



FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

Minutes of the March 19, 2009 Meeting

Attending Members

Crystal Norris
Jo Bentz
Al Ferris
Andrew Pozzi
Martin Bauman
Gene Gaffney
Dave Cook
Jim Lynch
Jeff Holden
Dave Lloyd

Absent Members

Ned Hill
Brock Dolman

Others

Doris Duncan, Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue
Frederique Lavoipierre, Sonoma State University
Nathan Rank, Sonoma State University
Demitri Esquivel, Department of Fish & Game
Jim Moore, Department of Fish & Game
Jim Snider, Department of Fish & Game
Tom Moore, Department of Fish & Game
George Neelands, Department of Fish & Game
Alex McVicker, Ag. Commissioner's Office
Dagney Thomas, Ag. Commissioner's Office

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

Adoption of Minutes

Crystal asks if there are any additions or corrections to the February 2008 minutes. There are none. Al Ferris makes a motion to approve the February minutes, with a second by Jeff Holden. Motion carried.

Correspondence

- A. Correspondence from California State Fish & Game Commission regarding various regulatory actions
- B. *The Bird Rescue Flyer* – Winter 2009
- C. Community Clean Water Institute – Annual Report 2007-2008

Introduction

Crystal introduces Dave Lloyd, new Commissioner representing the 4th district.

Dave says he is a local small vineyard owner and is looking forward to serving the Commission and working with the Commissioners.

Financial Reports

In February 2009, the Abalone Fund received \$100.00 from Central Collections, and \$3,744.00 from probation, with a fiscal year fund balance of \$12,000.00.

The General Fund received \$1,712.17 from Superior Court, \$517.06 from probation, and \$22.74 in expenses, with a fiscal year fund balance of \$44,123.18. Crystal states that the fiscal year fund balance does not include the deduction of grant #131 for \$4,500.00 for the Bodega Marine Lab, awarded in January.

Al Ferris makes a motion to approve the February 2009 financials as presented, with a second Jim Lynch. Motion carried.

Crystal says the Ag Commissioner's Office was forwarded a restitution payment from the District Attorney's office in the amount of \$5,000.00 on March 11, 2009, for an Abalone court case.

Old Business

Doris Duncan, Executive Director, Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue (SCWR), is requesting a grant in the amount of \$16,104.00, for *Mountain Lion Enclosure*, final reading.

Crystal asks if there are additional questions or comments from the Commission.

Andy Pozzi makes a motion to partially approve the grant in the amount of \$2,500.00, with a second by Al Ferris.

Gene Gaffney states that he cannot support an award of \$2,500.00, and that SCWR deserves more. He feels that the animals didn't choose whether or not they were rescued into captivity and still need care. He says that there is a fine line between perceiving the situation as "exhibiting" the cubs - as opposed to showing them for educational purposes, which is what he feels this situation really is. He points out that there is overwhelming support from the community and local and state agencies and organizations for this project.

Jeff Holden thinks that \$2,500.00 is "light" and that \$5,000.00 is not unreasonable.

Andy Pozzi says that he spoke with Steve Riske, Department of Fish & Game (DFG), about the pending district attorney case in Napa County as a source of potential funding for the project. Doris Duncan clarifies that the case hasn't even been filed yet.

Doris mentions a community forum that SCWR held involving DFG, Sonoma County Animal Care and Control, the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department, plus local community members – Channel 2 covered the event.

Al Ferris spoke to Supervisor Mike Kerns, who told Al to do whatever he felt was right. Al says that he feels that this grant request falls into the questionable realm regarding the new guidelines and that he wishes to proceed with caution.

Jim Lynch is willing to support up to \$4,000.00. He says that the charter of a rehabilitation organization is to “rehab and release” and that this doesn’t necessarily fall into that category.

Crystal clarifies that the MOU of rehabilitation organizations does not guarantee an educational component. The MOU a wildlife organization operates under is part of Title 14 Section 679, Nicole Carion is the Wildlife Rehabilitation Coordinator for the department. All wildlife in the care of a rehabilitator is the property of the DFG.

Jo Bentz states that the whole situation is unfortunately a bad deal. She understands the intended educational component, but doesn’t like the exhibition of animals for any reason. She wonders where to draw the line. She mentions concern over the stress levels of animals in captivity.

Doris Duncan states that the animals that come in to SCWR are immediately evaluated for stress levels. They currently have only 9 educational animals at their site.

Andy Pozzi restates his motion to partially approve the grant in the amount of \$2,500.00, with a second by Al Ferris. There are 7 “ayes”: Andy Pozzi, Al Ferris, Jeff Holden, Dave Lloyd, Jo Bentz, Martin Bauman and Crystal Norris. There are 3 “nays”: Gene Gaffney, Dave Cook and Jim Lynch. Motion carried to partially approve Grant #132 in the amount of \$2,500.00.

Frederique Lavoipierre and Nathan Rank are requesting a grant in the amount of \$5,300.00, for *Sonoma State University Entomology Outreach Program*, second reading.

Crystal asks if there are additional questions or comments from the Commission.

Andy Pozzi says that he has done research on microscopes and found some that are of similar power at a lower price.

Nathan Rank explains that there are other similar microscopes out there, but that it would benefit the program to have a couple of high quality microscopes, of durable quality, than to have more of a poor quality.

Gene Gaffney states that he has experience with Zeiss products and that they are of a much higher quality. He also feels that better quality is a better choice for the microscopes.

Crystal questions the stability of microscopes of poorer quality and agrees that better quality would be the best option.

Dave Cook asks about the number of students listed on the current program handout. Is this the current number reached, or projected for the future?

Frederique Lavoipierre says that the numbers listed represent the number of students they anticipate reaching throughout this year. She then mentions two letters of support from Lex McCorvey and Tim Tesconi, Sonoma County Farm Bureau, thanking the Entomology Program for their participation in the 2008 Sonoma County Ag Days. She says the program has received overwhelming support from local organizations, schools and educational partners.

Martin Bauman makes a motion to approve the purchase of one microscope, with a second by Andy Pozzi. There are three ayes: Martin Bauman, Andy Pozzi and Dave Lloyd. Motion does not carry.

Jim Lynch makes a motion to partially approve the grant in the amount of \$3,500.00, with a second by Jeff Holden. There are 9 “ayes” and one “nay” by Andy Pozzi. Motion carried to partially approve Grant #133 in the amount of \$3,500.00.

Dr. James Moore, Senior Fish Pathologist, CA Department of Fish and Game, is requesting a grant in the amount of \$20,381.03, for *Detection of invasive freshwater mussels and the agent of abalone withering syndrome in Sonoma County and surrounding waters, second reading.*

Crystal asks if there are additional questions or comments from the Commission.

Gene Gaffney reads part of an article regarding the impending threat of invasive freshwater mussels in Sonoma County.

Gene makes a motion to approve \$5,000.00 in funding from the Abalone Fund. He then rescinds the motion.

Jim Moore states that the first two items listed on the grant equipment list, totaling \$11,080.00 (including shipping + taxes), are the most critical to the project.

Martin Bauman asks where else they have requested funding from. Jim Moore states that they are also pursuing other counties in the state, where the research is being conducted.

Jeff Holden suggests the Commission consider partially funding only the centrifuge for withering syndrome in the amount of \$6,400.00.

Andy Pozzi asks when the Commission last funded this project. Jim Moore states it was six years ago. Andy wants confirmation that the equipment would remain the property of DFG, even though it would be housed at the Bodega Marine Lab in the DFG laboratory. Jim Moore confirms this.

Jim Lynch makes a motion to partially approve the grant, \$6,450.00 Abalone Fund, and \$4,630.00 General Fund, with a second by Jo Bentz. There are 7 “ayes”, and three “nays” by Andy Pozzi, Al Ferris and Dave Lloyd. Motion carried to partially approve Grant #134 in the amount of \$6,450.00 from the Abalone Fund, and \$4,630.00 from the General Fund.

New Business

The Commission discusses options for annual caps on funding for rehabilitation groups.

Jim Lynch says that there are too many “what if” situations that arise which fall outside of the \$2,500.00 per rehab group, per fiscal year “box”. Setting a \$2,500.00 cap would be limiting.

Jeff Holden thinks that setting caps reduces the flexibility of the Commission’s ability to award grants. It would set too many restrictions. He feels the Commission can make the decisions as they come through on an as per basis.

Martin Bauman asks the Commission why this is being brought up. Andy Pozzi states that he initiated the conversation.

Jo Bentz states that there is a wide variance in the amount of animals handled among the wildlife rehabilitation organizations.

Crystal Norris agrees with Jim and Jeff and feels that the Commission shouldn't limit itself and have the ability to award grants on an individual basis.

Doris Duncan apologizes to the Commission if they feel she has been coming in to ask for grant funding too often.

Dave Cook explains that the Commission supports her work, but simply can't do it all the time.

Al Ferris states that the Commission has many factors that it is dealing with regarding awarding grant monies, not just SCWR. He says that he admires Doris and all the work she is doing. She is always welcome.

Gene Gaffney says that the Commission tries to support all requests that come in. He also commends SCWR and Doris. He realizes that she is working very hard, that the organization is growing and feels she is doing a great job.

Reports and Comments

Commission –

Dave Cook met Shirlee Zane at a Sonoma County Conservation Action Network dinner meeting. He was asked to be a panelist. He also met Santa Rosa City Council Member Gary Wysocky. Jo Bentz says she read the DFG correspondence included in this month's packet and thinks there's a lot going on right now and that DFG is under a lot of pressure from lawsuits.

Andy Pozzi proposes an outreach program for restoration projects and asks if the Commission is interested. Dave also feels that the Fish & Wildlife Commission is under known in the county.

Jim Lynch went to dinner meeting similar to the one that Dave attended and agrees with Dave that the Commission is not well known. He also feels that the Commissioners need to individually make an effort to "spread the word".

There is discussion about targeting certain parts of the county such as Cloverdale, Sonoma and Petaluma. How would the Commission get the message out – via localized periodicals, organizations and/or the school system?

Al Ferris says that Dave Hillendahl is recovering well from his surgery.

Jim Lynch says that turkey season is coming up.

Jeff Holden apologizes for not making it to the February meeting. He showed up one week late by mistake.

Gene Gaffney invites the Commission to the Salmon Creek Falls Environmental Center grand opening on Saturday, April 4, 2009, at 4:00 p.m.

Crystal Norris has seen 6 to 7 turkeys in the creek behind her office. She also saw two turkeys at the top of her neighbor's redwood tree.

Public –

Dimitri Escovil, DFG, introduces himself as the new Santa Rosa warden, appointed in January. He's been working at the Russian River heavily on pollution cases. He attended an Abalone Task Force meeting with allied agencies (Sheriff's Dept., State Parks, DFG, CHP) to prepare for abalone season coming up in April.

Jim Snyder, DFG, works at the Bodega Marine Lab on mussel detection and thanks the Commission for their support.

Dagny Thomas, Ag Commissioner's Office, states that the office has a copy of the "Endangered Species" documentary that the Commission helped fund last year. She will request copies for all of the Commissioners from the producer, James Swan.

Alex McVicker, Ag Commissioner's Office, says that he has watched the documentary and highly recommends it.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Thomas

Secretary