

Technical Committee Meeting Draft Agenda
Gila River Basin Native Fishes Conservation Program
BLM Field Office, Safford, AZ
December 13, 2016

Item

1. **Welcome/Introductions** (All)

Doug Duncan, Tech Rep FWS
Mike Ruhl, Tech Rep NMGF
Brian Ferguson, NM –Fish Biologist, Tech Rep Game and Fish (Andrews replacement?)
Tom Sinclair, NM Fish and Wildlife
Rob Clarkson, Retired BOR
Heidi Blasius, BLM Safford AZ
Tim, BLM NM
Tony Robinson, AZGF
Julie Carter, AZGF Native Aquatics
Kent Mosher, AZGF

2. **Budget Update** (Bill/Doug): Close out of funds transfer / BOR agreements / Discussion

Funds transfer program- transfer money to FWS, but not NM only (other agreements already funded).
Need modification (existing 5 year agreements with 1 year modification)
Doug-ask financial about agreements- 1 year?
Tim question on funding issue- Is BOR still going to transfer funds to FWS, and then say to NM we still have agreement to FWS? Bill answer- small portion of money transferred to FWS, but bulk of \$550k directly administered by BOR (as of last year) – so agreement, Tim, would be directly with BOR. Tony comment-Agreements expire in 2017. Any agreements under master, can't go past master, dated Sept 30, 2017.
Bill comment- it's easier to admin through FWS
Doug comment- added step, agencies wouldn't get funding for 1.5 years, now maybe 6 months later.
Rob- BOR direct to NM?
Doug- keep umbrella (ie Bubbling Ponds ARCC)
Bill question –so half way through fiscal year, if we have money, how to get off books and get work out?
Doug- No year funds
Rob- don't bump up against 5 year agreement
Tim question to Rob- template (?) modeled on FWS (Tony- interagency agreement)
**service first initiative- share resources–initially done sharing office space within interior, expanded to include DOI and forest service (USGS) ?Bill- can waive overhead ? Tim- emailing
Thomas- saved money
Summary: no longer doing funds transfer (agreements going directly through Rec) Mike- doing cooperative agreement with BLM- quarterly reports were requirement- 2/3 submitted on time, but then

email about funding cut off. If under cooperative status- quarterly reports- it's important to follow up, with turnover etc.

*** some way to know when quarterly reports are received.

Bill- need scopes of work, cc Bill email

3. **Fish Barrier Update** (Bill): Handout / Discussion

Westfork Black Barrier- completed in May.

O'Donnell Barrier- Audubon opposed to barrier. Existing structure extending wing wall, cuts erosion. Bill's Sup wants to cut ties, unless strong need to finish, look to FWS to push Audubon.

Rob- headcutting not progressing as fast, if one goes second one

Doug- recent action, wouldn't take much flow

Bill- Sean setting up meeting to announce walk away – political (Tony)

Tony- last population of Gila Chub

Rob- recs decision to drop? Bill yes

Doug- important site, can't be replace with one in Santa Cruz, sonoita not been active concern in last 5 years

Heidi- way to shore up? That's what was purpose was- shore up (Rob)

Bill- burden on Rec, need support

Doug- will have Steve call Sean

Julie- "She" doesn't want any impacts, all natural, no impacts to research project

Tony – "she" has monitoring projects concerned about- rattlesnake den

Doug- get all three agencies to go back to Audubon

**Follow up with call. Strong opposition to walking away- last of the Gila Chub

Tony- site visit- brought up not worth while project

Bill- ? renovated in ? 2010- Tony..plans to renovate again? Tony –green sunfish down of structures- mosquito fish

Rob- ASGF supports- sent letter

Redfield Canyon

Bill- trying to fire the land for that – target 2018

Eagle creek- FWS writing EA, Freeport paying for barrier up to 4 million. New target date Sept 2018 (late spring)

Verde Barrier

Bill- discussion- two barriers.

Rob- background on double barrier? Aravaipa was too much \$\$, hadn't heard of anything with Verde

Bill- above Hell's canyon- Appraisal 3-4 mill

Rob- problem \$\$ 10 mill

Julie – would like to look into it, mentioned in watershed plan- AZGF like to support

Middle Fork

Mike question to Rob- high level, BOR concern about political? Rob-no. Concerned about burying hot springs, waiting on NM report

***Mike- some engineering memo- will look for and email out

Mike- published statewide fisheries management plan –Middle Fork is one of those places, want public comment- lots of logistics? unacceptable impacts

Rob- benefits worth looking into

Bill question number of sites? Rob- identified 3 or 4 sites, lowest one before canopy opens up, but no engineering [was done]- will be long barrier, but good road access, not like Blue though.

Mike- road access – copy of fish management on public tab on website

Doug- all native or sport fish?

Spring Creek

Tony- still worthwhile. Postponed because of Haigler creek

Rob question- Abandon?

Julie – Haigler- public upset, treatment, conservation easement with owner being negotiated, need to happen before barrier built, - grant money lost, needs repurpose- NEPA put on hold, public scoping put on hold as well. When conservation easement done, will pick back up (been 10 years)

Doug- NGO partners? Julie –yes, not sure about AZ water land and trust

Julie- land owner working with TNC, but TNC backed out and wanted AZGF to handle

Other Barriers

Doug- start thinking about other alternatives for barriers beside list.

***Bill question? Doug- looked at 50 streams and picked ones on list. Bill wants to follow up with meeting to discuss what's been looked at, worth revisiting?

Doug- include department with decisions on O'Donnell

Rob- Diane L. conversation with Tyse and was on board. Linda K is only issue

4. **Gila River Basin Monitoring** (Bill/Tony): Status/accomplishments of existing contract & New Contract

Tony- 5th year up in June- completed 5 year project

Note about form: Italics added to reference after contract started, Gray area references other programs monitored

63 streams – detected targets in 36

Julie question- Italics – not applicable- Tony- added later, start of contract was not part

Bill question- Number streams? Tony- summarize for spreadsheet

Rob question- New contract?

Bill- working with contracting folks, to get out in spring

Tony- access sites far to get to –Rob – separate contract for those

Rob- short history – doing canals, Gila, Salt for 15 years. Dropped to 1 every 5

Tony – states overlap with monitoring- Rob developed list of pops, AZGF was monitoring anyway, NM was monitoring same way Heidi was monitoring.

Bill question- Do more need to be added to list? Project specific

Tony- if species was established, roll over to monitoring wash, (Buckhorn)

Rob- in theory maybe delete

Tony question- cut back to not very often on non-native

Doug- yes, monitor streams with natives, or could have natives, no need to monitoring unless getting ready to do project there

Rob- don't use stringent criteria, reduce frequency to visitation

Bill- once every 3 years

*** Adjust list for monitoring status of streams

Tony- shouldn't be on working list if monitored by other programs.

Tony- if put out another contract for request for proposals? Bill yes- same as last time

Rob- Rec was supposed to put out to small businesses? Is AZGF qualified? Current contract expired in June.

Bill- summary of calendar year.

Tony- contract reports calendar year, though funding in middle of year

Doug- FWS no leeway on start date

Rob- modified Tony- yes- mid winter, calendar year reported

Bill- owe 5 year summary

Bill question- Any New Mexico sites ? NM not worthwhile- only looked at White Water

***Mike- Gila monitoring effort 10 fixed sites. In transition, was funded by sportfish brand, community surveys. Have desire for CAP funded portion? Gila, West Fork, East Tularosa,

Tony- report put out

Bill question- is information getting to group?

Doug- annual. Part of agreement. NMGF reporting for everyone

Mike- fall monitoring effort- paid by grant- reporting for grant, not sure if in CAP report?

Rob- want Mangus and Bear brought on.

Mike- continue sites, add others at less frequent

Rob- 1 every 3 years

Julie question- Long term monitoring program? Bill – need **workshop**- address: is it helping recovery plan efforts, is monitoring getting info needed

Doug- Rec made part of proposed action, Rob- for the life of CAP

Bill- formalize, look at data to reevaluate

*** Separate meeting for first 5 years

Monitoring-

Tony- smaller sites getting good idea of status of pop needed for recovery. Salt River, round tailed chubs not captured

Tony- weakness of sampling regime is fixed sites and missing info in-between

***Julie- multiple programs monitoring sites- it would be good if information centrally collected, internal but need meeting to centralize/coordinate data collection

Bill- venue to coordinate?

Mike- NM only- consulting? SWCA?- ask permits person to pull every permit in state and break out by basin, to see who is permitted for what, regarding to monitoring – collaborating with other agencies

Tom- working with NM

Julie- service doing species status assessment, coordinate so Service can make an informed decision.

Mike- ensure under a protocol that's defensible.

Tony – table 3 potential streams to add. CAP projects. Cienaga burrow?

Mike- didn't get there this year, but occasional monitoring-

Tony- wouldn't throw that one on there

Tony- Canyon Creek

5. **Conservation and Nonnative control actions**

- **2016 review**

Arizona conservation and nonnative control accomplishments (Tony/Heidi)

Mineral creek on hold because of state lands. Assessed sites throughout the year, some of which would be suitable to topminnow.

Bill question- Item 3-84C. Tony- Looking for new places to put fish. Bill - Suggested might want to investigate, Tony- (literature (?) Volts and Potaso, 2003) restocked TNC on Aravaipa Rim.

FS Coconino rec sites to be checked out. Tony- went at dry period of year- no likely usable

Sands Draw still wasn't ready. Heidi, still trying to get more grasses. At point where may be able to get established. Still using water for grassland restoration. Tony question- Consult with FWS? Heidi- not priority. Doug- can go in grazing BO. Tony- another solution? To get water without impacting fish? Heidi- can't take water for source, consider labor for manmade refuges, no money to completely finish, money diverted. If had funds could have completed Sands Draw. At Porter, solar panels down, move livestock, fence out spring, need EA.

Discussions with BLM if Upper Bonita Creek should be site

Boyce Thompson- holding pattern due to State park funding lost

New Mexico conservation and nonnative control accomplishments (Mike/Tim)

Mike- one non-native removal West Fork- remain rare, natives doing well

Did not do anything in Turkey Creek due to 1.) Andrew's departure, 2.) Fire cancelling second trip, and thus total reset.

Skeleton not surveyed yet. More than one non-native in Mule Creek- possible upstream on private land. Could make renewed effort with land owners.

Tony- they could migrate up when flowing down to San Fran.

Bill question- Seasonally connected? Yes. Mike- dry reach, Rob- inaccessible- no barriers.

Rob- Gila Chub? Mike & Tony, Doug, found some in Feb this year, green sunfish, small mouth bass, black bullhead

Brian-transferred loach minnow two creeks- Tularosa, West Fork, both had 100 in number, would like to do spikedace.

Bill- why was the number set at 100? Tony- Gila was hit hard, available stock? Would like as many as possible, i.e. 300 -- In last year's CAP report appendix.

Repatriation work-Mike- Andrew was working repatriation plan. In last year's CAP report appendix.

** look at repatriation approach with other agencies, i.e.: Tony AZGF. Julie- mirrored NM approach. If gap, start over.

TIM HANDOUT:

Surveys of Gila River---

Blue Creek-sampled upper reaches 1984, not resampled until 2010. Only new species in 2010 Red shiner.

Blue Creek 2015 – dry, 1 km walk upstream to find water. Only 5 pools found to have fish. In July after rain, no surface flow. 2016 surface flow past starting point, similar to 2010.

Tony question- Habitat suitable for repatriation of loach minnow or spikedace? Tim- no, but possibly could be a chub refuge or repatriation (repat).

Tim- since non-natives not in there, possible consideration for barrier –request for Rob comment

Rob- found good barrier site, if loach or spikedace can't go in, Rec won't want to.

Tim- Apache Creek, perennial springs this year, no fish in upper portion, will return regardless of program. Possible to reintroduce or repat – spikedace or chub. Check for perennial flows.

Downstream Apache Creek- no fish. Unknown other boundaries.

Rob question- Species of garter snake? Tim has in notes, but not narrow headed or northern.

Tim question- Further surveys in upper portion of blue creek and further assessing apache creek, looking for input.

Tim- fulfill task order, 2017, get into Canyon Box middle portion, boat trip survey- any round tail chub.

Mike question- Is main stem fall survey? Tim- yes. On BLM

Bill question- upper portion of apache to bear creek

Other projects (All)

- **2017 planned**

Arizona conservation and nonnative control (Tony/Heidi)

Tony- monitoring, some new potential (oil well, maternity, Indian Creek, Sycamore Creek, and maybe Copper Creek)

Bill- final year of monitoring? Tony- Cienagas

Tony- Murray spring fed from effluent seepage

Bill question- If didn't happen, impact to barrier? Tony- depends on flow through. If good connection they will swim up.

Tony- Sands Draw on hold this year.

Fresno canyon may not happen this year, but can take steps to get there.

Heidi- new fish in Boyce Thompson? Tony- yes. Julie? Source of non-natives- Tony- people

Heidi plans for removal this year- at Bonita, check for green sunfish removal. Aravaipa, will look at Horsecamp canyons, should still be green sunfish free but will check. These two were source, none seen, and this may help eradicate green sunfish from Aravaipa. Typically adults in main stem.

New Mexico conservation and nonnative control (Mike)

Mike- continue repatriation efforts. Get another survey of Mule Creek to check status of chub. Another pass of Hard Bar on West Fork. Transition away from Turkey Creek to do complete survey of Middle Fork. But will finish up Turkey Creek and Middle Fork.

Bill question, Doug year one goes into agreement.

Tim- get to 1984 sites. Confluences with tributaries to Blue Creek, Cherry Creek, ... Political changes since 1984 may allow him to do so. Wants to continue to assess Apache Creek- use hobos, to determine possible place for refuge or repatriation.

(Below is Tim's conversation regarding billing and available funds.)

Doug- agreement with BLM 5 years, but can only go to September 30th

Tim question- Why? Doug- Because can't go past master agreement.

Tim question- get task order to get rest of money for year, what are available funds? Rob- don't you have to bill and get reimbursed? Tim- first round of funding not allocated until late fiscal year 2014, and haven't bill for it; however, money available is not enough to cover, and doesn't want to risk losing future (?) funding? Do agreement with BOR? Doug- yes, funding for future years will come from BOR. Doug- as long as you invoice before Sept 2017 can get that \$

**** Can Doug and Tim email what's been billed? Less than 1K.

Bill-Tony- cost estimates not what being awarded to agency.

Keep Bill in loop! So he knows when things are invoiced.

Tim- 15K initially put in account, can bill for that, but remainder would come from new agreement with BOR?

Other planned projects (All)

No notes for this item

- **Fish Production**

- ARCC

Fish spawning in new tank

Next summer plumbing and new tanks, capacity for more fish. No phase 3?

*** Meeting to follow.

- Renovation funding (Bill/Doug)
- Renovation status (Bill)
- Production history (Tony)

Tony- Table 6, gray area after Matt came on.

Doug question- in future what's gone out? Tony- I have that.

***Rob - Comparing genetics from population of Blue River to see if same as source population.

- Staffing (Tony/Bill)
- Acquisition of spinedace and loach minnow
 - Aravaipa (Tony)
 - Blue River (Tony)
 - New Mexico populations (Mike)

Focus on wild to wild transfers. Refuge pops vs production out of hatchery. Expectations- support both, one over other? Where does renovation hatchery expansion fit into that? Timeline?

Bill question- How to plan? Tony- AZGF would acquire and deliver (?). Replicate in wild streams rather than bring into hatchery (point of clarification for Mike)

Mike- priority standpoint, no taking to ARCC, but if abundance of fish, can do both.

Rob? San Fran, Tularosa, etc...

Bill? Transfers/repatriation? Mike- laid out in repatriation plan.

Tony- recovery actions was to replicate pops in a refuge systems, as in ARCC, in case of disaster.

Reference Fossil Creek

Doug- maintain genetic diversity

Julie- prop end species, 1996 policy –prop in hatchery is last resort. Doug- at threshold for captive population. FWS- meet standards, Rob- Gila Chub at Indian Creek, if can maintain 500 at minimum would maintain gen div. Rob- Mike your concern is valid.

Mike- is husbandry issue? Unresolved issues? Beyond? Tim- something went wrong with systems that killed fish, and infected with parasites. Bill- due to renovation, spawning occurred off site.

***Bill- Matts gone, time to have workshop – Tony- meeting in January for past hatch managers from ARCC and Dexter to provide insight on how to better run hatcheries. Rob- manipulate daily. Don't rely on one annual Tony- pulsing with turbidity. Rob- research separate from hatchery is good. Julie- having a hatchery culturist vs researcher.

Mike final- priority is wild to wild transfers. ...until restorations done, then maybe readdress.

Tony- Blue river, Bonita creek.

- ASU Topminnow (Bill)

Bill- ref Paul literature- Bylas Spring stock, no talk of new population discovered in

- Other fish production (All)

- White River stock

Planning on surveying this spring with AZ (?) conservation, want to talk with Bill. Off table doing own hatchery due to fund. Wants to visit Bubbling ponds. Was concerned about small numbers in water, but didn't want to remove them. Convinced better to take now. "SHE" who is she? Rob- can ARCC take on stock? Tony- can be ready

- Eagle Creek stock

Tribal lands, no detail of survey info, but not much

- San Pedro preserve update

Managed by TNC, but at end of Feb walking away from agreement. Recs going to be maintaining it temporarily until other takes over.

Heidi- why walk away? Bill- discussion with Jeff Lark- vandalism and high risk/danger, Doug- seems TNC getting away from managing any land.

2018 policy committee recommendations (All)

- Discussion of projects sun setting in NM
- New projects

Recommendations:

Tony AZGF, continue everything except Fossil Creek- Tony writing completion report on that. Gila potential new stockings (Table 9).

***Julie question What happens to Fossil Creek? Who picks it up? Tony- want to be established program not a monitoring program forever.

Rob- potential conservation measures on new opinion is to put money into inflationary costs.

Bill- initial 500K, then to 550K.

Julie question- Does mscp account for inflation? Bill- Rob- not familiar, but thinks no, due to large \$\$

Rob- extra money found for ARCC, use money from fish barriers not built. Special projects can come up every year.

Bill- Rob- set of contracts ready to go, so when extra money comes up in May can move forward.

Doug- ensure wording in contracts is flexible

Tony- outlined in strategic plan

Bill- San Juan program, - Mike- build 2% inflation in, but Mike not sure of history.

Rob- Marsh and Assoc build inflation into proposals.

Rob- Policy committee votes on Tasks. (Today?)

BOR working on agreements that would start October 2017.

Continuation Tasks-

Mike- NM Game and Fish- Dialed back amount of money in Gila, West Fork removal, drop Turkey Creek, Middle Fork unfunded. Took money from WF and TC to cover Middle Fork.

Rob- in NM case, come up with list of new tasks. Give NM set amount like AZ

Rob- Year 5 of 5, 4 of 4, are going out the door, need to replace with new projects

Doug- \$122,800 left to spend, Rob- give to NM or, any new tasks coming up.

Bill- non-native Bonita Creek, Heidi- 18K may be done deal.

Tony- extra 10K for interns.

Doug- if NM split evenly, 41K each. Still have to include NM BLM

Rob - FWS, FS, NMGF need to come up with tasks for use money

Doug question- 1 of 1, 2 of 3, etc. Rob- asked how many years to complete project.

Mike- Can change in modification

Mike- Turkey Creek not continuing in 2018

*** Bill shore up budget, agreements, meet with Rob. Follow up with each person.

Tim - BLM NM for 2018 (More Q&A from Tim about funding)

Tim- will bill out for remaining funds, but have three tasks. Start new agreement for 5 year task? Or carry over with Mod? Doug- carried over no modification- on Reclamation agreement, they have the money.

6. Information and Education Update

- Website review (Bill) – postponed due to lack of time.
- Discussion (All)

7. Program Evaluation/Proposal process

- Presentation (Bill-Review of WMI report)

***Bill- will collect surveys

- Administrative procedures discussion (All)
- Project Proposal process (All)

Rob- maybe two meetings a year

Doug – bring in species leads for relative agencies.

Mike- where are we at with chub? Would like regulatory update.

Rob – Service is in the middle of evaluating

Julie- same with razorback, invite people from ES for updates.

- Workshop (All)

Bill- look at 5 conservation areas. May be venue to have hatchery discussion. Need time frame in next few months. March (last week) Doodle poll.

Doug- get facilitator, bill – Andi Rogers.

Tony- will help organize, Brian & Mike

- Strategic Plan (All)

Rob – directed by Bruce Tobbart

Bill- have workshop, then strategic plan review (by end of 2017)

- Consultation (Bill/Doug)

Garter Snake listing

Rob- bring in Chiricahua Leopard Frogs (?) (not sure if this was a serious suggestion)

8. Recap (Bill)

- Recommendations to Policy Committee
- Action Items
- Future meetings

(No notes specific to Recap section.)

ACTION ITEMS

BUDGET UPDATE

***Bill follow up. Service first initiative- share resources--initially done sharing office space within interior, expanded to include DOI and forest service (USGS) ?Bill- can waive overhead ?Tim will be emailing Bill.

*** CC Bill on quarterly reports. Bill- need scopes of work

FISH BARRIER UPDATE

** O'Donnell- Follow up with call. Strong opposition to walking away- last of the Gila Chub Tony- site visit- brought up not worthwhile project

*** Middle Fork - Mike will look for engineering memo and will email it out

Other Barriers

*** start thinking about other alternatives for barriers beside list. Follow up with meeting.

GILA RIVER BASIN MONITORING

*** Adjust list for monitoring contract status of streams

*** Workshop suggestion- Long term monitoring program- is it helping recovery plan efforts, is monitoring getting the information needed, formalize, look at data to reevaluate

***Julie- multiple programs monitoring sites- internal but need meeting to centralize/coordinate data collection NFCT

CONSERVATION AND NON-NATIVE CONTROL ACTIONS

2016 REVIEW

New Mexico conservation and nonnative control accomplishments (Mike/Tim)

** look at repatriation approach with other agencies, ie Tony AZGF. Julie- mirrored NM approach.
TOPIC FOR WORKSHOP Recover team meeting

2017 PLANNED

New Mexico populations (Mike)

***Bill- Matts gone, time to have workshop – Tony- meeting in January for past hatch managers from ARCC and Dexter to provide insight on how to better run hatcheries.

2018 Policy committee recommendations

*** Bill shore up budget, task agreements, meet with Rob. Follow up with each person.

*** Tony - email about setting up policy committee meeting

WMI RECCOMENDATIONS

*** Bill will collect surveys

PROGRAM EVALUATION / PROPSAL PROCESS

*** doodle poll for workshop dates.