



FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

Minutes of the January 18, 2007, Meeting

Attending
Members

Crystal Norris
Brock Dolman
Pierre Gadd
Martin Bauman
Al Ferris
Dennis Rosatti
Jim Lynch
Ned Hill
Jeff Holden
Andrew Pozzi
Jo Bentz
Dave Cook

Absent
Members

Others

Joseph Laugesen, Dept of Fish & Game
Nick Geist, Sonoma State University
Alex McVicker, Ag. Commissioner's Office
Deanna McAulay, Ag. Commissioner's
Office

Chairperson Crystal Norris called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Adoption of Minutes

A motion to accept the November minutes was made by Al Ferris with a second by Andrew Pozzi. Motion carried.

Correspondence

The following correspondence was received:

1. Wildlife Rescue's quarterly newsletter – *Call of the Wild*
2. News from NOAA dated January 3
3. News Release from Department of Fish & Game – *Avian Cholera Causes Bird Die-Off At Butte Sink*

Financial Report

The General Fund received in November \$3,783.63 from court revenues with a fund balance of \$174,601.79. The Abalone Fund in November received \$50 from collections with a fund balance of \$27,975.37. A motion to accept the November financial reports was made by Pierre Gadd with a second by Jim Lynch. Motion carried.

The General Fund received \$1,646.43 in December from court revenues with a fund balance of \$176,239.25. The Abalone Fund in December received \$30 from collections and court revenues of \$450 with a fund balance of \$28,455.37. A motion to accept the December financial reports was made by Pierre Gadd with a second by Jim Lynch. Motion carried.

Old Business

Spring BBQ 2007 – Ned reported he had contacted all surrounding counties' commissions except Solano, which he was having trouble contacting.

Andrew Pozzi inquired where the funding for the BBQ will be coming from. Crystal responded with the special fund monies. Andy asked who will be invited? Jim Lynch responded with the Sonoma County's judges. Ned added all the commissions from the surrounding counties will be invited. Crystal stated there will be a public notice in regard to the picnic.

Ned would like to have old grantees come and display what they have done with the money received from our commission.

Dave Cook stated the commission can use of the Water Agency area – security is the only concern, so we will keep the BBQ at the patio area. The BBQ can begin after 5:00 pm with set up beginning at 4:30 pm, should be no problem.

Jim added the last time this was done there were approximately 40 to 50 who attended and the majority were government officials.

Crystal said Jacob Katz would be good to invite as he has received scholarship grants a couple of times from the commission.

Dennis stated the Discovery Center's Sea Table would be a great display which was purchased from a grant received from the commission.

Ned asked the group what two exhibits would everyone like to see come to the BBQ? Dave answered Ocean Discovery's portable touch tank which was granted in November 2005. Jeff added the Salmon Creek Watershed out in Occidental; Pierre added Doris Duncan of Wildlife Rescue; Crystal added Department of Fish & Game and the Regional Parks folks.

Ned stated the Agricultural Commissioner's staff, judges, District Attorneys, and County Supervisors would be invited – anyone else? Brock added the RCD folks would be good to invite.

Andrew Pozzi is not in favor of the commission hosting a BBQ.

Ned will work on getting addresses. Dave will check on open dates at the Water Agency in May.

The time for BBQ was decided to be 5:30 pm.

New Business

First Reading of Stuart Creek – Jeanne Wirka of Audubon Canyon Ranch Bouverie Preserve is requesting a grant for \$3,000 to monitor and control invasive signal crayfish in Stuart Creek.

Jeanne Wirka was not present. Dave Cook stated he did an amphibian survey at Bouverie Preserve a couple of years ago and found crayfish in Stuart Creek. Dave suggested they try and eradicate this non-native species from the creek. Dave will give Jeanne a call and let her know about the second reading and attending.

Jo Bentz asked how do the barriers affect other species? Dave answered the creek tiers up to a waterfall. Near the bottom of the creek are two concrete dams and with this grant the preserve intends to improve these barriers. Steelhead have no problem jumping over these dams, Dave added.

Crystal stated this was the first reading of this grant the second reading will be during the February 2007 meeting.

First Reading of Sonoma County West Pond Turtles – Dr. Nicholas R. Geist of Sonoma State University Biology Department is requesting a grant for \$6,355 for reproductive biology and conservation of Sonoma County West Pond Turtles.

Dr. Nicholas R. Geist was present. Dr. Geist thanked the commission for hearing his request. He explained the two aspects he hopes to gain from this research.

First aspect to research temperature effects on Pond Turtles' sexual determination. The basic parameters of the turtles sexual determination is based on temperature – a couple of degree changes will produce a male or female. There have been some studies from Washington and Oregon, which studied captive versus head start but there is no data on temperatures. With the telemetry systems (requested in this grant) Dr. Geist would like to track adult female turtles.

Second aspect, compare turtles in artificial ponds at Sonoma State to a natural pond such as the Laguna. Also are we (the public) tramping on nests are we interfering with the breeding?

Dr. Geist added he has free labor from under graduates and graduate students. There are a number of students ready to begin work with this study. The equipment is what is needed to begin.

Jeff Holden asked are these native turtles? Dr. Geist answered with a “yes” they are the only native aquatic turtle in Northern California.

Jo Bentz declared her support for this grant. She also asked will you be working with the Department of Fish & Game? Dr. Geist answered not at this time.

Dave Cook stated he will not be voting on this grant because he would be training the students on the radio telemetry equipment.

Dr. Geist added there will be field and lab components to this study that the students will be involved in. One of the problems occurring with these turtles is the issue of being smashed by passing vehicles. They have found female turtles will travel and nest on

shoulders of roadways. Dr. Geist added when a pond has been assessed the majority of turtles found are older males – deceiving thriving turtle population.

Crystal asked what area will you be working in? Dr. Geist answered Sonoma County at this moment. He added it would be great to see this spread from Sonoma County but for now Sonoma County is where they will focus.

Crystal asked what is the incubation time for the turtles? Dr. Geist answered the regular incubation is 60 to 90 days, the critical period is in the middle third – key is to have a good professional temperature controlled climate to keep the eggs at an optimal temperature. He stated there he has one incubator and would like another one, which is included in this grant.

Crystal inquired if Dr. Geist has identified any nests or narrowed down an area? Dr. Geist answered we know there is a thriving population at Fairfield Osborn and in the Laguna. We plan on placing telemetry on the adult females. The Washington study came up with protocols which we will be using in this study. We do know our breeding season is April through July, which will be our labor intensive monitoring period.

Pierre asked how many females do you plan on tagging? Dr. Geist stated 25 mature adult females will be tagged. Dr. Geist added he will be asking questions of the Washington study folks in hopes of locating nests – if he found three or four nests he would be happy because each nest typically will carry six or eight eggs. Pierre asked if they would take all of the eggs or just a few? Dr. Geist answered all the eggs would be taken.

Andy inquired about the indirect costs of the study listed on the financial page? Dr. Geist stated this is electricity, laboratory costs, etc. for using Sonoma State's laboratory and green house.

Brock declared his love of turtles and his support for the study. Brock also offered his personal pond as a study site for the group to use. Additionally Brock brought some information dated back to 1922 for Dr. Geist to have.

Dennis declared his support for the study as well.

Andy asked what is the length of your study? Dr. Geist stated one year – he wants to get through this breeding season. Then Andy inquired what would determine you going on with the study further? Dr. Geist answered if there is good data from this pilot study, which is needed to obtain more money, then he will go after more money for future research.

Dennis asked will there be publications? Dr. Geist stated yes – he could think of at least two or three right now which could be published from this study.

Jeff queried if natural nests would be monitored? Dr. Geist yes – by comparing conditions such as how big, how deep, how many eggs are in a nest, temperature using probes, etc. Then set up protective barriers around the nests and monitor them through the breeding season.

Crystal Norris stated this would be considered the first reading of this grant.

Proposed Budgets for FY 07/08 – discussion began regarding the proposed budgets for the FY 07/08.

There is a revised budget which was handed out at the beginning of the meeting by Deanna. The Abalone budget for FY 07/08 revenue is the same as last year with an increase in interest because we are earning interest on the fund balance over the course of the year. \$7,500 total projected revenue, \$16,000 budgeted for grants, which would leave a net reserve of -\$8,500 in the Abalone Fund.

The General Fund budget for FY 07/08 projected revenue of \$50,750, \$62,050 budgeted for grants including scholarships, and office expenditures of \$3,700, which would leave a net reserve of -\$18,700 in the General Fund.

Jim Lynch stated the other issue is the scholarships given each year the commission might consider increasing the amount.

Jim Lynch made a motion to accept the Proposed Budgets for the FY 2006-2007. A second was made by Al Ferris. Motion carried.

Reports and Comments

Commission

Brock informed the group of a conference on March 7 through 10 in Santa Rosa on Salomid Restoration Federation which will be creating a DVD on Coho Brood Stock Program.

Dennis informed the commission of his PAC fundraiser on March 5, Keynote speaker Ted Elliott will speak on Open Space District he is the former Ambassador to Afghanistan.

Jo told the group of an Open Space workshop she attended with the City of Santa Rosa in regard to a creek trails plan including restoration ideas.

Dave told the group of the rubber dam which the water agency will put in place on Monday, January 22, on the Russian River because of the dry cold weather. This is unusual the last time the rubber dam was used was ten years ago.

Public

Joe Laugesen, Department of Fish & Game, thanked the commission for the equipment which has been purchased with money provided by grant requests from the commission. He stated the equipment is the best he has ever used. Joe stated future need for spotting scopes for viewing from the bluffs – would need four. Currently there are four full-time wardens for Sonoma County.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deanna McAulay
Secretary