

SOUTHWEST TRIBAL FISHERIES COMMISSION

SWTFC News

Summer 2017

Making a Difference



J. Mazzone, Chair; A. Ringia, Vice-Chair; S. Whiteman, Secretary-Treasurer; S. Leon, Exec. Director

From The Chair



Jacob and Gila

As the 2017 field season comes to an end and meeting season ramps up, I sometimes struggle to adjust to long hours in the conference room, and shorter hours in the field. As a student I was attracted to the field work: inclement weather, long dirt roads to the put in, horrendous tan lines, and living long periods of time out of a duffle bag. As a full time Fisheries Biologist I now understand that though the field work and data collection is essential to fisheries management, the meeting season is equally important: continuing education, interacting with peers, developing a grasp of regional policy shifts, and the sometimes convoluted “eco-politics” at tribal, state, and federal levels. Though most folks enter the fisheries realm with a solid grounding in data collection, fish identification, or recreational

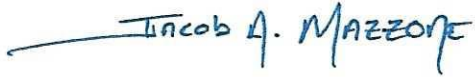
fisheries management. Few universities or fisheries programs prepare one for the “business” side of fisheries work. The meeting season is when one can sense the ebbs and flows of policy or brace themselves for political low tide.

The Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission (SWTFC) was established in part so Tribal fisheries professionals could have a venue to continue their professional development, interact with fellow Tribal fisheries resource managers, and discuss relevant policy and politics from the Tribal prospective. The SWTFC quarterly or annual meetings are what we as a group bring to the table. The more we work together to develop the meetings into a beneficial well attended venue for these types of conversations, the more we grow and expand our roles as Tribal Fisheries Professionals.

During my second term as Chairman of the SWTFC, this strikes me as one of the most important things our Board, Members, and Attendees can bring to the next meeting, and all meetings thereafter. A forward outlook with positivity and limitless potential.

Though I may be mentally stuck in field season, I look forward to working with you all this meeting season!

Sincerely,



Chairman Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission

Fisheries Biologist, Jicarilla Apache Nation Department of Game & Fish

Engaging Our Youth in Natural Resource Conservation

Working with our Federal partners, the SWTFC and its member Tribes are committed to providing meaningful employment and educational opportunities in natural resource conservation for our native youth.

Zuni Tribe Fish and Wildlife Department

Nelson Luna, Director, Zuni Fish and Wildlife Department



Front: Chris Kitcheyan (USFWS), Dante Lalio (TYCC), Alfonso Penketewa (ZFWD), Joey Gia Jr. (TYI), Matthew Neha (ZFWD); Back: Stafford Chimoni (ZFWD), Nelson Luna (ZFWD Director), Chandler Lalio (TYI), Alicia Welema (TYI), Shaylese Tsabetsaye (TYCC), Cody Lanyata (TYI Crew Leader).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) Tribal Youth Conservation Corps (TYCC) worked exceptionally well in its first year partnering at the Pueblo of Zuni, Fish and Wildlife Department (ZFWD). The ZFWD was able to augment the TYCC work force with four additional Bureau of Indian Affairs/SWTFC Tribal Youth Initiative (TYI) interns. TYCC/TYI participants gained valuable exposure and experience generating sincere interest in the natural resource disciplines and professions through hands on experience(s) and instruction from ZFWD, USFWS-Mexican Wolf Program/Ecological Services Office, Alchey-Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery Complex, U.S. Forest Service – Cibola National Forest, and Albuquerque Bio-Park/Zoo staff. Their experiences promoted personal growth, individual development, self-determination, team work/collaboration, traditional knowledge, and work ethic, thereby helping the youth to further develop their resumes. At the completion of this year's program, TYCC and TYI participants gained new ideas and direction for professional development, focusing on finishing high school, pursuing collegiate Bachelors and Masters degree programs, and returning to Zuni to continue their knowledge and experience in natural resource management.

Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery

Shelley Battiest, Manager, Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery



Mescalero Tribal Hatchery Staff and Summer Youth. Front row: Ignatius Palmer, Arian Enjady, Brooklyn Mendez; Middle row: Jessica Rodriguez, Tramaine Bigmouth, Gabriel Marrujo, Ethan Gallerito, Kendrick Ortega, Tori Marden (Asst. Manager), Shelley Battiest (Hatchery Manager); Back row: Kenan Zuazua, John Salazar, Ian Murphy, Houston Fatty, Brian Fierro, Deshante Mendez, Jimmy Runningwater.

The Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery (MTFH) engaged 10 youth in employment and natural resource conservation education opportunities during the summer. Diverse partnerships and grants made the youth program possible, with assistance provided by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) tribal program, the Leadership Institute Program with the Santa Fe Indian School, NAFWS, U.S. Forest Service, and the USFWS/SWTFC partnership.



Nathan Wiese, Manager of Mora National Fish Hatchery (FWS), teaches the youth about Gila trout.

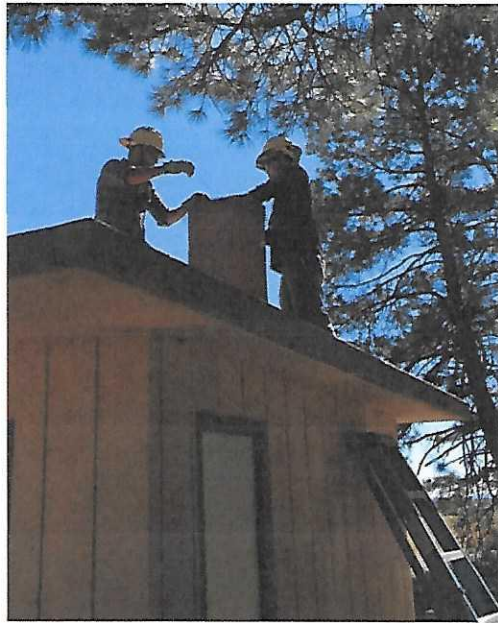
The summer program included hands-on instruction by MTFH staff on the basic operation and maintenance of the hatchery. Frequent tasks included cleaning the tanks and raceways, feeding the trout from fingerling through adult stage, assessing lengths and weights of trout in each raceway as well as water quality measurements, assisting with visitor tours, stream restoration projects, stocking local lakes and streams, and participating in community events.

The youth were the beneficiaries of field trips to the Southwestern Native Aquatic Resource and Recovery Center in Dexter, NM, and an overnight trip to Mora National Fish Hatchery (NFH), where they received a hatchery tour, did some fin-clipping of Gila trout with the Mora NFH crew, and joined the staff for a barbecue afterwards.

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Hopi Tribe Wildlife and Ecosystems Management Program

Natasha C. Kline, Forest Biologist, Kaibab National Forest



Travis Largent, Kaibab NF Biologist, and Erik Takala.

A partnership between the SWTFC and U.S. Forest Service, Region 3 (New Mexico and Arizona), provided support for a 10-week internship opportunity to the Hopi Tribe Wildlife and Ecosystems Management Program. The intern, Erik Takala, worked the first five weeks with the Kaibab NF on spring restoration and fencing projects, environmental education programs with the Williams Middle School, conducting “rapid plot” vegetation assessments for Forest Plan monitoring, range and soil condition monitoring, pronghorn capture and collaring, and burned area assessments. In his time with the Kaibab NF, Erik has worked with/shadowed the Deputy Fire Manager, District Archeologist, Radio Technician, Tribal Liaison, and Timber Staff. Erik worked with FS biologists to secure hardware cloth over ventilation pipes on restrooms to protect cavity nesting birds from entering and becoming trapped in the waste vats (picture at left).

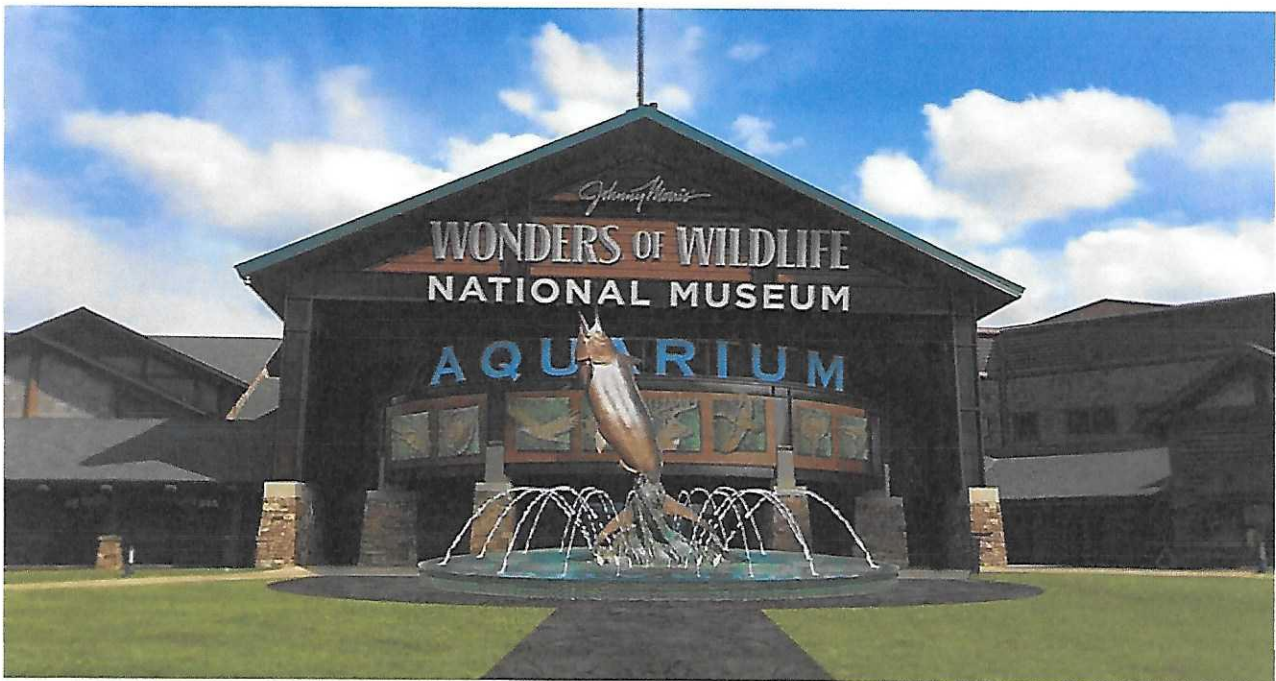
SWTFC Assists Johnny Morris with the Grand Opening of the Wonders of Wildlife National Museum and Aquarium



The museum starts with an exhibition honoring native Americans – our nation’s first conservationists. Serving as a tribute to the tangible benefits of world-wide conservation efforts, the museum and aquarium consists of an all-new 1.5-million-gallon aquarium adventure showcasing 35,000 live fish, mammals, reptiles, and birds. Immersive wildlife galleries bring visitors eye-to-eye with the greatest collection of record-setting game animals ever assembled. Located

adjacent to Bass Pro Shops National Headquarters in Springfield, Missouri, the 350,000-square foot experience celebrates people who hunt, fish, and act as stewards of the land and water.

In July, Johnny Morris, Founder and CEO of Bass Pro Shops, and Martin MacDonald, Director of Conservation for Bass Pro Shops, requested SWTFC Executive Director Leon to provide assistance to the museum staff during the final development of the Native American gallery. Accompanied by Fred Matt, NAFWS Executive Director, the two reviewed exhibits within the gallery and made suggestions for further enhancements. In September, Leon was invited to represent the SWTFC at grand opening ceremonies for the national museum and aquarium, where at the request of Mr. Morris, Leon discussed the importance and relevance of the Native American gallery with representatives of the local and regional press.



Wonders of Wildlife is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit foundation. Visit wondersofwildlife.org/conservation for more information.

Mescalero Tribal Hatchery and SWTFC Continue Dynamic Relationship

Shelley Battiest, Manager, Mescalero Tribal Fish Hatchery

Fish deliveries and stockings continued throughout the summer months. Since the beginning of the year, MTFH has stocked 50,980 rainbow trout (equivalent to 40,460 pounds) ranging in sizes from 10 to 13 inches. Shade coverings have now been constructed over four of the outside raceways. These canopies are serving their purpose – keeping great blue herons from attacking and feasting on fish less than eight inches in length. They are also effective in limiting algal growth in the raceways, thereby reducing the number of days per week that MTFH staff must clean the four raceways and lowering stress levels of the fish.



Brian Fierro, 17, cleans an outdoor raceway.

At the July SWTFC Board meeting, member Tribes voted to raise the cost per pound of rainbow trout from \$2.35 to \$3.06. This much needed correction in the market value of rainbow trout produced by MTFH will allow continued infrastructure improvements to be realized.

MTFH staff continue to practice and maintain bio-security measures. Additional new measures will be implemented as appropriate.

SWTFC Announces Planning for 2018 Fisheries Techniques Workshop

Planning is underway for the 2018 Fisheries Techniques Workshop, tentatively planned for a three-day period during the third or fourth week of next July, with the Pueblo of Cochiti as the intended host for the event. Partnerships making this workshop possible include the SWTFC; NAFWS; FWS Southwest Region, Headquarters Office, and National Conservation Training Center; BIA; and Bass Pro Shops. Others wishing to participate in the planning efforts are encouraged to notify SWTFC Executive Director Leon at stuartcleon@gmail.com. Watch for further information as the planning process continues.

SWTFC Quarterly Board Meeting Scheduled for November 7, 2018

The next SWTFC quarterly meeting is just around the corner! The meeting will convene at 8:30 a.m. (**note the earlier start time**) and will conclude at 12:00 noon. As in the past, the meeting will take place at the BIA Southwest Regional Office, 1001 Indian School Rd., Pete Domenici Building, Room 133, Albuquerque, NM. Topics of interest will include a presentation by Earl Conway, B.A.S.S., regarding warm water opportunities with SWTFC member Tribes, discussion of planning progress for the 2018 Fisheries Techniques Workshop, and discussion of a proposed amendment to the SWTFC Bylaws – Election of Officers. Please plan on attending this important meeting!