



## FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

### Minutes of the June 19, 2008 Meeting

#### Attending Members

Crystal Norris  
Al Ferris  
Gene Gaffney  
Martin Bauman  
Andrew Pozzi  
Pierre Gadd Jr.  
Dave Cook  
Jim Lynch  
Jeff Holden

#### Absent Members

Brock Dolman  
Ned Hill  
Jo Bentz

#### Others

Lisa Correia, Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer  
Stefan Parnay, Chief Deputy Ag. Commissioner  
Alex McVicker, Ag. Commissioner's Office  
Dagny Thomas, Ag. Commissioner's Office  
Jason Wells, Scholarship Recipient  
Lisa Wells, Visitor  
Maria Potter, Scholarship Recipient  
Jim Goodman, DFG Hunter Education  
Tom Henderson, DFG Hunter Education  
Bennet Holden, Guest

Chairperson Crystal Norris called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

#### Adoption of Minutes

Crystal asks if there are any additions or corrections to the May 2008 minutes. Pierre Gadd mentions that under the "Reports and Comments - Commission" section, paragraph one, he felt that the number of Supervisors requesting that the F&W Commission "reevaluate their requirements and criteria for approving grants", in the May minutes should have read "one" Supervisor, and not "a couple". The correction was noted. A motion to accept the May minutes was made by Jim Lynch, with a second by Jeff Holden. Motion carried.

#### Correspondence

- A. Correspondence from California State Fish & Game Commission regarding various regulatory actions
- B. Thank you and update letter from Robert Pennington of Community Clean Water Institute regarding Dutch Bill Creek Turbidity, Nutrient & Bacteria Study
- C. Article from James Swan of Snow Goose Down Productions: "Modern CSI Technology is Helping Nab Poachers"
- D. Sonoma County Abalone Network May 2008 newsletter

## **Financial Reports**

Crystal notes that the amounts reflected in the May 2008 financial reports do not reflect the recent grants #126-128 that have been awarded for: \$2,500 from the Abalone Fund and approximately \$5,000 from the General Fund. Jim Lynch asks Crystal if this will leave the General Fund with a balance of approximately \$10,000 at the end of Fiscal Year 2007-2008, and she confirms this.

In April 2008, the Abalone Fund received \$246.39 from Central Collections, with a fund balance of \$10,645.69. The General Fund received \$2,430.29 from the Superior Court revenues and \$194.39 from Probation, with a fund balance of \$171,314.03. A motion to approve the May 2008 Financial Reports is made by Pierre Gadd, with a second by Jim Lynch. Motion carried.

## **Old Business**

**Fish & Wildlife Scholarships 2008** – The 2008 Scholarship award checks are presented by Crystal Norris to Jason Wells from Humboldt State University, and Maria Potter from Sonoma State University.

Each received a \$1,500.00 scholarship from the Fish & Wildlife Commission for their exceptional courses of study in the areas of environmental science, resource management and conservation.

Jason is focusing his degree on Sustainable Forestry with an emphasis on outreach and public education, and Maria would like to graduate with a degree in Environmental Studies Conservation and work as a biological resources consultant in habitat conservation.

Both scholarship recipients thanked the commissioners for their consideration and for choosing them this year.

## **New Business**

**First reading of *The Raptor Conservancy Educational Program, Wildlife Center for Disease & Toxin Investigation*** - Janet Barth, Board Member, is requesting a grant for \$1,329.00, for The Raptor Conservancy Educational Program.

Crystal notes that the grant request is incomplete and that the Ag office staff was in contact with Janet Barth regarding submission of the complete grant request. Due to the fact that Janet is not present, and the complete grant request was not submitted, this agenda item will be tabled until further notice per the agreement of the commissioners present.

**Draft policy regarding Fund Balance Establishment and Grant Criteria** – Lisa Correia, Agricultural Commissioner, opens by saying that the draft policy is intended as a tool for making decisions and formalizing much of what the commission has done in the past in the way of good government practices. It is seen as a tool to move forward with, improving upon and putting in writing what has occurred in the past. She states that she and Stefan Parnay, Chief Deputy Agricultural Commissioner, met with the Fish & Wildlife Budget ad hoc committee (which consists of Jim Lynch, Crystal Norris and Andy Pozzi), and representatives from the County Administrator's Office to review the procedure by which grants are reviewed and approved. She says that the proposed document is a way to prioritize the projects in a way that makes it easy to manage yet accurately reflects the goals of the commission.

Lisa would like the commissioners' input, feedback and approval before finalizing the draft guidelines. The existing document is a working copy that is not a final document. She states that the prioritization of projects for approval is desired by the CAO and Board members. Understanding the challenge in accomplishing this, she suggests that this could be achieved with the commission considering and prioritizing grant requests as they come in, possibly approving them on a quarterly basis, instead of a monthly basis.

Key points that were brought up during the discussion between commission members and the Ag Commissioner's staff were as follows:

- Concern by the commission regarding assigning annual grant award percentages to specific types of grants (i.e. 20% Public Education, 25% Studies/Research, 25% Protection/Conservation, etc.) The types of grants that are submitted vary on a monthly and annual basis. One year may see more Public Education requests than Rehabilitation, another year may see more Protection/Conservation than Studies/Research. There is no way to anticipate the types of grant submissions that will come in for review. If defined percentages were allotted per "category", and a category exhausted within the first part of a fiscal year, the commission would be unable to consider any further worthy/beneficial grant requests that may come in that year in the same category. This system would limit the ability and flexibility of the commission to honor their mission statement and serve the public in a fair manner.
- Concern regarding the notation of "No labor or administrative fees shall be funded" listed in the draft policy for four of the seven categories: Public Education, Studies/Research, Rehabilitation, and Propagation. It was agreed by the majority of the commission that there was an imbalance in the draft policy restricting any labor or administrative fees for those areas, and questions as to why only one category, "Habitat Restoration", was noted "Up to 25% of the total grant request in this category may be applied towards labor". The commission felt that all of the categories that may need or qualify for labor costs within a grant proposal should be allowed the same consideration of a percentage allocation towards these possible needs.
- The majority of the commissioners present felt that they have been supporting the Mission Statement of the Fish and Wildlife Commission and making sound judgment calls regarding the review and awarding of grants to applicants. The commission reviews grant requests at least twice, sometimes more before making a final decision and every grant request is voted on according to the by-laws set in place for the commission. All commissioners review the same information and have the opportunity to ask any relevant questions prior to making a final decision. Per the bylaws of the commission, majority vote rules, as it always has. They feel that they have been consistently doing their job awarding a wide range grants in diverse categories and their choices have been aligned with the focus the draft proposal
- Many commissioners ask what has generated this new proposal, and it was discussed that two of the Fish and Wildlife Commission members are concerned with the quality and type of grant awards being awarded by the commission as a whole. The two commission members took their concerns to their respective Supervisors, who in turn spoke with the County Administrator's Office (CAO). The CAO then asked the Agricultural Commissioner's Office to draft a more defined policy to present for review to

the Fish and Wildlife Commission. The new policy is being recommended by the CAO via the Board of Supervisors (BOS).

- The majority of the commissioners feel that it hasn't been that long since the grant process was reviewed. They reject this new policy as unnecessary.

A motion to recommend that the draft policy submitted by the Board of Supervisors/CAO be rejected as a formal policy and considered as "**guidelines only**" by the Fish & Wildlife Commission, is made by Gene Gaffney, with a second by Pierre Gadd. Motion carried with 6 Ayes from Gene Gaffney, Pierre Gadd, Jeff Holden, Jim Lynch, Dave Cook and Martin Bauman. There are 2 Nays from Andy Pozzi and Al Ferris.

- There is concern by a minority of the commissioners that many of the Research Studies grant awards have "gone nowhere", which was part of the impetus for contacting the BOS about revising the grant process. It is also discussed that there have been no follow-up reports from grant recipients for large award amounts over the years, and that many recipients that do not follow-up continue to submit grant proposals and are awarded more funds.
- The commission as a whole agrees that the follow-up reporting by grant recipients has been minimal at best over the last ten years. It is agreed that the Agricultural Commissioner's staff will draft a follow up letter to grant recipients requesting the submission of a project report upon completion of a funded project, which will be presented for review by the commission at the July meeting. The content should include: "Show us the results. What did you do? How did you spend it? What did you accomplish?"

A motion is made by Jeff Holden to add a follow-up letter and procedure to the grant award process; that the grant application be more defined to include clear expectations by the F&W Commission regarding response and follow-up (to be administered by the Agricultural Commissioner's office staff). A second is made by Gene Gaffney. Motion carried.

- Another issue discussed by the commission was the issue of grant award monies used to purchase equipment, and what should happen to the equipment once a project is completed.
  1. Should it be returned to the F&W Commission?
  2. How and who should track it?
  3. Where would it be stored?
  4. Should it be purchased through the County? It is noted by Ag Commissioner's office staff that the purchasing process is tedious and lengthy, and that administration, tracking and storage through the County is not realistic.
  5. Should there be a set amount for equipment to be tracked? (i.e. over \$4,000)
  6. Option of F&W Commission requesting that equipment purchased by grant monies be donated to a non-profit after project completion.
  7. Simply allow organizations to keep equipment once they have completed a project.

Crystal Norris reminds the commissioners that ultimately they are not dealing with huge sums of money annually to work with and that the mission of the Fish & Wildlife Commission is to help the community in any way they can, to make a difference whether it is large or small.

Lisa Correia thanked the commission for their thoughtful insights, comments and recommendations and will discuss them and the draft document with the CAO following this meeting.

### **Reports and Comments**

There were no Commission or Public reports or comments.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Thomas

Secretary