Final Minutes - December 13, 2006 meeting of the CAP Fund Transfer Program's Policy Committee

Edited by Jeff Sorensen (AGFD) and Chuck Hayes (NMGFD)

Attendees: Bureau of Reclamation (BR) – Henry Messing
Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) – Steve Spangle
Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) – Bruce Taubert, Bob Broscheid
New Mexico Game and Fish Department (NMGFD) – Chuck Hayes

The meeting began at 9:30 am at AGFD headquarters. The meeting agenda focused on (1) changes in Policy Committee representatives, (2) the review and adoption of the WMI 2005 report recommendations, and (3) scheduling dates for the 2007 Joint meeting and June 2007 Policy meeting.

(1) Bob Broscheid was introduced as AGFD's new Policy Committee representative (with Bruce retiring from AGFD at the end of the month).

The Committee requested that Steve Spangle continue to represent FWS on the Policy Committee, or that Paul Barrett move to the Policy Committee and be replaced on the Technical Committee. The Policy Committee was OK with Barrett moving to that committee, but felt there were inherently difficulties in serving in both roles at once. Spangle said he would think some more about this topic before making a decision regarding USFWS's representation.

(2) The Committee reviewed the WMI 2005 CAP-FTP report, and provided the following input (**in bold text**) on WMI's recommendations:

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Recommendation 1: WMI recommends the trend of committing 100% of available annual funding continue in future years. **Agreed; high priority.**

TYPES OF PROJECTS
Recommendation 2: WMI recommends the categories created by us (or a similar set of descriptors) be utilized in the future to describe the types of projects to give reviewers an easy-to-comprehend matrix of program actions. **Agreed with modification—use new strategic plan goals and objectives to measure results; high priority.**

CHRONOLOGY OF PROJECT COMPLETION
Recommendation 3: WMI recommends the Policy and Technical Committees sustain the trend of minimizing deleted projects. When projects are deleted, a clear statement of the reason for deletion should be appended to program summaries. **Agreed.**

Recommendation 4: WMI recommends the number of pending projects be reduced and the oldest pending projects be moved to ongoing or deleted. WMI recommends pending projects be

<2 years in the classification. **Agreed with modification—"Number of pending projects be reduced to meet resource needs"; drop remaining part of recommendation; annually evaluate the need for each pending project; high priority.**

BIOLOGICAL OPINION CONSERVATION MEASURES IN RELATION TO PROJECT FUNDING
Recommendation 5: WMI recommends the trend of committing 50% of funding to each of the conservation measures be continued per the 2001 biological opinion. **Agreed.**

RECOVERY PLAN PRIORITIES IN RELATION TO PROJECT FUNDING
Recommendation 6: WMI recommends the percentage of funding dedicated to highest priority recovery plan actions increase. **Modified—First select priorities in species recovery plans, then use those to determine which recovery plan priorities are most appropriate to be accomplished by CAP funding and weight proposals accordingly; high priority.**

Recommendation 7: WMI recommends when funds are dedicated to medium or low priority recovery plan actions, the rationale and justification for funding projects lower than the highest priority be written and appended to program summaries. **Agreed.**

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT AND STRATEGIC PLAN
Agreed for (and to replace earlier versions of) Recommendations 8-11; Technical Committee to revise strategic plan and have draft ready for the Policy Committee by the June 2007 meeting, and finalize plan by January 2008 Joint meeting; high priority.

Recommendation 8: WMI recommends the Guidance Document be eliminated and replaced with a viable Strategic Plan that includes both a long-term vision and the 5-year objectives for the CAP Fund Transfer Program.

Recommendation 9: WMI recommends the CAP Fund Transfer Program Strategic Plan be completely rewritten to clearly state the long term vision, mission and goals of the program. Accompanying that long-term view should be a set of objectives designed to guide actions that advance toward Program priorities within a 5-year period. Program staff should seek help of outside professional planners as the new Strategic Plan is developed. The newly developed Strategic Plan should be updated at least every 5 years or as specifically needed.

Recommendation 10: The revised CAP Fund Transfer Program Strategic Plan should make clear how its priorities reflect or deviate from the priorities established in relevant recovery plans.

Recommendation 11: To be effective, the CAP Fund Transfer Program Strategic Plan must be a living document that clearly provides the framework for all program expenditures in relation to program goals and vision. All actions taken by both committees must be referenced back to Strategic Plan goals and objectives.

ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS
Committee Form and Function

Agreed for Recommendations 12-15, with FWS Technical Committee representative as lead on these tasks, with support from rest of Technical Committee.

Technical Committee
Recommendation 12: WMI recommends the Technical Committee take a more formal approach to how it does business. Agendas should be prepared and circulated to committee members at least 2 weeks before each meeting.

Recommendation 13: Formats for agendas and minutes should be standardized and filing protocols for those documents developed. A final agenda should be attached to each set of minutes.

Recommendation 14: All meeting decisions and justifications for those decisions should be clearly identified in the minutes, especially when status of individual projects is changed. To assure minutes are finalized promptly, consideration should be given to limiting them to a recording of topics discussed and actions taken.

Recommendation 15: To standardize committee operations, WMI recommends the FWS representative be made the permanent chair of the Technical Committee. The chair would be responsible for selecting dates and locations of meetings, developing agendas, recording draft minutes and producing final minutes of each meeting.

Agreed for (and to replace earlier versions of) Recommendations 16-19, with FWS Technical Committee representative as lead on these tasks, with support from rest of Technical Committee; meeting host will make conference room reservations, send out agenda, and provide a recorder for meeting notes; add to Joint meeting agenda time for discussion of topics in Recommendation 19.

Policy Committee
Recommendation 16: WMI recommends the Policy Committee take a more formal approach to how it does business. Agendas should be prepared and circulated to committee members at least 2 weeks before each meeting.

Recommendation 17: Formats for agendas and minutes should be standardized and filing protocols for those documents developed. A final agenda should be attached to each set of minutes.

Recommendation 18: All meeting decisions and justification for those decisions should be clearly identified in the minutes, especially when status of individual projects is changed. To assure minutes are finalized promptly, consideration should be given to limiting them to a recording of topics discussed and actions taken.

Recommendation 19: Time should be set aside during 1of the annual meetings to openly discuss committee operations, functions, and issues of mutual concern with Technical Committee members.

Recommendation 20: Written procedures should be developed by the Policy Committee that clearly define the purpose, function, roles and responsibilities of each committee. Roles of individual committee members, minimal qualifications for committee members and specific guidelines for timing, conduct, and record keeping for committee meetings should be defined. Procedures should also clearly define the roles of each agency. **Modify—first sentence information to be added to new strategic plan by the Technical Committee; drop remaining part of recommendation.**

Recommendation 21: A chair should be designated in advance for each meeting of the Policy Committee. The duties of the chair should be clearly specified in writing. **Agreed with modification—"A chair (host) should be designated in advance…"; the chair/host will be rotated every 6 months—AGFD was host in Dec 2006, NMGFD will be host in June 2007.**

Recommendation 22: A notice to the public of meeting date, location, and time should be provided for each decision-making meeting of the Policy Committee. **Disagree.**

Agreed for Recommendations 23-33, with FWS Technical Committee representative as lead on these tasks, with support from rest of Technical Committee; June as a possible cut-off date for submittal of new project proposals for next fiscal year?; high support.

PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS
Recommendation 23: A formal process should be instituted to solicit project ideas in an efficient manner. Per Technical and Policy Committee discussions, WMI recommends this solicitation process provide direction on project ideas that would be considered for funding based on a CAP Fund Transfer Program Strategic Plan and a date by which project ideas would no longer be considered for funding in the following fiscal year.

Recommendation 24: Particular emphasis needs to be given to increasing discussion with and contribution of ideas by members of the scientific community. The committees should aggressively explore ways outside technical expertise can be accessed. The size of the desert fish scientific community is small and this expertise should be tapped however possible. Scientific expertise in other disciplines should also be considered. **Perhaps use a pre-proposal process?**

Recommendation 25: Efforts need to be made, through sole source agreements or other mechanisms, to assure those who develop project ideas in response to solicitations by the CAP Fund Transfer Program are not effectively prevented from being selected as a vendor by federal contracting guidelines. **Perhaps use the federal procurement process?**

Recommendation 26: The Technical Committee should ensure that all project ideas and lists are described in sufficient detail to allow **Policy** Committee members to evaluate the merits of these ideas and lists. **Inserted clarification on which committee referenced.**

Recommendation 27: WMI recommends adoption of a standard format for presentation of the project ideas, descriptions, or proposals that are considered within the Technical Committee.

Recommendation 28: WMI recommends project ideas, descriptions, or proposals be provided to **Policy** Committee members sufficiently in advance of decisional meetings to allow thorough review and consideration. **Inserted clarification on which committee referenced.**

Recommendation 29: Technical Committee consideration of project ideas and its decisions with respect to individual projects and development of project lists and descriptions for Policy Committee review and approval should be documented explicitly in formal written minutes of the Technical Committee.

Recommendation 30: Policy Committee decisions concerning funding of the projects on the list presented by the Technical Committee should be explicit and documented in formal written minutes.

Recommendation 31: Each current and past project blurb should identify 1 or more recovery plan tasks that would be addressed by the project and the recovery plan priorities of those tasks. Note that efforts have already been made to address this recommendation.

Recommendation 32: Each project blurb should identify 1 or more program priorities of a CAP Fund Transfer Program Strategic Plan that would be addressed by the project.

Recommendation 33: Technical and Policy Committee members should consider project ideas and review project descriptions explicitly in relation to the tasks and priorities established in recovery plans and strategic plans, and this consideration and review should be documented in formal minutes.

CONTRACTING
Recommendation 34: A regular presentation by the FWS regional contracting officer and/or staff to both committees of the CAP Fund Transfer Program explaining key aspects of the process should be scheduled. Key aspects of this discussion should center on how the process can be more transparent, timely, and available to a wider audience of potential vendors. **Modify—"As needed, presentations by the FWS regional…"; perhaps needed every other year?**

Recommendation 35: Committee members should develop timelines for project review and selection that would accommodate time requirements needed for contracting and increase availability and interest of potential contractors. **Agreed.**

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT
Primary Program File

Recommendation 36: One centralized primary file should be created for the CAP Fund Transfer Program. At a pre-determined date each year staff members from the 2 federal agencies should meet to reconcile any and all differences in program documents and create 1 "official" record for that year. As the responsible agency for the program, the official record depository should be maintained, filed, and housed by the FWS. **Agreed. Reports should be PDF format, and web-based for availability; conduct 6-month reconciliation updates?**

Retrieving and Archiving Files
Agreed for Recommendations 37-39; BR would store duplicate files; reports web-based.

Recommendation 37: Beginning immediately, staff at the Phoenix FWS and BR offices should perform a detailed assessment of program files to identify missing files and organize existing files. One centralized project file should be created and organized by project years. This file should include an active and an archived depository. Complete directories should accompany all files. The FWS office should take the lead in this assessment.
Recommendation 38: Duplicate copies of the final documents should be created and filed in separate secure facilities.

Recommendation 39: Important program documents no longer needed on a regular basis should be clearly identified and archived in a permanent archive site, and made available to the public. This would include documents previously submitted to Paul Marsh.
Reporting

Recommendation 40: Progress reports and project status tables should be completed for each fiscal year; "formalized" in style and format, completed by the same date, and cover the same time periods each year. All tables, appendices, and associated files for each annual report should be clearly identified, labeled, and attached to each report. Status tables are critical and must be maintained. **Agreed; high support.** Note that efforts have already been made to address this recommendation.

Recommendation 41: The reports should track progress, accomplishments, and significant mileposts for each project and clearly identify elements of planning documents addressed. Significant findings should be identified and highlighted. Status changes for projects should be clearly identified and accompanied by justification for that change. **Agreed; annual verbal updates to Policy Committee by Technical Committee; January Joint meeting best time to do this.**

Recommendation 42: Interim reports should continue to be required for all principal investigators each year. Efforts to obtain these reports must be increased. Annual progress reports are important products and must accurately summarize the program. They are heavily dependent upon timely and accurate interim reports. **Agreed; set dates when reports due; reports should be brief with necessary details, not overly complicated or long.**

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION
For recommendations 43-44: Explore further with Technical Committee—is there a better process? Coordinate with others to use outside matching funds/in-kind for big projects (like Fossil Creek), consider identification of basins or reaches for native fish emphasis? Get Technical Committee feedback by June 2007.

Recommendation 43: The committees should evaluate, scope, and hold a multi-agency public process on potential for planning and project implementation at the scale of sub-basins or watersheds.

Recommendation 44: WMI recommends the Program make additional efforts to incorporate CAP Fund Transfer Program actions into a larger, comprehensive, regional native fish recovery effort. Opportunities to use program funds to leverage other funding should be automatically considered prior to project approval.

Recommendation 45: The suite of WMI recommendations outlines a program environment in which individual and committee roles and responsibilities are clearly defined; decision-making is formalized, disciplined and strategic; and program accomplishments are quantifiable and defendable. WMI recommends that strict adherence to such a work environment will minimize the acrimony that characterized the program's past and increase the likelihood of recovery of native fishes in the Gila basin. **This is more of a statement than recommendation; this would be part of the new strategic plan.**

(3) Potential dates for 2007 Joint meeting – Jan 23rd or 30th. No date set for June 2007 Policy meeting.

Action Items:
 • (none identified)

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