

## Minutes of the November 15, 2007, Meeting

### Attending Members

Andrew Pozzi  
Pierre Gadd Jr.  
Ned Hill  
Gene Gaffney  
Jeff Holden  
Al Ferris  
Dave Cook  
Jo Bentz  
Jim Lynch

### Absent Members

Crystal Norris  
Brock Dolman  
Martin Bauman

### Others

Karl Menard, Bodega Marine Lab  
Jim Goodman, Dept. Fish & Game HE  
Michele Luna, Stewards of the Coast  
Steve Riske, Dept. of Fish & Game  
Brendan O'Neil, CA State Parks  
Dan Curtin, Ag. Commissioner's Office  
Naomi Lozinto, Ag. Commissioner's Office

Chairperson Andrew Pozzi called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

### **Adoption of Minutes**

Andy Pozzi asks if there are any additions or corrections to last month's minutes. There were none. A motion to accept the August minutes was made by Al Ferris, with a second by Pierre Gadd. Motion carried.

### **Correspondence**

Letter from Fish and Game Commission regarding proposed notice of regulatory action relating to *Sport Fishing Report Cards and Tagging Requirements*.

### **Financial Report**

The Abalone Fund received \$80.00 from Central Collection and \$93.14 in Interest, with a fund balance of \$7,771.73, and a Budget Balance of -\$6,301.86. A motion to approve the October Abalone Fund financial report is made by Ned Hill, with a second by Gene Gaffney. Motion carried.

General Fund received \$4,372.57 from Superior Court revenues, \$257.85 from Probation, and \$2,196.01 in interest, with a fund balance of \$178,740.91, and a Budget Balance of -\$34,001.75. A motion to approve the October General Fund financial report is made by Al Ferris, with a second by Pierre Gadd. Motion carried.

## **Old Business**

**Final Reading of Public Education Display Aquaria, Bodega Marine Laboratory** - Karl Menard, Public Display Coordinator of the Bodega Marine Laboratory, is requesting a grant for \$9,000 for Bodega Marine Laboratory Public Education Display Aquaria.

Andy Pozzi reviews the grant and asks if the commissioners have any questions. Karl passes out an amended project updated. He then asks Karl Menard what the ramifications of granting a reduced amount would be – if it would mean the discontinuation of the project. Karl replies that it would not necessarily terminate the project but that the amount he has requested is what they will need to keep the project funded for one year. His strategy would then be to reduce the amount of time they would keep the aquaria open (i.e. 6 months instead of a year), and work within a reduced time frame to find additional sources of funding.

Andy asks what the commitment from Bodega Marine Lab will be if the commission does decide to approve the grant – what would happen next year? Karl replies that they are looking at other sources of funding, changing the fee structure for visitors to the lab (i.e. increase fees), seeking support from their own faculty, and grant proposals to other organizations.

Karl states that the amount being requested of the commission is strictly for maintenance of the aquaria such as cleaning, feeding, etc. The Bodega Marine Lab already covers the electrical expenses, the heavy machinery which works on the aquaria, and a significant portion of the modifications being made.

Andy then asks about the \$5,000.00 already given by BML. Karl says that the money was from a private donor. Andy wants to know if any of this money is being used for the annual maintenance. The donor's money was used to help repair cracks in the tanks due to leakage. He says that the Bodega Marine Lab will most definitely be looking to this individual for future contributions to the annual maintenance expenses.

Pierre Gadd asks Karl what the tanks are used for. Karl explains that the aquaria are the primary educational tool at the Lab. Over 10,000 people per year come out to learn about marine biology. A high school class was at the lab today on a field trip learning about the effects of the SF Bay oil spill on marine life. Due to the fact that they can't allow the public to access the laboratory areas of the facility, they serve as the nucleus for marine education.

Andy asks Karl how the project has been funded in the past. Karl replies that it's basically an unfunded project that Karl's actual team has provided over 60% of the funding, but due to the budget cuts, they now need to seek additional funding through grants from outside sources. Karl adds that they have a \$3,000 commitment from outside researchers, provided the aquaria are kept active for a year.

Al Ferris makes a motion to award a matching grant to the outside researchers in the amount of \$3,000. Jo Bentz feels that the commission should grant more than that because it is an important program. Jo's kids went there when they were in school. Jo feels we should grant at least \$4,500 or more.

Andy asks if the program continues through another year, will it cost more or less in the following years. Karl replies that once the program is stabilized within the first year, through training of volunteers, the annual maintenance expenses are projected to be less in the following years.

A new motion to accept the grant request for the amended amount of \$4,500.00 for **Public Education Display Aquaria** is made by Al Ferris. A second is made by Pierre Gadd. Motion carried for Grant #121 to Bodega Marine Lab.

The motion is carried with five “yes” votes from: Al Ferris, Pierre Gadd, Andy Pozzi, Jeff Holden & Ned Hill.

There were four “no” votes from Gene Gaffney, Jo Bentz, Jim Lynch and Dave Cook due to their desire for the grant award to be more than \$4,500.00

**Final Reading of Outdoor Classroom, Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue** – Doris Duncan, Executive Director, is requesting a grant in the amount of \$5,933.54 for an Outdoor Classroom for SCWR’s Educational Outreach Program.

Doris Duncan, nor a representative of the Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue, was present at the final reading.

Jeff Holden feels that after reviewing the grant request from the Wildlife Rescue and reviewing last month’s meeting minutes, due to the fact that the commission has granted nearly \$20,000 over the years to their organization, that the amount of \$5,933.54 is too much.

Andy Pozzi agrees with Jeff, and comments that Wildlife Rescue seems to always approach the commission first with their financial needs.

Jo Bentz comments that since they are a county wildlife rescue organization, we would by default be the first place they would reasonably come to. That being said, she isn’t necessarily supportive of the full amount of this current grant request.

Pierre Gadd states that the amount of money the commission has granted Wildlife Rescue for over 10 years doesn’t amount to that much annually, considering the size of some of the single grants the commission has awarded to others. He comments that they are an up and coming organization with growing programs and expansion needs as they become more established. He feels that the amount being requested, along with the fact that the labor is being requested is reasonable.

Jo Bentz proposes making a grant award for only the building supplies.

Andy isn’t interested in funding the classroom supplies, but possibly the classroom furnishings.

Jeff mentions that if the commission grants the request for only art supplies or furnishings, it’s like putting the cart before the horse.

A motion to award the grant request for the amended amount of \$3,500.00 for *building supplies only* for the Outdoor Classroom is made by Jeff Holden. A second is made by Gene Gaffney. Motion carried for Grant #122 to Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue.

The motion is carried with six “yes” votes from: Gene Gaffney, Jo Bentz, Pierre Gadd, Dave Cook, Jeff Holden & Ned Hill.

There were three “no” votes from Al Ferris, Jim Lynch and Andy Pozzi.

### **New Business**

**First Reading of Fish Passage Project, Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods** - Michele Luna, Executive Director, Redwoods is requesting a grant for \$14,850.00 for the Willow Creek Road 2<sup>nd</sup> Bridge Area Fish Passage Project.

Michele Luna introduces herself. She thanks the commission for their past support for the Watershed National Plan because that document has really laid the groundwork for future work regarding fish passage issues in the Willow Creek Watershed.

Michele then introduces Brendan O’Neil, an environmental scientist from California State Parks. State Parks owns around 80% of the Willow Creek Watershed; 7/8% of the Watershed is in conservation easement with Mendocino Redwood Company; and the Open Space District is current in negotiation for acquiring another 12,000 acres – which brings the total over 90% for protected lands in the watershed.

Since 2005 the Watershed Plan has enabled CSP to request & receive \$1.3 million in grant funding for upper watershed restoration work. They have decommissioned and upgraded 16.5 miles of former logging roads; upgraded 10 miles of logging roads and four miles of county road – which has saved 30,000 cubic yards of sediment from deposition into the Willow Creek Watershed.

They are making a proposal next month to Coastal Conservancy for \$130,000 for the bulk of this current project – which seems very likely to be funded. The current grant proposal to the Fish & Wildlife Commission is a supplemental amount to cover 80% design criteria for 2<sup>nd</sup> Bridge replacement. 2<sup>nd</sup> Bridge is the linchpin to Willow Creek – if 2<sup>nd</sup> Bridge is not fixed, there is no fish passage from Willow Creek.

If they restore fish passage in Willow Creek, there will be 7 miles of Steelhead habitat and 4 ½ miles of Coho habitat restored. Fish numbers have diminished significantly in Willow Creek since 1996. No Coho have been seen – this project is key for Coho restoration.

Department of Fish and Game has indicated great interest in the Rootstock Program at Willow Creek - it will be one of their next target locations. Brendan has been working with Derek Akum on the project and has been stocking Coho in Austin Creek and other parks and recreation areas that have had previous watershed work.

This current proposal is very similar to their previous work but also includes the fish passage issue. There have been significant partnerships associated with this project: \$130,000 from the Coastal Conservancy; \$14,000 match that is being considered by Mendocino Redwood Company (a private landowner in the watershed); and State Parks staff will be contributing as much time as possible to the project.

The reason they are requesting the money is because it is a unique situation due to the fact that the road is not a State Park road, it is a county road. They cannot use State Park funds on the project. Their own bylaws prohibit them from working on someone else's property. The county will not work on the bridge, as it has other transportation related priorities. The county has given the green light for State Parks and the groups associated with the project (Stewards of the Coast, Trout Unlimited, and others) to do the work on the bridge, it's now a matter of getting funding other than State Parks or County of Sonoma to finance the work.

This is an excellent opportunity for fisheries restoration in the Russian River basin.

Andy Pozzi asks how much Trout Unlimited contributing. Michele Luna answers that due to the time frame involved with getting the project started by the spring (so they can apply for DFG grants for the actual project), they didn't get the grant request submitted in time to receive Trout Unlimited funds currently. They are interested in contributing to the next phase.

Brendan states that it is critical for them to get the design work in prior to the next Department of Fish & Game funding/grant cycle because they have shown strong interest in funding the actual implementation of the project once it has been designed.

Jo Bentz wants to know if the grant is approved, how would they select the contractors – through bids? Brendan answers that it would be put up to bid and would fund a geotechnical study, which is required by the county codes for placement of the bridge. They have looked at multiple options for building the bridge: a bypass, a causeway. They are seeking the most judicious design that will be the most cost effective overall. Possibilities for the design are a bottomless arch or box culverts that can be expanded over the long term. He feels that it is a challenging project and invites the commission to come visit the site so they can get an added level of understanding about what is involved.

Jeff Holden asks if the new bridge would replace an existing bridge. Brendan says it wouldn't replace the existing bridge – which is further up the valley and is not functioning any longer. The three existing culverts are at higher altitudes and are not adequate to pass current flood flows. There is also no channel formation for the fish to migrate in. It keeps 99% of the fish from passing through the culverts.

Al Ferris asks where they are going to get the fish. Brendan replies that they will be getting fish from Green Valley Creek and Dutch Bill Creek. They are being raised at the Warm Springs Hatchery and then will be released during the fall. There are resident Steelhead Salmon in the creek already and they feel that they will naturally repopulate once the passage issue is solved.

Andy Pozzi asks if they would be willing to waive the \$1,350.00 for “10% Administrative Overhead (Stewards of the Coast)” in the grant request. Michele Luna says yes, they would.

Pierre asks if it is primarily a State Parks project. Brendan states that it is a collective effort, and that he is the project manager and Stewards of the Coast is the administrative manager. Michele states that due to the large amount of grant requests and complicated multi-party administration, Stewards handles that aspect of it, so Brendan can focus on the project itself.

Brendan adds that additional species related to the project are: California red legged frog and Northern red legged frog in the vicinity of the bridge, along with the potential for fresh water shrimp.

The commission asks what the plans for funding the second phase of the project will be. Brendan replies that it has a very high potential for success, if the first phase is implemented successfully.

Jo Bentz asks for a more detailed description of the landscape of the project. Brendan says that the road crosses the valley where the creek is and there is a bridge that goes over the former creek. Years ago, the Sonoma County Water Agency straightened the channel and the system was maintained through periodic dredging. In the 80's, dredging was abandoned. The profile of the stream gradient is less than 1% slope in the lower valley. The tendency is for the creek path to meander. After the big floods in the 80's, the channel filled with sediment. One used to be able to drive a bulldozer under the existing bridge, now there isn't enough room for a person to crawl under it. The stream bed has raised and the water now flows to the south side of the valley, rather than the north side. At some point, the county roads installed three culverts that act as a dam, which restricts the ability for normal flood flows.

Brendan adds that they have been working with Cal Trans and will be receiving additional mitigating funding from them in the amount of about \$940,000 for additional work upstream: debris removal, additional road de-commissioning, and an adaptive channel design.

Andy asked Brendan to return to the January F & W meeting and bring pictures of the site with him.

## **Reports and Comments**

### **Commission**

Pierre Gadd - Pass

Ned Hill – Pass

Gene Gaffney asked about lead shot being banned in buckshot. Is there an alternative to this? Jim Goodman, with Department of Fish & Game Hunter Education says that lead shot for waterfowl hunting has been banned for over 20 years. Jim says that the current concern is that when California Condors feed on animals shot full of lead shot, it can kill the condors. Legislation was introduced about two years ago regarding banning lead buckshot in areas

where the condor lives, which has just passed within the last month or so. Ned Hill says that there are restrictions regarding using lead shot over water, as it can cause lead poisoning in waterfowl. Jim thinks that it has made better hunters, while at the same time preserving wildlife.

Jeff Holden – Pass

Al Ferris – Pass

Jim Lynch – Hunted for three days at Lower Klamath Lake Refuge. Weather was too nice. It was not cold enough for good waterfowl hunting.

Dave Cook announces that 500 Shinook Salmon have been counted migrating up the Russian River past the Water Agency's River Dam, which is relatively low for this time of year. Jeff asks if this is an actual count and Dave says yes. Andy asks when the dam will come down, and Dave replies that it depends upon the water flow – usually during the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> big rain of the season; when water reaches 1,000 cu. ft. per second. The fish are headed for above Healdsburg or Dry Creek. Most of the spawning occurs in the main stem of the Russian River and a few of the main tributaries.

Andy asks Dave if he's ever done any work at Dry Creek and what the habitat is like there. Dave says that he's been there many times. It's mostly dense, with some clear spots and very sediment starved due to the dam. The water is cold, turbid and flows fairly fast. It's not a rearing habitat for younger Salmon, but the adults don't have a problem surviving in it.

Jo Bentz mentioned the signs for "Tiger Salamander Crossing". She believes that lead is toxic and harmful to wildlife and the environment; she's surprised it's still being used.

## **Public**

Jim Goodman and Steve Riske, of DFG, comment on a local abalone sting. Two individuals were caught with 11 abalone and narcotics with multiple priors. They then found additional abalone and a stolen Park Dept. radio.

Andy asks Steve how they are doing and if they have enough up to date equipment. Steve gives updates on some staff that have left. He says he will take a look at things and let the commission know if he needs anything.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:41p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Thomas

Secretary