



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

April 2016

# Alchesay-Williams Creek NFH Complex

*Southwest Region*



Monthly Accomplishment Report

## ***Conserving Aquatic Endangered Species***

The Complex' annual (scheduled) fish health inspections commenced on April 5th. Dr. Martha Keller and her crew started at Alchesay and ended at Williams Creek the following day. Dr. Keller was given a comprehensive tour of both facilities in order to get a better understanding of our unique Complex.

Fish have been held on station longer than expected while waiting for the “proceed to stock” letters from our Tribal partners. Extensive efforts have been made to keep all of our trout healthy during this three month waiting period.

Nate Wiese, Project Leader from Mora NFH, took tours of both the Alchesay and Williams Creek (AWC-NFH) facilities on Wednesday, April 20th. Bruce Thompson and Bradley Clarkson discussed Apache trout genetics with Nate. Several tips and great advice were shared that we may both be able to apply to our respective programs. Both program managers agreed that an inter-exchange of hatchery operational techniques/methodologies between programs is extremely valuable. As Nate Wiese put it “I’m really excited that we are swapping more ideas between hatcheries.”



Fish Health crew

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## ***Conserving, Restoring and Enhancing Habitats***

Compulsory EPA water sampling was performed twice at both hatcheries for the month of April. Both facilities were tested this month for suspended solids and water pH. All test results were within permit parameters. New changes enacted by the EPA discharge monitoring compliance office out of San Francisco require reports to be submitted electronically. Paper copies faxed to that office will no longer be accepted in the future. Gene Okamoto has scheduled himself for the required training utilizing the Net DMR electronic form program. Net DMR will now be used for sending in our monthly test results. The next scheduled online training day is May 17<sup>th</sup>. Two employees from the Complex will attend this training. One staff member will act as a back up to the other.

## ***Fulfilling Tribal Trust Responsibilities***

Gene Okamoto and Bruce Thompson worked with Chris Kitcheyan from New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NMFWCO) to establish stocking schedules and prepare change orders. Meanwhile, all New Mexico Tribal fish stocking remained on hold for the entire month, pending negotiations with the Director of the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish.

White Mountain Apache Tribe requested the attendance of Bruce Thompson, Bradley Clarkson, (AWC-NFH) Jess Newton and Jeremy Voeltz (AZFWCO) at a specially convened Tribal Council Meeting. Clarifications regarding BKD, stocking of Tribal waters, and the wording of the Director’s letter regarding stocking BKD negative fish were hotly debated. Due to the support of Josh Parker, Tim

Gatewood, Chadwick Amos and other Tribal natural resource employees, the issue was finally put to a vote and the council passed the resolution allowing trout from the Complex to be stocked on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.

The San Carlos Apache Tribe also drafted a letter requesting to receive trout from the Hatchery Complex in calendar year 2016.

The fish health results from our Annual Inspection came back with a finding of negative for the presence of *Renibacterium salmoninarum* (Rs) in the remaining fish on station. The complete inspection results are not yet available. Since our Complex tested positive for the BKD pathogen (Rs) earlier in the year, both stations are labeled as BKD positive for the next two years. Our Tribal partners have the option to accept or deny stocking of BKD negative fish into their waters.



Loading fish for stocking

As stated above, Fort Apache and San Carlos had provided a written response accepting trout from the Hatchery Complex. Stocking will continue for White Mountain Apache and San Carlos Apache Tribes.

### ***Enhancing Recreational Fishing and Public Use of Aquatic Resources***

Alchey-Williams Creek NFH Complex personnel stocked a total of 947 pounds of rainbow trout into San Carlos Apache Reservation waters. Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR) waters were stocked with 9,000 pounds of rainbow trout, 1,714 pounds of Apache trout and 77,185 one inch brook trout during the month of April. Total fish stocked for the month in a two week period of time was just shy of 215,000 trout for two Tribal partners.

### ***Workforce Management, Training, and Scientific Capacity***

Russ Wood, Fish Biologist at Williams Creek represented our Complex at the 2016 Broodstock Coordination meeting. This year's meeting took place at the Bears Bluff NFH in Charleston, South Carolina.

Bruce Thompson attended an Apache trout genetics conference call going over future plans for our Complex. Jeremy Voeltz, Jess Newton, (AZFWCO) Manual Ulibarri and Wade Wilson (SNARRC) all attended the call and provided good insight.



Attendees of the 2016 Broodstock Meeting

Pete Drevnick attended the heavy equipment Coordination Meeting which was held in Yuma, Arizona.

A fish food quote was compiled and sent to two different vendors early in the month. Fish pellet sizes ranged from 1mm to 4mm. As of late April, a purchase order had not been issued.

Bruce Thompson completed the 2015 Alchesay-Williams Creek Annual Report with the help of Gene Okamoto and Travis Taylor.

All employees at the Complex completed their required 2016 FISSA training.

Carol Walker provided valuable assistance at the Williams Creek Unit. She volunteered 147 hours this month helping out with fish culture duties and building maintenance. Jonathon Walker provided 92 hours at Williams Creek toward fish culture and construction.

Bruce Thompson attended the Southwest Monarchs webinar, which focused on improving milkweed habitat.

Pete Drevnick was off work for two weeks with tendonitis in his foot.

### ***Public Education and Engagement***

Williams Creek received 100 visitors this month and Alchesay received a total of 170 visitors. April came and went with warm temperatures bringing out lots of people enjoying the hatcheries' grounds and picnic areas.



Kids viewing adult fish



Field trip learning about young fish

Carol Walker, our volunteer at Williams Creek, has started working on the pollinator garden at Alchesay. Designing flower beds, weeding, and laying out a walk way are her non-fish projects for this spring. Eventually a pollinator garden will be constructed at Williams Creek as well.

## ***Asset Protection and Management***

The Complex tenant manager (Travis Taylor) worked closely with Jae Ahn, completing “tenant check out” paper work after Mr. Mike Figueroa decided to move off station. Final walk through was also completed. Mike was the last permanent employee to reside in hatchery housing.

A water pipe in the backyard of Quarters #6 at the Alchesay Unit broke. Maintenance (Pete Drevnick) quickly made the fix and water pressure was returned to the offices and quarters. Plans are underway to demo this building (Qtrs. #6). No one has resided in it since 2011.

## ***Upcoming Events***

Continue fish stocking to Tribes requesting fish.

Continue DM project construction as time allows

Coordination meeting in mid –May with WMAT-WORD

Receive a “semi” load of salt blocks (to reduce stress of overcrowded fish at both facilities)

Continue excessing equipment that is no longer utilized.

MAT team coordination with Buenas Aires NWR

Net DMR training

Bog Tank Kids Fishing Derby

### ***Hatchery Complex Personnel***

*Bruce Thompson, Complex Project Leader*

*Gene Okamoto, Alchesay Unit Leader*

*Pete Drevnick, Maintenance/Motor Vehicle Operator*

*Jeff Cody, Motor Vehicle Operator*

*Joyner George, WMAT Fisheries*

*Chadwick “Sharkey” Amos, Volunteer*

*Travis Taylor, Admin*

*Bradley Clarkson, Williams Creek Unit Leader*

*Russ Wood, Fish Biologist*

*John Fenslage, Maintenance*

*Mike Figueroa, Motor Vehicle Operator*

*Jimmy Smith, Motor Vehicle Operator*

*Isaiah Paxson, Animal Caretaker*

*Carol Walker, Volunteer*

*Jonathon Walker, Volunteer*