Gila River Basin Native Fishes Conservation Program Technical Committee Meeting Call
March 12, 2018 – 10:00am
Phone: 1-888-391-8602 Passcode: 6297858

Meeting Objectives

- Review Tier 2 Projects
- Strategic Plan Discussion
- Policy Meeting Date
- Set December 2018 Tech Meeting Dates

Participants

Tony Robinson (AGFD)
Mike Ruhl (NMDGF)
Doug Duncan (USFWS)
Bill Stewart (USBR)
Kent Mosher (USBR)

Annual Budget and Workplan

Bill – Any issues with workplan formatting?

- Tony – No issues with formatting. Answered Bill's comments and changed what needed to be changed.
- Mike – Fine with most of it. He will provide Bill with comments on workplan.

Bill – Provided concept for Native Fish in Classroom. Similar to Trout in Classroom. Could possibly fund project this year.
Bill – CAP funds-transfer amount

- Project costs creeping up each year, which is fine; however, FY2020 may be more restricted to the base $550k funds due to potential barrier costs
- Mike is funded to FY2020. Tony funded until FY2018 – Bill will hopefully frontload Tony for FY2019 and FY2020 this year.

Bill will wait for comments, then put out final draft of workplan.

Tier 2 Projects

Bill

- Looking to fund Phase 3 of ARCC Renovation
- Waiting to hear back from engineers about $$ amount for Redfield Canyon
- There is money available for large- and/or small-scale Tier 2 projects

Prioritized list (no filter by financial constraints)

- #1 – Evaluate if hatchery/captive re-established populations are genetically representative of remnant populations
    - Bill – Could #1 and # 4 (Effective population size evaluation N_b) be combined?
        - Doug – Yes, should be able to use same genetic samples
        - Tony – Tom Turner did something similar
        - Mike – Unsure about how they approached upper Gila River
        - Tony – Effective population is important for both hatchery and wild
        - Mike – San Juan crew is using effective population date for pikeminnow management – finding interesting results and believe it will lend insight to questions with population that are looking to reintroduce
        - Bill – plans to meet in a couple of weeks to discuss genetics project that will guide the scope of work statement.
- #3 - Chub DNA project

    - Tony – Does not believe that this project is currently a high priority
        - Josh Copas's paper accepted and will be out soon
        - Dowling's project would be answering different questions though
    - Mike
        - Table project for another year until we see the current science before proceeding
    - Bill
        - Doesn't think we could afford #1, #3, and #4 at the same time
- #2 - eDNA – Developing the tool for further refinement for spikedace and loach minnow
    - Tony
        - Current eDNA sampling is good at detecting the two species right now; however, it could use refinement to see how far the eDNA travels, as well as how long it takes to degrade.
    - Bill
        - There are multiple ways this could be funded. Could this work support what Tony has been doing?
    - Mike
        - It is a nice time to work on eDNA refinement as the Forest Service lab in Missoula is engaged in conducting range-wide assessments.
- #5 – Range-wide spikedace and loach minnow assessment of variables that affect establishment success
    - Tony
        - NAU student (Ben Cox?) addressing the question in a way
        - Bonar's student also addressing a slight piece of it
        - Project needs to be refined – would be better if laid out in study plan
    - Bill
        - Would it be good to have those students present at the next meeting?
    - Tony
        - Yes, it is worthwhile. However, NAU student had questionable methods of embeddedness and was not catching fish at some of the sites
        - Also, see #8 – Factors (all species) that determine success/failure of re-established populations
        - Suggested that #5 could be a graduate student project, but is also concerned about quality.
- #6 – Research lethal grid electroshocking for non-native removal
    - Tony
        - Would be interesting
    - Mike
        - Is it practical to set grids out and drag them around?
        - Has a hard time envisioning the practical application
            - Tony agrees in regards to stream implementation. The technique is more for habitat use studies right now.
        - On the fence with this project. Does not think it is a priority above other items lower on the list right now (i.e., #12 – Reclamation equipment for Heidi)
- #7 – Nonnative removal of yellow bullhead and green sunfish in Aravaipa
    - Bill
        - Do it well or don't do it all
        - Possibly place moveable weirs (i.e., by mile) and then shock these sections
        - Could combine #12 (Reclamation Equipment) with other removal projects and use Aravaipa Creek as a test case

- Tony
  - Is there a study plan for this project?
    - Bill has not seen one. However, if Reclamation funds the project, he wants a removal plan.
    - Tony – Plan should cover number of removals per year and what time of year. Tony would also like to assist with the removals.
- Small $ Projects
  - Bill – What about an on-call mechanical removal crew when there is project available (i.e., Aravaipa Creek)?
    - Tony – Removal is under AGFD authority. AGFD has no issues with BLM doing a removal at Aravaipa Creek and Bonita Creek, but this is not necessarily the case for on-call projects.
    - Could be useful for Red Tank Draw.
  - Tony – we need to do something about the Morgan City Wash weir
    - Bill – Can we take a site visit to Morgan City Wash?
      - Tony – Yes

Strategic Plan

Doug – If I work on CAP stuff should I review annual reports or strategic plan?

- Bill
  - Strategic plan needed prior to Policy Committee. It is a priority over annual reports.
  - What is the timeline for a revised draft?
    - Doug – Lots of stuff happening right now – recently found out who new Tucson supervisor will be and it will depend on supervisor's priorities
    - Tony and Bill – Both Tony and Bill can reprioritize time and work on strategic plan, if needed.
    - Doug – Let's wait a week (after new supervisor starts) and then make a decision
      - Bill will call Doug in a week.

Policy Meeting Date

Bill – Will be held during May at Reclamation Phoenix Area Office and will provide call-in information.

- Draft strategic plan needed by next month with a week or two for review. Need to provide it to the Policy Committee two weeks ahead of meeting.

Doug – Can't do week of May 15 (Madrean Conference)

Mike – San Juan Annual Meeting from May 21 – May 23

- Tony – Also, the same week as Western Division AFS conference

Tony – What about the second week of May?

- Mike – best week is May 7th, but needs to confirm. Tony needs to confirm too.

Bill – Should Andi and Carrie facilitate the Policy Committee meeting?

- Doug and Tony agree that it would be valuable to have them at the meeting.

Set December 2018 Tech Meeting Dates

Tony – Best weeks are Dec 4/5 or Dec 11/12

- Mike – San Juan meeting during one of those two weeks. Unsure of which week - will get back in touch with the group when he finds out.

Bill – Location?

- Doug – we haven't held the meeting in New Mexico in 10 years
- Bill – What about a field Trip to the Gila River Forks?
- Mike, Doug, Tony and Bill are good with the meeting being held in Silver City, NM.

Other Business

Tony – Project evaluation form in strategic plan needs to be updated

Bill – Would like to summarize where money has been spent and quantify this with species recovery goals.

Action Items

- Mike will provide dates for San Juan December meeting.
- Doug will get back in touch with Bill about strategic plan in a week.
- Tony, Mike, and Bill will confirm Policy Committee meeting dates.
- Mike will provide comments on workplan.
- Bill will address Tony's and Mike's comments on workplan.