



# Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission

Quarterly Meeting / BIA Southwest Regional Office – ABQ / December 7<sup>th</sup> 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

	<b>Discretionary Fund</b>	<b>Feed &amp; Fuel Account</b>		<b>Investment Account</b>
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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> through 23<sup>rd</sup>. 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  
[swhitema@southernute-nsn.gov](mailto:swhitema@southernute-nsn.gov)