



**Sonoma County Fish and Wildlife Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
February 17, 2011 – 7:00pm**

Attending  
Members

Crystal Norris  
Dave Lloyd  
Jim Lynch  
Andrew Pozzi  
Al Ferris  
Jeff Holden  
Brock Dolman  
Jo Bentz

Absent  
Members

Gene Gaffney  
Caroline Christian  
Dave Cook  
Darius Anderson

Others

Cpt. Steve Riske, CA Dept. Fish & Game (DFG)  
Bob Roberts, CA DFG  
Sarah Millus, Audubon Canyon Ranch  
Hattie Brown, Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation  
Dan Curtin, Ag Commissioner's Office

Chairperson Crystal Norris calls the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Crystal asks if there are any additions or corrections to the January 2011 minutes.

Al Ferris makes a motion to approve the January 2011 minutes as presented, with a second by Jeff Holden. Motion carried with eight 'Ayes', four 'Absent'.

**Correspondence**

- A. Correspondence from California State Fish & Game Commission regarding various regulatory actions
- B. California State Fish & Game Commission 2011 Meeting Schedule; March 2011 Agenda
- C. Letter of support for Gold Ridge Resource Conservation (GRRCD) District *Five Star Restoration* grant application
- D. GRRCD Pollinator Properties Map – Current and Proposed, January 2011
- E. Wildlife Fawn Rescue *Update* 2010 newsletter

## **Financial Reports**

In January 2011, the Abalone Fund received \$125.00 from Central Collections, and received \$5.07 in interest, with a fiscal year fund balance of \$273.05. The General Fund received \$1,402.81 from Superior Court, \$615.35 from Probation, \$230.21 in interest, and paid out grant #149 in the amount of \$3,000.00 and \$6.61 in office expenses, with a fiscal year fund balance of \$48,637.88.

Crystal asks for a motion to approve the January 2011 financial reports as presented. Al Ferris makes a motion to approve, with a second by Andy Pozzi. Motion carried with eight 'Ayes', four 'Absent'.

## **Old Business**

**John Kelly, PhD – Director, Conservation Science & Habitat Protection, and Emiko Condeso, Biologist/GIS Specialist, Audubon Canyon Ranch, are requesting a grant in the amount of \$8,216.00, for *Heron and Egret Project – Sonoma County*, first reading**

Sarah Millus, Field Biologist, is present for the second reading.

Crystal spoke with her friend, Janet Bosshard, who knows Emiko and John Kelly very well and has worked with them at a Cloverdale research site for the last 18 years. Janet is supportive of the project and says monitoring the rookeries is important and as they can major indicator about the environment.

Crystal asks if there are any additional questions or comments.

Jo Bentz asks if this is a year-long project. Sarah replies that this is an ongoing project started in 1991, and is a long-term monitoring study.

Andy Pozzi asks how long this grant funding would last. Sarah replies that it would be used for the current field season.

Al Ferris asks how much of the grant award would be used towards wages. Sarah replies that most of it would be used towards wages and mileage. Al states the Commission typically doesn't fund for staff hours/wages.

Andy asks who uses the data collected. Sarah replies that they share the information with open space districts, state and county agencies, wildlife refuges, and development agencies. They are working on a web-based GIS program that will be accessible to local agencies and the public.

Jo is supportive of the GIS program component and thinks it would be very useful to the public, land owners, developers, and other agencies. Sarah says there can be a lot of movement with the rookeries, only some have been static since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the GIS mapping program assists with determining this.

Jeff Holden asks if they are requesting grant funding from any other sources within Sonoma County for the Sonoma County research. Sarah states they have received a grant from the

Napa County Fish and Wildlife Commission for the Napa portion of the project. Jeff feels like it's a lot of money to ask to study birds that haven't been endangered for a long time. He agrees with Al, stating the Commission doesn't typically fund a grant based entirely on staff hours. He likes the project and thinks it's a good idea but thinks they are requesting too much.

Jim Lynch feels it is a great project and fits well with the Commission's charter and would like to see the study go through. There is a large rookery where he goes duck hunting. He says he thinks it is a responsibility of the Commission to support the project.

Jo Bentz supports the project if the data is shared with the county and city municipalities, via the GIS component.

Brock Dolman mentions the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) which lists and maps rare, threatened and endangered (RTE) species. He suggests Audubon Canyon Ranch share their GIS component with them.

Crystal asks for a motion to approve. Jim Lynch makes a motion to approve the grant in the amount of \$8,216.00, with a second by Jo Bentz. Motion does not carry, with a split vote of four 'Ayes', four 'Noes', four 'Absent'.

Crystal asks if there is a motion to approve a modified grant request. Jim Lynch makes a motion to approve the grant in the amended amount of \$5,000.00, with a second by Jeff Holden. Motion carries with six "Ayes", two "Noes" (Andy opposes; Jo opposes the reduced amount, wanting to fund the full amount), four "Absent", for grant #151.

**Captain Steve Riske, DFG, is requesting a grant in the amount of \$4,397.46, for *Russian River Enforcement*, third reading**

Captain Riske has completed all necessary paperwork and is waiting on the final approval from the DFG Auto Inspector who needs to come out and take a look at the vessel and give his final approval. The Inspector has mentioned concern about the DFG Department of General Services denying the request.

Crystal says that the grant request will remain pending on the monthly agendas until there is resolution to the situation.

**New Business**

**Hattie Brown, Conservation Science Program Manager, Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation (Laguna Foundation), is requesting a grant in the amount of \$6,990.00, for *Adopt a Vernal Pool Program*, first reading**

Hattie Brown introduces herself and gives a brief overview of the project. One of the ongoing projects she manages through the Laguna Foundation is the "Adopt a Vernal Pool" program.

Utilizing "Citizen Scientist" volunteers, they are conducting research on the three endangered plant species in vernal pools on the Santa Rosa Plain to determine if they are in decline, recovery, or near extinction. The objective of the project is to survey and collect data to establish

long-term trends regarding three species: Burke's goldfields (*Lasthenia burkei*), Sebastopol meadowfoam (*Limnanthes vinculans*), and Sonoma sunshine (*Blenosperma bakeri*).

They work with insect experts at Sonoma State University to determine specific insect pollinators, and are working with the City of Santa Rosa and the Department of Fish and Game to unify the data collection process across all of their combined properties that contain vernal pools on the Plain.

Al Ferris asks if this project is associated with the Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District's Pollinator project. Hattie says it is not. Al asks if it would be possible to place beehives near the vernal pools to assist with pollination. Hattie explains that honeybees aren't the primary pollinators of these species, bee flies are, but it is an interesting idea.

Jo Bentz asks if the current sites they are researching contain all three endangered plant species. Hattie says that all of the vernal pools have at least one species or more. Jo then asks if they are studying any pools that do not have any of the three species. Hattie explains they only do so in the case of pools where one or more of the species were known to previously have existed.

Hattie states all of their data is added to the CNDDDB. They have identified a threat to the native plant species: Pennyroyal mint (*Mentha pulegium*). It was identified back in the '80's as a potential threat to vernal pools. Most invasive weeds and plants can't survive in wet environments, but Pennyroyal mint can. They've identified it in over fifty percent of the pools they have studied. As a direct result of the data collected from this project, they have obtained grant funding to assist remove the Pennyroyal mint from the Marin/Sonoma Weed Management Area.

Al asks how close humans are allowed to get to a vernal pool. Hattie says that many of them exist on private property and there are safety and livestock issues, so the general public is not usually visiting them. There is an understanding that they are not to be disturbed, and often fenced off from grazing livestock.

Brock Dolman discusses increasing biodiversity and the integrity of the vernal pools with planned grazing and wholistic grazing methods.

Hattie will bring a paper she wrote with a colleague about "Citizen Scientists" to the next meeting for the Commissioners.

Crystal states this is the first reading, and the second will be heard at the March 2011 meeting.

## **Reports and Comments**

### **Commission –**

- Crystal watched nearly all of the National Geographic documentary episodes on DFG Game Wardens. She saw Captain Riske and his crew in some of the segments performing abalone investigations. She thought it was very diverse and has been enjoying them. She saw James Swan's (Snow Goose Down Productions) name in the credits as a co-producer.

She located the original Abalone Fund restitution court documents at the Ag office and forwarded them to Matt Cheever, Deputy District Attorney, to investigate dissolving the restitution fund and moving future monies into the General Fund.

She mentions that CalTrans was fined by DFG for storm drain violations during the Highway 101 construction and is waiting to see if the monies will come to the Commission.

- Jeff Holden also watched some of the National Geographic episodes with his son and enjoyed the series so far. He hasn't seen the Sonoma County episode yet.
- Brock Dolman says it was the banner year for Coho returns in the Russian River – 85 possible reds; almost all were broodstock program fish. They were sighted in Dutch Bill Creek, Green Valley, Felta Creek, Mill Creek, Grape Creek, Austin Creek, and a new one they've never been seen in before, Devil Creek. UC Cooperative Extension has been integral in tracking the broodstock fish. Brock also spent two days with Doug Gore, (Dragonfly Stream Enhancement) dropping large multi-ton boulders and redwood structures in Salmon Creek Estuary after seven years of planning.
- Al Ferris mentions changes to Halibut take limits for sport fisherman in Alaska.
- Dave Lloyd asks Captain Riske about the Steelhead releases this year. Captain Riske says everything is in order.

**Public –**

- Rob Roberts, DFG, introduces himself as the new Lieutenant for Sonoma, Marin, and Napa Counties. He spent the last eight years with the Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR). He's been with DFG for 11 years and is highly specialized in large scale marine pollution. He said two new wardens investigated a rumored gill net in Dry Creek, but found nothing. The new wardens from the academy are very enthusiastic and engaged.
- Captain Riske attended a Salmon meeting and there was talk that State waters (which reach out three miles from the coastline) would be closed and Federal waters would be open - which would ultimately be good for salmon fisherman. DFG biologists seem to have a positive outlook on things. A man was caught in Petaluma with 5 abalone, after being arrested with 36 the previous weekend in Booneville.

He says there is a State hiring freeze and feels the National Geographic documentary is helping support the enforcement efforts of DFG wardens statewide.

With no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Thomas  
Commission Secretary