

**Gila River Basin Native Fish Conservation Program  
Technical & Policy Committee Meeting  
Tuesday, March 10, 2020 1PM – 4PM**

*Bureau of Reclamation, 6150 W Thunderbird Rd, Glendale, AZ 85306*

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**MEETING NOTES**

**Meeting Objectives**

- Review and discuss FY2021 Project evaluation results, make adjustments as needed
- Evaluate and vote on FY2021 final ranked projects
- Discuss Tier 2 projects from the December 2019 Technical Committee meeting and any additions moving forward
- Discuss non-native control concepts/ideas from the December 2019 Technical Committee/Annual Reporting meeting and any next steps

**Participants:** Tim Frey, Heidi Blasius, Kent, Jill, Bill, Tony, Doug, Carrie, Bryan F. Matt Zigler

**Action item:**

- Edits to project/work plan to Bill by April 10 – **ALL**
  - **Project 4 – Gila Permanent Site Monitoring** : NM to edit POW to reflect that they will summarize/analyze the 2008-2020 data – **Jill/Bryan**
  - **Project 5 – Acquire SD, LM and rare populations of native fish**: For the FY21 work plan, combine this project with ARCC O&M - **Tony**
  - **Project 6 – Mulshoe ecosystem stream and spring repatriations**: Email: Dale Turner from TNC to see if there has been access on private property, also define what a “trip” is and a “removal”
  - **Project 10 – Expand Roundtail chub population in Harden Cienaga**: Combine the gila topminnow site with this as a “Harden Cienaga”
  - **Project 13 & 14** – Eliminate and add to the “gila topminnow” descriptive sentence
  - **Project 18** – ARCC: add Project 5 here
- Send Tier 2 proposals with rough estimate of \$\$ amount, to Bill by April 10<sup>th</sup> - **ALL**
- Send Policy Committee meeting agenda items to Bill/**Carrie** - **ALL**
- Send Non-native Workshop details to the Technical Committee when finalized - **Bill**

**FY 2021 Project Evaluation Results and Discussion**, *Bill Stewart, Bureau of Reclamation and Carrie Eberly, Southwest Decision Resources*

- Scoring form – not perfect, but gives a good idea of what the group thinks
- Evaluation form results for FY21
  - The red line indicates which project fall within the standard budget of \$550,000; this year there will likely be enough funding for those below the red line
  - Level of detail/information for evaluators to feel comfortable to score a project in an area that you may not be familiar with. This was easier than last year to rank/evaluate
  - Scientific methods – indicate that “we are using standard methods” and have in the past
- Projects discussion and revisions (if needed)
  - **Project 1**
    - Bill’s question: what is the target? Non-native reduction to a certain threshold or a response from the native fish based on removals
    - Tie in the permanent site monitoring in the Fall to project what the reach will look like to determine the effort the next summer. – is this possible?
      - The two are not in the same location, the non-native removal s below the confluence of the two and the system is different.
  - **Project 2**
    - Ranked high (#3) – catch all for catch, repatriation, etc.

- Keep track of the number caught for ARCC, how many released, broodstock, etc. – include a table with (ARCC reporting in December) the number came in, went out, currently have in stock
- **Project 3**
  - Monitoring project, so scores were lower
- **Project 4 – Gila Permanent Site Monitoring**
  - Monitoring – tying into the recovery goals, 10 year trend (stable, increasing, decreasing for SD and LM based on the recovery plan)
  - Historical reporting, summary exists (Yvette) – present some summary data during the reporting portion of NM in 2021
  - CAP funded the report, but not the surveys (2005/6)
  - Has been done every year since 1988, but not the same sites every single year
  - Yvette has done a variety summary reports (last done in 2007) on all the permanent sites to see what could be learned from the data
  - Summary data from 2008 to 2020 – in a report, with the new sites
    - Presence/absence is available, but no formal analysis
    - [NM to edit POW to reflect that they will summarize/analyze the 2008-2020 data – Jill/Bryan](#)
- **Project 5 – Acquire SD, LM and rare populations of native fish**
  - Does it make more sense to report this under ARCC (a project to support the work of ARCC)?
    - What Tony’s program does to get fish to ARCC..
  - May make more sense to lump this project and project #2 into a larger ARCC category – line items for budget
  - [For the FY21 work plan, combine this project with ARCC O&M - Tony](#)
- **Project 6 – Mulshoe ecosystem stream and spring repatriations**
  - Establish targets/benchmarks for this project
    - Heavy removal in the wilderness – much of the connectivity depends on the annual flows
    - Target should be reach 1 and 2 (lower section)
  - A forever project because of the private property issue – keep the green sunfish low in the upper reach.
  - Idea: Fly a drone from BLM land ends to inaccessible lands to determine wet/dry section (habitat evaluation)
    - TNC does wet/dry mapping every year, but unclear if they can cross the private property
      - [Email: Dale Turner from TNC to see if there has been access on private property](#)
    - Revisit the non-native conversation – 2021: big push (6 trips, now all in lower reaches, [define what a trip vs. removal is](#)) and get as much out as possible an revisit every other year, or just focus on 1 and 2 to some level and then follow up to see if there is contamination from lower pools/populations
- **Project 7**
  - Start a new project: stocking plus monitoring plus additional augmentation (at least 4years)
  - Should some of the sites be prioritized and some of the excess money be spent on SD/ LM (West Fork of the Black removal).
  - Consider the potential limitation of funding in the future (\$550,000) – be flexible enough to spend money on other prioritized projects.
    - Keep the ones that need to be monitored and the ones that need to be stocked
    - The tentative ones – removed entirely from the work plan need to be indicated “funding pending based on funding needing to be spent on West Fork of the Black”, but still in the Work Plan
- **Project 8**
  - No comments
- **Project 9**

- No comments
- **Project 10 – Expand Roundtail chub population in Harden Cienaga**
  - Combine the gila topminnow site with this as a “Harden Cienaga” – 2020 Bill is a lumper
- **Project 11**
  - No comments
- **Project 12**
  - Target as an issue here too – nonnative control
- ~~Project 13~~ **Add to the gila topminnow sentence**
  - Dollars from eliminating this project could go to West Fork
  - Out-year planning with tentative gila topminnow
  - In this work plan (and maybe 2020 workplna) – noted the reasons it is taken off
- ~~Project 14~~ **Add to the gila topminnow sentence**
  - Move to tentative status – add a short list of sites to the gila topminnow section
- **Project 15**
  - If AGFD does the control on its own..think about how BOR (what aspects) is involved as the barrier moves forward
- **Project 16**
  - With more money from other projects, there will be a need for more passes (pass = 40hrs), [Tony to edit](#)
    - Define the join coordinated effort will look like (AGFD, BOR, FWS and Tribe)
  - YY male brook trout is combined with Brook Trout – Colleen Caldwell in NM working with NM DFG, part of a research project looking at levels of removal effort combined with different stocking levels – survival and contribution to breeding population, 2 yrs in to the research. Pilot project in a pond and creek with similar goals
- **Project 17**
  - Using 2020 results from Bonita ad Aravaipa to determine efforts needed for 2021
  - Focusing on yellow bullheads, showing patterns similar to green sunfish, upstream there are less bullheads and more native; more concentrated in lower areas.
  - Assess if the pattern is holding true this year, this will determine that the similar effort that was used with green sunfish
  - Complete eradication
- **Project 18 - ARCC**
  - No comments – [add project #5 here](#)
- **Project 19**
  - Looking forward to genetic info – maybe in June
  - Could result in adjustment in December...

**FY 2021 Approvals – [approved with adjustments \(see above\)](#)**

*Bill Stewart, Bureau of Reclamation*

**Tier 2 Projects**

*Bill Stewart, Bureau of Reclamation*

- Research and Development of BOR in Denver has some funding for the best ideas, this could be an opportunity
- Concepts from December meeting and others
  - Crayfish biocide (3 phases, initially) Jon Amberg presented on the 1<sup>st</sup> phase
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> phase is \$300,000, and may need to be broken into phases.
  - Movable weir could be one the R&D in Denver could fund
  - \*\*Funding will be towards the end, pending barrier fixes.
  - Marsh and Assoc I&E proposals – ID book and Sharing Tails
    - Looking into how to fund, potentially through USFWS, pending agreements/contracts
  - Jeff Simms
    - St. David’s cienaga restoration – Kent has the proposal and the budget,

more information needed

- Another project on the San Pedro (preserve) that may need funding
- Gila River Indian Community – wetlands and ponds funding (native spp. That are not listed)
- Partner money – Desert Fish has some support, top ask \$15,000

- **Send proposals with rough estimate of \$\$ amount, to Bill by April 10th**

**Non-native control discussion, Bill Stewart, Bureau of Reclamation**

- CCAST – case studies on removal efforts (NM and AGFD have contributed)
- Matt Grabau conversation with Bill – sub group of folks to talk about targets/benchmarks
- Native Fish Conservation team – prioritize projects (additional effort)
- Framework for developing targets, thresholds, when to bail, etc. (decision tree development - workshop)
- **Workshop in Tucson in December** (case studies summarized and presented back) – person paid at U of A working with M.Grabau
  - Tool to determine how removal targets are set, prioritization process
  - Support state agencies, fws, and grbnfcp needs
  - Strengthen community of practice
  - Develop decision support tools for non-native species management
- Planning team to develop what the workshop would look like – collaborative effort
- Bill to send the small group the draft that comes from Matt Grabau
- Need goals of the workshop, the ask would be 2 extra days in Tucson – **Bill will get this and send to the group**

**Additional Technical Committee business items**

- Fund WMAT in July, they wouldn't process without Conflict of Interest forms for anyone who as has viewed, ranked, evaluated the project.
- AGFD needed approval, and have confirmed they wont sign it
- Non-federal partners can make up their own form if needed (there might be templates out there, USFWS is looking into it)
- This group is inherently in conflict of interest – funding goes to people who are ranking their own projects.
- Need to come up with a solution and the potential issue of FACA (as we are recommending/voting as a group on projects)
- Add to policy committee agenda if needed.
- **Send Policy Committee meeting agenda items to Bill/Carrie.**

**Adjourn**