

Gila River Basin Native Fish Conservation Program
Joint Policy-Technical Team Meeting
February 11, 2010

Final Meeting Minutes

Meeting Participants:

Rob Clarkson (BOR)	Clay Crowder (AZGFD—observer)
David Propst (NMDGF)	David Orabutt (AZGFD—observer)
Amy Unthank (USFS)	Steve Spangle (FWS, afternoon only)
Doug Duncan (FWS)	Mike Senn (AZGFD, afternoon only)
Tony Robinson (AZGFD—observer)	Henry Messing (BOR, afternoon only, via phone)
Jeff Sorensen (AZGFD)	
Tim Frey (BLM NM, via phone)	

Tim Hughes (BLM AZ) has replaced Elroy Masters at the Arizona BLM rep on the Tech Comm—he wasn't available to participate in today's meeting.

Action Items in Bold Font

1. Review of AZGFD projects (Robinson/Sorensen)
 - Robinson used a PowerPoint presentation to provide his update—**Sorensen to PDF this file and send out with draft minutes**
2. Review of NMDGF projects (Propst)
 - Propst used a PowerPoint presentation to provide his update—**Sorensen to PDF this file and send out with draft minutes**
3. Review of Reclamation projects (Clarkson)
 - Clarkson—Hot Springs barrier will be built this autumn; was postponed from this spring.
 - Clarkson—Used Program misc funds to help support David Ward's facility needs. Sorensen—AZGFD also used some AZ Heritage Funds to help buy replacement parts, 6 month supply of fish food, and other needs for Ward's lab.
 - Sorensen—due to revised AZGFD policy on storing hazardous materials on site, we will need some fire-proof cabinets for storing rotenone and sodium permanganate to meet Federal and State hazardous materials storage requirements; estimates cost for these cabinets just under \$3000—Sorensen requested the Program pay for these. Spangle—FWS had some storage cabinets for stockpiling rotenone, but their whereabouts are unknown...**Duncan will look into finding those cabinets.**
 - Sorensen—AZGFD will in the meantime buy spill-proof storage pallets for the stockpile of Program rotenone and permanganate in our warehouse (cost about \$800 using other AZGFD funds). Sorensen to send storage cabinet purchase information to Clarkson, if Duncan unable to find the FWS cabinets or they are not suitable.

4. Review of FWS projects (Duncan)
 - Duncan—drafted agreement on biocontrol symposium with Sea Grant folks.
 - Finished ASU agreement for maintaining topminnow stocks
 - Finalizing agreement for FY09 funds for New Mexico and TNC projects
 - Finished new AZGFD agreement, which began Oct 31, 2009.
 - Estimate \$30,000 overcharged on overhead for Program projects due to various reasons.

5. Other Program issues and action items (all)
 - Spangle—we would like an official rebuttal to false info on use and effects of rotenone in fisheries management; something like a brochure or white paper that the Program partners would endorse and be able to use in EAs, etc.
 - Senn—AZGFD can provide service of our PIOs to help outreach this message to the public; we (the Program) need the right message to counter the challenges to rotenone/antimycin use in fisheries management.
 - **Propst—is tasked with writing up the draft of this piscicide use message—**he'll get a draft out to the group to refine. Focus on conservation goals not the tools (rotenone/antimycin use). Ott has data on macroinvertebrate impacts and recovery due to piscicide use...**Propst will review this information.**
 - New FOIA from Dennis Parker and CESAR organization on rotenone use in AZ between 2006 and 2010—just received by FWS on 2/10/2010. Refer to email attachment from Duncan and Clarkson.

6. Fiscal status of Program (Clarkson)
 - Refer to Program fiscal summaries (RPA3 & 4)
 - Clarkson—plan to cancel two separate agreements (RPA3 & 4) to combine into one to make budget tracking easier; **Clarkson to send out revised agreement by 3/31/2010.**
 - \$100,000 for Chiricahua leopard frog work to be transferred to FWS in FY2010—they already identified \$125,000 of frog projects.

7. Technical Committee's recommended 2010 and ongoing projects (Clarkson)
 - Clarkson—Lower Blue River barrier and NEPA under a very tight timeline...Reclamation has \$6 million this year to construct the barrier; if the NEPA appealed and project delayed, Reclamation may not have those funds next FY (although Messing [via phone] indicates there may be other funds available in 2011). Clarkson is not optimistic that we'll get the NEPA completed and barrier built in 2010.
 - Clarkson—If West Fork Oak Creek (WFOC) project not funded with Program monies then those funds could be contributed to other Program needs, like supporting the USGS Lacrosse Lab proposal to test and label a potential new piscicide—a 5-yr project at a total cost of about \$4 mil. Refer to that proposal for details.

- Clarkson—some Program monitoring efforts may not be cost-effective (that is: amount of effort vs low numbers of native fish detected): San Pedro River, Gila River below Coolidge Dam, CAP canal, etc..
 - Spangle--Instead of annual surveys of these sites, instead monitor once every 3-5 years? Perhaps these monitoring funds could be better invested directly in conservation and recovery actions.
 - Senn—suggested that if additional Program funds available could we invest more into increasing the production of native fish at Bubbling Ponds. Clarkson—the recent Fossil Creek native fish workgroup meeting also recommended that native fish production be increased to meet stocking needs. Clarkson has asked David Ward to draw up what would be needed to increase production—equipment and costs—for the Bubbling Ponds native fish research facility.
 - Clarkson—additional Program funds were allocated to cover half of David Ward’s salary...which better reflects the amount of Program work he is currently conducting. Robinson and Sorensen—notified the group that Reclamation’s Boulder City Office is paying for the other half of Ward’s salary to conduct razorback work; those monies won’t be available after next year, so we’ll need to find additional funds to keep Ward fully employed at Bubbling Ponds.
 - The group agreed the WFOC project will stay on the books for now. Sorensen—he recommended to Shaula Hedwall and Julie Carter that if native trout funds can fully pay for the WFOC project, then do so. If that occurs, then Program committed funds for WFOC would be available for use elsewhere.
8. Policy Committee decision on new proposals (PC leads)
- Spangle, Senn, and Messing approved all 2010 projects for funding; Duncan—monies won’t be available until the end of the calendar year.
9. Schedule 2010 meeting dates for Technical Committee (all)
- Nov 3rd at Phoenix FWS AESO. **Duncan to reserve FWS conference room.**

End at 2:45 pm

Minutes recorded by Sorensen, with edits provided by Clarkson, Duncan, and Robinson

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AGENDA

Meeting location: Arizona Game & Fish Dept headquarters
5000 W Carefree Hwy, Phoenix, AZ

Starting time: 10 am local (MST), with expected ending around 3 pm

Topics (presenter):

1. Review of AZGFD projects (Robinson/Sorensen)
2. Review of NMDGF projects (Propst)
3. Review of Reclamation projects (Clarkson)
4. Review of FWS projects (Duncan)
5. Other Program issues and action items (all)
6. Fiscal status of Program (Clarkson)
7. Technical Committee's recommended 2010 and ongoing projects (Clarkson)
8. Policy Committee decision on new proposals (PC leads)
9. Schedule 2010 meeting dates for Technical Committee (all)

To join the meeting via conference call: 623-236-7995 or toll-free 1-888-865-8337

Meeting ID: 0813