 12/7/16)	\$24,452.99	\$165,952.94		

In addition to reporting the account activities, Steve provided several additional financial updates, including:

- New checking account will be setup exclusively to manage SWTFC grant funds
- The SWTFC’s 2015 tax filing was recently submitted per extended deadline
- Per our tax preparer recommendation, we will soon start Stuart as SWTFC employee w/tax withholdings

Chairman’s Report (Jacob Mazzone)

No news to report

Vice-Chairman’s Report (Adam Ringia)

Adam commented on the recent USFWS/tribes meeting – BKD was a major topic
 Adam commented that we need to discuss the need/opportunity to raise prices on fish sold at MTFH
 We can generate additional revenue that is much needed, yet still keep prices to tribes well under market prices
 A price increase would help cover investment in hatchery improvements, such as new raceway shade structures
 Receiving BKD-clear status may be an opportune time to implement a price increase
 We need feedback from member tribes – especially those purchasing MTFH fish – on possible price increases
 Several tribal reps in the group indicated willingness to explore/implement price increases for MTFH fish
 Tim asked about market prices; they vary depending on species and size and delivery location
 Commercial hatchery costs (market) are significantly higher than MTFH cost of \$2.35/lb
 Several tribal reps commented that they didn’t think a modest price increase would be a problem for purchasing
 Tyner commented that there is also a growing market demand (by non-Indian entities) for trout purchasing
 The group concurred that tribal needs must be satisfied first, then potentially consider non-Indian sales
 Pete commented that there are other aquatic-related products that could possibly be marketed for revenue generation
 Adam indicated that, based on a simple inflation calculation since MTFH re-opening, \$3.16/lb. would be current rate

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – Region 2 Update (Joe Early)

Joe doesn’t anticipate any FWS budget increases, so increases to TWG funding are unlikely
 There is no budget currently available to report on, so no grant-related dates have been set yet
 Joe expects to host three Eagle Summits in FWS Region 2 this summer (2017) in ABQ, PHX, OK City
 Joe indicates that any tribal issues, questions, concerns related to eagles can be agendaized, discussed at the summits
 No dates for the eagle summits are set yet; hope to schedule in conjunction with other tribal organization meetings
 A recent case in TX is likely leading to changes in who can apply for eagle feathers/parts from the repository

U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs Update (Joe Jojola)

Joe indicates RFPs were recently sent to tribes for BIA grant programs
 Similar to FWS, the grant budgets are not set yet for the different grant programs, so information is tentative

Expected BIA FY17 grant budgets (nation-wide) are as follows:

- Endangered Species, \$2.4M
- Invasive Species, \$3M
- Youth Programs, \$1M
- Hatchery Maintenance, \$6M

January 16th is the stated deadline for grant proposals; however, there will be some flexibility due to holiday
Future Climate Change funding is uncertain with new administration, but likely to have some allocation for FY17
Joe commented that projects focused more on climate change vulnerabilities/planning will be looked at favorably
Adam commented that timing of the BIA grant programs is difficult due to schedules of tribal government changes
A request was made for BIA to disclose awarded projects; however, BIA keeps that more or less confidential

New Mexico B.A.S.S. Nation Update (Earl Conway)

Earl is with NM B.A.S.S. Nation – a non-profit organization of about 500 members
BASS is interested in developing partnerships, including with tribes. He offers his fisheries expertise and assistance
Examples of successful collaborations are at: Roswell, Elephant Butte, Escondido, Morgan Lake
Earl says BASS is interested in tackling tough issues facing fisheries, especially habitat improvement work in lakes
BASS has experimented with many experimental approaches to habitat improvements - with both success and fails
Earl commented that BASS is prepared to explore matching-funds opportunities with its partners
Earl invites tribes to contact him with any interest in partnership projects

Native American Fish & Wildlife Society Update (Norman Jojola)

The 2016 Southwest Regional Conference at Twin Arrows (Navajo Nation) went very well
The Youth Practicum (held at Sandia) was also a good success
The next Southwest Regional Conference will be hosted by Mescalero Apache Tribe – August 8th through 10th 2017
Contact Norman if interested in serving on the Conference planning committee
Norman hopes to have the draft agenda released early
Youth Practicum is again planned, June 19th through 23rd. Again considering Rainbow Village (Sandia) to host.
Norman invites mentors and instructors for the Practicum to contact him; Room will be made on the agenda
Wildlife Management Short Course – CSU Fort Collins, CO in March 2017. Notices will be emailed out.
The 2017 NAFWS National Conference will be in May in Rapid City, South Dakota

Executive Director's Report (Stuart Leon)

Stuart gave a report on recent improvements to MTFH
New shade structures will protect against disease and reduce: algae, maintenance, predation, fish stress
Shade cloth has been received already; frame-structures are currently being delivered
Stuart commented that there is opportunity for expansion with additional shade structures and circular tanks
Tyner and staff have done an outstanding job of cleaning up all the MTFH facilities
Stuart would like to see a future meeting held at Mescalero Tribe; will enable SWTFC members to see MTFH
SWTFC looks at MTFH shade structure improvements as a big success
Stuart presented Tyner with a \$17,000 check for staffing/youth programming at Mescalero/MTFH (USFWS grant)
Funding has carried over from last year for youth programming at Zuni Pueblo
Funding is also available for youth programming at Southern Ute, White Mountain Apache, and others
BIA, USFS, and USFWS have been excellent partners in funding native youth programming
Joe commented that additional college-level native youth funding is available through BIA's Pathways program
Stuart indicates that SWTFC has discussed and would like to pursue a college scholarship program for youth

SWTFC-USFWS Fish Health Workshop Update (Stuart Leon)

Stuart updated the group on a recent decision by USFWS (Washington DC-level) and NCTC to support a new effort
SWTFC will co-sponsor a 2-day workshop in 2017 on fish health issues for tribes in the southwest
If this workshop is successful, then USFWS hopes to replicate it across the entire country
Our recent inter-agency BKD meeting was a great example of the importance of open dialog on fish health issues
Planning meetings for the workshop will be held early in 2017
Hoping to host workshop in Mescalero, NM; estimated timeframe of workshop is April or May 2017
USFWS fish health experts recently visited MTFH and advised staff on important bio-security measures
This was a very successful collaboration between USFWS and MTFH staff on improving MTFH operations
Stuart encourages MTFH staff to put the bio-security measures in-writing; Stuart offers his assistance

BKD-Suspect Fish Stocking Update (Stuart Leon)

Stuart asked Glenn Selby about status of USFWS bringing BKD suspect fish into suitable, isolated Navajo lakes
Glenn expressed frustration with both USFWS and State of NM not responding promptly to Navajo stocking needs
Jacob indicated that Jicarilla also received USFWS suspect fish, but required an ESA categorical exclusion
Jacob is disappointed that FWS staff had to “jump through hoops” to stock these fish; shouldn’t be this way
Jacob is also disappointed with State of New Mexico intransigence on stocking of BKD suspect fish
There was also concern expressed about USFWS failure to properly consult with tribes on planned meetings
USFWS doesn’t seem to hold tribes in the same sovereign position/light as it does states

MTFH Update (Tyner Cervantes & Tori Marden)

Tyner indicates that, due to prior lack of maintenance, we’ve had major maintenance issues with stocking truck
Engine re-build is underway with a total estimated cost of \$12K
Other MTFH hatchery trucks are being looked at for maintenance needs
If SWTFC has access to other reliable vehicles that could be assigned to MTFH, that could help
Tory gave a report on MTFH stocking activities (hand-out provided)
Tribal fish purchasers included Sandia and Mescalero
The blue heron problem continues; problem will be moot when shade structures are erected
Current fish on-station are doing well; no outward signs of disease or problems
Next disease testing is scheduled for February 2017
Hatchery status is currently “BKD+”; after Feb testing, should be “Suspect” status
Staffing level at the hatchery is strong; various trainings underway
Current customer base includes: Mescalero, Sandia, Isleta. Laguna still on-hold pending complete BKD resolution
Jacob indicated that new research is underway by USFWS to better understand BKD in the wild
Shelley indicates that disease awareness/prevention at MTFH is greatly improved over recent years

Open Discussion

Kai-t offered a number of suggestions to SWTFC, including:

- consider a new update to its Strategic Plan (long overdue), which will help communicate our mission
- approach EPA as a potential funding partner from a water quality perspective
- provide scholarship support for training/education (e.g., fish disease, spawning, etc.)
- consider supporting native fish restoration efforts

Tim mentioned his plans to start an inter-tribal water quality working group for the southwest

Kai-t questioned the separation of SWTFC from the Mescalero Tribe and how benefits extend to all members

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 PM

Tentative Next Meeting:

*SWTFC Annual BOD Meeting – April/May 2017
Mescalero Apache Tribe - Inn of Mountain Gods*

Meeting Minutes taken by:

Steve Whiteman, Secretary-Treasurer
Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission
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