



## FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

### Minutes of the May 21, 2009 Meeting

#### Attending Members

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

#### Absent Members

Gene Gaffney  
Ned Hill  
Brock Dolman

#### Others

Mary Jo Delos, Sonoma County Regional Parks  
Mary Clemens, Sonoma County Regional Parks  
Matt Lau, SRJC Graduate/Scholarship Recipient  
Katie Lau, Parent  
Lt. Steve Riske, Department of Fish & Game  
Joseph Laugesen, Department of Fish & Game  
Frank Crabtree, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Dan Curtin, Ag Commissioner's Office  
Dagny Thomas, Ag Commissioner's Office

Chairperson Crystal Norris calls the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. Initially there is no quorum. Jo Bentz arrives at 7:30 p.m. and Martin Bauman arrives at 7:53 p.m. and there is a quorum.

#### Adoption of Minutes

Crystal asks if there are any additions or corrections to the April 2009 minutes. Martin Bauman states that the figure of "7,000 geo-caching sites" he was describing at the April meeting were for Sonoma County alone, not world-wide. Jo Bentz says that the number of take for the Bag Limit Reduction discussion should be corrected as: "from five to two." Al Ferris makes a motion to approve the April minutes, with a second by Jo Bentz. Motion carried.

#### Correspondence

- A. Correspondence from California State Fish & Game Commission regarding various regulatory actions
- B. Letter from Friends of Sheephouse Creek regarding "40 Year Logging Plan Proposed for Coho Watershed"
- C. DFG Press Release regarding Quagga Zebra invasive mussels "Clean, Drain and Dry for Memorial Day Weekend" (submitted by Crystal Norris)

#### Financial Reports

In April 2009, the Abalone Fund received \$125.00 from Central Collections and \$54.16 in interest, with a fiscal year fund balance of \$5,550.00.

The General Fund received \$3,801.88 from Superior Court, \$437.05 from probation, and \$854.63 in interest, with a fiscal year fund balance of \$23,914.44.

Andy Pozzi makes a motion to approve the April 2009 financials as presented, with a second by Al Ferris. Motion carried.

## **Old Business**

### **Fish & Wildlife Scholarships 2009 –**

Matt Lau introduces himself and says that he is graduating from Santa Rosa Junior College this year and will be attending Humboldt State University in the fall. He plans to major in Wildlife and Wildlands Science and Management with a minor in Fishing and Fisheries Science and Management, and intends to pursue graduate degrees in the same areas.

Crystal Norris gives him his scholarship check in the amount of \$2,500.00 and he thanks the commission for their consideration and support towards achieving his educational goals.

### **Discussion/review of outgoing letter from the Fish & Wildlife Commission to the California Fish & Game Commission in support of “Trout Bag Limit Reduction in Sonoma Lake”.**

Per the request of the commission, Andy Pozzi drafted and sent a letter to the California Fish & Game Commission in support of the “Trout Bag Limit Reduction in Sonoma Lake”.

Al Ferris apologizes for missing the last meeting due to surgery recovery and says that he agrees with Andy Pozzi about the serious reduction of Steelhead at Lake Sonoma.

Lt. Steve Riske, DFG, states that he has had conversations with the guides at Lake Sonoma, who have told him that they are noticing a serious shortage of Steelhead in the Lake recently.

Andy Pozzi believes that it has become a serious problem.

### **Brendan O’Neil, Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, gives a project report on *Willow Creek Road 2<sup>nd</sup> Bridge Area Fish Passage Project, Grant #123.***

Brendan O’Neil thanks the commission for their assistance. He reports that they used the funds from the Fish and Wildlife grant award to pay for the design and engineering for the project, which they hope to have started in 2010. The goal is to open up 4 ½ miles of fish passage for Steelhead and Coho, which includes sediment reduction at second bridge, and 1,000 feet of channel work upstream from second bridge to reconnect the entire system.

To date, they have completed the design of the bridge, a SEQUA document ready to send to the state, Brendan is currently working on permits, and the project is anticipating additional grant monies from Dept. of Fish and Game, NOAA and National Marine Fisheries.

The biggest issue with the project is the fact that it is a County bridge, and not a high-traffic bridge, so it does not warrant county funds to be used to repair it.

Andy Pozzi asks what will happen to the old channel. Brendan says it will remain in place, with modifications. It is a low-gradient system, and they are anticipating a 50-year lifespan. He states that 90% of the watershed is in conservation ownership.

Al Ferris asks about their plans for clearing some of the woods around the banks of the stream. Brendan says they do plan some clearing.

Jo Bentz asks if this is last impediment to the fish. Brendan says that basically, yes it is. Brendan states that they intend to work with the DFG Broodstock program in the future.

### **New Business**

**Mary Jo Delos, Executive Director, Sonoma County Regional Parks Foundation, is requesting a grant in the amount of \$5,000.00, for *Environmental Discovery Center – Amphibian and Reptile Exhibit*, first reading.**

Mary Jo Delos introduces herself and Mary Clemens, Executive Director of the Environmental Discovery Center. They are asking for funding for a new program, an enhancement to the center. The Discovery Center has had over 50,000 school children and 100,000 public come through since it opened.

Mary Clemens states that over the years, she has realized that animals are a true tie for kids to nature, and only exposure to living creatures can make that connection entirely. Text books and dead specimens can only do so much. It's the live animals that truly do it for the kids. To date, the Tide Pool Display, which was funded in part by the Fish & Wildlife Commission, has been the biggest attraction at the center.

They are asking for new funding for an amphibian/reptile exhibit, which will include materials and staff expenses for a teacher.

The teacher they would like to hire currently does rehabilitation for amphibians. They would like the curriculum to include education about the issues surrounding non-native species, and the benefits of having California native species in our parks and Wildlands.

Crystal Norris asks how the \$5,000.00 grant request monies would be distributed. Mary Clemens states that \$1,000.00 would be used for supplies, and \$4,000.00 would be used to staff the amphibian rehabilitation woman.

Supplies would include a vivarium, snake enclosures, aquatic animals, frogs, insects, beetles, etc., and house native amphibian species. Crystal asks Mary and Mary Jo to provide more detailed information about the specific native species they plan on housing.

Dave Cook asks about "catch and release". Mary states that any animals that are simply brought to her uninjured or that need relocating are released back into their native habitat. If the animals are hurt, she will keep them. During the time that uninjured animals are being held pending relocation, they can currently be used to educate. This process usually spans a couple of weeks. The animals in question for the Amphibian and Reptile Exhibit will not be "catch & release"; they will remain at the Discovery Center with the display.

Crystal Norris says she has an objection to taking animals that are feasibly releasable and keeping them in captivity for educational purposes.

Mary Jo Delos clarifies with Mary Clemens that all the animals currently at the Discovery Center are currently rotated back into nature. Mary Clemens says that they are.

Dave Cook has concerns regarding diseases occurring in captive animals. He then asks if they have Fish & Game permits for keeping captive animals. Dave would also like to see a species list and all permitting regarding the ability to "catch & release" and keep animals in captivity, even if temporarily. Mary states that she will obtain this information and present it at the June Fish & Wildlife meeting.

Crystal states that there are a wide variety of permits that the amphibian rehab teacher could have, and would also like more detail about permitting. She would also like to make sure the exhibit features native species, with an educational component regarding exotic and non-native species.

Jo Bentz asks whether the animals for this exhibit will be caught & released from parks such as Spring Lake. Mary Clemens says that they currently do this with fish from Spring Lake. She will go back and re-read her permits to clarify where the animal catch & release responsibilities lay. Jo then mentions the importance of teaching "not killing" in the curriculum, noting that many cultures in Sonoma County do not like snakes, etc., because they do not have the exposure or education to know otherwise.

Mary Jo Delos states that they will go back and do their homework.

Crystal Norris asks Mary Jo & Mary to provide more information on the actual design of the exhibit.

Andy Pozzi asks Lt. Steve Riske, DFG, to check on the permits for Ms. Barbie Hoffman of Leapin' Lizards Rescue regarding her ability to manage/teach this program for the Discovery Center.

Dave Cook would like to see a breakdown of the hours involved for the staffing services of Ms. Hoffman for this project.

Andy Pozzi would also like to find out how the project plans to fund itself in the future.

Crystal Norris states that this is the first reading of the grant request, and the second reading will be at the June meeting.

**Lt. Steve Riske, Department of Fish and Game, is requesting a grant in the amount of \$8,778.00, for Abalone Regulation Enforcement, first reading.**

Lt. Steve Riske states that due to the two new Fish & Game Wardens that have joined their ranks, they need new spotting scopes and binoculars for each warden - of better quality than the DFG can afford.

Dave Lloyd asks if cameras can be attached to the scopes. Lt. Riske states that this grant request doesn't include the mounts, due to their cost.

Crystal Norris says that there is \$5,000.00 in the General Fund from a DA case that was earmarked for DFG equipment, and the rest could come from Abalone Fund or General fund.

Andy Pozzi suggests that Lt. Riske revise and resubmit the grant request to include everything, including the mounts for cameras and night vision. The commissioners agree with him.

Jo Bentz asks Crystal if the \$5,000.00 has a deadline (i.e. the end of the Fiscal Year). Crystal says no.

Crystal asks Lt. Riske to bring a revised grant request in to the next meeting, including an updated equipment list. She states that this is the first reading of the grant request, and the second reading will be at the June meeting.

### **Reports and Comments**

#### **Commission –**

Dave Cook has been doing fish population studies with the Water Agency at the lower end of Dry Creek and has seen as many as 1,000 Chinook smelts in one day over the past couple weeks. He is wrapping up fish population sampling today in the Russian River estuary. He caught Chinook, Steelhead, and counted 26 Coho at Willow Creek. These sightings are really exciting. He was doing fish dive studies on the East fork of the Russian River and found a Western Pearl Shell Mussel, about 4 inches long. He researched it and found it to be a native species. He also found a Winged-floater mussel in the Russian River, which is also a native species.

Jo Bentz watched the “Endangered Species” video and really enjoyed it. She thought it was really good and very informative.

Lt. Riske says that he spoke with James Swan and that National Geographic is interested in showing the documentary.

Al Ferris will be gone during June and July to Alaska for some fishing and relaxation.

Martin Bauman will not be attending the meeting next month because he will be in the UK at a sheep farm in the Yorkshire Moors.

Crystal Norris says that her “habitat” at work is still busy. Before the rains, they counted six Steelhead in the creek. She has recently spotted a young buck, a doe and two spotted fawns. They have also seen turkeys and a river otter.

#### **Public –**

Matt Lau, Scholarship Recipient, enjoyed the meeting and thanked the commission again for choosing him as a winner.

Lt. Steve Riske says that the lowest tides of the year coincide with Memorial Day weekend, so he is calling in backup DFG Wardens to assist during the weekend with a potential increase in abalone activity. He also mentions that one of his new wardens, Tiffany, did CPR on someone who had a heart attack after abalone diving and revived him; he unfortunately died later on. He also says that Osh McNulty is retiring, and it will be a big loss to abalone enforcement.

With no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Thomas  
Secretary