

ARIZONA BASS NATION

Conservation Update

Don McDowell

Conservation Director

April 2015



1. Roosevelt stock with additional Florida Strain Large Mouth

This Thursday, **April 23rd at 9:30 - 10:30ish**, Curt Gill will have a truck with our 35,000+ Florida strain bass to release into Roosevelt Lake at the Cholla Ramp. These are the fingerlings that were purchased with our donations and matching funds from AZGFD last fall. These fish are too big for the bags that they have used in the past to release the fry bass. They will fill coolers, garbage cans etc. with the fingerlings and they are asking for 5-6 boaters to help them distribute them around the lake. If you are available send me a contact number and Curt will call you with an exact time he will be at the ramp.

2. Tonto National Forest Planning Committee (April 20th 6pm to 8:30PM, AZGFD, Mesa Office 7200 E. University)

There are the two handouts from the meeting one from the FS and the other from G & F. We'll be getting a PowerPoint presentation shortly and I'll share that with you when it arrives. (Attached)

In attendance...John Hamill TRCP, 5 Forest Service folks, Jay Cook from G & F, Gary Stinson, Don McDowell, John Clemons, Joe Miller and one other guy from TU who I didn't know, and me.

It was a positive meeting from the standpoint of seeing the Tonto NF folks that will be involved with the planning effort. It also showed us the scope of the plan will be a massive undertaking, which will go on for a few years. We'll need to stay engaged on the Assessment phase this year, and the EIS phase, from the fall of 2015 through 2017. Once the plan is completed, the Monitoring phase will be underway from 2018 to 2032. When you view the PowerPoint, you'll get an idea on the depth of this planning. Our involvement will be critical at various stages of the process, and we'll need to make sure we engage when and where necessary and as appropriate. Part of my strategy will be to further the education on the effect of the Gizzard Shad, the need to streamline the NEPA/EIS process, eliminate other GO's self imposed authoritative over reach. Participate in the comment period for access fees increase, accounting for the annual fee revenue generated, percentage received back for the Feds and exactly if the increased is grant what will be the increase fund distribution.

3. Conservation Director Conference calls: April

Here is the summary of our two conference calls from this month. We had a total of 17 CDs on the two calls with another 5-6 who e-mailed that they were unable to call either night. No word from the remaining 25.

- Conservation Funding within Your States.

- Most states do not have a budget for conservation. Expenses are out of pocket for CD except perhaps for travel to bi-annual Conservation Summit
- AZ hires a grant writer (\$20/hr) who checks several granting sources bi-monthly and applies for funding
- NM uses fundraisers and sales of Alliance product to cover cost of scholarships and local activities
- KA gets paid by state fish & wildlife agency for turning in creel reports - \$25 ea.
- AL funds CD travel from general budget
- VA assists with CD travel and pays towards a lobbyist in the capitol
- CT uses volunteer time and travel expense as in-kind match allowing state agency to collect additional federal aid dollars
- CO uses money from a boat sale was earmarked for conservation activities
- MO provides a CD travel allowance of \$500
- SD has no line-item budget but CD and YD funds blended
- FL funding varies after state team is funded, looking to put release boats on the water this year with sponsor \$

- B.A.S.S. Membership Renewal Scam -

- Lonnie Johnson reported that the OR Attorney General had shut down these operations so hopefully no more fake BASS membership renewal notices.

- Updates on Legislation and Regulation

- TX - Bill on high school tournament angler exemption still in committee(?) Proposed by the people who hosted BASS Elite event in Orange. Working behind the scenes to kill it.
- MI - Dan Kimmel put in years of work and got year-round catch-and-release passed (although the additional harvest season to allow more tournament opportunity was not included in the new rule).
- NY - Different rules in the Lake Ontario/Thousand Islands area confounding NY bass anglers. Public meetings were not friendly to bass fishermen but NYBN folks working with agency and making progress.
- AL - Bill to allow gill netting on AL river passes house, now to senate. BASS opposes in concept but wants to preserve agency's right to use commercial netting to control Asian carp when they get into the system
- AZ Formation of Gila County Angler Roundtable to monitor the effect of Gizzard Shad on Roosevelt Lake and the impact on game species and forage fish, continued cooperation the AZGFD-on going
- NH - exotic aquatic species are being defined in a round-about way to close waters to boaters and anglers
- OR - no season on bass means no priority for management
- WI - DNR-recommended C&R season was vetoed by Conservation Congress

- NM - Landowners pushing to prevent walking on streambeds to limit stream fishing access
- Yamaha created new website encouraging freshwater bass anglers to get involved in saltwater conservation issues - BASC (Bass Anglers for Saltwater Conservation)
- Calls-to-Action (write your congressman) will be coming soon on bills reauthorizing the Sport Fish Restoration Act

- New Fisheries Chiefs in some states - Have you met yours?

- WI & ID Chief positions vacant
- AZ Chief doing well in the new position
- AL position will be vacant end of May
- VA musical chairs
- NM recent change for the good
- All Chiefs will be invited to 2016 Bassmaster Classic Conservation Summit in Tulsa, March 4-6th
- Please let Gene know if there have been changes in the leadership in your state's agency

- Survey on Water Supply Lake Tournament

Rules

- Bill Frazier still needs replies from many of you (*survey document attached* - send responses to him for tabulation).
- Increasing problems with municipalities and agencies restricting angling and boating on water supply reservoirs and lakes
- May be for water quality reasons...or....it may be just to keep anglers off the water and away from lakeside homes(?)

- Grant Funding - Shimano checks have been mailed to recipients

- ReBaits - Program details will be sent in separate e-mail to all CDs

- Conservation Jerseys for CDs

- Much discussion about keeping as-is, modifying color or artwork. Separate e-mail string will be started to get more input from the larger group.

Next calls will be in June 1st and 10th