

Final Minutes Of The January 30, 2007 Meeting Of The Cap Funds Transfer Program's Policy and Technical Committees

Paul Barrett

Attendees: Bureau of Reclamation – Rob Clarkson, Henry Messing
Fish and Wildlife Service –Paul Barrett, Glen Knowles, Steve Spangle
Arizona Game and Fish Department – Jeff Sorenson, Bob Brosheid
New Mexico Game and Fish Department – David Propst, Chuck Hayes

The meeting began at 1:00 pm. An agenda is attached.

The meeting began with a review of the program accomplishments in 2006 by Barrett. A discussion ensued concerning the need for future projects and activities to focus on the four fish upon which the jeopardy opinion was based; spikedace, loach minnow, topminnow, and razorback sucker. The group discussed recent bureaucratic and logistical problems encountered when trying to stock spikedace in Fossil Creek. Spangle emphasized the need to do any necessary section 7 consultations associated with the stockings early in the planning. Propst noted that New Mexico Department of Game and Fish will soon be stocking spikedace in the San Francisco River in conjunction with the Gila National Forest. In that case, the section 7 requirements will be easily and rapidly accomplished. It was agreed that Barrett will compile a list of potential repatriation sites and distribute it to staff in the near future.

The group then discussed recommendations from the Wildlife Management Institute report. After some discussion it was determined that Sorensen will take the lead on writing a new guidance document for the program. Other Technical Team members will assist as necessary and requested. In response to a question by Barrett, Messing reported that the Bureau of Reclamation is developing a web site for the Program and it may be available by February. The group decided that a list of all projects, completed, ongoing, pending and deleted will be put on the web site but the costs associated with each project will not be included.

Barrett then discussed issues associated with the Program's project selection process in general and John Rinne's Upper Verde Mechanical Removal Proposal in particular. With respect to Rinne's proposal the group discussed whether it was for management or research. Sorensen articulated some errors in Rinne's response to Barrett's email questions. All agreed it was difficult to follow the proposal and in Rinne's past reports, conclusions, results, and numbers are difficult to find. Spangle stated that if there is a problem with Rinne's science, it must be clearly stated to him. Propst emphasized the need for a report that clearly states what Rinne has already accomplished and a monitoring program. It was agreed that Sorensen will work with Arizona Game and Fish biologists, along with input from Clarkson, to prepare a bulleted list of benchmarks and monitoring, and we will request a final budget from Rinne before an agreement is reached to pursue the research.

The Teams then turned to the appearance of conflict of interest in the existing proposal selection process. Barrett stated the possible conflict come from two areas. First, any proposals from the four agencies that are on the Technical Team compete for limited funds with proposals from other entities. Second, Technical Team agencies have the opportunity to clarify or modify their proposals if questions arise during the review process, an opportunity not afforded to outside entities. Barrett also reported that after speaking with the Fish and Wildlife Service's regional contracting officials he was told that any proposals that are not interagency agreements between Federal entities must be posted on grants.gov and be publicly competed, even those where the states may claim statutory authority and a legal mandate to conduct. Propst said they encountered the same issue with the San Juan program but Reclamation was able to get a ruling from their attorneys that state agencies need not compete. The group discussed option to address the two areas of potential conflict of interest including convening an unaffiliated panel of experts to rank proposals prior to their evaluation by the Technical Team. It was decided that Barrett and Sorensen will draft a list of available options to address the situation. Clarkson will also check with Mark McKinstry of Reclamation's Salt Lake office regarding the states' need to compete for funding for the San Juan Program.

The Technical Teams recommended 2007 projects were then discussed. Specifics concerning each proposal are contained in the November 27, 2006 Technical Team Meeting Minutes. After reviewing the Technical Team's recommendations the Policy Team approved all suggested projects. The Team did emphasis the proposal to hold a Genetic Biocontrol Symposium should proceed cautiously and ensure southwestern fish issues be a specific consideration during planning for the workshop. The Team also requested that quarterly reports for all projects be included in future agreements.

Clarkson then updated the group on Reclamation's reconsultation. The new consultation will include Chiricahua leopard frog, Gila chub and incorporate the Santa Cruz basin. A requirement for a mainstream barrier on the Santa Cruz will be dropped and the Fund Transfer Program will be extended for five years with an additional \$50,000.00 added to each of the remaining years. A one-time payment of \$100,000.00 will be provided for Chiricahua leopard frog recovery.

Next on the agenda was s discussion of the Committees' operations, functions, and other concerns are recommended by the Wildlife Management Institute report. However, with the ensuing revision of the Guidance Documents it was concluded that a discussion would be premature.

The next joint meeting was scheduled for Thursday, June 14. It will be hosted by new Mexico Department of Game and Fish in Albuquerque.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Action Items.

- Prepare a list of potential repatriation sites and distribute to the Committees and Fish and Wildlife Staff. **(Barrett)**.
- Draft a new Fund Program Guidance Document **(Sorenson)**.
- Prepare a bulleted list of benchmarks and monitoring requirements needed to accept Rinne's Upper Verde Mechanical Removal proposal. **(Sorensen and Clarkson)**.
- Prepare a list of options for addressing possible conflict of interest issues **(Barrett and Sorensen)**.
- Contact Mark McKinstry regarding any exemption for the states to compete for funding in the San Juan Program. **(Clarkson)**.
- Contact appropriate staff to determine the status of any necessary section 7 consultation for stocking listed fishes in Redrock Canyon **(Barrett)**.
- Contact manufactures to determine how much rotenone can be purchased for \$25,000.00 **(Clarkson)**.
- Prepare agenda for the December 13 Policy Committee meeting **(Sorensen)**.
- Schedule January 2007 joint Technical-Policy meeting **(Sorensen)**.
- Review Proposal Evaluation Form and provide suggestions to Barrett **(All)**.

pjb