



FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

Minutes of the November 20, 2008 Meeting

Attending Members

Brock Dolman
Jo Bentz
Al Ferris
Andrew Pozzi
Dave Cook
Jeff Holden
Ned Hill
Martin Bauman

Absent Members

Crystal Norris
Gene Gaffney
Jim Lynch

Others

Doris Duncan, Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue
Doris Duncan's daughter, Guest
Dan Curtin, Ag. Commissioner's Office
Dagny Thomas, Ag. Commissioner's Office
Jim Goodman, DFG Hunter Education
Tom Henderson, DFG Hunter Education

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

Adoption of Minutes

Andy asks if there are any additions or corrections to the October 2008 minutes. There are none. Al Ferris makes a motion to approve the October 2008 minutes as presented, with a second by Ned Hill. Motion carried.

Correspondence

- A. Correspondence from California State Fish & Game Commission regarding various regulatory actions
- B. *The Bird Rescue Flyer* – Fall 2008 newsletter
- C. *Audubon Canyon Ranch* – Fall 2008 newsletter
- D. Email from Andrew Swan, Snow Goose Down Productions, regarding "Endangered Species" documentary video production final editing stage and premiere at the Sacramento ISE show

Financial Reports

In October, the Abalone Fund received \$125.00 from Central Collections, and \$66.19 in interest, with a current month fund balance of \$9,406.95, and a fiscal year fund balance of \$12,000.00.

The General Fund received \$2,739.87 from Superior Court, \$450.42 from probation, and \$1,238.69 in interest, with a current month fund balance of \$168,522.47, and a fiscal year fund balance of \$44,300.00.

Al Ferris makes a motion to approve the October 2008 financials as presented, with a second by Jeff Holden. Motion carried.

Old Business

Doris Duncan, Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue, gives a presentation on the progress of their Outdoor Classroom (F&W Grant #122).

Doris says that Wildlife Rescue expected the project to be completed in June of 2008, but it was actually completed in October 2008. She brings receipts for the materials used that were funded by the Fish and Wildlife Commission grant award, and then gives a Power Point presentation showing the stages of development and construction of the Outdoor Classroom. They are currently working with the County of Sonoma on finalizing the legality of what to name the structure. She explains that due to County regulations, there may be issues with calling it an "Outdoor Classroom", so they may end up calling it an "Outdoor Workshop" instead.

She states that approximately \$200.00 of the \$3,500.00 in grant monies awarded by the commission was used towards permits. She says that Wildlife Rescue will repay that amount if the commission deems it necessary.

Doris then goes on to explain the newest project they are working on. She says that the California Department of Fish & Game (DFG) recently placed two five-month old mountain lion kittens in the care of Wildlife Rescue. She explains that this is the first time that DFG has ever placed mountain lion kittens with a rehabilitation center in California for the use of education. Sonoma County Animal Care and Control has been providing dead deer (road kill) to feed the kittens. They have made a 20 year commitment to DFG for their care and upkeep.

Andy Pozzi asks what will happen to the kittens once they have matured. Doris explains that they are partnering with DFG to build an enclosure to permanently house them and teach mountain lion education to ranchers, wineries, students and the public in Sonoma County. They are building the new enclosure because the kittens are currently in the rehabilitation area of their property. DFG regulations state that the public cannot access wildlife rehabilitation areas, so Wildlife Rescue needs the new enclosure to allow for public education purposes. Doris also mentions that although DFG has entrusted the stewardship of the mountain lions to Wildlife Rescue and consulting them regarding care in captivity, DFG will not be assisting financially with the cost of care and upkeep for the animals.

Wildlife Rescue is planning to develop three educational animal enclosures for their property: a wildlife habitat (which will include the mountain lions), a barnyard habitat, and a domestic animal habitat for comprehensive animal environment education purposes.

Doris invites the Commissioners to come and visit the center any time.

Jim Goodman, Department of Fish and Game (DFG) – Hunter Education, discusses possible options to offer his classes to low income urban kids.

Jim Goodman followed up with the police chief in Sebastopol to consider options for bringing the program to facilities in Sebastopol. He's also spoken with the National Archery in the Schools program regarding obtaining an equipment list from them.

Andy Pozzi mentions that he spoke with Buzz Ramsey who works for Abu Garcia and for the Fishing in the City program, Pure Fishing is willing to offer rod and reel combos for around \$20.00 apiece. Andy also spoke with Jim Lynch, who is very supportive of Jim Goodman's concept idea.

Martin Bauman is strongly opposed to offering low income kids firearm education, even with the best intentions. He feels it is dangerous. Martin works with this demographic of children sometimes and thinks it would give them a false sense of empowerment that could lead to causing harm or damage. He believes that under the auspices of learning to hunt, these kids would actually be learning how to use firearms more effectively. He feels that offering fishing or even an outdoor photography program would be a much safer option for kids in this particular demographic.

Tom Henderson, DFG Hunter Education, says that the idea of the program would be to gradually expose kids to an increasing responsibility regarding education and awareness to not only hunting, but fishing and stewardship of the environment through multi-disciplinary outdoor education practices. There would be a gradual increase in responsibility, training and exposure to firearm use. Only students that exhibited exceptional responsibility, over a period of time, would be considered for the final stages of the program that included firearm use for hunting with live ammunition. A primary purpose of the program is to teach comprehensive outdoorsman & environmental respect, responsibility and awareness. They are looking at focusing on pre-teens, "intervening" before the kids get older and are exposed to negative or dangerous influences. Tom says that he feels that making generalized statements about kids in this demographic isn't fair, and doesn't allow for those that are responsible and respectful.

Ned Hill suggests that the target skills be started with air guns or shooting trap. Jim Goodman says that the primary advancement steps being considered for the program include archery, air gun and laser gun training.

Jim Goodman discusses a young woman, aged 16, whom he met in Alaska recently. She is the bronze medal winner in shooting trap and skeet for the US Olympic team. He explains that she comes from a very challenged and underprivileged background, including her mother passing when she was very young. By learning to shoot trap and skeet at an early age, she found a constructive outlet for her time, which has led to a very successful and focused life path.

Jo Bentz asks what would attract kids to this program. Jim Goodman says that the feeling of camaraderie and inclusion that comes with the course can be a real draw to kids who come from single parent or adverse home situations.

Jeff Holden says that he feels that kid will find guns and weapons no matter what, and that offering a structure and discipline with which to learn about them could be beneficial. He says that kids have the curiosity no matter what their upbringing. He thinks this is a good way to teach them and that it would demystify the "thrill" of handling a weapon.

Jo Bentz agrees with Martin to a degree regarding kids handling firearms, and understands that kids have a fascination with guns. She thinks that the shooting aspect of the program is going to be the draw for kids and that it will be complicated to progress kids from the initial entry level stages, to the level of responsibility of using a firearm. She says that the camaraderie aspect of the program is a good thing.

Al Ferris says that Western Outdoor News and its affiliates sponsor youth hunting programs, in which the size of the game hunted increases with the age and responsibility level of the kids. He says that in these programs there is one guide per every two youths, so that there is a high level of control of the program. He feels it teaches responsibility and respect, and says that they also sponsor similar types of fishing programs.

Brock Dolman states that the sooner this program concept comes in to the Commission as a grant request, it will make it clearer and easier to discuss as a commission.

Andy Pozzi asks Jim Goodman and Tom Henderson to submit an outline of the program to the Commission along with a grant request. He asks them to return in January with detailed lists of their proposed equipment needs, etc. Andy then asks who would be overseeing the program. Tom Henderson replies that it would be he and Jim initially and that they would like to start with a small pilot project group of no more than 25 kids.

Dave Cook reminds Jim and Tom that he would like to see their outline and funding request as it relates directly to the new guidelines set forth to award grant monies.

New Business

There is no new business.

Reports and Comments

Commission –

Al Ferris wishes everyone a great Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas.

Dave Cook says that over 1100 adult Chinook salmon passed the rubber dam at Wohler Bridge Road. There are low flows in the river from the recent heat wave. The agency was assessing the health of the fish related to the low flow and warm water temperatures. The Water Agency found Chinook ranging anywhere from 8 to 20 pounds, and counted about 20 Steelhead at the rubber dam.

Brock Dolman says that DFG has released about 10,000 juvenile Coho salmon into Dutch Bill Creek, which is the largest number they've ever done there. Community Clean Water Institute is still conducting their bacteria study of Dutch Bill Creek and is finding alarming levels of E.Coli in the Creek. He says it's related to upland surface runoff. He says that if we get some rain, DFG may release up to 400 adult Coho into the Salmon Creek Watershed – part of the Coho Recovery Broodstock program.

Andy Pozzi says that the Riverkeepers non-profit is filing suit in Superior Court against Syar Industries for gravel extraction. Andy reminds the Commission that part of the conditions of the past grant award to the Riverkeepers was that they would not file lawsuits if they had a fish habitat issues and they would take any issues directly to DFG to handle.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Thomas, Secretary