

Minutes of the July 19, 2007, Meeting

<u>Attending Members</u>	<u>Absent Members</u>	<u>Others</u>
Crystal Norris Pierre Gadd Al Ferris Jeff Holden Ned Hill Brock Dolman Martin Bauman Gene Gaffrey	Andrew Pozzi Dave Cook Jim Lynch	Martha Bentley, Bird Rescue Center Lisa Hulette, Gold Ridge RCD Alida Morzenti, Bird Rescue Center Karl Andersen, Bodega Water Co Abby Myers, Bodega Land Trust Ron Albin, Bodega Fire Dept Joseph Laugesen, Dept of Fish & Game Jim Goodman, Dept of Fish & Game Mary Clemens, So Co Regional Parks Mary Jo Delos, So Co Regional Parks Alex McVicker, Ag. Commissioner's Office

Chairperson Crystal Norris called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.

Adoption of Minutes

A motion to accept the June minutes as presented was made by Al Ferris with a second by Pierre Gadd. Motion carried.

Correspondence

Fish and Game Calendar for July 2007

Letter from Doris Duncan regarding not attending the meeting tonight

Financial Report

The General Fund received in June \$779.60 from court revenues and \$140.61 from probation less expenditures of \$728.75 with a fund balance of \$186,117.41. The Abalone Fund in June received \$311.00 from collections with a fund balance of \$6,953.33. A motion to accept the June financial reports was made by Gene Gaffney with a second by Brock Dolman. Motion carried.

Old Business

Second Reading of Salmon Creek Ranch Restoration Lisa Hulette of Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District is requesting a grant for \$6,125.00 for permanent fence along Salmon Creek.

Gene Gaffney asked where the bulk of the funding was coming from? Lisa answered Coastal Conservancy Agency.

Gene noticed in the grant request that the project mentioned a need for monitoring and management? Gene wanted to know if the funding from Coast Conservancy Agency address management and monitoring? Lisa replied that part of their agreement with the Coastal Conservancy Agency is that they have 3 years where they can help to maintain the project (assist if rocks should slip, plants should die) and that they have a 20-year maintenance and monitoring agreement with the landowner. The landowner will maintain the project for 20 years and Gold Ridge RCD is allowed to monitor it.

Crystal Norris asked if there would be any water testing done in the streams above and below where cattle will be entering to monitor water quality? Lisa replied that there is a water quality monitoring program that goes throughout Salmon Creek which is funded through State Water Resources Control Board.

Al Ferris mentioned again that the bottom 2 wires of the fence should not be barbed wire because of wildlife safety. Lisa stated that since the last meeting, she has spoken to the builder and they have it in place where the bottom 2 will not be barbed wire and will not be a problem for wildlife.

Motion to accept the grant request in full for \$6,125.00 for Salmon Creek Restoration Project was made by Al Ferris. A second was made by Gene Gaffney motion carried for Grant #117 to Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District.

Second Reading of Raptor Rehabilitation Compound – Doris Duncan (absent) of Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue is requesting a grant for \$17,903 for a raptor rehabilitation compound.

A letter was received today from Doris Duncan stating she was not attending the meeting tonight. She preferred to let the Commission make their own decision.

Jeff Holden stated he had gone to Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue's Open House and thought it looked like a great project. As far as he was made aware, there are a lot of politics involved, although he's not sure what the politics are. The Commission requested there be some cooperation involved and it doesn't appear like this is happening. The Commission made it conditional that if the 2 groups could come together, the Commission would fund the project. It doesn't appear as if they gotten together and it doesn't appear the funding will happen.

Jeff asked Alida Morzenti of Bird Rescue to explain what the politics are. Alida answered as a raptor biologist at Davis for 30 years, she knows a lot about this. There was a creance issue; the creance is certainly a long-standing perfectly acceptable way of exercising birds. One of the criticisms is that if you don't know what you're doing you can injure the birds. She agrees but it's true of any method. Creance flying is very inexpensive. It allows you to take whatever bird you may have to the most appropriate area to exercise it. Alida explained how Bird Rescue trains its volunteers in this method. The most common bird they acquire is a red tail. In the case of a red tail, it is a perch hunter, will sit in the flight cage. On occasion, the red tail may fly to the other end. You may have a large impressive cage but this does not equal an exercised bird.

Bird Rescue does have flight cages for smaller birds as it can be effective, but you don't need anything very big.

Alida would also like to address the staffing issue since it was brought up. Martha and Alida started Bird Rescue at its present location in 1980. She stated Bird Rescue closed its doors in 2003 for a couple of months, as there were staffing problems. She would like to point out, that the people who were the staff in charge at the time are no longer at Bird Rescue but are now the ones running the bird program at Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue. Alida thinks the fact that as an organization they had to close down for a couple months for once in 27 years, for a non-profit org is not a bad record. She would say that it was due more to staffing problems than anything else. She'll also point out that they handle about 3,000 birds per year. Alida is also surprised by the idea of wanting to address raptor rehabilitation when a majority of the birds coming in are songbirds. If there's anything that needs addressing, it's helping the songbirds. She would also like to say that Bird Rescue does birds; this leaves all the other wildlife in the county to Wildlife Rescue.

Alida stated that some of the Commissioner's were present when Bird Rescue applied for a grant a few months ago and that the approach that Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue took in discussing their grant was the approach that Bird Rescue is always faceless.

Alida spoke with Barbara Elliott who was the head of Wildlife Rescue 10 years ago and who trained Doris. Barbara stated she was the one who made the agreement between the 2 organizations; that Bird Rescue would do birds, and Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue would do everything else. Barbara said Doris was very well aware of this because in those days Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue would often pick up and accept birds and in turn, Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue would deliver them to Bird Rescue to be cared for. This is a long-standing agreement of which Doris was very aware. Bird Rescue doesn't have any expertise in anything else; they don't know coyotes, squirrels, raccoons, bobcats, etc, - they know birds. They feel that everyone should have enough work to do where they don't need this controversy going on in the background. They are happy to do what they do well, and let everybody else do what they do well.

Jeff said that one of Doris' arguments was that this was a Southern Sonoma County intake facility and were building this so anyone would be able to use it (other counties). He asked if it would be useful for Bird Rescue? Alida answered that they have no use for this for raptors. They have their own techniques, their own methods.

Crystal Norris inquired about waterfowl. Alida replied by saying Bird Rescue's waterfowl are transported to International Bird Research Rescue Center in Cordelia, who specialize in water birds. Bird Rescue does rehabilitate ducks. Bird Rescue transfers herons, egrets, and pelagic birds that require specialized housing to them. Bird Rescue sees no reason to try and duplicate something that International Bird Research Rescue Center does very well. Al asked who takes the birds to Cordelia? Alida answered that Bird Rescue transports them as they do have a transport team.

Ned Hill stated that he was brand new to the Commission regarding the meeting Alida was referring to when Doris made comments about Bird Rescue's grant. He stated that

he didn't enjoy Doris' comments about the grant request and on that note; he wasn't enjoying Alida's comments on Doris' request. Alida responded she was asked to be here tonight and to comment. Ned stated 2 months ago he wasn't impressed when this whole debacle started. He asked what prompted Alida to come in and to also write a letter responding to this? Alida answered she goes on the County of Sonoma website and checks the Fish & Wildlife Commission Meeting Minutes and Agenda. She stated she saw the request. She felt it was worth at least stating Bird Rescue's position. Ned wanted to clarify Bird Rescue's position and asked Alida if their position was Bird Rescue does birds and a cage was not the correct way to deal with rehabilitating raptors. Alida agreed with that statement. Doris was under the impression that this would benefit Bird Rescue, it's not and they're not interested as they have what they need as far as this goes. Alida stated she was here tonight because she was told the Commission requested she attend.

Martin Bauman agreed that with the amount of resources we have to not duplicate services and he would be opposed to approving this grant.

Gene Gaffney asked Alida if there was anyway to mend fences with Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue since they do receive so many birds? Alida does think they can all get along. She feels that it takes up unnecessary time and thinks it's pretty clear they do birds and take water birds to International Bird Research Rescue Center, and they refer all wildlife calls to Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue. Alida thinks that for the Sonoma County and the public in general it would make a clear-cut distinction of who does what. She doesn't want to get into an argument with Doris. They'd been playing phone tag and finally when they spoke, Doris told her that she was not attending the meeting tonight.

Martha Bentley stated Bird Rescue existed before Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue and Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue knew when they started that Bird Rescue was already in the business of taking care of birds.

Crystal went over the letter that Doris sent in. Doris stated she was leaving the decision up to the Commission tonight and that she would continue this project whether the Commission funds it or not.

Ned does not believe that this is a good request but not for any reason Martha mentioned. He's not concerned with who does what as long as it benefits the animals. He's more tired of all the fighting that's going on. He's opposed to this grant request, not only because 1 organization should be doing birds, he doesn't know if it matters how long someone's been doing something, it's whatever is best for the wildlife. He would like to see all this stop.

Alida responded she wanted to clarify there is no bickering going on. She is not here to bad mouth Doris or Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue. They are just trying to do their job.

Motion to deny the grant request in full for \$17,903.00 for Raptor Rehabilitation Compound was made by Al Ferris. A second was made by Jeff Holden motion carried.

New Business

First Reading of Indoor Tide Pool Support/Maintenance at the Environmental Discovery Center at Spring Lake – Mary Jo Delos and Mary Clemens of Environmental Discovery Center are requesting a grant for \$3,500 for professional maintenance and support of the indoor tide pool exhibit at the Environmental Discovery Center at Spring Lake Regional Park.

Mary Jo Delos stated a few years ago they received a grant from the Fish & Wildlife Commission for improvements to their indoor tide pool. They also received additional funding from the Fish & Wildlife Commission for their indoor tree fort they use for the fall and winter children's program. They are very thankful for everything.

Mary Jo stated the indoor tide pool (which is hands on) is their most popular part of their school field trip program; they conduct field trips for Sonoma County schools grades 1-6 on various science topics. They've had about 35,000 children come through so far.

Mary Jo explained Sonoma County Regional Parks contracts with a Marine Biologist to help maintain the indoor tide pool.

Mary Clemens thanked the Commission for having Mary Jo and herself.

Mary explained that Bodega Marine Lab has been helping them. The lab is a UC Davis run Marine Biology Department so they can't give EDC anything. The lab will loan EDC creatures (invertebrates, fish, etc) on loan. They cannot give them a Marine Biologist; they have to pay for that. EDC has been fortunate enough to contract with Karl Menard to work with them for the last few years.

Mary stated that she was asking the Commission to fund their Marine Biologist annual contract of \$3,500.

Crystal inquired about the contract with Karl. She wanted to know if he was employed through the lab or was he is contracted as an individual? Mary stated that he was contracted as an individual.

Jeff Holden inquired how maintenance and support services are paid for currently? Mary Jo Delos responded that previously they have used their general budget, but since their budget is so pressed this year, they've been asked to find a funder to help out with the costs.

Mary Jo Delos added that the school children attending through a field trip each pay \$3. The people that teach the children are interns from Sonoma State; they take the intern fee and charge that. Essentially there is no money made from the \$3 charged. They also have several funders for scholarships provided to schools in order to cover costs for children who cannot afford to pay (about 20% of admission is through scholarships). The only fee that is charged for people coming into the park is for parking. There is no additional fee to enter the Environmental Discovery Center. If you walk into the park, there is no fee charged.

Currently the tide pool consists of sea squirts, sea cucumbers, eels, perch, flounders, etc.

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

Presentation from Bodega Land Trust and Bodega Volunteer Fire Department –

Abby Myers of Bodega Land Trust, Ron Albini of Bodega Fire Department, and Karl Andersen of Bodega Water Company gave a presentation on their possible upcoming grant request regarding a water catchment system at the Bodega Fire Department.

Crystal informed the Commission that this is not a grant request, this is simply to let the Commission know about their project and to see if the Commission feels it falls under the grant requirements.

Abby Myers from Bodega Land Trust stated she felt they have projects that will help that preserve the flow in Salmon Creek, improve habitat, and provide for public education with regard to the need and the seriousness of water conservation in the coastal watershed.

Abby mentioned a water catchment system on the fire department roof and driveway that would provide water storage with the ability to use in summer too. The water usually used would not be needed. Water at times like this is drought in summer and overflow in winter, which is a good example.

Ron Albini with the Bodega Fire Department stated that a water catchment system will make them less dependent on Bodega Water Company wells and 1 current well they have on the fire department property at this time. They depend on that water for fire fighting and for daily use. The well on the property and the well from the water company are fairly close to Salmon Creek and the Salmon Creek watershed. Summer is when there isn't enough water and winter they have too much. A water catchment system would be best. It would also serve as an educational purpose for the community. It will visibly show they are doing something towards conserving water in the community.

Karl Andersen of Bodega Water Company stated that part of the joint water conservation program is addressing water issues and demonstrating water conservation in the community as well.

Crystal wasn't sure how this would fit into the Commission's mandate. The grant guidelines are mandated for Fish and Game, habitat, and restoration. A water catchment system is not going to protect the creek. The consensus of the Commission was at this time they did not think they could accommodate their request based on their DFG guidelines.

Crystal thanked everyone for coming. She advised them to check out the guidelines and see if anything would be of help in them getting a grant.

Reports and Comments

Commission

Crystal received an email from Stefan Parnay of the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office earlier this month regarding James Swan of Snow Goose Productions in Mill Valley who is in the process of putting together a video documentary

for PBS called, "Endangered Species: The Fish & Game Warden". She didn't have the office copy the whole document for everyone. Crystal can get email addresses from the Commission members and will have the office email information to them.

Crystal received an email from Lisa Correia today from Valerie Brown in regards to an email received from Karl Weiland, Chair of El Dorado County Fish & Game Commission. They sent out an invitation to participate in forming a statewide association of County Fish and Game Commissioners. The organizations will function as a point of collection, discussion and decision about various proposals, legislation and management at the State level. Eventually to be an effective voice for expressing collective local government voice as advocate to state officials and legislature. Crystal responded to Lisa that she would like to receive newsletters from other commissions, but that in the past have specifically made a point of not being politically active without addressing directly to the Board of Supervisors their opinion on something. Having some sort of coalition may be good. Crystal was hesitant about getting involved with something that may become political in regards to issues that come up. Supporting something overall may be good as well.

The consensus of the Commission was that this was not a good idea at this time and no action will be taken.

Al will be unable to attend the September meeting and will remind Crystal again next month.

Jeff's son is in 4-H and was unable to show or sell his lambs this year. One of the buyers was unable to buy and now he has some available for sale if anyone is interested.

Brock was happy to see everyone and said that he had a great time in Brazil.

Public

Joseph Laugesen brought in DFG's new spotting scope. He explained the clarity is beyond belief. They are made on demand from Germany and sent to the United States only when one is purchased. They run about \$3,000 and can be converted to take digital photographs.

Joseph also introduced Jim Goodman who is the 2006 Hunter Education Instructor of the Year with DFG. The Commission congratulated Jim for his accomplishments.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Naomi Lozinto
Secretary