



SOUTHWEST TRIBAL FISHERIES COMMISSION

STRATEGIC PLAN

October 1, 2018 - September 30, 2023



Message from the Chairman

As the Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission enters its 12th year as a non-profit entity, it is only fitting that we have a new streamlined Strategic Plan to guide us through the next five years. There have been tremendous changes in capacity and technology over the last decade, and the need for a responsive, more transparent, and better organized Commission has become critical. This new Strategic Plan focuses on developing the Commission's strengths.

Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery (MTFH) remains the heart of the Commission, as it allows us to provide quality sportfish to our member tribes at significantly reduced cost - and provides another line of defense if a catastrophe occurs with regular fish deliveries from other sources. As such, maintaining the mutually beneficial relationship between the MTFH and the SWTFC is paramount to our success.

The Commission serves as a central meeting space for the tribes, governments, and non-governmental organizations that conduct regional fisheries and watershed conservation work. The SWTFC will build upon this role and assist all parties in making intelligent and beneficial decisions on critical issues.

Through our workshops and trainings, as well as our work with tribal youth, we will continue to develop our members' capacity for self-determined fisheries and watershed management with the end goal being the conservation and improvement of recreational and native fisheries that support Indian sovereignty on tribal and treaty lands throughout the region.

To successfully accomplish all of these goals, the Commission itself needs to present a clear unified message that best serves native communities in the Southwest and their respective fisheries.

It is my hope and dream that over the next five years, the Commission will meet and exceed its own expectations of this strategic plan and build on its successes.

Jacob A. Mazzone

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission (SWTFC) was formed in April 2002 primarily in response to the closure of the Mescalero National Fish Hatchery (NFH) and the chronic erosion of funding and maintenance at the Alchesay and Williams Creek NFH complex located on the White Mountain Apache tribal lands in Arizona. Unlike other fisheries commissions focused on fulfillment of federal treaty obligations, such as the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Commission, the SWTFC is a coalition of tribes in the southwest which seeks to assist tribal fisheries programs by providing technical skills and support needed to move good ideas and projects from the conceptual phase to reality.

Fishery resources are culturally and economically important to Southwestern Tribes. Although diverse in terms of their actual resources and needs, all SWTFC member Tribes share a common goal of moving toward self-determination and self-sufficiency through development or enhancement of sustainable recreational and native fisheries. Some fisheries programs are well developed while others need support or technical resources to realize their potential. Tribes often have a specific vision of their fisheries management but need additional support and technical assistance to achieve that vision. All are committed to responsible and professional stewardship of these resources.

With a collective desire to succeed as a united coalition, the SWTFC has seized on opportunities, overcome challenges, and built trust among its member Tribes, as well as with several Federal, State, and non-governmental organizations. In the nearly fifteen years since its inception, the organization has progressed from relative anonymity to a recognized and respected voice for tribal fishery and natural resource issues facing southwestern tribes.

II. MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

Since its inception, the mission of the SWTFC has been to advance tribal self-determination and tribal stewardship of fisheries resources through the professional development and support of tribal resource management programs.

Our vision is to provide the technical skills and support needed to move individual tribal fisheries programs and projects from the conceptual phase to reality by assisting tribes with creating and facilitating inter-governmental and non-governmental partnerships, providing advocacy needed to obtain funding and support, and providing tangible services in the form of technical assistance and equipment.

III. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Maintain Support for Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery



Objective 1.1 Invest in necessary infrastructure to expand production and maintain quality control

Objective 1.2 Continue to seek hatchery maintenance funding via 638 contract and other mechanisms

Objective 1.3 Commission a report on the economic impacts of the MTFH

Objective 1.4 Explore opportunities for native species production and conservation support

Goal 2: Promote Inter-governmental and Non-governmental partnerships

Objective 2.1 Enhance existing partnerships with U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Native American Fish and Wildlife Society, American Fisheries Society, Trout Unlimited, B.A.S.S., Bass Pro Shops, and similar organizations.



Objective 2.2 Explore potential partnerships with the states of Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado.

Goal 3: Support Recreational and Native Fisheries Management on Tribal Lands

Objective 3.1 Assist member Tribes with development and implementation of fisheries management plans.



Goal 4: Engage Native Youth in Natural Resource Conservation and Education Activities



Objective 4.1 Provide coordination and support for at least two youth programs each year.

Objective 4.2 Link interested youth with faculty and programs at colleges, universities, and post-secondary technical schools in the Southwest.

Objective 4.3 Provide access to scholarships for youth enrolled at post-secondary education institutions.

Objective 4.4 Establish a mentoring program among member Tribes for youth interested in natural resource management.

Goal 5: Sponsor Workshops and Advanced Tribal Trainings

Objective 5.1 Plan, coordinate, and host a 2-3 day workshop each year on contemporary natural resource issues

Objective 5.2 Coordinate with the FWS National Conservation Training Center

Goal 6: Provide for the Commission’s Sound Administration and Conduct of Business

Objective 6.1 Maintain transparency and accountability in all matters of Commission administration

Objective 6.2 Ensure proper financial management and reporting, non-profit status, and tax filings

Objective 6.3 Improve communications and presence using various media tools

Objective 6.4 Manage and expand the Commission membership for active tribal participation and engagement

IV. MOVING FORWARD

The unique strength of the SWTFC lies in its ability to bring together tribes with diverse fisheries resources, people, skills, fisheries programs, and geographic landscapes to provide a unified voice for better management of fisheries resources on their respective lands. Additional strengths include:

- Political sovereignty of Native American lands create unique opportunities to partner with Federal, State, and Private groups to achieve shared goals such as improving fisheries management and conservation.
- Providing economic benefit to tribes and surrounding regions through successful tribal fisheries programs.
- Building tribal fisheries programs encourages professional development of staff, improved resource management, and enhanced sovereignty.
- The ability to create a network of tribally operated fish production facilities across the southwest

All SWTFC members share a common goal to increase the capacity of tribes to fulfill their self-determination and self-sufficiency goals. Federal agencies are partners in this process because of their trust responsibilities to tribes. States and non-governmental organizations also have an interest in seeing tribes become self-sufficient. We can work as partners to achieve common goals with the SWTFC providing a valuable link between agencies (both governmental and non-governmental) and tribes.