

# Alchesay-Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery Complex

SEPTEMBER 2016

*US Fish and Wildlife Service*

*Accomplishment Report*



## Conserving Aquatic Endangered Species:

A meeting was arranged with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) personnel on September 20, 2016 at the Tonto Creek State Fish Hatchery (TCSFH) to discuss the possible allocation of Apache Trout (APT) eggs to one of the state facilities. There were concerns with the Williams Creek station designated as a BKD positive facility and the State of Arizona asking the FWS to agree to a more stringent broodstock management program by implementing pair spawning, individual fish identification, and testing of all broodstock for both bacterial and viral fish pathogens. After further discussion, the State of Arizona has softened their original protocol request in favor of receiving up to 220,000 APT eyed eggs this year. AZGFD personnel attending the meeting included Chris Cantrell, Geoffrey Rabinovich, David Insley, and Bryce Sisson. The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) were represented by Jeremy Voeltz from Arizona Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (AZFWCO) and Bruce Thompson, Gene Okamoto, Bradley Clarkson, and Russell Wood from the Alchesay-Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery Complex (AWC-NFHC).

The Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission (SWTFC) hosted a BKD partnership meeting on September 27, 2016 in Albuquerque, NM at the Bureau of Indian Affairs

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(BIA) office to discuss the challenges and opportunities to their Tribal fisheries program due to the recent BKD findings at Alchesay-Williams Creek NFHC. The Tribal Commission has invited the FWS to update the SWTFC with responses from Southwestern Native Aquatic Resources & Recovery Center (SNARRC), Alchesay-Williams Creek NFHC (AWC-NFHC), Mora NFH, Mescalero TFH, and Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (FAC) office. Bruce Thompson represented the Complex answering questions referencing BKD and bio-security measures taken at both hatcheries. The State of New Mexico and the Forest Service was also in attendance. The State of New Mexico Game and Fish Department Chief of Fisheries-Michael Sloan repeatedly stated they have no authority over tribal fisheries in the decision to allow or bar fish distribution vehicles from a BKD positive facility to deliver fish into tribal waters of New Mexico. With this resolution coming to an understanding, the FWS will be able to transport fish into tribal waters if the Tribes agree to accept BKD negative fish from a BKD positive facility.

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

Complex personnel completed the monthly Discharge Monitoring Report (DMR) as well as compulsory EPA biweekly sampling of influent (Alchesay only) and effluent discharge water at both facilities for the month of September. Each facility was tested for total suspended solids (TSS) and pH limits. The biweekly analytical results remained well within the EPA parameters for both facilities. Quarterly domestic drinking water monitoring was also completed at both facilities. The result for the monitoring location, WC00388, at the Williams Creek facility tested positive for total coliform. A set of repeat water samples from the distribution location was sent in to reconfirm the presence of total coliform bacteria. The repeat samples were taken from four locations on the hatchery, encompassing the well, above the source, at the source, and below the source. The Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) was also contacted to guide us through the proper protocol to abate the potential safety concern. The retest results all came back negative.

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

The monthly Fisheries Coordination meeting between Arizona Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (AZFWCO), White Mountain Apache Tribe-Wildlife & Outdoor Recreation Division (WMAT-WORD), and Alchesay-Williams Creek NFHC (AWC-NFHC) personnel was cancelled due to prior commitments and rescheduling challenges.

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

Fall has arrived and the water quality condition at Alchesay NFH has recovered from unfavorable water temperature and the unsettled monsoon rainy season. The average

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daytime water temperature has dropped from the mid to high 60's to around 62°F. When the water temperature stays below 62°F for 5 consecutive days, this is an indication that environmental changes will remain balanced and Williams Creek NFH can begin transferring fish to the Alchesay facility. The Williams Creek NFH moved forward with the initial transfer of approximately 180,000 4" RBT to Alchesay NFH this month.



The Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR) received approximately 130,886 subcatchable 6" RBT for the month of September. Williams Creek 6" RBT program was transferred to the Alchesay unit due to continued low flows and limited rearing space at the William Creek facility. Average flow for the Williams Creek main spring was around 1,000 gallons per minute (gpm) throughout the summer months. All September subcatchable fish distribution was completed from the Alchesay facility. The Brown Trout (BNT) stocking will get underway in early October for the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT), San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation, and perhaps in support of the Navajo Nation and the Jicarilla Apache Tribe in the State of New Mexico.

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



The Apache Trout tank house modification is now complete. The comprehensive upgrade to the Apache Trout tank house include ten circular tanks for fish production, UV water treatment and upgrade egg treatment system to incubator stacks, egg hatching jars in rectangular tanks, and upgrades to the water delivery system (new plumbing). After the APT tank house went through a comprehensive disinfection, the hatchery's revised Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and Best Management Practice (BMP) protocols will be crucial to maintaining fish health. The day to day fish culture operations in adherence to these changes, will be paramount in circumventing future BKD problems in the Apache Trout program at the Williams Creek facility.

Andrew Sallach, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Drinking Water Protection Section, R9 Pacific Southwest Region, arranged a site visit on September 01, 2016 to evaluate the AWC-NFHC public transient drinking water systems. The last sanitary survey visit was completed in 2012 and identified a number of sanitary deficiencies during the visit. These deficiencies will be reviewed as well as developing a plan to

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address public health concerns. These include gas chlorination, review of sample sites and O&M plans, update of facilities and operators training on the revisions of the total coliform rule and monitoring schedules. A number of environmental health officers from the EPA, Indian Health Services (IHS), Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) and the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT) Environmental Department were invited to attend the EPA site visit. Hatchery personnel from each station gave the representatives a tour of their respective drinking water systems.

The Williams Creek Tank House Rehabilitation Deferred Maintenance (DM) Project is currently in progress and is on schedule to finish by the end of October. The DM project tasks includes electrical wiring and light fixtures installation, windows removal and replacement, removal of existing flooring and installation of new ceramic floor tile in



the office and visitor's restroom, installation of a radiant floor heating system, demolition of hazardous outside concrete steps, removal and replacement of exterior doors, installation of safety guardrails, and repairing and seal-coating the existing concrete retaining walls. Since the production tank house is completely shut down, this gave the hatchery staff the opportunity to make critical plumbing repairs and modifications. Six new freshwater headers complete with a main shutoff valve for isolating production rearing units in the event of a water supply emergency was assembled just prior to the arrival of the next shipment of rainbow trout eggs.



### Public Education and Engagement:

The fall season is the time of year when local patrons and tourists can benefit from the changing color of the leaves as well as paying a quick visit to the Alchesay-Williams Creek NFHC. While hatchery visitation has stabilized as the fall season passes and winter approaches, the community gatherings in the picnic areas have been consistent this month for everyone to enjoy. The month of September seems to mark the initial "winding down" of hatchery visitation and ceremonial gatherings for the calendar year, although, Alchesay NFH did have a spike in visitation, approximately 233 tourists visited the facility in addition to 48 tourists visiting to the Williams Creek facility.

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A McNary Elementary School class toured the Williams Creek facility on September 8, 2016, with 35 students and 4 teachers. Hatchery staff provided a guided tour of the facility circumventing the ongoing DM project of the production tank house.

Carol and Jonathan Walker remain committed in their participation in our volunteer program at the Alchesay-Williams Creek NFH Complex. Carol has provided 104.5 volunteer hours for the month of September while carrying out fish culture duties at the Williams Creek unit and single-handedly addressing the needs for the development of the pollinator garden at the Alchesay unit. Jonathan contributed 142.5 volunteer hours in fish culture and building maintenance activities at the Williams Creek facility.



Nathaniel Natan, White Mountain Apache Tribal member has volunteered approximately 60 hours this month mainly addressing building and grounds maintenance at Alchesay NFH. Nathan is part of a work study program where he shares his time attending school as well as volunteering work hours at the Alchesay unit. He contributes ~15 hours/week at the hatchery and devotes the rest of his time at school.



Carol was given the opportunity to spend more time with the development of the pollinator garden this summer since both the Apache Trout tank house and the production tank house are getting a thorough renovation.



She has reorganized her work assignments at Williams Creek and is committing up to three days a week to spend more time furthering the expansion of the Alchesay pollinator garden. Carol Walker donated up to 78.5 hours of habitat improvement this month in an effort to attract more pollinators, including the elusive Monarch Butterfly.

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### Asset Protection and Management:

The Alchesay-Williams Creek NFH Complex has prioritized and initiated abatement procedures in response to the facility condition assessment list generated by Jae Ahn, Facilities Coordinator, during his recent site visit to both hatcheries in late August. Each facility is working autonomously to prioritize and abate each of their deficiencies in a timely manner. Facility condition challenges are aimed at prioritizing safety concerns first, and time and weather sensitive issues soon after. The catalog of deficiencies varies from propane leaks, electrical and structural issues, replacement items, and general housecleaning to routine building maintenance. At this time, a number of deficiencies that were reported have been systematically repaired or replaced at both facilities and hatchery staff continues to move forward with the abatement plan of corrective actions for the remaining items on the facility condition assessment list.

### Upcoming Events:

#### **OCTOBER:**

October 3-7, 2016: Wage Grade Conference in Tucson, AZ

October 4, 2016: Williams Creek NFH to receive ~200K RBT eggs from Ennis NFH

October 14, 2016: FIS Fish and Egg Distribution Module reporting due

October 17, 2016: FBMS opens

October 18, 2016: Annual drinking water monitoring; including lead and copper testing

October 12 – 31, 2016: \*Completion of Williams Creek transfers to Alchesay NFH  
(approximately 100,000 5" fish)

\*Personnel taking much needed time off before Apache trout spawn taking commences in November.

\*Monthly coordination meeting at WMAT office in Whiteriver, AZ

October 24-28, 2016: All Program Leaders Meeting in Albuquerque, NM

## *Hatchery Complex Personnel*

### Alchesay-Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery Complex:

#### Whiteriver, Arizona

Bruce Thompson – Hatchery Complex Manager  
Vacant – Administrative Support Assistant

#### *Alchesay Unit*

Gene Okamoto – Unit Leader  
Pete Drevnick – Maintenance /MVO  
Jeff Cody – Motor Vehicle Operator  
Jimmy Smith – Motor Vehicle Operator  
Joyner George – WMAT Fisheries  
Chadwick “Sharkey” Amos – Volunteer

#### *Williams Creek Unit*

Bradley Clarkson – Unit Leader  
Russell Wood – Fish Biologist  
John Fenslage – Maintenance  
Mike Figueroa – Motor Vehicle Operator  
Isaiah Paxson – Animal Caretaker  
Carol Walker – Volunteer  
Jonathon Walker – Volunteer

