

## COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA BRIEFING

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**Meeting Date:** September 18, 2019

**Agenda Number:** 6

**Presenter:** Kirk Patten

**Corroborator:**

**Agenda Title:** Workshop – Presentation on the Department's Fisheries Management Division

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The Fisheries Management Division is charged with managing New Mexico's recreational fisheries as well as dozens of sensitive, threatened, and endangered fish and aquatic invertebrates. The Division is currently composed of Administration (six employees), a Hatchery Section (35 employees) and a Research and Management Section (27 employees). The Division is guided by a Statewide Fisheries Management Plan that was publicly vetted and adopted in 2016. The plan includes past and proposed management perspectives for waters across the state as well as prioritization of research and conservation projects.

The Hatchery Section oversees production of fish at six state fish hatcheries. These hatcheries were originally built during a period between the 1930s and 1960s with significant updates beginning in the 1980s and continuing today. The two largest facilities, Red River Hatchery and Los Ojos Hatchery, focus production on triploid rainbow trout with Los Ojos Hatchery also serving to rear Kokanee salmon. Triploid rainbow trout are also produced at Lisboa Springs, Glenwood, and Rock Lake Hatcheries with Rock Lake also serving as a largemouth bass broodstock and production facility. Seven Springs Hatchery serves as the Department's broodstock hatchery for Rio Grande cutthroat trout. In 2018, the Department received a capital appropriation to rebuild Glenwood Hatchery with the intention to convert that facility over to produce the federally protected Gila trout for recovery and recreational purposes. The Department has spent millions of dollars securing water sources and rearing facilities from whirling disease outbreaks in the late 1990s with some efforts continuing through approximately 2010. Current infrastructure needs to maintain and improve hatchery production include:

- Renovation of Glenwood Hatchery to produce Gila trout
- Modernization of staff housing at all facilities
- Replacement of raceways at aging facilities
- Updates and rebuilding of visitors centers
- Improvements to drinking water systems
- New hatchery building at Rock Lake Hatchery for warmwater production
- Addressing mine tailings used in the renovation of Lisboa Springs Hatchery in the 1980s

The Research and Management Section focuses on three integrated programs: Sportfish Management, Native Fish Management, and Aquatic Invasive Species prevention. Recent focus for Sportfish Management includes annual estimation of angler satisfaction rates, angler use and harvest rates, habitat restoration, population monitoring, allocation of hatchery produced fish compared to angler use, and expansion of native trout angling opportunities. Native fish management has been focused on native trout restoration, habitat restoration for rare taxa, species repatriation, use of environmental DNA for species detection, and research into the use of YY-male technology for unwanted fish species control. The Aquatic Invasive Species program focuses attention on preventing the spread of nuisance species in New Mexico (e.g. whirling disease, rock snot, New Zealand mudsnail) and the introduction of zebra and quagga mussel in New Mexico waters from surrounding states.