



November 14, 2015
New Mexico Bass Nation
Director's Meeting
Location/Time: Calibers/10:00 AM
4360 Cutler NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110

**NOTICE OF NMBN DIRECTORS MEETING SENT VIA EMAIL OCTOBER 13, 2015 VIA EMAIL [as amended]
(3 Responses Received)**

Directors,
Action Required!

Please forward this e-mail to your club president and copy me. If you have someone in your club that made the top 22, please copy them too and help us get a team email group set up for them. Let me know if November 14th would work for a meeting in Albuquerque. If I don't hear back from Directors soon, I am going to have to go directly to the club presidents and ask for new Directors. Also, if your club had recent elections, please update your club rosters and let me know who changed. I will work on getting the website updated and running again. Here [attached to email sent] is the latest on how the new Regional format will work. We need to figure out for sure what Opens-style tournament format means for next year's schedule.

I hope to schedule a conference call later this month and then have a meeting in November to discuss normal matters, by-law changes, next year's schedule, the Alliance contract if it continues and end-of-year awards.

Earl

Tournament schedule coordination and planning occurred prior to Directors meeting at 9:00 am

- I. 10:00 am Call to order, introduction, and roll call (Earl)
 - a. Southwest Bass Anglers - Bobby Carver – proxy for Mark Hettinga
 - b. High Country Bass - Denise Hansel – proxy for Ricky-Ray Martinez
 - c. Four Corners Bassmasters - Brian Stangel – proxy for Billy Dunson
 - d. ABQ Hawg Hunters - Xavier Gutierrez - Director
 - e. Cedar Cove – Randell Bell – Director
- II. Update Clubs, Directors, Officers (Brian)
 - a. ABQ Hawg Hunters
 - i. President - Moe Gutierrez
 - ii. Vice President – Mark Sawyer
 - iii. Director – Xavier Gutierrez
 - iv. Treasurer - Keith Johnson
 - v. Secretary – Earl Conway

- b. Cedar Cove
 - i. President - Chett Britton
 - ii. Director – Randell Bell
 - iii. Treasurer/Secretary – Tawny Bell
 - c. High Country Bass Anglers
 - i. President – Kenny Hansel
 - ii. Treasurer – Denise Hansel
 - iii. Director/Secretary – Brian Stangel
 - d. Four Corners Bassmasters
 - i. President – Landon McKnight
 - ii. Director – Billy Dunson
 - iii. Tournament Director – David Herrera
- III. Reading of previous minutes (Short recap of Navajo Meeting) (Earl/Randell)
- a. Earl kept the Directors meeting brief at Navajo with the President’s Cup Auction and other housekeeping items that needed to be addressed. End of Year awards were tabled until the next Director meeting. Officers were elected by the Directors that attended.
 - i. President – Earl Conway
 - ii. Vice President – Matt Peters
 - iii. Treasurer – Denise Hansel
 - iv. High School – Bobby Carver
 - v. Conservation Director – Earl Conway
 - vi. Tournament Director – tabled until the next Director meeting
 - b. Clubs present:
 - i. Cedar Cove
 - ii. Albuquerque Hawg Hunters
 - iii. Four Corners
 - iv. Southwest Bass Anglers
 - v. High Country Bass Anglers
- IV. Financial Report (Robert Piexotto)
- a. Please see the attached financials at the end of this report. Robert has the financials complete through October 2015. He has requested that they be done in the same format going forward as it will make tax filing easier. He estimated ~\$100 tax prep for 2015. Robert also volunteered to complete the November and December financials.
 - b. Robert was asked to show Denise the process for updating the financials going forward as part of the transition process.
 - c. WF login credentials and Visa DB transferred to Denise
 - d. [There should be an update and review of the clubs listed officers with PRC, IRS, etc. for accuracy and filing purposes]
- V. President’s Report
- A. Signing Alliance Package Contract (Dec. 18th deadline)
 - a. Motion from Four Corners, second Albuquerque Hawg Hunters
 - i. Sign Exclusive Alliance sponsorship agreement
 - ii. Accepted by acclamation
 - b. The Directors instructed Earl to sign the Alliance Exclusive package on behalf of the NMBN. It is the same as past programs.
 - c. Xavier gave an overview of President’s meeting during the National Championship.
 - i. Sponsor concerns over 20 person team

- ii. Selling State Team member product that was not purchased with the intention of “personal use”
 - 1. NMBN State Team members are reminded that product purchased as part of your State Team membership should be for “personal use” only
 - 2. Sponsors are starting to track internet sales and enforcing their policies under the sponsorship contracts
 - d. State Team Member Commitment
 - i. There was a substantial discussion around members of the State Team and holding them accountable for their representation of the NMBN.
 - ii. The Directors would like to make State Team members accountable as they are representatives of the NMBN and receive support for their participation beyond the State level.
 - iii. Earl will be working on drafting a document for each State Team member to sign to be eligible for participation and to receive the benefits of being a State Team member. It will be circulated to Directors for approval and implemented for 2016 State Team members that want support from the NMBN of State Team fundraising efforts.
- B. Sponsors, Incentives and State Team offers
 - a. Earl would like to establish a sponsorship committee.
 - i. Buddy system by NMBN member with each sponsor to manage each relationship and report to Directors
- C. Tournament Director
 - a. The election of a Tournament Director was tabled at the previous directors meeting. Earl was researching the appointment of a TD vs. election. The position is done by election according to the prevailing Bylaws. Nominations were accepted and voted on during the meeting.
 - b. Two nominees for TD:
 - i. Randell Bell and Dave Smith
 - 1. Vote
 - a. Albuquerque Hawg Hunters, Southwest Bass Anglers, Cedar Cove
 - b. High Country, Four Corners
 - ii. Randell Bell was welcomed back as the TD for 2016
 - c. Earl requested that Brian Stangel and Billy Dunson provide feedback to Randell on prevailing NM tournament environment, angler feedback, constructive criticisms, and perception of the NMBN around the state
 - i. Randell stated that he does not feel this is necessary and stated that the reason for decline in participation is because of the tournament format being draw instead of team
 - d. Four Corners and Albuquerque Hawg Hunters expressed their concern with moving to a team format and virtually eliminating any checks and balances that naturally occur in a draw format
 - e. Member Mark Sawyer urged the Directors to consider a team format and was supported by Cedar Cove and member Robert Piexotto. Earl reminded everyone that the NMBN is the only larger participation team formats in the state. Four Corners and High Country expressed their support of a draw vs. team format.
 - f. Earl has tabled the concept and wants to keep the Directors in the loop

- g. Any complaints on the lakes, tournament format, dates, staff, etc. should be directed toward Earl and he will bring information back to the Directors for discussion.

VI. Old Business

A. Officer Transition status (Earl/Denise)

- a. Randell has tournament/weigh-in equipment, Denise has registration/computer equipment
- b. Denise will work with Robert Piexotto for transition of the Treasurer role and they both discussed next steps
- c. Earl will work with Tawny for insurance certificate at the state level
- d. Earl will develop a process for how each club is covered and how to obtain certificate of coverage

B. Club Dues schedule and minimum requirements for a club

- a. Dues are need to be paid by December 31, 2015 for all members to get clubs on the roster
- b. Clubs must have at least 6 members
- c. NMBN dues are \$20 and BASS Nation dues are \$30, club level dues are set by your club
- d. Dues should be mailed to:
 - i. NMBN Treasurer
Denise Hansel
518 Ridgecrest
Los Alamos, NM 87544
- e. Please be sure to have your members update their BASS membership online with their current information AND EMAIL so they can be included on the NMBN Members List

C. Tournament Plaques (Randell)

- a. Motion by Four Corners:
 - i. Plaques will not be done ahead of time, but will be offered for: top three boaters, top placing nonboater, big bass. Anglers will need to make request to TD or President.
 - ii. Xavier second
 - iii. Accepted by acclamation
 - iv. TD will be responsible for facilitating acquisition of requested plaques

VII. New Business

A. New BASS Nation Qualification format

- a. Earl will be sending out the 2016 BASS Nation Championship proposal with new Regional Format

B. BASS Kayak interest

- a. BASS wants to increase membership from Kayak anglers
- b. John Stewart was looking for a pilot program
- c. Earl would like to propose the kayak store from the Butte and will explore that potential

C. Bylaw changes

- a. Earl would like to ask for a bylaw committee to review current bylaws
- b. Brian will start to work on Bylaw revisions and will forward a redline version to all Directors

VIII. Conservation Director's Report

- a. Earl discussed all of the projects that were worked on this year and thanked all the people that helped with all of the various projects during 2015.
 - b. Motion to accept CD report from Xavier, second Randell
 - i. Accepted by acclamation
- IX. Tournament Director Report
- a. Four Corners requested that the pairing be done again by the computer vs. the chip system
 - b. There was a lengthy discussion on the chip draw not changing how boaters and nonboaters were paired in 2015. It was stated that is was just as random as 2014 and prior years
 - i. Complaints were heard about: manipulation of the random pairing, how it was not random and other issues involving pairing nonboaters with people they did not feel safe with
 - ii. The chip draw done in 2015 did not eliminate any of the concerns
 - iii. A Pro/Am format will eliminate some boaters concerns as they will not be competing with the nonboater any longer
 - iv. Some ways to eliminate random circumstances where some boaters get nonboaters both days and other boaters get no nonboaters in the same weekend are the following:
 - 1. Everyone bring a nonboater
 - 2. Boaters that did not get a nonboater on Saturday are paired first on Sunday with nonboaters and the remaining boaters are then randomly paired with the remaining nonboaters
 - a. This second method can still be done by the registration staff with tournament committee members with the same rules that are applied for mechanicals or safety issues in the past
 - i. The nonboater is moved down the randomly generated list to the next spot until it meets the appropriate criteria
 - ii. After the “adjustments” are made, it is certified by the tournament committee
 - c. Denise will look into the Taysys tournament software program for the following:
 - i. Pro/Am format
 - ii. Pairing protocol that can handle the Sat/Sun separate event boater/nonboater “fairness” issue
- X. Pro/Am with and without the draw
- a. Tabled for discussion to go back to the clubs by Directors
 - b. All clubs are to have their tournament format proposals to go to Earl by January 15, 2016
 - i. Whatever format is being proposed must include the final event being a draw Pro/Am format
- XI. Proposed dates for 2016
- a. There was very little discussion as most of the discussion occurred prior to the Directors meeting. Randell and Tawny reviewed their dates for American Bass, Sun Country dates were considered as well and the following dates were proposed by the TD. Earl also commented that he would like to move the final weekend off of hunting season into August.
 - i. May 21-22, 2016 Conchas Lake

- b. President will utilize member list to communicate with members
 - c. A 2016team@nmbfn.com email list will be created for State Team communications
 - d. More timely submission for dissemination of information on website NEEDS to occur
 - i. Admin (Ricky-Ray and Brian) can be reached through info@nmbfn.com for any updates that need to occur on the website or information that needs to be shared with members
- XV. Social media, website revival and BigMouth
- a. A lot of discussion occurred around the BigMouth and whether reviving it made sense. The decision was made to focus on social media and promoting the NMBN through a Facebook presence. This will also allow us to promote and support our sponsors.
 - b. FB page
 - i. Earl will work with Tawny on developing a FB page
 - ii. Denise will separately look into a FB page
 - iii. A proposal needs to be made to the Directors for approval on how FB will work
 - iv. Tyler Wade at BASS should also be contacted as a resource
- XVI. Sponsors and advertisement
- a. Tabled for next Directors meeting
- XVII. End of Year Awards
- a. Club of the Year
 - i. ABQ Hawg Hunters were nominated by Four Corners for their efforts in the administration of the NMBN during 2015
 - 1. Southwest Bass Anglers seconded
 - 2. Accepted by acclimation
 - b. Community Service
 - i. Four Corners for the EH Queens Memorial fund raiser
 - ii. Elephant Butte for youth involvement and conservation support
 - iii. Socorro for the Junior Event held Fathers Day
 - iv. SW Bass Anglers garbage pickup at Aggie Pond
 - 1. Four Corners by acclimation
 - c. Youth Chapter
 - i. Southwest Bass Anglers
 - 1. Accepted by acclimation
 - d. Director of the Year
 - i. Cedar Cove nominated Earl
 - ii. For his tireless efforts in maintaining and enhancing the NMBN and its future success, the NMBN accepts Earl's nomination by acclimation, we thank him for his service.
 - e. Man/Woman of the Year
 - i. Earl nominated Paul Martinez
 - 1. Accepted by acclimation
 - ii. Four Corners nominated Denise Hansel
 - 1. Denise's tireless and selfless support of the NMBN at tournaments under the most difficult and challenging circumstances
 - 2. Without Denise there would have been no results or payouts at the first two events
 - iii. Earl nominated Tawny Bell
 - 1. Auction fund raising
 - 2. Conservation support

Revenues	\$ 24,250.00
Expenses	\$ 26,498.02
Income (Loss)	\$ (2,248.02)

Beginning Cash	\$ 13,653.73
Ending Cash	\$ 11,405.71
	\$ 11,405.71
	\$ -

GL used to prepare tax return	
1000 Cash	11,405.71
4010 Dues Revenue	\$ (2,235.00)
4020 Entry Fees	(17,365.00)
4030 Other revenues	\$ (4,650.00)
5020 Tournament Expense	14,181.37
5030 Traveling Team Expense	10481.20
5040 Misc Expense	\$ 1,835.45
6000 Net Income (Loss)	\$ (2,248.02)
8000 Retained Earning	(11,405.71)

Total -

December 5 - January 1st Debits Credits

Beginning Cash 12/5/2014	\$ 13,653.73	
Mercury Credit for Motor sale	\$ 4,000.00	
Cost of Mercury Sales		\$ 323.81
Other Deposits	\$ 180.00	
Other Deposits	\$ 250.00	
Other Deposits	\$ 320.00	
Ending Cash 1/7/2015	\$ 18,079.92	

Beginning Cash 1/8/2015	\$ 18,079.92	
Misc. Exp		145
Ending Cash 2/5/2015	\$ 17,934.92	

Beginning Cash 2/6/2015	\$ 17,934.92	
Dues Paid	460	
Mailing Fees incurred by KMA		15
Ending Cash 3/5/2015	\$ 18,379.92	

Beginning Cash 3/6/2015	\$ 18,379.92	
Dues Paid	560	
Traveling Team Check to Franco		534.9
Ending Cash 4/6/2015	\$ 18,405.02	

Beginning Cash 4/7/2015	\$ 18,405.02	
Revenue form Dues and Other Sources	425	
Danny Four Traveling Team Check		520.00
Kenny Hansel Traveling team Check		651.60
Joe Ramirez Traveling Team Check		620.10
Mark Williams Traveling Team Check		651.90
Steve Hammond Traveling Team Check		525.60
Rendell Bell Traveling Team Check		561.90
Paul Martinez Traveling Team Check		561.90
Matt Peters Traveling Team Check		550.20
Billy Dunson Traveling Team Check		525.60
Utah Bass Nation Check for Clear Lake		250.00
Wayne Bradshaw Traveling Team Check		520.00
Bob Lechel Traveling Team Check		651.90
Ending Cash Per Bank Statement	\$ 12,239.32	

7-May-15		
Beginning Cash	12,239.32	
Tournament revenue	11,820.00	
Traveling Team Expenses		1135.60
Raffle Tickets pay outs		760.00
Tournament Payouts		7342.46
Ending Cash	14,821.26	

5-Jun-15		
Beginning Cash	14,821.26	
Tournament revenue		
Raffle Tickets pay outs		760
Tournament Payouts		1,092.00
Ending Cash	12,969.26	

7-Jul-15		
Beginning Cash	12,969.26	
Ending Cash	12,969.26	

August		
Beginning Cash	12,969.26	
Sale of Motorguide Trolling Motor	650	
State Dues	40	
Ending Cash	13,659.26	

5-Sep-15		
Beginning Cash	13,659.26	
Tournament revenue	5,545	
Tournament expense		5746.91
Ending Cash	13,457.35	

7-Oct-15		
Beginning Cash	13,457.35	
Nationals Check to Robert Peixotto		700
Inventory Purchased by Earl Conway		251.43
Airline Ticket for X to go to Monroe		680.21
Misc expense		420
Ending Cash	11,405.71	

Tournament revenues:

Tournament revenue	17,365.00
Tournament expense	<u>(14,181.37)</u>
Gain (loss) form tournament operations	<u>3,183.63</u>

Other revenues and expenses:

Mercury Motor Credit	\$ 4,000.00
Sale of inventory	\$ 650.00
Dues Revenue	\$ 2,235.00
Traveling team expense	(10,481.20)
Miscellaneous expense	<u>\$ (1,835.45)</u>
Total other revenues and expenses	<u>(5,431.65)</u>
Net income (loss)	(2,248.02)
Cash position beginning of the year	\$ 13,653.73
Cash position end of year	<u><u>11,405.71</u></u>

GL used to prepare tax return		
1000 Cash		11405.71
4010 Dues Revenue		-2235
4020 Entry Fees		-17365
5020 Tournament Expense		14181.37
5030 Traveling Team Expense		10481.2
5040 Misc Expense		1835.45
6000 Net Income (Loss)		-6898.02
8000 Retained Earning		-11405.71
	Total	0

Conservation Director Report for 2015-2016

Earl Conway, Conservation Director November 14, 2015

Elephant Butte Project is Underway

After three years of negotiations and permitting hell, the project began in December with thousand of Christmas tress and artificial structure being placed in permitted coves. This is the first year of a five year project , Southwest Adapt-a-Cove, to improve habitat at the reservoir. (see project for details)

The permit, issued to New Mexico BASS Nation and the Albuquerque Hawg Hunters, is very comprehensive and requires a special use permit obtained through the New Mexico State Parks process for each event similar to our tournaments.

Representatives from the Bureau of Reclamation, State parks and Game & Fish have been assigned to review activities before issuing a permit. There are many details and constraints required to meet Federal laws to protect the water and cultural resources. ***No fish attractor or habitat improvement activities may be done without going through the proper permitting process.*** An insurance certificate from B.A.S.S. is also required for each activity.

It is imperative that we follow through with visible and convincing actions to solidify support for the project from the local community and the Bureau. Activities should begin with a Christmas Tree recycle project in January. Also, the youth BASS anglers need to get moving with the Shimano Grant or risk losing the grant.

Ruidoso high School students are working on shoreline vegetation strategies.



Shimano and Fish America Foundation contributed \$7500 to the effort in 2015. The Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership just obtained \$20,000 from USFWS to continue the effort. The grant is held by RFHP, not NM BASS Nation. Currently, NM BASS Nation has no funds for the project, just a lot of materials in Randell's yard, Earl's back yard and storage sheds.

2015 Lake Outlook

Elephant Butte is in bad shape but getting better. Unless the elevation gets above 4,360 feet and inundates the shoreline vegetation, fishing will remain poor without serious intervention. Sedimentation and the lack of habitat are limiting any recovery hopes. The Southwest Adapt-a-Cove project is intended to provide some help. The local community became more active, stocking 20,000 large fry and

talking with the NM Game and Fish and Commission. Much of our conservation efforts will be focused on Elephant butte for the next two years.

Ute Lake is a mystery and continues to underperform. Summer tournament results were still dismal. The lake is being managed for smallmouth and walleye. It is not clear that any of the bass fry stocked during 2013 survived to maturity. Sedimentation continues to be a limiting factor for largemouth in the upper reaches of the rivers. Fish Shocking surveys seem to also indicate that fishing pressure is limiting the number of 14-inch fish.

Navajo Lake continued to be the most productive lake, but fish were concentrated in a few areas. Yellow perch populations rebounded and so did the fishing. There continues to be a fair amount of (invasive) Eurasian Milfoil between the state park and La Jara. It seems to actually be good for the fish in small populations and NMG&F is just monitoring it for now. Boat inspections for mussels were increased with a permanent inspection and decontamination station. Several boats were sent for complete decontamination during the summer.

Conchas is fishing well for both smallmouth and largemouth with a wide distribution of age classes. Lodging is still a major limiting factor when considering tournaments.

Santa Rosa is in recovery mode and getting better. The recovery is a classic “new lake effect” event and the lake just needs some time and constant water level. The 2014 drought and sediment loading took its toll. Santa Rosa was devastated by the 2013 drawdown and then hit with silt and ash-laden flood runoff in September 013. Some reports indicated a good recovery is in progress with higher than average lake levels likely to continue through 2016.

Brantley is fishing exceptionally well. The floods have filled up Brantley and created the new lake effect by flooding the Sevens River wildlife area. There have been reports of 50 to 100 fish days. The lake still has a “no keep” rule due to DDT contamination. NM G&F has asked the NM Environment Department to resample and see if that ban could be lifted.

Abiquiu may be the states best public smallmouth lake. It is a good place to catch limits. It is small for tournaments and lacks lodging facilities.

Cochiti has produced some very good fishing and at least one 7+ largemouth this year. It is no wake and is not a viable state tournament water but local clubs should take advantage of it's close proximity for inexpensive day tournaments.

State Scene

New Mexico BASS Nation, anglers of Elephant Butte, and local community leaders are organizing and speaking with elected officials to get things moving to improve fishing at the lake. State Game commission and Game and Fish personnel were invited to meetings with both the anglers and community leaders to explore ways to improve fishing. NM G&F finally produce a draft Fisheries Management Plan and NM BASS Nation provided comments. It was a very good first draft and will provide a foundation for communication and trust in the future. They seem to have heard our demands to get the Rock Lake bass hatchery working. It is mentioned as a priority in the Plan.

Probably most notable is the participation of NM G&F in the Elephant Butte project. They sent staff and boats to help out with activities and have tried to do more monitoring in the selected coves.

National Scene

B.A.S.S. Conservation Directors will meet in Tulsa at the Classic next year (2016). Gene Gilliland has taken over the reigns and has gotten more recognition of the Conservation Mission. New Mexico still is the high point in habitat restoration efforts. Bass Pro Shops and other potential sponsors are still considering what can be done to support the Elephant Butte project.

Friends of Reservoirs continued to support New Mexico's efforts to improve Elephant Butte. Jeff Boxrucker, the program lead manager personally helped write the biological assessment for the Clean Water 404 permit application. Friends of Reservoirs will also be providing \$20,000 for the project in 2016. Kala Scarafiotti presented November 7, 2015 at the Ogden Utah AFS conference by using RFHP funds. She made contact with Utah Fish and Wildlife staff that are attempting the same vegetation restoration at one of their lakes. Their ideas will be incorporated into the Elephant Butte project.

Funding for Projects

The EPA-funded project at Roswell Zoo is winding down. The \$60,000 grant was spent and the final report was submitted. The Albuquerque Hawg Hunters will continue to work with the Zoo and Shawn Denny, NM G&F to monitor throughout the winter. The Ruidoso High School has offered to help replant the floating wetlands in the spring and NM G&F is planning a "Day at the Zoo" to teach water quality while they replant. Bulk materials were bought with the remaining funds to repair and replace the plants and islands in the spring.

No other grants or fund raising is in progress. There is a request to consider building an ADA fishing pier at Escondida Lake.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Golden Algae still is a major concern with the lower Pecos reservoirs. It is important that boats always be clean and dry after leaving an infected lake.

Fish Care

We did have dead fish weighed in last year after a perfect year in 2013. We are working on getting livewell dip nets and some educational materials to help reduce stress on the fish we catch. We are also having discussions with G&F about the possibility of releasing the fish in more protected and productive waters rather than releasing them at the weigh-in location. It turns out that current fishing regulations Do Not allow us to gather more than one legal limit for transport. We would need special permission from G&F.



Comments on Draft NM Fisheries Management Plan, October 21, 2015

The New Mexico BASS Nation appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft plan. The draft plan is an excellent start, considering no prior plan existed. While our non-profit organization focuses on black bass fishing, we have a mission to preserve fishing access and to conserve our fisheries for all fish, not just select species. We share the same objectives and we will continue to work with NMG&F to try new approaches to enhance the New Mexico fishing experience for all anglers.

This draft plan is a major accomplishment. It is well organized, thoughtful and exceptionally well written. We have comments and suggestions for addition of consideration.

Comments:

Cover

We would like to see a native Largemouth Bass instead of the state fish, the Rio Grande Cutthroat trout on the cover of the plan. (worth a try)

Introduction and Purpose of Plan (Page 6)

NM BASS Nation totally supports the purpose of the plan as stated. We recognize and respect the structure of fisheries management and the difficult challenges the department faces trying to balance priorities and manage conflicts. NM BASS Nation aspires to help the department in meeting the objectives stated in the plan and to not create conflicts that prevent or discourage collaboration.

Scope and Organization of the Plan (Page 7)

The organization of the plan is excellent. The decision to break down management by bodies of water is essential to deal with the diversity of issues and opportunities that each body provides. The plan addresses many of our concerns expressed by our membership about the lack of published goals, objectives and direction. Most importantly it will help manage expectations where the quality of the fishery is largely in the hands of nature and the reservoir water manager.

Fisheries Management Division Programmatic Priorities (Page 8)

The NMG&F needs to be involved with other issues that directly impact fisheries management. There is some discussion about collaboration and communication with other agencies, but some issues are important enough to warrant discussion in

the plan. An example is sedimentation prevention, mitigation and recovery. Heavy sediment loads have impacted Fenton Lake, Bonito Lake, Ute Reservoir, Elephant Butte Reservoir, and Cochiti Lake. NMG&F needs to be vocal in discussions about the impact of sediment loads on the fisheries. Where possible, NMG&F needs to influence Federal actions that could prevent, mitigate, or recover from erosion and sedimentation. Dredging operations can be devastating to natural spawns and should be limited to other times of the year when stream flows and other conditions would mitigate the impact of the operations. Please add some discussion about what conflicts and issues might require NMG&F to engage other agencies on the behalf of anglers.

Volunteers are a tremendous untapped resource. Volunteer education and conservation programs should be leveraged throughout almost every aspect of the Fisheries Management Plan with identification and encouragement of both individual volunteers through habitat improvement programs and by encouraging non-profit organizations to work with or lead conservation and habitat improvement activities. It would be good to see a statement that the fisheries section of NMG&F will embrace volunteers as much as is done in the other sections.

Youth fisheries and their value for recruiting new anglers should be discussed somewhere in the plan. Urban small waters serve many purposes in the development of our youth including the development of a passion for fishing, their respect for rules and law enforcement and the need to be good conservationist. Getting kids fishing is just a good way to “raise them right” and keep them out of trouble. Our urban fisheries may be the only opportunity many youth have to experience fishing before they are adults. We applaud the Big Cat program and the vigorous stocking of winter trout waters so that our children have more opportunities to fish. Please consider a special objective supporting youth fisheries.

Divisional Priorities (page 11)

1. Rearing and stocking fish & 2. Evaluation of Hatchery Stocking - Funding should be identified as an annual line item to purchase Largemouth Bass since the Rock Lake hatchery will be incapable of meeting management needs. Reliance on “available” fish stock from other state or federal hatcheries is not an adequate plan.

Rock Lake production of black bass needs to be a high priority.

4. Aquatic Invasive Species – There is not enough tangible emphasis on existing threats and fish kills. Golden algae, whirling disease, LMBV and other threats already exist and more emphasis on research and management strategies for these current threats is needed. Too much of the current AIS funding and effort is being directed to prevention of zebra and quagga mussels which have not been shown to have major impact on the fishery but rather the reservoir and municipal infrastructure. (see discussion of who should fund the prevention of mussels).

It will be impossible to galvanize angler support without more practical methods of preventing the spread of microscopic organisms. Changes are needed in the current

governing regulations. Invasive species legislation and regulation needs to be reviewed and reauthorized to remove unenforceable language concerning DNA and non-viable life forms. The legislation and regulation went far beyond enforceable law. For example, it is impossible for anglers to identify microscopic live or dead golden algae that are known to be present in many of the lower Pecos river impoundments. There is no active program to prevent the spread of golden algae and it should be removed from the Aquatic Invasive Management Plan or identified as a concern that is not actively enforced. Currently, any boat leaving Brantley Lake and launching into another reservoir could be charged with illegally transporting the DNA of the golden algae. Setting anglers up for violations is not going to encourage cooperation or trust.

5. Habitat Restoration – Reservoir fish habitat restoration needs to be discussed. New Mexico is far behind our neighboring states in reservoir fish habitat construction. NM BASS Nation has taken a lead role with the Bureau of Reclamation at Elephant Butte to enhance the fish habitat. It would be much better if NMG&F would identify reservoir habitat as a priority and lead similar efforts in the future.

ADA access for anglers needs to be discussed somewhere in the plan. Even though this represents a small population of anglers, it is extremely important that public access for everyone is a priority for the department. Special facilities and habitat enhancements should be considered for mobility-impaired anglers. This would be a great opportunity to leverage volunteers and non-profit organizations to help design and installed access facilities, enhanced fish habitat and fish attractors, especially on reservoirs. ADA access and fishing opportunities should be a required element of all concession contracts with State Parks.

6. Statewide Fisheries Management – NM BASS Nation totally supports the concept of adaptive management as long as the department does not revert to a “do nothing” approach when it seems that environmental conditions are impossible to overcome. In those situations, a strong emphasis should be put on trying new and innovative methods that may or have not been proven elsewhere.

Angler Survey Data (Page 12)

The use of **new** surveys to inform future decisions, strategies and actions is highly recommended. New Mexico angler patterns of behavior and preference for cold water versus warm water species have been largely influenced by past fisheries management practices. The strong historical emphasis on Put and Take rainbow trout stocking raised New Mexicans on easy stocked trout and salmon. Over time, people will develop an individual preference for some species of fish but it is often where they can afford to go and what they can consistently catch that influences what kind of fish they prefer and how many days they will spend fishing. Historical skewing of warm water versus cold water angling data by historical management practices have led to a trout bias that needs to be reassessed. More emphasis should be placed on where opportunities exist to recruit new anglers rather than just

maintaining the status quo. It is our belief that warm water reservoirs are largely untapped with respect to recruiting new anglers.

The plan should discuss education and encouragement of warm water angling opportunities. The current informational flyers and fishing proclamation have little about how to catch the individual species. Field posting of bag limits and identification guides are also lacking at public access points. With the emphasis on paperless proclamations, additional signage could help inform the anglers of size and bag limits but also encourage fishing.

Funding: (page 14)

It is our fundamental belief that if people don't actively experience wildlife-related activities, wildlife and access to wildlife will vanish. Since NM fisheries management is funded almost entirely through license sales and matching/leveraged Federal funds, it is imperative that we get more people fishing and increase license revenues to accomplish the objectives put forth in the draft plan.

There should be an objective to increase the amount of Federal funding used every year for tangible facility, equipment and habitat improvements. It is unacceptable for New Mexico to leave Federal funds untapped due to an arbitrary limitation to just use license revenues to secure Federal funds. Whenever needed, state funds needed to leverage Federal funding beyond license revenues should be requested through the state legislature to maximize the recovery of funds derived from taxes on New Mexico anglers. If NMG&F is constrained in their pursuit of Federal funding by their authorities, then this responsibility should be shifted to another Division as an economic development initiative and mission. This is good not only for fisheries management but also for the New Mexico economy. Likewise, NMG&F should encourage other agencies and non-profit entities to seek Federal, corporate and private grants for coordinated access and habitat improvement initiatives.

The plan lacks information on the type of activities that are included in the Research and Management section. It discusses what types of people are funded but does not provide much about what they do. In general we would like to see more applied field research funded with tangible results rather than paper studies. Also, we would like to see Federal funding used for more collaboration with neighboring states especially on warm water fisheries and reservoir fisheries partnerships. Our experience in neighboring states indicates they are much more open to adaptive management and habitat improvement rather than trying to preserve the status quo. Collaboration and communication with our neighbors will accelerate New Mexico's progress on this plan.

A strong and diversified licensed angler base is foundational to New Mexico's fisheries management. It has become increasingly difficult for people to obtain a last-minute fishing license because of the Kiosk approach. Many people consider fishing as a secondary recreational opportunity while hiking, camping or boating and do not purchase their license in advance of the opportunity. Many of the fishing

destinations do not have readily available license Kiosk or even internet access. A management priority should be placed on advertising and reminding people to purchase their license in advance and to make it easier for people to obtain a license using their cellular phone technology (Apps). A plan for increasing license sales through new and old approaches should be discussed. Some examples would include:

Stronger collaboration with State Parks and Municipalities to grow the number of licensed anglers. There should be a license Kiosk at every state park office with easy instructions on how to obtain a license.

“Fish New Mexico”, A one-day, free introductory license should be available for first time anglers. This serves as an incentive for people to try fishing and work through the challenge of putting their information into the license management database making it easier for future license purchases.

Aquatic Invasive Species funding (missing from plan)

Alternate funding should be used for the zebra and quagga mussel prevention and mitigation programs. While there will be impacts to anglers and fisheries, the primary beneficiaries of the prevention program are the agricultural communities and municipalities. A concentrated effort to require these entities to pay for the program should be started now rather than waiting until there is an infestation in one of the watersheds. Anglers should not be bearing the financial burden of prevention. In fact, many of the threats have resulted from houseboats and oil field activities, not anglers. However, detailed mitigation and recovery plans should be developed for each watershed that includes a first discovery response plan that details how boat and angler access will be impacted. The prior experience with Lake Sumner indicated that a deliberate plan for response and mitigation would be very helpful. A decision should be made now whether angler access will be controlled and whether boat cleaning stations should be installed at all state parks.

Specific Information for Fish Species, Taxa, or Communities (Page 16)

Mexico BASS Nation supports a managed fish community that is adapted to the current and predicted conditions, maintaining a balance between native fish and responsible management or exclusion of non-native species based on scientific data and management needs.

Indigenous, invasive, native, wild and introduced species need to be defined and discussed with respect to the basis for the designation. Not even humans were native or indigenous to New Mexico at some point in history. Based on fossil and anthropologic research, it is likely that many species that did not exist in specific drainages in 1900 had existed either there or in other NM drainage basins in earlier times. Other states are locked in conflicts over whether they should protect only “native” species or manage the community of fish in our waters for fishing. New

The plan is largely silent on suppression of nuisance non-game fish (Gizzard shad, suckers, goldfish, carp,) with the exception of the discussion of Tiger muskies. To some extent the introduction of striped bass to Elephant Butte may have helped reduce the gizzard shad population. At the risk of crossing the line of declaring all non-native species as nuisances, NMG&F should develop a strategy and management philosophy for nuisance non-game species and encourage recreational or commercial activities ranging from responsible introduction of sterile (Tiger muskie) or non-reproductive predator species (striped bass) to bow/spear fishing and harvesting through netting or “round-up” competitions.

As the department shifts to more emphasis on natural “wild” reproduction, there may be a need to protect prime spawning grounds during certain times of the year. This should be discussed as a possible management strategy and how angler access will be impacted. The New Mexico BASS Nation supports reasonable efforts to protect a limited numbers of key spawning areas on either a voluntary or mandated basis.

Hunting (bow and spear fishing) take of game fish during spawning periods should be prohibited as the fish are too vulnerable and the impact on the fishery is disproportionate to the recreational benefit. The issue of spear fishing should be revisited through public comment. The harvesting of large adult bass during the spawn at the primary warm water reservoirs by divers is a heated topic and would be even more heated if spear fishing were allowable in trout quality waters. There seems to be inequity in how this type of “fishing” is regulated.

Water-body goals

Fisheries management for a specific body of water should also include a discussion of the type of angling experience is possible. Some streams and impoundments are extremely challenging to access due to difficult terrain or limited road access.

In many cases, extreme water fluctuations, water quality issues or natural conditions severely limit management options. We encourage NMG&F to continue improving the information on the specific water bodies. We suggest identification of reservoir water managers and purpose of the impoundment. As many anglers believe that the state has control over water use and lake levels. It would also be useful to identify and explain seasonal water releases and how it may impact sport fish spawning or species recovery efforts whether the impact is good or bad.

Black Bass (Page 18)

Stocking of black bass. When available, smallmouth bass should be stocked on more than a recreational basis. Prey-base stocking should also be encouraged when needed to meet other management goals. It should be re-emphasized that the Rock Lake fish hatchery was originally authorized with an emphasis on Largemouth Bass production to mitigate the impacts of “free” fish not being available from other

hatcheries. Knowing that the hatchery will be incapable of producing sufficient quantities of largemouth bass, there should be an annual line item for purchasing largemouth bass rather than relying on just the one New Mexico hatchery and fish available from other state or Federal hatcheries. Whenever possible, bartering for in-kind trades of walleye eggs and big game species should be leveraged to improve access to largemouth bass fry.

Spotted bass still exist in Cochiti Lake and should still be considered a viable sport fish for several lakes throughout the state. There seems to be a concern with Section 7 consultation and approval to stock Black Bass in some reservoirs. If this is an issue, it should be discussed openly in the plan.

Habitat Restoration (Page 31)

NMG&F should do everything in it's authority or influence to support the restoration of the Rio Puerco to prevent further erosion and sedimentation in Elephant Butte Reservoir. The reservoir has already lost almost one third of its capacity and the sedimentation is ruining the upper section of the lake.

Page 71 typo on Pecos River "no to" should be "not to"

NM BASS Nation has decided not to comment directly on the individual water bodies but rather work with the department to better understand the opportunities and limitations of each water body. The management of each water body should be very fluid to respond to annual conditions. We have appreciated the opportunity to participate in local public meetings and we believe that is the best way to hear the diverse concerns of the angling public. We encourage future regional public meetings to discuss the specific issues at our major reservoirs.

Submitted by New Mexico BASS Nation

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