Gila River Basin Native Fish Conservation Program
Technical Committee Meeting
Thursday, April 8, 2021 9AM – 12PM

DRAFT MEETING NOTES

Meeting Objectives

- Discuss the current and future funding for GRBNFCP projects
- Review and discuss the FY2022 Work Plan and clarify comments, by agency
- Discuss and decide on next steps for FY2022 Work Plan finalization

Participants:

Bill Stewart, Kent Mosher, Doug Duncan, Brian Hickerson, Yvette Paroz, Tony Robinson, Jill Wick (by phone), Andi Rogers, Carrie Eberly, Tim Frey

Action items

- Follow-up state agency meetings – **BOR & USFWS with AGFD and NMDGF**
- Scoring form and template don't line up perfectly, needs revisions - **BOR will work on this**
- Meeting with Heidi to discuss Aravaipa funds and potential savings – **BOR and AZ BLM**
- **Timeline/Next Steps**
  - Agencies send revised project list and budgets to BOR - **May 7th**
  - Next draft workplan (with evaluation forms) send out - **May 12th**
  - 2 weeks for scoring, all evaluations due - **week of May 24th**

Welcome/Overview

- High level discussion today, how to make the budget work/adjustments/etc.
- Follow up meetings with both agencies later – intention to make refinements to budget
- Big picture: $550k is the maximum amount that can be funded in FY2022. The amount in the draft proposals totaled $697,442, which is $147,442 over the maximum allowed amount. The proposed work will need to be cut so that the total amount funded is a maximum of $550,000.
- More funding has been allocated in the past, but can't be this year (upcoming spending on barriers)
- Let's be creative

GRBNFCP Project: Current Funding and Future Evaluation – Bill Stewart

- **Current Proposed Budget**:
  - 2022 NEPA will use a lot of money for Eagle Creek
  - Commitment has been $550k for 30 years – commitment thru 2027
    - Future of program not sure after
  - Current big costs:
    - Consultation to address garter snakes-hopefully this year, that
    - Lots of barrier projects in the works
  - Current proposed budget request is $697K
    - 70/30-AZ/NM split currently.
    - Looking to reduce $150k
  - Strategy ideas? BOR presented two potential alternatives for discussion
    - Could cut based on current proportions allocated to the two states (70/30), which would amount to about $50,000 for NM and about $100,000 for AZ
    - A second proposed alternative was to cut funding based on project scores for FY2021 – 4 projects ranked below the $550,000 cutoff, do we cut these? How do we handle.
      - If we cut based on this approach, NM and AZ each lose 2 projects, but NM funding would be cut by $104,621, and AZ by $70,100
    - Cost share, grant funding, other ideas?
- **Reflections from group:**

- AGFD – hard to decide which approach to take. Suggested that evaluate what levels for the two states were funded years ago when program spending was at 550k? What were funds being allocated on then?
- NM – NM would like to choose which project to withdraw.
  - Would choose Westfork (non-native) over the permanent site monitoring.
  - Comment that the way that the ranking happens is skewed against monitoring,
    - Question, is this still the way we want to move forward as a team.
    - 30-year datasets are valuable.
    - Monitoring has a recovery value.
- AGFD comment- monitoring should be in our scoring – part of recovery
- AGFD has already tried to reduce some costs and will continue to talk to BOR
- Dropping projects isn't the answer but can we streamline them?
- Criteria "should" be answering what projects get the species to recovery.
  - What is the recovery value, hard question.
- Streamlining
  - NM Comment: budgets have become much more administrative focused with meetings, proposals, workshops, etc.
    - Budgets are increasing due to administrative tasks (which needs to be looked at)
  - Per BOR, there won't be additional workshops (without agreement from group)
- FS - likes the reevaluation of the budgets, find more matching funds, supportive of trying to fund all projects, but with some shaving of expenses.
- Criteria - Value (due to legacy) is not captured as well as it could be.
- Dropping projects: Do we just ask each state to drop a project? In each state?
- BLM – due to Covid, $29k won't be used, can it be carried over and removed her request for 50k
  - Money disappears, no new agreement until the other one ends (Feb).
  - Can de-obligate and re-obligate (BOR says) –
  - Needs more discussion here

Approach

- Look at comments and make adjustments
- Discreet projects to reduce $$ - Eagle Creek (AGFD) can be dropped for this WorkPlan, timing is not right; discuss on Aravaipa
- Discussions with states on dropping/streamlining
- Revision of the work plan with evaluation form - BOR

Next Steps and Wrap-up

- BOR follow up meetings with state agencies
  - Timing – agency meetings (April),
  - Agencies send revised project list May 7th,
  - Next draft workplan (with eval forms) May 12th,
  - 2 weeks for scoring (May 24th ish)
  - Policy meeting mid - June to review finalized work plan
    - Agenda – Consultation, projects, barriers, Strat plan process update, Budget update,
  - NM meeting- Bill follow up with Jill to discuss invites
- Updated FY 2022 Work Plan and Project Evaluation forms

Adjourn