

From The Chair



Jacob actually does fish....Un-named Lake, Southwest Colorado.

I'm looking at my *To Do List*. If you have never been in my office, the list sits right in front of the keyboard and to the left of a pile of papers that are supposedly very important. I'm pretty sure the first three items on the list will never be accomplished, the middle items are a strong "probably possible," and at the bottom of the list are the super low hanging fruit so I can mark some stuff off every once in a while. I also have a colorful list of projects for the summer interns, some tasks requiring supervision and others where supervision is highly recommended.

It seems no matter how efficiently I complete projects, tasks and my other duties as assigned, the list remains exactly one legal page long. Most of the notes I take for any given task have several exaggerated question marks. The doodling is equivalent to me throwing my arms toward the sky and screaming for divine intervention. I'm not sure if it is the heat of the caustic drought, but staying on top of this list has been more difficult than usual.

As tribal natural resource managers, we are asked to wear many hats and regularly convey complex information to a diverse range of audiences. Trying to explain the severity of this year's drought to leadership and general community members has been draining to say the least. There is, however, a silver lining. By conveying accurate and data-driven information, folks are learning more about their environment than they knew before and, in turn, are making more environmentally motivated choices.

With the constant inundation of "fake news" and social media trends involving less-than-truthful memes, people seem hesitant when presented with unbiased information, even from "trusted sources" (like the neighborhood fish biologist). As professionals, a commitment to unbiased information is key to building the required trust of our constituency. It is this trust that will allow us to make difficult choices during trying times with the support and understanding of many.

Every moment is a teachable moment and we need to seize the opportunity in each moment to teach. I have recently added "teach everyone who enters the office one thing about freshwater ecology" to the *To Do List*. It's near the top of the list and, therefore, is unlikely to ever be considered "complete." I guess that is the point. We should never be done trying to help inform people that the fish, though silent, have much to teach us.

So, despite every effort to inform the UPS driver about native fish species spawning behavior this morning, the *To Do List* work carries on.

Jacob Mazzone

Chairman Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission

MTFH Staff Focuses Attention on Overdue Maintenance Tasks



Infrastructure at the nearly 60-year-old Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery (MTFH) requires significant investment in time and funding to maintain safe and proper working conditions. MTFH staff is constantly challenged to preserve and enhance real property assets so that the assets can be used to successfully produce rainbow trout. Whether the maintenance is preventive, recurring, or corrective in nature, there is always a project requiring attention.

Occasionally, assets become worn out and require renewal or replacement. This was the case this spring, when the aging packed column aerators in the tank house were replaced. The existing columns had become covered with slime and algae over the years, and their reduced reliability, as well as unsightly appearance, called for replacement. The new columns will be effective in helping to increase the oxygen content of water delivered to each rearing unit to near 100% saturation, while reducing nitrogen gas to near 100% saturation.

SWTFC Member Tribes Engage Youth in Natural Resource Conservation Education and Employment Opportunities

Working with the U.S. Forest Service's National Office and Southwest Regional Office, and/or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation, several SWTFC member tribes successfully initiated education and employment opportunities in natural resource conservation for their youth this spring.

Southern Ute Indian Tribe Division of Wildlife Resource Management

A successful summer intern program, sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service and SWTFC, was initiated this spring and continues at the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and San Juan National Forest. Navajo tribal members Marcy Begay and Cody Cloud, both students at Fort Lewis College in Durango, signed up for the program to further their knowledge in natural resources management. Marcy and Cody have been especially focused on fish and wildlife work, including hands-on help with boat electrofishing, bird-banding, and surveys for endangered species like the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse and southwestern willow flycatcher. Their work will culminate in their participation in the Southwest Regional

Conference of the Native American Fish & Wildlife Society, hosted by the Southern Utes in August.



Cody Cloud banding an osprey.



Marcy Begay, with a brown trout taken by electrofishing.

Zuni Pueblo Fish and Wildlife Department

The Zuni Fish and Wildlife Department continues to be a worthy recipient of funding necessary to support summer youth interns as a consequence of collaborative efforts among the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the FWS' New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NMFWCO), and the SWTFC. These collaborative efforts are aimed at promoting educational outreach for Native American youth, and endorsing summer employment opportunities. The NMFWCO accomplishes this through the development of Tribal Youth Conservation Corps (TYCC) programs on tribal lands.

Four students, two sponsored by NMFWCO/USFS (TYCC) and two sponsored by SWTFC/USFS are being employed from June 5, 2018 through July 28, 2018. The enrollees are assisting with daily eagle aviary operations and maintenance, water quality monitoring, channel catfish stockings, habitation restoration and erosion control, construction of water catchments for wildlife, woodland thinning, and projects with the Cibola National Forest. The enrollees gain first-hand experience in multiple aspects of careers in natural resources, learn valuable lessons about being responsible, show personal growth, and develop relationships that will last a lifetime.



Interns at Zuni Fish and Wildlife Department 2018; left to right: Quinlan Seowtewa and Shaylese Tsabetsaye (USFWS/TYCC), Dominic Yuselew (SWTFC/USFS), Herbert Siutza III (ZECDC-YCC), Cody Lanyate (SWTFC/USFS).

Pueblo of Taos Division of Natural Resources



The NMFWCO initiated sponsorship of one summer intern with Pueblo of Taos this spring. Elias Cruz works directly for Talisa Ortega (see SWTFC fall 2017 newsletter page 2) in the Division of Natural Resources. Elias participates in projects on both the Carson National Forest as well as Pueblo of Taos. These projects include wildlife surveys for northern goshawk and southwestern willow flycatcher, stream barrier assessments, wilderness trail maintenance, habitat restoration, fish surveys, and installment of water drinkers for domestic livestock as well as wildlife.

Mescalero Apache Tribal Fish Hatchery (MTFH)



As in the past, the Mescalero Apache Tribe has been aggressive in its approach to engaging youth in natural resource conservation opportunities. This spring, youth have been hired by the Tribe (MAT), the Leadership Institute (LI), and the SWTFC/USFS.

Pictured at left are MAT summer interns Hunter Chino, Annette Smith, Payton Kazhe, and LI summer intern Kenan Zuazua. Not pictured: Matias LaPaz, a SWTFC/USFS intern. Matias has been living in USFS quarters and conducting projects on the Smokey Bear Ranger District of the Lincoln National Forest.

2018 Investment Fund Check Presented to Mescalero Tribe



In support of the formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that guides the Mescalero Apache Tribe's partnership with the SWTFC for the purpose of sustaining the operation of the MTFH, the SWTFC maintains an investment fund (Fund). Each year, four percent of the Fund's total value reported at the end of the previous calendar year is distributed. Ninety-five percent of this total distribution is paid to the Mescalero Tribe to help cover the labor related expenses tied to the operation of the MTFH, while the remaining five percent is retained by the SWTFC for its discretionary use.

On June 11, 2018, Executive Director Leon visited with MAT President Arthur "Butch" Blazer and his Executive Committee at tribal headquarters in Mescalero, NM. Leon was accompanied by MAT Director of Conservation Law Enforcement and Director of MTFH Tyner Cervantes, and Hatchery Manager Shelley Battiest. Several meaningful topics within the MOU were discussed with President Blazer and the Council members present. Following these discussions, Leon was provided the opportunity to present the Tribe with the 2018 distribution fund check totaling more than \$20,000.

SWTFC Officers

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MEMBER TRIBES

Jicarilla Apache
Mescalero Apache
Navajo Nation
Northern Ute Tribe
Oh-Kay Owingeh
Pueblo of Cochiti
Pueblo of Isleta
Pueblo of Laguna
Pueblo of Nambe
Pueblo of Picuris
Pueblo of Sandia
Pueblo of Taos
Pueblo of Zuni
Pyramid Lake Paiute
San Carlos Apache
Santa Clara Pueblo
San Ildefonso Pueblo
Southern Ute Tribe

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

SWTFC/NAFWS-SWR/USFWS/Bass Pro Shops sponsored Fisheries Techniques Workshop, **July 23-26**, 2018, San Carlos, Arizona

NAFWS Southwest Region Conference, **August 13-16**, 2018, Ignacio, Colorado/Southern Ute Tribe

SWTFC Quarterly Meeting, **August 13**, 2018, Ignacio, Colorado/Southern Ute Tribe